



Saint Matthew

CATHOLIC CHURCH

DEEPENING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH TOGETHER

DECEMBER 17, 2023 + THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

I am the voice
of one crying out in the desert,
“Make straight the way
of the Lord.”

John 1:23



MASS SCHEDULE

MASS

Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. | 8 a.m.
Wed. | 7 p.m. (Adoration at 6 p.m.)
Saturday Vigil | 5 p.m.
Sunday | 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m.
Holy Days | 8 a.m., noon, 7 p.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
☎ (615) 646-0378
🌐 www.stmatthewtn.org
📱 @SaintMatthewCatholicChurch

PASTOR:

Father Justin Raines

ASSOCIATE PASTOR:

Father Tien Tran

DEACONS:

Lachlan Cameron & Bill Forte



PARISH NEWS

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 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!

LITURGY SCHEDULE (DECEMBER 18-24, 2023)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ For Steve & Yolande Berk
- Jer 23:5-8
- Mt 1:18-25

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ For John Francis Weber
- Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a
- Lk 1:5-25

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

- 7:00 p.m. Mass
- ✦ Scott Dawson
- Is 7:10-14
- Lk 1:26-38

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ For Amy Guerra
- Sg 2:8-14
- Lk 1:39-45

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ For Anita Garcia
- 1 Sm 1:24-28
- Lk 1:46-56

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- 5:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass
- ✦ Barbara Sandler
- 8:30 a.m. Sunday Mass
- ✦ For Michael Harvey
- 11:00 a.m. Sunday Mass
- ✦ Vince Phillips
- 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
- Rom 16:25-27
- Lk 1:26-38

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

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 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. Thank you for your generous support!

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

- FOR THE WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 10, 2023 -	
PARISH, VISITORS, ACH WITHDRAWALS, ONLINE GIVING, AND LOOSE CASH	\$24,810
SECOND COLLECTION: RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT	\$955

THIS WEEK'S SECOND COLLECTION: Parish Charity

NEXT WEEK'S SECOND COLLECTION: Christmas

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY ON OUR
ONLINE GIVING PAGE:

www.stmatthewtn.org/church/giving



PARISH NEWS

CHRISTMAS BREAK OFFICE CLOSURES

Saint Matthew Catholic Church will close on Friday, December 22 and reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. Saint Matthew School will close on Thursday, December 21 and reopen on Thursday, January 4, 2023.

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!

FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION

Registration is now open for our next First Friday Adoration on January 5. Time slots are available in 30-minute increments. We need at least two people present with the Blessed Sacrament at all times throughout the day. To learn more and register for a time slot, visit bit.ly/smcffajjanuary24.

WOMEN'S CLUB JANUARY MEETING

The Saint Matthew Women's Club wants to help you get healthy and fit in the new year! All women of the parish are invited to the New Year, New You health fair on Wednesday, January 10. Healthcare professionals will be available to share tips and answer questions on nutrition, physical therapy, and mental health. The meeting will take place in the Cohan-Hansom Building from 7:30-9 p.m. More information will be made available soon. Save the date and make plans to attend!

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.

BEWARE OF SCAM EMAILS

Recently, we have heard from more and more parishioners and school parents receiving emails and text messages coming from scammers posing as Fr. Raines, Fr. Tran, and other church and school staff members. In these messages, the scammers are requesting meetings, asking for favors, and even soliciting money and gift cards from members of our community. As technology continues to advance, these messages are becoming increasingly harder to identify. Please know that all of our staff members will only contact you through verified forms of communication and send emails from our official Saint Matthew email addresses. Our staff would never solicit money or request personal information directly through email or text message. If you receive a suspicious message from a Saint Matthew employee, please do not respond to it or click any links in the message. Instead, please contact the church office, and we will help you verify whether the email is real or a scam. We are sorry for any confusion this may have caused. Please call the church office at (615) 646-0378 if you have any questions.



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

www.stmatthewtn.org

WELCOME TYLOR STARKEY!



Saint Matthew is pleased to welcome Tylor Starkey to our parish for the holiday season! Tylor is a seminarian for the Diocese of Nashville, currently in Configuration 3 at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, LA. Tylor will be joining us during his Christmas break to assist with our liturgies. He'll return during Holy Week for our Easter services. Feel free to introduce yourself and welcome him to our parish. Please pray for Tylor as he finishes his studies and prepares for the priesthood.

PARISH NEWS

ROOM IN THE INN

Our Room In The Inn ministry would like to thank everyone who donated warm coats for the guests at our upcoming events! We are overwhelmed by your generosity and kindness toward those most in need. While these coats will go a long way, they only satisfy one need for our homeless brothers. We are now seeking donations of NEW or GENTLY USED jeans to offer our guests. The jeans can be any color and sized for larger men. All donations can be dropped off in the bins under the table in the sacristy. For more information, please contact Mary Peters at mary_peters@comcast.net or Rhea Forte at (615) 828-5950. Thank you!

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 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 to complete the interest form. For questions, contact Susan Ruigh at susanruigh@protonmail.com or (402) 499-6724.

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 and 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 and scroll down to "Apply Now." If you have any questions, please contact Lori Bellante, Director of Advancement, at 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

FATHER RYAN LEGACY GALA

Join us on January 27, 2024 at the Music City Center as we honor David (FRHS 1966 alumnus) and Linda Bohan for their work and service to Father Ryan and the entire Nashville community. The cocktail reception will begin at 5 p.m., followed by the silent auction at 6 p.m. and the dinner at 7 p.m. Sponsorship opportunities are now available by visiting www.fatherryan.org/gala. Online tickets will be available later this month.

WORLD MARRIAGE DAY MASS & RECEPTION

All married couples are invited to celebrate your wedding anniversary in a special way this year at the World Marriage Day Mass with Bishop Spalding at the Cathedral of the Incarnation on Sunday, February 4 at 2:30 p.m. Anniversaries of any year are encouraged to attend (special recognition for milestone anniversaries of 25, 50, 60+ years). A reception will follow the Holy Mass. If you would like to attend, please RSVP with how many in your party will be attending to the Office of Marriage and Family Life online at www.nashvillefaithformation.com/mfl-events or call (615) 540-1235.

FORMED

PICK OF THE WEEK - DECEMBER 17

Advent Word Study

Agape: "Love"

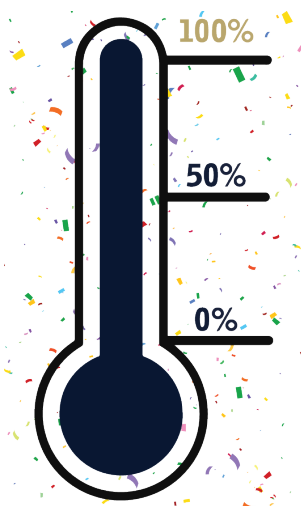


ADVENT WORD STUDY | AGAPE: "LOVE"

The word "love" is one of the sloppiest words in our language, as it primarily refers to a feeling that happens to a person. In the New Testament, "love" refers to a way of treating people that was defined by Jesus himself: seeking the well-being of others regardless of their response.

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

THE BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL FOR MINISTRIES: *WE'VE REACHED OUR GOAL!*



Saint Matthew is pleased to report that we reached our goal in the 2023 Bishop's Annual Appeal for Ministries! To date, we have raised \$121,883, surpassing our goal of \$118,390.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's appeal for your donations and prayers. The money raised will go a long way in serving the Catholic community in Middle Tennessee.

Your gifts will provide faith formation for youth and adults; support workforce development and financial counseling to prevent homelessness; promote vocations to priestly and religious life; and form our diocesan seminarians. Your commitment to Catholic ministries is inspiring and truly helps provide the light of Christ for those in need in Middle Tennessee.

TONY'S REFLECTION

WHAT IS JOY?

The third Sunday of Advent is traditionally called "Gaudete Sunday." Gaudete is the Latin word meaning "rejoice." With the word "rejoice" comes the concept of joy. Therefore, the prominent theme this week in Advent is joy. But what exactly is joy? Into every life comes glimpses of joy - the birth of a child, a wedding, a moment of peace in a hectic day, the awareness of God's presence in one's life. Yet these moments come and go and seem to get buried by the stresses of life.

True joy—the underlying peace that lasts despite the pressures of life—is often confused with happiness, a more transitory emotion inspired by fleeting events. Certain things bring momentary happiness to people, but they fade away, whereas joy is abiding and permanent. Happiness is circumstantial because it comes from the word "happenstance." Circumstances come and go – you have comfort then you don't. As Father Mike Schmitz sums up, "We long for happiness, but we're made for joy."

A psychologist for University of California, Berkeley mentioned that our idea of happiness centers around the self. I need ABC, then I'm happy. We have a false concept of happiness as a heightened sense of euphoria. Therefore, we think if we don't get this feeling of euphoria, we must not be happy. Here, we get into this endless trap of pursuing happiness in our consumer-crazed world. But, if we understand what joy is, we can approach any situation with a sense of balance, hope, acceptance, and understanding that God is with us. Scripture repeatedly indicates to "rejoice in all circumstances." Therefore, in any place in life, in any state, you can have joy that is not dependent on your comfort level. The Catechism defines joy as the "abiding and pervasive sense of well-being." So, it is still possible to have joy if you are in the middle of a crisis. Why can you have an abiding and pervasive sense of well-being in the midst of suffering? One answer, Jesus.

G.K. Chesterton described joy as "the gigantic secret of the Christian." Why? Because until Christ came along, you either believed in happenstance or you believed in the gods. The pagan gods are vindictive and don't care about you. However, Jesus reveals the very heart of who God is. Our God is three persons in one. He is constant. He is here. He loves you in all circumstances. Therefore, His "sense of well-being," His joy never goes away. Regardless of what happens to you, you can know that God loves you and that His joy is present even amid pain and suffering (see James 1:2).

Scripture reveals Christ as a person of joy despite His trials. At the Last Supper, Jesus referred to His joy: "These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11). As John the Baptist proclaimed on the coming of Christ, "My joy is now filled," let us experience joy today as we await the arrival of Christ on Christmas day.

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.

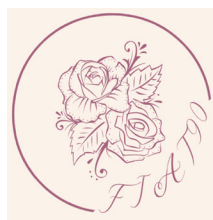
ADULT FAITH FORMATION

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.

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.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Still looking for that perfect Christmas gift? Consider sending your favorite teen on Mission Trip with us! Registration doesn't open until February 4th, 2024 but don't let that stop you from having something under the tree. Simply cut out the gift certificate below and stick it in an envelope. Or pair it with some work gloves or a journal that can be used on the trip! If you'd like a copy to print out yourself let Antoinette know.



RISE TONIGHT

It's the last one of the semester! This night will be whatever you need it to be (within reason).

If you need to get rid of pent up anger or energy, the gym will be open for you.

If you need to stock up on snacks to get you through exams, we got you.

If you need a new environment to study in, we'll have a quiet area for you. 5:30-7:30 p.m. as usual, starting in the Cohan-Hansom Building.

RISE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Mark January 6th as busy in your calendar because we're having a party! Immediately following the 5pm Mass in the PCC, ending at 8 p.m. More details to come.



TONY JESSE
Director of Religious Education
tjesse@stmatthewtn.org

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



ANTOINETTE HANNING
Director of Youth Ministry
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