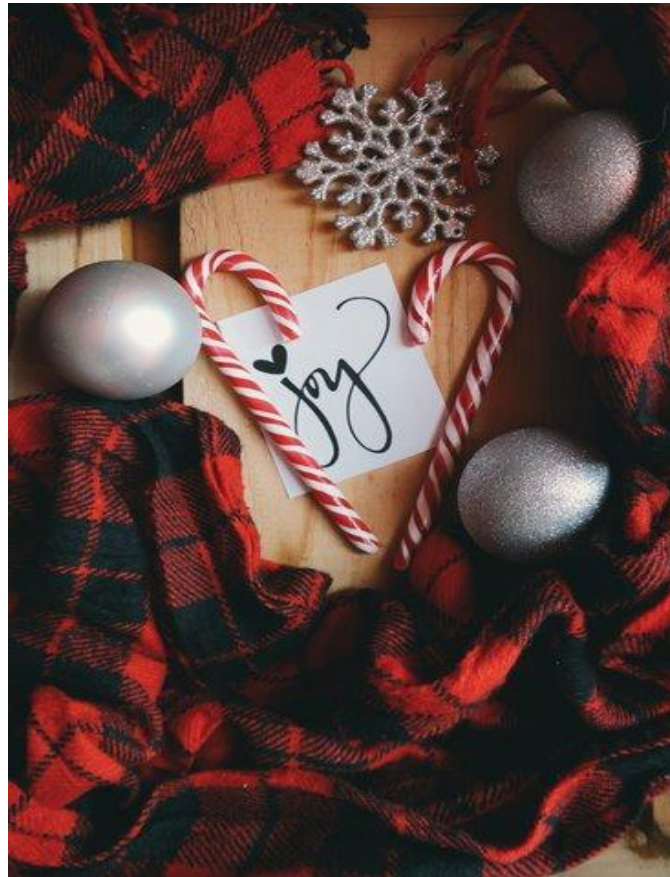




# Saint Matthew's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH



**Pajama Lessons & Carols**  
**The First Sunday after Christmas**  
**December 31, 2023**  
**10:00 am**

**Welcome to St. Matthew's! We are glad you are here.**

The People are invited to read the words in **bold**. If you're joining us from home, please stand, kneel, sing, and pray with us as you're able. No matter where you are, joining in this worship service is a form of prayer that connects you to God and to each other. Whenever two or three are gathered, even virtually, Scripture reminds us that Jesus is present among us.

**Children are most welcome and are encouraged to participate in worship.**

To the parents of children: Relax! God put the wiggle in children. Sit toward the front so your little ones can see and hear. Go ahead and quietly answer their questions. If you don't know the answer, the priest would love to talk to your little one. When you sing the hymns and join in the prayers, you teach little hearts how to be faithful; you are their best model. If you need to leave the service, that's okay. Don't be shy about coming back. It was Jesus who said, "Let the little children come to me."

**Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, there is a place for you at St. Matt's.**

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**Prelude**

David Christensen (b. 1957)

Prelude on "Love came down at Christmas"

**Entrance Hymn 100**

"Joy to the world!"

ANTIOCH

**Welcome & Bidding**

*Officiant* Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy:  
a Savior is born to you. Alleluia.

*People* **Unto us a child is born. Alleluia.**

*The Officiant continues*

Dear People of God: In this Christmas season, let it be our joy and delight to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy Child Jesus, and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died, and especially for the Church in our country and in this town.

And because he particularly loves them let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children as well as those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore. **Amen.**

*The people are seated.*

### **The First Lesson**

**Isaiah 52:7-10**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’ Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

### **The Collect**

God of the prophets in every age: you send messengers of hope for the world. Strengthen us to live as faithful people who proclaim a present and future of joy and renewed life. **Amen.**

### **The First Carol—Hymn 99**

“Go tell it on the mountain”

## **The Second Lesson**

**Luke 1:39-45**

Mary ran to see her cousin Elizabeth who lived in the hill country. When she cried out, “Elizabeth, it’s so good to see you!” the baby in Elizabeth’s belly jumped up and down. Elizabeth all of a sudden was filled with the Holy Spirit and yelled, “You are so blessed, Mary! And the little one inside you is blessed as well. How God must love me to send the mother of my Lord to visit me. As soon as I heard your voice, this little guy inside me jumped up and down for joy. This is just as God said it would happen, and we are both so blessed to see things work out this way. God is good to us indeed.”

## **The Collect**

God of surprises, you store up for us more good news than we can ask or imagine. Help us to keep our eyes open for the ways that you are at work in the world around us, and for the goodness you would have us help create in this world. You are good to us, indeed. And we are blessed by your love. **Amen.**

**The Second Carol—Hymn 84** “Love came down at Christmas” GARTAN

## **The Third Lesson**

**Luke 2:1-7**

In order to count how many people there were so that he could tax them, the emperor told everyone to go their hometowns to be counted. So Joseph went with Mary, his fiancée, who was expecting a baby at any time, from Nazareth to Bethlehem. His family was descended from King David, and King David had lived in Bethlehem. While they were there, Mary delivered a baby boy, wrapped him up tight, and laid him in a feed trough in the barn where they were staying because the inns were all full.

## **The Collect**

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of Mary: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**The Fourth Lesson**

**Luke 2:8-20**

Meanwhile, in the field, shepherds were watching their sheep during the night. All of a sudden an angel stood right in front of them, and God’s glory was shining all around and they were scared to death. The angel told them not to be afraid because there was only good news. “This news is so good,” the angel said, “that everyone will be happy. Today in the city of David, the Savior whom everyone’s been waiting for was born. I want you to go find him. Here’s how you’ll know he’s the right baby: He’ll be lying in a feed trough all wrapped up in strips of cloth.”

When the angel said that, the skies burst into song, and angels filled up the entire sky, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to those on earth whom God loves.”

When the angels had gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and find this baby boy they were talking about.” So they ran and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the feed trough, just as the angel had told them. They told Mary and Joseph what the angel had said about who this child was and would become. Everyone was amazed at their story. But Mary kept this entire story in her heart. The shepherds praised God for all that had happened that night, and went back to their sheep who had been wondering where the shepherds had gone.

**The Collect**

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## The Fifth Lesson

John 1:1-14

Before there was anything, there was the *Word*, with God and in God. The *Word* was God! Everything there ever was in the whole universe came to life through the *Word*. In fact, there's nothing that the *Word* didn't make. Life came into being through the *Word*. That life lights up for all people to see. It shines in the darkness, and as you know, darkness cannot put out light.

John the Baptist was a man of God. He understood that Jesus was the light, and that Jesus was coming to be our savior. Some people didn't recognize that, but those who did, who let him shine his light into their hearts, had the power to become God's children.

And the *Word* actually became one of us, and lived here on earth with us. You and I have seen his glory, and he is filled with grace and truth.

John cried out in the desert, pointing to Jesus and saying, "He's the One. He's the One I've been talking about!" Because Jesus is filled with grace, all of us have more than our share of grace. In fact, we have been given grace upon grace upon grace. And even more grace than that.

The law given to Moses served its purpose; now grace and truth is serving its purpose through Jesus Christ. No one knows what God the Father looks like. Jesus, God's only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, is the one who makes God the Father known to us.

## The Collect

O God, you make us glad with the yearly festival of the birth of your son Jesus Christ: grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes again in glory. **Amen.**

## The Fifth Carol—Hymn 107

IN DULCI JUBILO

“Good Christian friends, rejoice”

## Prayers of the People

*Officiant* All things have been clothed in grace by the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ; all the earth has been enlightened in his dawning. Trusting in the light and grace, let us pray for all people in need and for all the world, saying: Merciful God, hear our prayer.

*Intercessor* For the churches, that united in life they may be faithful in witness to your Son come among us, merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* For the poor of the earth, for the victims of warfare, that their mourning may be turned into joy, merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* For all families, that they may be renewed in joy, receive the word of mercy into their hearts, and become places of hospitality to the stranger, merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* For the leaders of nations, that they may turn from ways of fear and warfare to the ways of your wisdom and grace, merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* For all bishops, priests, and deacons; and especially for Michael, our Presiding Bishop, for Jeff and Laura, our Bishops, and for Marissa, our Rector; that they may rejoice in your mercy and faithfully teach the greatness of your coming among us, merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* For this assembly, for our sick and those who have asked for our prayers, especially Daniel, Kristen, Vinny, Antonio, Thomas, Diana, James, Carol, Susan, Lee, Arlene, Barbara, Mike, Jack, Chuck, Joan, David, Liz, Ann, Jack, Pat, Kathy, Dick, Scott, Martin, Ann, Melinda, Aaron, Dann and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and for ourselves, that we may be renewed by the light and grace of your incarnate word, merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* God of all time, help us enter the New Year quietly, thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others, mindful that our steps make an impact and our words carry power. May we walk gently. May we speak only after we have listened well. Creator of all life, help us enter the New Year reverently, aware that you have endowed every creature and plant, every person and habitat with beauty and purpose. May we regard the world with tenderness. May we honor rather than destroy. Lover of all souls, help us enter the New Year joyfully, willing to laugh and dance and dream, remembering our many gifts with thanks and looking forward to blessings yet to come. May we welcome your lavish love. In this new year, may the grace and peace of Christ bless us now, and in the days ahead. **Amen.**

—“*Help Us Enter the New Year,*” *Vinita Hampton Wright*

*Intercessor* Rejoicing in the company of Mary, mother of our Lord, and of all the witnesses of the incarnation, we commend these prayers and all our life to you, O God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*The Officiant adds a concluding collect*

Gracious God, Giver of all good gifts, accept the prayers we offer on this joyful feast. May the Rising Sun of Christ spread across the whole world and brighten us all; we ask this in the Name that is above all other names, that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## **Welcome & Announcements**

### **The Christmas Blessing**

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier be with you this day and always. **Amen.**



**Dismissal Hymn 87**

MENDELSSOHN

“Hark! the herald angels sing”

**Dismissal**

*Officiant*

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

*People*

**Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Postlude**

Anonymous, 18th-century

Old Bohemian Christmas Toccata

*Please join us for cookies and cocoa.*

## **Worship Leaders**

<i>Officiant</i>	The Rev. Marissa Rohrbach
<i>Readers</i>	Congregational Volunteers
<i>Intercessor</i>	Chris Perry
<i>Organist</i>	Andrew Leslie Cooper

**Prayer Requests** *Specific prayer requests will be kept on the prayer list for six weeks. Please call or email the office if you have additions or deletions to the prayer list. **You are encouraged to offer your own prayers silently or aloud as indicated in the Prayers of the People.***

Today and through the week, we remember all those who have been commended to our prayers. For those who are sick or in need: *Daniel, Kristen, Vinny, Antonio, Thomas, Diana, James, Carol, Susan, Lee, Arlene, Barbara, Mike, Jack, Chuck, David, Joan, Liz, Ann, Jack, Pat, Kathy, Dick, Scott, Martin, Ann, Melinda, Aaron, Dann and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. For those serving in the military, Matthew Comeau.*

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for St. Mark's, Bridgewater; Good Shepherd, Bristol/Plainville; St. Paul's, Brookfield; Trinity, Brooklyn. For soup kitchens and food pantries, and all ministries that feed those who go without.

## Weekly Calendar — December 31 – January 7

### **Sunday, December 31**

10:00am

11:00am

### **The First Sunday after Christmas**

Pajama Lesson & Carols

Cookies & Cocoa

### **Wednesday, January 3**

7:30-9:00pm

Social Justice & Racial Healing group meeting

### **Thursday, January 4**

7:30-9:00pm

St. Matthew's Church Choir rehearsal

### **Sunday, January 7**

10:00am

### **The First Sunday after the Epiphany**

Holy Eucharist – Rite II

**Connection details available on our website, in the e-news,  
and in our Parishioner Facebook group.**

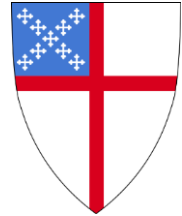
Need to sign up for the e-news? It's easy – just go to [www.stmatthewswilton.org/newsletter](http://www.stmatthewswilton.org/newsletter).

Need to join the Parishioner Facebook Group? Go here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/StMatthewsOnline/>

Need something else? Send Marissa a note or be in touch with another member of the staff.

## Worship Schedule at St. Matthew's

Holy Eucharist on Sundays at 10am



*Please keep an eye on our website and social media as well as our e-news. There you'll find information and opportunities to connect for friends and members of all ages.*

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### **Staff**

Rector	The Rev. Marissa S. Rohrbach, <a href="mailto:marissa@stmatthewswilton.org">marissa@stmatthewswilton.org</a>
Music Ministries & Organist	Andrew Leslie Cooper, <a href="mailto:andrew@stmatthewswilton.org">andrew@stmatthewswilton.org</a>
Parish Administrator	Nancy Johnson, <a href="mailto:office@stmatthewswilton.org">office@stmatthewswilton.org</a>
Director of WEPCO	Donna Savage, <a href="mailto:wepco@optonline.net">wepco@optonline.net</a>
Bookkeeper	Louann Miska, <a href="mailto:louann.miska@gmail.com">louann.miska@gmail.com</a>
Media Technician	Matthew Henshaw
Nursery Staff	Lucia Sato
Sexton	Alix Williams, Jairo Mejia

### **Wardens and Officers**

Warden	Pam Ely	Clerk	Jennifer DeAngelis
Warden	Anne Newton	Asst. Treasurer	Brian Angerame
Treasurer	Rob Kyle		

### **The Vestry**

Eleanor Arnold	Amy Gubner	Endy Perry
Beth Baker	Vytas Kisielius	Paul Reis
Pam Carlson		

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