

THE MESSENGER

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ASSOCIATE RECTOR ANNOUNCED AT ANNUAL MEETING



At our annual meeting held on January 22, we were introduced to our newest staff member, Associate Rector Mary Lynn Coulson. Mary Lynn is a graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary; she serves currently as Vicar at St. Martin in the Fields in Edwardsville, Kan., and also as a chaplain at St. Luke’s Hospital. We plan an in-depth introductory interview with Rev. Coulson in the March issue. Thanks to all who attended the annual meeting, and to Carol Zoellner, Mary Kidwell, Fr. David, Donna Kirkwood, and Will Henderson for their presentations to the more than 60 in attendance. And most of all, a hearty welcome to Rev. Mary Lynn Coulson! More to come in March.



IN THIS ISSUE

- IMMIGRATION UPDATE.....2
- BIBLE CLASS KICKS OFF.....4
- WHERE ARE THEY NOW?.....5
- EEI EVENTS IN FEBRUARY.....6
- HAITI UPDATE.....9
- PRAYER VIGIL.....11
- GOOD FAITH NETWORK.....12
- UPCOMING EVENTS.....13

IMMIGRATION AND ADVOCACY UPDATE

By Sara O'Connell

Over the past months much has changed in the outreach work being done by members of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Michael and All Angels in the role of providing support for refugees and asylum seekers, and in advocacy work.

Federal policy changes have led to a sharp decrease in immigration to our country and to cuts in staffing and funding of settlement agencies, such as Della Lamb, Catholic Charities, and JVS. This has greatly impacted their ability to assist those immigrant families who arrived shortly before these cuts took effect.

As a result, our team has no new families with whom we are working, however we are continuing to provide assistance, as needed, to the established families and greater support to a family who has been in Kansas City for one year. This work involves ongoing English language learning (ELL), transportation to medical, dental, and other essential appointments, school enrollment and advocacy in the schools for ELL support, and support for the myriad needs that come up in all of our lives, but are much more difficult for these families to tackle on their own. Examples of this help include rental negotiations, green card filing assistance, and health insurance application assistance.

These families walk on a tight rope, especially financially. Changes in health, rental issues, job losses, etc., affect them immediately and greatly. Recently some have become victims of an extensive scam operation that siphoned funds from EBT cards - cards which provide benefits such as SNAP and TANF. We are always appreciative of any financial help that can be provided to these families .



IMMIGRATION AND ADVOCACY UPDATE (cont'd.)

In October an advocacy initiative was started with the hope of reaching out to those who might be interested in a less direct and hands on type of assistance. Meetings addressing ongoing changes in immigration, court observation training, and accompaniment training have taken place and continue. Please contact me if you have an interest in learning more about advocacy.

Despite significant and ongoing challenges in this type of ministry, it is highly rewarding. Close relationships develop and witnessing the steady growth in English skills, daily living skills, and overall confidence is heartwarming. Seeing the children thrive at school gives the parents and volunteers alike much needed hope. Between families, efforts to help each other has grown as family members learn more about living in the US - it is beautiful to behold.

I recently took a second look at a book many of you may know - *Braiding Sweetgrass*. A line stood out which I will share. "...when conditions are harsh and life is tenuous, it takes a team sworn to reciprocity to keep life going forward. In a world of scarcity, interconnections and mutual aid become critical for survival." Robin Kimmerer was writing about lichens, but, as she stresses, this is critical for humanity as well.



Thank you for the support STMAA members have given to this ministry and for the ongoing interest. Any questions, help, advice, etc. are always welcome!

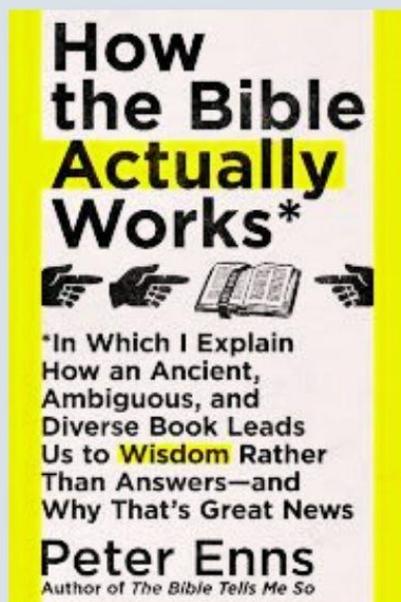
Email: sarao720@yahoo.com

A JOURNEY THROUGH “HOW THE BIBLE REALLY WORKS”



The next installment of Christian education for adults at STMAA kicked off on January 18, when Fr. David began a collective study of *How the Bible Actually Works*, by controversial evangelical Bible scholar, popular blogger, and podcast host of “The Bible for Normal People,” Peter Enns. Classes will take place in the Bingham Room Sundays at 8:45 a.m., into the month of May, with the exception of Holy Week.

The book’s main thesis is that the Bible is not an instruction manual or rule book but a powerful learning tool that nurtures our spiritual growth by refusing to provide us with easy answers but instead forces us to acquire wisdom. We had an enlivening discussion in the first session, and we can hope you can be a part of this ongoing learning!



“The Bible becomes a confusing mess when we expect it to function as a rulebook for faith. But when we allow the Bible to determine our expectations, we see that Wisdom, not answers, is the Bible’s true subject matter,” writes Enns.

PARISH YOUTH OUT IN THE WORLD

By Asher Bloete Menke

Another installment of, “What ever happened to so-and-so?” from our youth program. More updates to come next month. February’s alumni from our youth program are Max Welker and Nathan Kidwell.



MAX WELKER

After serving for 4 years in the US Navy on the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier, Max entered into an apprenticeship program to become a licensed electrician. He is currently in the fourth year of a 5-year program, working as an apprentice while finishing classes. Last year, Max bought his first house and lives in south Kansas City.

NATHAN KIDWELL

Nathan is a sophomore at Embry-Riddle in Florida, where he studies aerospace engineering and other subjects. He also plays on the lacrosse team after playing all four years at SM East. His primary church home is still STMAA, attending when he’s home on break from school. He reports that his lacrosse team does a lot of community service during the offseason in the Daytona Beach area. He’s pictured here during the recent holiday with his new niece.



EPISCOPALIANS FOR EQUITY & INCLUSION

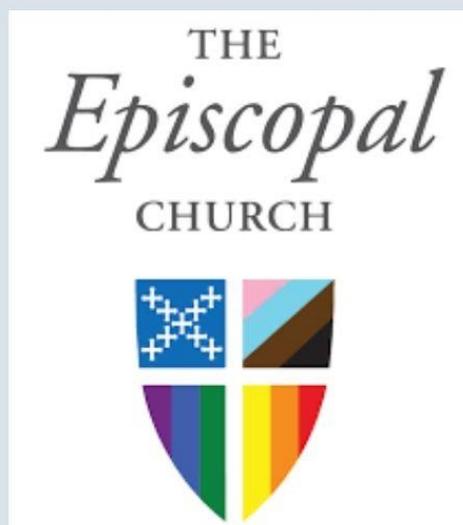
What is EEI?

By Jaime Keltner

St. Michael's has always been a welcoming place for all, and a small but mighty group has come together to make sure our LGBTQ+ community understands how inclusive St. Michael's is.

Episcopalians for Equity & Inclusion (EEI) was created after KC Pride in June to be affirming of all LGBTQ+ persons. The group was started by Craig Aikman, Addrienne Conway, and Jaime Keltner, who each have a personal interest in seeing a group like this come together. The group began meeting several months ago and have invited members of the STMAA family to attend as well. The EEI group is always looking for new parishioners and/or friends to join and help with our group's endeavors. Meetings are scheduled the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month in the Bingham classroom.

The hope is to create a group where LGBTQ+ issues could be discussed, education could be provided to the parish on these issues, and everyone could participate in outreach opportunities that help support the LGBTQ+ community. Over the course of the past seven months EEI has worked on the KCMO Pride Festival and JOCO Pride in the Park. EEI is also hosting an upcoming educational series about the basics of the LGBTQ+ community.



EPISCOPALIANS FOR EQUITY & INCLUSION (con't.)

At both the KCMO Pride Festival and Johnson County Pride in the park the group manned and decorated a booth, and provided giveaways and information about STMAA. The group will continue to support both of these outreach opportunities in 2026. KCMO Pride will take place at the beginning of June, and JOCO Pride in the Park in October (dates TBA).

The upcoming educational series on LGBTQ+ is being led by Craig Aikman. Each session will focus on a different piece of the LGBTQ+ community. They are designed to be stand alone sessions, which means parishioners needn't worry if they can't attend them all.

This wonderful group is excited to share love and support of the LGBTQ+ community at a time when they need it the most and they hope you will join them! Look for a signup link in the weekly newsletter to ensure enough space is available for upcoming meetings or just to get more information.





February 22 - Spencer Hall - Coffee Hour



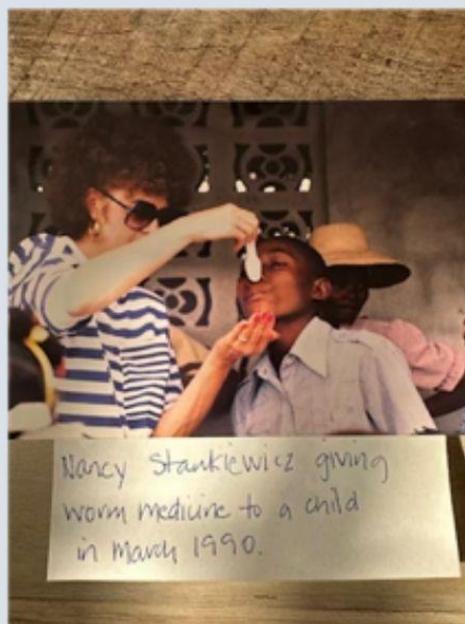
Improving Student Nutrition in Haiti

By Lisa Welker

Growing children already have a big job to do: grow strong bones and strong muscles, fight disease, learn relationship skills, and build sharp minds. Yet, in Haiti, most children are attempting to do this while supporting parasitic worms in their bellies. Intestinal worms, or helminths, are small thieves that do big harm.

They sap nutrients and blood the children need to stay strong. They leave children with less energy for learning in school and playing at home. They create anemia and malnutrition. They also open the door to other diseases. Research studies prove that keeping children without worms while they are growing can be just as effective as a school lunch program.

With sky-high inflation in Haiti, we have been unable to provide a daily lunch of rice and beans. In past years, regular medical and educational teams to the school provided worm medication to all children. It was a sticky red liquid that made a lot of mess; but was fun to give nonetheless!



HAITI (cont'd.)

Improving Student Nutrition in Haiti

Since the pandemic, the medication is most often given as pills (Albendazole or Mebendazole) to swallow or crush into a bite of peanut butter. With the assistance of health care workers from the local birthing center, Maison de Naissance, a de-worming program has been reintroduced in the classrooms at St. Paul's.

Last month 430 of the nearly 550 current students received albendazole. Health education was provided regarding the medicine, transmission, and avoidance of future infestations. Teachers assisted with recording those treated. The cost was around \$1,000, which was donated by a parish family. Our goal for 2026 is to administer the medication to the 3, 4, 5-year olds a second time in 6 months (with ongoing 6 month intervals). Those over 6 years of age will be re-treated at yearly intervals. Ideally we could offer medication to entire families of the students, which would greatly decrease transmission/reinfection. However, at this time, that is cost prohibitive.

If you would like to know more about this valuable project or contribute to medication/administration expenses, contact the Haiti Ministry (chair is Gary Welker: gewelker@gmail.com).



PRAYER VIGIL

Prayer Vigil for Immigration Ministries

Members of the St. Thomas/St. Michael's Immigration Ministries took part in an inter-parish evening of reflection and prayer on January 22, exploring God's call to us to welcome, care for, and protect the most vulnerable.

Prayers were said for immigrants and all who are impacted by the increasingly foreboding immigration environment, for our faithful volunteers who love and support them, for enlightenment and courage for our legislators and community leaders to safeguard due process and fairness for all persons, and for strength and insight to continue to respond to God's command to welcome and love the stranger.

Special guests at this event included Rabbi Mark Levin from Beth Torah in Overland Park, Bishop Daniel R. Genovesi from St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Emporia, Rev. Sarah Shipman, Director of Episcopal Migration Ministries in Topeka, and Pastors Chris Wilson of St. Andrew Christian Church in Olathe and Rick Behrens of Grandview Park Presbyterian Church in KCK. All from the church community are welcome at future vigils to bring attention to and community around this issue.



When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.

—Leviticus 19:33–34

A LETTER FROM THE GOOD FAITH NETWORK



On behalf of the Housing Justice team of Good Faith Network, I am writing to share an important and exciting update from our Housing Justice work—and to ask for your help in getting this project across the finish line.

A Habitat for Humanity housing development in Lenexa is moving into its final public approval phase. Using one-time gap funding from the County, this project will create FIFTY high-quality, permanently affordable homes for working families and represents exactly the kind of smart, values-aligned housing investment our network has long supported. The coming weeks are critical.

Public support—especially from Lenexa residents—will matter. There will be a Lenexa City Council Meeting on Tuesday, February 17, at 7:00 pm where this will be discussed. We are in a strong position—but this is the moment when showing up matters most. Your presence, your voice, and your willingness to invite others are essential to ensuring this project moves forward.

Aileen Ball
Lead Organizer
The Good Faith Network
aileen@thegoodfaithnetwork.org

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER FEB 17

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES FEB 18

LENT: POTLUCK SOUP DINNER & CLASS
FEB 25, MAR 4, 11, 18, 25

HOLY WEEK & EASTER

HOLY WEEK WALK THRU MAR 29

PALM SUNDAY MAR 29

MAUNDAY THURSDAY APR 2

GOOD FRIDAY APR 3

GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER & RECEPTION APR 4

EASTER SUNDAY APR 5

WELCOME & CONNECT LUNCH APR 19

END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR CELEBRATION MAY 3

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH MAY 10

PENTECOST SERVICE WITH BAPTISMS MAY 24

MEGA CAMP (GRADES 3-12) MAY 31- JUN 6

ARTS CAMP (GRADES K-6) JUL 6-10

ALL PARISH ICE CREAM SOCIAL JUL 19

