

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS

Dec. 24	\$1,214
Dec. 25	\$923

MASS SCHEDULE

(L=Living, †=Deceased)

<i>THE MOST HOLY FAMILY</i>		
Sat. Dec. 30	5:00 PM	For the Living and Deceased People of the Parish
Sun. Dec. 31	9:00 AM	For †Henrietta Zellerer
Mon. Jan. 1	9:00 AM	For the Living and Deceased People of the Parish
Tue. Jan. 2	XXXXX	NO MASS THIS WEEK—SCHOOL MEETING
Wed. Jan. 3	8:00 AM	For †Anna Menefee
Thur. Jan. 4	8:00 AM	For Elsie Cooper (L) [Adoration & Confessions 6-7 PM]
Fri. Jan. 5	8:00 AM	For Peter Cooper (L) [First Friday Mass]
<i>THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD</i>		
Sat. Jan. 6	5:00 PM	For †Genoa Scott
Sun. Jan. 7	9:00 AM	For the Living and Deceased People of the Parish

PRAYER LIST—Jerry & Eileen Ehlman, Verna Payne, Kate & Colton Sherold, Emmitt Thomas, Jeff suffering from Meniere’s disease, Tony Bach, Mike and Bill Lemming, Dave Neuspickel, Bonita & Jim Happe, Andy Sper, Billie Huffman, Larry Slusher, Roger High, Cheryl Miller, Sherry Jackson, Sarah Griphover, Jeanne Eanes, Bill Schneider (Dominion Assisted Living 4009 Siegalman Dr. Florence, KY. 41042 Room 215), Ree Wagner, Randy Goodhew, Patty Neuspickel’s son Jim, Alan Fields, Imogene Fisk, Larry Cappel, Sean Timmerding, Rodney Gurren, Maverick Orth (2 years old), Bill Edelbroich, Jim Wolfe, Steve Vaughn, and John Jackson.

BIRTHDAYS— Jan. 3-Karly Bach, Jan. 3-Christine Thorwarth, Jan. 4-Caedan Feinauer, Jan. 6-Trisha Moore, Jan. 8-Myra Cooper Jan. 10-Rachel Broering, Jan. 11-John Mills, Jan. 15-Linda Fryman, Jan. 20-Joe Bach, Jan. 23 -Tim Dickerson, Jan. 23-Jerry Ehlman, Jan. 29-Maybalee Miller.

ANNIVERSARY— Jan. 17-Mark and Jeanne Cooper, Jan. 17-Christine and Nathan Thorwarth,

Please send any requests for prayers or memorials to the parish email or call to make a request. If you birthday or anniversary is not listed, let Linda know.



SAINT MATTHEW CHURCH

Pastor: Rev. Jacob Straub – Cell (859) 445-2436

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Parish Email: stmatthew13782@gmail.com – Bulletin submissions by Fri. afternoon

Parish Website: stmatthewskenton.org

Worship Schedule:

Saturdays – 5:00 PM

Sundays – 9:00 AM

Weekdays – 8:00 AM

Eucharistic Adoration: Thursdays 6-7:00 PM

Confession Times:

Saturdays – 4:00-4:50 PM

Sundays – 8:00-8:50 AM

Thursdays—6:00-6:50 PM

Parish Staff and Volunteers

Religious Education – Roseanne Rawe (859) 635-1572

Bulletin/Prayer List – Linda Fryman (859) 240-2377

Parish History/Cemetery Info – Patty Neuspickel (859) 472-2508

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE HOLY FAMILY

DECEMBER 31, 2023

KENTUCKY MARCH FOR LIFE—Join other Pro-Life Kentuckians on Tuesday, January 23 for the 2024 Kentucky March for Life & “Love them Both” Rally. The program will begin with Mass at Good Shepard Parish in Frankfort, followed by a rally at the State Capital. The event will end with a procession to the Cemetery of the Innocents in the historical Frankfort Cemetery. The Pro-Life office will be organizing buses that will leave from Northern Kentucky. If you are interested in traveling with other parishioners from the Diocese, please contact the Pro-Life Office for more information, 859-392-1500.

HOLY DAYS—A simple reminder: Christmas is a holy day of obligation every year. January 1st is NOT a holy day of obligation this year since it occurs on Monday. We will still have Mass on January 1st at 9:00 AM. Join us to ring in the New Year right.

LECTOR— Dec. 31-Rita Funke, Jan. 1-Lisa Cooper, Jan. 7—Bill Funke

CLEANING —Dec. 31—Kathy and Wanda Bach



FROM THE PASTOR—CHRISTMAS AND STORIES

Stories have been a part of our human experience since we have existed. Even before we could write out words, we traced images onto the walls of caves. Soon we began to have those appointed to the task of telling stories, either through recitation, through song, or through writing. With the advent of motion pictures, we now have even more ways to enjoy our favorite stories come to life before our eyes. How many different stories have been told throughout the centuries: Odysseus and Aeneas, Arthur and Camelot, Robin Hood and his Merry Men, the modern sagas of the Lord of the Rings and Star Wars. Each of us has that story that we know from beginning to end, that story which we treasure greatly, which we return to time and time again.

What is it about that one story that attracts us to return to it even when we know the plot and could probably recite the whole thing from memory? It is something which speaks to us deep down within our being, striking a chord within our heart. It resonates with what we desire and what we wish could be. It is the proper resolution of all things: the good are rewarded, the wicked are overthrown and punished, and all live happily ever after. This resolution is what every decent human being desires in their own life, and so we seek to affirm this by clinging on to stories where this resolution occurs. We treasure these stories because we recognize the reality that there is evil in our world, and that perhaps it might win over us unless we act. For tonight we re-hear the story that has been woven into the human experience from the very beginning. We hear once the story of the real battle of good and evil which has been waged from the creation of the world, and which continues now and unto the end of time. It is the story we are all too familiar with, yet the story which we should delight in the most.

With the child whose birth we celebrate on Christmas, our story begins to turn towards its climax through the introduction of the most unexpected of characters: the Author of the story itself. For the child born to us this night is no mere child. He is the Creator of the entire universe become a creature within that same universe; He is the Author of the great story who becomes one of the characters within that same story; He is the indivisible, infinite, immortal, eternal God become man so as to serve that same God. It is this child who will turn the story towards its climax through His life and through His death. We know the conclusion of the story: we see it in the Cross displayed so prominently in our church. We will celebrate it once more on Easter Sunday when we recall and rejoice in the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But can we really say that all of that is the true conclusion to this story we have reviewing? How can we say that this story is done when it seems that so little has changed from before?

It is true that the story of humanity is completed in Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Jesus' vindication of humanity shines forth like the dawn and His victory like a burning torch. Yet this story is not completed in each one of us. It is unfinished in that we each are given the choice of either joining in with the victorious story of Christ or of writing our own story against God and against Christ. It is unfinished in that it is still being written in our hearts and in our lives, the pen standing over the paper at each moment to write down and to trace out our path either towards union with God or abandonment of God.

We should recall the classic ending of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*: Ebenezer Scrooge, having been visited by three spirits showing him Christmases past, present, and future, changes his ways for the better, exclaiming at the end: "I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year." If we are to honor Christmas all year, we must make our broken or discordant stories one with the story of Christ, with the story of His Church.

Let us rejoice in this day, because God does not abandon us as a failed story, but instead willingly enters the story so as to restore us. Let us live out our stories in unity with the great story of Jesus so that we may be a part of the new story which will be written in joy and peace, where all will live happily ever after.

Fr. Jacob Straub