



God Is Good News

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

NOV. 2021 TO FEB. 2022



Alpha ~ We come together in faith



What does it mean?

See pages 4-5



PadRay Ponders



Advent Preparation for two celebrations



Music? Decorations? Do they matter?

Dear Church,

For several years now, a few friends and I have been debating whether or not it is appropriate to begin playing Christmas carols and putting up Christmas decorations even before Advent begins. As I have grown older I have come to realize this answer: my opinion doesn't matter!

What matters is why we do or don't play Christmas carols and decorate Christmas early. Which brings us to the discussion of what exactly is the purpose of Advent?

Advent is a time of waiting. Waiting for what? There are basically two purposes or two periods to the Advent season. The first purpose is to prepare ourselves for Christmas Day, for observing the day of Christ's Nativity. If listening to specific music and or decorating our homes helps us spiritually to prepare for Christmas Day it's good. The problem often arises that we hear the music so often and we have the decorations up so long that when Christmas Day arrives, we're ready to stop all this. Many people spend the day after Christmas taking down decorations and trees are packed away. And we go back to normal!

There is a second purpose for the season of Advent, a separate focus to the Advent season, which is the preparation for the second coming of Jesus at the end of time. Jesus said: "you know neither the day nor the hour" when the Son of Man shall return.

In a talk on the meaning of Advent given by Father Michael Schmitz, he offered an interesting interpretation of the second coming. If I understood him correctly, he was saying while we don't know when Jesus will return at the end of time, we do know that Jesus will return in our own time on the day we meet Jesus face

to face, the day we die. If we knew the exact day that we were going to die, say Christmas Day, how would we prepare for that day? Maybe the hustle and bustle of Christmas preparations would be a little different. Our emphasis would be a little different.

Again, if I understood Father Michael's point, it is that the season of Advent has two periods: one is the preparation for Christmas Day when we celebrate the incarnation; the second is preparation for that day when we meet Jesus face to face. So, the first two weeks or so of Advent concentrate on the second coming of Jesus. From about December 17 on the focus of Advent is on preparing for Christmas Day.

Some friends of mine had an interesting tradition when they were raising their fairly large family. Beginning December 17 when the church begins the immediate preparation for Christmas Day, after the children went to bed, "angels" would come and begin to decorate the house. Each morning the children would notice something new until Christmas Eve where the tree was fully decorated and lit.

The point is, that Advent is the time to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christmas Day and to prepare ourselves for the celebration of that day when we will meet Jesus face to face in eternity.

If we are really trying to prepare for those two events, we can discern whether or not Christmas songs and decorations help or hinder those preparations.

23



Help to make the season bright for others

Giving Tree

Our Giving Tree is up in the Gathering Area.
Please take a tag and return your unwrapped gift by Sunday, December 12.
We are collecting for Brookside and Womankind.

Adopt a Family for the holidays

If you are interested in adopting a family for Christmas, please contact Chris at the rectory, 440-888-8220 ext 113, or chris.walter@stmatthiaschurch.org.



Take time to get into the true Spirit of Christmas

Monday evening Rosary with Father Ray

Every Monday in Advent you are welcome to join Fr. Ray via Facebook to pray the rosary. You can find a link to the St. Matthias Facebook page on the parish website: www.stmatthiaschurch.org or go directly to facebook.com/stmatthiastheapostleChurch.

Whole Family Catechesis ~ Nov. 29 & Dec. 13

The first Monday of Advent, November 29, join us for Whole Family Catechesis from 6-7:15 p.m. in the classrooms. The topic will be “The Church Year, Advent Prayers and Practices.” Please let Dianne Laheta know if you plan on attending in order to have enough supplies. Dianne can be reached at 440-888-8220 ext 124 or dlaheta@stmatthiaschurch.org.

Monday, December 13, is another session of Whole Family Catechesis from 6-7:15 p.m. in the classrooms. The topic will be “Advent, Christmas, The Holy Family.” Please let Dianne know if you plan on attending in order to have enough supplies. Dianne can be reached at 440-888-8220 ext 124 or dlaheta@stmatthiaschurch.org.

Friday evening Coffee Houses ~ Dec. 3, 7 & 10

Coffee Houses return! Join us on Friday evenings, December 3, 10 & 17. We will start the evenings in the church for some praise and worship music and then move to the classrooms for coffee and presentations/discussion.



- * December 3 ~ “Q & A with Father Ray.” Father Ray will answer questions you have regarding the season of Advent and Christmas. You can email your questions ahead of time to joe.mikolajczyk@stmatthiaschurch.org. *Please be sure to put “Q & A Question” in the subject line.* Or come prepared with some questions that evening. Father Ray will try to cover all of them.
- * December 10 ~ Presentation on “Joy.” This will precede the third Sunday of Advent, Gaudete Sunday and is meant to remind us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful have reached the midpoint of Advent.
- * December 17 ~ Presentation on “Reconciliation,” followed by a reconciliation service. Join us and prepare you hearts for the coming of Christmas.

Breakfast in Bethlehem – it’s not just for kids! ~ Dec. 4

St. Nicholas will stop by our Breakfast in Bethlehem. Breakfast will be on Saturday, December 4 from 9-11 a.m. in the classrooms. Bring the family and join us for breakfast sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Sign-up sheets are in the Gathering Area. Please be sure to let us know how many are coming in order to have enough food prepared. The deadline to RSVP is Sunday, November 28.

Taizé Service ~ Dec. 19

Take time to stop and reflect on the Advent season by joining us on Sunday evening, December 19 at 7:00 p.m. for a Taizé Service. Taizé is a simple, meditative form of worship, calling us to dwell deeply on Christ’s presence around and within us. Take this time to slow down and focus on preparing for Christmas.



Liturgy Schedule

Liturgies are in person and livestreamed on YouTube from link on church website www.stmatthiaschurch.org

Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation)

Wed. Dec. 8
8:30 a.m.
&
7:00 p.m.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Fri. Dec. 24
4:00 p.m.
&
Midnight Mass

Sat. Dec. 25
10 a.m.

Mass Feast of the Holy Family

Sun. Dec. 26
10:00 a.m.

Mass Feast of Epiphany

Sat. Jan. 1
4:00 p.m.
&
Sun. Jan. 2
10 a.m.

(January 1, 2022 the Solemnity of Mary is not a Holy Day of Obligation this year.)

Alpha ~ In their own words

Pictured here are some of the Alpha participants at October's "Holy Spirit" Weekend, the first Alpha since 2016. In the fall of 1999, St. Matthias was the first Catholic Church to bring the 10-week Alpha course to Ohio. Alpha is unique because it is both a time and a place to explore the Christian faith with others while focusing on individual questions about life, faith and meaning. At each weekly session, participants, both believers and non-believers, church and unchurched, have time to connect with others over dinner, hear a talk on an element of faith, and share individual questions and perspectives.



Joe Mikolajczyk
Pastoral Minister

Alpha has been such a big part of our vibrant parish life throughout the years. I was so excited to be a part of the course again. The energy of the team and guests has been absolutely amazing! I've really enjoyed seeing everyone share experiences and faith while getting to know each other.



Carole Singer The minute I walked into the first Alpha meeting I was made to feel welcome. I found new forever friends. Sharing our feelings, whether good or bad, and praying with each other was very special to me.



way to see that most people have the same or similar questions about God and scripture. I believe it is all in how we accept the words of God in our heart and trust in God no matter what is going on in our lives.

Lenny Trassare This was a great experience for my wife and me, and I wish more parishioners took the time to attend Alpha. It brought me a lot closer to the church and the opportunity to know and meet new parishioners.

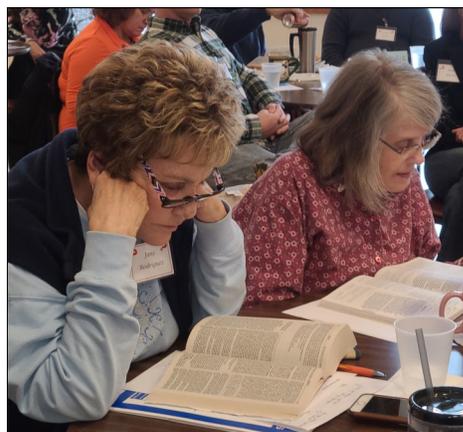


Rose Trassare Alpha has brought the Holy Spirit into my heart in a deeper way. It has helped in a



expectations. The weekly meetings are informative and interesting and the weekend was an overwhelming and emotional spiritual experience.

Terry Duke Though not surprised, I was amazed at the group of intelligent, spiritual and caring, Christ-like people that we have in the St. Matthias community. I never recognized the personhood of the Holy Spirit, and this was a totally new interpretation for me. Lastly, I just wanted to say that Alpha has met and exceeded my



Terri Mattie (right) A reminder that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are persons, each with his own speciality. Each doing what they do best to help us.

Jane Rodriguez (left) One thing I am grateful for besides the wonderful experience of Alpha is getting to know others at our meetings. Alpha has also taught me how important prayer is. I realized that the Holy Spirit IS God and Alpha made me understand how powerful His love is. Alpha not only met my expectations but exceeded them. I truly believe that God guided me there and knew I needed to hear his powerful messages from so many blessed speakers. I am so grateful to everyone that worked so hard to make it a "special miracle" to me and to everyone that had the opportunity to participate in it.



Fran Moore I am personally learning more about the bible and scriptures. For me, the bible can be difficult to read. It's important to have connection with your own parish and people, so Alpha has certainly helped me with this. I loved the connection with the people at our table, and of course meeting so many that I see at Mass but usually just wave or say Hi. I love the songs and connecting with music. Thank you to those special musicians. On a personal note: I absolutely love making desserts for Alpha. I will miss Alpha.



Sue Braun (left) Being a part of Alpha not only gives you an opportunity to meet new people but to become close to these people in a special way while becoming closer to Jesus.

Bonnie Ciulla (right) Recognizing the Holy Spirit in your everyday life is important. Your happiness, joy, peace, patience and the spirit within you that you give to others is so important also. This Alpha class always exceeds my expectations. It is so enjoyable and meaningful.



Tom Shiban

I'm just going to tell you what's in my heart.

Joe never fails to amaze me; his leadership skills, faith, humor and gentle manner remind me of my younger self.

I know that the Lord gives us what we need; but I have received so many gifts during this Alpha, and I know that our guests are being helped immensely, because I feel it, and that has been substantiated by the feedback I have been receiving.

I am overjoyed with the new people I have gotten to know because of Alpha 2021; they touch my heart.

I believe we need to sustain Alpha on a regular basis; it's such a strong parish-builder.



Carol Duke I looked forward to the Alpha meetings each week. I believe Alpha has opened up my understanding of the Holy Spirit as a person instead of a force or a dove or a spirit, but to regard the Holy Spirit as more of a personable being. What the Holy Spirit had begun may continue as we forge onward with new relationships and prayer support for each other and a new extension of community.



Chris Kupczyk (with fiancé Laura Licek)

I would have to say that Alpha made me more aware of the Holy Spirit as a figure in the Trinity not the ghostly or dove like I thought before. The Alpha program has given me recertification that it's our Christian obligation of giving back and spreading the Living Gospel to all our brethren. The rewards and the outpouring of satisfaction from doing the Lord's bidding is remarkable, and I advise everyone experience this program at least once in their lives.



Kathy Byrne (center, with guests Gina and Diana Turella) Believe to understand — not understand to believe. Father Ray talked about this during our weekend and it really has stuck with me.



“ I want to do everything, even the smallest things, for the greater glory of God.”

St. Dominic Savio



High Fives...

To our parish volunteers

Behind the scenes, many parishioners quietly practice works of kindness and service which we would like to recognize. Here are just a few...



“Travelin’ Man”

This 1961 Ricky Nelson song seems to fit **Mike Michalski**. In his work as a business consultant, Mike has offered to deliver Angel Gown donations to Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) across the country. Thanks to him, hospitals in Toledo, New York, Tampa and Tucson have received our gowns. “I have been very blessed in my life, and for me it’s an honor to help in this way,” says Mike. Thanks to another parishioner who wishes to remain anonymous, gowns have been shipped to NICUs in several Appalachian states including Kentucky, Ohio, Arkansas and West Virginia where poverty is rampant. **Nancy Sandlin** also delivered gowns to Akron General and an NICU in Pennsylvania.

Team effort

Donations of precious wedding dresses recently came from **Linda Moore, Pat Kaminski, Diane Allen, Laurie Sammon and Gudron Svoboda**. The donations were used to make Angel Gowns.



St. Francis would be proud

Special thanks to Padua Franciscans **Father Marc Schekells** and **Father Johnpaul Cafiero** who have been helping at St. Matthias Masses. We are grateful.



Yum, yum!

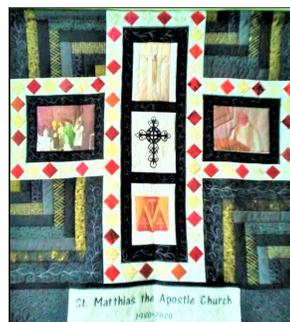
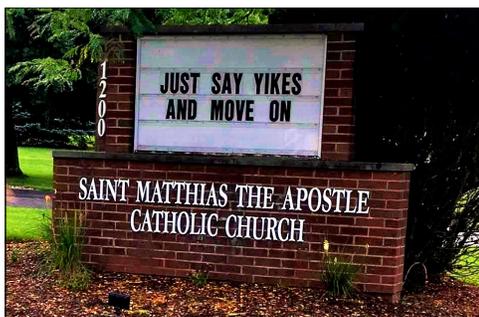
Paul Clark (second from left) and his kitchen crew, **Dennis Camarati, Leslie and Grace Malvic, and Bob Sammon**, prepared hearty meals for participants in the Alpha program last month.

working behind the scenes

“I saw the sign”

If you have ever gotten a chuckle from the display sign as you drive onto our church grounds, you may thank **Amy** and **Greg Marke**. Every Friday they can be found changing the signs with new ways to bring a smile to passersby.

Amy and Greg also deliver weekly food donations to Brookside and Transfiguration Parish. More smiles.



Sewing up 40th Anniversary

Karen Spirakus put her creative sewing talents to work creating this quilt as a lasting memory of the parish's 40th anniversary. Take a look at it the next time you're in the Gathering Area.

Dear Santa, define “nice”



A truly nice experience took shape when 20 St. Matthias families purchased gifts for 20 Brookside families to put under their Christmas trees this year. Mainly clothes and toys from our parish Secret Santas will be wrapped by parents of Brookside children to bring some merriment to these families in need.

Church mice?

No. But scurrying about are **Terri Mattie** and **Pamela Ziss** serving as sacristans at the 4 p.m. Saturday Mass, faithful greeter **Eileen Fahey**, and **Laura Walters** and **Betty Yurik** who continue adorning the church with beautiful and seasonal decorations, like this peaceful autumn reminder that our parish has books in the church or Gathering Area where you can enter the names of loved ones you've lost or special prayer intentions.



“We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta



Saint Matthias the Apostle Church

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Mission Statement of Saint Matthias Church

We, the family of Saint Matthias, called to be disciples of Christ, reach out with a loving and caring spirit. Proclaiming the message of the Risen Lord, we provide for the spiritual growth and development of our community. By sharing liturgies, ministries and responsibilities, we promote God's kingdom.

"God Is Good News" is the newsletter of Saint Matthias the Apostle Church.
Staff: Irma Baker, Patti Bertschler, Rita Dowd-Mikolajczyk, Chris Walter

Saint Matthias Church

(440) 888-8220 - www.stmatthiaschurch.org
www.facebook.com/stmatthiastheapostlechurch
YouTube from link on church website

Masses

Saturday: 4 p.m. - in church
Sunday: 10 a.m. - in church and online
Holy Days: 8:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Weekdays: Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:30 a.m.
Monday/Wednesday No service

Reconciliation

Reconciliation - Saturday 3:15-3:45 p.m. or by appointment

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday: 9 am to 4 pm
Friday: 9 am to 3 pm

St. Matthias Parish Staff

Rev. Raymond A. Sutter, D.Min. - Pastor
Rev. Art Snedeker - In residence
Tom Litwinowicz - Deacon
Ken Golonka - Deacon Emeritus
Dianne Laheta - Pastoral Minister
Joe Mikolajczyk - Pastoral Minister
Sig Mikolajczyk - Music Director
Chris Walter - Office Manager
Ann Marie Rymarczyk - Receptionist
Bob Arbuckle - Facilities
Brandon Arbuckle - Facilities