

# Matt's Missive

December 2025

## Annual Tamales and Trimmings

### Decorating the Parish Hall



## PLEASE JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS

**Christmas Eve**  
**Carols 7:15pm**



**Christmas Day**  
**Service 10am**

Our Mission: We serve Jesus Christ as a community rich in the Episcopal tradition by welcoming the seeker, providing a caring family, encouraging spiritual growth, and reaching into our neighborhood and world.

## More Photos From the Annual Tamales and Trimmings



## St. Matthew's Dining Out

The St. Matthew's Dining Out group resumes in January. This group meets on the last Thursday of every month from January - October. All are invited to join us at **6:30 PM** on Thursday, **January 30th**, restaurant to be announced.

## Associate Rector Office Hours

It's hard to believe, but as I write this brief article I am closing in on the first year of my return to St. Matthew's as Associate Rector. I am so happy to be here and now that I have retired from my position as a hospice chaplain I intend to get more involved in the ministry of the church.

Given that plan, I want to begin holding office hours on Tuesday mornings, starting in January, for anyone who might like to sit down and visit. If that time doesn't work for you, let's talk and see what a better fit might be, but for now I plan to be there on Tuesdays from 9 am to noon.

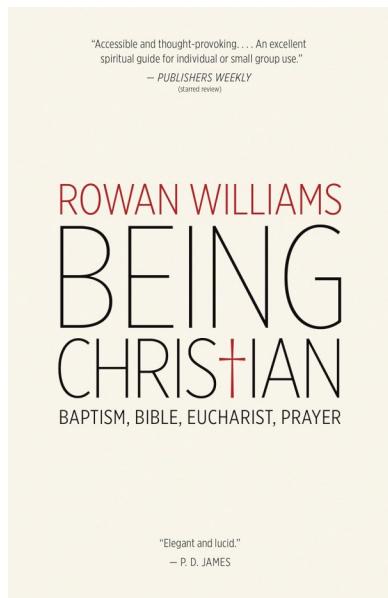
I will also be preaching a bit more frequently and celebrating at the altar every other week. I look forward to finding ways to support our worship in my own ways. Please don't hesitate to stop in for a visit some Tuesday morning!

Blessings,  
Mother Barbara

*"Let nothing disturb thee, let nothing affright thee. All things are passing; God only is changeless."*  
St. Theresa of Avila

## New Wednesday Evening Study

By Diane Woods



Our Wednesday Night Study Group begins a new 4-week study using, *"Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer"* by Rowan Williams, retired Archbishop of Canterbury, on January 8th. During this study we will explore four essential components of Christian life: baptism, Bible, Eucharist, and prayer.

"In accessible, pastoral terms Williams discusses the meaning and practice of baptism, the Bible, the Eucharist, and prayer, inviting readers to really think through the Christian faith and how to live it out."

The study starts on January 7th and ends January 28th. We will meet in the parish hall at 6:00 p.m. The format for the evening begins with dinner (bring your own) and catching up with each other. Our discussion of that week's reading will start at 6:30 p.m. and closes with an Order for Compline at approximately 8:00. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex on Sunday, or you can call the office.

Books were ordered and are available in the office. The cost of the book is \$9.00, payable to Diane Woods. If you prefer, you can purchase the Kindle book from Amazon.com for \$8.07.

## RACAP NEWS

By Kathy Ercoline

Thank you to all who generously donated to the Holiday Basket Program. Your donations of food and money were greatly appreciated and added to the success of distributing food baskets to many families in our local area. The Christmas food baskets will be delivered a few days before Christmas. There will be a final report on the holiday basket program in the January Matt's Missive.

**JANUARY IS 'SOUPER BOWL' MONTH:** Once again, St Matthew's will participate in the 'souper' bowl program for RACAP. We will collect soup in January, starting New Year's Day, until Super Bowl Sunday, on February 8, 2026. We will collect all varieties of soups and crackers.

### Current Pantry Needs:

Canned Fruits	Tomato Products	Ramen	Dried Beans
Rice	Canned Meats	Muffin Mix	Mac 'n Cheese
Meat Helpers	Jello	Canned Beans (not green beans)	
Canned Soup	Toothpaste	Laundry Detergent	Shampoo
Dish Soap	Feminine Hygiene Products		

### PET FOOD IS ALWAYS ACCEPTED

These items are the current needs, but any non-perishable food items and/or monetary donations are always accepted.

**CHECK THE DATE:** Please remember to check the date on the food items you donate to RACAP. Food with an expired date or after a "best by" date cannot be distributed.

**RACAP BOARD:** The RACAP Board is made from up to three people from each of the RACAP Member Churches. Currently St. Matthew's board members are Mary Dunham and Kathy Ercoline. We are eligible to have one more member on the board. If you are interested in being a board member or if you would like to have more information, please see Kathy Ercoline.

*Wishing you a blessed holiday season, a Merry Christmas, and a Healthy and Happy New Year!*

### RACAP Month in Review

#### **November 2025 Assistance Results**

# of Families Assisted 108 ~ # People 291

# of Pantry Visits 79 ~ # of People Fed 222

# of REPEAT Clients 47 ~ # of NEW Clients 61

Estimated Value of Food Given: \$19,381.00

Value of Rental Assistance Given: \$4,028.35

Value of Utility Assistance Given: \$4,112.80

***"Thank you for helping us help others."***

## Hospitality Notes

By Melissa Mudge

### Many Thanks

Thank you, people of St. Matthew's.

Tamales and trimmings – Yum and Wow! Delicious lunch provided by us and transformation of the Parish Hall in about two hours! The brightness of Christmas to delight our senses and the reflections of God's love to fill our hearts.

And looking forward to Luncheon with Bishop Read this month also. The hospitality sign-up is full of delicious dishes. Thanks in advance .

### On-Going Hospitality

- ♦ Morning Coffee Fellowship after each Sunday Service.

**8:00 service**—morning coffee and snacks will be ready about 8:45.

**10:00 service**—coffee and snacks will be ready about 10:45.

Thanks, host families, for the ever-evolving goodness that comes out of our kitchen.

- ♦ Hospitality Committee – Volunteers are needed to prepare food, set up, serve, and clean-up at some of our church related activities. If you would like to be "hospitality on call," please let me know. I have a list!
- ♦ Kitchen Clean-up – Looking Good! Cleaning up after every activity helps keep the area clean and sanitary. Please wash your hands before touching anything in the kitchen, even coffee and ice scoop. This keeps us all safe and healthy.

### Give it – To Go

*Pray for all poor and neglected people whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who are broken in body or spirit. Turn their sorrow into joy.*

Thoughts and prayers lead to contemplation. Contemplation opens hearts to listen to God.

Listening can result in action on behalf of those for whom we pray.

O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered: Accept our prayers on behalf of those who died by shootings this Advent season. Grant them entrance to the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of the saints; Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### Special Days/Events

- ♦ **January 1—Feast of the Holy Name.** The eighth day after his birth, the child was circumcised and given the name of Jesus. The early preachers of the Gospel lay stress on the name as showing that Jesus was a man of flesh and blood, though also the son of God, who died a human death, and who God raised from the dead to be the savior. The name was given to Jesus, as the angel explained to Joseph, because he would "save his people from their sins. The word means" Savior" or "Deliverer" in Hebrew . (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, page 132)

*(Continued on next page)*

## Hospitality Notes: Special Days/Events (Continued)

- ♦ **January 5—Remembering Sarah, Theodora, and Syncletica of Egypt.** “Fix our hearts on You, O God, in pure devotion, that aided by the example of your servants Sarah, Theodora, and Syncletica, the vain pursuits of this world may have no hold upon us, and that by the consuming fire of your Spirit, we may be changed into the image and likeness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with you and the same Spirit be all honor and glory, now and forever. *Amen.*”
- ♦ **January 6—Epiphany.** *And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.* (Matthew 2:12) ‘The proof the Epiphany story isn’t in the star, the magi, or the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The proof that the story matters is that the magi leave for their own country by another road...In meeting Jesus, the magi are changed. Any fear of Herod’s earthly authority is cast aside, and the comfort of a well-trodden path home is abandoned for a different way. They do not leave as they came; they are changed. Beloved, does your life witness to receiving the unconditional favor of the living God? Do you journey onward by a different road?’ (Rev. David Sibley, *Forward Day by Day*, November | December 2025 | January 2026)
- ♦ **January 16—National Religious Freedom Day.** The day observes the adoption of Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom by the Virginia General Assembly on January 16, 1786. The statute became the basis for the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, and it led to guarantee of religious freedom for everyone in the United States. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Religious\\_Freedom\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Religious_Freedom_Day))
- ♦ **January 19—Martin Luther King Jr. Day.**
- ♦ **January 26—Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle.** *I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you.* (Acts 26:16b) “...If there’s a theme I appreciate in Paul’s words, it is that he knows his conversion is not a one-off event...Paul says Jesus told him that he would testify to the things in which the Lord would appear to him. He would keep being converted, day by day, to God’s purposes. Have you undergone conversion? How will you be converted still?” (Rev. David Sibley, *Forward Day by Day*, November | December 2025 | January 2026) .

### January Birthdays

*For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* (Jeremiah 29:1)

Suzanne Milton	Dante Black
Lynn Medina	Tommy Evans
Lori Tidwell	Keith Black
Leah Tafolla	Rose Marie Smith
Courtney Hopkins	Craig Hopkins
Michael Winkle	Mary Dunham



## Happenings Around The Diocese

**Father/Son Retreat:** February 6-8, 2026, at Camp Capers.

Join us at this years' retreat for fathers, grandfathers, father-figures, and their sons to share a weekend at Camp Capers, away from the responsibilities of everyday life playing games, doing fun outdoor adventure activities, studying the Bible, and sharing delicious meals.

**Couple's Weekend Getaway:** February 13-15, 2026, at Mustang Island Conference Center.

Escape for the weekend with your Sweetheart. The schedule is intentionally very relaxed, so you can spend time together resting, reflecting, and renewing with God and each other in His coastal creation. Each room has a private deck view of the sea and boardwalk access to beach.

**Spring Break Family Camp:** March 12-15, 2026, at Mustang Island Conference Center.

Spend Spring Break weekend with your family on the beach at Mustang Island Family Camp! Enjoy swimming, singing, surfing, arts & crafts, delicious meals, a buried treasure hunt, beach games, worship, building sandcastles, fishing, resting under a beach umbrella, a campfire, and more. Programming begins Thursday afternoon/evening and continues through Sunday lunch. Each day ends with worship, music, and a family-centered Bible teaching.

*You can find more information and registration on these & other events at <https://www.dwtx.org/events>*



## From the Blog

### [The Rt. Rev. Dr. David G. Read, D.D.'s Advent Message: Building a Peaceable Kingdom.](#)

I love the season of Advent! The word “advent” means “coming” or “arrival.” This season is a gift from the Church to us all. The early fathers and mothers of the Church believed that celebrating Christmas – celebrating that God loves us so much God stooped down to come among us as one of us in the person of Jesus, born in Bethlehem – required preparation. They believed we should prepare our hearts and minds to keep the feast of the Incarnation. And as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, we would also be preparing ourselves for the promise that Christ will come again. So, this season of Advent, with its candles counting down the weeks, is a time of preparation for all who follow Jesus. Read the full letter [here](#).

### [Save the Date for Diocesan Council 2026!](#)

The Diocese of West Texas Council 2026 is fast approaching. Clergy, delegates, exhibitors, and guests will gather Thursday through Saturday, February 26-28, at the Hilliard Center in Corpus Christi, Texas to discuss business, share fellowship, and worship together.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. David G. Read, D.D., Bishop of West Texas, has announced the Council theme, "Let Love Be Genuine" from Romans 12:9. Click [here](#) to listen to Bishop Read's message on why he chose this theme. Visit the [Council 2026](#) website page to learn more.

The **DEADLINE** to submit Missive articles is the 15th of the month. Any late articles will be in the next month's issue.

## JANUARY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 <b>New Year's Day</b> <b>Office Closed</b> <b>No ARC Service</b> AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	2	3
4 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L)	5 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	6	7 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, VEB) Wednesday Night Study 6-8pm (CH)	8 Eucharist 11am (ARC) Choir Practice 2-3pm (C) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	9	10
11 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L)	12 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	13 Vestry Meeting 6pm (CH)	14 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, VEB) Wednesday Night Study 6-8pm (CH)	15 Eucharist 11am (ARC) Choir Practice 2-3pm (C) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	16	17
18 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L)	19 <b>MLK Jr Day</b> <b>Office Closed</b> <b>No Staff or Prayer Meeting</b> AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	20	21 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, VEB) Wednesday Night Study 6-8pm (CH)	22 Eucharist 11am (ARC) Choir Practice 2-3pm (C) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	23	24
25 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L)	26 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	27	28 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, VEB) Wednesday Night Study 6-8pm (CH)	29 Eucharist 11am (ARC) Choir Practice 2-3pm (C) Dining Out 6:30pm (TBD) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	30	31

C – Church; **CH** – Creasy Hall; **VEB** – Vellom Ed Building; **L** – Library  
**ARC** – Army Residence Community

## JANUARY 2026 SUNDAY MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Ministry	January 4	January 11	January 18	January 25
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Janet Clere Diane Woods	Tarawanda Howard Suzanne Milton	Maggie Barnes Stephenie McBride	Pat Clarke-Kempf Cindy Hull Diane Woods
<b>8 AM Reader</b>	Jayne Dunlap	Suzi Hopkins	Joan McClain	Max Hopkins
<b>8 AM Greeter/Usher</b>	Max Hopkins	Ron Dunlap	Suzi Hopkins	Jayne Dunlap
<b>8 AM Coffee</b>	Jayne Dunlap	Suzi Hopkins	Tarawanda Howard	Joan McClain
<b>10 AM Server</b>	Sean Francis	Wayne Mudge	Terry May	Arlene Stalvey
<b>10 AM Reader</b>	Janet Clere	Maribeth Likins	Melissa Mudge	Diane Woods
<b>10 AM Greeter/Usher</b>	Diane Woods	Melissa Mudge	Suzanne Milton	Kathy Ercoline
<b>Prayers of the People</b>	Janet Clere	Bill Ercoline	Maribeth Likins	Ellen Yelverton
<b>Newcomer Visits</b>	Terry May Diane Woods	Terry May Diane Woods	Terry May Diane Woods	Terry May Diane Woods
<b>Home Communion</b>	Ellen Yelverton	No Home Communion	Janet Clere	No Home Communion
<b>Prayer Ministry</b>	Ellen Yelverton	Maribeth Likins	Ellen Yelverton	Maribeth Likins
<b>10 AM Coffee</b>	Melissa Mudge	Diane Woods Terry May	Kathy Ercoline	Colleen Hubberd
<b>Audio Visual</b>	Wayne Mudge	Terry May	Jay Barnes	Wayne Mudge
<b>Lockup/Security</b>	Ellen Yelverton	Tarawanda Howard	Terry May	Arlene Stalvey

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

## SEPTEMBER 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

Monthly	Pledge	Plate	Other	Total	2025 YTD	Pledge	Plate	Other	Total
Operating Income Received	\$15,357	\$3,467	\$3,233	\$22,057	Operating Income Received	\$150,338	\$10,305	\$11,306	\$171,949
Operating Income Budgeted	\$15,594	\$1,445	\$278	\$17,317	Operating Income Budgeted	\$140,353	\$13,004	\$7,075	\$160,432
	Monthly	YTD				Monthly	YTD		
Overall Operating Expenses	\$17,716	\$188,155			Outreach	\$1,390	\$2,465		
Budgeted Operating Expenses	\$21,205	\$201,223							

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
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