ADVENT/CHRISTMAS 2020

Matt's Media



The Newsletter of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Islington

Published November 29, 2020

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From the Pastor

Rev. Philip Stonhouse

Hello to my St. Matt's Family,

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord (Psalm 27:14)

Advent is a season of waiting. We remember the days when Israel had waited for the Messiah, a king to overthrow the tyranny of sin. As such, we remember that we too are waiting for our King, Jesus, to come back into the world and fully establish His Kingdom of Heaven here on earth.

We were reminded by Bishop Jenny on November 8, that we have been waiting for a lot these days, like election results, a vaccine, equality, peace and unity, or any number of things that this world does not yet have. In fact, when we really think about it, our whole life could feel like waiting. There is always something we yearn for, some way to grow, some greater joy, something we don't have, but we know that shouldn't stop us. Sure we live in a gentle sense of what we lack, but here at our fingertips is already a great bounty, thanks to God. The question for us now is not 'what are we waiting for' but 'how are we preparing and working towards what we wait for?'

Do you have a list of things that you want to do once COVID-19 is in our rear-view mirror? Have you been watching the news and listening to experts to know what is best, what we can and cannot do and how to stay healthy? During the election did you look into what the numbers meant and how we might understand what was happening? Did you celebrate or mourn when the result slowly came in and one step was taken in either direction?

These are all parts of waiting and these responses are also natural parts of waiting for God. In this Advent Season, how can we productively participate in this waiting? Perhaps we could create a list of things we long for and then try to determine how we can have those things right now. Just as 'take-out' is not the same experience as eating at a restaurant, but they are alike, how can we create a welcoming, loving space, even if we are not yet in God's Kingdom? How can we show others what God's kingship would mean, even when people are just getting to know Him? How can we learn and study the things that will help us to grow and stay healthy, physically and spiritually, so that we might be ready for God's Kingdom to come? How can we mourn and celebrate the ways we come closer to the kingdom, as we see the things we still lack?

... continued



From the Pastor (continued)

We already do a lot together towards this end, but what are the next steps? During the Advent season we have a lot going on at the church for you, but also for those you know and love. I welcome you to invite others to join us online. There is so much hope that we can look towards in our waiting.

In some ways this is waiting, but it is also preparing; it is actively waiting and working towards the very thing we are waiting for. We live in these 'now' and 'not yet' times, where we know bits of God's Kingdom, but we are still waiting. This can be very hard, but we can use these times with purpose and meaning, because God has given us a vision of the future we long for. He has given us a way through Jesus to get there. So, even now in these strange times, we can begin to create and live in the world we long for.

The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?

(Psalm 27:1)

God bless you while you wait and while you work.

Your brother in Christ, Rev. Philip

Financial Update, October 31, 2020

Please find below an update of the parish's operating fund as of October 31, 2020.

Operating Fund	October 2020	October 2019	Budget 2020
Income	\$209,692	\$226,614	\$260,842
Expenses	\$220,614	\$262,691	\$273,787
Net Operations	(\$10,921)	(\$36,076)	(\$12,945)

Although givings are significantly reduced this year, the deficit is reduced as well due to a combination of the Diocese's three month Jubilee payments for our Priest's salary (\$15,837) and assessment (\$11,493), a Diocesan utility subsidy (\$1,950), and the federal government wage subsidy program (\$10,729) which totals \$40,009. It is our understanding that these subsidies (other than perhaps the wage subsidy), will not be available in 2021.

We are hopeful that with the parish's continued generosity, an increase in givings and fundraising efforts we will be able to reduce the 2020 deficit and begin 2021 without a previous year's deficit.

Thank you for your support and caring.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Wardens.



Wardens' Report

Karen Lee, Stuart Watt, Shantelle Hampton and Lianne Thompson

As we enjoyed some lovely Fall weather, St. Matthew's was able to offer in-person and online worship from September 13 until November 22. As of November 23, the province and diocese returned us to a more restrictive phase. As a result, services will be exclusively online at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. for at least a 28 day period. Many thanks to Rev. Philip and Colin Hall and the staff for making this possible. The purchase (made possible by a Diocesan grant) of new (or reconfiguration of old) equipment has made this process go well under difficult circumstances.

One of the noteworthy events of this Fall was the Celebration of New Ministry of Rev. Philip Stonhouse held on November 8, 2020. This service represented the culmination of the hard work and commitment Philip has done to become a Priest. Bishop Jenny Andison presided over the service. Congratulations, Philip, and thank you for being with us.

The parish extends sincere thanks to Nancy and Deborah Hurn and their team of Choppers for their dedication in providing a weekly lunch to the Toronto Urban Native Ministries. We also thank the parish for their ongoing support in continuing to financially support this Outreach initiative.

We also extend our thanks to Marguerite Locke for her leadership of the MacMillan Food sales, the proceeds of which will assist in offsetting the 2020 deficit.

We are delighted to welcome Christine Ivy as our Youth and Discipleship Pastor. Christine's responsibilities include providing leadership to the Youth, evolving our discipleship ministry, and supporting parish communications. Thank you, Christine, for joining our team.

As you will see in other parts of this newsletter, there are many worship and other events planned for the Advent and Christmas Season. In your journey through this Season we hope you will find these meaningful.

Advent and Christmas Offering 2020

Gifts received through our Advent and Christmas envelopes will be directed towards offsetting our current deficit. A financial update can be found on the previous page.

We give thanks to God for His continued provision and care for St. Matthew's, especially in these uncertain times. Wishing you and your families a blessed Advent and Christmas Season!

In Honour Gift

Looking for a gift for that special person?

You might want to consider an *Honour's Gift* to St. Matthew's in honour of that person on the occasion of a birthday, anniversary, Christmas. St. Matthew's will send an acknowledgement of your gift to the recipient. A tax receipt will be issued to the donor. Thank you for your consideration.

The Wardens





Many Faces, One Heart!

We are delighted to unveil our display, "Many Faces, One Heart," which is now in place in the Narthex. This display consists of smiling pictures of eight of our parishioners and their personal witness statements. They share what St. Matthew's means to each of them as they journey in their faith walk.

The display stand was designed and created by our parishioner, John Lawrence. The wood is recycled from a former pew. We are very grateful to John for this contribution.

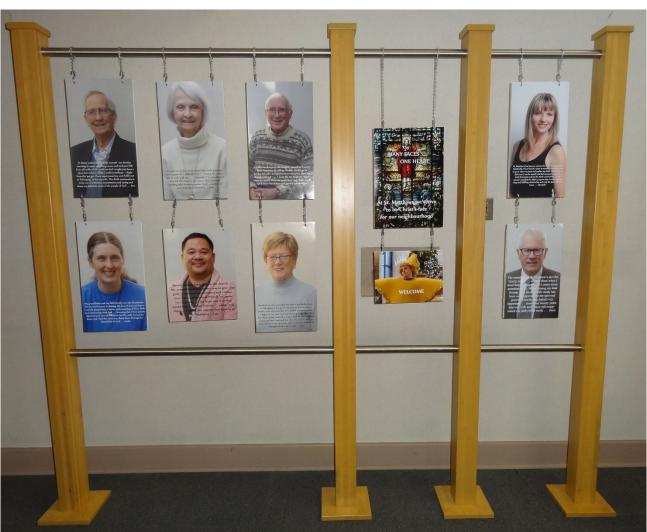
We are also indebted to Rev. Merv Mercer, who not only photographed the participants, but also prepared the photos, with the individual statements, for the display.

We hope, that along with sharing parishioners' testimonials, the display provides a 'welcome' for folks when they arrive for worship.

Many thanks to everyone who participated in making this display one of St. Matthew's treasures.

Participants: Ken Boughton, Joan Corbett, Emily Crump, Bruce Gleeson, Shantelle Hampton, Dave Oakden, Iain Shao, and Ann Sim.

Thank You!





Celebration of New Ministry

A service of celebration and commitment for our new Priest, The Reverend Philip Stonhouse, was held in the church on November 8, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. Many people attended in person, with many more attending online on Zoom. Guest Preacher, Bishop Jenny, was outstanding.

The weather was delightful, allowing for an impromptu "Receiving Line" for Rev. Philip and Bishop Jenny outdoors as people exited the service. Social distancing was observed and masks were worn. Guests received a "DIY Tea Party Loot Bag" to carry home which contained a Peak Freen package, Lindt truffle, Earl Grey tea bag, and doily.

Bishop Jenny's remarkable sermon is available on YouTube for everyone to hear.



















What's Happening

Monday Wednesday Friday	12:00 p.m.	Noon Renewal on St. Matthew's YouTube channel (available at noon or any time afterward) youtube.com/channel/UCeTIBsRzvoz-zJcKv5nKb7g		
Tuesday	9:00 a.m.	Soup's On: Soup Making for Toronto Urban Native Ministry		
Nov 16 –Dec 8	Advent Series 'Surprised by Hope' – 4-week GIFT Groups are on-going			
Tues Dec 1	10:00-11:00 a.m.	Warm Clothing Appeal drop-off, north-west parking lot		
Sat Dec 5	8:00 a.m.	Men's Breakfast on Zoom Contact Colin Hall (colinhall1999@gmail.com)		
Sun Dec 13	10:00-11:00 a.m.	MacMillan's pick-up north-west church parking lot		
Sat Jan 9	8:00 a.m.	Men's Breakfast on Zoom Contact Colin Hall (colinhall1999@gmail.com)		
Wed Jan 20	TBD	Welcoming Committee Meeting on Zoom		
Wed Jan 27	7:00 p.m.	Parish Council Meeting on Zoom		
Sat Jan 30	4:00 p.m.	Messy Church		
Sun Feb 28	TBD	Vestry Meeting		

CAROL EVENSONG FUNDRAISER

December 20, 3:30 PM Online on Zoom



Advent / Christmas 2020





Online via Zoom and YouTube

Sunday, December 6th

9:30AM Family Service 11AM Classic Service

Sunday, December 13th

9:30AM Family Service 11AM Classic Service 4PM Lessons and Carols

A service of nine lessons, along with carols, solos and seasonal instrumental music.

Wednesday, December 16th

7:30PM Blue Christmas
A special service where we grieve our losses and recognize God's presence with us.

Sunday, December 20th

9:30AM Family Service Christmas Pageant

Our first online Christmas pageant!

11AM Classic Service

3:30PM Carol Evensong

Carols and hymns with Tyler Versluis and guest artists

Thursday, December 24th, Christmas Eve

4PM Family Christmas Eve Eucharist 7:30PM Christmas Eve Eucharist "Darkness to Light" 10PM Christmas Eve Eucharist by Candlelight

Friday, December 25th, Christmas Morning

10AM Classic Service

Sunday, December 27th

9:30AM Family Service 11AM Classic Service

Wednesday, December 30th

7:30PM Zoom Carol Sing (online)
A chance to sing communally (if virtually)

All events online until further notice.

Contact office@saintmatts.ca or 416-231-4014 for the link.

Please watch the website (saintmatts.ca) and weekly email for updates



Did you know?

Mary Gleeson

For many years there has been a St. Matthew's group called "Friends for Friends" who feel called to stay in touch with parishioners who for varied reasons are unable to make it to church on a regular basis. For a very lengthy period, Ann Sim led this group of volunteers who phone, visit, or take communion to these members of our church family, and this still continues, although certainly on a lesser scale due to the pandemic.

One of the special features always includes taking a small Christmas parcel to the Friends. For several years Leslie Portch has generously gathered items to include in these annual gifts, and this year, even with COVID-19, is no exception. Toothpaste, toothbrushes, Kleenex, toques, chocolate, hard candies, soaps, and small Christmas decorations are among some of the articles that might be received from her. She arranges the items in individual plastic Ziplock bags and delivers them to a parish member to be wrapped or put in gift bags. We are extremely grateful for her continued and loving dedication to this ministry.

Members of the parish usually bake treats, but due to the virus, this year we are including small, pre-packaged cookies instead. Pat Currie has contributed her time and talent sewing many face masks to include. Also, the Club Matt children will likely make cards at Messy Church to include as they have in the past.

Although the usual personal visits can't be carried out at this time, we will ask for a few volunteers to do a drop-off at residences or homes in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines. A sincere thank you to the many people who have contributed in any way to this long-time ministry.





Warm Clothing Appeal: Touchless Drop off Tuesday, December 1

St. Matthew's is again assisting Toronto Urban Native Ministry (TUMN)/Holy Trinity Anglican Church in securing clean, warm, gently-used clothes, boots, blankets, or sleeping bags for the homeless community downtown.

If you can assist in donating any items, please make sure they are clean and place them in separate bags LABELLED FOR MEN OR WOMEN so they can be readily distributed. (children's clothing is not included in this request)

Simply bring your donation to the rear west parking lot of the church from 10 am to 11 am on Tuesday, December 1 and Volunteers will lift the goods from your vehicle into a delivery vehicle. Thank you in advance for any donations. *Marguerite Locke*

Thank you, Lois Armstrong!

Have you wondered how people are keeping busy during the pandemic? Lois Armstrong has knit 150 prayer shawls! These shawls provide a wonderful, comforting "hug" from St. Matthew's. Thank you, Lois, for ensuring we have many shawls to gift to those in need.

MacMillan's Gourmet Frozen Foods Pick Up

Thank you to all parishioners who purchased MacMillan's food products for our November fundraiser. The orders will be delivered on Sunday, December 13th from 10 am to 11 am to the west rear parking lot (northwest side of church). Please ensure that you arrive during that time-frame to pick up your products.

Orders were placed between November 10 and 22, for Touchless Parking Lot pick up. Payment was received via e-transfer or cheque to the church. Orders were pre-packed by MacMillan's to reduce handling. St Matthew's received 30 percent of Baked Goods sales and 25 percent of Meals and Munchies sales.

Thank you, Marguerite Locke, for your cheerful, efficient project. Also, thank you, Helen Prankie, for your computer talents in properly tabulating the orders.

Mitten Tree

Each Christmas season, we put up a tree in the Narthex where knitted scarves, hats, and mittens donated by parishioners can be hung. Because of the pandemic, the tree will not be set up this year. However, donations will still be gratefully received from those who wish to provide items. We are asking that the contributions be placed in ziploc bags, then please phone the church office (416-231-4014) or Mary Gleeson (416-239-9640) and we will arrange for a pick-up or co-ordinate your delivery.



Decorating St. Matthew's with Poinsettias

We plan to decorate the church for Christmas and will order red poinsettias as part of the process. If you wish to donate a plant in Memory of a loved one or in Thanksgiving for someone or something special, please provide information to the church office (416-231-4014, office@saintmatts.ca). The cost this year will be \$15.00 per plant. Payment can be made by cheque, mailed or dropped through the church mail slot, or by etransfer to finance@saintmatts.ca. Please note on your cheque or in the etransfer message box that your gift should be directed to 'Poinsettias.'

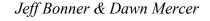


Messy Church

Our first Messy Church of the new season, done online via Zoom on October 24 and themed around Living Water, was a great success. One participant described it as the best online gathering yet.

All the children received packages delivered by volunteers prior to the event with materials required for various activities involving water. After each activity, our volunteer facilitators gave some thoughts about what the activity can teach us about our faith.

One activity involved filling three small jars with different levels of water. The children then observed that they sounded different from each other when tapped with a spoon. The lesson we took from this was that being filled with the Holy Spirit changes the way we sound.







Another activity was called "Walking Water" with coloured water in three of five cups. As time went on, the water travelled up and through paper towel between the cups, filling the empty cups and creating a new colour of water. The lessons we took from this were: 1) that the love of God spreads out from us, and 2) as we come together in all our diversity the church becomes a new and richer spectrum that we wouldn't see on our own.

The activities were a lot of fun, followed by a time of worship led by Rev. Philip and a pizza dinner enjoyed "together." As always, we still look forward to the time when we can safely gather in person, but our first online Messy Church of the season was both encouraging and engaging. At the time of writing, our next Messy Church will be online on November 28 where we will focus on preparing for Advent and the coming of Christmas.

Messy Church in 2021 will be on the last Saturday of each month, from 4-6pm. We encourage all families to join; let the church office put you on the list for delivery of supplies and email link to the Zoom call. If we hear soon enough and can get you a package of instructions and supplies, we will do that.

Join us for Messy Church in 2021!

January 30 February 27 March 27 April 24 May 29



Club Matt

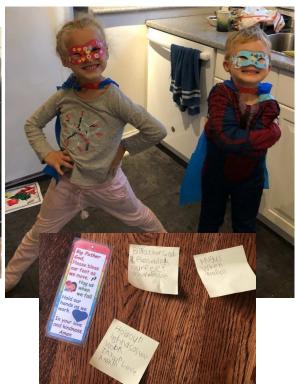
Jeff Bonner, Linda Dickson, Dawn Mercer, Jenna Wukasch, Amanda Boyd

Starting with Blessing of Backpacks September 13, the Club Matt program this fall expected to have families and children gather at 9:30 a.m. in the worship space or on Zoom. It soon became clear that it was safer and easier for families to gather for worship online.

In the later half of this fall the 9:30 a.m. family service went totally online. Packages of materials to support the Sunday lesson and theme-for-the-week are being delivered the previous day, as much as possible, to homes of families who join the 9:30 Sunday service. Kids participate in music to which they can sing and dance, as well as in prayers with actions that get everyone engaged. Children and families eat breakfast, "show and tell," do learning activities together during the online Zoom time, and continue after. See how proud they are of the results of their activities, including adding a 'Jesus is my Superhero' costume to their Sunday morning activities.

We look forward to celebrating Advent and Christmas on Zoom in ways that will be similar to inperson Club Matt from previous years. If you have suggestions, please pass them along.







GIFT Groups

This Fall the Tuesday GIFT Group has discussed the application of ideas from the Sunday sermon to our everyday lives. It has also provided important support and encouragement during the isolation of COVID-19.

To enable more St. Matthew's folks to experience being in a GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) group, a four-week video study on *Surprised by Hope* by N.T Wright is running online from November 16 until December 8. Four different groups are meeting.

If you would like to participate in a GIFT Group, please contact the office at office@saintmatts.ca .



Trunk or Treat

Iain Shao suggested that we provide St. Matthew's kids with the opportunity to show off their Halloween costumes in the church parking lot on October 31. Vanessa and Isabella Shao made the treat bags which Lianne and Cassidy Thompson displayed in the trunk of her well-decorated car. It was a spontaneous event but a few people were delighted to show off their costumes, including Kay Blakely and her grandkids, close neighbours of St. Matts. Trunk or Treat is definitely an event to be repeated next year with more publicity to our community and neighbourhood.



Kingsley School's Pumpkin Patch

What do you do when a pandemic prevents you from your annual visit to the pumpkin farm? You create your own, of course!











Christine Ivy, Youth and Discipleship Associate Pastor

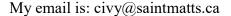
Hello Saint Matthews!

I am so excited to be joining you in the capacity of Youth and Discipleship Associate Pastor. I am new to your area but not new to the Anglican church and I am looking forward to getting to know the youth and young at heart at this parish.

A little bit about me: I was raised going to church with my mom and grandparents in Scarborough. I have worked at one non-profit as a graphic designer, and two churches as a Children's Minister and Lay Pastor of Discipleship. In 2018 I finished my Master of Divinity degree at Wycliffe College.

This past September I moved to Saint James Town in downtown Toronto, after feeling like God was calling me to live closer to the poor. I love the architecture, the people, and the food of this neighbourhood. I have a dog who is 14 years old, likes short walks, and sleeping most of the day. Her name is Sweet Pea and she is a Shiba Inu rescue. I am also a part of a group of young people who pray weekly for the neighbourhood as a part of an organization called MoveIn (www.movein.to is the website if you'd like to learn more).

Lately I have been working on keeping my house plants alive and trying to balance eating healthily from all the amazing food delivery options just a few clicks away. I started playing Dungeons and Dragons a few years ago and hope to soon play with our youth! I look forward to meeting more people - over Zoom and in person (when possible) - soon!



I believe we're all called to follow Jesus - aka discipleship - together. Can't wait to journey with you!

Sincerely, Christine

Church Records

Deaths

Charlotte Weiler October 10, 2020

Patrick Rickards October 31, 2020

Grant to them Eternal Rest, O Lord, And let light perpetual shine on them! May they Rest in Peace & Rise in Glory

Manifesting God

Tyler Versluis

If you glance at the vast annals of church history, you may have come across the term 'iconoclasm,' the social belief that icons – like those used in Eastern Orthodox churches – and other works of religious art should be cast out of places of worship and even destroyed. This debate raged in the early stages of the Church, and reappeared several times, most notably during the Reformation, as zealous followers of John Calvin in the Netherlands seized Catholic churches and destroyed paintings, statues and altars. Their justification lay in the commandment, "Thou shalt not make any graven image, nor bow down nor serve them."

Although the Bible never specifically defines idolatry or what constitutes an idol, iconoclasts took this commandment very seriously and removed paintings, statues, icons, relics and even crosses from their sacred spaces. Defenders of these items in sacred spaces would argue for the differentiation of veneration and idolatry, and that the visual splendour brought forth by these objects constitutes, in itself, an act of worship: a fulfilment of sacred artistic beauty.

For me this is often the most troubling aspect of the plurality of Christian worship: an Eastern Orthodox temple with a splendid iconostasis and golden hand-painted icons, versus the sober functional interior of a strict Reformed church, adorned only with a table for the Lord's Supper and a baptismal font. How do these churches have such radically opposed conceptions of a sacred space? Is there not only one God?

As ages rolled by, sacred art and architecture naturally took influence from the styles dominating at the time. Heavily ornamented architecture and bold, emotional chiaroscuro paintings in the Baroque period gave way to the neo-Roman and Greek objectivity of the Classical era. In our own time we see how one sacred "style" gives way to another. As organ and four-part hymnody went out of fashion in some churches, it gave way to worship music in a folk style and other vernacular musical genres.

As a Christian it is sometimes hard to accept those manifestations of sacredness that we consider bad or outdated. But God can inspire anyone, and that person responds with the tools at their disposal.

The American academic Camille Paglia describes art as "the unification of the spiritual and material". In many ways, art, and especially sacred art, is needed more than ever, as we are constantly bewitching ourselves with magical machines that offer neither the spiritual nor material. We deny our minds the silence necessary to hear God, and we ignore the "earthiness" of sensual experience in God's world.

Right now, I am listening to James MacMillan's 1992 Percussion Concerto, subtitled "Veni, Veni Emmanuel". It is a hefty half-hour work that opens in a state of musical chaos, but a familiar hymn lurks and yearns to sound out in the open:

O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

During this Advent season, we celebrate both the arrival of our hope and salvation and prepare our hearts for another arrival and the fulfilment of another promise: Christ will come again. In the meantime, in this world of darkness we must use our hands and hearts to build the kingdom of God here, through art, praise and discipleship.

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Pastoral Care: Pastoral visits can be offered over the phone, by email or via Zoom. Due to current pandemic restrictions, we cannot offer visits. Please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca.

Partners in Prayer: Should you desire prayer for yourself or for another person, please make details known to Bob Holloway at 416-253-4909 or rholloway@sympatico.ca. If necessary, the request can be transmitted through the church office.

Cycle of Prayer: "Beloved, pray for us." This is Paul's way of asking the Thessalonians to pray for him (5:25) and it expresses the genuine need for believers to support one another through prayer. Each Sunday, we will be praying for individuals and families of St. Matthew's in the Prayers of the People. Each week, a few names will be mentioned in our prayers and we will have the opportunity to support one another through prayer. Please take the time to remember these people during the week in your own prayers as well. If you do not wish to be included in our "Cycle of Prayer" please let the office know and we will be sure to keep your name off the list.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Prayer Shawls are provided to those who need the warmth and comfort of God and St. Matthew's. If you would like a shawl for someone, please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca. If you are knitting shawls for this ministry, please contact the office to arrange to drop them off.

Join Us

Monday-Wednesday-Friday
12:00 Noon Renewal on YouTube

Messy Church

Last Saturday of the month Next Messy Church is Jan 30

GIFT Groups



Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9:30 - 3:30

The office is operating remotely. Telephone and email messages will be checked and returned during office hours.

The Rev. Philip Stonhouse, Priest-in-charge 416-231-3060 / philipstonhouse@hotmail.ca

The Rev. Gail Marshall, Deacon
The Rev. Merv Mercer, Honorary Assistant
The Rev. Milton Dorman, Honorary Assistant
Christine Ivy, Youth & Discipleship Assoc. Pastor
Jeff Bonner, Family Ministry Associate
Tyler Versluis, Music Director and Organist
Tom Travaglini, Sexton/Verger
Lisa Tait, Parish Administrator



Sunday Services

As of November 23, all services are online only.

Please visit our website or call or email

the office for updates

9:30 a.m. Casual 11:00 a.m. Classic

12:10 p.m. Online Coffee Hour

3962 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9B 1M3

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StMatthewsAnglicanChurch



saintmatts islington



https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeTIBsRzvoz-zJcKv5nKb7g