



Saint
Matthew's
Episcopal Church

Newsletter

July-August 2007

201 East Frederick Drive • Sterling VA 20164



Photo by Gregory Strong

*"Come, follow me," Jesus said,
"and I will send you out to fish for people."
At once they left their nets and followed him.*

Matthew 4:19-20 (Today's New International Version)

FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends,

As I hope you know by now, we are adopting a Summer Service Schedule from July 1 to September 2. During this time, we will have two Sunday services: one at 8:00 a.m., and one at 10:00 a.m. Our 8:00 a.m. service will remain unchanged, and our 10:00 a.m. service will contain elements of both the 9:15 and 10:30 services, making the most of the strengths of each.

This was *not* my idea. I was, in fact, resistant to it. Frankly, I did not want to make the change.

It all started when several people, each independent of the others, suggested a simplified summer

service schedule. They weren't pushy about it, and I politely told each one no. But when several people, all of whom I deeply respect, make the same suggestion, it gets my attention. I've often found that when an idea pops up multiple times, the Lord is behind it.

I decided to do a better job of listening to God and others. As I did so, I, too, became convinced a summer schedule would be a good idea. Saint Matthew's has grown considerably more complex over the past several years. If we simplify life a bit, it gives people a break – people who have pushed themselves and worked hard and sacrificed much. It gives them a chance to ease off the throttle a bit and take the summer to relax and refresh. Creating the chance to do that is very important to me.

Saint Matthew's has also grown considerably larger over the years. By combining our services, we create an opportunity for more people to get know one another. It's a chance to deepen our sense of community. This, too, is important, I think.

So no, this was not my idea. But it was the right idea for this time and place nonetheless, and I am very thankful for those who suggested it. May Saint Matthew's always be a church where we all do our part in seeking God together and serving him accordingly, not simply relying on the rector to do it for us.

Listening along with you,
Rob+

FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

VICKI NELSON

Summertime. Life gets a little slower. We use our barbeque more. The neighborhoods come alive.

Saint Matthew's comes alive as well. The youth activities during the summer – Mission Possible, Vacation Bible School, the two mission trips – not only energize our youth but create in all of us a sense of community and purpose. All of us have a role to play in our youth programs. I urge you all, as part of your summer reading program, to revisit Proverbs. This ancient book was written, for the most part, by King Solomon “for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowl-

edge and discretion to the young” (verses 1:1-4). We can all use that, in between our beach-reads.

Now that I have a son who is partially moved out (i.e., in college), I really appreciate the role Saint Matthew's can play in the life of our youth. It's a known fact that kids learn by mimicking. At home, they only see their own parents who, by the time the kids are teenagers, are not to be trusted, let alone mimicked. But at church, they look around and see examples of healthy, adult relationships. They find adults who actually care about how they are feeling, how they are truly doing. We have a responsibility to the youth of our church. If we want the next generation to have a fighting chance at living successful, Christian lives,

it is up to all of us to dive in and help.

Saint Matthew's will launch a new youth program this fall. Anyone can be a part of it, and there is lots of work to do. The basis of the program is that it is parish-driven, not youth leader-driven. There are many roles to fill – from one-time, task-oriented jobs to leadership roles. I am very excited about the program and think it has great potential. But, its potential is predicated on the entire congregation getting behind our kids and rolling up our sleeves. We can do this. And the reward is so great.

If you want more information about this program, or want to get involved or help in any way, let me know. I'll point you in the right direction.

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Save this date: Sunday, September 23, for our annual parish picnic. More details to come in the September newsletter.



OUTREACH

Outreach Opportunities

Hope you are having a wonderful summer! Saint Matthews' outreach efforts continue – and there are many opportunities for you to make a difference in our community. Activities include the following:

- Habitat for Humanity: Building homes in Loudoun County
- LINK: Helping feed the hungry in our community
- ESL: Teaching English as a second language
- Mountain Mission School: Helping children in need
- Many others ...

Please visit our web site at <http://stmatthewssterling.org>, come to our Outreach Committee meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, or contact one of our committee members below:

- | | | |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| • John Martin | john.martin@kimley-horn.com | 703-855-3611 |
| • Kenny Thayer | kcthayer@verizon.net | 703-796-9054 |
| • Leanna Wilson | mdwilson61@msn.com | 703-421-7086 |
| • Deb Listopad | dlistopad@comcast.net | |

Outreach at Saint Matthew's strives to genuinely improve the quality of life for those in need in Sterling, the broader community, and the world. Outreach helps us accomplish the mission of Saint Matthew's in knowing and sharing God's love. You can make a difference!

English As A Second Language Opportunity

Dear Friends,

I would like to tell you about an outreach opportunity that has captured my heart. I hope it will capture your heart as well after you read this. For the past several years, the instructors for Saint Matthew's English as a Second Language (ESL) have been working hard to provide this much-needed service to the newest members of our society, helping with their transition with language and cultural lessons and events. We have seen these students come back year after year and become members of our community. Recently, one of our regular students passed an electrical engineering certification test with 100 questions in the English language. Four years ago, this student started in our basic entry-level class. Also, one of our advanced students is now teaching.

The generous members of Saint Matthew's donated laptops to begin our Computer Literacy course this past year. This has been a successful program, and we have discovered the use of computers can be helpful at all levels. We are hoping for more donations for the coming year so we can continue and expand this program.

This year, two of our instructors initiated major life changes and will need to modify their involvement with the program for the fall. *We need instructors for the fall. You do not need to be an experienced instructor, nor do you need to speak a foreign language.* The students will capture your heart, and the challenge of fulfilling their needs will capture your mind and energy. This is a wonderful outreach opportunity, helping both the individual students and our community.

There are other ways to help, including laptop donations, guest speaking opportunities, curriculum development, and other material and time donations. The continuation and success of the ESL program depend upon your donations: not material, although those are always helpful, but your time and energy are critical. We hope that you can contribute in some way to the ESL program. Any donation that you could make would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Leanna Wilson or Katt Hancher (both in the directory), or leave a message at the church. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Katt Hancher

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Vacation Bible School – August 6-10

There will be a stampede of excitement as we visit Avalanche Ranch: A Wild Ride Through God's Word! We'll gather for Chuck Wagon Chow; then set off to cowpoke crafts, wild Bible adventures, and horseplay games; and view Chadder's latest adventure! Everyone attending this Vacation Bible School (VBS) – kids, teens, and adults – will grow deeper in their faith. If you would like to volunteer, contact Jodie Leach at jodieleach2@aol.com or 703-421-6310. Registration forms for children are included in this newsletter. Please extend the invitation to friends and neighbors! On Sunday, August 12, we will have a VBS celebration service.

Thanks to Sunday School Volunteers

Thank you to a great team of dedicated teens and adults who have spent the past year teaching our children and developing their Christian faith. Many thanks are due to Angela McKeown, Kimberly Wood, Bethany Hansberger, Robbie Miskovich, Cindy Piskadlo, Debbie Vereb, Leanna Wilson, and Peter Hart. We also give an extra special thanks to Ken Thayer who has led our gathering time and helped share his faith with our children.

Youth Program Updates

The youth leadership team of Peter Hart, Alan Davenport, Richard Leach, Ann Lowden, and Vicki Nelson, and I was chartered to develop a new vision for our youth group program covering middle and high school students. We worked closely with the Riddle Group, a consulting company which specializes in helping churches transition from a youth pastor-centered youth ministry to a church community-centered youth ministry. A church community-centered youth ministry believes that the responsibility for spiritual nurturing belongs to parents and the church community. It takes seriously its God-given role as the community that raises up a child.

In March, our team presented an overview of our progress, goals for the youth group program, the supporting organizational structure, and the process for becoming a youth worker. The complete presentation can be found on Saint Matthew's web site. Since March we refined volunteer job descriptions and organized an educational event for parents – "Parents Night Out" – that took place in May.

(Continued on page 4)

Vestry Highlights May 2007

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. with prayer and with reflection on 1 Timothy 6:17-18-19, about not putting our hope in wealth but in generosity and doing good deeds. ~ After approving the minutes of the previous meeting, the vestry reviewed the church financials as of April 30. Revenue exceeded expense in April by about \$3,000, yet has not met expectations year to date. Anticipating significant revenue increase and real ministry needs and opportunities, along with ending 2006 with a good cash reserve, the vestry had passed a 2007 budget with a nearly \$69,000 deficit. Projecting to the end of the year from actual figures through April, the budget would end at about \$65,000 in deficit. The total budget requires revenue to exceed budgeted income to balance at year's end, especially in view of the purchase of a house and possible parking lot repair. Hence, revenue must be increased or expenses trimmed in the near future. ~ There was a short discussion about the current state of affairs in terms of the issues confronting the national church and the Anglican Communion. ~ HSBC, the bank holding the mortgage on the North Argonne property adjacent to the church, accepted the church offer of \$310,000. The ratified contract has not been signed yet; it awaits action by HSBC. There was discussion about the possibility of the family currently in the house or another fam-

ily living there. At the end of the discussion, the vestry consensus was that the family should be approached with 60 days to vacate the house after the purchase is completed. ~ Bids have been solicited to repair the parking lot. After meeting with the junior warden, one contractor made a proposal showing what the parking lot needs and what can be done for repairs. While the proposal was generally well received, the vestry discussed how to pay for the repair. Ideas included a capital campaign for projects like the property purchase and parking lot repairs. The consensus was to table the decision to get a second quote in the next month and to vote at the next meeting. ~ There was discussion of the possibility of engaging in a "visioning" process, probably in the fall, with an architect to consider the building program. ~ A special meeting to review the budget was planned for June 9. ~ The junior warden and the chair of the Interior Renovation Committee have been looking at replacing the choir chairs in the altar area with more suitable chairs. ~ The meeting adjourned about 8:45 p.m., with the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 19, 7:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY

Trip to Nationals–Cardinals Baseball Game

The Community Committee is putting together a trip to see the Washington Nationals play the St. Louis Cardinals on Saturday, August 4. We have 50 tickets in section 305A – good for catching foul balls, so bring your glove. The cost of the event is \$45. This includes round-trip bus transportation from Saint Matthew's to RFK Stadium. Please make checks payable to Richard Leach. Scholarships are available. The game starts at 7:05 p.m., and the bus will depart at 5:00 p.m.

Fishing in the Bay

Have you ever wished you could spend the day with your family fishing in the Chesapeake Bay? Here's a great chance to "Go fish!" On Saturday, September 29, we will take a day fishing trip on the bay, leaving at 9:30 a.m. from the church and returning about 8:00 p.m. Fishing will be for all ages, and you are sure to catch lots! This is guaranteed to be a memorable trip! The cost will be approximately \$90 per person. Scholarships are available. For more information contact Dick Almarode at 703-433-9205 or dick-alma@verizon.net. Look for a sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the parish hall.

Finance Committee

Update

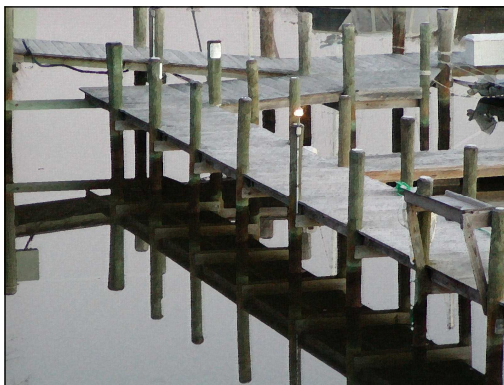
Periodically I take this opportunity to let you know how your church's finances are doing. So I thought it was a good time to do that again.

Through May 2007 the expenses are right on budget with no big surprises. However, our pledge income is a bit down. This was concerning to me, so I asked that a report be run showing pledge-to-date versus payments-to-date (on a total view so as to protect the confidential nature of this information). What the report revealed was that through May, year-to-date pledge payments were trailing year-to-date pledge by 13%.

I urge everyone to keep their pledge payments up to date on a running basis throughout the year. I fully understand that some of us may have financial challenges that prevents us from doing that, but if you are able, please do keep your pledge payments up to date. This helps the vestry accurately evaluate the financial performance of the church.

As a reminder, the Finance Committee is planning to send out first-half giving statements in July. Thank you for your continuing support.

May God bless you all,
Richard Leach



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

(Continued from page 3)

In the coming weeks members of the youth leadership team will be inviting parents and others in the congregation to fill positions and begin putting together program details for the kickoff in September. I hope you will prayerfully consider serving God through this important ministry. A youth worker training session, facilitated by the Riddle Group for those desiring to work directly with youth, is planned for Saturday, August 11.

Charlie Biegel