

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Spirit of St. Matthew's

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

Epiphany 2023

The Season of Epiphany begins with the arrival of the Magi from afar to visit and pay homage to the infant Jesus in Bethlehem - the event through which God makes known that Jesus is the Light for the world. "Epiphany" comes from the Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning 'manifestation' or 'appearance'. It is, in some sense, a continuation of the Christmas season.

This season is the season of light. It is the time when we recall the Gospel story of Christ as the Light of the World to all peoples. It is a time in which we focus on the Transfiguration and glory of Christ, the mission of the Church to reach all the peoples of the earth, and the great gift of God's grace in revealing healing truth and light to the world.

The season begins with Christmas on December 25, the birth of Christ, followed by the 12 Days of Christmas which lead to the feast of Epiphany on January 6. The season of the Epiphany continues until the day before Ash Wednesday, which this year, is February 16.

The Baptism of our Lord is observed on the Sunday after Epiphany. The gospels for the other Sundays of the Epiphany season describe the wedding at Cana, the calling of the disciples, and various miracles and teachings of Jesus. The Last Sunday after the Epiphany is always devoted to the Transfiguration. Jesus' identity as the Son of God is dramatically revealed in the Transfiguration gospel, as well as the gospel of the baptism of Christ. We are called to respond to Christ in faith through the showings of his divinity recorded in the gospels of the Epiphany season.

During the Season of Epiphany, we also remember the revelation of Christ to John the Baptist, to the disciples, and to all Christians. We also remember Christ's baptism and our own, together with the ways in which Christ has been revealed to humankind, especially in the healing miracles.

The liturgical color of the season is green, representing the green things of God's earth and referring to growth of the Spirit of God within us in response to His coming at Christmas.

Parish News

The future of St. Matthew's and many of the churches in the Diocese of Newark is currently at risk. Declining attendance and pledging has made it difficult for many of the churches to survive. There are 96 congregations in the diocese and 30 of them do not have full time clergy. Finding part time clergy has become a difficult task and as you are aware, some weeks we worship with Annunciation in Oradell or St. Martin's in Maywood. The Bishop has said that churches are not to continue using supply priests every week, and that a Eucharist celebration is really only required for one Sunday per month.



St. Matthew's offered a presentation to the parish on September 25, 2022 to discuss this issue and to find direction for us to proceed. Owen Davitt, our Minister of Music prepared a video presentation pinpointing areas where help is needed from the congregation to continue worship and other services provided by St. Matthew's Church. Members were asked to volunteer to take on some of the tasks that are required to keep running so that the full burden no longer falls on George Hahn, to whom we offer our deepest gratitude. Some members have come forward to help. Pat Johnson is the newest member of the Altar Guild, and Shawn Herrick comes weekly to clean inside the church. What can you do to contribute?

Following the meeting, a survey created by Owen was sent by email to all members of our church community to determine which areas they felt are most important, how they could help continue our church life and what direction we wish to pursue. Some of the surveys were received but better data can be collected if more members could complete and return their surveys. The survey is anonymous, and our input is critical to define how our journey forward will look. Submit one for each member of your family for the best results.

If you have not already done yours, here is the link: <https://forms.gle/fvYSJzfwPJKGronz9>

Bishop's Study Group

Bishop Carlye Hughes has started discussion groups to address these issues of direction for the churches in the Diocese of Newark. The title for our sessions is "Moving Forward with Jesus: The Gospel, the Kingdom and Getting Unstuck". The situation we face in 2023 is both unprecedented and at the same time similar to what the church has faced time and again since the very beginning—the need to get unstuck and restart in what seems a whole new world. The end of this work is not to find a strategy to restore things to what they were, or even to fix things—it is to look together at how we can join in the new thing that God is doing.

The team representing St. Matthew's attendance in this group is our Warden, George Hahn, Junior Warden Linda Finnegan, Church Administrator Janice Walker and Linda LoPresti. If you wish to learn more about this, please speak to one of them and they will be happy to fill you in on the progress.

Christmas 2022 at St. Matthew's



Christmas Eve celebrated by
Father Joe Leigh



Candlelight singing of "Silent Night"



St. Matthew's choir accompanied by
voices from Paramus High School



String quartet from the Paramus
High School Orchestra

Welcome Father Joe Leigh!

St. Matthew's welcomed Father Joe Leigh as our newest visiting priest during late November. He travels to St. Matthew's from Kearsburg, New Jersey, and provides wonderful sermons. He is filled with information from his years of experience and is happy to answer our questions. Here is a brief bio that he provided to us:

The Rev. Father W. Joseph Leigh was born in Denver, Colorado and spent the first 25+ years as an active member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, located 2 blocks south of the State Capital. His parish family there sent him off to Seabury-Western Seminary then in Evanston, IL. After his ordination to the Diaconate, he served a year at St. Philip's, Joplin, MO, where he was ordained to the priesthood. In 1979 he returned for a short time to Colorado serving two small parishes off I-70 in Eastern Colo. Father Joe was called by the Rector of Saint Uriel the Archangel in Sea Girt in September 1980 as Curate. He served as Assistant at Grace, Merchantville (1983-84), Rector of St. James, Eatontown (1985-90), Interim of All Saint's, Lakewood (1990-91), Vicar of both St. Mary the Virgin, Keyport, and St. Clement's, Belford (1991-2000). He returned to St. Uriel's from 2000 to 2004 as an Associate. Father Joe then returned to the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Keyport in be 2005 and retired following the closure of St. Mary's on Advent 2, December 2019. Father Joe has remained active serving as a Supply Priest since then.

Newest Acolyte

Father Joe is also helpful to the acolytes who are learning to serve at the Eucharist celebrations. We have a new acolyte, Zach Sternbach, younger brother of Hunter Sternbach, shown here with their Mom, Jennifer. Jen and her sister Katie were both acolytes at St. Matthew's and were confirmed here while growing up in our congregation.



2023 Altar Flowers and Sanctuary Candles

To reserve your desired dates for these please contact Linda Finnegan, manager of the calendar, at 973-928-5508 or 201-370-8192 or by email: lfinn24@gmail.com. Checks should be made 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.

Paramus Community Pantry

As part of our outreach programs, St. Matthew's is supporting the Paramus Community Pantry. Most of us do not realize that there are many in our own neighborhoods who rely on the help they receive from this Pantry. Visit their website for more information about this organization: <https://paramuscommunitypantry.org> Please help by donating items for the pantry Right now, needed most are: Chef Boyardee and canned pasta products, boxes of spaghetti, jar pasta sauce, apple juice, rice, snack and dried beans and cereal. Please make sure the product dates have not expired. A complete list of needs is posted on the website and all donations are appreciated. The items may be dropped off in the donation boxes located in the Narthex.

Save the Date

The Annual Meeting of St. Matthew's Church will take place on Sunday, February 19, immediately following the service. It is important that everyone attends this meeting. The budget is discussed, and members of the Vestry are elected. Any new information from the Bishop will be presented. Sandwiches will be provided but a few desserts would be welcome.

Coffee Hour

It's time to resume our fellowship time of coffee hour. We will begin on February 5th and look forward to them on each First Sunday of the month. Vivian Chester has agreed to organize these so please offer to provide some light refreshments on one of those Sundays. Thank you Vivian !

Birthdays & Anniversaries

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

11~Laura Joosten Pantelides
13~ Stephanie Evans
18~Nancy Petrillo
19~Clara Nagy
20~Robert Chebba
21~Ryan Coohill
27~Ginny Marchut
28~Richard Albro
28~Mary Pinkerton

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

16~Robert & Karla Cheba

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1~Stephanie Teng
6~Kristina & Brian Lama
6~Stacy Ullrich
12~Nancy Newman
14~Meghan Murphy
20~Donald Higgins
22~Erin Hahn
23~Taylore Chacanis
24~Gail Bornkamp
25~Helen Chubb

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

14~Laura & Ed Coohill
25~Evelyn & Len Cheringal



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

9~John Lama
16~Len Cheringal
27~Jack Adrick Wawra
28~Laken Rohdieck
29~Jonathon Teng
30~Patrick Tomasulo
31~Katherine Baccala

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

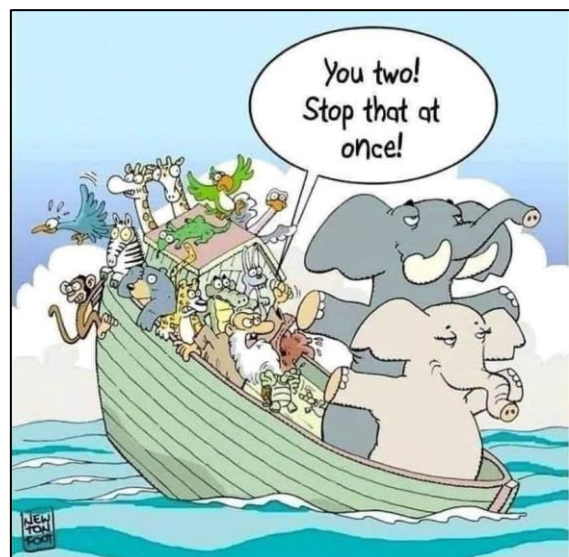
25~Linda and Bob Morrisette

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

3~Amy Kulesza
8~Kathryn Lynne Tomasulo
13~Walter Ullrich III
17~Frank Perrone
21~George Hahn
22~Allen Mark
23~Robert Teng
24~Linda Finnegan
24~Suzanne Lightbody
29~Janyce Perrone

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

20~Dr. Aaron Yang and Claudia Yen



Words of Peace

"You can have flaws, be anxious and even be angry, but do not forget that your life is the greatest enterprise in the world. Only you can stop it from failing. You are appreciated, admired and loved by so many. Remember that being happy is not having a sky without storm, a road without accidents, a job without effort, a relationship without disappointments.

"To be happy is to stop feeling like a victim and become the author of your own fate." It's walking through deserts, but being able to find an oasis deep in the soul. Is thanking God every morning for the miracle of life. It's kissing your children, cuddling your parents, having poetic moments with your friends, even when they hurt us.

"Being happy is letting the creature that lives in each of us live, free, joyful and simple. You have the maturity to be able to say: "I've made mistakes". It's having the courage to say I'm sorry. It's having the sense to say "I need you". Is having the ability to say "I love you". May your life become a garden of opportunities for happiness... that in spring he may be a lover of joy and in winter a lover of wisdom.

"And when you make a mistake, start over. Because only then will you be in love with life. You'll discover that being happy isn't having a perfect life. But use tears to irrigate tolerance. Use your defeats to train your patience.

"Use your mistakes with the serenity of the sculptor. Use pain to tune into pleasure. Use obstacles to open the windows of intelligence. Never give up ... Above all never give up on the people that love you. Never give up on being happy, because life is an incredible spectacle." **POPE FRANCIS**

A Little Story . . .

"Tonight, I walked in from the store with my arms full and a brand new candle in my bag. As I struggled to get it all on the counter, one bag dropped, and I heard the glass break. My brand new candle was ruined as the glass shattered. Frustrated, I was ready to throw the whole thing away. My husband refused to let me do so. "It will still light; it will still serve its' purpose," he stated. Immediately, I began to argue back.... "But it's broken and ugly and glass is everywhere. It's just not the same."

I walked away and when I came back, he had placed the candle on the counter and lit the wick. My heart immediately was drawn to the light. How often do we do this in our own lives or with others? Things don't turn out the way we want them to. Plans fail. Dreams shatter. Goals hit the floor. People break our hearts. And we are ready to throw the whole dang thing in the trash. Even though it can still light.... still shine.... still bring the fragrance of goodness. It just may not be pretty or in the package that we wanted or imagined.

Tonight, may we all be reminded that even in the brokenness and cutting edge of life, there is still goodness and purpose and light. We simply must be willing to not throw it all away and allow the redemption to take place. There are times that our story will simply speak a little louder and impact even more people when we are willing to allow the broken places of our life and story to shine for others to see and understand."

Cre: Liz Liles Wagoner



Calendar

January

29

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Joe Leigh, Celebrant and Preacher

February

3-4

149th Diocesan Convention
Hilton Meadowlands, East Rutherford

5

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Liz Golub, Celebrant and Preacher Coffee Hour

12

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Joe Leigh, Celebrant and Preacher

16

Vestry Meeting 7 pm

19

Last Sunday after the Epiphany Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Joe Leigh, Celebrant and Preacher
73rd Annual Meeting Immediately following service

22

Ash Wednesday Imposition of Ashes Holy Eucharist 7 pm
Rev. Joe Leigh, Celebrant and Preacher

26

The First Sunday in Lent Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Joe Leigh, Celebrant and Preacher

March

5

The Second Sunday in Lent Holy Eucharist 10 am at St. Martin's,
Maywood

12

The Third Sunday in Lent Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Joe Leigh, Celebrant and Preacher
Daylight Savings Time begins.

19

The Fourth Sunday in Lent Holy Eucharist 10 am

26

The Fifth Sunday in Lent Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Joe Leigh, Celebrant and Preacher

April

2

Palm Sunday Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Joe Leigh, Celebrant and Preacher Coffee Hour

6

Maundy Thursday

7

Good Friday Holy Eucharist 7 pm
Rev. Dr. Yesupatham Duraikannu, Celebrant and Preacher

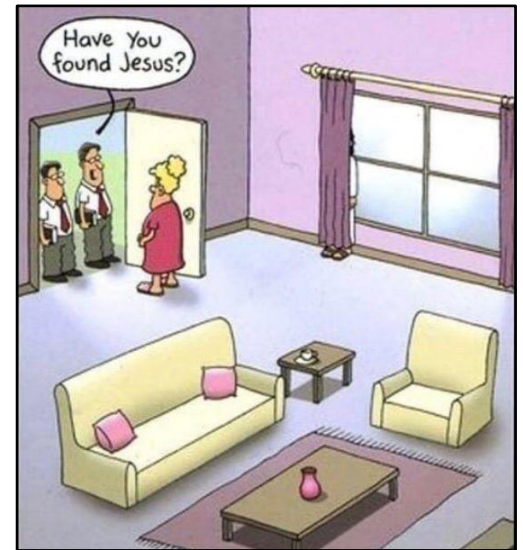
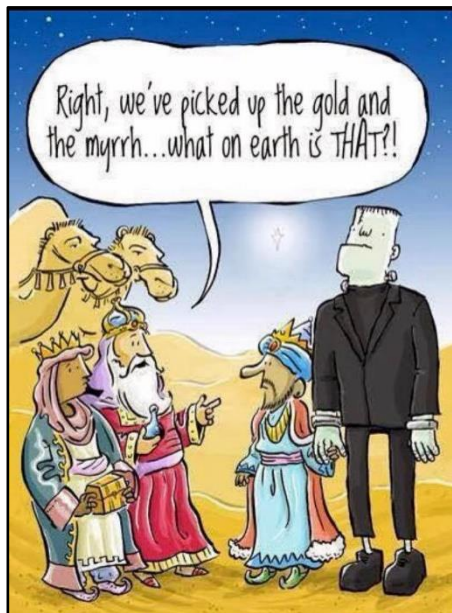
8

Holy Saturday

9

Easter Sunday Holy Eucharist 10 am
Rev. Liz Golub, Celebrant and Preacher

Just for Laughs . . .



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The Episcopal Church
Welcomes You



Senior Warden: George Hahn
Deacon Emeritus: 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.