



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, **rdemkovitz**
Nathalie Godet, *Website & Bulletin Coordinator*,
ngodet

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

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**

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023
1st Sunday of Advent

Solemnity
of the
Immaculate
Conception
of the
Blessed
Virgin Mary
this Friday,
December 8th
is a Holy Day of
Obligation

Mass Times:
8 AM, 12:10 PM,
& 7:30 PM



BLOOD DRIVE

Saturday, December 9

8:30am – 2:30pm

The Knights of Columbus along with the
St. Matthias Home School Association

168 JFK Blvd Somerset, NJ

To make an appointment: www.nybc.org/drive / Sponsor code: **14750**

Or scan QR code



Appointments are preferred however walk-ins will be welcomed if space permits. Please remember to eat, drink, and bring your ID with your name and photo. Visit nybc.org/learnmore for COVID-19 safety protocols.



800.933.BLOOD · nybc.org #njbloodservices

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

The Church is open for individual prayer

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

Sunday, Dec 3, 2023 **1st Sunday of Advent**

8:00AM Mass Church
 10:00AM Mass Church
 11:00AM Rosary Altar Society Mtg. John XXIII Rm
 12:00PM Mass Church
 2:00PM GIFT Church, John XXIII & Clsrms

Monday, Dec 4, 2023 **St. John Damascene, Priest & Doctor**

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

Tuesday, Dec 5, 2023 **St. Sabbas the Sanctified, Abbot**

8:00AM Mass Church
 6:30PM GIFT Church, John XXIII & Clsrms
 6:30PM SMS Multi-sport Club Cafeteria
 7:30 PM SVDP mtg.

Wednesday, Dec 6, 2023 **St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra**

8:00AM Mass, St. Joseph Novena Church
 9:30AM Prayer Group 1 Holy Spirit de Porres Rm
 2:00PM Bereavement Group de Porres Rm
 7:00PM Eucharist Presentation - B John XXIII Rm
 7:30PM Folk Grp Rehearsal Church

Thursday, Dec 7, 2023 **St. Ambrose, Archbishop & Doctor**

8:00AM Mass Church
 3:30PM Children's Choir Gr. 3 & 4 Church
 4:00PM Children's Choir Gr. 5-8 Church
 7:30PM Sunday 10AM Choir Rehearsal Church

Friday, Dec 8, 2023 **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary — Holy Day of Obligation**

8:00AM Mass Church
 12:10AM Mass Church
 7:30PM Mass Church

Saturday, Dec 9, 2023 **St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin**

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

Sunday, Dec 10, 2023 **2nd Sunday of Advent**

8:00AM Mass Church
 10:00AM Mass-Sign Language Interpreter Church & Family Mass
 11:00AM Children's Liturgy of the Word K-5 John XXIII Rm
 11:00AM 1st Reconciliation Prep #3 Church & clsrms
 11:00AM Rosary Altar Society Mtg. John XXIII Rm
 12:00PM Mass Church
 4:00PM SMYLE Youth Grp. Cafeteria

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,

We are happy that our “Spread the Light Christmas Tree” campaign is on track despite some hiccups along the way. Seven parishes, including ours, had decided to collaborate in buying the trees from the same Tree company. But all of us were disappointed at the much smaller size of the trees delivered instead of what we had ordered. We complained to the company and they replaced more than half of our trees that were too small. Hence we are able to do justice to all our parishioners and others who sponsored the trees, though there may be slight variations in size. Thank you for your understanding of a situation beyond our control. Hearty thank you to Jo-Ann Piagentini and Pat Cullen who coordinated the entire project with the help of so many of our parishioners and staff – too many to name here. Enjoy the ethereal beauty of these 300 trees lit for over a month from now, and invite your families and friends to come and enjoy the same.

This first Sunday of Advent reminds us to enter this holy season of preparation for Christmas with hope. Unlike the animals, we are blessed with the ability to think about the future. We need to do it with hope rather than hopelessness. One of the reasons why we read the Old Testament passages during Advent is to learn about the hopes of the people of those times. They longed for restoration of order and peace in a world of division and conflict as they awaited the Messiah. Our hopes are no different from theirs: lasting peace, tranquil lives, sufficiency of food, end to conflicts, suffering and pain. The difference is that we know that the Messiah has come and so we await the anniversary of his coming as well as be conscious of his second coming at the end of time.

The Advent practices are meant to help us welcome the Messiah in our hearts in a very conscious way. The lighting of the Advent wreath is a beautiful practice that happens in our church each Sunday of Advent. But it is a lovely practice that more and more families are doing at home. Please see in today's bulletin a short prayer service for the families who plan to have an Advent wreath lighting at home.

Jesus is ‘Word made flesh’ and so we need to listen to God’s Word more frequently. In the recent months, many of our parishioners have been taking a copy of “The Word Among Us” monthly publication. Some of you have told me that the daily scripture readings, prayers and reflections in them were very helpful. I am happy that we offered this free for our parishioners even though I was told to follow the practice in some parishes where an offering of a dollar per book is in place. No matter what, growing in familiarity with the Word is truly a great preparation for Christmas.

Let us not forget that receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the best spiritual preparation for Christmas. Both of us priests plan to be available for confessions during the whole season of Advent: weekdays after the 8 am Mass, and a longer time on Saturdays from 3:00 – 4:30 pm. If these times are not convenient, you can call any of us and make an appointment. I would encourage you to plan early to take advantage of this Sacrament that brings so much peace of heart.

Let us all live Advent and make it a fruitful experience.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal



Readings for the Week

Monday, December 4, 2023 Is 2:1-5 Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9 Mt 8:5-11

Tuesday, December 5, 2023 Is 11:1-10 Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17 Lk 10:21-24

Wednesday, December 6, 2023 Is 25:6-10a Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 Mt 15:29-37

Thursday, December 7, 2023 Is 26:1-6 Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a Mt 7:21, 24-27

Friday, December 8, 2023 Gn 3:9-15, 20 Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 Eph 1:3-6, 11-12 Lk 1:26-38

Saturday, December 9, 2023 Is 30:19-21, 23-26 Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Sunday, December 10, 2023 Is 40:1-5, 9-11 Ps 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14 2 Pt 3:8-14 Mk 1:1-8



Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, Dec 2	5:00PM	Craig Slyman, by Mom & Dad
Sunday, Dec 3	8:00AM	David Lacson, by The Derikito Family
	10:00AM	Bill Murphy, by Murphy Family
	12:00PM	Intention of Parishioners
Monday, Dec 4	8:00AM	Beatrice V. English, by Vinnie
Tuesday, Dec 5	8:00AM	Caroline Williams, by Mary Jo & Jim Masucci
Wednesday, Dec 6	8:00AM	Jack Sullivan, by Mary & Family
Thursday, Dec 7	8:00AM	Jim Isola, by Joanne Pisciotta
Friday, Dec 8	8:00AM	Benito & Genarda Capuno, by The Capuno Family
	12:10PM	Edith Casaclang, by daughter Grace
	7:30PM	Arielle Albani, by The Albani Family
Saturday, Dec 9	5:00PM	Paul & Maureen Doyle Endres, by Isabelle & John Baker
Sunday, Dec 10	8:00AM	Intention of Parishioners
	10:00AM	Brita Marrero & Hans Ammann, by Mike & Julie Burke
	12:00PM	Mary Gidaro, by Mary Pat Burke

Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please call the Parish Office or **email Kelly Counts** at kcunts@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 | Linda Hartong | Christine Matthews | Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF |
| Samantha Bellouny | Marilyn Horvath | Ann McElwee | Sr. Bernadine Marie Stemnock |
| Tara Capatosto | Amanda Isele | Jessica Marie Merrick | Jacqueline Taylor |
| Elizabeth Card | Baby Elaine Isele | Gail Miranda | Anita Vance |
| Kyle Davidson | Bill Johnson | Robert Pellegrino | Eileen Weber |
| Lisa DeFeo | Renée Jolly | Robert Pietrowiak | Nancy Whelan |
| Zenon DeGuzman | Bill Kelleher | Randolff Pinard | Ginette Zamor |
| Marlene DiMaggio | Betsy Kondrat | Valerie Polci | Anne Zando |
| Hattie Evans | Armando D. Liban | Kim Price | |
| Heinley Gaspard | Mary Lou Littrakis | Denise Pultro | |
| Claudia Gemgnani | John Littrakis | Doris Regan | |
| Emma Gergely | Denis Loboda | Gabriel Rivera | |
| Gerry & Jack Gernert | Aries Magali | Arina Robinson | |
| Marie Godet | Al Maglio | Maria Schwenzer | |
| Shelly Greene | Alexandra Marquez | Amy Shepp | |

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

Pray for those who have died... — “His mercy endures forever.” Chronicles

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



If you meet a turkey the day after Thanksgiving, what do you call it? = Lucky! 😊

Little Johnny's kindergarten class was on a field trip to their local police station where they saw pictures, tacked to a bulletin board, of the 10 most wanted men. One of the youngsters pointed to a picture and asked if it really was the photo of a wanted person. "Yes," said the policeman. "The detectives want him very badly." So Little Johnny asked, "Why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?" 😊

My mother in law came for a visit so I asked her - How long do you plan to stay? Just until I start getting on your nerves, she replied. Oh, so you won't even stay for a coffee? 😊

Upgrade mine: "Mom, our Sunday school teacher said that God made our brains and they are like computers; when is God going to upgrade mine?" 😊

Kidding?: Reaching the end of a job interview, the Human Resources Officer asks a young engineer fresh out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "And what starting salary are you looking for?" The engineer replies, "In the region of \$150,000 a year, depending on the benefits package." The interviewer inquires, "Well, what would you say to a package of five weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary, and a company car leased every two years, say, a red Corvette?" The engineer sits up straight and says, "Wow! Are you kidding?" The interviewer replies, "Yeah, but you started it." 😊

A pedestrian steps off the curb and into the road without looking and promptly gets knocked flat by a passing cyclist. "You were really lucky there," says the cyclist. "What on earth are you talking about! That really hurt!" says the pedestrian, still on the pavement, rubbing his head. The cyclist replies, "Well, usually I drive a bus!" 😊



Parenting Tune-Up

Advent begins Dec. 3. Although too often considered as the Christmas shopping season our Church reminds us that it is a time to "Be watchful! Be alert!" (Mark 13:33) During this Advent each day watch your child and note one kind, joyful, or positive act.

Marriage Tune-Up



"Be watchful! Be alert!" (Mark 13:33) Advent has begun. Each day try to notice one act of helpfulness or kindness that your beloved does. Don't take each other for granted.

From the Pastoral Council

AN INVITATION FROM THE PASTORAL COUNCIL



Dear Parishioners,

This year is the 40th anniversary of the ordination of Fr. Abraham. Many of you may already know this from the July issue of the Catholic Spirit that covered this year's significant anniversaries of the priests of our diocese. Father is not interested in any extravagant celebration. So the plan is to have a simple and modest celebration on **Sunday, December 17, 2023** (the actual date of his ordination). We, the Parish Pastoral Council members, cordially invite you to attend the Jubilee Mass on that Sunday at 12 noon and afterward join a fellowship meal in the cafeteria.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Wegg and Frank Rees

For the Parish Pastoral Council

Reflect

WALK SLOW ... ENJOY EVERY MOMENT

"Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come." Mark 13: 33-37

Every morning, she goes for a walk with her two daughters. The first half goes quickly. The three walk the third-of-a-mile up the road to the older daughter's kindergarten at the end of their street. She hugs her five-year-old goodbye and sends her on her way.

Then she and her four-year-old, Poesy, turn around and start back. The return trip home lasts as long as Mom is willing to let it. They cover the same third-of-a-mile, but the pace is slower and the path meandering, as Poesy stops to probe the mysteries along the way: investigating a storm drain, examining a fallen scarlet maple leaf, scaling a water puddle (missing the first couple of attempts). She discovers a twig and leaf and excitedly shows her mother how, together, they make a flag. "Mommy! Look!" Poesy cries as she points to a beautiful rainbow hovering over the mist created by a water sprinkler. Her attention constantly revolves, to a dog one second, to a feather the next, then to an eye-catching pebble. Mom hides her impatience. There's a great deal to be done today. Both have places to be. While Mom cherishes this time with her daughter, she's aware that the clock is ticking.

But still . . . "Watching her, I feel the rush of time," she writes, "and I realize just how soon these walks of ours will end. Come September she will be in kindergarten; I will leave both girls at school and walk on my own. Once again I'll travel as quickly as I want to, but the appeal of that has now faded away. These slow morning rambles with my four-year-old - the new day glimmering around us, the sun warm on our backs - are the most fleeting kind of pleasure. I'll try to remember, later, what she did and said, but the feeling of the moment, sweet and simple, will be gone. "I stop walking, looking over my shoulder for Poesy. When she gets to me, I reach down and take her hand."

On this First Sunday of Advent, Jesus urges us to appreciate what this mom comes to realize on her morning walk with her daughters: that life is precious, that our world changes, that our time is limited. Father Richard Rohr writes that faith and spirituality begin with "seeing. It's not about earning or achieving but about "paying attention": paying attention to the presence of God in every joy and sorrow, in every pain and trauma, in every victory and setback before us. Advent calls us to "watch," to be "alert" to the presence of God in the love of family and friends, to find the true meaning and purpose of our lives in moments of compassion, forgiveness, and generosity.

AN ADVENT PROJECT

Every morning when we get up, let us pray, "Lord, show me someone today with whom I may share your love, mercy and forgiveness." Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said, "Whatever you do in your family, for your children, for your husband, for your wife, you do for Jesus." Every night when we go to bed, let us ask ourselves, "Where have I found Christ today?" The answer will be God's Advent gift to us that day. By being alert and watchful we will receive an extra gift: Christ himself. **Let us remember the saying of St. Thomas Aquinas: "Without God, I can't. Without me, He won't."**

WHAT ABOUT ETERNITY?

We are so future-oriented concerning our life here on earth that we often forget the life beyond entirely. We spend too much time trying to protect ourselves against future misfortunes. We save for a rainy day, to get married, to buy a home, to send the children to college, to retire in comfort and to protect ourselves against future misfortunes. But we need to be more spiritually wakeful and prepare for our eternal life because we can die any day, and that is the end of the world for us. Let this Advent season be the time of such a preparation for us.

ADVENT! ... WAKE UP! ... BUT TO WHAT?

Do you remember the movie *Awakening*? Robert De Niro plays the part of a patient who, for thirty years, does not move or speak. A particularly, sensitive and enterprising doctor tries out some new theories and lo and behold, the patient begins to move around, talk and feel. For a brief period he returns to this world and announces to those amazed folks around him that he is back: "I have been away for quite some time.... now I am back." He becomes gradually aware of the love and concern that surrounds him and what is really alive inside of his heart and soul. -It is never too late to wake up. Morning is when you wake up. Advent is a nice time to wake up. Wake up to give an account of your stewardship. Wake up into a time for giving and sharing, a time that we are called to be thankful and prepare our hearts for the Christ child. Wake up and open your eyes in Faith to see God present and active in your life and in your world.



WHAT "IMMACULATE CONCEPTION" OF MARY MEANS

There's a popular misunderstanding that it refers to Jesus' conception by the Virgin Mary. It doesn't. Instead, it refers to the special way in which the Virgin Mary herself was conceived. This conception was not virginal. (That is, she had a human father Joachim as well as a human mother Anne.) But it was special and unique in another way. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (no.490) explains it this way: "To become the mother of the Savior, Mary "was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role." The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as "full of grace". Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin."

Being a Holy Day of Obligation, you are invited to attend any of the three Masses we have this Friday: 8 am, 12:10 pm and 7:30 pm.

WESLEY, LUTHER AND A GARDENER

Once **John Wesley** was asked what he would do if he knew this was his last day on earth. He replied, "At 4 o'clock I would have some tea. At 6 I would visit Mrs. Brown in the hospital. Then at 7:30 I would conduct a mid-week prayer service. At 10 I would go to bed and would wake up in glory."

When **Martin Luther** was asked what he would do on the day of Jesus' return, he said he would go out and plant a tree. Bible tells us that Christ expects each of us to be about our work so that when he comes, he will find us in gainful and constructive employment, taking care of the world as his trustees.

Some years ago a tourist visited the Castle Villa Asconti on the shores of Lake Como in northern Italy. Only **the old gardener** opened the gates and the visitor stepped into the garden, which was perfectly kept. The visitor asked when the owner was last there. He was told, "Twelve years ago." Did he ever write? No. Where did he get instructions? From his agent in Milan. Does the master ever come? No. "But, you keep the grounds as though your master were coming back tomorrow." The old gardener quickly replied, "Today, sir, today."

A Christian watches and works as though the Master would return this very day. He wants Jesus to find him busy about his tasks: washing dishes, mending shoes, running a lathe, teaching school, planting a rose bush. Jesus will be pleased to see his faithful ones working hard to build a better world, a more Christian society.

THE ADVENT WREATH IN YOUR FAMILY

The Advent wreath, four candles on a wreath of evergreen, is shaped in a perfect circle to symbolize the eternity of God. In our church, three of the candles are purple and one candle is rose or pink, to represent joy. During each Sunday of the Advent season, we focus on one of the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. Others consider the lighting of the first candle to symbolize expectation, while the second symbolizes hope, the third joy and the fourth purity. It is a common practice for families to light Advent wreath candles at home. Here is a suggestion to have a little family prayer for lighting the first candle this Sunday:

The family gathers around the Advent wreath. Begin with the sign of the cross.

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

Child #1: How does this happen?

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

Family: "Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."

Mother: A reading from the prophet Jeremiah: "The Lord said, 'I made a wonderful promise to Israel and Judah, and the days are coming when I will keep it. I promised that the time will come when I will appoint a king from the family of David, a king who will be honest and rule with justice. In those days, Judah will be safe; Jerusalem will have peace and will be named 'The LORD Gives Justice.'" (Jeremiah 33:14-16)

Father: Today, we wait for the coming of Jesus. We begin in the dark, and on this first Sunday of Advent, we light the first candle.

First candle is lit by one of the children.

Child #2 : Every week in Advent, we will light another candle. Each candle that we light will remind us that the Light of the World will soon come to us in the human form of the baby Jesus.

Family: Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, he is the Savior of every nation. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation. May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord. R/. Amen.

Serve



The Giving Tree

Our Giving Tree is at the front of the Church and will remain there until **Sunday, December 17th**. We invite you to take an ornament and purchase some/all of the suggested items. If you prefer to directly ship your gift, please visit www.stmatthias.net/givingtree, to access the Amazon link to the Great Expectations Wish List.

We will be collecting gifts the weekends of December 9th /10th and December 16th / 17th ONLY.

All gifts are due back no later than December 17th.

Please be sure to **SECURE THE ORNAMENTS TO THE PACKAGES.**

Without the tags we have no way of knowing where the gifts are to be delivered.

We can always use more elves after Mass and drivers for deliveries on **Monday, December 11th and Monday, December 18th**, after the **8:00 AM Mass**.

If you'd like to volunteer, please contact **Joanne Diana** at (732)322-6270 or j-diana@comcast.net.

Once again in conjunction with Catholic Charities we will distribute gifts to Elijah's Promise, Great Expectations, Naomi's Way, Ozanam Family Shelter, Ozanam Men's Shelter, PACT, YES Early Learning Centers (Sacred Heart & St. Ladislaus), as well as Pregnancy Aid and Local Families.

St. Matthias parishioners and friends have always been generous.

*Please keep up our tradition, it means a lot to so many people in need. **Thank you!***



SMYLE YOUTH GROUP PROJECT

On Saturday, **December 9th** and **Sunday, December 10th** all SMYLE members are asked to volunteer to help with the collection of the following items

for Unity Square after all the Masses:

Men's-hats, scarves, gloves, toiletry items such as small deodorant, soap, and washcloths.

Thank you!!!

Pray



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.

From the Pastoral Staff

The poet J. Janda writes “As fish live only in water we live only in Christ; this is Truth, anything less is delusion; yet the lie is made Truth and Truth is made the lie.” (*Christ Our Earth*)

Many times, I am saddened to hear various scenarios where people are viewed as “problems”. The truth is that we are not problems to be solved, but rather mysteries to be encountered. This was a running mantra during the National Catholic Youth Conference that I had recently attended. There were 12,000 youth and Youth Ministers who had experienced many diverse opportunities to openly express their faith, questions, and struggles as Catholics living in Christ.



I wish to share an exciting news that St. Matthias was recently awarded an opportunity by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry to participate in a 3-year opportunity to learn and implement Accompaniment strategies. I would like to thank our Pastor - Fr. Abraham, and our Coordinator for Youth Ministry - Sue Lenczewski, for contributing content during our formal application process and participating in an interview with the NFCYM staff. We had described our parish as being very concerned about youth faith formation. Besides the traditional approach, we have tried other ways of getting the youth involved. The Accompaniment project sounds very promising because it's promoting an inter-generational aspect of ministerial engagement among a diverse community. We have a long tradition of community engagement and outreach and eagerness to embrace new models and methods of faith and parish formation.

From poignant description of the church as a field hospital, to proclaiming the need for mercy in a jubilee year and beyond, Pope Francis has spoken again and again about our need to meet people in whatever circumstances life has given them and to walk with them in compassion and love.

In terms of accompaniment, we hope to have significantly greater involvement of the parish community with our youth spanning all facets of parish life - rather than keeping Youth Ministry as separated and isolated from the community. Also, more visibility for the youth in the Sunday Liturgy and parish events, making them aware that they belong and that their presence is valued.

I am very hopeful that the coming three years of our parish joining this national pilot program of accompanying the youth (we are one of only 43 parishes selected nationally) will bring our youth into a significant presence and prominence in the life of our parish community.

Prayers for a Blessed and Happy Advent!

Deacon John

GIVING TUESDAY “WORKS OF MERCY”

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. Thank you. This year, instead of focusing on any particular project, we wish to highlight the “**Works of Mercy**” to further the God-given mission of our parish and help those in need. Thank you for your goodness. **For more information & to donate visit: www.stmatthias.net/givingtuesday/**

To Donate to the Church:



To Donate to the School:



Connect



Please join members of the **St. Matthias Rosary Altar Society** and fellow parishioners for a Rosary for families on **Sunday, December 3rd** after the 10:00 AM Mass in the Pope St. John XXIII Room (PMR).
Light refreshments will be served following the rosary.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETS IN PERSON ON DECEMBER 13th AT 2 PM

The Alzheimer's Association and St. Matthias Catholic Church are co-hosting a monthly Support Group for individuals living with Alzheimer's or Dementia, their care partners, and others dealing with the disease. Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, December 13th, from 2:00 PM -3:00 PM** in the Parish Office at St. Matthias. **Registration is required.**



To register, call 800-272-3900 and mention the St. Matthias group.

The Group provides a safe and supportive environment and offers dementia-related education, emotional support, and connections with resources so that the group members may enhance their lives in the midst of the journey.

For more information, visit alz.org/NJ.

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.



SMS students, faculty, parents, and friends rocked their [teambellouny](https://www.teambellouny.com) shirts in support of Mrs. Bellouny, our Middle School teacher. Mrs. Bellouny, you are an inspiration to all and you are in our daily.



Give (and Receive!)

Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024				Last Year's Total
Current Month	In-Pew/Mail	Parish Giving	Weekly Total	Weekly Total
Week 10 - November 5, 2023	\$11,350.50	\$17,757.75	\$29,108.25	\$28,125.75
Week 11 - November 12, 2023	\$14,173.50	\$23,455.39	\$37,628.89	\$29,089.50
Week 12 - November 19, 2023	\$8,747.50	\$13,140.25	\$21,887.75	\$21,264.25
Week 13 - November 26, 2023	\$9,358.00	\$8,949.25	\$18,307.25	\$19,212.25
			Month-to-date Total	November Total Last Year
			\$106,932.14	\$97,691.75
			Current Year-to-date	Year-to-date as of November
			\$1,914,436.75	\$1,871,586.06

Stewardship Reflection December 3, 2023 First Sunday of Advent

“Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.” - Mark 13:33

We all take things for granted. In particular, we take time for granted. We make our lives too busy. We plan our days, weeks, months, even years in advance. Remember, our time on earth is a gift. None of us knows how long we will be here. Start today and begin thanking God for each and every day.

Reflexiónese 3 de diciembre 2023 1er Domingo de Adviento

“;Vigile! ;Manténgase alerta! Usted no sabe cuándo llegará el momento.” - Marcos 13:33

Damos las cosas por sentado. En particular, damos el tiempo por sentado. Tenemos nuestras vidas demasiado ocupadas. Planificamos por adelantado nuestros días, semanas, meses y aún nuestros años. Recuerde, nuestro tiempo en la tierra es un regalo. Ninguno de nosotros sabe cuánto tiempo estaremos aquí. Empiece hoy y comience a darle gracias a Dios por todos y cada uno de nuestros días. Tómese un tiempo en silencio, todos los días, y escuche cómo Dios lo está llamando en este momento para ayudar a construir Su reino en la tierra.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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

Parish 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 Carmen Driz-Mellini Barry Dusault Gwen Orlowski	Audrey Francis Joan Pritchard Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, Ex-Officio Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio
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About St. Matthias (please contact the staff members on the cover for up-to-date information)

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

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

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

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



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



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