# AUGUST NEWSLETTER
## St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

### A message from our Rector, Rev. Rob Merola

Dear and Beloved Friends,

As I was walking through my garden one morning, enjoying the beautiful blooms, I was reminded of one of my favorite stories. I thought, perhaps, you would enjoy it too.

It happened some years ago now; in fact, it happened the summer I planted my first flower garden. Everything had been grown from seed, and gently (oh so gently!) nurtured along. Each plant was lovingly watered, pruned, and fertilized, and diligently protected from pests. The result was a beautiful blanket of blooms of which I was so very proud!

Not long after the flowers started blooming, Linda was sitting in the living room on a Friday afternoon (I was away on a Vestry retreat) and heard some noise outside the window. Looking out, she saw some neighborhood kids being kids and pulling the flowers off my beloved plants. They were giggling as they picked them and threw them on the ground. Linda rushed out the door and, of course, as soon as they saw her they ran away.

It didn't take Linda long to find them. She invited them to return to the garden with her. "Please do not pull off the flowers," she said, "because it damages the plants." But then she went on to do something I have always thought to be extraordinary.

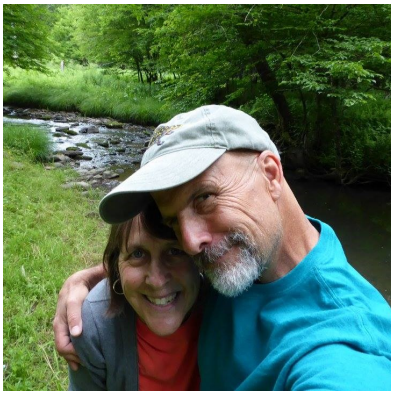
Using clippers, she cut each kid a nice long stemmed flower, gave it to them, and said gently, "All I ask is that you please ask me if you'd like some flowers." The kids went away amazed, and we never had another problem. I couldn't help but thinking it was probably a good thing she was home and not me!

Linda's approach to life has pretty much never been to see what she can take, to protect what she has, or to get what she can out of something or somebody else. To the contrary, she really is the kind of person who looks for what she can give. In short, she chooses the way of Love.

That's what a follower of Jesus looks like, I think. It's what I hope we look like as individuals and as a church; freely sharing whatever we have with whoever is in need, whenever and wherever they need it. And it's why after 36 years of marriage I'm still excited to hang out with my wife: I keep hoping more of her will rub off on me!

Hopefully,

Rob+



### This issue:


- **Back to School Blessing**
- **Education for Ministry**
- **August Events**
- **August Outreach**

# WAYS TO CONNECT

**Summer Faith Factory for Kids**
Sundays at 9:30am

**Youth Group Sunday (Not) School**
Sundays at 10:15am

**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

**Social Time with Kevin**
Mondays at 8:30pm on Zoom
Email Kevin Fletcher: Kevin@stmtts.org

**Outreach Meeting**
Email Kristin.Drummond@stmtts.org

**WatCh (Wednesdays at Church)**
Pausing for August

**Men's Group**
Saturdays at 8:00am
Email Linden: Linden@stmtts.org

**Algonkian Park Walking Group**
**(Coffee Chat) Dogs & Children Welcome**
Saturday, August 6th at 9 AM
Questions? Office@stmtts.org

# SAVE *the date*

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH**

JOIN US IN CELEBRATION
AS WE WELCOME
REV. MARY MARGARET
BACK TO ST. MATTHEW'S

# AUGUST

SUMMER EVENTS AT ST. MATT'S

## AUGUST

Tuesdays - Celebration Garden Volunteering 8:30 AM
Friday, August 5th - Youth Group Beach Bash at St. Matt's
Saturday, August 6th - Algonkian Park Walking Group
Thursday, August 11th - Youth Group Escape Room Outing
Sunday, August 14th - National Creamsicle Day
Tuesday, August 16th - Education for Ministry Open House
Sunday, August 21st - Back to School Backpack Blessings
Sunday, August 28th - Aloha Summer Sunday!

## SEPTEMBER SAVE THE DATES

Sunday, September 4th - Reverend Mary Margaret Returns!
Sunday, September 11th - Back to Church Sunday

**FOR INDIVIDUAL EVENT DETAILS, VISIT STMTTS.ORG/EVENTS**

*"I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."*

*- Philippians 4:13*

Want to start the school year off right for you and your family? Check out these resources:

## BACK TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

- Prayers
- Lunchbox notes
- Free weekly organizer
- Tips for a less-stressful back to school and more

**Visit stmtts.org/backpackblessing**

# EVENTS

## COFFEE & CHAT ALGONKIAN PARK WALKING GROUP

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6TH AT 9AM
ALGONKIAN PARK SHELTER ONE

BRING YOUR FAVORITE TO-GO CUP OF COFFEE AND JOIN US AT ALGONKIAN PARK TO WALK & CHAT!

*SHELTER ONE IS ADJACENT TO A PLAYGROUND, CHILDREN ARE WELCOME.*

**QUESTIONS? Contact Office@stmtts.org**

## NATIONAL CREAMSICLE DAY

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14

**JOIN US FOR REFRESHING CREAMSICLES**
COFFEE HOUR BETWEEN THE 9:30 & 11AM SERVICES

## EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

EfM is a 4-year small-group program that provides an education in the content of the Christian tradition. Participants read, study, and discuss ways to live into their theological beliefs and to be an example of the heart and hands of Christ.

**EfM Open House, August 16th, join us to learn more. Snacks will be served.**

**LEARN MORE: stmtts.org/efm**

## Aloha Summer

**BEACH BASH SUNDAY AUGUST, 28TH**

JOIN US FOR SERVICE & COFFEE HOUR AS WE SAY ALOHA TO SUMMER

**WEAR YOUR FAVORITE HAWAIIAN SHIRT!**

## BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 21**
9:30 AM SERVICE

STUDENTS OF ALL AGES, TEACHERS & SCHOOL STAFF ARE ALL INVITED FOR A SPECIAL BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLESSING.

# CHILDREN & YOUTH

## VBS HIGHLIGHTS

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS WHO MADE VBS A SUCCESS!**

Together we connected with almost 70 children from St. Matthew's and our community!

A special thank you to Corinne Glascock our VBS Director. Corinne is a dedicated teacher in Fairfax County and a long-time member of St. Matthew's. Her hard work and dedication made this a VBS to remember!

For more pictures, visit our Facebook page!

## SUMMER SUNDAY FAITH FACTORY

**June 19 - Aug 28**

**9:30 AM**

PRE-K THROUGH 5TH GRADE

JOIN US ON SUNDAYS FOR ALWAYS FUN, SOMETIMES MESSY, LESSONS ON FAITH!

YOUTH GROUP
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

## SUNDAY (NOT) SCHOOL

**SUNDAYS AT 10:15 AM**

**GRADES 6 THROUGH 12**
**IN THE CLASSROOMS ON THE HILL**

**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).**

## YOUTH OUTING BEACH BASH AT ST. MATTHEW'S

Friday, August 5th
6 PM - 9 PM

Our Beach Bash is going to be an outdoor, summer extravaganza!

Volleyball, glow sticks, water balloons, yard games, a slip and slide, and all sorts of summer fun.

Parents are asked to contribute to our picnic food offerings for this great event.

## YOUTH OUTING ESCAPE ROOM

ESCAPE ROOM HERNDON
Thursday, August 11th
1:30 PM - 4 PM

Cost approx. $30 per person, scholarships available.

**LEARN MORE & REGISTER:**
stmtts.org/YouthEvents

# OUTREACH

## SCHOOL SUPPLY COLLECTION

This year, we've received specific requests from our schools – to help us to fill their exact needs by purchasing/donating one or more of the following items between July 20th and August 14th. Help us give local students what they need to succeed!

**THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED!**

**HERE'S HOW:**

1) Purchase requested items from our Walmart school supply wish list where they will be sent directly to St. Matt's: stmtts.org/BackToSchool

2) Purchase requested items at a location of your choosing 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).

**HERE'S WHAT OUR SCHOOLS NEED:**

- 4-Packs of black dry erase markers; Goal: 100
- 3-Subject college-ruled notebooks; Goal: 100
- Wide-ruled black marble composition notebooks; Goal: 100
- Fiskars 5" blunt tip scissors; Goal: 100
- Packs of college ruled loose leaf paper; Goal: 300
- Jlab Jbuddies Studio Over-ear wired headphones; Goal: 50

LEARN MORE & SHOP OUR WISHLISTS:
stmtts.org/BackToSchool

BE THE CHANGE | BECOME A SATELITE FOR FOOD DONATIONS

- PLACE A BIN ON YOUR FRONT STEP
- TELL THE NEIGHBORHOOD
- DROP OFF DONATIONS AT CHURCH!

LEARN HOW YOU CAN BECOME A SATELLITE FOR FOOD PANTRIES:

**stmtts.org/BeTheChange**

## LINK FOOD PANTRY

**Help fight food insecurity in Loudoun County.**
**Donation drop off Tues & Thurs 8 AM - 5 PM**

- Toilet Paper
- Paper towels
- Diapers
- Baby Wipes
- Feminine Products
- Pasta
- Pasta Sauce
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Fruit
- Rice, Beans
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Hamburger Helper
- Soup

**Learn more: stmtts.org/Link**