

APRIL

NEWSLETTER

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR DAYS

REV. ROB MEROLA

Dear Friends,

I remember it like it was yesterday.

It's Saturday afternoon, and I'm in the office. My brother, who lived in Springfield at the time, calls. He and his family are in the area, and he thought they might drop by for a visit. It's a pleasant surprise; even though I have a lot to do, I drive home.

When I get there, my 20-month-old nephew Ben is running around the backyard (he just turned 21 last July). Somehow that turns into a walk to the Potomac River, a distance of about a mile and a half from our back door.

I'm still in my dress shoes and clergy blacks, though I had taken off the collar. Aunt Karla (our name for my brother Matthew's wife) is eight months pregnant with Elise (now a sophomore on the dance team at Virginia Tech). Our daughters, Christine and Mary, are still at home. They too drop what they are doing and happily join us. On our way to the river, Linda and I walk hand in hand in the warm afternoon sunlight and feel like kids again.

The trail is quite muddy; none of us are able to avoid it. We frequently need to pick Ben up and redirect him so he won't head off into the woods or fall into a stream. As we do so, the mud travels further up our bodies and our clothing. When we get to the river, we throw stones and watch the water go by.

On the way back, Ben finally gives out. He falls asleep in my brother's arms. We were almost home when Matthew gives out and I have to carry him. Ben, that is, not my brother.

The day wasn't anything planned. It just happened. Even now, some 20 years later, I am so glad it did.

Easter will come this month. It will be a time to worship God, and there is nothing that could be more important. But it will also be a time to enjoy the good gifts God has given us in one another, and that is of vital importance as well. In these uncertain times, when none of us knows what tomorrow may hold, it is the wise man, woman, and child who will make the most of their days by making sure they have time for both.

Rob +



April 2023

THIS ISSUE:

- Holy Week & Easter
- Youth Sunday
- Talent Show
- "The Last of Us" Discussion
- Spring Events

WAYS TO CONNECT

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

Faith Factory for Kids
Pre-K through Gr. 5
Sundays at 9:30 AM

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

Sandwich Generation
1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 7:30 PM
office@stmmts.org

Donuts & Discovery - Middle & High School Students
Sundays at 10:30 AM

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

WatCh (Wednesdays at Church)
Wednesdays at 7 PM

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

Bread of Life Prayer Group
Mondays at 7:00 PM
Darrell@stmmts.org

Men's Group
Saturdays at 8:00 AM
Linden@stmmts.org

EVENTS & SAVE THE DATES

APRIL

Tuesdays - Backpack Buddies Packing at 12 PM

Wednesdays - WatCh at 7 PM

Sundays at 10:30 Donuts and Discovery

Sat., April 1st - Parish Work Day 9 AM - 12 PM

Sun., April 2nd - Palm Sunday Services

Thurs., April 6th - Maundy Thursday

Fri., April 7th - Good Friday

Sat., April 8th - Holy Saturday

Sun., April 9th - Easter Sunday

Sat., April 15th - Talent Show & Silent Auction

Sun., April 16th - "The Last of Us" Discussion & Dinner 6 PM

Sun., April 30th - Newcomers Reception

MAY

Tuesdays - Backpack Buddies Packing at 12 PM

Wednesdays - WatCh at 7 PM

Sundays at 10:30 Donuts and Discovery

Sun., May 14th - Mother's Day

HOLY WEEK

A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN 7 DAYS



PALM SUNDAY 8, 9:30 & 11 AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY 7:30 PM

GOOD FRIDAY 12 PM & 7:30 PM

HOLY SATURDAY 10 AM



HE IS RISEN

CELEBRATE EASTER

with St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

6:00 AM Easter Sunrise Worship

Join us at Saint Matthew's for a stunning 6 AM Sunrise Worship Service with Paschal fire followed by a light Brunch in the Parish Hall.

9:30 AM Festival Easter Worship with Band*

Join us at 9:30 AM for our vibrant Festival Easter Worship with Band as we joyfully celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

11:00 AM Easter Worship*

Join us at Saint Matthew's for joyful Easter Worship with Choir & Strings as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord.

**Outdoor Egg Hunt & Celebration for children following the 9:30 & 11 AM services.*

stmtts.org/Easter

EVENTS & PRAYER GROUPS

Spring WATCH WEDNESDAYS AT CHURCH

WatCH (Wednesdays at Church) will resume April 19 and continuing each Wednesday thereafter on into the month of May.

We will meet from 7 to 8 PM as we consider how to live a life pleasing to God.

Topics will include such things as What God Wants, The World: Good or Evil?, The Role of Satan, and What Do We Do With Guilt? Please join us!

THE LAST OF US

DISCUSSION & COOKOUT

SUNDAY, APRIL 16TH | 6 PM - 8 PM

Address: 34 Bedford Drive, Sterling VA
Come through the side gate to the garden

What do YOU think of the ending of The Last of Us?

Join us as we discuss this deeply emotional turn of events that has generated such deep feelings for so many.

Should be a fun night; if you watched the show, you'll no doubt want to join us! Bring a side dish to share.

(Note: this show contains strong and graphic violence and disturbing themes, so it is not kid friendly).



SANDWICH GENERATION PRAYER GROUP

The "sandwich generation" is defined as a group that cares for their aging parents as well as for their own children. This group offers prayer, fellowship, and support for those in this season of life. This group meets on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm.

an evening of Joy, Hope & Inspiration

Hosted by Akila O'Grady with
Red Wind Diaries & St. Matt's 930 Band

Saturday, April 29 from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Join Akila for an evening of inspirational songs, and love to celebrate her birthday.

RSVP required office@stmtts.org

NEWCOMER'S

RECEPTION

Sunday, April 30th, 3 PM
Rev. Rob & Linda Merola's Garden

Enjoy refreshments and fellowship. The main dish & drinks will be provided, please bring a side dish. Lawn chairs and/or blankets to sit on are recommended.

Address: 34 Bedford Drive, Sterling VA
Come through the side gate to the garden

RSVP: Miriam@stmtts.org

STUDENT MINISTRIES

PALM SUNDAY KIDS PARADE

APRIL 2ND 9:30 AM

Calling all Kids! Join us for our 9:30 service as we process into the church to celebrate Palm Sunday followed by Faith Factory in the Parish Hall.

EASTER SUNDAY KIDS EVENTS

- Special Easter Children's Church Service - Parish Hall 9:30 AM
- Goodie Bags at all Services
- Egg Hunts following the 9:30 & 11 AM services
- See the Easter Bunny!

Learn more:
stmmts.org/Easter

BIBLE STORY PEEPS DIORAMA CONTEST

SUNDAY, APRIL 2ND
AT 10:30 AM

AWARDS FOR
Old Testament
New Testament
Best Overall
Best Incorporation of a Donut

(in honor of our Donuts & Discovery Class)

Kids/Students through grade
12 may enter



DONUTS & DISCOVERY

SUNDAYS AT 10:30 AM
Classroom 4

Middle & High School
Students are invited as we dive into stories of the bible. Did those things really happen?
OR are they just stories?

Questions?
journey@stmmts.org

CHANGE JARS SUPPORTING YOUTH MISSION TRIP

Our students are excited about this summer's mission trip to Erie, PA. They will spend a week repairing homes, deepening their faith, and building relationships.

Will you pick up a change jar by the front doors of the church and add coins over the next few months? As you add coins, pray for our student's lives, and those they meet, to be touched and changed for good. Coins collected in June will be used to defer costs for transportation and supplies.

LEARN MORE:
stmmts.org/youthmission

St. Matt's Students Presents TALENT SHOW & SILENT AUCTION

Supporting the summer Youth Mission Trip to Erie, PA

SATURDAY, APRIL 15TH
6 - 8 PM

REGISTER TO PERFORM:
stmmts.org/TalentShow

Questions? Contact
office@stmmts.org

YOUTH SUNDAY

APRIL 30TH AT 9:30 AM

Join us as the Students of St. Matthew's lead our worship service. Questions on how your student can get involved?

Contact journey@stmmts.org



BACCALAUREATE CELEBRATION

SAVE THE DATE! June 4th

Graduates and their families are cordially invited to celebrate all of your accomplishments.

RSVP office@stmmts.org

APRIL AT ST. MATT'S

PARISH WORK DAY SAT. APRIL 1ST 9 AM - 12 PM

We need YOUR help preparing the church grounds for Easter!

We have inside jobs and outside jobs - options for all ages and ability levels. Join us for any amount of time you can!

Donuts and coffee will be served!

EASTER VOLUNTEERS

Holy Week & Easter Volunteers Needed

- 5-minute jobs
- Jobs you can do from home
- Help with services
- Welcome Visitors
- Put out Eggs for the Egg Hunt and more!

stmtts.org/EasterHelp

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

PAT & FRANK WAGNER



Pat & Frank have generously donated their time and talents to our Thanksgiving and Easter Bag Food Drives. Their dedication has greatly improved the process and capacity of donations we have been able to share with the community over the last couple of years. We are blessed to have them!



BACKPACK BUDDIES

is now part of the Hunger
Response Team of Sterling

Why was HRTS created?

To help better support Backpack Buddies to receive access to potential grants and corporate matching programs we are unable to apply for as a religious institution.

In the future, HRTS hopes to grow and support additional outreach programs in Loudoun County.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

GIVE - sponsor a child
SHOP - drop off food donations
SHARE - tell a friend!

**LEARN MORE &
FIND OUR SHOPPING LISTS:**
sterlinghelp.org