

Style Guide for St. Matthew Catholic Church

This style guide is intended to improve consistency within our publications and ensure clear messaging in support of the St. Matthew Catholic Church identity. These guidelines apply to writing for print and electronic publications, including the bulletin, the website, e-communications, department manuals, annual reports, mailings, etc. In accordance with the Diocese of Charlotte, St. Matthew generally follows Associated Press, USCCB and Catholic News Service style guidelines when writing for publication. Copies of these style guides are available for reference in the communications office. Here are some helpful rules when writing materials for publication by St. Matthew.

- **Months** – Spell out months of the year. If used as part of a date, abbreviate *Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Dec.* Spell out *March, April, May, June and July.* If the month, as part of a date, is in a headline, spell it out.
- **Times** – Use figures except for noon and midnight. Write as follows: 10 am; 7 pm; 7 to 8 pm; noon and midnight
- **Numbers** – spell out whole numbers below 10, use figures for 10 and above. For school grades, spell out first through ninth and use numerals for 10th through 12th grades.
- **Punctuation** –
 - Day and date: Friday, Jan. 8, at 8 pm
 - Do not include a comma before “and” in a series. (at the 9 am, 10:45 am and 12:10 pm Masses)
 - Punctuation should fall inside a closed quote. (She said, “God is good.”)
- **Percentage** – Spell out percent unless space is an issue and use a numeral. (35 percent increase)
- **Spacing** – Include only one space after a period.
- **Titles** – Capitalize official job and organization/department titles but not general positions or roles. (Faith Formation Coordinator, Director of Liturgical Ministries, First Friday Ministry, Living Your Strengths; altar servers, lectors, ushers)
- **Campus Locations** – Capitalize the names of offices or church campus locations if it includes the proper name of the building such as New Life Center Banquet Room, Daily Mass Chapel and Parish Center Family Room. Do not capitalize if it is a general location such as narthex, church, gift shop and church office.
- **Junior, Senior** – Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names. Do not precede by a comma.
- **Addresses** – Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., St. only with a numbered address. Spell out otherwise. (Drive, Road and Terrace are always spelled out.)

Church/Catholic Terminology

- **Mass** – always capitalize the word Mass.
- **Jesus** – Capitalize pronouns used to reference Jesus or God. (Jesus gave His life to save ours.)
- **Sacraments** – Capitalize sacraments (Eucharist, Communion, Baptism, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders) Do not capitalize marriage. Lowercase the word “sacrament” if not used in combination with a sacrament. Capitalize if used in combination: Sacrament of Confirmation.
- **Scripture** – Capitalize. Do not capitalize modifying adjectives: sacred Scriptures, holy Scripture.
- **Church** – Do not capitalize unless used as part of the formal name of a building, a congregation or a denomination: *Holy Redeemer Church*, the *Catholic Church*. Lowercase when used in an institutional or general theological sense: *The church is the people of God. The church teaches that ...*
- **Clergy Titles** – Spell out clergy titles. (Father John Doe; Sister Jane Doe; Deacon John Doe)
- **Saint** – Abbreviate St. when in a church title (St. Matthew Catholic Church) and for saint names (St. John); spell out for All Saints or angels and saints.