

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

# *Spirit of St. Matthew's*

167 Spring Valley Road, Paramus, NJ 201-262-5286  
stmatthewsparamus.org

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## **Advent 2020**

***A blessed Advent season*** to all family and friends of St. Matthew's! We continue our journey observing the health precautions outlined by the Diocese of Newark.

Due to pandemic restrictions and an abundance of caution, the Vestry has decided that until further notice there will be no in-person church services. The newest precautions required by the Diocese are as follows:

- Indoor in-person gatherings will be limited to 10 people, all inclusive (including clergy, musicians, tech folks, congregants, etc.)
- Outdoor in-person gatherings are limited to 25 people, all-inclusive (including clergy, musicians, tech folks, congregants, etc.)

This will be revised as the situation improves and we will all be kept informed. We continue to offer live worship services on YouTube. Join us at [www.stmatthewsyoutube.com](http://www.stmatthewsyoutube.com). Subscribe to St. Matthew's on YouTube and you can see all previously broadcast services if you wish. If you have trouble accessing the service on YouTube contact George Hahn at 201-906-7273.

The full service bulletin will be sent to you by email, or can be downloaded from our website [www.stmatthewsparamus.org](http://www.stmatthewsparamus.org) so that you may pray along with the Celebrant and sing the hymns with the organ music. No Book of Common Prayer or Hymnal is needed.

Our Christmas celebration is still being planned. More information will follow as we get closer to the date.

## ***Join us as we prepare for the birth of Jesus during the season of Advent!***

In 2020, the first Sunday of Advent marks our moving into Year B of the three years of the lectionary readings.

Advent, and beginning the new church year from the Latin *adventus*, means "coming". Advent, a quiet time of watching and waiting, consists of the four Sundays before Christmas when we anticipate Christ's coming into the world. It is a time of preparation.

Advent is the first season of the church year. The seasons of the church year are helpful ways of focusing our attention on different aspects of the Christian story as the year proceeds.

The practice of keeping the church year dates back to 5th century Jerusalem. As Christians, we use different symbols during different seasons to visually express the basics of our faith and as reminders of the journey in Christ and with Christ in our life. Symbols can have heightened meaning for us when associated with particular seasons of that journey. You will notice several symbols in this first season of the Christian year.

The first symbol you will notice in the sanctuary is an Advent wreath. It consists of a circle of evergreen branches (symbolizing eternal life) and four candles, each representing the light of God coming into the world. The fifth candle is white and is called the Christ Candle. There is no one prescribed color for the candles, although several traditions exist. Some of you may remember the use of purple during Advent, representing a penitential theme for the season. In more recent years, however, blue is being used, reflecting the sense of hope and anticipation.



The candles are lit every Sunday in Advent. They are lit by some of the youngest members of the congregation and their families while the congregation sings a verse of the hymn “O come, O come, Emmanuel”. On the 1st Sunday, a blue candle (hope) is lit. On the 2nd Sunday we add the second blue candle (peace or preparation) while on the 3rd Sunday, the pink candle (joy) is lit. The 4th Sunday in Advent marks the lighting of the final blue candle (love).

Some families have Advent wreaths in their homes. They use the lighting of an Advent wreath and the reading of scriptures at home as a wonderful way to have the entire family involved in this time of preparation.

## ***The Liturgy During Advent***

In 2020, the first Sunday of Advent marks our moving into Year B of the three years of lectionary readings.

During Advent, you will see that we include the Nicene Creed, dating from the 4th century, rather than the Liturgical Affirmation (from the New Zealand Prayer Book) or the Apostle’s Creed. In recent years, the language of the Nicene Creed was changed from “I believe” to “We believe” in recognition that we worship, not as individuals, but as members of the body of Christ. During Advent we omit the Gloria and pray the Holy Immortal One instead.

Have a blessed Advent season preparing for the coming of our Lord Jesus on Christmas Day!

*Adapted from article written by D-L Casson.*

## Advent Resources

**Noonday Prayer and Litany of Hope** - Each Friday in Advent, the Diocese of Newark is invited to join in Noonday Prayer at 12 pm on zoom. The service includes a “Litany of Hope” adapted from an earlier zoom service with Bishop Hughes on November 3rd. Zoom and phone information will be emailed out early on Monday, November 30 (for the service on December 4) to recipients of *The VOICE Online* with sign-in instructions for this Zoom meeting. To subscribe to *The Voice Online*, [click here](#), or contact Canon Wright ([awright@dioceseofnewark.org](mailto:awright@dioceseofnewark.org)) for the sign-in instructions

**Enjoy a mini Advent retreat in your own home!** Follow this link: <https://dioceseofnewark.org/content/o-antiphons-meditation-advent> to an Advent meditation service. The video is an hour-long meditation with music, sacred readings, silence, art and prayer. It offers a time set apart from the world and fosters a contemplative awareness of God’s presence. It can be paused at any time to allow for more reflection time or to be watched in segments.

## Other Parish News

Wonderful news! Jim and July Albro are recovering from a serious bout of Covid-19 and are on the mend. Jim surprised Judy with a Thanksgiving dinner from Biaggio’s and she was finally able to eat and enjoy. They wish to thank everyone in our St. Matthew’s family for their love and prayers during their recovery.



The St. Matthew’s ECW is once again sponsoring the **Annual Mitten Tree**: Scarves, hats, gloves/mittens and unwrapped toys are needed for distribution to children at the Holley Center in Hackensack and St. Paul’s church, Paterson. While the church is closed due to the pandemic, please leave contributions in sturdy plastic bags at the back door of the church and leave a message on the church phone so your donation can be taken inside as soon as possible.

The **Adopt-A-Plant** landscaping program fund raiser was a huge success! Thank you everyone for your generous donations. Donors will receive a receipt for this donation for tax purposes.

The footings are being prepared for the **new sign** in front of the church. Installation will be late December or after Christmas in January. Spring will be a beautiful time to see the new face of St. Matthew’s!

The Borough of Paramus held a memorial service for **Veteran's Day**. Participating were Jim Albro, Skip Cherven and other Paramus veterans. Thank you for your service.



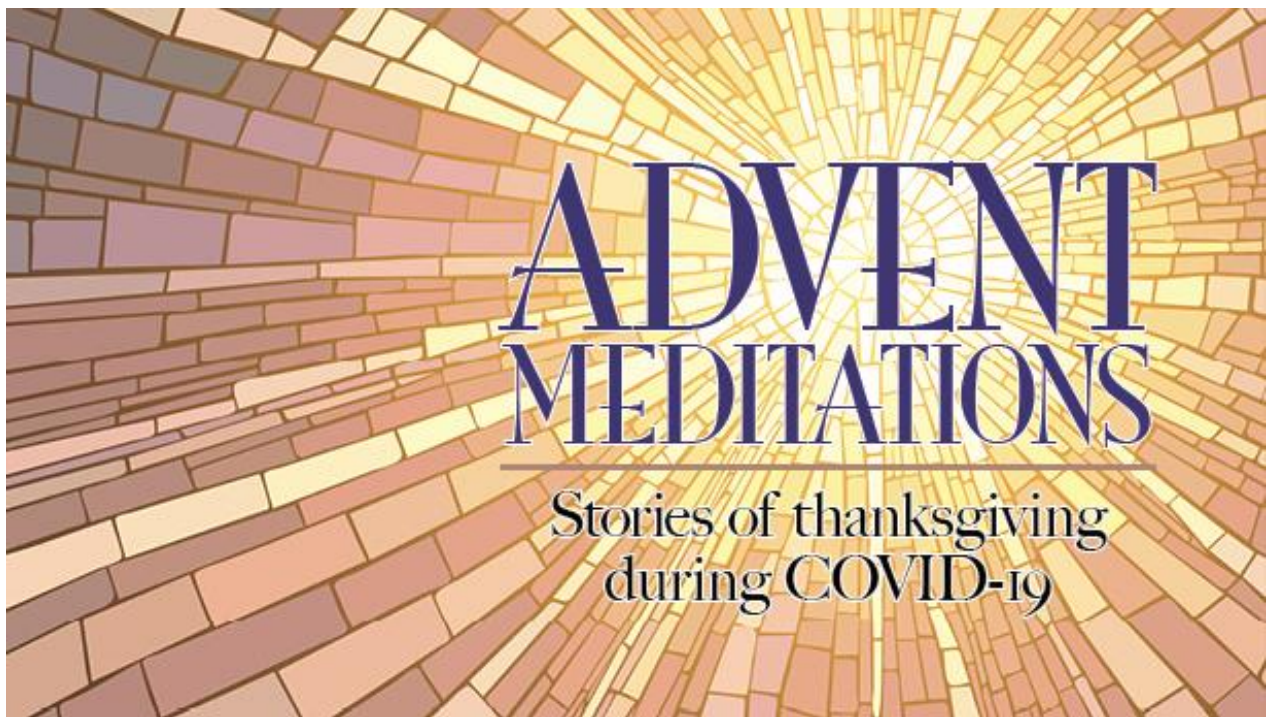
Please **continue to donate** to support our work. Consider using the eGiving tools on our website: <http://stmatthewsparamus.org>. Just click "online giving" under "Features" on the right side of the page. If you need help, feel free to call George Hahn at 201-906-7273. Alternately, offerings may be mailed to the church or left in the church mailbox.

If you have **Altar Flower or Sanctuary Candle requests** while the church is closed, please contact the office. Make checks payable to St. Matthew's Church with "Altar flowers for (name and requested date) or Sanctuary candle" for (name and requested date) noted on the memo line and mail to the church.

## Calendar for December

- 6 Advent 3 – Holy Eucharist 10 am
- 9 St. Paul's Shelter dinner – Leave 5 pm
- 10 Vestry Meeting 7 pm
- 13 Advent 3 Holy Eucharist 10 am
- 20 Advent 4 Holy Eucharist 10 am
- 24 Christmas Eve Service: 4:30 pm (subject to change)
- 25 Christmas Day Holy Eucharist 10 am
- 27 The First Sunday after Christmas Holy Eucharist 10 am





*Published daily during Advent. Sign up to receive via email  
(or manage your existing subscription) at [dioceseofnewark.org/meditations](https://dioceseofnewark.org/meditations).*

## **Advent meditation for November 29, 2020**

I forgot my mask!!

Halfway through the forty minute ride, I realized that I didn't have my ticket to enter the dentist's office, but too many miles had passed and not enough time remained to drive back home and retrieve the required face mask, forgotten on the kitchen counter. A state of high fret marked the remainder of my trip, punctuated by anxious plotting about how I might gain entry to the office. Pull up my shirt to cover nose and mouth? (Not a good idea) Use a plastic bag? (None in the car) Wad up tissues? (Ugh)

Upon arrival I called the office from my car and answered the now familiar questions: "No, no, no, no, no...well, er... yes, I am over 65." Then I made my confession – no mask. "No worries," the receptionist answered without a hint of reproach or annoyance at my dimness. "Just come to the side door and we'll give you a one."  
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Advent will be different this year, with COVID 19 and the necessary instructions to keep us safe, like limiting gatherings and wearing face coverings. But two grace-filled realities endure. First, that we will forget things – a phone call, a card, a few bills, the grocery list, a mask. Second, that we can find God in even the smallest, most ordinary events of everyday life that are created by our very human forgetfulness and distraction. God reaches out to us in the compassion, kindness and practical help given to us by others. What will God's presence look like? Well, God came to me through a facemask.

As Advent unfolds, watch for how God will come to you!

O my strength, I will watch for you;  
My God in his steadfast love will meet me. Psalm 59:9a. 10a (NRSV)

## Faith Under Pressure

### Today's Prayer and Encouragement:

- **Sometimes, it can feel like you've been left out to dry.**

*James 1:3 – You know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.*

Do you sometimes feel like you've been placed in the spin cycle of your washing machine? Things are whirling about in vicious cycles, and you wonder what is going on and when will it end. Then when the spinning stops, you may feel wrung out, and left "hanging out to dry." Staying with the analogy, though, you realize you haven't been shredded, you've not shrunk, you are barely wrinkled. The pressure of a hot iron, and you'll be good as new! Your faith has been tested!

It is human to get worked up over circumstances you don't control. Often, the more you try to do "something," the faster things line up asking for more attention. Discouragement sets in. Stop a minute. God works on an entirely different schedule. He has a specific time for every event, and each has a specific purpose (Ecclesiastes 3:1). When you acknowledge that God is in control over everything, and that He has a time for everything concerning you, then you can wait patiently for His timing. "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7).

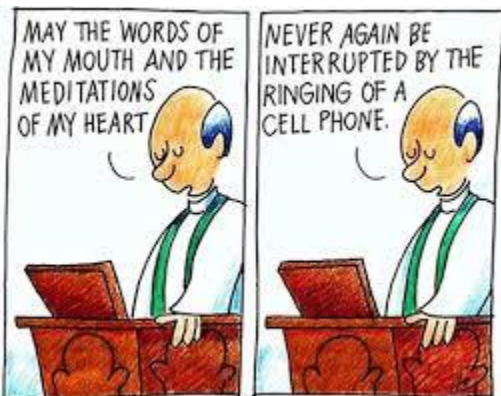
#### PRAY WITH US

***Dear Heavenly Father, I have to confess that some days it feels like I've been put through the wringer. My emotions are frayed and my hopes and dreams have been hung out to dry. Forgive me, for in those times, I have allowed my faith to waiver. I know Your Word says that when my faith is tested, my character grows as I turn and rely once again on You. So, help me keep my focus on You and not on my trials. I long to have that golden precious faith that Peter mentioned. You are so good, and I love You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.***

- Thank God that you can increase your faith as you hang onto Romans 5:3-4 that says, "We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope."
- Reaffirm your hope in God and in His character and plan for America.
- Pray for President Trump, his legal advisers, and campaign staff, as they challenge election results.
- Pray for Joe Biden as he moves forward into a time of transition with the projection that he has won the election.
- Pray that you will stand firm for your faith in God, no matter the circumstances.

## December Birthdays . . .

3~Bruce Woodcock  
6~Judy Albro  
16~Brianna Greenblatt  
19~Tracy Joosten  
22~Duncan Greenblatt  
26~Barbra Joosten  
31~Nick Baccala



## And Anniversaries

9~Rick & Nancy Newman



Phone: 201-262-5286  
Fax: 201-262-5286  
E-mail: [stmatthewsparamus@verizon.net](mailto:stmatthewsparamus@verizon.net)  
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**Deacon:** The Rev. Jacques Girard  
**Parish Administrator:** Janice Walker  
**Webmaster:** Shawn Herrick  
**Newsletter Editor:** Linda LoPresti

*We, the Congregation of St. Matthew's, seek to know the gifts that Christ has given us, to use them as Christ would have us, in a ministry of love and encouragement to each other and the community, with God's help.*