

Newsletter

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Sterling, VA

www.stmatthewsterling.org

November 2003



A Blast from the Past

Sketch of completed
Stained Glass windows

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Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church

Calendar of Events - November 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
2 5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	3 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	4 7:00 P - AA Meeting 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program)	5 7:00 P - English classes 7:30 P - Bible study - adults 7:30 P - Bible study - youth	6 9:00 A Classroom of Discovery 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 3:30 P - Girl Scouts-Weller 6:30 P - Girl Scouts-Wilson 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal 7:30 P - Worship Commission	7	8 Parish fishing trip 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
9 G3 - Hero 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	10 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	11 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program) 7:00 P - Spiritual Formation Committee mtg. 7:00 P - AA Meeting	12 7:00 P - English classes 7:30 P - Bible study - youth 7:30 P - Bible study - adults	13 9:00 A Classroom of Discovery 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 6:00 P - Girl Scouts-Colon 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal	14	15 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
16 5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	17 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	18 7:00 P - AA Meeting 7:00 P - Vestry Meeting 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program)	19 7:00 P - English classes 7:30 P - Bible study - adults 7:30 P - Bible study - youth	20 9:00 A Classroom of Discovery 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 3:30 P - Girl Scouts-Weller 6:00 P - Girl Scouts-Wilson 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal	21	22 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
23 5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	24 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	25 9:00 A Classroom of Discovery 7:00 P - AA Meeting 7:00 P - S-Anon (12-Step Program) 7:00 P - Strategic Planning mtg.	26 7:00 P - English classes	27	28	29 8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
30 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting						

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...

Dear Friends,
Faith is easy to write about. It's hard to live.

Recently I declined the opportunity to continue as a finalist in a search by one of largest Episcopal churches in the United States. I won't say I was unexcited about the opportunities that church has the potential to offer. What I will say is that I continue to be even more excited about what God is doing here. This is where I believe God has called me to be, and I look forward to continuing on with you in doing the work He has called us to do.

That's not so much where faith comes in. It's not hard to see the blessings God is presently pouring out upon us. We have enjoyed a tremendous growth spurt this fall. Lives are being changed. Hearts are being touched. People are committing and recommitting and deepening their existing commitments to Jesus. Excellent work is being done by a great many people in the service of God's kingdom.

Where I found my faith challenged is in wondering how the events taking place in the national and global church will affect our future. The church that contacted me was big enough to withstand a split. Even if half their people left, there would still be plenty of people to carry on. It was also wealthy enough to weather a prolonged or severe storm. In the material world, at least, sizable endowments offer significant security.

Clearly that is not the case at St. Matthews. Any kind of split threatens to take back the ground we've worked so hard to gain. And that's where faith comes in.

Faith is easy to write about. It's hard to live. But I want you to know that I continue to be committed with all my heart to living out the life of faith with you. I continue to believe—foolishly, perhaps—that the best is yet to be. Faith places our future, as individuals and as a church, squarely in God's hand. And when it comes right down to it, I can't think of any place I would rather it would be.

Rob+

ADVENT IS COMING!

November 30 marks the first Sunday of Advent, a very important season in the life of the Church. Truthfully, it is only in a careful observance of the Sunday's of Advent that one is fully prepared to celebrate a meaningful and satisfying Christmas. To this end, materials such as Advent Calendars and devotional books for families and adults will be made available in mid-November.

PARISH RETREAT

A deposit has been sent in reserving rooms at the Massanetta Springs Conference Center for our Parish Retreat. Scheduled for February 6-8, we are designing this weekend get away for the whole family. It will be a time of great food, great fellowship, great teaching, and great fun as we grow closer both to one another and to our Lord Jesus Christ. More information will be coming soon, but make sure you set that weekend aside now—you won't want to miss it!

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music is a blessing to us and a gift from God. How privileged I am to serve the Lord in this way and to have so much support from all the good people at St. Matthew's! I am so happy to say that our music program is growing very nicely since a year ago, when I first started here. We have added new voices and a bass player to our 9:15 service, and new voices to our 10:30 service. I have heard there are other beautiful voices who will be joining us soon. Please come forward and let me know who you are so we can begin to have the blessing of your voice to add to our group. We will be starting on Christmas music rehearsal this week. If you would like to be a part of our Christmas program we would all love it!

Our rehearsals are on Thursday nights. The 10:30 service group meets from 7:00-8:00, and the 9:15 group meets from 8:00-9:00 with a rehearsal on Sundays from 8:30-9:00.

I sincerely hope you will consider joining us in uniting our voices in praise to our Heavenly Father. See you on Thursday!

Nancy Prestipino 540-338-4730,
Prestipino@aol.com

ENGLISH CLASSES FOR ADULTS

Have you seen the *Home* section of the newspaper—that is the before and after shots of homes that have had makeovers? This reminded me of when I showed the before and after of the English for Adults classrooms to the Director of Loudoun Literacy Council. I showed her where we met last year—in the Narthex and in the Sanctuary. I then took her to the trailer to show her the after! A year ago I would have never dreamed that we would have such classrooms. Every time I am in the trailer I am reminded of the sacrifices you church members made by buying the trailer. My staff, students, and I are grateful for your support.

— Leanna Wilson, coordinator.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Our Sunday School children have spent the last few weeks learning about God's creation of the Earth. They made a banner which they shared with the congregation on the morning of the Bishop's visit. On October 26th, they will be working on a banner for All Saints Day, which will include pictures of each child. They will be sharing this with the congregation on November 2, which is All Saints Day.

On Sunday November 30, the children will be working on wreaths for Advent. Please plan on bringing some cut evergreens (such as holly, fir, etc.) with you that Sunday.

CLASSROOM OF DISCOVERY

The Classroom of Discovery continues to provide the best in early childhood education right here at St. Matthew's. Our doors are always open to visitors! Check us out any morning from 9-12 and see what a terrific opportunity children have at our school.

AWAY FROM THE MANGER

A Christmas Play

Come and be a part of a fun play which explores the reasons that certain people (and stars, and barnyard animals) did not go to Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus. There are parts and jobs for kids of all ages. We will have rehearsals November 9, 16, and 23, December 7 and 14. Make your visit with the baby Jesus this year extra special and join in the fun! For information, call Vicki Nelson at 703/444-2077.

INTERIOR RENOVATION COMMITTEE

Our committee has been busy finalizing the design to complete our stained glass windows. All the doves will be facing down as in traditional Christian symbolism. We wanted to create something beautiful without detracting from the Eucharist window. We are also working towards further upgrading our parish hall. We are selecting new flooring and considering changing the tables and chairs. In the near future we will be designing a new outdoor sign for the church. Please give us your ideas and suggestions!

CALL TO PRAYER FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Please pray for the future of our denominational expression of Christian faith and life. At the time of this writing, the leaders of Anglican/Episcopal denominations worldwide are engaged in an emergency meeting in London at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The meeting was called in order to consider what to do about a widening gap in faith and practice among members of the Anglican Communion. The U.S. General Convention's actions last August in confirming the election of a practicing homosexual as Bishop of New Hampshire and approving the local use of liturgies for blessing same-sex partnerships helped precipitate the current crisis in the Anglican Communion. At issue are the role of scripture in guiding the Church's faith and practice as well as the long-standing teaching of Christian churches on the institution of marriage as the only legitimate context for sexual activity.

Karen Strong represented Saint Matthew's at a conference sponsored by the American Anglican Council on October 7-9 where similar issues were discussed in light of the future of the Episcopal Church. Karen's report on the conference will be available on the Saint Matthew's website (<http://stmatthewssterling.org>). Information can also be found on the American Anglican Council's website (www.americananglican.org). If you have particular questions, you may contact Karen Strong directly.

FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

Pick a door, any door. From the moment you enter Saint Matthews it is evident that change is everywhere. What an incredible journey the last year has been at Saint Matthews.

The changes you see are consistent with our Mission Statement. The vestry has endeavored to establish additional programs and upgrade our facilities to meet the needs of those who seek to "Know and share God's Love".

I wanted to use this opportunity to relay some of my thoughts and share some information about the current plans for Saint Matthews.

The ability to implement change is only possible with resources to support additional programs and maintain the building and grounds.

In addition to the annual budget requirements supported by faithful tithing, our greatest resource is the generosity shown by individuals. A favorite story of mine starts with a simple request placed in the bulletin for a "new or gently used refrigerator". In a very short time frame there were four refrigerators available to Saint Matthews! Then there is the piano, it is not just a piano, it is a baby grand! The vestibule floor is a donation; the stain glass windows were also donated. The shed was donated. Fence – donated. The light on the shed was donated. The flowers and bench for the Meditation Garden – also donated. The concrete sidewalk leading to the Classroom on the Hill – you got it – another donation.

The generosity in both time and effort is equally overwhelming. Individuals have donated time and materials to paint walls, scrape floors, replace outlets, change light bulbs, plant flowers and pull weeds. Did you know that there are 16 air filters to be changed on a regular basis? I am still counting light bulbs. Any idea how many hours it takes to mow the lawn? Another favorite story – this time one of our newest members volunteered to paint – and then volunteered her neighbors to help! Personally, I am in awe of the generosity of so many individuals. The hand of the Lord is surely moving among us.

LINE OF CREDIT UPDATE

As you may know, the vestry moved to take advantage of the prevailing interest rate climate this last summer and finalized the re-finance of the mortgage in August. The mortgage is at a substantially lower interest rate and is structured to increase cash flow and to allow for capital improvements to the property by utilizing our equity position and creating a line of credit.

The line of credit is approximately \$152,000. Closing costs for the refinance were paid from the line of credit. (Attorneys fees - another donation!)

Any other expenditures from the line of credit are intended to be used for capital improvements to the property and to hire an architect/engineer. The Revitalization Committee is in charge of identifying possible capital improvements and making recommendations to the vestry. The vestry is charged with approving all expenditures from the line of credit.

To date, \$5,000 has been drawn from the line of credit. The funds were used as a deposit for materials to replace the wood trim and gutters.

The following capital improvements are in progress and funds will be drawn from the line upon completion:

Replace trim and gutters:	\$17K (balance)
Replace concrete:	\$12K
Repair parking lot:	\$7,500

The Revitalization Committee is considering the following items:

Replace front doors:	\$5K
Replace floor - parish hall:	pending
Replace signage:	pending
Install cabinets:	pending

With more changes on the horizon, it is even more evident that as part of a growing family, effective communication becomes even more critical. I encourage everyone to ask questions or offer suggestions about the finances at Saint Matthews or anything else that may concern you. Any vestry member or the treasurer will make himself or herself available to you. The books and records are always open to review. You are encouraged to attend vestry meetings and ask questions.

Care to get involved? Want to voice an opinion? Pick a task, join a committee and delight in the amazing fellowship found in serving. The first step is calling me at 703-444-1995.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The Spiritual Formation committee continues to plan and execute activities that are designed to enhance an individual's spiritual formation. A listing of these activities is given below. You are welcome and invited to participate in as many of these activities as possible. Please mark the items of interest in your calendar so you do not miss out. The activities are designed for individuals of all ages in all aspects of spiritual development.

If you have any questions about any of the above activities, please feel free to contact any member of the Spiritual Formation Committee of Richard Leach (703-421-6310). The next Spiritual Formation Committee meeting is Tuesday, November 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the church. All are welcome.

The next Spiritual Formation Committee meeting is Tuesday, October 7, at 7:00 p.m. at the church. All are welcome.

Adult Bible Study	Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.	Even if you have not attended to date, please feel free to join the group as each session is a self contained study
High School Bible Study	Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.	Even if you have not attended to date, please feel free to join the group as each session is a self contained study
Class for Seekers / Explorers	Wednesday nights at 7:30 p.m.	Class led by Father Rob
Sunday School	Sundays at 10:30 a.m.	Classes for pre-K through 8th grade
G3 Youth Group	Sundays at 5:00 p.m.	Youth group for middle schoolers and high schoolers
National Cathedral Visit	October 25, 2003	Morning tour followed by a worship service
Quiet Day	January 3, 2004	
Episcopal Faith & Heritage	January 5, 12, 19, & 26, 2004	Led by Greg Strong
Parish Retreat	February 6 - 8, 2004	Massanetta Springs Conference Center, Harrisonburg, VA
Episcopal Worship Service & Eucharist	February 22, 2004	Led by Rob Merola
Lent Series	March 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31, 2004	Led again by Karen and Greg Strong
Youth Retreat to Creation Fest	June 23 - 26, 2004	
VBS	July, 2004	

SERVING AT SUNRISE

by Martha Olson

Last year, Clint Huffman asked me about leading Morning Prayer at *Sunrise*, an independent and assisted living facility in Countryside. Right away, I recognized this as an opportune moment, one not to be taken lightly. Here was someone interested in a ministry that was badly in need of additional people, a ministry area that has a fairly high turnover rate.

At first, I was tempted to tell Clint *only* about the good aspects of this ministry. *Don't tell him the challenging parts.* I was tempted big time! *He doesn't have to know "all of it."* Before I spoke a single word in response to Clint, I could already see his name on the next schedule. *Just get him to sign up! Just get him to sign up!*

I did, however, snap out of it. Yes, we were short-handed in this ministry area. Yes, I thought Clint could do a fine job at Sunrise. But I had to be totally honest with him, even if it meant that he'd say, "No, I don't think so." I had to tell him the truth about serving at Sunrise.

The truth is this: Serving at Sunrise stretches your comfort level.

You drive up to Sunrise with the best of intentions. You approach prepared and with confidence. You have God in your heart, a prayer book in one hand, and communion in the other. Smiling, you reach the door that leads into a rather elegant gathering room. You open the door and enter. All eyes turn toward you, and there you are, face to face with some of the disquieting realities of aging. Some of the residents (I won't use their real names) are quiet, some mumble to themselves, and some just sleep. Who are they? Who were they 10, 20, 50 years ago? You only see them in the here and now. Their past is somewhere within them. Some know their own names. Some don't. Who are they?

(cont'd on page 6)

YOUTH MINISTER'S REPORT

During this time of year we often spend more time with family. School begins, keeping us at home to do homework. The weather gets cool, convincing us to stay indoors where it's warm. This can sometimes mean disagreements on bed-times, hours in front of the television, or time spent playing video games. We all need to remember that God has brought us together as a family.

God brought my wife to me, and while she may think I play too many video games, and I may think she works too much, we have this time together to sit in front of the fire together, enjoying the gifts He has given us. We may not agree on when to go to bed, or how late is too late to stay out, but together our families make each of us more than we could hope to be alone.

I've seen this many times with my St. Matthew's family. The youth and the adults came out during the parish work day to help beautify the "home" God has blessed us with. This is a time for us to remember our St. Matthew's family, and spend time together outside Sunday mornings. We've got an amazing spiritual enrichment evening (SEE) where groups of different ages and faith levels come together to understand our faith better. We've even got a fishing trip and a parish retreat coming up. Spend some time with our St. Matthew's family, I promise you the time spent will not be wasted and make you even more than you are.

Peace,
+Tom

Serving at Sunrise

Helen sits in her wheelchair and stares. Her head seems heavy. She rests it on her right hand. *Were you a teacher, Helen? A scientist? A homemaker? What used to make you laugh?* She looks at you when you bend down to greet her. She squeezes your hand as you whisper into her hearing aid. *Pray with me, Helen.*

Mary says she can't see the print on the pamphlet you hand her. "My glasses are upstairs," she says in a thick European accent. "That's OK," you say. "I'll pray loud enough for all of us." She clasps her hands and closes her eyes. *Where are you from, Mary? What was your first language?* She holds your hand tightly when you pray for her. *Don't be afraid, Mary. God is always with you.*

Sam always wears his baseball cap. He says his favorite player was great, but he can't remember the player's name. Sometimes Sam can't remember his own name. *How many statistics do you carry inside your head, Sam? Do you know, Sam, that God knows the number of hairs on your head?*

Henry always has a smile on his face and a glint in his eye. He bends over his walker as he slowly makes his way into the gathering room. Always charming, there's no doubt in your mind that once upon a time Henry was a ladies' man. *Did you marry, Henry? How many children do you have? (How many wives did you have?) May your spirit always soar, Henry.*

Doris Mae is in the adjoining room. She is comfortable just where she is and doesn't want to move. She'll receive communion if you bring it to her, though. *I know you're tired, Doris Mae.* Gently, you place the communion wafer in her mouth. *Doris Mae, the Body of Christ, the Bread of Heaven.*

The session is over, and you prepare to leave. You're at the door of the gathering room and reach for the knob, but something beckons you to turn around. They're all still looking at you. You smile and wave. You wonder if, when you get older, you will require this level of assistance. You wonder if someone will bend down to look into your eyes on a Sunday

morning. You wonder if someone will smile at you and speak into your hearing aid. You wonder if someone will gently place a communion wafer in your mouth. You wonder if someone will hold your hand and pray with you. You're very glad you came, very glad, indeed. You walk away.

Serving at Sunrise can be challenging. Serving at Sunrise may stretch your level of comfort. However, in exchange, you walk away with a full heart, a spirit renewed, and the knowledge that you did something good for someone else, if only for a moment.

Yes, I told Clint the truth about serving at Sunrise. I'm happy to say that he did give it a try and that he's been a regular member of this ministry ever since. If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, just ask any one of us (Roland Kuniholm, Clint Huffman, Lisa Lintelman, Phyllis Mikolaitis, or me), or come along on a Sunday morning. You may find that serving at Sunrise is a great hat for you to wear -- just don't be surprised that it may require a bit of stretching.

G-3 ACTIVITIES

We've had a lot going on during youth group this past month, with even more coming up. We're well into our bible study, walking through an overview of all the books of the bible. Right now we're beginning to think about January, when we start a new bible study. If you have any suggestions, we'll definitely weigh all of them, and have a final vote on which to proceed with.

In October a group of us went to see Cats. This was a fun afternoon with members of the youth group and adults coming together as we traveled into the city for the play, then shared dinner together at Logan's.

Coming up in November, we have our annual trip to the corn maze and a rock opera. The trip to the corn maze, on November 1st, will begin with dinner at the Wing Factory. Soon after we'll be heading to Woodbridge to see !Hero, the rock opera, on November 9th. In addition to these activities we'll of course be having youth group Sunday nights, except November 9th and November 30th.

We're planning is a G3 ski retreat during Winter Break. We'll be heading out Sunday, December 21st at 12 PM and coming back December 22nd. This will be a great time where we can enjoy an indoor heated pool, game rooms, time together, time with God, and (of course) skiing! We need adults to chaperone and help make this event leading up to Christmas a success.

Vestry Business – September 2003

At its September 16 meeting, the vestry dealt with a number of matters.

The treasurer, Charlie Biegel, reported on the church's finances. In addition to reviewing income and expenses through August 2003, the vestry discussed the recent refinancing of the church's debt, the church's line of credit for capital improvements, and the revised value of the church subsequent to refinancing. The vestry also discussed the question of how to handle requests by parishioners to withhold the portion of their pledge that would go to the national office of the Episcopal Church. This was connected to a larger discussion at the vestry meeting about decisions of the recent General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

The junior warden, Linda Clark, brought up several items for discussion: building steps to the Classroom on the Hill; erection of a fence by the Classroom of Discovery around the play set; and painting the church kitchen. These items were approved.

Led by Allen Tuttle, the vestry discussed and initiated plans for a stewardship campaign to further the vision and mission of Saint Matthew's. Having begun in October, the campaign will end by the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

There will be an election for new vestry members in January 2004 at the annual meeting. Candidates will be identified by the end of November. The nominating committee consists of John Guenther, Allen Tuttle, and Paula Reardon.

The church staff now has enhanced Internet and e-mail capacities through the installation of DSL in the church offices. Additionally, a new computer in the church office improves capability and productivity in church administration.

The vestry reviewed a design for stained glass in the side windows of the front doors. With minor modifications, the design was approved.

With more going on at the church, the use of space is reaching limits. For example, attendance at the 10:30 service is about at capacity. In view of the needs, a motion was approved to review alternative ways to meet Father Rob's office needs and to use his office as a small classroom for certain purposes.

Additionally, the building committee of the vestry is working with an architect to identify and plan for the potential uses of the church's site and facilities.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
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MINISTRY BUILDERS

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

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 **DECEMBER** newsletter must be submitted by **November 15**. Content can be submitted in hardcopy or on disk to the newsletter mailbox in the Church office. Content may also be emailed to **Newsletter@stmatthewssterling.org**.