

Matt's Media

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

Lent-Easter 2026

For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth.

(Job 19.25)

FROM THE RECTOR:

"I won't believe it until I see it with my own two eyes." "Seeing is believing." We put a lot of trust in our eyes. Our eyes are great sources of information. As a visual learner, a lover of art and beauty, I find vision is very important. Yet can we really trust our eyes? Can we really trust what we see? More particularly, do our eyes have the capacity to take in everything and can our mind interpret that information adequately? The lights can play tricks on our eyes; our eyes can deceive us. We trust our eyes even though we know they are not foolproof. We need something more; we need to see with new eyes.

Every year since I was 10 my vision has been deteriorating; I was also diagnosed as being 100% red/green colour blind. This made me, from a very young age, question my sight and vision. My favourite colour is green, but what am I really seeing? All this made everyone else question my sight as well. We would debate a colour, or image in the distance, and often I would be right (not always). It made me realize that everyone's vision and interpretation is open to question.

Interestingly, even the understanding of our own deficiencies could be imperfect. I learned from my current eye doctor that I don't have colour blindness (through a higher-quality test), but likely something called colour blending or melding. We have also learned through trial and error that my eyes want to stay just a little blurry, so every time I would get a new prescription it would take only a few weeks for my eyes to adjust to be worse. Ironically, because of this misunderstanding we were making the problem worse, and we were questioning the wrong things.

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NEXT ISSUE:

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From the Rector (continued)

This feels like a perpetual problem in society; we think the world isn't seeing something properly, so we focus on that as the problem and often make things worse. Perhaps many problems fall into this line of thinking. Almost no one thinks they are the villain in their own story and almost everyone thinks they are striving for what is important (even if only subconsciously). Yet are they seeing clearly? Do they really understand the problem? Most of us would argue 'no', even if we don't know the problem.

In the current age of individualism and doubt, people say, 'Well there just isn't any truth then', or 'Just believe whatever you want, but don't put your ideas on me'. Yet this is ridiculous! Just because you can't see something clearly does not mean it isn't there. Just because chemistry looks at one aspect of science and biology at another doesn't mean that they don't have something to say to one another, that they can't find a truth in common for both of them.

In the age of the Enlightenment, when Christendom and its core values still held social sway, even if not intellectual sway, the solution was for humanity to combine many limited perspectives to provide an additive effect. The biggest problem with this solution is the requirement of a true and guiding principle bigger than everyone and everything else. Otherwise, how would you know what to grab onto and what to ignore? One divergent thought could send the whole vision on the wrong course for generations - which has happened repeatedly within history, medicine, architecture, the cosmos, chemistry, biology, faith - where all have been led astray. It now feels like society and world order are being led astray.

What we need first is our core foundation/principle to guide everything else. You can't build a skyscraper without the foundation to support it. Even most trees, to grow taller, grow deeper. Every Sunday at the centre of our worship service is the one strong foundation - the creed - where we confess the identity of God that he has revealed to us as the creator of the invisible and visible, as the almighty, as the Father, as the incarnate, as the breath, as the sacrificial unity of

love, as the unifier, as the law giver, as the just and merciful, as the one that is bigger than life and death. He is the only uniting foundation, bigger and better than everything else, that puts love as the foundation for everything. Whether or not you believe this to be true, you should want this to be the case; this is our only real hope and the only real stability for our lives. Put your trust in this foundation, put your weight on it, build on it, and you will see, as Jesus says in the parable of the wise builder, how well this foundation withstands the greatest storms - pain, death, and loss - and maintains a true home and shelter, even when nothing else stands.

Once we have this foundation, then the question is "How do we know, how do we see what to build on it?" Paul tells us to build with precious things: like gold, silver, and metal, because in the storm/time to come it will be tested, too. But we need to see what is truly precious, and that will stand the test of time and judgement. For that, we need God - the one who created everything and is above time. Just as he has come down to reveal himself to us, again and again throughout history, the bible, and our lives, he will also come down and give us new eyes, he will open the eyes of the blind, his light will reveal what is right in front of us. As C.S. Lewis says, "I believe in Christianity like I believe the sun has risen not only because I can see it, but because by its light I can see everything else." In this, we don't trust our own eyes, we trust what God shows us, what he reveals, and everything else comes to light because of it.

Ultimately, God tells us that most important item is relationship, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart ... and love your neighbour as yourself." It is not the stuff, or the entertainment, or the experiences, even the safety; it is the connection, closeness, and love. We start with the core relationship with God that provides order and light for everything else, and then as a natural consequence we are led to a closer and better relationship with everyone and everything. This is nothing new, but we need God's eyes to see it afresh and we need his eyes to know it and to live it and to build the right things upon him. AMEN.

Wardens' Words

At St. Matthew's we began 2026 in earnest with hosting our Visioning Day. We are grateful for the dedication of our team members: Linda Harrison, Sharon Shao, Bryan Tran, Mercy Njeteneh and Rev. Philip, supported by Deborah Whalen-Blaize and Bill Matthews from the Diocese. As well, we wish to thank all those who participated, sharing their thoughts and hopes for St. Matthew's. The concluding report will be available in late February.

This Spring we will be undertaking the renovation of a storage room off the gym to accommodate a permanent home for our Archives. As well, we will be converting the current Wardens' office space into a permanent home for our Youth. The warden's office will be sharing the Ministry office space with our other ministries. We will share pictures once the work is completed.

In recent months, you may have noticed that the sound system in the nave and online has not been consistent and audible. We are researching a 'fix' and hope to

have the issues resolved in the not-too-distant future.

The church property continues to require daily supervision and maintenance. We thank Tom Travaglini, our Sexton, for his continued diligence and responsiveness as the need arises. Many thanks to our property co-chairs, Marguerite Locke and Stuart Watt, whose support is greatly appreciated.

As in years gone by, Lent and Easter time offer a wonderful spiritual journey at St. Matthew's. From Lenten studies, Holy Week services, the Easter early morning Sunrise Service, the Children's Easter Pageant and Easter Sunday service. We are so grateful for the spiritual leadership of Rev. Philip, along with Rev. Merv, Rev. James, and Tyler's musical leadership. Thank You.

We look forward to walking with you at St. Matthew's as we continue to learn and grow and *Share Jesus' Love* with each of you and our external community.

Karen Lee, Sharon Shao, Paul Lorimer, Nancy Hurn

Visioning Day Summary

On Saturday, January 17, 2026, members of our parish gathered from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to discuss the strengths and opportunities of our church. Deb Whalen-Blaize (Diocesan Congregational Development Consultant) and Bill Matthews (ODT, Diocesan Volunteer) facilitated a program of small group discussions, feedback, and reflection. Participants included 43 adults, eight youth, and 13 children. Thank you to everyone who helped make this a successful day, especially our food volunteers and Dawn Mercer, ODT, for her responsibility for the children.

On Tuesday evening (January 20), Deb and Bill engaged a further 10 people in a shorter, two-hour Zoom session for those who could not attend on Saturday. Both events were opportunities to share information on our personal relationship with our parish, our faith, and the need for growth for our parish. 'Togetherness' and 'positivity' have been

highlighted as an important outcome of the day, as we chatted with each other about participation.

Over the next few weeks and months we will discuss and bring forward new ideas and plans to strengthen our inward and outward parish growth. It will be important to maintain the balance of caring for and strengthening our community already in place, so that St. Matthew's continues to be a safe, joyful, and energetic place to belong. Through our inward strength we will find ways reach out to our community and encourage others into God's loving presence.

St. Matthew's is on the right path as a community and has good instincts to facilitate change. We want to encourage everyone to continue to find their place of belonging in our parish and ways to grow their faith.

Linda Harrison

Chancel Guild

Advent and Christmas are probably the busiest seasons for the Chancel Guild.

We began the season by preparing for Advent: changing the Hangings to the appropriate colour, placing the Candles on the windowsills, setting up the Advent Stand with its wreath and candles and erecting the Mitten Tree in the Narthex.

During the second week in December, we prepared for the Blue Christmas service: set up the table to hold the sand containers, candles, tapers, matches, and water.

Later that same week we decorated the church for the Pageant and the Christmas season. A big shout-out goes to Sandra Wilson who updated the red bows for the seats and created more so that each seat had a bow. Many thanks to Sandy Easterbrook, Vivian Knowles, Vanessa James-Locke, Richard Farrar, Bruce and Mary Gleeson, and Jim Currie for lending a hand with the decorating. Thanks to these helping hands we were able to complete the decorating in just 2½ hours. Then we gathered in the lounge for fellowship, coffee, and treats.

On Christmas Eve we setup and cleaned up for the three communion services.

Property Projects

At the time of submitting this article, the Wardens have approved a proposal for the installation of a sump pump to resolve the accumulation of water in the elevator pit. We are securing final timelines from DanMac Plumbing and our electrician to commence this work. Costs will be in the range of \$12,000, which includes the pump, digging of the floor in the pit, installation of a new electrical outlet in the adjacent electrical room, hook up of sump pump to main drain and oversight by Precision Elevator while the work is being completed.

The second project which will get underway shortly is the renovation of the old shower room beside the gym.

During the second week in January, we removed the Christmas decorations.

Thanks to everyone who helped fill our Mitten Tree with such warm and cozy items. We collected a total of 53 items. The items were divided between two parishes: St. James United Church on Burnhamthorpe and St. Peter's Anglican Church on Dundas Street in Mississauga.

Thank you to everyone who donated flowers in 2025 in memory of loved ones or in thanksgiving. The average number of arrangements for the year was only one per month. The 2026 Flower Chart Calendar is now posted in the Narthex; please consider signing up for a Sunday to donate flowers in memory of loved ones or in thanksgiving so we can beautify our Chancel with fresh flowers more often than once each month.

We are always looking for new members to join our team. If you need more information concerning the duties of the Chancel Guild, please contact Pat Currie at 647-998-7607 or Sandra Wilson at 905-624-3786.

This room had been used many years ago as a washroom, then was rented out to Swansea Dogs for storage. It is in poor condition, and we are securing competitive quotes for the work involved to make it a good archival storage and office space. At this time, an estimate of \$15,000 is predicted.

Both of these necessary projects are not covered in our budget, but the Wardens welcome any donations, earmarked "Property Upgrades."

We will have to consider a Special Fundraiser this year to offset the costs.

Marguerite Locke

What's Happening

Tues Feb 24	Lenten Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. (4 weeks)	In person
Wed Feb 25	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Fri Feb 27	Youth Group: 7:00 p.m.	In person
Sat Feb 28	Messy Church: 4:00 p.m.	In person
Sun Mar 1	Unity Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Tues Mar 3	Lenten Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. (4 weeks)	In person
Wed Mar 4	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study: 6:00 p.m.	In person In person
Sat Mar 7	Men's Breakfast: 8:30 a.m. Sunset Grill, 1510 Dundas Street, Mississauga, contact dave.oakden@gmail.com	In person
Sun Mar 8	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m. and BCP Worship: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Tues Mar 10	Lenten Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. (4 weeks)	In person
Wed Mar 11	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Fri Mar 13	Youth Group: 7:00 p.m.	In person
Sun Mar 15	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m. and BAS Worship: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Tues Mar 17	Lenten Bible Study: 7:00 p.m. (4 weeks)	In person
Wed Mar 18	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Sun Mar 22	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m. and BAS Worship: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Tues Mar 24	Stations of the Cross: 7:00 p.m.	In person
Wed Mar 25	Stations of the Cross: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Fri Mar 27	Palm cross making: 10:00 a.m. Youth Group: 7:00 p.m.	In person (Narthex) In person
Sat Mar 28	Messy Church: 4:00 p.m.	In person
Sun Mar 29	All Ages Worship: 9:30 a.m. and BAS Worship: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Wed Apr 1	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Thurs Apr 2	Maundy Thursday Worship: 7:00 p.m. Gethsemane Watch	In person & online At home
Fri Apr 3	Good Friday Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Sun Apr 5	6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service (Marie Curtis Park)	In person
<i>Easter Sunday</i>	9:30 a.m. All Ages Worship and 11:00 a.m. BAS Worship	In person & online
Wed Apr 8	BCP Worship: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Fri Apr 10	Youth Group: 7:00 p.m.	In person
Sat Apr 11	Men's Breakfast: 8:30 a.m. Sunset Grill, 1510 Dundas Street, Mississauga, contact dave.oakden@gmail.com	In person
Sun Apr 12	Unity Worship and Easter Pageant: 10:30 a.m.	In person & online
Fri Apr 17 –19	Youth Radiate Retreat	In person

The Battlefield of Souls

“The awful thing is that beauty is mysterious as well as terrible. God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart of man.” Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

The pursuit of beauty (“art”) has always demonstrated humankind’s struggle to incarnate the fruitfulness of God’s blessings. This is not a bad thing, per se, and in fact, beauty, whether natural or human-made, is often the most obvious proof of God’s presence and existence in the world. The beauty of art relieves the burden of mundane life and points towards transcendental aims, and yet paradoxically it reveals truth as plainly as our eyes can see anything else.

I adore this quote by Dostoevsky, because it makes plain that art (this pursuit of beauty) is ultimately a place of struggle for God. It is a primary thing, and not secondary afterthoughts or materialism, both in our daily lives and in the Church’s life.

Unknown to us, this battle also takes place in our worship and liturgy. As dramatic as this sounds, and as much as we like to think about our churches being places of community and friendship, we are also locked in a battle for our souls between the grace of God and the banality of sin, and the patterns of worship and liturgy are often our only hope for survival. Take, for example, the altar in every Anglican church. Simultaneously a table set for a feast, and a table for slaughter, the altar’s inevitable

presence beckons us as we fight against the pride that prevents us from confessing our sins, accepting our salvation and receiving the Body of Christ. The white cloth spread across the altar reminds us of that pure and Sinless One whose blood was not poured out worthlessly, but rather every drop is reserved for our salvation.

Perhaps the word “liturgy” is not often part of your personal conceptualisation of what Church is. Although St. Matthew’s has an “Evangelical” and “Low Church” history (which often implies a lack of emphasis on liturgical elements), the reality of liturgy cannot escape our minds; everything we do on Sunday, every “motion” by the clergy and laypeople, is the beauty of liturgy. Thus it is the meeting place of two incarnations: the presence of beauty and order, both gifts from God, and the incarnation of God’s Word “dwelling among us”. God is in our midst, we declare when we gather to worship. Liturgy is the perfect model and order for our own lives.

The next time you worship, remember: we make our churches and our liturgies beautiful, because our churches and liturgies are battlefields: a struggle for transcendence, a struggle for order and meaning, a struggle for peace in God’s presence.

In Christ, Tyler Versluis

Deacon’s Cupboard

Thank you to all who have contributed to our Food Cupboard. I believe the special cookies and treats at Christmas were a hit.

This is an ongoing need, and we would appreciate any contributions, any of those below:

- Canned vegetables
- Low-sodium soups, dry or canned, and chunky
- Canned meat, like corned beef, chicken
- Canned stews

- Peanut butter
- Honey
- Nuts, dried fruits, (unsweetened)
- Rolled oats
- Popcorn kernels (not microwave)
- Pasta dinner, like KD
- Spaghetti and meatballs
- Canned fruit, unsweetened apple sauce
- Shelf-stable milk or oat milk (non refrigerated)

Noel Martin, Deacon’s Cupboard Mouse

Dawn Mercer Awarded the Order of the Diocese of Toronto

Dawn Mercer was nominated in 2025 for all the amazing work she has done here at St Matthew's. Every three years a parish can nominate to the Bishop of Toronto a member of their parish to receive the Order of the Diocese of Toronto (ODT).

The ODT is to recognize and honour those members of the laity in the Diocese who have given outstanding service over a significant length of time in their volunteer ministry. The Diocese gives thanks to God for the work and witness of those faithful lay persons in our Diocese who in the exercise of their baptismal ministry have demonstrated that "their light shines, their works glorify."

Dawn Mercer was nominated because of her exemplary and faithful commitment to discipleship. She has with devotion and skill uplifted our children through curriculum creation, design, and teaching for our weekly Club Matt (Sunday School) and monthly Messy Church programs. She has also helped to grow adult disciples of Christ through leading a weekly Bible Study and through writing and leading special

bible studies every Advent and Lent. The award was presented to Dawn at the Choral Evensong Service on January 1, 2026, at St James Cathedral.

Linda Harrison



Name Tags

You may see some parishioners wearing a name tag. Would you like one? These help everyone to learn your name and to remember anyone's name when we 'draw a blank.' If you would like a name tag, you may place an order at the Welcome Table in the Narthex. There is a \$15 charge to cover the cost. Turn around time is 1-2 weeks. They come with a magnetic clip so

there are no holes in your favourite outfits. There has been some discussion about leaving them at the Church from week to week so we don't forget to put them on as we leave home. Deborah Hurn would be interested in your thoughts.

Deborah Hurn

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Southern Harmony II

Our last concert of this season, Southern Harmony II, was a follow-up to a very popular concert of a few years ago, Southern Harmony. Of the four performers, the lead vocalist was new to us. All four Toronto-based musicians were professionals with outstanding talent, qualifications, and experience: Laura Swankey, lead vocals; Gemma Donn, violin; Benjamin Stein, guitar, vocals; and Tyler Versluis, piano, keyboard, vocals.



Southern Harmony began as a style of singing, an easy introduction to the grounds of music, the rudiments of music, and plain rules for beginners. Its roots are found in the American colonial era, when [singing schools](#) convened to provide instruction in choral singing, especially for use in [church services](#). Southern Harmony sang traditional tunes with appropriate words. This practice remained popular with [Baptists](#) in the South long after it fell from use in other regions.



In performance, singers would face each other from four directions, and use the ‘Sol-Fa’ system as a memory trick to teach [aural skills](#), [pitch](#), and [sight-reading](#) of [Western music](#). They would begin each piece singing “Sol, Fa, Mi”, etc. designations, then sing the tune again with the words of the hymn.

One piece sung at our concert was *What Wondrous Love Is This*, a hymn we had sung in church that morning. Other tunes felt singable or vaguely familiar, e.g., like Irish tunes. The group’s performance was excellent. The lead singer, Laura Swankey, had a splendid voice that was so smooth it was a pleasure to listen.

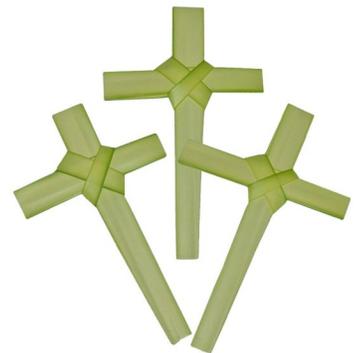
Kathie Oakden

Palm Crosses and Easter Flowers

Palm Crosses: Volunteers are requested to make Palm Crosses on Friday, March 27 at 10:00 a.m. No experience necessary. RSVP to Sandra Wilson, Pat Currie, or the office.



Flowers for Easter: Each year we decorate the church for Easter with flowers that can be ordered “In Memory Of” or “In Thanksgiving For.” Prices and order dates will be determined closer to that date and will be made known via Sunday announcements and the weekly email.



Club Matt



Club Matt has been learning about Jesus! During this module, we have been learning about his youth into adulthood. The topics have been:

- Jesus is Found in the Temple
- Jesus Chooses the Disciples
- Jesus Calms the Storm
- Jesus Turns Water to Wine
- Jesus Feeds the 5000
- Jesus Heals the Blind Man
- Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter
- Jesus Heals the 10 Lepers

Have you ever thought about joining our team? You might think you need to be an expert about the Bible. The truth is, teaching the stories is a great way to gain

greater understanding for ourselves. The information and tools are provided for you. You just add your time and touch to help the children understand. You don't need to be able to answer all the questions, you can help the children find the answers and feed your own curiosity. Just let us know if you would like to sit in on a class to see if you might have a calling to this most important ministry.

Deborah Hurn



Youth Group

January was certainly a cold month, but our youth embraced the winter season with some wonderful, shared experiences. We began by taking a group of youth skating at our local community rink. An exciting milestone as for several of them, it was their very first time on ice skates. Laughter, encouragement, and a few wobbly moments made for a memorable afternoon together.

Later in the month, a group of sixteen attended the *Faith and Hockey Night* at the Coca-Cola Coliseum, where we enjoyed an exciting Marlies game. Following the game, the group had the unique opportunity to skate on the professional rink, an experience they will not soon forget. The evening also included a panel of young athletes who shared their faith journeys and how they seek God's guidance in

their lives, offering meaningful inspiration for our youth.

We are also excited to share that several youth have begun their Confirmation course. It is a joy to watch them grow in faith as they seek God's guidance in their lives. As part of their journey, they have started reading *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis, engaging in thoughtful discussions as they explore what it means to live out their faith.

It has been a joy to see friendships growing and faith conversations deepening through these shared experiences.

Tanya Marcon Moore



“What is Messy Church?”, you ask

Messy Church is a two-hour program for children accompanied by their family, friends and neighbours.

It runs from 4 to 6 p.m. and includes dinner for everyone – kids, adults, and volunteers.

It takes place in St. Matthew’s gym and church on the last Saturday afternoon of each month, except December, July, and August. Enter from the parking lot doors.

Each month, a seasonal theme teaches children about Jesus and God’s love through games, crafts, and worship: 30 minutes each for active games (gym), crafts (gym), worship (church) and lastly, dinner (gym).

Everyone goes home fed, happy, and tired.

It is run by St. Matthew’s volunteers – adults and teens who earn volunteer credits for school.

It is free. (Donations are appreciated.)

Come with your friends, come as a family, or volunteer to help with crafts, games or dinner and clean-up.

Ask the office, Linda Dickson, Dawn Mercer, or Deborah Hurn for more information.

Put your name on the Messy Church email list to be notified.

Kathie Oakden

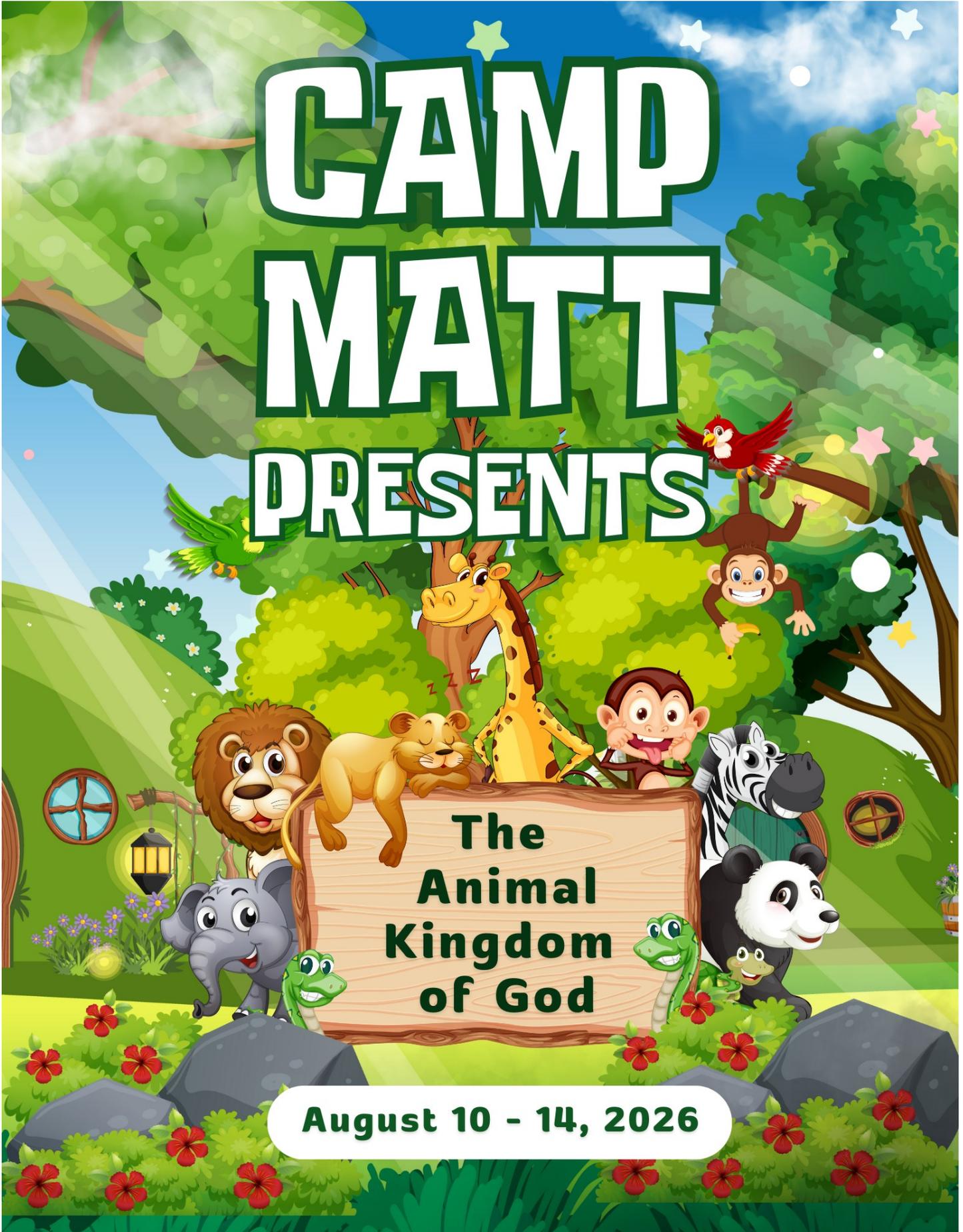


**SATURDAYS
@ 4 PM**

February 28
March 28
April 25
June 6

**FUN!
FOOD!
FAITH!**

CAMP MATT PRESENTS



**The
Animal
Kingdom
of God**

August 10 - 14, 2026

Christmas Lunch Reflection

From the beginning of our time at St. Matthew's (dating back over 60 years) we have always felt welcomed. As longtime members, we have been included as part of a close family.

We have always enjoyed sharing in lunches and dinners, and are glad that this hasn't changed over the years. In December we gathered together to celebrate—and we have just spent the Christmas Season remembering and glorifying—the Birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. What happened over 2000 years ago comes alive and renews each one of us. Some of those times can be sad, but the joy of Love coming into the world from God the Father renews us.

We enjoyed our Christmas lunch this past December to commemorate that renewal, and we also know that friends who are not members of St. Matthew's felt very much "at home." Our tablemates were a mixture of young and old. We had a young man who had tried different churches in the neighbourhood and settled at St. Matthew's as fulfilling his sense of welcome and learning. He was going back to his home in Brazil because of circumstances, but you could tell he was sad about leaving our parish.

The lunch was as usual—good friends, good food, and efforts to be warm and welcoming with music and laughter. We were fortunate to win some prizes in the draw, and while we had no need of them at this time in our lives, we could pass them on to friends and family.

We are sad when people are leaving our congregation, but we wish them all the very best, and show by our thoughts and prayers that we will miss them.

It takes time and effort to make people happy each time we gather and we can honestly say, our Parish does a great job.

Christmas lunch summary: 75 Friends and Family fed, 9 Kitchen Helpers, 10 Turkey Roasts cooked, 20 Take-away Meals given out.

Al and Florence Thompson





Christmas Bags

The *Friends for Friends* team, with lots of help, delivered a christmas gift bag to 23 parishioners and 27 cards were sent. The gift bag tradition has been going on for more than 40 years. It provides an opportunity to visit with people who don't get out to church often and to let them know they are part of our church family. We are thankful for Leslie Portch who continues to contribute many useful items and treats; for the Youth Group and Messy Church children who gave cookies, an ornament, cards, and hot chocolate; and for the bakers who provided a delightful variety of Christmas cookies. A special thank you to all who contributed and all who delivered and visited with our parishioners. Thank you also to Mary Gleeson and Vanessa James-Locke who helped with the bagging.



Linda Harrison and Barb Landry

A Grand Illumination

Christmas comes but once a year, so in hopes of extending our Christmas joy to last the whole year, we join Ebenezer Scrooge in promising to “honour Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year.” However, this task is not one for the faint-hearted. Our Christmas intentions are daily assaulted in the news by ever increasing reports of protests, riots, disasters, and wars, a never-ending litany of humanity’s inhumanity to one another that results in our doubting that the Christmas dream of ‘peace on earth, good will to all’ will ever be realized. Not until we reach another Advent can our Christmas hope be revived in the Advent admonition to “cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.”

Under the bright illumination of the Christmas star, the Lessons and Carols Service’s scriptural retelling of the Christmas story in the matchless Shakespearean verse of the King James Bible dispels the shadowy

doubts that clouded our Christmas vision and allows us to join in the singing of remembered hymns with grateful hearts. The radiance of that star recalls for us our baptismal blessing: “Receive the light of Christ, to show that you have passed from darkness into light” and enlightens our hearts to once again accept and believe the Christmas blessing of the miracle birth of the baby in Bethlehem.

This verse from John Betjeman’s poem “*Christmas*” beautifully expresses the joyous wonder of our restored acceptance of this blessed gift.

And is it true? And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window’s hue,
A baby in an ox’s stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me?

Bruce Gleason

Advent Bible Study: *The Chosen*

For the Advent season this year another part of the video series, *The Chosen*, was highlighted. *The Chosen* series is biblically based and makes the scriptures come alive. Each episode gives us more ways to relate to Jesus’ life and teachings. The Advent theme was “*Salt and Light: Becoming Jesus People: Living the Good News.*” Season 2, episodes 5-8, were viewed and used for prayer and discussion on Tuesday evenings in person in the church or online. We were able to immerse ourselves into living with Jesus and his followers. Each week we read a bible passage,

watched an episode and focused on questions relating to our life and faith. The evening closed with personal reflective prayer. There were always more questions for us to take home for continued reflection and prayer.

The Youth Group offered a bonus experience this Christmas season. The parish was invited to share with them and view “*The Chosen: Holy Night:*” a wonderful movie version telling of Jesus’ birth.

Linda Harrison



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Jon Harrison

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Blue Christmas Service Reflection

On December 10, I attended a Blue Christmas service at St. Matthew's Church for the first time. This service is planned for people who may be experiencing grief, loss, or loneliness during the Christmas season—a time that is often expected to be joyful and celebratory. Although I had known for years that St. Matthew's offered this service, I never felt the need to attend until recently. After the passing of both my parents, Beatrice and Jeffrey Wright, as well as my stepmother, Jean Tovey, I felt drawn to this service as a way to honour their memory and acknowledge my feelings of loss.

Growing up, Christmas was filled with warmth and togetherness. I have many wonderful memories of celebrating the holidays with my parents and extended family—visiting aunts, uncles, and cousins, and sharing Christmas gatherings and dinners in places such as Niagara Falls, Paris, Ontario, and Cambridge. Those memories remain very special to me, which also makes the absence of my parents especially difficult during the holiday season.

Although it is hard to celebrate Christmas without them, I am grateful that I am not alone. I now have my

own family—my wife, Casey, and our daughter, Balsey—as well as my Uncle Bill and close friends who continue to offer love and support. Attending the Blue Christmas service helped me realize that many others carry similar feelings of loss. It was comforting to know that I am not the only one who misses loved ones who are no longer here and who reflects on past Christmases with both joy and sadness.

One of the most meaningful parts of the service for me was lighting candles in memory of my loved ones. It was a simple yet powerful gesture that allowed me to pause, remember, and feel a sense of connection. The Blue Christmas service truly provides a safe and supportive space for those who are grieving, reminding us that it is okay to acknowledge sorrow even during a season associated with happiness.

In the end, attending this service gave me comfort, understanding, and a sense of peace. It reminded me that while loss changes how we experience Christmas, love and memory remain. The Blue Christmas service honours that truth and offers hope to those who need it most during the holiday season.

Tom Wright

Daily Bread Booklet

The *Daily Bread* booklet is a great at-home tool to support prayer and daily bible readings. Each booklet includes three months of readings, along with a commentary explaining each short bible story. The booklets are available for free on the table in the St. Matthews' narthex as you enter the church (new booklets are on display every three months). It is also

available in large print for those with sight issues. I have used the *Daily Bread* booklet for many years as part of my morning routine to remember God's daily presence in my life. The booklet is small and fits easily into your pocket or backpack if you don't have time to read it at home. I pray you will find it helpful.

Ann Sim

Home Communion

Home Communion is available to anyone who would like this Sacrament in their home or wherever they are. If you are unable to make it to Church during the Lent or Easter seasons, or anytime, and would like to

receive, please contact the church office and arrangements will be made.

Deborah Hurn

Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy and Flyer

On Saturday, January 24, several St. Matthew's parishioners refreshed their knowledge about the Diocesan *Sexual Misconduct Policy: Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Assault*. Their training workshop was conveniently shared with The Church of Christ the King parish on Rathburn Road and was conducted by Rev. Stephen Blackmore, our former Rector.

What is this Sexual Misconduct Policy? A small flyer available in the Narthex defines each category (Harassment, Exploitation, Assault) and provides information about what to report and whom to contact for help or information. Copies of the full policy are available on the Diocesan website, www.toronto.anglican.ca

Training is a key component of the [Responsible Ministry: Screening in Faith](#) program and is required

for all volunteers and staff who minister with children and vulnerable adults.

A Sexual Misconduct Policy workshop should be conducted in every parish once a year for those who are new to a ministry role and repeated every three years thereafter. Each parish is responsible for holding its own training workshop. All volunteers and staff who minister with children and vulnerable adults must attend the workshop. It can be used for groups as small as five and as large as 100 participants. Computer-savvy people can also take the training online.

Ultimately, we're working to protect our most cherished treasure: the weak and vulnerable who come to us in faith.

Kathie Oakden

Farewell to Ken and Jen Boughton



Long-time parishioners Ken and Jen Boughton have moved to South Africa. They will be missed!



Valentine Tea



Bin there, Done that. New Recycling Rules.

All Ontario municipalities now use the same company, Circular Materials, to collect 'Recycling'. Their website offers simple Recyclable Materials charts. You can see them at this site: circularmaterials.ca/ON. Check them out!

St. Matthew's saves \$5,000 annually on its municipal garbage fee by sorting the garbage accurately, so everyone must co-operate!

- Ignore what incentives are written on the product or its box. (e.g., Recyclable, Compostable)
- If you think your CLEAN item can be recycled, find your item in the charts.

We're Still Collecting!

We are still collecting a variety of items that support other charities:

Stamps: Oxfam collects stamps to raise funds for the Stamp Out Poverty program with a focus on the needs of women and girls. Save foreign, Canadian, and commemorative stamps. Please save the entire envelope if there are clearly identifiable town/village postmarks or registered/special delivery postmarks.

Eyeglasses: The Lions Club of Canada will collect and donate eyewear free of charge to people in developing countries. They accept prescription and sunglasses. Several pairs have been donated at Hakim Optical for pick by the Lions Club of Canada.

Milk Bags: MILKBAGSunlimited collect the bags to weave mats, purses, shoes etc. The outer plastic bag from your 3 bags of milk can be made into sleeping mats! The bags cannot disintegrate in landfills. They will become a mattress for people who have nothing but bare earth or cardboard to sleep on.

Basically,

- If your item is "ALL EMPTY AND FOOD FREE" or "EMPTY AND FREE FROM FOOD RESIDUE" put it in the BLUE BIN.
- If your item has FOOD or RESIDUE on it and if your item is DEGRADABLE PAPER put it in the GREEN BIN
- If your item is not degradable, NOT CLEAN or not in the charts, put it in the GARBAGE PAIL.

Kathie Oakden

Pop Can tabs: March of Dimes Canada collects aluminum pop tabs year-round, and the recycling of these tabs generates revenue that benefit their Assistive Devices Program that helps buy, repair and maintain a wide variety of mobility or assistive equipment including wheelchairs.

For more information, here are the web sites:

[Canadian Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centre - CLERC](#)

[Support Oxfam by Stamping Out Poverty | Oxfam Canada](#)

[Networks - Milk Bags \(milkbagsunlimited.ca\)](http://milkbagsunlimited.ca)

[Pop Tabs | March of Dimes Canada](#)

You may drop off the items at the Welcome table in the Narthex or outside the Office in the marked boxes. We will ensure they get to the right place. If there are any other small items you would like us to collect, let Deborah Hurn know, and we will see if we can facilitate that.

Deborah Hurn

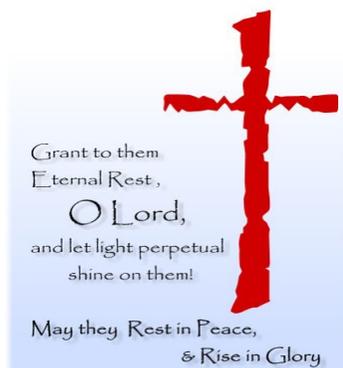
For more information on events, worship times and more,
check our website at saintmatts.ca

Church Records

Deaths

Margaret Bastin
December 19, 2025

John Armstrong
January 14, 2026



Baptisms

Alex Kiniaru Njoroge
December 25, 2025

Eliza Marie Stonhouse
January 4, 2026



**EASTER
SUNDAY**

6:30 AM SUNRISE WORSHIP (MARIE CURTIS PARK)
9:30 AM ALL AGES WORSHIP
11:00 AM BAS WORSHIP

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. *(John 3.16)*

But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. *(Matthew 29.5-6)*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. *(1 Peter 1.3)*

Pastoral Care: Pastoral visits can be offered in person, over the phone, by email or via Zoom. Please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca.

Partners in Prayer: Should you desire prayer for yourself or for another person, please make details known to the church office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca. As need requires, renew prayer requests monthly.

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 pray for individuals and families of St. Matthew’s in the Prayers of the People. Each week, a few names are mentioned in our prayers and we 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 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. If you are knitting shawls for this ministry, please contact the office to arrange to drop them off.

Sunday Services

9:30 a.m. Casual (in person & online)
followed by Coffee Hour in gym

11:00 a.m. Classic (in person & online)
Followed by Coffee Hour in lounge

10:30 a.m. Unity Worship
Followed by Coffee Hour in lounge
(Generally first Sunday of each month
and replaces 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. worship)
Please check saintmatts.ca

Wednesday Service

10:30 a.m. BCP Service
(Posted on YouTube afterward)

Messy Church

Last Saturday of the month
Next Messy Church is February 28

Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) Groups

Contact the office for information

The Rev. Philip Stonhouse, Incumbent

416-231-3060 / philipstonhouse@hotmail.ca

The Rev. Canon Dr. Merv Mercer, Honorary Assistant

The Rev. James Liu, Visiting Priest

Dr. Tyler Versluis, Music Director and Organist

Tanya Marcon Moore, Youth Ministry Associate

Tom Travaglini, Sexton

Grant Dunbar, Verger

Lisa Tait, Administrator

Office Hours & Contact Information

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

9:30 - 3:30

Email: office@saintmatts.ca

Telephone: 416-231-4014

Website: www.saintmatts.ca

Address: 3962 Bloor Street West
Etobicoke, ON, M9B 1M3



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[st.matthewsislington](https://www.instagram.com/st.matthewsislington)



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeTIBsRzvoz-zJcKv5nKb7g>

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