



Saint Matthew CATHOLIC CHURCH

DEEPENING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH TOGETHER

DECEMBER 21, 2025 + FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



NORMAL WEEKLY 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.

*See pg. 2 for changes to this week's schedule

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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass

✠ Scott Dawson

8:30 a.m. Mass

✦ For the People of Saint Matthew

11:00 a.m. Mass

✠ MaryAnn Culbertson

• Isaiah 7:10-14

• Romans 1:1-7

• Matthew 1:18-24

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

8:00 a.m. Mass

✠ William & Jeanne Lawson

• 1 Samuel 1:24-28

• Luke 1:46-56

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

8:00 a.m. Mass

✠ Mary Ann Claxton

• Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24

• Luke 1:57-66

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE VIGIL MASS

4:00 p.m. Mass

4:15 p.m. Mass - Gym

6:30 p.m. Mass

✦ For the People of Saint Matthew

• Isaiah 62:1-5

• Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

• Matthew 1:18-25

No 7 p.m. Mass, Adoration, or Confession

10:00 p.m. Mass

✦ For the People of Saint Matthew

• Isaiah 9:1-6

• Titus 2:11-14

• Luke 2:1-14

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 a.m. Mass

✠ For All Those Remembered in Christmas Memorials

• Isaiah 52:7-10

• Hebrews 1:1-6

• John 1:1-18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26

Feast of Saint Stephen

8:00 a.m. Mass

✠ Stephanie Sheehan

• Acts 6:8-10: 7:54-59

• Matthew 10:17-22

✦ **Special Intention**

✠ *May they rest in peace*

END-OF-YEAR GIVING REMINDER

All contributions to Saint Matthew or directly to the Diocese must be post-marked by Wednesday, Dec. 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 and Tuesday, Dec. 30.**

Please call the business office at 615-550-5111 to ensure somebody is in the office prior to visiting 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 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, Dec. 31. The easiest way to give is by visiting dioceseofnashville.com/appeal and selecting "Saint Matthew" as your parish when you donate. Please note that gifts to the Seminarian Education Fund also count toward our goal for the Bishop's Annual Appeal (see page 5 for QR codes).

Thank you for your continued generosity and support!

MASS CHANGES & OFFICE CLOSURE

As noted above, the Church Office is closed Dec. 23 through Jan. 1.

Dec. 24 & 31 - We will *NOT* have Wednesday night adoration, confession, or 7 p.m. Mass on these days. Mass on Dec. 31 is at 5 p.m.

Dec. 25 - Mass is at 10 a.m. on Christmas Day. No 8 a.m. Mass.

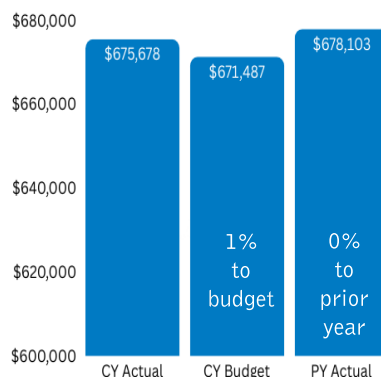
Jan. 1 - Mass is 9 a.m. on Jan. 1. No 8 a.m. Mass.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

- FOR WEEK ENDED DECEMBER 14 -

REGULAR COLLECTIONS	\$33,851
SECOND COLLECTION: RETIREMENT FOR RELIGIOUS	\$861

YTD Summary



Visiting, new, or looking to give?

Scan to make a gift now, or visit

stmatthewtn.org/church/giving



Second Collections

This Week:

Charity & Outreach

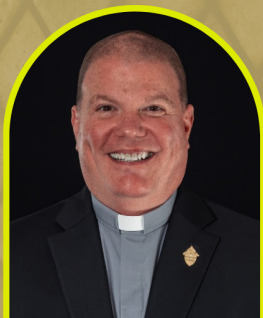
12/25 Christmas

Next Week:

Youth Ministry

DIACONATE ORDINATIONS!

CONGRATULATIONS DEACONS!



**REVEREND MR.
DANIEL OTT**

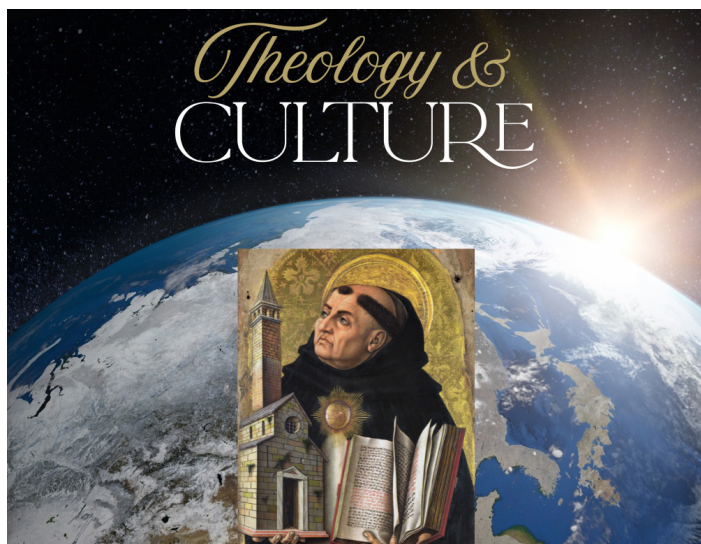


**REVEREND MR.
JAMES GROSSHEIM**

Join us for celebratory receptions with these men today, Sunday, Dec. 21, in the Cohan-Hansom Building. For Reverend Mr. Dan Ott, following 8:30 Mass, and for Reverend James Grossheim following 11 a.m. Mass.

THEOLOGY & CULTURE SERIES BEGINS JAN 4

Join us for a new faith formation series, *Theology & Culture*, 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. Our first speaker will be Father Raines on Sunday, Jan. 4, discussing Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.



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.

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

On Thursday, Jan. 1, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Holy Day of Obligation. Saint Matthew has Masses available on **Wednesday, Dec. 31, at 5 p.m.**, and on **Thursday, Jan 1, at 9 a.m.** Incense will be used at 9 a.m. Mass. We will *NOT* have our regularly scheduled 7 p.m. Mass, adoration, or confession on New Year's Eve, nor an 8 a.m. Mass on New Year's Day.

FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION

First Friday Adoration on Friday, Jan. 2, will have reduced hours, beginning after 8 a.m. Mass and concluding on Friday at 5 p.m. Sign up for a 30-minute time slot now at bit.ly/smcffajan26.



NEW PARISHIONER RECEPTION- JAN 8

New to Saint Matthew or looking to get more involved? Come to our New Parishioner Reception on Thursday, Jan. 8. Welcome to Saint Matthew.



**Saint Matthew
Catholic Church**

New Parishioner Reception

**Thursday
Jan. 8, 2026**

- Meet the priests
- Learn about our parish
- Connect with ministries
- Discover ways to live your faith



6 p.m. Parish Conference Center



Merry Christmas



*“You are the light of the world.
A city on a mountain cannot be
hidden.”
~ Matthew 5:14*

VOTE FOR THE SAINT MATTHEW TREE

Vote for the Saint Matthew School Christmas Tree in the Stephens 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 become back-to-back winners by voting through the QR code. You can visit the Festival of Trees display nightly from 5-8 p.m. at Meriwether Park inside Stephens Valley.

ANNUAL FUND UPDATE

As you make your year-end giving plans, please consider supporting the Saint Matthew Annual Fund. As this campaign reaches the mid-year point, we are at 29% of our \$125,000 goal. Make your end-of year tax-deductible donation today!

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. 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.



**Scan to
support the
Annual Fund**

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

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. There are still volunteer opportunities for some of our 2026 dates. You can sign up or view the wish list through the QR code. Thank you to everyone who donates clothing or volunteers with RITI. Without your generosity we could not offer this program, nor the love of Christ, to our guests.



FATHER RYAN LEGACY GALA - FEB 7

Father Ryan 47th Annual Legacy Gala is Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026 at the Music City Center. Save the date as online ticket sales begin in January. Learn more or inquire about other opportunities with the gala at fatherryan.org/give/gala.

formed®

Pick of the Week: December 21



Sleigh Ride: Christmas in the Last Frontier

Sleigh Ride documents two Dominican friars' harrowing mission to celebrate Christmas Mass for three small villages in remote Alaska that have no assigned priest. With only 5 hours of sunlight, during the coldest time of the year, the friars will drive over 28 hours and 548 miles through high winds and snow packed roads bringing Christmas to the ends of the earth.

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

BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL FOR MINISTRIES - SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

Good news is meant to be shared. Mary shows us this when she visits her cousin Elizabeth—both women expecting, both filled with joy. Yet Mary's visit was not only about celebration; it was an act of loving service. Despite her own pregnancy and the long journey, Mary went to assist Elizabeth, bringing with her the presence and light of Christ.

Elizabeth recognizes this immediately, proclaiming that the child in her womb leaped for joy at Mary's greeting. The Gospel reminds us that Advent is a season of joyful anticipation and generous hearts. Like Mary, we are called to carry Christ's light to others through acts of love, service, and support for those in need.

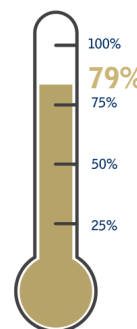
Mary and Elizabeth also reflect the strength of family supporting one another. As a parish family, Saint Matthew is invited to do the same. With 21% of our Bishop's Annual Appeal for Ministries goal still remaining, we ask you to prayerfully consider a year-end gift. Your generosity helps us support vital diocesan ministries, seminarian education and the diaconate program, and strengthens the mission we share as the Body of Christ. Donations may be made to the BAAM or the Seminarian Education Fund via the QR codes provided.



Seminarian
Education
Fund



Bishop's
Annual
Appeal



**Saint Matthew 2025
Donations: \$135,611 (79%)
Goal: \$171,000**

TONY'S REFLECTION

TRUSTING IN GOD'S PLAN

In the 4th week of Advent, God's plan is announced to Mary and Joseph. To ponder what Mary and Joseph are going through, it is helpful to get the backstory of their relationship. Jewish weddings have two distinct stages: kiddushin and nisuin. After the first stage, there is a legal marriage that only death or divorce can break. A first-century husband had some time (upwards of a year) after the wedding to prepare a home for his new wife. When he brought his wife into the home, he would consummate the marriage by having physical relations with her.

Scripture indicated that Mary and Joseph were "betrothed" but not yet living together. This is code for being legally married but not yet having physical relations in their new home. It should be noted that there was no shame in having a physical union between the kiddushin and nisuin stages. Therefore, Mary and Joseph are legally married and are free to have sexual relations. What is obvious is that they don't have relations. Recall Mary's response to the angel's proclamation of bearing a son is, "How will this be, since I know not a man?" Mary's reply insinuates that she doesn't plan to have sex with her husband. Early Christian texts inform us that Mary had taken a vow of perpetual virginity to God. We might ask, if she took a vow of virginity, then why did she get married to Joseph? Unfortunately, an unwed Jewish virgin was a vulnerable target for the occupying Roman power to take advantage of. As a strong carpenter, Joseph was Mary's trusted husband and protector of her virginity. Of course, this would mean that Joseph would have taken a vow of virginity himself. The fact that Joseph knew that the child was not his implies he did not have physical relations with Mary, nor did he plan to because "he knew her not" (Mt. 1:24-25).

Nazareth was a small town. Joseph and Mary likely pronounced their virginal vows at their wedding, which the townspeople would have witnessed. Now that Mary is pregnant, the gossiping town will assume that they broke their vows. Yet, Joseph, being unwilling to put Mary's reputation to shame, shields her by "divorcing her quietly" and leaving the scene. By leaving, in effect, Joseph is telling the townspeople it was me who is to blame. Joseph is willing to spend the rest of his life being thought of as having taken advantage of, then abandoned, his young wife so that Mary's character does not become tarnished.

While Joseph protects Mary from the local slander, he still must grapple with the nature of her pregnancy. There are various theories as to what Joseph initially knew or did not know about Mary's pregnancy. One theory is called "The Reverence Theory." Under this view, Joseph does not think Mary has committed adultery, as he does not doubt her purity and innocence. He is aware of Isaiah's prophecy that a virgin shall bear a son and sees his virginal bride as the fulfillment of this prophecy. He knows something divine is going on. However, being a humble man, he considered himself unworthy to take care of Mary and be the father of the King Child. As a just man, he knows that Mary belongs to God, and he considers himself unworthy to live with her. Therefore, he decides to separate himself quietly out of justice for God and reverence for Mary.





Whichever theory is true, before Joseph took action, God sent an angel to remind him of his royal lineage as a descendant of David and how the Messiah would come from this line. This story and the exchange between Joseph and the angel contain a message for us as well—don't be petrified to participate in God's saving plan. We can also reflect that God's saving plan could place us in similar roles to Joseph (as husband and father) and Mary (as wife and mother). This season, let us contemplate how we can mimic Mary and Joseph's part in putting trust in God to play a part in leading us to the Christ Child.

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.



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?


The uniquely engaging format of *Healing the Whole Person* 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



YOUTH RETREATS


CONFIRMATION RETREAT

Register now for this year's confirmation retreat! Students will hear engaging talks from young adults to awaken their souls in preparation of 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.

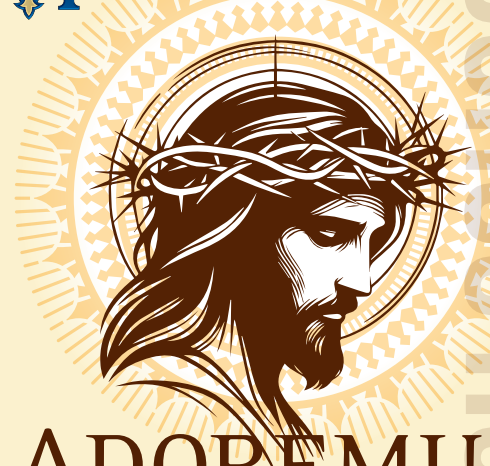
We need several volunteers to help with the retreat including adults, young adults, and high school students. Contact tjesse@stmatthewtn.org for more information.




SAVE THE DATE: RISE RETREAT



Saint Matthew
CATHOLIC CHURCH



ADOREMUS



High School Retreat at Camp Marymount

\$100 March **27-29**

RISE YOUTH MINISTRY

YOUTH MINISTRY SURVEY

If you have a teen in the parish, we want to hear from you. Please take a brief 10-question survey which will allow us to better serve and provide spiritual opportunities for the youth in our parish. Whether your children have never attended RISE, or are a weekly attendee, we want to hear from you. It should take no longer than five minutes and you have the option to remain anonymous. Thank you!



CHRISTMAS CAROLING TONIGHT

Please note, RISE will be meeting off-campus tonight and meeting earlier than usual for Christmas caroling at the Heart of Mary House. See the graphic below for more information.



Christmas
Caroling

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

CHRISTMAS BREAK AND 2026 KICKOFF

Following tonight's caroling event, RISE will be on Christmas break until Sunday, Jan. 11, with a special social evening involving the saints.



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



*Saint Matthew
Catholic Church*

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.



- Incense will be used at the 10 p.m. and 10 a.m. Masses.
- The nursery is available for the 4 & 4:15 p.m. Masses only in the P.C.C.
- Christmas choir offerings can be found on page 3 of the bulletin.
- Once the church is full for 4 p.m. Mass, visitors will be directed to the gym for the 4:15 p.m. service.
- Saint Matthew will not hold weekly adoration, confession, or 7 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve, nor 8 a.m. Mass on Christmas day.