

Newsletter

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Sterling, VA

www.stmatthewssterling.org

August/September 2003



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Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church

Calendar of Events - September 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program) 7:00 P - AA Meeting	3 7:00 P - English classes 7:00 P - Strategic Planning Committee mtg.	4 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 3:30 P - Girl Scouts-Weller 6:30 P - Girl Scouts-Wilson 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal 7:30 P - Worship Commission	5	6 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
7 5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	8 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	9 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 7:00 P - AA Meeting 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program)	10 7:00 P - English classes 7:00 P - Spiritual Formation Committee mtg.	11 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 6:00 P - Girl Scouts-Colon 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal	12	13 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
14 5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	15 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	16 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program) 7:00 P - Vestry Meeting 7:00 P - AA Meeting	17 7:00 P - English classes 7:00 P - Strategic Planning Committee mtg.	18 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 3:30 P - Girl Scouts-Weller 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal	19 6:30 P - Confirmation class	20 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 9:00 A - Confirmation class 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 6:00 P - Girl Scouts-Wilson 7:00 P - AA Meeting
21 5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	22 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	23 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 7:00 P - AA Meeting 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program)	24 7:00 P - English classes 7:00 P - Spiritual Formation Committee mtg.	25 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 6:00 P - Girl Scouts:Colon 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal	26	27 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
28 5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	29 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	30 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program) 7:00 P - AA Meeting				

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...

Dear Friends,

I heard a great story the other day. After having such a wonderful experience at last year's Bug Safari Vacation Bible School, many families from the community returned again this year for SCUBA—our Super Cool Underwater Adventure VBS. As I was talking with one of these families, they told me how disappointed one of their children was when last year's VBS ended. They drove by the church a couple weeks later after all the decorations had been taken down. The child said with heartfelt sorrow, "*They turned the bug camp into a CHURCH!*"

I had to laugh. At the same time, I am keenly aware that for many people—just like this little boy—the church* can be very disappointing. Obviously, that's because the church is made up of imperfect people who are still growing into the fullness of God's love—and some who no longer see it necessary to believe in God at all. The church is not without its faults, and that leaves all too much room for things such as scandal, self-righteousness, politicizing, indifference, hypocrisy, and so on.

But that is not the whole story. When the church takes seriously its calling to quite literally be the body of Christ—to, in accordance with Scripture do precisely what Jesus would do if he were right here right now—then it becomes the most powerful force for good on the face of the earth. It offers love, forgiveness, meaning, hope, and connection that can be found nowhere else. These days I have personally been thinking about an old word—*glory*—and how glorious the church can be when the church is working right. I am marveling how our lives—yours and mine—can be marked by this glory. There is simply nothing like it, friends.

Because you know what? If the church can be disappointing, the world can be far more disappointing still. There is something so much better available. To a youngster it might well look like a bug museum or an undersea adventure. As we grow older, we might come

to recognize it in a building marked by a cross and an altar. To all ages it might be a smiling face, a welcoming hand, and open arms. As Jesus himself might've said, "To those who have eyes, let them see."

Rob+

*Please be clear I am talking about the church in general and no church—especially not St. Matthew's—in particular.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Bishop Gray will be with us for confirmations at our 10:30 service on Sunday, September 28, 2003. Anyone interested in being confirmed, received, reaffirming their faith, or simply knowing more about the Episcopal Church should plan on attending classes on Friday, September 19, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday, September 20, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you wish to receive this sacrament, please look for a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the church office or contact Richard Leach (703-421-6310). Please add your name to the sign-up sheet or contact Richard by September 1, 2003.

STEP OUT THIS FALL

Fall is a great time to step out - whether it's taking a walk in the crisp fall air or trying something new, or re-trying something familiar. With the new sermon series starting, we are looking to step out with arts in our worship. What does that mean, you say. Well, we want to try some new stuff and we believe there are lots of "closet" artists in our congregation. We are looking for all kinds of artists whether musicians, poets, actors, painters or sculptors. Have you always had a knack for interpretive reading? Well, here is your opportunity to shine. Are you dynamite on the mandolin? Well, we want to hear from you too. If you feel at all moved with the spirit in any of these areas, please contact Leslie Tracy or Vicki Nelson (our phone numbers and email addresses are in the directory or call the church office and they can give either to you).

Sermon Series: Starting on August 24th our new sermon series will be **Timeless Values for Today's Families**. Based on a fresh look at the 10 Commandments, we will be exploring the foundations of building strong families. Of course, these same principles will be just as applicable to strong foundations for our individual lives, whatever our station in life might be.

FORWARD THINKING

How many of you are already thinking of sugarplums and twinkling lights? Yes, Christmas is around the corner and we are working on a spectacular Christmas program this year. Based on the success of our S.C.U.B.A. Vacation Bible School, there is no question that St. Matthews can produce great things in the service of the Lord. The program will involve lots of people at every age and is planned to be a real community event. The acting and singing parts will include kids and adults. Then, of course, there is all the behind-the-scenes work as well. We will need people to sew, paint, type, manage props, help with rehearsals, and help with advertising, just to name a few jobs. If you are interested in being part of this fun and exciting project, please contact Vicki Nelson at van@sacklaw.com, or 703/444-2077.

ALTAR GUILD NEWS

First of all, I'd like to thank Barbara Mead for several years of help on the Altar Guild; we're sorry to see her go but look forward to a (possible?) return in the not too distant future. Which leads me to the second point: we would LOVE to have new people or a new team on board. Responsibilities include setting up and cleaning up for Sunday services for 2 consecutive weekends every 2-3 months, with occasional hours thrown in for our uplifting (read: fun) polishing events. Friendly and grateful training is provided.

I will also be preparing an Altar Guild Wish List should anyone be interested in making a specific donation for such items. Feel free to let me know if there's anything in particular you'd like to see added to the list.

I'm quite approachable but if you can't find me, I can be reached at 703-430-8345 (H)/ 571-235-8138 (cell)/ lisa.m.lintelman@mail.sprint.com.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Registration for Sunday School will begin August 24th. Our first day of classes will be on Sunday, September 7th during the 10:30 service for children pre-k through grade 5. We are looking forward to a fun-filled year!! In addition to our regular curriculum, the kids will be participating in outreach projects and special holiday events. Stay tuned ...

When doing your back-to-school shopping, please consider shopping for the "Operation Christmas Child" fill-a-shoebox project. This is a very fun project which anyone can participate in. We will be collecting small gifts for children. The gifts will be packed in shoeboxes. Some requested items are school supplies, hard candy, small towels, and clothing. Summer clothing is fine as often the boxes go to the tropics. Toiletries are welcome but please no liquids. Last year the Sunday School classes really enjoyed filling the boxes. Also, please save your empty shoeboxes!

We thank you!

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The Spiritual Formation Committee has made good progress in developing a spiritual formation map that would help a person grow from a seeker of information about Christianity to a fully committed follower of Jesus. The committee has used a prioritization method to map and plan curriculums and activities that are designed to help a person move along the continuum of spiritual formation. These curriculums and activities would include Christian education (Sunday school), Confirmation and First Communion classes, small group studies/ workshops (Bible studies, seasonal series, topical workshops, G3, VBS, quiet days), and retreats (parish retreat, youth retreat, day retreat), and apply to people of all ages. The committee is now entering the phase of implementing these curriculums and activities. If you have an interest in this area, or would just like to see how the committee is progressing, please come to a committee meeting. All are welcome and volunteers to assist with the implementation of activities are needed. Please check the announcements found in your Sunday bulletin or contact Richard Leach (703-421-6310) to find out when the next committee meeting will be held.

FINDING YOUR HEART HAT:

How I Served God in the Past, and Lessons I Learned Along the Way

by Martha Olson

"Boundaries." Now there's a term I didn't understand until a few years after becoming a member of St. Matthew's. Shortly after being "received" at St. Matthew's I dived right into service. I wore all sorts of hats. I was a **Lay Eucharistic Minister, Sunday School Teacher, VBS Teacher, ESL Sub, Lector, Usher, Teller, Register, and Scheduler**. I was a **Member of Helping Hands, Altar Guild, Flower Guild, Coffee Hour, Prayer Group, Prayer Chain and Women's Group**. I was even a **Vestry Member** for a whole year (a very long year, I might add). I was a general helper in anything and everything. The only reason I wasn't in the choir was because I can't sing worth a hoot.

Did I burn out? You bet! I didn't intend for that to happen. There was just so much to do and so few volunteers that I just wanted to do my part. What did I learn? Well, to make a long story short (and that is not an easy thing for me to do), I learned to **listen** to God. I paused. I asked. I listened. By doing just that, I discovered that it wasn't all that difficult. I can't tell you *how* to listen. That's something between you and God. I can't even tell you how *I* listened. I just know that when I was ready to pause, when I was ready to pray for guidance, when I was ready to listen to God, He was there. Somehow, in my heart, in my mind, and sometimes through others, I heard. I understood. I knew.

Bottom line: I concluded that God wanted me to be **of good heart** in anything I did in his name. I concluded that I could best serve God by focusing on the things I love to do. I also concluded that some of the hats I was wearing probably looked better on others -- some of my hats would better fit **their** good hearts. So I searched my heart and my head about each thing I was doing, and I kept only the hats that fit my heart.

I'm not burned out anymore. My heart is peaceful, contented, and happy with every hat "we" wear. But I still worry about all the unclaimed hats out there. There is still **so much to do** and we still need more volunteers to wear these hats of service and to make the most of the opportunities at hand. Fr. Rob does so much, and then some. But he needs more of us to wear hats around St. Matthew's. **I invite you to listen to God** and to **search for your Heart Hat**. You don't need to wear all of them. (Please don't make the mistakes I made.) God certainly doesn't want you to burn out, and neither does Fr. Rob. You don't even need to wear several hats (though it's greatly appreciated when you can).

Why not try on at least a single hat? Try one on and look at yourself in God's mirror. Would you look stunning in an **"usher's hat"**? Would a **"teller's hat"** look flattering on you? Would a **"Lay Eucharistic Minister's hat"** hide your hairline? (Nothing personal, Fr. Rob.) There are so many to choose from and there are plenty to go around! Is there an area of ministry in which you can serve God with **a good heart**?

Contact persons are available for each area of ministry. Just call the church office or ask Fr. Rob. You can ask me, too. I know them all!

Vestry:

Senior Warden – John Guenther
Junior Warden – Linda Clark
Treasurer – Charlie Biegel
Spiritual Formation – Richard Leach
Youth Ministry – Tom Leary
Strategic Planning – Ann Lowden
Outreach – Paula Reardon
Stewardship – Allen Tuttle

Ministry Areas:

Stewardship of Creation – Merry Breed
Sunday School – Lisa Clippinger
Newcomers Welcome – Sandra Gentry
Flower Ministry – Pat Guenther
Coffee Hour – Katt Hancher
Vacation Bible School – Jodie Leach
Newsletter – Erin Leary
Altar Guild – Lisa Lintelman
Nursery Coordinator – Karla Merola
Music – Nancy Prestipino

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Half a year has already passed and our Strategic Planning initiative, to develop a comprehensive plan reflecting our service to God, continues. A significant amount of progress has been made with the survey preparation, values and an internal audit of the health of the church. The last part of this first phase involves you and gaining your insight. This will be accomplished via the survey that we will be distributing in September, more about that later. Continuing on, the committee is in the process of developing the Mission. After that we will develop the associated objectives defining what we need to change, build and develop so that St. Matthew's can be the most it can be, in His praise. Our goal is to finish the complete strategy by November. We meet every other Wednesday at 7pm and would appreciate anyone's time or thoughts on ideas and suggestions for the development of St. Matthew's. You can contact us through the church office or by email to me at atlaok@aol.com.

The SURVEY

Our plan for distribution is to have copies of the survey available for you to complete, commencing Sunday, September 6 and continuing on for the next 2 Sundays. We will also have a copy available on the website and an email will be sent to the congregation, for those who miss the services. We, the planning committee will be available on those Sundays to answer any questions you may have. Additionally, as a little incentive, "goodies" to munch on will be provided. We do hope you all will find a few moments to provide your feedback, concerns and ideas for the future of St. Matthew's and use the opportunity to talk to the Committee.

CLASSROOM OF DISCOVERY 2003-2004

Come and allow your 18-36 month old to explore the magic of the preschool setting with the safety and comfort of your presence in the classroom.

Contact: Sheri Brown, Director
(703) 450-5456 ethanb@erols.com

MOVING ON THE TRAIL(ER) OF FAITH

What a blessing our portable classrooms have been already! These classrooms are now home to our Sunday School and ESL classes. In addition, they were used extensively in supporting our VBS.

The final expense total for the classrooms was \$32,439.81, well within our established budget of \$35,000. By God's grace we have raised \$30,430 in donations to date. It is not too late to make a contribution toward the portable classrooms. Simply write a check payable to Saint Matthews with a note in the memo field reading "Portable Classrooms". We hope to raise the remaining \$2,009 by year end.

Charlie Biegel, Treasurer

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Our Super Cool Undersea Bible Adventure was swimming with 150 children! More than we had prayed and planned for, what an amazing week! Heartfelt thanks to all to the parents who sent their beautiful children. To the many volunteers who came together to organize, encourage and energize our youth, thank you so much for sharing your time and for filling a need! To the community, your prayers for our endeavors were a blessing!

We continue to pray that each child, volunteer, and families were touched and moved deeper in their faith and that the dive continues for each of them as they grow through believing, obeying, trusting loving and sharing God's love.

A special thanks from Jodie Leach- To all those who gave my family and me support, words of encouragement, and prayers, you each helped me succeed in having a wonderful week. I couldn't have done it without you. You had a wonderful impact. I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart.

Plans are already underway for next year's "Lava Lava Island - Where Jesus' Love Flows". We welcome donations of tiki torches, grass skirts and the like. We are sure the kids will go ape over the daily Bible stories and special treasure verses. Keep your calendar free for the end of July 2004!

YOUTH MINISTER'S REPORT

Recently I was talking with Max Drexler. For those who don't know, the Drexlers were very involved in the church, and Max participated in G3. They've recently moved to Indiana, and are getting settled in. They are all doing well, and hope we at St. Matthew's are doing well.

While we were talking, Max was telling me about the people he's been seeing in Indiana. He thought it was a bit interesting that everyone, from neighbors to strangers on the street, smile and wave at you as you walk or drive around. Over the past few years it seems as though our own community has lost some of it's consideration for each-other. I see this happening more and more each day. As I drive into the city I see cars in too much of a rush to obey the law coming very close to causing multiple accidents. I even see this in schools and at work, where there are some people who believe they are above us (I can think of times I've been guilty of this myself). I've been reading the "Gospel According to the Simpsons". The author points out a theme of the Simpsons which is also present in our lives, that we are considerate to each-other in church, but will quickly flip (or flick) them the bird upon leaving the parking lot.

At the Creation Festival concert, 120 thousand people were in one place at the same time, and every time I was bumped accidentally, an apology was quick to follow. The people at Creation know what millions of others are still learning, that we have been given God's love. The Monday after the Creation Festival, I was listening to the Michael W. Smith song "Give it Away", and was moved to tears. This song speaks to our need to share God's love with everyone we encounter.

I hope that over the coming months we can all challenge ourselves to realize every person we see and hear about has lived their own unique lives. As we begin a new year of school, realize there are thousands of people in school who would appreciate you being considerate to them, and realize they have problems and joys just as we do. Every person deserves our thoughtfulness and to

feel the love we have every day from God. The Newsboys sing in their song "Shine" sing:

*Shine.
Make'em wonder whatcha got.
Make'em wish that they were not
On the outside looking bored.
Shine.
Let it shine before all men.
Let em see good works and then
Let em glorify the lord.*

A father lived in silence
Saw his son become a man
There was a distance felt between them
'Cause he could not understand
That love isn't love
'Till you give it away
You gotta give it away

Love is like a river
Flowing down from the giver of life
We drink from the water
And our thirst is no longer denied
You gotta give it away

Michael W. Smith, "Give It Away"

G-THREE HAPPENINGS

With school starting up again we will be going back to having G-3 every week, beginning the weekend after Labor Day. We're also going to begin our separate G-3 bible study for those who want to have a fun time learning about the bible. With the beginning of the school year, everyone in 6th grade through 12th is welcome to take part in all G3 events. Any new 6th graders are welcomed and encouraged to take part in all of our great activities.

There are many different areas around the church where we can share God's Love. We have outreach opportunities, improvements to the grounds, help with Sunday School, many different areas; we even need helpers for Youth Group. Within each area there are many different jobs, please contact the coordinators on page 4 to get more information. G3 needs helpers to plan and organize trips, adults to lead small groups, people to provide transportation to and from events, individual speakers, literally anything.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
201 East Frederick
Sterling, VA 20164

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MINISTRY BUILDERS

If you happen to shop at the new Family Christian Store in the Dulles Crossing Place, we are part of a program they offer called Ministry Builders. This means that for any purchase you make, simply tell them you attend St. Matthew's and they will give you stamps. Much like Green Stamps of old, you turn these into the church office, we put them into a book, and then redeem each book for 5\$ towards any church purchase. Thank you!

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 **OCTOBER** newsletter must be submitted by **September 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**.