

A close-up photograph of several pumpkins in various shades of orange, yellow, and green, some with dark spots and stems.

# OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

## St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

*"God looks into our hearts  
and sees all that we are,  
including our ugliest parts,  
and the most shameful  
parts of our story. God sees  
those parts, and God loves  
us completely for who we  
are right now. That is the  
hope that is in me."*



### Inside:

TRUNK OR TREAT & PET  
BLESSINGS

COAT DRIVE UPDATES

YOUTH MISSION TRIP 2024

NEW WEDNESDAY NIGHT  
BIBLE STUDY

## HOPE

**KARA LAUGHLIN, SEMINARIAN**

Grace and Peace to you, people of St. Matthew's! I am writing to you from my room at Virginia Theological Seminary, where I am thinking of you and wondering about all we will do and learn together in my year as your seminarian. I am also thinking about hope.

Partly, that's because I have many hopes about our time together. Partly it's bringing up thoughts of my home state, Rhode Island, where Hope is the state motto. But mostly I'm thinking of hope because tomorrow I will give a three-minute testimony to my homiletics (Seminary-speak for preaching) class. We have been asked to take a passage of scripture that has been meaningful to us, and to speak "to the hope that is in us."

It's a good question to ponder: What is the hope that is in me? Where does it come from? Where does God reveal that hope in the story of God's people? I'm looking forward to what I know will be a wide variety of responses to these questions.

For my part, I'm planning to talk about Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well in John 4. This is the story where Jesus and his disciples stopped at a well in the middle of the day. The disciples go off to see about some food. Jesus stays behind at a well. When a Samaritan woman comes, he asks her for a drink, and she is astounded. She has plenty of reasons for being astounded, and we will look more deeply into this in October during Wednesday Night Bible Study when we discuss four encounters between Jesus and women in the Gospel of John.

For now, let's just say that Jesus is breaking all kinds of social barriers for the sake of love. In that story, I see Jesus looking deep into the heart of a woman who has been told by everyone around her that she doesn't count. Often when we tell the story, we might say something like, "But Jesus loves her anyway." But I'm not sure that's exactly right. Jesus loves her. Full stop. Jesus doesn't love her in spite of who she is, he loves who she is, in all her imperfections and failures.

I wonder how many of us have felt that if the people we love could see us, really see us, they might find they don't love us as much as they think they do. The story of the woman at the well reminds me that God looks into our hearts and sees all that we are, including our ugliest parts, and the most shameful parts of our story. God sees those parts, and God loves us completely for who we are right now. That is the hope that is in me.

Hope can be a tough sell in our world. If we want reasons to feel hopeless, most of us can bring up one or two things right to mind. But hope teaches us to look for what's good. Hope teaches us to believe that we can be loved. That the world is worth making better.

I wonder, where does your hope come from? Where is God in that hope? What exactly is the hope that is in you? I hope you join me for Wednesday night Bible Study this month so we can explore it together.

Kara

# 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

**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

## 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 - HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing at 12 PM  
Wednesdays - Bible Study 7 PM  
Thursdays - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM  
Sunday, Oct. 1st - HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing at 10:30 AM  
Saturday, Oct. 7th - SterlingFest Parade 9 AM - 12 PM  
Sunday, Oct. 8th - 2024 Youth Mission Trip Info. Meeting 10:30 AM  
Friday, Oct. 13th - Coat Drive Ends  
Sunday, Oct. 15th - Thanksgiving Food Drive Begins  
Sunday, Oct. 22nd - Trunk or Treat & Pet Blessing at 2 PM  
Friday, Oct. 27th - Game Night 6 PM

## NOVEMBER

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 November - HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing at 12 PM  
Wednesdays - Bible Study 7 PM  
Thursdays - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM  
Sunday, Nov. 5th - HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing at 10:30 AM  
Tuesday, Nov. 7th - Thanksgiving Food Drive Ends  
Friday, Nov. 24th - Game Night 6 PM  
Sunday, Nov. 26th - Christ the King Sunday

## DECEMBER

Sunday, Dec. 3rd - ADVENT BEGINS!

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



## CHECK OUT OUR WEEKLY PODCAST

Listen at  
[stmtts.org/podcast](https://stmtts.org/podcast)





# OCTOBER *outreach*



## WINTER COAT DRIVE

COLLECTING NEW AND GENTLY USED  
CHILDREN'S WINTER COATS| SIZE 6 - 16

St. Matthew's has partnered with Sterling area schools to help students in need receive a coat this winter.

Here's how:

1. Purchase requested items from our wish list and they will be sent directly to St. Matt's.\* (Costco currently has kids' winter coats on sale for \$15).
2. Purchase requested items at your chosen location and drop them off in the appropriate box(es) at the back of the church before/after Sunday services or during Tuesday/Thursday office hours (8 AM - 4 PM).
3. Make a financial gift online and in the memo note "Winter Coat Drive 2023".

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

PLEASE DROP OFF ALL COAT DONATIONS BY OCTOBER 13, 2023.

## THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

Pick up a reusable grocery bag and shopping list on Sunday, Oct. 15th. Drop off donations on or before Nov. 7th.

- Canned meats (tuna or chicken)
- Canned vegetables
- Dried beans
- White rice
- Corn flour (like Maseca)
- Vegetable oil
- Mac & Cheese
- Pasta
- Pasta sauce
- Special Treat (your choice)
- Disposable diapers/ Baby wipes\*
- Formula\*
- \$25 Walmart gift card\*

\*Optional items



HELP US  
REACH OUR  
GOAL OF  
205 BAGS!

DOWNLOAD SHOPPING LIST AND SIGN UP TO HELP:  
[stmtts.org/ThanksgivingBags](http://stmtts.org/ThanksgivingBags)

## BACKPACK BUDDIES

Backpack Buddies is packing again! Join us on Tuesdays at noon or the first Sunday of the month.

The Hunger Response Team of Sterling (HRTS) is a new 501c3 started to address the increasing needs of our Backpack Buddies program. Within the first month of school, our program has increased from 250 to 270 students needing support each week.

How can you help?

- Sponsor a child: \$9 a week provides six meals!
- Donate Food
- Help Pack
- Share with a friend!
- Follow HRTS on social media:



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

# FUN FACT

Backpack  
Buddies  
pack over  
1000 lbs of  
food EACH  
WEEK!

# OCTOBER *events*

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS AT 7 PM

This October, you're invited to join Kara, our new seminarian for our Wednesday Bible Study. We will look carefully at stories about Jesus and women in the Gospel of John.

As it happens, there are four Wednesdays and four stories. If you've always wondered why Jesus seems to be so mean to the woman at the well, this is the series for you. Join us on Wednesdays in October from 7-8 PM.



### STERLINGFEST PARADE

**STERLINGFEST PARADE**  
**SATURDAY, OCT. 7TH**  
**9 AM - 11 AM**

The annual SterlingFest Parade will take place on Saturday, October 7th.

St. Matthew's will be handing out reusable bags for the community to use when collecting candy during the parade.

Help us Know and Share God's love while enjoying this annual community event!

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



### WEEKLY CHOIR REHEARSALS

**JOIN THE CHOIR**  
**THURSDAYS AT 7:30 PM**

Come make a joyful noise and join the St. Matthew's choir!

The choir has returned to singing regularly at the 11 AM service.

All voices are welcome, please join our Choir Director, Kevin Fletcher for weekly rehearsals on Thursdays at 7:30 PM.

**LEARN MORE:**  
**[Kevin@stmtts.org](mailto:Kevin@stmtts.org)**



### OCTOBER GAME NIGHT

**OCTOBER GAME NIGHT**  
**FRIDAY OCTOBER, 29TH**  
**6 PM- 9 PM**

Join us for game night the last Friday of each month from 6pm-9pm.

Do you love tabletop games? Parks, Forbidden Desert, Sushi Go, Wing Span, Who Killed Dr. Lucky?

There are so many great games! Which is your favorite? Bring your favorite board or card game and a snack to share, as we enjoy hanging out and trying new games.



# OCTOBER

## Children's Ministry & Events

### TRUNK TREAT & PET BLESSING

Sunday, Oct. 22  
2PM - 4PM

Come in your (non-scary) Halloween costumes for games, and trick or treat at decorated car trunks for allergy-friendly candy/toys.

Pets are also welcome to come in their costumes for treats and a special blessing.

SIGN UP TO HOST A TRUNK!

LEARN MORE:  
[stmmts.org/TrunkOrTreat](http://stmmts.org/TrunkOrTreat)



## FAITH FACTORY KIDS SUNDAYS AT 9:30 AM

Our Faith Factory classes have been having tons of fun this fall!

- Reading about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
- Painting
- Sunday Funnies
- Games like Family Fued to review the Ten Commandments
- Learning about forgiveness and the Lord's Prayer in Sign Language
- Our children even received a visit from the Bishop!

All students ages 4 through 5th grade are invited to join Ms. Hilary and Ms. Yarbrough every Sunday at 9:30 AM!

Learn more & Register: [stmmts.org/FaithFactory](http://stmmts.org/FaithFactory)



# YOUTH GROUP AT ST. MATT'S

## OCTOBER YOUTH EVENTS

### **LASER TAG AT ULTRAZONE LOUDOUN**

Sunday, October 8th | 4 PM - 6 PM

For Middle & High School Students

Cost: \$25

Ultrazone Loudoun is one of the area's best laser tag facilities. Middle and High School youth are invited to join Ben for an afternoon of fun.

### **YOUTH AT TRUNK OR TREAT & PET BLESSING**

Sunday, October 22 | 1 PM - 4 PM

For Middle & High School Students

Cost: FREE EVENT

Come decorate Ben's trunk, wear your non-scary Halloween costume, and help us celebrate the spooky season with the community. Pet Blessings will also be offered this year!

Learn more: [stmmts.org/trunkortreat](http://stmmts.org/trunkortreat)

### **CLIMB UPTON**

Sunday, October 29 | 3 PM - 5 PM

For Middle & High School Students

Cost: \$40 for youth 8-15, \$50 for 16+

Climb Upton is a 90-element vertical adventure located in Upton Hill Regional Park in Arlington, VA. Climbers can choose their challenge with easy, medium, and hard features on all 3 levels. All Middle and High School youth are invited for this epic day of team building fun.

### **MORE EVENTS & AND SAVE THE DATES ON OUR WEBSITE:**

- Hiking
- Holiday Volunteering Event
- Bowling at Bowl America
- Launch Trampoline Park Outing
- LOCK-IN! COMING SOON!

**Event details & RSVP:**  
[stmmts.org/YouthEvents](http://stmmts.org/YouthEvents)



## 2024

## **YOUTH MISSION TRIP**

**PARENT INFORMATION MEETING:**  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8TH 10:30 AM

This summer, our youth will travel to Dinwiddie, VA from June 23 - 29th for a week of service and diving into their faith journey.

Parents are invited to an information meeting, Sunday, Oct. 8th at 10:30 AM, students are invited to join in following Donuts & Discovery.

Learn more on our website & RSVP for the information session:

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

## **DONUTS & DISCOVERY**



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