



# *Saint Matthew* CATHOLIC CHURCH

DEEPENING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH TOGETHER

DECEMBER 10, 2023 + SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## *Prepare*

the way of the Lord, make  
straight his paths!

- Mark 1:3



### MASS SCHEDULE

#### MASS

Mon., Tues., Thurs. | 8 a.m.  
Wed. | 7 p.m.

Fri. | 8 a.m., noon, 7 p.m.  
Saturday Vigil | 5 p.m.  
Sunday | 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m.

#### CONFESSION

Wednesday | 6 - 6:50 p.m.  
Saturday | 4 - 4:45 p.m.

### PARISH INFORMATION

#### CONTACT US:

📍 535 Sneed Road W, Franklin, TN 37069

✉ [info@stmatthewtn.org](mailto:info@stmatthewtn.org)

☎ (615) 646-0378

🌐 [www.stmatthewtn.org](http://www.stmatthewtn.org)

📱 @SaintMatthewCatholicChurch

#### PASTOR:

Father Justin Raines

#### ASSOCIATE PASTOR:

Father Tien Tran

#### DEACONS:

Lachlan Cameron & Bill Forte



## PARISH NEWS

### NATIVITY PAGEANT - DECEMBER 16



The Children's Nativity Pageant, hosted by our St. Gianna Circle Mothers Ministry, will take place this Saturday, December 16 following the 5 p.m. Mass. The pageant is a retelling of the Christmas story made up entirely of a cast of children from our parish and school community. All parishioners are invited to attend. We hope to see you there!

### YEAR-END CONTRIBUTIONS TO SAINT MATTHEW

With the end of the year fast approaching, please remember that all contributions must be postmarked by Saturday, December 31 to be credited toward your 2023 contributions. While the parish offices will be closed for the holidays, our business office will be available on Friday, December 22, Tuesday, December 26, and Friday December 29 to process end-of-year accounting. Stock and IRA contributions take time to process, so if you are interested in making a stock or IRA gift before the year's end, please contact Bill Stewart in the business office at [bstewart@stmatthewtn.org](mailto:bstewart@stmatthewtn.org) or (615) 550-5107 to start the process. Gifts can also be made through our online giving platform, Our Sunday Visitor, at [bit.ly/smconlinegivinghub](https://bit.ly/smconlinegivinghub). Thank you for your generous support!

### LITURGY SCHEDULE (DECEMBER 11-17, 2023)

#### MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ For the Tran Family
- Is 35:1-10
- Lk 5:17-26

#### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ Thomas William Edmondson
- Zec 2:14-17
- Lk 1:26-38

#### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

- 7:00 p.m. Mass
- ✦ For James Desrochers & Family
- Is 40:25-31
- Mt 11:28-30

#### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ For Steve & Yolande Berk
- Is 41:13-20
- Mt 11:11-15

#### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ Anthony Tran
- Is 48:17-19
- Mt 11:16-19

#### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- 5:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass
- ✦ Fr. Paul Altman Hostettler
- 8:30 a.m. Sunday Mass
- ✦ For the People of Saint Matthew
- 11:00 a.m. Sunday Mass
- ✦ Jim Hughes
- Is 61:1-2a, 10-11
- 1 Thes 5:16-24
- Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

- ✦ Special Intention
- ✦ *May they rest in peace*

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

- FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 26, 2023 -	
PARISH, VISITORS, ACH WITHDRAWALS, ONLINE GIVING, AND LOOSE CASH	\$ 22,442
SECOND COLLECTION: CAPITAL NEEDS	\$379

THIS WEEK'S SECOND COLLECTION: Religious Retirement

NEXT WEEK'S SECOND COLLECTION: Parish Charity

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY ON OUR  
ONLINE GIVING PAGE:

[www.stmatthewtn.org/church/giving](https://www.stmatthewtn.org/church/giving)



## PARISH NEWS

### KofC 8TH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

All Catholic students in 8th grade are invited to participate in the Knights of Columbus Catholic Citizenship Essay Contest. First-place winners will win \$150, second-place winners will win \$100, and third-place winners will win \$50. The winning essay will be submitted to the Knights of Columbus' regional essay competition. Students are asked to write a 500-750 word essay on the following theme: "How can the Church evangelize in the digital age?" Essays and entry forms must be submitted to Knights of Columbus Council 12012 by email to [kofc12012@gmail.com](mailto:kofc12012@gmail.com) by Wednesday, December 13.

### ROOM IN THE INN NEEDS MORE WARM COATS

Thanks to your generous donations in our warm clothes drive in October, coats have flown off the shelves at our first two Room In The Inn events of the season. Our supply of heavy warm coats has dwindled, and with the cold weather setting in, we are in need of additional ones to offer our guests at our upcoming events. New and gently used items in good condition will be accepted. If you would like to purchase coats, you can shop on your own or purchase items from our Amazon Wishlist at [amzn.to/46HuXyr](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08HJX4YR) (case sensitive). All donations can be dropped off in the bin under the table across from the sacristy. Warm hats and gloves will also be accepted. Thank you for your generosity!

### BECOME A GIFT BEARER

As we reflect on the holiday season, we remember all of the gifts that God has given us in our lives. At each Mass, the gift bearers represent the faithful of the Church expressing their gratitude and thanks for God's blessings and returning those gifts back to Him. Families and individuals alike are welcome to participate in this special part of the liturgy. We are specifically in need of gift bearers for the 5 p.m. Masses on Saturday. If you are interested in participating in the Mass, scan the QR code above or visit [bit.ly/smcgiftbearer](https://bit.ly/smcgiftbearer) to sign up for one of our upcoming liturgies.



### CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIAL

Christmas at Saint Matthew has always been a special time of beauty because the flowers decorating our church have been a memorial to our loved ones. We are again offering the opportunity to participate in a special way by having our loved ones remembered at the 10 a.m. Mass on Christmas Day. To participate, please fill out the "Christmas Flowers" offering in your December envelope packet and place your offering in the collection basket. You can also make a contribution to the Christmas Flowers fund on our online giving page at [bit.ly/smconlinegivinghub](https://bit.ly/smconlinegivinghub) and write in the name of your loved one in the notes section. All memorials must be submitted by end of business on Wednesday, December 20. Thank you!

### THE NATIVITY STORY: A MUSICAL MEDITATION

The Saint Matthew Church Choir invites all to a special program of Christmas music before the 4 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve, called *The Nativity Story: A Musical Meditation*. The program will feature a beautiful and diverse range of musical selections for the season, highlighting our full choir, small groups, our violinists and our accompanist. There will also be meditative scripture readings throughout to help the congregation to prepare for the Christmas liturgy. The program will begin at 3:15 p.m. We hope to see you there!

### RESPECT FOR LIFE ROSARY

Join our Respect for Life Ministry after the 8 a.m. Mass every Monday as they pray a special rosary for the unborn. All are invited to participate. The group will meet either in the grotto or in the church depending on the weather. If you are interested in joining or learning more about our Respect for Life Ministry, please contact Mary Starr at [maryestarr25@gmail.com](mailto:maryestarr25@gmail.com).

### JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST!

Stay up to date with the latest news and information from Saint Matthew! Join our email list today to receive our newsletters, updates on upcoming events, and more. To sign up, visit [bit.ly/smcemailsignup](https://bit.ly/smcemailsignup).



## PARISH NEWS

### PASSION OF CHRIST PRAYER GROUP




Please join us on the last Sunday of the month at 3 p.m. in the chapel to pray the Way of the Cross, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and learn more about our Lord's Passion. Our mission is to pray for our fellow Catholic brothers and sisters who have left the church, or any intentions that you may have. As St. Mother Teresa once said, "To make sure that we do not forget, Jesus gave us the Eucharist as a memorial of his love... When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then; when you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now." Visit [bit.ly/smcwayofthecross](http://bit.ly/smcwayofthecross) to complete the form.

### SEVEN SISTERS APOSTOLATE

The Seven Sisters Apostolate needs women who would commit to offering a weekly holy hour for our parish pastor. The commitment of each intercessor is to the day of the week versus a particular hour on a particular day. You would pray the hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in adoration or in front of a tabernacle. This may be prayed at any parish. If you are interested in joining the apostolate, visit [bit.ly/smcsevensisters](http://bit.ly/smcsevensisters) to complete the interest form. For questions, contact Susan Ruigh at [susanruigh@protonmail.com](mailto:susanruigh@protonmail.com) or (402) 499-6724.

### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Follow Saint Matthew to deepen your Catholic faith on your favorite social media platform! Find us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to keep up with everything happening here on Sneed Road.

 SaintMatthewCatholicChurch  
 @stmatthewtn  
 c/SaintMatthewCatholicChurch



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE  
NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM  
SAINT MATTHEW.

[www.stmatthewtn.org](http://www.stmatthewtn.org)

## SAINT MATTHEW SCHOOL NEWS

### FREE MONEY!

Let's take advantage of free money to raise funds for our sister parish, Our Lady of Miracles, in Gobert, Haiti! Simply register your Kroger and Publix shoppers cards and select Saint Matthew Church to receive the funds. Then, buy groceries as you normally would! These stores will send quarterly checks to the church and school based on our total spending. To register your cards for these benefits, visit [www.publix.com](http://www.publix.com) and [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com). Thank you for your support!

### GOT SPARE CHANGE?

There are clear boxes on the table outside the training chapel where you can share your spare change to benefit our sister parish in Haiti. Don't have any change in your pocket or purse? Use the included QR code on the box to donate a dollar or two (or more!). Thank you in advance for sharing your spare change!

### APPLICATIONS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED FOR SAINT MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL

There is still time to complete an application for Saint Matthew School for the 2024-2025 school year! Students in all grades are welcome to apply. To complete an application, go to [www.stmatthewtn.org/school/admissions](http://www.stmatthewtn.org/school/admissions) and scroll down to "Apply Now." If you have any questions, please contact Lori Bellante, Director of Advancement, at [lbellante@stmatthewtn.org](mailto:lbellante@stmatthewtn.org).

### SMS COMMUNITY NIGHT

On Thursday, January 25, our 5th-6th grade basketball teams will play The Covenant School at Belmont's Curb Event Center. This will be a special evening of basketball and our chance to show our support of The Covenant School, their students and families. As part of the evening's festivities, we will sell special T-shirts to commemorate the event. The shirt will be available for pre-order through the Saint Matthew Spirit Store after Christmas break. We would love to have a big turnout from Lion Nation at this event. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us at Belmont for the games.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### BECOME A FATHER RYAN STUDENT

Applications are now being accepted for the 2024-2025 school year at Father Ryan High School. With large numbers applying for this current school year, we encourage prospective families to apply as early as possible. For more information and to apply, visit [www.fatherryan.org/admissions/apply](http://www.fatherryan.org/admissions/apply).

### OH, COME LET US ADORE HIM

In honor of the Year of Parish Renewal in the National Eucharistic Revival, St. Ann Catholic Church is hosting 40 continuous hours of Adoration from December 15-17. The opening Mass will take place at 6 p.m. on Friday, December 15, and the closing Mass at 11 a.m. on Sunday, December 17. For more information and to register, visit their website at [www.saintannparish.com/faithformation](http://www.saintannparish.com/faithformation).

### CHRISTMAS CONCERT BENEFITTING VHF

The Bellevue Presbyterian Church will host a Christmas concert on Saturday, December 16, from 6-8:30 p.m., benefitting Visitation Hospital Foundation. Performers include Jonathan Celia Faro, Italian opera singer; Tyler Michael Smith, the son of Michael W. Smith; and Sarah Smith, Tyler's wife. For more information, contact Rhyan Preyer at [rhyan.preyer@visitationhospital.org](mailto:rhyan.preyer@visitationhospital.org).

## FORMED

PICK OF THE WEEK - DECEMBER 10

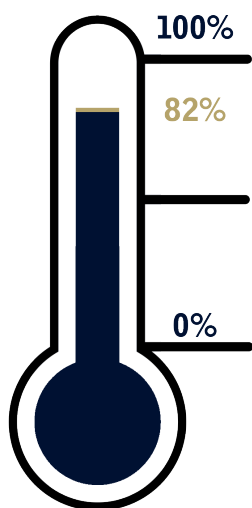


### THE SPIRITUALITY OF ADVENT

Join Dr. Tim Gray, president of the Augustine Institute, as he discusses the spirituality of Advent and the joy of waiting for Christ.

To watch this title and many more like it, visit [FORMED.org](http://FORMED.org) and sign up using our parish zip code (37069).

## THE BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL FOR MINISTRIES: MORE THAN \$95,000 RAISED!



Thanks to your generous support, Saint Matthew has raised more than \$95,000 toward its goal in this year's *Bishop's Annual Appeal for Ministries*! Our goal for this year's appeal is \$118,390. We are currently at 82% of that goal with a total of \$97,295 raised to date.

Your generosity supports ministries and services that carry forth the Bishop's mission and vision, including adult and youth catechesis, support for clergy, sacramental marriage, life at all stages, robust Catholic schools and much more. Please prayerfully consider making a gift.

If you have already donated, we appreciate your contribution! If not, time is running out to participate in this year's appeal. Visit [dioceseofnashville.com/appeal](http://dioceseofnashville.com/appeal) to make your gift today. Thank you!

## TONY'S REFLECTION THE SEASON OF PREPARATION

The basic four-week theme of Advent throughout the three years of the lectionary cycle breaks down to: the first week of Advent focuses on the Second Coming of Jesus; weeks two and three meditate on the figure of John the Baptist; and week four zooms in on the days just before the birth of Jesus.

Today, our readings introduce, or re-introduce, us to the bigger-than-life figure of John the Baptist. History records that John the Baptist was the preeminent preacher before Jesus arrived. He was a sort of "Billy Graham" of his time, drawing stadium-sized crowds even while preaching in the wilderness. The crowds flocked to John not merely because he had a "feel good message" that all are saved with no work of faith required. Rather, John's message portrayed the stark reality that we need to repent wholeheartedly of our sins before the coming of the Messiah.

The word "repent" in the original Greek is translated as "metanoia." Metanoia means a changing of the mind or a changing of conviction that results in a change of action. In this sense, repent is similar to the English word of reposition in which you have to change your current path to a new trajectory. After all, God says "yes" to us, but before we can say yes to God, we have to say "no" to all those things (i.e. sin) that take us away from God. Here, repentance becomes a prerequisite before God can come into our lives. Now we begin to see the significance of John's message – before goodness can enter into us, we need to go through the process of purification.

After the people repented and acknowledged their sins, John baptized them. This whole process was quite an act of humility on the part of the Jews because it was tantamount to admitting that they were ritually unclean and needed a whole-body washing. It was incredibly humiliating to acknowledge sin publicly, as usually sin was only acknowledged to a priest when bringing a sacrifice. Notice that the more prideful among the Jews, the Pharisees and Sadducees, did not receive John's baptism.

Despite his blunt message, we see that the crowds that came shared a great deal of faith in John. Coincidentally, the theme of the second Sunday of Advent is faith. Faith is not some state of feeling we get ourselves into. As Peter Kreeft, professor of philosophy at Boston College, notes, "Faith is simply believing in God and therefore believing everything He has revealed — no matter how we feel." While external things influence feelings, faith is given from within and calls for an act of the will. This Advent, let us make an act of faith and repent so Christ can fully enter our lives.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### CONFIRMATION RETREAT



We are looking forward to our Confirmation Retreat on January 27 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Camp Marymount in Fairview, TN. At the retreat, students will encounter an inspirational message that will awake their souls as they prepare for Confirmation. We will be sending out detailed information about the retreat as we get closer. To register your child for the retreat, visit [bit.ly/smcconfirmationretreat24](https://bit.ly/smcconfirmationretreat24).

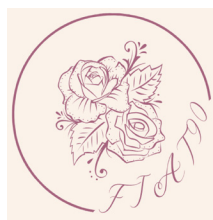
## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

### EXODUS 90



Exodus 90 is a spiritual program designed for men that offers a 90-day journey of self-denial and prayer to obtain freedom from that which negatively controls men. The Exodus 90 program consists of prayer, asceticism, and fraternity. Exodus 90 starts on January 1 and ends on March 31. If you are interested in participating in Exodus 90, please fill out the interest form at [bit.ly/smcexodus90](https://bit.ly/smcexodus90).

### FIAT 90



Fiat 90 is a spiritual program uniquely designed for women. Fiat 90 is a 90-day journey that gives women an opportunity to grow closer to God, closer to each other, and closer to authentic femininity. The Fiat 90 program is built on prayer, practices of self-denial, self-reflection, and community. Fiat 90 starts on January 1 and ends on March 31. If you are interested in participating in Fiat 90, please fill out the form at [bit.ly/smcfiat90](https://bit.ly/smcfiat90).



## YOUTH MINISTRY

### HOMESCHOOL LUNCH

This month, we're switching things up a bit and joining the Lunch Bunch for bingo! Homeschooled students in high school are welcome to come from noon-2 p.m. for lunch and bingo with the senior members of the community (you don't need to stay the entire time if you can't). We'll meet in the narthex of the church. Bring along a Christmas-themed item for the prize table priced around \$10. This can be trinkets, baked goods, games, etc. Let Antoinette know if you'll be there so she can order your lunch. We'll see you there!

### PRAYER FOR EXAMS

O Great St. Joseph of Cupertino,  
who while on earth did obtain from God  
the grace to be asked at your examination  
only the questions you knew,  
obtain for me a like favor  
in the examinations for which I am now preparing.  
In return, I promise to make you known  
and cause you to be invoked.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

*St. Joseph of Cupertino is the patron saint of students & test taking. Good luck to all students taking exams in the upcoming weeks!*

### PILGRIMAGE

Photo proof that we did make it to the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament! Pictured below is just some of the group who went on Pilgrimage last Saturday. Thank you for all your prayers!





**MISSION TRIP  
JUNE 2024**

REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 4TH, 2024



**TONY JESSE**  
Director of Religious Education  
[tjesse@stmatthewtn.org](mailto:tjesse@stmatthewtn.org)

Want to learn about the faith? Visit  
<http://bit.ly/SMCFaithFormationInterestForm>



**ANTOINETTE HANNING**  
Director of Youth Ministry  
[ahanning@stmatthewtn.org](mailto:ahanning@stmatthewtn.org)



OFFICE HOURS: Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

CHURCH: 615-646-0378

SCHOOL: 615-662-4044

## Holiday Mass Schedule

**DEC 23** Fourth Sunday of Advent

5 p.m. Mass - Church\*

**DEC 24** Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. Mass - Church

11 a.m. Mass - Church\*

\*Nursery available

**DEC 24** Christmas Eve

4 p.m. Mass - Church\*

The Nativity Story: A Musical Meditation beginning at 3:15 p.m.

4:10 p.m. Mass - Gym

6:30 p.m. Mass - Church

Liturgy Choir performing

10 p.m. Mass - Church

Special prelude music 15 minutes before Mass

**DEC 25** Christmas

10 a.m. Mass - Church

Special prelude music 15 minutes before Mass

**JAN 01** Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

9 a.m. Mass - Church

## Did you know...

This year, the Fourth Sunday of Advent falls on Christmas Eve. Since we have obligations to attend Mass for both the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas, we want to help you select which Masses you will attend to satisfy each obligation. Use the infographic below to help you choose your Mass schedule for December 23, 24 and 25.

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

Choose from the options below:

12/23 @ 5pm

12/24 @ 8:30am

12/24 @ 11am

### Christmas

Choose from the options below:

12/24 @ 4pm

12/24 @ 4:10pm

12/24 @ 6:30pm

12/24 @ 10pm

12/25 @ 10am