

NEWSLETTER

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Sterling, VA

www.stmatthewssterling.org

February/March 2003



Page 1

- Letter from the Rector
- English Classes for Adults
- Prayer Chain

Page 2

- Cub Scouts Complete God and Country Program
- Summer Camping Trip for all Members of G-3
- Stewardship Update
- Stained Glass Window

Page 3

- Stewardship of Creation Conference
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- Scouting Sunday
- February Pot Luck Dinner
- Moving on the Trail(er) of Faith
- G-Three Happenings

Page 4

- Lent
 - ❖ Lenten Services
 - ❖ Lenten Program
 - ❖ Observing a Holy Lent
 - ❖ Ash Wednesday Services

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church

Calendar of Events - February 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:00 A - G-3 Ski Trip
2 Scouting Sunday 5-7 - G-3 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	3 7:00 P - Boy Scouts 7:00 P - English Classes	4 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 12:00 P - "Discovery" Spanish class	5	6 3:30 P - Girl Scouts 6:30 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 P - Worship Commission	7 9:00 A - "Discovery" play group	8 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast
9 5-7 - G-3 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	10 7:00 P - Boy Scouts 7:00 P - English Classes	11 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 12:00 P - "Discovery" Spanish class	12 7:30 P - Parents of Teens	13 6:00 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal	14 9:00 A - "Discovery" play group	15
16 Stained Glass Window Dedication 5-7 - G-3 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	17 7:00 P - Boy Scouts 7:00 P - English Classes	18 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 12:00 P - "Discovery" Spanish class 7:30 P - Vestry Meeting	19	20 3:30 P - Girl Scouts 6:00 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal	21 9:00 A - "Discovery" play group 30-hour Famine	22 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 6:00 P - Pot Luck Dinner 30-hour Famine
23 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	24 7:00 P - Boy Scouts 7:00 P - English Classes	25 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 12:00 P - "Discovery" Spanish class	26 7:30 P - Parents of Teens	27 6:00 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal	28 9:00 A - "Discovery" play group	

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church

Calendar of Events - March 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 10 - 12 P Observing a Holy Lent
2 5-7 - G-3 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	3 7:00 P - English Classes 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	4 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery 12:00 P - "Discovery" Spanish class 6-7:30 P - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	5 Ash Wednesday Services: 6 A, 12 P, 7:30 P	6 3:30 P - Girl Scouts 6:30 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 P - Worship Commission	7 9:00 A - "Discovery" play group	8 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast
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23 5-7 - G-3 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	24 7:00 P - English Classes 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	25 9:00 A - Classroom of Discovery	26 7:00 P - Soup-er Supper 7:30 P - Parents of Teens	27 6:00 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Choir Rehearsal	28 9:00 A - "Discovery" play group	29 9:30-4 P - Stewardship of Creation Conference 6:00 P - Pot Luck Dinner
30 5-7 - G-3 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	31 7:00 P - English Classes 7:00 P - Boy Scouts					

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...

Dear Friends,

As I drove to work the other day, there had been a light snow the evening before. Seeing it brought back fond memories of growing up in Pittsburgh. One of those memories was of finding a deserted snow covered parking lot in the family station wagon and doing “donuts” (spinning the car in circles on the slippery surfaces). This behavior was actually encouraged. The theory was that it made a person a better driver knowing how their vehicle would handle in the snow, and gaining some experience in what to do when one’s car began to slide.

Thinking about that, I thought I’d head for an empty parking lot that would probably not yet be plowed. This was not hard to find. Now my car, a 1989 Honda Accord, is front wheel drive, so I didn’t have much hope for its ability to do donuts. When it comes to power slides and four-wheel drifts, there is nothing like good old rear wheel drive, especially when it is a big old station wagon with no weight in the back.

You can imagine my surprise—and delight! —when, if I turned the steering wheel and laid on the throttle, the car lost all traction and began to slip around in a circle. By rapidly turning the steering wheel the opposite direction of the slide and lifting my right foot from the accelerator, I could execute beautiful four-wheel drifts. What fun!

Well, it was fun, until I slid right into that pole. As I had grown confident with how the car was handling, I’d also increased my speed, which in retrospect was probably a mistake. By the time I saw the pole coming, there wasn’t a lot I could do except make sure I didn’t hit it head on. Which I didn’t. It was only the rear end of the car that didn’t quite make it past the pole. At least the taillights still work.

Someday, I hope, I’ll do my last stupid thing. I wish that day had come by now, but clearly that hasn’t happened. I believe that day will come, but I suppose realistically it may not be

(cont’d on page 4)

ENGLISH CLASSES FOR ADULTS

Since the publication of the last newsletter, Althea Kuniholm, Roland Kuniholm, and Michael Wilson have joined as teachers. I thank the Lord for His calling them to this ministry. Others such as Becky Smith and Linda Merola helped with registration as well. Everyone involved left with smiling faces and a song in their hearts.

We have one more day of registration. We would like to add another dozen students to the rosters. Whoever shows Monday, January 21, however, will be God’s will.

We are looking forward to the graduation ceremony and reception to be held during one of the church services in early June. I will let you know the specific date and time as soon as these plans are finalized.

I give a special thanks to Bill Schneider as he graciously agreed to be the Person in Charge for this semester. I will still be the coordinator but not a teacher this term because of my own class schedule at George Mason University. I will miss the face to face interaction with the students and teachers, but I will be in touch with all weekly on the telephone.

Please feel free to talk to any of us who have had any part in the ministry. We welcome questions and invite you to come observe (and eat) with us one Monday night. Come fellowship with us. Come join us for great joy.

Leanna Wilson, Coordinator

PRAYER CHAIN

Despite the loss of three on the chain, two more have been added. Regardless, the chain has never been broken. Why join? Joining helps us have more communion with God and fellowship with other church members. Additionally, seeing answers to prayer according to God’s will is truly amazing. For information, please see or call Leanna or Michael Wilson at (703) 421-7086 or find us at the 9:15 service.

CUB SCOUTS COMPLETE GOD AND COUNTRY PROGRAM

Twelve Cub Scouts from Pack 1156 have recently completed the God and Country Program.

Wolf Scouts Alex Cooney and Steven Vereb completed the God and Me curriculum designed to help first through third grade children become best friends with Jesus and tell their story of "God and Me" together. They begin by looking at their own lives followed by learning about the life and death of Jesus. They then learn that because God cares for them, they can care for others.

Webelos Scouts Patrick Boulware, JJ Cottone, Patrick Dinsmore, Hayden Griggs, Kyle Karnei, Casey Lang, Andrew Masters, Robert Smith, Tommy Vereb and William Weber completed the God and Family curriculum. This curriculum is designed to help fourth and fifth grade youth understand the importance of family and God's role in a healthy family. The scouts compared six steps for making pizza to God's plan for strengthening families. In each lesson, students met one or more Bible families, completed exercises and participated in activities to help them relate the Bible stories to their own lives. They created a pretend pizza to represent what makes a healthy family and enjoyed real pizzas in a celebration at the conclusion of the course.

SUMMER CAMPING TRIP FOR ALL MEMBERS OF G-3:

THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR SUMMER...MAYBE YOUR LIFE!

You are warmly invited to attend the 25th annual Creation, the nation's largest Christian festival. Join with thousands of people from all across the United States and Canada for four exciting nights and three days of great Christian music, inspired teaching, camping, friends and much more." From the Creation Festival 2003 website.

On June 25-28, G-3 is making plans to attend this event at the Agape Farm in Uniontown PA. **As you consider your summer plans, we hope you will put this on your calendars and plan to be a part of this incredible experience.**

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE.

As the Newsletter is going to press, we are just starting our 2002 Stewardship Program. Our theme this year is "Raising the Level of Our Faith", and we invite all our friends and members to let your giving be an expression of your faith. For the Merola family, 2002 was an exciting time as we stretched to give, as we believed God was calling us to do. Living in Northern Virginia is considerably more expensive than Florida, and we couldn't quite see how our budget would allow us to give, as we felt led to do. For us, anyhow, that was where faith came in, and we found our faith confirmed and even strengthened as God provided beyond what initially seemed possible.

Please understand that we are not advocating irresponsibility but faithfulness, taking time before God to ask what He would have each of us offer in terms of time, service, and finances. We ask no more and no less, believing that we give simply because of who God is, but also knowing the blessing that comes as God provides for those who step out in faith.

If, of course, you are not sure where you are in your faith, or if you have been hurt by a church before, and so are not ready to make this commitment, then we invite you to make 2003 a season of receiving Grace rather than giving. For those who are planning to make a pledge but have not yet returned your pledge card, please prayerfully complete it and either mail it to the church office or place it in the offering on Sunday morning. If you lost your pledge card, additional cards are available. Thank you.

STAINED GLASS WINDOW.

The five-piece stained glass window that will go over the glass doors in front of the church is nearing completion. We think you will be most pleased with the results! We are planning to dedicate the window at our February 16th services, and have it installed the following week.

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION CONFERENCE

The Stewardship of Creation Committee of the Diocese of Virginia will host its seventh conference March 29, 2003, 9:30-4:00, at the Virginia Theological Seminary. The conference, “**You Shall Renew the Face of the Earth’ Faithful Stewardship and Renewable Energy**” will cover the spiritual, economic and technical implications of renewable energy and energy conservation. The Rev. Sally Bingham, Executive Director, The Regeneration Project and Environmental Minister, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco and Mr. Gary Gardner, Director of Research, Worldwatch Institute will be the keynote speakers. Workshops will feature: Wind Tags – How you can support Wind Energy in Virginia; Health Effects of Air Pollution; Energy Conservation and Audits for Congregations; and Green Buildings. Please contact Merry Breed (Committee and Conference Co-chair and St. Matthew’s member) 703-444-2451 for more information.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER! Tuesday, March 4 from 6:00- 7:30 PM. Before we enter into the austere season of Lent, don’t miss this wonderful opportunity to load up on some tasty sweets and find out what it means to be “shriven”!

SCOUTING SUNDAY.

February 2 is Scout Sunday, and we invite all Boy, Girl, Cub, and Brownie, past or present, to wear their uniforms or any portion thereof! We will also be honoring those who have completed the work for their God and Life badge, something that requires a significant commitment to achieve.

FEBRUARY POT LUCK DINNER

February's Potluck dinner will be on the 22nd at 6pm. The theme will be favorite soups and sandwiches. Just what we all need for these cold winter nights. Bring your favorite soup or sandwich or a dessert. Soup bowls and spoons will be provided so don't worry about that. Questions or additional info, call Alan Denko 703-450-6637. Alan may be bringing his famous Irish Pub Soup. Hope to see you all there.

MOVING ON THE TRAIL(ER) OF FAITH.

As I write this in early January, we have now received just under \$30,000 of the \$35,000 needed to complete our moving on the Trailer of Faith Campaign. This is simply an incredible accomplishment, especially during a year when so many non-profit organizations have seen their charitable giving plummet.

For all those who taken the step of faith to have joined us in this, may you know to the bottom of your heart that you have helped write a very important chapter in the history of St. Matthew's. Even more importantly, may you know that you have helped advance the kingdom of God, enabling us to live into our mission. I truly believe that for generations to come, people will look back on the part you have played and be thankful.

G-THREE HAPPENINGS

It's been an exciting January for youth group. We've begun working with different curriculums to find a good fit for the group. We also transformed the parish hall into a Summer oasis, with miniature golf, badminton, a pool to play in, and a park where we grilled hot dogs and hamburgers and had smoothies and snow cones.

February and March are full of events. February 1st, we have our first ski trip. We'll be hitting the slopes of Whitetail for a day of skiing, snow tubing and/or snowboarding. In March we will be spending an afternoon rock climbing.

We will be taking part in the 30 hour famine on February 21st and 22nd with St. Anne's and St. Timothy's churches. The youth group will be raising money to help the millions of starving and hurting children in the world's poorest countries and then fasting for 30 hours, so that they can have a real taste of what hunger is like. For more information see the 30 Hour Famine web site at www.30hourfamine.org. Sign-up and donor sheets will be distributed soon.

In addition to special events we will continue to meet Sunday evenings to learn how God is leading our lives.

LENT

BODY FOR LIFE, by Bill Phillips, has been on bestseller lists for more than three years and sold more than three million copies. Clearly, people are looking to physical fitness to find *empowerment* and *inspiration for living*. Or maybe it is just that they want to look good!

Bodies are indeed important things, and taking care of them is an important part of living a healthy life. *But what about the soul?* How does a person improve their spiritual fitness and find a power for living that goes beyond the physical?

The season of **LENT** begins to answer some of these questions for anyone who is serious about strengthening their faith. Lent is modeled after the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert, where he began to figure out what it actually meant for Jesus to be Jesus. In much the same way, Lent is meant to be for us 40 days of soul searching, reflection, and taking stock as we figure out what it means for us to be us. In my experience, that is never quite as obvious or as easy as it sounds.

In further imitation of Jesus during these days, we too “withdraw into the wilderness”. That is why we give certain things up, simplifying our lives and removing distractions to better see where we are and where we still need to go. Here are some of the “tools” St. Matthew’s will be offering to make the most of this season.

Lenten Services

The Worship Commission has suggested the following changes for our Sunday services. We hope this will set apart the season of Lent and highlight its call to self-examination and repentance. The 8 and 10:30 services will begin with the Penitential Order, including the Ten Commandments on the First Sunday of Lent. The Kyrie (*Lord Have Mercy*) will be substituted for the Gloria. And, of course, no “Alleluias” will be sung or said. To help us out with this, we will use the Agnus Dei (*O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world...*) for the Fraction Anthem (the words said at the breaking of the communion bread or Priest Host).

Lenten Program: A Soup-er Supper followed by Terrific Teaching!

During the season of Lent there will be a Wednesday Night program beginning March 12th and continuing through April 9th (five weeks). The Evening will begin with a light supper of soup, salad, and bread at 7PM. After the meal will be a program facilitated by the Drs. Greg and Karen Strong in which we will consider the essentials of a strong and healthy faith.

Observing a Holy Lent

The Saturday before Lent begins, March 1, we will be offering a mini course from 10AM to Noon at the church. We will be looking at some of the practices that great spiritual men and women have found helpful down through the ages in their pursuit of God, and how we can implement these “disciplines” as well for our own spiritual benefit and refreshment.

Ash Wednesday Services, March 5.

Our services will be at 6AM, 12Noon, and at 7:30PM. All will include the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion, Rite 1.

Rector

until I step foot in glory. Until that time, I am simply going to be thankful for the Grace that comes in being loved in the midst of my foolishness—and in particular for a wife who is so often the faithful vehicle by which this Grace comes.

With no small measure of embarrassment,
Rob+

St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church and Cameron Parish

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Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday 10 AM to 3 PM

Rector Hours

Monday-Thursday 8 AM to 4 PM

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Easter is April 20th... Begin thinking about dedicating an Easter Lily.

February's Sermon Series: "Growing into Greatness"

Ash Wednesday Services, March 5.

Our services will be at 6AM, 12Noon, and at 7:30PM. All will include the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion, Rite 1.

DID YOU KNOW? In the first half of January we had already had almost 1500 page views of our Website! To see what the big deal is, go to www.stmatthewssterling.org and visit our site!

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 **April** newsletter must be submitted by **March 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.