



St. Matthias Parish Office:

Open 8:30-6:00PM Mon-Fri
 168 JFK Boulevard, Somerset, NJ 08873,
 732-828-1400, fax: 732-828-0866,
www.stmatthias.net

Mass Schedule (in person):

Sat—5PM, Sun-10 AM & 12 noon
 M/T/W/Th/F at 8:00AM
 And also on our YouTube channel
[youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ](https://www.youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ)

St. Matthias School (SMS):

170 JFK Boulevard, Somerset, NJ 08873
 732-828-1402; www.stmatthias.info

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS
SUNDAY, DEC 20, 2020 –
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Giving Tree—Visit our website to select a tag. See page 10.
www.stmatthias.net

Advent Reconciliation Service— is tonight, Sunday, Dec. 20 at 6:30PM. See below.

Christmas Mass Schedule:

Thurs, Dec. 24:
 2 pm, 4 pm, 6:30 pm
 12 Midnight

Friday, December 25:
 10 am & 12 noon

Masses will be in church with overflow in the cafeteria.
 Masses will also be livestreamed on our YouTube channel. Please sign-up to attend in person.
 Communion will also be offered outside by the front doors.

Merry Christmas!



Advent Reconciliation



For all Parish emails, add @stmatthias.net

Pastor: Rev Abraham Orapankal, abraham
Parochial Vicar: Rev. Msgr. Joseph Curry, jcurry

Pastoral Staff

Deacon Russell Demkovitz, rdemkovitz
 Ana V Kelly, *Marketing & Development*, akelly
 Dolores R. Nann, *Faith Formation*, dnann
 Mary Beth Oria, Business Administrator, moriam
 Deacon John Radvanski, deaconjohn
 Joan Best Seamon, *Music Ministry* jseamon
 Sr Marie Therese Sherwood, *OSF, Social Concerns*,
msherwood
 Phyllis Stone, *Liturgy/RCIA and Administrative*
Assistant to the Pastor, pstone

St. Matthias School (add @stmatthiasnj.org)

Elena Malinconico, Principal, emalinconico
 Joseph Gidaro, Vice Principal, jgidaro

Parish Office Staff

Kelly Counts, *Day Receptionist*
 Nathalie Godet, *Formation/Parish Support Sec.*
 Leslie Guillen, *Bulletin Editor*
 Amy Hanna, *Parish Support Secretary*
 Vinnie Natale, *Bookkeeper*
 Trish Stumper, *Parish Support Secretary*
 Mike Lanyi, *Sacristan*

Maintenance Staff

Julio Montero, *Maintenance Supervisor*
 Conroy Davis, *Custodian*
 Juan Diaz Flores, *Custodian*
 Silvia Nizama, *Housekeeper*

Join us for our parish **Advent Reconciliation Service** tonight, Sunday, December 20th at **6:30 pm**. The service will be both in-person (in the church) and livestreamed on our YouTube channel, [youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ](https://www.youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ). Both Frs. Abraham and Joe will be here in church to hear confessions after the service, starting at 7:00 pm.

On Saturday, Dec. 19th, Frs. Joe and Abraham will also hear confessions from 3:30 to 4:30 in the Cry Room and in the Vesting Sacristy just off the main entrance of the church.

For a private confession off-hours, please contact the Parish Office.

Sign Up Today to Attend Christmas Mass In-Person

Due to Covid restrictions, everyone who plans to attend a Christmas Eve/Day Mass in-person, is **required** to Sign-Up ahead of time. We do not want to be like the Inn Keeper 2,000+ years ago who stood at the door and said there was no more room. To sign up, see the article on



Visit our "Spread the Light" Christmas Tree Display & Manger

The trees are lit every evening from **5PM to 12 Midnight** through Jan. 6, The Feast of Epiphany. See photos on page 9.

This Week at St. Matthias

- **All Masses** will be celebrated **in-person** (overflow in the cafeteria).
- **Masses** will also be **livestreamed on our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ](https://www.youtube.com/c/StMatthiasSomersetNJ)**

The **Church is open** for **individual prayer** Sun-Fri from 7:30 am to 7pm & Sat from 9 am to 7pm, unless another event is taking place (Mass, Funeral, Wedding, etc.)

Sunday, Dec 20, 2020 4th Sunday of Advent

10:00AM Mass Church
10:30AM Communion outside front doors
10:30AM RCIA de Porres Rm
12:00PM Mass Church
12:30PM Communion outside front doors
6:30PM Advent Reconciliation Service Church

Monday, Dec 21, 2020

8:00AM Mass–Novena after Mass Church
6:30PM Dee’s Small Grp. Mtg. via Zoom

Tuesday, Dec 22, 2020

8:00AM Daily Mass Church

Wednesday, Dec 23, 2020

SMS & Parish Office Closed

8:00AM Mass Church

Thursday, Dec 24, 2020 Christmas Eve

SMS & Parish Office Closed

2:00PM Christmas Mass Church, Café & John XXIII (overflow)
4:00PM Christmas Mass Church, Café & John XXIII (overflow)
6:30PM Christmas Mass Church, Café & John XXIII (overflow)
12:00AM Midnight Mass Church, Café & John XXIII (overflow)

Friday, Dec 25, 2020 Christmas Day

10:00AM Christmas Day Mass Church, Café & John XXIII (overflow)
12:00PM Christmas Day Mass Church, Café & John XXIII (overflow)

Saturday, Dec 26, 2020

3:30-4:30PM Confessions Church
5:00PM Mass Church

Sunday, Dec 27, 2020

10:00AM Mass Church
10:30AM Communion outside front doors
12:00PM Mass Church
12:30PM Communion outside front doors

Bulletin Article Requests:

If you would like to send information to be included in our bulletin, please email it to bulletin@stmatthias.net by **6 pm, Wednesday, 10 days before the intended issue** (earlier for holiday weekends). Approved content is published on a space-available basis.

From the Pastor & the Pastoral Staff



Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! Even when the usual celebrations of this happy season are marred by the pandemic, we all want to have some good feeling. I heard reports that there is a great shortage of Christmas Trees because, unlike other years, more people decided to buy trees to create a good feeling. We here at St. Matthias are blessed to have the initiative of “Spread the Light” with some 270 Christmas trees memorialized and lit for this whole season – thanks to Msgr. Curry. It is wonderful to see so many people walking by the trees to bask in the light in the darkness!

But the source of this good feeling is Baby Jesus who is the reason for the season! Unless we give due importance to Him over all other external signs of celebrations like the Christmas trees, 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, there can be no genuine and lasting good feeling. Hence let me suggest three easy ways to go to the source – Jesus Christ – to experience lasting good feeling:

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. What gift will please Jesus? Maybe the gift to forgive someone you’ve wanted to for 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, as I had suggested two weeks ago. 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.

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

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

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

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

Friday: 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

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

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

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

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

Sunday: 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 Col 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 or Lk 2:22, 39-40

*The Mass intentions will be fulfilled by Fr. Abraham and Fr. Joe as they celebrate private masses for these intentions, when we don't have a public mass scheduled. Everyone is welcome to join us in spirit as we pray for these intentions.

Mass Intentions for the Week*

Saturday, Dec 19	5:00PM	Bill Murphy, by St. Matthias Folk Group
Sunday, Dec 20	8:00AM	Health & Blessings for Julian & Stacy Colletti, by Alma Valdez
	10:00AM	Bonnie Joyce Von Ohlen, by The Family
	12:00PM	Intention of Parishioners
	5:30PM	Kimberly Hancaviz, by Barbara Giannotto
Monday, Dec 21	8:00AM	Rest in Peace Sr. Margaret Elaine Rounak, by The OSF Community
Tuesday, Dec 22	8:00AM	Ada Galdi, by Bernadine Pasternak
Wednesday, Dec 23	8:00AM	Frederick & Theresa Janeski, by The Russo Family
Thursday, Dec 24	2:00PM	Norman & Michele Siebenlist, by Eileen
	4:00PM	Mary Cate, by Jack & Sharon Murphy
	6:30PM	Paul, Sally & Nicholas Hughes, by The Hughes Family
	12:00AM	Michael & Alice Horan, by Gene Horan
Friday, Dec 25	10:00AM	Thomas & Betty Nileski, by Jack & Sharon Murphy
	12:00PM	Deceased Members of the DeGuzman & Valdez Families, by Alma Valdez
Saturday, Dec 26	5:00PM	John Natale, by Vinnie & Joanne
Sunday, Dec 27	8:00AM	Julian, Felisa & Ben De Guzman, by Alma Valdez
	10:00AM	William Oberlander, by Jim & Vivian Kalchbrenner
	12:00PM	Robert Dunne, by The Rossi Family
	5:30PM	Intention of Parishioners

Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please **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.

Elbren, Sr. & Natalia	Nancy Diaz	Alexander Maceren	Aubree Rezac
Agdeppo	Mary Dolan	Kelly Magat	Diane Rice
Rosemary Albaugh	William Dolphin	Al Maglio	Datius Rutashobya
Robert Bachman	Dorothy Domenici	Sue Maglio-Alese	Rudy Schaar
Lourdes Banaag	Jaclyn, Ariana & Thomas	Patrick Mahoney	Maria Schwenzer
Edward Bauer	Donlon	Christine Matthews	Lena Sciotto
Cecillia Bongga Alcantara	Mary Eads	Anne McElwee	Sr. Mary Amata Shina, OSF
Barbara Branham	Anne Fortune	Steve McGovern	Sr. Rosaria Shina, OSF
Dylan Braunstein	Emma Gergely	Elizabeth Miller	Encarnacion (Gina) So
Timothy Brennan	Rose Gessner	Dave Moynihan	Alessandro Spagnolo
Marie Brody	Mary Gidaro	Russel Mulholland	Dennis Stuewe
Baby Isla-Rose Callahan	Katherine Giustino	Baby Ezran Natural	Juan Ulerio
Tara Capatosto	John Gross	Patricia Nese	Fred & Carolyn
Ellen Catalina	Michael Hagerty	Cassian Ndukwu	Vanmiddlesworth
Frank Catalina	Sloopy Hoffman	Danny Ongchango	Eulalia Villanueva
Barbara Coan	Allison Karakowski	Julianne Opydike	Mark T. Worthington
Wes Coddington	Michael Kirugi	Mafalda Parafioriti	Edward Yeager
Lisa DeFeo	Millicent Kraft	Julie Parks	
Marie DeFeo	Taylor LaCort	Jim Pettit	Everyone who is ill with Covid-19
Adoracion & Cenon	Al & Rose Larangeira	Christina Pietrowiak	...and for all who are
DeGuzman	William Lecorchick	Annie Powderly	homebound, elderly, in nursing
Mary Ellen Delaney	Pat Leposa	Samantha Renaud	care, or living with chronic illness
Alaina Derecola	The Litrakis Family	Chris Retz	

Pray for those who have died...

- "His mercy endures forever." *Chronicles*

Sunday Reflections



Parenting Tune-Up

It's getting close...and it's 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 (though scaled down this year), to light the tree, to open a present...

Marriage Tune-Up

Christmas. The birth of a baby reminds us of our past. Jesus himself has many ancestors as we read in his genealogy from the gospel of Matthew chapter 1. Today, ponder the lives of your ancestors and see how some of their expectations are fulfilled in you.

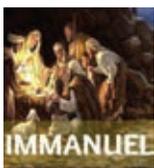


What's the Origin of the Word 'Christmas'?

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).



'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.

The 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.



Smile with Your Family



Sign on a church bulletin board: "Merry Christmas to our Christian friends. Happy Hanukkah to our Jewish friends. And good luck to our atheist friends. ☺"

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

Stewardship Quote:

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" - LUKE 1:28. Faith is a gift from God. Take time in silence and thank Him for all the gifts He has given you. Try to set aside any anger or resentment you have and really open your heart to receive the gift of God's mercy and forgiveness. We can't give what we don't have. We need to receive God's mercy and forgiveness first before we can give it to others. (Archbishop Carlson)

Sunday Reflections

Sunday Reflection: Welcoming the "Holy" Family!

"Behold, you will conceive and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father . . ." Luke 1: 26-38



In his book 'Once Upon a Time in Africa', Maryknoll Father Joseph Healey recounts a true story of a young couple expecting their first child. Late on December 24, the young mother-to-be sensed something was wrong. The couple was alone: all their neighbors were away or busy with preparing for the

great Christmas feast; some were involved in campaigning for the general election that was just a few weeks away. The couple went to the nearest maternity hospital, but there was no one to attend to her because the doctors and nurses were on strike and the watchman wanted a bribe before he would let them in.

On the way home, they met a homeless family who was living on the streets. They immediately recognized what was wrong and made a comfortable place for the expectant mother to lie down. Then they helped with her delivery. She gave birth to a healthy baby boy whom they named Samuel. Street children gave the newborn baby simple gifts, including their only toys: glue and a ripped ball. The couple made their way home, deeply grateful for the help offered by this homeless family. Could Mary and Joseph and the Child Jesus have been better cared for?

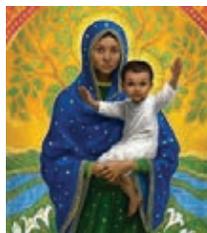
Remember this story today as you busy yourself with the final preparations for Christmas - and keep in mind that those you welcome, those you share the holiday with, are Christ, and that the love of God is in your midst. Welcome them as you would welcome the Holy Family; offer them not only the hospitality of your table and hearth but welcome them with the compassion and peace of the heart that makes the simplest gift and fare celebrations of the love of God in our midst.

Pope Francis on the Pandemic



"The recent pandemic enables us to recognize and appreciate once more all those around us who, in the midst of fear, responded by putting their lives on the line. We began to realize that our lives are interwoven with and sustained by ordinary people

valiantly shaping the decisive events of our shared history: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caretakers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests and religious... They understood that no one is saved alone." (*Fratelli Tutti*, No. 54)



"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 stop-over in Atlanta. While he was sitting at a lunch counter, a woman came out of the ladies' 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. But 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. But 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. He is Emmanuel, God with us!



Sunday Reflections

Who's Teaching at Home?



In a *Family Circus* cartoon, the little girl sits her baby brother on her lap and tells him the story of Christmas. According to her version: Jesus was born just in time for Christmas up at the North Pole surrounded by eight tiny reindeer and the Virgin Mary. Then Santa Claus showed up with lots of toys and stuff and some swaddling clothes. The three Wise men and elves all sang carols while the Little Drummer Boy and Scrooge helped Joseph trim the tree. In the meantime, Frosty the Snowman saw this star.

We can appreciate her confusion. There is a lot to learn about Christmas. Who does the teaching in your home? Look at today's gospel passage. It is from the gospel of Luke who was a Gentile converted by St. Paul at Troas about the year 50 A.D. Later, he became a fellow-worker with Paul in spreading the faith. Luke's Gentile Christian community lived a generation or more later than the apostles, after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70. Since they were not Jews, Luke had to explain to them how Jesus was the Messiah promised to the Jews by God through the prophets. He also explains how the Messiah had his human origin while retaining his Divine nature. In the Acts of the Apostles, he shows how Jesus continued to operate among his apostles and the early Church. Hence, today, the narrative of the infancy of Jesus in Luke's Gospel was intended to teach the Gentile converts their Christian heritage and to keep them focused on their new religion's mission. The kind of interest Luke had in giving correct information about Jesus to his people should be ours, too. Such information is for the formation of our children (and ourselves) into better disciples of Jesus the Savior of the world.



\$500 for Info on a Missing Cat!

Remember the story about the guy who hated his wife's cat? He just hated that cat with a vengeance, but his wife loved the cat. One day, the cat disappeared. His wife was grief-stricken, so the man put an ad in the newspaper: "\$500 for information on the missing cat." His friend saw the ad and said to him: "Wow! \$500 for word on the cat that you hated...that's pretty risky, isn't it?" With a sly, knowing twinkle in his eye, the man responded: "It's not so risky when you know what you know." We know the end of the story.

Life is not so scary when you know what you know. We know God keeps his promises and sends a Savior. We know Jesus comes and his name is called Emmanuel, meaning "God With Us."

God Surprised Us!



I like the story about a professor who sat at his desk one evening working on the next day's lectures. His housekeeper had laid that day's mail and papers at his desk and he began to shuffle through them discarding most to the wastebasket. He then noticed a magazine, which was not even addressed to him but delivered to his office by mistake. It fell open to an article titled "The Needs of the Congo Mission". Casually he began to read when he was suddenly consumed by these words: "The need is great here. We have no one to work the northern province of Gabon in the central Congo. And it is my prayer as I write this article that God will lay His hand on one - one on whom, already, the Master's eyes have been cast - that he or she shall be called to this place to help us." Professor Albert Schweitzer closed the magazine and wrote in his diary: "My search is over." He gave himself to the Congo. That little article, hidden in a periodical intended for someone else, was placed by accident in Schweitzer's mailbox. By chance he noticed the title. It leaped out at him. Chance? Nope. It was one of God's surprises.

Today's gospel focuses on one of the greatest surprises that ever there was, the surprise that took place when an angel by the name of Gabriel appeared to a young teenager by the name of Mary. Mary's choice was no easy one. As a teenage girl, betrothed but not yet married to Joseph, she was being asked to become pregnant by a Heavenly Source. Betrothal was regarded as a full commitment to one's future spouse, and for such a girl to lose her virginity was tantamount to adultery, a sin punishable by death. But her trust in God saw her through. Are we courageous and generous with our "Yes" to God as Mary was?

Celebrating Our Faith: Liturgy



Marian Novena at St. Matthias

Among the popular piety, Marian devotion has a pre-eminent place of honor. Prayer is the language of the heart, and prayer to Jesus through our Blessed Mother strengthens us, gives us hope, and unites us to heaven. The Miraculous Medal is a symbol of devotion and love recognized by the Catholic Church. It is a support for those looking for a grace, for those facing a hard time in their lives, or for those who just want to remember every day that they are not alone, and have an endlessly good and loving Mother supporting and sustaining them.



The novena will continue after the 8 am Mass on Mondays which is traditionally the day of the novena. Join us in praying our Miraculous Medal Novena.

Celebrating Our Faith: Liturgy

Now is the Time to Sign up for Christmas Mass at St. Matthias

This year we are **requiring** parishioners who would like to attend Christmas Mass **in person** (in the church or cafeteria) to sign up. Why? We do not want to be like the inn-keeper who has to turn anyone away at the door when there is no more room.



To sign up, go to www.thejesustoday.com/stmatthias/christmassignup.php If you do not have access to a computer, then please call Kelly Counts at the Parish Office, 732-828-1400, to sign up.

Mass Times are Dec. 24th: 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 6:30 pm, Midnight
Dec. 25th 10:00 am, 12:00 Noon

Please note that we will continue to offer Communion outside approximately 30 minutes after Mass starts. Questions? Please feel free to contact Phyllis Stone, pstone@stmatthias.net, 732-828-1400, x127.



Oplatki Christmas Wafers



Oplatki Christmas wafers are available in the Parish Office. If you would like to receive these wafers, please come to the Parish Office during regular hours.

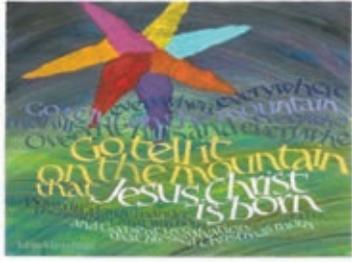
Dear Mancuso Family,

'Go Tell it On the Mountain that Jesus Christ is Born' and that the Mancuso family is truly a gift to St. Matthias.

On behalf of all members of the Liturgical Ministry, the Parish Staff, and everyone who has attended mass here in church or at home at any time since the pandemic hit in March of 2019 - literally thousands of participants and viewers all over the world - we could not have continued our Worship these many months at St. Matthias without you. Your family has without a doubt been one of the most precious gifts to the Catholic Community of St. Matthias.

With your help, we have given this parish community the wonderful gift of continuous liturgy and worship. God bless your family this Christmas and in the upcoming New Year, and a sincere and heartfelt 'Thank You' to you.

Merry Christmas
The Catholic Community of St. Matthias

Discovering God: Formation



Substitute Teachers Needed for SMS



Saint Matthias School is looking to augment their teacher substitute list. A minimum of sixty college credits are required for all candidates. If you or someone you know is available Monday through Thursday from 7:30 to 2:30 and/or Friday from 7:30 to 12:30, please contact Joseph Gidaro, jjgidao@stmatthiasnj.org, or Diane Flanagan, dflanagan@stmatthiasnj.org at the school.

Being Good Stewards

St. Matthias School (SMS) Annual Fund 2020-2021

The Parish and School have launched the SMS Annual Fund for 2020-2021. Please read the letter from Fr. Abraham and Ms. Elena Malinconico on our website, www.stmatthias.net/SMSAnnualFund. The letter is also being distributed via the St. Matthias Family Connect (SMFC) e-letter. Thank you!

Being Good Stewards

Key Provision of the New CARES Act (*Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security*)

Please note that the new law expands charitable giving incentives and allows taxpayers who take the standard deduction to make up to \$300 of charitable cash contributions to qualified charities this year. The \$300 deduction is per tax-filing unit, so the deduction is limited to \$300, even for married taxpayers filing jointly. For those who do itemize their deductions, the new law allows for cash contributions to be deducted up to 100% of your adjusted gross income for the 2020 calendar year. As always, please check with your tax advisor for details.

Does Your Employer Offer a Matching Gift Program?

If you have made a donation to St. Matthias Church or St. Matthias School this tax year, please check to see if your employer provides a matching gift program. The EIN for the Church and for the School is 22-1720768. The NCES school ID for St. Matthias School is 00867334. Questions? Contact Ana Kelly, akelly@stmatthias.net.

Stewardship Reflection Dec 20, 2020 Fourth 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.

Reflexiones 20 de diciembre de 2020 4º Domingo de Adviento

"¡Salve, llena eres de gracia, el Señor es contigo!". - LUCAS 1:28

Después de Jesús, miramos a María como una administradora ideal. Toda su vida la vivió en obediencia al llamado de Dios. María nos enseña a vivir con alegría por todo lo que se nos ha dado. Así como la luna refleja la luz del sol, María refleja la luz de Cristo. Como María, estamos llamados a reflejar la luz de Cristo al mundo a través de nuestra gratitud y generosidad.

16th Annual Night of Winners To support St. Matthias School Saturday, February 13, 2021

The success of this event is due in large part to the generous donations that we receive from our parishioners and school families.

Any new, unused items, in their original packaging are welcome to be dropped off in the Parish or School Office during normal business hours.

The deadline for donations is January 22, 2021.

Not sure what we might be looking for? Look no further than the list below for ideas/suggestions or visit our Amazon Wish List to donate with just a few clicks!

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/dl/invite/85UrXJn?ref=wl_share

Thank you in advance for your generosity and kindness!
Please note that all donations are tax-deductible.

Gift Certificates/Gift Cards
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Electronics (TV's, iPads, Kindles, etc.)
American Girl Dolls
Collectibles
Barware
Sporting Equipment
Gaming Stations
Pet Items
Beauty Items
Vacation Home Rentals

Any questions about donations can be directed to Melissa Garlatti –
melissa.garlatti@gmail.com



EVERYONE Is Encouraged to Purchase Gift Cards Online to Help Our School **AT NO COST TO YOU!**

We have over 750 gift cards currently available online. No need to stop by the office, nor to touch anything. Instead, when you go shopping or to a restaurant, buy the gift card on your phone, and then pay for your items by showing the cashier your phone. The cashier will scan the gift card on your phone. And St. Matthias School will receive a percentage of the gift card price, at no cost to you. Here are the steps:

1. Go to your phone's App store and download "RaiseRight Fundraising" (If you are on a computer, go www.raiseright.com and follow the prompts.)
2. Click on "Join a Program"
3. Enter the following Enrollment Code to help St. Matthias School: **A68921F9388**
4. Then follow the prompts, skipping the optional boxes.

Remember to use **RaiseRight** every time you shop. Also, invite friends/family/neighbors to purchase these gift cards. Questions? Contact Melissa Rizzo, melissamillerrizo@gmail.com.

Building Community — “Spread the Light” Christmas Trees



Note:
Overhead
drone
photos
taken by
Samuel
Kostik.

Building Community



“Spread the Light” Part 2 — Volunteers Needed on January 9!

Thanks to all the people who have worked so hard to bring our “Spread the Light” Christmas tree memorial to life. It has been wonderful!

Unfortunately, all things have to come to an end. We will be taking down the trees and storing all the lights and cords for next year, on **Saturday, January 9, 2021 from 10:00 am through 3:00pm** (as needed). This will involve:

- Removing the lights and placing them in containers
- Taking down the trees and placing them along the parking lot
- Taking up the electrical cords
- Taking up the poles and placing them along the parking lot.
- Bringing the light and cord containers to the parish office/garage.

We will be again looking for people from 6th grade and older to help. If you are free, you are welcome to join us for as long as you can. Wear masks, etc. For more information, please contact Fr. Joe, jcurry@stmatthias.net.

Caring for Others

2020 GIVING TREE – COVID-19 Edition

A symbolic Giving Tree is now in the Church; however, the ornaments will serve to provide general information only. We will be supporting the less fortunate through virtual giving. In an effort to keep the staff and our volunteers safe, we will not be making deliveries this year. Therefore, **ABSOLUTELY NO GIFTS ARE TO BE DELIVERED TO THE CHURCH OR PARISH OFFICE.** Please check the parish website for additional details: www.stmatthias.net/social-concerns/giving-tree

If you have any questions, please call Joanne Diana (732)873-8521 or send an email to j-diana@comcast.net. Thank you.



Connecting with Our Local Community



Part-time Custodian Position Available:

If you have custodial experience and are interested, please contact our Business Administrator, Mary Beth Oria, at 732-828-1400; ext. 121



Parish Leadership

Parish Pastoral Council:

Chair: Nick Grippo
nickgrippo@gmail.com

Co-Chair: Lisa Robinson
lar0504@comcast.net

Secretary:
Tom Aussem

Co-Secretary:

Denise Brown
Lorraine Farr
Anne Marie Francis
Claudine Langrin
Garrett Linderoth
Joe Percoco

Rose Peng
Marybeth Purcell
John Taylor
Ana Kelly, Ex-Officio
Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio

Parish Finance Council:

Joe Porter, Chair
Finance council
@stmatthias.net

Susan Klimcsak
Barry Dusault
Gwen Orłowski
Audrey Francis

Kester Hector
Mary Beth Oria, Ex-Officio
Fr. Abraham, Ex-Officio

Trustees:
Isaac Peng
Marge Richards

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

Parish Registration — Welcome new members! Please register by calling the Parish

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.

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

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The RCIA process is an opportunity for instruction and spiritual transformation for any adult seeking a deeper understanding of the Catholic tradition or

full incorporation into the Catholic Church. If you are interested in becoming a Catholic or completing the Sacraments of Initiation-- Baptism/ Confirmation/Eucharist, please call the Parish Office.

Stewardship

Stewardship is a way of life, a way of thanking God for all our blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us. Whether it is clothes for the poor, food for the hungry, outreach to youth, in education, in worship, or simply arms stretched out to someone who is lonely, the Catholic Community of St. Matthias encourages everyone to become stewards of the gifts they have been given by God, returning a portion in gratitude to God for the work of ministry

here at St. Matthias and beyond our local community.



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.

Bulletin Article Requests

Please email proposed bulletin articles to bulletin@stmatthias.net by 6 pm, Wednesday, 10 days before the intended issue (earlier for holiday weekends).



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#WHATSMYNAME

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