

MARCH NEWSLETTER

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church



A message from our Rector Rev. Rob Merola

Dear Friends,

Some years ago while living in the south, a great influx of armadillos invaded our yard. They dug up everything, creating so many craters that our lawn and garden was left with a distinctly lunar appearance.

It was time for Armadillo Combat, which meant a rigorous live trapping program. The problem is that armadillos can't be lured into a trap with bait. To be successful, one must discern the habits of the marauding armadillos in order to figure out armadillo trails. Then one sets a trap in the middle of the perceived armadillo path. Finally, one hopes that an armadillo does indeed wander in. And they did.

I caught four pretty quickly, all released alive and well in the yard of a Baptist church down the street (kidding). We also caught 8 raccoons, 2 squirrels, a rabbit, an opossum, and the neighbor's kid in doing so, but we felt like we are on the right track.

All of us have things in our lives we'd like to change. Like the above scenario, such changes start when we have a concern (assault armadillos). This concern, if untended, grows into a crisis (a garden that looks like a lunar landscape). The crisis requires a choice (can I live with the mess or do I choose to do something about it?) Once one makes a choice, the decision must be carried out in action (becoming an armadillo trapper). And finally, if the change is going to be effective, one must make a commitment to continue it (I set traps for months on end.)

We are about to enter the season of Lent. Perhaps one way of understanding this season is "trapping armadillos". It offers a process by which we can capture our concerns before they become a crisis as we chose to correct our conduct. It asks us to make a commitment to do so (It's only 40 days. We can do anything for only 40 days. Really!) At the end of those 40 days, we just may find that the landscape of our life improved.

The idea of taking 40 days-- just 40 days -- to be used in such a way that they can change the rest of our lives for the better sounds like a pretty good deal to me.

Will you please join me in observing Lent? A good start would be to look at some of the specific suggestions on how to do this found in the pages that follow. Make a plan. Do it.

Warmly,
Rob+



This issue:

- **Pancake Tailgate**
- **Ash Wednesday**
- **Lent at St. Matthew's**
- **Youth Events**
- **Outreach Updates**

WAYS TO CONNECT

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

8, 9:30 & 11 AM
In-person and Online
stmtts.org/services

Faith Factory for Kids

Sundays at 9:30am & 11:00am

Youth Group Sunday (Not) School

Sundays at 10:15am

Raising Teens Connection Group

Sundays at 10:15am Classroom 4

Young Professionals (YoPros)

2nd/4th Sundays at 12:30pm

Email: Caitlin.Dronfield@stmtts.org

Compline

Monday - Friday at 8:00pm

Facebook Live: stmtts.org/live

Social Time with Candace

Mondays at 12pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 681-861-620

Bread of Life Small Group

Mondays at 7pm

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

Social Time with Kevin

Mondays at 8:30pm on Zoom

Email Kevin Fletcher: Kevin@stmtts.org

Sandwich Generation Small Group

1st/3rd Tuesdays at 7:30pm

Leadership Lunches

1st Tuesday of every month on Zoom

Email Miriam@stmtts.org for Zoom link

Outreach Meeting

Email Kristin.Drummond@stmtts.org

WatCh/WonZ (Wednesdays at Church)

7pm–8pm | In-Person & On Zoom

Zoom ID 840 3217 6070 Password: church

Women's Group

Thursdays at 12:15pm on Zoom

Zoom ID: 886 5270 7607 Passcode: church

Men's Group

Saturdays at 8:00am

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

EASTER FOOD DONATIONS DROP OFF BY MARCH 29TH

Please fill a reusable grocery bag with all of the following items:

- Dried beans
- White Rice
- Canned meats (tuna/chicken)
- Canned vegetables
- Pasta Sauce
- Pasta
- Vegetable oil
- Corn flour (like Maseca)
- Mac and Cheese
- A special Easter Treat

Need a reusable bag to fill? Free bags are available at the front of the church, with attached shopping list!

stmtts.org/EasterBags

M Saint
Matthew's
Episcopal Church
To know and share God's love



LENT AT ST. MATTHEW'S

SHROVE TUESDAY



TUESDAY, MARCH 1st!

PANCAKE TAILGATE

TUESDAY, MARCH 1
5 PM - 6:30 PM

PANCAKES, BACON, SAUSAGES, & FIRE PIT!

Bring your propane grill and cook with us or just come for the fun - there will be plenty of pancakes and food for everyone!

ST. MATTHEW'S PARKING LOT

Lent

WEDNESDAYS AT CHURCH

WEDNESDAYS 7-8 PM
BEGINNING MARCH 9TH

Join Rev. Mary Margaret as we will delve into a film series called "The Way of the Heart," which takes us through the stations of the cross.

In-person and on Zoom
Meeting ID: 841 3217 6070
Passcode: church



"The Stations of the Cross are a long-standing tradition among Christians who choose to hold a vigil in their hearts during Good Friday. From the 14 original stations of the cross, we have selected 10 films that we believe embody 10 markers of Jesus's journey, and allow us to make the inward trek of death to resurrection alongside him. We hope these stations, films, and meditations will be a blessing to your journey, and open up his Way of the Heart."

ASH

WEDNESDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, March 2
6 AM, 12 PM & 7:30 PM
IN-PERSON & ONLINE

stmmts.org/services

FAMILY LENT DEVOTIONALS

Join us Sunday, Feb 27th for coffee hour* & to build your:

40-Day Family Challenge Deck!



Family Lent Devotionals

These devotionals are great for families of all ages!

Daily Scripture
Short Devo
Family Discussion Questions
Children's Activity and ASK

*Between the 9:30 & 11 am services

HOW TO OBSERVE A HOLY LENT

-Rev. Rob Merola

Here are three principles to guide us in crafting a plan to deepen our inner life during the season of Lent.

- If you take something on during Lent, give something up. Our lives are all full to overflowing already. We don't want to add something to our lives that will only make us busier, diminish our margins, and further wear us out. In order to avoid that, if we commit ourselves to an additional practice that will require a further commitment of time and energy, then we need to stop doing something else.
- Limit the number of things you'll do/quit doing. As a rule of thumb, making one to three significant behavioral changes is probably optimal, and any more than that is only going to bring frustration and failure. Remember: less is often more.
- Make at least one of your Lenten disciplines secret. Keep it between you and God alone.

With these principles in mind, here are 10 specific suggestions for Lenten practices. It is certainly not an exhaustive list. Remember: you are choosing one to three new behaviors, not trying to do all ten of them.

1. If you do not already do so, commit to being present in weekly worship.

2. If you do not already do so, commit to joining us for WatCH/WonZ weekly throughout Lent.
3. If you do not already do so, read the Bible daily.
4. If you consume alcohol, abstain for Lent. (I, Rob, would love for you to join me in this.)
5. Change eating habits for a healthier diet.
6. Fast, either skipping a certain meal each week, or fasting one day a week, and perhaps even considering a 36-72 hour fast before Lent's end (always consult your physician first!).
7. Abstain from technology on some regular basis, or from some specific form of entertainment (surfing the web, Facebook, favorite TV show, video games, etc.).
8. Walk regularly with a spouse, child, or friend, or otherwise exercise.
9. Journal daily. Reflect on what a deeper life might look like.
10. Engage in one secret act of kindness every day.

MARCH SERVICES & EVENTS



LEADERSHIP LUNCHES

March 1, April 5, May 3, and June 7
FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
AT 12:30 PM

Want to improve your leadership skills in 2022? Join our leadership lunch discussion. We invite you to listen to a specific podcast individually and then meet over your lunch break to discuss and plan specific steps we can take to be better leaders at work, in our homes, and in our community. Friends and co-workers are welcome to join us.

Contact Miriam at Miriam@stmtts.org
for the Zoom and podcast links.

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

MISSION TRIP GULF COAST (LAKE CHARLES, LA AREA)

JULY 16TH - JULY 22ND

STEP UP TO BE THE "HANDS AND FEET" OF JESUS BY CARING FOR AND PROVIDING FOR THE PEOPLE'S NEEDS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



Questions?

Contact Zena Horaibi Zena.Horaibi@gmail.com

stmtts.org/Mission2022



LENT

A FORTY DAY JOURNEY

Lent is a season of the Church Year that calls Christians to focus on repentance and personal devotion in light of the coming celebration of Easter. The forty-day period of Lent connects with many Scriptural events important in the history of salvation: the forty days of the flood, the forty years of Israel's wilderness wanderings, Moses' forty days on Mount Sinai when he received the Law, and Jesus' forty days of temptation in the desert.

The season of Lent is decidedly somber. In the Church's worship, a penitential tone (feeling or expressing sorrow) is expressed in various ways:

- Vestments are changed to purple, a color associated with mourning.
- The shout of praise "Alleluia" is eliminated from all acts of worship.
- The Eucharist begins with an acclamation that acknowledges our need for mercy. The Celebrant says, "Bless the Lord who forgiveth all our sins," and the people respond, "His mercy endureth for ever."
- The Gloria ("Glory be to God on high") is neither sung nor said, and the service music changes to be more somber.
- The priest's final blessing over the congregation is replaced with a solemn prayer focusing on the Lenten journey.

Except shared from St. John's Episcopal Church in Dallas, TX

MARCH CHILDREN & YOUTH

JOIN US FOR FAITH FACTORY!

Always fun, sometimes messy lessons on faith each week!

SUNDAYS AT 9:30 & 11 AM
PRE-K - 5TH GRADE



SUNDAY (NOT) SCHOOL SUNDAYS AT 10:15 AM

TACKLING LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS:

Youth are encouraged to decide for themselves based on their faith, experiences, and relationships (with God, family, and each other).

Sunday (NOT) School meets in the classrooms on the hill (in the trailer).



PANCAKE DECORATING CONTEST!

TUESDAY, MARCH 1ST | 5 - 6:30 PM

Pancake Decorating Contest at the Pancake Tailgate. St. Matt's Youth will host (and participate in!) a friendly decorating contest.



LOUDOUN UNITED FC VS. INDY ELEVEN GROUP OUTING

Sat., March 12th | 5:45 PM
Segra Field, Leesburg



VS.



Youth are invited to Loudoun United Soccer League team's home opener!

Sign up here: stmmts.org/Soccer



HIKING -OR- CHERRY BLOSSOMS!

MARCH 26TH AT 11 AM

Hiking at Great Falls or Cherry Blossom Festival in DC - This all depends on nature...so we will have to wait and see! Either way, we will plan to depart from St. Matt's at 11 AM to carpool to Great Falls Park or in to DC.



stmmts.org/YouthHike



YOUTH GROUP MISSION TRIP

HARRISBURG, PA | JUNE 26-JULY 2



stmmts.org/YouthMission

MARCH OUTREACH

EASTER EGG HUNT CANDY DONATIONS NEEDED

Individually packaged, nut-free candy and toys are appreciated!

Examples:

- Gummy Bears
- Starburst
- Small packs of jelly beans
- Stickers
- Tootsie rolls
- Small plastic rings
- Sour patch kids

**DROP OFF TUES/THURS 8 AM - 4 PM OR
SUNDAYS 8 AM - 12 PM**



BECOME A SATELITE FOR FOOD DONATIONS

1. PLACE A BIN ON YOUR FRONT STEP
2. TELL THE NEIGHBORHOOD
3. DROP OFF DONATIONS AT CHURCH!

PRINT-AT-HOME BIN SIGNS
& SPECIFIC NEEDS POSTED

stmmts.org/BeTheChange

WOMEN GIVING BACK VOLUNTEER DAY

**Saturday, March 5th
10 AM to 12:30 PM**

- Help receive & sort clothing
- Must be 12 to volunteer, under 15 require adult supervision

**MASKS REQUIRED & SPOTS ARE LIMITED
RSVP stmmts.org/WomenGivingBack**



LINK AGAINST HUNGER

LINK provides emergency food and financial assistance to qualified people in need in the Sterling, Herndon, and Ashburn communities. LINK needs volunteers on an ongoing basis to help run their food pantry distribution, make deliveries and help unload bulk food deliveries. You can sign-up to help at www.stmmts.org/link

**Contact Melissa Hancock at
melissahancock@hotmail.com.**



THE 8 BIGGEST BENEFITS OF BEING GENEROUS

Segment of an article by Lyle Daly for The Ascent
For the full article, visit stmmts.org/generous

Helping others could help you, too.
Helping others could help you, too.
From a young age, we're told that it's better to give than to receive. Although you may think this is just a cliché, it turns out that there's a lot of truth behind that sentiment.

When we studied how being generous affects your life, we found that people with high levels of generosity reap all kinds of benefits. Here are the perks of generosity that stand out the most.

1. Greater satisfaction with life
2. More friends
3. Stronger relationships with the people they know
4. Happier with their careers
5. A more positive outlook
6. Better physical and mental health
7. Satisfaction with what you have
8. Higher self-esteem

Generosity can change your life

If there's one takeaway from all this, it's that being generous can have a dramatic impact on your quality of life. It can make you happier, healthier, and improve your relationships with others.

There are all kinds of ways to be generous, from donating to a cause you believe in to volunteering your time. Not only will it benefit others, but it could also benefit you.

BACKPACK BUDDIES

Our Backpack Buddies program, provides meals dozens of local children. Each child receives a bag filled with six meals, snacks, and milk every weekend during the school year. You can help:

- MAKE A FINANCIAL GIFT
- DONATE FOOD
- HELP PACK!

stmmts.org/backpack-buddies

**Contact Hilary Hultman-Lee at
HHLlearning@gmail.com to get involved!**