

# Matt's Media



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

Published November 27, 2022

In this issue:	St. Matthew's 75th Anniversary	p. 4	Next issue:	Lent / Easter: February 19, 2023
	What's Happening	p. 5		Submissions due: February 1, 2023
	Ministry Fair	p. 10	Editor:	Kathie Oakden
	Children & Youth	p. 14		kathie.oakden@gmail.com
	Alpha Marriage Course	p. 16	Layout:	Lisa Tait

## From the Pastor

*Rev. Philip Stonhouse*

Most of you will have heard by now that Mary Anne and I are expecting our first child. It is a very exciting time for both of us as we wait to meet the little guy. As we wait, we are learning, reading, and planning as we prepare ourselves, our dog Layla, and our house. There is so much information we need to learn and so much stuff we need to figure out if we need or want. I try to keep reminding myself that more than anything else, this little guy needs the two of us, sleep and food. The rest is just icing on the cake.

I am telling you all of this because we as a church are also entering into a period of waiting and preparation. Advent is a season where we look back at how Israel was waiting for the Messiah to come and set them free. We, too, live in a time of waiting. We are waiting for the fullness of God's Kingdom to be realized, for Jesus to come again, and for heaven to be made on earth.

Looking at how expectantly excited we are and how much we do to prepare ourselves and the world around us for this baby has challenged me to rethink what this Christian waiting and preparation should really look like. Am I that excited for God's kingdom? Do I watch with expectant eyes? Do I share my excitement and desire to bring others into it? Am I preparing my heart, mind, and body for Christ, as I am for this baby? Am I preparing those around me to receive and welcome Jesus? These are big and important questions for all of us.

I know that a baby will change our lives for the better, but not always for the easier. The same is true, but in an even grander way, when it comes to Jesus. Through him, we will be changed. We will grow out of our world as we know it and into a new one as we become more like Christ.

Just like with a baby, it may be that we are never truly prepared, but we can do a lot right now so that when He comes, we can respond and react rightly, ready to embrace what Christ offers.

We can make space in our lives to receive and welcome Jesus. We can learn what He wants and desires so that we can fulfill it. We can learn about what the world needs to become more like His kingdom. The starker the difference, the harder the adjustment. We can practice what it means to be Christ-like, changing both our internal and external being so that Christ may enter and so that others might be prepared too. We can dwell in the mystery, practicing holiness and worship, so that we might become the temple God longs us to be.

*...continued*

## From the Pastor *(continued)*

During this Advent season, as always, there will be many special services to help you prepare yourself and others: Lesson and Carols (Dec 4, 4:30 p.m.), Blue Christmas (Dec 14, 7 p.m.), Christmas Pageant (Dec 18, 10:30 a.m.), Three Christmas Eve services (4:00 p.m. family service, 7:00 p.m. classic service and 10:00 p.m. quiet candlelight service), and our Christmas Day service at 10:30 a.m.

I also want to draw your attention to two other important ways we are preparing ourselves.

- Through Testimonials: On November 27 we will begin to hear testimonials about how Jesus affects individual lives (Blessington Velagapalli and Florence Thompson will be speaking). Then we will be writing our own testimonials and compiling them in a book for our 75th anniversary.
- We are also watching a show called *The Chosen* together and discussing the portrayals of Jesus and His disciples. This is a fantastic way for us to encounter the gospel afresh. *The Chosen* is free online and easy to look up and we have study booklets available at the church. (please see page 9 for more information)

I hope you have a wonderful Advent, a joyous Christmas, and that this season of waiting might instill in you an even greater desire for God's Kingdom to come.

God bless you all.

Your brother in Christ,  
Rev. Philip Stonhouse





## Wardens' Report

*Karen Lee, Stuart Watt, Marguerite Locke, and Sharon Shao*

And suddenly it is Winter! After enjoying a beautiful Fall, it is now time for snow tires and bundling up. We hope that you and your families are keeping well and safe.

This Fall has been a busy time at St. Matthew's:

- The Alpha Marriage Course, lead by Rev. Philip, was held at the Hurns' home. Delicious dinners were served at each gathering. Heartfelt thanks go to Deborah and Nancy Hurn for sharing their home and meal preparation talent and to all the volunteers who assisted in the preparations.
- Other activities in October included a Newcomers' dinner and evening hosted by Mary Anne and Rev. Philip at the Rectory.
- Rev. Philip lead a thoughtful discussion on Reconciliation on October 23.
- The Blessing of the Animals held on October 16 lead by Rev. Philip was well attended by approximately 25 animals and their caretakers!
- On the evening of November 2, Tyler Versluis our music director and Rev. Philip lead us in a very moving All Souls Day worship service. Thank you to all who participated in the preparation and presentation.
- Our Advent Bible Study on the video series, *The Chosen*, is currently underway. It is possible to participate either online or In Person.
- On November 20, our Ministry Fair was held in the gym following the Unity worship service. It was an opportunity to gather and learn more about the many ministries we have at St. Matthew's. Many thanks to all our volunteers who participated and all the attendees. If you would like information about a ministry, please do not hesitate to contact Rev. Philip or Karen Lee at anytime.

All tenants, for the most part, have returned to meeting at St. Matthew's. Behind the scenes we are slowly working on disposing of items that have collected through the years and are no longer used or needed.

We now look forward with excitement to the arrival of Baby Stonhouse. Thank you, Mary Anne and Philip, for bringing this wondrous gift to us!

In closing, financially we continue to address our deficit. We are grateful for all your gifts. Any additional support that you are able to give is much appreciated. Thank you.

Outlined below is the summary of our financial status as of October 31, 2022.

Comparative Income Statement (Operating Fund)			
	2022 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Budget
Income	\$223,036	226,449	242,301
Expenses	\$237,780	227,306	251,592
Net Income	\$ (14,744)	(857)	(9,291)

As always, we give thanks to God for God's continued provision and care for St. Matthew's. Best Wishes for a Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas!

## Celebrating St. Matthew's 75th Anniversary

Marguerite Locke

The year 2023 is a VERY SPECIAL milestone for St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Islington as we celebrate 75 years of ministry in Etobicoke. We have several events in the planning stages to share our anniversary together.

Our communications team will be featuring a Special Edition of Matt's Media, with archival material and photos showcasing our ministry inside and outside our walls. It is fun to look back to our roots, to the styles of worship and outreach and to see how technology has broadened our worship experience.

There is an opportunity to submit articles for a St. Matt's booklet of your favourite bible verses, a brief testament of your faith, a poem, or just a thought on your Christian journey. Submissions and preparation of those articles is under the leadership of Rev. Merv and Rev. Philip and they will happily receive your contributions now.

An updated electronic photo album will be forthcoming in the winter for our 75th! It has been many, many years since a directory was published. To identify more faces and names, we thought this would be a great opportunity to welcome everyone with portraits. Thanks to Blessington Velagapalli and Sharon Shao for spearheading this work.

We are finalizing details, but PLEASE SAVE THESE DATES for these special events for parishioners, for our community and for former members of the Parish.

- Tuesday, February 14: Valentine Luncheon
- Sunday, June 4, 2:00 p.m.: "Coffee House Concert" for our community to enjoy great music, goodies and gathering for all ages. Tyler Versluis, our talented organist, composer and conductor, will lead this event.
- Sunday, September 24, 3:00 p.m.: Bishop Andrew Asbil and the VIVA Choir will lead our 75th Anniversary Service of Song and Thanksgiving with a reception to follow.

We would love to have former clergy, organists, and members of the parish reunite at this special service. Can you contribute names and addresses of former parishioners?

These are a few of the events planned and we hope that you will be able to participate.



## Bloggers Wanted

We're always looking for contributors to our parish blog. Not sure what to write? Take inspiration from existing [blog posts](#), share your faith journey, review a Christian book or film... the possibilities are endless. If you have ideas but don't love to write, we're happy to help. Bring your ideas to Rev. Philip or email the office.

## What's Happening

Sat Dec 3	Men's Breakfast: 8:30 a.m. (see page 8)	Sunset Grill
Sun Dec 4	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m.	In person & online
	BAS (Book of Alternative Services) service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
	Lessons & Carols: 4:30 p.m.	In person & online
Tues Dec 6	Final Film and Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.	In person & online
Wed Dec 7	BCP (Book of Common Prayer) service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sun Dec 11	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m.	In person & online
	BCP Worship service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Wed Dec 14	BCP Worship service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
	Blue Christmas: 7:00 p.m.	In person & online
Sun Dec 18	Unity Worship service & Christmas Pageant: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
	Special coffee hour to follow service	
Wed Dec 21	BCP Worship service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sat Dec 24	Family Eucharist: 4:00 p.m.	In person & online
	Choral Eucharist: 7:00 p.m.	In person & online
	Candlelight Eucharist: 10:00 p.m.	In person
Sat Dec 25	Christmas Day Eucharist: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Sun Jan 1	Unity Worship service: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Sat Jan 7	Men's Breakfast: 8:30 a.m.	Sunset Grill
Sun Jan 8	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m.	In person & online
	BAS Worship service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Sun Jan 15	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m.	In person & online
	BCP Worship service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
	Confirmation/Questions of Faith Course (to Feb 9)	

## Help Wanted for Coffee Hour

We are looking for people to help with the 11:00 a.m. coffee hour. It's not much work, but very much appreciated. We ask for a small quantity of coffee cream and 2% milk as well as a light snack such as cookies or squares or sweet bread. The coffee will be prepared and all other supplies are provided. There is a sign-up sheet in the lounge.



## Chancel News

### Altar Flower Orders

We'd like to remind everyone that we now order the altar flowers in a slightly different manner. Please contact the office by phone or email (416-231-4014 or [office@saintmatts.ca](mailto:office@saintmatts.ca)). Then request the date you wish and the wording you would like used.

Once your date has been confirmed, please send a payment of \$60.00 by cash, cheque (made out to St Matthew's Church), or etransfer ([finance@saintmatts.ca](mailto:finance@saintmatts.ca)) and mark it "altar flowers." We thank you for your continued support.

### Thanks to all Who Donated Thanksgiving Decorations

Thank you to all who donated food to decorate the church for Thanksgiving.

### Help with Sunday Communion Set-up and Take-away

We always welcome new members to help set up for Sunday communion services. The time required is usually a half to three quarters of an hour on a Saturday morning beginning at 9:30 a.m., and then tidying up after the 11:00 a.m. services on Sunday. It would be most helpful if a 9:30 a.m. attendee could take a few minutes to clear away after that service and bring out the communion vessels (already set out in the sacristy) for the 11:00 a.m. service. Please speak to Mary Gleeson (416-239-9640) or Sandra Wilson (905-624-3786) if you feel you'd like to help in this special ministry. We are very thankful for all those who participate and have participated for many years in our group.



### Flower Arranging

Speaking of flowers, if you are interested, we could use some extra assistance in this area. Sandra hopes to go home to Australia for a visit in the new year, and while she is away, and during other times, help with flower arranging would be most appreciated.

### Decorate the Church at Christmas!

As has been the custom, we plan to order poinsettias to decorate the church at Christmas. The price per plant is \$20. Orders may be placed online at [saintmatts.ca](http://saintmatts.ca), by filling out a paper form available in the Narthex, by emailing [office@saintmatts.ca](mailto:office@saintmatts.ca), or by calling the office at 416-231-4014.



## Art by Peggy Dunbar

Grant Dunbar shared some artwork by his late wife, Peggy. Her carolling mice and trumpeting angel are lovely reflections of the Christmas season.



## Refreshing The Spirit – Sacred Art and the Human Soul *Tyler Versluis*

Georgian theologian and scientist Pavel Florensky has an astute observation about art – that a work is either more or less than what it is in reality. For example, a bad painting is nothing more than wasted paint on a canvas, while a good painting transcends its medium – it is no longer paint on a canvas, but rather something more, an illumination or revelation.

Experiencing art and music, at its most basic level, is an exchange of information. The artist shares, and the listener or viewer takes in the experience through their senses. This experience either adds to us, enriching our lives, or it takes away from us, like a vampire sucking away energy from a host. A concert of bad music depresses and drains energy away from me, while a concert of good music reveals something new about the world or about my place in the world. J.S. Bach declared quite famously that music was to glorify God and refresh the spirit, a statement I agree with. But surely Bach was referring only to good music!

Herein lies the complex relationship of art, worship, and taste. When it comes to Christian art, the product varies so incredibly in scope, aesthetics, and outcome that it becomes nearly impossible (or very difficult) to form any singular idea or concept on what good, worshipful art is. Is the Jesus in the Saint Catherine Monastery's *Christ Pantocrator* the same Jesus that Chris Tomlin sings about on his albums? Of course, but these extremely disparate portrayals cloud and complicate the vision.

Consider the explosion of folk-inspired worship music that sprang up in churches after the Roman Catholic church permitted singing in the vernacular in the 1960s. This music, now largely scrutinized as musically vapid and theologically faulty (although this particular writer listens to his John Michael Talbot albums with thorough satisfaction), was considered emblematic of a worship movement that grew too bold and overstepped its mission. In 2022 Catholic musicians have largely turned their backs on this era, and new Catholic hymn books are full of Gregorian chant once again (although typically in English translations... pilfering lots of music, ironically, from high church Anglicans!).

We are living in a time in church history that can broadly be described as iconoclastic. Newer Protestant churches largely eschew art of any kind, even refraining from depicting crosses in their sanctuaries. The role of the organist, once considered equal in importance to the clergy as they provided a mystical, spontaneous element to faith and worship, has shrunk to a mere accompaniment role. The reason for this is that we have grown to believe that art is dangerous. Art is subjective, frequently ambiguous and, of course, expensive. Sometimes the march of time is not kind to a particular artwork, adornment or architectural feature and it goes out of date. Perhaps it's more practical to just whitewash everything rather than worry about these things?

Art can also be ugly, bizarre, or confrontational. In previous *Matt's Media* articles I have written about the spiritual elements in the music of Lingua Ignota and Judee Sill, music which is largely difficult or written under difficult circumstances. My last article discussed the visual art of Hermann Nitsch, whose preferred medium was blood and white canvases. Many readers witnessed the premiere of my *Stabat Mater* during our Lenten Tenebrae service, a piece of music that is frequently abrasive, and eerie. This is a composition on a sacred subject, but it is also about me, my perceptions, and my faith. Making sacred art is less about "receiving a task from the divine" to create, and more about a dialogue between an objective reality, the holy, and the subjective taste of an artist. Although God reveals Himself to us frequently, the lens with which we view Him is often blurred by our limited perceptions, skills, or desires. Often, we can depict only one facet of God.

## Refreshing The Spirit – Sacred Art and the Human Soul *(continued)*

If we are to move ahead from this 20th century iconoclastic reality in the church, I believe it necessary

1. To accept that art can sometimes be difficult, because the Biblical and Christian narrative is often difficult, and art is made by sinners.
2. That Christian artists should be free to pursue to express their visions, doubts and subjectivities in their work, because this is both honest work and the “right” with which artists operate. Good art needs to be honest art.

I am looking at a painting called *The Crucifixion*, by one of my favourite painters, Matthias Grünewald. It is a striking work: Jesus Christ lies dead on the cross, his skin grey and mottled, his limbs strangely long and painfully contorted. Blood pours from the nails hammered into his feet. It is simultaneously grotesque and majestic at the same time. It is a “difficult” depiction, but one that seems strangely apt. As we judge and reflect on Christian art (and art made by Christians), let us remember that confronting the sacred is often a wrestling match from which we depart with more questions than answers.

In Christ,  
Tyler Versluis

## All Souls Day

We joined together at 7:00 p.m. on November 2, in person and online, to remember and pray for those who have gone before us.

This beautiful service, prepared by our Music Director Tyler Versluis, presented hymns from the Taizé worship tradition, including *Bless The Lord, My Soul*; *Jesus, Remember Me*; and *Within Our Darkest Night*. The choir was assisted by Laura Larson, Michelle Lorimer, and alto Karen Davidson.

Violinist Gemma Donn played violin descants.

Soprano Laura Larson sang *Pie Jesu* from Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*.

We commemorated more than 70 people and remembered Queen Elizabeth II, indigenous children who passed while at residential schools, and those who have died in the Ukrainian conflict.



## Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast is Saturday, December 3, 8:30 am, Sunset Grill, 1510 Dundas St. East, Mississauga. This is east of Dixie Road, at the stoplight for Walmart and Costco.

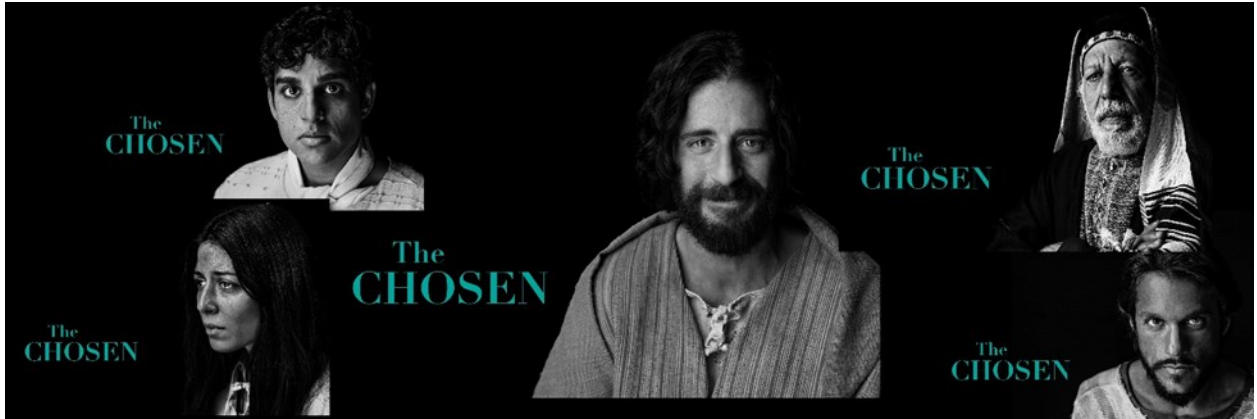
Following dates are Saturday: Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4.

Give Dave Oakden your email address to receive an email reminder ([dave.oakden@gmail.com](mailto:dave.oakden@gmail.com)). All men are welcome.



## Advent Bible Study: *The Chosen*

Kathie Oakden



*The Chosen* is a video drama about the life of Jesus Christ. It introduces Jesus and His calling of the initial disciples, with a discussion after each episode. It focuses more deeply on the people who encountered Jesus and shows Jesus "through the eyes of those who met Him."

St. Matthew's Advent Study Groups have met for three weeks now, at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday evenings. An episode has been viewed together (both in the church and at home online). Following a five-minute break, small group discussions have been led by Rev. Philip and Dawn Mercer in person, and by Michelle Lorimer on Zoom for those at home.

There are two more episodes in this Advent Study. Everyone is welcome to give it a try. If you want to familiarize yourself with the characters, watch the first three videos at home. Episodes can be found at <https://www.angel.com/watch/the-chosen>.

Michelle Lorimer posted a blog about *The Chosen* on St. Matthew's website last year. It is titled *Representation & Seeing — Some thoughts on The Chosen, a new mini-series on the life of Christ*. You can find it [here](#).



*"Reflect upon your present blessings—of which every man has many—not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some." — Charles Dickens.*

## The Food Cupboard

*Noel Martin, Food Cupboard Mouse*

Thank you to those who have been contributing to the food cupboard.

Having cleared out some items whose best before date had passed, we now have quite a few empty spaces on our shelves. We could use chunky soups, tuna, corned beef, pasta sauce, vegetables, canned spaghetti & meatballs and fruit. Any and all donations are appreciated.

## Ministry Fair

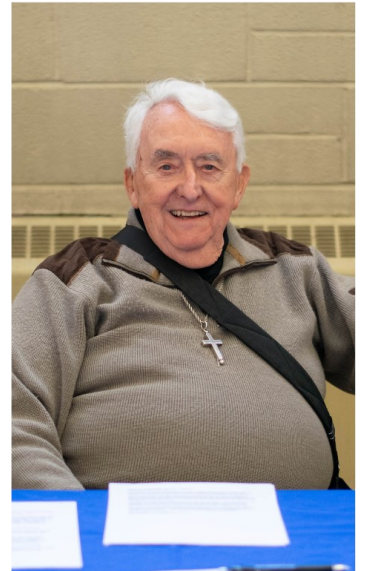
*Rev. Philip Stonhouse*

On November 20 after a beautiful Unity worship service with music from our worship band and choir, we gathered in the gym over sandwiches made by Karen, Ron, and Barb to explore and have conversations about the numerous ministries that happen at St. Matthews. We had fun exploring what ministry fit our Myers Briggs personality assessment; if you missed it, feel free to reach out and we can forward you the document, or click [here](#) if you're reading this online.

Conversation and fellowship are already beautiful things, but on top of that, we saw numerous ministries get new volunteers or participants. Thank you to all who managed tables or shared your ministries. A special thank you to all those who prepared and served food and drinks.







*"Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay/Close by me forever, and love me, I pray...  
— Away in a Manger*

## 1939: A Stratford Festival Commission

Nancy Hurn & Dawn Mercer

As the understanding of the residential school history has evolved, many artistic and interpretive events have been created to help Indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians come to a better understanding of this past. The Stratford Festival in Ontario recently held the World Première of an important play entitled *1939*. The drama tracks the production of Shakespeare's play, *All's Well that Ends Well*, at an Anglican Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario in preparation for the visit of the King and Queen of England to Canada in 1939.

The play depicts the harsh, dark conditions in residential schools at that time.

The staging subtly, and not so subtly, reflects the efforts made to erase the language and culture of the students. The play provides striking parallels between the humanity of the First Nations peoples and of the characters found in the old English Shakespearean play. The elements of colonization come through in the script written by Jani Lauzon and Kaitlyn Riordan with assistance from a number of local indigenous people and through the use of the *Children of Shingwauk Archives* at Algoma University and the *Anglican Church Archives* in Toronto. The students (actors) emotionally reveal the sadness of life in the schools and their efforts to return to their life with their families. At the play's end, each student follows a path that takes them into the world as nurses, teachers, farmers, and actors. The play is filled with humour and shows a more positive perspective on this difficult time, which appeals to both indigenous and non-indigenous audience members and gives a palatable picture of life in the schools. It beautifully shows the resilience and the resistance of the indigenous peoples when these seldom receive acknowledgement.

On October 19, 2022, sixteen people from St. Matthew's attended a performance of *1939* and recently had an online discussion with Kaitlin Riordan, one of the playwrights. Kaitlin provided an overview of her experience as a non-indigenous Canadian writing the play with the indigenous co-playwright, Jani Lauzon, as they worked to reflect the very difficult life in the residential schools. She also spoke about the importance of humour as they depicted the harshness of life in the church-run schools. The racist and naive attitudes of the principal and staff were clearly identified.

The play has been videotaped for future showing and many agreed that we want to see it again to understand the deep complexities of the script and the wonderfully moving performances. We will share the video link with the St. Matthew's community when it is released, sometime in early 2023.

To see the actors, stage, and costumes for the production, please visit the *1939* website at [stratfordfestival.ca/WhatsOn/PlaysandEvents/Production/1939](http://stratfordfestival.ca/WhatsOn/PlaysandEvents/Production/1939).

## Advent Toy Drive

Marguerite Locke

New toys, books, and plush toys only, suitable for ages newborn to six years old.

Please bring any unwrapped donation to the church foyer/Narthex and deposit in the box provided (near the round table). All donations are appreciated from Sunday, December 4 until Sunday, December 18. They will be delivered to the Scott Mission on December 19 in time for distribution to parents in need of help this Christmas.

Questions? Please contact Marguerite Locke at [mdlocke@hotmail.com](mailto:mdlocke@hotmail.com).





## Messy Church

Linda Dickson

The theme for October Messy Church was “Remember to be thoughtful and Remember things we are thankful for.”

Due to the amazing fall weather, we were able to enjoy outdoor activities, including an obstacle course, painting with vegetables, and making leaf lanterns – leaves ironed between sheets of wax paper and wrapped around a jar with a battery-powered candle inside. We also each made a filo-pastry apple pie for dessert. It was a blessing to be able to enjoy our sit-down meal together, which was taco bowls and mini apple pies.

Please see information in the Narthex and below about upcoming dates.

### Messy Church Ministry

Messy Church takes place on the fourth Saturday of each month, 4-6 p.m., excluding December, June, July, and August.

We have a meeting on Zoom at the beginning of each month to plan that month’s Messy Church. Each team member can decide what they would like to work on. We love new ideas for crafts related to themes and dessert ideas. We arrive on the day of Messy Church at 2:30 p.m. to help with set up, and at 4:00 p.m. we assist with the activity that is scheduled. We all work together and help so that all leaders are comfortable with what they are doing. If you have any questions or would like to give it a try please contact Linda Dickson at [mrsldickson@gmail.com](mailto:mrsldickson@gmail.com).

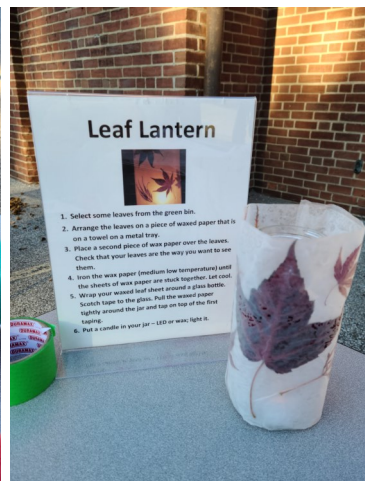




**Saturdays at 4 p.m.**

<b>September 24</b>	<b>February 25</b>
<b>October 29</b>	<b>March 25</b>
<b>November 26</b>	<b>April 29</b>
<b>January 28</b>	<b>May 29</b>

**416-231-4014 / [office@saintmatts.ca](mailto:office@saintmatts.ca)**





## Children and Youth Programs

*Lianne Thompson & Rev. Philip Stonhouse*

The relaunch of our children and youth programs this Fall has been an exciting time as we welcomed returning and new families to St. Matthew's. The All-Ages service at 9:30 a.m. is filled with wonderful music and we have embraced the return to the prayer circle and administering the bread and the wine to each other as we worship God.



### Club Matt

After the Creation program that started the year, Club Matt Junior journeyed further into the Old Testament where we met and learned more about people whose faith revealed how God keeps his promises. Discussions and fun activities allowed the children to learn more about Noah, Abraham & Sarah, Joseph, and Moses.

The children have been fully engaged through some of the wonderful resources we have – various versions of Noah's ark and the animals, videos that bring the bible stories to life, and engaging crafts. See photos of some of the fun the children have experienced this Fall!



Sunday Fun at Club Matt



## Children and Youth Programs *(continued)*

### St. Matt's Youth

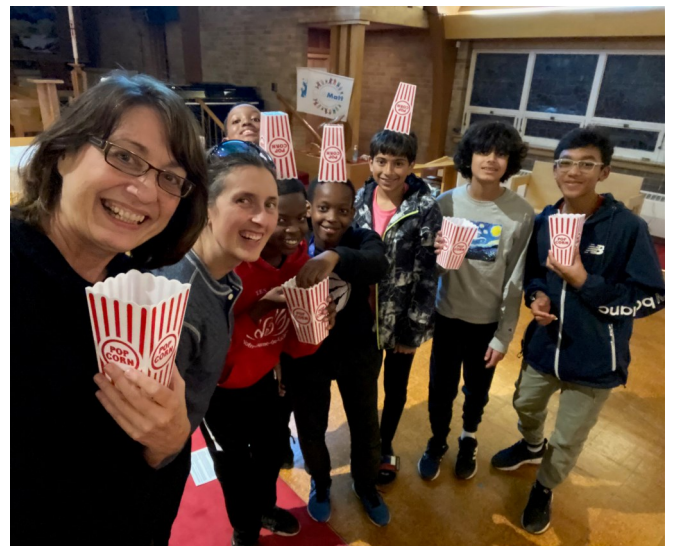
The Sunday Youth program each week has been aligned with the *Acts* sermon series and has included videos and discussions on persecution, the Good News, Paul, the Holy Spirit and more.

The work on the Youth room wrapped up in October when paintings by the youth were hung on the walls. Their art pieces represent how they think about God or where they feel closest to God (we invite you to stop by to see them).

After two years of only gathering online, it has been exciting this Fall to launch Youth Friday Night Events on the first and third Fridays each month.

Recent events included a Candy Game Night and a movie night where we watched *Black Panther* and discussed lessons particularly relevant to Christians.

We are going rock-climbing in December and then taking a break until the new year. Plans are in the works, though, to join a Winter Youth Retreat at Ontario Pioneer Camp in February!



### Waiting for Christmas

As we wrap up the Fall programs and activities, Club Matt and St. Matt's Youth are looking ahead to Advent. Part of our waiting for Jesus includes preparing for the Christmas Pageant, which will be held during the Unity Service on Sunday, December 18.

## Alpha Marriage Course Reflections

Bryan Tran & Tatiana Saliba

We recently had the joy and privilege of participating in the Alpha Marriage Course, and it seemed to come into our lives exactly when we needed it. Over the past year we have gone through quite a lot: getting married, moving into our first permanent home together, renovating it from top to bottom, starting new jobs, helping our families through difficult times, and saturating ourselves with teachings and practices from ancient traditions and modern science. Needless to say, we felt overworked and overwhelmed, and our relationship bore the brunt of our stress.

When we found the fountain of love and grace that is St. Matthew's Church, it felt like a miracle! Immediately we were taken in as part of the family and we could feel the Spirit living within and throughout the community. We quickly realized how starved our hearts and souls had been, and many tears of joy and sorrow have been shed since.

The Marriage Course allowed us to revisit the foundation of our relationship and examine where our bond has held strong and where we need to spend some extra time and attention to heal and grow. We recognized patterns of behaviour that we adopted from our parents and understood each other from a broader and deeper perspective. We realized the consistent focus and energy necessary to show up every day for ourselves, for each other, and especially to fulfill the will of God.

The atmosphere offered by the St. Matt's community was essential in creating a safe space for us to dive deep into ourselves and explore with an open heart and in a non-judgmental way. It takes immense courage to be naked in your truth, and we are so grateful we were able to do so while being cradled by such a loving family.

*Genesis 2:24–25*

“This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.”

Our thanks go to: Rev. Philip for being our brother in Christ, an awesome guide, and great explorer on the path to God. Nancy and Deborah Hurn for their love, dedication to the parish, generous hospitality, and heartfelt hugs! Everyone in the community that supported the Marriage Course, from deciding to offer the course to preparing the delicious dinners. Alpha for the great production value and content in the course. Sila and Nicky for bringing the voice of two loving parents into our marriage. The many couples who shared their journey and perspectives, and the three couples who gathered around the Hurns' dining table with us – we learned so much from everyone and loved seeing all the different ways marriages can work. We highly recommend the course to couples of any age. As for ourselves, we look forward to renewing our commitment to each other by reviewing the course once a year.





## All Creatures Great and Small

Members of St. Matthew's, along with friends, family, and neighbours, gathered to give thanks for their animal companions at St. Matthew's annual Blessing of the Animals on October 16. To the background of a rousing canine chorus, Rev. Philip shared readings from *Genesis* and *Isaiah*, and led prayers for both people and pets. At the conclusion of the service, he met and individually blessed each pet.



## Church Records

### Weddings

Thomas Wright and Casandra Mae Pasaforte  
October 17, 2022



**St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Islington presents**

## **Musical Moments at St. Matthew's Concert Series**

**Tyler Versluis, artistic director**

### **SONGS FOR OUR LORD AND LADY**

**Sunday, January 22, 2023, 2 PM**

Devotional songs from the musical ages by Grandi, Chaminade, Scelsi, Holst and Gorecki.  
Leanne Vida and Cynthia Smithers, guest singers.

**Concerts Pay What You Can (\$20 suggested)**

**3962 Bloor Street West / [saintmatts.ca](http://saintmatts.ca) / [office@saintmatts.ca](mailto:office@saintmatts.ca) / 416.231.4014**

*Series presented in loving memory of Sally Martin*



## **LESSONS & CAROLS**

A joyous time of singing carols and listening  
to Scripture as we look to Christmas.

**DECEMBER 4**

**4:30 PM**

In person and online

## **Christmas Pageant**

**December 18, 2022, 10:30 am Unity Service**



**Watch the children and youth of St. Matthew's retell the story of Jesus' birth**

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## Introducing Our New Advertiser: Welcome Aboard Photography Anne-Marie May, CPP

Anne-Marie May is a dedicated, talented, and experienced portrait photographer. Her offer of two portrait packages for St. Matthew's Auction in 2020 were purchased by Marguerite Locke and David Oakden. Both are pleased by their portrait session and photos – ask them yourself.

Anne-Marie joined St. Matthew's online during COVID isolation, following Rev. Philip Stonhouse to our parish. She had been attending his former parish, St. Bride's Clarkson, which her children still attend. St. Matthew's also has another connection with Anne-Marie: her brother-in-law, Rev. Philip May, served as Curate when Rev. Bill Kibblewhite was our minister.

Now that we attend church services in person, you may have sung near Anne-Marie on Sunday. Her beautiful, strong soprano voice supports the entire congregation.

To reach Anne-Marie at **Welcome Aboard Photography**,  
 email [contact@welcomeaboardphotography.com](mailto:contact@welcomeaboardphotography.com)  
 or see her website [www.welcomeaboardphotography.com](http://www.welcomeaboardphotography.com)

We acknowledge that we are in the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Anishnabe peoples, on whose land and by whose waters we gather to talk, listen, learn, worship, share and heal together in the name of our Creator, the Holy One of Blessing.

**Pastoral Care:** Pastoral visits can be offered over the phone, by email or via Zoom. If you would like to arrange for home communion, please contact Rev. Philip or the office at 416-231-4014 or [office@saintmatts.ca](mailto: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](mailto: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 will be praying for individuals and families of St. Matthew’s in the Prayers of the People. Each week, a few names will be mentioned in our prayers and we will 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](mailto: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  
(Posted on YouTube afterward)

**Messy Church**  
Last Saturday of the month  
Next Messy Church is January 28  
4 p.m.

**GIFT Groups**  
Contact the office for information

### Sunday Services

9:30 a.m. Casual (in person & online)  
11:00 a.m. Classic (in person & online)  
12:10 p.m. *Coffee Hour* ((in person & online)



### Office Hours

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

The office is operating remotely.  
Telephone and email messages will  
be checked and returned during  
office hours.

**The Rev. Philip Stonhouse, Incumbent**  
416-231-3060 / [philipstonhouse@hotmail.ca](mailto:philipstonhouse@hotmail.ca)

*The Rev. Gail Marshall, Deacon*  
*The Rev. Merv Mercer, Honorary Assistant*  
*Tyler Versluis, Music Director and Organist*  
*Tom Travaglini, Sexton/Verger*  
*Lisa Tait, Parish Administrator*



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