



THE KEY

ST. MATTHEW'S PARISH

BEDFORD N.Y.



September

P A R I S H N E W S

2026

A Word from the Rector

It's exciting to be launching into a fresh program year. The staff and I have spent much of the summer planning, updating and making some fresh improvements.

For starters, you'll notice our newly revised bulletins on Sunday mornings. These have been given an aesthetic overhaul, based upon a review of many of St. Matthew's old bulletins from yesteryear. They will still include the same familiar Order of Service (slightly expanded), but with the appointed lectionary insert readings now incorporated into the bulletins. This streamlined version of things should make following along with our services more straightforward. Likewise, our website is in the process of a fresh overhaul. And our Thursday email-blast updates are being expanded to include more information about parish life. You will want to make sure that you are signed up to receive them if you want to stay abreast of everything that is going on at St. Matthew's.

Finally, and most significantly, we are welcoming a third member of clergy into our ranks. Meet our amazing new curate, Patty Dhar, who comes to us from Greenwich, where she has co-led a 50+member ecumenical Bible Study for the past few years. Patty was ordained a deacon this past June and will be ordained a priest in January 2027. She will oversee the relaunch of our weekly Women's Bible Study (Tuesdays, 9:15-10:15 a.m.) which kicks off in October, as well as focus on Women's ministry at St. Matthew's.

It's been many years since St. Matthew's had three clergy, and I've prayed many times that the opportunity for that dynamic might present itself once again. Patty comes in answer to those prayers, bringing loads of fresh energy, and I know that she will quickly win you over. She is wise, whip-smart, deeply spiritual, the mother of triplets, has spent years living abroad (mainly in London and New Delhi), has a history of working in finance and the non-profit sector, and is already familiar with our neck of the woods. Matt and I can't wait to work with her, and to show her the ropes of ministry. Patty's first Sunday is Sept. 6, and I hope that you'll make her feel most welcome. She has told me that she can't wait to meet all of you and to dive in.

I'm excited for this new, three-pronged clergy chapter of ministry, and for a wonderful year of church. We can't wait to reconnect.

Grace & Peace,



WELCOME SUNDAY

Sept 13 at 10 A.M.

Join us as we welcome back the choir, kick off a new year of Church School and enjoy fellowship at a spectacular Coffee Hour!

Welcome to Our New Clergy – Curate Patty Dhar!

Let's all give a very warm greeting to the newest member of our clergy- Patty Dhar, a curate, who will hold a leadership role in women's ministries.

Patty was raised outside of Washington, D.C., and spent most of her adult years in New York and Greenwich. Having graduated from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania with a BS in Economics and an MBA, Patty later earned an MA in Christian Leadership (MDiv equivalent) from St. Mellitus College in London in 2023. She lives in Greenwich with her husband, Madhav, and her 23-year-old triplets – Arjun, Ayla and Maya – live in New York.

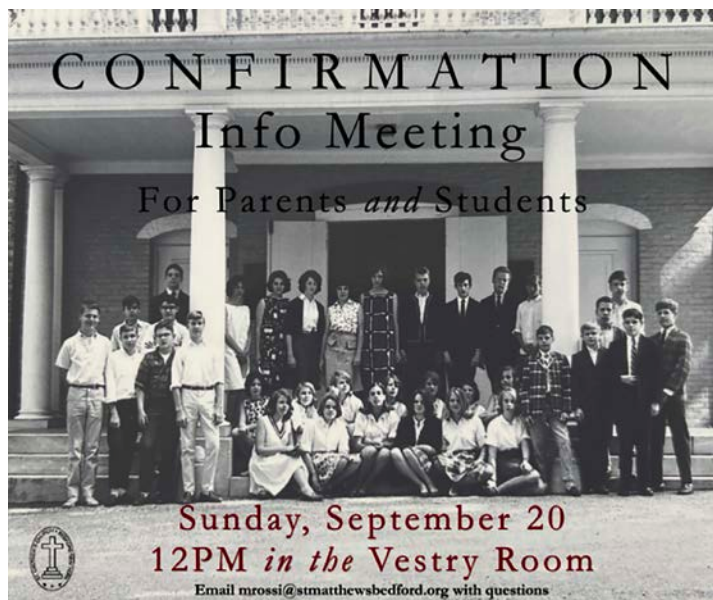
Patty returned to the USA after living overseas in London and New Delhi with her family for the previous 15 years. These international experiences have given her a deep appreciation of other cultures and perspectives, while keeping Greenwich, CT. as her home base. Patty has offered her strategic perspective by serving on the planning committees of both St. Barnabas Church and Stanwich Church in Greenwich before her ordination to the transitional diaconate this past June. She most recently trained at Trinity Church in Trumbull, CT, and as a chaplain at The Nathaniel Witherell Nursing Home.

Interesting, SaraBeth Zahl had a key role in Patty coming to our parish. They both attended a monthly prayer meeting called Journey Mates, which meets at Stanwich Church in Greenwich, and after one of the sessions, SaraBeth encouraged Patty to talk to her husband and here she is, part of our team.



Confirmation

Registration for the 2026-2027 Confirmation year is open now! We'll have a mandatory informational meeting at noon on Sun., Sept. 20. Information for registration can be found in the weekly E-blast and the Youth and Family Newsletter.



Festival of St. Matthew (Formerly Harvest Festival)

On Sept. 27, we'll gather for a celebration of what churches sometimes call their "Patronal Feast." The "Feast Day" commemorating St. Matthew (for whom our church is named) falls every year on Sept. 21, and so the following Sun., the 27, we will gather to "feast" together on delicious autumnal fare, to enjoy some fun St. Matthew themed activities (on our brand, new playground equipment!), and to celebrate God's faithfulness to our church as we head into the Fall and the new program year. We hope you'll join us!



Preschool 2026-27 Is about to Begin

Another school year is ramping up. Teachers with arms full of supplies and creative inspiration transform their classrooms into happy learning spaces. St. Matthew's Preschool is like a beehive buzzing with new activity and promise. As the last weeks of summer wind down, the excitement and a few butterflies of anticipation creep into households awaiting the first day of school. It's always a little crazy; too many things to do and the worry of time fleeing past, but I love it!

As everyone is aware our biggest anticipation is the new playground. In the last weekend in July, volunteers wielding chainsaws, assorted tools, and shovels worked tirelessly to dismantle the old playground. Bit by bit structure pieces and a seemingly endless amount of mulch was tossed into a waiting dumpster.

And now in the last week of August, our new playground equipment arrived, with workers assembling and placing the new pieces – ready to be discovered by Church School and Preschool children as they return to school. So much happens on a playground – fun, new friends, memories-in-the-making, I can't wait to see the happy faces and sounds of laughter and joy. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all who helped with every aspect of the new playground! I am awestruck. The pictures say it all...

Liz Peck, Director



*Our wonderful
NEW
playground
equipment*

Church School Begins Sept. 13!

We are so excited for another year of Pre-Church and Church School with our children at St. Matthew's!

Children's Programming kicks off at the 10 a.m. service with a Blessing of the Backpacks and annual group photo. After the children are prayed for, Pre-Church School children will walk to their classrooms in the Parish House for lessons and activities and Church School children will walk downstairs to the Church School classrooms for fun large group and small group time.

This year in Children's Ministry:

Nursery Care (Birth – age 3)

Loving staff and volunteers will greet your littles each week in room A-3. Drop off begins at 9:30 a.m. each week. Please bring any diapers, snacks or items your child may need while in our care.

Pre-Church School (ages 3 – 6 who are potty trained but not yet in Kindergarten)

With our **Frolic** curriculum, children will learn Bible stories through hands on play and interactive story telling. Once a month the Pre-Church School children will join the Church School children in the Children's Chapel for a worship experience to get them acclimated to that space and structure as well as when it's time for them to graduate into Church School.

Church School (Kindergarten through 5th Grade):

With our **Holy Moly** curriculum, we're excited to explore the Old and New Testaments this Church School year in fun, interactive and engaging ways.

Each week children will experience the Bible story three ways:

1. An interactive **Children's Chapel** including traditional worship and lessons from Rev. Matt, Ms. Torres or one of our Small Group leaders.
2. A silent but engaging animated video, fun game and discussion all together in **Large Group**.
3. Through a scripture reading with prayer, reflection and interactive activities to reinforce the lesson in **Small Group**.

New this year! We've partnered with **StoryMakers**, a not-for-profit organization that designs Gospel resources for kids and teens to bring the Bible to life. **StoryMakers** wants children to know God is with them, for them, and actively redeeming them. Resources from **StoryMakers** will be sprinkled into the Church School year to help enhance what we're already learning.

[Click here](#) or scan this QR code to register your children for the 2026-27 programming year.



Please reach out to me with any questions. We look forward to seeing the children of St. Matthew's on Sept. 13 for Welcome Back Sunday!

Volunteer with us!

Our teaching teams are in need of **five shepherds**! We are looking for monthly leaders, substitute leaders, youth helpers and musicians to complete our volunteer needs. If you're interested in learning more about these roles or ready to join the team for the 2026-27 school year, let me know!

I am always happy to answer any questions about our Children's Ministry! You can contact me at mtorres@stmatthewsbedford.org.

Melissa Torres, Children's Ministry Coordinator



Fireside Chat Sept. 20

On Sun., Sept. 20, we'll be joined by Melina Smith of StoryMakers NYC, an amazing family ministry creator and partner. St. Matthew's is part of a cohort of churches helping StoryMakers to test and develop play-based curriculum for kids and their families to help bring faith into the home in a fun and low-pressure way. Mel will host an interactive presentation during Coffee Hour, and at 5:30 p.m. that evening, we will welcome families back to continue our "Fireside Chat" series on talking to children about God. Her talk will focus on "play" as a theological category, and will include some incredible resources, interactive discussion, and plenty of time for questions and conversation. If you have kids in your life you won't want to miss this!



The Bible for Beginners

The Bible can be intimidating. Maybe you feel like you should know it but don't. Or you want to read it but have no idea where to start. Or you've tried reading it couldn't make heads or tails of it. If any of these describes you, you aren't alone, and we are here to help! Join John and Matt on **Sunday mornings at 9 a.m., beginning Oct. 4 in the Vestry Room**, as they help demystify the Bible, from basic practical questions (what is the "Old Testament?" how do I find a book, chapter, and verse? which translation should I read? why are there four Gospels?) to headier ones (what do we mean when we call the Bible "God's Word?" what difference does "genre" make? do we read the Bible like any other book or in some special Christian way?). They will also give an overview of the main storyline of the Bible, breaking down its major parts, themes, and going into some depth about our favorite pieces. If you've ever wanted to get into the Bible but weren't sure where to start, now is the time! Childcare is available!

The 2026-27 Bedford Chamber Concert Series: The Triumphant Return

After a 12-month hiatus, the Bedford Chamber Concert Series (BCCS) committee is pleased to announce its energetic return this fall under the new leadership of BCCS Artistic Director Jacob Gruss. Jacob is also the new music director at St. Matthew's Church. He brings a unique blend of talent and experience having studied at Julliard, the Yale School of Music, the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and as Organ Scholar at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

The new season commences on Nov. 5 at 8 p.m. when the church (not the Parish Hall) will be filled with music in "A Choral Concert for All Saints' Day." Featured will be Gabriel Fauré's Requiem with 12 professional singers accompanied by organ.

Fauré's Requiem is widely acknowledged as the crowning achievement of the seminal French composer. Written and revised from 1887-90, the work in seven movements features two soloists with accompanying organ. The piece differs markedly from earlier 19th century settings of this form, lacking the sound and fury of Berlioz and Verdi, especially in the fiery "Dies irae" movement which Fauré omits. The result is a generally reassuring, contemplative exploration focused on the primary sense of the mass, rest and peace. The texture is largely homophonic and chordal with the most striking contrasts emerging from daring harmonic sequences. Rounding out the program will be works by Vaughan Williams, Stanford, and Bowers.

Future BCCS performances include the annual Festive Holiday concert on Dec. 17, an April concert with cello and piano, and a final choral concert on May 20 that celebrates American composers as well as the poetry of Robert Frost.

Start the season by joining us on Nov. 5th at 8 PM for the Faure Requiem in the pews at St. Matthew's. Tickets are \$50 (student rate: \$10), include light refreshments, and are available at <https://bedfordchamberconcerts.org>

ST. MATTHEW'S BOOK CLUB

God, Literature, and You.

Sept. 24 *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson

Oct. 29 *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner

Dec. 3 *Till We Have Faces* by C.S. Lewis

*All meetings at 3 p.m. in the Vestry Room.

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




The Amazing Women of St. Matthew's



If you have joined St. Matthew's, you are a treasured member of WSM. If you are new to St. Matthew's, we welcome you!! If you have been here for years and want to be involved, we welcome you!!

WSM is hosting a new Mahjong evening! **SAVE THE DATE: Oct. 15, 7-9 p.m.!!!** All skill levels welcome!

There are a multitude of ways WSM gathers together and supports our vibrant parish, and have fun in faith together over the year. These include:

Coffee Hour, which welcomes everyone with smiles and treats after each 10 a.m. service from September through June.

Decorating the Fellowship Room for Advent
Hosting the festive and delicious Christmas Brunch for the parish.

Hosting Wine & Wreaths, a gathering during a winter evening to prepare our hearts and homes for the festive Advent season by decorating wreaths with designer made bows and beautiful trimmings.

Supporting our parish by creating additional wreaths for the SMC tree sale at the Wreath evening!! We bring the families together at the tree sale with Hot Cocoa for the kids and special treats for the grownups!!

Maundy Thursday, hosting a potluck dinner.

Easter Celebration.
The annual Easter Egg hunt and all the preparations, including the expanded coffee hour!

Spring Luncheon with a keynote speaker, bringing together parish women and friends to be inspired in faith and fellowship.

Summer Garden Gathering —enjoying a glorious day, touring a beautiful garden, cutting flowers, making art and arrangements — and looking forward to another year of volunteering together.

Come create joy, with friends old and new, and support our wonderful St. Matthew's Parish with the WSM.

In faith and love, *The Women of St. Matthew's Board*
Deanna MacLean, Michele Pelligrini, Melissa Atkins,
Denise Santomero, Amy Keeler, Jaclyn Dailey, Liza Clymer,
Abby Langalis, Candy Borner & Mary Andryc.

To volunteer or if you have any questions about upcoming programming, please email: wsm@stmatthewsbedford.org
WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



A Message from the Courtrights

Dear St Matthew's,

Greetings from Hong Kong! It's been 20 months since the Courtrights said goodbye to Bedford. At the invitation of June and Herb, I'm so pleased to share that life and ministry are going so well!

We love our life in Discovery Bay. The girls' school is right by the water. Alice is happy supporting me and the girls while continuing with her writing. We ride around town in the church-owned golf cart for errands, family pool time, or to drop off Caroline at gymnastics, Lucy at tae kwan do, or Margaret at football (soccer). We've settled into our apartment where I host pot luck suppers, a weekly Bible study (Wednesday at 11am!), and Committee (Vestry) meetings. I am very much in the "parish" ministry model here—connecting with church-goers and non-church-goers alike in the grocery store, as a chaplain at SKH Wei Lun Primary School (where DB Church worships on Sundays), or on the ferry to Hong Kong Island on my way to and from St. John's Cathedral.

Speaking of the Cathedral, where I spend about 40% of my time/ministry in this dual role, things are going well there, too. I enjoy being part of a Chapter of seven clergy with various ministry responsibilities. St. John's welcomes 2100 worshippers each weekend

across nine services in four different languages

There's so much more to share but, suffice it to say, God was definitely up to something when He called us here! The congregation has received us with open arms and Discovery Bay Church is enjoying a season of happy, healthy ministry. By God's Grace, we've grown 85% in attendance (55 to 100 average Sunday attendance) and 100% in giving since we arrived. I am so thankful to John Zahl for teaching me so much about what faithful and grace-filled ministry looks like and to St. Matthew's for five and half years of love and support. My prayers are with you all. I've compiled a snapshot of ministry from quarterly reports about DB Church and pieces I've written for the Cathedral's quarterly magazine. <https://www.discoverybaychurch.org.hk/ministrymedia/>



Sending all our love!

Drew+



BLESSING OF THE PETS



OCTOBER 4 4:00 P.M. CHAPEL-IN-THE-WOODS



ALL PETS WELCOME!

St. Matthew's Hosts the Rural & Migrant Ministry



On Wed. Aug 19, St. Matthew's hosted the Rural and Migrant Ministry Overnight Leadership Campers for activities and a picnic.

These campers are the children, aged 8-17, of rural and migrant farm workers from throughout New York State. RMM provides an opportunity for an overnight camp experience these children would otherwise never have. As part of their camp experience, they take a day for an outing, this year to the Norwalk Maritime Museum, and then to St. Matthew's for activities, a picnic and a vesper service at Chapel-in-the-Woods. What a joy it was to share our beautiful grounds and outdoor chapel and be a part of the laughter and camaraderie of the children. The campers romped on the inflatable slide and through the water obstacle course, jumped into the stream, enjoyed table games in the Fellowship Room, and as one would expect, ate mountains of hot dogs, hamburgers, ice cream, cotton candy and popcorn. At the end of the evening, campers and St. Matthew's parishioners left, tired but happy from a wonderful time together.

[Watch the RMM Leadership Camp video](#) to learn more about this amazing program.



Jacob Gruss Speaking on the Hymnal 1982



The Hymnal 1982 is often considered the "Rolls-Royce of Church Hymnals". Music Director, Jacob Gruss, on June 14 gave a wonderful class including brief history of the hymnal's publishing, an explanation of its structure, along with a bit of participatory singing.

Comings & Goings

New & Returning Parishioners:

Mary-Grace Reeder and Robertson McAnulty
37 W. 8th Street, Apt. 82
New York, NY 10011

Mr. & Mrs. Austin and Anna Allmann
48 Avondale Road
White Plains, NY 10605

Holy Baptism

Received into Christ's Holy Church

Perry Townsend Geiger-July 19, 2026

William Massie Manning- July 19, 2026

Thomas Massie Furnary- July 19, 2026

Avery Atwood Massie- July 19, 2026

Riley Jane Massie- July 19, 2026