

ADVENT 2023

THE ORACLE

SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Matthew's Family,

November 12th was an exclamation point on the life of our parish, a powerful testimony of who we are as the body of Christ. The bishop's visitation provided an opportunity for us to combine the final two services and celebrate: our faith in Jesus Christ, our common life as a family, our place in the wider church, and our love for our confirmands. So many of you shared comments on how moving the entire morning was, from the service through the luncheon in a packed parish hall.

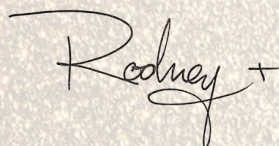
And please, don't take my word alone. Know that Bp. Gutierrez loves you and this parish very much as well. This visit was his fourth time at St. Matthew's in the three years I've been here, and he also met with us virtually soon after I first arrived. (Ah, remember those wonderful days on Zoom?) He is thankful for our vibrancy, our witness, and believes we have food and fellowship like few others!

I mentioned that this one day was an exclamation point, because it served as a focused glimpse on the much larger story that we are writing together. To have those moments such as we experienced on November 12th, there are countless hours, prayers, and moments with Christ and one another that make this possible. You can't fake what happened during the bishop's visit, and our genuineness shined through for all to see. For that, for you, I am thankful.

Let us also consider that the confirmands, my own daughters included in that number, saw this congregation in action as well. We supported them, upheld them, involved them, and welcomed them more fully into our lives. That didn't go unnoticed by them and their families. I intentionally and repeatedly call us the 'St. Matthew's family' for a reason. It must be at the core of who we are, how we interact with one another, how we live this life in Christ. That is what people see in us. May God grant us the grace to lovingly and tenaciously hold on to that through word and deed.

May all of you have a blessed Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas. Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in this gift of life. Rejoice in this family.

With love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney" followed by a small cross symbol.

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 23 -
THANKSGIVING SERVICE 10:00 AM

NOVEMBER 26 -
CONSECRATION SUNDAY 7:45; 9:00; 10:30AM

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 5 -
RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE 2:00PM - 7:00PM

DECEMBER 9 -
SOCIETY OF THE COMPANIONS OF THE HOLY
CROSS ADVENT QUIET DAY 9:30AM - 12:00PM

DECEMBER 16 -
MEN'S BREAKFAST 8:00AM

DECEMBER 17 - 21
OPERATION BEAR HUG DISTRIBUTION BY YOUTH
AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

DECEMBER 24
HOLY EUCHARIST 7:45, 9:00, 10:30AM
CHRISTMAS EVE HOLY EUCHARIST 3:00, 5:00 &
8:00PM

DECEMBER 25
CHRISTMAS HOLY EUCHARIST 10:00AM

MINISTRY UPDATES

Pastoral Care

Sharing in the JOY of serving others . . .

The Pastoral Care group frequently makes visits to our parishioners. Mille Graf and Barbara McKinney have served on this committee for some time.

Millie frequently took communion to people and enjoyed getting to know people and know their stories. People became more than just faces you would see on a Sunday morning. Barbara McKinney served as our parish secretary for years and sang in the choir. She also served in the hospice and bereavement care departments for Abington Hospital. Currently, she supports bereavement calls for the Northeast region of ACTS Retirement homes.

Both women are limited now by their ability to visit others, but they have offered their hearts to reach out and write letters to parishioners. Caring for others through their letter writing capabilities has expanded our pastoral care team's ability to connect with others and has brought joy and a greater sense of purpose to Millie and Barbara. Thank you, ladies, for your desire to connect with others and provide care to our parishioners.

10:30 Choir

"St. Matthew's has recently added to its Music Ministry with the addition of a Handchime Choir. Fourteen people of varying ages and musical knowledge joined together to make beautiful music. Our first pieces were Amazing Grace and Simple Gifts.

The handchimes were a memorial gift given to St. Matthew's by Bill and Dorothea Graham in loving memory of Dorothea's long-time voice teacher, Mrs. Marion Walker. Mrs. Walker lived to be 102 years old and passed in the year 2000.

Mrs. Walker, a Michigan native, became a resident of Bucks County in 1947 and soon after opened her Temora Studio of Music. She was a conductor of the Bucks County Choral Society. Mrs. Walker was a contralto soloist and graduate of Oberlin College in Ohio.

Dorothea began her 20-plus year relationship with Mrs. Walker in 1966, when Dorothea was 14 years old. Most people can look back over the years and find the person who impacted them the most. Mrs. Marion Walker was more than a vocal coach. She was a mentor, a teacher, a listener, and a friend. Hearing and participating in the handchime choir, brought back many beautiful memories of a kind and caring woman, who Dorothea and Bill are so grateful to have known."

The Handchime choir will offer special music at the 10:30 a.m. service on a regular basis. We hope you will come and listen and be inspired!

Be the change you wish to see in the world,

Judi Kearney

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The Arise Band

It's hard to believe we are approaching advent!

The Arise Band is looking forward to singing and praising songs during this glorious season! We will be focusing on songs which reflect the longing for the coming Messiah, awaiting the coming of our Savior.

On Christmas Eve, the band will be playing at two services, the 3:00 family service and the 5:00 early evening service.

At the 3:00 service, some of our youth, Alexa, Sophia and Xavier will be joining the band. Many thanks to them for all their hard work and help!

Let's celebrate together the coming of the birth of our Lord!

Isaiah 7:14: Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

In Christ,

Martha Reynolds (Coordinator) and Anne Flood (Conductor)



**CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
SUNDAY SCHOOL & PRESCHOOL FAMILY
ACTIVITY . . .**

ADVENT WREATH MAKING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023 - 10:30 - 11:30 am

PARISH HALL

**JOIN OUR CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL FAMILIES AS WE GATHER
IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS AND CRAFT OUR VERY OWN
ADVENT WREATHS.**

**FAMILIES WILL LEARN ABOUT THE TRADITION AND HOW TO
CELEBRATE IN YOUR HOME EACH WEEK LEADING UP TO
JESUS' BIRTHDAY. LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AND CRAFT
SUPPLIES PROVIDED.**

**SUGGESTED DONATION:
GENTLY USED CLOTHING AND TOYS FOR ST. JAMES SCHOOL.**

**Everyone
is
Welcome!**

NURSERY SCHOOL UPDATE

We are approaching the holiday season. The Nursery School children will spend November with activities related to Thanksgiving, autumn, foods and nutrition. Many of the classes will be preparing a feast to celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday. Parents will also join their children to celebrate the Thanksgiving Feasts at the end of November.

The first of two Parent Teacher Conferences will be held at the beginning of November. Conferences are for all classes from the 2 ½'s to the Pre-K. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to sit and talk with their child's teacher one on one about how their child has adjusted socially to school, who their friends are and what activities they enjoy participating in school. The conference is also a great time for parents to discuss with the teacher which class to register their child for the next school year.

We begin pre-registering children for the 2024-2025 school year at the end of November. Existing families in the nursery school will register their children the last week of November into the first week of December. The second week of December is set aside for church members to register their children and the third week of December we open registration to the community. If you have friends, neighbors or family interested in registering please have them call the school at 215-646-4466 for information or to schedule a tour.

The school children are anticipating the many Christmas festivities that will take place. On Saturday, December 2nd we will have our Family lunch with Santa. This is a fun event where families join together for lunch in the parish hall. After the lunch we chance off our fabulous raffle baskets and children travel downstairs to classrooms to have their picture taken with Santa Claus and make some adorable Christmas crafts! Our Christmas Concerts will take place this year on December 20th and December 21st. Mrs. Reynolds, our music teacher, will be working with the children in music class preparing them with Christmas songs old and new. Families will come to the church for the Concert and then head downstairs to their classrooms for parties with their children. The Nursery School will be closed from December 22nd until January 2nd for Christmas Break.

Warm regards,
Jackie Anderson, Director

Mwamba Foundation

I always give thanks to God when I count the many blessings that God has showered on Mwamba Foundation from its inception in the year 2000. This far God has been faithful.

Mwamba Foundation has been the bridge to Colleges and Universities for children who would otherwise not acquire high school education.



Our children are among the top performing students...and our alumni have now adopted one student for a high school scholarship!

I want to sincerely thank the Mwamba Foundation board members and sponsors who have faithfully and generously supported Mwamba Foundation to achieve its mission.

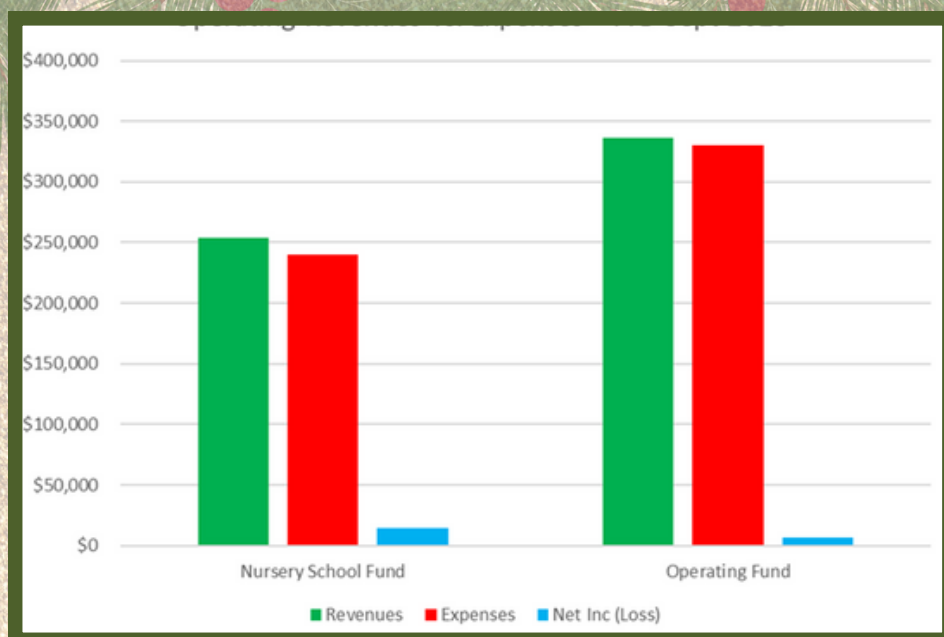
Dorcas Chemengich, cofounder Mwamba Foundation
(excerpted from a longer article in the Summer newsletter)

Please consider donating to this worthy cause, by going here tinyurl.com/Mwamba-SMEC-22, or by check to St. Matthew's with "Mwamba" on the memo line. Thank you!

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's Report in the last Oracle featured a table with a ton of numbers, and lots of text. So, for this edition we're going to test the adage about a picture being worth a thousand words!

Those two small blue columns may not look like much, but they signify that our collections so far this year were higher than our spending. This speaks to both the support of our parishioners and PreSchool families and the care with which we manage our spending (together with a little luck in having had no snow last winter).



And you may wonder what “operating” means in the chart title. For Revenues it means that the \$70K in Bequests received this year is not included. Similarly, the \$7K that we have spent so far on capital projects (Sacristy door repairs and painting in the PreSchool) is not included in Expenses.

Look for more “pictures” in the next Oracle that will show how we are doing compared to our budget. (Spoiler alert – **it's good news!**)

Jim Garrison, Treasurer

Welcome Newcomers!

We're thankful for God's Grace for bringing us together. Our congregation welcomes you and thanks you for visiting Saint Matthew's Church. Please consider us your “Church Home” and explore all Saint Matthews has to offer. Father Rodney and/or any of our Ushers are happy to answer any questions you may have as is any member of our Staff or Congregation.

As Thanksgiving and Christmas approaches, please take advantage of the many opportunities to Worship with us!

We hope that you will be welcomed with a friendly “hello” and smile from our ushers and others in the congregation. We hope that you will take time to enjoy our coffee hour where we chat about our week over an assortment of coffee, bagels, fruit, veggies and whatever has been contributed that day.

We do have welcome packets in the narthex that describe the activities and events at Saint Matthew's. We hope that you will decide to make Saint Matthew's your church home. We look forward to getting to know you! Welcome!

Jon Clark, Vestry

PILGRIMAGE

Sacred Travel – Going on a Pilgrimage

Have you ever considered going on a pilgrimage? Do you even know what a pilgrimage is? How does it differ from going on vacation? Could a pilgrimage be the way you decide to spend your vacation?

Why wouldn't you want to journey to a sacred place to deepen in your relationship with God? A pilgrimage is a journey to a place associated with someone or something well-known or respected, or simply viewed as a journey of personal transformation. The word "pilgrimage" comes from the Latin word "peregrinus" meaning "foreigner" or "traveler."

Although I have done several spiritual retreats, going on a "pilgrimage" was new to me. But, when I read about a pilgrimage to Greece in October of 2023, given by 206 Tours to follow in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul, I knew instantly that I had to go. I wanted to see the places where the Apostle Paul traveled as he wrote his letters to churches. I hoped to marvel and wonder how the church was built after Jesus's resurrection and how Paul's work and others eventually spread the good news about Jesus Christ across the world.

During my pilgrimage, I saw the town of Philippi where Paul was in prison (Acts 16), I saw the town of Ephesus where Paul was put on trial (Acts 19), I saw monasteries built on the top of mountains of rocks, I saw the island of Patmos and the Grotto (cave) where John received his vision which is written in the Book of Revelation. What surprised me about my pilgrimage was the opportunity it gave me to develop relationships with the other pilgrims on the trip. We grew closer because of our shared experiences, and we celebrated masses together that highlighted the things we were seeing and doing. We learned that our shared responsibility would be to tell others about our journey.

One of the most memorable spiritual experiences we could have, as a congregation, would be to go on a pilgrimage. Now is the time to begin thinking about travel plans for 2025. Think about the sacred places we could travel . . . Think about what you would like to see? . . . What would you like to experience? . . . How might you deepen your spiritual life in Jesus Christ? . . . Let Father Rodney know about your interests as we would like to begin planning our first pilgrimage for 2025. What better blessing can there be than to pilgrim with other parishioners to a sacred place to be in the presence of Jesus Christ?

Pam Dunlap, Vestry



OUTREACH - INREACH UPDATE

The Little Pantry

We are so thankful for this ministry at Saint Matthew's, to be able to make a small difference in people's lives, whether it be providing toilet paper, paper towels, cereal.....

Just recently we became a member of the MontCo Anti-Hunger Network. This organization helps support and provides resources to food pantries in our community.

St. Catherine of Siena is also giving us support by donating any extra overflow of food donations from their food pantry.

To keep this well needed ministry running, we are always in need of donations. There is a list of items needed on cards in the narthex. This is a great way to help out our community!

Many thanks to those who donate! Jesus said in Matthew 23:35, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

In Christ,
Martha Reynolds

Many Thanks!

To those of you who have donated to The Little Pantry and Mattie Dixon Food Cupboard! We see the need in our community increasing and are grateful for your contributions. Thanks for your frequent donations!



Operation Bear Hug

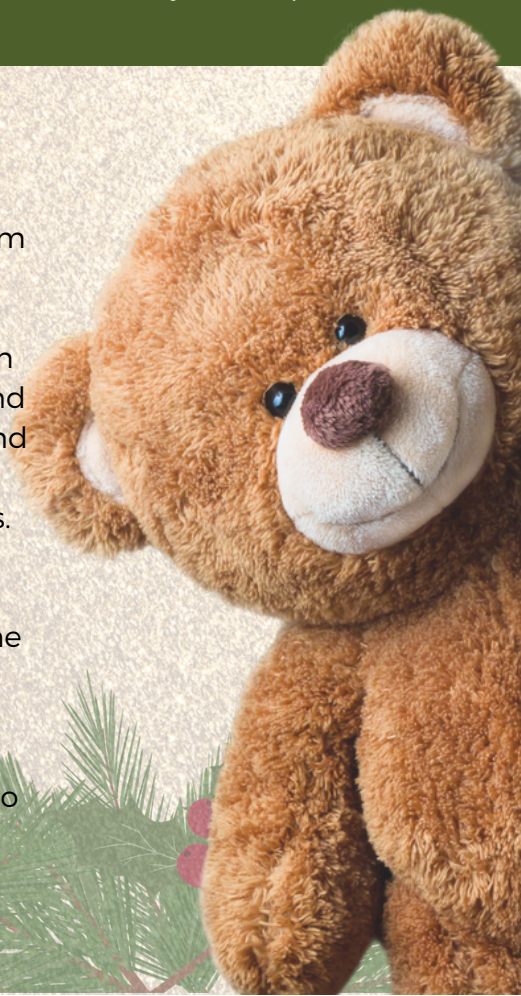
Operation Bear Hug will continue this year but will be a little scaled back from what we have done in the past.

Our Youth and Sunday School children will be taking bears to our home-bound parishioners who might need a visit and a bear hug. The bears will be distributed the week before Christmas.

If you would like to donate bears, you may bring them to church or follow the instructions to the right.

We look forward to continuing this outreach activity that brings such joy to recipients.

Pam Dunlap



Bear Donations

There is still time to contribute bears that will to be distributed to our home-bound parishioners.

You may donate at the church or order bears through Amazon and have them delivered to
Pam Dunlap
1802 Naomi's Court
North Wales, PA 19454.

The Youth and Sunday School will distribute them the week before Christmas. Thank you for your donation of soft and cuddly bears.

SAINT MATTHEW'S WEBSITE

(www.saintmattsec.org)

If you have not visited our website recently, we invite you back! Various updates and changes have been made, including:

- **Worship Services** - Including links to bulletins, lyrics, and livestream events.
- **Upcoming Events at Saint Matthew's** - A list of weekly happenings and events at the parish with links for more information.
- **Recent News & Information** - Links to recent events including links to Zoom meetings.

Join Us for Worship Services this Sunday

No matter where you are in your spiritual journey, you are welcome at St. Matthew's. As Episcopalians, we seek and serve Christ in all people.

7:45 a.m. – Rite I Holy Eucharist (In-Person)

9:00 a.m. – Rite II Holy Eucharist with Contemporary Music (In-Person and [Livestream](#))

10:30 a.m. – Rite II Choral Eucharist (In-Person)

Upcoming Events at St. Matthew's

- SEP 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm [🔗](#)
11 ETC Rehearsals
- SEP 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm [🔗](#)
12 Vestry Meeting
- SEP 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm [🔗](#)
13 Holy Eucharist & Healing Prayers
- SEP 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm [🔗](#)
13 ETC Rehearsals
- SEP 7:30 pm - 8:45 pm [🔗](#)
13 Hearing God Bible Study
- SEP 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm [🔗](#)
13 Arise Rehearsal
- SEP 9:00 am - 10:00 am [🔗](#)
14 Morning Prayer

Recent News & Information

Men's Breakfast

September 1, 2023

Join us Saturday, September 9 at 8:00 AM for good food, fellowship, and conversation. A sign-up sheet is available in the narthex.

[▶ Read More](#)

Hearing God Bible Study

September 1, 2023

This seven-week Bible Study is based on the book Hearing God by Dallas Willard. This study will meet on Tuesday evenings (Wednesdays on Vestry weeks) from 7:30-8:45pm and will explore... [Read the full article...](#)

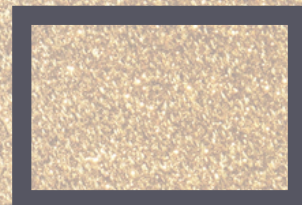
[▶ Read More](#)

FOR UNTO US A SAVIOR IS BORN





SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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Maple Glen, PA 19002
Church Office: 215-646-4092



joy

TO THE WORLD