



St. Matthias Parish Office

Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm,
168 JFK Boulevard, Somerset, NJ 08873
732-828-1400, fax: 732-828-0866
www.stmatthias.net

Mass Schedule (in person):

Sat - 5 PM, Sun - 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM & 12 noon
M/T/W/Th/F at 8:00 AM
also on our YouTube channel
youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ

St. Matthias School (SMS):

170 JFK Blvd., Somerset, NJ 08873
www.stmatthias.info 732-828-1402
School Office Hours,
Monday-Friday 7:45AM to 3:30PM

For all Parish emails, add @stmatthias.net

Pastor: Rev Abraham Orapankal, **Abraham**
Fr. Lancelot McGrath, *Parochial Vicar* **lmcgrath**
Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, *Business Administrator*
mpburke-grospin

Anthony Baio, *Maintenance*
Deacon Ron Caimi, *Senior Deacon*
Maria Cornier, *Parish Secretary* **mcornier**
Kelly Counts, *Receptionist*, **kcounts**
Deacon Russell Demkovitz, **rdemkovitz**
Nathalie Godet, *Website & Bulletin Editor*,
ngodet

Leslie Guillen, *Bulletin Coordinator*, **lguillen**
Amy Hanna, *Accountant/Databases*, **ahanna**
Mike Lanyi, *Sacristan*

Sue Lenczewski, *Youth Coordinator*, **SMYLE**
Julio Montero, *Maintenance Supervisor*
Debra Schurko, *Director of Religious Education*,
dschurko

Vinnie Natale, *Bookkeeper*, **vnatale**
Silvia Nizama, *Housekeeper*
Deacon John Radvanski, **deaconjohn**
Joan Best Seamon, *Pastoral Associate for*
Music Ministry, **jseamon**

St. Matthias School (add @stmatthiasnj.org)
Mary Lynch, *Principal*, **mlynch**

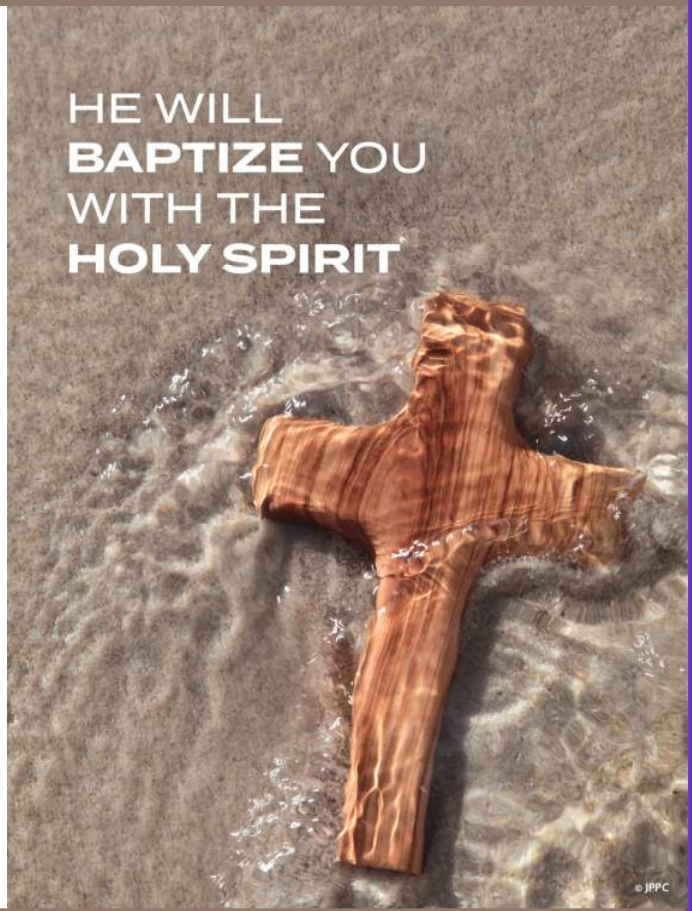
THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024
3rd Sunday of Advent



**MEMBERS OF
SMYLE
YOUTH
MINISTRY
ARE
COLLECTING
ITEMS IN
SUPPORT OF
UNITY
SQUARE
TODAY
BEFORE &
AFTER
EVERY MASS**

**SEE PAGE 7
FOR MORE
DETAILS**

HE WILL
BAPTIZE YOU
WITH THE
HOLY SPIRIT



Rejoice!
**Gaudete
Sunday**



TODAY is the last day to drop off
the gifts for the Giving Tree
Please help those in our
community most in need.

Please see page 9 for detailed information.

Masses are also livestreamed on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ

The Church is open for individual prayer

Mon-Fri: 7:30 am to dusk, Sat: 9 am to 6pm, and Sun: 7:30 am to 1 pm, unless another service is taking place.

Saturday, Dec 14, 2024

3:00PM Reconciliation Church
5:00PM Vigil Mass Church

Sunday, Dec 15, 2024 3rd Sunday of Advent

LAST DAY TO DROP OFF GIVING TREE GIFTS

8:00AM Mass Church
10:00AM Mass Church
10:00AM First Reconciliation - #3 Church
11:00AM RCIA de Porres Rm & Ruiz Rm
12:00PM Mass Church
1:30PM Baptisms Church
1:30PM SMYLE meeting St. John XXIII Rm

Monday, Dec 16, 2024

St. Adelaide of Italy

8:00AM Mass, Miraculous Medal Novena Church
6:00PM Eucharistic Adoration Church
7:00PM Cub Scout Pack 195 Meeting Cafeteria

Tuesday, Dec 17, 2024

Our Lady of Loreto

8:00AM Mass Church
6:30PM Simbang Gabi John XXIII Rm
7:30PM Handbell Rehearsal Church

Wednesday, Dec 18, 2024

St. Flannan, Monk

8:00AM Mass St. Joseph Novena Church
9:30AM Holy Spirit Prayer Group de Porres Rm
1:00PM SMS Band Rehearsal Church
5:30PM SMS Band Concert Church
6:30PM Girl Scout Troop 63202 Meeting PreK Clm
7:30PM Folk Group Rehearsal Church

Thursday, Dec 19, 2024

St. Anastasius, I, Pope

8:00AM Mass Church
1:00PM Prayer Shawl Ministry Ruiz Rm
3:30PM Children's Choir, Grades 3 & 4 Church
4:00PM Children's Choir Grades 5-8 Church
7:30PM Adult Choir Rehearsal Church

Friday, Dec 20, 2024

St. Dominic of Silos,

8:00AM Mass Church
6:45PM Boy Scout Troop 154 Mtg. Cafeteria

Saturday, Dec 21, 2024

St. Peter Canisius,

3:00PM Reconciliation Church
5:00PM Vigil Mass Church

Sunday, Dec 22, 2024 4th Sunday of Advent

8:00AM Mass Church
10:00AM Mass Church
11:00AM RCIA de Porres Rm & Ruiz Rm
12:00PM Mass Church
6:30PM Penance Service Church

BULLETIN ARTICLE REQUESTS:

If you would like to send information to be included in our bulletin, please email it to bulletin@stmatthias.net by **9 AM, MONDAY, 5 business days before the needed bulletin date** (earlier for holiday weekends). Approved content is published on a space-available basis.

Bulletin deadlines for this holiday season up to mid-January are accelerated by the Publishers. Hence matters to be published must be submitted 10 days earlier than the usual time.

Dear Friends,

Today we light the third candle on our Advent wreath. For families keeping this Advent wreath ritual at home can use the prayer put in this bulletin. We are reminded of how we all need that light of Jesus Christ to dispel the darkness within us. Brighter the light, clearer the vision.



Today is called “*Gaudete Sunday*” because today’s Mass (in its Latin form), began with the opening antiphon: “*Gaudete in Domino semper*” --“Rejoice in the Lord always.” In the past, when Advent was a season of penance, the celebrant of the liturgy used to wear vestments with the penitential color of purple or violet. In order to remind the people that they were preparing for the very joyful occasion of the birth of Jesus, the celebrant wore rose-colored vestments on the third Sunday. (you may remember that we have a similar break--*Laetare Sunday*—in Lent). Today we light the rose candle, and the priest may wear rose vestments, to express our joy in the coming of Jesus, our Savior. The primary common theme running through today’s readings is joy as we keep busy or even anxious with the preparation required of us who await the rebirth of Jesus in our hearts and lives. The second common theme is that of bearing witness. The prophet Zephaniah in the first Reading, Isaiah in the Responsorial Psalm and St. Paul in the second reading – all exhort us to rejoice and be glad.

This does not mean all people are happy. Many of us may not realize that there is a lot of sadness behind a smiling face. Those who suffer anxiety or stress cover it up with a smile. I read what a young person in college wrote last year:

“I am no longer afraid to admit how I’ve struggled with my mental health over the past three years. I have dealt with both anxiety and depression, both of which are common among teens.

I had trouble opening up to others and getting the help I needed. Instead I would lock myself in my room because I felt so much comfort in the darkness. Everyone had different coping mechanisms for handling not just mental health, but life in general. One thing I learned from my experience with depression was the ability to cope with my feelings by expressing them. Writing poetry helped me the most.”

Mental illness is so common that it can easily be overlooked. The “Accompaniment Project,” about which our young people spoke during all the Masses last weekend, is precisely to address the reality of mental health that afflicts more people than we know. Our parish Youth ministry’s Steering Committee (Deacon John Radvanski, Sue Lenczewski, Keith Slyman, Denik Joseph, Pat Cullen, Mary Guardini, Iris Abraham, Carl Furtado and Abigail Joseph) has prepared a survey/questionnaire that you were asked to respond, see page 8 for access to the survey. Thank you for your good will to support this Accompaniment Project which is a grant-funded initiative of the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM). We are happy and proud that our parish of St. Matthias is one of the 43 parishes chosen from 17,000 plus parishes nationwide. The goal is to actively support young people in their faith journey, being present with them and listen to their needs to ultimately guide them to a deeper relationship with Christ. As I thank our Youth Ministry leaders, I invite us all to support this very worthwhile cause.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal

Readings for the Week

Monday Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9 Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday Gn 49:2, 8-10 Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17 Mt 1:1-17

Wednesday Jer 23:5-8 Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 1:18-25

Thursday Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17 Lk 1:5-25

Friday Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 Lk 1:26-38

Saturday Sgs 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 Lk 1:39-45

Sunday Mi 5:1-4a Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 Heb 10:5-10 Lk 1:39-45



Mass Intentions for the Week

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------|---|
| Sat., December 14 | 5:00PM | Repose of the Soul of Marie DeFeo by daughter Lisa |
| | 5:00PM | Jill Szabo by The St. Matthias Music Ministry |
| Sun., December 15 | 8:00AM | Josephine Printon by Michael & Rebecca Zinnikas |
| | 10:00AM | Sr. Sonia by Paul & Patricia Nolan |
| | 12:00PM | Intention of Parishioners |
| Mon., December 16 | 8:00AM | Atensa & Akwesi Prempeh, by Alexis |
| Tues., December 17 | 8:00AM | Health & Blessings for Fr. Abraham, by The Godet Family |
| Wed., December 18 | 8:00AM | Helen Geraghty & Patricia Deely, by Mary |
| Thurs., December 19 | 8:00AM | Julie Tatulli, by Mary Spozdzial |
| Fri., December 20 | 8:00AM | Dorothy Gonzalez, by The Francis & Gonzalez Families |
| Sat., December 21 | 5:00PM | Intention of Parishioners |
| Sun., December 22 | 8:00AM | Jack Shafranski, by The Dupras Family |
| | 10:00AM | Julian & Felsia De Guzman, by The DeGuzman Family |
| | 12:00PM | Jack Frankenfield, by Deacon Russ & Monica |

Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please call the Parish Office or [email prayer@stmatthias.net](mailto:prayer@stmatthias.net) to add the name to this list. Names will be listed in the bulletin for **6** weeks. Please let us know if this time period needs to be extended. We want to know how you are doing and want to offer you the support of our prayers.

New people on our prayer list are noted in blue.

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---|
| Sue Alese | Sharon Gadomski | Kim Krikorian | Menchie Molano- | Sr. Bernadine Marie |
| Edgar Banaag | Heinley Gaspard | Kathy Langenbacher | Sotelo | Stemnock |
| Carolyn Banghart | Emma Gergely | Rose Larangeira | Sarah Braun Morini | Mary Sullivan |
| Ghislaine Baron | Claude Godet | Linda Leone | Robert Pellegrino | Richard Sury |
| Samantha Bellouny | Marie Godet | Henrietta Lesiak | Robert Pierro | Jacqueline Taylor |
| Carmen Bender | Fr. Ben Gomez OMI | John Litrakis | Robert Pietrowiak | Anita Vance |
| Mary Bostrom | Shelly Greene | Mary Lou Litrakis | Randolff Pinard | Minda Villarica |
| Patricia Burke | Linda Hartong | Aries Magali | Valerie Polci | Eileen Weber |
| Tara Capatosto | Jeff Hentz | Kenneth & Kelly Magat | Kim Price | Nancy Whelan |
| Rustico Castellano | Marilyn Horvath | Susan, King & Tosh | Frank Rispoli | Ginette Zamor |
| Lisa DeFeo | Jerry & Donna Hucul | Manansala | Gabriel Rivera | Celia M. Zelinski |
| Patricia Dolphin | Nicole Cherill Hynes | Colleen Maniscalco | Bob Rotz | Anne Zando |
| Sanora Doyen | Marilyn Jensen | Alexandra Marquez | Marisa Ruppel | And for all who are ill, homebound, elderly, in nursing care, or living with chronic illness, we pray. |
| Andrea Dubuisson | Jean Alix Jolly | Christine Matthews | Maria Schwenzer | |
| Derowitsch Family | Marie Claude Jolly | Ann McElwee | Amy Shepp | |
| Hattie Evans | Donna Kahora | Jessica Marie Merrick | Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF | |
| Margaret Ann Cichon | Patty Kerekes | Gail Miranda | Timothy Siclari | |
| Ford | Betsy Kondrat | | Catherine Steele | |

Pray for those who have died...

— “His mercy endures forever.” *Chronicles*

Catherine A. Havey,

Reverend Leo V. Gariazzo, *mentor of Deacon John*

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



Are you infected by this Advent Virus?! Be on the alert for symptoms of inner **Hope, Peace, Joy and Love**. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to this virus and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world. Some signs and symptoms of **The Advent Virus**:

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging other people.
- A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- A loss of interest in conflict.
- A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.

- An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

Please send this warning out to all your friends. This virus can and has affected many systems. Some systems have been completely cleaned out because of it. 😊

He: Want to hear a construction joke? **She:** Yes.

He: Sorry, I'm still working on it. 😊

She: Do you want to know how to keep someone in suspense? **He:** Yes. **She:** I'll tell you later 😊

Lawyer: 'Now that you have been acquitted, will you tell me truly? Did you steal the car?'

Client: 'After hearing you in court, I'm beginning to think I didn't.' 😊

Why was the horse so happy?

Because he lived in a stable environment 😊



Parenting Tune-Up

The purpose of Advent is not to shop but to learn to wait. Teaching your child to delay gratification is an important life skill. Perhaps this **W.A.I.T.** acronym could help: **W** - Waiting give us time to make a good decision or to buy the right thing.

A - Anticipation can enhance appreciation.

I - Instant gratification is often fleeting.

T - Take stock of your blessings. What do you already have?

Marriage Tune-Up



"The Lord will rejoice over you with gladness..." Zephaniah 3:14-18)

Preparation for Christmas can strain even the best relationships. But be grounded in this truth that God is pleased with us despite our imperfections. If so, can we be gentle and patient with each other as you do the many tasks to prepare for Christmas?

FAMILY ADVENT WREATH: LIGHTING THE 3RD CANDLE

(Assign readings among family members)

Reader #1: Today is the third Sunday of Advent. Advent is a time of waiting. We wait for God to send divine love and light into our dark world.

Reader #2: How does this happen?

Reader #1: God's light comes through Jesus, who became a human being just like you and me, so that he could show us the way back to God's divine love and light.

ALL: "Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us. Let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Reader #3: A reading from the prophet Zephaniah: "Jerusalem, the time is coming, when it will be said to you: 'Don't be discouraged or grow weak from fear! The LORD your God wins victory after victory and is always with you. He celebrates and sings because of you, and he will refresh your life with his love.'" (Zephaniah 3:16-17)

Reader #1: We continue to wait for the coming of Jesus. Last Sunday, we began in the dark, and then we lit two candles. Today, on the third Sunday of Advent, we light three candles.

First, second and third candles are lit. While this is being done, the following is read:

Reader #2: Every week in Advent, we light another candle. Each candle that we light reminds us that the Light of the World will soon come to us in the human form of the baby Jesus, the Messiah who will show us the way back to God.

ALL: *The Messiah is on the way to us. As we prepare for his coming, may we repent of our sins. May we remember our baptisms with water. May we be ready to be baptized with God's Holy Spirit and fire. May we be ready to help our Lord proclaim the good news of God's love to all people, so that the world will be filled with joy. Amen.*

Reflect

BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE, BAPTISM OF FIRE

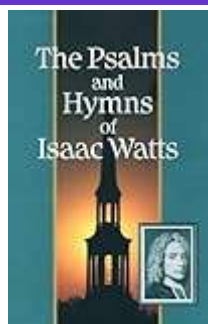
"I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Luke 3: 10-18

The pressures of their jobs, of raising their two kids, of the everyday demands of keeping up a house were taking their toll. He and she were living in different orbits. And now, Christmas. One day, he had enough. He called his mother and she agreed to take the kids for an overnight, and he surprised her with a night out - and they stayed up well past their usual bedtime. Now, they make one night every two weeks their time together, and they take turns planning the evening out.

Final exams are looming - and he's lost. He's in trouble, especially in his economics course. The paper that's due in a few days is going nowhere. So he unplugs and turns off the devices and heads with his laptop to the academic resource center. And he listens to the tutor's advice not only on how to restructure his paper but change his whole approach to his studies.

It's been two months since she buried her husband. She's struggling; she has no idea what to do next. At church, she hears about a winter clothing drive. She goes home and sees her husband's slacks, suits, jackets and beautiful wool coat all still hanging in the closet. She pauses for a moment, and decides it's time to move on. And the first step on the journey is a trip to the church basement with a big donation to the clothing drive.

In his book *Sacred Fire: A Vision for a Deeper Human and Christian Community*, theologian Ronald Rolheiser writes about the two baptisms John speaks of in today's Gospel: "John's baptism is only a preparation for Jesus' baptism. What's John's baptism? It is a baptism of repentance, a realization of what we are doing wrong and a clear resolution to correct our bad behavior. What is Jesus' baptism? It is an entry into grace and community in such a way that empowers us internally to do what is impossible for us to do by our willpower alone." The couple, the student, and the widow all realize that something in their lives is not clicking and accept the need to change - John's baptism. Then they find the resolve and grace to bring about that change and take steps to make that change happen - Jesus' baptism. May this Advent season be a time for us to embrace John's baptism of repentance - realizing what is wrong or missing from our lives - so that we may immerse ourselves in Jesus' baptism of transforming reconciliation and peace.



"Joy to the World!"

Consider the story of one young man. He was often sick as a baby. He was always small, puny some would say. As a youth he was always frail and delicate. He was not able to play sports with the other boys his age. Eventually he entered the ministry. But his health was so fragile, he was unable to serve his growing congregation. Amazingly, he did not dwell on his troubles. In fact, his spirit soared. His only real complaint was the poor quality of the hymns of his day. He felt they did not convey hope and joy. Someone challenged him to write better ones. He did. He wrote over 600 hymns, most of them were hymns of praise. When his health collapsed completely in 1748, he left one of the most remarkable collections of hymns the world has ever known. His name was Isaac Watts. In a few weeks we will be singing one of his most famous hymns, Joy to the World! Isaac Watts discovered joy in his life because he knew that God would never desert him. He was able to live his life with all sorts of health problems, feeling close to God and Jesus. He had joy deep in his heart.

In medieval times, this day—the Third Sunday of Advent—was called Gaudete Sunday, as an equivalent to Laetare Sunday during Lent. As we pray today, we also rejoice that the Lord does not fail to show his power and might. We rejoice at the thought that Jesus is going to be reborn in our lives, deepening in us His gifts of love, mercy, forgiveness and the spirit of humble and sacrificial service during this Christmas season. During this season, let us joyfully share God's bountiful grace, forgiveness, and mercy with others.

What Jesus commanded John's disciples, he commands us as well: Go and tell others what you hear and see.

Parish Penance Service is Next Sunday

Our Parish Advent Penance Service will be next Sunday – December 22nd evening at 6:30 pm, with more priests present.

Why is it a good thing to make a good confession? Sam Guzman, a convert to Catholicism, and an author and editor of "The Catholic Gentleman" (a popular blog for Catholic men) writes about his experience of Confession. It is a gift he values because, "As a protestant, I never really knew if I was forgiven. Had I been really sorry enough? Had I prayed long enough and hard enough? ... The sacrament of penance changes all that." Then he goes on to enumerate three important reasons for receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

A new beginning, Concrete forgiveness and you receive graces. If interested to read his blog on this topic, go to: www.catholicexchange.com/reasons-go-confession

Reflect

About John's Preaching

Humorous newspaper columnist Dave Barry once made an interesting observation: "If there really is a God, who created the entire universe with all its glories," wrote Barry, "and He decides to deliver a message to humanity, He will not use, as his messenger, a person on cable TV with a bad hairstyle." Barry's probably right. I certainly would not look to a TV preacher—even one with a good hairstyle—to bring me an accurate depiction of God. But I have to ask what would Dave Barry do with John the Baptist? Bad hair wouldn't even begin to describe John's distinctive appearance. According to Matthew's Gospel, John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. (3:4) And when he preached, he outright insulted his congregation. He called them a brood of vipers! Imagine if I began my sermon by addressing you as snakes. "Listen up, you lizards!" Obviously John never read Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

John's central message: repentance leading to renewal of life: John preached fervently, urging his listeners to make preparations for the coming of the Messiah. Even though John's preaching was characterized by scathing criticism, his call for reform is still described by Luke as "the Good News," because the arrival of the Messiah will initiate a new reign of forgiveness, healing and salvation. The repentance which John preached called for a change in behavior and not just regret for the past. According to Scott Hahn "Repentance" translates a Greek word, *metanoia* (literally, "change of mind"). It means a radical life-change involving a two-fold "turning" - away from sin (see Ezekiel 3:19; 18:30) and toward God (see Sirach 17:20-21; Hosea 6:1). It requires "good fruits as evidence of our repentance" (see Luke 3:8). That's why John told the crowds, soldiers and tax collectors they must prove their Faith through works of charity, honesty and social justice.

DO YOU FEEL RUSHED? STRESSED? SAY THIS PRAYER:

Loving God, help me focus on a peaceful pace rather than a harried one. I will keep moving forward gently, not frantically. Help me let go of my need to be anxious, upset, and harried. Help me replace it with a need to be at peace and in harmony.

Pay it forward!

The film, *Pay It Forward*, (based on the novel by Catherine Ryan Hyde) has the same premise that underlies the source of the joy and happiness celebrated in today's liturgy. The film tells the story of a seventh grade teacher (Eugene Simonet) and his eleven-year-old student (Trevor). On the first day of class, the teacher puts this challenge on the blackboard: "Think of something new that will change the world, and then act on what you have thought." The idea captivates the boy, who lives with his single parent, an alcoholic mother. The boy attempts to put this idea into practice by helping people, who will, in turn, "pay it forward" by helping others. The boy draws a circle in his homework book and puts his name in the middle. From that circle, he extends three lines, at the end of which are three more circles. In the first circle he writes his mother's name. He will try to get her to give up her alcoholism. In the second circle he writes the name of a classmate who is being bullied by the larger boys in school. He will make it his duty to defend this fellow. In the third circle, he writes the name of his teacher, whom he will try to persuade to fall in love with his mother.

These are huge challenges for the boy. The film then shows the steep obstacles he faces in his attempt to improve his world. In the end, *Pay It Forward* inspires us to imagine the possibilities of making the world a better place, transforming one person at a time by a series of "random acts of kindness" and love. The movie teaches us that when someone does a good deed for us, we should "pay it forward" by making "an act of faith in the goodness of people." The net result is lasting peace and joy, the central theme of Advent third Sunday's readings.

"Always winter and never Christmas!"

In the second chapter of C.S. Lewis' book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, little Lucy stumbles through the back of a wardrobe into the imaginary country of Narnia. Although it's summer in England (where the wardrobe sits), it's winter in Narnia. Shivering in the cold, Lucy soon meets a faun, Mr. Tumnus, who tells her what wintertime is like in Narnia. The wintertime is perpetual, says Mr. Tumnus, and is the result of someone called the White Witch. "It's she who makes it always winter (here)," Tumnus says, "Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!" (2) What a wonderful description of a world without Christ: "Always winter and never Christmas . . ."



Pray

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



PLEASE COME JOIN THE MANY WHO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME WITH THE EUCHARISTIC LORD.

**OUR NEXT ADORATION WILL BE MONDAY EVENING,
DECEMBER 16, 2024 FROM 6 PM TO 8 PM.**

WHEN THE DEACON IS AVAILABLE, WE CONCLUDE ADORATION WITH A BENEDICTION.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO FOR ADORATION? YOU FALL IN LOVE! ULTIMATELY, YOU CAN'T HELP THIS ONE! WHEN YOU SPEND MORE TIME WITH AN OPEN HEART IN ADORATION AND JUST LET CHRIST LOVE YOU, THEN YOU'LL FALL IN LOVE TOO. THAT LOVE WILL DEFINE YOU AND ALLOW YOU TO BE YOURSELF.

“I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS.” (JOHN 10:10)



SIMBANG GABI 2024



This annual devotional 9 day novena will be celebrated in various parishes in the Diocese of Metuchen from December 15-23.

St Matthias Parish will host the 3rd night novena Mass on December 17 at 6:30 pm

For complete Simbang Gabi schedule and updates, please visit the Filipino Apostolate Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.diometuchenFA>

All are welcome to join this Simbang Gabi journey and experience the beautiful tradition in staying alert and focused on what Christmas is all about.

November Baptisms

The Catholic Community of St. Matthias welcomes the following children who were baptized in November. We support them with prayers and ask their parents to nurture them so they can grow to be faith-filled people of God and our parish community.

Ophelia Rose Abrantes

Liam Felix Crespo

Penelope Saige Hale

London Hale

Riley Elizabeth Puccio



OPLATEK – THE CHRISTMAS WAFER

The Oplatek (o-pwa-tek), Christmas Wafers, will be available in the parish office for you to take to share with your family for Christmas. The word Bethlehem means “House of Bread”. The breaking of the bread is a sign of charity, unity, and friendship. Religious family traditions and customs bring the truths of Faith into the home. One of these beautiful Christmas customs is the Christmas wafer. A Wafer bearing a simple design commemorative of Christ’s birth is broken by the head of the family and shared with everyone at the Christmas meal. With a simple prayer for God’s grace and the welfare of the present and absent members of the family, the head family member breaks the Wafer and distributes it, a piece to each one at the table. While doing so each member of the family is kissed and wished a joyful feast. The other family members then greet one another in the same way. All this brings to mind clearly our charity for one another, to seek salvation together. Family customs remind us that we seek and obtain salvation with the help of others at all times.

NEW JERSEY RIGHT TO LIFE RAFFLE WINNERS (Our parish raised \$1,000.00)

1st Prize - Volvo **Winning ticket# 08493** Matawan, NJ

2nd Prize - \$1,000.00 **Winning ticket# 10122** Old Bridge, NJ

3rd Prize - \$750.00 **Winning ticket# 14992** Lanoka Harbor, NJ

4th Prize - \$500.00 **Winning ticket# 03187** Blue Bell, PA

Learn



ST. MATTHIAS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM WORKERS NEEDED



St. Matthias School is in need of workers for our After School Program.

The hours are 2:30PM-6:00PM.

Please email **Mary Lynch**, mlynch@stmatthiasnj.org & **Tesh Barr**, tbarr@stmatthiasnj.org or call **732-828-1402** for more information.

Serve

SMYLE will be collecting the following items for Unity Square after all Masses from now until **December 15th**. The items needed are for men and women.



- Hats
- Scarves
- Gloves
- toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Small deodorants



All items should be marked "SMYLE" and left in the cry room.

The team will pick them up each weekend after Mass. **SMYLE meetings will be from 1:30-3:30.**

We will meet **TODAY, December 15th** in the cafeteria to sort and bag the items.

ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT



The Accompaniment Project is a grant-funded initiative of the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM).

This survey is for people of ALL ages - feel free to share with anyone!

Your responses will help us create and sustain engaging ways to encounter Christ and develop real relationships with anyone who wants to be accompanied on their journey searching for meaning, joy, and purpose in their life. Thanks for taking time to tell us what you think. **YOU MATTER !!**

Giving Tree



This is the **last weekend** to drop off gifts for the Giving Tree located at the front of the Church. Gifts will be collected at all Masses this weekend December 14th/15th. They can be dropped off at the Church after Masses and also on Sunday until 2:00 PM in the cafeteria. When returning the gifts, **please be sure to secure the ornaments on the outside of the packages**. Please note,

ALL GIFTS MUST BE RETURNED TODAY, DECEMBER 15TH to be distributed on time.

St. Matthias has always been very generous and supportive of these organizations and we thank you once again for your generosity. Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

As always, we could use elves to move gifts to the school after Masses and a few drivers for deliveries the mornings of December 9th and 16th after the 8:00 AM Mass. Should you have any questions and/or would like to volunteer to help, please contact

Joanne Diana at (732)322-6270 or j-diana@comcast.net.

Give (and Receive!)

| Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025 | | | | Last Year's Total |
|---|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Current Month | In-Pew/Mail | Parish Giving | Weekly Total | Weekly Total |
| Week 22 - Dec. 1, 2024 | \$12,927.55 | \$9,940.50 | \$22,868.05 | \$27,688.50 |
| Week 23 - Dec. 8, 2024 | \$15,032.00 | \$25,027.00 | \$40,059.00 | \$33,617.75 |
| Week 24 - Dec. 15, 2024 | | | | \$22,252.35 |
| Week 25 - Dec. 22, 2024 | | | | \$17,325.05 |
| Week 26 - Dec. 29, 2024 | | | | \$27,574.25 |
| | | | Month-to-date Total | December Total Last Year |
| | | | \$62,927.05 | \$128,457.90 |
| | | | Current Year-to-date Total | Year-to-date as of December 31, 2023 |
| | | | \$575,606.01 | \$579,954.57 |

REMINDER!

When we contribute via check, the Chase Bank requires that the checks must be made out to
“Church of St. Matthias.”
 No other variation of this designation will be acceptable due to greater security controls.

Stewardship Reflection December 15, 2024
3rd Sunday of Advent

Reflexiónese – 15 de diciembre de 2024
3^{er} Domingo de Adviento

“Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.” (PHILIPPIANS 4:6)

“No se preocupen por nada, más bien pídanle al Señor lo que necesiten y agradézcane siempre.” (FILIPENSES 4:6)

St. Paul reminds us that God is an abundant God – He is the ultimate giver of gifts. He promises to give us all that we need. Remember, that we are created in God’s image and likeness. We, too, are made to be generous with all of our gifts as well. Placing our trust in God frees us from being a slave to possessions. It allows us to share ourselves and our goods with others gratefully and generously.

San Pablo nos recuerda que Dios es un Dios abundante - Él es el máximo dador de dones. El promete darnos todo lo que necesitemos. Recuerde, fuimos creados a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Nosotros también, fuimos hechos para ser generosos con todos nuestros dones. Poner nuestra confianza en Dios nos libera de la esclavitud de los bienes materiales. Eso nos permite compartimos a nosotros mismos y a nuestros bienes con los demás agradecida y generosamente.

GIVING TUESDAY IS BACK!

GivingTuesday is an opportunity for people to give back in many different ways: through acts of kindness, gifts of voice, time, talent, or treasure. Our parish of St. Matthias has been blessed with generous parishioners who always responded joyfully to every need of our community. Please consider donating to St. Matthias Church as one of your GivingTuesday contributions. Every contribution no matter how small goes towards making improvements to our church. Thank you for your goodness.



Scan the QR code or visit: www.stmatthias.net/givingtuesday/

Connecting to Our Local Community



OPENING MASS FOR THE HOLY YEAR 2025

Pope Francis has declared 2025 to be a Holy Year of Jubilee for the Catholic Church, an event that takes place once every 25 years. Bishop James F. Checchio, in union with his brother Bishops around the world, will celebrate the Opening Mass for the Holy Year 2025 on the Solemnity of the Holy Family, **Saturday, December 27 at 5 p.m.** at the Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi in Metuchen, NJ. All are welcome; no ticket required.

THE BODY OF CHRIST CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP

St. Francis Cathedral 32 Elm St., Metuchen, NJ 08840

Thursdays at 8:00PM on Zoom & in person, located in the building where Eucharist Adoration is held.

Includes: Talks, Bible Readings, Music & Fellowship.

Contact Pamela Gendlek at 732-548-0100 or email her at info@stfranciscathedral.org, before going in case its been cancelled for any reason.



YEAR END DAY OF PRAYER

Tuesday, December 31 from 9:30am-3pm

Spend this last day of the year reflecting on the many gifts God has bestowed on you. Day begins and ends with communal prayer. Bring a bag lunch. In Person Program.

\$20-\$30 as you are able

Registration for all offerings is **required 10 days in advance** to avoid the program being cancelled.

You can register and pay for any program at www.msmhope.org.



HEARING ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE IN OUR CHURCH

Did you know that we have a hearing assistance listening system in our Church? Part of the system includes portable receivers which are available to be borrowed and returned following Mass. They are located in the vesting sacristy in our church. If you are interested in testing the system, please speak to any of our priests or deacons to pick the receiver up before Mass and to return it after Mass.

Parish Leadership

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Parish Pastoral Council: Co-Chairs: Stephen Busono sbusono@gmail.com Bill Isele t33sm@aol.com | Co-Secretaries: Didi Molano Sheila Tartaglia Teresa Yannotta Joe Percoco | Miles London Fr. Lancelot McGrath, Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio Trustees: Pearl Scott Marge Richards | Parish Finance Council: Kester Hector, Chair Finance Council @stmatthias.net Carmen Driz-Melilli Barry Dusault Joan Pritchard | Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, Ex-Officio Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio |
|--|---|---|--|--|

About St. Matthias (please contact the staff members on the cover for up-to-date information)

Parish Registration — Welcome to St. Matthias! Please register on our website. www.stmatthias.net/join-us, or visit the Parish Office.

Marriage — Registered parishioners should contact the parish office a year before the desired wedding date.

Baptism — Baptismal Preparation Sessions are held four times a year for registered parishioners. Please contact the parish office before the baby is born. The sacrament of Baptism is celebrated on the second and fourth Sunday of each month, except during Lent.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) - If you are interested in becoming a Catholic or completing the Sacraments of Initiation--Baptism/Confirmation/Eucharist, please call the Parish Office.



St. Matthias School is a PreK3 through 8th grade school rooted in faith, inspired by love, and dedicated to academic excellence. Before and After School Care Programs are available. Come visit! Contact 732-828-1402 to schedule a tour.



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Event Dates

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
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| November 5 | November 12 |
| November 19 | December 3 |
| December 10 | |

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