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

Mass Schedule (in person):
 Sat - 5PM, Sun - 8, 10 AM & 12 noon
 M/T/W/Th/F at 8:00AM
 And also on our YouTube channel
youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ

St. Matthias School (SMS):
 170 JFK Blvd., Somerset, NJ 08873
www.stmatthias.info 732-828-1402

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 Joseph Gidaro, *Vice Principal*, [jgidaro](mailto:jgidaro@stmatthiasnj.org)

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS

SUNDAY, DEC 12, 2021 – Third Sunday of Advent Religious Retirement Fund Sunday

Reconciliation Opportunities

Please see the article on page 7 for several opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Christmas.

The Giving Tree

Please see the article, containing updated information, on page 10.



**WELCOME TO THE ST. MATTHIAS
 CHRISTMAS TREE AND NATIVITY DISPLAY!**

We are grateful to all who have sponsored a tree.

To find a specific tree, scan the following code:



This display is open to the public/visitors
 and we welcome you to
 bring your family and friends.

If you would like to make a donation,
 we invite you to text
TREEDISPLAY to 44-321

May this Christmas Season bring you many blessings!

Visit Nativity & Trees

Our Nativity and Tree display will be lit nightly from 6 pm till Midnight through January 6. To find a tree, search for the sponsor's name on our website:

www.stmatthias.net/treedirectory or use your phone to scan the QR code on one of the signs by an orange cone on the field. The display is open to the public and all visitors. Visitors who would like to make a donation are invited to text **TREEDISPLAY to 44-321**

#GIVING TUESDAY THANKYOU

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

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

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

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



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

This Week at St. Matthias

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

The Church is open for individual prayer

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

Christmas Trees and Nativity—Lit Every Night from 6pm till Midnight

Sunday Dec 12, 2021 3rd Sunday of Advent Retirement Fund for Religious

Poinsettias delivered to Homebound Neumann Rm
SMYLE Blessing Bag Items Collected at all Masses

| | | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| 8:00AM | Mass | Church |
| 10:00AM | Mass | Church |
| 10:00AM | 1st Reconciliation Prep Church, clsm, & John XXIII Rm | Cafeteria |
| 10:30AM | RCIA | Church |
| 12:00PM | Mass | Church |
| 4:00PM | SMYLE Mtg.—Assemble Blessing Bags | Cafeteria |

Monday, Dec 13, 2021 St. Lucy, Martyr

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

Tuesday, Dec 14, 2021 St. John of the Cross

| | | |
|--------|--|--------|
| 8:00AM | Daily Mass | Church |
| 7:00PM | SMDP Racial Justice Initiative Core Grp. | Zoom |

Wednesday, Dec 15, 2021, St. Maria di Rosa, Foundress of Handmaids of Charity

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

Thursday, Dec 16, 2021, St. Adelaide of Italy, Holy Roman Empress

| | | |
|--------|------------------------------------|--------|
| 8:00AM | Mass | Church |
| 3:30PM | Children's Choir gr. 3&4 rehearsal | Church |
| 4:15PM | Children's Choir gr. 5-8 rehearsal | Church |
| 7:30PM | Sunday 10AM Choir rehearsal | Church |
| 7:30PM | neXt Level Mtg. | Zoom |

Friday, Dec 17, 2021, St. Josep I Vives, Priest

| | | |
|--------|------------|--------|
| 8:00AM | Daily Mass | Church |
|--------|------------|--------|

Saturday, Dec 18, 2021, St. Flannan, Monk, 1st Bishop of Killaloe, Ireland

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|--------|
| 3:00PM | Sacrament of Reconciliation | Church |
| 5:00PM | Mass | Church |

Sunday Dec 19, 2021 4th Sunday of Advent

| | | |
|---------|---|--------|
| 8:00AM | Mass | Church |
| 10:00AM | Mass | Church |
| 12:00PM | Mass | Church |
| 6:30PM | Advent Holy Hour with the Sacrament of Reconciliation | Church |



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends,

A friend of mine recently warned me about an 'Advent Virus' going around! Here is more info:

Be on the alert for symptoms of inner Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. The hearts of a great many are already exposed to this virus and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world. Some signs and symptoms of The Advent Virus:

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging other people.
- A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- A loss of interest in conflict.
- A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

Please send this warning out to all your friends. This virus can and has affected many systems. Some systems have been completely cleaned out because of it.

How wonderful it will be if all of us were infected with this Advent Virus!! For many of us, cutting Christmas chaos can be a dream come true as this warning about the Advent Virus reminds us. But it is possible with planning, intention and lots of prayer. If you feel stressed or rushed, try this or similar prayer: *Loving God, help me focus on a peaceful pace rather than a harried one. I will keep moving forward gently, not frantically. Help me let go of my need to be anxious, upset, and harried. Help me replace it with a need to be at peace and in harmony.*

As we enter the frenzy-phase of Christmas rush, I invite us to focus on the theme of Mercy that Jesus came to proclaim. I'm very happy that many have already made use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Saturdays of Advent when both Msgr. Brennan and myself have been making ourselves available in the Confessional with an extra half hour, from 3 – 4:30 pm.

Like Jesus our Master who went after and cared for the stray sheep, Pope Francis has been reminding us that the church is a "field hospital" for injured souls, where the wounded are welcomed and loved, not judged. If we hesitate to go for Confession or doubt the grace of this sacrament, listen to the words of Pope Francis:

"It is not easy to entrust oneself to God's mercy, because it is an abyss beyond our comprehension. But we must! ... "Oh, I am a great sinner!" "All the better! Go to Jesus: He likes you to tell him these things!" He forgets, He has a very special capacity for forgetting. He forgets, He kisses you, He embraces you and He simply says to you: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more" (Jn 8:11)." Happy Advent!

Your brother in Christ,
Fr. Abraham Orapankal



Readings for the Week

Monday: Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a; Ps 25:4-5ab, 6, 7bc, 8-9; Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday: Zep 3:1-2, 9-13; Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19, 23; Mt 21:28-32

Wednesday: Is 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25; Ps 85:9ab, 10, 11-12, 13-14; Lk 7:18b-23

Thursday: Is 54:1-10; Ps 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12a, 13b; Lk 7:24-30

Friday: Gn 49:2, 8-10; Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17; Mt 1:1-17

Saturday: Jer 23:5-8; Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19; Mt 1:18-25

Sunday: Mi 5:1-4a; Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45

Mass Intentions for the Week

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------|---|
| Saturday, Dec 11 | 5:00PM | Birthday Blessings for Frances Curtis, by The Family |
| Sunday, Dec 12 | 8:00AM | Jose Jesus David Mateo, Sr., by Carla & Susan Tiongson |
| | 10:00AM | Elsie Meagher, by son, Tom Meagher |
| | 12:00PM | Clemens P. Scheurle, by The Scheurle Family |
| | (5:30PM) | Intention of Parishioners |
| Monday, Dec 13 | 8:00AM | In Loving Memories of deceased members of the San Juan & Santos Families, by A. Santos Family |
| Tuesday, Dec 14 | 8:00AM | Linda Grey, by The Kane Family |
| Wednesday, Dec 15 | 8:00AM | Anne Caputo, by The Goodman Family |
| Thursday, Dec 16 | 8:00AM | Manny Locsin, by Alex & Marie Maceren |
| Friday, Dec 17 | 8:00AM | Leonor Guillerma, by Alma Valdez |
| Saturday, Dec 18 | 5:00PM | Danny Rogan & Pat O'Connor, by Margaret Gallegher |
| Sunday, Dec 19 | 8:00AM | Jose Jesus David Mateo, Sr., by Carla & Susan Tiongson |
| | 10:00AM | Angela Frigiola, by The Misuraca Family |
| | 12:00PM | Dorothy Gonzalez, by Anne Marie Francis |
| | (5:30PM) | Intention of Parishioners |

Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please call the Parish Office or **email Kelly Counts** at kcounts@stmatthias.net to add the name to this list. Names will be listed in the bulletin for **6 weeks**. Please let us know if this time period needs to be extended. We want to know how you are doing and want to offer you the support of our prayers. *New people on our prayer list are noted in blue.*

Carolyn Banghart

Maria Barreiro

Virginia Briggs

Marie Brody

Thomas Burns

Tara Capatosto

Ellen Catalina

Tom Current

Joseph DeFrancesco

Cenon DeGuzman

Mary Ellen Delaney

Alaina Derecola

Surya & Juliany Dharma

Jim Dolan

Mary Dolan

William Dolphin

John Farkas

Claudia Gemgnani

Emma Gergely

Rose Gessner

Mary Gidaro

Marie Godet

Sloopy Hoffman

Baby Isla-Rose Huffman

Kathleen Lagenbacher

Al & Rose Larangeira

Erlina Liem

The Litrakis Family

Al Maglio

Sue Maglio-Alese

Beatrice May

Margaret Menendez

Gail Miranda

Sabrina Moloney

Dave Moynihan

Baby Ezran Natural

Patricia Nese

Danny Ochangco

Jim Pettit

Christina Pietrowiak

Oscar Poisler

Baby Griffin Rademaker

Kevin Reavey

Chris Retz

Ann Ritchick

Jaxon Rivera

Angela Romanek

Rudy Schaar

Maria Schwenzer

Sr. Mary Amata Shina, OSF

Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF

Catherine Sloomaker

Encarnacion (Gina) So

Alessandro Spagnolo

Dennis Stuewe

Jeff Tami

Fred & Carolyn Vanmiddlesworth

Eulalia Villanueva

Judi Wojna

Mark T. Worthington

Everyone who is ill with Covid-19

...and for all who are homebound, elderly, in nursing care, or living with chronic illness

Pray for those who have died...

— “His mercy endures forever.” Chronicles

Jill Gordon-Szabo

A Pearl of Wisdom for this Week:

Do you feel rushed? Or stressed? Say this prayer:

Loving God, help me focus on a peaceful pace rather than a harried one. I will keep moving forward gently, not frantically. Help me let go of my need to be anxious, upset, and harried. Help me replace it with a need to be at peace and in harmony.

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



Patience is the quality you admire in the driver behind you, but can't stand in the driver who's in front of you. 😊

I had my patience tested today; it came back negative 😊

Why are physical therapists always so calm? Because it's their job to exercise

patience. 😊

A kid pokes his dad with a ruler several times. Angrily, the dad asks him what are you doing?" The boy says: "I'm measuring your patience!" 😊

What's the difference between an ER doctor and an editor? One has patients

with comas, the other has patience with commas 😊

Adults can learn many things from children; how much patience you have, for instance 😊

Dear God please help me have patienceand make it quick! 😊

Baptism of Repentance, Baptism of Fire

"I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming ...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Lk3: 10-18

The pressures of their jobs, of raising their two kids, of the everyday demands of keeping up a house were taking their toll. He and she were living in different orbits. And now, Christmas. One day, he had enough. He called his mother and she agreed to take the kids for an overnight, and he surprised her with a night out - and they stayed up well past their usual bedtime. Now, they make one night every two weeks their time together, and they take turns planning the evening out.

Final exams are looming - and he's lost. He's in trouble, especially in his economics course. The paper that's due in a few days is going nowhere. So he unplugs and turns off the devices and heads with his laptop to the academic resource center. And he listens to the tutor's advice not only on how to restructure his paper but change his whole approach to his studies.

It's been two months since she buried her husband. She's struggling; she has no idea what to do next. At church, she hears about a winter clothing drive. She goes home and sees her husband's slacks, suits, jackets and beautiful wool coat all still hanging in the closet. She pauses for a moment,

and decides it's time to move on. And the first step on the journey is a trip to the church basement with a big donation to the clothing drive.

In his book *Sacred Fire: A Vision for a Deeper Human and Christian Community*, theologian Ronald Rolheiser writes about the two baptisms John speaks of in today's Gospel: "John's baptism is only a preparation for Jesus' baptism. What's John's baptism? It is a baptism of repentance, a realization of what we are doing wrong and a clear resolution to correct our bad behavior. What is Jesus' baptism? It is an entry into grace and community in such a way that empowers us internally to do what is impossible for us to do by our willpower alone." The couple, the student, and the widow all realize that something in their lives is not clicking and accept the need to change - John's baptism. Then they find the resolve and grace to bring about that change and take steps to make that change happen - Jesus' baptism. May this Advent season be a time for us to embrace John's baptism of repentance - realizing what is wrong or missing from our lives - so that we may immerse ourselves in Jesus' baptism of transforming reconciliation and peace.

John Was No Goose Preacher



Soren Kierkegaard the famous philosopher of Denmark has a famous fable about geese. The geese in a certain farmyard decided to gather together every seventh day. At that time one of the ganders would mount the fence and preach to his fellow geese about their lofty destiny. The pulpit goose would recall the exploits of their forefathers and praise God for the gift of flight bestowed upon them. The congregation of fowl would flap their wings in hearty agreement. This

routine happened every week. After each assembly the geese would break up and waddle to their respective places in the farmyard and eat the grain the kind farmer had scattered on the ground for them. On Monday morning the geese would chat about Sunday's sermon and discuss what might happen if they took to the skies once again. They might get lost or even worse, they might get shot. There was little doubt among them that the best thing was to linger in the farmyard with its security. The sermons would stir them and that

was sufficient. It was good to hear what they could be and do as long as they need not do it or be it. All the while they didn't realize they were being fattened for the holiday tables of the farmer and his friends. That not only happened in a fable on fowl, but can happen all too frequently in a Church service on Sunday. The people were told simply what they must do.

When John was through preaching, the people asked questions about deeds ... what they should do. They had been so guided in their thoughts that they were

Continued on next page

John was no Goose Preacher (cont'd)

prompted by God's Spirit to do that which was pleasing to the Lord. Repentance means a change in the purpose and direction of our lives. Filled with joyful expectation that the Messiah was near, the people asked John, "What should we do?" He told them to act with justice, charity and honesty, letting their lives reflect their transformation. For us, that transformation occurs when Christ enters our lives, and it is to be reflected in our living in the ways John suggested.

"What is Gaudete Sunday?"

Today is called "Gaudete" Sunday because today's Mass begins with the opening antiphon, "Gaudete in Domino semper" ("Rejoice in the Lord always"). Today we light the rose candle of the Advent wreath and the priest may wear rose vestments to express our communal joy in the coming of Jesus, as our Savior. The theme of the third Sunday of Advent is *rejoicing in hope*. Advent is a time for joy, not only because we are anticipating the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, but also because God is already in our midst. In today's first reading, the prophet Zephaniah says, *Shout for joy, O Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel.* Zephaniah made this prophetic proclamation at the height of the Jewish exile when things appeared hopeless and unbearable. In today's Responsorial Psalm (Is 12), the prophet gives the same instruction, *Shout with exultation, O city of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.* St. Paul echoes the same message of joy in the second reading, taken from his letter to the Philippians: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again, rejoice... The Lord is in your midst... Fear not... be not discouraged... The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all..." Paul was imprisoned when he made this appeal for rejoicing. In the Gospel today, John the Baptist explains the secret of Christian joy as wholehearted commitment to God's way by doing His will. A sad Christian is a contradiction in terms. According to the Baptizer, happiness comes from doing our duties faithfully, doing good for others and sharing our blessings with others. John's call to repentance is a call to joy and restoration.

Rejoicing in Facial Paralysis?

A few years ago *The Reader's Digest* reported the story of an attractive and successful business woman who noticed a small lump behind her ear as she was brushing her hair one morning. As the days went on, she noticed that the lump was getting larger, so she decided to see her doctor. Her worst fears were confirmed. The doctor told her that the lump was a large tumor that would require immediate surgery. When she awoke following the surgery, she found her entire head wrapped like that of a mummy. She could see herself in a mirror only through two tiny holes cut into the wrapping. When the bandages were removed after a week she was shocked to see that her once attractive features had become disfigured by a facial paralysis caused perhaps by damage to facial nerves during the removal of the tumor.

Standing before the mirror, she told herself that she had to make a choice whether to laugh or to cry. She decided to laugh. Although the various therapies tried were unsuccessful in alleviating the facial paralysis, the decision to laugh in the face of adversity allowed this woman to carry on with her life with joy, giving encouragement to those with similar paralysis. Christian joy does not come from the absence of sorrow, pain or trouble, but from an awareness of the presence of Christ within our souls.



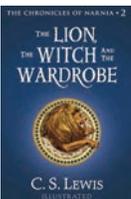
About John's Sermon!

Humorous newspaper columnist Dave Barry once made an interesting observation: "If there really is a God, who created the entire universe with all its glories," wrote Barry, "and He decides to deliver a message to humanity, He will not use, as his messenger, a person on cable TV with a bad hairstyle." Barry's probably right. I certainly would not look to a TV preacher—even one with a good hairstyle—to bring me an accurate depiction of God. But I have to ask what would Dave Barry do with John the Baptist? Bad hair wouldn't even begin to describe John's distinctive appearance. According to Matthew's Gospel, John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. (3:4) And when he preached, he outright insulted his congregation. He called them a brood of vipers! Imagine if I began my sermon by addressing you as snakes. "Listen up, you lizards!" Obviously John never read Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. [<http://www.bright.net/~coth/latebreak.htm>. Walter Brueggemann & Charles Campbell, *The Threat of Life: Sermons on Pain, Power, and Weakness* (Fortress, 1996).]

We are called to a change of life. John the Baptist, the stern and uncompromising preacher, challenges our superficial attempts at change, demanding that we take a deeper look. Obeying the commandments is a good start, but we must then examine our relationships with others. We must mend ruptures and frictions, face family responsibilities, work honestly and treat employees justly. Start where you are, John says. Our domestic and social lives must be put in order. John's voice is sober and runs counter to the intoxicating voices around us. He calls for rectitude and social consciousness. We must abandon our selfish thirst for consumption, and instead, be filled with the expectation of Jesus' coming. Hence, let us celebrate the memory of Jesus' first advent at Bethlehem, prepare for his daily advent in our lives through his presence within us and in people around us, and wait for his third advent or "second coming" ("Parousia") at the end of the world, with joyful expectation.

Reflect

“Always Winter and Never Christmas!”



In the second chapter of C.S. Lewis' book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, little Lucy stumbles through the back of a wardrobe into the imaginary country of Narnia. Although its summer in England (where the wardrobe sits), it's winter in Narnia. Shivering in the cold, Lucy soon meets a faun, Mr. Tumnus, who tells her what wintertime is like in Narnia. The wintertime is perpetual, says Mr. Tumnus, and is the result of someone called the White Witch. "It's she who makes it always winter (here)," Tumnus says, "Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!" What a wonderful description of a world without Christ: "Always winter and never Christmas ..."

Our First Reading today is from Zephaniah 3:14-18. Most Bible scholars believe that Zephaniah prophesied about 600 years before Jesus was born. Zephaniah is speaking to a people who have been burdened with war, destruction and displacement. Their lives have been assaulted and their hopes have been dashed. This is how he explains the reasons they will have for rejoicing: "The Lord has removed the judgment against you" (in other words, God has forgiven them); and "the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst" (that is to say, God is with them); "you have no further misfortune to fear" (i.e., He delivers them from evil). The prophet concludes by giving the assurance, "He will rejoice over you and renew you in His love" (He loves you and wants to reconcile you to Himself). The whole reading gives us the same joyful assurance. Skepticism about war and terrorism, and the erosion of moral values, need not prevent us from trusting that God will encircle us with love and will grant us the joy and peace we so desperately seek.

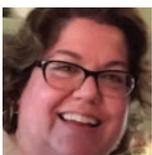
Pay it Forward!

The film, *Pay It Forward*, (based on the novel by Catherine Ryan Hyde) has the same premise that underlies the source of the joy and happiness celebrated in today's liturgy. The film tells the story of a seventh grade teacher (Eugene Simonet) and his eleven-year-old student (Trevor). On the first day of class, the teacher puts this challenge on the blackboard: "Think of something new that will change the world, and then act on what you have thought." The idea captivates the boy, who lives with his single parent, an alcoholic mother. The boy attempts to put this idea into practice by helping people, who will, in turn, "pay it forward" by helping others. The boy draws a circle in his homework book and puts his name in the middle. From that circle, he extends three lines, at the end of which are three more circles. In the first circle he writes his mother's name. He will try to get her to give up her alcoholism. In the second circle he writes the name of a classmate who is being bullied by the larger boys in school. He will make it his duty to defend this fellow. In the third circle, he writes the name of his teacher, whom he will try to persuade to fall in love with his mother. These are huge challenges for the boy. The film then shows the steep obstacles he faces in his attempt to improve his world. In the end, *Pay It Forward* inspires us to imagine the possibilities of making the world a better place, transforming one person at a time by a series of "random acts of kindness" and love.

The movie teaches us that when someone does a good deed for us, we should "pay it forward" by making "an act of faith in the goodness of people." The net result is lasting peace and joy, the central theme of Advent third Sunday's readings.

Connect

We Remember Music Minister Jill Szabo Who Died on November 30, 2021



Jill was an active Music Minister at St. Matthias for over 40 years. Jill sang in the Children's Choir when she was at St. Matthias School. During high school, she played piano and flute and sang in the Folk Group. After college, she started a teen choir that specialized in Christian contemporary mu-

sic, the Archangels, which later became Revelation, an intergenerational choir.

She ministered weekly at Masses, weddings, funerals, and provided music for every Baptism at St. Matthias for over 20 years. Every year on Christmas Eve, Jill combined the Revelation Choir with the Filipino American Association Choir of St. Mat-

thias for the 6:30PM Mass.

Jill also taught music at St. Matthias School from 2005-2018, where she introduced handbells and tone chimes into the music curriculum and started the first handbell choir that played regularly at school liturgies.

Jill was a talented choir director and accompanist. She

spread the gospel message of Jesus through song. She welcomed instrumentalists and singers, young and experienced alike, and helped them develop their unique talents to the praise and the glory of God.

We will truly miss her, especially this Advent/Christmas Season.

Are Preparing and Waiting Really Worth your Time?



Preparing and waiting seem to be the most frequently expressed words I hear and often say during Advent. We wait in long lines or we wait for the online shopping confirmation and delivery! We prepare for tests and then we wait for hopeful results. Somehow the joy and rejoicing are fleeting!

When John the Baptist arrived on the scene, the world was in trouble. People were waiting a long time for change and a reason to hope. He came into a world that was troubled on many fronts – waiting for the unexpected to happen, whatever that might be. The political world was in upheaval. Rome ruled the known world and the Jewish nation did not like it. Numerous revolts had failed causing much bloodshed. The moral world was in collapse, immorality, murder, robbery and other sinful activities were the pandemics of the days. Everything that people would look to for stability was falling apart. People were blaming each other for everything. Sound familiar?

During these days of lessening daylight,

during these uncertain times of increasing darkness in our world, I suggest we ask ourselves how well are we preparing and waiting? “Who” or “What” is the focus of everything we think is so important? How certain are you that waiting and preparing is really worthwhile? Today John can help us to refocus our intentions and to boost our spirits.

John says it is inhumane to impose unnecessary hardships or not to think of the welfare of others – instead we should have an attitude of gratitude and charity. John also reminds us that we’re not following Christ whenever we are manipulating, coercing, or bullying others for our own self-indulgence. Serving others doesn’t mean patiently standing by or anticipating someone’s capricious whims. John tells the tax collectors to be good tax collectors, and the soldiers to be better soldiers.

Instead of doing more things or new things this Advent, we’re being directed to think of better ways of living and serving like Christ. We are called to

testify to the light by brightening up someone’s dark days, and in so doing, we can find joy while we prepare and wait for the next moment when Jesus will come. For Christ to become really present this season, you have to help make it happen. Advent is the time to prepare for passing on the love of God which is visible in the Lord’s Nativity.

The second reading of St. Paul reminds us to pray for the strength, direction, and the “**peace of God that surpasses all understanding**”. Life is too short to worry about everything. To obtain true peace, we are encouraged to rid ourselves of anxiety – often a tough thing to do!

I offer for you a Sufi blessing: “May the blessing of God rest upon you. May the peace of God abide in you. May the presence of God illuminate your heart, now and forever.”

Advent Blessings on this Gaudete Sunday!

Deacon John

Pray

Opportunities for Reconciliation before Christmas

Reconciliation on **Saturdays, December 11th and 18th** will be from **3:00 pm to 4:30 pm**, with both Fr. Abraham and Msgr. Brennan hearing confessions.

Instead of the typical reconciliation service on the **last Sunday of Advent, December 19th**, St. Matthias will offer **Holy Hour beginning at 6:30pm**. Confessions will be heard during the Holy Hour. Four priests will be available to hear confessions. The evening will conclude with **Benediction**.

Oplatek Christmas Wafers



The Christmas tradition, of breaking the Oplatek wafer before the Christmas Eve dinner and sharing it with those around the table, began in Poland in the 10th century. The wafer is made from wheat and water, the same as our communion hosts. The tradition is also celebrated in Lithuania and Slovakia.

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



Christmas Eve “Live” Nativity Video 2021

Parents are invited to record a video of your children telling the story **by Sunday, December 19th** for our virtual “Live” Nativity this year. Please upload it to: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1J9UPoKfTQwoUvluQtNieRoHQz2QuEj8K?usp=sharing> Email Kelly Dillon at kd199@comcast.net with any questions.



Pray



ST. MATTHIAS LITURGY WANTS YOU TO BE A CHRISTMAS ANGEL

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

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Or contact Phyllis Stone, pstone@stmatthias.net

Special Collection for Retired Religious is this weekend, Dec. 11/12, at all Masses.

ST. MATTHIAS CHRISTMAS SEASON MASS SCHEDULE



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

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

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



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

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

5:00 pm Mass in church

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

10:00 Mass in church

Epiphany of the Lord - Sunday, January 2nd

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

Franklin HS Madrigals - 1:00 pm in church



Learn

To celebrate our Youth at St. Matthias, we are publishing transcripts of statements made by some of our NeXt Level members describing their experiences in a passion project.

When I was at the NeXt Level camp during the summer, it was a very eye-opening experience. I was able to meet so many new people, experience new opportunities, and grow my faith in different ways.

During the week we had a sheet of paper on the wall labeled, "The Names We Carry". Every day throughout the week we would write down the names of people that stuck out to us and made our week more memorable.

One of the days, we went to a day camp called CYO. It wasn't my favorite service site from the week but I was grateful to spend the day with amazing kids. Although, one girl, in particular, named Sahara, stuck out to me. The kids were in 1st or 2nd grade and we had to help them with arts & crafts. Most of the kids were very outgoing and talkative, except Sahara. The kids were painting and most of them were finished when I sat down with her. She

was being very delicate and taking her time with her painting. I was very patient with her and didn't want to rush her. I tried talking to her and asked her about her work, but she didn't talk very much. I decided to stick by her because she wasn't talking to any other kids.

The other group members & I had been called to do another task somewhere else in the building. So, we said goodbye to the kids (for now) and as we were leaving, Sahara came up to me and gave me a hug. I was so surprised and shocked, but also very happy. As someone who can relate to having trouble being able to open up to people right away and still do to this day, I was so proud of her.

We met back up with the kids about an hour later. There were books for reading, Legos for playing, beads for beading bracelets, and "Just Dance" was even turned on. I saw Sahara sitting trying to read so I went up to her. We

read a couple of books together and I helped her along the way. She had trouble at some times, but I walked her through it and was more than happy to help her.

The time to leave eventually came and we had to say goodbye to the kids. It was very hard to say goodbye to them, especially Sahara since we created a bond in the short amount of time I was there.

Knowing I would never see her again was hard to accept. But, I am still so grateful to have been by her side through the day and see her open up and get more comfortable. That is an experience that I was so glad to have and that I will never forget. It encourages me to want to help out more at places like CYO and gives me confidence that I can help kids like Sahara.

Isabella Fama



Give (and Receive!)



The Saint Matthias School Annual Fund

The SMS administration, teachers, and staff thank you for your continued support of our mission to provide a quality Catholic education to all children who pass through our doors. Our objective is simple: to nurture thinkers, leaders, global citizens, and disciples of Christ who can go out into the world and make a positive impact on the lives of others.

We cannot do this without your help, for it truly does take a community to raise a child. The simple truth is that our budget is limited. Your gift will go a long way in providing the extra resources that can make a huge difference in the lives of our children.

Our Annual Fund is the bedrock of our fundraising efforts. No gift is too big. No gift is too small. If you find it in your

heart to help OUR school and OUR students, you may send a check made payable to "Saint Matthias School". You may drop your donation off at the Main Office or mail it to: Saint Matthias School, Annual Fund, 170 John F. Kennedy Blvd, Somerset, NJ 08873.

As always, we are truly grateful for your selfless generosity.

| Stewardship Totals for Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 | | | | Last Year's Total |
|---|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Current Month | In-Pew/Mail | Parish Giving | Weekly Total | Weekly Total |
| Week 19 - Nov. 7, 2021 | \$9,984.00 | \$22,650.75 | \$32,634.75 | \$23,675.88 |
| Week 20 - Nov. 14, 2021 | \$10,343.00 | \$18,568.25 | \$28,911.25 | \$24,864.30 |
| Week 21 - Nov. 21, 2021 | \$11,454.00 | \$13,317.25 | \$24,771.25 | \$25,263.00 |
| Week 22 - Nov. 28, 2021 | \$6,479.00 | \$8,565.25 | \$15,044.25 | \$22,566.10 |
| | | | Month-to-date Total | Nov Total Last Yr |
| Thanksgiving Collection: | \$830.00 | | \$101,361.50 | \$96,369.28 |
| | | | Current Year-to-date | Year-to-date as of Nov |
| | | | \$554,643.91 | \$524,355.09 |

Please Note: The December collection information will be included in the next bulletin.

Stewardship Reflection Dec 12, 2021 3rd Sunday of Advent

“Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

St. Paul reminds us that God is an abundant God – He is the ultimate giver of gifts. He promises to give us all that we need. Remember, that we are created in God’s image and likeness. We, too, are made to be generous with all of our gifts as well. Placing our trust in God frees us from being a slave to possessions. It allows us to gratefully and generously share ourselves and our goods with others.

Reflexiónese — 12 de diciembre de 2021 3do. Domingo de Adviento

“Nada debe angustiarlos; al contrario, en cualquier situación, presenten a Dios sus deseos, acompañando sus oraciones y súplicas con agradecimiento”. (Filipenses 4:6)

San Pablo nos recuerda que Dios es un Dios abundante- Él es el supremo dador de dones. Él nos promete darnos todo lo que necesitamos. Recuerde, fuimos creados a imagen y semejanza de Dios. Nosotros, también, estamos hechos para ser generosos con todos nuestros dones. El colocar nuestra confianza en Dios nos libera de ser esclavos de nuestros bienes. Nos permite ser agradecidos y generosos para compartir nuestros bienes con los demás.



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Alzheimer's Early Stage Support Group Forming

The Alzheimer's Association and St. Matthias Catholic Church is co-hosting an Early Stage Support Group series for people living with Alzheimer's and Dementia and their care partners. The group will meet every second Wednesday of the month in the de Porres room in the Parish Office. Our first meeting is January 12th from 2pm-4pm.

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. Early-Stage groups offer social, educational and/or support components and are facilitated by trained volunteers. For more information visit alz.org/NJ. To register: alz.org/CRF or call 24/7 Helpline 800-272-3900

Vocations Ministry - Called to Build God's Kingdom — Dec 12, 2021

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

Although Jesus' words may strike us as poetic, they clearly run counter to the way things are usually done in our world. Even if we find Jesus' message

attractive, the world pushes us towards another way of living. The Beatitudes are in no way trite or undemanding, quite the opposite. We can only practice them if the Holy Spirit fills us with his power and frees us from our weakness, our selfishness, our complacency

and our pride.

Let the Holy Spirit in to allow us to be open to this countercultural way of thinking and living.



2021 GIVING TREE

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

Just a friendly reminder, all gifts should be shipped directly to the organizations by December 20, 2020. Absolutely no gifts/packages are to be left at the church or parish office. If you purchased gift cards to be hand delivered, please drop them in the collection basket this weekend or drop them in the slot at the Parish Office NO LATER THAN Wednesday December 15.

If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Diana at j-diana@comcast.net or (732) 873-8521. Thank you once again for your generosity and support. Merry Christmas to all!

Parish Leadership

Parish Pastoral Council:

Co-Chairs:

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

Co-Secretaries:

Lorraine Farr and
 Anne Marie Francis
 Rose Peng
 Frank Rees
 Maria Tapia-Burch
 John Taylor

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

Trustees:

Isaac Peng
 Marge Richards

Parish Finance Council:

Joe Porter, Chair
FinanceCouncil
[@stmatthias.net](mailto:FinanceCouncil@stmatthias.net)
 Barry Dusault
 Gwen Orłowski
 Audrey Francis
 Kester Hector

Joan Pritchard
 Mary Pat Burke-Grospin,
 Ex-Officio
 Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio

About St. Matthias (please contact the staff members on the cover for up-to-date information)

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

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

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

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



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