



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, 10 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,
7:45 AM -3:30 PM

For all Parish emails, add @stmatthias.net

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

Deacon Ron Caimi, **Senior Deacon**
Kelly Counts, **Receptionist, kcounts**
Deacon Russell Demkovitz, **rdemkovitz**
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ngodet

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Julio Montero, **Maintenance Supervisor**
Dolores R. Nann, **Pastoral Associate for**
Faith Formation, dnann

Vinnie Natale, **Bookkeeper, vnatale**
Silvia Nizama, **Housekeeper**

Deacon John Radvanski, **deaconjohn**
Joan Best Seamon, **Pastoral Associate for**
Music Ministry, jseamon

Sr. Marie Therese Sherwood, **OSF, Pastoral**
Assoc. for Social Concerns, msherwood

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

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023
3rd Sunday of Advent

TODAY
IS THE LAST DAY
TO DROP OFF
GIFTS FOR THE
GIVING TREE
DETAILS ON PAGE 7



This years
CHRISTMAS
SCHEDULE
can be found
on page 8



Blessings &
Congratulations
Fr. Abraham
on the

40th Anniversary
of your
Ordination!

1983 - 2023



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.

Sunday, Dec 17, 2023 3rd Sunday of Advent

7:30AM Giving Tree Sorting Old Kindergarten Rm
 8:00AM Mass Church
 10:00AM Mass Church
 12:00PM Mass Church

Monday, Dec 18, 2023 St. Flannon, Monk

8:00AM Mass/Miraculous Medal Novena Church
 6:00PM Eucharist Adoration Church

Tuesday, Dec 19, 2023 St. Anastasius I, Pope

8:00AM Mass Church
 6:00PM Simbang Gabi Mass Church
 6:30PM SMS Multi-sport Club Cafeteria
 6:30 PM SMS : SAC Mtg. de Porres Rm

Wednesday, Dec 20, 2023 St. Dominic of Silor, Monk

8:00AM Mass, St. Joseph Novena Church
 9:30AM Prayer Group 1 Holy Spirit de Porres Rm
 7:30PM Folk Grp Rehearsal Church
 7:30PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal Church

Thursday, Dec 21, 2023 St. Peter Canisius, Religious and Doctor

8:00AM Mass Church
 10:00AM Prayer Shawl Ministry Ruiz Rm
 11:30AM SMS 4th Gr. Christmas Prayer Svc. Church
 3:30PM Children's Choir Gr. 3 & 4 Church
 4:00PM Children's Choir Gr. 5-8 Church
 7:30PM Sunday 10AM Choir Rehearsal Church

Friday, Dec 22, 2023 Sts. Chaeremon, Ischyryon & Company, Martyrs

SMS Closed—Christmas Break

8:00AM Mass Church

Saturday, Dec 23, 2023 St. John of Kenty, Priest

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

Sunday, Dec 24, 2023 4th Sunday of Advent Christmas Eve

8:00AM Mass Church
 4:00PM Christmas Eve Vigil Mass Church
 4:00PM Christmas Eve Vigil Mass Cafeteria
 6:30PM Christmas Eve Vigil Mass Church
 11:59PM Midnight Mass Christmas Eve 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.



Dear Friends,

Today marks a significant milestone in my life. I was ordained a priest on December 17, 1983 in my home parish in the southern state of Kerala, India. As I looked for an apt verse as a motto for my priestly life, I was fascinated by a poem of Rabindranath Tagore, a famous Indian Nobel Laureate, poet, playwright, composer, philosopher, social reformer and educationist. It was titled: *Give Me the Strength!* Here's the poem:

*This is my prayer to thee, my lord,
 Strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart
 Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.
 Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service.
 Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees
 before insolent might.
 Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles.*

And give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love. The motto I chose was a line from that poem: *“Lord, give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service.”* As I look back at the 40 years of my priestly life, I can honestly say that I have tried my best to live this motto, despite my own human frailties and weaknesses. I'm grateful to our loving God who kept me going in all situations of my life and ministry. I was blessed to be born into a wonderful family. The faith of my parents and the role model I saw in the priests who served in our parish, planted the seeds of vocation to priesthood in my heart. Though sad to leave my parents and siblings as a teenager, I joined the seminary to become a missionary priest in the north-east of India, some 2500 miles away from home. I am grateful to all the people who came into my life, too many to name or count. I am grateful to them for their love, support, and encouragement, as I believe I too have given the same to them when they needed.

Thank you for the love, acceptance, and support I received and continue to receive from you, the people of God of St. Matthias. Thank you for your constant prayers that kept me going despite the challenges I faced. Please continue to support me with your prayers. We shall be relentless in our efforts to bring the mission of Jesus Christ to our community and to all around us. A group of our parishioners volunteered to form a Celebration Committee and put in a lot of hard work to plan and execute this celebration today. I am truly indebted to them for their love and sacrifice.

It is so providential that this celebration falls on the third Sunday of Advent which is known as 'Gaudete' Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word meaning "rejoice." This Sunday is so named because "Rejoice" is the first word in the entrance antiphon for today's Mass taken from Philippians 4:4,5: *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near.”* The third candle we light on our Advent wreath is of pink color, a joyful reminder that our salvation is near. Let us celebrate together the Lord's coming into our hearts.

Your brother in Christ,
 Fr. Abraham Orapankal

Readings for the Week

Monday, December 18, 2023 Jer 23:5-8 Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 1:18-25

Tuesday, December 19, 2023 Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17 Lk 1:5-25

Wednesday, December 20, 2023 Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 Lk 1:26-38

Thursday, December 21, 2023 Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 Lk 1:39-45

Friday, December 22, 2023 1 Sm 1:24-28 1 Sam 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd Lk 1:46-56

Saturday, December 23, 2023 Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 and 14 Lk 1:57-66

Sunday, December 24, 2023 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 Rom 16:25-27 Lk 1:26-38



Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, Dec 16	5:00PM	Repose of the Soul of Marie DeFeo, by Daughter, Lisa
Sunday, Dec 17	8:00AM	Marleen LaBeste, by The Tibay Family
	10:00AM	Intention of Parishioners
	12:00PM	Herman Mens, by Joann & Robert
Monday, Dec 18	8:00AM	In Thanksgiving of Alexander Mallare, by Sister
Tuesday, Dec 19	8:00AM	Maria Rosario Ligot, by Reena & Annabelle
Wednesday, Dec 20	8:00AM	Dorothy Gonzalez, by Karen Francis
Thursday, Dec 21	8:00AM	Soledad Lazaro, by John & Marivic Bulich
Friday, Dec 22	8:00AM	Ester Acaling, by The Derikito Family
Saturday, Dec 23	5:00PM	Joseph & Lucy Lyons, by Daughter
Sunday, Dec 24	10:00AM	Intention of Parishioners
Church	4:00PM	Norman & Michele Siebenlist, by Eileen
Cafeteria	4:00PM	Deceased Members of the Best & Seamon Families, by Joan & Terry Seamon
	6:30PM	Sally & Paul Hughes, by The Family
	12:00AM	Toby Moreno, by A Friend

Pray for those who are sick...

Beth & Jay Adams

Olga Marie Bando

Carolyn Banghart

Samantha Bellouny

Tara Capatosto

Elizabeth Card

Kyle Davidson

Lisa DeFeo

Zenon DeGuzman

Marlene DiMaggio

Vivian Dong

Hattie Evans

Heinley Gaspard

Claudia Gemgnani

Emma Gergely

Gerry & Jack Gernert

Marie Godet

Shelly Greene

Linda Hartong

Sloopy & PJ Hoffman

Marilyn Horvath

Amanda Isele

Baby Elaine Isele

Nick Isele

Bill Johnson

Renée Jolly

Bill Kelleher

Betsy Kondrat

Kathy Langenbacher

Armando D. Liban

Mary Lou Litrakis

John Litrakis

Denis Loboda

Aries Magali

Al Maglio

Susan, King & Tosh

Manansala

Alexandra Marquez

Christine Matthews

Ann McElwee

Jessica Marie Merrick

Gail Miranda

Danny Ongchango

Robert Pellegrino

Robert Pietrowiak

Randolff Pinard

Valerie Polci

Kim Price

Denise Pultrio

Doris Regan

Gabriel Rivera

Arina Robinson

Maria Schwenzer

Amy Shepp

Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF

Sr. Bernadine Marie

Stemnock

Jacqueline Taylor

Anita Vance

Eileen Weber

Nancy Whelan

Ginette Zamor

Anne Zando

And for all who are ill, homebound, elderly, in nursing care, or living with chronic illness, we pray.

Pray for those who have died...

— "His mercy endures forever." Chronicles

John Sudia,

Martin Slyman

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



Christian home!: After the Baptism of his baby brother in Church one Sunday, little Johnny sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That priest said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys!" Father got the message and they began to go to Church regularly... Needless to say, the family had a bit of catching up to do.!" 😊

Message on the outside sign of a Church: "We welcome all denominations — \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100." 😊

What building in New York has the most stories?
The public library! 😊

What stays in the corner yet can travel all over the world? A stamp. 😊

"Johnny, why did you kick your brother in the stomach?" exclaimed the angry mother. "It was pure accident, Mama. He turned around." 😊

You know that story about the four young monks who take a vow of silence? They're sitting in the meditation hall, when one of them complains out loud about something. Then the second one says "be quiet!" then the third one says, "you are both talking!" then the last one says, proudly, "I am the only one who has not spoken!" 😊



Parenting Tune-Up

Where does God live? Ask your child. Perhaps each of you can draw a picture of God's home. Is God in the sky, in nature, inside you, even in your enemy? YES. Help your children recognize God as an omnipresent Holy Spirit who makes everything they see, hear, and touch sacred. You too!

Marriage Tune-Up



Ways to Turn Your Beloved Off #6 - Let the busyness of Christmas preparations blind you to the gift of your relationship. Don't let shopping or decorating or worries keep you from treasuring the presence of your beloved.

Why is today "GAUDETE SUNDAY?"

Today is called "*Gaudete Sunday*" because today's Mass (in its Latin, pre-Vatican II 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. (By the way, we have a similar break--*Laetare Sunday*-- during the Lenten season). 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 that of encouraging joy as we meet our need for 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 Isaiah, Mary and John the Baptizer all bear joyful witness to what God has done and will do for His people.

Are you a Happy Christian?

There is a story told about a man from Louisville, Kentucky, who had to travel to St. Louis on business. This was years ago when Christians kept Sunday as a very special day. For this man, "keeping the Sabbath," also meant not riding the trains on Sunday. Thus, after he finished his business late Saturday night, he had to stay over in St. Louis until the following Monday morning. On Sunday morning, he left the hotel looking for a place to worship. The streets were quite deserted, but finally he saw a police officer and asked him for directions to the nearest Church. The stranger thanked the police officer for the information and was about to walk off when he turned and asked the police officer: "Why have you recommended that particular Church? It looks like a Catholic Church. There must be several Churches nearby that you could have recommended." The police officer smiled and replied: "I'm not a Church man myself, but the people who come out of that Church are the happiest looking Church-people in St. Louis and they claim that they have received Jesus and they are happily taking him to their homes. I thought that would be the kind of Church you would like to attend." The Scripture for today reminds us that every Sunday in every Christian church must be a *Gaudete Sunday* or "Rejoice Sunday."

Advent Wreath Lighting at Home, 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.*



A gift of light and life

[John came] to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him . . . “I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord.” John 1: 6-8, 19-28



When nine-year-old Tae Butler was a cancer patient at UCLA Mattel Children’s Hospital, Dr. Ted Moore was her oncologist. During one of Tae’s grueling four-to-six-week hospital stays for leukemia, Dr. Moore gave her a gift that changed her life: his stethoscope.

“He taught me how to use the stethoscope to listen to the heart,” Tea recalls. “Instead of just coming in, listening and leaving, he was like, ‘Do you want to try?’ Hearing a heartbeat is so cool, especially as a kid. I always felt that he made sure that I understood what was happening.”

It was during these talks with Dr. Moore that she decided to follow his example and become a pediatric oncologist. “He nurtured my creativity and curiosity,” she says, “and that resulted in me choosing this path.”

Seventeen years later — and cancer free — Tea, now 26, is a fourth-year medical student at UCLA — and this summer she got to work as a primary intern with the doctor who saved her life. “It is a full-circle moment,” Tae says. “To see my name next to his on the patient list . . .” The moment is just as rewarding for Dr. Moore. “I see someone who has taken what could have been one of the worst tragedies and turned it into something absolutely incredible,” he says. “She has the ability to understand and connect with patients. “A person like Tae only comes around once every few years. You try to keep them because you want to work with the best.” And Tea — soon to be Doctor Butler — still keeps the stethoscope he gave her close by.

“I hang it above my desk to remind me, ‘This is what we’re working for, this is our why,’” she says. “It fuels me, even through hard times.” [People.com, August 24, 2023.]

In this season of gift-giving, Christmas calls us to give as God gives: that the most meaningful gifts we give are the gifts of affirmation, enablement, reconciliation and hope. A doctor’s gift of his stethoscope to his young cancer patient is just such a gift. In this Advent season and in every season of the new year, may we bring Christ to birth in the “gifts” of light and hope we are able to humbly and lovingly give to others.

Joy comes from Love

St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) and Advent joy:

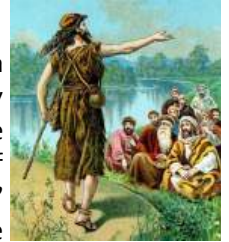
Through her ministry in Jesus' name, Mother Teresa brought untold blessings and joy to the poor who lay unattended and forgotten on our streets. When asked the source of her joy, Mother Teresa replied: "Joy is prayer – joy is strength – joy is love – joy is a net of love. . . A joyful heart is the normal result of a heart burning with love . . . loving as He loves, helping as He helps, giving as He gives, serving as He serves, rescuing as He rescues, being with Him twenty-four hours, touching Him in His distressing disguise." (Malcolm Muggeridge, *Something Beautiful for God*, Harper and Row, San Francisco: 1971). When Advent arrived every year, Mother Teresa's life, continued to witness the joy which is true hallmark of every Christian and the rightful inheritance of all the poor.



Let St. Boniface's words be a blessing upon our family's Christmas tree this holiday season. May our Christmas trees, like Boniface's "home tree," be our first planting this new year of a new attitude and vision of kindness, compassion and reconciliation; may its lights continue to illuminate the "highway" we can create for the God's Christ to enter homes and hearts in every season of every year.

"Why are you outside?"

Henry David Thoreau was an American writer who authored the renowned essay "Civil Disobedience." He championed the freedom of the individual over the law of the land. He distinguished between "law" and "right." He wrote: "What the majority passes is the 'law' and what the individual conscience sees is the 'right', and what matters most is the 'right' and not the 'law'." Once, Thoreau was imprisoned for a night. He had refused to pay the poll-tax as a protest against the government's support of slavery and its unjust war against Mexico, presumably in support of slave trade intentions. When he was arrested, he hoped that some of his friends would follow his example and fill the jails, and in this way persuade the government to change its stance on the issue of slavery. In this he was disappointed. Not only did his friends not join him, one friend paid the tax on his behalf and got him released the very next day. When he was in the prison, Emerson, another American writer, came to visit him. He said to Thoreau: "Thoreau, Thoreau, why are you inside (jail)?" And Thoreau replied, "Emerson, Emerson, why are you outside?" Thoreau was a great lover of truth. He suffered because he spoke and stood for truth. Emerson said in his obituary of Thoreau, "He was a great speaker and actor of truth."



"Blessed tree of light and kindness"



Many wonderful stories and legends surround the tradition of the Christmas tree. One such legend, from Germany, recounts the story of St. Boniface, the eight-century English monk who brought the Gospel to Germany. In one version of the story, on the night of December 24, Boniface and his monks came upon a giant oak tree, sacred to the pagan God Odin. Each year on the darkest night of the year, worshippers would gather at this sacred tree to sacrifice a young child to Odin. The people believed that the child would travel to Valhalla and present the people's praise and prayers to Odin.

Boniface was horrified. According to the legend, Boniface seized an axe and, with one blow, brought down the giant oak. The people were terrified, certain that the gods would strike Boniface dead. Boniface was prepared to pay with his life for felling the sacred tree. But nothing happened. In that moment, the worshipers realized that their gods were powerless, nonexistent.

Boniface then began to preach the Gospel of God's coming as a child. He then pointed to a nearby fir tree. "This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight. It is the wood of peace. It is the sign of endless life, for its leaves are ever green. See how it points to heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christ Child; gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your own homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness."

The German tribes embraced Boniface's words that Christmas Eve and began decorating their homes with evergreen, which became a symbol of the constant love of God for them in every season.

Today's Gospel presents the frankness and humility of John the Baptist. John's humility: The evangelist John presents John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3, "a voice in the desert" calling for Israelites to prepare a way for the coming of Jesus. John in his Gospel takes special care to stress the fact that Jesus surpasses John the Baptist. The Baptizer declares: "I am baptizing only with water; but there is One among you--you don't recognize him--and I am not worthy to untie the straps of his shoes." There was a Rabbinic saying which stated that a disciple might do for his master anything that a servant did, except only to untie his sandals. That was too menial a service for even a disciple to render. So John said: "One is coming whose slave I am not fit to be." John's mission was only to "prepare the way." Any greatness he possessed came from the greatness of the one whose coming he foretold. John is thus the great example of the man prepared to obliterate himself for Jesus. He only pointed the way to Christ.

From the St. Matthias Vocations Ministry



CONGRATULATIONS FATHER ABRAHAM!

The Saint Matthias Vocations Ministry Team congratulates Father Abraham on the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the Priesthood and thanks him for his faithful commitment to his priestly vocation.



Today we honor Father Abraham as an exemplar of how one responds to God's call, embraces one's vocation, and helps build a world that reflects God's love. We thank God for allowing Father Abraham to be with us here at St. Matthias these past five years, shepherding us, instructing us, inspiring us, and - most importantly - helping us grow closer to God.

God calls each of us to a particular vocation. Father Abraham and so many other Catholic priests are called to a very particular and special vocation, one that is graced with sacred authority and power, and that shares in the mission entrusted to the very first apostles - to build up the church and the people of God.

Earlier this year Bishop Checcio announced a Diocesan-wide effort to promote priestly vocations. All parishes have been asked to join this effort. The Saint Matthias Vocations Ministry Team will be focusing on this over the next year. You will be hearing a lot about it in the near future. We will need your help.

All Catholics are encouraged to prayerfully ask God for more priests, deacons, and consecrated men and women, so that they may be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of vocation. We can encourage our youth to consider the ordained and consecrated life and support and counsel those who hear this call from God.

We can always turn to God in our need, so we pray: *Lord, we know the harvest is rich, but workers are scarce. We believe that you continue to call men and women to do your work in this world as priests, deacons, and religious. We pray that these men and women may open their hearts to your will and have the courage to go where you lead. Through Christ our Lord. Amen* (Prayer for Vocations).

Once again, we offer Father Abraham a well-deserved congratulations and our heartfelt thanks. We wish Father Abraham all of God's blessings, and we pray for Father Abraham as he continues his priestly duties in service to God and all of us.

For more information on the Saint Matthias Vocations Ministry, please contact Joe Percoco at [percoco™ rutgers.edu](mailto:percoco@rutgers.edu).

Serve

Oplatek Christmas Wafers

The Christmas tradition, of breaking the **Oplatek** wafer before the Christmas Eve dinner and sharing it with those around the table, began in Poland in the 10th century.

We currently have Oplatek wafers available in the Parish Office during regular hours for parishioners to pick up if they would like to celebrate this tradition.



The Giving Tree



This weekend marks the last for the Giving Tree. The tree will remain at the front of the Church until **Sunday, December 17th**. We invite you to choose any remaining ornaments and purchase some/all of the suggested items. If you prefer to ship your gift directly, this is the last chance to visit the parish website www.stmatthias.net to access the Amazon link to the Great Expectations Wish List.

ALL GIFTS are due back this weekend, December 16th and 17th. Please place them in the Church after Mass or deliver them to breezeway area Sunday between 8:00 AM and 1:00 PM. **All gifts are due back no later than 2:00 PM TODAY.** Once again, please be sure to **SECURE THE ORNAMENTS TO THE PACKAGES**. Without the tags we have no way of knowing where the gifts are going.

Thank you for being a part of this tradition and bringing a little joy to our less fortunate brothers and sisters. The St. Matthias community has always been generous, thank you once again.

Merry Christmas!

Pray

CHRISTMAS SEASON MASS SCHEDULE 2023-2024

Changes/Updates? Check www.stmatthias.net



Saturday, December 23

5:00pm

Sunday, December 24

8:00 am

Sunday, December 24 Christmas Eve

4:00pm (church)

4:00pm (cafeteria) 6:30pm (church)

12:00 Midnight (church)

Monday, December 25 Christmas Day

10:00am and 12:00 Noon

Feast of the Holy Family

Saturday, December 30

5:00 pm

Sunday, December 31

8:00 am, 10:00 am & 12:00 noon

Solemnity of Mary Mother of God

Monday, January 1

10:00 am

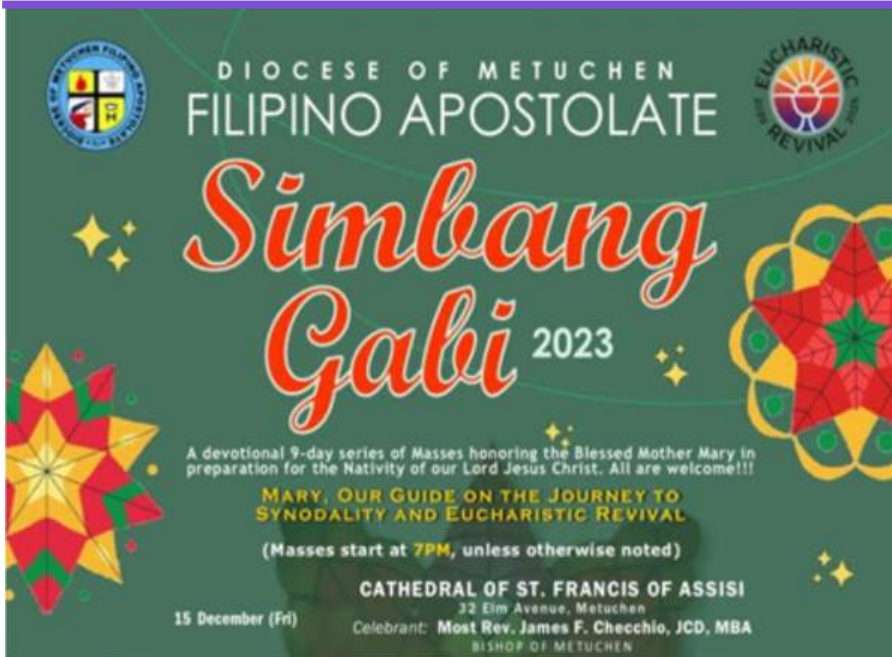
Epiphany of the Lord

Saturday, January 6

5:00pm

Sunday, January 7

8:00 am, 10:00 am & 12:00 noon



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN
FILIPINO APOSTOLATE

Simbang Gabi 2023

A devotional 9-day series of Masses honoring the Blessed Mother Mary in preparation for the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. All are welcome!!!

MARY, OUR GUIDE ON THE JOURNEY TO SYNODALITY AND EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL

(Masses start at 7PM, unless otherwise noted)

15 December (Fri)

CATHEDRAL OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
32 Elm Avenue, Metuchen
Celebrant: Most Rev. James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
BISHOP OF METUCHEN

**The Simbang Gabi
Mass at
St. Matthias
will be on
December 19th
at 6:00PM.**

ALL ARE WELCOME !

**ADORATION
OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**



**PLEASE COME JOIN THE MANY WHO SPEND SOME
QUIET TIME WITH THE EUCHARISTIC LORD.
OUR NEXT ADORATION WILL BE THIS
MONDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 18, 2023
FROM 6 PM TO 8 PM.**

Learn



St. Matthias School is looking for help in the following areas:

- After School Program (Paid Position)
- Substitute Teachers (\$95 a day)
- School Advisory Council (Finance Volunteer)
- Athletic Association (Directors/Board Member Volunteers)
- School Finance Members (Volunteers)
- Marketing (Stipend)

Please email **Mrs. Mary Lynch**, Principal at mlynch@stmatthiasnj.org for more information.



Give (and Receive)



IF YOU HAVE NOT SIGNED UP WITH PARISH GIVING...

Most of our contributing parishioners have signed up with our online Parish Giving Program. That has been a big help to the parish in so many ways. If you are one of the few who have not, here's why it is helpful to you and important for St. Matthias:

Parish Giving offers secure flexible online giving for our parishioners who would like to make their donations online using a credit card or bank transfer. You never have to bring cash or checks to church. Giving electronically also helps the church save money and plan the budget. If you want to simplify your life, scan the QR code or go to our website www.stmatthias.net and click on the Parish Giving Link under 'Give'. Parish Giving offers you complete control over your account to change your giving as needed. You have the benefit to generate a giving report and easily choose the specific collections you wish to support. We thank you for your support which enables St. Matthias to minister to the community.

A LETTER FROM OUR ST. VINCENT DEPAUL SOCIETY MINISTRY — *Be the Light*

Elisa Medrano and I met a man in need of help in the Wawa parking lot (27 and Cozzens Lane). He left his partner, 13-yo son and 6-yo daughter at home in the dark. PSEG had turned off their power due to insufficient payments. Three days before the man called the Saint Vincent de Paul (SVDP) HELPLINE asking for assistance because his PSEG service was off for non-payment. The man works as a delivery driver and his employer reduced his work hours, so he was not bringing in enough to cover both rent and utility bills.

Early the next day, I called PSEG credit and billing, introducing myself as a SVDP worker from Saint Matthias, intending to ask what minimum payment amount they would require to restore service. The PSEG representative was empathetic towards SVDP because his mother had been active in this very Saint Matthias ministry.

We negotiated a reasonable turn-on amount of \$800. Our SVDP treasurer was able to authorize an electronic payment to this man's account. Voila – there was light. The man called me with thanks.

Please pray for this neighbor in Franklin. He has applied for a second job and his partner has tried to arrange childcare so she could work as a caregiver. Together they should be able to meet future family expenses.

Our ministry and those we serve are grateful to the Saint Matthias parishioners who support us with donations given through the poor boxes, through Parish Giving and in contribution envelopes. You are the LIGHT.

- **Peggy Joyce**, St Vincent de Paul Society at St Matthias

Give (and Receive)

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023				Last Year's Total
Current Month	In-Pew/Mail	Parish Giving	Weekly Total	Weekly Total
Week 23 - Dec. 3, 2023	\$11,088.00	\$16,600.50	\$27,688.50	\$31,740.25
Week 24 - Dec. 10, 2023	\$9,084.00	\$24,533.75	\$33,617.75	\$38,685.75
Week 25 - Dec. 17, 2023			\$0.00	\$22,959.25
Week 26 - Dec. 24, 2023			\$0.00	\$64,137.25
* Christmas and Sunday Collections Combined for 2023			Month-to-date Total	Month-to-date Total
Immaculate Conception: \$2,076.00			\$61,306.25	\$157,522.50
Retirement Fund for Religious: \$4,845.00			Current Year-to-date	Current Year-to-date
			\$1,975,743.00	\$2,029,108.56

Stewardship Reflection December 17, 2023 Third Sunday of Advent

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. “Rejoice always” means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. “Pray constantly” means prayer should be a running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. “Give thanks in all circumstances” means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.

Reflexiónese 17 de diciembre 2023 3° Domingo de Adviento

“Estén siempre contentos. Oren sin cesar. Den gracias en todas las circunstancias, porque esa es la voluntad de Dios para ustedes como creyentes en Jesucristo.” - 1 TESALONICENSES 5:16-18

Esta lectura de las escrituras resume a la Corresponsabilidad. “Estén siempre contentos” quiere decir colocar su confianza en el Señor; Él proveerá para todas nuestras necesidades. “Orar constantemente” significa que la oración debe ser una conversación fluida con Dios a través de todo el día, todos los días. “De gracias en todas las circunstancias” quiere decir dar gracias aún en las malas situaciones, agradezca siempre a Dios. Sufrir un poco ayuda a construir empatía con los demás en situaciones similares, y muestra nuestra dependencia de Dios.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The parish office is in need of volunteers Monday - Friday mornings.
If you have some free time, please contact Mary Pat in the parish office, (732) 828-1400.
Thank you for all you do for St. Matthias.

Parish Pastoral Council: Co-Chairs: Frank Rees Frees814@gmail.com Marilyn Wegg mcw-wam@comcast.net	Co-Secretaries: Stephen Busono sbusono@gmail.com Bill Isele t33sm@aol.com Al Drabnis Didi Molano	Sheila Tartaglia 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 Gwen Orlowski	Audrey Francis Joan Pritchard Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, Ex-Officio Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio
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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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