

THE KEY
St. MATTHEW'S PARISH
BEDFORD N.Y.

November PARISH NEWS 2026

A Letter from the Rector

A few weeks ago, we received a call from a man whose wife had died unexpectedly. They called St. Matthew's because we had baptized their daughter 27 years earlier. She had attended our preschool and then been confirmed at the age of 13. Then we lost touch with them when they moved abroad, returning to the area just a few years ago. Fortunately, the husband reached out to us in that most trying time, and we were able to provide care and a lovely funeral service. Such occurrences are common in the life of our church, and we deeply appreciate the role we are able to play in such difficult moments.

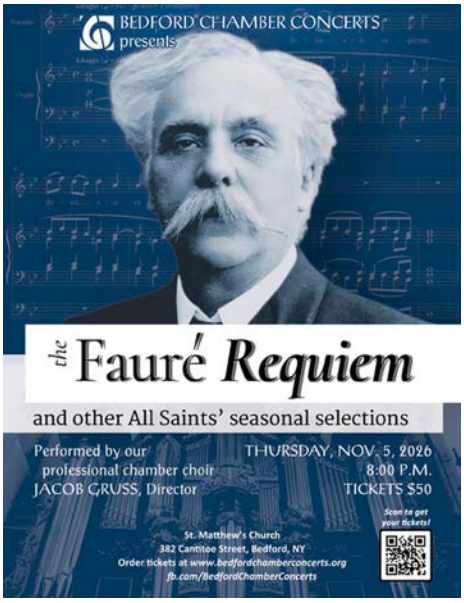
On the flipside, we have baptized seven babies in the last three Sundays. We play a crucial role in life's most pivotal circumstances ("from birth to earth," as the saying goes). I cite these examples to convey the vital role St. Matthew's occupies in the life of our community, not just in beginnings and endings, but also in so many of life's colorful moments in-between. Far from being removed from the realities of your day-to-day, in fact life flourishes within the church.

Along those lines, consider that November is stewardship season at St. Matthew's, when we ask our parishioners to make a pledge in support of our ministry for the upcoming year. **On paper, we have more than 400 families on our rolls. Yet, last year, only 184 families made a pledge to support us financially, which means less than half of our parishioners officially contributed in the way that we rely upon for planning our annual budget. We would love to see that number go way up this year.**

It is our hope that, if you are a member of our church, then you will make a financial pledge for 2027. You can do so easily via our website **here**, or by filling out a pledge card which will be included in every Sunday morning bulletin in November. Think of it a bit like a subscription. Our ability to pay our incredible staff, to provide pastoral care, weekly services, church school formation for our children, the care of our lovely buildings and grounds, our vast programmatic offerings, and the variety of annual events we put on for the Bedford Community … all of these are dependent upon the continued support of our membership, meaning you (if you're reading this).

If you are new to pledging, you might start with a prayer instead of a number: "God, please make me charitable; guide me in how much to give to St. Matthew's. Amen." Consider how we stand on the shoulders of more than 200 years of parishioners who invested in St. Matthew's well-being. Imagine how many people we have been able to bring into contact with Christ's love, and how there may very well come a time when you find yourself needing us for consolation, companionship, counsel, or prayer. Thanks so much for your support. We are here for you.

Grace & Peace,



Nov. 5: The Glorious Return of the Bedford Chamber Concert Series and the Fauré *Requiem*

Join us on Nov. 5 at 8 p.m. when the sanctuary of St. Matthew's will be the site of **A Choral Concert for All Saints' Day**. Part of the returning Bedford Chamber Concert Series, this first concert will feature Gabriel Fauré's famed Requiem, Op. 48 with professional chamber choir of 12 and Artistic Director Jacob Gruss.

Peaceful, contemplative and melodic, the Fauré Requiem is considered by many to be the crowning achievement of the renowned French composer. Written and revised from 1887-90 in seven movements for choir and soloists, the piece is the quintessential romantic exploration of peace and rest.

Consistent with this theme, the All Saints' Day concert will also feature works by composers spanning many centuries and countries. It will open with a piece by Palestrina, one of the finest masters of late Renaissance polyphony. Also on the program will be pieces by the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, the French organist and composer Maurice Duruflé, and the American educator and choral composer Randal Thompson, all of whom were active into the 20th century.

Join us Nov, 5 at 8 p.m. in the pews of St. Matthew's for the return of this beloved concert series. To purchase tickets or to become a supporter of this vital concert series, visit **https://bedfordchamberconcerts.org.** Tickets can also be purchased at the door. A reception will follow the concert in the Parish House.

For the Love and Care of St. Matthew's

Stewardship season is upon us at St. Matthew's! It is our annual opportunity to bear witness to the splendor of our parish community and grounds, marvel at the life-giving ministry it provides, and venerate our esteemed clergy and staff who lead us in spiritual health and growth. None of this is possible without pledges and fiscal support from our parish.

By way of background, the 2026 operating budget of St Matthew's is $1,543,000 of which $1,000,000 or 65% will come from your pledges. The remainder mostly is sourced from fundraisers and income from the Church's endowment. The largest item of expenditure is personnel expenses which is budgeted to be $886,000 or about 60% of total expenditures. Property maintenance and other overhead expenses is expected to be $390,000 with programs totaling another $126,000. These numbers demonstrate how crucial your support is to the fiscal health of St. Matthew's.

Please join us in the call to make a pledge to St. Matthew's for the 2027 year. The leaders of the Episcopal Church state that members of a church in good standing are givers of record. Whether you are pledging for the first time, increasing your support, or maintaining your current level of giving, please know that every single pledge makes a difference, because it represents commitment and gives witness to God's goodness.

With deep gratitude and heartfelt appreciation,
Your Stewardship Committee of the Vestry
Andi Ahrens, Sam Boe, Caesar Bryan, Greg Gaynor

St. Matthew's Thanksgiving Ingathering

Help provide a Thanksgiving meal for our neighbors in need!

Your food donations (plus a turkey and pie) go to our neighbors at: **A-Home**, **Abbott House**, **ARC**, **Open Arms**, **The Pantry**, and **the Community Center of Northern Westchester**.
Shopping bags are in the back of the church.
Envelopes for donations are in your bulletin.

Take a bag and fill it with:



- sweet potatoes
- cooking oil
- coffee and tea
- stuffing mix
- 1 can green beans
- 1 can corn
- apple sauce
- cranberry sauce

Return bags to St. Matthew's by Sunday, November 22nd

JOIN US FOR A THANKSGIVING SERVICE

THANKSGIVING EVE
WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 25 5:30 P.M.
AT ST. MARY'S
197 HICKORY KINGDOM ROAD

THANKSGIVING DAY
THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 26 10:00 A.M.
AT ST. MATTHEW'S

Blessing of the Costumes and Coffee Hour









Church School

Busy with Learning and Fun

Faith Steps are in full swing at St. Matthew's as we partner with parents to guide a child's journey of faith for the whole family! We've now had two Fireside Chats and The Storybook Bible presentation and all three events have been meaningful and spirit-filled. The next Faith Steps event will be a prayer workshop on Nov. 15 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the Vestry Room.

The Blessing of the Costumes and All Hallow's Fest events were a boo-tiful sight to see! We hope you had a skele-ton of fun at these spook-tacular events!

In Church School, we've been exploring the Old Testament with stories about the Creation, Noah, Baby Moses, and The Stone Tablets. We'll continue spending time in the Old Testament and also learning about giving back and being thankful as we participate in the InGathering later this month.

Looking Ahead.

The annual Christmas Pageant is coming! This year's event will be on Dec. 13. It is a wondrous and joyful sight to behold so hope all our children will be part of the celebration. Please contact me if you have any questions!

Melissa Torres, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Bible for Beginners



John and Matt taught an adult class on the Bible, its themes, structure and their favorite parts.

The Men Take Wings!









St. Matthew's Clergy Visit Meadow Ridge



St. Matthew's clergy and eucharistic lay members bring the cup and chalice to members of St. Matthew's and Bedford friends once a month.

An Annual Service of Prayer Together



Patty Dahr preached at the Joint Service with Antioch, St. Mary's and St. Matthew's



Preschool: Learning Through Play

Amid the rustling leaves, children in the 3's and pre-k's were out on walks foraging for signs of fall. The 3's learned all about acorns and that they come from "oak" trees not "acorn" trees! They tried to spy sneaky squirrels with fat cheeks stuffed with acorns scurrying away to hide their stash for the winter. Now whenever they see a hole in the ground, they are sure it is filled with acorns. The pre-k's made beautiful fall collages while the 3's made leaf creatures and buried sprouting acorns in hopes to grow new oak trees.

Our gorgeous new playground structures remain a happy focus of every day. As each area become its own center with its own special features, we are happy and proud to have a new area for our young farmers with a wonderful tractor from The Friends of the John Jay Homestead. We are hoping these beautiful fall days continue so we can romp in the leaves and climb on the playground!

St. Matthew's Book Club

Join us on Thurs., Dec. 3 at 3 p.m. in the Vestry Room to discuss TILL WE HAVE FACES by C.S. Lewis.

Bibles for Kindergarteners



Parents present their children with their own bibles during the 10 a.m. service on Oct. 11.

The John Jay Homestead Tractor Finds a New Home

The barn at the John Jay Homestead was home to the tractor for many years and a favorite play feature for children whenever they visited. When the NYS Park Service recently developed plans to restore the Homestead property, the tractor was to lose its home. Thanks to Haley Rossi, Caroline Macgill and the Friends of the John Jay Homestead for recommending to the NYS Park Service donating the Homestead's beloved tractor to St. Matthew's Church, with its own legacy to John Jay and playground where it would continue to be cherished by children. Transporting the tractor to St. Matthew's also had a story, as Frank, the owner of Castle Towing in Chappaqua, lived at one time next door to St. Matthew's. He remembered fondly his children playing on its playground and also on the tractor at the Homestead, and generously donated his company's services to bring the tractor to St. Matthew's playground.







Rural and Migrant Ministry Musical Benefit

On Fri., Oct.16, St. Matthew's hosted a benefit concert for the Rural and Migrant Ministry. Seven world-class musicians donated their time and talent to this fundraiser. Among the highlights were pianist Cynthia Peterson's rousing performance of Ravel's Alborada del Graciouso and the evening's finale of Schumann's Piano Quintet in E Flat Major. Harpist Liann Cline provided an unusual close-up view of solo pieces for the harp. Three teenagers who are part of RMM's Youth Arts Group spoke articulately and movingly about the mural they created to express their experiences as children of immigrant agricultural workers.

After an intermission of food, drink and socializing, the Rev. Richard Witt, Executive Director of RMM expressed his thanks to St. Matthew's and the attendees for their support of RMM. If you missed this event, please consider contributing to RMM directly!





Confirmation

The Fall session of Confirmation classes wrapped up on Oct. 25. Over five classes we covered the central storyline of the Old Testament, worked on memorizing the books of the Bible, using them, and trying to connect the big story of Scripture to its climax and fulfillment in Jesus Christ. We went out with a bang for the Fall with the Haunted Hike! We're looking forward to another retreat this Winter, and the second session of classes will resume in February.

Trunk or Treat

Super heroes, ghouls, knights, ladies in distress, witches, skeletons, pilgrims — they were all came to St. Matthew's on Oct. 25.





















Women of St. Matthew's

WSM held their first Mahjong event on a lovely Fall evening with instructor and math teacher Stefani Mancuso! A dozen beginners had a wonderful lesson, hosting four tables of open play.Delicious snacks, seasonal sweets, mulled wine and great conversations warmed our hearts.

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Women of St. Matthew's Christmas Wreath Workshop returns after a sold-out success in 2025! Join us on Thurs. , Dec. 3, 6-8 p.m. We will then be getting the Fellowship Room ready for the Christmas Brunch on Sun., Dec. 6, including decorating the Wish Tree. Santa elves are also needed to help at the Brunch. This is a great way to begin the season of Advent and Chritmas.







Clean-up

Fall means preparation of the church grounds for winter. Dedicated parishioners were out with rakes, chainsaws and hammers putting up deer fencing and striping the parking lot.





Bedell Funds at Work

Last year, a Bedell grant was awarded to St. John's Episcopal Church in South Salem to help fund the construction of a new rectory. St. John's is a historic parish comprised of two campuses: St. John's in South Salem and St. Paul's Chapel in Vista. Parishioners have gathered to worship at the South Salem location since 1750.



During a recent search for a new rector, St. John's struggled to find a suitable, affordable home in the local community. After an exhaustive analysis of the real estate market, leadership determined that the best option was to build a modular home on land the church owned at the St. Paul's campus. Father Frank Hakoola, then the Priest-in-Charge and now the Rector, has been instrumental in revitalizing the parish and raising its prominence within the community. He had been commuting from Manhattan for three years, and St. John's was eager for him and his family to reside locally.



A rectory is more than just a residence; it is a place of ministry, hospitality, and stability," the wardens explained in their application. "It allows our rector to live among us, to be more present for pastoral care, and to foster a deeper sense of connection within our church family and the greater community."

St. John's raised nearly half of the construction costs through a parish-wide capital campaign and secured property support funding from the Diocese. However, the $300,000 Bedell grant bridged the final gap. It allowed St. John's to reach its fundraising goal without depleting its capital reserves, enabling the parish to move forward immediately with construction permits.

On Sept. 19, 2026, Bishop Heyd led a groundbreaking ceremony, followed by a service of celebration at St. Paul's Chapel, to mark the occasion of the first rectory built in the New York Diocese in over fifty years. The components of the three-bedroom, raised-ranch modular home were delivered the following day. The completed house will be approximately 2,000 square feet and feature a finished basement. Rev. Hakoola and his family plan to move in by the end of the year.



The Bedell committee and Vestry are pleased to award this grant which so closely aligns with the original bequest of Hope Bedell – to strengthen the Episcopal Church through funding of capital projects, in particular housing for Clergy.

Blessing Our Friends!

It rained dogs of all shapes and sizes!!!











Mark Your Calendars For These Early December Events







Comings & Goings

New & Returning Parishioners:

Charles & Haley Shine Joerss
100 Seminary Road
Bedford, NY 10506

Holy Baptism

Received into Christ's Holy Church

Rene Alexandre, October 11, 2026

Loveland Ophelia Keele, October 11, 2026

India Mills Keele, October 11, 2026

Isabel McKinney Keels, October 11, 2026

Malone Magaret Reighley, October 11, 2025

Isabel Evans Walker, October 18, 2026

Charles Michael Allwin, October 25, 2026