



THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024
4th Sunday of Advent



Blessed is
the fruit of
your womb

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**

CHRISTMAS SEASON MASS SCHEDULE 2024-2025

Changes/Updates? Check www.stmatthias.net

Tuesday, December 24

CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00pm (church)
4:00pm (cafeteria)
6:30pm (church)
11:15 pm *Christmas Carols*
(church)
12:00 Midnight (church)

Wednesday, December 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00am and 12:00 Noon



FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Saturday, December 28

5:00pm (Vigil Mass)

Sunday, December 29

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

Wednesday, January 1

**SOLEMNITY OF MARY
MOTHER OF GOD**

10:00 am

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Saturday, January 4

5:00pm (Vigil Mass)

Sunday, January 5

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

© JPPC

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 21, 2024

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

Monday, Dec 23, 2024 St. John of Kenty, Priest

8:00AM Mass, Miraculous Medal Novena Church
6:00PM Eucharistic Adoration Church

Tuesday, Dec 24, 2024 St. Adele, Abbess

Christmas Eve

SMS Closed & Parish Office Closed

4:00PM Christmas Eve Vigil Mass Church
4:00PM Christmas Eve Vigil Mass Cafeteria
6:30PM Christmas Eve Vigil Mass Church
11:15PM Christmas Carols Church
12:00AM Midnight Mass Church

Wednesday, Dec 25, 2024

Christmas Day

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

Thursday, Dec 26, 2024 St. Stephen, Deacon & 1st Martyr

8:00AM No Mass

Friday, Dec 27, 2024 St. John, Apostle & Evangelist

8:00AM Mass Church

Saturday, Dec 28, 2024 The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

3:30PM Reconciliation Church
5:00PM Vigil Mass Church

Sunday, Dec 29, 2024

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

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

Merry Christmas!

Yes, even though today is the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas is getting close... and it is here in just two days... Although we can't control its suddenness, and how our culture celebrates it, we can keep the spirit of Christmas in our own home by teaching our children the value of delayed gratification. Wait for the party, wait to open a present. Read the Christmas story as a family. Matthew and Luke are the Evangelists we can depend on for the birth and infancy narratives of Jesus. The first two chapters from each of these gospels are ideal for this purpose. Read at least one chapter each day starting today.

This Christmas is very special because the Jubilee Year (celebrated every 25 years) will begin on December 24, 2024 (Christmas Eve) and conclude on January 6, 2026 (Feast of the Epiphany). This was officially proclaimed by Pope Francis in his papal bull titled *Spes Non Confundit* which means "Hope Does Not Disappoint".

It is customary that holy doors will be designated to enter through during this Jubilee Year, first in Rome and then in each diocese throughout the world. Holy Doors of the 2025 Jubilee of Hope in Rome will be located at the four papal basilicas as well as at a prison. The first Holy Door will be opened by Pope Francis at St. Peter's Basilica on this Christmas Eve to usher in the beginning of the Jubilee Year worldwide.

What is the significance? The Holy Doors are sacred portals. These doors are ceremonially opened during Jubilee Years, symbolizing the spiritual journey from sin to grace. For pilgrims, crossing these doors is a profound act of faith, offering an opportunity for renewal, forgiveness, and a deeper connection with the divine. The act of physically crossing the threshold signifies a renewal of faith and a desire for spiritual transformation. As Pope St. John Paul II stated, "To pass through that door means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; it is to strengthen faith in him in order to live the new life which he has given us."

Let us all enter the Jubilee Year of Hope. The Christmas story is truly a story of hope. May our Christmas be filled with the wonder of "Emmanuel" (Matthew.1:23: God-with-us). May His peace and joy illumine our hearts and our homes.

Christmas Blessings!

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal



Readings for the Week

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

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

Wednesday Vigil Is 62:1-5 Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Wednesday Night Is 9:1-6 Ps 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 Ti 2:11-14 Lk 2:1-14

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

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

Thursday Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 Mt 10:17-22

Friday 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 Jn 20:1a, 2-8

Saturday 1 Jn 1:5-2:2 Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8 Mt 2:13-18

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 3:12-17 or 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24 Lk 2:41-52

Mass Intentions for the Week

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
Mon., December 23	8:00AM	Julie Tatulli, by Mary Spozdzial
Tues., December 24	4:00PM	Norm & Michele Siebenlist, by Eileen Siebenlist
	4:00PM	Judy Mallin Andrews, by Mom, Rose Mallin
	6:30PM	Jack Shafranski, by Doherty Family
	12:00M	Mary Hoynoski, by Mary Nepote (Midnight)
Wed., December 25	10:00AM	Alice Meden, by Kathy Meden DeAngelis
	10:00AM	Deceased Members of the De Guzman & Valdez Families, by Alma
	12:00PM	Joseph Kwakye, by Aunt Monica
Thurs., December 26		No Mass
Fri., December 27	8:00AM	John Natale, by Vinnie & Joanne
Sat., December 28	5:00PM	Jose C. Domingo, Jr., by The Olegario Family
Sun., December 29	8:00AM	Intention of Parishioners
	10:00Am	Blessings of Healing , Luz DeGuzman Menzel, by The DeGuzman Family
	12:00PM	Alejandria, Leonora & Connie Valdez, by The Valdez Family

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

Pray for those who have died...

— “His mercy endures forever.” *Chronicles*

Joseph D. DuPont, Jr., brother of Linda Madison



Smile with Your Family



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. 😊

Q: What's a sheep's favorite Christmas song?

A: Fleece Navidad. 😊

One of my four nephews just brought me wine and said, "Here's your Christmas juice," and now he's the one I'm leaving everything in my will. 😊

Knowing that the pastor enjoyed his drink, a hotel owner offered him a case of cherry brandy for Christmas in exchange for a free ad in the church newsletter. The pastor agreed and ran this in the next issue: "The pastor would like to thank Patrick Smith for his kind gift of a crate of fruit and for the spirit in which he gave it to me." 😊

The Hanukkah miracle is that the menorah oil lasted eight extra days. I re-create this miracle with every tube of toothpaste. 😊

Experts agree the best way to save money on gift giving this holiday season is by alienating all your friends and family. 😊

I told my sis-year-old that was not getting a cat because Santa is allergic to them. Her response: "Google that and prove it." 😊

My friend reviewed her young son's fill-in-the-blank homework. One line was: "At Christmas, we exchange gifts with ____." His response: "Receipts." 😊

As we were putting out cookies for Santa on Christmas Eve, I accidentally dropped one. "No problem," I said, picking it up and dusting it off before placing it back on the plate. "You can't do that," argued my four-year-old. "Don't worry. Santa will never know." He shot me a look. "So how come he knows if I've been bad or good, and yet he doesn't know the cookie fell on the floor?" 😊

FEELING RUSHED? READ THIS TO SLOW DOWN!

Christmas is here, and you feel overwhelmed? Read on:

"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 Bethlehems 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

Christmas is here, and you feel overwhelmed? Read on:

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.**

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 profession as a religious, and, finally, to the company of the saints. In today's Gospel, Mary travels "in haste" 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.

"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.



"May Christ be born in you!"

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 his Angelus message of December 19, 1999, 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 . . ." (5) Bethlehem reminds us that God is with us in the person of Jesus Christ.

“Could he be the Messiah?”

Here is a story of the enormous difference that the awareness of the presence of Christ among us could make in our lives as individuals and as communities. A certain Palestinian Jewish monastery in the first century before Christ discovered that it was going through a crisis. Some of the monks left, no new candidates joined them, and people were no longer coming for prayer and consultation as they used to. The few monks that remained were becoming old and depressed and bitter in their relationship with one another. The abbot heard about a holy man, a hermit living alone in the woods and decided to consult him. He told the hermit how the monastery had dwindled and diminished and now looked like a skeleton of what it used to be. Only seven old monks remained. The hermit told the abbot that he had a secret for him. One of the monks now living in his monastery was actually the Messiah, but he was living in such a way that no one could recognize him. With this revelation the abbot went back to his monastery, summoned a community meeting and recounted what the holy hermit had told him. The aging monks looked at each other in disbelief, trying to discern who among them could be the Christ. Could it be Brother Mark who prayed all the time? But he had this holier-than-thou attitude toward others. Could it be Brother Joseph who was always ready to help? But he was always eating and drinking and could not fast.

The abbot reminded them that the Messiah had adopted some bad habits as a way of camouflaging his real identity. This only made them more confused and they could not make a headway figuring out who was the Christ among them. At the end of the meeting what each one of the monks knew for sure was that any of the monks, excepting himself, could be the Christ. We need to recognize the real presence of the Emmanuel in others. It is then that we will treat others with respect and considerateness.



The Irish Christmas Custom of Candles on Windows

The custom of placing lighted candles in the windows at Christmas was brought to America by the Irish. When religion was suppressed throughout Ireland during the English persecution, the people had no churches. Priests hid in the forests and caves and secretly visited the farms and homes to say Mass there during the night. It was the dearest wish of every Irish family that at least once in their lifetime a priest would arrive at Christmas to celebrate Mass. For this grace they hoped and prayed all through the year. When Christmas came they left their doors unlocked and placed burning candles in the windows so that any priest who happened to be in the vicinity could be welcomed and guided to their home through the dark night. Silently the priest would enter through the unlatched door and be received by the devout inhabitants with fervent prayers of gratitude and tears of happiness that their home was to become a church for Christmas. To justify this practice in the eyes of the English soldiers, the Irish people explained that they burned the candles and kept the doors unlocked so that Mary and Joseph, looking for a place to stay, would find their way to their home and be welcomed with open hearts.

The candles in the windows have always remained a cherished practice of the Irish, although many of them have long since forgotten the earlier meaning. We all need to welcome the Messiah into our hearts. We all need to allow the Savior to be reborn in our lives. Let us remember the famous lines of Alexander Pope: “What do I profit if Jesus is born in thousands of cribs all over the world during this Christmas, but is not born in my heart?” Let us allow Him to be reborn in our lives during Christmas 2013 and every day of the New Year 2024. Let us show the good will and generosity of sharing Jesus, our Savior reborn in our hearts, with others by love, kindness, mercy, forgiveness and humble service.

“Please come back again” 😊

An electrician did a small job, one afternoon, for a popular local restaurant. He met many of the employees and management, and he was very impressed by how friendly everyone was. He and his wife had never been there before, so the following week, they went to the restaurant for dinner. And, during dinner, the man kept mentioning to his wife how nice everyone was when he did the job there and that they almost made him feel like he was part of the crew. They had a wonderful dinner, and finished off a bottle of fine wine. When the check came, the man was amazed at how little the bill was, and noticed that the waiter had written "50% Off" on the check and deducted that amount. He showed this to his wife. He mentioned just how incredibly nice everyone was at this restaurant. And even though he only worked there for just one afternoon, they gave him this great discount. He paid the check and thanked the waiter for the generosity of the restaurant and staff.

On the way out, the man stepped into the kitchen to personally thank the chef, and shook hands with everyone on the crew (about a dozen employees), expressing his appreciation for the great dinner and discount. He also left a note for the owner, thanking him, and offering him 50% off his next electrical maintenance job. On his way out the door, he thanked the maitre d' for the generous discount. The maitre d' then explained to him that not only did the man and his wife get the discount, but everyone else in the place did also. He said, "Sir, tonight, and every Tuesday, is 'Half-Price Night.' But I have to tell you that you are the only customer in the history of this restaurant to thank the entire kitchen crew and the owner for having it.... Please come back again!" One of the attributes of a grace-filled life is a spirit of gratitude. What a wondrous and glorious blessing! The Gospel today demonstrates that with a true spirit of gratitude comes the spirit of generosity. The Magnificat teaches gratitude; the Visitation teaches generosity.

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 23, 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)



Oplatek Christmas Wafers

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 is 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.

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.



RCIA

We are very happy that we have a good group of adults and teens attending the new class for RCIA (now renamed as OCIA). But you might know someone, in your families or friendship circles, who has not received the Sacrament of Holy Communion or Confirmation. Kindly ask them to contact our RCIA Coordinators:

Anne Marie Francis at alfrancis.30@gmail.com or Mary Frances Reavey at mfreavey@gmail.com

We are making it easy for all to attend these sessions by meeting on Sundays after the 10 am Mass. These sessions are conducted not in a lecture or class model but as a faith-sharing group that is truly fun to learn and have good support in the faith journey. Anyone is welcome to attend any of these sessions.

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

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 !!**

Connect

COME CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY WITH THE FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL MADRIGALS!



On **Sunday, January 5, 2025**, the Franklin High School Madrigals will sing a short concert of Christmas music in the Church immediately after the noon Mass (at which our Children's Choir is singing)

The Madrigals, under the direction of Ms. Kiera Radvanski (Deacon John's daughter), have sung during the Christmas season throughout central NJ. We are delighted that they are returning to St. Matthias for their 20th Epiphany performance. Keira is even a former member of our St Matthias Children's Choir!

Come support this talented group of young musicians and enjoy their beautiful Christmas selections.

Our St. Matthias January GIFT session will take place right after the Madrigals concert.

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
Retirement Fund for Religious: \$4,467.00			\$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 22, 2024 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? 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 – 22 de diciembre de 2024 4º Domingo de Adviento

“Porque he aquí, que cuando oí tu saludo, el bebé saltó de alegría en mi vientre.” (LUCAS 1:44)

¿Salta de alegría cuando escucha la lectura de las escrituras y del Evangelio en la Misa? Si no es así, no culpe al lector o al sacerdote, más bien mire dentro de sí mismo. ¿Qué está haciendo para que crezca su amistad y amor a Jesús? ¿Cómo se prepara para la Misa cada semana? ¿Simplemente se presenta en la misa y espera ser entretenido? Como Cuerpo de Cristo, somos llamados a participar activamente, no solo a ser observadores pasivos.

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

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.



ROSARY for LIFE

Come Pray a Rosary for Life (in solidarity with those at the March for Life in Washington, DC and across the country). Bishop Checchio is scheduled to attend!

Friday, January 24, 2025 at 1:00 pm on Main Street in Woodbridge.

Park and meet in the St. James Parish parking lot at 12:45 pm
(369 Amboy Ave, Woodbridge, NJ)

There is a 12:10 pm daily Mass at St. James for those who wish to attend.

For more information, contact amarshall@diometuchen.org or call 732-562-1543.

Parish Leadership

Parish Pastoral Council: Co-Chairs: Stephen Busono sbusono@gmail.com Bill Isele t33sm@aol.com	Co-Secretaries: 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
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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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