



# THE KEY

## ST. MATTHEW'S PARISH

### BEDFORD N.Y.



May

P A R I S H   N E W S

2026

### A Thought from the Rector

*“Do not press me to leave you, or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people...” (Ruth 1:16)*

These words of Ruth to her grieving mother-in-law are almost 3000 years old. And yet who wouldn't want to hear them today? Sara Beth and I had them read at our wedding. They are words of love.

A few years ago, I had a poodle named Birthday. He used to follow me wherever I went. He was always easy to find, because he would position himself between me and wherever it was that I was trying to get. I constantly had to push him aside. All he wanted, it seemed, was to be close. For years, I thought it was annoying, co-dependent even.

But when he was diagnosed with lymphoma, I began to see him in a completely different light. I realized how much I was going to miss his constant impeding and intermediary presence. Birthday was like Ruth in that his whole life was committed to staying close. And Ruth, of course, is like the Holy Spirit, always close, “in whom we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). As the Psalmist says: “Where can I go that thou art not with me? If I descent to the depths you are there...” In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, the truth is that you will never be alone.

One of my favorite parishioners described her faith in similar terms to me recently. It was at a very low point in her life that she finally prayed to Jesus in total sincerity. And that's when, as she put it, “suddenly the ‘I’ became a ‘we.’” Amen.

In Christ,

### The Flowering of the Cross



*Mother's Day,*

*Sunday, May 10 10 a.m. Service*

Please bring flowers from your garden to decorate the cross.  
Additional flowers for the service are given  
by the Vincent family in honor of all mothers.



### Confirmation

We had 19 students confirmed and one adult received on Sun., Apr. 26. Bishop Allen Shin presided over this lovely service. A big thank you to the parents who committed to a renewed and more involved confirmation program this year, and especially to the newly confirmed, who made confirmation a priority, and maybe even enjoyed it a little bit by the end :) May God richly bless this next chapter of your life in faith! (see page 8 for additional pictures)

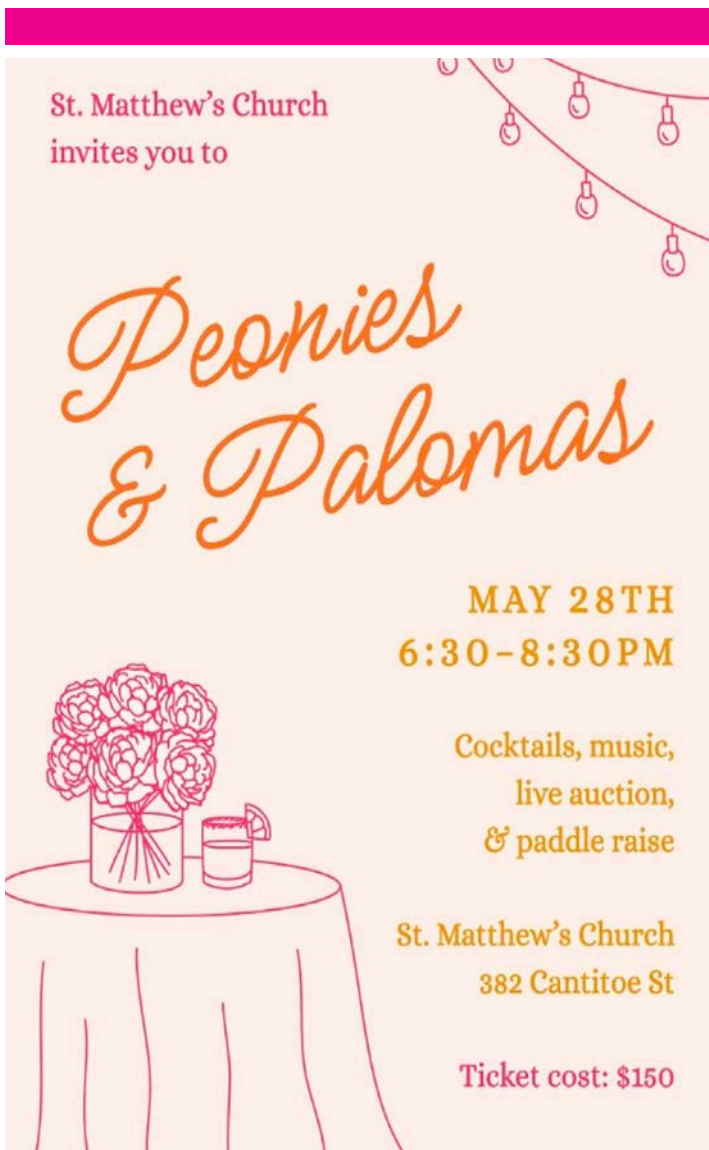


## Peonies and Palomas

This year's Peonies and Palomas fundraiser on Thurs., May 28 at 6:30 p.m. is co-chaired by Lily Geiger Kast, Bella Swift Gabourie and Chesley Andrews Sjulsen. As explained by Lily: "We three are second-generation parishioners and we share a deep connection to St. Matthew's." The event will feature live-music, silent auction items, delicious appetizers and beverages, and will also have a paddle raise with Steel Swift as the MC! The funds raised through Peonies and Palomas will directly support the church's operating budget, helping to sustain the programs, ministries, and shared experiences that make this community so special.

The co-chairs are joined by an enthusiastic and talented committee: Andi Ahrens, Matt Andrews, Katie Brouwer, Molly Breuer, Russell Breuer, Bryan Gabourie, Frank Geiger, Carolyn Guard, Matt Guard, Ted Jacobi, Will Kast, Annie Manning, Kate McLaughlin, Courtney Rault, Bailey Reece, Brooks Reece, Elizabeth Rice, Haley Rossi, Marious Sjulsen, Lydia Snyder, Eckert Snyder, Steel Swift, Mary Weir, Melissa Vincent and Roger Vincent.

Come for what will certainly be a warm, festive, and meaningful evening! Tickets at \$150 per person can be [purchased here](#).



St. Matthew's Church invites you to

*Peonies & Palomas*

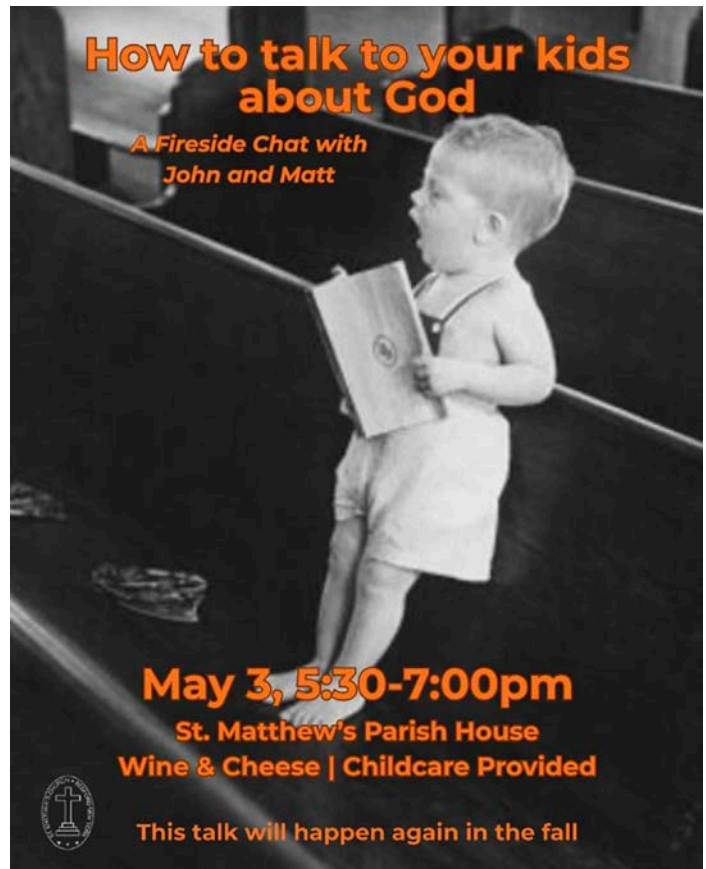
**MAY 28TH**  
**6:30-8:30PM**

Cocktails, music,  
live auction,  
& paddle raise

St. Matthew's Church  
382 Cantitoe St

Ticket cost: \$150

The poster features a pink background with a string of lights at the top and a vase of pink peonies on a table at the bottom left.



**How to talk to your kids about God**

*A Fireside Chat with John and Matt*

**May 3, 5:30-7:00pm**

St. Matthew's Parish House  
Wine & Cheese | Childcare Provided

This talk will happen again in the fall

The poster features a black and white photo of a young child sitting on a chair and reading a book.

## New Playground

On Thurs., April 30, the Parent Association of St. Matthew's Preschool hosted a Spring Fling Fundraiser for our new playground, being developed jointly with the church.

We have engaged the "Bears Playground" company to replace the existing structures and add a free-standing tire swing. Although this won't happen until early August, there is much preparation to be done. During the spring and early summer, we will be working on the playground "clean-up," relocation of existing pieces, and dismantling of old structures.

A few trees will be taken down, and giant roots covered. In May, sign-up sheets will be posted for parishioners and Preschool parents to get together the weekend of July 24-26 to get the playground space ready for installation! We are looking forward to having a beautiful new playground for our children – children, Preschool and church, to enjoy for years to come. [To help, donate here.](#)



## Church School Ends the Church Year with Special Programs

As the Church School year comes to a close, there is still a lot to learn and a lot going on in Children's Ministry for children in Kindergarten – 5th grade. For parents, be sure and note the details found in the Youth and Family Newsletter.

On Sun., May 10, the parish celebrates our mothers and the season of rebirth with our traditional **Flowering of the Cross** service. Families take turns adorning our cross with blossoming flowers. Whether families bring flowers from their home, or from the church, every member of the church has a role to play in bringing spring to St. Matthew's. The Children's Choir will also be singing.

John Zahl and Matt Rossi are holding a fireside chat about Faith in the Home called **How to Talk to Your Kids About Faith** later on May 3 at 5:30 p.m. This talk will be repeated in the fall and is part of a new Faith Formation series offering classes and workshops for parents and families!

**Sit-Together Sunday** on May 24 invites children to be part of a regular worship service with their family. There will be children's worship bulletins to help explain the service to the children. Nursery care will be open for children 6 and under.

The last day of class will be on May 31 in the Children's Chapel and Church School classrooms. We will celebrate the end of another year of Church School with the much anticipated special **"Stump the Rector"** chapel and some classroom fun.

We will also be holding a **Church School Open House** on May 31 at \_\_\_ for Rising Kindergarteners and their grownups to come and see what Church School is all about. We'll meet in the Church School Large Group room for a brief tour and an overview of our program when the school year resumes in September. Current Church School parents are also welcome to attend.

Church School officially closes on Sun., June 7 with a service in the **Chapel-in-the-Woods and the Stream Stomp!** Bring water shoes or wellies, a towel and be ready to catch the crayfish which have been waiting all winter to play. Afterwards, we'll have the Church School cake and lemonade up at the top of the path.

That evening on June 7, the parish will be together for its **Annual Parish Picnic** with hamburgers, hot dogs, etc. and games. What a wonderful way to celebrate a great church year together at St. Matthew's!

I look forward to seeing everyone on Sundays and at these special events.

*Melissa Torres, Children's Ministry Coordinator*

## Youth Group

The Youth Group gathered to valiantly stuff over 1000 eggs for the Egg Hunt, and were integral in Easter Day festivities. We gathered for our first "regular" meeting in quite a while on April 19 and enjoyed the warm weather with games and some Bible teaching. We look forward to a more regular schedule in May, including especially our "Tongues of Fire" hot wing eating contest on Pentecost Sunday (May 31). We would love to have all our youth join us!

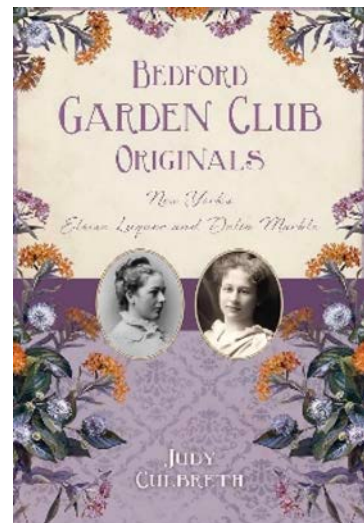
## A Special Tribute to Historic Bedford Women, One Especially Important to St. Matthew's

St. Mary's Church, Sun., May 3 at 5:30 p.m. St. Mary's Church is hosting Judy Culbreth, well-known author and TV journalist, on Sun., May 3 at 5:30 p.m. She will explore the life of Eloise Payne Luquer, (1862–1947), whose father served as pastor of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church for more than 50 years, and as such grew up in the rectory at St. Matthew's.

Eloise and her close friend Delia Marble, at the turn of the century, were a "tour de force." They founded the District Nursing Association, which evolved into the Northern Westchester Hospital. They were instrumental in founding The Bedford Free Library and Bedford Garden Club and were early leaders of the Garden Club of America and the Bedford Historical Society.

Eloise was a student of botany and famous watercolor painter of wildflowers; over 200 of her paintings are held at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. They helped create one of our country's first nature trails at the Ward Pound Ridge Reservation.

The talk, will be centered around Culbreth's new book, "Bedford Garden Club Originals: New York's Eloise Luquer and Delia Marble." For those of us interested in the history of St. Matthew's, her talk is a must. And there is an inside St. Matthew's connection: Judy Culbreth is Brett Cameron's mother!



## The Women of St. Matthew's – Annual Spring Meeting and Luncheon

The Women of St. Matthew's is holding its annual Spring Meeting and Luncheon on Fri., May 8 from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. Please join us for a discussion with our speaker, Dr. Angelina Lipman, who will inspire us as we gather to connect and celebrate a wonderful year of supporting our parish and each other.



Dr. Lipman is the author of "Blocking the Noise: A Roadmap to Happiness". In her book, Dr. Lipman describes the relentless noise that we all experience in our everyday lives that can affect everything. Sometimes it's blaring, obvious, and in your face. Other times it's pervasive, sneaky, and barely audible. But we don't have to be at the mercy of noise. Dr. Lipman's discussion will be dedicated to identifying and releasing the noise that pulls us away from our peace, health, and happiness. Together we'll press reset and begin a journey toward clarity, calm, and certainty.

Dr. Lipman has distinguished herself as a psychologist, educator, author and founder of *Blocking the Noise*. As an accomplished writer and researcher, she has contributed widely cited pieces to the Annual Review of Psychology, the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, and Social Justice Research. Dr. Lipman received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Columbia University, a Master's degree in Psychology from New York University, and a PhD in Social Personality Psychology from New York University. Dr. Lipman spent over a decade in academia, with a research focus on the impact of identity on psychological well-being, achievement, and relationships. Her work has been recognized via numerous awards, fellowships, and conferences. Dr. Lipman resides in Westchester with her husband, three children, and many pets.

To join us at the luncheon, please [RSVP by clicking this link here.](#)



## The Women of St. Matthew's

### THANK YOU!

We would like to extend a very special thank you to all of our wonderful Lenten and Easter volunteers. We are so appreciative of your generosity and willingness to serve with us. If you served during the Lenten Quiet Day, stuffed Easter eggs, planted tulips, prepared the kitchen, served during the Easter coffee hour or donated your time in any other way, thank you! We could not have done this meaningful work without you.

Your love has blessed us all.



At the Gala of Hope, St. Matthew's will be honored for their years of service with Hopes Door.

Click the image for ticket information!



# A Glorious Easter

The celebration weekend began on Saturday with a hike to the top of our woodlands.



Holy Saturday Hike



The 9 a.m. family service had great youthful activity and fun



Get Ready, Get Set, Go!



7:30 a.m. on Easter day, a hearty group joined in a sunrise service in the Chapel-In-The-Woods.

## Spring Arrives for the Preschool

Although Easter was early this year, the children bundled up and raced outside for their annual Easter egg hunt. The Two's and Three's collected as many eggs as they could carry, happily working together to clear the playground. The Pre-K took their egg hunt one step further as they sorted the eggs by color and then counted them to discover they had found 164! After all the eggs were turned in, each child was given an Easter box to take home.



As tulips, daffodils, and forsythia began to bloom, the children returned from break and dove into spring projects. Bright colored poppies, rainbows, sunflowers and little nests with baby birds adorned the classrooms. Perhaps though the best gift of spring was once again being able to play on the playground. When you ask children what

their favorite part of school is, they inevitably say “playing on the playground.” It is a magical place where children hone their gross motor skills as they run, jump, climb, slide and swing. Play is unstructured and imaginations flourish. Games are invented and amazingly problem-solving and compromise skills seem to become a natural element of getting along (sometimes with a little teacher guidance).



This summer, the Preschool and Church are working together to revamp the playground. Two new play structures will replace the old ones, and a separate tire swing will be added behind the swings. We can't



wait to see the excitement of the children discovering and playing on them.

*Liz Peck,  
Director, St. Matthew's Preschool*

## St. Matthew's Book Club

God, Literature, and You



Thursdays at 3 p.m in the Vestry Room  
May 28

Silence by Shusako Endo  
June 25

Piranesi by Suzanne Clarke

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?



## Adult Ed Class - 39 Articles

John and Matt will teach a class every Sunday in May at 9 -9:50 a.m. on the 39 Articles of Religion, an early Anglican statement of faith that articulates the Protestant commitments that were commonplace among 16th and 17th century Anglicans, much of which is still reflected in our Prayer Book today. If you've wondered about the heritage of Anglican and Episcopal theology, some of the early debates that formed the Prayer Book tradition during the English Reformation, and how the Episcopal Church today is connected to Anglican theological heritage, this class is for you!

# 2025 Was A Busy Year for Bedell

Last year, the Bedell Committee recommended grants for five parishes within the New York Diocese. While we receive many compelling requests, our funding focuses on churches supported by the Diocese with an active parishioner base, dedicated lay leadership, and strong clergy. We also evaluate a parish's ability and efforts to fundraise within their congregation and community, as well as their success in securing outside grants. Below are highlights of three of the 2025 grant recipients.

## St. Francis and St. Martha Church, Greenburg NY

Located in Greenburg's business district, St. Francis and St. Martha Church serves as a vital community hub with extensive outreach programs. This tight-knit parish sought assistance to address critical health and safety issues within the church building and rectory. Severe water damage necessitated the regrading and replacement of front walkways, steps, and railings, while repeated flooding caused significant structural damage.



Committee member Gordon MacGill advocated for the parish, recommending a contractor experienced with Bedell projects who offered a flexible payment structure to accommodate a strict budget and timeline. While the parish initially considered a temporary fix, a \$115,000 Bedell grant allowed for a permanent solution. The funds enabled the replacement of the main entrance infrastructure, extensive foundation repairs, and waterproofing. Additionally, the parish added a second egress to the lower level, replaced the failing rectory roof, and renovated the rectory bathroom with a walk-in shower and safety bars to ensure accessibility.

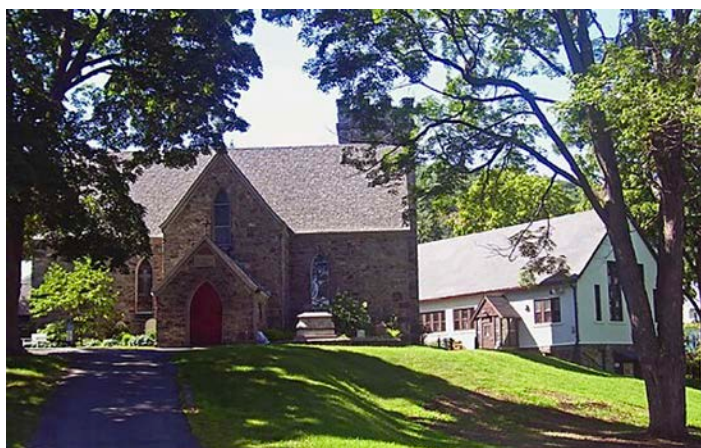


## Church of the Holy Innocents, Highland Falls NY

Situated just outside the gates of West Point, Holy Innocents is a dynamic, diverse parish and serves as the Episcopal presence and vital community center for the surrounding area. Both the church and rectory are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Construction of the Rectory was funded by J. P. Morgan. The parish maintains a strong focus on outreach, including a thrift store, food bank and campus ministry. This community has been significantly impacted by an influx of low-income contract workers and the devastating floods of 2023.

While the parish continues to work with FEMA to secure restoration funds, they required immediate assistance to address the damaged rectory. Although parishioners worked tirelessly to haul away flood-damaged materials, professional intervention was needed to restore the interior and exterior. The goal was to preserve the historic property and create a suitable living space for a new Priest-in-Charge, as the lack of housing had hindered recruitment. A

grant of \$82,100 enabled Holy Innocents to complete this essential preservation.



## Christ Church, Warwick NY

Christ Church is a vibrant and growing parish that has seen remarkable revitalization since the arrival of the Rev. Amber Carswell in 2021. Under her leadership, average Sunday attendance has increased from 77 to 162. The Diocese has also shown strong support by funding a Curate position and providing a property support grant.

Rev. Carswell initiated a "Save the Nave" project, securing the majority of funding through a successful capital campaign. However, during the restoration of the 1866 structure, while removing aluminum siding added in 1970, workers discovered extensive rot as well as insect damage to the structural support beams. Additionally, masonry work was required to prevent basement wall erosion, and the structural integrity of the bell tower was found to be in "sinister" condition. To help fund the unforeseen costs uncovered during renovation, the Bedell Committee awarded a grant of \$157,000.

In 2025 the Bedell committee recommended, and the Vestry approved, grants totaling \$800,000. Highlights of additional grants will be covered in future issues of the Key.



*Robyn McCree, Chair, Bedell Committee*

# A Confirmation Celebration!!



## Confirmation Class Lock-in

We had twelve students present for a “Confirmation Lock-in” on March 27 which included some light catechesis, and plenty of fun. Sam Godoi made a special appearance at a nighttime scare in the Chapel-in-the-Woods, and games were played in the Church Yard until nearly midnight. Students “slept” on the floor, and were awakened to techno-music and pancakes at 7:30 a.m.

## Comings & Goings

### Holy Baptism

*Received into Christ's Holy Church*

Sinclair Mckenzie Fraser, April 12, 2026

Madison Mckenzie Fraser, April 12, 2026

### In Memoriam

*In sure and certain hope*

Laura Robinson, April 10, 2026