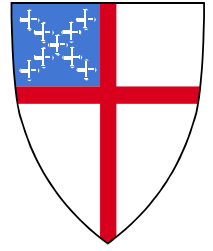


*Saint*  
**Matthew's**  
Episcopal Church



201 East Frederick Drive • Sterling, VA 20164

## March 2015

### FROM THE SEMINARIAN

#### CHRISTIAN ANDERSON



This past summer I was given a crash course on gardening. My stepfather had passed away in the spring and I had returned home for the summer to help out my mother. I soon realized that my time at home would not only involve grieving the loss of Charlie, but also the enormous task of filling his gardening shoes. My stepfather was retired and had spent the last ten years tending to a sizeable yard that he filled with raised gardens, exotic plants, multiple families of ferns, and a horrendous bamboo outbreak. I found myself married to e-how and YouTube looking up everything from “how to harvest asparagus” to “top 5 ways to kill bamboo.”

I sweated more than I had ever sweat. My back aged from 36 years of age to 78 in three short months. And my hands . . . well, let's say I was literally creating an entire green hand. But, as you probably already know, the hard work is quite gratifying. As our work on this earth continues to become more ethereal and communicated through WiFi, I found the opportunity to dirty my hands in the earth to be refreshing, grounding, and quite transformative. I . . . felt . . . everything: the softness of the soil, the scratch of the rocks against my palms, the sting of the wasp, and the bleeding callous from the grip of the axe. No emoticons were needed. No clicking “send” to share my transcendent experience. Just a series of sensorial moments shared within God's organic playground.

The current Lenten season calls us to tend to our own soul gardens. It beckons us to sink into the dirt and grime of our lives. It nags us to finally acknowledge and remove the various weed patches that may be sucking our spiritual life into the ground. It also yearns for us to feel the bountiful springs of life sprouting from our hearts. In order to see the entire landscape of our soul, Lent directs us to unplug from superficial distractions and fall into the organic and authentic state of our being: ticks and all.

This Lent, let's mimic Jesus and dedicate these 40 days to acknowledging every temptation and obstacle that removes us from our Father. Every Sunday, let's lift up a new spiritual weed to God and pray that we nurture every God given source of love in our hearts. Most importantly, let's do it together. Let's pray and support one another as we follow the call of our Master Gardener.

Our backs might ache and our hands will get dirty, but we take comfort knowing that our hard work prepares the way for the glorious blossoming of the life-giving, resurrected Christ in all of our hearts.

May this Lenten season bring a bountiful harvest into your hearts.

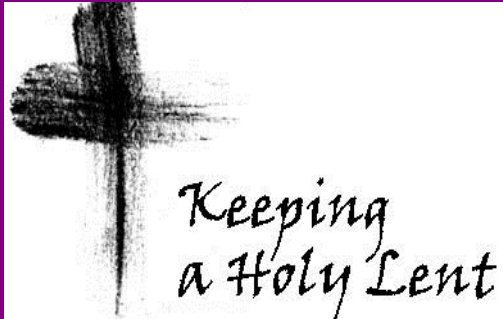
Christian



### Saturday, March 14th at Noon

Join us for our next free Community Lunch. We need volunteers to set-up, serve and most importantly interact and get to know our neighbors. Food donations are also appreciated. Please contact Sandra Gentry at [sandra.gentry1@verizon.net](mailto:sandra.gentry1@verizon.net) to find out how to get involved.

## Lenten WatCh Series



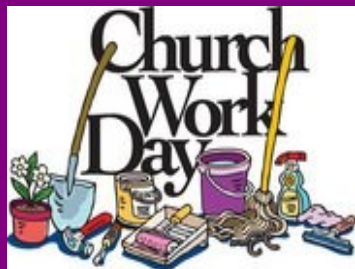
Join us as we read and discuss the book *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion* by Gregory Boyle as our WatCH study this Lent. This gripping book is a series of stories written by a Jesuit priest working in the middle of L.A.'s most notorious gang ghetto. Boyle tells tale after tale of "homies" who, frankly, aren't too different than you, me and our neighbors. All of them (us) are looking for love and acceptance in a world where everyone – gang member, suburban housewife, federal worker – are pigeon-holed by society. And yet, Boyle dares us to be like Jesus nonetheless.

We will have group discussions and break into small groups to dive deeper into what boundless compassion means. We will start each Wednesday at 6:30pm with a community meal of soup and sandwiches, then start our sessions promptly at 7:00 p.m. Child care will be provided. We guarantee that you will find something in this book that speaks directly to you. You can order the book through iBooks or Amazon. Alternatively, we will have books available in the office. The books are \$10.25 each or free to those who cannot afford the book but would like to participate.

Child care will be provided and there will be Lenten activities for children of all ages.

## Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, March 28th, 10am-12pm

Join us for this wonderful community event at Briar Patch Park. There will be an Easter egg hunt, face painting, pictures with the Easter bunny and much more. We are accepting donations of plastic Easter eggs and candy (peanut-free) and small toys for this event. Please contact Tracey with questions. [Tracey@stmmts.org](mailto:Tracey@stmmts.org)



## Parish Work Day Saturday, March 28th 9am—12pm

Please join us as we prepare the church and grounds for Holy Week and Easter. We need your help! Stop by for an hour or so and then head over to the Easter egg hunt at the park. Coffee will be provided and we'll have jobs available for all ability levels.