

# MARCH NEWSLETTER

*St. Matthew's Episcopal Church*



## THE JOURNEYS THAT MATTER

**Rev. Rob Merola, Rector**

Dear Friends,

Have you ever noticed that on a map or GPS, roads tend to lead to the same places? If you are a hiker, you know that trails tend to end in the same locations as well. This is even true with game trails; they lead to water, or food, or to my backyard where animals find both. Animals know that if they follow these trails, they will reliably get where they need to go and find what they need. Predictable paths lead to predictable places.

This is also true of metaphorical paths. If I want to be healthier than I am, there is a path that will get me there (exercise regularly!). If I want to improve my finances, there is a way I can trust that will produce this result (spend less than I make!). If I want to experience better relationships, there is a route I can rely on to arrive at this destination (love well!). There are also paths that will, with equal reliability, take us where we do NOT want to go. There are ways that lead to ruin.

What we think of as individual decisions are actually steps on a longer journey. As they accumulate over time, they create a trajectory. Too often when people fail to realize this, they find themselves surprised by the trajectory they are on and where it is inevitably leading them.

This Lent our theme is "Journey: Heading Towards our Hearts' True Home." Our hope is that it will be an opportunity to think about the direction of our lives. Do we like where we are? What did we do right that got us here, and how do we do more of it? Are we unhappy with where we are? What did we do wrong that got us here, and how do we correct it? Most likely, our lives are a mixture of both. How do we tease out the differences between what is helpful and what is not?

These are the questions we want to help you answer during Lent—and beyond. The journeys that matter most are not journeys we make alone, and one of the surest paths to success (no matter what our endeavor) is to choose our travelling companions wisely. I can tell you for a fact that I would not be where I am today—and where I am is pretty darn sweet—without the travelling companions I've found at St. Matt's.

Our Lenten journey will, of course, end on Easter. There aren't many years where Easter comes in March, but this year is one of them. We hope you'll be with us to celebrate. The great joy we'll find there, and the assurance of God's presence with us and provision for us, will be food nourishing our hearts and souls as our life journeys continue. I am confident that the choice to join here at St. Matt's on the journey through Lent and Easter will indeed help all of us get where we want to go.

With much love and affection,  
Rob+



## This issue:

- Easter & Holy Week
- Men's Fellowship Event
- March Calendar

# MARCH AT ST. MATT'S

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p><b>SUNDAY SERVICES AT 8, 9:30 &amp; 11 AM</b>                      Faith Factory (Age 4 - Gr. 5) &amp; FF Unplugged (Gr. 6-8) at 9:30 AM                      Donuts &amp; Discovery (Gr. 6-12) at 10:30 AM</p> <p><b>WEEKDAY EVENINGS</b>                      Compline at 8 PM online: <a href="http://stmmts.org/live">stmmts.org/live</a></p>					1	2
3 <b>Backpack Buddies Packing at 10:30 AM</b>	4 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620  Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	5 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM  <b>Youth Event see page 6</b>  Sandwich Gen. 7:30 PM	6 Wednesday Bible Study 7 PM	7 Thursday Bible Study 12 PM  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	8	9 Men's Group 8 AM
10 <b>Daylight Saving, come early for a wake you up surprise!</b>  <b>Bring Easter Food Bags to Church!</b>	11 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620  Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	12 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM  <b>Easter Food Donations Due</b>	13 Wednesday Bible Study 7 PM	14 Thursday Bible Study 12 PM  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	15	16 Men's Group 8 AM  <b>Men's Fellowship Event 9:30 AM - 1 PM</b>
17 <b>St. Patrick's Day, wear green!</b>	18 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620  Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	19 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM  Sandwich Generation 7:30 PM	20 Wednesday Bible Study 7 PM	21 Thursday Bible Study 12 PM  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	22	23 Men's Group 8 AM  <b>Parish Work Day 9 AM - 12 PM</b>
24 <b>Palm Sunday Services at 8, 9:30 &amp; 11 AM</b>	25 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM  <b>Youth Event see page 6</b>  Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	26 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM	27 Wednesday Bible Study 7 PM	28 Maundy Thursday Service 7 PM	29 <b>Good Friday Services 12 PM &amp; 7 PM</b>	30 Men's Group 8 AM  <b>Holy Saturday Service 10 AM</b>
31 <b>Easter Sunday Services at 6:30, 9:30 &amp; 11:15 AM</b>  <a href="http://stmmts.org/Easter">stmmts.org/Easter</a>	<p><i>This is not a full list of all events or uses of the St. Matthew's buildings, check out the link below for the most up-to-date calendar:</i></p> <p><b><a href="http://stmmts.org/calendar">stmmts.org/calendar</a></b></p>					

# APRIL

SAVE THE DATES

**EVERY WEEK**

**Sundays**

- Faith Factory (Age 4 - 5th grade) & Unplugged (6th - 8th grade) at 9:30 AM
- Donuts & Discovery (6th - 12th grade) at 10:30 AM

**Mondays**

- Social Time on Zoom noon  
 Mtg ID: 681-861-620
- Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM

**Tuesdays**

- HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing at 12 PM

**Wednesdays**

- Bible Study at 7 PM

**Thursdays**

- Bible Study at 12 PM
- Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM

**Saturdays**

- Men's Group 8 AM

**Weekday Evenings**

- Compline at 8 PM  
[stmmts.org/live](http://stmmts.org/live)

**SPECIAL EVENTS & SERVICES**

**Sunday, April 7**

**Backpack Buddies at 10:30 AM**

**Sunday, April 14**

**National Gardening Day!**

**Sunday, April 21**

**Celebrating Earth Day at 10:30 AM**

**Sunday, April 28**

**National Blueberry Pie Day**

# holy week



**Sunday,  
March 24th**

**Services at  
8, 9:30 & 11 AM**

Join us for procession of the palms, and a dramatic reading of the Passion by several of St. Matthew's Youth.



**Thursday,  
March 28th**

**Maundy Thursday  
Service 7 PM**

This solemn service reflects on Jesus' path to crucifixion. Includes communion, foot washing, and stripping of the altar.



**Friday,  
March 29th**

**Good Friday Services  
12 PM & 7 PM**

Good Friday worship invites us to reflect on the suffering Christ went through for our sake by sacrificing his life for our sins.



**Saturday,  
March 30th**

**Holy Saturday  
Service 10 AM**

This simple service commemorates the day between the crucifixion and the resurrection when Jesus lay in the tomb.

## CELEBRATE EASTER HE IS RISEN



### EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES AT ST. MATTHEW'S

#### 6:30 AM Easter Sunrise Worship

Join us at Saint Matthew's for a stunning Sunrise Worship Service with Paschal fire. Following the service, join us for a simple Easter Brunch!

#### 9:30 AM Festival Easter Worship with Band

Join us for our vibrant Festival Easter Worship with Band and violin as we joyfully celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Children will enjoy our interactive programming and Egg Hunt. Following the service, parents are invited to join us on the front lawn for Egg Hunt and photos with the Easter Bunny.

#### 11:15 AM Easter Worship

Join us at Saint Matthew's for joyful Easter Worship with choir, strings, and woodwinds as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. Children will love our Easter booklets and goodie bags, and outdoor Egg Hunt with the Easter Bunny following the service!



# EVENTS & OUTREACH

## Easter Food Drive

Drop off all donations by  
March 12th



Join us in achieving our goal of donating 225 bags to those in need this Easter!

Download the shopping list, and/or sign up to help pack, shop and deliver food at the link below.

[stmmts.org/EasterBags](http://stmmts.org/EasterBags)



## Men's Group Fellowship Event

Sat., March 16th | 9:30 AM - 1 PM

Let's spruce up the Chapel in the Woods for Easter services together.

Join us for outdoor repairs, cleanup, and fellowship with grilled food and refreshments.



## Parish Work Day

Sat., March 23rd | 9 AM - 12 PM

Join us for a family-friendly service event! Help spruce up our church and grounds for Easter.

Indoor and outdoor tasks for all ages available. Donuts, coffee, and a great time provided!

## Backpack Buddies

Sunday, March 3rd

10:30 AM

& Tuesdays at noon

Help pack 270+ food bags for Sterling area school children in need.

Donations wanted, find our shopping list and how to help on our website

Learn more:  
[sterlinghelp.org](http://sterlinghelp.org)



## Easter Egg Stuffing

Sundays in March

Every Sunday in March, grab a few Easter Eggs and some candy during coffee hour, and enjoy fellowship while stuffing!

Our Annual Easter Sunday Egg Hunts are a highlight for the community, thank you for your support!

## Easter Candy Collection

Drop off by March 17th

Collecting nut-free candy and small toys for our annual Easter Egg hunts.

Drop off donations no later than Sunday, March 17th in the bin by the back door of the church labeled "Easter Candy"



## Easter Flower Dedications

Due Palm Sunday,  
March 23rd

Honor loved ones and celebrate new beginnings this Easter by dedicating flowers to adorn the sanctuary on Easter Sunday.

[stmmts.org/Flowers](http://stmmts.org/Flowers)

## Daylight Saving Sunday, March 10th

Even though our digital clocks automatically reset, our internal clocks might not!

Join us Sunday, March 10th for a special 'wake-you-up' surprise!



## Game Night

No March Game Night

Since our usual Game Night time takes place on Good Friday, we encourage you to join us for worship at 7 PM.

Join us in April for our usual time!

April 26th from 6 PM - 8 PM



## Women's Volunteer Event

Sunday, April 28th  
1 PM - 3:30 PM

Join us at Women Giving Back for an afternoon of service. Women are invited to bring any gently used spring/summer women's and kids' clothing to donate.

RSVP required:  
[stmmts.org/WomenGivingBack](http://stmmts.org/WomenGivingBack)

# SPIRITUAL FORMATION

## journey

heading towards our hearts' true home



LENT AT  
ST. MATTHEW'S

We welcome you to walk this journey with us at St. Matthew's. Visit our Lent Resources on our website: Devotionals, Recipes, FAQs, Podcast, Book & App recommendations and more:

[stmmts.org/Lent](http://stmmts.org/Lent)



## Wandering Heart

coming home

LENT BIBLE STUDY  
GROUPS

**WED. AT 7 PM -or- THURS. AT 12 PM**

What can we learn from stories of wandering hearts in the Bible? Where do we see ourselves in these stories? We will explore the stories, make connections to stories from our lives, and leave each week with a new practice to help us listen for God's voice.

## Bread of Life Co-ed Book Group

**Mondays at 7 PM**



Delve into the depths of Jesus' final words on the cross with "Seven Words" by Susan Robb.

Meetings feature a brief 10-12 minute video followed by a discussion of the video and the relevant book chapter.

**Questions? Contact  
Darrell@stmmts.org**

## Sandwich Generation Prayer Group

**1st and 3rd Tuesdays  
at 7:30 PM**



The "sandwich generation" is defined as a group that cares for their aging parents as well as for their children.

This group offers prayer, fellowship, and support for those in this season of life.



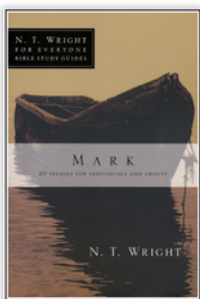
## Young Professionals

**2nd & 4th Sundays**

In your 20s/30s and looking to enrich your spiritual life? Join us in March!

Note: there will be no meeting March 31st because of Easter.

**Caitlin.Dronfield@stmmts.org**



## Men's Group: New Book Study

**Saturdays at 8 AM in the trailer**

Discover a deeper understanding of scripture and fellowship at our Men's Group. This Lent, we will study together the Gospel of Mark using NT Wright, *The Gospel of*

*Mark for Everyone*. Delve into Wright's rich insights and accessible translation, exploring how Mark's Gospel speaks to us today.

All are welcome, learn more about our Men's Group at [stmmts.org/mensgroup](http://stmmts.org/mensgroup)



## Women's Group Letters from Love

**Times and Dates Vary, see below**

Join our Letters from Love Women's small group led by Sara Warnick.

Meet at St. Matthew's on Sunday, Feb. 25th from 2 - 4 PM, March 10th, April 7th, and 21st from 1 - 3 PM. We will be exploring God's unconditional love and how to tap into that for nourishment, direction, and peace.

**RSVP: [stmmts.org/womensgroups](http://stmmts.org/womensgroups)**



# CHILDREN & YOUTH



## FAITH FACTORY SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM

Classes for Age 4 - 2nd Grade & Grades 3-5. Join us for Bible stories, games, crafts and more. Building faith, one child at a time.

## SUMMER CAMP VBS AT ST. MATT'S

JULY 22-26, 2024 | 5:30 - 8:30 PM

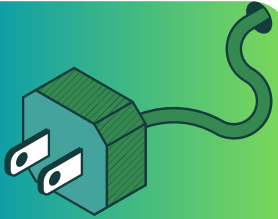
Join us for our favorite Summer Camp Experience, VBS! This summer, kids will dive into an ocean of discovery learning God is a real friend who loves them forever!

- Dinner each night
- Water Games
- Skits and Bible Adventures
- Live Band
- Science Experiments and more!

LEARN MORE: [stmtts.org/VBS](http://stmtts.org/VBS)

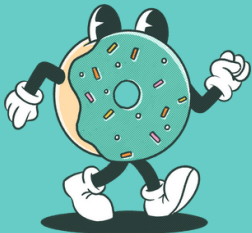


# YOUTH GROUP AT ST. MATT'S



## FAITH FACTORY UNPLUGGED Sundays at 9:30 AM in Classroom 4

Students in 6-8th Grade are invited to Faith Factory Unplugged on Sundays at 9:30 AM. Join us in Classroom 4 for Bible Study, tangible life lessons just for Middle Schoolers, and more.



## DONUTS & DISCOVERY Sundays at 10:30 AM in Classroom 1

Middle and high school youth will enjoy donuts, continue working through the Starting Point Series, and begin work on a Passion re-enactment for Palm Sunday (March 24th). Questions? Contact [Ben.Merola@stmtts.org](mailto:Ben.Merola@stmtts.org)



## TREE OF LIFE VOLUNTEERING EVENT Tuesday, March 5th | Meet at St. Matt's at 4 PM

Cost: FREE

Join Ben at the church to cook a meal for the homeless in collaboration with Tree of Life Ministries!



## LAUNCH TRAMPOLINE PARK EVENT

Monday, March 25th | Meet at Launch Herndon at 1:15 PM

Cost: \$10 (usually \$35 + cost of gear)

Schools are closed on 3/25, instead, join Ben at Launch Trampoline Park for an afternoon of fun!

More details and RSVP on the Band App or [stmtts.org/YouthEvents](http://stmtts.org/YouthEvents)