

## Contents

This Week's Readings

### Rector's Ramblings

#### Gaudete Sunday

The Third Sunday in Advent is traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday and features Rose colored Vestments.

The name derives from the historical use of Philippians 4:4 as the introit verse for the Eucharist on this day. In this verse we are commanded to "Rejoice always".

On this Sunday, we will hear Paul's words to the Philippians as well as the Lord's word given through Zephaniah that we are called, nay commanded, to rejoice.

Why do we rejoice? Because our King and Savior now draws near. Because God has won the victory through Jesus Christ. Because the Kingdom of God is at hand.

Rejoicing, it is not a suggestion. In the words of the old Nike campaign, "Just do it!"

Advent Blessings,

Dave+

Dave Halt, Rector  
309-660-8515

## Ministry Links

St. Matthew's Webpage  
The Episcopal Diocese of  
Springfield  
Rector's Blog

## The Good News

December 14, 2018



### Breakfast Fellowships

Men's Breakfast will meet in the Parish Hall at 8:00 AM on Saturday, December 15.

### From the Parish Mission Council

The Saint Matthew's Parish Mission Council has been meeting to discuss the surveys we asked the parish family to fill out. After much discussion we realized that we as a parish are very comfortable getting together in social situations. In that light, we have planned some events throughout the upcoming year where we may gather and get to know one another better.

Our first event will be on Sunday, December 16. Following the 10:00 service we will have a carol sing with cookies, hot chocolate and coffee. Bring your favorite cookie and join us in singing your favorite Christmas songs.

We look forward to kicking off our get togethers and bring our parish family closer together

### Flowers at Christmas

If you wish to donate towards the flowers at Christmas in memory or honor of a loved one, please let the office know by 12/21. Please include the names of those you wish memorialized. The list will be included in the Christmas bulletin and in the prayers of the people.

### End of Year Contributions

Any donations, gifts, pledges you wish to have recorded on your 2018 giving statements should be turned into the office by Sunday, December 30.

### **Christmas Schedule**

In the interest of maximizing opportunities for folks across our membership spectrum to attend Christmas Services our calendar is as follows.

December 24th

12:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Day Eucharist (with hymns)

9:00 p.m. Candlelight Eucharist

December 25th

9:00 a.m. Christmas Day Rite I Eucharist.

We are also working to schedule a special Epiphany Evensong at Funk's Grove Chapel with a "Twelfth-Night" celebration including burning of the greens at the Nature Center. Details will be provided as they are finalized.

### **Holy Days after Christmas**

Services will be held on the following days:

St. Stephen (12/26) at noon.

St. John the Apostle (12/27) at 7:30 AM.

The Holy Innocents (12/28) at noon.

Holy Name (1/1) at noon.

### **Epiphany Celebration**

We will hold an Epiphany Celebration Evensong at 5:30PM on January 6 at the Funk's Grove Chapel. All are invited to attend.

After the Evensong we will travel the short distance to the Nature Center to burn the Christmas greenery (the large wreaths) used in the Sanctuary. This is an old tradition and is appropriate for disposing of what has been blessed by holy use for the beauty of our worship. You are also invited to bring small greens to add to the fire. We will have hot beverages and treats.

### **Devotionals**

If you are not using a devotional, Advent is a good time to begin. Here are a couple that are easy to receive and well worth the read.

1. "The Good News Daily" which is included in this newsletter and is produced by the Bible Fellowship. Our publication also includes the weekly prayer list.\*

2. "The Living Church" offers a daily devotional delivered to your inbox each morning. These are written by lay and ordained members of The Episcopal Church (several members of our Diocese, including our Rector, write for this ministry). If interested you may sign up [here](#).

\*If you would like to place someone on the prayer list, or have not updated your request recently, please email Pat at [office\(at\)stmattsblm.org](mailto:office(at)stmattsblm.org).

## **Outreach Opportunities**

### **Warm Clothing**

As the weather cools, The Outreach Committee is again urging you to think about the need for warm coats, hats, gloves, and scarves in our community. Please bring your gently used coats, etc., to church and place them in the big white box in the hallway across from the office. The Committee will take them to The Salvation Army, which will distribute them to the needy through January 16, 2019. Thank you for helping us keep people warm.

### **Mitten Trees**

It is an annual tradition at St. Matthew's that Christmas trees be trimmed with hats, scarves, gloves and mittens for children in need in the community. "Mitten Trees" have been placed in the Narthex and hallway outside the Parish Hall. Please help decorate them with store bought or handmade items during Advent and through the season of Christmas.

### **Thanks**

Many thanks to everyone who helped make the fall Book/DVD/Bake Sale another success. More than \$1100 was raised for outreach needs in the community and beyond. The Outreach Committee thinks this was the best bake sale ever.

## **Crossroads Area Student Theatre**

Some of our youth are participating in this program and will be showcased in the "Dickens Christmas Festival 2018".

Tickets are available for free at the box office one hour before show time.

The Festival is free and runs December 6, 7, 8 and 13, 14, 15 at Eastland Mall from 5-8:30 in the evenings and on Saturdays

from 12-8:30PM.

The play "The Ghosts of Dickens" is featured at 6:30PM on evenings and 1:30PM on Saturdays.

### **Advent Evensong**

Evensong is offered each Sunday at 5:30PM. This is a service of scripture readings and reflective music. All are invited to this restful service in the midst of a busy Advent.

### **The Daily Devotional Reading**

is available by clicking of the link below:

[Good News Daily](#)

### **Worship Serving Schedule**

16-December

7:30

Greeter: Doug & Dede Dyson

Lector: Kathryn Morris

E.M.: Bill Johns

9:30

Acolyte: Shelley Carter

Crucifer: Liam Halt

Thurifer: Emily Lavikoff

Lector: Chrissy Stoffer

E.M.: Sarah Halt & Bob Kohlhase

Monday Counter: Gary Ploense

Coffee Hour: Valerie & Rex Schaeffer

23-December

7:30

Greeter: Ray Durham

Lector: Liz Gordon

E.M.: Chris Bennett

10:00

Acolyte: Christian Pitts

Crucifer: Brad Bauman

Lector: John Stoffer

E.M.: Jack Pitts

Monday Counter: Gary McGinnis

Coffee Hour: Linda Thomas & Ann Sokan

## **St. Matthew's Weekly Activities as of December 16th**

*Coffee Hour follows 10:00 worship in the Parish Hall*

Sunday-7:30 a.m.-Rite I

10:00 a.m.-Rite II

10:45 a.m.-Sunday School

11:00 a.m.-Rosary

1:00 p.m.-Green Scouts

5:30 p.m.-Evensong

Tuesday-7:00 a.m.-Morning Prayer

Wednesday-5:30 p.m.-Holy Eucharist followed by Adult Formation

Thursday-7:30 a.m.-Morning Prayer & breakfast

Friday -7:30 a.m.-Morning Prayer

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

*If you have anything you would like added to the schedule or announcements in the bulletin and news letter please send an email reply to the newsletter, or call the office.*

### **Readings for December 16, 2018**

Hymns: #65, #68, #481

Old Testament

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;

shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,

O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,

he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing  
as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,

so that you will not bear reproach for it.

I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.

And I will save the lame

and gather the outcast,

and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you home,

at the time when I gather you;

for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the Lord.

Canticle 9 Page 86, BCP The First Song of Isaiah  
Ecce Deus

Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely, it is God who saves me; \*

I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, \*  
and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \*  
from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, \*

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; \*

see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \*  
and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \*

for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The New Testament

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they

asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

## **Birthdays & Anniversaries December 16 -22**

### *Anniversaries*

### *Birthdays*

### **Dedications for this week:**

*The Memorial lamp is lit in loving memory of Carl Ploense  
by Cris Embree & Gary Ploense*

### **Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent, December 16th**

Stir up thy power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let thy bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

### **Contact Information**

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

