

# FOLLOWING FAITH

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*



HAPPY NEW YEAR



NEW IS THE YEAR, NEW ARE THE HOPES,  
MAY YOU BE BLESSED WITH A  
PROMISING AND FULFILLING NEW YEAR!

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



## Deacon's Corner

Rev. Deacon Taylor Johnson

Happy New Year everyone!

As a church, we did this back on the First Sunday of Advent, but as far as the non-liturgical calendar is concerned, the new year has begun.

The new year is a great time for a fresh start, for making changes we've been putting off, for taking stock after the whirlwind of the holiday season and seeing areas of our lives in need of tweaking. For many of us, this involves making new year's resolutions. We proclaim to ourselves and the world that this year will be different, that it's time for a change, that we are resolute in our cause. After all, our church year begins with hope, why can't the calendar year?

Hope tells us that change can truly happen, that we can be different than before. Not only different, but better. We can take the steps forward we've always wanted to take. This can be something physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual. Maybe we want to finally lose some weight, get in shape. Maybe we want to start going to therapy, or learn a new language. Or maybe we want to commit ourselves to a new spiritual discipline, like consistent morning prayer or reading through the Bible.

Our New Year's resolution is an opportunity. That doesn't mean it will be easy, though. It's hard to make a change stick. After all, gyms are never more full than they are in January. We start strong, full of enthusiasm, but then life gets in the way. Something breaks our routine, breaks our stride, and our resolution falters. We miss a workout, miss a prayer. God forbid we miss a day of Duolingo and get that little owl mad at us. Seeing the streak broken, we declare the resolution broken, the hope of change lost. But that doesn't have to be the end of the story. Hope is much more resilient than that. Don't forget, for us, the New Year comes during Christmastide.

At Christmas, we celebrate the coming of Christ, the inbreaking of the kingdom of God here on earth. We prepared for that kingdom during Advent through the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. So, as we move into this new calendar year of 2026, don't let those themes slip away from you. Hold them tight not only through the new year, but through the entire year. Hold onto the hope that change is real, that God's grace can conquer all, that God will not stop drawing us closer and closer to the Christ. Hold onto the peace that the grace of God does not abandon us when we fall, when we falter, but instead is right there ready to help us get back up and get back on our way. Hold onto the joy we experience as we succeed, as we see the changes we want to make taking hold in ourselves, the joy when those changes cease to be new and begin to simply be who we are. And never forget, never lose sight of the love that permeates it all. The love that came down at Christmas, the love that makes each new year, each new day even, an opportunity for God to do something new in us because, no matter what, God loves us deeply. So happy new year to us all.

Happy New Year to who we have been, and happy new year to who we will become. By the grace of God, by the hope, peace, joy, and love of God, Happy New Year.

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## Episcopal Youth Community

Jann Eich, Director

# JANUARY 2026 EYC SCHEDULE

**02**  
SUN

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR  
JR/SR HIGH BEGINS IN  
AMY WEST HOUSE AT 9  
AM

**14**  
WED

EYC SAM AND GREG'S  
NIGHT. MEET THERE.  
5:30-6:30 PM

**23**  
FRI

EYC EVENT IN  
GRUMAN HALL 6-8  
PM



# youth news

# Christian Formation

Jenifer Woytowich, Director

Dear St. Matthew's Family,

As we begin a new year, I want to thank you for the beautiful way our church family journeyed together through Advent and Christmas. We truly had a wonderful time sharing Advent lessons together—learning, creating, and worshiping side by side. Each week, we explored meaningful traditions and saints and discovered beautiful ways to continue spreading God's light within ourselves and with others.

Our Children's Christmas Pageant was a joyful highlight of the season. It was a wonderful experience filled with love, fun, and joy, and it truly reflected the heart of Christmas. Thank you to every child, youth, adult, volunteer, and family member who participated and helped make the pageant so special. Your willingness to share your time, energy, and faith brought the story of Jesus' birth to life in a powerful and memorable way.

As we move into January, we will return to **regular Sunday School classes**. We are excited to settle back into our weekly routines, continue growing in faith together, and explore God's Word in age-appropriate and meaningful ways. *Information about Lent services and formation opportunities will be coming soon.*

## Ladies Bible Study:

All women are warmly invited to join our **Ladies Bible Study**, which meets **Thursdays from 9:30–11:00 a.m.** This is a welcoming space for fellowship, meaningful discussion, and growing together in faith.

- **January 8 – February 12** (6 weeks): *What My Grandmothers Taught Me* by **Merryl Blair**

We also have several exciting book studies planned for the months ahead:

- **February 19 – March 26** (6 weeks): *The Walk* by **Adam Hamilton**
- **April 9 – May 14** (6 weeks): *Matthew: The Gospel of Promised Blessings* by **Matthew Skinner**

## Sunday School Information for Parents:

If you haven't already, please help us keep our records current by emailing me or completing the student information forms located in the Christian Education classrooms. This information is very helpful for ensuring their care and keeping families informed.

Please include:

Parent name    Phone number & email address    Child's name(s), age(s) and grade    Any allergies

Please remember to pick up your children from Sunday School by **9:50 a.m.**, allowing everyone enough time to transition to the worship service.

As we step into a new year together, may we continue to trust God's guidance and walk forward with hope. A kid-friendly verse to begin the year reminds us:

**"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."**

*Psalm 118:24*

Thank you for being such a loving, faithful, and engaged church family. I look forward to all that God has in store for us in the months ahead.

Blessings,

**Jen Woytowich**

Christian Formation Director

[christianed1@stmatthewsmadison.org](mailto:christianed1@stmatthewsmadison.org)

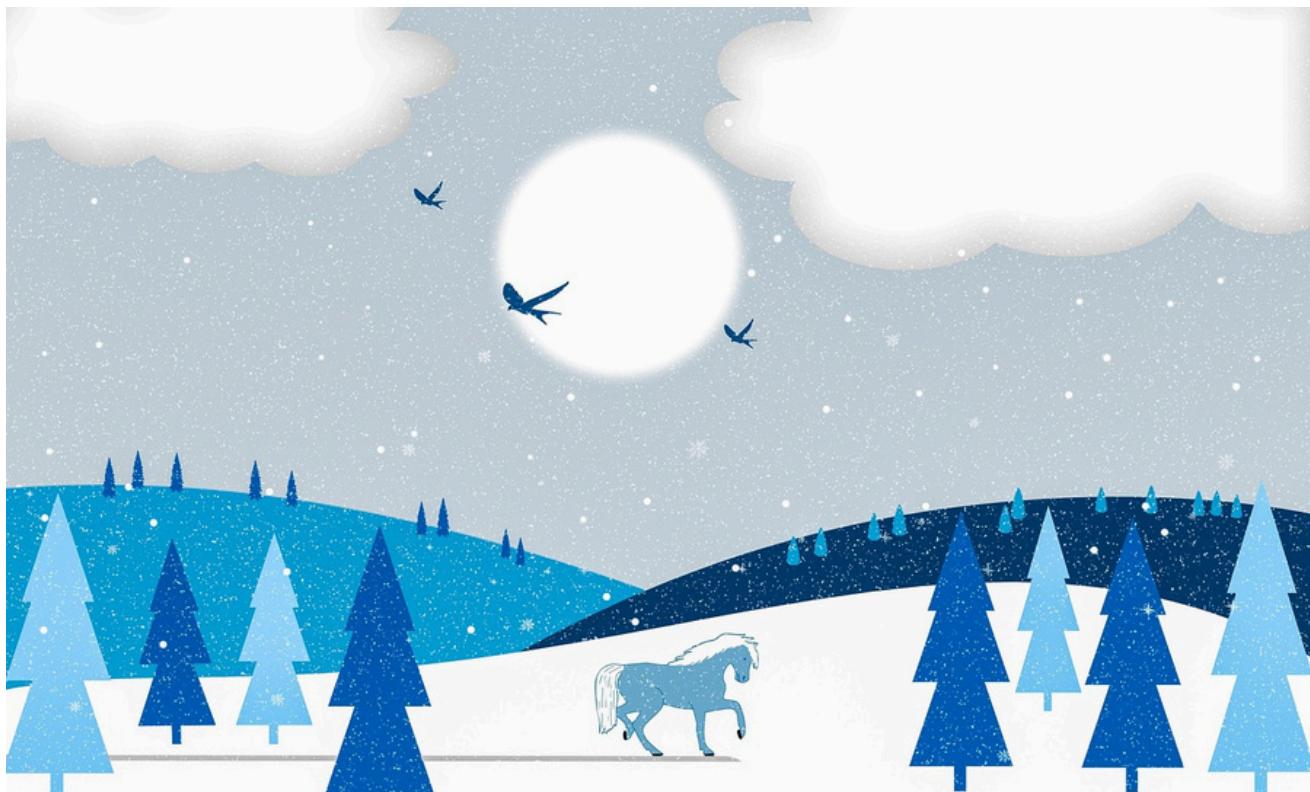
## Episcopal Church Women

Melissa Barton, President

We are putting together our calendar for the year. If you have any suggestions of places to go or events to have, please let me know. We especially want to discuss any sort of fundraisers that could replace the Rummage Sale.

We plan to go out for lunch, date and place to be announced  
Our next meeting will be January 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 in Gruman Hall.

Melissa Barton  
ECW President



## Prayer List

Please pray for St. Matthews's members who are distressed in body, mind, or spirit:

Bill Byrd, Chuck, Lorna, and Roy Vickers, Dottie Aldredge, Gina Centanni, Terry Schuster, David Osmond, Anna Post, Bev Ryberg, David Newton, Jane Prince, Mary Travers, Anne Sullivan, Judy Elkins, Lynda Johnston, Bob & Eileen Bogard, Roger & Rhoda Kitchen, Brenda Kirkendall, Chris King, Eileen Lewis, Molly Killian, the Sloan Family, Trudie Gruman, Ray and Shirley White, George and Sandra Burgess, Norm Smith, Keith Ulrich, Tyron Newton, Clarissa Dozier, Andy Williams, Darryl Carpenter, Carmen M. Colon, Robert Sampson, Deborah Harrison, Dennis and Beth Blanco, Scott Cechovic. Beau Womack and Joan East.

Also pray for our friends and family members, especially:

Brenda Anderson, Diana Parks, Martha Bergmann, Chuck Sewell, Wes Patterson, Richard Hattoway, Jenny Williams, Rosie Brown, Jewell Newton, Ginger Eich, Catherine S. Williams, Joe Allen, Caroline Thomas, Elyssa Nelson, Bill Fischer, Sally Flanigan, Theresa Richerson, Scott Marbut, Todd Newman, Cathy Taveras, Fran Woytowich, BB McCalpin, Stephen Byrd, Bronwen Murray, Katie Ray, Peggy Wagner, Joe Frank Trevino, Emmy & Drew Champion, Ron Mandelbaum, Dave Knowles, Wade Allen, Emily Nebrig, Bobby Paysinger, Barbara Lemley, Steve Sands, Felicia Temple, John David Landin, Mike Bolton, Dr. Mark Bronner, Ashley Jenkins, John Freedman, Mark Anderson, Judy Tuck, Kathleen Glor, Ann Reid Cronin, Elizabeth Hodges, Jill Kanuchok, Mike Mumfrey, Joyce Lewis, Allan Scott, Christine Van Dyke, Christopher Taveras, Mike Rice, Suzette Rice, Vaughn Cassell, Shannon Carpenter, Jarilyn Alleman, Jake Sowder, Cheryl Lavazza, Margaret McHugh, Shawn and Rachel Blanco.



# January Readings

## January 4th

[Jeremiah 31:7-14](#)  
[Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a](#)  
[Matthew 2:1-12](#)  
[Psalm 84 or 84:1-8](#)

## January 11th

[Isaiah 42:1-9](#)  
[Acts 10:34-43](#)  
[Matthew 3:13-17](#)  
[Psalm 29](#)

## January 18th

[Isaiah 49:1-7](#)  
[1 Corinthians 1:1-9](#)  
[John 1:29-42](#)  
[Psalm 40:1-12](#)

## January 25th

[Isaiah 9:1-4](#)  
[1 Corinthians 1:10-18](#)  
[Matthew 4:12-23](#)  
[Psalm 27:1, 5-13](#)

# January Servers

	B	C	D	E	F	G
1		<u><a href="#">Jan. 4th</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Jan. 11th</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Jan. 18th</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Jan. 25th</a></u>	
2	<u><a href="#">10:00 A.M.</a></u>					
3	VOD					
4	Altar Guild	N.Snell	S.Bagwell,D.Kleinjung	G.Lo, A.Coiner	N.Snell	
5	Ushers	R.Cassell, T.Sampson	M.Barton, N. Snell	M.Harrison, J. Anderson	D.Utt, A.Utt	
6	Lector.	D. Lawrence	A.Coiner	S. Peterson	M. Harrison	
7	Epistoler.	B. Buzby	P. Marques	J. Salmon	M. Pezzula	
8	Intercessor	S. Fletcher	P. McGraw	B. Womack	L. Mack	
9	LEM.	K.Price, K.Barr	D.Loehr,J.Vaughn	S.Weaver,K.Price	D.Loehr, K.Barr	
10	Crucifer.	C. Bagwell	E. Bruce	C.Bagwell	A.Maddox	
11	Gospeler.	B. Watson	A. Wales	S.Jones	E.Maddox	
12	Torch Bearer.		N. Rasmussen	C.Trout		
13	Torch Bearer.		M. Rasmussen	N.Lapacek		
14	Counter	M.Barton,A.Coiner	M.Harrison, S.Cox	P.Lewis, A.Coiner	M.Harrison, S.Cox	
15	Hospitality	R. Wyatt	M. Couch	M. Pezzula	D. Kleinjung	
16	Nursery.	M.Brown, A.Anderson	M.Brown, A.Anderson	M.Brown, A.Anderson	J.Maddox, T.Sampson	
17	<u><a href="#">8:15 A.M.</a></u>					
18	Lector	B. Pope	A. Turner	A. Utt	W. Christopher	
19	Counter	K.Modrall,C.Byrd	W.Christopher,J.Cooper	H.Tidwell,R.Driesbach	K.Modrall, C.Byrd	
20	Ushers	D. Utt, R. Sampson	D. Utt, C.Stagner	D.Utt, B.Buzby	A.Abercrombie,R.Sampson	
21	Crucifer	M.Pezzula	A. Maddox	A. Utt	E. Bruce	
23	Altar Guild	A.Turner	D.Buzby	B.Combs	A.Turner	
24	LEM	K.Scheuer,S.Smith	A.Williams, B.Williams	K.Scheuer,B.Carpenter	W.Christopher,T.Christopher	

## January 2026 Church Calendar

### Weekly Recurring Events

#### Sunday

8:15 a.m. - Eucharist/Reflection  
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 am - Sunday School  
10:00 a.m. - Holy Eucharist, Nave

#### Monday

5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. - Scouts BSA #628  
6:30 p.m.- 8:00 p.m. - Bells Angels

#### Tuesday

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. - Men's Breakfast  
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Reunion Group

#### Wednesday

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Reunion Group  
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Noon Eucharist

#### Thursday

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - Ladies Bible  
Study

#### Friday - Office Closed

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Cleaning crew

#### Saturday - Office Closed

### Other Scheduled Events

Wednesday, Dec. 31 - Church Office closed  
Thursday, Jan. 1 - Church Office closed  
Tuesday, Jan. 6 - Wing and a Prayer at 5:30pm at Cricket's  
Monday, Jan. 12 Sewing Sisters at 9am in Gruman Hall  
Wednesday, Jan. 14 - ECW Meeting at 10:30 am in Gruman Hall  
Monday. Jan. 19 - Sewing Sisters at 6pm in Christian Ed. Bldg  
Tuesday. Jan. 20 - NEWSLETTER DEADLINE  
Monday, Jan. 26 - Sewing Sisters at 9am in Christian Ed. Bldg  
Tuesday, Jan. 27 - Wing and a Prayer at 5:30pm at Cricket's

