

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church
Growing in Love to Become One with God's Purpose



John the Baptist.
Acrylic, Spray Paint on Canvas. Dustin Parent, 2014

Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2020 | 9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Prelude

“We Will Glorify”

by Twila Paris

Priest: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: And blessed be God's kingdom for ever and for ever. Amen

Collect

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord.

Kyrie

Celebrant: Lord have mercy.

People: Christ have mercy.

Celebrant: Lord have mercy.

Let us pray

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of
the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for
our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;

his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Response

Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13

Benedixisti, Domine

- 1 You have been gracious to your land, O LORD, *
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
- 2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *
and blotted out all their sins.
- 8 I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.
- 9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
- 11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
- 12 The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.
- 13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

People: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Meditation

“Refiners Fire”

by Brian Doerksen

Verse 1

Purify my heart
Let me be as gold
And precious silver
Purify my heart
Let me be as gold
Pure gold.

Chorus

Refiner's fire
My heart's one desire
Is to be holy
Set apart for You Lord
I choose to be holy
Set apart for You my Master
Ready to do Your will.

Verse 2

Purify my heart
Cleanse me from within
And make me holy
Purify my heart
Cleanse me from my sin
Deep within.

The Gospel

Mark 1: 1-8

Clergy: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Clergy: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

The Rvd. Naz Javier

The Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and

was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we may all be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world; especially for our current President Donald J. Trump, and President-Elect Joseph R. Biden.
That there may be justice, peace, and unity over all the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble especially Ella, Terry, Carol, Phil, Mary Lou, Edward, Dick, Karen, Lou, June, Margaret, Constance, Priscilla, Dorothea, and Bob; *That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Give to the departed eternal rest, particularly Bill Myers, who passed away early on Thursday morning. Additionally, we pray for those who have departed due to the coronavirus pandemic. *Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy; *May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

God, our Gracious Shepherd, we offer you our deepest worship and honor for your faithfulness to the people of St. Matthew's through the years. You have blessed us with faithful clergy and leaders who have led us to you, nurtured us in your care, and encouraged us in our work for you. Today, we are particularly grateful that you have led us to our new rector, Father Rodney Roehner, who will walk with us in the next chapter of our common life and ministry. Be with him and his family as they say farewell to their current parish and community and as they prepare to come to us. Provide everything necessary for their life and salvation as they travel and begin to settle in our midst. Prepare our hearts to receive them into our parish family with patience and joy. Provide from your bounty all that we need to follow the mission you have set before us all in the years to come as priest and people. In your most Holy Name we pray. **Amen.**

Confession

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins to God.

Leader and People

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; in your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone; and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God, have mercy upon you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

— Holy Communion —

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer A

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

***People:* And also with you.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

***People:* We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

***People:* It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. For you are the source of light and life, you made us in your image and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The people stand or kneel.

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to

you, the God and Father of all. He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world. Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant and People

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

The Celebrant continues

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

Celebrant and People

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Celebrant breaks the bread.

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the Feast. Alleluia.

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Offertory

“Down in the River to Pray”

Traditional, arr. Allison Krauss

As I went down in the river to pray	O mothers, let's go down
Studying about that good ol' way	Come on down, don't you wanna go down?
And who shall wear the starry crown	Come on, mothers, let's go down
Good Lord, show me the way	Down in the river to pray
O fathers, let's go down	As I went down in the river to pray
Let's go down, come on down	Studying about that good ol' way
O fathers, let's go down	And who shall wear the starry crown
Down in the river to pray	Good Lord, show me the way
As I went down in the river to pray	O sinners, let's go down. Let's go down, come on down
Studying about that good ol' way	O sinners, let's go down, Down in the river to pray
And who shall wear the robe and crown	As I went down in the river to pray. Studying about that
Good Lord, show me the way.	good ol' way And who shall wear the robe and
	crown Good Lord, show me the way.

Closing Prayer

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

Parish Announcements

Song of Service

“*God is Great* “

by Marty Sampson

Verse 1

All creation cries to You
Worshipping in spirit and in truth
Glory to the Faithful One
Jesus Christ God's Son

Verse 3

All to You O God we bring
Jesus teach us how to live
Let Your fire burn in us
That all may hear and all may see

Verse 2

All creation gives You praise
You alone are truly great
You alone are God who reigns
For eternity

Bridge and Ending

Holy is the Lord
The whole earth sings
The whole earth sings

'Cause we're living for the glory
Of Your name
The glory of Your name

Chorus

God is great and His praise
Fills the earth fills the heavens
And Your name will be praised
Through all the world

God is great sing His praise
All the earth all the heavens
'Cause we're living for the glory
Of Your name
(The glory of Your name)

— PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS —

LIFE LONG LEARNING MINISTRY

Adult Lifelong Learning Forum: Continues this morning at 11:00 AM. Led by a group of rotating leaders, the forum aims to focus on understanding the root causes of systemic racism, and how Christians are called to respond. Join the forum every Sunday at 11:00 AM on *Zoom*. In January, the Adult LLL Forum will begin a month-long study of the Gospel of Mark. You can join the forum each Sunday by logging on here: <https://zoom.us/j/98376656289?pwd=OmF-Ga1AxRmpYc1NuLzNKbjNRaFtOT09>

Sunday School: Is a virtual learning opportunity streamed live on the second Sunday of the month. Before the lesson is offered, children and their parents can pick-up engaging materials at no cost in the lower parking lot of Saint Matthew's. Then, families can choose how they interact with our lessons — join us live at 8:45 AM on the second Sunday, or review our recorded lesson posted on our Facebook page and church website. The next lesson will be held remotely on December 13th at 8:45 AM. Materials are available for pickup now. You can join us here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6mdedqq>

Youth Group: Is taking a break from our bible study on James' letter for the month of December. Instead, we'll meet on December 16th for a virtual Christmas Party held over Zoom. We'll catchup, play some games, and finish with a Christmas movie depending on the turn out. Stay tuned for updates on our program in January! You can join our party here: <https://zoom.us/j/91363746529>

Christmas Pageant 2020: It remains a challenge for Saint Matthew's to gather in person during this most special and holy season. In times like these, I wonder how technology might bring us together?

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 as 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 to participate by heading to: <https://tinyurl.com/yyekqzqf> 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**.

Who Do I Go To With Questions?

Reach out to a member of the Pageant Team! Anthony Carrella, Janine Buesgen, Antonia Edwards, and Martha Reynolds.

PARISH TRANSITION COMMITTEE

The Rvd. Rodney Roehner, his wife Carolina, and their twin daughters Alexa and Sophia will arrive in Pennsylvania very soon — around December 7th, 2020. While the family's residence in Lower Gwynedd is being prepared, they will reside in a comfortable, local AirBNB. The Transition Committee invites 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

<https://tinyurl.com/y3nprkg6> or call the parish office.

Recommend Favorite Local Opportunities

<https://tinyurl.com/y3nprkg6> or call 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

<https://tinyurl.com/y57e7pjb> or call the parish office.

Donate Toward a Welcome Gift

<https://saintmattsec.org/giving> You may also choose to send your contribution to Saint Matthew's Church, c/o Carolyn Bedics.

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, Jon Clark, Connie Dee, Treva McLaughlin, Pam Dunlap, and Antonia Edwards.**

OUTREACH MINISTRY

Operation Bear Hug 2020: Saint Matthew's is spreading Christmas cheer by collecting and donating brand-new bears to local centers including Fox Subacute and other senior residences in our community. We are hoping for a record-breaking year — our goal is to collect over 300 bears! We presently have 164 bears and will need about 150 more to fulfill the needs of three senior centers, and Abington/Lansdale Hospital. We will be collecting bears until December 21. If you have any questions about Operation Bear Hug, please reach out to Lisa Walsh. Here's how to get involved:

- Purchase a brand-new bear and drop it off in the boxes by the kitchen, or outside St. Matthew's (919 Tennis Ave, Maple Glen) in the plastic bins at the lower parking lot entrance to the Narthex.
- Purchase a brand-new bear online via an online retailer or Amazon (see our Wish List: <https://tinyurl.com/y26yrs2m> and send to Lisa Walsh. Her home address is: 126 Morning Walk Dr, Warrington PA, 18976. Call her at: (215) 518-3316
- Make a donation through our online giving page by choosing "Operation Bear Hug" from the dropdown menu, and we will purchase bears for you!

STEWARDSHIP 2020

Don't forget to make your pledge of support for 2021

Our current stewardship campaign has a goal of 140 pledges (our 2019 number) for \$357,000. That amount will allow us to continue our current level of staffing to support our new rector. Our new rector is anxious to direct both new and current programs to help us realize our hopes and dreams as a church community. Many thanks to those of you who have made your pledge already. For those who have not, pledges may be made online (just click on the “make a pledge” graphic in your weekly emails, or visit our website), or you may email the parish manager

FROM THE RECTOR'S WARDEN

Worship Update

from Sunday, November 22, 2020

We have some disappointing news, which most of you are probably expecting. Beginning on Sunday, November 29, we are shifting from the current modified in-person worship service to 100% virtual. As you are aware, the COVID infection rates are climbing, and we have no reason to expect this trend to reverse anytime soon. We have been watching and hoping for the rates to decline, or even flatten – but they have not. After having numerous conversations, consulting with Fr. Rodney and reviewing the cautionary directive from the Bishop, we believe the prudent decision is to refrain from in-person services 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. Secondly, by making this decision now, we can focus all our energy and planning for the best possible online service experience. To be clear [...] services on November 29 through December 13 will be streamed on Facebook Live at both 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. We may have additional changes after December 13, as Fr. Rodney will be joining us on December 20. We plan for Christmas Eve services to also be virtual only, with more details to follow [...] Please let me know if you have any questions.

- Chris Suhy, Rector's Warden

FROM THE VESTRY

Welcome Newly Elected Vestry Members: Nancy Austin, John Gill, Karen Sawyer
Rotating off with our thanks: Joe Buesgen, Tim Jennings, Chris Strittmatter

ST MATTHEW'S INVITES YOU TO OUR CHRISTMAS SERVICES

CHRISTMAS EVE

3:00 P.M. EUCHARIST &
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT (VIA
ZOOM)

5:00 P.M. CONTEMPORARY
EUCHARIST (LIVESTREAM)

7:00 TRADITIONAL
EUCHARIST (LIVESTREAM)

CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 A.M. HOLY
EUCHARIST
(LIVESTREAM)

