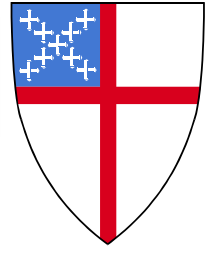


Saint
Matthew's
Episcopal Church



201 East Frederick Drive • Sterling, VA 20164

January 2019

FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR GRANT MANSFIELD



Advent is the season of quiet anticipation. Christmas is the season of joy and celebration. Epiphany, the season that follows Christmas, is the season of physical manifestation and relationships. While an often-overlooked holiday in the regular observance of many Western Christians, Epiphany is perhaps the most relevant, symbolic season in our lives because it focuses on the core of how we practice and live out our faith in Christ - through relationships.

Think about it, this whole season is focused on relational acts! In the Western Church, Epiphany is the time when we recall and remember the coming of the wise ones from the East. In a time when there were no cars, planes, or trains, these wise ones left behind everything, risking it all to be in relationship with the Christ child. Leaving behind family, livelihood, food, and shelter, they hopped on their camels and traveled thousands of miles, through harsh terrain, risking bandits and thieves, scarcity of food and water...even death.

And if that wasn't enough, once they arrived in Judah, they risked death again by angering Herod, the king (!), when they refused to turn in this child to him to be killed. All this they did to be in relationship with this most special child, Jesus. What might our world look like now if we risked even half of what they did to be in relationship with God?!

It is time for us to become bold and risky in our faith again, Saint Matthew's! It is time for us to risk it all, leave everything behind—in our personal lives and in our communal life—to be in radical, loving relationship with God and one another, to try innovative things and do relationships in new, deeper ways!

We are at a place in our journey together where we **MUST** be **BOLD** in our relationships and risk taking, as the wise ones were when coming to the baby Jesus. Our culture drives us to be more and more disconnected from one another; people are more and more apathetic in tending and growing their relationship with God; as a parish, we have dwelt too long in what is safe and comfortable for us. Epiphany is a time of radical relationship, a time to see God made manifest in front of us—in Jesus, and in one another. Epiphany is a time for us to reconnect with God and one another.

For 2019, I call us to this bold faithfulness, to focus this year on our relationships with God, our families, our parish, and our neighbors. I call upon us to be risk takers, to be the modern wise ones who risk it all for something greater than what this world offers us. Won't you join me in risking it all in faith, so that together we may see the face of God made manifest in our presence?

Peace,
Rev. Grant

Save the Date
Vacation Bible School July 22-26, 2019

The Good Place

Everything is fine.



Everyone wants to end up in the Good Place. In fact, every major belief system in the world says that journey starts NOW. What you and I do in 2019 has everything to do with whether we will find ourselves in the Good Place—or a Bad Place.

**Join us every weekend in the month of January for our sermon series:
The Good Place!**

Community Lunch

January 12, 2019, 12pm-2pm

What would it look like for Sterling to come together as a community of hope?

When I pray about our community lunches I see hope in the form of:

- * the planners
- * the shoppers
- * the ingredient choppers
- * the chefs
- * the dessert bakers
- * the decorators
- * the coffee makers
- * the inviters
- * the greeters
- * the ride providers
- * the servers
- * the musicians
- * the dancers
- * the face painters
- * the craft teachers
- * the book organizers
- * the baby holders
- * the listeners
- * the relationship builders
- * the smiles
- * the table bussers
- * the dish washers
- * the cleaners
- * the tablecloth washers

I see a community of hope and I invite you into it.

Please pray over our next community lunch on Saturday, January 12 from 12pm to 2pm. All are welcome to engage as your gifts are best given.

Susie Harding
Community Luncheon Coordinator
susie.harding@gmail.com



High School Mission Trip: Appalachia

July 13-19, 2019

Mission Trips are an essential part of the St. Matthew's experience; it is our hope that all of us, at some point, will go on a mission trip. They are life changing experiences that many of us treasure as one of the highlights of our lives. And though we have gone on trips all over the world, one of the areas of greatest need is right here in our back yard: Appalachia.

So, from Saturday, July 13th - Friday, July 19th, that is where our SNL (Sunday Night Live) High School Mission Trip will be going. The cost is \$450/person which includes everything but spending money. We invite all our high schoolers (and friends too) to join us. A deposit of \$100 is due to reserve your spot. Checks can be made payable to St. Matthew's designating them for High School Mission Trip. Scholarships are available. Please contact Miriam in the church office for more information.
Miriam@stmtts.org



WatCh: Wednesdays at Church

Wednesdays, January 9, 16, 23, and 30 at 7pm

In the month of January, we'll be offering two different tracks for our WatCh series, and we hope you'll join us on—you guessed it!—Wednesday nights at 7pm for dinner and/or 7:30-8:30 for the study itself.

Track 1: As we start a new year, ever wonder what the future holds? As it turns out, the book of Revelation has quite a bit to say about that—even about what will happen in 2019. Join Fr. Rob in studying the book of Revelation.

Track 2: Interested in having your child or yourself baptized? Are you curious about what baptism is and what it all means? Join Rev. Grant in this four week course that explores infant and adult baptism, how to prepare for baptism, and what exactly we Christians mean when we say we are resurrected through our Baptisms.

Listening Sessions with Bishop Susan Goff

Thursday, January 17, 6-8 p.m. Christ Church, Spotsylvania

Saturday, February 9, 1-3 p.m. St. Barnabas, Annandale



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter into a new chapter together in the Diocese of Virginia following the retirement of Bishop Shannon Johnston and my becoming Ecclesiastical Authority, I invite us into renewed mission together in Christ's name. I invite us to look back – not to the recent past – but to our roots in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to a deep recollection of who we are called to be and what we are called to do in his name.

Strengthened by that recollection, I invite us to connect more deeply than ever with one another as lay people, deacons, priests and bishops, and to connect more powerfully than ever with a world so in need of the Good News we have to share in Christ Jesus. Summarized in two words, I invite us to RECALL and RECONNECT.

We will engage this work of recalling and reconnecting in five Community Listening Sessions that will take place around the Diocese during the season of Epiphany. I hope you will attend one. Each session will include a time for your Bishops and other diocesan leaders to talk about our deepest longings and heart-felt desires for our Diocese, followed by time for us to listen to yours.

What we hear from each other in these sessions will shape subsequent opportunities for sharing as we deepen dialogue and grow in community. What we learn will strengthen us to go Now Into the World. Please do plan to be a part of this time.

Faithfully yours,

Bishop Goff

P.S. Rev. Grant will be coordinating carpools to the Listening Session in Spotsylvania and Annandale. Please contact him at Grant@stmnts.org if you would like to attend.

New Worship Materials

If you have joined us for worship at our 11am service since August, you may have noticed a few changes occurring- new prayers for Holy Communion and the Prayers of the People, music coming from different hymnals, etc. The question has been raised- what resources are these prayers and music coming from and why have we decided to use them?

One of the things I absolutely love about our Episcopal tradition is that our worship takes on many forms, embraces diverse cultural experiences of God, and incorporates them into our tradition's worship. No one is left out- rather than stifle the creativity of our worship, we embrace the gifts that others bring and expand the tradition. When our tradition expands, our General Convention- the governing body of the Episcopal Church- commissions, develops, and publishes resources for worship that enable all our congregations to use and share in these gifts that deepen our understanding of God and how one may worship God. It is these resources that we have begun incorporating into our worship and will continue to do so, so that we ourselves might share in the gifts offered by others in our Church and grow in our understanding and worship of God.

Below are the resources we have been using and a simple summary of their origin/purpose:

Enriching Our Worship (EOW)- EOW is a resource published in 1997 that utilizes inclusive and expansive language for God, specifically using gender neutral and feminine language and imagery from Scripture in prayers for Holy Communion and other portions of our worship.

Planning for Rites and Rituals (PRR)- PRR is a resource published yearly that provides Prayers of the People (among many other things) that coincide with the lectionary readings for each week of the Church year.

Book of Occasional Services (BOS)- BOS is a liturgical resource published in 2003 that provides additional prayers and worship materials that were not originally published in the Book of Common Prayer.

Wonder, Love, and Praise (WLP)- WLP, a supplement hymnal to the 1982 Hymnal, was published in 1997. This supplement hymnal incorporates a wider diversity of music that congregations began using after the 1982 Hymnal was published.

Lift Every Voice and Sing II (LEVAS)- LEVAS is a hymnal of the Episcopal Church, published in 1993, that focuses on music contributed to our tradition from our African American congregations.

****Flor Y Canto (FYC)**- FYC is a Spanish hymnal published by Oregon Catholic Press in 2011. This hymnal gathers music from all over Latin America and represents the diversity of Spanish speaking cultures found in the Western Hemisphere. Though it is not published by the Episcopal Church, it is widely used in our Spanish-speaking Episcopal churches.

****We have not utilized this resource in our worship, but include it on this list to bring awareness of it.**