

APRIL NEWSLETTER

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church



HOW DO WE MEASURE WHAT REALLY MATTERS?

by Rev. Rob Merola, Rector

Dear Friends,

People love numbers. If we can put a number to something, it gives us a concrete way to measure how we are doing. And if we can figure out how to change a number, either moving it up or down as the situation dictates, it can make us feel in control of otherwise complicated issues.

Recently, for instance, I received a free Fitbit (a fitness tracker you wear on your wrist like a watch) through our insurance. I love it! It measures all kinds of things, and seeing those numbers so clearly makes me feel like there are things I can do to enjoy better health. I can count steps. I can increase exercise time spent in the cardio zone to drop my resting heart rate (arguably one of the best overall indicators of one's health). I can see how many calories I've burned. And so on!

You can think of all kinds of things that people like to put a number to as an indication of how they are doing in life. Salaries, grade point averages, and birthdays are a few examples; I'm sure you can think of many more.

The problem is, that it becomes too easy to track the wrong things or to oversimplify complex problems. Take salary, for instance. Is that really the best way to measure how one is doing in one's life's vocation (in a delicious irony, spell check wanted me to change this to "vacation")? It is the number many people focus on exclusively, but there are so many other factors that are potentially more meaningful. The catch is, they are harder to measure (and compare!) and so require deep thought and reflection. For a Christian, such a measure might be the correspondence between God's will and their life. This might even make salary irrelevant. But how does one measure such correspondence?

Or take birthdays. Is the number of birthdays on planet earth really the best measure of how one is doing at really being alive? Again, that's harder to capture, isn't it?

And some things—maybe the most important things of all in life—resist being simplistically quantified. Like love, maybe. I don't know that I've ever seen a "love measure", because relational richness in life is dependent on a great many factors.

Or—and this is where I'm going with all of this—one's spiritual life. How do we measure how well we are doing spiritually? I am unaware of any simple number that gives us an easy measure of our spiritual health. Instead, what's needed is the willingness to do the hard work of determining what a healthy spiritual life looks like, and what it requires (and yes, a healthy spiritual does make requirements, the absence of which probably means that in reality, one doesn't have much of a spiritual life at all). Rather than looking for simple numbers, might it make more sense to consider how we might alter our behavior to reach the quality of spiritual life we desire?

I do love my Fitbit. I think it will make me healthier. But I love my church more. Because I know it brings me closer to Jesus.

Warmly,
Rob+

THIS ISSUE:

- Sermon Series: Eclipse
- New! 11 AM Faith Factory Class
- The Chosen Season 4 Viewing
- Earth Day & Blueberry Pie?!

APRIL AT ST. MATT'S

MAY

SAVE THE DATES
EVERY WEEK

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620 Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	2 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM Sandwich Gen. 7:30 PM	3 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 7 PM	4 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 12 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	5	6 Men's Group 8 AM
7 Spring Faith Factory Begins! See Page 5 Backpack Buddies Packing at 10:30 AM	8 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620 Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	9 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM	10 Youth Group Event. See Page 6 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 7 PM	11 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 12 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	12	13 Men's Group 8 AM Marie Thomen Memorial Service (Tentative)
Women's Group 1PM	14 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620 Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	15 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM	16 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 7 PM	17 Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	18	19 Men's Group 8 AM
14 Eclipse Sermon Series Begins Youth Group Event See Page 6	YoPros at 1 PM	16 Sandwich Generation 7:30 PM	17 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 7 PM	18 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 12 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	19	20 Men's Group 8 AM
21 Celebrating Earth Day! Women's Group 1PM	22 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620 Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	23 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM	24 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 7 PM	25 Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	26	27 Men's Group 8 AM
28 National Blueberry Pie Day YoPros at 1 PM Women's Group at Women Giving Back 1 - 3:30 PM	29 Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620 Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	30 HRTS Backpack Buddies Packing 12 PM	30 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 7 PM	30 The Chosen Season 4 View & Discuss 12 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	30 Game Night 6 PM	

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 8, 9:30 & 11 AM
Faith Factory (Age 4 - Gr. 5) at 9:30 & 11 AM
Donuts & Discovery (Gr. 6 - 12) at 9:30 AM

WEEKDAY EVENINGS
Compline at 8 PM online: stmmts.org/live

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:

stmmts.org/calendar

- Sundays**
- Faith Factory (Age 4 - 5th grade) & Middle/High School Donuts & Discovery Groups at 9:30 AM
 - 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
 - Sandwich Generation (1st and 3rd Tuesdays) at 7:30 PM
- Wednesdays**
- Bible Study at 7 PM
- Thursdays**
- Bible Study at 12 PM
 - Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM
- Saturdays**
- Men's Group 8 AM
- Sundays**
- Young Professionals Group (2nd and 4th Sundays at 1 PM)
 - Weekday Evenings
 - Compline at 8 PM stmmts.org/live

SPECIAL EVENTS & SERVICES
April 30 - May 2nd
The Church office will be closed for staff training

Sunday, May 5th

- Special Cinco De Mayo Coffee Hour
- Backpack Buddies at 10:30 AM
- Youth Event at 12 PM

Sunday, May 12th

- Mother's Day - Special treat for all women on Mother's Day

Sunday, May 19th

- Pentecost, wear red!
- Youth Event at 12 PM

Sunday, May 26th
Services at 8 and 10:30 AM

- St. Matthew's Memorial Weekend Picnic begins at 11:30 AM

eclipse

stop and see the SON



NEW SERMON SERIES

BEGINNING SUNDAY, APRIL 14TH

This series will encourage us to pause amidst life's busyness and distractions, compelling us to gaze intently at the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

WELCOME GUEST PREACHER

Pastor Annabelle P. Markey



St. Matthew's is excited to invite Pastor Annabelle P. Markey as a guest preacher on Sunday, April 7th.

Annabelle grew up in Maryland and studied German, Medieval Studies, and Global Studies at Hood College, studying abroad in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany. After college,

she worked in the travel industry for three years while discerning a call to ministry. She graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary) with concentrations in Biblical Studies and Theology and Public Life focused on Christian-Jewish dialogue. She also completed a Certificate in Ecumenical Studies through the Washington Theological Consortium and spent time living in the Collegium Oecumenicum, an ecumenical community in Munich, Germany. She served as an ordained pastor at Community Lutheran Church in Sterling, VA for nearly ten years.

In 2022, she became a certified spiritual director through the Oasis Ministries for Spiritual Development "Spiritual Direction for Spiritual Guides" Program. Her website is www.journeying-together.com. On a lighter note, she loves tacos, dogs, traveling, learning languages, singing, knitting, writing icons, and walking/hiking. She's married to a wonderful fellow named Jeff, hangs out with a big Labrador Retriever named Hasper, and looks forward to meeting you!

STUMP THE SEMINARIAN

WITH ANAM & KARA



Ask "Anam the Axolotl" & our Seminarian, Kara Laughlin

Is there something about the Episcopal church that you've always wondered about? Maybe it's all the standing and sitting and kneeling. Maybe it's one line we say every week that's never really made sense to you. Or maybe you're really into church trivia and want to know more.

Well, good news! Now's your chance to get some answers and help our seminarian at the same time. Kara is working on a set of short educational videos for a class project and she needs your help.

Please send your burning questions about God and the church to kara.laughlin@stmtts.org. She'll pick her favorites to research and we'll share the final videos with you on our Facebook & Instagram Pages!

The CHOSEN

SEASON 4

SCREENING & DISCUSSION

Wed. at 7 PM -or- Thurs. at 12 PM
Beginning April 3rd & 4th

Join us on Wednesday evenings at 7 PM or Thursdays at 12 PM in April and May to watch 1 episode per week followed by discussion questions.

The Chosen is a historical drama based on the life of Jesus. The series shares an authentic look at Jesus' revolutionary life and teachings. Attendees will not need to have watched seasons 1-3 beforehand, however they are free to watch on the Angel Studios app.

WOMEN'S GROUP

APRIL 7 & 21 AT 1 PM

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

We will be exploring God's unconditional love and how to tap into that for nourishment, direction, and peace. For additional details & meeting location:

stmmts.org/womensgroups

WOMEN'S GROUP VOLUNTEER EVENT

Sun., April 28th | 1 - 3:30 PM

Women are invited to bring any gently used spring or summer women's and kids' clothing to donate.

RSVP required:
stmmts.org/WomenGivingBack



MEN'S GROUP

Saturdays at 8 AM

Discover a deeper understanding of scripture and fellowship at our Men's Group.

We are studying together the Gospel of Mark using NT Wright, The Gospel of Mark for Everyone.

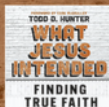
stmmts.org/MensGroup

BREAD OF LIFE BOOK GROUP

MONDAYS AT 7PM

Starting April 1st, resuming:
What Jesus Intended: Finding True Faith in the Rubble of Bad Religion.

Come for a fresh hearing of Jesus—one that offers us the healing and goodness we've always longed for.



BACKPACK BUDDIES

Packing Sunday, April 7 & Tuesdays at Noon.

Join us on Tuesdays at noon, and the first Sunday of every month during coffee hour between the 9:30 & 11 AM services.

Learn more:
sterlinghelp.org/BackpackBuddies



Celebrate Earth Day

Sunday, April 21st

Join us on Sunday, April 21st to celebrate Earth Day (a little early).

Come for worship & pick up a pack of seeds to aid your spring planting.

GAME NIGHT

Friday, April 26th
6 PM

Love board games, card games, strategy games?

Bring a snack and your favorite game for an evening of fun!

NATIONAL BLUEBERRY PIE DAY

Sunday, April 28th

Join us on Sunday, April 28th for worship & join us for coffee hour between the 9:30 & 11 AM services for a slice of blueberry pie!



MEMORIAL WEEKEND PICNIC AT ST. MATT'S

Sunday, May 26th | 11:30 AM

Join us for our annual afternoon of fun at St. Matthew's. Enjoy hot dogs & burgers from the grill, games, face painting, kids moon bounce and more.

Services this Sunday will be held at 8 & 10:30 AM.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

NEW THIS APRIL! FAITH FACTORY KIDS

BEGINNING APRIL 7TH

Exciting News! Faith Factory will have classes during our 9:30 AND 11 AM Services starting this April!

Register: stmmts.org/FaithFactory



SUMMER CAMP VBS AT ST. MATT'S

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

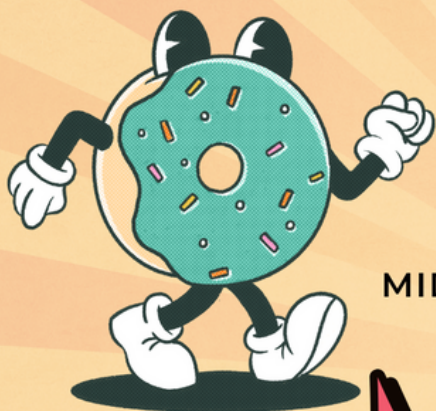
Join us for our favorite Summer Camp Experience, VBS! This summer, kids will dive into an ocean of discovery learning God is a real friend who loves them forever!

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

LEARN MORE: stmmts.org/VBS



YOUTH GROUP AT ST. MATT'S



DONUTS AND DISCOVERY

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL BREAKOUT GROUPS

NEW
TIME!

SUNDAYS AT
9:30 AM

STARTING APRIL 7TH

QUESTIONS? CONTACT
BEN.MEROLA@STMTTS.ORG



YOUTH SERVICE EVENT | WED. APRIL 10, 2 - 5 PM

Schools will be closed, so St. Matt's Youth will spend the afternoon assisting with outdoor work at *Good Shepherd of Northern Virginia*, a local nonprofit providing help to the homeless.

What to bring: Work gloves and a rake (if you have one), and a bottle of water. Wear comfortable clothes you don't mind getting dirty. RSVP on the Band App



HIKE AT GREAT FALLS PARK | SUN. APRIL 21st 11 AM - 1 PM

All middle & high school youth are invited to go for a hike on Sunday, April 21st from 11 AM - 1 PM as an early Earth Day celebration.

Bring a bag lunch, water, and wear comfortable clothing & good-quality sneakers/shoes. RSVP on the Band app



YOUTH MISSION TRIP | JUNE 23 - 29

Most families are planning their summer camps now, be sure to add the Youth Mission Trip to your schedule! Cost: \$500 - scholarships and payment plans available.

LEARN MORE: stmtts.org/youthmission

Join us on the BAND APP

ST. MATT'S
YOUTH
GROUP



SCAN HERE