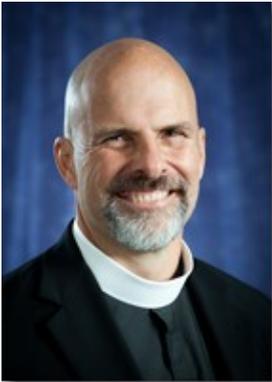


## October 2020

### FROM THE RECTOR

#### REV. ROB MEROLA



Dear and Beloved Friends,

One reason Jesus didn't end up very popular in his day was that he was pretty big into losing. Right from the start, he "lost" his position as God when he chose to become human as well. He lost opportunities to become rich and powerful every day. And, of course, he lost his life.

What's more, he insisted on this losing life style for his followers. "Whoever loves their life will lose it," Jesus taught. "But whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Of course, with the benefit of 2000 years of hindsight, we see that Jesus' strategy ensured that Love won in the end. It's because we, too, want Love to win that we have made this decision:

After careful consideration and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our decisions, **St. Matt's will not be gathering indoors for in-person worship through December 31, 2020.**

If possible, this decision is even more painful than the last one as it involves Christmas. To me, at least, reopening for Christmas feels like it would be a HUGE win (and it would certainly make my life immeasurably easier). But if reopening our building for public worship might be a win for us, it could also be an even greater loss for our community. And it would surely be a loss in terms of the message it sends, that we put our enjoyment of gathering inside for worship ahead of the good of our neighbors.

And that we simply will not do.

What we will continue to do is love our neighbors—and our neighborhoods. The safety of our parishioners and the community is our top priority.

As before, this decision was made with the unanimous agreement of the COVID-19 Working Group, Vestry, and staff. It was made with extensive prayer, lots of dialogue, data from medical and public health contacts, and by paying particular attention to the trends in Northern Virginia.

That being said, we do not want to so focus on what we can't do that we miss all the things we can do; all the things God is doing! On October 24, for instance, our **outdoor services will expand to 3:30pm and 5pm on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month** (please see [go.stmmts.org/events](http://go.stmmts.org/events) for details). And, the Diocese of Virginia gave us the OK to offer Communion at these services!

**Online Sunday services are continuing at 8am, 9:30am, and 11am through Facebook and YouTube.** If you are not joining us for these experiences, I truly believe you are missing something special.

Opportunities to connect beyond weekend services are also increasing. A list of these can be found on the next page, and receiving the Friday Flash will keep you up to date with the latest developments. Please email [Miriam@stmmts.org](mailto:Miriam@stmmts.org) if you need a copy.

Finally, as I hope you would expect of Saint Matthew's, **we are engaging with our community like never before.** As we have said over and over again, only your generosity lets us respond with such largesse.

As we move forward and embrace these opportunities to reach new people, connect with old friends, and stretch our talents and gifts in new ways, we are so grateful for each and every one of you!

With much love and affection (and hope for better days),  
Fr. Rob+

P.S. If you would like to provide feedback, please email: [feedback@stmmts.org](mailto:feedback@stmmts.org).

P.P.S. There WILL BE an outdoors in-person Christmas Day service. Details to come!

## Note from our Senior Warden

My Dearest St. Matthew's Friends and Family,

I am pleased to provide the following St. Matthew's COVID-19 re-gathering policy update:



- After careful consideration, Saint Matthew's will not be gathering indoors for in-person worship through December 31, 2020.
- Online Sunday services are continuing at 8:00am, 9:30am, and 11:00am through Facebook and YouTube.
- Based on the success of St. Matt's Saturday evening outdoor services, we will continue our outdoor offerings. On October 3rd at 5:00pm we will have a Pet Blessing Service, with a regular outdoor service on October 10th at 5:00pm.
- Beginning October 24th, we will be expanding our outdoor offerings to include both 3:30pm and 5:00pm worship/prayer services, twice per month on the St. Matt's lawn or in the parking lot. (Please read the Facebook events page, [go.stmtts.org/events](http://go.stmtts.org/events), for details.)
- The Diocese of Virginia has granted St. Matt's permission to offer Communion at outdoor services.
- The safety of our parishioners and the community is our top priority. We are committed to maintaining strict safety guidelines for gathering outdoors, including wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing.
- St. Matt's is already hard at work planning creative Advent and Christmas service offerings. You will hear more about these in the coming weeks and months.

As a participant in St. Matt's COVID-19 working group, I am encouraged by the group's commitment to safety and continued focus on allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our decisions. Please know we are keeping everyone in our prayers while making these tough decisions. In the coming months, we will continue to reassess our gathering policy while being mindful of Virginia and CDC guidelines. If you would like to provide feedback regarding regathering restrictions, please email: [feedback@stmtts.org](mailto:feedback@stmtts.org).

Regards,  
Linden Sanders  
Senior Warden



## Blessing of the Pets

**Saturday, October 3rd, 5:00pm**

Bring your pets for a special Pet Blessing Service.  
We will meet on the front lawn.

*Masks are required and physical distancing must be observed.*

# Connect Virtually

## Live Stream Sunday Services

Sundays at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00am

## Faith Factory for Kids

Sundays at 10:30am

Email [Adrian@stmtts.org](mailto:Adrian@stmtts.org) to join

## Youth Bible Study/Topical Discussion

Sundays at 10:30am

Google Meets

<http://meet.google.com/jya-nkrr-sis>

## Young Professionals (YoPros)

2nd/4th Sundays at 12:30pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 832 1051 7955

## Mid-Week Prayer and Compline

Monday - Friday at 12:00pm and 8:00pm

Facebook Live: [stmtts.org/live](https://www.facebook.com/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: [darrellandmerry@verizon.net](mailto:darrellandmerry@verizon.net)

## Sandwich Generation Small Group

1st/3rd Tuesdays at 7:30pm

Email: [Harding.Brent@gmail.com](mailto:Harding.Brent@gmail.com)



## Bible Study with Genevieve: Men of the Bible

Wednesdays at 8:15pm, until October 14

Zoom Meeting ID: 884 1853 6414

## Women's Uncommon Prayer

Thursdays at 12:00pm

Email Susie: [susie.harding@gmail.com](mailto:susie.harding@gmail.com)

## Sacred Ground with Rev. Mary Margaret

Thursdays at 6pm

Email to join [MaryMargaret@stmtts.org](mailto:MaryMargaret@stmtts.org)

## Men's Group

Saturdays at 8:00am

Zoom Meeting ID: 581 005 941

## Compassion Craft and Story Time

1st Saturdays at 10am

Zoom Meeting ID 865 9982 1819

Password: church

# ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN!

## Fall Faith Factory Sundays at 10:30am

Faith Factory will continue to meet on Zoom by grade.

Contact Adrian for the meeting ID and password at

[Adrian@stmtts.org](mailto:Adrian@stmtts.org)

## Compassion Storytime with Miss Adrian

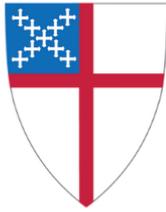
### Saturday, October 3 at 10:00am

Join us the first Saturday of each month for compassion themed stories & crafts. See Zoom code above under Virtual Connections.



## What is a strategic vision?

A basic definition of strategic vision, is "what an organization wants to become in the future". Our Strategic Vision will help guide all our efforts toward a common vision and goals as a church.



2020-2024

# ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH STRATEGIC VISION

**MISSION** TO KNOW AND SHARE GOD'S LOVE

**VISION** To develop a deeper connection with God, each other, and those in need in our global community

## CORE VALUES



### Creative

Seeking innovative and engaging ways to know and share God's love.



### Loving

Sharing God's love faithfully with everyone, everywhere, all the time.



### Adaptable

Remaining flexible to meet the ever-changing needs of our congregation and community.



### Curious

Inspiring continuous learning, questioning, and growth in faith. Never settling for what's comfortable.



### Enthusiastic

Working in God's name with joy in spirit, mind, and body.  
**HAVING FUN!**

Mission = Why we exist

Vision = What we want to do

Core Values = What we are

Strategic Goals =  
How we achieve our vision

### TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION, WE NEED YOU!

- Pray for our church as we journey together to achieve our goals.
- Help guide all our efforts toward a common vision as a church. Everyone's talents are needed to help achieve this vision.
- Get involved! Volunteer for Backpack Buddies, Youth Group, Faith Factory, small groups, virtual community building, bible study, Celebration Garden, worship team, or any way you feel you can contribute!

SET GOALS, AIM HIGH, AND LIVE INTENTIONALLY.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

- Experience God through dynamic, musically-oriented, and transformative **WORSHIP**.
- Cultivate a **WELCOMING** environment for **ALL** people and family structures seeking deeper relationships with God and each other.
- **FORM** our identity in Jesus so that we find common ground through making a difference rather than making statements.
- Prioritize the development of our next generation through relatable experiences that attract and engage **YOUTH** of all ages.
- Fill the whole world with God's Word and love through mission, community, and **OUTREACH**.

# Outreach Happenings

## Outreach Spotlight

The Outreach Committee would like to recognize Sandra Gentry for her continued dedication to serving her neighbors and for always helping out when there's a need. This past month Sandra called local businesses to ask for donations for our school supply drive. Through donations by business and St. Matt's members and friends, we were able to distribute 600 bags of school supplies to local students.



## Backpack Buddies

We continue to accept donations of shelf-stable food items and school supplies this month. Drop off items at church on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8am - 4pm. Sign up to pack here: [go.stmtts.org/Pack4BB](http://go.stmtts.org/Pack4BB).

For more information, please contact Hilary Hultman-Lee at [HLLlearning@gmail.com](mailto:HLLlearning@gmail.com).

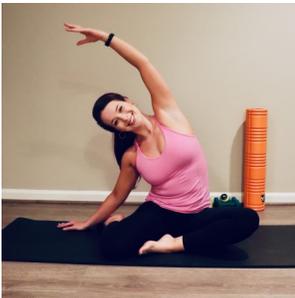
## Outreach Committee Zoom Meeting - Friday, October 16, 7:00pm

Email [Adrian@stmtts.org](mailto:Adrian@stmtts.org) for more info.

## School Supply Distribution

We'd also like to thank everyone that helped and donated to the School Supply Distribution. We will continue to collect school supplies throughout the year. Drop off items at church on Tuesdays/Thursdays 8am - 4pm.

## Pilates for Backpack Buddies Saturday, October 10 from 3:30-4:30pm



Abby Middleton

You're invited to an afternoon of Pilates with Abby Middleton and Kate Love of Core Collective Pilates. The class will be held on the front lawn of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church at 201 E Frederick Drive, Sterling, VA 20164. Bring a mat/towel, bottle of water, and a donation to support Backpack Buddies. (Shelf stable milk, oatmeal packets, fruit cups, or granola bars. Financial donations can also be made at [go.stmtts.org/give](http://go.stmtts.org/give).) We also invite you to stay for our 5pm worship service following the Pilates class.



Kate Love

Whether you are new to working out or a triathlete, Pilates is not only for everybody but also every body. Abby and Kate know all bodies are unique, and they love offering personalized modifications to ensure everyone will enjoy and benefit from their Pilates practice. Pilates is a form of low-impact exercise that aims to strengthen muscles while improving postural alignment and flexibility. Pilates moves tend to target the core, although the exercises work other areas of your body as well.

Learn more: <https://pilatescorecollective.com>

**New Times in October**

# OUTDOOR WORSHIP

**OCTOBER 10  
AT 5PM**

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**OCTOBER 24 AT  
3:30PM & 5PM**

[go.stmmts.org/events](http://go.stmmts.org/events)

## Youth Group Events for October!

**Open to Students in Grades 6 - 12**  
**Email [MaryMargaret@stmmts.org](mailto:MaryMargaret@stmmts.org) to join the mailing list.**

**Saturday, October 10th, 6:30-7:30pm**  
 Pumpkin Painting and Fall Minute-to-Win-It

**Saturday, October 24th, 6:30-7:30pm**  
 Jackbox Online Games

**Saturday, October 31st, 4:00-5:30pm**  
 Smashing Pumpkins (Not the rock band)

**Every Sunday, 10:30-11:00am**  
 Bible Study/Topical Chats on Google Meets

Thanks to those who came out to the movie & pizza night.