

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# *Spirit of St. Matthew's*

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stmatthewsparamus.org

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## **November 2023**

**Advent** is the first season of the church year. The first Sunday of Advent, December 3, marks our moving into Year B of the three years of the lectionary readings. The seasons of the church year are helpful ways of focusing our attention on different aspects of the Christian story as the year proceeds.

Advent, from the Latin *adventus*, means “coming”. Advent is a quiet time of watching and waiting, consisting of the four Sundays before Christmas when we anticipate Christ’s coming into the world. It is a time of preparation.

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.

## Shared Ministry News

Our shared ministry with St. Martin's Church in Maywood is making great progress. Currently we worship in Maywood one Sunday a month, and The Rev. Ruben Jurado celebrates the Eucharist and preaches at St. Matthew's once every other month.

The two churches, affectionately called **The 2 St. Ms**, met for a shared worship at St. Matthew's on October 1 with the Rev. Ruben celebrating the Eucharist and preaching. The annual picnic followed worship celebrating St. Matthew's Day. Members of both churches had a great opportunity to each together and visit with each other.



Fr. Ruben is seen here blessing the animals after the St. Francis celebration at Maywood on Sunday, October 8.

A shared coffee hour also took place on Sunday, October 29 with Annunciation Church in Oradell. Hopefully we can continue these combined worship services into the future.



## Parish News

This summer, Ruth Mark had a visit from her daughter Vivian and her two girls, Alexa and Sophia. Vivian is a pediatrician in Hong Kong, and the girls are doing well in school. We were very happy to have them join us for worship and were able to see how much they've grown. Thank you Ruth, for sharing your visit with us!



Our youngest acolyte Zach Sternbach is now an all-star football player. Don't be surprised if you see him hurrying out after serving at the altar and running inside to change for his Sunday game!





**"An Autumn Concert"** was presented Friday November 17 at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church on Spring Valley Road in Paramus. It was the third in a series of concerts, offered by the St. Matthew's Music Ministry.

The concert was a combination of chamber music by Schumann and Devienne and original music composed by Owen G. Davitt, Minister of Music at the church and pianist, Aedan McEvoy. Performers included Stefanie Santoro on flute, Owen Davitt on oboe and English horn, and Aedan McEvoy on the piano.



In addition to his position as Minister of Music and Organist at St. Matthew's, Mr. Davitt is currently the Director of Bands for a local school district, teaching grades 4-8 instrumental band and music composition. He produces several of these concerts annually to bring an evening of beautiful musical and fellowship to the community.



The concerts often include interesting and unusual instruments. Patrons of the concert donated non-perishable food which supports the Paramus Food Pantry. Another concert is planned for the spring.



## **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.

# Erin Hahn's Adventures in Japan

"This past August Erin Hahn left for Japan, where she is living and teaching English through the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) program. JET brings university graduates to Japan as Assistant Language Teachers, among other disciplines, with commitments ranging from one to five years. Erin is living in Niihama, a small city on the northern



coast of one of Japan's smaller islands. She is responsible for classes in several elementary schools and one middle school.

So far, Erin has made trips to Kyoto and Osaka for festivals, cultural activities and just to hang around with friends. She also visited Nara Park, where hundreds of small, wild deer roam freely. These deer are famous for politely bowing to receive treats!



Erin seems very happy living her new adventure and sends her regards and best wishes to all for a wonderful Christmas season!"



Erin hikes Mt. Kamegamori



Japanese Temple



View from her apartment



Mt. Kamegamori

## 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](mailto: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.

## **A Prayer for Peace of Mind**

Almighty God, we bless you for our lives, we give you praise for your abundant mercy and grace we receive. We thank you for your faithfulness even though we are not faithful to you. Lord Jesus, we ask you to give us peace in our mind, body, soul, and spirit. We want you to heal and remove everything that is causing stress, grief, and sorrow in our lives.

Please guide our path through life and make our enemies be at peace with us. Let your peace reign in our family, at our place of work, and in everything we lay our hands on.

Let your Spirit of peace go ahead of us when we go out and stay by our side when we return.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

I saw this today- no matter what happens in your life, you can start over.



## **God Said No**

I asked God to take away my habit. God said No. It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up. I asked God to make my handicapped child whole. God said No. His spirit is whole, his body is only temporary. I asked God to grant me patience. God said, No. Patience is a byproduct of tribulations; it isn't granted, it is learned. I asked God to give me happiness. God said No. I give you blessings; happiness is up to you. I asked God to spare me pain. God said No. Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me. I asked God to make my spirit grow. God said No. You must grow on your own, but I will prune you to make you fruitful. I asked God for all things that I might enjoy life. God said No. I will give you life so that you may enjoy all things. I asked God to help me LOVE others, as much as He loves me. God said . . . Ahhhh, finally you have the idea.



**This day is yours. Don't throw it away. May God Bless You.**

## **A PRAYER FOR PEACE IN ISRAEL, PALESTINE, AND UKRAINE**

**God of Comfort**, send your Spirit to encompass all those whose lives are torn apart by violence and death in Israel and Palestine. You are the Advocate of the oppressed and the One whose eye is on the sparrow. Let arms reach out in healing, rather than aggression. Let hearts mourn rather than militarize.

**God of Justice**, give strength to those whose long work for a just peace might seem fruitless now. Strengthen their resolve. Do not let them feel alone. Show us how to support their work and bolster their courage. Guide religious leaders to model unity and reconciliation across lines of division. Guide political leaders to listen with their hearts as they seek peace and pursue it. Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace and disavow violence.

**God of Love**, we lift up Palestine and Israel — its people, its land, its creatures. War is a monster that consumes everything in its path. Peace is a gift shared at meals of memory with Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Let us burn incense, not children. Let us break bread, not bodies. Let us plant olive groves, not cemeteries. We beg for love and compassion to prevail on all your holy mountains.

**God of Hope**, we lift up the cities and places of the region, so long divided, yet so filled with life and creativity. Come again to breathe peace on your peoples that all may recognize you.

**God of Mercy**, even now work on the hearts of combatants to choose life over death, reconciliation over retaliation, restoration over destruction. Help us resist antisemitism in all its forms, especially in our own churches. All people, Israelis and Palestinians, deserve to live in peace and unafraid, with a right to determine their future together.

**God of the Nations**, let not one more child or elder be sacrificed on altars of political expediency. Keep safe all people from unjust leaders who would exploit vulnerability for their own distorted ends. Give wise discernment to those making decisions to pursue peace. Provide them insight into fostering well-being, freedom, and thriving for all. Teach all of us to resolve injustices with righteousness, not rockets. Guard our hearts against retaliation, and give us hearts for love alone. Strengthen our faith in you, O God of All Flesh, even when we don't have clear answers, so that we may still offer ourselves nonviolently for the cause of peace. **Amen.**



### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

### DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

9~Rick & Nancy Newman

### 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

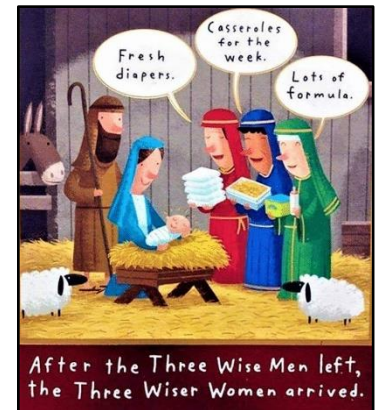
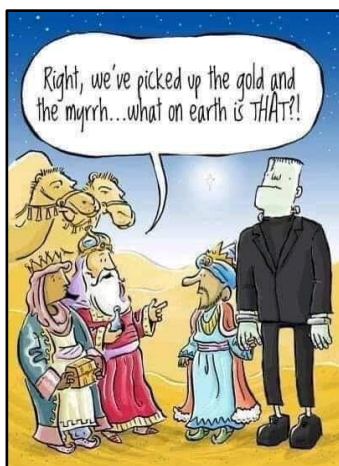
26~Robert & Karla Chebba

## Calendar

### December

- 3**      **First Sunday of Advent** - Shared Holy Eucharist 10 am at St. Matthew's. Fr. Rubén Jurado , Celebrant and Preacher  
St. Martin's book club meeting to follow worship.  
The selection is "The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell" by Robert Dugoni
- 10**      **Second Sunday of Advent** - Shared Holy Eucharist 9:30 am at St. Martin's, Maywood - Fr. Rubén Jurado, Celebrant and Preacher  
**Christmas Party**
- 13**      **St. Paul's Shelter dinner**    Leave 5 pm
- 17**      **Third Sunday of Advent**    Holy Eucharist 10 am  
Rev. Michael Gerhardt, Celebrant and Preacher
- 21**      **Deadline for submission of names for Christmas flowers**
- 24**      **Christmas Eve Service** - Shared Holy Eucharist at St. Matthew's 7:00 pm  
Rev. Dr. Yesupatham Duraikannu, Celebrant and Preacher
- 25**      **Christmas Day** - Shared Holy Eucharist 9:30 am at St. Martin's, Maywood
- 31**      **The First Sunday after Christmas** - 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.*