



THE KEY

ST. MATTHEW'S PARISH

BEDFORD N.Y.



A Thought from the Rector

This Summer, we're trying something new, a preaching series. Matt and I are preaching our way through one of the most famous books of the Bible: Romans. There's almost no better way to get serious Christians to perk up than to mention Romans. This is because, in it, Paul offers an all-encompassing theological picture of the purposes of God, and the significance of Jesus. The scope is enormous, both cosmic and eternal. I recommend reading it some time for yourself, as it's the kind of letter that proves life-changing for many, yours truly included.

My favorite chapter is Chapter 7. I sometimes tell people that, "in ministry, I bed down in Romans 7." No single passage from scripture informs my thinking about what we are doing in church more than that of the second half of Romans 7. In case you don't recall, it's the famous bit where Paul expounds with probing insight about the psycho-spiritual plight of humanity. He writes:

"I do not understand my actions...For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ...So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind...Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ!"

Can you understand what he's getting at? He's saying that we are all in a constant state of inner battling between what we know to be good, and what we know to be bad. There is the person we aspire to become, and then there is the version of ourselves that eats all of the ice cream and acts nastily to the people we love. In Paul's view, we are always disappointing ourselves. And in my estimation, he's right. Experience verifies it every day. We are at war with ourselves, and in need of rescue.

According to Romans, it is into that precise predicament that Jesus comes to meet us all. I think about it every day. It shapes my life and ministry from top to bottom. It's why struggling people can find hope every Sunday at St. Matthew's. ...And it's why I sign off these letters each time with the same words: Grace & Peace. Read Romans and come hear us preach about it. I promise it will speak to you.

Grace & Peace,

September Schedule

Sun., Sept. 6	8 & 10 a.m.	Sunday services resume in the Church
Sun., Sept. 13	10 a.m.	Welcome Sunday & Blessing of the Backpacks
Wed., Sept. 16	10:15 a.m.	Wednesday Service resumes
	11 a.m.	Bible Study
Thurs., Sept. 24		Book Club
Sun., Sept. 27		Harvest Festival



Summer Schedule July-August 9 a.m. Chapel-in-the-Woods

Note: On July 12, our good friend and former Associate Rector Danny Lennox will preach and celebrate at the 9 a.m. service, adding his voice to the Romans preaching series. Danny is Chaplain at Trinity Pauling School.

St. Matthew's Romans sermons are also available on Apple or Spotify podcasts.



Our Parish Picnic Was Perfect!



A Dad Camp to Be Remembered!

Our first ever Dad Camp was a huge success! We had 12 dads and their kids pitch tents up in the field, with another five or so joining us for hot dogs, s'mores, games, and a short prayer service around the fire. It was really special to see kids playing with their dads and having the time of their lives. We'll definitely do it again, and are making plans for a family campout in the Fall, moms included! A special thanks to Sam Godoi and Dale Akinla for all their help in pulling it off.

Matt



A Great Year for Our Choir

Our choir under the direction of Jacob Gruss completed its first year on May 31 with Evensong at 5 p.m. Afterwards we all celebrated with a pot luck dinner in the Parish House, where we were joined by John and Matt as well as family. A splendid time was had by all.

Jacob has taken our choir in a glorious new direction with a focus on a capella hymns of praise and thanksgiving as well as psalms, carefully selected to accentuate the holy days of our liturgical calendar. And for the first time in parish history, we began a program of monthly choral Evensong in January — a largely sung service of Evening Prayer that frees the congregation to listen, reflect and experience deep spiritual peace as the day draws to a close.



Church School

Hello St. Matthew's Families!

Thank you for sharing your children with me and the Church School team this year! It was a fantastic year and I'm so excited for what's to come next year! Children's Ministry will resume in September. Until then, here's what you need to know...

It's a **Sit-Together Summer** for Pre-Church and Church School children. All children are invited to attend church with you as a family in the Chapel-in-the-Woods. Nursery care will also be available for children 6 and under beginning at 8:45 a.m.

Welcome Back Sunday

Pre-Church and Church School will resume on Welcome Back Sunday, Sept. 13 with a Backpack Blessing and kick-off to the new Church School year! More information will be sent out in the Youth and Family Newsletter when it resumes in the fall. If you aren't receiving these, please email me!

Volunteering in Church School

Interested in serving on the Church School team for the 2026-27 programming year? Contact me for more info or to join this fantastic group of youth and adult leaders who serve once a month to help the children of St. Matthew's have fun and grow in their faith!

Melissa Torres, Children's Ministry Coordinator

A Super Stomp!

On the last day of Church School, the 10 a.m. service was held in the Chapel-in-the-Woods on a beautiful sunny morning. Just before the sermon, children, parents and grandparents followed Matt out of the Chapel down to the stream where he led a children's song before welcoming children-with-nets in hand into cool water in search of crayfish. Great fun was held by all ages. Topping off the morning, a church school cake and other treats and drinks greeted parishioners provided by WSM Team One.



St. Matthew's Book Club

God, Literature, and You



Thursdays at 3 p.m in the Vestry Room
July 30

The Listener by Taylor Caldwell

August 27

Death Comes for the Archbishop by Willa Cather

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?



Preschool Year Ends with a Graduation and Party!

What a wonderful year it has been. Our children grew, learned, laughed, played, and made lasting friendships. As always, the last two weeks were frenetic and sped by in a blink. There never seems to be enough time to do “just one more thing. Before we knew it our Pre-K class was donning their Graduation robes, and the end of the year Pizza party was in full swing! It was a blast. Mountains of pizza were gobbled up, bubbles were flying and dancing children filled the playground. The day was completed with melted ice cream smiles!



July is “go time” to get ready for September. This year most importantly we are readying the playground for our new play equipment. On the weekend of July 24-26 Preschool and Church families are joining together to dismantle the old structures. By September in time for the beginning of Church School and Preschool, the playground will be graded and landscaped and the new equipment installed.

Happy summer!

Liz Peck, Director

Gentlemen of St. Matthew’s,

Many of you will have heard the exciting news that we are giving our playground at church a massive overhaul including the installation of brand new playground equipment. This will be a huge blessing not only for our preschoolers who are out there nearly every day during the school year, but for all the children of our parish and community who use the playground year round on Sundays and weekdays.

In order to install the new stuff, the old stuff has to be removed, and to do that, we’re asking for your help!

The weekend of July 24-26 Sam Godoi and the property commission will be out there tearing down the old playground (chain saws, axes, sledge hammers, muskets, etc.), and they are looking for volunteers from the church and preschool to help with the project. Many hands make light work, and I can promise the availability of some beers to sweeten the deal.

If you’re around the weekend of July 24-26, would you consider signing up to come help with the demolition and cleanup? It will be a lot of fun, and a massively appreciated service to our church and preschool. **You can sign up for a slot to help here.**

One more incentive: we’re asking if we can’t get the volunteers coordinated in time, we’ll need to hire an outside outfit to come in for the project (which won’t be cheap!). We’d much rather do it with you all instead!

So sign up for a slot, come out for a few hours, and help keep our playground one of the most beloved places on our campus!

Peace,
Matt

The Women of St. Matthew’s Summer Garden Gathering

What a relaxing and joyous day June 25 was when many of the Women of St. Matthew’s gathered together at Rabbit Hill. We are most thankful to the Santomero family for hosting and sharing their magnificent garden with us.

The day gave us the opportunity to make new friends, get to know acquaintances better, and of course reaffirm long-time friendships. We wandered through mature perennial gardens, enjoyed the gorgeous weather, cut flowers and escaped our day to day routines. Matt gave a lovely uplifting prayer. A few of us tried botanical gel printing, some of us enjoyed the shade by the pool! A special time of friendship and renewal was had by all. All in a summer’s morning gathering of WSM!!

I would also to thank the board of WSM for their steadfast leadership year round. I am so grateful for all of the Women of St. Matthew’s!!

Deanna Berg MacLean



St. Mary's Church

Final Phase of Critical Restoration Underway Project Culminates with Restoration of Magnificent 20-over-20 Wood Windows

The final phase of critical restoration work to preserve St. Mary's Church for future generations is now underway. The church's magnificent 20-over-20 double-hung wood windows have been carefully removed and transported to a specialized restoration contractor's workshop, where they will undergo comprehensive repairs, conservation and restoration.

Made possible through a substantial grant from the St. Matthew's Bedell Fund and the generous support of the St. Mary's Vestry and community, the restoration campaign began in the fall of 2023. The first phase focused on reconstructing the historic church's fieldstone foundation walls, which had begun to fail and collapse inward. Modern reinforcing materials were incorporated on the interior to improve structural stability while preserving the historic appearance of the dry-laid fieldstone exterior.

At the same time, the church's original hand-hewn floor joists were strengthened with 55 new timber posts installed on hand-dug concrete footings. In the fall of 2024, scaffolding was erected to facilitate replacement of deteriorated clapboard siding and railings, as well as installation of a new copper roof. Clapboard facades and window shutters were repaired and repainted. In the spring of 2025, interior plaster ceilings and walls were repaired, and the sanctuary and adjacent spaces received a complete repainting.

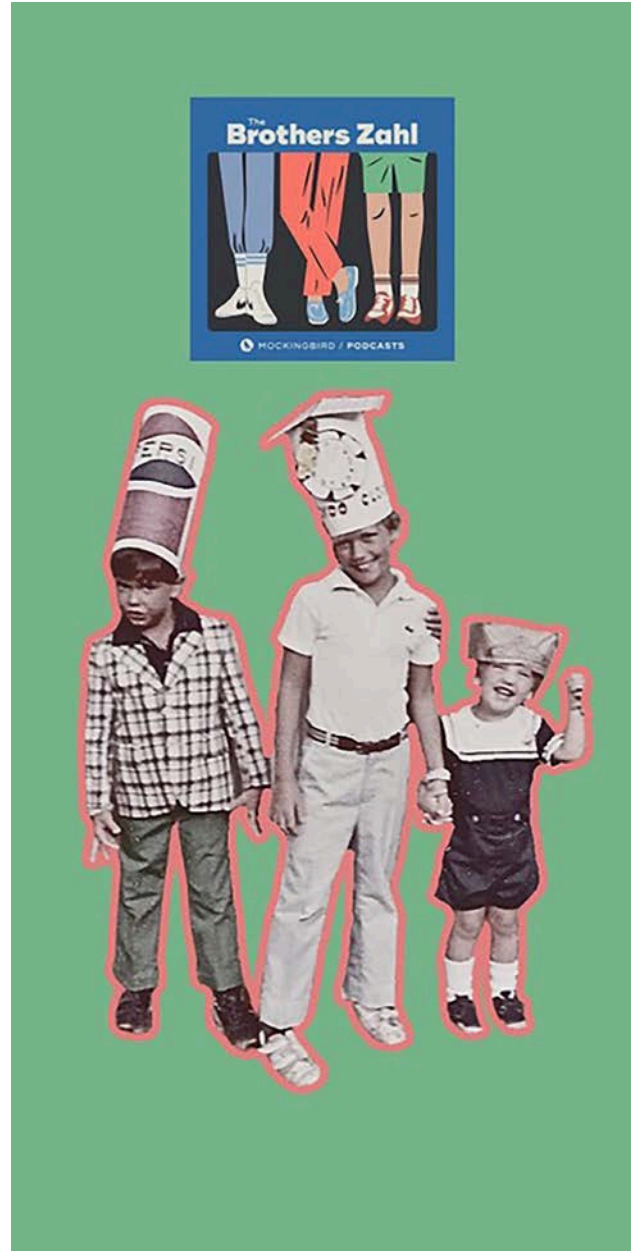
The restoration of the church's original wood windows marks the final major phase of this multi-year effort. Through responsible stewardship of this beloved church, we preserve not only a remarkable historic building, but also the values that have defined St. Mary's for more than 170 years—Community, Faith, and Diversity. These values remain as important today as ever and continue to inspire and unite us in challenging times.

Stacy Albanese & Piers MacDonald



The Brothers Zahl Strike Again!

A new season of The Brothers Zahl podcast just launched on Monday. New episodes will be dropping every Monday in July. The first episode is entitled "The Law" and you can find it here {hyperlinked: <https://thebrotherszahl.fireside.fm/>} or wherever you get your podcasts.



Comings & Goings

Holy Baptism
Received into Christ's Holy Church

Artemis Marie Bernstein, June 27, 2026