



THE KEY

ST MATTHEW'S PARISH

BEDFORD N.Y.



January

P A R I S H N E W S

2026

A Thought from the Rector

Happy New Year! Happy new? I'm not so sure. Human nature is usually disinclined to change. We naturally gravitate toward the familiar. And yet, we find the Psalmist speaking repeatedly in praise of the new. Psalm 40, verse 3, for example, says: "The Lord put a new song in my mouth..." Whether we like it or not is irrelevant, God is often found in the new.

The truth is that life will force you to experience new things, new circumstances, new people, etc.... And in most cases, we meet those moments with trepidation. But what if God is in the new, then does that change anything? I believe it does. It replaces dread with hope and fear with courage.

An illustration of this dynamic comes from the book, *My Son Is a Splendid Driver*, by William Inge, in which he describes an interaction that occurs between a man and a woman in a book store. They grew up together, but have not seen each other in years. Joey, the protagonist recalls that Betsy had been an aspiring actress, and he inquires about her work as an actress. In answering his question, she tells him that she has become a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and that becoming an actress is no longer something she is pursuing. And then she says this: *"I had to give up my conception of what my life was going to be, do you see? My will had to be overcome. I had to learn that there's a stronger will that works behind the entire universe that sometimes stops us in our headstrong way and says No. And then you have to surrender to a real life, Joey. The life that's really yours...."*

Betsy does a beautiful job of describing the hard-won nature of human surrender and the fruit that is born of acquiescence. Ultimately, it's called faith. While we may not know the way, we trust the One who does. God is in the new.

Happy New Year,

John Jell

Art Show: Bedford 2026

Art Show Bedford is returning in January 2026 for its 53rd year. ASB is known for its warm atmosphere and high-quality art.

This year's show will feature 45 artists; some are new to the show and others are old friends. There will be beautiful work available across a range of media and price points.

The Committee takes great pride in the invitation that is sent out in the first week of January. In recent years, we have featured longtime friends of the show and renowned local artists including Julie Testwuide, Carol Bouyoucos, Shelley Dell, Rachel White, Betty Ball and Mireille Duschene. This year we will feature the work of Kendall Klingbeil. Kendall is a Pound Ridge based artist who is well known for her versatility and range of styles. \She has painted a stunning and unique view of the iconic Bedford Oak. The painting will be available for purchase at the preview party on Fri., Jan. 23.

Art Show: Bedford's Preview Party is one of the most popular events on Bedford's winter calendar. Delicious hors d'oeuvres will be served courtesy of Happiness Is. Music from our own "Mark Weigel & Friends" will ensure things stay lively, assisted by the generous pouring hands of the Men of St. Matthew's at the bar. Tickets for the party are available at the show's website, www.artshowbedford.org.

As in previous years, many of the participating artists will be present during the show and enjoy mingling with the patrons. Viewing beautiful art in front of a warming fire is a truly lovely and cozy way to spend a winter afternoon.

For 53 years Art Show: Bedford has had the same simple mission: to showcase local artists and support local charities. Tara Deeks, co-chair of ASB, explains, "Many of our charities have remained the same over the years, and we are confident that the organizations we support are maximizing the benefit of every dollar. In many instances, parishioners of St. Matthew's have become board members or active supporters, so we try to do more than just write a check."

This year's charities are:

A-Home
Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester
Community Center of Northern Westchester
Endeavor Therapeutic Horsemanship
Hope's Door
Hour Children
Midnight Run
Neighbors Link
New Dawn



St Matthew's Church

Fellowship Hall
382 Cantitoe St
Bedford, NY

All proceeds donated
to local charities

For more info visit
artshowbedford.org



Exhibition & Sale two weekends

Jan 24-25
Jan 30-31, Feb 1
11am-5pm
free entry

Preview Party

Jan 23
6:30-9pm
tickets required

The Women of St. Matthew's

Wreath Making Workshop: On Dec. 4 the Women of St. Matthew's hosted 30 women for an evening of fellowship and creativity! They decorated wreaths to adorn their own homes and the doors of our church, as well as 31 more that were delivered to the field and sold for the benefit of St. Matthew's at the Christmas Tree Sale. While decorating, the women listened to lively carols and enjoyed delicious bites of charcuterie and sushi. Even Johnny Zahl made an appearance to admire the beautiful decoration! We hope you'll join us next year as the tradition continues.

Christmas Brunch: Thank you to all of the 200 plus members of the St Matthew's community who joined us for the annual Christmas Brunch on Dec. 7. We enjoyed a delicious array of festive food from savory meats of filet and ham, to sweet treats of homemade brownies and three gorgeous Bûches de Noël. The Hall was full of noise and laughter as we gathered together to enjoy the company of our vibrant community. The WSM could not have done it without the generosity of the dozens of volunteers who donated their time days to decorate the hall, serve the food, and clean up the kitchen. Thank you all! If you wish to join the fellowship of women who put together these events, please email wsm@stmatthewsbedford.org as we look towards our events in the Spring.



Men's Breakfast

The annual men's Christmas breakfast was held in the Fellowship Room on Sat., Dec. 20. Setting the mood for the festivities and with sheet music supplied by Eric Parsons, hearty male voices filled the room with the joyous sound of familiar carols. The breakfast feast, organized by Bill Fagan and supplied by many helping hands, spread across all of the long tables utilized for coffee hour. The morning's talk, given by Bill Fagan with additional insight offered by Matt Rossi, dealt with the differences across the four Gospels in the treatment of the Nativity.



ART SHOW: BEDFORD



Kendall Klingbeil

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Art Show: Bedford 2026

Rehabilitation Through the Arts
The Pantry

Come to the show – treat yourself or a loved one to a piece of art that will give you endless pleasure, support our local artists in their vocation and lift up our neighbors in need.

Dates and times for the 53rd Annual Art Show: Bedford:

PREVIEW PARTY – Fri. Jan. 23, 6.30-9 p.m.

EXHIBITION AND SALE

Sat-Sun, Jan. 24-25

Fri.-Sun, Jan. 30-31 and Feb. 1

11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily

The SILENT AUCTION runs throughout the show and closes at 3 p.m. on the final day. This year it will feature exciting items from dog training to holiday homes.

Church School:

Happy New Year!

We'll be kicking off 2026 in Church School on Jan. 11 and finishing out the Church School year learning in the New Testament with stories of Jesus' teachings that we can apply to us today. Please join us as we continue to build faith and fellowship in our children!

Celebrating Christmas!

What a joyous season it was in Children's Ministry! Each week, Nursery Care, Pre-Church School and Church School programming were overflowing with joy and excitement as we heard the stories of Jesus and celebrated our savior's birth. Though the snow kept many at home this year, incredibly nearly 35 children and youth were involved in this year's Christmas Pageant. A huge Thank You to Tara Deeks for all the behind the scenes planning and efforts that she puts into organizing such a beautiful service! We're so thankful to the children and youth who were absolutely wonderful at bringing the story to life and to all who helped make it happen!

Please reach out to me with any questions.

Melissa

Preschool Happenings

Bells were ringing and children were singing all through the last week of school before break. Their beautiful voices culminated in a happy Holiday Family Chapel. The children paraded down the church aisles ringing their bells, then gathered in the front to sing Jingle Bells. After Matt's delightful rendition of the Christmas Story and a heartwarming "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" from the children, everyone scurried outside to meet Santa! There is nothing better than experiencing the joy of the holidays through these little eyes and voices. One little boy asked me if I knew that Santa's sleigh landed on the roof!

As it does every year, St Matthew's Preschool, opens its January doors to very "grown-up" children. Dressed in their layers of warm clothes and boots, they move through their day in seamless transitions. The Two's to PreK's are diving into new "units". Winter, hibernation, and migration are themes that set the stage for listening, reading, projects and learning. It is a wonderful time to come and visit the classrooms and observe and rediscover the curiosity of little children.



A Wonderful PreSchool Family Chapel!



Thank you, George

At our Dec. 21 10 a.m. service, John Zahl presented George Fernandez with a proclamation from Bishop Matthew Heyd to George commemorating his 20 years of service to St. Matthew's Church and its parishioners. Thank you, George, you are the best!



Bedell Recipient: St. James the Less, Scarsdale

Founded in 1849, St. James the Less is an active and growing parish in Scarsdale. Rev. Astrid Storm, the Rector of St. James, considers it now to be a regional, rather than local parish, as it has absorbed a number of other parishes in the area that have closed. As such, in addition to regular weekly services, St. James provides many programs and services throughout middle and lower Westchester County and the North Bronx, including a thriving nursery school, food pantry, and soup kitchen, as well as youth, music and adult education programs.

Mother Storm first approached St. Matthew's in 2023, to see if the Bedell Fund would be able to provide a grant to help with much needed repairs to the church and grounds. After completing a master plan for the property, St. James decided that the project that had top priority was the design and development of an outdoor fellowship/arrival court and expanded and upgraded parking facilities, and applied to the Bedell Committee for a grant for this work. Limited parking had been a consistent concern of parish leadership, both

for church services and for parish and community gatherings as the membership has grown. The arrival court is both the focal point for entry into the Church and an outdoor area for services and gatherings.

The Bedell Committee and St. Matthew's Vestry approved a grant for \$225,000 in late 2023. Work was delayed while permits were sought from the Village of Scarsdale. The project scope tackled several necessary improvements to the Church's parking lot and access ramp, and mitigation of poor drainage. The work began in the early summer of 2024 and was completed this December in time for Advent and Christmas.

As a result of the Bedell grant, St. Matthew's has developed a wonderful relationship with St. James and helped a growing Westchester Episcopal Church better meet the needs of its congregants. Mother Storm and members of the St. James Vestry have made several visits to St. Matthew's and attended our services. We hope our relationship as sister churches will deepen in the coming months and years.

Youth Group

Despite bad weather and lots of sickness going around, we had a great Youth Group Christmas Party! Pupusas were tried for the first time by all, plenty of candy canes were consumed, and some strange gifts changed hands in our White Elephant exchange. Big hits included a bonzai tree, a singing Santa hat, and...tape. The Christmas Party concluded a wonderful Fall of Youth Group gatherings of all different sorts with a mixture of both fun and Christian formation. We'll pick up gatherings again in January, and a full schedule for the Winter and Spring will be published in the New Year.



St. Matthew's will host a Men's Beefsteak Dinner in the tradition of the New York beefsteaks of the 19th century – that means tons of steak and sausage, plenty of cold beer, jackets and ties, and limited cutlery. It will be a memorable night of men's fellowship and good eating, and a hymn or two may even be sung. Mark your calendars for Sat., Jan. 10 at 7 p.m. We'll dine in the Fellowship Room, and tickets can be purchased for \$50 at this [link](#). We hope you'll join us!

St. Mary's Christmas Service

It was a glorious night at St. Mary's when over 200 people filled the historic building with spirited songs of the season.



Advent at Saint Matthew's

Friday night was cold but a great deal of warmth was spread as the first trees and wreaths were sold



On Saturday, the tree sales continued while beautiful final decorations were placed around the parish.



Great trees

Again this year, we had beautiful fresh trees to sell and a hard working crew to sell them.

Special thanks go to Paul Matthews and Andy Brenner, who organized and managed the tree sales.



**Our Christmas Decorating Team!
Thank you all!**



Advent at Saint Matthew's

A Beautiful Bountiful Brunch



Sam is the Man!

Throughout the season, one person was always there, helping everyone....Thank you, Sam



Splendid Music

Throughout Advent, the parish has enjoyed great music, from both our regular choir, under the direction of the Music Director Jacob Gruss and our new Junior Choir.



A Perfect Pageant

On Dec., the parish collected for our annual Pageant, staged by the Women of St. Matthews, with the Saunders family laying out an incredible array of food.



Christmas Eve

At the 4 p.m. Service, John and Matt had all the children come up front to look for and celebrate the arrival of Baby Jesus.

