



THE KEY

ST. MATTHEW'S PARISH

BEDFORD N.Y.



March

P A R I S H N E W S

2026

A Lenten thought from the Rector

“Lead us not into temptation...”

We have just finished our three-part study of The Lord’s Prayer, and this phrase stands out as being especially Lenten in emphasis. Certainly temptation is the theme that kicks off Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness, and Lent is indeed the time of year when we acknowledge our appetites, and pray that God will keep them at bay.

“Lead us not into temptation...”

The implications of this part of the prayer are two-fold. First, if God does not lead away from temptation, the assumption seems to be that we will succumb. Willpower is a fickle animal, and the story of giving way to temptation is as human as it gets; it is literally the essential theme that defines our first ancestors and their famous short-lived stint in the garden of Eden. Yes, if this prayer is not answered, it seems that we are headed for trouble.

But the second aspect is where I find comfort. Because you see, God loves to answer this prayer. Like any parent, He protects and is always looking out for us. So, we must conclude that we are, in effect, constantly being led away from the temptations that would otherwise lead us astray. Which means – and this is where things get interesting – every time this part of our prayers is answered, we cannot know it. Each time it is answered something doesn’t happen, and we remain safe from temptation.

Thus, we have to vault in our thinking beyond what we know into the realm of imagination. Imagine all the ways in which you have been spared calamity. Imagine all of the car accidents that have been narrowly avoided or have not happened to you. Can you try to imagine all of the violence from which you have been shielded? Years ago, after a shooting happened on the campus of JMU in Blacksburg, VA, the college preacher at UVA (just up the street from JMU) pointed out, “the tragedy is that this has happened. But the miracle is that it doesn’t happen even more often, and that it has not in this instance befallen us.”

So it is with so many things, but, because our prayers have often been answered, we will never know the extent to which our dear Lord is constantly intervening, “leading us not into...” Things could be so much worse, save for our prayers. Indeed, we are the recipients of bountiful mercy, whether we know it, or not.

I invite you into a continued holy (and prayerfully imaginative) Lent, in Christ,

Lent & Easter Season 2026

Lenten Films at Bedford Playhouse	6 p.m.	Every Sunday in Lent
Men’s Breakfast	7:30 a.m.	Saturday, March 21
Matins and Quiet Lenten Retreat	9:15 a.m.	Saturday, April 5
Procession of the Palms	10 a.m.	Sunday, March 29
Family Holy Week Service	5:30 p.m.	Thursday, April 2
Maundy Thursday Potluck Supper.	6 p.m.	Thursday, April 2
Stripping of the Altar	7 p.m.	Thursday, April 2
Gethsemane Watch	8p.m.-7 a.m.	Thurs.- Fri., Apr. 2-3
Good Friday Services	12 & 7 p.m.	Friday, April 3
Holy Saturday Hike	10 a.m.	Saturday, April 4
Easter Sunday Services	7:30, 9 & 11 a.m.	Sunday, April 5
Easter Egg Hunt	10 a.m.	Sunday, April 5

GriefShare Group Beginning Mar. 16

We’re announcing that St. Matthew’s will begin hosting a bereavement care group this month using the GriefShare curriculum. The group will meet weekly on Mondays from 7-8:30 p.m., and will be led by parishioner and hospital chaplain Ellie Sullivan. The first meeting is on Mar. 16 and will run for 13 sessions covering a variety of discussion topics around grief, loss, and faith. GriefShare is an internationally recognized and respected program featuring well-made and thoughtful videos, a workbook full of helpful prompts and practices for participants, and material informed by best practices from grief counselors, and clergy.

**Easter Memorial Flowers – Donations
with the names of those being
remembered are due by Mar. 21 to
the Parish Office or donate online.**

Midnight Run

Our next Midnight Run is scheduled for Mar. 7. We are collecting clothing and supplies for the next few weeks (see below). There is a collection bin in the Parish House. We also need volunteers to prep the food and clothing at 9 a.m. on Mar. 7, as well as adult and teenage volunteers to complete the run later that evening (8 p.m.-midnight). Please contact Dan Moore for more details – dmoore@cjs-securities.com. (914) 310-4392.



CLOTHING DRIVE



**COLLECTING NOW - MARCH 1ST
DROP OFF AT CHURCH OR OFFICE**

Thermal Underwear

(M-XL)

Sweatpants

(M-XL)

New Underpants

(M-XL)

Hoodies

(M-XL)

New Socks

(All Sizes)

Winter Hats & Gloves

(All Sizes)



Art Show: Bedford Shines



The weather outside was frightful, but Art Show: Bedford was able to raise a delightful \$50,000 for the charities we support during the 53rd annual show.

A snowstorm forced the closure of the show the first Sunday, but business was booming the second weekend. Artists and patrons enjoyed wine and cheese by the fire on the second Friday night. Saturday and Sunday saw a steady stream of visitors rushing in to bid on the silent auction or pick up the art piece they had been mulling over.

Applause and “thank you’s” to the Art Show Committee, our parish, auction donors and to our artists, for a beautiful, successful show – and one that helps so many served by local charities! Charities supported by the show are: Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester, The Community Center of Northern Westchester, Endeavor Therapeutic Horsemanship, Hope’s Door, Hour Children, Midnight Run, Neighbors Link, New Dawn, and The Pantry and Rehabilitation Through the Arts.

Confirmation

Confirmation class resumed on Feb. 22, and will continue with four more sessions in March. Building on our retreat and sessions in the Fall, we’ll cover the traditional Christian catechetical material: The Lord’s Prayer and the Apostles’ Creed, and spend some time learning about the Prayer Book and the Anglican Tradition as well. Mark your calendars for Confirmation Sunday with Bishop Alan Shin on Apr. 26!

LENTEN *Film Series*

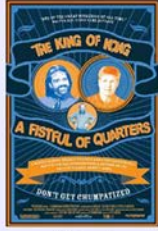
Every Sunday during Lent!

Bedford Playhouse
6:00 p.m.



Rescheduled to March 29
"Lease of Life" (1954)

Discussion and
Q & A with
Rev. John Zahl,
following each film!



March 1
"The King of Kong" (2007)



March 8
"The Browning Version"
(1951)



March 15
"The Book of Eli"
(2010)



March 22
"The Gospel According
to Matthew" (1964)

Tickets and information available at www.bedfordplayhouse.org

Annual Meeting

The Vestry convened the parish for its Annual Meeting on Sun., April 8. John Zahl reported on some of the highlights of the past year including the arrival of Matt Rossi as Associate Rector, his own sabbatical, the retirement of Tony Newman and calling of Jacob Gruss as our new Music Director, the parish Pilgrimage to England to trace our Anglican heritage, and expansion of activities of the Women's of St. Matthew's under the leadership of Deanna MacLean and WSM Board. John Walker also noted some changes to our Committees including Tricia Swift, as the new Chair of the Preschool Commission, replacing June Blanc; Robyn McCree agreed to continue as Chair of the Bedell Committee for another two years. Mary Farley reviewed the finances of the Church, which thanks to everyone's efforts, is for the first time in many years in the black and running a small surplus. The Parish then voted and approved the 2025 Financials. (In the event of a surplus, the Vestry has a policy that such funds would be allocated to the Outreach Committee.)

The Parish also voted and approved the Vestry slate: Scott Brown for Junior Warden for a third two-year term; Sam Boe, Chris Lacovaro, Rick Mast and Janet Schloot as Vestry members for their first three-year terms. The Parish also thanked retiring Vestry members, Kathy Brenner, Tara Deeks, Bill Fagan and Dave McCree for their service to the Church.



Choral
EVENSONG

SUNG BY ST. MATTHEW'S PARISH CHOIR

at 5:00 pm
Sunday, March 1
Sunday, March 29
Sunday, April 26
Sunday, May, 24

St. Matthew's
382 Cantitoe Street
Bedford, NY 10506

St. Matthew's Book Club
God, Literature, and You

Thurs., March 26, 3p.m.
Peace Like a River, Leif Enger

*Meeting will be held in the Vestry Room

Join Matt for a lively discussion over tea.
We'll consider what the book offers on the question:
What does it mean to be human?

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH
BEDFORD, NEW YORK

Church School: The Season of Lent

As we enter this Lenten season, we're reflecting on how small faith can make big moves. The children in Church School have deep thoughts and tough questions and it's a joy to help them learn about our amazing God and how Jesus led the disciples. During this month and next we'll be forming new connections to Jesus' teachings as well as we look towards Holy Week. All children, Kindergarten – 5th grade are welcome and invited to join the conversation at Church School anytime!



Speaking Christian – Adult Education for Lent

Join us on Mar. 1 and 8 for the last two of three classes during Lent where we learn to “Speak Christian” together, exploring the history and theology of the Christian faith through ancient and contemporary sources and some rousing discussion! Growing as a Christian is a bit like learning a language. The Christian faith has its own vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and regional dialects. Like all languages, it's a kind of world unto itself. Those who grow up steeped in it speak it fluently, though often without the ability to articulate how it works, and those who come to it later in life can find the process of acquiring the language challenging for a variety of reasons. And, like language, whether you're brand new to the faith or have been a Christian since before you can remember, there's always room to grow in understanding and fluency.

A Special Shrove Tuesday

Families gathered for a fun evening of pancakes and bingo as they “feted” before the 40 days of Lent.



Preschool

What a winter this has been! Snow and freezing temperatures have kept our little ones inside during their days at school. Channeling outside energy into inside activities is often a challenge but our teachers are masters at providing unique sensory and multi-step projects to keep children engaged. From sensory tables filled with both real and fake snow to scented playdough and dress up areas filled with big boxes that promote imaginative scenarios the children have relished their fun days at school.



Children's Choir

The new Children's Choir sings on the first Sunday every month at the 10 a.m. service and rehearses the last Sunday and first Sunday of every month from 9 - 9:45 a.m. The choir is open to all children age 4 through fifth grade. Please contact Heymin Sohn, Children's Choir Director at hkang311@hotmail.com.



Children's Choir Director Heymin Sohn with members of the choir.



Youth Group

February was a quieter month for Youth Group with the cancellation of our ski day due to cold weather, which we rescheduled for Feb. 28. March will bring more activity, especially with the Midnight Run on Mar. 7, Easter Egg stuffing on Mar. 22, and attending some of the Lenten Movie films at the Bedford Playhouse.



The Gift of Life

St. Matthew's sponsored another successful Red Cross Blood Drive on February 20. A total of 28 units of blood were donated—an excellent result! Bill Fagan, as the designated blood drive sponsor, thanks parishioners Jim Bourke, Sha Fagan, Catherine Miele, Missy Renwick, and John Walker for “giving the gift of life,” Sam Godoi and our Church Office team for handling the arrangements and communications, and parishioner and State Assemblyman Chris Burdick for supporting communications to the Bedford community.



The Women of St. Matthew's Lenten Events

On Sat., Mar. 21, the Women of St. Matthew's welcomes ALL to a **Lenten Quiet Day** led by special guest, Mary Zahl (See article). From 9:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., we will come together in the Children's Chapel to learn and worship together as we consider "The Importance of Listening" to God and others. Join us for quiet meditation, thoughtful conversation, and a lunch for Q&A. Childcare will be provided. Please RSVP by emailing: wsm@stmatthewsbedford.org

On Thurs., Apr. 2, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., the Women of St. Matthew's will host the **Maundy Thursday Potluck** for the congregation, as we prepare our hearts and minds for the Maundy Thursday service at 7 p.m. and Gethsemane Watch.

Throughout the month of March, the Women of St. Matthew's will be preparing for the unforgettable **Easter Egg Hunt**. Join us on Thursdays, Mar. 19 and 26 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. to enjoy Pizza & Wine as we begin stuffing Easter eggs together! Our popular morning option of Scones & Coffee takes place on Thurs., Mar. 26, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. (Preschool hours) -- please drop by for as long as you are able!

We will also need men and women alike to help with baking, setting-up/taking down and serving for the **Easter Egg Hunt**. Many hands make more fun for all! **Please sign up here to volunteer.**

Ladies: Join the fellowship of women who enjoy working together to put together these events, please email wsm@stmatthewsbedford.org as we look towards our events this Spring!



Lenten Quiet Day: Importance of Listening with Mary Zahl

"As we bemoan the divisions in our world, whether between groups of people or within our own families, learning to listen to each other may be the first step to bridging the divides that concern us. Valuing what the other has to say - more than anything we might want to say - is both simple and counter-intuitive, but it is a sure-fire way to put the grace of God into concrete action. Moreover, learning to better listen to God can help us connect with the faith that unites us, transcending the issues which divide us. At this workshop, we will have the opportunity to both listen to God and to each other."



For 25 years Mary Zahl has been teaching the principles of Christian Listening, which she learned from Canon Anne Long in England. She is married to Paul, an Episcopal priest, and is the mother of three sons in ministry, including John. Professionally, she is a garden designer and spiritual director.

Don't Miss Our Bible Studies

The Rector's Bible Study meets on Wednesday's at 11 a.m. in the Vestry Room, following the 10:15 Wednesday Eucharist in the church. We are studying the Book of Genesis. All are welcome.

The Women's Bible Study is held on Mondays at 9:30 a.m. in the Vestry Room. St. Matthew's women will continue studying the appointed Lectionary readings from the previous Sunday.