



THE ANTIPHON

The Parish Newsletter of
St Matthias' Church, Dallas, Texas

DECEMBER 2017

Beloved in Christ,

I am sitting down to write this in the run up to Thanksgiving. I am mindful of just how much I have for which to be thankful. Specifically, I want to be sure to tell you that I am grateful for our parish. I am extremely blessed to be able to share in the life of this our parish family. You are a blessing and wonderful!

The Church year is winding to a close. We now have liturgical gears to shift. The Service music at 10:30 will be the music composed by John Merbecke for the first Book of Common Prayer, so it is very Anglican. It is simple and straightforward, in keeping with the sensibilities of Advent. The secular world is well into what it calls "the holidays." How can you possibly have holidays if nothing is holy to you? I don't know. In any event, the world around us sees it as a marvelous time to move some merchandise. The temptation for us is to get caught up in all of that. But the Church calls us, you and me, to Holy Days. So there is always a tension this time of year between these two.

In his first epistle, Saint Peter (3:15) admonishes us to revere Jesus as Lord and to always be ready to give a defense for the hope that is in us. How to do that? **Keep Advent.** Do not be in a huge hurry to put up all the Christmas decorations all at once. Do it in stages. Start with an Advent Wreath. Use it - daily, if you can. Over the course of the next few weeks, if you just have to, put up the decorations, but do it a bit at a time. If your neighbors ask you what you are doing, they are presenting you with the perfect opportunity to invite them to come to Church with you at Christmas. Advent is indeed a season of solemn preparation - so be very intentional about your preparations.

Make sure that in addition to the outward preparing that you are making some inward preparation. I am always available to hear confessions by appointment. I am available on Saturdays (with the exception of the 16th) at

noon for confessions. If you would like to talk about the state of your soul, I'm always glad to do that. Just give me a call: 214.358.2585. The Church also invites you to embrace the giving of alms in this season - (*See "Advent Self-Denial Offering" below*). Make sure that you leave room in your schedule for some increased acts of devotion. Come to a weekday Mass and give God of the first fruits of your day. The stillness of the early morning is a fine time to share with Him.

This year's calendar presents us with a challenge - This is the shortest Advent we can get - The Fourth Sunday of Advent is also Christmas Eve. The last time it happened was in 2006. Christians do have an obligation to attend Mass on all Sundays and on Christmas. That is our bounden duty, as the old Prayer Book says. These are two separate things this year. So on Sunday December 24th we will have Mattins at 9:00 and **one Mass** at 9:30am. It will be a Solemn Mass but I am mindful that everyone needs to be there, so adjustments will be made. This year is out of the ordinary for all of us, so please do make your plans to be in on everything now.

The challenge, of course, is to decorate the place for Christmas and we can't fully do that in the church until after the 4th Sunday of Advent Mass. (*I have given the Altar Guild the go-ahead to hang the garlands on Saturday.*) We also need to deck the Great Hall. My plan is for us to do that on Saturday the 23rd, even though it is technically before the Fourth Sunday of Advent, it is still pretty late in the game! I will make sure we have a suitable tree and some lights. Will you make plans to be with us? Mass will be celebrated that morning at the regular Saturday time. So let's gather after Mass in the Great Hall. We'll put the coffee pot on. Kids and guests are definitely welcome. If you can't handle heavy lifting, don't worry, tree ornaments don't weigh that much. It is an opportunity for us to do something together that we will then be able to enjoy throughout the Christmas Season.

Our Christmass celebration will begin on Christmas Eve at 10:00pm with appropriate music in the church, then at 10:30 a Solemn Procession and Solemn High Mass - bring the kids, the neighbors, the neighbor's kids. (We will have a nursery.) And we will follow the Mass with a gathering in the Great Hall to toast the birth of our Savior. On Christmas morning, Mattins will be read at 10:45 and Mass will be celebrated at 11:00am. On Sunday the 31st, we will have our annual Service of Lessons and Carols as the Liturgy of the Word at the High Mass followed by a reception in the Great Hall (*When, glad we will have it decked!*). More so than probably any other time during the year your friends and neighbors might just be open to accepting an invitation

to come to church with you. If not on Christmas Eve, then just maybe on the Sunday after - we do have 12 days in which to celebrate!

It is a true joy to be here with you.

God bless you all,



NOTIFICATION OF 2018 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Fast upon this year's turning, it will be time for us to gather as God's People once more to review the year 2017, to look forward to at least the immediate future, and to elect some of our own to lead us into that future, both in our parish and in our diocese. The Vestry and I have set our **Annual Congregational Meeting** for Sunday morning, January 28th, beginning with Mattins at 9:00am and Mass at 9:30am. Please remember that there will be one Mass only that day. Following Mass we will have a brief break for continental breakfast. Then we will come into session in the church. **I ask all of you to clear your calendars now for this very important gathering.**

It is, therefore, time for nominations to be made both for the parish Vestry and Delegates to Diocesan Convention. At the conclusion of my remarks, you will find information on the nomination process. I ask you to study it carefully and follow it ... and begin now to pray for the Lord's guidance of us and our decisions.

I am looking forward to moving into and through the beginning of this new Year of Our Lord with you. I pray that my ministry among you will work for the glory of God, the sanctification of your souls and our being a blessing to God's world. Certainly you are doing these things for me. Thank you, so very much. Be assured of my love,



ST MATTHIAS' NOMINATION PROCESS

At St Matthias', all communicant members-in-good-standing of the parish make up the committee which nominates candidates for the offices of Vestry and Diocesan Convention Delegate as well as the electors for these offices. Official nomination packets with a letter from the Rector to potential nominees are available on the narthex table or from the Rector. Only nominations made through these packets are valid. **The deadline for nominations is Wednesday, December 20th.** They must be given to the Rector or be in to the Administrator's office by that date.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE OFFICES OF VESTRY AND DELEGATE

The importance of these offices, and therefore of the qualities needed in those elected to them, arises out of the fact that both of these ministries exercise the ministry of **headship**. Vestry exercise this ministry in collaboration with the parish's Rector; Diocesan Convention Delegates exercise it in collaboration with our diocesan Bishop.

The ministry of headship is radically important in every community. Why? Because of the way God has constituted the human community: spiritually and psychologically, the quality of every human community's *headship* greatly determines what that community can become and achieve. We see this first of all in our natural human families: the quality of the parents greatly determines what the children can become and achieve. Therefore the nature of Vestry members and Convention Delegates has decisive impact on a parish's and diocese's spiritual depth and health as well as their mission, ministry and temporal well-being.

Years ago, a holy and spiritually-deep bishop of the Anglican Communion articulated well the qualities needed in those holding these offices. He stated:

1. They must be deeply committed Christians, baptized and confirmed for a goodly number of years before ever being considered for service; hopefully this will insure that they have the spiritual depth needed for leadership;
2. They must have been active members of the parish for a number of years: hopefully this will insure that they "know" the parish they will help lead and provides time for the parish to experience them as ministers and to evaluate them as leaders;

3. They must have a track-record of sacrificial and fruitful ministry in the parish and support of it not only with their time and talent but with their financial resources;
4. They must have the spiritual and emotional maturity to work well with others, with a positive attitude, expressing their opinions and promoting their concerns out in the open instead of “behind the scenes”, striving with others for consensus, with the ability to submit to and accept the decisions of the body; and
5. They should be able to work with and under those in authority over them.

As we nominate and elect people for these holy offices, keep these qualities in mind and be directed by them.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO NOMINATE?

The Canons of the Church allow only **duly qualified voters** to make nominations. A duly qualified voter is defined by the Canons as one who

- is baptized **and** confirmed, and at least 16 years of age;
- is a communicant member of the Parish **in good standing**.

To be a communicant member in good standing, a person must be

- *registered on the membership rolls of the parish;*
- *faithful in attendance at worship Sunday by Sunday;*
- *faithful in working, praying, and giving of themselves and their substance for the spread of the Kingdom of God; and*
- *must have received the Holy Communion at least three times in the preceding year.*

QUALIFICATIONS FOR NOMINATION AND ELECTION

The Canons of the Church and the Customary of the Diocese require that:

The candidate must be

- a duly qualified voter (see above);
- a consistent, concerned steward of God’s blessings;

This means the nominee must be actively involved in ministry in the Parish and a financial supporter of her, with over a year’s demonstration of sincere effort to meet his/her financial commitment to the Parish. Since the tithe (10%) of income is the biblical standard for giving, the nominee should be someone who has achieved this or is well on their way to achieving it.

- someone whose lifestyle conforms to Christian expectations;
- someone whose attitude about the Parish, the Christian Faith, and life is positive, not negative;
- someone who is able to work well with the Rector and others on a decision-making body;
- someone who is willing and able to commit the time necessary.

It is the custom of St Matthias' that spouses of present Vestry members should not serve on the Vestry at the same time.

Expectations and Responsibilities

It is very important that those who nominate and those nominated understand and accept the demands made and required of Vestry members and Convention Delegates. Those considered for nomination should be individuals who **already** are living the life required of parish leaders: it is folly to expect someone, simply because of election to an office, to fulfill its nature and demands unless, in their life in the parish, they are already living these things.

Vestry Members (3 year term) are responsible for leading the Parish through full involvement in our worship, educational, fellowship and service life. During the course of their term, they will

- worship every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation and take part in other parish devotions (*e.g. Stations of the Cross in Lent, etc.*);
- participate in the Parish's educational programs;
- participate in Parish fellowship activities (*e.g. Lenten Suppers, Fellowship Supper, etc.*);
- attend monthly Vestry meetings, called meetings, and annual Vestry Conference;
- oversee the work of a Vestry Commission;
- lead their fellow-parishioners in a life of sacrificial service of the Lord, one another, and the world.

Convention Delegates (1 year term) must be able and willing to attend the Annual Diocesan Convention, any called meetings of Convention, and meetings of the deanery (several meetings a year).

THE NOMINATION PROCESS

1. As a candidate's eligibility must be determined, nominations will be reviewed by the parish officers responsible for the information determining eligibility (*Rector, Rector's Warden, and Stewardship Officer*). Anyone nominated who does not fulfill all requirements for eligibility will be informed of this by the Rector or Rector's Warden, explaining the reason.
2. **All** candidates determined to be eligible for election will be presented to the congregation for consideration. Therefore, at the election meeting, there will be no nominations from the floor.
3. Nominations must be made on the official Nomination Form, with **all** information and signatures required, and the form must be received by the Rector or into the Parish Office **by the deadline, December 20th**.
4. Only **one** Nomination Form may be submitted for each nominee.



DON'T FORGET ... OUR ANNUAL COAT DRIVE

Benefitting *Herbert Marcus Elementary School* scheduled for **Sunday, December 3rd**. Our goal is to have a coat from each family at St Matthias'. They don't have to be new, but should be in good condition. After Thanksgiving, there are lots of sales at Walmart, Target, and even the Thrift stores often have good buys on winter coats. If you have any questions, please contact me at 972 234 1031. Thank you. *Bob Priest*, Marcus Co-ordinator.



PRAYERS AND SQUARES MINISTRY

The Prayers and Squares Ministry **will not meet** in December. We will have our annual Christmas Party on Wednesday, December 6th. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 11th from 6:30pm to 9:00pm. For the time being, we will meet on Thursday evening only. We have quilts available for giving. If you know someone who would benefit from extra prayers and support, please consider a quilt for them. Contact nitahinshaw@aol.com to make a request.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION

2017 - The deadline for receiving your 2017 contributions which you want included on your 2017 statement for federal income tax purposes is **Sunday, December 31st, 2017**.

2018 - Do you wish envelopes in which to make your financial stewardship payments? During the month of December, they will be in the Great Hall on the table against the north wall. Please note on the sheets your name and the number of the box you have taken.



DECEMBER FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

Jingle, Jingle, Mix and Mingle!

Christmas is almost here!

So make a dish and a wish to be of Christmas cheer.

Our December Fellowship Supper will be hosted by Nancy Gaines at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Misty and David Krawetzke. Please gather with us on **Saturday, December 9th at 7:00pm** to celebrate this joyous time of year. The address is 501 Byron Court, Irving 75038. Maps will be available on the narthex table the Sunday prior to the event. Please complete the sign up form in the Sunday bulletin.

If your last name begins with

A through H

I through P

Q through Z

Bring either

Vegetable or Main Dish

Dessert or Main Dish

Salad or Main Dish

DECEMBER COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Shelter Team: *Captains* Raymond & Cynthia Turnbull, Danelle Harris, Timothy & Abigail Harwood, Patrick & Megan McGehee, Christopher & Savannah Brown, David & Dixie Turnbull. Team meets at church 4:00pm, Sunday, December 17th.

Sandwich Makers: Team 4 - Patricia Goodwin, Patrick & Megan McGehee, James & Deborah Nugent, Susan McQueen, David & Dixie Turnbull, Donna Wheeler, Savannah Brown, Niesa Page, Raymond & Cynthia Turnbull, Tiffany Wright.



WOMEN'S GROUP

CHRISTMAS ADOPT A FAMILY – Please join us in the Great Hall at 7:00 pm on Monday, December 18th to wrap the presents for the families we have adopted this year. If you have extra gift boxes you would like to donate, they will be most appreciated. Wrapping paper and tape will be provided and refreshments will be served. Contact Patty Goodwin at (817) 846-8929 with any questions.

If you selected an angel from the tree, please remember to have your unwrapped gifts(s) along with its respective angel (very important!) returned no later than Sunday, December 17th and place the items on our designated tables located by the double doors entering into the Great Hall.



THE SEASON OF ADVENT

On December 3rd, a new Christian year begins; it is the **First Sunday of Advent**. Advent (Latin for “coming”) is a season which looks at our Lord’s comings to us in the past, the present and the future. **The past:** his coming in the flesh two millennia ago. **The future:** his return in glory at the end of the ages. **The present:** his coming to us daily in the events of our lives and in our life in his Church. The season is four weeks in length and ends with our celebration of our Lord’s first coming, *the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ (Christmas)*.

Liturgical changes in Advent: At Mass, the *Trisagion (Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us)* is used in place of the *Kyrie* and the *Gloria in excelsis*. At Solemn High Mass, we sing this to a beautiful setting by Alexander Archangelsky, a Russian composer.

Vestments: In keeping with Advent’s tone of solemn expectation, the vestments of the Sacred Ministers are of a sober, royal color. At St Matthias’ we keep the ancient English use of Sarum (Salisbury) with vestments of gray-blue. The pall which covers the Altar also changes to a tapestry with many colors of blue in it.

Other Advent customs:

- * Our progress through the four Sundays of Advent is marked by the four candles of an **Advent Wreath**, one additional lit each Sunday as we draw closer to Christmas. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, a custom stemming from a time in which Advent was more like a “little Lent”, with a penitential emphasis. The rose candle relieved the penitential emphasis with the injection of a note of rejoicing.
- * **A Jesse Tree** hangs in the church narthex. Based on Isaiah 11:1, “There shall come forth a shoot from the root of Jesse”, the tree is decorated with symbols of Jesus’ spiritual heritage. This family history conveys the drama of the Father’s activity as he worked through history to prepare the world for the coming of his Son.
- * The **Advent Home Liturgy** provides daily devotions for the season.

CHRISTMAS SEASON AT ST MATTHIAS'

★ **Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24th**

9:00am **Mattins**

9:30am **Solemn High Mass**

Church School is in recess today.

10:00pm Musical Interlude

10:30pm **Solemn Procession and Solemn High Mass**

The traditional, beautiful Great Mass of the Feast. Let your children enjoy it as well! Nursery provided.

★ **Christmas Morn, Monday, December 25th**

10:45am **Mattins**

11:00am **Low Mass** A simple, said Liturgy; no music

★ **The First Sunday after Christmas Day, December 31st**

8:00am **Low Mass**

Church School is in recess this day and resumes January 7th.

10:30am **Solemn High Mass, with Lessons & Carols**

A wonderful liturgy, with the whole Christmas story and its meaning told in Sacred Scripture and celebrated in song! Stay for the reception in the Great Hall.

★ **The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, January 6th**

9:00am **Mattins**

9:15am **Mass**

Christmas Season ends celebrating the fact that the Babe of Bethlehem is not only Savior of the Jews, but of all mankind!

