



**Reaching out
Reaching within
Proclaiming God's Love**

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

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The Messenger



Advent Traditions

I've always thought about Advent as a time of reflection, quietness, and preparation. It is observed by many Christians as a period of prayer, fasting, and repentance, followed by anticipation, hope, and joy. I read that originally, there was little connection between Advent and Christmas. But by the 6th century, Roman Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ. But the "coming" they had in mind was not Christ's first coming in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming back into the world.

Wondering about how I could spend this Advent season "preparing", got me thinking about how we prepare here at St. Matthew's during Advent. How, as a faithful people, do we honor this time preparing for the coming of the baby Jesus? What are the traditions here at St. Matthew's that are observed at Advent?

The following are some of the traditions I have come to love while here at St. Matthew's.

The first tradition to begin the Advent Season is the lighting of the Advent Wreath. We have a beautiful stand for the blue Advent candles that get lit each Sunday of Advent until the 4th Sunday of Advent when the rose candle is lit. Then on Christmas Eve, the white Christ candle is lit. We have a reading and prayer while the candles are being lit. It's a great start to our worship time.

The next tradition that has been started here at St. Matthew's, usually on the 3rd Sunday of Advent, is the service of Lessons and Carols. I love this service where several scripture passages are read by various readers each followed by an Advent/Christmas carol sung by the congregation.

Also on the 3rd Sunday of Advent every year, we have Hanging of the Greens when the members of the church get together and decorate the tree, and the altar, and put the candles up for the Christmas Eve service. The decorations always seem plain and simple at first glance but are considered beautiful and festive, ready for Christmas Eve once completed. We work together getting all these decorations up and then enjoy snacks to finish off the work.. It's a joyous time watching the church being decorated so beautifully.

At St. Matthew's we also have the tradition of displaying poinsettias in honor or memory of a loved one or for blessings received. You can donate towards these poinsettias and they are placed on or around the altar and church during the Christmas season. On the night of the Christmas Eve service, the loved ones are named in the bulletin. These poinsettias really beautify the sanctuary. Then after the Christmas season, everyone is invited to take some of the poinsettia plants home to keep alive!

The next tradition is the Christmas Eve service. If you talk to some of those church members who have grown up at St. Matthew's, they will tell you that we used to have the service at or around Midnight, like the traditional Episcopalians; but over the years that has changed. The Christmas Eve service now starts at 7:00 pm with 30 minutes of music and continues with the Holy Eucharist at 7:30 pm. At the beginning of the Christmas Eve service, a young child carries the baby Jesus and places him in the manger at the altar. This is a beautiful service, ending with a candlelight service while singing Joy to the World!

Even though it is after Advent, another tradition here at St. Matthew's is an Epiphany party to celebrate the Magi coming to see the baby Jesus bringing gifts. We have a white elephant gift exchange and usually a King's Cake spending a fun time together with our church family. In the last few years, we have also begun to do the act of Chalking the Door for the new year.

I love all these traditions. Can you think about other traditions that you have loved here at St. Matthew's? Forward your memories to me and I can put them in the next Messenger. We have so much to be thankful for and these traditions help us display this thankfulness to each other.

I hope you find ways to spend this Advent in quiet reflection to help you prepare for Christmas.

Have a blessed Advent
Elizabeth Hill
Editor



St. Matthew's Vision Statement

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church is living into God's vision for us as a beloved community and disciples of Christ. We are always growing in relationship with God, embracing our neighborhood and our world, and leading through acts of service as a beacon of God's justice and love.

St. Matthew's Mission Statement

The Mission of St. Matthew's is to Welcome, Respect and Care for All People. We accomplish this by following Christ, the perfect example of God's reconciling love, as we promote justice, peace and healing for ourselves and our world.

St. Matthew's office hours:

- Monday-Thursday 9:00 am-2:00 pm
- Fr. Richard is in the office 10:00 am-2:00 pm Monday and Tuesday.

Services: Holy Eucharist 10:15 am every Sunday
Evening Prayer 6:30 pm every Wednesday
Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24, 7:00 pm

The St. Matthew's Vestry's December meeting will be after church on Sunday, December 10, 2023.

The Vestry Meeting minutes will be posted on the Vestry bulletin board in the hallway.



Birthdays,
Baptisms, and
Confirmations

December

Remember to pray for each of these persons on their special day

Watch over your children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

December Birthdays

- December 5—Jerry Collier
- December 9—Amy Ekerberg, Katrina Southern
- December 12—Jason Penner
- December 22—Sarah Hill Kenney
- December 27—Rosalind Scudder
- December 30—Melissa Keenan
- December 31—Ian McCloud

December Baptisms

- December 5 —Jim Reese
- December 20—Maddie Stonehouse
- December 22—Drew Holstine, Wayne Reif
- December 23—Alison Loyd, Nancy Craig
- December 24—Haley Southern
- December 26—Mary Ann Glover Beck
- December 29—Jane Orr, Charles Beck

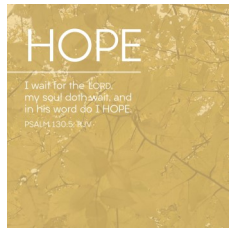
December Confirmations

- December 7—Donna Mills, Melissa Keenan, Sean Hall
- December 8—Rosalind Scudder
- December 16—Annette Bernard
- December 23—Andrew Craig

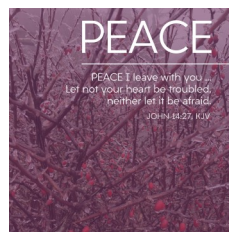
If you know of other birthday, confirmation, or baptism dates that are not listed, please contact the office so they can be included. Thank you.



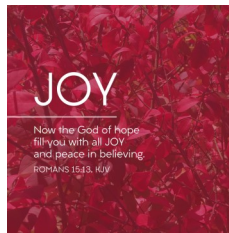
☆ ☆ *Advent and Christmas Schedule* ☆ ☆



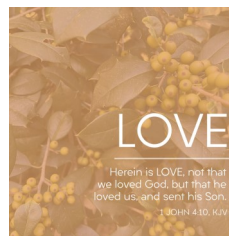
Advent 1—Sunday, December 3
Advent Study—9:00 am
Holy Eucharist—10:15 am



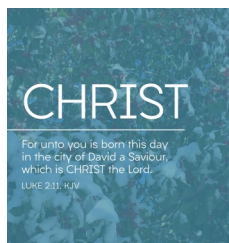
Advent 2—Sunday, December 10
Advent Study—9:00 am
Holy Eucharist—10:15 am



Advent 3—Sunday, December 17
Advent Study—9:00 am
Eucharist in the Absence of a Priest—Reserved Sacrament—10:15 am
A Service of Lessons and Carols
Hanging of the Greens—following the worship service



Advent 4—Sunday, December 24,
Advent Study—9:00 am
Holy Eucharist—10:15 am



Christmas Eve
Sunday, December 24
Christmas Music—7:00 pm
Holy Eucharist—7:30 pm



Christmas Day
Morning Prayer—10:15 am



December 2023



Join us for Coffee Hour after the Worship service

Coffee Hour Hosts

- December 3—Twila Lockaby
- December 10—Jeremy and Elisabeth Kitto
- December 17—Sarah and Chris Teichler
- December 24—Melissa Keenan
- December 31—Fred Schroeder

There will be a 2024 Coffee Hour Hosts calendar up in the parish hall towards the end of December. If anyone has any questions or concerns about coffee hour, please contact Melissa. Thanks



Card Ministry

The St. Matthew's Card Guild will meet Monday, December 4, 10:00 to 2:00. Bring a lunch or snack. Join us for the fun and fellowship!



Words can never express the gratitude we have for everyone at St. Matthew's for the food, flowers, cards and especially the prayers that we received while Steve was recovering from his surgery, It has been a

really rough road and we truly believe that prayers were a large part of his recovery. Saying thank you seems so inadequate for what we feel, but it will have to do, so a big THANK YOU to you all. God bless you

Steve and Ginger

St. Matthew's Outreach

Food Cart

14 non-perishable food items were delivered to the Salvation Army "Harvest of Love" food bank in November. Please remember those who don't have enough to eat.

Adopt A Family

We have a lovely family of 4 this year. Dad, mom, and 2 kids: A 6 year old boy, and a 1 year old girl. We are so blessed to be able to provide gifts to help this family celebrate Christmas.



There are tags on a wreath which will be out in the parish hall on Sundays. Please have gifts wrapped and at church by December 17th. Any concerns, please contact Melissa. Thanks



Mitten Tree

We thought it would be wonderful to collect winter items for Northridge Elementary School across the street from St. Matthew's. Kids are always losing mittens and hats. Here is a list of needed items:

Mittens, stocking hats, leggings, sweatpants, underwear, and socks.

Please bring to church and place in the basket under the mitten tree. We will accept items through the end of December

Harvest of Love

We will have totals soon. These items will be delivered to Salvation Army "Harvest of Love" food bank in the 1st week of December

The Outreach committee would like to thank all of our friends in the pews, our church family for supporting all of the giving opportunities throughout this year. We are all so blessed to be able to do God's work! Have a blessed Christmas!



Altar
Guild



Altar Guild Team for December

Melissa Keenen, Karen
Wall, Ginger King

December Altar Flowers

December 3—Ruth Cooper
“In memory of Darling Chuck”

December 10—Margie Knupp
“For Blessings Received”

December 17—Twila Lockaby
“For Blessings Received”

December 24, 25, 31 and January 7
Christmas Poinsettias



We will polish brass on Saturday, December 9,
at 10:00 am (all are welcome to help)

Poinsettia ORDERS

Help to decorate the church altar and
sanctuary by donating towards Poinsettias.
You can give in honor of a loved one, in
memory, or for other thanksgivings.

Any amount you can give is wonderful.
Lets fill the church with the beauty of the
poinsettias and for the blessings of the sea-
son. Thanks for your generosity.

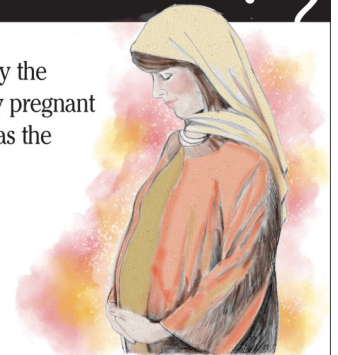
Please use the forms available at the back
of the church or contact Twila Lockaby.

These flowers will be on the St. Matthew's
Altar December 24—January 7

?? ? Bible Quiz ? ?

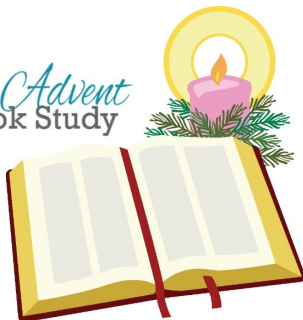
Elizabeth, an older relative of Mary the
mother of Jesus, was miraculously pregnant
at the same time as Mary. What was the
name of Elizabeth's husband?

- A. Aaron
- B. Zechariah
- C. Joseph
- D. Simeon



Answer: B (See Luke 1:5, 39-41)

Advent
Book Study



Advent begins Sunday, December 3

Join us for a group study
during Advent at 9:00 am
every Sunday morning in
the lounge. Books are
available at the church.



Sunday, December 17

Stay after the worship service and
Lessons and Carols to Hang the
Greens. Time to trim the tree,
hang the greenery and put out the
candles! Bring a snack to share.



Epiphany Party! Saturday, January 6, Noon

Mark your calendars to join us for an Epiphany Party as we celebrate when the Magi came to worship baby Jesus.

At Noon we will gather for a potluck lunch and follow with a White Elephant gift exchange/game. Bring an inexpensive wrapped white elephant gift. We have always had lots of fun and laughter as we celebrate the end of the Christmas season and the start of the Epiphany season.

Bring a dish to share. Hope you can be here for this joyful celebration.



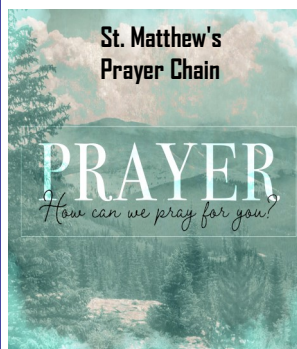
Please join
Deacon Barbara Gibson
for Evening Prayer
every Wednesday
at 6:30 pm In the
St. Matthew's Covey Chapel.
Or join us on Facebook.
Everyone is welcome.
Come take
a few minutes to end your
day with prayer.



LET'S FILL UP THE ST. MATTHEW'S FOOD PANTRY.



The pantry is outside, at the entrance to the parking lot. Some suggested items: cereal, canned goods, jelly, mac and cheese, boxed meals, spaghetti, easy muffin mixes, etc. Please consider the weather when leaving your items. Thanks for helping our neighbors.



St. Matthew's Prayer Chain

If you have a request for prayers for yourself or others, contact Mary Upton at 316-841-1736. The information you share will then be passed on to the chain leaders who will pass the information on to their team. The members of the chain will add your request to their prayers. The information you give me is confidential and will not be shared with others outside the prayer chain without your permission.



St Matthew's
Annual Parish Meeting
Sunday, January 21, 2024

11:30 AM

Almighty and ever living God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, bear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

All committee chairs are asked to submit their Annual Reports to office.stmatthewsnewton@gmail.com or leave with Charlie in the church office as soon as possible. It is requested that all reports be submitted by January 2, 2024.

One agenda item is election of new Vestry members and convocation delegates. The nominating committee will be meeting to name a slate of nominees for Vestry and a convocation delegate. Please prayerfully consider serving if asked by the nominating committee.

Being a Vestry member is an important leadership position. Working with the priest, the Vestry is responsible for the financial and spiritual health of the church community.

Convocation delegates and alternate attend three or four meetings per year of the SW Convocation. The delegates attend the annual Diocesan Convention in October, which will be in Wichita in 2024. The alternate is encouraged to attend meetings of the SW Convocation to learn about the responsibilities of the delegates and attend the convention if the elected delegate cannot attend.

At the beginning of the new year the Vestry will be organizing a Search Committee to begin the search for a new Rector at St. Matthew's. Please consider serving on this important committee.

Please plan to attend the Annual Meeting as we look at what was accomplished in 2023 and as we plan ahead for 2024.

All members of St. Matthew's are encouraged to attend this important meeting of our church. Each committee will have their report for 2023, the budget will be discussed, and plans for the new year will be talked about and voted on!

Of course we will also be planning a Potluck Lunch along with the Annual Meeting!

Please bring a dish to share.

**ANNUAL
MEETING**



Our generosity is informed by the simple theological truth that God has blessed us infinitely with all of the gifts of Creation. Our lives, our labor, our love is devoted to the mission of the Church when we take stock and realize that our lives and our response to God's generosity are Rooted in Abundance.

Thank you to everyone that has returned their pledge card. We will be gathering the information from these cards which will help the Vestry plan for 2024. Thank you for your generosity and for being willing to contribute not only financially but also with your time.

If you haven't returned yours yet, it is never too late! Thanks.

There is a busy and exciting year ahead at St. Matthew's. Where and how will you get (or stay) involved?

Ponderings at the end of a day — or year

Dutch Catholic priest and theologian Henri Nouwen found it useful to reflect on several questions at the end of the day: "Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to some-one's face? Did I say words of healing?" Pondering such questions may prove valuable at the end of a year as well: "How did I contribute to peace in the world this past year? Did I bring smiles to others' faces? Did I offer words of healing?" Nouwen continued, and we can too: "Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love?"

Many of us set New Year's resolutions for self-improvement, asking, "What are my goals? How can I better myself, my weight, my work-life balance, my habits?" But Nouwen said of his self-inquiry: "These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and [in] the life to come." His resolution was to share God's love with others. With God's help, it can be ours as well, for each new day and each new year.

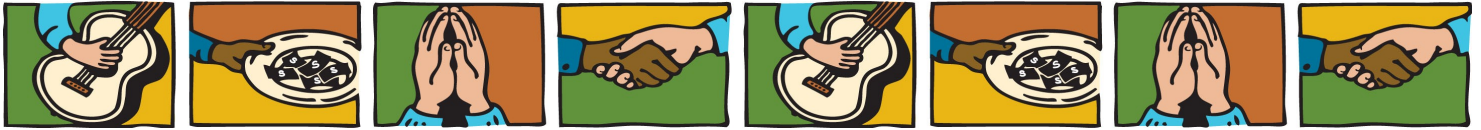
The Foreigner

In the Gospel of Thanksgiving Day Jesus is traveling through Samaria greeted by ten lepers standing from afar requesting healing from this unusual Healer Jesus tells them to go show themselves to the priests as they traveled they were cleansed of the ten only one returned to express gratitude and he was a foreigner Jesus affirms him telling Him to rise for his personal faith had saved him

Traveling the Journey of Life we return with the one whom Jesus expressed his own deep personal gratitude

Joan Breit
Thanksgiving Day 2023





Here is the worship schedule for November. Please let the office know if you would like to sign up to read, usher and/or count. We can always use more hands! ***If you are unable to serve when you are scheduled, please find a substitute.*** Thanks for your service!

	December 3	December 10	December 17	December 24	December 24, 7:00PM	December 31
Season	First Sunday of Advent	Second Sunday of Advent	Third Sunday of Advent Lessons & Carols Hanging of the Greens	Fourth Sunday of Advent	Christmas Eve	1st Sunday after Christmas
Service	Holy Eucharist	Holy Eucharist	Communion in the absence of a Priest (ComAP)	Holy Eucharist	Holy Eucharist	Holy Eucharist
Leaders	Fr. Richard Osborne	Fr. Richard Osborne	Deacon Barbara Gibson Mary Anne McCloud	Fr. Richard Osborne	Fr. Richard Osborne	Fr. Richard Osborne
Lectors	Bonnie Jones	Mary Upton	Jeremy Kitto	Fred Schroeder	Elizabeth Hill	Darlene Hall
Counters (2)	Twila Lockaby	Fred Schroeder	Mary Upton	Mary Upton		Margie Knupp
	Margie Knupp	David Simmonds	Fred Schroeder	Fred Schroeder		Twila Lockaby
Ushers (2)	Elizabeth Hill	Melissa Keenan	Rick Glover	Elizabeth Hill	Mary Werner	Rick Glover
	Mary Upton	Bonnie Jones	Mary Upton	Melissa Keenan	Bonnie Jones	Mary Upton
Hosts	Twila Lockaby	Jeremy & Elisabeth Kitto	Sarah & Chris Teichler	Melissa Keenan	Open	Fred Schroeder
Altar Flowers	Ruth Cooper "In memory of Darling Chuck"	Margie Knupp "For blessings received"	Twila Lockaby "For blessings received"	Christmas Poinsettias	Christmas Poinsettias	Christmas Poinsettias
Acolyte & LEM	Fred Schroeder	Karen Wall		Fred Schroeder	Fred Schroeder	Fred Schroeder
Organist	Chris Teichler	Chris Teichler	Chris Teichler	Chris Teichler	Chris Teichler	Kelli Glann

Christmas Morning—December 25—Morning Prayer—10:15 am