

NEWSLETTER

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Sterling, VA

www.stmatthewssterling.org

April 2003



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Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church

Calendar of Events - April 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery	2 6:30 P - Soup-er Supper 7:00 P - Lenten Study	3 3:30 P - Girl Scouts 6:30 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 P - Worship Commission	4 9:00 A - Discovery play group	5 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 8:30 A - 3 P - Spring Clean Up
6 4:00 P - Loudoun Chorale 5:00 P - G-3 - Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	7 7:00 P - English Classes 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	8 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery	9 6:30 P - Soup-er Supper 7:00 P - Lenten Study	10 6:00 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal	11 9:00 A - Discovery play group 7-9 P - Altar Guild Polishing	12 9-11 A - Altar Guild Polishing
13 8 A, 9:30 A, 11 A - Palm Sunday Services 5:00 P - G-3 - Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	14 7:00 P - English Classes 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	15 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 7:30 P - Vestry Meeting	16	17 3:30 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 P - Maundy Thursday	18 9:00 A - Discovery play group Noon, 6:30 P, 7:30 P - Good Friday	19 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 10:00 A - Holy Saturday
20 6:00 A - Sunrise Celebration 8:00 A, 9:30 A, 11 A - Easter Services 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	21 7:00 P - Boy Scouts 7:00 P - English Classes	22 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery	23 7:30 P - Parents of Teens	24 6:00 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal	25 9:00 A - Discovery play group	26 6:00 P - Pot Luck
27 5:00 P - G-3 - Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	28 7:00 P - Boy Scouts 7:00 P - English Classes	29 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery	30			

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...

Dear Friends,

On a recent Saturday afternoon I was heading back to the office after a lunch appointment. I noticed I had a message, and in checking it learned that my brother and his family had dropped by the house.

It wasn't a particularly convenient time for me—I had some things that needed to be finished that day, including a sermon-- but then, when is? When is a convenient time for any of us these days? And maybe that is precisely the point. When you care about people enough, whether family or friends, you make time for them especially when it is not convenient to do so. I can't help but feel that it is something of a poverty that in the midst of all that we have we don't have time for one another; time to just "drop by".

I turned the car around and headed home. As it was such a beautiful afternoon, we let Ben (my 20 month old nephew) run around the back yard. Somehow that turned into a walk to the Potomac River, a distance of maybe two miles from our back door.

I was still in my dress shoes and clergy blacks, though I had taken off the collar. Aunt Karla (our name for my brother, Matthew's wife) is eight months pregnant. Christine and Mary dropped what they were doing and happily joined us. Linda and I walked hand in hand in the warm afternoon sunlight and felt like kids again.

The trail was quite muddy, so none of us were able to avoid it. And when we had to pick up Ben and redirect him so he wouldn't head off into the woods or fall into a stream, the mud had a way of traveling further up onto our bodies and our clothing. When we got to the river, we threw stones and just watched the water go by.

On the way back, Ben finally gave out, falling asleep in my brother's arms. We were almost home when Matthew gave out and I had to carry him. Ben, that is, not my brother.

It wasn't anything planned, it just happened. But I am so glad it did.

Easter will come this month. It will be a time to worship God, and there is nothing that could be more important. But it will also be a time to enjoy the good gifts God has given us in one another, and that is surely of vital importance as well. In these uncertain times, when none of us knows what tomorrow may hold, it is the wise man, woman, and child who will make the most of their days by making sure they have time for both. Rob+

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

A Spiritual Formation committee is being planned. Richard Leach will be the leader of this committee and he will be seeking volunteers to help with the committee's activities. These activities could include developing and conducting a Confirmation class or classes, Christian lifestyle sessions, parenting workshops, and a retreat. If you are interested in participating in some form on this committee, please keep a look out for additional forthcoming information.

INTERIOR RENOVATION COMMITTEE

Now that we have the stained glass window installed above the front doors of our church we are continuing our renovation of the two offices. Along with replacing the carpet, both offices will be painted and window treatments added. Take a look at Rob's office which has recently been finished! Any ideas or suggestions for improvement in our church please let us know.

Sharon Ferguson

2003 CONFIRMATION CLASS

We are planning to have a Confirmation class later this year. The Bishop will be at Saint Matthew's on September 28, 2003, thus, the class is being planned to coincide with Confirmation during the Bishop's visit. Depending on the interest and need, we can have multiple classes - one for adults, one for high schoolers, one for middle schoolers. Please look for more details forthcoming.

ENGLISH CLASSES FOR ADULTS

Those of us involved in this ministry continue to feel energized by helping adults learn English. What is encouraging is having regulars come every week. Also encouraging is the prayers and enthusiasm of the entire church for this ministry.

We have several changes in personnel. With great gladness we welcome Linda Merola (who has been involved since January) and substitute teacher Jodie Leach. With great sadness we say good-bye to Erin Tracy and Michael Wilson whose work schedules changed. Even though they won't be with us physically, they will remain in our hearts and in our prayers.

Leanna Wilson, Coordinator

PRAYER CHAIN

I am reminded about a song I learned in Sunday School many years ago: "Why worry when you can pray? Trust Jesus, He'll be your stay. Don't be a doubting Thomas. Rest fully on His promise. Why worry, worry, worry, worry, when you can pray?" We on the prayer chain have found out that praying is much easier than worrying.

Joining us on the prayer chain is Debbie Bouges who has been on the chain for over a month. Gerri, Martha, Leslie, Sue, Becky, Elizabeth, Michael, and Leanna are delighted to link up with her. Please call us with your requests. As always, prayers are kept confidential.

MOTHER'S DAY AND MOM'S APPLE PIES

VBS proudly presents delicious pies fresh from the ovens of the "Mom's Apple Pie Company"!!! All 9" pies are \$9.00 each and all profits go to the Vacation Bible School program. All of Mom's Pies can be frozen -thawed - and heated for a great dessert anytime!!! Order forms will be available in the back of the church in late April. The delivery will be in time for Mother's Day.

SPRING IS IN THE AIR

The snow is almost melted and the very first spring flowers are emerging - a sure sign that spring and clean up day at Saint Matthew's are just around the corner.

If you are looking for a service project to enhance your Lenten experience or just looking for a way to make a personal contribution with a limited time commitment- here is your opportunity! If everyone contributed just two hours much could be accomplished in just one day.

The date is April 5th from 8:30 AM to 3PM. Both the church interior and grounds need some attention in order to make our home presentable for Easter and the coming months. If this date is not suitable, please let Linda Clark know as there are tasks that can be accomplished at your convenience.

Sign up sheets will be available on the bulletin board or e-mail me at your convenience. If you have a particular talent in any specific project or have noticed some area of the grounds that needs attention, I would like to hear about it!

Lunch will be served! See you there!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School announces S.C.U.B.A. -Super Cool Undersea Bible Adventure!

Listen to the crashing waves. Smell the salt air. Feel the warm, soft sand under your toes. Kids, teenagers and adults will have oceans of fun on this VBS, going deeper into God's Word. As kids dive into awesome Bible adventures, they'll discover how to believe in God, obey God, trust God, love God and share God's love.

Mark your calendar for July 29- August 1, 2003. Kids ages 3 to 103 are welcome! Activities will begin at 5:30 pm with a light supper in the Parish Hall and end with a final gathering around 8:30 p.m. Sign up will begin in May. Contact Jodie Leach, 703-421-6310, or via email, JodieLeach2@aol.com, for more info or to help with the program.

ST. MATTHEWS – BUILDING OUR WAY TO THE FUTURE

Hi! You probably think this is an article is about the trailer—wrong! This is about a new and exciting avenue for St. Matthews; it's the creation of a strategic plan.

Firstly, let me introduce myself. My name is Ann Lowden. I was elected to the Vestry this year and I have been asked to lead this endeavor. I bring to this effort a lot of energy and enthusiasm, but this is not a one-person effort. I will be asking for YOUR help. I'll get to the help part later.

Let me start with telling you why the Vestry feels we need a strategic plan. Like everything in life if you don't know where you are going it's a pretty difficult thing to plan how to get there. Therefore we intend to identify what the members of the church want St. Matthews to become and to create a vision of that goal. From that we can create objectives and accomplishments and establish a roadmap of how to get there. Lots of ideas are possible for ways to use the trailer to connect with the community and how to use the church and our members to connect with God. Ideas need a plan to become reality and that is why we need a Strategic Plan for St. Matthew's.

Now back to the help part. I need about 6 volunteers to participate in the Strategic Plan committee. What's involved? Just one meeting a month for a couple of hours, involving tasks such as preparing a Survey to gain insight on everyone's views for the future of the church, evaluating the information, planning and preparing the strategy and communication plan. My family and I have been attending St. Matthews for over 12 years, and we know it to be full of kind and generous of heart families that participate in many functions at the church. Please help me in this new and exciting goal. Lets give it "...and then some" treatment to make St. Matthews even better in the future and a place that many more families will want to be a part of.

Interested friends of Strategic Planning should call me at 703 430 9678. The first meeting will be at the end of March.

RAISING THE LEVEL OF OUR FAITH CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The results of our 2003 campaign are quite fascinating. First the bad news: Due to moves, planned moves, economic changes, and four families who have left our congregation, we have lost 18 pledging units from last year for a total of \$25,064.* Also, for a variety of reasons, 11 pledges have been decreased for a total of \$9,682. **That means we more or less begin 2003 \$35,226 in the whole!**

There is, however, good news as well. To this date we have been privileged to receive 16 new pledges for a total of \$23,980. And perhaps most significantly, given the current economic downtrend, twenty families have decided to step out in faith and increase their pledge by \$20,576. **That means at this point we are actually \$7,590 ahead of where we were last year for a total of \$191,942.**

That is roughly a 4 percent increase over last year. It also means that our average pledge has increased by almost \$200, again a very significant trend in light of the economy.

Finally, we **still need \$12,380** to fully fund the ministries and initiatives to which we believe God is calling us this year. Because St. Matthew's is historically an "and then some" type church—doing what is required and then some!—we have every reason to believe that by God's grace we will reach this goal.

If you have not yet done so, **we ask you to please prayerfully consider making a pledge to God's work here at St. Matthews.** If you are new to St. Matts and wish to make a pledge, or if you lost your original and need one, pledge cards are available in the back of the church. Thanks.

*This number could decrease in that there may still be some families from last year who are still planning on turning in a pledge card.

YOUTH MINISTER'S REPORT

I recently attended a training session on connecting with youth today. This was a great event which talked about engaging our youth and communicating the bible so that it remains interesting. A couple of things here really stood out to me. One of the most important was regarding youth cultures and the existence of tribes, clusters and friends.

Many of us grew up with cliques. In high school I was even guilty of being in one myself – I will always remember my two best friends and how we were inseparable. Today things similar to cliques do exist, though in a very different form. I heard about a group of 3 to 4 friends making up a cluster. These guys are best friends and generally shouldn't be separated from each other. These friends belong to tribes, made up of multiple clusters with common interests. These interests may be band, sporting events, academic activities, or simply common music tastes. The surprising suggestion is to let these groups remain as they are. Through day to day activities they'll interact with other clusters and different tribes. These clusters are the best of friends, forming a bond which may last for years.

I've been watching our own youth group become one great tribe. We have a couple different groups of friends who really click. Many are best friends who spend lots of time together. We all share a common faith, a love of Christ, and enjoy spending time with one another. I've been blessed to watch our group grow into a tribe who truly looks out for each other.

MOVING ON THE TRAIL(ER) OF FAITH.

We now have our Site Amendment Plan approved! That is a huge step, paving the way for us to now procure our building permit (which we should have by the time you read this), run power to the class rooms (which we are doing now), and finally get our Certificate of Occupancy. Once that is the case, we will be planning another one of our famous St. Matthew's Parties to celebrate!

G-THREE HAPPENINGS

It's been an exciting few months and it's only going to get better! We have a lot of outings, service projects and activities planned. While we may have gotten a lot of snow in February, that didn't stop us from joining with St. Anne's and St. Timothy's to have a great 30 hour famine. All in all we had a group of about 30 kids. This was a weekend where we mingled with other churches and actually enjoyed going without food for 30 hours.

On to what's coming up in the next few months. We will be working with Keep Loudoun Beautiful, spending a few days in April cleaning up our community. We'll also be taking part in the American Cancer society's Relay for Life May 31st to June 1st.

The group will be taking part in many fun activities through June. G3 is heading out to see the Foo Fighters in concert on April 30th. This is actually a great event planned by one of our youth and should be a fun-filled evening. We will have a night out at the Reston ice skating rink one Saturday in April. The planning for Creation Festival has begun. This is a great retreat from June 25th to 28th in Mt. Union Pennsylvania where we'll be bonding, talking, growing and listening to some great music. For more information about the festival go to www.gospelcom.net/creation/east/ or get in contact with me.

Lastly, get ready for a Sunday not to be forgotten. On May 4th G3 will be taking over the church. For the 9:15 and 10:30 services the youth group will take over. We'll be running the music, sermon, prayers, everything. Anything goes on this great Sunday event. Bring a friend and join us for this day which is guaranteed to be a lot of fun. Following the 10:30 service we'll be celebrating our success at my new house and seeing just how much abuse a new home can take. We'll be grilling out, watching movies, listening to music and enjoying the day.

EASTER SERVICES

There will be four Easter services this year, each with a very different character.

6:00AM. The first service will be a **Sunrise Celebration** using the **Great Vigil of Easter**. This is a very dramatic service, including the Service of Lights. It begins with the Kindling of the Paschal Fire, and continues with a candlelight procession led by the newly lit Paschal Candle into the church. The first part of the service continues by candlelight as the sun rises (I trust you catch the imagery) and key Bible readings rehearse the history of our salvation. This is followed by the Renewal of our Baptismal Vows, and finally, Holy Eucharist.

After the service, there will be **Champagne Breakfast** served. Of course, those who wish to come early before the 8AM service (or anyone else for that matter) are also encouraged to come and join us. There will be a sign up for the Champagne Breakfast, or you can simply call the Church Office at 703-430-2121 to let us know you are coming.

8AM will be a **traditional Rite I Eucharistic Celebration**

9:30AM will be our third service. It will be an **informal, family friendly Rite II Eucharist including drama and lively music.**

11AM will be our fourth and final service of the day. It will be a **Rite II Eucharist including incense, traditional hymns, and special music to mark the day.**

We hope that you will find this service schedule as exciting as we do, and that you'll invite any family, neighbors, and friends that might not have a place to worship on Easter.

HOLY WEEK.

Palm Sunday: Services will be at 8, 9:30, and 11AM, with the Liturgy of the Palms being used both at the 8 and 11 services. The 11 service will include an actual Procession of Palms. It will start outside, or if weather is bad in the Parish Hall, and then move in a parade into the congregation while singing a hymn of praise. That service also includes a dramatic reading of the Passion.

Maundy Thursday: 7:30 p.m. Including Special Music, Foot Washing & Stripping of altar

Good Friday: Good Friday Liturgy at 12 noon; 6:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross outdoors on the church grounds (weather permitting), followed at 7:30 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy -- no Eucharist at either service.

Holy Saturday. Brief service using Holy Saturday Liturgy at 10 AM.

ALTAR GUILD UPDATE

We are very excited to announce the recent purchase of new white linens which are expected here in time for Easter. To help make the sanctuary even more sparkling, we will be having two polishing events this spring -- Friday, 11 April, from 7-9 PM and Saturday, 12 April, from 9-11AM. Any and all help would be greatly appreciated.

And a very warm welcome to our 2 newest members, Beth and Shawn Carr. We're always looking for more help, training provided with lots of support. Contact Lisa Lintelman at 703 430 8345 with questions or if interested.

EASTER LILIES

It is time to order your Lilies for Easter Sunday, April 20. You are invited to remember someone special in your life, give thanks for your blessings, celebrate someone's life or special occasion.

The cost of the Lilies is \$10. Dedication forms may be found on the glass tables in the narthex or in this newsletter. Return the forms to the church office, mail them in, or place them in the offering plate. The deadline for ordering your Easter Lily is April 11. For more information contact Pat Guenther at 703-433-2397.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
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Sterling, VA 20164

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APRIL'S POTLUCK – APRIL 26th at 6 pm.

DID YOU KNOW? St. Matthew's organ actually works and we are using it once again at our 10:30 service!

Join us next Sunday at one of the following services:

8:00am Rite One Service

9:15am Contemporary Service

10:30am Traditional Family Rite Two Service

Deadline for Submissions. All content for the **May** newsletter must be submitted by **April 15**. Content can be submitted in hardcopy or on disk to the newsletter mailbox in the Church office. Content may also be emailed to Newsletter@stmatthewssterling.org.