

Matt's Media



The Newsletter of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Islington

Published December 1, 2024

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The Now and Not Yet

Rev. Philip Stonhouse

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” *Matthew 3:2*

We as Christians live in the ‘now and not yet.’ This interesting reality occurs because we know something special and wonderful in Jesus has been established, and at the same time, we know that it has yet to be fully realized. His Kingdom is, as Jesus says, close at hand. We can reach out and grab hold of it, but it is still an arm's reach away.

This can be hard. We want it right here, right now, fully realized. Everyone who has God's breath in them has had a taste of God's Kingdom; sadly, the world's way of trying to gain God's Kingdom is to fight for their own pocket of peace and joy. But because they don't realize its source, they end up creating pockets of their Kingdom (which is not as good). We do know where it comes from. We want this world to be God's Kingdom, a place where God reigns, and a place where we are surrounded by the Fruits of the Spirit. Yet as long as the world is seeking other kings, or letting other things rule over them, they will never know God's Kingdom realized, because it will never be in their hearts. Think about it this way: someone might sit in front of a great feast but spend the whole time looking at his neighbour's plate. Or imagine being in a pitch-black room where only one person can see and describe everything we touch. It would make sense to listen to him, for safety and understanding, but sadly not everyone does. We as Christians can still struggle with this, too. Everyone has some idea of what they want the world to be and yet no one, other than Jesus and those faithful to him, have been able to establish that.

Jesus came to establish this Kingdom, plant it in our hearts, and bring us to fullness. He came down from heaven and brought God's Kingdom to us. Now, we can grasp it; holding onto Jesus is the way we grab hold of the Kingdom. At any moment, though, God's Kingdom might feel far away; that is usually because we have stopped holding onto Jesus and we have latched onto something else. Have you ever noticed that it is quite difficult to hold onto numerous things at once? ‘Since Matteo’ I have learned that I can do only so much with one hand. It is the same way with God, except often we don't give him even one hand. We need to hold on to Jesus alone if we expect to know his Kingdom. Jesus has graciously done the work of bringing the unimagined, unobtainable Kingdom of God, and now we need to hold on in faith.

... continued

The Now and Not Yet *(continued)*

This makes sense though. A Kingdom is a place and people where everyone and everything is directed towards the leadership and pleasure of its King. This should tell us how God's Kingdom can be established both in our hearts and the world. It comes down to whom we make our Lord and how we direct the objects of this world to the King. The beautiful thing about a good king is that he sets everything right. He uses his leadership and authority to pour out his joy upon those who do well and are faithful to him. He makes the Kingdom a place that resembles his ideals. Of course, everyone in the Kingdom still are themselves, but they all define themselves by their ruler and king. We are Christians, little Christs.

Advent is a season where we prepare ourselves for the coming of King Jesus and yet we acknowledge that he has already come. His Kingdom is here and yet not everyone lives in it. One day Jesus will set all things right and that means setting all hearts and things towards him; that could be a scary reality for many people.

This Advent during our services, our readings and sermons will look at our incarnational God: our God that became present, became human, and dwelled with us. A beautiful aspect about this incarnation is how God wants to become incarnate in us. God wants to be seen and known through us in some pivotal and amazing ways.

Here again is that now and not yet reality. In us, God is making himself known; we can be images of God and bring God into people's hearts and lives. Yet we still wait for the full realization of these things. This could be a struggle, but instead we are meant to see it as a hope. What we have now is a taste, a promise of a Kingdom that is greater than our imagining.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." *Matthew 13: 31b-32*

Rev. Philip Stonhouse



DECEMBER 4, 2024
11:30 AM
ST. MATTHEW'S GYM

JOIN US FOR A
**CHRISTMAS
LUNCH**
LET'S CELEBRATE!

ALL ARE WELCOME
BRING A GUEST OR TWO!
FULL TURKEY DINNER TO BE SERVED
DOOR PRIZES
CHRISTMAS HYMNS

RVSP to office@saintmatts.ca or 416.231.4014

Wardens' Report

Karen Lee, Sharon Shao, Paul Lorimer, Richard Farrar

This Fall, St. Matthew's calendar has been filled with Worship services, bible studies, children's and youth programs, a wellness exercise program, and much more. We hope that you have had the opportunity to participate and found them helpful. We are grateful for leadership from Rev. Philip and Rev. Merv, as well as from our staff and volunteers.

Some highlights included the Blessing of the Animals, All Souls service, *The Chosen* video and bible study series, two performances in our concert series, and the successful Messy Church gatherings. Our Fall Tea's focus was an interview with Rev. Philip led by our music director, Tyler Versluis.

St. Matthew's is able to provide our worship services and concerts online and on YouTube because of our amazing Tech Team. We so appreciate and thank them for their dedication to this ministry.

A highlight of this Fall was our first Talents Auction. We want to thank the volunteers for their contributions and the parishioners for attending which made the event a resounding success!

Overseeing the management of our physical properties could not be accomplished without the assistance of our Sexton, Tom Travaglini. Thank you, Tom, for your work. We also wish to acknowledge the support and assistance of Marguerite Locke and Stuart Watt. As you are aware, due to the age of our facilities, our attention must be constant and repairs attended to on a regular basis.

The Advent and Christmas Offering will be directed towards offsetting the current deficit.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our St. Matthew's family and friends for your generosity and continued financial support.

As you will see in other parts of this newsletter, there are many worship services and events planned for the Advent and Christmas Season. In your journey throughout the Christmas Season, we hope you will find these meaningful.

We give thanks for God's continued provision and care for St. Matthew's. Wishing you and your families a blessed Advent and Christmas Season!

Wardens' Financial Report

Karen Lee, Sharon Shao, Paul Lorimer, Richard Farrar

Dear Parishioners, we are very grateful for your continued financial support of the many ministries and operations of our parish as well as all the ways our community benefits from your time and talents.

We have a deficit of \$41,652. The summary of our financial status as of October 31, 2024 shows that our expenses are much greater than we budgeted due mainly to significant building repairs and increasing operational costs (see page 4, Property Maintenance).

Operating Fund	2024 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
Income	\$ 241,001	243,512	252,920
Expenses	\$ 282,653	254,766	263,600
Net Operations	\$ - 41,652	- 11,254	- 10,680

Property Maintenance

Marguerite Locke

As this issue of Matt's Media is being published, the church property is being prepared for winter. The flower beds and gardens have been cleaned out, bushes trimmed and wrapped, and tons of leaves collected.

The sprinkler systems at both the church and rectory have been blown out ready for the freezing temperatures.

A few screens on windows in the hallway near the lounge are being repaired and the window ledge there will be sanded and stained soon.

Our snow removal contract has been finalized. After comparing five companies in the area for quotations, we will be using Mortimer Landscaping for this service again this winter. Due to commitments to have our lot plowed by 7 a.m. on weekdays for renters and before 8:00 a.m. for church on the weekends, other snow plowing companies were much more expensive than Mortimer.

The furnace system of boilers has been cleaned again and hopefully will operate well for another year. It is an old system that has served the church well for at least 25 years. But when the time comes, and it will, that we must replace the furnace, it will be a very major expense.

The most challenging issues this summer and fall continued to be leaks on the southwest corner of the church. This resulted in water in the youth room and in the elevator pit. We undertook repairs to the Narthex roof, an additional downspout was added to assist in drainage during heavy rains, and leaf guards were installed. Hopefully these upgrades will solve the leaks. We are monitoring the situation and will then make appropriate repairs to the drywall in the youth room and confer further with the elevator company to repair the pit.

As in any older building, wear and tear is constant and the financial challenges to maintain and, in some cases, upgrade areas, are key to keeping our worship space comfortable and safe for all.

Men's Breakfast

Saturday, December 7, 8:30 a.m. at Sunset Grill, 1510 Dundas St. E., Mississauga. All are welcome. For more information or to be put on the email reminder list, contact dave.oakden@gmail.com. Subsequent dates are January 4, February 1, March 1, April 5, etc. (the first Saturday in each month unless it is included in a long weekend or other extended holiday.)



Help Decorate our Church!

Each year we decorate the church with poinsettias purchased in memory of a loved one or in thanksgiving for blessings.

Forms: Online at saintmatts.ca
Paper forms in Narthex

Cost: \$25 / plant

Due: December 14

Thinking Ahead: Volunteer!

Marguerite Locke

It is never too soon to think about 2025 and how you may wish to volunteer for a role in the leadership and organization of our church. We have so many excellent ministries to engage lots of individuals in wonderful, inspiring worship. However, we also have lots of tasks that need willing hands, dedication, and a reasonable, respectful amount of your time.

I am assuming the role of Nominating Chair from the capable hands of Barb Landry. Please prayerfully consider what of your talents and time may be shared with St. Matthew's. If you have a particular skill set or background that would be helpful in property, fundraising, hospitality, or outreach please contact me, the office (416-231-4014), Rev. Philip, or a Warden. (my email is mdlocke@hotmail.com)

For more information about our ministries, there are booklets available in the Narthex and information on the website at saintmatts.ca/serving.

Together we can build a team to share the load of managing a busy parish like St. Matthew's and keep it running well next year.

Chancel Guild

Vivien Knowles

When Pat Currie approached me to join the Chancel Altar Guild I did not hesitate to take on the task. Growing up in Cape Town, South Africa, at the age of 14 I became involved in the cleaning, dusting and polishing of Brass and Silver on Saturdays in the Anglican Church I attended every Sunday.

St. Matthew's Chancel members are a great team to work with and embraced me to learn the meaning of the Sacred Vessels and other Sanctuary items. Sharing these duties, I feel blessed to serve in this rewarding ministry.

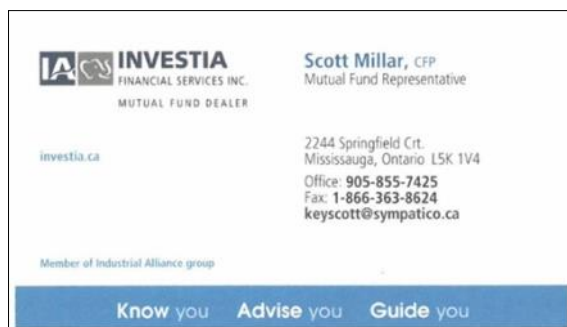
The Food Cupboard

Noel Martin

We have continued demand for food from the food cupboard. We need your continuous help in keeping it going.

Right now, we need canned vegetables, fruit, soups, stews. Pantry items only, please, no fresh fruit or vegetables. If you can, any help for those receiving a bag of food will be appreciated. Cash gifts are always useful, too.

Thank you for your ongoing support in this vital mission.



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Parish Alignment/Visioning (October 9 Meeting)

Linda Harrison

There is always a need to realign our priorities in life and spiritual community. An open meeting was held to look at who we are as a parish, what we are welcoming people into and how do we stay grounded in our faith in Christ.

We began the evening with prayer and scripture. We shared thoughts on two questions. Why do we exist? How do we behave? All of us have ownership in what is happening in our church community. We were reminded of the Anglican three-legged stool principle: Holy Wisdom/God's enlightenment through the Holy Spirit, Tradition and Scripture.

Why do we exist? Many of the thoughts shared overlapped and were recorded for future discussion. They were summarized as: to participate in God's mission, to grow God's kingdom, and to share/live the gospel.

How do we behave? We looked at core values and standards we want to uphold; again, many wonderful views were recorded for future discussion. A summary here was: connected to God, loving/caring and dependable/prayerful with integrity and trust.

Going forward there are other questions to ask: What do we do? How will we succeed? What is most important right now? Who must do what?

Over the next few months Janet Marshall (from the Diocese) will be joining us to co-ordinate our efforts. We need to gather a visioning team to listen and draw together what everyone is saying. Then we will host a Saturday session with exercises and activities to inspire us to answer our big questions. We will also reach out to get more input from those who weren't able to participate.

Please pray and participate. Reverend Philip's hope is that through this process we might have a shared vision for who we are as a community, and a set of priorities and hopes that we can purposefully and practically work towards, all for the glory of Jesus Christ.

All Souls Day

All Souls Day was observed on Thursday, November 7th at 7 pm.

We remembered our loved ones with photographs and candles during a thoughtful progression of worship interspersed with music:

O Gracious Light [Choir], *Abide With Me* [Choir + Congregation], *Psalm 130* [Choir + Congregation, Tyler Versluis cantor], *Psalm 90* [Choir + Congregation, Michelle Lorimer cantor], *Magnificat* [Erika Sitko], *Nunc Dimittis* [Bruce Gleeson], *Within Our Darkest Night* [Choir], *I Heard A Voice From Heaven* [Choir], *Kontakion for the Dead* [Choir], and *God, That Madest Earth and Heaven* [Choir + Congregation].

Advertise in Matt's Media

Would you recommend your contractor, repair person or professional to a fellow parishioner? Would they like to see their ADVERTISEMENT here?

2025 – 4 issues, \$100 for a 3.5"x 2" Business card size.

Please have them email St. Matthew's Church (office@saintmatts.ca) and Marguerite Locke will follow up.

Afternoon Tea with Rev. Philip Stonhouse

Linda Harrison

There were 25 people who came on October 15, interested to visit together and to learn more about Rev. Philip's life. Thank you, Karen Lee, for organizing the details and to the volunteers who provided delicious treats. Tyler Versluis guided the interview of Rev. Philip with thoughtful questions.

Philip grew up in Saskatchewan from age 4 to 20. Both of his parents are Anglican Priests who met here in Toronto at Wycliffe College. As a child Philip was encouraged to ask questions and experienced an openness with his father to discuss life and faith issues. He spent many hours "hanging out" in the church building. Choir and music kept him in the church even when other things like sports might have pulled him away. His parents exposed him to many Christian faith practices – being Christian was more important than being Anglican.

In high school he got involved in drama and excelled at it. He portrayed George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*. This experience opened his eyes and heart to understand people, and began to help him think about the suffering of Jesus. Post-secondary education led him to Toronto, where he registered and graduated from University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) and Sheridan College, and worshiped at St. Peter's, Erindale. He felt a sense of Christian isolation in the theatre, which led him to explore identity questions: Who am I? Where am I going? How am I called? His career in acting was not as fulfilling as he needed and he felt God pushing him in a new direction. He had always felt called to ministry but kept refusing to accept God's direction, until God kept removing any excuse he would make. Philip found a richness of faith community at Wycliffe College, and Anglican priesthood found him.

Philip spoke of two immense benefits that he experiences in the priesthood. Pastoral visiting is a privilege to enter into someone's life. Faith life is paramount because a priest's faith life affects all those he ministers to (though we should all realize that this is true for us, too). It is important to practice walking in communication with God and being prayerful. The job doesn't work without it.

Philip shared thoughts on "Anglicanism." The Anglican Church in the world is a broad tent that draws in many but it has an orthodoxy. It promotes good, faithful bible reading focusing on Christ and the Gospel – it holds onto historic faith and Spirit-led wisdom. The "creed" is the center of belief. It has degrees of accountability. If we want to do social justice, it still needs to be biblically centered. Growth in the church is only possible with faith growth and growth in relationship with God.

Philip believes that "we parishioners need to own the vision" of the future for St. Matthew's. The community around us is growing; we need to find our place and how to grow. One benefit of the historical Anglican model is a desire to speak to all cultures in their own language and in our allegiance to Jesus we have "unity" in diversity. Philip believes that we are dual citizens of heaven and earth, that we need to keep first things first and be more like Jesus. A constant goal for the Church and individuals is to grow in faith and grow in relationship with God.



What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherd watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary. (*What Child Is This*)

The Chosen

November 12-December 3, 7 pm: Bible studies (view Season 2, episodes 1 to 4).

This season's episodes of *The Chosen* have proven to be very engaging, both in person in the church and online. Considerable 'Artistic Licence' has been taken in the expansion of familiar biblical persons and parables. This has generated comfortable discussion and interest. Studies have been led by Rev. Philip, Dawn Mercer and Michelle Lorimer (online for episodes 2 to 4).

To watch the videos at home, search for the phrase, "Watch the Chosen," to get this year's series (which has a different producer from Season 1 of last year.)

You can still catch Episode 4 of this bible study on December 3, in person or online. A link will be sent Tuesday afternoon if you wish to participate via Zoom.

Wednesday Worship & Wellness, Tea and Treats

Cliff LaRose

Hello everyone,

Wednesdays have given me a good midweek faith recharge that I look forward to.

I have enjoyed St. Matthew's Wellness exercise group led by Katie Ward for the past six weeks at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesdays in the lounge. I exercise regularly and have benefitted very much from Katie's stretching and routine of flowing exercise to loosen my joints. I look forward to attending the next session.

Wednesday's 10:30 a.m. Book of Common Prayer service is one I really enjoy. It is an intimate service with lots of personal reflection.

We have now added Tea and Treats in the Lounge after the service where we have great conversation about the sermon and other faith topics.

I am so grateful for my friends at St. Matthew's Church and feel very connected.

Life is so good with God. Peace be with you all.



Talents Auction

Marguerite Locke

The Talents Auction held in the gym on November 3 after worship was a great success with funds raised of \$6,023 – a wonderful result.

We enjoyed thrilling entertainment, a satisfying and nutritious buffet meal, and an abundance of wonderful auction items for which a variety of bids were made. Our stage looked amazing thanks to the blue and white backdrop that Ritah Namagembe erected on Saturday afternoon. In addition, the home-made baking selections and knitted goods were enticing.

Our performers were outstanding!

Thanks to Elvis (aka Robert Pooran) who brought some great gospel tunes and nostalgic songs of Elvis to the event. Many of us were singing along.

Thanks to Rev. Philip for Shakespeare's soliloquy from *MacBeth*, "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow;" songs "Any Dream Will Do" from *Joseph and the Technicolour Dream Coat* and "The Impossible Dream" from *Man of La Mancha*; and Philip's own children's story "The Lost Lambi" with a cameo appearance by Matteo. We are blessed with his talent and leadership of this event.

And thanks to musicians Eric (violin) and Layla Ho (voice) and Michelle Lorimer (keyboard, voice) for stellar performances of Bach's *Air on the G String*, and Michelle's compositions, *Here in this Place* and *Arise, Shine* (Isaiah 60).

Special thanks to Katie Ward, Vivien Knowles, Tanya Marcon, Deborah Hurn, Nancy Hurn, Helen Prankie, Sandra Watt, Barb Landry, Stuart Watt, and Linda Harrison. Without your assistance our event would not have been such a success.

A heartfelt thank you to all our purchasers as well.



What's Happening

Sun Dec 1	Unity Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
	Lessons & Carols: 2:30 p.m.	In person & online
Tues Dec 3	The Chosen Bible Study: 7 p.m.	In person & online
Wed Dec 4	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
	Christmas lunch: 11:30 a.m.	Gym
Fri Dec 6	Youth Group: 7:00 p.m.	In person
Sat Dec 7	Men's Breakfast: 8:30 a.m. (1510 Dundas St. E., Miss.)	Sunset Grill
Sun Dec 8	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m. (Bishop's visit)	In person & online
	BCP Worship: 11:00 a.m. (Bishop's visit)	In person & online
Wed Dec 11	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
	Blue Christmas: 7:30 p.m.	In person & online
Sat Dec 14	Pageant Rehearsal: 10:00 a.m.	In person
Sun Dec 15	Unity Worship & Pageant: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Wed Dec 18	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sun Dec 22	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m.	In person & online
	BAS Worship: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Tues Dec 24	Christmas Eve Family Service: 4:00 p.m.	In person & online
	Christmas Eve BAS Choral Service: 7:00 p.m.	In person & online
	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: 10:00 p.m.	In person
Wed Dec 25	Christmas Day Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Sun Dec 29	Unity Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Sun Jan 5	Unity Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Wed Jan 8	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sun Jan 12	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m.	In person & online
	BCP Worship: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Wed Jan 15	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sun Jan 19	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m.	In person & online
	BAS Worship: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Wed Jan 22	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sat Jan 25	Messy Church: 4:00 p.m.	In person
Sun Jan 26	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m.	In person & online
	BAS Worship: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, to all good will from heaven's most gracious king!" The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing. (*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*)



In Defence of Saints and Icons

Tyler Versluis

One of the most attractive facets about Anglicanism is that it righteously functions as a meeting ground for high church and evangelical orientations. On the subject of saints and icons, this is often grounded in a high church tradition which possesses a focus of physical symbols of liturgy and sacrament, as opposed to “low church” traditions, with an emphasis on the Word and preaching (although these stereotyped traditions continue to be challenged and dissolved in Anglicanism today).

Regardless of your Anglican orientation, I am writing with the assumption that most reading this grew up in a Western Christian church, in which the subject of saints is a peripheral topic and religious icons are virtually unused. From conversations I have had, the largest source of repugnancy of saints and icons seems to be the fear that it is a form of idolatry. The Ten Commandments, after all, state that we should not worship graven images or other gods. But is this what icons and saints are about?

To begin with saints, let us be clear about what the Scriptures and Anglican doctrine say about them and our working relationship. Anglican history on this subject is long and muddled, but has settled in the affirmation that we should practice *advocation of the saints*, meaning “asking for the saints to pray with them and on their behalf, [but] not praying to them”, although this statement might be debated by Anglo-Catholics. If you believe in the continual establishment of the kingdom of God, and in the continual pouring forth of his spirit, then you must also believe that God continues to reveal himself through the works of saints, living and dead. In 1948 our own parish assumed the name of St. Matthew the Evangelist not out of flippancy, but out of a commitment to work in the spirit of Saint Matthew, that ostracized bean counter working for the oppressor of the Jews, who gave up his conflicted life to follow Jesus. The Creed affirms our belief in the communion of saints, living and dead, knit together with us in the body of the Christ. The Scriptures conclude that the saints in heaven are concerned for our salvation (Luke 15:7), pray fervently to God (Revelation 8:4) and are witnesses to our prayers and activities (Hebrews 12:1). James 5:16 says that the prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective; who are more righteous, besides Christ Himself, than the saints already in heaven? Since there is no division between the kingdom of God in heaven and on earth (because we are united in the body of Christ), the saints, “dead” as they may be to us, should be petitioned to pray for us, in the same way that we ask others to pray for us.

I have a Russian-style icon of Seraphim of Sarov on the wall above my desk where I work. Seraphim of Sarov was a Russian hermit (1754-1833) who lived in a cabin in the woods as a monk, fed wild animals, and prayed ceaselessly, often while standing on a rock with his arms raised. People from across Russia came to him for advice. He is honoured in the Church of England’s liturgical calendar on January 2nd, as a Spiritual Guide. Seraphim’s small collection of writing - actually dictated and published by a follower, since, like many saints, Seraphim was too modest to write anything down - are the only theological writings that have resonated with me on a similar level to the Scriptures themselves. Idolatry? No. Veneration? Perhaps, but more likely a constant visual reminder about my own need to banish hypocrisy and acquire the Holy Spirit, as Seraphim demanded for all believers.

In my own humble spiritual practice, the practice of physical devotion - kneeling, praying, genuflecting, crossing myself - are integral to my concept of worship. Sometimes we are too intellectual and “brain-oriented” in our worship, and forget that the body must also be attuned to

In Defence of Saints and Icons *(continued)*

God's grace. Mark 12:30-31 states we must love God through four essences: heart, soul, mind and strength. In order to do so, our five senses must be utilised and engaged when we worship. So why not give ourselves reminders about God's dominion with visual images of Jesus Christ, God's acts and works of his saints? Icons, like the cross, are visual and physical reminders of the kingdom of heaven. Our desire for God should be so powerful that we are willing to transform and orient our physical spaces towards His kingdom. Popular evangelical theology says that Christ only needs to be carried invisibly in our hearts, but that is not enough. The kingdom of God is about the spiritual piercing the material - God being made incarnate in flesh, the Holy Spirit being poured out. Crosses and icons, often made simply from wood and paint, likewise transcend their materials and embody a more important spiritual truth: they point us towards God. You might be familiar with the Mother of God or "Theotokos" icon, which depicts Mary cradling or holding a young Jesus on her lap. It might appear that Mary is the focus of this icon, but notice what Mary is always doing in this icon with her right hand: gesturing or pointing towards Christ. If we want to find God, we need road signs that point to Him.

The human mind and body are so easily distracted and tempted that we need those reminders - visual especially - to re-orient ourselves on a daily basis: a crucifix on a wall, Saint Michael trampling on the devil, the Annunciation. By far, the most striking and Gospel-oriented assets in St. Matthew's are the stained-glass windows, which are both for storytelling and visual reminders of God's grace through the Scriptures, and onward to our own establishment as a house of worship. In the past, stained glass was helpful for telling the Gospel to people who were largely illiterate. Almost everybody is literate these days, but it hasn't helped us much with faith.

Word and intellect are important in worship, but it's only about 50% of what we need. Music is a powerful symbolic bridge in worship because it is seemingly immaterial and material at the same time, reminding us of God "coming down" to meet us in our house of worship. But we need the purely physical as well, incarnations of spiritual truth in physical things - crosses, icons, the flesh and blood of the saints whose works and merits resonate with our own individual personalities and point us all, ultimately, to Jesus Christ.

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King, peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled." Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" (*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*)



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Music at St. Matthew's: Singing Strings

Sunday, November 17, 2:30 p.m.

Polymuse Quartet
of the Great Lakes Philharmonic

Anton Yeretsky, Anna Tsapenko: violin
Lyubomyr Klyufinskiy: viola
Zaida Nassirov, violoncello

“Polymuse Quartet brings the most hallowed and intimate string quartet repertoire to life before our eyes.”



Thus advertised, it proved delightful! These excellent musicians played many familiar classical pieces and one piece typical of Kiev culture.

First was a familiar hymn tune (Blue Hymnal *Common Praise* 388 – ‘Austria’): Franz Joseph Haydn’s (1732-1809) *String quartet in C major*, ‘*Kaiser Quartet*’ (1797), in four parts: Allegro, Poco adagio; cantabile, Menuetto, Finale; allegro

The second piece, *Divertimento* by Ihor Shamo (1924-82), was typical of Kiev public performances at noon and 6 pm.

A Saint Malo (1928) is a Quebec folk tune arranged by Sir Ernest MacMillan (1893-1973).

Plink, Plank, Plunk! (1951) by Leroy Anderson is all pizzicato! It was familiar, energetic and fun.

Tales from the Vienna Woods (1868) by Johann Strauss II (1825-99) reflected bird-song in a lengthy waltz.

Pizzicato Polka (1869) by Johann Strauss II, with its many pizzicato sections, was composed to provide respite from bowing for the musicians who provided the music for three-hour-long “balls”.

Afterwards, a delicious fruit/dessert buffet was provided by Katie Ward and her daughter, Lauren.



MUSIC AT ST. MATTHEW'S

YOUNG ARTISTS SERIES: DIAPENTE



Toronto's latest five-person vocal ensemble delves into the exciting, diverse, rare, and wonderful works of the Renaissance.

Sunday, February 2, 2025
2:30 PM

Pay what you can (\$20 suggested)

MAID Discussion — A Summary

A follow-up to the spring discussion of MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) was held on October 16. MAID is a societal issue we are facing and we need to understand how it affects us and how we respond to our community, our friends, and family with respect to our Christian faith. The most common reasons people are drawn to MAID are suffering, being a burden, and having control over end of life. To find our understanding as Christians, we need to refer to God's biblical teachings and spend time in prayer.

Suffering is not always a bad thing. It is often a path to something more. God does and can redeem suffering and redirect our faith. Jesus on the cross is the ultimate suffering. We are often transformed through our suffering and draw closer to God. Our bodies are God's temple and we need to wait, hope for healing and miracles and to see beyond the pain.

God wants everyone to be cared for and uplifted. God does not want us to abandon those who are suffering, they are not a burden. We are called to care for one another, to trust in God, to pray for those in need and to be thankful for God's faithfulness.

It is also important to remember that we need to follow God's will and timing, not our own. We are called to "wait on the Lord," to wait and trust in hope. The Psalms are an important place of reference to follow when trying to understand our struggles and emotions and to be able to give them to God.

Death is a topic our society struggles to understand and accept. We often are afraid to share and prepare for something we each will experience. We need to be present for others as they think about and prepare for their end of life. Asking for permission to pray for someone and share our personal faith is a good step in being present in the situation they are facing. It is important to understand their thoughts and also to share how important they are to the people in their life.

We need to pray for the continuing development of science as godly creativity used for good. We need to pray that the health care profession is a constant patient advocate and that the path of truth and good is upheld for all of humanity.

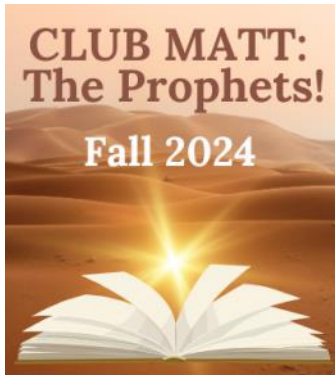
Ritah Namagembe: Young Entrepreneur

Ritah Namagembe decorated the stage with blue and white fabric and balloons for our Talents Auction. You may know Ritah (Samale Kisuule) as a member of our choir. Besides studying engineering subjects, she is an Event and Wedding planner. Her company, La Pearl Inc. A Touch of Elegance, offers party rentals, home decor, events planning, home redesign and events decoration. As a young entrepreneur, in March 2024, she was awarded a certificate for Excellence in Entrepreneurship, given by Tom Rakocovic, MPP for Humber River/Black Creek. Ritah means 'pearl'.



Club Matt

Dawn Mercer



This Fall in Club Matt, we have learned about prophets who were called by God to tell His people to follow Him. In every lesson we thought about what the people should Stop doing (red light); what they should be Cautious about (yellow light) and what they should Start doing (Go - green light). During many weeks the "Go" lesson was a reminder to faithfully follow the One True God. The instructions may have come from Amos, Isaiah, Elijah, Esther or other prophets. There were many different hazards (Caution): a Lion's Den; very hot fire; bathing in the Jordan River; powerful kings and many more, but God was always there to protect His prophets.



Advent and After Christmas

Advent lessons will begin with another important prophet, John the Baptist, who called people to prepare for the coming of Jesus. This reminds us that Christmas is the celebration of Jesus coming to show how very much God loves us. The high point of our Club Matt Christmas lessons will be our Christmas pageant at the All Ages Service, December 15. This provides the very special way that our whole St Matt's family is reminded of the events around the birth of our loving Savior Jesus, as told and played out by our Youth and Club Matt.

After Christmas our lessons will focus on the teachings of Jesus; these will of course include the teaching about prayer, loving your neighbour and parts of the Sermon on the Mount.

From the Club Matt Team: Linda Dickson, Tyrene Jackman, Diana Lewis, Vanessa James Locke, Sophia Lorimer, Dawn Mercer, Lianne Thompson, Tatiana Saliba, Jenna Wukasch and new youth leader Ashley Vaughan.

We are looking for one or two more leaders for the Junior (ages 2 ½ - 6) and Senior (Grade One to Grade 5/6) groups. Please speak with Rev. Philip, Deborah Hurn or one of the leaders. This is an excellent way to deepen your faith, get to know the kids better and have fun with our lively, inquisitive kids.

My name is Tyrene Jackman. I am the newest member of the Club Matt team, teaching in the senior room. I have been attending St. Matthew's for the past 18 years; both my children were baptized here as well as my wedding ceremony.

Seeing the love my son has for God and being on my own healing journey have motivated me to become part of this wonderful team of amazing teachers to help enrich the children's faith in the Holy Spirit.

Thank you for welcoming me with open arms.

Messy Church

Linda Dickson

In the month of September we recognized Orange Shirt Day and Indigenous culture. The children worked with plasticine to make the medicine wheel with the colours of Yellow, White, Black, and Red. The families made talking sticks. These are used in a family or group discussion by passing one around the group. The person with the stick is the only one allowed to talk. All others must pay attention.

Our October Messy Church celebrated *Our Cornucopia God*. We made Pine Cone bird feeders to celebrate giving to all. Each person planted a Christmas cactus shoot. The starters originated from Ann Sim's mother's plant, to Ann, to Linda Dickson at an Ash Wednesday children's day and now along to so many others.

The *Journey to Christmas* Messy Church will take place November 30. At this event families will receive an Advent Passport, Cards for shut ins, friendship bracelets to give to others.



Messy Church is such a blessing to our family. From the creative and interactive activities, fun songs, child-friendly teaching of God's word and delicious food, our family always has a great time. We are so appreciative of the thoughtful planning, prayer and the time and dedication of the volunteers who always welcome our boys with love and kindness.

We love seeing how Messy Church brings together our larger community in a safe and welcoming space. (by Layla Ho)



Messy Church

SATURDAYS

@ 4 PM

January 25
February 22
March 29
April 26
May 31
June TBA

Fun, Food & Faith!

Program free of charge
Donations welcome

St. Matt's Youth

Bryan Tran

We kicked off another fall season with our three main programs: Sunday morning discussions, bi-weekly youth group events, and seasonal retreats.

Our Sunday morning discussions occur every second and fourth Sunday at the 9:30 a.m. service - as the children split off into their Club Matt groups and the adults go to the lounge, the youth have been meeting in the gym (while we await the repairs being done in the youth room which was damaged in the summer from heavy rainfall and flooding) for some icebreaker games and bible study. The theme for this year's bible study is "Influencers in the Life of Jesus," where we have been looking at the various people in and around Jesus' life and exploring all the influences that helped guide and shape their decisions. From Mary and Joseph to King Herod, from Peter to Judas, we imagine what it was like to be that person in that time, then try to understand why they did the things they chose to do. In doing so, we also look for who or what is influencing us in our own lives.

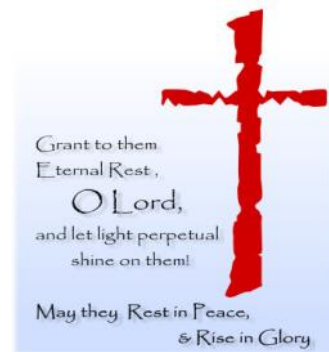
A group of five St. Matt's youth went to the annual Diocesan retreat at Muskoka Woods and had a fabulous time - or so I'm told! Big thanks go out to Ian Physick (one of the youth ministry coordinators for the BYMC - Bishop's Youth Ministry Committee) for stepping in to be a leader for our youth at the retreat while I was away. We look forward to our next retreat in the winter season, hosted at the Ontario Pioneer Camp, in early February.

Our youth group events are back on track after a pause due to travel and illness. We enjoyed playing volleyball recently, and look forward to rock climbing and gift making to close out the year. We thank our youth for being so involved with St. Matt's - from volunteering at Messy Church to sharing their musical gifts monthly as part of a worship team - and all the plenteous ways they share in Jesus' love in our congregational life.

Church Records

Deaths

Bonnie McConnell
September 26, 2024



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We Are Still Collecting!

Deborah Hurn

Over the years, St. Matthew's parishioners have collected items for various charities to help them in their work or to help them raise funds. Recently, when recalling these items which we dropped off in the Narthex, we wondered what we had been supporting! After some research we have resumed collecting the following items for the various organizations:

Stamps: Oxfam collects the stamp to raise funds for the Stamp Out Poverty program with a focus on the needs of women and girls. Save foreign, Canadian, and commemorative stamps. Please save the entire envelope if there are clearly identifiable town/village postmarks or registered/special delivery postmarks.

Eyeglasses: The Lions Club of Canada will collect and donate eyewear free of charge to people in developing countries. They accept prescription and sunglasses. Several pairs have been donated at Hakim Optical for pick up by the Lions Club of Canada.

Milk Bags: The outer plastic bag from your three bags of milk can be made into sleeping mats! MilkbagsUnlimited collects the bags to weave mats, purses, shoes etc. The bags cannot disintegrate in landfills. They will become a mattress for people who have nothing to sleep on.

Pop Can tabs: have long been collected by many people. A little research found it to be true: they can be turned into wheelchairs! March of Dimes collects aluminum pop tabs year-round, and the recycling of these tabs generates revenue that benefit their Assistive Devices Program that helps buy, repair and maintain a wide variety of mobility or assistive equipment including wheelchairs.

For more information, here are the web sites:

[Canadian Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centre - CLERC](#)

[Support Oxfam by Stamping Out Poverty | Oxfam Canada](#)

[Networks - Milk Bags \(milkbagsunlimited.ca\)](#)

[Pop Tabs | March of Dimes Canada](#)

You may drop off the items in the marked boxes outside the Office or drop them off at the Welcome table in the Narthex and we will ensure they get to the right place. If there are any other small items you would like us to collect, let Deborah Hurn know, and we will see if we can facilitate.



Pastoral Care: Pastoral visits can be offered in person, over the phone, by email or via Zoom. Please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca.

Partners in Prayer: Should you desire prayer for yourself or for another person, please make details known to Bob Holloway at 416-253-4909 or rholloway@sympatico.ca. If necessary, the request can be transmitted through the church office.

Cycle of Prayer: “Beloved, pray for us.” This is Paul’s way of asking the Thessalonians to pray for him (5:25) and it expresses the genuine need for believers to support one another through prayer. Each Sunday, we pray for individuals and families of St. Matthew’s in the Prayers of the People. Each week, a few names are mentioned in our prayers and we have the opportunity to support one another through prayer. Please take the time to remember these people during the week in your own prayers as well. If you do not wish to be included in our “Cycle of Prayer” please let the office know and we will be sure to keep your name off the list.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Prayer Shawls are provided to those who need the warmth and comfort of God and St. Matthew’s. If you would like a shawl for someone, please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca. If you are knitting shawls for this ministry, please contact the office to arrange to drop them off.

Join Us

Wednesday

10:30 a.m. BCP Service

Upcoming Messy Church

January 25

GIFT Groups

Contact the office for information



Sunday Services

9:30 a.m. Casual (in person & online)
followed by Coffee Hour in gym

11:00 a.m. Classic (in person & online)
12:10 p.m. Coffee Hour

10:30 a.m. Unity Worship replaces
9:30 and 11:00 a.m. worship
(generally first Sunday of each month)
Please check saintmatts.ca

Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
9:30 - 3:30

416-231-4014
office@saintmatts.ca



The Rev. Philip Stonhouse, Incumbent
416-231-3060 / philipstonhouse@hotmail.ca

The Rev. Merv Mercer, Honorary Assistant
Dr. Tyler Versluis, Music Director and Organist
Bryan Tran, Youth Ministry Associate
Tom Travaglini, Sexton
Grant Dunbar, Verger
Lisa Tait, Administrator

3962 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9B 1M3

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