Who Are You Listening To?

I’ve come down with a bad case of Pundit Fatigue. I have what is officially known as “Prognosticator Weariness.” My ailment has something to do with the length of the national campaigns in this country. Ted Cruz declared he was running for president 85 weeks before Election Day. Whereas national campaigns in Canada run for 11 weeks, 21 in Mexico, 19 in the UK, while France’s presidential campaign runs a measly TWO WEEKS!

So for some 596 days, until the election finally put an end to it, we’ve been subjected to endless hours of televised opinions from the news people who presumably have the answers. Now I’m not saying they DON’T have the answers. And I’ve been avidly listening to all my favorite “opinionators,” (or is it opinionizers?) while even subjecting myself to the exquisite agony of tuning into some with whom I totally disagree. (Good for the soul, one of my mentors once told me.)

Therefore, I have no one but myself to blame for the malady to which I’ve succumbed. Fortunately, however, I have a remedy. My remedy, which I’ve also taken as my discipline for this Advent, is to listen to something wonderful, to a voice that both refreshes and inspires, the one voice that always gives me hope and strength. The voice that never pulls me down and always builds me up.

Whose voice can that be? God’s voice! This Advent I’m determined to spend less time listening to the media pundits and more time listening to the Lord. How do I do that? By going to His Word and prayerfully seeking the hope, wisdom and guidance the Bible has for all of us. I’m going to start by reading a psalm a day. Will you join me? This Advent, let’s tune into God and cheer up together. And, yes, coming to church helps too.

See you there!

Christmas at St. Matthew’s

It is the magnificent season of Advent at St. Matthew’s. The word advent is derived from the Latin word “adventus” meaning “coming” or “visit,” and, indeed, there are many events coming up for parishioners to enjoy this wonderful time of year. Mark your calendars!

Christmas Tree Sale - Sat., Dec. 3 and Sun., Dec. 4. - Beautiful freshly harvested Frazier and Douglas firs of all sizes will be available for sale in the back parking lot from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Volunteers are needed to show and load trees on cars. Contact Will Gourd (will.gourd@ubs.com) if you can help, for more information and special requests.

Advent Lessons & Carols, Sun., Dec. 4 - Enjoy traditional readings that tell of the coming of Christ and sing the lovely carols of the season – at both the 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. services.

Christmas Brunch, Sun., Dec. 4 - There is no better way to get into the Christmas spirit than by coming to the annual St. Matthew’s Christmas Brunch, Dec. 4, after the 10 a.m. service. The Women of St. Matthew’s will fill the Fellowship Room with beautiful poinsettias, magnificently decorated wreaths, plants, gifts, and a delightful brunch. And, keep a look out for that jolly elf.

Wish Tree, Sun., Dec. 4 - Take a star from the St. Matthew’s Wish Tree and brighten the Christmas of someone from Hope’s Door, A-Home, or a child whose mother is incarcerated at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility.

Advent Quiet Afternoon, Sat., Dec. 10 - Follow the Star -Deacon Elena will lead us as we seek God’s path through this beautiful, timeless season 1-3:30 p.m. Email: elbarnum@gmail to sign up.

Festival of Music Service, Sun., Dec. 11 - This 10 a.m. service features the first part of Handel’s Messiah and other Christmas music, offered by our superb choir, with the professional singers performing the solos, all led by our great music master Tony Newman


Christmas Pageant, Sun., Dec. 18 - At the 10 a.m. service, come enjoy the Christmas story performed by our Church School children as they fill the parts of the Holy Family, friendly beasts, angels and wise men.

St. Mary’s Festive Christmas Service, Wed., Dec. 23 - Christmas story and carol service at 5:30 p.m., with Antioch Pastor Merle McJunkin.

Christmas Eve Services, Thurs., Dec. 24
4 & 6 p.m. Manger Services
10:30 p.m. Pre-Service Concert
11 p.m. Festival Holy Eucharist with Terry’s Character at the crèche

Christmas Day, Fri., Dec. 25
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

December Key Dates

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Advent Quiet Afternoon – Following the Star
Sat., Dec. 10, 1 – 3:30 p.m. Vestry Room

Join us for an opportunity to deepen our experience of God’s call to us to follow the Star to Bethlehem. Using Advent Scripture, prayer and reflection, Deacon Elena will lead us as we seek God’s path through this beautiful, timeless season of light and darkness, angels and shepherds, and, in the quiet simplicity of the manger, God coming to birth among us over 2000 years ago and in our lives today.

Please sign up in the Parish House.

Wish Tree

When you go to our outstanding Christmas Brunch, you will see a tree in the corner of the Fellowship Room ablaze with gold stars. This is our Wish Tree and each star holds a wish of an adult or child from Hope’s Door, A-Home or a child from Hour Children. Please take a star and return it by Dec. 13, so all gifts may be wrapped and delivered before Christmas Day. Give a needy child his or her wish!

Busy times for the Church School

The children enjoyed their first all-school communion in the Children’s Chapel on Nov. 6 led by Jane Wood and Rik Pike. The service celebrated All Saints Day and was preceded by a parade through church with each child carrying the flag of a favorite saint and singing a couple of familiar saints tunes.

Poinsettias

Our church becomes especially beautiful at Christmas time, filled with poinsettias, donated in memory of loved ones no longer with us. Please return the enclosed donation envelope to the Parish Office by Thurs., Dec. 15, with their names.

Men’s Fellowship Christmas Breakfast, Dec. 17

The highlight of gustatory delights is the annual Men’s Fellowship Christmas Breakfast. Come on Sat., Dec. 17 at 7:30 a.m. for an unbelievable repast and the best of fellowship. You will be cheerfully nourished and depart at 9 a.m. full of Christmas spirit, well-fortified to tackle your Yuletide chores. Come dine, ye merry gentlemen; let nothing keep you away!

Two Opportunities for Lessons & Carols…

This year, parishioners can enjoy our popular Lessons & Carols service at both the 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. services on Dec. 4. Mark Weigel is planning some fun music variations for the 5 p.m.—why not come to both?

Magnificent Music

December is a spectacular music month at St. Matthew’s. We start with the Lessons and Carols service on Dec. 4, with the congregation joining the choir singing our favorite holiday hymns. The Festival of Music on Dec. 11, with our outstanding choir performing Part One of Handel’s Messiah is not to be missed. People pay hundreds of dollars to hear a performance of this quality… and we have it right in our church. The Bedford Chamber Concert on Dec. 14, with Handel’s Royal Fireworks Music, Water Music is another that you shouldn’t miss. And, don’t forget – on Christmas Eve, Tony and the choir perform a special concert before the start of the midnight service. And that is just the big stuff – in between, we have Tony playing spectacular pieces on the organ before and after services, the choir singing during the offertory and more. We are so lucky to have Tony as our music director, to have such a strong choir and a Music Committee leading the way.

December Lessons:

12/4: Zechariah and Elizabeth: Parents of John the Baptist
12/11: John the Baptist
12/18: Pageant
12/25 & 1/1: No church school

Thanksgiving Ingathering bags were distributed on the second Sunday of the month, with the younger grades decorating turkeys in class to encourage discussion of the needs of families unable to afford a full holiday meal. The “turkey corral” was on display in the Fellowship Hall the following week for children to return bags filled with Thanksgiving foods. This is a wonderful project for our young parishioners because they relate well to the need of hungry children and the importance of family gathering to celebrate with a meal.
44th Annual Art Show: Bedford Spans Two Weekends in January

In a departure from previous years, the 44th Annual Art Show: Bedford will begin with the Preview Party in the Fellowship Hall on Fri., January 20, and the Exhibition and Sale on Sat. and Sun., Jan. 21 and 22. The show will reopen on Thurs., Jan. 26, and continue through Sun., Jan. 29, 2017. In the event of inclement weather one weekend, there will be yet another chance to see the show, which provides support for both local artists and local charities. The 2017 Art Show: Bedford chair is Laura Blau of Bedford.

The Fri. night Preview Party, from 6:30 to 9 p.m., will be catered by Bedford Gourmet, with champagne, wine and beer adding sparkle to the festivities. Mark Weigel & Friends band is providing music for the party. The Exhibition and Sale continue on Sat., Jan. 21, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sun., Jan. 22, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

The following week, the exhibit is closed from Mon. to Wed., but then reopens on Thurs. and Fri., Jan. 26 and 27, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and on Sat., Jan. 28, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sun., Jan. 29, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

On Sat., Jan. 28, a Young Collector’s Reception is planned. Kipton Cronkite, founder of ArtStager, will speak at this event, as will Michael Klein, an art consultant who assembled the Microsoft Collection in Redmond, WA. Several performance artists provided by Anita Durst, founder of chashama, will also appear at this event.

About 45 artists will participate in this year’s show, selling paintings, photographs and sculpture, as well as hand-made jewelry, glass items and pottery. Works run the gamut from contemporary to traditional styles, and there is something to appeal to everyone. Uprise, an online gallery that specializes in affordable and contemporary artwork, has various artists participating in the show, as well as those from chashama and popular local artists from past shows.

Parish participation is important for the Art Show since it is the major annual outreach fundraiser organized by the Women of St. Matthew’s, and proceeds directly benefit local charities.

Please mark both Art Show weekends on your calendars, and don’t miss the Preview Party that is sure to be more exciting than ever this year. Tickets are $100 in advance; $125 at the door. Look for the invitations in early Dec. and RSVP as soon as possible. In the meantime, check www.artshowbedford.com to view artists’ works and see updates as the 2017 Art Show gets closer.

Another Successful Midnight Run

On Sat., Nov. 12, St. Matthew’s completed another very successful Midnight Run. Many thanks to all of those who donated clothing, supplies and food. A special thank you to Caroline Shepherd, Marilen Tilt, Laurie Sturz, Robyn & David McCree and Lily and Cora Moore for the food prep and Herb and Tina Foster for many hours of putting together much needed supplies/toiletries. Finally, gold stars to our “runners” that gave up their Sat. night (and several precious hours of sleep) including veteran Will Gourd, rookie Michael Deeks, and especially our youth; Brian Gourd, Pearse O’Brien, Sammy Speegle, Graham Agee and Drew Gregory. We even had a special appearance from St. Matthew’s alum and veteran runner Missy Walker (and friends). For those that made the run, it was another great reminder of just how fortunate we all are.

(And the biggest thanks go to Will Gourd and Dan Moore for organizing our participation in Midnight Run year after year!)

Helping Our Vets!

On Wed., Nov. 9, St. Matthew’s had an interesting and moving speaker, Michael Warshaw, president of “Heroes in Transition,” an organization dedicated to helping individuals who have served our country. Michael described how they provide a range of services, including home modifications and assistance dogs for disabled veterans. Joining him speaking was Duke A. Searles, Volunteer Supervisor, VA Montrose Food Pantry, who described the huge need for food and support for veterans in this area. More information on Heroes In Transition can be found on their website: http://www.heroesintransition.org/

They are a great organization and operate on a shoestring (100% of contributions go to the vets) so donations are most appreciated.
**December 14: Handel’s Baroque Masterpieces**


The Royal Fireworks Music (HMV 351) were written in April 1749 at the behest of King George II to celebrate the conclusion of the Austrian War of Succession. Despite Handel’s preference, it was originally composed for only wind instruments and drums at the king’s specific orders. However, Handel then rescored it for a full orchestra, which was performed only a month later.

The Water Music was commissioned by King George I in 1717 for an orchestra of some 50 string and wind instrumentalists as musical entertainment for his barge outings on the Thames. Published in full only posthumously, in 1788, they were sorted into three suites based in part on their key. Suite No. 2, in D major (HMV 349), perhaps the most popular of the three, features trumpets playing not only lively fanfares but also a hornpipe and a minuet.

The twelve concerti that make up Handel’s Opus 6 mark a landmark in the history of the concerto grosso, a popular form of Baroque chamber composition that was defined by Corelli’s pioneering work in this genre. Handel’s fifth concerto in D major (HMV 323) was one of the most popular of these twelve.

The Bedford Chamber Ensemble for the December concert features the following musicians: Emily Daggett Smith (violin solos), Emilie-Anne Gendron (violin), Danielle Farina (viola), Alexis Gerlach (cello), Stephen Sas (bass), David Glukh and Maximilian Morel (trumpets), and Jared Soldaviero (timpani).

Tickets ($40) can be reserved by phone at 914-522-5150 and paid for at the door, or ordered online at www.bedforchamberconcerts.org or as part of a series subscription. Student tickets, which can only be purchased at the door, cost $10. Children and their parents are welcome to attend the rehearsal, from 6 to 7 pm, for free! The Winter Gala concert is always a sell-out, so reserve your tickets early.

As always, the concert starts at 8 pm in the Fellowship Room. Wine and sumptuous and seasonal treats are provided by the Music Committee at intermission.

**Safe Church Training at St. Matthew’s**

On Saturday, Nov. 5th fellow parishioner, Deacon Elena Barnum, led a Safe Church training session on campus. Half a dozen people participated in the five hour session which elicited thoughtful discussions and shed light on the ways we can maintain a safe environment for our children as well as encourage healthy behavior among fellow parishioners.

The National Episcopal Church requires each Diocese to provide Safe Church training for all adult staff and volunteers who work regularly with our children and youth, as well as those in leadership roles in a parish, parish school, or any parish programs in the larger community. Our Bishop expects training to be updated every five years. The Safe Church workshops provide essential information for maintaining safe and healthy programs for our children, youth and adults.

**Clean-up**

A hearty group of parishioners showed up for our annual Fall Clean-up. Many thanks to the team that worked hard, doing everything from splitting wood to installing fences, but overall, working to keep our Church grounds beautiful.

**Jamboree**

It was another successful College Jamboree at St. Matthew’s, with the Yale Whiffenpoofs and the Harvard Krokodiloes performing – just with a special twist this year. For the first time ever, the two groups performed together – to sing a final song in honor of Terry. Many thanks to Doug Kim for all the hard work and leadership he puts into this event year after year.

**Celtic Evensong Service**

Just a few years ago, St. Matthew’s did not have a 5 p.m. service. Now, it is not only an integral part of our church offerings, but also provides innovative and interesting worship services. For example, on Nov. 13, the Children’s Chapel was the site of a Celtic Evensong, which dates back to traditions in ancient Britain and Ireland in the 6th Century AD. Many thanks are due to Rik, for creating these unique options but also Mark Weigel, for providing outstanding music accompaniment and to Deacon Elena Barnum. Keep an eye out for the 5 p.m. schedule through June in the January Key.
Make Your Pledge Early, Please!

The St. Matthew’s Annual Fund Drive is underway. We canvass the Parish membership to raise money for our annual operations budget, approximately $895,000.00 by asking for a pledge.

This year, more than ever, we need full Parish participation. Last year just over half of the Parish contributed! We feel we can and should do better as a community. A pledge is a financial commitment to support your Church. There are a myriad of ways to fulfill that pledge, but the Vestry, like you, needs to anticipate donations, and meet a budget in the most prudent manner possible. Your early pledge helps us plan effectively!

For more information on pledging, kindly consult the Annual Fundraising Drive mailing or the church website: http://www.stmatthewsbedford.org/faq_on_pledging. Please return your pledge card or fill out the pledge form online as soon as you can! Remember: God loves a cheerful giver!

Thank you!......Stewardship Commission

Newcomers’ Cocktail Party

Many thanks to Caroline and John Walker for hosting the St. Matthew’s Newcomers’ Cocktail party, which provides an excellent opportunity for our Vestry and Welcome Commission to get to know new parishioners.

Sally and Frank Pedraga are welcomed by Mary Farley

John Stockbridge and Janet Schloat welcome Miles and Brett Cameron, center.

All Hallows’ Eve

Unfortunately the weather on the evening of Oct. 30 was rainy, dark and dreary but the St. Matthew’s Haunted Hike and Spaghetti Dinner went on without a hitch. After the ghouls and goblins attended the 5 p.m. service, and had a delightfully prepared spaghetti dinner, the haunting and hiking element took place in the basement of the Parish House. The confirmation class did an outstanding, creative job and the evening was scary successful.
December Church Calendar

First Sunday after Christmas, January 1, 2017
8:00 a.m.  No 8:00 a.m. service
10:00 a.m.  Holy Eucharist, Rite I
Altar Guild: Messrs. Kent and Garten
Ushers: Messrs. Borner and Brenner
Lay Reader: Mrs. Tisi
Lector: Mrs. Tilt
**No Children's Service
5:00 p.m.  No 5:00 p.m. service
**Children's Service

Comings & Goings
New or Returning Parishioners:
Ms. Darci J. Bailey  Mr. Ralph McDermid, Jr.
175 Fox Lane  52 Lafayette Place, Apt. 3G
Bedford Corners, NY 10549  Greenwich, CT 06830

Holy Baptism
Received into Christ's Holy Church
Henry Renwick Morse – November 6, 2016
Charles Preston Sylvester – November 13, 2016

In Memoriam
In sure and certain hope
Karen Rahm Carlson Vincent – October 21, 2016

A large contingent of parishioners joined Terry Elsberry and our Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Mary Glasspool, for a screening of “Disturbing the Peace” at the Jacob Burns Film Center. Sponsored by St. Matthew’s and the Westchester Sawmill Episcopal Clericus, the film tells the transformational story of a group of ex-Israeli soldiers and ex-Palestinian prisoners of war who come together to form “Combatants for Peace.” An interesting discussion, including two of the participants, followed the screening.

April Foley

Remember to go to St. Matthew’s website to do your online Christmas shopping at Amazon. Amazon will donate a small percentage of your purchase price to St. Matthew’s.