



SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church



WELCOME KARA LAUGHLIN, SEMINARIAN

Kara Laughlin is a second-year student at Virginia Theological Seminary. A near-cradle Episcopalian, she lives in Leesburg, VA with her husband Jim, their three kids, Joshua, 21; Sebastian, 17; and Cordelia, 15, and their dog Remi. Her presenting parish is St. James' Episcopal Church in Leesburg. Before entering seminary, she worked from home as a writer, authoring more than 65 nonfiction books for kids. She has spent the summer in a chaplaincy education program at Goodwin Living in Arlington, VA. She's looking forward to continuing her education and ministry with the people of St. Matthew's, who have already shown her tremendous hospitality.

**Join us on Sunday, Sept.
17th to welcome Kara!**

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

REV. ROB MEROLA

Dear Friends,

What is your job as a human being?

I'm not asking about your vocation or career. I am asking what is our responsibility, our fundamental duty, as a person. Would you agree that it is to become a certain type of person? Is our essential obligation in life to become a good person, a loving person, or a productive member of a community who leaves the world better than we found it, for example?

Let's take this a step further. Consider an important role in your life, such as being a parent or a spouse. What is your job in that role? A parent's job, for instance, is surely more than providing food, shelter, and clothing for one's children. I'd suggest it involves actively shaping our children so that they see the value in becoming more like Jesus.

I'd also suggest that these "jobs" are far more important than what we do for a living. And yet it is the norm in our world today for them to receive far less attention.

At St. Matt's this fall, we want to partner with you in these essential activities. I'm tremendously excited about what we are offering this September. One of these things is a brand-new sermon series, "It All Got Better When..." It's going to be an opportunity to think more deeply both about what the most important things we can do are, and about how we can incline the odds towards success in doing them. Frankly, simply taking an hour a week to intentionally focus on these things and duly consider them is invaluable in actually accomplishing them.

We've also hired Ben Merola, as our Interim Youth Minister for our middle and high school students. Ben, a previous summer intern, is looking forward to fun outings to promote fellowship - like Sportrock Climbing on September 4, and spiritual formation on Sunday mornings between the 9:30 and 11:00 AM services.

Faith Factory is also seeing an infusion of new talent as we add two new teachers, Hilary Hultman-Lee and Alex Yarbrough. I hope you'll take a few minutes to read more about them later in this newsletter. If you are the parent of a child ages four - fifth grade, I hope you'll bring your children on September 3 at 9:00 AM for a breakfast treat and a chance to meet their new teachers.

That "it takes a village" to raise a child is more than just a trite or clever line; it is simple truth. Whatever their age, we think it is the wise parent who builds the church in as part of their young person's village. It is one more critical component that helps create the favorable outcomes we desire.

From my perspective, this is one of the strongest seasons in ministry we've seen at St. Matthew's. I looking forward to joining you in it.

Warmly,
Rob+

WAYS TO CONNECT

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

Faith Factory
Age 4 - Gr. 2 | Classroom 3
Sundays at 9:30 AM

Faith Factory
Gr. 3 - 5 | Classroom 1 & 2
Sundays at 9:30 AM

Donuts & Discovery with Ben
Gr. 6 - 12 | Classroom 4
Sundays at 10:30 AM

Young Professionals (YoPros)
2nd & 4th Sundays at 12:30 PM
Caitlin.Dronfield@stmtts.org

Compline
Monday - Friday at 8:00 PM
Facebook Live: [stmtts.org/live](https://www.stmtts.org/live)

Social Time with Candace
Mondays at 12 PM
Zoom Meeting ID: 681-861-620

Bread of Life Study Group
Mondays at 7:00 PM
Darrell@stmtts.org

Wednesday Bible Study
Wednesdays at 7:00 PM
office@stmtts.org

Men's Group
Saturdays at 8:00 AM
Contact MensGroup@stmtts.org

SAVE THE DATES

SEPTEMBER

Sundays - September Sermon Series: When It All Started To Go Right
Sundays - Faith Factory (Age 4 - 5th grade) at 9:30 AM
Sundays - Donuts & Discovery with Ben (6th - 12th grade) at 10:30 AM
Tuesdays - Celebration Garden Volunteering 8:30 AM (last date Sept. 26)
Thursdays - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Beginning Sept. 7th
Sunday, September 3rd - Back to Church Sunday & Robeks Smoothies Truck!
Sunday, September 3rd - Meet & Greet our Faith Factory Teachers at 9 AM
Sunday, September 3rd - Faith Factory + Donuts & Discovery Returns!
Sun., Sept. 3rd & Mon. Sept. 4th - Labor Day - Church Exterior Painting
Sunday, September 3rd - Youth Group Event at Sport Rock Sterling 1PM - 3PM
Saturday, September 16th - Parish Work Day 9 AM - 12 PM
Sunday, September 17th - Welcome Seminarian Kara Laughlin & Bishop Visit
Sunday, September 17th - October 15th - Winter Coat Drive Begins
Friday, Sept. 22nd - Sunday, Sept. 24th - Women's Retreat at Shrine Mont
Sunday, Sept. 24th - Youth Group Event at Escape Room Herndon at 3 PM

OCTOBER

Sundays - Faith Factory (Age 4 - 5th grade) at 9:30 AM
Sundays - Donuts & Discovery with Ben (6th - 12th grade) at 10:30 AM
Tuesdays in October - weekly HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing at 12 PM
Thursdays - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM
Sunday, Oct. 1st - HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing at 10:30 AM
Saturday, Oct. 7th - SterlingFest Parade
Saturday, Oct. 14th - Men's Breakfast
Sunday, Oct. 22nd - Trunk or Treat & Pet Blessing at 2 PM

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



BISHOP VISIT SUNDAY, SEPT. 17TH 11 AM SERVICE

All are invited to join us for a visit from the Bishop and to celebrate confirmations, baptisms, and receptions to the Episcopal Church on Sunday, Sept. 17.

Join us immediately following the service for a reception, please bring a side dish to share.

**For more information,
contact office@stmtts.org**

SEPTEMBER *events*

IT ALL 
GOT BETTER WHEN

SEPTEMBER SERMON SERIES SUNDAYS IN SEPTEMBER

Instead of always asking ourselves 'Where did things go wrong?' Join us this September for a new sermon series where we'll investigate looking at things from a new angle 'IT ALL GOT BETTER WHEN'

**BACK TO CHURCH
SUNDAY**

BACK TO CHURCH SUNDAY SUNDAY, SEPT. 3RD

Join us for Back to Church Sunday! Great worship, catch up with friends, and enjoy some tasty treats from a local food truck!

**BIBLE
STUDY**

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS AT 7 PM

Fr. Rob will lead the discussion as we continue to discuss what Jesus had to say about the good life (based on Matthew 5: 1-12). Bible study begins promptly at 7, please join us! Questions? office@stmtts.org

WEEKLY CHOIR REHEARSALS THURSDAYS AT 7:30 PM

Come and make a joyful noise with the St. Matthew's choir! Join Choir Director, Kevin Fletcher on Thursdays at 7:30 PM for choir rehearsal, starting Thursday, September 7th and Sundays during our 11 AM Service. For more information, contact Kevin@stmtts.org

WOMEN'S

retreat

SIGN UP TODAY!

WOMEN'S RETREAT | SEPT 22 - 24

You're invited to join the women of St. Matthew's to enjoy fellowship and relaxation as we cultivate fertile soil in our hearts. We are excited for this weekend's guest speaker, Rev. Mary Margaret Winn. **MUST REGISTER BY SUNDAY, SEPT. 3RD.** Cost \$125 (scholarships available upon request). **ALMOST FULL! REGISTER:** stmtts.org/retreat

SEPTEMBER *outreach*



CELEBRATION GARDEN

VOLUNTEERING TUESDAYS AT 8:30 AM

Congratulations to Heidi Lathrop and the entire Celebration Garden Volunteer Team. This season they have grown and donated over 800 lbs of fresh produce to local charities and 170 bouquets of flowers to friends and neighbors! Regular volunteer hours for the season will end on Tuesday, Sept. 26th. Email garden@stmmts.org for more information.



PRESSURE WASH & PAINT ST. MATT'S SAT., AUG 26, SUN., SEPT 3 & MON., SEPT 4

Help us get the exterior of St. Matt's back into tip top shape!

SIGN UP:stmmts.org/Painting



PARISH WORKDAY

SATURDAY, SEPT. 16TH 9 AM - 12 PM

Jobs of all types for all ages and abilities: dusting, gardening, polishing etc. Donuts & Coffee will be available.



WINTER COAT DRIVE

BEGINS SEPT. 17

Our annual winter coat drive for kids begins Sept. 17th. New and gently used coats size 6-16 for local Elementary and Middle School students wanted.

Shop at your favorite store, Costco, or visit our wishlist: stmmts.org/WinterCoats



HRTS BACKPACK BUDDIES

The Hunger Response Team of Sterling Backpack Buddies program will begin packing for the 2023 school year and we are in need of food donations for this year: shelf-stable milk, juice boxes, instant oatmeal packets, shelf-stable breakfast foods (like pop-tarts or individual cereal boxes), canned soup, ramen/ cup-o-noodles, granola bars, mac n' cheese single-serving cups. Learn more about the Hunger Response Team of Sterling and how you can help fight childhood hunger right here in Sterling: sterlinghelp.org



FAITH FACTORY KIDS RETURNS THIS FALL!

SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM | BEGINNING SEPT. 3RD

Join us this September for Faith Factory | Building Faith One Child at a Time with new teachers, new curriculum, faith and fun built into every lesson.

MEET OUR FAITH FACTORY TEAM



ALEX YARBROUGH | FAITH FACTORY AGE 4 - GRADE 2

Hi! I am Alexandra (Alex) Yarbrough. I was born and raised in Quito, Ecuador, but have lived in Ashburn, Virginia for the last 18 years. I am married with two daughters (14 and 18 years old) and have a puppy named Mila. I earned a Bachelor's Degree in advertising and worked as an Account Manager for a large advertising company in Quito for four years before marrying my husband and moving to Sweden.

After having kids, I learned how much I enjoy being around children, and decided to switch careers from advertising to education. I have been teaching Spanish, to youth for the last 9 years. I studied Primary Montessori education at Barrie Institute of Advanced Montessori Studies in Maryland and received my Montessori Early Childhood Credential from the American Montessori Society (AMS-MACTE). This will be my 8th year teaching at the Montessori School of Leesburg, I also have 13 years of experience volunteering with youth K-12, and 6 years of teaching Sunday school. I was raised and attended Catholic school from K-12 and have been part of Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church in Ashburn for the last 10 years.

My hobbies are reading, exploring nature, walking with my family, photography, traveling, and being a very active Girl Scout Troop Leader. It is my great privilege to work and learn with your child and I look forward to seeing them develop their love of God. I truly believe God is taking care of us every day and brought me here for a reason. I feel blessed to be teaching Sunday school to the younger friends at St. Matthew's.



HILARY HULTMAN-LEE | FAITH FACTORY GRADES 3-5

You may know Hilary from her role coordinating our Backpack Buddies program for the last seven years, but she is very excited to add this new role serving as our Faith Factory Director, providing oversight of our Sunday morning program and teaching grades 3-5.

Hilary is a native of Northern Virginia and was raised in Presbyterian and Episcopal churches. She has degrees from the College of William and Mary and George Mason University as well as the University of Kentucky. She taught in Kentucky for two years, then returned to Virginia to teach for seven years in Loudoun County Public Schools. She left the classroom to start a family with her husband, Evan; their two children are Sebastian (11) and Phoebe (5).

Hilary began attending St. Matthew's several years ago, attracted by a welcoming congregation that is dedicated to service in our community. She looks forward to engaging the children of St. Matt's with vibrant, faith-based enrichment.

FAITH FACTORY MEET THE TEACHERS SUNDAY, SEPT. 3RD 9 AM - 9:30 AM

All Faith Factory parents & kids are invited to a short 'open house' style meet & greet. Join Alex, Addie, and Hilary for some breakfast treats, ask questions, and check out some of the fun things the kids will learn this year! Questions? Contact Miriam at office@stmtts.org

YOUTH GROUP AT ST. MATT'S

SEPTEMBER YOUTH EVENTS

SPORTROCK CLIMBING CENTER

Sunday, September 3rd | 1 PM - 3 PM

For Middle & High School Students

Join Ben at Sport Rock for indoor rock climbing Sunday, Sept. 3rd meeting at Sport Rock, 45935 Maries Rd, Sterling, VA 20166, meet at 1 PM, climbing starts at 1:30 PM. It is recommended climbers wear comfortable clothing, good sneakers and bring a water bottle. Cost is \$35* and includes climbing gear. Space is limited to 15 participants so please register using the link below and fill out the Sportrock Participant Agreement early.

YOUTH AT PARISH WORKDAY

Saturday, September 16th | 9 AM - 12 PM

For Middle & High School Students

Join Ben for donuts, coffee, and help get the church looking its best for the Bishop's Visit on Sunday, Sept. 17th. RSVP appreciated to know how many donuts we'll need!

MAGICIANS WORKSHOP - ESCAPOLOGY FAIRFAX

Sunday, September 24th | 3 PM

For Middle & High School Students

Join Ben at the Escapology Escape Room in Fairfax on the 24th of September at 3 PM, 4211 Fairfax Cor Ave E #230, Fairfax, VA 22030. Cost \$23*. Space is limited to 20 participants so please invite your friends and register early!

MORE EVENTS & AND SAVE THE DATES ON OUR WEBSITE:

- SterlingFest Parade
- DC Central Kitchen Day of Service
- Trunk or Treat
- Climb UPton
- Hiking
- Bowling at Bowl America
- Launch Trampoline Park Outing
- LOCK-IN! COMING SOON!

Event details & RSVP:
stmmts.org/YouthEvents



BEN MEROLA

*INTERIM YOUTH MINISTRY &
MARKETING COORDINATOR*

Ben recently graduated from George Mason University with a degree in Marketing and returns to St. Matt's having been our Summer Youth Intern during the summer of 2022!

He is very excited to be back and jump into all things Youth Ministry!

Ben has been hard at work the last two weeks planning an outstanding line up of both just-for-fun and community service-focused events for our Middle & High School Youth this fall.

Welcome back Ben!

DONUTS & DISCOVERY



**GRADES 6-12
SUNDAYS | 10:30AM
CLASSROOM 4**