

## Contents

This Week's Readings

### Rector's Ramblings

On the Second Sunday of Advent we hear the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist. John is also known as "The Forerunner"; the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness, "prepare the way of the Lord!"

How do we prepare? We prepare through repentance of sin. We lower our self-exalted and created high-places, and in finding ourselves lowered, we are raised in the grace of God.

St. John Chrysostom preaches on John saying:

"Thus the prophet wrote that he shall come saying, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." And John himself said when he came, "Bring forth fruits consistent with repentance," which corresponds with "prepare the way of the Lord." See that both by the words of the prophet and by his own preaching, this one thing is manifested alone. John was to come, making a way and preparing before hand, not bestowing the gift, which was the remission, but ordering in good time the souls of such as should receive the God of all."--Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew 10.3

May we each hear the call of John and be renewed in our own repentance this Advent season.

I pray you have a blessed Advent, and ask your prayers as well.

Dave Halt, Rector  
309-660-8515

## The Good News

December 7, 2018



### Breakfast Fellowships

Women's Breakfast will meet in the Parish Hall at 8:30 AM on Saturday, December 8.

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

### Theology Uncorked

Will hold its regular meeting at 6PM on Sunday, December 9.

Topic: What about Mary?

### Decorate the Sanctuary

Join members of the Altar Guild and help get the Sanctuary ready for the holy season of Christmas. This Sunday (12/9) right after the 10:00 Mass your help would really be appreciated!

### 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

## Ministry Links

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

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.

### **Annual Meeting**

Hold the date: January 13, 2019

Reports are due by January 6.

There are currently three seats open for Mission Leadership Team. Anyone interested in serving in this ministry is invited to submit a brief bio to the office by January 6. This shall constitute a nomination for office.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

**Outreach meets at 8:30 on December 9.**

### **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

### **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 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.

### **New Email**

Fr. Dave is closing out his GMail account. His new email is **frhalt (at) protonmail.com**.

### **The Daily Devotional Reading**

is available by clicking of the link below:

[Good News Daily](#)

### **Worship Serving Schedule**

9-December

7:30

Greeter: Ray Durham

Lector: Julie Bennett

E.M.: Chris Bennett

10:00

Acolyte: Alley Roberson

Crucifer: Brad Bauman

Lector: Karyn Smith

E.M.: Emily Lavikoff

Monday Counter: Pam Laws

Coffee Hour: Chrissy & John Stoffer

16-December

7:30

Greeter: Doug & Dede Dyson

Lector: Mark Gibson

E.M.: Bill Johns

9:30

Acolyte: Shelley Carter

Crucifer: Liam Halt

Thurifer: Emily Lavikoff

Lector: Chrissy Stoffer

E.M.: Sarah Halt & Bob Kohlhasse

Monday Counter: Gary Ploense

Coffee Hour: Valerie & Rex Schaeffer

**St. Matthew's Weekly Activities as of December 9th**

*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

6:00 p.m.-Theology Uncorked

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

Saturday-8:00 a.m.-Men's breakfast

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 9, 2018**

Hymns: #73, #76, #67, #59

The First Reading

Baruch 5:1-9

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,

and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God.

Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God;

put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting;

for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven.

For God will give you evermore the name,

"Righteous Peace, Godly Glory."

Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height;

look toward the east,

and see your children gathered from west and east

at the word of the Holy One,

rejoicing that God has remembered them.

For they went out from you on foot,

led away by their enemies;

but God will bring them back to you,

carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low

and the valleys filled up, to make level ground,

so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.

The woods and every fragrant tree

have shaded Israel at God's command.

For God will lead Israel with joy,

in the light of his glory,

with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

The Song of Zechariah  
Benedictus Dominus Deus  
Luke 1: 68-79

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; \*  
he has come to his people and set them free.  
He has raised up for us a mighty savior, \*  
born of the house of his servant David.  
Through his holy prophets he promised of old,  
that he would save us from our enemies, \*  
from the hands of all who hate us.  
He promised to show mercy to our fathers \*  
and to remember his holy covenant.  
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, \*  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
Free to worship him without fear, \*  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.  
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, \*  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
To give his people knowledge of salvation \*  
by the forgiveness of their sins.  
In the tender compassion of our God \*  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of  
death, \*  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
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 1:3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying  
with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of  
your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am  
confident of this, that the one who began a good work among  
you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is  
right for me to think this way about all of you, because you  
hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with  
me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and  
confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long  
for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is  
my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with  
knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is  
best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and  
blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that  
comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

The Gospel  
Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

### **Birthdays & Anniversaries December 9 -15**

#### Anniversaries

#### Birthdays

Collin Bennett

Mary Hunt

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

*The Memorial lamp is lit in loving memory of Mary Moussalli  
by Chrissy & John Stoffer.*

### **Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent, December 9th**

Merciful God, who didst send thy messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### **Contact Information**

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

