

ADVENT

GUIDE TO A GREAT CHRISTMAS

Finding Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love



First Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 1, 2024

GIVING TREE

ADOPT A FAMILY OR PICK A SINGLE GIFT

GIVING TREE 2024

Make someone's Christmas brighter by shopping for a local family or individual student. This year our school leaders gave us valuable feedback on what is most helpful to families in our community. This means while there are fewer family requests, we are able to make the holiday brighter for more students and have collected wish lists for all! We encourage you to select as many student (tree) ornaments and family (star) ornaments as you are moved to fill. Please note each ornament represents a wish list for a real

student or family so they all must be turned in by **December 15th!**

- Choose an ornament from the tree (for family star ornaments, be sure to note your name and contact info on the sign-up sheet).
- Drop off labeled, unwrapped gifts by December 15 (include school name and gift number).
- Invite a friend to donate a Walmart, Food Lion or Safeway store gift card in the \$25-\$50 range or a specific item identified on an ornament.

More info: stmtts.org/givingtree

WELCOME

We know that going to church or to a new church for the first time can be nerve-racking. We want to help make your first experience at St. Matthew's a great one!

If this is your first visit to Saint Matthew's, we welcome you. Please join us between services for coffee, tea and refreshments in the Parish Hall. For more information about our community, visit our website www.stmmts.org. We are so glad you are here!



COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

All baptized Christians are welcome to participate in communion. If you would like to receive, simply place one hand on top of the other, palms up, and the priest will place bread in your hand. You may then consume the wafer. If for any reason you prefer to receive a blessing, simply cross your arms across your chest and the priest will give you a blessing. Gluten free wafers are available upon request.

Would you like to learn more about baptism? Please visit our website: stmmts.org/baptism or contact our office via email at Office@stmmts.org or phone at 703-430-2121.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER LIST

The Saint Matthew's intercessory prayer list is for those in or related to our community who are in need of prayer. It is designed so that all members of our community can pray for each other on an ongoing basis. In order to pray for those on the list, simply ask God to be with them and help them in any way needed - God knows what is going on, so we don't need to.

Please pray for the following:

Sean, Sieg, Chuck, Lea, Bonnie, Arthur, John G, Glo, Deb, Teresa, Mel, Eric, Debbie, Marshall, Ruth, Rennie, Arianna, Amy, Jackie, Ann, Kay, Jane, Panita, Mary Ann, Sharp Family, Amelia, Kassadi, Samantha, Dawn, Rudy, Kay, Clarissa, Dottie, Jonathan, Ageanna, Becky, RL, Darla, Gerry, Jenny, Reena, Sarah, Brandi, Barbara, Michael, Peggy, Emmett, Cathleen, Ray, BMR, Asley, Robyn, Emma, Frances, Christy, Nick, Gus, Aldana, Clint, Chelsea, Edgar, Rusty, Anne, Shelby, Kiera, Marty, Verdun, Candace, Kevin, John, Ome, Renee, Grace, Kristina, Fire and Hurricane Victims, Freya, Ava, Steve, Natalie, Kristen, Sophia, Sadie, Shaundra, Larry, Don, Fabiano, Diana, Phil, Luke, John, Brenda, Pete, Valorie, Cathy, Naomi, Dan, Christy, Dennis, Diane, Brent, Mary, Sybil, Judy, James, Rick, Avery, Emory, Mario, Molly, Cooper, Rose, Sarah, Jessica, Barbara, Jonathan, Jay, Amanda, Venessa, Desira, Rose, Sarah, Natalie D, Natalie S, and Paul.

If you or someone you care about are in need of Pastoral Care, please call 703-430-2121.

8 AM SERVICE

The Word of God

Entrance & Welcome	
Opening Sentence	109

Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Lighting of Advent Wreath

Lessons

First Reading • Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalm • 25:1-9

Second Reading • 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Gospel • Luke 21:25-36

Sermon The Reverend C. Robert Merola, Jr.

Nicene Creed 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI 392

Confession and Absolution 393

Peace 360

Announcements

The Holy Communion

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

(An offertory plate is not passed at this service. If you wish to make a donation, the collection plate can be found at the back of the church, or donations are accepted online at www.stmmts.org/give)

All things come of thee, O Lord,

And of thine own have we given thee.

Great Thanksgiving • Eucharistic Prayer B 367

The Lord's Prayer 364

Breaking of the Bread 364

Invitation to Communion 364

Communion of the People

Post-Communion Prayer 366

Blessing 366

Procession into the World 366

9:30 AM SERVICE

The Word of God

Welcome

Lighting of Advent Wreath and Prayer

Song

Song

Gospel • Luke 21:25-36

Sermon

The Reverend C. Robert Merola, Jr.

Prayers of the People

Peace

Announcements

The Holy Communion

Offertory

(An offertory plate is not passed at this service. If you wish to make a donation, the collection plate can be found at the back of the church, or donations are accepted online at www.stmmts.org/give)

Great Thanksgiving (stand through Communion)

Eucharistic Prayer

Sanctus

The Lord's Prayer

Breaking of the Bread

Communion of the People

Song

Closing Prayer (stand through dismissal)

Blessing

Closing Song

Dismissal

11 AM SERVICE

The Word of God

Welcome

Opening Sentence 109

Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Lessons

First Reading • Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalm • 25:1-9

Second Reading • 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Gospel • Luke 21:25-36

Sermon The Reverend C. Robert Merola, Jr.

Nicene Creed 358

Prayers of the People

Confession and Absolution 393

Peace 360

Announcements

The Holy Communion

Offertory Anthem •

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

Doxology • Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow

Great Thanksgiving • Eucharistic Prayer B 367

Sanctus • Holy, Holy, Holy • S129

The Lord's Prayer 364

Breaking of the Bread 364

Invitation to Communion

Communion of the People

Communion Hymn •

Post-Communion Prayer 366

Blessing

Procession into the World •

Dismissal 366



YOUTH FAITH, FUN, & SERVICE SPORTROCK!

Sun., Dec. 8, 12:30PM-2:30 PM

Ready for adventure and an afternoon of exhilarating indoor rock climbing? Whether you are a seasoned climber or a beginner, this is the perfect opportunity to challenge yourself and have fun.

WINTER BREAK LOCK-IN

Friday, December 29, 6 PM –

Saturday, December 30, 8AM

Get ready for games, food, movies, and more! Our winter lock-in is one you won't want to miss.

Scan the QR Code to stay updated with all the youth happenings.



ALPHA! Sunday, December 1, 8, and 15 from 5PM-7PM

Join Ben and friends for a chance to enjoy dinner, games, and deep conversation about faith and life.

DONUTS & DISCOVERY

Sundays at 9:30AM

Middle and high school students are invited to start Sunday mornings with a treat and some thought-provoking conversations at Donuts and Discovery. Join us for donuts and engaging faith discussions tailored just for you. It's the perfect way to connect with friends, explore big questions, and deepen your understanding of faith.



CHILDREN'S NATIVITY PLAY STMTTS.ORG/CHRISTMASPLAY

All children and youth are invited to participate in this fun retelling of the Christmas story. Register today using the link above. Rehearsals are held each Sunday at 11AM.

Teens are also needed to assist with tech, costumes, welcome team, song leading, and more.

Questions? Contact Hilary at FaithFactory@stmtts.org



PARISH WORK DAY SAT., DECEMBER 21, 9AM-12PM

Join us as we help prepare the grounds and church for a glorious Christmas celebration. Stop by for an hour or two. There are jobs for all ability levels. Enjoy coffee & donuts!





**GIVING
TUESDAY**
SUPPORT
BACKPACK BUDDIES

**BACKPACK BUDDIES
STERLINGHELP.ORG/SUPPORT**

1 in 4 children in Loudoun County Schools is food insecure.

Join us on **December 3rd** for **#GivingTuesday**, a global generosity movement that transforms communities when they work together for a worthy cause, and together we will help fight childhood hunger right here in Sterling.

Be a Giving Tuesday Ambassador for HRTS by visiting the link above.



**WOMEN'S MINISTRY
MIDWEEK MINDFUL MOMENT**

**MIDWEEK MINDFUL MOMENT
WITH ZORANA ON WEDNESDAYS**

Take a break from the hustle and join Zorana for a Mindful Moment. This is a peaceful 30-minute Zoom session designed to help you reconnect with God while enjoying meditation and a chance for women's fellowship – perfectly timed for midweek renewal. Bring your favorite cup of tea at 8PM on Wednesdays in December.

Zoom Meeting ID 747 4043 8363
Passcode: Stmatts



**CHRISTMAS
FLOWER
DEDICATIONS**

**CHRISTMAS DEDICATIONS
DUE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15**

Remember a loved one or give thanks for blessings received through the dedication of Christmas flowers. Donations of any amount are graciously accepted as we decorate the church to celebrate Christmas. Submit a dedication online at stmmts.org/flowers. Payment can be made online at anytime at stmmts.org/give—please indicate flowers in the memo line.



**SCAM ALERT
STMMTS.ORG/SCAMS**

As the holiday season approaches, we find this is a time when fraudulent emails and texts are sent asking well intentioned church members to provide support for fake causes. Please review the link above for information on how to spot false claims. Also, St. Matthew's clergy and staff will never ask you to email or text gift card codes. If you receive a request that seems sketchy, please contact the office to confirm 703-430-2121 or Office@stmmts.org.



WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Join Fr. Rob each Wednesday at 7PM or Thursday at 12PM for an engaging Bible study. (No Bible study November 27 or 28.) Whether you're new to studying the Bible or a seasoned reader, join this welcoming space to explore scripture, share insights, and grow in faith together. All are welcome—bring questions.



CHRISTMAS AT ST. MATT'S

Invite your friends and family and join us for any of our Christmas services. All services include holiday music, communion, and a Christmas message from Rev. Rob Merola.

Christmas Eve

- 3 PM - Children's Christmas Nativity Play and service
- 5 PM - Classic Christmas Mass with soloists and strings
- 8 PM - Festival Christmas Service with live band
- 11 PM - Traditional Midnight Mass with hymns, choir and strings

Christmas Day

- 10 AM - Classic Christmas Day service with holy communion



ADVENT WREATH MAKING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 10:30AM

An Advent wreath helps us set aside the season of hope as we await the birth of Jesus. Join us in the parish hall to make a fresh Advent wreath. May it be a wonderful addition to your holiday celebrations.



ROB RECOMMENDS STMTTS.ORG/ROBREADS

Fr. Rob often recommends books in Sunday messages. If you're looking for a holiday gift, check out the latest suggestions at the link above.



1 ADVENT

First Sunday of Advent



Revised Common Lectionary

Sunday, December 1, 2024

COLLECT

Traditional

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Contemporary

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

THE DAYS are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Refrain

My God, I put my trust in you.

Psalm 25:1-9 *from the Book Common Prayer*

- 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; * let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.
- 2 Let none who look to you be put to shame; * let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.
- 3 Show me your ways, O LORD, * and teach me your paths.
- 4 Lead me in your truth and teach me, * for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.
- 5 Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, * for they are from everlasting.
- 6 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; * remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.
- 7 Gracious and upright is the LORD; * therefore he teaches sinners in his way.
- 8 He guides the humble in doing right * and teaches his way to the lowly.
- 9 All the paths of the LORD are love and faithfulness * to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

HOW CAN WE thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

GOSPEL: Luke 21:25-36

JESUS SAID, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the

whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

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THIS WEEK AT ST. MATT'S

Sunday, December 1st

- 8:00 am - Rite II Worship Service
- 9:30 am - Festival Worship Service
- 9:30 am - Faith Factory
- 9:30 am - Middle & High School Student
- 10:30 am - Advent Wreath Making
- 11:00 am - Christmas Nativity Play Rehearsal
- 11:00 am - Classic Worship Service
- 12:15 pm - Gabe's Lay Support Team Meeting
- 5:00 pm - Youth Group Alpha

Monday, December 2nd

- 12:00 pm - Social Time with Candace
- 5:30 pm - Knutson String Studio Recital
- 5:30 pm - Girl Scout Troup 2157
- 7:00 pm - Bread of Life
- 7:30 pm - Free to Live

Tuesday, December 3rd

- 9:00 am - All Ages Read Together
- 9:00 am - Staff Meeting
- 12:00 pm - HRTS/Backpack Buddies Packing
- 6:30 pm - Alcoholics Anonymous
- 7:00 pm - Education for Ministry
- 7:00 pm - Band Rehearsal
- 8:00 pm - Compline (on line)

Wednesday, December 4th

- 12:00 pm - Alcoholics Anonymous
- 5:00 pm - Knutson String Studio Recital
- 7:00 pm - Bible Study
- 8:00 pm - Women's NA Group
- 8:00 pm - Mindful Ministry with Zorana

Thursday, December 5th

- 9:00 am - All Ages Read Together
- 3:00 pm - Gap Solutions, HRTS Packing
- 6:15 pm - Girl Scouts
- 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal

Friday, December 6th

- 8:00 pm - Compline (on line)

Saturday, December 7th

- 8:00 am - Men's Group
- 6:30 pm - Alcoholics Anonymous
- 7:00 pm - Narcotics Anonymous
- 8:30 pm - Narcotics Anonymous

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- December 1st: Katy Massa
- December 2nd: Allen Tuttle, Bart Ecker
- December 3rd: Anna Claire Campbell
- December 4th: Claire Hart, Oliver Massa
- December 5th: Pete Hart, Kris Golden
- December 7th: Melissa Hancock, Mary Ann Smith, Koko Solomon, Martha Olson, Karen Circle

ATTENDANCE November 24, 2024

Time or Place	Attendance Online	Attendance In-Person
8:00 AM		
9:30 AM		
11:00 AM		
Faith Factory		
Youth Group		

HELP SUPPORT

ST. MATTHEW'S MINISTRIES



GIVE ONLINE



stmtts.org/give



venmo



@stmttssterling



CASH OR
CHECK

Checks can be made payable to "St. Matthew's Church"

For more ways to give and information on automatic giving:

stmtts.org/give

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

In-Person & Online

8:00AM | This is a traditional communion service using Rite II from the Book of Common Prayer.

9:30AM | This is a vibrant communion service with our very own live band. If you are looking for a joyous family service with some of the best music around, this is the service for you.

11:00AM | A classic communion service with our fabulous choir. We use Rite II from the Book of Common Prayer.

Compline (evening prayer) Tuesday & Friday at 8pm on Facebook

Online Worship
stmmts.org/live

Sunday services are broadcast on Facebook and YouTube.

St. Matthew's Staff & Vestry

Rector, Rev. C. Robert Merola, Jr.
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VESTRY

Robby Stevens, Senior Warden

Andrew Wright, Junior Warden

Craig Dubishar

Bob Henry

Julie Kane

Sharon Muniz

Stephanie Zebrowski

Service Volunteers

Ushers|

Lectors|

Eucharistic Ministers/LEMs|

Tellers | Dan Robertson

Altar Guild | Elly Hilz, Tom Leary, Richard Henry