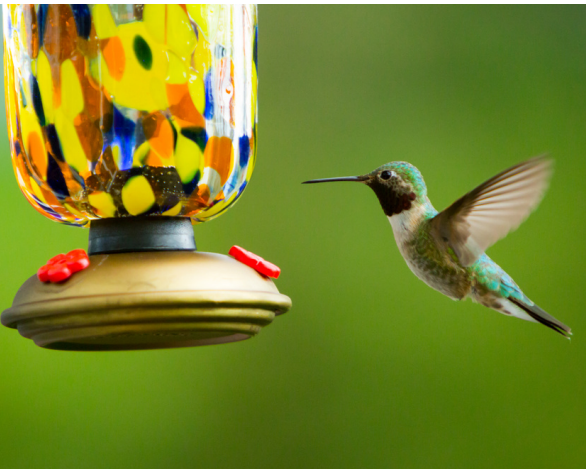


# MAY NEWSLETTER

*St. Matthew's Episcopal Church*



## CONNECTION & CONTINUITY

REV. ROB MEROLA

Dear Friends,

On Thursday, April 21, 2016, I received an email from my father. The subject line read "Hummers". It began, "Good Morning Rob, our first hummer arrived here on April 11th." Similar emails had come every year in mid-April, and I looked forward to receiving them. I'd set out my feeders, and wait for the birds to arrive here-- usually 10 days to 2 weeks later. I couldn't wait to send him an email of my own letting him know when they did.

That fall was the year my father died, and so I have not received such an email since. But every year about this time (I'm writing this on April 13th) I think of those emails, and of my father. I still miss him so much that it brings tears to my eyes and a lump in my throat thinking about it. But when I do, I dig out the hummingbird feeders, wash them, and fill them with fresh nectar I have just made. Later in the season, the formula is 4 cups water to 1 cup sugar (no red dye!!), but at the start of the season I make it stronger: 3 cups water to 1 cup sugar. This is to help them recover from their long migration back north.

It is a ritual, a ritual my dad and I shared for decades. The gift of that is that now even when I do it alone, I still strongly feel his presence. There is still connection and continuity, and in that, there is a very real comfort. That is part of the power of ritual, and no small part of the reason why ritual is so important.

There are many reasons to go to church. If one believes in God, then making intentional and focused time to worship is certainly the most important. But ritual is not far behind, particularly as those rituals are shared by families as they have been for generations and even millenia. Just like feeding hummingbirds with my dad, they build connection and continuity across the generations. They help us know who we are—and there is considerable evidence that part of the reason people feel such anxiety these days is the loss of such rituals and the absence of such knowledge. It leaves us lost and alone.

Church seems optional to increasing numbers of people these days. It's seen as a lifestyle accessory easily discarded with little or no consequence. I'd suggest that depends on what a person wants out of life—and what a person wants for the people they care about. It may well be that our culture has taken a wrong turn, and the stunning decline in every measure of human well-being is the price.

Or maybe not. That's for you to decide. It's an important decision.

With much love and affection,  
Rob+

May 2023

## THIS ISSUE:

- Faith & Science Series
- Women's Retreat
- Memorial Day Picnic
- Backpack Buddies

# WAYS TO CONNECT

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP | Sundays at 8, 9:30 & 11 AM

## Kids Chapel

Pre-K through Gr. 5

Sundays at 9:30 AM

## Compline

Monday - Friday at 8:00 PM

Facebook Live: [stmtts.org/live](https://www.facebook.com/stmtts.org/live)

## Sandwich Generation

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 7:30 PM

[office@stmtts.org](mailto:office@stmtts.org)

## Donuts & Discovery - Middle & High School Students

Sundays at 10:30 AM

## Social Time with Candace

Mondays at 12 PM

Zoom Meeting ID: 681-861-620

## WatCh (Wednesdays at Church)

Wednesdays at 7 PM

## Young Professionals (YoPros)

2nd/4th Sundays at 12:30 PM

[Caitlin.Dronfield@stmtts.org](mailto:Caitlin.Dronfield@stmtts.org)

## Bread of Life Prayer Group

Mondays at 7:00 PM

[Darrell@stmtts.org](mailto:Darrell@stmtts.org)

## Men's Group

Saturdays at 8:00 AM

[Linden@stmtts.org](mailto:Linden@stmtts.org)

## EVENTS & SAVE THE DATES

### MAY

Tuesdays - Backpack Buddies Packing at 12 PM

Wednesdays - WatCh at 7 PM

Sun., May 7th - Backpack Buddies packing during coffee hour

Sun., May 7th & 21st - Faith & Science Discussion Series

Sun., May 14th - Mother's Day Flowers in the Garden

Fri., May 26th - Game Night at 6 PM

Sun., May 28th - Memorial Day Picnic AT ST. MATTHEW'S!

### JUNE

Tuesdays - Backpack Buddies Packing at 12 PM

Wednesdays - WatCh at 7 PM

Sun., June 4th - Graduation Service & Dinner at 5 PM

Date coming soon: Men's Breakfast



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church  
**MESSAGE**  
*ON THE GO*

## LOVE THE SERMON? Check out our weekly podcast!

The weekly audio podcast for St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. Our hope is that this podcast will help you To Know and Share God's Love... and then some.

[stmtts.org/Podcast](https://www.stmtts.org/Podcast)



# WE NEED YOUR HELP SHARING THE NEWS!



Because our neighbors should never go hungry.

## BACKPACK BUDDIES IS NOW PART OF HRTS!

### SPONSOR A CHILD TODAY

\$9 a week , \$40 a month, \$480 a school year

Through the Backpack Buddies program, HRTS provides support to 250+ local school children, and those number are growing! Children receive a backpack filled with six meals each week.

We currently provide weekly meals for children attending Potowmack E.S., Rolling Ridge E.S., Sully E.S., Horizon E.S., Algonkian, E.S., River Bend M.S., Potomac Falls H.S.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

#### GIVE

Sponsor a child  
\$9 a week  
\$40 a month  
\$480 for the school  
year

[sterlinghelp.org/Give](http://sterlinghelp.org/Give)

#### SHOP

Check out the shopping  
list and drop of  
donations

[sterlinghelp.org/Shop](http://sterlinghelp.org/Shop)

#### SHARE

Invite 2 friends to  
learn about HRTS and  
ask them to sponsor a  
child. Share with your  
work or school!

\*Corporate matching available

[sterlinghelp.org/Share](http://sterlinghelp.org/Share)

## INVITING A FRIEND TO SUPPORT HRTS

### A few messages you can try:

Hi (insert name) I just learned about this new nonprofit that is feeding kids in Sterling on the weekends. Can you believe there are families in this area that struggle with having enough food? It's crazy, right?

Would you join me in sponsoring one of these kids? It's only \$9 a week.

Check it out:  
[sterlinghelp.org/Give](http://sterlinghelp.org/Give)

Hi (insert name)! Are you familiar with Backpack Buddies? They give kids meals on the weekend who don't have enough at home to cover when school is out. Well, there is a new nonprofit supporting Backpack Buddies and you can sponsor a child for \$9 a week. Would you be willing to check it out?

[sterlinghelp.org/Give](http://sterlinghelp.org/Give)

Hi (insert name), I need your help. I just started sponsoring a child for Backpack Buddies and they're in need of more sponsors. Would you join me? It's only \$9 a week, and helps 250 kids in Sterling.

Check it out:  
[sterlinghelp.org/Give](http://sterlinghelp.org/Give)

Follow HRTS on Facebook & Instagram  
@hungerresponse

LEARN MORE: [sterlinghelp.org](http://sterlinghelp.org)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Spring WATCH WEDNESDAYS AT CHURCH

We will meet on Wednesdays from 7 to 8 PM in May as we consider how to live a life pleasing to God.

Topics will include such things as What God Wants, The World: Good or Evil?, The Role of Satan, and What Do We Do With Guilt? Please join us!

## Mother's Day SUNDAY, MAY 14TH

Join us for worship as we celebrate all the women in our lives & pick up small potted zinnias or snapdragons from the Celebration Garden

The 2023 Celebration Garden hot sauces will also be available for a donation to the garden.

## MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND PICNIC AT ST. MATTHEW'S

SUNDAY, MAY 28th | Following the 9:30 AM Service

Food, games, and fellowship. Bring a side dish or dessert to share based on the first letter of your last name.

A-L: Desserts

M-Z: Side Dish or Salad

**Don't forget to wear red for Pentecost!**

This year's picnic will be held at St. Matthew's and not at Algonkian Park.

Services will be held at 8 & 9:30 AM.

Additional parking is available at the Sheriff Station across the street.

Learn more at  
[stmtts.org/Events](http://stmtts.org/Events)



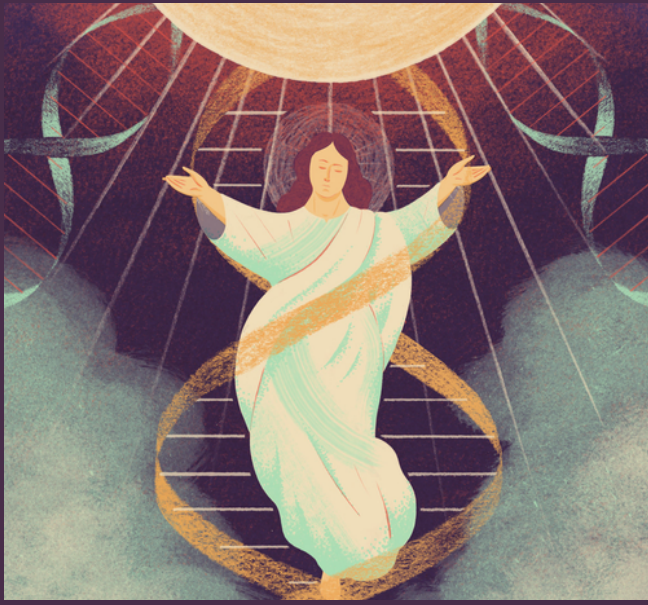
# MAY AT ST. MATT'S

## FAITH & SCIENCE

A DISCUSSION SERMON SERIES

SUNDAY, MAY 7th & MAY 21st

Join Rev. Rob Merola & Jonathan Marvin, Senior Scientist at Howard Hughes Medical Institute as they dive into faith & science.



## WOMEN'S RETREAT

FRI., SEPT 22nd - SUN., SEPT 24th

CULTIVATING FERTILE SOIL IN OUR HEARTS

featuring guest speaker:  
Rev. Mary Margaret Winn

Space is limited, so register early.  
Register: [stmtts.org/retreat](http://stmtts.org/retreat)

WOMEN'S

retreat

SIGN UP TODAY!

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Pictured from Left to Right (Margaret Kelly, Sue Norris, Linda Merola & Barbara Thomas)

Meet our Thursday office volunteers! This wonderful group of ladies meet most Thursday afternoons to stuff bulletins, prepare newsletters, tidy the sanctuary, and other administrative tasks. Additionally, they all volunteer in many other capacities. We are grateful for their support.

## WE'RE HIRING!

Live Stream & Audio Technician

St. Matthew's is looking for a part-time Live Stream & Audio Technician to help with our Sunday Services.

- Music & Audio experience a plus, but not required
- Training provided

For a full job description & to apply, visit:

[stmtts.org/workwithus](http://stmtts.org/workwithus)

# STUDENT MINISTRIES

## INTRODUCING **KIDS** CHAPEL



We create fun, safe, and welcoming environments where kids and volunteers come to know and experience Jesus. We emphasize the importance of prayer, daily devotions, friendship, and quiet times.

Pre-K through 5th Grade. Sundays at 9:30 in Classrooms 1&2



## STELLAR VBS

JULY - 24 | 28 5:30 - 8:30 PM

Shine a light on Jesus' love! Launch your kids on a cosmic quest this summer!

Stellar rockets kids on an out-of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun!

REGISTER TODAY: [stmtts.org/VBS](http://stmtts.org/VBS)



**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED!**



## BACCALAUREATE CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, JUNE 4TH AT 5 PM

High School & College Graduates and their families are cordially invited to our Graduation Service & Dinner.

RSVP [office@stmtts.org](mailto:office@stmtts.org)