

M *Saint*
Matthew's
Episcopal Church

Newsletter

April 2008

201 East Frederick Drive • Sterling VA 20164



Photo by Gregory Strong

*Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth,
bright with a glorious splendor,
for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King.*

+

From the Exsultet ~ The Great Vigil of Easter ~ The Book of Common Prayer

FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends,

I hope that by the time you read this, we will have hired Saint Matthew’s first assistant rector. As we have been going through this process, I couldn’t help but think of what a positive experience my first call as a priest was.

It was Ernie Bennett – then the Rector of Saint Andrew’s, Ft. Pierce, now the Canon to the Ordinary in the Diocese of Central Florida – who hired me. During my job interview he asked what I believed about Jesus. I told him that “Jesus is my Lord and Savior.” Proclaiming the good news both in word and deed of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ would indeed prove to be the focus of our ministry together, even as it continues to be the focus of my life and ministry today.

Ernie did a great job of helping me “flesh out” what it means to be a priest. I remember one Sunday morning I could not find the page the Gospel was on. “Boss,” I said meekly, “I can’t find the page.” We still laugh about that to this day.

On a more serious note, Ernie was careful to share every aspect of parish ministry with me, and to give me both the experience and the confidence that would one day be needed to be a rector myself. So many of the things that I still do as a priest are things Ernie taught me.

But it wasn’t just Ernie that made my first church such a great experience, as important as he was. It was the church itself. Saint Andrew’s welcomed me with open arms, and they loved me like their own from the very first day. Of course, it didn’t hurt that the church was right on the Indian River and I could virtually walk out the back door and go fishing.

I was 28 years old at that time, and young enough to be most parishioners’ son or even grandson. To say they knew more about life than I did would probably be something of an understatement. I am sure I tried their patience on any number of occasions, but I never remember anyone being anything but gracious with me. They prayed for me and with me, and were deeply committed to fully supporting me in my life and ministry as priest. I am

who I am today in no small part because of them, and I remain eternally grateful for their love and encouragement. Thinking about all this I gave Ernie a call, and we talked and laughed and reminisced. Once again, I felt myself to be so incredibly blessed.

Part of the reason I am so excited about bringing our first assistant rector on board is, quite frankly, that I need the help. But that’s not the whole reason, and truth be told, not even the biggest reason. I can’t wait to share what a great place Saint Matthew’s is with somebody else – to see them love you like I do. I can’t wait to see you welcome them with open arms as Saint Andrew’s welcomed me – to see them grow and blossom as a priest through your love, support, and encouragement. And I can’t wait for all of us to join with our new assistant rector in the most important mission of all as together we take another huge step in reaching out to even more people with the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Faithfully,
Rob+

FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

Paul Schmid

“The first day of spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another. The difference between them is sometimes as great as a month.” *Henry Van Dyke*

“A day without sunshine is like night.” *Steve Martin*

I actually went skiing last weekend. This is more of an indicator of how far in advance I am writing this, rather than how long it will take to decide for sure when spring has officially sprung. But in any case, I am truly looking forward to the warmer weather and finding out what kind of April Fool’s jokes my

kids will play on me this year. I always learn a lot from my kids.

For example, while we were skiing last weekend, Jennifer’s goggles became fogged up, and she asked to borrow my handkerchief to clean them. I almost said yes, but then I quickly realized that she probably needed something different for that job. Inside my jacket pocket I found some unused napkins we had leftover from lunch, and so I gave her those instead. She was able to successfully clean the fog off of the lenses, but unfortunately this approach created some new scratches in

her field-of-view instead. She pointed out to me that the mistake I made was to give her napkins which had been manufactured from recycled nails.

The reason I decided to share this experience in the Saint Matthew’s Church newsletter is that upon further reflection I noticed there might be a fairly subtle spiritual lesson that could be learned from this tragic comedy. Sometimes when we are trying to help others to see better, they actually end up helping us to see better, and we can correct the mistakes of our ways.

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SPIRITUAL FORMATION

VBS = Vacation Bible School ≥ July 28 –August 1

Jo(Hn₃)¹⁶ = Tr(ue) + Lo(ve). Just one formula in our amazing Power Lab!

Registration forms are now available within this newsletter, as a link from www.stmatthewssterling.com, and in the parish hall. We are always indebted to our adults and teens who join us for the week as station leaders and crew leaders. Each day children take part in fun Bible learning they can see, hear, touch, and even taste! We are bubbling with excitement about this electrifying week! If you are ready to plug into Jesus' miraculous power, contact Jodie Leach at jodieleach2@aol.com or 703-421-6310. If you have any resources or supplies for chemistry or science props (e.g., lava lamps, fiber optic lights, lab coats, lighting balls), please contact Jodie.

[Deep experiential Bible leaning] + [wacky fun] + (Rich Lasting Relationships) = **Power Lab: Discovering Jesus' Miraculous Power!**

Mission Possible

Kids in grades 2-8, it's your turn for a mission trip that will have us zooming around Loudoun! We'll be searching for ways to volunteer and share God's love. Keep the week of *July 7-11* free so you can help folks in your backyard! We'll be meeting at Saint Matthew's at 9:30 a.m. and traveling to undisclosed locations each day! Sign up forms are available in the parish hall. If you have questions, contact Jodie Leach at 703-421-6310 or jodieleach2@aol.com, or get in touch with Kenny Thayer. Many good works are in the works!

2008 High School Mission Trip

If you have not signed up for one of our two high school mission trips (Philadelphia or Belize), and you would like to go, please contact Richard Leach (rpleach1226@aol.com or 703-421-6310) for space availability and other details. The trip to Philadelphia is the week of August 3, and the trip to Belize is June 28-July 5.

Mission Trip Fundraiser Updates

The past month has been a whirlwind of activities! We've been raising money through many diverse events. More information can be found on the bulletin board and through the weekly announcements. We are excited about upcoming events and invite you to participate as time permits:

- April 11 – Bunco Night
- April 12 – Bake Sale and Babysitting Night,
- April 13 – Scrips Orders
- April 14 – Spaghetti Dinner,

April 19 – Car Wash (Xpress Lube in Cascades)

April 26 – Yard Sale

Yard Sale. Think spring and spring cleaning! Clean out your closets, cupboards, and attics. Donate your treasures to support our worthwhile mission trips. We'll accept all furniture, small appliances, toys, clothing, bicycles, books, movies, music, household items, tools, and the like in good condition. Contact Deb Listopad at 703-421-1978 or Jean Pritchett at 703-948-7341 to make a donation.

Scrip Program is a simple way to buy a gift card from Saint Matthew's. More information is available in the packet in the parish hall or through the website. Orders for April will be placed on April 13 and received on April 20. At any time you can place an order on-line at <http://www.shopwithscrip.com>. You will need to enter the Enrollment Code: E2E7BCL3166L7. Since beginning this program in December, we have raised nearly \$1,000.

GoodSearch is a search engine and portal to merchants on the web who will donate funds to Saint Matthew's. For every search you make, Saint Matthew's receives one penny. For every purchase we receive a percentage of the purchase. Here is the link: <http://www.goodsearch.com>. If you wish to use GoodSearch, please select Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church (Sterling, VA) as "Who Do You GoodSearch For?" When looking for our church name, please do not add an apostrophe or a period.

Please continue to pray for those planning and attending mission trips. Over 60 people have committed to changing their lives and spending time this summer helping others. Your prayers are needed for all those who are preparing for life-changing and memorable experiences.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

LOL Youth Group

Welcome to our monthly Youth Group column called “LOL Youth Group.” Look here each month for a list of coming events and stories about how the youth of Saint Matthew’s are living our mission – “to know and share God’s love.” Check out these stories.

At one of their recent meetings, the middle school small group took an unexpected turn into uncharted waters and started discussing the subject of painful family situations: what those feel like as an adolescent, how it feels to be in those situations, and what Jesus would want them to do for those who are going through such difficulties. This discussion has led to several activities the group has taken on, some of which are even ongoing, like the following.

- The group delivered lunch to people who were moving a family going through a difficult time. The group committed to supporting the family each month.
- The group learned how to depend on each other; and, in order to be accessible to each other, they created an e-mail point of contact and a phone tree so they can quickly communicate with each other when someone in their group is in need.
- The group started a prayer request process where each person writes a prayer request on an index card. They are piled together; and, on an anonymous basis, everyone takes home one card to pray for during the next week.
- The group decided to choose a Bible verse each week to study on a daily basis. They want to see what God will teach each person in the group when they study the same verse all week.

Way to go, middle schoolers! Keep those stories coming! Tell your small group leader or any member of the Youth Leadership Team your story and see it in print here!

April LOL Happenings

- April 2 WATCH
- April 6 Belonging Activity
- April 9 WATCH
- April 11 Bunco Night (Mission Trip Fundraiser)
- April 12 Bake Sale at Giant and Parent’s Night Out (Mission Trip Fundraisers)
- April 13 Small Groups
- April 14 Spaghetti Dinner (Mission Trip Fundraiser)
- April 16 WATCH
- April 19 Car Wash (Mission Trip Fundraiser)
- April 20 Small Groups
- April 23 WATCH
- April 26 Yard Sale (Mission Trip Fundraiser)
- April 27 Small Groups Service Project

Upcoming LOL Activities

- 30-Hour Famine
(The date was moved so more folks could help with the Yard Sale, but watch for more information to come soon!)
- June 25-28 CreationFest

Watch bulletins, e-mail, and next month’s newsletter for more activities.

Your Youth Leadership Team – Peter Hart, Richard Leach, Charlie Biegel, Alan Davenport, and Vicki Nelson

COMMUNITY

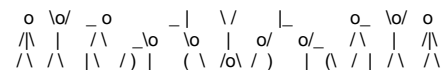
Easter Brunch

Many thanks are due to all who provided food and fellowship for the brunch on Easter morning. And thanks are due to the kitchen staff for making the brunch memorable and to other special folks for getting the egg hunts rolling.

Rocknoceros – April 19

Rock out to the biggest hits from this infectious group’s latest CD, “Dark Side of the Moon Bounce.” Bop to the beat while learning about the first man on the moon, the metric system, the importance of teeth brushing, and the names of the fifty states. Clever lyrics and unforgettably catchy tunes make this a hands-down favorite for little music fans. Rocknoceros is Coach Cotton, Williebob, and Boogie Bennie: the hot new rock stars for the under eight set. They write terrific songs that teach even the youngest music fan, and they are flat-out fun! Come see what the stroller moms’ cell phones are buzzin’ about! Don’t

miss this energetic and educational show on the front lawn of Saint Matthew’s on Saturday, April 19 at 11 a.m.



Spaghetti Dinners

Second Mondays of the month are for spaghetti! Make your plans *now*. Don’t cook! On Monday, April 14, 5:30-7:30 p.m., join the Mission Team for a fabulous spaghetti dinner with premier pasta, scintillating salad, and generous garlic bread. Donations will be accepted. Please share this meal with your friends and co-workers. Keep these dates as well on your calendar for warm, satisfying spaghetti: May 12 and June 9. Contact Leslie Tracy or Pam Hart at spaghettdinners@stmatthewssterling.org.

Vestry Highlights – February 2008

The vestry convened on February 19. After opening the meeting just after 7:00 p.m. with prayer and remarks on seeking the kingdom of God first, Father Rob welcomed and introduced returning and new vestry members. Paul Schmid will be Senior Warden. Pam Hart and John Martin will be Junior Wardens. New vestry members – Ed Goloway, Luanna Hansberger, and Deb Listopad – shared about themselves and their vision for being on the vestry. The other returning vestry members in attendance were Charlie Biegel and Katie Robertson. Returning vestry member Richard Leach was out of the country on a business trip. ~ The vestry reviewed the church's finances as of January 31. Revenues were significantly under budget for January, and expenses were significantly over budget (due in large part to a sizeable payment toward 2008 mission trips). The vestry took proper note of the situation yet also observed that historically this is not uncommon for the first part of a new year. It will take a few months to determine accurate trends for income and expenses. ~ The vestry was apprised of the status of the assistant rector search. Father Rob has continued the search

process for the last several weeks. While an assistant to the rector is the rector's hire, he has sought to conduct this in a collegial manner. Hence, certain members of the congregation have been helping with reviewing candidates. A second round of interviews with candidates is upcoming. Father Rob has also met with one candidate a third time. ~ Improvements continue with the Argonne house, including the installation of blinds and work on the bathrooms. ~ Vestry liaison assignments for ministry areas were specified: Pam Hart, Community; Katie Robertson, Reverence; Deb Listopad, Outreach; Charlie Biegel, Spiritual Formation, and Richard Leach, Stewardship. ~ The church's Strategic Plan needs to be updated for 2008. Each ministry committee will review the plan for its area and make necessary changes. Then, by the April vestry meeting, the vestry as a whole will review the changes and ensure that the updated plan supports the strategic goals of the church. ~ The meeting adjourned just before 9:00 p.m., with the next meeting planned for Tuesday, March 18, 7:00 p.m.

Building Program

On March 4, the Building and Finance Committees held a joint meeting to discuss the potential building program with Patsy Bjorling, Diocesan Director of Stewardship and Development. We discussed a three-part building program: (1) the concept planning for the design of building and grounds; (2) a potential capital campaign to support a phased program; and (3) the support and enhancement of the missions of Saint Matthew's through the program.

Momentum is building! In February we received more ideas on our "wish list" of building requirements. With the list, we are now seeking the services of an architect to help us develop a phased master plan for a building program.

In March, you may have noticed the wooden stakes with orange tape around

the grounds of Saint Matthew's. We completed a new survey of our property, compliments of Rice and Associates, Inc., a local surveying firm that *donated their services* in support of our efforts!

In the coming months, there will be lots of ways to participate.

- The parish will be invited to participate in the planning of the building program – look for announcements in mid to late April on a date for a design meeting or "charrette." It'll be fun!
- Each of the three efforts above – building, finance, and missions – will need additional volunteers over the coming months.
- Also, we're forming a prayer team

to focus on our building program, inviting the Holy Spirit to be in all of us as we strive to develop and implement a master plan.

For more information or to offer your time and talents, please contact any member of your Building or Finance Committee: *Building Committee* – John Martin, Vicki Nelson, Merry Breed, Bob Petersen, Richard Leach, Joe Listopad, Bill Aird, and Ed Goloway; *Finance Committee* – Richard Leach, Charlie Biegel, John Guenther, Randy Palmer, Jackie Baker, Erin Leary, Bob Petersen, and Miriam Turner. We welcome your support and prayers as we progress on our journey of planning and implementing improvements to our buildings and grounds.

January Treasurer's Report

January pledge income was \$28,800, which was \$7,300 under budget for the month. Total operating income for the month was \$30,100, and operating expenses were \$42,500, resulting in a \$12,400 reduction in our general fund balance. The general fund balance at the end of January was \$75,600.

Our mission fund balance deficit increased by \$21,100 to \$30,000 because of pre-paid mission trip expenses. We expect this deficit in the mission fund balance to be paid off through planned fund raising and deposits from missionaries.

Vacation Bible School



July 28-August 1, 2008
5:30 - 8:30 p.m. ♦ Dinner Included

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church
201 E. Frederick Drive, Sterling VA 20164
♦703-430-2121 ♦www.stmatthewssterling.org

Child Registration Form

For age 4 and rising grades K-5! Age 3 if accompanied by a parent or volunteer.

Registration deadline: July 6, 2008! \$25 for one child, \$35 for two siblings, no more than \$40 per family. Checks made payable to Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Memo: VBS. Cost covers dinner and crafts for five nights, a Bible book, a set of Bible buddies, and a t-shirt (for those who turn in registration by the due date). Scholarships are available. Mail this form to Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Attn: Jodie Leach, 201 E. Frederick Dr., Sterling VA 20164. For more information, contact Jodie Leach at 703-421-6310 or jodieleach2@aol.com.

Child's Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home phone _____ Email Address _____

Age of Child: _____ Date of Birth _____

School grade in Spring 2008 _____ Allergies/medical conditions _____

Is your child allergic to latex? Yes No Unsure

Parents/ Legal Guardian _____

Name of Adult picking up child _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone _____

Home Church _____

Would you like information on Saint Matthew's? _____

♦T-shirt size (Hanes 50/50) **Circle one**

Child XSmall (2-4) Child Small (6-8)

Child Medium (10-12) Child Large (14-15)

Adult Small Adult Medium Adult Large Adult XLarge

(Note: Shirts will be ordered on July 7. If this form is turned in after that date, there is no guarantee that a shirt will be available.)

I give my permission for my child to be photographed during VBS with the knowledge that such photos may appear on the Saint Matthew's website, www.stmatthewssterling.org

Signature _____ Date _____