

# JULY NEWSLETTER

## *St. Matthew's Episcopal Church*

### WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING RIGHT NOW?

REV. ROB MEROLA

Dear Friends,

There is so much that I don't know, so much yet to learn. Sometimes what there is to learn corrects what I thought I already knew. Usually, someone else has to teach me. And almost always, I'm better off for it.

On my recent fishing trip, it was recommended that I bring a fly called a "clouser". It's easy to tie and very durable. But it just doesn't look fishy to me, so I don't fish them. Still, I tied a couple, mostly just to say I did.

On the last day, the guide asked me if I brought any clousers. "A couple," I said. "I'll leave them with you if you like," I continued, hoping he'd pick up on my distinct lack of enthusiasm for using it.

He didn't. "Great!" he replied. "You don't need to leave them with me. Let's put one on now!" Reluctantly I followed his advice. I simply did not believe that fly was going to catch anything.

You can see what's coming, can't you? On the very first cast, the biggest fish of the trip absolutely inhaled it. Unfortunately, the fish's sharp teeth cut my line as he did so, leaving with me only the memory of his massiveness.

Suddenly, I wished I had brought more clousers!

Increased knowledge means increased skill and increased skill means increased success. Learning is one of the most important keys to self-improvement. And this leads me to a question: What are you learning in your life right now? Over the years, one of the things I've seen that is the surest recipe for disappointment or worse is to have no intentional ongoing learning process in place. It is to have no deliberate, sought-out course of action to get what we need to become a better person tomorrow than we are today.

Frankly, I know of no better place for this to happen than church. It's where I've found the people most willing to share what they've learned with me. It's where I've found a community that has supported me in putting these learnings into practice. It's where I've found ongoing relationships—many spanning decades—that facilitate the process of improvement (it doesn't happen overnight!) and most importantly, it is where I find the Spirit of God, the power that helps make change possible.

Thank you, St. Matt's, for all you've taught me. I am eternally grateful.

Warmly,  
Fr. Rob+



### THIS ISSUE

- SUMMER AT ST. MATT'S
- CELEBRATION GARDEN
- STUDENT MINISTRY UPDATES
- VBS DETAILS

# 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

### Kids Chapel Unplugged 6th & 7th Graders

Sundays at 9:30 AM

### Journey Breakfast Club 8-12 Graders

Sundays at 9:30 AM

### Young Professionals (YoPros)

June only - 1st & 3rd Sundays  
at 12:30 PM

Caitlin.Dronfield@stmmts.org

### Compline

Monday - Friday at 8:00 PM

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

### Social Time with Candace

Mondays at 12 PM

Zoom Meeting ID: 681-861-620

### Bread of Life Prayer Group

Mondays at 7:00 PM

Darrell@stmmts.org

### Men's Group

Saturdays at 8:00 AM

Contact Pete Office@stmmts.org

# SUMMER SAVE THE DATES

## JULY

Tuesdays in July - Celebration Garden Volunteering 8:30 AM

Sunday, July 2nd - Bomb Pop Popsicles Celebrating the 4th of July

Sunday, July, 9th - National Sugar Cookie Day

Sunday, July 9th - Saturday, July 15th - Youth Mission Trip to Erie, PA

Wednesday, July 11th - Wednesdays at Church at 7 PM

Sunday, July 16th - Rootbeer & Creamsicle Floats

Wednesday, July 18th - Wednesdays at Church at 7 PM

Thursday, July 20th - 6th -8th Grade Art and Lunch Party

Sunday, July 23rd - VBS Training & Set Up

Monday, July 24th - Friday, July 28th - Stellar VBS

Sunday, July 30th - VBS Sunday at 9:30, wear your VBS Shirt

## AUGUST

Tuesdays in August - Celebration Garden Volunteering 8:30 AM

Thursday, August 3rd - 6th-8th Graders Mission & Museum of the Bible

Saturday, August 19th - Ladies Outing at Tarara

Sunday, August 20th - Back to School & Backpack Blessings

Sunday, August 27th - Haiti Benefit Concert & BBQ

**For individual event details, visit [stmmts.org/events](https://stmmts.org/events)**



# SAVE THE DATE!

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 27TH at 5 PM**

**Join us for BBQ, Live Music, Kids' Games & more!**

**Last year we raised enough money to feed the children of St. Mathieu's school for an entire year, let's do it again!**

**Eat, Enjoy, and Donate - You can make a difference.**

**Learn more [stmmts.org/HaitiConcert](https://stmmts.org/HaitiConcert)**





# STELLAR VBS

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

Bible Adventures, Games, Science Experiments, Live Music, Dinner & More!

Shine a light on Jesus' love! Launch your kids on a cosmic quest this summer! They'll have a blast shining Jesus' light on the world. Stellar rockets kids on an out-of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun!

- **Ages: 3\* years- completed 4th grade**
  - \*3 and 4-year-olds must be accompanied by an adult. Rising 6th grade (students who have completed 5th grade and are entering 6th grade in the fall) and older are invited to register as volunteers.
- **Cost: \$40\*\* per child, including a light dinner each night and a VBS t-shirt!**

\*\*scholarships available, contact [office@smtts.org](mailto:office@smtts.org) for more information.

**REGISTER TODAY & INVITE A FRIEND!**  
[smtts.org/VBS](http://smtts.org/VBS)

## VBS YOUTH VOLUNTEER EVENTS

**JOIN US FOR POST-VBS FUN EACH NIGHT**  
FOR VOLUNTEERS IN GRADES 6-12 | \*PARENT CHAPERONES ALSO NEEDED

**Mon., July 24 - Ice Cream Social | 8:30 - 9:30 PM**

Enjoy your favorite flavors of ice cream with all the toppings you can think of while getting to know your fellow youth volunteers.

**Tues., July 25 - Karaoke Night Returns! | 8:30 - 9:30 PM**

Back by popular demand, sing along with your favorite songs, no talent is necessary just the desire to have fun!

**Wed., July 26 - Water Games | 8:30 - 9:30 PM**

Join us for an epic water battle with water balloons, squirters, and more!

**Thurs., July 27 - Game Night | 8:30 - 9:30 PM**

Come enjoy snacks and bring a favorite board/card game to share.

**Fri., July 28 - Slip n' Slide Kickball | 8:30 PM - Pickup TBA**

End VBS week with a fun night of slip n' slide kickball

RSVP at [smtts.org/VBSevents](http://smtts.org/VBSevents)

Contact Cassidy at [journey@smtts.org](mailto:journey@smtts.org)

### WILL YOU JOIN US FOR VBS? VOLUNTEERS WANTED

by Kathleen Bellamy,  
Director of Communications  
& VBS 2023 Director

There are a few things I've experienced at St. Matthew's where I am blown away by how the entire church and community join together to create something so inspiring that it simply takes my breath away. VBS is one of those things.

Every summer, without fail, the church is transformed by volunteers to create a fantastic immersive experience to teach the children of our community about the love of Jesus, and it's JULY which means - it's time!

I get almost as excited for VBS as I do for Christmas! Seeing the joy and amazement on the kids faces when they walk in, make new friends, get soaked with water balloons during games and fill their tummies with kid favorite foods - truly is the highlight of my summer!

Will you join me and volunteer to keep this tradition going for St. Matt's? I promise you'll love it as much as the kids do!

#### Ways you can help

- **Pray!** Pray that we reach children in our community to Know and Share God's Love through VBS!
- **Donate** - grab a star off of our donation board in the sanctuary, or make a financial donation online at [smtts.org/give](http://smtts.org/give)
- **Volunteer** - Sign up to help with decorating, cooking, crew leader, music or post-VBS clean up. There is something for everyone! Rising 6th graders through adult ages are invited to volunteer.
- **Share** - send VBS information to families you know. Kids who might enjoy camp, teens who would make great volunteers, or other friends you know that would make great connections volunteering together.

Sign up & Learn more: [smtts.org/VBS](http://smtts.org/VBS)





# JULY AT ST. MATT'S

## VBS VOLUNTEER TRAINING SUNDAY, JULY 23rd

Following the 11 AM Service

All volunteers for this year's VBS are asked to attend a short training on Sunday, July 23rd at 12pm.

We will cover:

- This year's theme and daily message
- Volunteer assignments
- Expectations and dress code
- Tips on engaging with our campers
- What to do in case of an emergency
- Q&A Session
- Please stay after training to help decorate if you can.

Questions? Contact [Kathleen@stmtts.org](mailto:Kathleen@stmtts.org)

## WATCH WEDNESDAYS AT CHURCH

JULY 12 & 19 | 7 PM - 8 PM

WatCH will resume on Wednesday, July 11. Fr. Rob will lead the discussion, and our topic for the month of July will be what Jesus had to say about the good life (based on Matthew 5: 1-12). We begin at 7 and conclude promptly at 8 PM. Please join us!

Questions? Contact [office@stmtts.org](mailto:office@stmtts.org)

## CELEBRATION GARDEN VOLUNTEERING TUESDAYS AT 8:30 AM



Join us to harvest fresh produce to support local food pantries. Volunteers of all ages are welcome!

This summer, the Celebration Garden is introducing a new cut flower ministry. Come learn how to make floral arrangements and deliver them to those in our community who may be lonely, or need a little pick-me-up.

For more information, contact Heidi at [garden@stmtts.org](mailto:garden@stmtts.org)

## SUNDAYS IN JULY

**JULY 2  
BOMB POPS**

Join us for Bomb Popsicles during coffee hour between the 9:30 & 11 AM services.

**JULY 9  
SUGAR  
COOKIES**

Celebrate National Sugar Cookie Day during coffee hour between the 9:30 & 11 AM services.

**JULY 18  
ROOTBEER  
FLOATS**

Grab a rootbeer or creamsicle float during coffee hour between the 9:30 & 11 AM services.

**JULY 23  
VBS SET UP  
& TRAINING**

Help with VBS set up and stay for training following the 11 AM service.

**JULY 30  
VBS SUNDAY  
9:30 AM**

Join us for a lively service celebrating all we learned during VBS week!



# OUTREACH & UPDATES

## SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE BEGINS THIS JULY

*by Susan Nixon, School Supply Drive Outreach Volunteer*

Two years ago my husband, John, and I made St. Matthew's our church home. Since our arrival, I have been deeply moved by the extent of the generosity of this community. Prior to retirement in June 2022, I worked as a school-based occupational therapist in Fairfax County for 25 years. I loved my work with students, teachers, and families, so as I explored opportunities to serve at St. Matthew's I was excited to learn about the role of school liaison. For the past year, I have been a school liaison to Park View High School, working closely with the Family Liaison at the school and facilitating St. Matthew's role in responding to the student needs with food, clothing, and supplies. This role has allowed me to maintain a connection to schools in a different but equally important way.

The needs of many of the students in our community are staggering at times. Yet I know through the generosity of our church family, St. Matthew's has been instrumental in making a difference in so many lives. Our School Supply Drive this summer is part of that support. Each school has provided a list of needs, and these are the items we will be collecting over the summer. When the students return to school this fall, they will have the tools and supplies they need.

This passage from James guides me in how I act out my faith in the community: What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:14-17 NIV)

I am so grateful to be a part of such a committed and generous community.



## SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Every student deserves access to supplies!  
Help us provide for area schools!

### WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- Shop our list online
- Share our list with friends
- Donate gift cards or give to the 2023 School Supply initiative

**SHOP OUR SUPPLY WISHLIST HERE:**  
**[stmmts.org/BackToSchool](https://stmmts.org/BackToSchool)**



# KIDS & STUDENT MINISTRY

## KIDS CHAPEL

Age 4 - 5th grade

SUNDAYS  
AT  
9:30 AM

## CHAPEL *Unplugged*

6th & 7th Grade



## WELCOME COLIN LATHROP

Colin has joined us this summer while he is home from college at Penn State! He has been doing an excellent job assisting with Sunday morning livestream and audio, and has been an amazing addition to our Summer Student Ministry Team!



## JOURNEY BREAKFAST CLUB

Sundays at 9:30 AM for Grades 8-12

A safe place for students to come and be who they are, make friends, and have real conversations about God.

These events are open to students everywhere and anywhere! Grades 8-12.

### Our Mission:

We partner with students no matter where they are in their journey to provide meaningful connections and experiences to encourage them through life's ups and downs.

# KIDS SUMMER EVENTS

For students in 6th - 8th grade

## *Unplugged*



## WATER PARTY & LUNCH

Thursday, June 29th  
12-3 PM

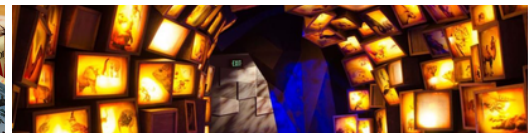
Join Colin & Kassidy for Lunch and Water Fight!



## ART PARTY & LUNCH

Thursday, July 20th  
12-3 PM

Join Colin & Kassidy for Lunch and explore your creativity through art!



## MISSION EVENT & MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE

Thursday, August 17th  
9 AM - 6 PM

Details coming soon!  
Contact Ron at  
journey@stmtts.org

RSVP [stmtts.org/KidsSummerEvents](https://stmtts.org/KidsSummerEvents)