



Saint
Matthew's
Episcopal Church

Newsletter

May 2007

201 East Frederick Drive • Sterling VA 20164

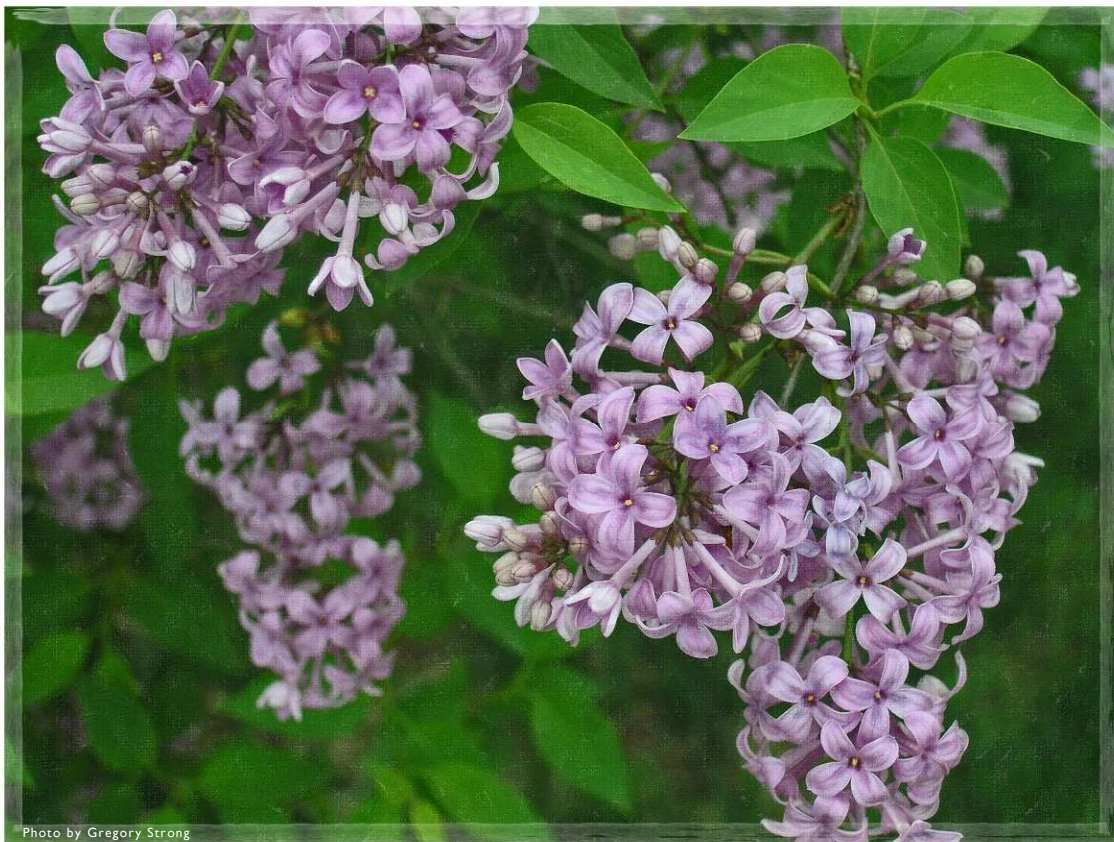


Photo by Gregory Strong

*O heavenly Father, who hast filled the world with beauty;
Open our eyes to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works ...*

Prayer "For Joy in God's Creation": The Book of Common Prayer

FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends,

An essential component of the Christian life well lived is the practice of self examination. Many of us make this a part of our Lenten disciplines, and that is good as far as it goes. But better still would be for us to make it a regular and intentional part of our Christian life in general.

Self examination can take many forms. For me, it most often begins with reading Scripture or other materials, continues as I prayerfully reflect on the key points of what I have read, and culminates in working through the questions this naturally raises (usually in my journal).

Recently I have been experimenting with occasionally beginning with questions themselves. For instance, here is a series of questions that have been haunting me lately. "Whom do I envy, and whom do I admire? What is the difference between them? What can I learn from this?"

When I think of people I envy, it tends to be people who have material things or the opportunities that money makes possible. I might, for instance, envy some one who drives a Ferrari (or the brand new Lexus LS 460 I saw the other day), or who can fly in with friends to a remote location in Alaska and fish for monster salmon.

But when I think of people I admire, I come up with something very different. The name I come up with most regularly these days is David Knight, the rector of our sister parish, Saint Patrick's in Mississippi. For 18 months now he has been struggling to hold together the remnants of a parish in a little town that continues to be devastated to this day. Although he has opportunities to go elsewhere I am sure (and who could blame him if he did?), he has remained unerringly faithful.

In the end, although I freely admit I sometimes get confused or off track, it is far more important for me to become more like the people I admire than to

try and obtain that which I envy. From what I can tell, the truth is that envy just begets more envy, and for those who choose that track they simply have to keep pursuing the next Big Thing. Growing in the qualities that make us better people, better Christians – in what experience I have of that so far (limited as it may be!), there is a satisfaction here that goes beyond what any thing on earth can provide.

So what questions are you asking yourselves these days? What question is God placing in your heart? How are you doing in allowing this process to help you become more fully human, the person that God created you to be, and that you may yet be fortunate enough to become?

Questioning right along with you, Rob+

FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

Watch and pray. Many times in the Bible we are called to action. But during Holy Week, I was again reminded of the occasional but extremely focused call not to act, but to wait. Yet not just wait – to wait, anticipate, act by praying and focusing on God. In our world of "To Do" lists in every form – many of us have sticky-notes, PDAs, or even lists on their cell phones – it can be very difficult to know when we are to not act, but to watch and pray. It was evidently impossible for the apostles to do, although if they had the gift of telling the future, I would venture to guess that sleep would not have come as easily as it did on that first Maundy Thursday.

During Lent, in addition to WATCH, I studied a CD program by a favorite writer, John Ortberg, entitled "God is Closer Than You Think." I listened to the CDs so much

that many of them won't play any longer. I'm a visual learner, so I needed to play them over and over to remember what I had heard the time before! I hope Mr. Ortberg forgives me, but I think I could synthesize his book into a few words: God is as close as you allow him to be. If you talk to him, he will talk back. If he doesn't, it's because he wants you to wait – to watch and pray. It sounds too simple, doesn't it? That's what I thought as well.

To fully appreciate this, we need to take ourselves out of the here-and-now, the moment where we are just waiting for the next moment, when something must be done. But it does not have to be a momentous moment. It can be while you are showering, driving your car, waiting in line, or walking through the mall. Ask God to stand by you. He already is; you just haven't acknowledged it yet.

How many of us are parents who would give anything for our son

or daughter to come to us and say, "Can I talk to you?" (And I can tell you, as the mother of two sons, that does not happen very often!) That's where God is. He is our heavenly Father, waiting for any opportunity for us to allow him into our lives.

But the hardest thing to hear back, once we talk with God, is silence. Don't misunderstand that as his not hearing you. That is his way of saying, "Watch and pray." God always hears and always responds. It may not be immediate, and it may not be in the form you expect. But just imagine that God will take care of each of his children, just as you would take care of yours.

By the way, for those who were unable to attend the Maundy Thursday service, listening to the Taize chant – "Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray" – as the altar was stripped was truly awesome.

Vicki Nelson

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Baccalaureate Celebration 2

Sunday Picnic at the Park 3

Outreach Opportunities 2

2007 Mission Trip 3

WATCH 3

Vestry Highlights 3

Membership Login 4

COMMUNITY

Baccalaureate Eucharist and Dinner

We'd like to honor our high school and college graduates on June 10 with a special baccalaureate service and dinner beginning at 6:00 p.m. This celebration is for graduates and their families. Please let us know who is graduating by signing up in the parish hall on the community bulletin board. Congratulations to all our graduates!(703-948-7341) to make a donation.

Sunday Picnic at the Park – May 20

On Sunday, May 20, the 8:00 a.m. service will be held at Saint Matthew's. The 9:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. services will be combined and *celebrated at Algonkian Park at 11:00 a.m.* Join us at Algonkian Park for fun and fellowship! Wear your favorite team jersey! D.C. United will join us with giant inflatables to try out our soccer skills! Bocce, volleyball, badminton, horseshoes, and more! Lots of activities for all ages! We will have a celebration service at 11:00 a.m. followed by a barbecue. Saint Matthew's will provide hot dogs, chips, and paper goods. Please bring a side dish to share. Based on last name, bring the following: A-H, desserts; I-O, drinks; P-Z, side dishes. Invite friends and neighbors to the park for a fun-filled day!

Trips to See Two Musicals

The Community Committee is sponsoring trips to see two musicals this summer. The first is "Jesus Christ Superstar" at Wolf Trap. The performance is at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, June 8, and each ticket is \$50. The second musical is "Phantom of the Opera" at the Kennedy Center. This performance is at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 8, and each ticket is \$85. The seats for both performances are in the rear orchestra section.

We have a limited number of tickets for each performance. If you would like to go, please add your name and details to the sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the parish hall. Payment should be given to Richard or Jodie Leach, and checks should be made payable to Richard Leach. For additional information, please contact Jodie (jodieleach2@aol.com) or Richard (rpleach1226@aol.com)

Easter Events

A huge thank you to Richard Henry for organizing the Easter Eggstravaganza at Briar Patch Park. If you haven't seen the photos, check out all 145 of them at www.stmatthewssterling.org. What a turn out! Thanks to the many volunteers who arrived early Saturday morning to set up, to those who spent the day, and to two special Easter bunnies! Many thanks to those who invited friends, donated candy, and filled the thousands of eggs! Special kudos to Kenny Thayer for overseeing the concessions; the profits were given to the mission trips. Three cheers to the grilling team!

Many thanks to Pam Hart for coordinating the Easter Brunch. A delicious feast was served on Easter morning. Special thanks to all those who prepared dishes, and to Kim Tracy who filled hundreds more eggs and organized the abundant egg hunt after services

OUTREACH

How can I reach out to people in need in my community? Whether we define "community" as Sterling or people throughout the world, we often ask this question as we grow in our faith and look for meaning in our lives. We feel God's call to help others in need. When we reach out, we are rewarded with knowing that we are answering the call as Christians to help improve the quality of life for others. Saint Matthew's is doing great things to improve the quality of life for people in Sterling, in Loudoun, and in Virginia.

- **LINK:** Many in our community go hungry. Sometimes they suddenly find they cannot feed themselves or their family. LINK provides emergency food for families in Sterling, Herndon, and Ashburn. In 2006, LINK supported more than 1,000 families with a week's worth of groceries. Food is donated by local churches, as well as by grocery stores, individuals, businesses, and other groups. Volunteers store, coordinate, and deliver the food. *You* can help by simple donating funds, food, or time. If you have questions or wish to help – or if you know of someone who needs help – contact Kenny Thayer at 703-796-9054.
- **English as a Second Language (ESL):** The Sterling and Herndon communities are home to a growing population of people who could benefit by learning English. Several people at Saint Matthews's have been running a very successful program teaching English to people in our local community. Graduates have applauded us for helping them communicate more effectively. *You* can help. Contact Leanna Wilson at mdwilson61@msn.com or 703-421-7086.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** Committed to helping low income families realize their dream of home ownership since 1976, Habitat for Humanity has built more than 200,000 houses in over 100 countries, including 75,000 across the United States. In exchange for "sweat equity" towards the completion of the home, Habitat helps families obtain low or no interest mortgages with payments that equal approximately 30% of the family's income. The homes are professionally framed. Then volunteers join the families to complete the finish work on the home.

With the need for affordable housing so great, Habitat has reached out to members of the community, asking for their assistance in becoming part of their \$100,000 House Sponsorship Program. Saint Matthew's has made a five year commitment towards sponsorship. Our Outreach Committee is in the process of asking other area churches to join us in this commitment. One more house would mean one more family's dream fulfilled.

(Continued on page 3)

OUTREACH *(Continued from page 2)*

The average price of a home in Loudoun County is approximately \$500,000, making home ownership for low income families a near impossibility. Yet the Loudoun County Habitat Program, begun in 1993, has already completed homes for seven partner families. Work is currently underway to build five houses near St. Louis (north of Middleburg). Construction has begun on the first two homes, with plans for the final houses to be completed within the next year. *You* can be a volunteer builder, or you can help provide lunch to a group of volunteers working on a Saturday. Saint Matthew's is organizing a group to support the building of these homes. Look for future announcements in this newsletter, on the bulletin boards, and in the service bulletins.

- **Mountain Mission School:** In the 85 years Mountain Mission School has operated, thousands of children have passed through their doors and gone on to successful lives. Some have only required care for a short time, while others have been with them through adulthood. Mountain Mission School is a non-profit (501c3) charitable organization in Virginia. The children enjoy the benefits of a quality Christian education from pre-school through high school. Over 90% of their children go on to pursue additional education after graduation from high school. Their students face many challenges in life but achieve great things! Saint Matthew's supports this school by donating gifts and directly sponsoring one of the students. For more information, see their website at <http://www.mountainmissionschool.org>, or contact Kenny Thayer at 703-796-9054.

Saint Matthew's is indeed reaching out to people in our community. There are many stories to tell of people who have been helped and lives transformed. We are feeding the hungry through LINK, teaching English to our neighbors, helping build homes for low-income families, and reaching out to children in need. Do these efforts need your help? Yes. Could we do more? Yes! If you would like to help – or if you have ideas on how we can make lives better for others – call the parish office, contact John Martin at 703-430-2419, or come to our Outreach Committee meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. We welcome your time and talents!

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

2007 High School Mission Trip

All roster spots for our two 2007 High School Mission Trips have been taken. However, if you would like to go, and have not already secured a spot, please contact Richard Leach (rpleach1226@aol.com or 703-421-6310) to see if another roster spot can be added. This year's trips are to the Eastern Shore of Virginia the week of June 24, and to the country of Belize the week of July 21.

WATCH

WATCH stands for Wednesday at Church! There is something for everyone! The evening starts with dinner at 7:00 p.m. Programs last from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. They include the following.

Adults (choose 1 of 2 programs)

Parenting Class

This consists of a multi-week course for parents to learn how to love, nurture, and discipline their children better. Charlie Biegel and Tom Leary lead this course.

Bible Study

Following up on Easter, Greg Strong coordinates a study on the passion and resurrection accounts in the New Testament, and the

birth of the church consequent to Jesus' ascension and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

High School (grades 9-12)

Rob Merola leads a program for high schoolers on values.

Middle School (grades 6-8)

Middle Schoolers are exploring what it means to live in an Easter community.

Elementary (grades 1-5)

Youngsters in elementary grades learn more about God and faith through hands-on activities.

Vestry Highlights March 2007

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. ~ Concerning the church's finances as of February 28, income was good in February, picking up from January. Expenses were below budget. ~ The vestry reviewed the church's three trustees, last appointed in 1996. The vestry determined to update the trustees soon. ~ The congregational meeting on March 14 to address issues in the national church went well. The vestry expressed its commitment to focus on our vision, mission, and strategic objectives. Discussion ensued about what the church might do with respect to the issues. There was consensus that a subgroup of the vestry could meet to identify possible scenarios that might occur in the national church and their potential effects on Saint Matthew's. There was also agreement to explore ways for certain vestry members to

act as "listening posts" for those in the congregation concerned about the issues. These members would then share people's concerns and feelings with the vestry, as well as provide information about the vestry's perspective and focus. ~ A formal bid has been made for the property next to the church. With its current zoning, the property could be used for residential purposes. Other uses would require rezoning. The consensus was to continue with the bid. ~ Other business at the meeting: a report on a March meeting for parents about the Youth Leadership Team and youth ministry; development of a Pastoral Care program; and a proposal for an additional worship service on Saturday evenings in the fall. ~ The meeting adjourned shortly after 9:00 p.m., with the next meeting scheduled for April 17, at 7:00 p.m.

How to create a Login:

AccessACS
Welcome to St. Matthew's login

There will be a maintenance update from 11:00 p.m. February 6 until 8:00 a.m. February 7 EST. You may not be able to access your data during these time periods.

Members who already have a user name and password may sign in below.

To register for the first time to see your personal information, click the link that says, "Get your user name and password". Please note that we must have this information already in our files for you to be able to register.

Registered Users Sign In Here

User Name:
Password:
 Remember me

[Forgot your password?](#)

Not Registered?
[Get your user name and password](#)

- Go to the AccessACS site (<https://secure.accessacs.com/access/memberlogin.aspx?sn=111141>) or click the "Access Member Data" link under What's New on the church website – www.stmatthewssterling.org)
- Click the link under "Not Registered?"

AccessACS
Welcome to St. Matthew's

To register, the following information must match the information in our database.

* = Required Field

* First Name
* Last Name
Suffix
* E-mail Address

[Return to sign in page](#)

Enter your first name, last name and email address on the form. If the information you entered matches the data in the membership database, you'll receive a confirmation message and an email with your initial password.

The first time you login with the initial password you'll be prompted to change your password

Registered Users Sign In Here

Registered Users Sign In Here

User Name:

New Password:
Confirm New Password:
 Remember me

[Forgot your password?](#)

You must change your Password before proceeding. Please enter and confirm your new password

Features:

- Print/view a directory of all members in the online database
- Update your profile, including members of your family
- View your Contributions, including pledge

AccessACS

My Overview My Profile Directories

Welcome, Erin Leary

I Want to View...

[My Complete Profile](#) [My Contributions](#)

My Calendar Saturday, January 27, 2007

If you have any questions or problems contact the church office, 703-430-2121 or OfficeManager@stmatthewssterling.org

~ SUMMER FUN ~



Vacation Bible School
August 6-10, 2007
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Dinner included

Children, youth, and adults ... everyone is invited! Experience high-energy, faith-filled fun! This year our church will be a stampede of excitement as we visit **Avalanche Ranch: A Wild Ride Through God's Word!** Five evenings spent as a community! A Bible book, a t-shirt, a set of Bible buddies, activities, and crafts for five nights are included. Scholarships are available. Registration forms are available in the parish hall, on the web site at www.stmatthewssterling.org, or through Jodie Leach at 703-421-6310 or jodieleach2@aol.com.

Mission Possible

Who: Kids rising to grades 2-8



What: Summer mission work to help people in Loudoun County

When: June 25-29, 2007 (attend one day or all five)

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Bring a bag lunch!

Where: Meet each day at Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church and travel to various places nearby.

Why: If you are looking for some summer fun, searching for ways to volunteer, wanting to share God's love, this is the program for you!

How Much: It's free; we welcome donations of \$10 to cover incidentals.

We'll start each day with some games, then prepare for an activity that helps people in our community! Ideas of activities include giving out water bottles on the W&O bike trail, painting and decorating wood bird houses for Habitat for Humanity, an outing to Claude Moore Park, and traveling the neighborhood collecting food for LINK.

Bring a bag lunch each day, and we'll picnic nearby.

You are free to sign up for all days or only days that fit your schedule. Each day is a new adventure, and the schedule for the day's specific activity is to be determined as the weather permits.



Questions: Contact Jodie Leach at 703-421-6310 or jodieleach2@aol.com



Name: _____ Phone: _____

Current Grade: ____ E-mail: _____

Days you CAN ATTEND (please circle all that apply):

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday ALL 5 DAYS

___ My parent can help by driving on which day? _____

___ My parent can not help during this week.