

*St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish
April 6, 2025*



*5th
Sunday of Lent*

*"I am the resurrection and the life;
whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me
will never die.*



John 11:25-26



Dear Parishioners,

It can be a surprise when we realize that Lent is almost over; Lent has gone by so quickly! Next Sunday is Palm Sunday, followed by Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Where did the time go! Scott Hahn's opening sentence continued with these words: "...today's Gospel clearly has Jesus' passion and death in view." And so it does, and we continue to prepare ourselves during these last days of Lent to appreciate anew the glory of the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The readings for the Sundays of this year have been profound. We began with the Temptation of the Lord in the Desert on the first Sunday in Lent, then we heard the Gospel of the Transfiguration, then The Woman at the Well, and last week The Healing of the Man Born Blind, and this week the Raising of Lazarus from the Dead. I often times use this Gospel reading when celebrating the funeral of someone whose death has stirred up a lot of questions about God's love for us, or a lot of anger. I reflect on the anger that Martha may have had in her voice when she confronted Jesus with the words "Lord, If you had been here, my brother would not have died!" We probably all have been there ourselves, in that angry place when we try to deal with a death that makes no sense, should not have happened, and naturally causes us to question God's plan. When Mary comes out of the house to see Jesus, she confronts him with the same words, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!"

It is in this Gospel story that we have one of the two recorded instances of Jesus crying. One of the shortest passages in the Bible is John 11:35, "And Jesus wept." His grief is real. What do you think He is crying for? For Lazarus's death? In reaction to the grief of the people around him? In response to the intense anger of his friends Martha and Mary? The people there saw it as a sign of Jesus' great love for his friend Lazarus. But yet others asked why, if he had cured the man born blind he couldn't have done something for this man that he loved. So many ask that very same question today when they are faced with a loss.

Enter Easter. The story of Lazarus continues with Jesus calling him out of the tomb into the light of day, out of darkness into light, out of death into life. The Easter story is not just the story of Jesus rising from the dead. It is our story of conquering death and living forever.

I try to share this with families facing a difficult loss. I fear I often come across as a priest who is just trying to find the right words to bring comfort, or more cynically, to put the "best spin possible" on a bad situation. What I hope to convey though is the real hope we have as Christians in the Resurrection. Jesus did not die and rise for Himself. He did it for us. Lazarus walking out of that tomb is us walking out of our tombs. "Where O death is your sting? Where O death is your victory?" Our natural lives come to an end, some much sooner than they should. But thanks be to God that because of what Jesus has done our death leads to a new life. Perhaps this offers little consolation when we mourn, but it is the reason for our joy when we die.

~Fr. Chris

St. Matthew Women's Club Scholarship



College Scholarship Applications are available at the Guidance Department at BMHS, Shawsheen Tech, and the St. Matthew Parish Office. Applications are **due by Friday, April 18**. Please call the office with any questions or for more information. **All applicants must be accepted into college, be a registered member of St. Matthew Parish and completed volunteer work within the Parish.*

Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) Corner

Join us THIS FRIDAY for our final Soup and Stations this Lent



The Saint Matthew the Evangelist Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Council, and the Building Committee are all pleased to announce that they will be hosting Soup and Stations this upcoming **Friday, April 11, 2025**. We would like to cordially invite you to join us for an evening of faith and fellowship. The Stations of the Cross will begin at 6pm in St. Andrew Church followed by a variety of meatless soups, bread and butter, a beverage, and more served downstairs in Father Wilson Hall. We look forward to seeing you there!!

-The Saint Matthew the Evangelist Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Council, and the Building Committee.

Saint Matthew the Evangelist Easter Egg Hunt Sponsored by the Billerica Knight of Columbus



We invite you and your family to hop on over to Fr. McCormick Hall at St. Theresa Church on **Saturday, April 19th** from **10:00 AM – 2:00 PM** for a very special Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by the Billerica Knights of Columbus. The members of the K of C have been working hard stuffing hundreds of eggs to prepare for this fun-filled day!

This **FREE event** will also include many other activities such as a bouncy house, cookie decorating, pin the tail on the Easter Bunny and much more! A light lunch will also be provided. Weather permitting, the Easter Egg hunt will take place outdoors.

We hope you and your family can join us for this wonderful event!

Donations Honoring our Loved Ones...



Every month, we will provide the opportunity to donate the Altar Bread (\$80.00), wine (\$50.00), candles (\$75.00), and missals(\$200.00) to be used in our parish that month. Please call the office if you are interested in donating one of these items as a memorial or "In Thanksgiving" for a family member or loved one.

The Month of April

Altar Bread– In Loving Memory of the Devlin and Spezzafero Families

from Ed and Janet Devlin

Wine– In Loving Memory of the Devlin and Spezzafero Families

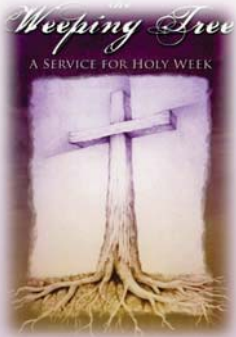
from Ed and Janet Devlin

Candles– In Loving Memory of Richard Blaney

from the Blaney Family

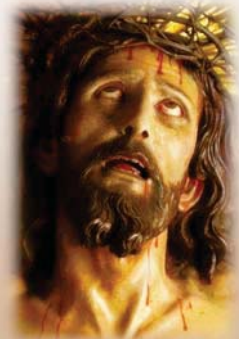
Missals– In Loving Memory of Lloyd Michael James

from the James Family



All are invited to the Weeping Tree

To mark the start of Holy Week, the Courageous Catholic Women Group (CCW) will present The Weeping Tree for prayer and reflection on **Monday, April 14th at 7:00pm in St. Andrew Church**. The Weeping Tree is a "poignant portrait of the cross that uses beloved hymns, newly composed music, thoughtful narration and sacred symbols to create a touching testament of grace" to the events of Holy Week. All members of St. Matthew Parish are invited to join members of the CCW for this beautiful presentation. Light refreshments will be provided in Father Wilson Hall after the presentation.



Miraculous Crucifix of Limpias-THIS Sunday

During this Holy season of Lent, come join us and spend some time prayerfully meditating and venerating the extraordinary manifestations of Christ's agony on the cross moments before his death. **THIS Sunday, April 6th at 3:00pm come to St. Andrew Church**, 45 Talbot Ave. North Billerica, and behold an exact replica from Spain of the Holy Miraculous Crucifix of Limpias and a True Relic of the Cross of Christ.

Prayers, Hymns and Confessions will take place during the reflection.

Jubilee Year 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

What is this Jubilee Year about?



Pilgrims of Hope is the theme for this year's jubilee celebrations. We want this "Jubilee to be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus" (Spes Non Confundit, 1). To participate in this year, rediscover the reason of why you hope in Jesus and his promise of eternal life, share with someone who is despairing why you have hope, and practice works of mercy to be signs of hope to others.

A Jubilee Year is a time for forgiveness and renewal in our relationship with God. Jubilee years were initially marked in Scripture by the remittance of debt and property, and the healing of relationships.

In his letter announcing the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis wrote, "*We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire; that is why I have chosen as the motto of the Jubilee, Pilgrims of Hope.*" Go to bit.ly/JubileeOfHope to see all the events throughout the archdiocese.

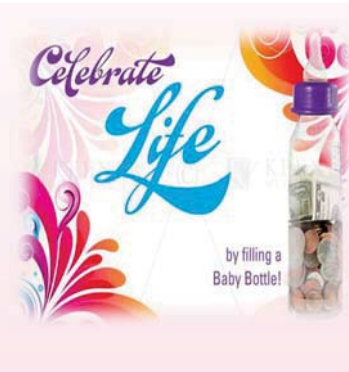
"A pilgrimage is not just a journey in search of a place; it is also a journey of the heart."

~Pope Francis

Welcome into the Church !



Congratulations and God's many blessings to the family of **Caroline Judith, Sophie Brooks, Jamie Daniel and Sadie Catherine** whom we welcomed into our Faith Community through the waters of Baptism. We wish for them a lifetime of learning about God's great and merciful love. **For more information about scheduling the sacrament of Baptism for your child, please contact the Parish Office at 978-663-8816.*



Baby Bottle Drive

The Pro-Life Network, Billerica and Beyond will be hosting their annual St. Matthew the Evangelist Baby Bottle Fundraiser **NEXT weekend, April 12th and 13th.** Baby bottles and envelopes for donations will be available after all the Masses and should be returned the weekend of April 26th and 27th. A QR code is provided as well for your convenience. All donations will help Heartbeat Pregnancy Help in

Burlington, our local resource center to help needy moms, babies and their families. They help provide car seats, strollers, cribs, clothing diapers, formula and more!



Knights of Columbus Raffle

The Knights of Columbus will be selling raffle tickets for their annual raffle after all the Masses next weekend. **The Grand prize is \$10,000!** Don't forget to get your tickets and hopefully one of our parishioners will be the big winner!

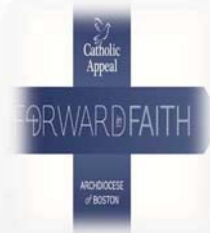


All are Invited!

Please join St. Matthew the Evangelist Women's Club at our meeting on **Wednesday, April 9th at 7:00 PM.** We will gather in Father McCormick Hall for a special presentation by our own Fr. Sassou and Frances Moody. They will share stories and photos of their recent adventure in Africa. Ice cream sundaes will be served so make sure to bring your sweet tooth!



2025 Catholic Appeal - Moving Forward in Faith



We are pleased to share that Saint Matthew Parish **has raised \$37,305 toward our 2025 Catholic Appeal goal of \$75,800.** Our heartfelt thanks to all who have helped make our campaign a success so far. The Appeal is a primary means by which we embrace our brothers and sisters into Christ's circle of care. If you have not had the opportunity to support the Appeal yet, we invite you to make your gift today to help us reach our goal.



Pick up an envelope in your pew, at the back of the church or make an on-line donation at www.bostoncatholicappeal.org, or using the QR code to the right. Participation from every household in the parish is important and every gift makes a meaningful difference. Your participation in our Appeal is appreciated by our parish and all those who are served by the ministries funded by the Appeal that put faith into action. Saint Matthew has relied on the resources at Central Ministries many times, with their knowledge and assistance being invaluable to our parish.

"The Catholic Appeal is our way of acting in solidarity to spread hope."

Come and be comforted!



The **"Seasons of Hope" Spring Bereavement Sessions** will take place on Wednesday evenings, beginning on April 23, April 30, May 7, May 14, May 21 and May 28. The sessions will be held in the Parish Center of St. Michael Parish in Bedford from 6:00-7:30pm. If you have any questions, or would like to sign up, please e-mail Pat@bedfordcatholic.org or call Pat at **781-275-6318, X 230.**

Today's Special



Another Successful Spaghetti Supper!!!

We are pleased to share photos from St. Matthew Parish's recent spaghetti supper, held at Father Wilson Hall in Saint Andrew Church. The evening was a great success with music, laughter, and delicious cuisine! Many thanks go to the team who worked hard to make this event such a success. Keep an eye on the Parish bulletin and website for updates on upcoming events.



THANK YOU! We were so blessed this past weekend to have a number of our students from the Teen Ministry Program clean our two churches from top to bottom in anticipation of Holy Week. While the teens diligently earned their service hours for Confirmation, a number of our parishioners volunteered their time to not only oversee this project but to jump in and lend a hand as well. If you notice a little extra shine and sparkle in our buildings, it is all thanks to these wonderful individuals and of course our trusty mascot Oso!



Women's Club Bake Sale

Proceeds to Benefit St. Vincent de Paul



St. Matthew Woman's Club will host a Bake Sale **NEXT weekend, April 12th and 13th**. The sale will be held at Fr. McCormick Hall after the 4pm, 9:30am and 5pm Masses. All of the profits will be donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The money collected will help in providing food and other necessities for those in need. This is a perfect opportunity to stock your freezers with some sweet treats while helping those in need before the Easter holiday.

Billerica Interfaith Association Spring Luncheon



Many thanks to the Billerica Interfaith Association for the wonderful opportunity last Wednesday to gather together for prayer and hospitality at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Billerica. Members of St. Matthew Parish and North Billerica Baptist Church came together to provide a wonderful luncheon followed by a beautiful blending of our faiths in a Prayer Service which was led by Father Chris and Rev. Jocelyn Peirce. Music was provided by our Music Director, Laura Rosa and our cantor, Becca Murphy. The message of the day was "Renewal". In a world that so often can focus on darkness, we must always strive to keep God in our hearts as we work as a community to share His message of hope and peace and renewal of spirit!





Reflection Question of the Week ~ 5th Sunday of Lent

In our first reading from Isaiah we hear, "See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" As the last days of Lent draw closer, what fruit or good do you see "springing forth" because of your Lenten practices? Reflect on the ways your Lenten practices may have made a difference in your prayer? Are you aware of any positive changes in yourself, or toward others? There are still two weeks left to consider the difference this Lent is making on your

discipleship. Take to heart the words of St. Paul who reminds the Philippians and us of our goal: "I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus". Pray for the grace to remain attentive to living a life rooted in Christ.

- God reminds us to let go of our past mistakes and failures and not dwell on what we cannot change. Instead, we should focus on the new opportunities God is giving us.
- What new beginnings is God offering you in your life?
- In what ways can you show mercy and forgiveness to others?
- What steps can you take to grow closer to Jesus and strengthen your faith?



Intentions for the week of April 5th-April 11th

John Charles Bertolucci, III-29th Anniversary
Anthony and Gertrude Caterino-Memorial
Maurice and Annie Harrington-Memorial
Mammen Varghese-Memorial
Charles (Chuck) Long-6th Anniversary
Cynara Ferrao-Memorial
Richard Conte-8th Anniversary
Thomas Kennedy-Birthday Memorial
Alice Caputo-Memorial
Robert Lowney-Memorial
Bob Sances-Birthday Memorial

Intentions for the week of April 12th-April 18th

Gertrude Higgins-Birthday Memorial
Connie Conway-11th Anniversary
Elizabeth Perez-Memorial
Pauline McGaughy-Memorial
James McGinnis-3rd Anniversary
Jack and Alexander MacArthur-Memorial
Gene Ferris-Memorial
Toni Tarnowski and Robin Williams-Memorial
Ronald Pelletier-Memorial
Kathleen Ruggeri-Birthday Memorial
The Avellani and Massaro Families-Memorial



Online Giving QR Code

Use the QR code to the left, to make a secure, one-time or recurring contribution from your bank account to our parish. Online Giving provides many advantages to you and the parish. Thank you for your continued support. **St. Matthew the Evangelist receives approximately 40% of contributions through online giving!**



St. Andrew Church

45 Talbot Avenue
N. Billerica, MA 01862

Sun. Mass 8:00am & 11:00am

Daily Mass Tues. & Fri. at 12:05pm

Rosary led by Legion of Mary: Friday at 11:30am

St. Theresa Church

466 Boston Road
Billerica, MA 01821

Sat. Mass 4:00pm

Sun. Mass 9:30am & 5:00pm

Daily Mass M, W, & Th at 9:00am

Confession Sat @ 2:00 pm

Pastoral Team

Rev. Christopher Casey, Pastor
Ext. 224

Fr. Jean Sassou, Parochial Vicar
Ext. 223

Deacon Al Shanahan, Deacon

Resident Clergy:

Fr. Romain Rurangirwa

Fr. Theophilus Okpara

St. Vincent de Paul Society: 978-408-8278

Office Team

Christine Kilburn, Director of Finance & Operations
Ext. 243

Karen Dubbs, Office Manager
Ext. 300

Heather Murphy, Pastoral Ministry & Project Coordinator
Ext. 200

Dino Bastianelli, Facilities Manager
Ext. 332

Youth Faith Formation Staff

Karyn Moody, Coordinator for Grades 1-4
Ext. 444

**Deb Fergus, Senior Coordinator for Faith Formation
and Coordinator for Grades 5-8**
Ext. 442

Alanna Fava, Confirmation & Teen Ministries
Ext. 445

Dustin Batista, Pastoral Minister & Teen Ministries
Ext. 448

Knights of Columbus

Dan Quattrocchi, Membership Director
kofc3963@yahoo.com

St. Matthew Parish Office

One Grace Avenue
Billerica, MA 01821
978.663.8816

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 10am-3pm

Music Ministry

Mrs. Laura Rosa, Director and Organist
Maria Coughlan, Cantor
Rebecca Murphy, Cantor
Michelle Roy, Cantor



For questions about St. Matthew Parish or information on any of the following topics, please contact the person listed below:

New to the Parish, Mass Intentions, Baptisms, Adult Confirmation, RCIA or the CORI process? Please Call the Parish Office at 978-663-8816, Mon-Wed. from 10am-1pm or email admin@billericacatholic.org

Funerals

If you have recently experienced the loss of a loved one, please contact the office at **978-663-8816** so that we can walk with you through this difficult journey.

Weddings

Congratulations on your engagement! Please call 978-663-8816 or email admin@billericacatholic.org to schedule an appointment at least 6 months before your wedding.

Homebound and Sick

Do you know of someone who is homebound and would appreciate a visit from a priest? If you know someone in the parish who would like a visit to receive the Eucharist, please call the office at **978-663-8816** to arrange a visit.



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I CAN WALK BAREFOOT ON THE BEACH AGAIN!

Local acupuncture clinic is treating the untreatable, peripheral neuropathy with incredible results!

Pain comes in many shapes and sizes. One of the most debilitating being the burning and tingling that comes with peripheral neuropathy. A disease that comes with years of shooting, stabbing pain that gradually ends in numbness, balance problems, and on occasion, amputations. A disease that was once classified as irreparable.

David R. of Waltham, MA was facing such a fate.

“I stopped golfing. I wasn’t taking walks on the beach with my wife. I was living on gabapentin and antidepressants and everywhere I went; my doctor, the specialists, the pain institute, told me there was no cure. How are you supposed to live your life knowing that everyday brings pain and suffering?”

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves, commonly caused by a lack of blood flow to the nerves in the hands and feet. This causes the nerves to begin to degenerate due to lack of nutrient flow. Most peripheral neuropathy sufferers experience a heightened sensitivity to touch making it almost impossible for those diagnosed to even wear shoes, much less enjoy life.

“It was like walking on sharp river rocks. I barely left my recliner.” shares David, whose experience is not uncommon for those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy.

That is until he found Min Jeon of AWC|Acupuncture & Wellness Clinic of Burlington Massachusetts. Min and her staff have pioneered a cutting edge, medical solution to treat neuropathy, eliminate or greatly reduce its symptoms and give people their lives back. And they’re doing it without the use of prescription medications and invasive surgeries.

“Acupuncture is incredible at restoring blood flow and stimulating damaged nerves, preventing them from dying off,” tells Min Jeon. “We take our treatments a step further by integrating ATP Resonance BioTherapy® which targets specific nerves in the body using microcurrent. ATP therapy is like watering a plant. This treatment will stimulate the blood vessels to grow back around the peripheral nerves and provide them with the proper nutrients to heal and repair.”

Three months later David is thrilled with his progress, “I can walk barefoot on the beach again!”

Success stories like David’s are not atypical for the staff at AWC. “We have a 90% success rate in treating neuropathy,” shares Min.

The number of treatments needed to allow the nerves to fully recover will vary from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed neurological and vascular evaluation. So long as you have not sustained more than 85% nerve damage AWC offers hope where there once was none.

While David’s peripheral neuropathy was idiopathic, meaning the cause is unknown, Min’s treatments can also help people whose neuropathy is caused by diabetes or chemotherapy.

“We have seen tremendous success in treating neuropathy of all types through very personalized treatments, specifically tailored to treat each individual case.”

To schedule a consultation and complete evaluation call (781)221-0162 but do so quickly because AWC is taking a limited number of new neuropathy patients. For more information and to take advantage of their new patient offer visit AWClinic.com.

Visit www.AWClinic.com to learn more and to take advantage of their NEW PATIENT OFFER!

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- Fr. Richard Clancy

Pastor, River of Divine Mercy Parish
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Local acupuncture clinic is treating the untreatable, peripheral neuropathy with incredible results!

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Success stories like David's are not atypical for the staff at AWC. “We have a 90% success rate in treating neuropathy,” shares Min.

The number of treatments needed to allow the nerves to fully recover will vary from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed neurological and vascular evaluation. So long as you have not sustained more than 85% nerve damage AWC offers hope where there once was none.

While David’s peripheral neuropathy was idiopathic, meaning the cause is unknown, Min’s treatments can also help people whose neuropathy is caused by diabetes or chemotherapy.

“We have seen tremendous success in treating neuropathy of all types through very personalized treatments, specifically tailored to treat each individual case.”

To schedule a consultation and complete evaluation call (781)221-0162 but do so quickly because AWC is taking a limited number of new neuropathy patients. For more information and to take advantage of their new patient offer visit AWClinic.com.

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