

Newsletter

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Sterling, VA

www.stmatthewsterling.org



October 2002

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Letter from the Rector...

Recently I heard the pastor of the largest church in America talk about how 10 years ago he thought that Children's Ministries—Sunday school—would soon be dead. As I understood it, he based that thought on two observations. First, no matter where he went, churches seemed to be struggling with their Sunday schools. They were always short on volunteers, their curriculums were not particularly engaging, and hence there was no excitement or enthusiasm being generated. In short, lives were not being changed, and kids certainly weren't having much fun. And second, he observed how sports had become the new religion in America—that families would volunteer more of their time and energy to faithfully supporting their children in their sport programs than to the development of their spiritual life. He also observed as to how this made sense—kids went to their respective sports, met other kids, learned some skills, got some exercise, and generally had fun in doing so. What parent wouldn't feel good about that?

But then he went to talk about how in recent years God again seemed to be moving in powerful ways in Children's Ministries. People began to acknowledge a problem with Children's Ministries—and *do something about it*. First, this generally meant new and improved curriculums geared towards today's kids. As these curriculums were generally more interactive, it also meant lots of volunteers—particularly *men* (and perhaps we have the sport movement itself to thank for this! Look at how many men got involved in their children's

Vestry Notes

1. The Vestry unanimously voted to pursue the immediate purchase of a Portable Class Room, roughly the same size as our parish hall, from Chantilly Bible Church for a price not to exceed \$20,000.
2. Considered a recommendation by Charlie to purchase a new digital copier at roughly the same price as the maintenance and supplies on our old one. Purchase of a new copier unanimously approved, though a decision was not made as to whether this copier should also include color capabilities.
3. Considered recommendation of the technology committee as follows. It was recommended that we purchase 2 copies of the Windows 2000 operating system for about \$200. This way our machines can be locked down and we can ensure they will do what we want them to do when the people who are supposed to be using them need them to do it. Passwords will be limited to direct users of the machine (administrator, head teller, treasurer and one other person from the Technology Committee in charge of keep the network functioning optimally). This was approved. Also recommend purchase of a flat monitor (up to \$400) and a wireless keyboard/mouse (up to \$100) for Rector's office. The Vestry decided not to act on this at this time. Tech Committee is also looking into a digital camera for a variety of functions around the church (newsletter, web site, power point, etc). Finally, the cost and feasibility of DSL lines for the church are also being considered.
4. The Class Room of Discovery Preschool painted the playground and mulched it—as well as some of our beds. Apparently all our pieces of equipment meet code except the slide. A motion was made and approved to remove the slide.
5. The need to create a Master Plan for the full development of this site was discussed.

Network Classes

If you missed it in September, you've still got three more chances!!! We're talking about Network, the course geared to helping you learn more about the person God created you to be. Our goal in offering this course is to help you live life more effectively and therefore with a deep sense of fulfillment.

So, if you haven't joined us yet, please consider October 5, November 9, or December 7th from 9AM to 3PM at the church. All the folks who have taken Network so far have been glad they did, and I have every reason to believe that you will be too.

B.Y.O.P.

Sunday October 6 at 5 PM will our Blessing of the Animals at our Sanctuary in the Woods next to our church parking lot. All pets—and their owners—are welcome for a brief service including an individual blessing for all pets present. This is a great activity to bring a friend!

Sunday School

St. Matthew's Sunday School began its 2001-2002 session with a bang on September 8th, at the 10:30am service. We purchased a **brand new curriculum** this year that we believe is both engaging and informative for our children as well as teacher friendly. We will again have an Activity Sunday once a month geared toward interactive learning that is lots of fun.

Though most teaching positions are well staffed, **we do still need teachers**—so if you like kids and have a gift for teaching, we need you!

Finally, we are pleased that Lisa Clippinger is taking over for Cindy Steinman as the Director of our Sunday School. Special thanks to her for all her hard work, and to Cindy for the most excellent job she has done these past two years.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and Cameron Parish

201 East Frederic Drive
Sterling, VA 20164-2387
Phone: 703-430-2121
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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.

Portable Classroom Update

The Vestry unanimously voted to purchase a Portable Class Room from Chantilly Bible Church for a price not to exceed \$20,000. We believe that it will cost \$5,000-\$7,000 to move it to our site, and another \$3000 for site prep and set up. Total expenditures should be in the \$30,000 range.

For that money we get a very nice building, already wired and including heating and AC, which is comparable in size to our parish hall (it is actually longer than that section of our building by 6 feet but is also slightly narrower). It can house up to 4 classrooms, which means that we will be able to restore the Parish Hall to its original size and function (minus the storage closet). From initial conversations with Loudon County, we do not believe permitting will be a problem.

We realize that thirty thousand dollars is a lot of money. It is not in the budget, and will have to be raised separately. However, if each family made only a \$150 gift, we would be there! Though it never quite works out that way (some will give more, some less, and some for good reason will not be able to give at all). We believe this is a very manageable sum by God's grace and with His help of course.

ACTIVATE YOUR FAITH!

*"Nothing will help you grow spiritually more than service."
(Fr. Rob)*

WHY NOT GO THAT EXTRA MILE?

Attending Sunday services, coming together to worship our great God, is a wonderful expression of our faith. But why stop there? Go that extra mile. Take that leap of faith. Extend your hand and let God lead you a little further out. Dare to serve Him in new ways.

- If you attend Sunday services, why not don a vestment and help at the altar?
- If you listen to the lessons on Sunday, why not step up to the podium and read aloud, in your finest voice, for everyone to hear?
- If you visit the sick, why not take communion and prayer to them?
- If you pray for the elderly, why not pray with them on a Sunday Morning? Why not take communion to them?

If you think God might be calling you to any of these ministries, are you willing to try? Will you go that extra mile for Jesus? If you have any questions or concerns, please ask and we will be happy to answer! Just ask Fr. Rob, or call Martha Olson, (703) 406-3515, or simply come to our next **Training Session for Lay Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors**, with Fr. Rob **Tuesday 7:30 p.m., October 8th in the Sanctuary** (use the front door please).

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

English Classes for Adults

The St. Matthew's English Classes for Adults program got off to a great start. Staff members gathered before 6:30 on September 16th not expecting anyone until 8:00. To their surprise a number of people arrived at 6:30. They opened the lines 15 minutes early and were packed until nearly 8pm. 32 students are registered and 11 are on a waiting list. All students were given tracts in the following languages: Farsi, Spanish, Urdu, Vietnamese, and Portuguese. The folders contained lined paper, calendar sheets, important Loudoun County numbers and a St. Matthew's welcome sheet that included a picture of the church, service times, and nursery times. All students without a church or questions about the Bible were invited to call or visit us.

The first night of classes will be September 16 and we're still expecting people to try and register. Thanks to Becky Smith and Sharon Biegel for serving as information specialist to explain waitlists, take names, and hand out tracts on the first two nights of class. Classes will consist of students learning to fill out a wide variety of forms such as employment forms, library cards, and money orders. Students will also have the opportunity to ask for help with any particular situation they may be having filling out a school form or reading a brochure.

RECTOR...

lives through coaching—a very good thing). Second, parents stepped up to the plate. They began to acknowledge their responsibilities in forming the spiritual lives of their kids—just like they do with academics or arts or athletics. For the most part, kids don't embrace any of these things willingly *at first*. But if parents provide structure and firm support, they start to find joy in being good at things and in the relationships they develop while doing so. Church is no different—it takes firm but loving parental guidance to be develop spiritual life in children, and all the blessings that go with it (deep and abiding sense of security, of worth beyond just what they do or how they perform, a sense of meaning and purpose, a healthy value system willing to stand against short term pleasure for eternal reward, etc). And finally, *churches* stepped up to the plate in providing significant resources—sometimes literally *millions* of dollars in supporting and developing their Children's Ministries. And all this is not without effect in our larger culture. Just a few weeks ago an article in *Time* magazine reported a study that found that involvement in a Youth Group can strongly boost the self esteem of girls and their ability to withstand what is often the negative pressures of our society.

I thank God with all my heart for the ways St. Matthew's is also a church that is willing to step up to the plate in being a part of this powerful movement of God. Whether in buying new curriculum or giving it our very best in teaching it; whether it is in purchasing a new building to provide adequate classroom space or the parent who makes sure their children are there every Sunday for Youth Group or Sunday school; whether in just simply to take the time to love on our kids or in giving generously to a budget that supports the spiritual growth and development of children—may we as faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ live into this glorious opportunity with bold expectations and humble service.

Faithfully, Rob+

Special thanks to Leanna Wilson, Marina Fleming, Bill Schneider, Phyllis Mikolaitis, Kelsey Hancher, Mary Passafaro, Erin Tracy, Barbara Waters, Katt Hancher and Pat Schneider for their work with the English classes. **The class is looking for teacher assistants to serve one Monday a month. If you are able to help out contact Leanna Wilson 703-421-7086.**

G THREE

Our parish youth group, is bigger and better than ever. With new faces, new folks helping out, and big, bold plans. We are looking forward to a GREAT year together. If you are in 6-12th grade, join us every Sunday from 5-7 PM.

This month we are planning on hiking Old Rag Mountain in the peak of Autumn's glory. In an attempt to work around sport schedules, we are planning this trip for Monday, October 14th (sorry, but you won't be missing school—it is Columbus Day). This will be an all day event; we'll meet at the church at 8AM and hope to be back by 6PM. Children need to bring lunch and plenty of water

On September 29 we'll be making the world's biggest BANANA SPLIT at G-3. We'll need everyone to bring their friends to help us actually eat it! We have plenty more stuff on tap, so stay tuned!

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

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Blessing of the Animals October 6 at 5:00pm	G-Three Old Rag Mountain Hike October 14
Sign up for Network Class-- Live life more effectively and therefore with a deep sense of fulfillment	Volunteer to be a LEM, Lector, or teacher assistant...
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 November newsletter must be submitted to the newsletter mailbox in the Church office by October 20th. Content should be in hardcopy format or submitted on a disk. Please do not email content.