



THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023
4th Sunday of Advent– Christmas Eve



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* **lmcgrath**
 Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, *Business Administrator*
mpburke-grospin

Deacon Ron Caimi, *Senior Deacon*
 Kelly Counts, *Receptionist*, **kcounts**
 Deacon Russell Demkovitz, **rdevkovitz**
 Nathalie Godet, *Website & Bulletin Coordinator*,
ngodet

Leslie Guillen, *Bulletin Editor*, **lguillen**
 Amy Hanna, *Accountant/Databases*, **ahanna**
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Sue Lenczewski, *Youth Coordinator*, **SMYLE**
 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**



OUR NEXT ADORATION WILL BE
MONDAY EVENING, JANUARY 8, 2024
FROM 6 PM TO 8 PM.

THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON
DECEMBER 26TH AND DECEMBER 29TH

Masses are 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: 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 24, 2023 **4th Sunday of Advent**
Christmas Eve

8:00AM	Mass (Sunday Obligation)	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

Monday, Dec 25, 2023 **Christmas Day**
SMS- Christmas Break all Week

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

Tuesday, Dec 26, 2023 **St. Stephen, 1st Christian Martyr**

Parish Office Closed

8:00AM No Mass

Wednesday, Dec 27, 2023 **St. John, Apostle & Evangelist**

8:00AM	Mass, St. Joseph Novena	Church
9:30AM	Prayer Group 1 Holy Spirit	de Porres Rm

Thursday, Dec 28, 2023 **Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

8:00AM	Mass	Church
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Friday, Dec 29, 2023 **St. Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury**

Parish Office Closed

8:00AM	Mass	Church
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Saturday, Dec 30, 2023 **St. Anysia of Salonika, Martyr**

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

Sunday, Dec 31, 2023 **New Year's Eve**

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.



Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! Yes, even though today is the Fourth Sunday of Advent, today is also Christmas Eve and tomorrow is Christmas Day! This happens once in about ten years! Hence it is easy to feel quite frenzied and get trapped into an all too familiar paradox: the person whose birthday we are supposed to be celebrating is left out of the celebration! He is ignored. It is not intentional, but Jesus is often overlooked as undue importance is given to all the external trappings of Christmas, to Rudolph, Frosty the Snowman, Santa Claus, the Grinch, elves, and a long list of celebrated fictional characters that the media and companies present to us. Let me suggest three easy solutions:

1. Take seriously the good news announced by the Angels: *“Fear not, for behold, I announce to you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people”* (Luke 2:10). We all know how fear can cripple us and take away our joy and peace. With all our intellect and innovations, we have not made our world safe and secure for ourselves and for our children. But we can destroy this fear and live joyfully if only we can take the message of Christmas seriously by believing in the Prince of Peace.
2. Give Baby Jesus one very special gift. Let this gift be something personal so that you don’t need to reveal it to anyone. One gift that will please Jesus the most is the gift to forgive someone you’ve wanted a long time. If you do that, you will have the happy surprise of finding out that you were the one who really got the gift, because as Lewis B. Smedes wrote in his book, *Forgive and Forget*, *“When you release the wrongdoer from the wrong, you cut a malignant tumor out of your inner life. You set a prisoner free, but you discover that the real prisoner was yourself.”*
3. Read the Christmas story with your family this week. Matthew and Luke are the Evangelists who 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 from today.

Many of you already did this, but can do it again: bring your family and friends to enjoy the beauty of the 300 brightly lit Christmas trees. Walk among the shining trees and breathe in that ethereal feeling of joy and peace. May your Christmas be filled with the wonder of “Emmanuel” (Mt.1:23: God-with-us). May his peace and joy illumine your hearts and your homes. Merry Christmas!

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal

Readings for the Week

Monday, December 25, 2023 (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
Monday, December 25, 2023 (Night) Is 9:1-6 Ps 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 Ti 2:11-14 Lk 2:1-14
Monday, December 25, 2023 (Dawn) Is 62:11-12 Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12 Ti 3:4-7 Lk 2:15-20
Monday, December 25, 2023 (Day) Is 52:7-10 Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-18
Tuesday, December 26, 2023 Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 Mt 10:17-22
Wednesday, December 27, 2023 1 Jn 1:1-4 Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 Jn 20:1a and 2-8
Thursday, December 28, 2023 1 Jn 1:5-2:2 Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8 Mt 2:13-18
Friday, December 29, 2023 1 Jn 2:3-11 Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6 Lk 2:22-35
Saturday, December 30, 2023 1 Jn 2:12-17 Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10 Lk 2:36-40
Sunday, December 31, 2023 Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3 Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 Lk 2:22-40 or Lk 2:22, 39-40

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, Dec 23	5:00PM	Joseph & Lucy Lyons, by Daughter
Sunday, Dec 24	8:00AM	Intention of Parishioners
Church	4:00PM	Norman & Michele Siebenlist, by Eileen Deceased Members of the
Cafeteria	4:00PM	Best & Seamon Families, by Joan & Terry Seamon
	6:30PM	Sally & Paul Hughes, by The Family
	12:00AM	Toby Moreno, by A Friend
Monday, Dec 25	10:00AM	Robert Eskdale, by The Weeden Family
	12:00PM	James Isola, by Cousins Cira & Neil Boccio
Tuesday, Dec 26	8:00AM	No Mass
Wednesday, Dec 27	8:00AM	John Natale, by Vinnie & Joanne
Thursday, Dec 28	8:00AM	In Memory of Ceil Flesher, by The Bell Family
Friday, Dec 29	8:00AM	Marcaro Garcia, Sr. by The Bandong Family
Saturday, Dec 30	5:00PM	Will Cuddeback, by Mom & Dad
Sunday, Dec 31	8:00AM	Intention of Parishioners
	10:00AM	Sophie Teresa Schultz, by The Weeden Family
	12:00PM	Frank Moran, Sr. by Jerry Gomez

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.

Beth & Jay Adams	Emma Gergely	Kathy Langenbacher	Danny Ongchango	Sr. Bernadine Marie Stemnock
Olga Marie Bando	Gerry & Jack Gernert	Armando D. Liban	Robert Pellegrino	Jacqueline Taylor
Carolyn Banghart	Marie Godet	Mary Lou Litrakis	Robert Pietrowiak	Anita Vance
Samantha Bellouny	Shelly Greene	John Litrakis	Randolff Pinard	Eileen Weber
Tara Capatosto	Linda Hartong	Denis Loboda	Valerie Polci	Nancy Whelan
Elizabeth Card	Sloopy & PJ Hoffman	Aries Magali	Kim Price	Matthew Wilson
Kyle Davidson	Marilyn Horvath	Al Maglio	Denise Pultro	Ginette Zamor
Lisa DeFeo	Amanda Isele	Susan, King & Tosh Manansala	Doris Regan	Anne Zando
Zenon DeGuzman	Baby Elaine Isele	Alexandra Marquez	Gabriel Rivera	
Marlene DiMaggio	Nick Isele	Christine Matthews	Arina Robinson	And for all who are ill, homebound, elderly, in nursing care, or living with chronic illness, we pray.
Vivian Dong	Bill Johnson	Ann McElwee	Bob Rotz	
Hattie Evans	Renée Jolly	Jessica Marie Merrick	Maria Schwenzer	
Heinley Gaspard	Bill Kelleher	Gail Miranda	Amy Shepp	
Claudia Gemgnani	Betsy Kondrat		Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF	

Pray for those who have died...

—“His mercy endures forever.” *Chronicles*

Patricia Perrotta

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



Christmas celebration: A priest, a minister, and a rabbi are discussing how each celebrates Christmas. The priest says, "We have a 12 o'clock high mass, then we go home and gather around the Christmas tree and sing 'Ave Maria' ". The Minister says, "Our traditions are very similar. We have an 11 o'clock candlelight service, then gather around the Christmas Tree and sing 'O Come all Ye Faithful' ". The rabbi says, "Well, we close the stores early, gather around cash register, and sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." ☺

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Tinselitis! ☺

What Christmas Carol is a favorite of parents? Silent Night ☺

Net News: The rumor is that the Vatican's interactive website has many great new features, including a downloadable picture of Jesus Christ which will bounce around your screen after a preset length of time. It has been christened the 'screen saviour' ☺

How is Christmas like your job? You do all the work and the fat guy in the red suit gets all the credit. ☺

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? Nothing—it was on the house! ☺

Did you hear that Santa knows karate?

He has a black belt. ☺



Parenting Tune-Up

It's getting close... and its here... Christmas is here... 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, to light the tree, to open a present...

Marriage Tune-Up



Christmas. The birth of a baby reminds us of our past ("Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is 14 generations" Mt. 1) and into our future (What will this child become?) Today, ponder the lives of your ancestors and your unknown future together.

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD "CHRISTMAS"?

The word "Christmas" comes from the Old English phrase *Christes mæsse* ("Christ's Mass")—that is the Mass celebrated in honor of Christ's birth. From this original reference to a particular Mass celebrated in the Church's liturgical year, the term came to apply both to the day on which the Mass was celebrated and to the liturgical season associated with it (i.e., the Christmas season, aka *Christmastide*). The term *Christes mæsse* began to be written in English as one word in the mid-1300s.

Note that this *only* applies to English and languages that English has influenced. Other terms are used for this day (and season) in other languages. For example, in Spanish, Christmas is *Navidad*, in Italian it is *Natale*, and in French it is *Noël*. These terms are derived from the Latin root *nativitas*, from which we also get the word "Nativity" (i.e., birth).

IS IT OKAY TO WRITE X'MAS?

Some people are uncomfortable with writing X'Mas, because X in English stands for nothing, and they even accuse those who use it of destroying the meaning of Christmas. In fact it is a linguistic abbreviation – a practice that the earliest Christians *did* frequently with sacred terms. Scholars studying early Christian manuscripts are familiar with a phenomenon known as the *nomina sacra* ("sacred names") in which terms like "God," "Jesus," "Lord," and "Christ" were *regularly abbreviated precisely because they were sacred*. 'X' is the 22nd letter of Greek alphabet known as *chi*. This *chi* is the first part of the word *chirios* which is expanded to *Christos*, which means the anointed one. The earlier way to abbreviate the word in English was *Xp-* or *Xr-* (corresponding to the "Chr-" in Greek *Χριστός*), and the form *Xres mæsse* for "Christmas" appears in the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" (c.1100). It's just an abbreviation, and there is no intention to demean Christ or Christianity. But without this background information, it is understandable that some people can be upset with the use of X'Mas.

“WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THIS BABY JESUS?”

Wade Burton tells about a man who was riding a bus from Chicago to Miami. He had a stopover in Atlanta. While he was sitting at a lunch counter, a woman came out of the women’s restroom carrying a tiny baby. She asked the man, “Will you hold my baby for me; I left my purse in the restroom.” He did. However, as the woman neared the front door of the bus station, she darted out into the crowded street and was immediately lost in the crowd. The man couldn’t believe his eyes. He rushed to the door to call the woman, but could not see her. What should he do? Put the baby down and run? When calmness settled in he went to the Traveler’s Aid booth, and they soon found the real mother. The woman who had left him holding the baby was not the baby’s mother. She had taken the child, perhaps to satisfy a motherly urge to hold a child. The man breathed a sigh of relief when the real mother was found. After all, what was he to do with a baby?

In a way, each of us is in the same situation as this gentleman. We are left with the question, “What will we do with the Baby?” Have we really come to terms with the fact that this Baby is not simply extraordinarily gifted, but that he is himself a gift from the heart of God?

JOY TO THE WORLD!

In the prologue to his book *Joy*, William Schutz tells how the birth of his son Ethan inspired him to write the book. Ethan begins his life by giving joy to his parents. The joy continues as Ethan sees, touches, tastes and hears things for the first time. However, something happens to Ethan as it does to all of us. Somehow, his joy diminishes with growth, never to return fully. Schutz wrote his book to help readers recapture some of this joy. Like Ethan, Jesus too begins his life by giving joy. Even before he is born, his very presence brings joy to people. –Even when we cannot achieve our full human potential in some of those areas Schutz outlines, we can still experience a profound interior joy because Jesus is in our midst. The power of his presence enables us to endure any difficulty, transcend any trial or overcome any obstacle. His presence can bring peace where there is anxiety, sharing where there is selfishness and dreams where there is despair. Isaac Watts was right when he composed a Christmas carol entitled “Joy to the World!” Indeed, there is real joy in the world at Christmas time because the Lord is come.

We need to experience Jesus the Emmanuel. The real meaning of Christmas actually is Emmanuel, God-with-us – God coming down to us; God coming alongside us; God seeking us out; God revealing Himself to us; God bringing us forgiveness, healing, comfort, moral strength, guidance. Each one of us has, deep down in our souls, an incredible

hunger: a hunger for purpose and meaning; a hunger to feel and celebrate the redeeming, forgiving, sustaining love of God; a hunger to be in the presence of God. Christmas is special because it reminds us concretely that God is indeed with us. In every circumstance of life, even when we are frightened or lonely or in sorrow, God is with us. So let’s go home to the heart of Christmas and embrace Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

MAKING A HOME

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Luke 1: 26-38

God asks a peasant girl of Nazareth to bear the child who will be the long-awaited Messiah. God is asking her and her fiancé to do something simple and common yet profoundly important and demanding: God asks Mary and Joseph to create a home for his Son.

As most of us realize, creating a home demands much more than constructing a building of tangible materials like wood and brick — a home is built of the intangibles of love and forgiveness. Creating a home is not just a matter of erecting walls and installing alarm systems — a home is about creating a safe place emotionally and spiritually, a place where spouses and children are always welcomed, always accepted, always loved, without limit or condition. Creating a home is not just maintaining a shelter in which to eat and sleep and play protected from the elements — a home exists for the far more challenging but fulfilling work of maintaining an environment of compassion, forgiveness and peace for those we love.

That is what God asks Mary and Joseph to do for his Son. And from the home Mary and Joseph will create will come the One who will create a family of all peoples and nations, who will reveal to men and women of faith of every place and time the way home to the Father. And that is what God asks of us in creating our homes, as well: to make places of safety and acceptance, of support and reconciliation for our families, places where the love of Mary’s Son dwells always.

In Luke’s account of Gabriel’s appearance to Mary, we realize the blessed work of making a home and place for those we love. Everything we do for our spouses and children — from grilling hamburgers on the deck to changing diapers, from vacuuming the always-in-need-of-vacuuming carpet in the family room to reading to our children at night — are all part of the holy work of making a home, of making a place for his Christ. All are signs of Emmanuel in this place and time of ours. May Mary’s making a home for God inspire us to see even the most mundane tasks of making a home for those we love as signs of God’s loving presence in our midst.



EVERY MOTHER’S “FIAT”

Just about every mother will tell you that the birth of her child changes everything. And it’s not just a matter of hormones. The birth of a child turns a woman’s world upside down — and the child becomes the center of that new world. The child comes to define the mother’s life. The child’s hungers and wants become those of the mother. The child’s cries and giggles resonate in the mother’s very being. The sleep deprivation, her own slow recovery from childbirth and the never-ending trail of Pampers are small prices to pay to see her baby smile and hear her baby giggle, to know the love of their baby’s hug, to catch her child struggling to take that first step and clap as the child utters a first word.

A mother will tell you that they never thought they could love another human being as much as this child. A mother will tell you that they never thought they could let a child take over their lives — and that they’d be so happy at the prospect. A mother will tell you that they will never regret saying yes to becoming a mother. The Gospel story begins with a mother’s yes: Mary says yes to God, yes to the gift of this child, yes to the vocation of motherhood. In the Annunciation, Mary says yes for all of us.

[Adapted from the writings of Caryl Houselander.]

Each one of us must now echo that yes to God in our own lives, that yes to accept the Child Christ into our own homes and hearts. We are all asked by God to surrender who and what we are in order to allow Christ to be born again and again in our compassion, our generosity, our selflessness, our struggle to build lives centered in God’s justice and forgiveness. Today may we say yes to God’s call to bring Christ to birth in our work and play, our home and heart.

‘EMMANUEL’ IS GOD WITH US. BUT, ARE YOU AWARE OF THAT?

“Excuse me,” said a small river fish that happened to reach the ocean to a larger fish he saw there, “You are older than I, so can you tell me where to find this thing they call the ocean?” “The ocean,” said the older fish “is the thing you are in now.” “Oh, this? But this is only salty water. What I’m seeking is the ocean,” said the disappointed fish as he swam away to search elsewhere.

Christmas Gospel introduces God as Emmanuel, one living with us. Christmas celebration should enable us to experience this God within us and all around us.

GOD IS LIGHT, AND IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL

Eight-year-old Benny died of AIDS in 1987. CBS made a movie drama about the trauma called *Moving Toward the Light*. As Benny lies dying in his mother’s arms, he asks, “What will it be like?” His mother whispers softly in his ear, “You will see a light, Benny, far away – a beautiful, shining light at the end of a long tunnel. And your spirit will lift you out of your body and start to travel toward the light. And as you go, a veil will be lifted from your eyes, and suddenly, you will see everything ... but most of all, you will feel a tremendous sense of love.” “Will it take long?” Benny asks. “No,” his mother answers, “not long at all. Like the twinkling of an eye.” Many families have been devastated by AIDS. Amid the darkness and despair, an eight-year-old boy and his mother witnessed to the sustaining power of the light of God’s presence. They have touched the lives of a multitude of people.

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

In order to have this light and to share it, we need to become Christ-bearers and Christ-givers. Since it is Jesus Who gives real meaning to our celebrations, Jesus must be reborn in us each time we celebrate Christmas. Hence, let us leave a “room in the inn” of our hearts for Jesus 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, if He is not born in my heart?” So let us pray for the grace of Jesus’ birth in each one of us today, bringing us love, mercy, kindness and compassion to give away. Let us help all those around us to experience the newly-born Savior – Jesus within us – as sharing love in the form of compassionate words, unconditional forgiveness, selfless service, merciful deeds and overflowing generosity.





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.

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



NATIONAL

Eucharistic Pilgrimage

NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC PILGRIMAGE

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage (NEP) has publicly launched!

The NEP (<https://www.eucharisticpilgrimage.org/>) will consist of four cross-country Eucharistic processions, collectively traversing the entire continental United States over a two-month period, beginning during the feast of Pentecost, **May 17-19, 2024**.

The pilgrimage is being organized by the National Eucharistic Revival campaign in conjunction with Modern Catholic Pilgrim, a Catholic nonprofit dedicated to deepening the faith across the country through pilgrimages. Along the way, the pilgrims will make stops in major U.S. cities, churches, Catholic colleges, and holy sites. Parishes along the routes will host Mass, adoration, devotions, praise and worship, lectures on the Eucharist, and more.

The Seton Route, which will begin in New Haven, Connecticut, will be passing through the Diocese of Metuchen on May 27-28, 2024. The four pilgrimage processions will ultimately converge in Indianapolis on July 16, 2024, to participate in the National Eucharistic Congress. Adam Carlisle, Secretary for Evangelization and Communication, will be helping to organize our diocese's involvement. If anyone is interested in assisting with this important event, please feel free to contact him at acarlisle@diometuchen.org.

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.

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING NEW, UNUSED ITEMS IN THEIR ORIGINAL PACKAGING TO THE ST. MATTHIAS SCHOOL NIGHT OF WINNERS! DONATIONS CAN BE DROPPED OFF TO THE SCHOOL OR PARISH OFFICE.

Jewelry	Vacation Home Rentals	Collectibles
Bottles of Wine/Liquor	American Girl Dolls	Barware
Housewares	Sporting Equipment	Pet Items
Appliances	Gaming Stations	Beauty Items
Electronics (TV's, iPads, Kindles, etc.)		

Not sure what we might be looking for?
You can purchase something from the AMAZON WISH LIST:
https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3A6FWUGQ9Y32T?ref=wl_share

FAMILY MINISTRY FAIR LIVE WEBINAR

January 25, 2024

All are welcome to join our Family Ministry Fair Live Webinar on Thursday, January 25, 2024 from 1:00 – 3:30 PM. Our four speakers will be: Dr. Gregory Popcak (Catholic HOM), Damon Owens (Communio), Enza Cerami (Living Stones, Inc.) and Patrick Metts, LPC (RESTORE Catholic Marriage Resource). This event presents a chance to learn and grow parish outreach to families and also minister to marriages. For more information and/or to RSVP for the Zoom link please contact cdaverso@diometuchen.org

Serve



The Giving Tree

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

ROSARY FOR LIFE

January 19, 2024

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 19, 2024, 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 Avenue, 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.

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 & 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



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.

Stewardship Reflection December 24, 2023 4th Sunday of Advent

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" – Luke 1:28

After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. Her entire life was lived in obedience to God's call. Mary teaches us to live with joy for all we have been given. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Mary reflects the light of Christ. Like Mary, we are called to reflect Christ's light to the world through our gratitude and generosity.

Reflexiónese 24 de diciembre 2023 4º Domingo de Adviento

"Salve, llena de gracia, El Señor está contigo." - LUCAS 1:28

Después de Jesús, vemos a María como un ideal de corresponsabilidad. Vivió su vida entera obedeciendo el llamado de Dios. María nos enseña a vivir con alegría por todo lo que nos ha sido dado. Así como la luna refleja la luz del sol, María refleja la luz de Cristo. Como María, somos llamados a reflejar la luz de Cristo al mundo a través de nuestra gratitud y generosidad.



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.

Connecting to Our Local Community



Saturday, December 31, 9:30 am-3 pm — in person program
Year-End Day of Prayer

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. (\$20-\$30 as you are able)

Wednesday, January 2, 7-8:30 pm Hybrid

Monthly Series: Contemplative Nonviolent Prayer & Practice - Lord, Your Servant is Listening

Today the words “Contemplative Living” are popular, but what do these words mean?

This monthly series explores in depth ways to nurture our prayer life and how to live the abundant, holistic life that Jesus has promised us. First Tuesday of the month, 7-8:30 pm (Per session—\$20-30 as you are able)

Presenter: Connie Palmer, LCSW

January Co-Ed Retreat:

Exploring the Many Ways of Prayer

January 25-28, 2024

Led by Fr. Joe Costantino, S.J.



Are you in a rut with your prayer life? Perhaps you may even feel as if you have no prayer life at all or maybe your prayer life simply needs to be given a new shot of life and energy. Wherever you are in your prayer life and faith journey, this retreat is for you. This retreat offers an extra night for prayer for those who wish to begin a day earlier.

Loyola Jesuit Center, 161 James Street, Morristown, NJ 07960

Pregnancy Aid Center Needs Your Help



Pregnancy Aid Center (59 Thompson Street, Raritan; 908 526-8121) is in serious need of toddler coats and winter clothing, diapers, wipes, shampoo, toys and baby equipment to help local needy moms and children. It is a great way to give new life to your children's outgrown items.

Drop off is Wednesdays from 12 pm to 2 pm: the center is open from 11am to 2 pm on Mondays; 10am to 12:30 pm on Tuesdays, and 10am to 12 pm and 4 pm to 5:30 pm on Thursdays.

Parish Leadership

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
FinanceCouncil
[@stmatthias.net](https://www.facebook.com/stmatthias.net)
 Carmen Driz-Melilli
 Barry Dusault
 Gwen Orlovski

Audrey Francis
 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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