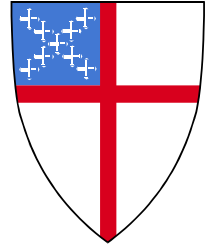


*Saint*  
**Matthew's**  
Episcopal Church



201 East Frederick Drive • Sterling, VA 20164

## August 2015

FROM THE RECTOR

ROB MEROLA



Dear Friends,

As you probably know, there is a bigger homeless population in Loudoun County than most people realize. Over the years we have developed relationships with many of these people and have come to know them by name.

One of our homeless friends stopped by last week, but I had to go straight into a meeting. For him it was no bother; he took the opportunity to sleep on a pew. Afterwards we chatted briefly. We helped him as best we could.

This particular man walks with a bad limp which has grown more pronounced with age, so I usually drive him to a bus stop after we talk. Unfortunately, I was late for my next meeting, so I asked Tom O' Neill, the director of this year's VBS, if he would mind doing so. He said he would be happy to help.

Our homeless friend was duly appreciative, but asked if he might sleep a little longer. I expect he's fallen on even harder times than usual as he did not look good, and has been sleeping outside wherever he can find a place. His belongings, which he carries on his back, often change. He says he gets beaten up and what he has is stolen. I believe him, given the cuts and contusions that are often evident. One of the things we were able to do was put him up in a hotel for a couple nights.

So I can see why he'd like more time to rest in a safe place, even if it is a brutally hard wood pew. Here Tom shines—he says he has some errands to do and will stop back in a little while to see if our friend is ready to go.

When Tom does come back, he brings lunch with him. Our homeless friend is awake, and they sit and talk. I do not know if anything in all of existence matters more than such kindnesses. On the way to the Dranesville Giant, our homeless friend asks Tom if he could drop him off at the post office on Elden Street instead. He said there was a bench there that he sleeps on. This too, Tom does, writing me a note afterwards saying, "Interesting guy and I'm glad I got to spend time with him."

That's what a follower of Jesus should look like, I think. It's what I hope we look like as a church; freely sharing whatever we have with whoever is in need, whenever and wherever they need it. And, it's why after 15 years at St. Matt's, I am even more proud of you than ever.

Gratefully,  
Rob+

**Fr. Rob will be celebrating his father's 80th birthday so there will not be a 5pm church service on Saturday, August 8. We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, August 9 at 8am, 9:30am, or 11am.**

## *Special Guest Speaker, Meredith Ehler*

**August 22 and 23 (All Services)**



Saint Matthew's is excited to welcome Meredith Ehler as our guest speaker on Saturday, August 22 and Sunday, August 23 at all services. Meredith is a former Redskins Cheerleader and a Herndon native. She attended JMU where she earned a degree in fashion. She also studied in Paris, and worked as a fashion stylist and event planner for stores like Nordstrom and Saks.

Now she is a Christian speaker and writer. Meredith has a passion for strengthening women, children and marriages. She has experienced for herself the amazing results that come when you have a personal relationship with Christ. Meredith and her teenaged daughter are writing a book about parenting and they speak locally with the intention to inspire others to make Jesus and the Bible the most important things in their life.

She has a style blog "MeredithEhler.com" and a Christian blog and website "AMoreBeautifulLife.com". She has her own business and serves her clients as a makeup artist, wardrobe stylist and home decorator.

## *End of Summer Potluck*

**Saturday, August 29th**

**After the 5pm Contemporary Service**

Come and join us for a potluck dinner on Saturday, August 29th immediately following the Saturday service. After a long and hot summer, come and see some of your old friends, make some new ones and get revved up for all of the fun and exciting activities and events planned for the Fall.

Bring your favorite casserole/crockpot dinner or salad to share.



## *Blessing of the Backpacks & Back to Church Weekend*

**August 29 and 30**



Summer is almost over and fall is just around the corner. That means it's time to get back into our regular habits. Grab your calendar and create a recurring event for Church every Saturday evening or Sunday morning. Sunday school begins on August 30.

Children are invited to bring their backpacks to any of the four services this weekend to receive a special blessing before the new school year begins.

This is only a small selection of our upcoming events. Read the weekly bulletin for the most up to date information. Can't make it to church, read the announcements online at [www.stmmts.org](http://www.stmmts.org). Look under "For Parishioners" in the left hand column.