

Newsletter

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Sterling, VA

www.stmatthewssterling.org

October 2003



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Youth Minister's Report

Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church

Calendar of Events - October 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
			1	2	3	4	
			9:00 A Classroom of Discovery				8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting
			7 P - English classes 7:00 P - Strategic Planning Comm. 7:30 P - Bible study - youth and adults	9:00 A - Flower Ministry 3:30 P - Girl Scouts- 6:30 P - Girl Scouts- 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal 7:30 P - Worship Commission			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	9:00 A Classroom of Discovery					9:00 A - Parish workday - Exterior 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting	
	7:00 P - Boy Scouts	7:00 P - Spiritual Formation Comm. 7:00 P - S-Anon (12- Step Program) 7:00 P - AA Meeting	7:00 P - Spiritual Formation Comm. 7 P - English classes 7:30 P - Bible study - youth and adults	9:00 A - Flower Ministry 6:00 P - Girl Scouts-Colon 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	9:00 A Classroom of Discovery					8:00 A - Men's Breakfast 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting	
	7:00 P - Boy Scouts	7:00 P - AA Meeting 7:00 P - S-Anon (12- Step Program)	7:00 P - Strategic Planning Comm. 7 P - English classes 7:30 P - Bible study - youth and adults	9:00 A - Flower Ministry 3:30 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
12:00 P - G3/Youth Group at CATS 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	9:00 A Classroom of Discovery					12:00 A - Parish trip to the Cathedral 9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - AA Meeting	
	6:00 P - Girl Scouts-Wilson 7:00 P - Boy Scouts	7:00 P - AA Meeting 7:00 P - Vestry Meeting 7:00 P - S-Anon (12- Step Program)	7:00 P - English classes 7 P - Spiritual Formation Comm. 7:30 P - Bible study - youth and adults	9:00 A - Flower Ministry 6:00 P - Girl Scouts 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal			
26	27	28	29	30	31		
5:00 P - G3/Youth Group 7:00 P - Prayer Meeting	9:00 A Classroom of Discovery						
	7:00 P - Boy Scouts	7:00 P - AA Meeting 7:00 P - S-Anon (12- Step Program)	7 P - English classes 7 P - Strategic Planning Comm. 7:30 P - Bible study - youth and adults	9:00 A - Flower Ministry 7:00 P - Music Rehearsal			

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR...

Dear Friends,

Anyone who had been to St. Matthew's lately knows you can literally see the changes. For example, the tile in the entryway to the church has been completely redone with beautiful slate-like flooring. Landscape improvements have helped beautify our grounds. The walls in the parish hall have come down and the room has been restored to its previous size. It has also received a fresh coat of paint which brightens it up considerably. Two large, brand new stainless steel refrigerators now grace our kitchen. And, like the brand new baby grand piano that was given just about a year ago, so that our Music Minister Nancy Prestipino has an instrument to play that is worthy of her considerable gifts and talents, many of these projects are gracious gifts by anonymous parishioners.

The improvements will continue throughout the fall. Very soon now the rotting wood trim will be replaced around our entire building. The deteriorating concrete will be torn out and new concrete poured. The parking lot will likely be resurfaced. Our sign in front will be reworked and enhanced. The glass side panels next to our stained glass window will be replaced with stained glass as well (I've seen the design and it is beautiful!)

I could not be more pleased with all of this. The willingness of people to invest time, energy, and financial resources shows how positive people are feeling about our life together here at St. Matthew's; how proud we are of all that God is doing in our midst; and how grateful we are for being part of it all. Thanks be to God--it is an incredible place to be!

With a full and grateful heart he said, "To those who have eyes, let them see."

Rob+

SURVEY UPDATE

Special thanks to all those who have completed our Parishioner Survey, helping us gather feedback on how well we are serving you and accomplishing our mission of Knowing and Sharing God's love. We also greatly appreciate the honesty with which people have written, both recognizing our strengths and addressing our weaknesses.

Here is one of my favorite responses so far:

Question: *Try visualizing Saint Matthew's in 3-5 years and explain what you see and how it contrasts with today's church.*

Answer: *The whole G3 (our youth group, --ed.) will take over the church and hold all the positions of power!*

Though obviously there is a degree of youthful playfulness in this answer, we love the serious understatement that shows our young people thinking about exercising rightful leadership in the life of the Church. That is a great thing.

If you have not yet filled out the Survey, we encourage all our parishioners to do so. For your convenience the survey is available on the website. Thank you very much for your help in this.

WE CAUGHT SO MANY...

the last time, we're going again! On Saturday, November 8, we'll be heading up to Point Lookout to fish for Striped Bass. This time I understand that we will also do some trolling for big fish to add to the excitement. So if you are interested, please sign up by October 5 so we know how many boats we will need. Cost is \$60 (\$50 a person plus a tip), and that includes everything (license, tackle, bait) except lunch. And oh yeah, cleaning the fish.

ROB RECOMMENDS

We continue to be committed to improving and enhancing our website at <http://stmatthewssterling.org>. One of our newest features is a column entitled Rob Recommends, a weekly column written that reviews a wide variety of subjects including--but not limited to!--restaurants, food, movies, music, books, leadership materials, and so on. If you have a moment, check it out!

NEW ACOLYTE DIRECTOR

We are pleased to announce that Tim Baumker has agreed to serve as our new Director of Acolytes. Any children in fifth grade and up are invited to join the Acolyte Team and help us lead great worship on Sunday Mornings at the 10:30 service. Tim desires to make training convenient, so in addition to a regular scheduled training meeting (as yet to be determined) he is happy to train new acolytes following Sunday services or whenever fits your schedule. Look for more information coming soon.

ALTAR GUILD NEWS

I am happy to announce a couple of new additions to the Altar Guild: Elly Hiltz and Linda Merola. We deeply appreciate your joining us and extend a hearty welcome to our fold. Needless to say, we're always happy to take more on. Grateful training will be provided which includes a whole new set of vocabulary words! Main responsibilities include Saturday set-up for Sunday services (takes about 1 hour) and doing switchovers between services on Sunday (working with a team member for 2 weekends every other month or so). Questions? Give me a call: Lisa Lintelman (703-430-8345 or 571-235-8138).

We extend our heartfelt sympathies to Olive over the loss of our honorary team member, Ross. As mentioned in Fr. Rob's eulogy, his presence and support was quiet but strong. He will be missed by all.

PARISH EXTERIOR WORK DAY

The next Parish Work Day is scheduled for Saturday, October 11th from 9AM to 4 PM. Let's get together and help beautify the church exterior and grounds. A number of projects are available for all ages and work experience. If you can wield a paint brush, wash a window or pull a weed you are needed!

Lunch will be served and of course the fellowship is unsurpassed. Please contact me for further information or with suggestions

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

We are thrilled with the increase in the number of kids in Sunday School! We have added a class for kids age 3-4 this year and look forward to teaching our little ones about God's everlasting love. If you have a child in Sunday School, please make sure that we have your e-mail address so that we can contact you about all of our exciting activities for the fall.

PARISH CATHEDRAL TRIP

Sign up now to attend the guided tour of the Washington Cathedral. The trip is planned for Saturday, October 25. Transportation is provided by bus which will depart from the parking lot by 9 a.m. Ticket prices are \$2.00 for student, \$3.00 for senior citizens, and \$4.00 for adults for a 60 minute tour. Eucharist will be celebrated at the Cathedral at noon.

Sign up sheets are available on the table in the narthex, or call Pat Van de Griek at 703-450-7731. Please indicate your intentions as soon as possible as the bus must be reserved in advance and is dependent on the number of attendees.

EXCITING INNOVATIONS ARE COMING TO 9:15

Strings, Horns, Rockers, Funk masters, Actors, Actresses, Producers for dramas and videos, technological wizards to make it look and sound good! We are looking for part time (from once to once a month) helpers to make the 9:15 expand musically and technologically. We have so many ideas (and are looking for more), but we can only act on as many as we have people for. Questions? Interested even maybe? Call me Leslie Tracy 703-450-0786.

CLASSROOM OF DISCOVERY

The Classroom of Discovery is off to a terrific start for the 03-04 school year. With the help of the G-3 we were able to mulch the playground to exceed state safety guidelines so the entire St. Matthew's community will be able to enjoy it safely. We still have a few spaces in the Adult-Tot class (Mondays 9-10:30 with an adult in attendance) and our regular two and three day preschool classes (9-12 ThF or MTW). Please call Sheri Brown [703.450.5456 (home) or 703.927.3333 (mobile)] for more information.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The Spiritual Formation committee continues to do a great job of planning and executing activities that will enhance an individual's spiritual formation. In September we began our Sunday school classes for two-year-olds through 8th grade. We resumed our G3 meetings every Sunday evening. We began our Wednesday night classes - an adult Bible study, a Bible study for high schoolers, and a course for explorers. And, we conducted our Confirmation class. These six activities alone offer something for individuals of all ages in all aspects of spiritual development. However, we have many more activities planned. A listing of those activities is as follows:

National Cathedral Visit – Morning tour followed by a worship service	October 25, 2003
Quiet Day	January 3, 2004
Episcopal Faith & Heritage – Led by Greg Strong	January 5, 12, 19, & 26, 2004
Parish Retreat – Massanetta Springs Conference Center Harrisonburg, VA	February 6 - 8, 2004
Episcopal Worship Service & Eucharist – Led by Rob Merola	February 22, 2004
Lent Series – Led by Karen and Greg Strong	March 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31, 2004
Youth Retreat to Creation Fest	June 23 - 26, 2004
VBS	July, 2004

The Spiritual Formation committee hopes you have a chance to attend many of these activities. Please mark you calendars. Additional details will be forthcoming. Also, it is not too late to join one of the activities we began in September.

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

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The year is passing very quickly and summertime vacations have caused us to be a little behind schedule, however progress has been made. Sunday September 14th saw the start of the Parishioner's Survey period which lasted through September 28th we will be distributing the survey to complete our Internal Audit of St. Matthew's. We hope you found time to consider and pray before answering all the questions and provided your answers from the heart.

After the survey results are compiled the information will be distributed via the website and newsletter. The information will also be used as part of the Strategic Plan.

We have also confirmed our Vision statement and begun work on the Mission and Objectives. Our goal is to have the Strategic Plan completed by the beginning of December so that it can be our guide and roadmap for the next three years for St. Matthew's
In His Service
Ann Lowden

NEW TO ST. MATTHEW'S?

Join us for a Newcomer's reception on October 26. You'll have an opportunity to find out more about St. Matthew's and the ministry areas that we have. Look for more information in the bulletin. If you questions, call the church office.

A TISKET, A TASKET, WHY NOT START A BLESSING BASKET

I started a Blessing Basket at the beginning of this year. I used a beautiful basket that my sister had given me for my birthday. My plan was to record one blessing a day on an index card and deposit it into my basket. Then I was planning to read all of my cards in chronological order on Thanksgiving, or whenever I needed a pick-me-up or a reminder of God's love and presence in my life. I have a friend who does this on New Year's Eve. She even goes so far as to pick the blessing for which she is most thankful and she inscribes it on a rock and adds one rock every year to her garden. I must admit that my deposits have been very sporadic, and my blessing basket has been greatly neglected.

Over the summer, I saw the movie "Legally Blonde 2: Red, White and Blonde". In the movie, the main character used a "Snap Cup" from her sorority days. This is how it worked: Members of a group deposited notes into a cup stating their own accomplishments or complimenting others in the group. As the cup was passed around, the members took turns reading the notes out loud. As each note was read, everyone snapped their fingers to acknowledge and celebrate each other's successes. This ritual reminded me of my blessing basket, and I realized how much I missed keeping up with it. God has been doing so many amazing things in my life. He is worthy of a million snaps from me (and then some)!

God shines down upon us in so many wonderful and special ways - a new friend, a beautiful child, a warm hug, a reassuring smile, a nuzzle from a wet dog nose, an uplifting song, a sunny day, running water, food on the table, a place like St. Matthew's to freely worship and gather in fellowship . . . Will you please join me in starting your own blessing basket while I resolve to resume making daily deposits in my basket?

Here are some ideas for starting your own blessing basket:

- 1) Find an empty basket or other receptacle
- 2) Decorate the outside of the basket if desired
- 3) Keep a pen and a stack of index cards next to the basket
- 4) Keep the basket in a visible place where you will remember to make deposits daily
- 5) Before you go to sleep each night, take some quiet time to reflect on the day's events and record what was most meaningful to you
- 6) Read your blessing out loud as a prayer of thanksgiving to God
- 7) The next morning, re-read the previous day's blessing and ask God to continue to guide you and protect you, offer prayers of intercession for others as well
- 8) Consider starting a group basket and invite all family members to participate and then read the blessings together on a weekly basis during Family Time

Here are some examples from my own basket:

Wednesday, January 1, 2003

Dear Lord, Happy New Year to You and thank You for starting my new year off so great already. It is only 11:30 a.m. but I have already received a wonderful blessing today, which has brought me so much peace and joy and for which I am incredibly grateful to You. It was small and simple but had such a huge impact on me. Dodger sat on my lap!! He never does that. He sat on my lap on the blue comforter while I was in the Lazy Boy for a whole hour this morning. He slept while I read a book and petted him. He is such a blessing to me. Thank You. I love You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tuesday, January 14, 2003

Dear Lord, Thank You for the blessing of the song "Here I Am (I Will Always Love Your Name)". I had the chorus stuck in my head from Sunday, and was going to look up the words on the internet at work. But I found the words in my song folder in the car and I sang it the whole way to work this morning. What a beautiful song and the words are so true about how I feel about You and having You in my life. Thanks be to God! I love You. Amen.

YOUTH MINISTER'S REPORT

It's been a very busy month for everyone. School has begun, and a lot of people are really getting settled into life with homework and a LOT less free time. On top of it, life around the church has really started getting busy. We've begun a weekly bible study for the youth which is going incredibly well. We've started meeting at G3 weekly again with a great group coming together. On top of that we have some of our monthly activities planned out (Cats and !Hero) with even more coming along.

Currently both the junior and senior G3 groups are working through the 10 commandments, inspired by Father Rob's sermon series. We're also beginning to truly realize what it means to live in His word. At one meeting we were able to debate what it means and why it's hard to openly have religion in government buildings.

We all like to share the things we enjoy to do. This made me realize that for each activity we have planned at St. Matthew's, someone who loves the activity has planned or helped in the planning of the activity: the fishing trip that Rob planned, the camping trips Peter Nelson has planned for the group, including White Water Rafting and Creation Festival. I see this often in my conversations with people, when I mention going to an Oriole's game a couple of the guys get a gleam in their eyes. I mentioned canoeing to one church member and he's now beginning to plan a canoe trip for our youth group. Richard Leach really likes to go to the theater, and upon his mentioning Cats he quickly put together the entire activity. As I mentioned earlier, we had a G3 debate night, which Alex Leach had a large hand in planning, mainly because he loves to debate (trust me, he does).

I was thinking about this recently, and realized we have over 250 families in our church. Of the individuals I know within our St. Matthew's family, each of them has a passion area we'd love to share with others. If just one person from one fifth of the families planned an activity we'd have one great and unique activity every week (my math may be slightly off, let's say we get Easter off). The best part of this is that I've found the youth can plan activities just as well as many adults. On top of it all there are many people in our church who love to help the planner make everything happen. By sharing our life passions we further God's will, by spreading His greatness to everyone.

Please, enjoy yourself and further God's will by planning those activities you love to do, and sharing them with those around you.

Peace,
+Tom

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201 East Frederick
Sterling, VA 20164

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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 **NOVEMBER** newsletter must be submitted by **October 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**.