

# NEWSLETTER

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Sterling, VA

[www.stmatthewssterling.org](http://www.stmatthewssterling.org)



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## Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church Calendar of Events – January 2003

| Sunday  | Monday                          | Tuesday                                    | Wednesday  | Thursday  | Friday | Saturday                                      |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--|---|--------|---|
| 29<br>2 p Boy Scouts<br>5-7 G-3<br>7 Prayer Meeting                             | 30<br>7 p ESL<br>7 p Boy Scouts | 31<br>New Year's Eve                       | 1<br>New Year's                                    | 2<br>3:30, 6:30 Girl Scouts<br>7:30 Worship Commission<br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal<br>(10:30 Service) | 3      | 4<br>7 p AA                                   |
| 5<br>2 p Boy Scouts<br>5-7 G-3 (Backwards Night)<br>7 Prayer Meeting            | 6<br>7 p ESL<br>7 p Boy Scouts  | 7<br>8a Pre-School of Discovery<br>7 p AA  | 8<br>7 p Boy Scouts                                | 9<br>3:30, 6:30 Girl Scouts<br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal (9:15 Service)                                | 10     | 11<br>7 p AA                                  |
| 12<br>2 p Boy Scouts<br>5-7 G-3 (Banana Night)<br>7 Prayer Meeting              | 13<br>7 p ESL<br>7 p Boy Scouts | 14<br>8a Pre-School of Discovery<br>7 p AA | 15<br>7 p Boy Scouts<br>7 p Parents of Adolescents | 16<br>3:30, 6:30 Girl Scouts<br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal<br>(10:30 Service)                           | 17     | 18<br>11:30 a -1:30 p Winter Picnic<br>7 p AA |
| 19<br>2 p Boy Scouts<br>7 Prayer Meeting  | 20<br>7 p ESL<br>7 p Boy Scouts | 21<br>8a Pre-School of Discovery<br>7 p AA | 22<br>7 p Boy Scouts                               | 23<br>3:30, 6:30 Girl Scouts<br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal (9:15 Service)                               | 24     | 25<br>7 p AA                                  |
| 26<br>≈ 11:45 a Annual Meeting<br>2 p Boy Scouts<br>5-7 G-3<br>7 Prayer Meeting | 27<br>7 p ESL<br>7 p Boy Scouts | 28<br>New Year's Eve                       | 29<br>New Year's                                   | 30<br>3:30, 6:30 Girl Scouts<br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal<br>(10:30 Service)                           | 31     | 1<br>G-3 Ski Trip<br>7 p AA                   |

## LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that a year ago at this time we were still in the process of applying for Parish Status. There was concern that if we took this step, became financially independent, but then could not actually sustain that independence, it would be devastating.

There was wisdom in this concern, made all the easier to hear because of the love and gentleness with which it was shared. Personally, I was tempted to wait a year, receive additional aid, and use whatever additional money we could get to better prepare ourselves to take this big step.

But as I prayed about it, and talked with many of you and saw the fire in your bellies and the dream in your eyes, I knew God was calling us to go forward. I realized that what would really build and strengthen our church would be to step out in faith and take the next step in God's plan for us.

That is, of course, what we did, and what a year it has been. One of my very favorite Scriptures is the passage that speaks of God being able to do "infinitely more than we could ever ask or imagine", and that seems to be a pretty good summary of how God has blessed us in 2002. We have added vital new ministries, further developed existing ones, significantly expanded our facilities (and paid for it in an ailing economy!), increased funding to every ministry area, hired a seminarian, hosted a preschool, virtually doubled our attendance numbers after already dramatically increasing them at the end of 2001...By God's grace and with His help, we have indeed grown strong in the Lord.

I could not be more proud of you. It is with great confidence in God and in you that I eagerly await what God is going to do in our midst in 2003!

With deep affection,  
Rob+

## DO YOU HAVE AN ADOLESCENT IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?

If so, you are invited to join a group whose purpose will be to gather and focus resources for your parental task—a task that we assume has some added demands at this time in your life!

This group will meet for ten sessions, the frequency, time, and place of which will be determined at our first meeting. These will not be a series of lectures. Rather, it will be a gathering of folks with a shared purpose—parenting their adolescent well—and a shared faith. Within this context, we hope to also share our strengths and weaknesses, our insights and needs, and in so doing better equip one another and ourselves for the task at hand.

The basis of each session will be a theme taken from each chapter of the book, Like Dew Your Youth by Eugene Peterson. It is one of the best and most positive books I have read on this subject, and is well worth the investment on its own.

If you are interested in this course, please let the church office know so we can order you a book. We are asking for a \$10 donation to cover the cost of the book. Our initial meeting will be Wednesday, January 15th a 7:30 PM at the church.

## ANNUAL MEETING

Please mark Sunday, January 26th, on your calendars for our Annual Meeting. It will be held immediately following the 10:30 service (probably getting started about 11:45AM). We are working out the details, but did we mention this meeting will include a delicious and tasty meal? It is our hope that all our parishioners will be present if at all possible.

## **“A TRIBUTE TO OUR CREATOR** *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. I actually did attend this event when I (Fr. Rob) was a teenager, and it did change my life. We hope you will put this on your calendars for the summer—it is going to be a great trip!

## **THE JESS PRESS**

St. Matthew's is very pleased to be sending \$1200 in support to Jessica Nakles, a local college student doing missionary work in Spain. To keep us up to date on her work, she sends us “The Jess Press” every month, which can be read on our bulletin board.

## **NEWS FROM CYNTHIA**

We were pleased to receive a Christmas card from our summer seminarian, Cynthia Walters. She wished everyone a “Very Merry Christmas” and blessed New Year. She also writes “St. Matthew's is in my daily prayers”; that she remembers her “time at St. Matthew's and all you good people with gratitude and joy”; and that she continues “to wear my Bug Safari shirt when I exercise!” Please pray for her as she takes Graduate Ordination Exams (GOES), a required and grueling set of competency tests in seven areas of seminary studies, from January 3-7.

Additionally, we will begin interviewing candidates for this summer's intern position beginning the first week of January.

## **MOVING ON THE TRAIL(ER) OF FAITH**

As you have no doubt seen, our Portable Classrooms are now on site and pretty much set up. Having been involved in building other buildings at other churches (such as a Sanctuary and a Christian Education Building) I am amazed at how much space we have acquired in such a short period of time for such a reasonable price. I keep shaking my head and saying, “God is so good!”

The cost of this project was projected to be \$35,000, and we continue to feel we can have everything done for that. So far (I am writing in December) we have collected just over \$25,000 with about \$10,000 remaining. To this point we have paid out about \$27,000, so we have less than a \$2000 shortfall, which we were able to cover through our Operating Budget. We have, by the way, completely paid for the classrooms themselves and they are now ours! Obviously, the other \$8,000 (for finishing the site-ing and set up) is still going to come due, so we are hopeful that the New Year will bring new opportunities for people to give even as you have done so generously already.

We still have permitting issues to be worked out, all administrative in nature, as we understand it. That means these are not so much problems but procedures that simply take time to be carried out. We also still have some work to be done, like running power and giving them a coat of paint so they match our other buildings.

Thank you for your generous support in making this happen!

## JANUARY'S SERMON SERIES

January's Sermon Series: "God, I Need a New Year!" In this series we will look at how we can make the most of 2003 despite the economic down turn, increased fears of war and terrorism, and ever escalating demands upon us. This would be a great time to invite friends who may be feeling anxious or discouraged, or who are simply having a hard time getting the work/family/personal life balance right.

## POT LUCK DINNERS

St. Matthew's is "resurrecting" the monthly Pot Luck dinners. The schedule for the next three months is January 25, February 22, and March 29. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 6 pm and share our food and company. The theme for January 25 is a pre-Super Bowl tailgate party. Bring your favorite football finger food or dessert and wear your favorite team's colors. Yes we know the 'Skins aren't in the playoffs! Hope to see you all there. For addl. info, you can call Alan or Debbie Denko at 703-450-6637.

### **St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and Cameron Parish**

201 East Frederick Drive  
Sterling, VA 20164-2387  
Phone: 703-430-2121  
Fax: 703-430-2638

#### **Office Hours**

Tuesday-Friday 10 AM to 3 PM

#### **Rector Hours**

Monday-Thursday 8 AM to 4 PM

#### Staff

**The Reverend Rob Merola**-Rector  
daddyrob88@aol.com

**Sandra Gentry**-Senior Warden

**John Guenther**-Junior Warden

**Debbie Bouges**-Church Office

**Karla Merola**-Nursery Coordinator

**Sharon Miller**-Sexton

#### Sunday Services

8:00 AM Rite I

9:15 AM Contemporary

10:30 AM Rite II

*Nursery is provided at 9:15 and 10:30 services.*

## PRAYER CHAIN

I, Leanna Wilson, am the new coordinator for the Prayer Chain. I have two requests. First, please call me for prayer requests for spoken or unspoken requests. Although your requests are kept confidential within the chain, you may feel more comfortable calling with, "This is Jane Doe. I have an unspoken request about my aunt."

A second request is for ones to join the Prayer Chain. You will receive a phone call about the request. You will then call the next person in the chain with the request. We all then pray for you daily.

Eight of us are in the chain. If God is speaking to your heart about this ministry or if you have a prayer request, please call Leanna Wilson at (703) 421-7086.

## ENGLISH CLASSES FOR ADULTS,

Leanna Wilson, coordinator

I would first like to say "Thank you" to the English class staff. They have been a joyful and dedicated group of teachers. They are Marina Fleming, Bill Schneider, Kelsey Hancher, Phyllis Mikolaitis, Mary Passafaro, and Erin Tracy. Our substitutes and workers behind the scenes are Pat Schneider, Katt Hancher, and Martha Olson.

We had three classes for Fall 2003. Two were Level I and one was Level II. The two Level I groups were combined and Level II group's interest declined, so we dropped that group. Registration for our January 6, 2003 classes occurred on December 23 and 30.

Please pray for our ministry. Several of our teachers need time off to take care of their extended families. If you are interested in helping one to two times a month, please give Leanna a call, 703-421-7086. You will have lesson plans and will be in the class with one of our experienced staff persons.

## G-THREE HAPPENINGS

It's time for another wonderful year to begin. We've had an incredible time in youth group over the past year. We've gone white water rafting, made a 40 foot banana split, frozen to death raising money at the bake sale, enjoyed some flatliners, flamingo'd people, and continued to learn how God's love impacts our lives. The trailer has arrived, and we're almost in!

Now it's time for a new and great year. We have two retreats planned, a ski trip, rock climbing, a picnic, and that's just in the first few months. Onto the events that are right around the corner... We're off to ski! We'll be out on the slopes February 1st! We need parents to drive, and skiers to ski!

We also have our picnic coming in just a few short weeks. Yes, we'll be defying the weather, and helping Rob remember the January's in Florida. The church will be converted into an outdoor picnic area. We'll be wearing shorts and t-shirts, playing some miniature golf, grilling some burgers and dogs. Just having a great day out (and in). This is a family event, so bring friends and the whole family. This will be happening January 18th from 11:30 - 1:30 (in the trailer if God wills it).

We've also got backwards night coming up on January 5<sup>th</sup>, as well as Banana night on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Not sure what that all means? Well, come on out and see!

On a personal note, I thank you all for making me feel at home as youth minister of this church. I truly enjoy every one of you and sharing time with you all. I'm looking forward to all the time we'll be spending over the next year, as we get to know one-another better. I pray we will truly become one cohesive group, united in Christ, becoming friends with each-other, no matter what our background is.

We need volunteers, parents and non-parents, to help us make all these events a success. If you're interested in helping, even if it's just for one event, give me a call at 703-450-6216.

+Tom

## HOLIDAY DONATIONS

We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who gave so generously to our neighbors during the holidays. This was the third year that St. Matthew's has participated in the Loudoun Holiday Coalition "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" program. The program applications the week before Christmas indicated that 1172 Loudoun families were in need of services this year. Karen, the program director from the Loudoun County Department of Social Services, has again expressed her sincere thanks to St. Matthew's. She knows that we are a parish that she "can count on".

Our assistance began before Thanksgiving. We donated sixty-nine "gently used" coats to be distributed to those in need along with the Thanksgiving food baskets. Boy Scout Troop 968 handled our food collection again this year. We appreciate their help packing and carrying a substantial pile of food over to the collection site. Members of our youth group spent an evening volunteering at the collection site, sorting food and assembling baskets.

The new "Reindeer Express" program provided used and new Christmas decorations to brighten the holidays. St. Matthew's provided seventy-seven items, ranging from ornaments to a Christmas tree. Our Holiday Star Tree coordinated our collection of Christmas gifts. The response was outstanding! Over eighty families participated and donated over 329 gifts! Thank you all for opening your hearts to our neighbors. St. Matthew's has once again shared God's love in a very warm and generous way.

Merry Breed and Maria Tuttle, Project Coordinators

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

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January's Sermon Series: "God, I Need a New Year!"

Please mark Sunday, January 26th, on your calendars for our Annual Meeting

**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 February newsletter must be submitted to the newsletter mailbox in the Church office by January 20<sup>th</sup>. Content should be in hardcopy format or submitted on a disk. Please do not email content.