



# The Quarterly Link

The newsletter of

## St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

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## Summer 2010

(All these articles are also available on-line, at [www.stmatthewsrichmond.org](http://www.stmatthewsrichmond.org))

### KEEPING OUR EYES ON JESUS

By Rev. Charles D. Alley

*"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied,  
"tell me to come to you on the water."*

*"Come," [Jesus] said.*

*Then Peter got out of the boat,  
walked on the water and came toward  
Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was  
afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out,  
"Lord, save me!"*

*Immediately Jesus reached out his  
hand and caught him. "You of little  
faith," [Jesus] said, "why did you  
doubt?" (Matthew 14:28-31)*

Anyone who keeps up with the news knows that this is a turbulent time for Episcopal churches.

Locally, in the Diocese of Virginia, we are embroiled in lawsuits over property ownership with those who were our brothers and sisters only a few years ago. On the national scene, the Episcopal Church leadership seems more bent on breaking canon law than enforcing it and continues on its merry way on a trajectory that takes it further and further away from the teachings of Scripture and the practice of the rest of the Anglican

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Communion. Internationally, the Anglican Communion is in an uproar about how it is to deal with the North American Anglican provinces.

It is indeed a dark and stormy night for those of us in fishing boats upon the sea. But Jesus is still sovereign, and his step upon the sea and his command to the wind bring calm even today. Just as for Peter, if we want to do what Jesus does, we must keep our eyes on him.

Here at St. Matthew's we are endeavoring to do just that. Jesus in his great commission did not command us to bring peace or to maintain the structures of the Church, he called us to go and make disciples of the nations (Matthew 28:18-20). We will know the peace of

God, even in the most turbulent conditions, if we align ourselves with the will of God. And since we have a missionary God, we need to follow him by keeping our focus on mission.

This summer there has been a group of your fellow parishioners who have been meeting every two weeks with the clergy in order to discern what God would have us do as a congregation. This has not been a task of deciding where we should do mission, but rather a difficult and challenging exercise in discerning who God has called us to be as a mission community. This is an important and exciting time in our life together as we seek to focus our sight more clearly on Jesus so we can know his peace in the midst of the storm and follow him more nearly through the turbulence.

Although the heavy lifting is on the shoulders of the Mission Task Group, we need the whole congregation to participate with us if we are to successfully follow Jesus as a community. One of the most important elements of the entire endeavor is to stay connected to God through prayer and that is something in which we all need to participate. Please pray daily for the Mission Task Group and the congregation as we seek the mind and will of the Lord. Here is a prayer that we all can pray:

*Lord Jesus, give to us, the people of St. Matthew's, the eyes to be able to see you and the ears to be able to hear you so that we can follow you according to your way. Through the guidance of your Holy Spirit direct us to your perfect will for us. We desire to know how and what you would have us do for the spread of your kingdom in the world. Enlighten the Mission Task Group and empower us to be what you*

*would have us be and do what you would have us do so that we might glorify you and love our neighbors. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.*

### **Watch for news on St. Matthew's Day this September 19<sup>th</sup>**

We will be celebrating our 62<sup>nd</sup> year as a parish with special speakers and events, including an ice cream social. You don't want to miss it! Watch the Week Link and our website, [stmatthewsrichmond.org](http://stmatthewsrichmond.org), for more information.

### **Playground Matching Challenge Met**

As of this week we have met the match for the playground. The total received to date is \$5,671.40. It is not too late to continue contributing to this fund. The more money we raise, the more new equipment and the safer the playground will become. Thanks to those who have given, thanks to the donor who started us on this path, and thanks to all who will contribute as we go forward.

### **St. Matthew's Daily Devotional is now on Facebook.com**

If you enjoy using social media, be sure to "Like" our new Facebook page featuring the daily devotional from Chuck. He's just begun part 2 of his walk through the Book of Psalms. Check out the devotional either on Facebook or on our website, [stmatthewsrichmond.org](http://stmatthewsrichmond.org), and be sure to tell your friends about it.

## **Pastoral Pointers**

### **Sunday Morning: “Take Away” or “Bring To”?**

*By the Rev. Mario Gonzalez del Solar*

A frequent metaphor for Sunday worship and study I’ve heard over the years is “getting your batteries charged.” One comes to church for a spiritual boost which sustains you through the week. I think most of us have experienced a Sunday’s worship that was uplifting enough for its memory to linger in our hearts and minds in the days following. We’re aware that as we’ve left St. Matthew’s after worship, we’ve taken something of the Holy Spirit with us. As we go through our week, we may find strength in what we’ve taken away from Sunday to meet difficult challenges and frustrations during the week. This is a blessing, and contributes to our growth in faith and our knowledge of Christ.

But there’s another way of approaching Sunday worship. It involves consciously preparing for it in two ways. First, we pay attention to the challenges and frustrations and difficulties we face each week, and hold them before the Lord in prayer daily. How is the Lord guiding us in dealing with them? Has he shown us our part in having caused the difficulties we face? Are we aware that he is carefully guiding us through this situation, in that difficult relationship, or strengthening us to face this particular challenge? Second, along with our prayer, we seek God in his word. As we daily come to the Scriptures, is God showing us more of himself in his relationship with the people of Israel, with David, or Solomon, or Hosea, or Jesus or Paul?

When we daily fortify ourselves for life lived that day by laying our life’s

struggles and challenges—and joys!—before the Lord and seeking him in his word, we are storing up spiritual riches for the coming Sunday. When Sunday—the Lord’s Day—comes, when we meet with God’s people and worship and praise him, we find ourselves attuned to the Holy Spirit in a new way. When we hear his word preached or taught in Sunday School, we’re open to God’s action in our hearts in a new way. We’re likely to find that a sentence in the service addresses what we’ve prayed about that week, or that some aspect of the Scripture readings or the sermon speaks to what we’ve been saying to God or hearing from him.

“Saving up” our spiritual riches for Sunday blesses us in another important way: it strengthens and empowers everyone who’s worshipping the Lord by making our worship that much more genuine and consonant with the Spirit of God, in whom we’ve lived all week long. So remember: Sunday worship isn’t just a matter of what we “take away”. It’s what we “bring to” it that makes it a blessing for us and for others.

### **Senior Warden Report**

*By Ramona Neifeld*

Matthew 20:28 tells us that “the Son of Many did not come to be served, but to serve...”. It is exciting to realize that St. Matthew’s will soon have a “Signature Mission” that will give us all an opportunity to serve others as Jesus did. The Mission Task Group is hard at work; praying, seeking God’s direction and looking for a mission opportunity that will best follow God’s will and fit the gifts and talents of St. Matthew’s. What a wonderful new ministry this will be!

In the meantime, we can all be out in the mission fields that surround us. Each of us has been blessed with unique gifts from God that are to be shared with others. Each of us is called to a different mission field and they often are not trips to third world countries or do not require long term commitments. What are your gifts and where is your field? Is your field right here in St. Matthew's? Are you being lead to offer help to the family with little ones with babysitting? Does the elderly person you sit behind each week need a friendly face to visit on a regular basis or to hear a friendly voice on the phone? Is your mission field in your neighborhood? Does a neighbor need meals for a while due to an illness or because they are going through hard times? Maybe the person up the street needs someone to go with them to their doctor's appointments while they are being treated for cancer. Is your mission field in the greater Richmond area? Can you speak Spanish? Many of the free clinics in the area need volunteers to gather information from the many Spanish speaking clients. Are you lead to be with children and would be a great mentor, reading buddy or Big Brother/Sister? Are you being called to serve others in a third world country? Do you have a heart for education and would love to be part of a team building a school in a town that doesn't have one? Do you have a medical background and would like to help with providing health care in a village that is miles and miles away from a clinic or hospital.

First Corinthians chapter 12 tells us that there are different kinds of gifts and different kinds of service, but one Spirit. We are given these gifts for the "common good." (1 Cor. 12:7) We are to seek God and be obedient to His will and use our gifts to serve others, because we all

need each other to make the Body of Christ whole. As we heard in a recent sermon, this may require us to step out of our comfort zone, and this is a good thing! "If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever." (1 Peter 4:11)

We are not walking into these mission fields alone; God is ALWAYS with us. AND as we serve, we get to take the light and love of Christ with us, to shine on those we are serving and show them how wonderful our Lord and Savior is. How exciting!

### **A Great Big Huge Thank-you!**

To everyone who helped out or donated items for Vacation Bible School. It was a lovely week of learning about trust, love, sharing, following God, and caring about each other. We hosted around 70 children from within and outside the parish. We were blessed with over 45 volunteers to shepherd and teach. We also collected a generous offering to help support Gerald and Parimila, our "adopted" children in Uganda and India. Please join us in thanking God for a very blessed week.

### **Attention all artists & crafters!**

The St. Matthews Arts and Crafts Showcase will return! We had such great feedback from last year's show that a reprise was a must. If you dabble in painting, photography, needlework, sculpture, woodworking, etc. then this is your chance to "let your light so shine". The date is Sept. 11 and 12 so you have plenty of time to create your works of art. Applications and information will be available after church for the next two

Sundays in the Parish Hall. You may also call Pam (784-4809) or Tina (740-3006). All proceeds go to St. Matt's Outreach Programs. We would love to see some of you talented teens involved too!

**“Scrappy Squares” Quilt winner to be announced soon!!**

In conjunction with the 2010 Fine Arts and Crafts Showcase at St. Matthew's the weekend of September 11-12 a quilt will be won by the person whose ticket is drawn on Sunday, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. The drawing will take place in the Parish Hall immediately following the 10:30 service. There will be one last opportunity to procure tickets for the quilt by making a donation just prior to the drawing. You do not need to be present to win.

Nine quilters and crafters pooled their talents to create the quilt – Augusta Cole, Carol Grainger, Mary-Meade Lee, Gigi Mills, Lois Rucker, Georgia Selhorst, Debbye Silva, Ann Shibut and Ann Thomson. Great fun and fellowship was enjoyed as we worked together on this original Augusta Cole design. The finished quilt top was machine quilted by Ann Shibut using an original stitching pattern she created especially for this project.

All donations raised for the quilt will benefit St. Matthews Outreach. Tickets will be available in the Parish Hall after the 10:30 church service and also from several church members during the week. A donation of \$1.00 is asked for 1 ticket, or a \$5.00 donation for 6 tickets.

It is our hope that this quilt will ~ Bless the person who wins it; assist in expanding St. Matthews outreach and

Be a colorful reminder of the blessings of Christian fellowship and cooperation.

**Music Notes**

*By Susan Wilson, Director of Music Ministries*

During the Chancel Choir summer break there will be soloists, instrumentalists and small ensembles providing music for worship. If you are interested in taking part in the summer music offerings, please contact me immediately. Rehearsals will be set based on individual schedules and the practice time needed.

Meanwhile, it's hard to think about the fall season while we are in the midst of summer. But before you know it, school will be back in session and the choirs here at St. Matthew's will be resuming once again. As you plan your fall please keep in mind our choir opportunities.

The children's choirs will continue to meet on Sunday afternoon from 5:00-6:00. The Carol Choir is for children 4 years old through kindergarten. The Treble Choir is for children in grades 1-5. A new Middle School Choir will begin this Fall, which will meet on Wednesday night immediately before Middle School Youth Group. The Chancel Choir will continue to meet on Thursday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m. The Handbell Choir will be rehearsing each week on Sunday afternoon from 1:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Please prayerfully consider joining one of the St. Matthew's Choirs. For additional information, please contact Susan Wilson at [susanwilson.stmatts1@verizon.net](mailto:susanwilson.stmatts1@verizon.net).

## **Buildings & Grounds Update**

*By Boyd Brown, Chairman*

In the last several months, the Buildings and Grounds Committee has made progress in several highly visible and some not-so-visible areas of the church and grounds:

- The committee has assisted in creating a toddler playground next to the main playground by clearing some trees and shrubs and putting up a wood fence. The red bell tower that once sat outside the Parish Hall has been converted to a sandbox.
- The pews in the sanctuary have been refurbished to even out the color and hide scratches. In the process, the kneelers were cleaned and repaired.
- The telephone and data lines for the church offices have been replaced and rerouted.
- The vanity in the ladies' restroom has been replaced and new faucets installed.

Among the items Buildings and Grounds will be addressing in the near future are the following:

- Repair of the guest bathroom in the rectory, including replacement of the floor, which has experienced water damage, and replacement of some vintage fixtures.
- Replacement of the controller for the heating and air-conditioning system in the Sanctuary. This will help keep the temperature at a comfortable level in every season.
- Repair of the roof over the breezeway connecting the Sanctuary with the Parish Hall, which leaks and does not drain properly.
- Installation of new signs for the church and the nursery school.

## **Youth Ministry**

*Gabriel Mayer - Youth Minister*

Our middle school and senior high youth groups continue meeting together for the rest of the summer. This summer has really been a great opportunity to meet outside of church, and get to know each other. We have a paintball competition coming up on Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>, and we'll continue studying the Book of Galatians and how we are justified by Christ on our behalf, not by anything we do or don't do. We are still working on setting up a middle school mission before the end of the summer, which will be a local one or two-day event.

We will resume our regular youth group evening meetings this fall. During September we will be doing a mini-series on mission, coordinating our efforts with the adult education program. This will be linked to our celebration of St. Matthew's Day and our Mission Study Group. And of course, make your plans now to purchase pecan pies this fall!

Oct. 1-3 is our middle school retreat at Modgnik ("Kingdom" backwards!) at Camp Rockbridge. We'll be partnering with a number of other local Richmond church youth groups, as well as some youth from surrounding states, for this retreat. Shawn Slate, the Reformed University Fellowship minister for the University of Virginia, will be our speaker. He spoke at our high school Modgnik last spring. This is a really great retreat, and I'm looking forward to going with the middle-school youth this fall. Stay tuned for news on the senior high youth retreat, tentatively scheduled for next April.

## **Children's Education**

*By Jill Rich, Director of Christian Education*

*Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, and will bring you back from captivity.*

*—Jeremiah 29:12—14*

Apathy is not the first word that comes to mind when I think about contemporary American culture.

Our children are involved in sports and community service. We ourselves are engaged in their activities as well as our own.

Within a 10 mile radius I can shop at Nordstrom, two different Macy's, three Targets and get my tall, nonfat, no water Chai in at least six Starbucks. If I'm bored, I can go to West Chester Regal Cinema and choose from 16 different movies, all playing throughout the afternoon and evening.

And when all else fails, I can surf the Internet to my heart's content. My usual

haunts are CNN, Times of Malta (don't ask), checking my six email accounts, Epicurious, The Carrot Box and the biggest time-killer of all—Facebook.

Nothing in any of this is intrinsically evil or sinful. But what does all this activity and distraction do? It keeps me from being engaged in my life and in the lives of those around me. I become apathetic.

As Kathleen Norris says, "we lose our capacity for wonder."

It is when we are able to wonder, to be completely captivated by the real world around us, we see God. We see the God who created those teeny, tiny bright red bugs that make you itch.

We see the God who placed the stars in the sky, some whose light we see is all that is left. In the faces of our children, we see the echo of our spouse or even shadows of parents and grandparents.

And when we see God, we have a choice. We can choose to ignore the world around us or we can engage with Elohim—Creator and Preserver?

Dear friends, wake up and seek Him!

## **2010 Financial Report – Jan. to June**

	Budget	Actual	\$ Fav/(Unfav)
Total support	\$322,320	\$339,745	\$17,425
Total expense	\$341,507	\$339,076	\$2,431
<i>Excess/(Deficit)</i>	(\$19,187)	\$669	\$19,856