

THE ORACLE

SAINT MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



St. Matthew's Family,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! My family is greatly anticipating the beginning of our ministry alongside all of you in mid-December, and we give thanks for the call to serve such a vibrant and faithful parish. There is also the added blessing of returning home not just to 'Philly', but to the same area in which we once lived.

It was two months to the day from when I submitted my materials for the position of rector to the time the offer came to lead St. Matthew's. Considering how lengthy your entire process was that may seem quick, but (and I'll be glad to share those stories!) every step of the process was Spirit-led, open, engaging, and filled with joy. My family found everyone on the search committee, Vestry, and staff to be good and faithful people, and it is obvious that you have a passion for your church home. Now we look forward to the opportunity to meet the rest of you and hear your stories and prayers for St. Matthew's.



I also want to commend all of you for your resilience and faith. St. Matthew's has been through quite a bit these past two years with the retirement of your rector of 34 years, the assistant priest, and now the ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic. Yet, even amidst such change, my encouragement to all of you is fear not. We are upheld in the arms of a merciful and loving Lord, and, by focusing solely on him, we can confidently live out the words of St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

My family is planning to move the week of December 6th, and our first Sunday with you will be December 20th. By that time, we will be deep into the season of Advent, and with it, the theme of the coming of Jesus among us; something that occurs not just at his birth and coming again in glory, but each and every day of our lives. Together, may God grant us the grace to boldly take hold of those opportunities, and may that transforming message of hope, of joy, of that peace which passes all understanding be at the heart of all we do as the body of Christ at St. Matthew's.

With Love in Christ,
Rodney+



We are pleased to announce formally that Reverend Rodney Roehner has enthusiastically accepted our call to be Saint Matthew's rector! After 15 months of careful preparation and reflection, our search process and the Holy Spirit has led us to Father Rodney. The search committee unanimously recommended the call to the Vestry, who in turn unanimously accepted that recommendation. We believe our prayers have been answered and we are excited for his arrival on December 20, 2020.

Father Rodney comes to us from St. Paul's Episcopal Church in New Smyrna Beach, FL, where he has been rector for 6 years. Prior to that, he was the Associate Rector and school chaplain at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in New Orleans, LA. He attended seminary at Nashotah House Seminary in Wisconsin, where he earned a Masters of Theological Studies with a concentration in Anglican Studies. He brings with him significant experience, accomplishment, spirituality, ability, and enthusiasm.

As Father Rodney noted in his letter to us, he is not new to this area. He was born and raised in Montgomery County, graduating from Methacton High School and Villanova University. Father Rodney is excited to return to the area for himself, but especially for his family. Father Rodney is married to Carolina, and together they have two children, twin 11-year-old girls, Sophia and Alexa.

On a more personal level, Father Rodney enjoys baseball, football and tennis – We hope he is still a Phillies/Eagles/Freedom's fan! He shares with us that his wife is quite the artist, and photographer so their home always looks like a studio! Carolina is also an interpreter by profession.

The twin girls, Alexa and Sophia are currently in 6th grade and have a variety of interests. They both seem to have inherited Carolina's artistic talents as well as other passions. Sophia enjoys playing the violin and piano. Alexa plays flag football, while Sophia is interested in baseball and volleyball. Both will enjoy swimming club/teams and the entire family likes hiking, and generally being outdoors. They also look forward to the local restaurants, with Italian and Asian as favorites!

We are very excited to have Father Rodney and his family join us in December, and know all of St. Matthew's join in the excitement to welcome them into our family!



Please join our parish family as we...

Welcome the Roehner's!

Dear Parish Family,

By God's grace, we are thrilled to welcome The Rvd. Rodney Roehner and his family into the life and ministry of St. Matthew's. Rodney, his wife Carolina, and their twin daughters Alexa and Sophia are preparing for a big move from Florida to the Commonwealth throughout the coming weeks. We estimate that they will arrive in Pennsylvania at or around December 7th, 2020. While the family's residence in Lower Gwynedd is being prepared, they will reside in a comfortable, local AirBNB.

We have been hard at work thinking of thoughtful, supportive, and collaborative opportunities for welcoming The Roehner's — *after all, in the heart of every congregation should be the flourishing of the pastor and his family.* To that end, we wish to invite you in welcoming Fr. Rodney for yourself! Choose a welcoming option that works best for you and your family this season.

Send a Word of Welcome

Say hello to Fr. Rodney and his family by sharing a word of welcome. Entries will be compiled into a parish-wide welcome card. You may also choose to write a physical card and mail it to Saint Matthew's Church, c/o Anthony Carrella, or by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/y3nprkg6> or by calling the parish office.

Recommend Favorite Local Opportunities

Submit a recommendation of your favorite restaurants, recreational, cultural, and family opportunities in the area by going to <https://tinyurl.com/y3nprkg6> or by calling the parish office.

Purchase Groceries for the Pounding of the Pantry

Sign-up to purchase grocery staples as we pound Fr. Rodney's pantry by going to <https://tinyurl.com/y6xabtck> or by calling the parish office.

Prepare and Deliver a Home-cooked Meal

Sign-up to make a family-style meal during over a six week period by going to <https://tinyurl.com/y57e7pjb> or by calling the parish office.

Donate Toward a Welcome Gift

Contribute toward a gift card for Fr. Rodney (under \$50). Head to <https://saintmattsec.org/giving> and you may choose a gift type. Alternatively, you may also choose to send your contribution to Saint Matthew's Church, c/o Carolyn Bedics.

This is an exciting time of new vision for St. Matthew's, and we hope you will join us in making the Roehner family feel the love of our community. We know the hospitality and warmth of this blessed place abounds. Should you have any questions, please contact any member of the Transition Committee below.

Joyfully,

Chris Suhy, Anthony Carrella, Connie Dee, Treva McLaughlin, Pam Dunlap, and Antonia Edwards.

Welcome to another year of collecting bears for our Operation Bear Hug!



St. Matt's is spreading Christmas cheer by donating brand new bears to local centers like Fox Subacute and some other senior residences. Unfortunately, this year, we will not be in person at the Abington/Lansdale hospital. We are hoping for a record-breaking year of collecting bears—our goal is to collect 300 bears or more to distribute to our community, especially those who remain in quarantine due to the virus.

There are three options for donating bears:

- Purchase a brand-new bear and drop it off in the boxes by the kitchen.
- Purchase a brand new bear by social distancing via Amazon and send to my home address (below). Any bear is fine to purchase or you can go here, <https://tinyurl.com/operationbearhug2020>, for a wishlist of bears we have already selected.
- Make a donation through our online giving page, <https://tithe.ly/give?c=1645637> by choosing "Operation Bear Hug" from the dropdown menu, and we will purchase bears for you!

It is safe and easy to participate in making someone feel very special and loved this Christmas season especially with the isolation from the virus. We will be collecting bears this year until December 21, as we will have to isolate the bears prior to giving to recipients.

Let's spread holiday cheer and exceed our goal!

Lisa Walsh, 126 Morning Walk Dr, Warrington PA 18976

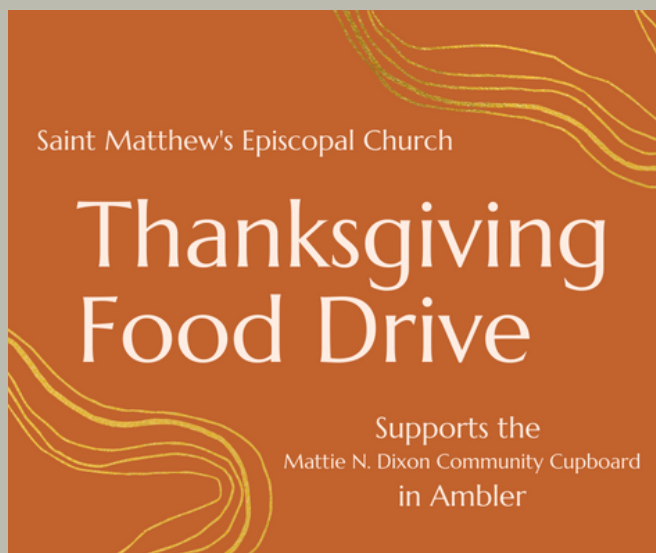
215-518-3316

2021 Pledge Update:

Thank you to all who have submitted your 2021 pledges. As of 11/22/20, we have received **75** pledges for a total of **\$253,802**. If you have not yet submitted a pledge, we need your help to reach our goal of **140** pledges with a total of **\$350,000**. This level of funding is critical for us to support Father

Roehner, and all the programs that will help us realize our hopes and dreams as a church community.

Pledges can be made online (just click on the "make a pledge" graphic in your weekly emails, or visit our website), or you can simply email the parish manager at parishmanager@saintmattsec.org. We would appreciate hearing your intentions by **December 1st**.



Yea! Saint Matthew's! You did it again!

Despite the pandemic, we were able to collect and donate 232 pounds of food to the Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard. This will make Thanksgiving much more food secure for those in need in our area. The volunteers at Mattie Dixon were most appreciative of our efforts. Thank you so much for your generous support!

***Sincerely,
Nancy Williams, Coordinator***



As Saint Matthew's prepares to enter a season of new ministry, we also prepare to say farewell to our beloved Interim Rector, The Rvd. Dr. Peter Stube.

To that end, we are collecting your notes, cards, and words of appreciation to ensure everyone has an opportunity to say goodbye. We invite you to participate in any of the following ways:

- Send physical cards and letters to Saint Matthew's Church, c/o Anthony Carrella, who will ensure they are delivered to Fr. Peter upon his departure (919 Tennis Avenue, Maple Glen, PA, 19002).
- Digitally submit a scan of your own card or letter by emailing it to: anthony@saintmattsec.org.
- Type a note to be included in our parish-wide farewell card, by going here: <https://amcarrella3.typeform.com/to/fFDzK4SL>



December at St. Matthew's

As always, the primary goal is to gather in the safest way possible. Due to significantly increasing COVID-19 infection rates and guidance from the Diocese, we are shifting from the current modified in-person worship service to 100% virtual starting November 29 for the foreseeable future.

This decision does not come lightly, but we feel by being pro-active with this decision we help protect the health of our congregation, staff and community. In addition, by making this decision now, we can focus all our energy and planning for the best possible online service experience through Advent and the Christmas Season.

Advent & Christmas

November 29, December 6 & December 13:

8:00 a.m. — Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary with Traditional Music (Livestream Only)

9:30 a.m. - Holy Eucharist in the Sanctuary with Contemporary Music (Livestream Only)

December 20, Christmas Eve:

Fr. Rodney will be joining us on December 20, so there may be additional changes to the service schedule. We are planning on the Christmas Eve services to be virtual only, with more details to follow.

We appreciate your patience as we work through the details, but in the meantime, please call the parish office (215.646.4092) if you have any questions.



Yes! There *will* be a pageant this year! It may look a little different, but *Do Not Be Afraid!*

What is a Virtual Pageant? A virtual pageant means that we won't be performing inside of our church building this year. Instead, we'll each record our lines in advance, combine them together, and interact with a recording being streamed live to our homes. Though this experience might feel new and maybe even a bit strange, do not be afraid! With your help, all of us will be able to create a memorable, joyful, and holy memory at Saint Matthew's this year.

How Will It Work? Anyone can participate, but we will prioritize children for the major roles! After you or your family signs up as a participant, they'll be sent a few lines from our pageant script. From there we'll ask you to record those lines, and send them to us when you're done. We'll stitch all of the clips from Saint Matthew's together into one pageant movie, which you'll be able to interact with at your home during the Advent and Christmas seasons. You'll also be able to keep pageant forever, and send it to your loved ones with the click of a button.

What Now? We're asking families to sign-up here: <https://amcarrella3.typeform.com/to/bYzhglnF> by **Sunday December 6th** to participate. Around December 8th, we'll send your family a few lines to record – we'll ask if you'd like to create your own costumes, or if you'd like Saint Matthew's to lend you a few of our own. Once you record your lines, we'll show you how to send them to us. We ask that you do this before December 20th.

Questions? Reach out to a member of the pageant team:
Anthony Carrella, Janine Buesgen, Antonia Edwards, Martha Reynolds

Nursery School Update

St. Matthew's Nursery School has served the families in our community for 28 years now. It would not be unfair to say that the challenges of 2020 exceed those of any past year. Along with all other schools in Montgomery County, the Nursery School closed in March due to Covid-19. It remained closed through the remainder of that school year in order to keep our students and staff safe.

It is thanks to the commitment, dedication, and careful planning of our Nursery School director, Jackie Anderson, that we were able to make the decision to open the Nursery School in September. We are so fortunate to have a director and staff of dedicated and caring individuals who are joyfully ushering the children through this most challenging time. Implementation of strict controls that follow CDC and Montgomery County Department of Health guidelines, and the strong support of the parents, have meant that the children are able to participate in a school program at this critical time in their lives.

Enrollment is lower this year, as adjustments were needed to class size to address Covid-19 space concerns. We currently have 85 children, with a staff of 19 supporting them. The staff has been flexible and innovative in finding ways to safely continue with the programs the parents and children love. Each week the children enjoy arts and crafts, singing, cooking, stories, academics, enrichment classes such as Mathemagic, Science, Reading Writing and Fun, Kreative Kids Art, and so much more! All brought to them with lots of love each day.

The school will continue to work diligently with their families, the church and our community to keep the staff and children safe, and provide a place for them to learn and have fun!

Please contact Jackie Anderson (215.646.4466) with any questions you might have about the school.

nurseryschool@saintmattsec.org

Science can be fun!



I can write my
name!



Future engineers at work!





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Maple Glen, PA 19002
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