



Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church

June 2005

201 E. Frederick Drive
Sterling, VA 20164

NEWSLETTER



From the Rector

Dear Friends,

Some years ago I got a little bored doing the same thing over and over again celebrating Sunday morning services. To talk myself through the boredom, I thought I'd calculate how many services I would likely have remaining in my service as a priest. I figured when I came up with that number I'd conclude, "That's not so bad. I can do that."

I think I was about 35 at the time, so I estimated that if I had 30 years left as a priest, at 52 Sundays a year, that came out to repeating a given service 1560 times (though I do multiple services on a Sunday, each one is different).

The result of those computations was different than I expected. I looked at that number and it was much smaller than I expected—only 1560 services! That was going to go by in a flash. I decided then and there that as far as it was in my power to do so, I was going to cherish each and every service for the opportunity to worship God it is.

Obviously, one could do the same sort of thing with summers. If I live to be 80, I only have slightly more than 30 summers to go. Pretty sobering, isn't it?

I'm not writing any of this to be morbid—far from it. I'm writing it to encourage all of us to make the most of the time given to us. What do you hope to get out of this summer? What do I?

Do we want to slow down a bit and spend more time with those we love?

Do we want to take more time to walk in the evenings and soak in the beauty of God's creation?

Do want to simply read some good books?

Could our spiritual life use a little help, and might the summer offer some opportunities to address that?

The sooner we figure that out, the more likely we are to actually achieve it instead of simply letting the time slip through our hands.

Figure it out, friends. Make it happen. I can assure you—you'll be glad you did.

Rob †

Confirmation

Bishop Jones will visit Saint Matthew's on Sunday, September 11, 2005. One of the purposes of the Bishop's visit is to perform the sacramental rite of confirmation. Confirmation, which is the expression of a mature commitment to Christ, signifies that one is ready to take on new responsibilities within the Church.

Confirmation is normally a sacramental rite for teens and up. Those wishing to be confirmed should look for a sign-up sheet on the Spiritual Formation bulletin board in the parish hall and plan to attend a confirmation study on Friday evening, September 9, and all day Saturday, September 10. More details will be forthcoming regarding the confirmation study.

For more information on confirmation please contact Richard Leach or Rob Merola.

Baptism Schedule

The Book of Common Prayer lists four times during the liturgical year that baptisms should be done. Saint Matthew's has elected to adopt this schedule as well. The remaining date for 2005 is All Saint's Day, November 6, 2005 (the Sunday after All Saint's Day)

The other three dates — the First Sunday after Epiphany (usually the second week in January), the Easter Vigil (which is the sunrise service on Easter morning), and Pentecost (which was May 15 this year) — have already come and gone. However, going forward, baptisms will be done by this schedule.

If you would like to schedule a baptism in 2005, please see Father Rob.

Movie Night Is Coming!

We will be showing a movie and having a discussion outline each Wednesday for adults and kids! So don't make other plans this summer, come to Saint Matthew's on Wednesdays for a great mid-week gathering of friends! Look for more information in upcoming bulletins.



Youth Minister's Report

Over the past month the parishioners of Saint Matthew's have begun writing daily devotions based on the epistle reading of the day. In case you don't know, the Episcopal lectionary is the list of what readings we should read each Sunday (the first reading, second reading, and gospel, a.k.a. the Old Testament reading, the Epistle, and the Gospel). Not only are the Sunday readings listed, but there's even a Bible reading for each and every day of the year. Pretty amazing, I know.

I was incredibly happy to be asked to contribute my own reflections on the reading once a week. I knew I'd gain some spiritual growth, but I've also found I really have a lot of fun with it. Instead of my usual blog, which rambles on about whatever I'm thinking of, this is a directed writing with a real focus.

There are currently seven people writing, each with their own unique look at the passage and way of writing. While I'd bet I'm pulling down the IQ of the group, I can still hope to move someone every now and then.

I'd definitely recommend checking it all out. It's short (we have a 350 word limit, and it's often shorter than that), often moving and always inspirational. As a small taste of what's listed, here's my posting from May 12 on Hebrews 7:18-28.

"I swear on my mother's grave I'm telling the truth." "I swear if you don't stop that right now, I'm going to knock you into tomorrow." "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God." "I swear to take this woman to have and to hold, to cherish in sickness and in health, until death do us part." "I swear Coldstone Creamery is the best ice cream I've ever had."

Ok, I think you get the idea. I'm talking about oaths.

When we enter into a relationship with someone, whether it's a friend, a date or a long-term commitment (I'm talking marriage here), we make an oath to that person. Sometimes it's not spoken and sometimes it is, but we commit to that person that we will treat them well, the way we want to be treated by them, and the way Jesus treats us.

The same is true for those of us who have decided to become followers of Jesus. We've taken an oath to follow God and his teaching. An oath to share with others the amazing wonders he brings to us. In return, God's made an oath to us. Jesus has promised us eternal life. A life which surpasses that ultimate barrier, death.

Have you spoken aloud that oath you've given to Jesus? If you haven't made that oath yet, what will it take for you to make that oath? Maybe it's time to begin looking at the promises you've made and see which ones are really important. Which promises have you made which will impact your life here and, literally, forever?

Peace,

† Tom

G3 HAPPENINGS

We're coming up on summer vacation and with it CreationFest and the mission trip. We have 15 people ready to grow their spirit through some amazing music at Creation this year at the end of June. We also have an amazing 25 people going out to a reservation spending a week making a real difference in the lives of others the first week of August. Please keep each of them in your prayers as we set out on these emotional and faithful experiences.

We also have Starbucks continuing each Thursday through the summer, so come on out and enjoy the warm weather and meet some new friends. It's a very easy night where you can meet people and get a feel for some of the youth group without feeling a whole lot of pressure. Who knows, you may end up seeing someone you know.

If you have any questions about our activities, call Tom Leary at 703-858-1410.

Helping Hand Help Wanted

Do you have a special dish that is easy to prepare and you would like to share it with others? We are looking for people of all ages who would be willing to prepare a casserole and deliver it to a parishioner in need. Your special dish may be called for when a parishioner or someone we know is in need because of pregnancy, hospitalization, or financial struggles.

Please contact Miriam Turner for more information at HelpingHand@stmatthewssterling.org or 703-787-9745.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Pizza and Game Night
June 4, 6:00 p.m.

Annual Parish Picnic
September 18

From the Senior Warden

Once again summer is upon us. It seems that out of all the seasons of the year, summer brings the biggest changes in our routines. School is out, so the kids are at home all day and families take long anticipated vacations. At least one thing stays the same though. Saint Matthew's has a full agenda of activities in which everyone can participate. Samplings of these activities are as follows.

- On June 12 there will be a Sunday School celebration where the children will recite the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and sing songs, during the 10:30 a.m. service. This will be followed by a celebration picnic.
- On June 29 the youth group will depart for CreationFest — three days of camping and listening to Christian music and inspirational speakers with 100,000 other Christians.
- From July 5 to 9, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Mission Possible Summer Camp will take place. This camp is for rising 5th through 7th graders. Each day the campers travel to a different location to participate in a community service project. This is a great way to participate in mission service before you are old enough to go on the youth mission trip.
- July 25 to 29 is our Vacation Bible School (VBS). This year the theme is an African safari. If you have not already done so, please complete a registration form. VBS is a great experience not only for the kids but for the teen and adult volunteers, too.
- On July 31 a group of 27 (six adults and 21 teenagers) will depart for the Crow Reservation in Montana. This is our annual high school week-long mission trip.
- In August our new seminarian begins her two-year internship with us. We are looking forward to her

arrival and welcoming her into the warm fellowship of Saint Matthew's. I know she will not only learn a great deal from us, but we will also learn new and exciting things from her. When she arrives, please make a special effort to welcome her into her new family.

- Throughout the summer we will be offering Wednesday night at the movies. A different movie will be shown each Wednesday evening. Please look for more information forthcoming about this fun activity.
- On Sunday, September 11, Bishop Jones will attend the 10:30 service at Saint Matthew's. One activity the Bishop will perform while here is confirmation. If you wish to be confirmed, please look for the separate announcement in this newsletter.
- If you have not been to one before, please join us for a Pizza and Game night on June 4 beginning at 6:00 p.m. They are a blast and a great way to meet more of the Saint Matthew's family. Please look for announcements regarding this activity.

The above list is just a sampling, as I know other activities are being planned (e.g., a trip to see our new baseball team, the Nationals). Please keep your eyes peeled for the weekly announcements in your order of worship for more information on the activities planned for this summer.

I have one last request. Please keep the high school mission trip in your prayers. A mission trip can be a life changing event, and your prayers help to make that happen.

Wishing you all the best in your spiritual journey,
- *Richard Leach*

New Pet Friendly Service at Saint Matthew's

The first pet friendly service was held last month to a "fetching" "gaggle" of people and their animal companions. Even though it was raining "cats and dogs" outside, the "brood" seemed delighted to be able to join the "flock" in worship. Father Rob had every eye "trained" on his sermon — not a "peep" was "uddered" out of place. Pets "lapped up" their blessing, while the humans received Holy Communion. After the service, the dogs seemed to be a bit more obedient and loyal, and the cats simply seemed to care a bit. The hamster in attendance was just happy to get out alive. The service will continue the fourth Sunday of each month at 4:00 p.m. "Purr"sonally, I feel it is a great opportunity to experience the message of Christ with my fellow animal-lovers. Please plan on coming this month, June 26. Bring your friends and tell them to bring their pet's also. I hope to see "eue" at the next service!

- *Angela Brittain*

From the Lay Ministry Coordinator

Lay Ministry is...

. . . our commitment as members to serve and to encourage others to use their gifts as they serve.

Is serving the Lord a "job" or a "ministry"?

Some people have a job in the church; others involve themselves in a ministry.

What's the difference?

- If you're doing it just because no one else will, it's a job. If you're doing it to serve the Lord, it's a ministry.
- If you're doing it just well enough to get by, it's a job. If you do it to the best of your ability, it's a ministry.
- If you do it as long as it doesn't interfere with your other activities, it's a job. If you are committed to staying with it even when it means letting go of other things, it's a ministry.
- If you do it because someone else said it needed to be done, it's a job. If you do it because you think it needs to be done, it's a ministry.
- People will say "Well done!" when you finish a job. The Lord will say "Well done!" when you complete your ministry.

On any Sunday

Worship is an activity. We invite God to talk to us. He talks. We listen and respond. In any given worship service, there are many members of the congregation who help each of us prepare to worship Almighty God. How are these people chosen? They ask for the opportunity to serve. You can be an assistant. Consider the following list of tasks that are done to prepare worship at Saint Matthew's: greeters, ushers, Sunday school teachers and assistants, altar preparation, lay Eucharistic ministers, acolytes, readers, Sunrise Service team, choir members, instrumentalists and soloists, flower arrangers, Coffee Hour hostess, teller, technology/computer during service.

I encourage you to identify your gifts and to use your time and talents in ministry. If you are unsure of where to get started, feel free to contact me by phone at 703-421-6310 or by email at jodieleach2@aol.com.

- *Jodie Leach*

An average church is filled with people doing a job.

A great and growing church is filled with people who are involved in ministry.

Stewardship of Creation Committee

Saint Matthew's Adopts the Cedar Grove Trail

Claude Moore Park was busy in April as volunteers trimmed and cleaned up all eleven miles of hiking trails. Saint Matthew's volunteers joined this Keep Loudoun Beautiful project. Tom and Joe Lowden and Rich Henry clipped back the wild roses and autumn olive bushes encroaching on "Saint Matthew's" trail. The purple-blazed Cedar Grove Trail leads hikers past succession and cedar forests and along the edge of a state-rare upland depression swamp. Before returning to historic Vestal's Gap Road, hikers may stop and try to spot the green residents of "The Frog Pond."

National Trails Day, June 4, 2005, will be celebrated at the park. Trail adoption certificates will be presented at 1:00 p.m. Volunteer groups will be recognized for their commitment to maintain the trails in Claude Moore Park. We would like to have lots of people represent Saint Matthew's! Please join us at Pavilion #1 at 1:00 p.m. and help us share our love of God's creation! For more Trails Day information, or to join in our next work-trip, please contact Merry Breed at 703-444-2451 or darrellandmerry@earthlink.net.

- *Merry Breed*

MISSION POSSIBLE

Who: Kids rising to grades 5 - 7

What: Summer Mission Work to help people in Loudoun County

When: July 5 - 8, 2005 (attend for one day or all four)

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring a bag lunch!

Where: Meet each day at Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church and travel to various places nearby.

Why: If you are looking for some summer fun, searching for ways to volunteer, wanting to share God's love, this is the program for you!

Cost: It's **free**; we welcome donations of \$5 to cover incidentals.

We'll start each day with some games, then prepare for an activity that helps people in our community! Ideas of activities include giving out water bottles on the W&O bike trail, painting and decorating wood bird houses for Habitat for Humanity, an outing to Claude Moore Park, and traveling the neighborhood collecting food for LINK. Bring a bag lunch each day, and we'll picnic nearby.

You are free to sign up for all days or days that fit your schedule. Each day is a new adventure, and the schedule for the day's specific activity is to be determined as the weather permits.

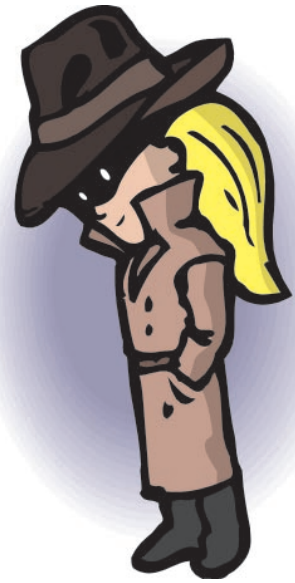
Questions? Ask Jodie Leach at 703-421-6310 or jodieleach2@aol.com.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Current Grade: _____ Email: _____

Days you **CAN ATTEND** (please check all that apply): Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday ALL 4 DAYS

My parent can help by driving on which day? _____ My parent can not help during this week.



It's a Date
For You and Your Kids
Friday, June 10
6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Ages 2 and up • Fee is \$3/hour
(Red Cross certified babysitters on duty)

Let Saint Matthew's Youth Group do your babysitting while you spend some quality time with a loved one!

While you catch a meal and a movie or whatever, your kids will be making new friends and enjoying a beach-themed good time!

Fun for kids!

There'll be movies, games, crafts, songs, snacks, and more.

Reservations are suggested, but not required.

Please let us know ahead of time if we need to plan for special needs like allergies or access. Call 703-421-6310 for more information.



This summer 21 teenagers and 6 adults will be traveling to the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana. There they will serve the people living in the community. We are looking forward to this opportunity to serve, and we appreciate your support of our fundraising efforts.



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND MORE!

We look forward to a great celebration on Sunday, June 12! At the 10:30 a.m. service, the children will be reciting the **Ten Commandments** and receive recognition for all they have learned this year. A **Celebration Picnic** will follow at noon. Saint Matthew's will provide hot dog. Families are invited to bring items based on their last name in the alphabet: A-K, side dish of vegetables or fruit; L-P, salads; Q-Z, desserts. We are working out the details of activities such as a moon bounce and other recreation for the kids.

Summer Time Sunday School will be large group activities using the curriculum of Power Express - **"Dig Into the Bible."** Each week, we will focus on a different type of activity. If you have a passion for art, music, science or cooking, we are looking for teachers to serve a rotation of one Sunday this summer.

If you are rising to grades 5-7, a special summer camp is planned for you!
MISSION POSSIBLE – a special daily activity of helping people in our community.
July 5-9 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It's free! See page 7 for more information.

Vacation Bible School!

Serengeti Trek - Where Kids are Wild about God

July 25-29. Sign up today! Registration forms are due by July 10! Things are heating up! We have a 7-foot giraffe coming, along with elephants, lions, and cranes! Join us for dinner and the wilds of a summer safari! Songs, games, drama, and crafts will keep the children busy from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Dinner is included!

MAY FLOWERS BRING...

... more flowers, right? Well, we are hoping so. In an effort to give everyone the opportunity to dedicate altar flowers, we are going to provide a new way to make dedications. Within the next few weeks, you will see pew cards in the pockets in the back of the pews on which you can write flower dedications. You can then either drop the completed card in the offertory plate, or you can call or send an email to Barbara McKinney. All the information you will need to make a dedication will be on the pew card. Once you make a dedication, Barbara will keep track of those dates for you and will remind you next year at the same time. And you do not need to wait until the date is near to make the dedication. You can let Barbara know at any time, and she will keep track of it for you. It could not be any easier. Flowers are a wonderful way to glorify the Lord's table and thank God for the wonderful blessings he has given us. So, make a flower dedication today!



Outreach Committee

ESL graduation and reception were held May 1, 2005 at the 9:15 a.m. service. Seven out of thirteen graduates came this year to receive diplomas, a book, and a t-shirt with an American flag and the words, "God Bless America." I thank many of you: Elaine, our music director, for the special music; Mary Petersen for cutting the cake and making special punch for the reception; Becky Smith, the welcome coordinator; and Mark Vereb, Spiritual Formation Chair, for their special interest in my students. Continue to pray for these students. All graduates come next year at no charge.

PowerPoint is a wonderful assistive technology, but to some of us, there is nothing like picking up a good book. Besides wonderful PowerPoint slides we have seen at the annual meetings and at services, a yearly scrapbook to browse through will be available starting for year 2005. Please hand pictures to Karen Thayer, the master designer and coordinator; Kenny Thayer; or Leanna Wilson. We also are looking for testimonials on how coming to Saint Matthew's has enriched your life. You may request that your letter be anonymous. Please send email to Leanna Wilson at mdwilson61@aol.com or to Saint Matthew's (please ask to forward) with testimonials on (1) what attracted you to Saint Matthew's, (2) what is your favorite service, (3) what you do, or (4) how a parishioner or our favorite rector has touched your life.

Please continue to look for weekly announcements in the bulletin for upcoming projects and meetings. Be checking for Mission Possible activities for rising 5th to 7th graders (registration form in this newsletter). Please write dates on your calendars, and come out and join in the fellowship and fun. Come join our monthly Outreach Committee meeting on the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the trailers. We are always looking for new ideas of how to help others less fortunate than us and spread the word of Jesus. I hear that cookies and drinks are served at this meeting. See you there!

- **Leanna Wilson** and **Kenny Thayer**, Co-Chairpersons

Deadline for submission to this newsletter is the first Friday of each month. Content may be submitted by hardcopy to the newsletter mailbox in the church office or e-mailed to Newsletter@stmatthewssterling.org.

From the Vestry - April 2005

The April 19 meeting of the vestry opened with prayer at 7:05 p.m. After approval of minutes from previous meetings, the vestry heard the treasurer's report on the church's finances through March 31. Overall, the church's fund balances were in good shape. In terms of income, the church was above budget by about 5% for pledge income and under budget by a small amount for plate income. In terms of expenses, the church was a little over budget in some areas and a little under budget in other areas. One area significantly over budget was advertising. This led to a discussion of issues related to the church's advertising, a discussion that was decided to be carried over to a later meeting. Also, continuing a matter of business from the March meeting, the vestry voted to approve several sections of a set of policies and procedures for church operations and ministries. Then the vestry voted to approve Steve Weser to serve as junior warden and chair of building and grounds. The vestry next discussed plans for a pet-friendly service beginning in April and continuing on the fourth Sunday for six months. Held in the Sanctuary in the Woods, this service will consist of a Rite II Eucharist with blessing of animals. The Boy Scout troop at Saint Matthew's had approached the church about holding a car wash for parishioners in the church parking lot during the Sunday services as a fundraiser. After consideration, and in accord with policy, the consensus was that the Scouts would not be permitted to hold this on a Sunday morning at the church. The vestry then revisited the question from a previous meeting of having a strategic meeting in May. It was tentatively set that the meeting would take place the evening of May 13 and all day on May 14 at a site other than the church. The two major topics would be these: identification of strategic themes; and development of the stewardship/budget process. In further business, Rob Merola reported on plans for Ann Ritonia to start a ministry internship at Saint Matthew's in August. The meeting adjourned at 8:52. The next meetings will take place May 13-14 (a strategic meeting, tentatively set) and May 17 (tactical).

The Classroom of Discovery

For information on the preschool classes that meet here at Saint Matthew's, visit their new website: www.classroomofdiscovery.org.



**Saint Matthew's Presents a Unique Worship Service
for People and their Pets**
the fourth Sunday of every month at 4 p.m.



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The Reverend C. Rob Merola • Rector
201 East Frederick Drive • Sterling, VA 20164-2387
Telephone: (703) 430-2121 • Fax: (703) 430-2638
Sunday Service Times: 8:00 AM • 9:15 AM* • 10:30 AM*
*Nursery Provided

Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

E-mail: OfficeManager@stmatthewssterling.org • Internet: <http://www.stmatthewssterling.org>