



Saint Matthew CATHOLIC CHURCH

DEEPENING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH TOGETHER

DECEMBER 14, 2025 + THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



**Be strong, fear not! Here is your God,
he comes with vindication;
with divine recompense he comes to save you.
Isaiah 24:4**

MASS SCHEDULE

MASS

Mon., Tue., Thu., and 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.

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
📱 @stmatthewtn

PASTOR:

Father Justin Raines

ASSOCIATE PASTOR:

Father Tien Tran

DEACON:

Bill Forte



LITURGY SCHEDULE

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass

✦ For the People of Saint Matthew

8:30 a.m. Mass

✦ Pasquale (Pat) De Francesca

11:00 a.m. Mass

✦ Norm Pictor

- Isaiah 35:1-6, 10
- James 5:7-10
- Matthew 11:2-11

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

8:00 a.m. Mass

✦ Jim Gill

- Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17
- Matthew 21:23-27

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16

8:00 a.m. Mass

✦ For Dan Ott

- Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13
- Matthew 21:28-32

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

7:00 p.m. Mass

✦ David Akins

- Genesis 49:2, 8-10
- Matthew 1:1-17

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

8:00 a.m. Mass

✦ For Fr. Patrick Fitzsimons

- Jeremiah 23:5-8
- Matthew 1:18-25

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

8:00 a.m. Mass

✦ John Grasso

- Judges 13:2-7, 24-25
- Luke 1:5-25

✦ **Special Intention**

✦ *May they rest in peace*

**To RESERVE MASS INTENTIONS,
VISIT [BIT.LY/SMCMAASSINTENTION](http://bit.ly/smcmaassintention)**

COME PRAY THE ROSARY IN THE CHAPEL
FOLLOWING 8 A.M. WEEKDAY MASSES
AND 8:30 A.M. SUNDAY MASS.

END-OF-YEAR GIVING REMINDER

All contributions to Saint Matthew or directly to the Diocese must be post-marked by Wednesday, December 31, to be credited toward your 2025 contributions. Please note that while the church office will be closed for the holidays (Dec. 23–Jan. 1), the business office will be open in a limited capacity to process end-of-year gifts on:

- Monday, Dec. 29
- Tuesday, Dec. 30

Please call the business office at 615-550-5111 to ensure somebody will be here before coming up on these days.

Stock contributions require additional processing time. If you wish to make a donation of appreciated stock before year-end, please contact Bill Stewart at bstewart@stmatthewtn.org or by phone at (615) 550-5107.

You may also make gifts through our online giving platform, Pushpay. If you plan to utilize a Donor Advised Fund for any 2025 contributions, please verify cut-off timing as soon as possible with your financial advisor or brokerage firm.

Gifts for the 2025 Bishop's Annual Appeal for Ministries are also due by Wednesday, December 31. The easiest way to give is by visiting dioceseof-nashville.com/appeal and selecting "Saint Matthew" as your parish when you donate. Please note that gifts to the Seminarian Education Fund also count toward the Bishop's Annual Appeal (see page 5 for QR codes).

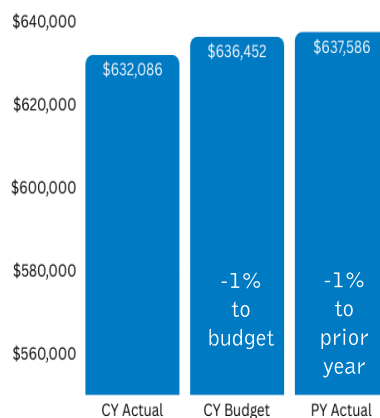
Thank you for your continued generosity and support!

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

- FOR WEEK ENDED DECEMBER 7 -

REGULAR COLLECTIONS	\$31,976
SECOND COLLECTION: BUILDING MAINT. & FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS	\$698
SECOND COLLECTION: IMMACULATE CONCEPTION	\$440

YTD Summary



Visiting, new, or looking to give?
Scan to make a gift now, or visit
stmatthewtn.org/church/giving



Second Collections

This Week:
Retirement for Religious

Next Week:
Charity & Outreach

Registered Parish Families: 1265

CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS

Help beautify the church at Christmas by supporting the Christmas Flower Memorials fund. Gifts can be made in memory of, or in celebration of, loved ones. Scan to donate or drop off your corresponding church envelope to the parish office. Donations must be received by **Wednesday, Dec. 17**, to be recognized in print in the Christmas bulletin.



ROOM IN THE INN NEEDS

Our Room In The Inn ministry is seeking a few items to best serve our guests during their visit at Saint Matthew. The following items are requested:

- Jeans (particularly sizes 30 & 32)
- Boxers (all sizes, particularly medium)
- Shoes (athletic or boots)
- Long Underwear (all sizes)

Please bring donations to the church office or order through their Amazon Wish List on our website.

Thank you to everyone who donated so generously during the coat drive ahead of the RITI season.

CHRISTMAS MASS MUSIC

4 p.m. - Full choir, organ/piano and violin. A full choir program with scripture readings before Mass begins at 3:15 p.m.

4:15 p.m. - Cantor and keyboard in the gym.

6:30 p.m. - Liturgy Choir with the organ.

Musical prelude begins at 6:20 p.m.

10 p.m. - Choir, organ, and violin. Musical prelude begins at 9:40 p.m.

10 a.m. - Cantor, organ, violin. Musical prelude begins at 9:40 a.m.

CHURCH DECORATING

The Saint Matthew Art & Environment Ministry needs volunteers to help decorate the church in preparation for Christmas on Tuesday, Dec. 23, and again for removing the decorations on Monday, Jan. 12. Scan the QR for times and details. All supplies provided. Thank you for helping us celebrate Christmas!



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, Dec. 24

4 p.m.*

4:15 p.m. (gym)

6:30 p.m.

10 p.m.**

Christmas Day

Thursday, Dec. 25

10 a.m.**



* Once the Church is full for 4 p.m. Mass, visitors will be directed to the gym service

** Incense will be used at these Masses

We will not have weekly adoration, confession, or 7 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve, nor 8 a.m. Mass on Christmas Day.



The second quarter is coming to a close here at Saint Matthew School, which, believe it or not, means we are almost halfway done with the school year! This week, we celebrated the Feast of the Immaculate Conception with an all-school Mass on Monday, followed by another special Advent Mass on Tuesday in which our students helped Father Tran light the candle for Peace. In the second half of the week, we celebrated Polar Express Day, a fun pajama day tradition for our younger students. We also held our annual spelling bee, in which 16 of our best spellers across 5th-8th grade competed for a spot at the Nashville Diocesan Spelling Bee. As we approach this last week of school, please pray for our middle schoolers who will be taking exams next week. God bless.

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

Registration for this year's confirmation retreat is open! Students will hear engaging talks from young adults to awaken their souls as they prepare for the sacrament of confirmation. All students being confirmed in 2026 are asked to attend the free retreat. The retreat is on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Scan the code for more details, and to register.

Additionally, we are in need of several volunteers to help with the retreat including adults, young adults, and high school students. Contact Tony Jesse at tjesse@stmatthewtn.org for more information about the retreat or volunteering.



VOTE FOR THE SAINT MATTHEW TREE

Vote for the Saint Matthew School Christmas Tree in the Stephen's Valley Festival of Trees competition. Our tree, *'Every Time a Bell Rings, an Angel Gets its Wings,'* is inspired by the Christmas classic *It's a Wonderful Life*. Keeping with our Silver Jubilee theme, it features silver bells and angels.

Help Saint Matthew win for the second year in a row by voting through the QR code. You can visit the Festival of Trees display nightly from 5-8 p.m. at Meriwether Park inside Stephen's Valley.

GIVE TO THE ANNUAL FUND

As you make your year-end giving plans, please consider supporting the Saint Matthew Annual Fund. Your generosity directly strengthens our mission by providing essential resources that keep our students safe, supported, and growing in faith—especially through vital services like school security and our nurse. Our Annual Fund goal is \$125,000.

Every gift, no matter the size, makes a lasting impact on our children and our community. Visit stmatthewtn.org/school/support or scan the QR code to make your gift today. Pledges and matching gifts are also welcome. Thank you for your continued support of Saint Matthew School and for helping us nurture a faith-filled, academically excellent environment for all our students.



Scan to
support the
Annual Fund

UPCOMING EVENTS



Saint Matthew
Catholic Church

New Parishioner Reception

Thursday
Jan. 8, 2026

- Meet the priests
- Learn about our parish
- Discover our ministries
and other ways to get involved



6 p.m. Parish Conference Center

CATHEDRAL ORGAN CONCERT

The Cathedral of the Incarnation will host its final Winter Organ Concert at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 17, and feature Dr. Peter Rogahn, associate organist and choirmaster of Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral in Nashville. All are welcome.

MORNING COFFEE AT FATHER RYAN

Parents of students in 4th-8th grades are invited to join Father Ryan for coffee and pastries in the Neuhoft Library on Wednesday, Jan. 14, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. President Paul Davis '81 will share updates about Father Ryan and provide parents the opportunity to connect and ask questions of the Senior Leadership Team on any topic, including tuition assistance opportunities, academic programs, strategic plan initiatives, and more. To register for this free event, go to www.fatherryan.org/visit.

BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL FOR MINISTRIES

As we approach the end of the year, please consider a gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal for Ministries. Your generosity helps Saint Matthew reach our parish goal of \$171,000 while investing in the future of our Church and supporting those who are seeking Christ through the many ministries of our diocese. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of those in need and strengthen the mission we share as the Body of Christ. You may give directly to the BAAM or to the Seminarian Education Fund via the QR codes to the right. Donations to the Seminarian Education Fund also count toward our goal. The diaconate program is supported by these funds.

formed®

Pick of the Week: December 14



Our Lady of Guadalupe & St. Juan Diego

A boy, his sneakers, and a giant sombrero take up the story of St. Juan Diego's miraculous encounter with the Blessed Virgin Mary. How far will Our Lady ask him to reach out in faith, trust, and confidence?

Littlest Saints features the lives of the saints as told by kids. In each episode, a young child dons a habit, a cassock, a uniform, anything and everything, and acts out a different heavenly hero's story, full of drama, comedy, and everything in between.

Watch this series and other great content for free. Visit FORMED.org and use our parish code: 37069.



BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL FOR MINISTRIES

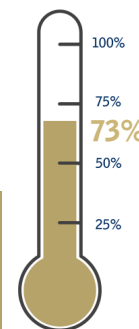
Seminarian
Education
Fund



Bishop's
Annual
Appeal



Saint Matthew 2025
Donations: \$125,736 (73%)
Goal: \$171,000



TONY'S REFLECTION

REMOVING OUR BLINDNESS

On the surface, our readings today look like a pious reflection that instills hope—God will heal those who are in a dire situation or experience oppression. Yet, having a context of the scene in both readings may spark a deeper reflection.

At the time of Isaiah's O.T. reading, things looked bleak for Israel as the Assyrian army was zeroing in on Jerusalem. Rather than experience oppression from the corrupt Assyrians, Jerusalem was temporarily spared by God. However, Isaiah's reading speaks of a greater freedom, one of restoration and liberation from the slavery of persecution by outside forces—whether spiritual or worldly. Theologians note that when Isaiah mentions the blind, the paralyzed, and the deaf, he's referring to the faithful being oppressed by their own sin, which flows from being enslaved by corrupt rulers. King Hezekiah paid off the king of Assyria (2 Kings 18:1-18) so that he wouldn't sack Jerusalem. However, in the process, Hezekiah sold his people out to the Assyrians, thus leading to their inevitable demise.

In the N.T. reading, King Herod, another corrupt king, threw John the Baptist in prison because John upheld God's teaching on marriage, which didn't sit well with his adulterous lifestyle. In this desolate state in prison, it might seem that John is perplexed about whether Jesus is truly the long-awaited Messiah. Yet, a closer look at John's exchange with his own disciples reveals John does know, but he needs to allow his disciples to see that Jesus is the Messiah. As St. Jerome mentions, "John asked this not because he is ignorant, but to guide others who are ignorant." John the Baptist is described as the forerunner of Christ and, as Jesus shares, is the greatest of the prophets. John bluntly instructed his disciples to follow Jesus when he announced, "Behold the Lamb of God." However, John's disciples aren't following Christ; they are still following him. Now, John must have his disciples ask Jesus precisely so they can "see." And Jesus answers John's disciples by quoting Isaiah's prophecy of healing the blind, lame, and deaf.

Yet, while Isaiah and Jesus list ailments that are physical, the physical paralysis conveys a deeper spiritual wound. Jesus's bodily healings always revealed the deeper need for a spiritual recovery (cf. Mark 2: 1-12). Therefore, one who has a physical blindness represents the soul that cannot see God, while the deaf signify one who cannot hear God. In our hectic, fast-paced world where sensually gripping images and noisy messages come at us rapidly, it's easy to suffer from spiritual blindness and deafness in which God's message is muted by the clatter around us. I suspect for many of us, December is when this clatter is amplified. As we are immersed in a flurry of activity, a mounting "to-do list," and internal stress, let us enter the temple of silence where Jesus can liberate us from our spiritual ailments.

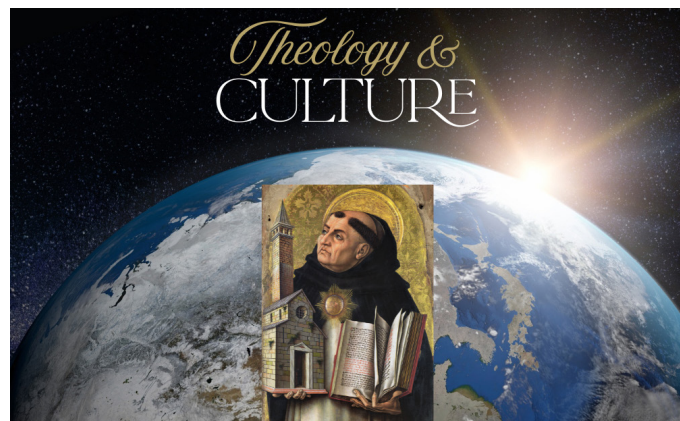
A prophet of God speaks in multiple time periods. John allows us to perceive the connection of Advent, as once we "see" and our spiritual blindness is detached, we will then make every effort to prepare for Christ this season.

FAITH FORMATION

THEOLOGY & CULTURE SERIES

Join us in the new year for *Theology & Culture*, a formation series exploring where our Catholic faith intersects with the world around us—and how these connections shape the way we live, think, and engage with modern culture. *Theology & Culture* will meet between the Masses (9:45–10:45 a.m.) in the Parish Conference Center each Sunday in January before transitioning to once a month. The first talk on Sunday, Jan. 4, will be led by Father Raines as he talks on Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Speakers will include Father Raines, Tony Jesse, James Grossheim, and others. Come discover how faith and culture meet, and how that meeting point can transform our daily lives.






Join Bishop J. Mark Spalding
for the Diocese of Nashville's

**JUBILEE
YEAR
CLOSING
MASS**

**Sunday, December 28
11:00 a.m.
Cathedral of the
Incarnation, Nashville**

Visit nashvillefaithformation.com
for more information on the
Jubilee Year of Hope.



Advent CELEBRATION

All 9-12th graders are invited
Sunday, Dec 14th
5:30-7:30pm

Food • Gingerbread House Contest • Prayer

**Come in your best ugly Christmas sweater or Christmas Pajamas



RISE SCHEDULE

SUN
DEC 14

ADVENT CELEBRATION!
Celebrate this great season with your RISE family. See the graphic for more. See you tonight!

SUN
DEC 21

CHRISTMAS CAROLING
We will meet at the Heart of Mary House at 5 p.m. spreading Christmas Joy to those who are suffering. Families welcome.

SUN
DEC 28

Christmas Break
Be sure to join us for our Spring Semester Kick-off event on January 11th

RISE meets on Sundays in the P.C.C. beginning at 5:30 p.m. with pick-up at 7:30 p.m. Dinner is provided.



JOHN PAUL II Healing Center
Transformation in the Heart of the Church

Would you like to deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ?

Have you forgiven, but are still experiencing negative emotions?

Do you feel like you bring the same sins to confession, again and again?

This uniquely engaging format will help you see and experience God's healing love through teaching, prayer, personal reflection, adoration and the Sacraments. Join us Thursday & Friday evening and all-day Saturday.

Healing the Whole Person

FEBRUARY 12-14, 2026

Catholic Pastoral Center | Nashville, TN

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN



All RISE teens and their families are invited to join us as we bring joy to the residents of the Heart of Mary House.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 • 5PM

6107 New York Ave.

**We will meet at the Heart of Mary House

**RISE welcomes all students
in grades 9-12**



MICHAELA MILLER
Director of Youth Ministry
mmiller@stmatthewtn.org
615-550-5102

WITH PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING TO ALMIGHTY GOD, THE
DIOCESE OF NASHVILLE CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE
ORDINATION OF

Dr. Albert Domm

Mr. David Johnson

Mr. James Grossheim

Mr. Daniel Ott

Mr. David Herrera

Mr. Patrick Owings

Mr. Glenn Hutchens

Mr. James Quinby

Mr. James Rose

TO THE SACRED ORDER OF DEACON THROUGH THE INVOCATION OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE IMPOSITION OF HANDS BY

Most Reverend J. Mark Spalding, D.D., J. C. L.

TWELFTH BISHOP OF NASHVILLE

SATURDAY, THE TWENTIETH OF DECEMBER IN THE
YEAR OF OUR LORD TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE
AT TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

IGLESIA SAGRADO CORAZÓN DE JESÚS
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

Please consider supporting our brothers Dan Ott, James Grossheim, and the seven other men being ordained to the diaconate by joining them for their Ordination Mass this Saturday, Dec. 20. Keep these men in your prayers.

All are invited to celebrate with Dan and James on Sunday, Dec. 21, as they assist at and preach their first Masses as deacons—Dan at the 8:30 a.m. Mass and James at the 11 a.m. Mass. Both of their Masses will be livestreamed. Following each Mass, join us in the Cohan-Hansom Building for receptions in their honor as we congratulate them and pray for them in their new ministry.