



All are Welcome

St. Matthias Parish Office:

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

For all Parish emails, add @stmatthias.net

Pastor: Rev Abraham Orapankal, [abraham](mailto:abraham@stmatthias.net)
Senior Priest: Msgr. Seamus Brennan, [sbrennan](mailto:sbrennan@stmatthias.net)
 Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, Business Administrator
[mpburke-grospin](mailto:mpburke-grospin@stmatthias.net)

Deacon Ron Caimi, *Senior Deacon*
 Kelly Counts, *Receptionist*, [kcounts](mailto:kcounts@stmatthias.net)
 Conroy Davis, *Custodian*
 Juan Diaz Flores, *Custodian*
 Leslie Guillen, *Bulletin Editor*, [iguillen](mailto:iguillen@stmatthias.net)
 Nathalie Godet, *Formation/Parish Support*
Secretary, [ngodet](mailto:ngodet@stmatthias.net)

Amy Hanna, *Parish Support Secretary*, [ahanna](mailto:ahanna@stmatthias.net)
 Julio Montero, *Maintenance Supervisor*
 Deacon Russell Demkovitz, [rdemkovitz](mailto:rdemkovitz@stmatthias.net)
 Ana V Kelly, *Pastoral Associate for Marketing & Development*, [akelly](mailto:akelly@stmatthias.net)

Mike Lanyi, *Sacristan*
 Sue Lenczewski, *Youth Coordinator*
 Dolores R. Nann, *Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation*, [dnann](mailto:dnann@stmatthias.net)

Vinnie Natale, *Bookkeeper*, [vnatale](mailto:vnatale@stmatthias.net)
 Silvia Nizama, *Housekeeper*
 Deacon John Radvanski, [deaconjohn](mailto:deaconjohn@stmatthias.net)
 Joan Best Seamon, *Pastoral Associate for Music Ministry* [jseamon](mailto:jseamon@stmatthias.net)

Sr Marie Therese Sherwood, *OSF, Pastoral Assoc. for Social Concerns*, [msherwood](mailto:msherwood@stmatthias.net)
 Phyllis Stone, *Pastoral Associate for Liturgy/RCIA & Admin. Assistant to the Pastor*, [pstone](mailto:pstone@stmatthias.net)
 Trish Stumper, *Par. Support Secretary*, [tstumper](mailto:tstumper@stmatthias.net)

St. Matthias School (add @stmatthiasnj.org)

Mary Lynch, *Principal*, [mlynch](mailto:mlynch@stmatthias.net)
 Joseph Gidaro, *Vice Principal*, [jgidaro](mailto:jgidaro@stmatthias.net)

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. MATTHIAS

SUNDAY, DEC 5, 2021 –
 Second Sunday of Advent



HSA Christmas Craft Fair is this **Sunday (TODAY)** in the Cafeteria from 9AM-2PM. Get

your Christmas shopping started or done at this annual event. All proceeds benefit the Home/School Association.



Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary—

Wednesday Dec. 8, a Day of Obligation.

Masses will be at 8AM, 12:10PM, & 7:30PM



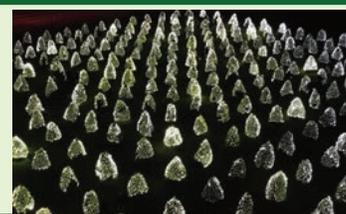
The Giving Tree

All gifts must be sent by **Dec. 20.**
 Gift cards must be brought to church by **Dec. 12**
 See page 10.

Christmas Tree Lighting

Saturday, December 4,
 after the 5 pm Mass

Join us for this spectacular event
 as we light the Christmas trees!



Thank you to all the parishioners who volunteered with tree set-up and applying the lights. We could not have succeeded without your help!!



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.

Sunday Dec 5, 2021 2nd Sunday of Advent

9:00AM	HSA Christmas Craft Fair	Cafeteria
8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass	Church
12:00PM	Mass	Church
2:00PM	GIFT Church, clsrms & John XXIII Rm	

Monday, Dec 6, 2021 St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra

All Day– St. Nick Sale (HSA event) thru Friday

8:00AM	Mass	Church
8:30AM	Miraculous Medal Novena	Church
6:30PM	HSA Board Mtg.	Zoom

Tuesday, Dec 7, 2021 St. Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor of the Church

8:00AM	Daily Mass	Church
6:30PM	GIFT Church, clsrms, John XXIII Rm	
6:30PM	SAC Mtg. de Porres Rm	
7:30PM	SVDP Mtg.	Zoom

Wednesday, Dec 8, 2021, Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary—a Day of Obligation Parish Office Closed

8:00AM	Mass	Church
9:00AM	SMS Immaculate Conception Mass	Church
12:10PM	Immaculate Conception Mass	Church
7:00PM	SMDP Mtg.	Zoom
7:30PM	Immaculate Conception Mass	Church
8:30PM	Folk Grp. Rehearsal	Church

Thursday, Dec 9, 2021,

St. Juan Diego Cuauthlatotzin

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 10, 2021, Our Lady of Loreto

Poinsettias delivered to Homebound Neumann Rm

8:00AM	Daily Mass	Church
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Saturday, Dec 11, 2021, St. Damasus I, Pope

Poinsettias delivered to Homebound Neumann Rm

3:30PM	Sacrament of Reconciliation	Church
5:00PM	Mass	Church
5:00 PM	SMYLE Items Collected	Cry Room

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

SMYLE Items Collected at all Masses Cry Room
Poinsettias delivered to Homebound Neumann Rm

8:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	Mass	Church
10:00AM	1st Reconciliation Prep Church, clsrm, & John XXIII Rm	
10:30AM	RCIA	Cafeteria
12:00PM	Mass	Church
4:00PM	SMYLE mtg to assemble Blessing Bags	

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends,

With our Christmas Trees lighting and Manger blessing this weekend, we are making our festival season more visible and charming. Thanks to the good will of 259 families/individuals who sponsored the Christmas trees. They will be pleased to see the names of their dear ones memorialized with a laminated plaque on each tree. As it happened last year, I'm sure that this year too we will see numerous people – parishioners and visitors alike - stopping by to enjoy the enchanting sight especially at night, reminding all what these trees surrounding the manger symbolize: the love of God manifested at the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.



This huge project became a reality due to the hard work of so many. The parish staff, especially Vinnie Natalie, Trish Stumper, Nathalie Godet & Ana Kelly, followed the lead that Msgr Curry had done last year by an advance planning. Many volunteer groups like members of the Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts, Teens from our parish and from St. Joe's High School gave their time and energy on two Saturdays, enduring the cold and windy weather. We are glad that Patrick Gianotto from Franklin Electric is providing us with the electrical services. Numerous other volunteers - too many to name here - gave their time to make this happen. These efforts were lead by Mary Pat Burke-Grospin, Deacon John Radvanski, Julio Montero and others. We were blessed to receive a substantial amount as seed money for this endeavor from Bill Gleason of the Gleason Funeral Home. In the name of the parish community, I am truly grateful to all people of good will who helped in one way or other with this wonderful project that lights up, not only our church compound, but also our hearts.

Tomorrow, December 6, is the feast of St. Nicholas, better known as Santa Claus due to the gift-giving nature of the saint. Often people forget that Santa Claus and St. Nicholas are the same person as the saint's name shifted from St. Nicholas to Santa Claus—a natural phonetic alteration from the German *Sankt Niklaus* as well as from the Dutch figure of *Sinterklaas*. Please read more about him in this bulletin so that we can enlighten our children about the truth of Santa Claus.

This Wednesday, December 8, is the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. This dogma proclaims that our Blessed Mother was conceived without original sin. It refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother Anne, even though the gospel we hear at Mass this day is about the conception of Jesus. The relevance of this feast for us is to see in Mary an example of what God can do in a person and what we can do, if we put ourselves in God's hands and at God's service as Mary did. It will enable us to remain free from sin as much as humanly possible with God's grace. It is the patronal feast of the USA and a Day of Obligation, I invite you to attend any of the Masses that day: 8 am, 12:10pm or 7:30 pm.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Abraham Orapankal

Readings for the Week

Monday: Is 35:1-10; Ps 85:9ab, 10, 11-12, 13-14; Lk 5:17-26

Tuesday: Is 40:1-11; Ps 96:1-2, 3, 10ac, 11-12, 13; Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday: Gn 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38

Thursday: Is 41:13-20; Ps 145:1, 9, 10-11, 12-13ab; Mt 11:11-15

Friday: Is 48:17-19; Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4, 6; Mt 11:16-19

Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Ps 80:2ac, 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Mt 17:9a, 10-13

Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a; Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18



Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, Dec 4	5:00PM	Romeo Jamilano Pagkatipunan, by The Salopek Family
Sunday, Dec 5	8:00AM	Jose Jesus David Mateo, Sr., by Carla & Susan Tiongson
	10:00AM	Angela Frigiola, by St. Matthias School
	12:00PM	Alfons Nowakowski, by daughter, Irene
	(5:30PM)	Intention of Parishioners
Monday, Dec 6	8:00AM	Jack Sullivan, by Mary & Family
Tuesday, Dec 7	8:00AM	Alejandro & Leonora Valdez, by Jaime & Alma
Wednesday, Dec 8	8:00AM	In gratitude for Dee & Ana, by Your Friends
	12:10pm	Adoracion DeGuzman, by The DeGuzman & Valdez Families
	7:30pm	In gratitude for our School & Parish Office Staff
Thursday, Dec 9	8:00AM	Ester Liban, by The Liban & DeGuzman Families
Friday, Dec 10	8:00AM	Hildegard Scheurle, by Nancy Inzano
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

Pray for those who are sick...

If you or a family member are sick, please call the Parish Office or **email Kelly Counts** at kcoun@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

Canon 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

Jill Gordon-Szabo

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*

Alma Garcia

Barbara Coan

Dolores Pasquarelli

Reflect



Smile with Your Family



A charitable man decided to visit a sick ward at a hospital to cheer up the patients. He took along a keyboard and played humorous songs and told jokes at many a bedside. After finishing his final performance for an old man he said, "I hope you get better." The old man smiled vaguely at the performer and replied, "I hope you do too." 😊

An older gentleman was rushed to the hospital with a possible concussion. The doctor asked him a series of questions: Do you know where you are? I'm at Rex Hospital. What city are you in? Raleigh. Do you know who I am? Dr. Hamilton. He then turned to the nurse and said, I hope he doesn't ask me any more questions. Why, she asked. Because all of

those answers were on his badge. 😊

Q: What nails do carpenters hate to hit? A: Fingernails. 😊

Generation gap: A mom texts, "Hi! Son, what do IDK, LY and TTYL mean?" He texts back, "I don't know, love you and talk to you later." The mom replies, "It's OK, don't worry about it. I'll ask your sister. Love you too." 😊

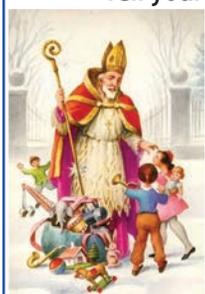
Clean sweep: "I decided to sell my vacuum cleaner. All it was doing was gathering dust." 😊

Middle age is when your age starts to show around your middle. 😊



Parenting Tune-Up

Santa Claus is Saint Nicholas...?



Tell your kids how the true story of Santa Claus

begins with St. Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara in the present day Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the

sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man.

Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ruthlessly persecuted Christians, Bishop Nicholas suffered for his faith, was exiled and imprisoned. After his release, Nicholas attended the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. He died December 6, AD 343 in Myra and was buried in his cathedral church, where a unique relic, called manna, formed in his grave. This liquid substance, said to have healing powers, fostered the growth of devotion to Nicholas. The anniversary of his death became a day of celebration, St. Nicholas Day, December 6th.

The gift-giving nature of St. Nicholas was appealing to all. But the saint's name shifted from St. Nicholas to Santa Claus—a natural phonetic alteration from the German *Sankt Niklaus* as well as from the Dutch figure of Sinterklaas. Pre-modern representations of the gift-giver from Church history and folklore merged with the English character Father Christmas to create the character known to Americans and the rest of the English-speaking world as Santa Claus.

Traffic Lights and other Warning Signs



At an intersection, the green light changes to yellow. At the theater, the house lights flash. In the Battalion Tactical Operations Center, a Warning Order comes down from Brigade. At the airport terminal, the boarding call comes over the intercom. At a railroad crossing, the lights begin to flash. In a small Midwestern town, the tornado siren screams. On the football field, the two-minute warning sounds. In the cargo bay of a C-140, a red light comes on. In the Desert of Judea, voice of one calling in the wilderness is heard declaring, "Prepare the way of the Lord." What do all these have in common? They are signs or warnings that people, including ourselves, need to prepare for what is about to happen.

Today's readings give the same message of warning. We need to prepare the way for the Messiah in our hearts: We have to fill in the "valleys" of our souls which have resulted from our shallow prayer life and a minimalist way of living our faith. We have to straighten out what ever crooked paths we've been walking, like involvement in some secret or habitual sins or in a sinful relationship. If we have been involved in some dishonest practices at work or at home, we are called to straighten them out and make restitution. If we have been harboring grudges or hatred, or failing to be reconciled with others, now is the time to clear away all the debris. If we have been pushing God off to the side of our road, if we have been saying to Him that we don't really have the time for Him, now is the time for us to get our priorities straight. As individuals, we might have to overcome deep-seated resentment, persistent fault-finding, unwillingness to forgive, dishonesty in our dealings with others, or a bullying attitude. And we all have to level the "mountains" of our pride and egocentrism. As a society we might have to dismantle unfair housing policies, employment disparity, economic injustice, or racial and ethnic biases.



The Symbolism of the Advent Wreath

You will be happy to know and share these meaningful explanations: The wreath is made of various evergreens, signifying continuous life. Even these ever-

greens have a traditional meaning which can be adapted to our faith: The laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering; pine, holly, and yew, immortality; and cedar, strength and healing. Holly also has a special Christian symbolism: The prickly leaves remind us of the crown of thorns, and one English legend tells of how the cross was made of holly. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ. Any pine cones, nuts, or seedpods used to decorate the wreath also symbolize life and resurrection. All together, the wreath of evergreens depicts the immortality of our soul and the new, everlasting life promised to us through Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, who entered our world becoming true man and who was victorious over sin and death through His own passion, death, and resurrection.

The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent.

Three candles are purple and one is rose. The purple candles in particular symbolize the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken at this time. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, *Gaudete* Sunday, when the priest also wears rose vestments at Mass; *Gaudete* Sunday is the Sunday of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead. The light again signifies Christ, the Light of the world. Some modern day adaptations include a white candle placed in the middle of the wreath, which represents Christ and is lit on Christmas Eve. Another tradition is to replace the three purple and one rose candles with four white candles, which will be lit throughout the Christmas season.

By the Middle Ages, the Christians adapted this tradition and used Advent wreaths as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. In family practice, the Advent wreath is most appropriately lit at dinner time after the blessing of the food.



Coping with Loss and Grief During the Holidays

The holidays bring plates full of things to do and get done. Expectations are up, the supermarkets are busy, on-line and in-store vendors do their bidding while tugging at our wallets, if not our hearts. We try our best to navigate this all under normal circumstances, but today's world doesn't really seem all that "normal" to many of us. Forces far beyond our control, uniquely frame the very personal challenges each of us face. The highs and lows can be daunting, even confusing. Add to this brew, feelings of loss, which can be intensified during the holidays, whether from the passing of a loved one or loyal pet, separation, divorce, or job loss. Somehow, the world can seem not to be what it was just a brief while ago. Road maps are hard to find, no less the energy to look for them. What to do?

First up, be kind to yourself and manage your expectations. This year will not be the same as years before, but, then again, what year is exactly the same as the one before it? Give yourself a break and reduce, if possible, your "to do's". It may be helpful to take the time to sit down and make a prioritized list on a piece of paper of those actions which are the most important to be done first. This list can offer you direction, save steps and give you feedback on your progress. Call on others and delegate, as much as possible. Having some current focus is important in a time of grief. Grieving takes time, but helps us adjust to new realities. It doesn't happen overnight. The sense of deep loss can become manageable with faith, patience, and time. We do not know what tomorrow will bring in our individual search for meaning.

You may want to schedule something to look forward to, whether by yourself, with another, or others. It doesn't have to be a big event, but one that could bring you to a different and possibly joyful place. You may have to get a bit out of your comfort zone for this. Put your pledge to yourself on your calendar as a reward for managing during a difficult time. Guilt, an all too common driver of human behavior, while natural, shouldn't get in the way of you doing something for yourself or experiencing joy during the holidays. Your joy can become contagious to others, no less a reward to you. You may want to volunteer. There are many charities that can use your help.

Lastly, in this brief note, be aware of the possibility of a post-holiday letdown or "blues". This is not an unusual phenomenon. It can seem to come out of nowhere. If you can't "shake" a sadness, which is controlling your life, seek professional help.

For a wonderful life, the right opportunities are to be seized and cherished. Some will pass us by, some we will learn from, and others will await our courage and conscious action.

Blessings to all in this season which so highlights forgiveness, change, and hope. (John F. P. Cole, Grief Counselor)

Reflect



"Make Ready the Way of the Lord."

A blizzard hit the Kansas prairie. Two feet of snow drifted to five and six feet in places. The telephone rang in the doctor's home. The time had come for John Lang's wife to have her baby. But it was impossible for the doctor to get through those drifts. John Lang called his neighbors: Can you help the doc to get through? In no time, from all directions, came men and boys with plows and shovels. They labored with all their might almost for two hours until finally the old doc was able to make it, just in time to deliver the Lang baby.

Today, to all of us comes a call from another father, God the Father through His prophet Isaiah and repeated by Jesus' own cousin John the Baptist: "Make ready the way of the Lord." But we are called, not to remove piles of snow, but piles of sin, neglect, thoughtlessness, the things that make it difficult and often impossible for the divine child to be reborn to our hearts and lives.

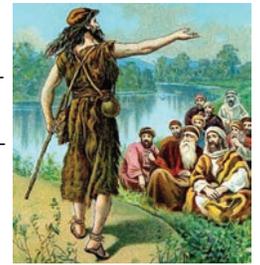
Change of Heart in Practical Terms

A few years ago, newspapers carried the story of Al Johnson, a Kansas man who came to faith in Jesus Christ. What made his story remarkable was not his conversion, but the fact that as a result of his newfound faith in Christ, he confessed to a bank robbery he had participated in when he was nineteen years old. Because the statute of limitations on the case had run out, Johnson could not be prosecuted for the offense. Still, he believed his relationship with Christ demanded a confession. And he even voluntarily repaid his share of the stolen money!

John the Baptizer challenges us to change our hearts to welcome the Messiah. How to do that in our lives? William Bausch offers some suggestions as to how we might accommodate the Baptizer. "Make friends with someone you're at odds with. Pick up the phone and talk to somebody you haven't talked to in months or years. Be the first to hold out the hand of reconciliation even though it gets slapped or rejected. Don't turn your head at shady dealings. Be willing to put some of your possessions on the line. Tithe, not out of your excess, but out of your substance. Add up your Christmas spending bills that you chalked up for presents and then slice off 10 percent and give it to the poor. Give evidence that you mean to repent." Sally Koch reminds us that great opportunities to help others seldom come but small ones surround us every day. It takes only a minute to be kind, but the prophet reminds us the end result can remain forever and a day.

John's Preaching and Confession

The Jordan River was the place that represented the eastern border of the Promised Land, separating it from the desert — where the Jews had wandered aimlessly for 40 years after centuries of slavery in Egypt. By preaching his message there, John was inviting the Jews of his day to come out of the bondage of slavery, to leave their faults, their wandering and their sinful lives behind, and to enter into the Promised Land full of God's blessings. John called people to repent as a way of preparing their hearts and lives for the Lord's visit. He is calling us, too, to get ready for something so great that it fills our emptiness with expectation.



The Fathers of the Church have called the Sacrament of Reconciliation our "second baptism," in which we're brought back to the Jordan and cleansed interiorly as we were on the day of our Christening. Advent, like Lent, is a season given to us so that we may repent of our sins and be reconciled with God and His Church by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It was for this purpose that the Sacrament was instituted by Jesus after His Resurrection: "Receive the Holy Spirit: Those whose sins you forgive are forgiven; those whose sins you retain are retained" (Jn 20:18-22). It is for this on-going reconciliation, then, not just to "preach repentance and forgiveness of sins ... to all nations beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk 24:47), that Jesus sent His apostles and their successors out to the ends of the world.

Real Proof of Inner Cleansing

John's message calls us to confront and confess our sins. A smooth road means nothing to God, but a repentant heart means a great deal. Hence, the truly important goal for us is to prepare our hearts to receive the Lord. We have to turn away from our mistakes and wrong choices in sincere repentance and receive God's forgiveness. There are basically two reasons why people who have recognized their sins fail to receive forgiveness for them. The first is that they fail to repent. But the second is that they fail to forgive. Jesus is very explicit about this in Matthew 6:14 and 15.

He says, "For if you forgive men their transgressions, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Is there someone I need to forgive today? We must not let what others have done destroy our lives. We can't be forgiven unless we forgive. We must release our bitterness if we are to be able to allow God to do His healing work in our lives.

From the Pastoral Staff



Priorities

At this time of the year, how often do we hear relatives and friends say, "I really don't know what to get him/her for Christmas, he/she has everything already?" Then

there are the very difficult folks to please, either because they are fussy or hypercritical or both. The high-achievers have all of their shopping completed months in advance. Children are usually the easiest to buy for since a toy goes a long way. In addition, for others, shopping is a joyous and exhilarating time of the year. The more they shop, the more enthused they get. Add a vestige of snow to the hunt for gifts and the shopper may lose all control!

No matter where you are, this is a very hectic and frenetic time of the year for nearly everyone. It goes beyond dealing with crowds and traffic as it can take a toll on one's emotional state as well.

Yet, the Church provides us with a time to calm down and re-focus ourselves prior to celebrating the memorial of the birth of Jesus. This period of four weeks in preparation for Christmas is Advent, which comes from the Latin "advenio," meaning, "to come to." We are called to come to a period of spiritual preparation during this first season of the new

liturgical year. In a few short weeks, at the end of our spiritual preparation, we come to Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Pope Francis in his 2018 Angelus said, "Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world." This the true meaning of our Advent season; are we willing to accept the Holy Father's invitation?

So, do we find ourselves only focusing on the materialistic aspects of Advent, or are we solely renewing ourselves spiritually, or are we striving to do both? Are we dedicating time and aiming to enhance our lives with the four virtues of this advent season: hope, love, joy, and peace? Each week when we attend Mass, the four candles that make up the advent wreath serve as reminders of the virtues and the importance of living our lives with one another. Are we people of hope, love, joy, and peace?

During Advent 2020, Pope Francis prayed, "May the Virgin Mary help us as we approach Christmas, not to allow ourselves to be distracted by external things, but make space in our heart for Him who has already come and wants to come again to heal our illnesses and give us his joy." Let this be our prayer as well. Joe Gidaro, Vice Principal

Pray

Religious Retirement Fund Collection — Next Weekend at all Masses

Next Sunday, Dec. 12, we will have a special collection for the Religious Retirement Fund. From Catholic schools and hospitals — to parishes, retreat centers, and works of mercy — elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have prayerfully served our Church and world. Most ministered with little pay. Now, without enough for retirement savings, many religious communities are struggling to care for aging members. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps provide nursing care, medicine, and other necessities. More details at www.retiredreligious.org Please be generous. You may donate through Parish Giving, by check made out to St. Matthias with "Religious Retirement" in the memo line, or by using the Ivory envelope or marking "Religious Retirement on the outside of any envelope.

Christmas Eve "Live" Nativity Video 2021



To keep everyone safe, we are again asking the children of our parish to narrate the Nativity story in their own

words, and we have actors lined up to perform the story just as they tell it. For reference, watch last year's Nativity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yY7oNgok7k>

Of course, we cannot use the entirety of every entry, but we'll do our best to make sure everyone gets a part in the video. Parents are invited to record a video of your children telling the story **by Sunday, December 19th** and upload it to: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1J9UPoKfTQwoUvluQtNieRoHQz2QuEj8K?usp=sharing>

Email Kelly Dillon at kd199@comcast.net with any questions. -- Kelly & Camryn



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.

SEEKING ANGELS FOR ALL OF THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MASSES. SIGN UP THROUGH SIGN-UP GENIUS: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A054FA4AB2FAAFF2-christmas1> or contact Phyllis Stone at pstone@stmatthias.net

Pray

St. Matthias Christmas Season Mass Schedule

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

(in church w/overflow in cafe-
teria)

2:00 pm Mass

4:00pm Mass

6:30 pm Mass



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

Midnight Mass

10:00 am Mass

12:00 pm Mass

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

5:00 pm Mass

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

10:00 Mass

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:

Hello my name is Emily Chavez. I am a NeXt Level Youth Delegate.

"Faith without Works is Dead" - John 2:26. When looking at this line, I only thought of it as the motto for the Center of Faith Justice. I didn't look much into it. Then, I went to Trenton for the NeXt Level, Level Up week of service. That week taught me what this verse really meant.

While in Trenton, we went to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Arm in Arm Food Pantry, Sprout U School of the Arts, and CYO Summer Camp. The difference between this service experience compared to my past service experiences was that I had never seen the work I did put into action. While we were at the Soup Kitchen, we packed up some food prior to the lunch rush. Then, when everyone came in for lunch, I worked the salad bar with my friend. Everybody came in, grabbed a

tray and some food, and then those who wanted salad came and got salad. After I was pretty much done serving everyone their salad, I just looked at everyone. Everyone looked like they came from different places and different states of financial difficulty. There were so many different races, genders, and backgrounds. However, through all of the differences, people began to get up out of their seats and sit with others.

Before I knew it, I saw so many smiles in one room. All these people had in that moment were food and company, and that was what was making them happy. Food and company— just two things that we take for granted, were all these people needed, and I got to provide one of them. This really opened my eyes.

At that moment, I began to think. Eve-

rything that I thought was important in my life didn't seem as dependable as I thought before that week. Seeing these people talking and listening to each other gave me a realization -- we had to be the company to each other just as it was present in the soup kitchen. Sometimes we just need to be a shoulder to cry on or an ear to listen to. It may seem insignificant to us, but it could mean the world to somebody else.

So yes, faith without works is dead. We could talk about how much we hate hunger or how mental health stigmas should be rid of. However, the talking won't do much. If you really believe in something, take the first step. Do something about it. Faith is only alive when carried out into the world, and the week in Trenton taught me that.

Thank you.

Give (and Receive!)

A Note of Thanksgiving from the St. Martin de Porres Society

As part of honoring the feast day of St. Martin de Porres and in recognition of National Black Catholic History Month in November, the St. Martin de Porres Society organized a parish wide collection of items for local organizations in need.

Mountains of diapers, rattlers and other baby items were collected for the Center for Great Expectation along with \$750 in gift cards for use to purchase baby items at Walmart and Target. The parishioners also contributed gallons and gallons of laundry and dish detergent for the Ronald McDonald House in addition to dish towels and other kitchen items. The Society extends a hearty 'thank-you' to all parishioners who contributed to the collection.



Give (and Receive!)



SMYLE Youth Group

SMYLE will be collecting items for Unity Square, an organization that supports the homeless. The Collection will take place on 12/11 and 12/12 at all of the Masses. The items needed are:

Socks, Gloves, Hats, Scarves, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Toilet paper, Dunkin' Donut gift cards (\$5 maximum), Chapstick.

SMYLE members, please help us collect items for Unity Square. We will be collecting items at all Masses the weekend of December 11 and 12th. No sign up needed.

SMYLE will be packing Blessing bags with these items at their meeting 12/12 from 4:00-5:30 pm in the St. Matthias Cafeteria. Join us to help our Brothers and Sisters in need!

Have a blessed and safe Advent. — Sue Lenczewski, SMYLE

End of Year Donations and Matching Funds



For those who wish to make an End-of-Year donation, please also check if your employer offers matching funds.

If you have any questions about processing matching funds, contact:

Ana Kelly, akelly@stmatthias.net, for donations to the church,

and Joe Gidaro, jgidaro@stmatthiasnj.org, for donations to the school.

Thank you!

Stewardship Reflection Dec 5, 2021 2nd Sunday of Advent

“And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value...” (Philippians 1:9-10)

During the Christmas shopping season it is easy to get caught up in the frenzy of buying gifts. But, is that “gift” truly an expression of your love for the other person. Or, are you just fulfilling your “obligation” to give them something? To grow in friendship with someone, you need to spend time with them, learn what is of value to them. Maybe this year, buy less “stuff” and spend more time with those you love.

Reflexiónese — 5 de diciembre de 2021 2do. Domingo de Adviento

“Esto es lo que pido en oración: que el amor de ustedes abunde cada vez más en conocimiento y en buen juicio, para que discernan lo que es mejor...” (Filipenses 1:9-10)

Durante la temporada de compras navideñas es fácil quedar inmerso en el frenesí de la compra de los regalos. Sin embargo, ¿es ese “regalo” una verdadera expresión de su amor por la otra persona?, ¿o, simplemente está cumpliendo con su “obligación” de darle algo? Para aumentar la amistad con alguien, usted necesita pasar tiempo con ellos, aprender que es de valor para ellos. Quizás este año, compre menos “cosas” y pase más tiempo con aquellos que ama.

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	\$0.00	\$6,479.00	\$22,566.10
Month-to-date Total				Nov Total Last Yr
\$92,796.25				\$96,369.28
Current Year-to-				Year-to-date as of Nov 30,
\$546,078.66				\$524,355.09

The Parish Giving amount for November 28 was not available at the time this bulletin was printed. We will update the amount in a future bulletin.



A Fund Raiser for Good Deeds & Acts of Kindness is happening at SMS. Our students complete Acts of Kindness to show appreciation by “paying it forward”. Please show your support!



Are You in the Midst of Holiday Shopping?

If you plan to buy anything on Amazon, please begin by clicking on the link at:

www.stmatthias.net/amazon This helps St. Matthias, at no cost to you. **Thank you!**

Vocations Ministry - Called to Build God's Kingdom — Dec 5, 2021



Pope Francis in “*Gaudete et Exsultate*” on the call to holiness in today’s world says:

There can be any number of theories about what constitutes holiness, with various explanations and distinctions. Such reflection may be useful, but nothing is more enlightening than turning to Jesus’ words and seeing his way of teaching the truth. Jesus explained with great simplicity what it means to be holy when he gave us the Beatitudes (cf. Mt 5:3-12; Lk 0:64-23). The Beatitudes are like a Christian’s identity card. So if anyone asks: “What must one do

to be a good Christian?”, the answer is clear. We have to do, each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount. In the Beatitudes, we find a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives. The word “happy” or “blessed” thus becomes a synonym for “holy”. It expresses the fact that those faithful to God and his word, by their self-giving, gain true happiness. Let us be open to the power of the Holy Spirit so that we live the Beatitudes and attain the happiness and holiness that Jesus teaches us.

2021 GIVING TREE



Our 2021 Giving Tree has been placed in the Church as a visible reminder of our continuing support to those less fortunate. There are still COVID restrictions in place so **we are once again requesting that all gifts be shipped directly to the organizations by December 20, 2020.** ABSOLUTELY NO GIFTS/PACKAGES ARE TO BE BROUGHT TO THE CHURCH OR PARISH OFFICE. If you prefer to purchase **gift cards** and have them personally delivered, we are offering you the opportunity to **drop them in the collection baskets until the weekend of December 12, 2021.** Please clearly mark them for the Giving Tree with the name of the preferred charity.

Ornaments on the tree represent Great Expectations, Elijah’s Promise, Ozanam Family Shelter, Ozanam Men’s Shelter, PACT, Pregnancy Aid, YES Learning Center, Franklin Township Community Services and Miriam’s Heart.

Please go to the Parish website www.stmatthias.net/social-concerns/giving-tree/ . This link will give all information needed for your donations.

If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Diana at j-diana@comcast.net or (732) 873-8521. Thank you once again for your participation and generosity. Be well and please stay safe.



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
 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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