



Saint Matthew

CATHOLIC CHURCH

DEEPENING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH TOGETHER

DECEMBER 24, 2023 + FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Behold!

You will conceive in your womb and bear
a son, and you shall name him Jesus.

Luke 1:31



MASS SCHEDULE

MASS THIS WEEK

Sun. | 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 4 p.m.,
4:10 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 10 p.m.

Mon. | 10 a.m.

Tues., Thurs., Fri. | 8 a.m.

Wed. | 7 p.m. (Adoration & Confession
at 6 p.m.)

Saturday Vigil | 5 p.m.

Sun. | 8:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.

PARISH INFORMATION

CONTACT US:

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✉ 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

LITURGY SCHEDULE (DECEMBER 24-31, 2023)

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD VIGIL MASS

- 4:00 p.m. Mass
- 4:10 p.m. Mass
- 6:30 p.m. Mass
- ✦ For the People of Saint Matthew
 - Is 62:1-5
 - Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
 - Mt 1:1-25

MASS DURING THE NIGHT

- 10:00 p.m. Mass
- ✦ For the People of Saint Matthew
 - Is 9:1-6
 - Ti 2:11-14
 - Lk 2:1-14

MASS DURING THE DAY

- 10:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ For all those remembered in the Christmas Memorials
 - Is 52:7-10
 - Heb 1:1-6
 - Jn 1:1-18

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ Martin J. Holmes
 - Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
 - Mt 10:17-22

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

- 7:00 p.m. Mass
- ✦ William and Jeanne Lawson
 - 1 Jn 1:1-4
 - Jn 20:1a and 2-8

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ Anna Grace Miller
 - 1 Jn 1:5—2:2
 - Mt 2:13-18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

- 8:00 a.m. Mass
- ✦ Kaye Arkins
 - 1 Jn 2:3-11
 - Lk 2:22-35

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

- 5:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass
- ✦ Pauline Moyer
- 8:30 a.m. Sunday Mass
- ✦ Janice Tabernik
- 11:00 a.m. Sunday Mass
- ✦ For the People of Saint Matthew
 - Sir 3:2-6, 12-14
 - Col 3:12-21
 - Lk 2:22-40

CHRISTMAS BREAK OFFICE CLOSURES

Merry Christmas from Saint Matthew Catholic Church and School! Our church and school offices are closed for Christmas break. The church offices will reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. Saint Matthew School will 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 this afternoon before the 4 p.m. Mass 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!

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. Although the parish offices will be closed for the holidays, our business office will be available on Friday, December 22 and Tuesday, December 26 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 17, 2023 - | |
|--|----------|
| PARISH, VISITORS, ACH WITHDRAWALS, ONLINE GIVING, AND LOOSE CASH | \$32,234 |
| SECOND COLLECTION: PARISH CHARITY | \$623 |

THIS WEEK'S SECOND COLLECTION: Christmas

NEXT WEEK'S SECOND COLLECTION: Rise Youth Group

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY ON OUR
ONLINE GIVING PAGE:

www.stmatthewtn.org/church/giving



PARISH NEWS

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/smcffajuary24.

JANUARY LUNCH BUNCH



Lunch Bunch returns on Tuesday, January 9! Lunch Bunch is our parish's monthly social event for members of the community ages 55 and up. This month, our theme will celebrate the new year! Come

wearing your favorite festive apparel to ring in 2024. Participation in the theme is encouraged, but not required. The event will take place from noon-2 p.m. in the narthex. The cost for entry is \$10 and a bingo prize valued around \$10 for the prize table. This can be a trinket, toy, game, statue, book, baked goods, etc. Have some old items collecting dust in your home? Bring it to bingo! To register for the event, visit bit.ly/smclunchbunchjan24.

WOMEN'S CLUB JANUARY MEETING

The Saint Matthew Women's Club wants to help you be your best self 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 about 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!



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

www.stmatthewtn.org

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.

ROOM IN THE INN

Our Room In The Inn ministry is seeking donations of NEW or GENTLY USED jeans to offer our guests at our upcoming events. 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!

LOST AND FOUND BOX

Our lost and found box, located on the metal shelving unit in the church kitchen, will be cleaned out on Tuesday, January 2. All items that have been left behind will be sorted and either donated or thrown away. If you believe you left something in the church recently, please be sure to check the lost and found box before you leave Mass this weekend. Thank you!

PARISH NEWS

KofC YOUTH FREE THROW COMPETITION

The Knights of Columbus Free Throw Competition is back! All children from the Saint Matthew community ages 9-14 are invited to participate in this annual competition, sponsored by Council #12012. This year's event will take place at the St. Henry gym on Sunday, January 14 at 12:30 p.m. following the 11 a.m. Mass. All interested participants must fill out a registration form and bring it to the event. Visit bit.ly/smckcfreethrow24 to download the registration form. If you have any questions, please contact kofc12012@gmail.com.

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.

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.

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 24

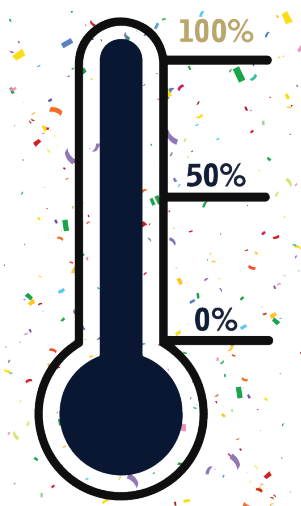


FORMED NOW | THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

We are excited to announce our series of *FORMED Now* Christmas and New Year special episodes. In these episodes, professors from the Augustine Institute Graduate School will lead us in reflections throughout the season.

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.

FRAN'S REFLECTION THE ADVENT WREATH

"Are we there yet?" is a question for the ages, and it applies to car trips and Advent alike. With Christmas so very near, this year as we light the fourth Advent candle the answer to the perennial question is an enthusiastic: "Almost there!"

Young German children in the 19th century are credited as the inspiration for our modern Advent wreath. When the days of Advent passed too slowly for their childlike anticipation of Christmas, a simple visual representation of the four Sundays of Advent provided an easy way for them to mark the progress with patience. Other historical accounts suggest a much earlier tradition, deriving from the Christian missionary practice of using common pagan symbols to introduce Jesus Christ, Light of the World.

The Advent wreath tradition is both efficient time-keeping and effective Christian symbolism. Each element of the wreath helps the faithful prepare week by week in Advent for the coming of the Lord.

The wreath is a circular form made of evergreen foliage. In ancient Rome, such wreaths were symbols of victory. The Advent wreath serves as a Christian herald, announcing the victorious entry of the King into the world as a baby at Bethlehem. The continuous shape of the circle, with no beginning and no end, signifies the eternal nature of God and His unending love.

The four candles of the Advent wreath mark the four Sundays of Advent. The purple and pink colors of the candles correspond to the liturgical vestments of violet and rose worn by the priest during Advent. Purple is the Church's color for penitence and preparation, while pink is used to indicate a sense of joyous anticipation. The Advent wreath is a simple way to practice the season of Advent with childlike expectation for the Light who has come into the world and who we look for in the world to come. ✝

This reflection was written by Saint Matthew parishioner and school parent, Fran Jaeger. It was originally posted on Nashville Catholic, the new online media hub for the Diocese of Nashville. Visit www.NashvilleCatholic.org to read more of Fran's work and to view more news and information from the Diocese of Nashville.

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

IT'S THE FOURTH SUNDAY FIRST...

Did you know that Saturday night Mass counts for the Sunday obligation because of Jewish tradition? While days end at midnight on our calendar, the Jewish day begins and ends at sundown. Liturgically, Catholics have borrowed from this practice for many years. So although the Fourth Week of Advent is only a day this year, let's make it count! Whether or not you decide to go to Mass Saturday evening or Sunday morning, we encourage you to read the readings and think about the theme of love. Consider taking the time to intentionally close your Advent with prayer and anticipation.

RISE CHRISTMAS PARTY

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



MERRY CHRISTMAS, FROM THE POPES

“Christ is our peace! Brothers and Sisters, who are listening to me, open your hearts to this message of peace, open your hearts to Christ, the Son of the Virgin Mary, to the One who became ‘our peace!’”

- *St. John Paul II on Christmas, 2001*

“The things of God can wait, we think and we say. And yet he is the most important thing, ultimately the one truly important thing. Why should we not also be moved by curiosity to see more closely and to know what God has said to us? At this hour, let us ask him to touch our hearts with the holy curiosity and the holy joy of the shepherds, and thus let us go over joyfully to Bethlehem, to the Lord who today once more comes to meet us. Amen.”

- *Pope Benedict XVI on Christmas, 2012*

“Brothers and sisters, Bethlehem shows us the simplicity of God, who reveals himself not to the wise and the intelligent but to the little ones, to those with a pure and open heart (cf. Mt 11:25). Like the shepherds, let us too set out in haste and allow ourselves to be amazed by the unthinkable event of God who becomes man for our salvation. He, the source of all good, makes himself poor, asking as alms our own poor humanity. Let us allow ourselves to be deeply moved by the love of God. And let us follow Jesus, who stripped himself of his glory in order to give us a share in his fullness.”

- *Pope Francis on Christmas, 2022*



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



ANTOINETTE HANNING
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