



St. Matthias Parish Office:
 Open Mon-Thu: 8:30-5:00PM; Fri: 8:30-4PM
 168 JFK Boulevard, Somerset, NJ 08873
 732-828-1400, fax: 732-828-0866
www.stmatthias.net

Mass Schedule (in person):
 Sat - 5PM, Sun - 8, 10 AM & 12 noon
 M/T/W/Th/F at 8:00AM
 And 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

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THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS

SUNDAY, DEC 19, 2021 – Fourth Sunday of Advent



Advent Reconciliation during Holy Hour

Advent Reconciliation during Holy Hour is **tonight** at **6:30PM to 8:00PM** in the church. Everyone is welcome.

Visit Christmas Trees & Nativity

They will be lit nightly from 6 pm till Midnight. We are grateful to all who have sponsored a tree and our many volunteers who helped to set them up. If you sponsored a tree, you may find its location on our website at: www.stmatthias.net/treedirectory, or you may scan the following code:



Our Nativity and Tree display is open to the public/visitors and we welcome everyone to bring your family and friends. If you would like to make a donation, we invite you to text **TREEDISPLAY to 44-321** May this Christmas Season bring you many blessings!

A Christmas Prayer

Not gold, nor myrrh, nor even frankincense would I have for you this season, but simple gifts, the ones that are hardest to find, the ones that are perfect, even for those who have everything (if such there be).

I would (if I could) have for you the gift of courage, the strength to face the gauntlets only you can name, and the firmness in your heart to know that you (yes, you!) can be a bearer of the quiet dignity that is the human glorified.

I would (if by my intention I could make it happen) have for you the gift of connection, the sense of standing on the hinge of time, touching past and future standing with certainty that you (yes, you!) are the point where it all comes

together.

I would (if wishing could make it so) have for you the gift of community, a nucleus of love and challenge, to convince you in your soul that you (yes, you!) are a source of light in a world too long believing in the dark.

Not gold, nor myrrh, nor even frankincense, would I have for you this season, but simple gifts, the ones that are hardest to find, the ones that are perfect, even for those who have everything (if such there be).

- Rev. Maureen Killoran,
www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/advent-and-christmas-prayers



If you shop on Amazon, please help us by starting at:
www.stmatthias.net/Amazon

This Week at St. Matthias

Masses are celebrated in-person and also livestreamed on our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ](https://www.youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ)

The Church is open for individual prayer

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

Sunday Dec 19, 2021 4th Sunday of Advent

8:00AM Mass Church
10:00AM Mass Church
12:00PM Mass Church
6:30PM Advent Reconciliation & Holy Hour Church

Monday, Dec 20, 2021

8:00AM Mass Church
8:30AM Miraculous Medal Novena Church

Tuesday, Dec 21, 2021 St. Peter Canisius, Religious

8:00AM Daily Mass Church
9:00AM SMS Prayer Service Church

Wednesday, Dec 22, 2021

SMS Dismissal—12:15PM
HSA Event All Day—Santa

8:00AM Mass Church
9:30AM Holy Spirit Prayer Grp. de Porres Rm
7:30PM Folk Grp. Rehearsal Church

Thursday, Dec 23, 2021, St. John of Kanty, Priest & Professor

SMS on Christmas Break

8:00AM Mass Church
7:30PM NeXt Level Mtg. Zoom

Friday, Dec 24, 2021

Christmas Eve, Parish Office Closed

2:00PM Christmas Mass Church
4:00PM Christmas Mass Church
6:30PM Christmas Mass Church
11:59PM Midnight Christmas Eve Mass Church

Saturday, Dec 25, 2021, Christmas Day

10:00AM Christmas Mass Church
12:00PM Christmas Mass Church

Sunday Dec 26, 2021 The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

8:00AM Mass Church
10:00AM Mass Church
12:00PM Mass Church



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends,

Have you thought of inviting someone to our Church this Christmas? Dr. Thom Rainer who conducted a national research “The Unchurched Next Door” says: **“Eighty-two percent of the unchurched are at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited.”** But the problem is that **“only two percent of church members invite an unchurched person to church. Ninety-eight percent of church-goers never extend an invitation in a given year.”** Thankfully, that is not fully true about our parish! I have heard a number of stories of our parishioners joining us because of the invitation of another parishioner. Two weeks ago, I mentioned in my homily about a parishioner who expressed her joy and gratitude that she joined our parish following the suggestion of her friend, and she felt that was the right decision she made. Another parishioner told me that after getting discouraged with ‘parish-shopping,’ a neighbor suggested that he try St. Matthias and his family felt very much at home here and continues to feel so.



Many are looking for some good news, some hope, because they are hurting in so many ways: families experience conflicts, devastating test results, and a host of other problems that make people scared at the thought of a bleak future. Yet on the first Christmas, those who were frightened and in desperate need of good news and great joy were addressed directly by the angel: **“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born...”** (Luke 2:10-11) **Isn't that a good enough reason for us to invite someone to church this Christmas?**

Christmas is a time of giving gifts – to families, to charities, to church. But giving an invitation to church could be the best gift you can give to someone who really needs God's presence in their lives. In my previous parish, I had a banner fixed at the entrance: **“Every Member A Minister.”** Seeing it every time the parishioners came to Church, it helped them realize that each of them is a minister of Jesus and so taking ownership of the message of Jesus means to become a disciple who will bring others to Jesus. You are acting as a disciple of Jesus when you invite someone to come to our church. You are introducing to our Savior those who need his healing and comfort especially if they are hurting.

The Mission Statement of our parish has this line: “As a diverse people, journeying together in faith, we are growing in awareness of the pain and joy of our brothers and sisters ...” Our Church is that place for the kind of support and fellowship where they can meet the God who loves them, understands their greatest fears, sees their deepest longings, and who sent His Son to save us. From the testimonies of those joining us, we can be certain that, true to our mission statement, we are a very inclusive and welcoming community. **So, see you at Christmas with your invited guests, family and friends.**

As we celebrate Christmas in a few days, my prayer is that your Christmas will be filled with the wonder of “Emmanuel” (Matthew.1:23: God-with-us). May his light shine upon you; may his peace and joy fill your hearts and your homes.

Your brother in Christ,
Fr. Abraham Orapankal

Readings for the Week

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

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

Wednesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd; Lk 1:46-56

Thursday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10, 14; Lk 1:57-66

Friday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79

Saturday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 or Mt 1:18-25
Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or Jn 1:1-5, 9-14

Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28; Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10; Col 3:12-21 or Col 3:12-17, or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, Dec 18	5:00PM	Danny Rogan & Pat O'Connor, by Margaret Gallegher
Sunday, Dec 19	8:00AM	Jose Jesus David Mateo, Sr., by Carla & Susan Tionson
	10:00AM	Angela Frigiola, by The Misuraca Family
	12:00PM	Dorothy Gonzalez, by Anne Marie Francis
	(5:30PM)	Intention of Parishioners
Monday, Dec 20	8:00AM	Rest in Peace Dorothy Gonzalez, by Anne Marie Francis
Tuesday, Dec 21	8:00AM	Robert Bachmann, by William Bartlett
Wednesday, Dec 22	8:00AM	Ester Liban, by Alma Valdez
Thursday, Dec 23	8:00AM	John Rochford, by Carol Rochford
Friday, Dec 24	2:00PM	Bruce Anderson, by Mary Bostrom
	4:00PM	Patrick J. Sheenan, by Joan Shea
	6:30PM	Adoracion De Guzman, by Alma & Jaime Valdez
	Midnight	Health & Blessings for Renee Jolly & Rodrigue Charles, by The Godet Family
Saturday, Dec 25	10:00AM	Deceased Members of DeGuzman & Valdez Families, by Alma & Family
	12:00PM	Michael Gleason, by John Galet
Sunday, Dec 26	8:00AM	Barbara Craisis, by Mary
	10:00AM	Joseph Infusino, by Nancy Sekelsky
	12:00PM	Sadie, Milton & Jean Callender, by Antoinette Surdo-Palladino
	(5:30PM)	Intention of Parishioners

Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please call the Parish Office or email Kelly Counts at kcounts@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.*

Carolyn Banghart

Maria Barreiro

Virginia Briggs

Marie Brody

Thomas Burns

Tara Capatosto

Ellen Catalina

Tom Current

Joseph DeFrancesco

Cenon DeGuzman

Mary Ellen Delaney

Alaina Derecola

Surya & Juliany Dharma

Jim Dolan

Mary Dolan

William Dolphin

John Farkas

Claudia Gemgnani

Emma Gergely

Rose Gessner

Mary Gidaro

Marie Godet

Sloopy Hoffman

Baby Isla-Rose Huffman

Kathleen Lagenbacher

Al & Rose Larangeira

Erlina Liem

The Litrakis Family

Al Maglio

Sue Maglio-Alese

Beatrice May

Margaret Menendez

Gail Miranda

Sabrina Moloney

Dave Moynihan

Baby Ezran Natural

Patricia Nese

Danny Ochangco

Jim Pettit

Christina Pietrowiak

Oscar Poisler

Baby Griffin Rademaker

Kevin Reavey

Chris Retz

Ann Ritchick

Jaxon Rivera

Angela Romanek

Maria Schwenzer

Sr. Mary Amata Shina, OSF

Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF

Catherine Sloomaker

Encarnacion (Gina) So

Alessandro Spagnolo

Dennis Stuewe

Jeff Tami

Fred & Carolyn Vanmiddlesworth

Eulalia Villanueva

Judi Wojna

Mark T. Worthington

Everyone who is ill with Covid-19
...and for all who are homebound,
elderly, in nursing care, or living with
chronic illness

Pray for those who have died...

— “His mercy endures forever.” Chronicles

Marion Hobert

Rudolph Schaar

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



Christmas telegram: The preacher and his pregnant wife had left for a conference in France, forgetting to give instructions for the banner which was to decorate the hall at the Christmas Carol Concert, the following weekend. The parish secretary was astonished to receive a telegram from France which read simply:
UNTO US A SON IS BORN. NINE FEET LONG AND TWO FEET WIDE.
REV. AND MRS. JOHNSON. 😊

Christmas Stamps: A woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. "What denomination?" asked the clerk. "Oh, good Heavens! Have we come to this?" said the woman. "Well, give me 20 Catholic stamps for me and 20 Baptist stamps for my husband." 😊

Expanding Archbishop: When Cardinal Dolan (who is physically big) was Arch bishop of Milwaukee, he told Pope

John Paul II in a papal audience, "Holy Father, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is growing and expanding!" To which JP II responded, "And so is its new archbishop!" 😊

Teacher to student, "What are you – animal, vegetable or mineral?" Student replied, "Vegetable." Teacher: "How come?" Student: "I'm a human bean." 😊

Feel Rushed? Then read this to slow down!

"Take time to be aware that in the very midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the Bethlehem's of our homes and daily lives. Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present.

"An old abbot was fond of saying, 'The devil is always the most active on the highest feast days.'

"The supreme trick of Old Scratch is to have us so busy decorating, preparing food, practicing music and cleaning in preparation for the feast of Christmas that we actually miss the coming of Christ. Hurt feelings, anger, impatience, injured egos—the list of clouds that busyness creates to blind us to the birth can be long, but it is familiar to us all."

(Edward Hays, A Pilgrim's Almanac)

Mercy Quote of Pope Francis



Jesus' attitude is striking: we do not hear the words of scorn, we do not hear words of condemnation, but only words of love, of mercy, which are an invitation to conversation.

"Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again."

Ah! Brothers and Sisters, God's face is the face of a merciful father who is always patient. Have you thought about God's patience, the patience He has with each one of us? That is His mercy. He always has patience, patience with us, He understands us, He waits for us, He does not tire of forgiving us if we are able to return to Him with a contrite heart. "Great is God's mercy," says the Psalm.

From Atheism to God: Edith Stein's transforming "visitation"



"Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb . . ." Luke 1: 39-45

The journey of Edith Stein from atheism to God, from Jewish scholar to Carmelite nun, is one of the great odysseys of faith. The former Jewish-atheist scholar died as a Carmelite nun in the gas chamber of Auschwitz in 1942. Edith Stein - Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross - was canonized in 1998. One of the most influential people in Edith's life was the philosopher Adolf Reinach, her professor at the University of Gottingen. In Reinach's writings and teachings, Edith began to see the wisdom of God illuminating the philosophical wisdom of the ages. Both Professor Reinach and his wife, Anna, were unstinting in their friendship and support to Edith, one of the very few women pursuing higher studies in the early days of the 20th century. Anna's friendship and counsel were especially valued by Edith.

At the outbreak of World War I, the wise and humble professor went off to fight for the German fatherland. Awarded the Iron Cross for his bravery, Reinach was killed in Flanders in 1917. When word of Reinach's death was received, the devastated Edith immediately went to comfort Reinach's young widow. Edith had no idea what to say. But it was Anna who provided hope and consolation to Edith. Despite her grief, Anna's trust in God and the meaning of the Cross seemed stronger than ever. Edith later wrote of that moment: "It was my first encounter with the Cross and the divine power it bestows in those who carry it. For the first time I was seeing with my very own eyes the Church, born from its Redeemer's sufferings, triumphant over the sting of death. That was the moment when my unbelief collapsed and Christ shone forth - in the mystery of the Cross."

Edith and Anna's "visitation" was a turning point in Edith's own journey of faith, leading her to Christianity and baptism, to

Reflect

From Atheism to God: Edith Stein's transforming "visitation"

(continued from previous page)

profession as a religious, and, finally, to the company of the saints.

Mary wants to be with her cousin Elizabeth. Luke never says exactly why she goes, but we can guess: Mary wants to be with her beloved cousin in the last months of what must have been a very difficult pregnancy, but also to seek the elder Elizabeth's counsel and support during her own tumultuous time. In Mary and Elizabeth's meeting and in our own similar "visitations," the Spirit of God is present in the healing, comfort and support we can extend to one another in such moments. In the stirring of the infant in Elizabeth's womb, God calls to humanity in every time and place: I am with you every step of the way. I am with you in every storm. I am with you when the night seems unending. In Christ's birth, the inexplicable love of God becomes real to us, the peace and justice of God become possible.

"At least I made a difference to that one!"



A little girl was walking along a beach covered with thousands of starfish left

dying by the receding tide. Seeking to help, she started picking up the dying starfish and tossing them back into the ocean. A man who watched her with amusement, said, "Little girl, there are hundreds of starfish on the beach. You cannot make a difference by putting a few of them back into the sea." Discouraged, she began to walk away. Suddenly, she turned around, picked up another starfish, and tossed it into the sea. Turning to the man, she smiled and said, "At least I made a difference to that one!"

Today's Gospel tells us how Mary, a village girl carrying Jesus in her womb, made a difference in the lives of her cousin Elizabeth and of the child in her womb. The child John, as he grew up, helped Mary's Son to transform the history of mankind by preparing the way for the Messiah. The starfish story suggests that each person, no matter how unimportant, may truly benefit from our work, and that any service, however small, is valuable. The story also shows how seemingly hopeless problems can be solved by taking the first step.

"Advent Teufel" or Advent Devil!



Maula Powers is a storyteller. In an issue of *Catholic Digest* some years ago Ms. Powers told about a creature called the "Advent Teufel." *Teufel* is a German word for devil. According to an old German folktale, it is the Advent Devil who tries during the Advent season to keep people so busy in outward affairs that they lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas. The Advent Devil doesn't want people to have time to experience the rebirth of Christ within themselves. The temptations of the Advent Devil are diabolically clever. He makes it so easy for us to go along with the flow of seasonal celebrations. The Advent Devil's business is to keep us so busy with holiday obligations that we forego daily prayer, Scripture study, and Church services. Some of us have been fighting the Advent Devil this year. Hopefully, we now have him under control. Just a couple more days. I hope you are in a position to use that little bit of time that's left to focus on the real meaning of it all.

"All of a sudden I realized, I matter, I really matter!"

A man in the hospital is being treated for cancer. He is estranged from the Church. He has this long list of things he can name for you in his indictment. He doesn't like the Church in its present institutional form. But he is in the hospital. One day a priest walks into his room. He didn't invite him in, he just walked in. The priest asked him, "Do you want to be anointed?" Realizing that it was the Catholic rite for the sick, the man said, "Yes." Then he wrote this. "Lying on my narrow, hospital bed, feeling the oil of gladness and healing, I knew I had little time. More importantly though, I felt by a wondrous grace that this was the first time in my memory that the Church was paying attention to me, individually, by name, naming me, praying for me to deal with my painful circumstances and my suffering, the suffering that is uniquely mine.

All of a sudden I realized, I matter, I really matter. I still can't get over the power of this feeling of mattering, of being an irreplaceable individual." In the Visitation scene described in today's Gospel, two insignificant women realize how they matter by being selected the mothers of the Messiah and his precursor.



Joyce Kilmer's Sonnet

The sonnet titled "The Visitation," and today's gospel passage of Mary's visitation, celebrate one wonderful moment of our salvation

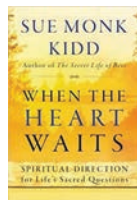
as Mary shares with Elizabeth the arrival of the "hidden God". The poem was written by New Brunswick, NJ poet Joyce Kilmer (1886–1918), author of "Trees." Kilmer was killed at the Second Battle of Marne in 1918 (WW I) at the age of 31.

It follows on the next page.

Reflect

THE VISITATION

There is a wall of flesh before the eyes
Of John, who yet perceives and
hails his King.
It is Our Lady's painful bliss to
bring
before mankind the Glory of the
skies.
Her cousin feels her womb's
sweet burden rise
And leap with joy, and she comes
forth to sing,
With trembling mouth, her words
of welcoming.
She knows her hidden God, and
prophesies.
Saint John, pray for us, weary
souls that tarry
where life is withered by sin's
deadly breath.
Pray for us, whom the dogs of
Satan harry,
Saint John, Saint Anne, and Saint
Elizabeth.
And, Mother Mary, give us Christ
to carry
within our hearts, that we may
conquer death.



“May Christ Be Born in You to Share!”

Sue Monk Kidd in her book *From When the Heart Waits* writes about her visit to a monastery around Christmas years ago. She passed a monk walking outside the church and said “Merry Christmas.” And the monk replied, “May Christ be born in you.” At the time, Ms. Kidd thought that this was a very peculiar greeting. But she never forgot it. And, with time, she came to realize the power of that simple greeting: “May Christ be born in you.” When Christ dwells within, there is peace. Pope St. John Paul II, in one of his Angelus messages, explained that Christmas is not simply the remembrance of the Event that took place 2000 years ago when, according to the Gospel, the power of God took on the frailty of a baby. It is really about a living reality that is repeated every year in the heart of believers. “The mystery of the Holy Night, which historically happened two thousand years ago, must be lived as a spiritual event in the ‘today’ of the Liturgy,” the Pope clarified. “The Word who found a dwelling in Mary’s womb comes to knock on the heart of every person . . .” Bethlehem reminds us that God is with us in the person of Jesus Christ.

We need to carry the same Word, Jesus, to others as Mary did. We can make a real difference in the lives of others by carrying Jesus to them. However, we cannot give what we do not possess. Christmas is the ideal time for us to be filled with the spirit of Christ, allowing his rebirth within us. Thus he enables us to share his love with all whom we encounter by offering them humble and committed service, unconditional forgiveness and compassionate caring. Sharing Jesus with others is the best Christmas gift we can give. God wants each of us, like Mary, to carry to those around us the Lord of Life. It is easy to send flowers, Christmas cards or gifts. To give the gift of oneself, however, is the greatest gift of all. Let us take the time to visit others this Christmas, to bring some inspiration into their lives, and hopefully to bring them closer to God. Let us share with them the Spirit of God, the Spirit of consolation, of courage, of peace and joy, just as Mary did. During the Christmas Season, God calls us into action as He did Mary. Is there anyone we know who is lonely, in a nursing home, ill or bedridden? Can we help him or her with a brief visit? Is there extra food in our pantry that a poor family could use? Such organizations as the Ladies of Charity or St. Vincent de Paul Society can find such a family for us.



An Older Woman's Wisdom and Strength

In Rumer Godden's exquisite novel *In This House of Brede*, there is a moment when Abbess Catherine, who has been elevated to that office in a time of unusual stress for the Brede Abbey, also contemplates this moment in the Gospel: Every evening at Vespers in these days, Abbess Catherine, as if echoing the Abbot's words, thought, as the antiphon to the Magnificat was sung, of the Visitation, when the Virgin Mary, with the angel's announcement beating in her heart, had gone “in haste,” as Saint Luke says, to visit her far older cousin. Why, wondered Abbess Catherine, did the theologians always teach - and we take it for granted - that Mary went simply to succor Elizabeth? Probably she did do that, but could it not also have been that she needed the wisdom and strength of an older woman? How wonderfully reassuring Elizabeth's salutation must have been: “Whence is this that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” A recogni-

tion without being told, and Mary, as if heartened, touched into bloom by the warmth and honor of that recognition, had flowered into the Magnificat.

We need to bless and encourage the younger generation. Elizabeth demonstrates the responsibility of the older generation to inspire the younger generation. We need others to recognize our gifts, to honor our true being, and to pronounce "the goodness of God upon us." Grandparents and parents, teachers and leaders, have the responsibility of encouraging those around them by saying, "You are an important person, valuable to God and to me." During this Christmas week, parents and older people might convey a blessing to others, especially the young. Complimenting and encouraging one's spouse, children and friends, let us make them know how valuable they are to us and to God.

Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

Christ's compassion towards the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity permeate the gospels. He cured the blind, lame, deaf, leprosy, bleeding and disease of every sort. He also forgave sin and raised the dead to life.

Christ's love for the sick and weak and dying has continued through the centuries because he entrusted that ministry to the church, his body. Caring for the sick is one of the corporal works of mercy and is carried out in many ways in our parishes today. The church has built hospitals, and nursing homes, it has trained doctors and nurses and provides loving care to the sick and dying through these institutions and the tender care offered by the medical profession. In these institutions the church cares not only for the sick bodies of the faithful but also cares for the spirit by ministering to the fear and anxiety that surrounds sickness, both for the sick person and the family. Through its pastoral care of the sick and dying the church shows its love for Christ who associated himself with them when he said, "I was sick and you came to visit me". Priest chaplains, deacons and lay pastoral ministers, together with Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion help the sick and their families in all kinds of situations.

The church has a special sacrament for those who are sick called "The sacrament of Anointing of the sick". Over the centuries the Anointing of the Sick was conferred more and more exclusively on those who were near the point of death. But please note this is a sacrament for the sick and not only the dying. The Catechism of the church tells us, "the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is given to those who are seriously ill" (1513 CCC) and it goes on to say "The Anointing of the Sick is not a sacrament for those only who

are at the point of death. Hence as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age the fitting time for him to receive the sacrament has certainly already arrived" (1514 CCC). The sacrament can be repeated any time a new illness or serious deterioration in the person's condition occurs.

I have a sense that this sacrament is among the "neglected" sacraments, like confession, because it is misunderstood and perhaps feared. Again note it is a sacrament that has as one of its goals the recovery of good health. Family members or those caring for the sick should not delay or hesitate in calling for a priest to come Anoint a person who is seriously sick. It is one of the seven sacraments of the church. It is attested to in the letter of Saint James 5; 14-15 "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders (presbyters) of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed any sins he will be forgiven".

We, the church, have an obligation to care for our brothers and sisters who are sick, weak or dying. And that care must consist of ministering to their physical and their spiritual need. Pray daily for the sick and dying and see to it that anyone who wishes to be visited by a priest and receive this sacrament has an opportunity to do so. Our hospitals and some nursing homes have chaplains assigned. Just call the pastoral care departments and request a priest. If the person is being cared for at home call your local parish.

Msgr. Brennan



Pray

Advent Reconciliation during Holy Hour — This Evening, Sunday, December 19

St. Matthias will offer **Holy Hour beginning at 6:30pm in the church with confessions heard during this service.** We will have 4 priests in total to hear confessions. The evening will conclude with **Benediction.**

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. The wafer is made from wheat and water, the same as our communion hosts. The tradition is also celebrated in Lithuania and Slovakia.

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.



Pray



ST. MATTHIAS LITURGY WANTS YOU TO BE A CHRISTMAS ANGEL

Decorate the church and cafeteria, be Greeters and Hospitality Ministers, Project the Mass in the Church, Operate live-streaming equipment in the Cafeteria.

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OR CONTACT PHYLLIS STONE AT
pstone@stmatthias.net

ST. MATTHIAS CHRISTMAS SEASON MASS SCHEDULE



Nativity of the Lord - Friday, December 24th, (Christmas Eve)

2:00 pm Mass in church w/overflow in cafeteria
4:00pm Mass in church w/overflow in cafeteria
6:30 pm Mass in church w/overflow in cafeteria

Nativity of the Lord - Saturday, December 25th (Christmas Day)



Midnight Mass in church
10:00 am Mass in church
12:00 pm Mass in church

Solemnity of Mary Vigil - Friday, December 31st, (New Year's Eve)

5:00 pm Mass in church

Solemnity of Mary - Saturday, January 1st (New Year's Day)

10:00 Mass in church

Epiphany of the Lord - Sunday, January 2nd

8:00 Mass in church
10:00 Mass in church
12:00 Mass in church



Franklin HS Madrigals - 1:00 pm in church



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.

*Isabella Charlotte Antes Zoraya Cruz Francis Ryan Joseph Kreiger
Juliana Marconi Makayla Marie Sullivan Joseph Edwin Young*

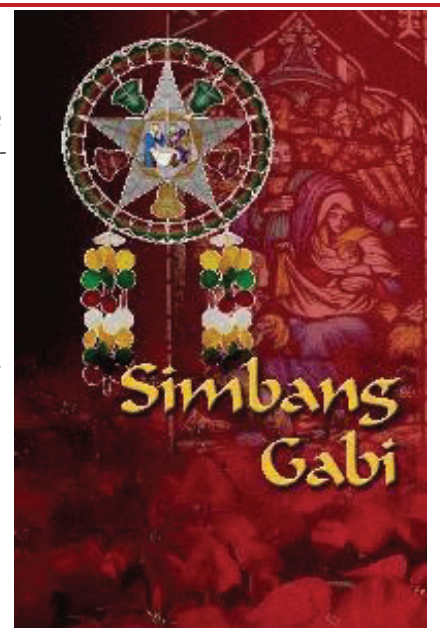
SIMBANG GABI

This is a devotional nine-day series of Masses, **DEC. 15-23**, contemplating the Blessed Mother's anticipation of the Birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, over 2000 years ago. The nightly Eucharistic Celebrations in designated parishes in the diocese will also be live-streamed. Bishop James Checchio began the celebration at St. Francis Cathedral in Metuchen on Wednesday, December 15th starting at 7pm. The concluding Mass on Thursday, December 23rd at 7pm will be at the Immaculate Conception Church in Somerville.

For those who prefer the traditional early morning Masses, there will be Misa de Gallo at 5am from December 16 to 24 in these 2 parishes: St. Ladislaus in New Brunswick and Our Lady of Victories in Sayreville.

For a complete Simbang Gabi Schedule and link to the live-streamed Masses, please visit

www.facebook.com/diometuchenfa or request a copy via email to gondee328@yahoo.com.



#GIVING TUESDAY THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our two Giving Tuesday campaigns this year— **Spiritual Tech Connect** for the Church and **Trading Spaces and Reading Places** for the School. We are truly humbled by your generosity and participation! Your generous donations will go a long way in serving our students and church community.

For those who haven't had an opportunity to donate as of yet, we want you to know that our campaigns will remain open through the end of December. There is still time to make a difference and for corporations to make a matching end-of-year gift. (If you are reading this bulletin online, hold down the CTRL key and click on the links below.) Thank you!

Church: <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/st-matthias-church-school/givingtuesday-spiritual-tech-connect-campaign>

School: <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/st-matthias-church-school/giving-tuesday-trading-spaces-reading-places>

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022				Last Year's Total
Current Month	In-Pew/Mail	Parish Giv-	Weekly Total	Weekly Total
Week 23 - Dec. 5, 2021	\$11,277.00	\$18,935.75	\$30,212.75	\$20,389.93
Week 24 - Dec. 12, 2021	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$27,901.47
Week 25 - Dec. 19, 2021	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$28,039.18
Week 26 - Dec. 26, 2021	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$33,598.93
			Month-to-date Total	Dec. Total Last Yr
This bulletin went to the printer before December 12. We will update the collection information in the next bulletin.			\$30,212.75	\$109,929.51
			Current Year-to-date Total	Year-to-date as of Dec 31, 2020
			\$584,856.66	\$634,284.60

Stewardship Reflection Dec 19, 2021 4th Sunday of Advent

“For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy.” (Luke 1:44)

When you hear the scripture readings and Gospel reading at Mass, do you “leap for joy?” If not, don’t blame the lecturer or priest, rather look inside yourself. What are you doing to grow in friendship with Jesus? How do you prepare for Mass each week? Or, do you just show up and expect to be entertained? As the Body of Christ, we are called to be active participants, not just passive observers.

Reflexiónese — 19 de diciembre de 2021 4to. Domingo de Adviento

“Porque apenas oí tu saludo, el niño en mi vientre saltó de alegría” (Lucas 1:44)

Cuándo escucha la lectura de las escrituras y la del Evangelio en la Misa, ¿usted “salta de alegría”? Si no es así, no culpe al lector o al sacerdote, más bien mire dentro de sí mismo. ¿Qué está haciendo para aumentar su amistad con Jesús? ¿Cómo se prepara para la Misa cada semana? ¿O simplemente se presenta y pretende ser entretenido? Como el Cuerpo de Cristo, somos llamados a ser participantes activos, no solo observadores pasivos.



Tuition Angels Continue to Provide Assistance

Since 2009 until the present time, the Tuition Angel Fund has been providing assistance to families who struggle to keep pace with tuition payments and desire to give their children a Catholic Education. We want to continue providing a strong faith-filled, Catholic, Christ-centered education to our children. We want to be there to help families who believe in the positive effects of a Catholic education and allow them to experience SMS. We are, therefore, asking your help in building up the Tuition Angel Fund. Any donation that you can afford will be more than helpful. You can donate through Parish Giving, by writing a check and mailing it to the Parish Office, or by placing your donation in an envelope, marking it “Tuition Assistance” and placing the envelope in the collection basket. Thank you in advance for your help. SMS continues to be a vibrant, nurturing and essential part of our Parish Community and your gift to the Angel Fund will help us to keep it that way.

— Members of the Tuition Angel Committee

Connect

17th Annual Night of Winners (Basket Raffle) is coming Feb. 26, 2022!!

Night of Winners (NOW) supports St. Matthias School. The success of this event is due in large part to the generous donations that we receive from our parishioners and school families. Any new, unused items in original packages are welcome. These can be dropped off at the school office or the Parish Office during business hours. We will have more detailed information coming in the next few weeks, so keep an eye out.



Serve

Vocations Ministry - Called to Build God's Kingdom — Dec 19, 2021

Pope Francis in "Gaudete et Exsultate" on the call to holiness in today's world says:

Let us listen once more to Jesus, with all the love and respect that the Master deserves. Let us allow his words to unsettle us, to challenge us and to demand a real change in the way we live.

Otherwise, holiness will remain no more than an empty word. We turn now to the individual Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew (cf. Mt 5:3-12). We often do not want to be challenged by the Gospel, but would rather just be comforted and affirmed. But when we let the Gospel move us to take a closer

look at our lives, our choices, our perspectives- (how could the poor in spirit be blessed anyway?) then we are opening our hearts to the Gospel's transformative effect. Only then does real change become possible.



2021 GIVING TREE

This is the last weekend for the 2021 Giving Tree. For those who have already participated, thank you for your support. For those wishing to participate there is still some time. **Please visit the Parish website www.stmatthias.net for additional information and to view the organizations and remaining gift ideas/requests.**

Just a friendly reminder, **all gifts should be shipped directly to the organizations by TOMORROW, December 20, 2021.** Absolutely no gifts/packages are to be left at the church or parish office.

If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Diana at j-diana@comcast.net or (732) 873-8521.

Thank you once again for your generosity and support. Merry Christmas to all!



Parish Leadership

Parish Pastoral Council:

Co-Chairs:

Claudine Langrin
ClaudMLangrin@gmail.com and
Mary Beth Vetter-Purcell
marybeth.vetter@gmail.com

Co-Secretaries:

Lorraine Farr and
Anne Marie Francis

Rose Peng
Frank Rees
Maria Tapia-Burch
John Taylor

Marilyn Wegg
Ana Kelly, Ex-Officio
Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio

Trustees:

Isaac Peng
Marge Richards

Parish Finance Council:

Joe Porter, Chair
FinanceCouncil
[@stmatthias.net](mailto:FinanceCouncil@stmatthias.net)

Barry Dusault
Gwen Orłowski
Audrey Francis
Kester Hector

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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