

201 E. Frederick Drive
Sterling, VA 20164

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church

JUNE 2004



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YOUTH SUNDAY

From the Rector

Dear Friends,

We at Saint Matthew's have been blessed to see God working in amazing ways in the past few years. We see significant growth in virtually every area of our life together, from changed lives to church attendance to numbers of volunteers to staff to resources available and so on. As I am sure you know, this is not always the case in the church or at all times in the church's history.

Why we are included in the ones being given this gift, I don't know. Certainly we are a prayerful group, devoted to faithfully following Jesus, dedicated as our mission says to knowing and sharing God's love. But that is also true of lots of churches that are not being blessed with such growth.

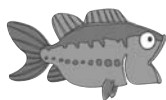
Jesus taught that the wind of the Spirit blows where it wills, and I think the sovereignty of God is as good an answer as any to this question. And that means we are being offered an exceptionally great privilege: to partner with the great God of the entire cosmos in the redemption of lost souls. Whatever you believe about the particulars, most of us believe in hell in part because we've been there at one time or another. Jesus offers us a way out—and then offers us the unbelievable opportunity of offering others a way out as well. If you really think about it—and I hope you do—what could be more important than that?

With such gifts comes responsibility as well—a responsibility to make the most of the opportunity at hand. And for the leadership of our church right now, that looks like it is going to require a building program. That's because we no longer have adequate sanctuary space for a congregation of our size. We no longer have adequate parking. We no longer have enough bathrooms. We don't have enough space for our kids. We don't have enough gathering space. We don't have enough offices. We don't have enough...well, I trust you get the picture!

I've built church buildings before. From an ego perspective, it's not something I ever need to do again (its not something I particularly want to do either!). But from the perspective of removing the physical obstacles that stand between us and the work we believe God wants to do through Saint Matthew's, I agree wholeheartedly with the leadership of the church. We need to build, and to do so as soon as it is fiscally responsible to do so. To that end we have hired an architect and have begun to look at plans as to what new construction might look like.

You'll be hearing more about this in the months to come. We'll be interested in your input, and would be happy at any point to answer any questions you might have. And, of course, we ask for your continued prayers!

Faithfully,
Rob †



Youth Minister's Report

A few weeks ago we started a Bible study on the Book of Acts. While there were both adult and youth bible studies, I think you can guess which one I took part in. Anyway, we started the series on a brief overview of Acts, after which we focused on the Holy Spirit. The discussion had been working through my mind for a while, but in another sermon I'd read, the importance really came out. He mentioned that each day that we live, the Holy Spirit is the being who guides us to fulfill His works. It's the Holy Spirit who gives us individual attention in our lives.

You have Christ, God the Son, inarguably the

biggest thing to happen in our world. Then of course there's God the Father. While Christ may be the biggest and best thing to happen in our world, God the Father is the biggest thing to happen to our world; he is the creator of it. But all of that happened long ago. If you want to really see God working today, it all comes through the Holy Spirit. I'll get to why in just one second.

It's kind of interesting what happened after Christ died. In the Old Testament we see the Holy Spirit show Himself a couple of times to some people, like Saul's heart being changed by the Spirit (1 Samuel 10:9-10). There are specific times in which the Spirit works through people to further God's will. But then on Pentecost (yes, that

continued on page 4

is after Christ gave his life for us), the Holy Spirit comes to the disciples, igniting them on fire (both physically and emotionally). After this we all know what happened—Peter came out and converted the 3000 people by speaking in their native tongues (Acts 2:14-41, if you'd like a refresher).

From Pentecost onward the Holy Spirit was no longer reserved for certain individuals at certain times. Christ tells the disciples that the Holy Spirit will come to all of them. Then they'll be "baptized" not with water but with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). At this point every person has God guiding them every moment of every day through the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28). Tell me, is that not awesome?

My entire life I've believed in God. I may have gotten away from attending church, and then come back again. Through it all I have felt Him guiding me in lots of different ways.

I feel Him the most when I prepare these newsletter items, or when I prepare a talk for youth group. For days, or sometimes weeks, the world begins to get clearer in one way or another. Someone may send along a story or sermon they've heard; I'll hear or be part of a conversation on some topic; or I'll even be sleeping and wake up knowing where He wants me to go.

By now everyone in G3 will already know this one. But the night before our Bible study on the Holy Spirit I had an incredibly vivid dream. I'd seen our sanctuary, albeit with a new design, with a huge group of youth leading a lively praise service. The youth planned and ran this weekly service, which was bringing in many youth, just as many people in their "very late" teens, and even some people who have stopped turning "29". This was an amazing dream which brought so much joy to my heart. To realize we could have a weekly worship service led by youth for anyone, and knowing people leave with a good message. If you have any questions on that one, simply look at our youth service; many people left that service having been moved by the Spirit's words coming from Alex Leach's mouth.

Lots of people believe in luck (I'd bet even some people reading this now). But, while it may sound hokey, I truly believe everything has a purpose. God created this life, and He guides it through the Holy Spirit. Even when I make mistakes and follow the wrong voice, the Spirit is still working His plan. My life isn't lucky; it's been blessed by Him.

Over the coming month, I would simply ask that you try and truly listen. The Spirit moves in so many ways we can recognize. Some people see things happen which

are obviously His works; our Classroom on the Hill is one of those visions I see all the time. Other people feel an urge to do one thing (often a good thing) over another. Even others actually hear Him speak to them. Personally, I feel Him bring understanding to me when I see certain things, and I feel Him nudging me to do one thing over another.

How do you recognize Him?

Peace,

† Tom

G3 Happenings

First and foremost, youth group did an incredible job running the youth Sunday service. I'm still hearing many congratulations on the great job accomplished by every one in youth group. Now we're thinking of having another youth led service in August, planned and led entirely by youth. If anyone would like to start planning this service, especially the music so we can begin practicing, let me know.

We have a couple of things coming up with the beginning of summer. Foremost is **CreationFest**. We have a lot of people signed up for this great event. For everyone registered to go, it's time to start getting all the stuff we need, from sleeping bags to coats to shorts to CDs. Last year was a great time, and since we've been through it before, this year will be even better! So, get ready to head on out for great music, great worship, and great camping, June 23–26.

We also have our **mission trip** in the works. Seven people will be heading out in the beginning of July for a week of mission work for those in need. I only wish I could join them.

VBS is also around the corner. If you haven't volunteered to help out, this is one event which needs youth! Truly, the adults are great, but some are just too old to relate with kids, while teenagers are the perfect go-between. I mean, how many adults know how to treat people under 21 like equals?

On top of it all we have the end of the school year coming, and G3 every week. It'll be a packed summer!

To sign up or get information for any of these events, please contact Tom Leary at 703-858-1410, or e-mail YouthMinister@stmatthewssterling.org.

From the Senior Warden

This summer at Saint Matthew's promises to be very exciting, full of activities to enhance our mission — To know and share God's love — and to move us closer to our vision — To live life at its fullest in Christ.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of these activities with you.

In June we will be going to CreationFest. While I did not attend last year, everyone I have spoken to who did go had a great time and found it spiritually moving. Many are attending again this year. I, too, am planning to attend and am very much looking forward to it. If you would like to attend, or you want more information, please see Peter Nelson, and he will be happy to assist.

July will likely be the busiest of the three summer months. First we have confirmation class on July 9 and 10 in preparation for Bishop Lee's visit to Saint Matthew's on July 11. Anyone wishing to be confirmed or received, please see me regarding these classes.

Next in July we have a senior high mission trip. This trip is to the North Carolina Smoky Mountains. The group leaving on this trip will depart on July 11, the same day the Bishop is here. It will be great to have the Bishop participate in the send off of the group going on the mission trip. Mission trips can be life changing events so I am thrilled that we have a group going this summer.

Finally in July we have two weeks of Vacation Bible School. Yes, I said two weeks of VBS and its decorations. The first week (week of July 19) Potomac Falls Episcopal Church will hold a morning VBS at our campus. The following week (week of July 26) we will hold our evening VBS that begins with dinner. If this year's VBS is as successful as last year's, we will be overflowing with children learning about the love of Jesus.

In August, the vestry will be attending the Leadership Conference held at Willow Creek Church outside of Chicago. This will be a great opportunity to learn from outstanding leaders (both church leaders and non-church leaders) and apply that knowledge to our life together at Saint Matthew's.

Again, these are just some of the activities that will be going on this summer. Additional activities are being planned by the Community, Outreach, and Spiritual Formation committees (e.g., fishing trip, G3 fun, etc.). I hope you will take advantage of these activities and participate in the ones that interest you. Please look for additional details in future announcements.

May you live life at its fullest in Christ,
Richard Leach

From the Vestry - April 2004

Following an opening prayer right after 7:00 p.m., Rob Merola reflected on certain ideas about leadership from Jim Kouzes's book *The Leadership Challenge*. Richard Leach then highlighted several upcoming events in the church life: the Bishop's visit in early July; a youth mission trip in mid July; Vacation Bible School in late July (first, Potomac Falls E.C.; then, Saint Matthew's); and the vestry trip to a leadership conference in August.

Next came Charlie Biegel's report on church finances. As of the end of March, income exceeded budgeted income, and overall expenses were at or a little below budget. Hence, in general the church's fund balances are in good shape. This led to discussion of ways to use additional income faithfully and wisely in light of the church's strategic plan. The vestry decided to continue this discussion into the next vestry meeting (May).

Work will continue as well to complete the audits of

the church finances for 2002 and 2003. Merry Breed sketched plans for a Ministry Fair in late May to present to the congregation the ministry areas and ministry opportunities.

Vicki Nelson followed with a report on planning ideas for worship and music in view of developments in the church.

As the last major item at the meeting, Rob spoke about the possibility of a leadership development lecture series based at Saint Matthew's. His thinking began in part out of discussion with Jim Kouzes, a noted author on leadership, about the possibility of Jim's coming to Saint Matthew's to speak. This could grow into a regular lecture series on leadership at Saint Matthew's. The meeting adjourned shortly after 9:00 p.m. The next meeting of the vestry was scheduled for Tuesday, May 18, to reconsider the church plan and budget for the remainder of 2004.

Spiritual Formation

"Once again another newsletter deadline arrives, and I am perched upon my chair, racking my brain for something important, or at least relevant, to say. Since joining this committee, I've been in an uphill battle to learn the ropes and in these notes to announce items and events of interest. This month, however, I need not mention upcoming events as they are so ably advertised elsewhere; this year's Vacation Bible School, Confirmation Classes, CreationFest, etc. All exciting events of which I urge you all to take advantage of.

Which brings me to what I am racking my brain about at 5:40 a.m. on a Monday morning as dawn breaks over the Potomac, and as people start competing for the few remaining parking spaces outside of my office block. The bottom line is time. Time, or the lack of it, rather. Lots of great events coming up in the parish calendar, lots of events in our family's lives, lots more work to do at the office. More to do at the office is why I'm sitting here at "O - dark - thirty", as we say in my world. And I have oft succumbed to the lure and the demands of the job, but that's the culture of the military. Your life is not your own, and you have to go the extra mile every day as part of your service to your country. Often it means cutting back on family time. It usually means you have no time for any "extra curricular activities" outside the home and work, to include time for your own self, your own sanity, and for God.

The military culture is one that requires us to give up many of our rights and freedoms to answer our country's call. Other walks of life have their own cultures. The business world has its culture of staying ahead of the competition in a world that knows no mercy for those who lag behind at the cash register. The political world has a culture centered, it would seem, around the pursuit of power while still trying to serve the electorate. And the church's culture? Certainly, as Saint Matthew's mission statement puts it, "To know and share God's love." But how do we fit individually within this culture while trying to serve our professional requirements?

We are all there on Sunday, no doubt about it. I'm usually an "8 o'clocker", but since my son started Sunday School, I've been bouncing back and forth between the 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. I must admit it is rather pleasing to have to arrive early to get a "good seat" at 10:30 a.m. And I've seen the great crowd of super children in the Sunday School and the joy in learning in their faces. I've listened to the excellent discussions in the Lenten Series and have always walked away more knowledgeable than when I came in. And I've been a regular in our Bible studies over the last year and have enjoyed the excellent teaching by all, again learning more and deepening my understanding of God and faith. I can't help but think that, based on the excellent "give and take" of the conversations at the Lenten Series, that the Bible studies would benefit greatly from similar interaction. We are off to a good start with the Bible studies, and I know that larger crowds will improve the quality of the discussion and the learning.

Which brings me back to culture. In our world our time is limited. We all manage, with great difficulty I know, to carve out time for worship on Sundays. For me, however, the weekly study groups and my own individual devotions have been my link from one Sunday to the next. It's not enough for some of us to depend on Sundays alone; we need the additional time for private and collective study. Some of us have injected Bible study into our cultures. In the military, even in my office building here in Washington, we have study groups — some meet at the strangest hours! But even if for just 30 minutes, it's a chance to learn, to connect, and to grow. For some of us, it's our midweek sanity break and I commend it to anyone who is worn thin by Wednesday or Thursday each week. I'd like to see it become more of our parish culture. Not just a small group in the trailers once a week, but perhaps in homes. Different groups, different themes, different times — flexibility — it's a requirement in our hectic world.

We had this culture in my last parish in England, and I'd like to see something like it here. Just a thought. Perhaps you could chew on it for a while? What would you like to see? What type of study would suit your needs? A traditional "pick a book from the Bible and dig in" study? A topical study? A group that reads, sings, and prays? Wednesdays? Thursdays? Time of day? Location? As the long gone commercial said, "Enquiring minds want to know."

And I'd say we all have enquiring minds. The mind that stops enquiring, that stops searching, that stops learning, eventually just — stops. So, I'll leave you with these thoughts and these questions. And I'd ask you to email me your thoughts. I know that my comrades and I here in the District and around the world benefit enormously from "the culture of study", the constant struggle to move down the path towards Christ despite the pressures upon us. I commend it to you. Private study? Of course! Keep at it! But it's amazing how much is gained from the power of the group. How else are we to "...know and share God's love?"

Cheers,

Kris

Kristina.young@dia.mil

PREACHER MAN

By Maysie Floyd

(Inspired by the Sunday Night Prayer Group)

As I worked in the church office
I became aware of this truth —
Sunday services on May second
Were in charge of our youth.
Oh my, would this be a good day
To coddle myself? Sleep late?
Read the papers? Hurray! Hurray!
As a mother of four, grandmother to ten,
Hadn't I seen it all done?
Was it never to end?
But, whoa! Look who's preaching.
My goodness, my me!
That's the young man who cleaned up
the spaghetti,
You see.
VBS, I remember it well. A dear little VBS-er
was giving me a blazing smile.
As his uneaten plate of spaghetti
Slowly slid off in the aisle (at my feet).
Alex it was — cleaned it all up.
Didn't know his name then,
But remembered his face.
Wiped it all up — spotless and neat
And with a “one more river crossed” look,

Went back to his place.
So-o-o, guess I've got to get going,
Put on my good clothes,
Fix up my face,
Powder my nose.
Rings on my fingers,
Bells on my toes....
Wait, wait, wait,
Let's not get carried away.
It can't possibly be that good.
What can he say?
But he did, and it was,
And they ALL made me so proud.
It has really been worth it —
Our youth came through —
Shout it out loud!
Then I thought to myself,
What's all the fuss?
Just gotta say it —
The score was A plus!
Thank you, Youth.
Thank you Alex, Preacher-Man!

June Fishing Excursion

Remember last year when we took a break from being “fishers of men” and became “fishers of fish”? Join us this year for an exciting day on the Chesapeake Bay fishing or just enjoying the earth’s beauty as we cruise around one of God’s most beautiful and resourceful estuaries. We will leave Solomons, MD at O-DARK-30, and fish for multiple species including rockfish, trout, croaker, and yellow perch. The trip date is June 19. Contact Dick Almarode at 703-433-9205 or dick@almarode.us to sign up. See you there!

Sunday School News

It is hard to believe that we will soon be finishing another year of Sunday School. I know I speak for all our teachers when I say that we have really enjoyed the opportunity to get to know your children and to teach them about the wonder of God's love and His creation. We are blessed to have a very dedicated group of teachers at Saint Matthew's.

We are currently evaluating our Sunday School curriculum to ensure that we are offering the best instruction in the time that we have on Sunday morning and look forward to another exciting year with your children in the fall.

Summer Arts

Do you enjoy reading poetry, or singing, or playing the xylophone? Do you love to paint summer flowers? Boy, do we need you! Summer is a great time to fill in for missing musicians at the Sunday morning services. You don't have to sing to make a contribution to our arts ministry. We need to give some of our singers a break over the summer, and you can test the waters as a temporary artist in residence. If you are interested, please see Vicki Nelson, Leslie Tracy, or Father Rob.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

The Right Reverend Peter Lee will visit us for confirmations at our 10:30 service on Sunday, July 11, 2004. Anyone interested in being confirmed or received, or in reaffirming their faith or simply knowing more about the Episcopal Church, should plan on attending classes on Friday, July 9, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday, July 10, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you wish to participate in this sacramental rite, please look for a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the parish hall, or contact Richard Leach at 703-421-6310. Please add your name to the sign-up sheet or contact Richard no later than July 1, 2004.

Fall Foliage Special

Come join us for a scenic journey through the colorful Maryland countryside riding on a TRAIN! The DC Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society will whisk you away from Union Station in Washington, DC, to Thurmont, MD, on a comfortable MARC commuter train. Enjoy the Thurmont Fall Colorfest as well as a short train ride into the beautiful Catoclin Mountains to view the colorful autumn glory. The trip is October 9, 2004, and the estimated cost is \$70.00 per adult and \$60.00 per child. Contact Dick Almarode at 703-433-9205 or dick@almarode.us for additional details. You may view additional information at the NRHS website (<http://www.dcnrhs.org/>) as the trip date nears.



**Lava Lava Island
- Where Jesus'
Love Flows**

Registration Forms - Pages 9-10

LAVA LAVA ISLAND

Vacation Bible School
July 26-30, 2004
5:30 PM- 8:30 PM
Ages 4 thru 5th grade

Saint Matthew's invites children to join us in the jungles of Lava Lava Island for a week of Bible learning fun! We are overflowing with excitement! Be sure your kids have the hottest summer ever by coming to Lava Lava Island: Where Jesus' love flows! Mark your calendar for July 26-30. Activities begin at 5:30 p.m. with a light supper in the parish hall.

Each day kids will sing catchy songs, play teamwork-building games, experience electrifying Bible adventures, collect Memory Buddies to remind them of God's word, take on a Daily Challenge to let Jesus' love flow home, and create Bible Point crafts that they'll take home and play with all summer long.

PARENTS: Please register your children (age 4 through rising 5th grade) TODAY! Payment (or request for scholarship) should accompany your form(s). Three-year-olds are welcome if there is a parent volunteer accompanying the child.

KIDS: YOU are our most important VBS ambassadors! Please take home several VBS forms and invite your friends/neighbors/classmates to join us!

THINKING OF HELPING WITH VBS?

We need adult and teen/preteen helpers! Please sign up on the volunteer form. Sign up as an Island Crew Leader or help with a Station Leader.

Look for registration forms available in the parish hall, on the website, and in this newsletter.

We are sharing our facility with Potomac Falls Episcopal Church, and they are planning the daytime VBS during the week of July 19-23.

For more information, contact Jodie Leach: 703-421-6310, or email; JodieLeach2@aol.com



JULY 26-30 * VÄRÖTÖN BILBÉ SCÖÖL * DÉTÄILS PÄGES 9-11
LÄVÄ LÄVÄ SÄSÄP JESUS' LOVE FLOWS

Sterling, VA 20164

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

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

All content for the JULY newsletter must be submitted by FRIDAY, JUNE 11. Content can be submitted in hardcopy or on disk to the newsletter mailbox in the church office. Content may also be e-mailed to Newsletter@stmatthewssterling.org.

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Sunday Service Times: 8:00 AM • 9:15 AM* • 10:30 AM* • 5:00 PM
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