

# April

## Newsletter

### Resurrection Plants

by Kara Laughlin, Deacon

**“My favorite day of the year!”** the text began. It continued: **“I smelled the hyacinths today!”**

That text was from my neighbor, Heather. She was talking about the hyacinths I'd planted a couple of years ago in a strip of dirt between our houses. One day she had told me that she loved hyacinths, because the smell always made her think of her grandmother. Later that fall, her husband caught me planting the bulbs in a strip of dirt between our houses. He kept my secret, so Heather didn't find out about them until they poked up from the ground the following spring.

She was delighted, and it cemented our bond as neighbors and friends.

That was several years ago. Today, the hyacinths are naturalizing, so more and more come up every year. And every year, there is a day when the text comes.

At the church where I grew up, we had a 3 p.m. children's service, followed by an egg hunt and balloon release.

I tell this to my kids, and they are horrified. “Don't sea turtles choke on balloons that get to the ocean? Isn't that illegal? Do balloons even decompose?” In case you're wondering, the answers to those questions are: yes, yes, and yes, but it takes about four years. I have no excuses, except that the adults were organizing this, and I was a kid. Also, this was in the 1970s, and we were still learning to think through the environmental outcomes of our actions.

Because the service was at the end of the day, every child who attended was invited to take one of the foil-wrapped pots of Easter flowers—daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips—which were

massed around the baptismal font and on the steps leading to the altar. Mr. Stenning, our rector, called them “resurrection plants” because even though the

flowers would soon wither and die, they would come back the following Spring.

Mr. Stenning died in March of last year, so now our neighborly hyacinths are also reminding me of someone I love but see no longer, or, as Mr. Stenning would say, ‘in God's nearer presence.’

I'm glad Heather and I have resurrection hyacinths to share. I love getting that text every year: An annual, extended thank-you for an act done once, but which set in motion a gift of fragrant beauty that comes back for both of us every spring.

Our Holy Week and Easter celebrations are like that text. **They are our annual, extended celebration and thank-you to God for the redeeming gift of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.** An act of infinite love, done once, but reverberating through history ever since. I hope you will come celebrate and give thanks with us!

Yours in peace and joy,  
Kara+

**P.S.** No need to worry about the sea turtles. We'll skip the balloons.



### IN THIS ISSUE

- Holy Week & Easter Services
- Make Easter Unforgettable
- Parish Work Day
- Super Mario Sunday!

# April at St. Matt's

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<p>This is not a full list of all events or uses of the St. Matthew's buildings, visit: <a href="http://stmtts.org/calendar">stmtts.org/calendar</a> for the most up-to-date schedule.</p>		<b>1</b> <i>(FCPS Closed)</i>  Compline 8 PM Online	<b>2</b>  <b>Lenten Discussion Series</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>	<b>3</b>  Bible Study 12 PM  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	<b>4</b> <i>(LCPS Closed)</i>	<b>5</b> Men's Group 8 AM
<b>6 LENT V</b>  Fr. Rob Preaching  <b>Backpack Buddies Packing + Calm Jar Craft</b>  Youth - Passion Reading Practice 10:30 AM	<b>7</b> <i>(LCPS Closed)</i>  Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620  Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	<b>8</b>  Compline 8 PM Online	<b>9</b>  <b>Lenten Discussion Series</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>	<b>10</b>  Bible Study 12 PM  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Men's Group 8 AM  <b>PARISH WORK DAY</b> <b>9AM - 12PM</b>
<b>13 Palm Sunday</b> Services at 8 AM, 9:30 AM & 11 AM  <b>PEEPS at 10:30 AM!</b>	<b>14</b>  Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620  Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	<b>15</b>  Compline 8 PM Online	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <i>Maundy Thursday</i> Service at 7 PM  Choir 7:30 PM	<b>18</b> <i>Good Friday</i> Services at 12 PM & 7P M	<b>19</b> Men's Group 8 AM <i>Holy Saturday</i> Service at 10 AM
<b>20 EASTER SUNDAY</b>  Services at 6 AM, 9:30 AM, & 11:15 AM  <i>(see details on page X)</i>	<b>21</b>  Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620  Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	<b>22</b>  Compline 8 PM Online	<b>23</b>  <b>Wednesday Book Discussion</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>	<b>24</b>  Bible Study 12 PM  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM	<b>25</b>  <b>Game Night</b> <b>6 PM</b>	<b>26</b> Men's Group 8 AM
<b>27</b> Genevieve Davis Preaching  Baptisms at 9:30 & 11 AM  <b>Coffee Hour - Cake &amp; Super Mario!</b>	<b>28</b>  Social Time on Zoom at 12 PM ID: 681-861-620  Bread of Life Book Group 7 PM	<b>29</b>  Compline 8 PM Online	<b>30</b>  <b>Wednesday Book Discussion</b> <b>6:30 PM</b>	<b>MAY SAVE THE DATES</b>  Wednesday Cook-Outs at Fr. Rob's 5/4 - May the 4th be with you! 5/10 - Women's Coffee Mixer 5/11 - Mother's Day 5/18 - WGB Outreach Event 5/25 - Memorial Day Weekend Event		



# JOIN US FOR EASTER

**SUNDAY, APRIL 20TH AT 6 AM, 9:30 AM, & 11:15 AM**

Invite your friends and family and join us for any of our Easter Sunday services as we come together to celebrate the resurrection of Christ through joyful worship, heartfelt teaching, and plenty of surprises. All services include fantastic music, communion, and a uplifting message from Rev. Rob Merola.

### 6:00 AM | Easter Vigil, Sunrise Service & Brunch

Immerse yourself in the beauty of an Easter Sunrise Mass at 6:00 AM, featuring Paschal fire followed by a delightful Easter Brunch in the Parish Hall.

### 9:30 AM | Festival Easter Service

Join our vibrant Festival Easter Worship with the 930 Band and Horn Trio, where we joyfully celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Kids will adore our Children and Youth Programs (*details below*).

### 11:15 AM | Classic Easter Service

Experience joyful Easter Worship with Choir, Flute, and Strings, celebrating our Lord's resurrection. Plus, kids will love our Children's Easter Drama Workshop (*details below*).

## EASTER SUNDAY EVENTS



**7:00 AM - Easter Brunch** (*Following the 6 AM service*) - enjoy a delightful Easter Brunch and fellowship following our sunrise service. Sign Up to contribute: [stmntts.org/EasterBrunch](http://stmntts.org/EasterBrunch)



**9:30 AM - Children's Program** - Kids will love our "taste of vacation Bible school" with Alaska-themed music, movement, crafts, and science in our age-leveled Faith Factory classes, each taught by professional educators. (*During the 9:30 AM service*)



**10:30 AM - Easter Egg Hunt** (*Between the 9:30 & 11:15 AM services*) - stay after the 9:30 AM service or come early to the 11:15 AM service for children to enjoy our annual Easter Egg Hunt and visit with the Easter Bunny!



**11:15 AM - Kid's Easter Drama Workshop** - Lights, camera, action! Kids will act out a re-telling of the Easter story. Enjoy their filmed performance later, and share it with family and friends. (*During the 11:15 AM service*)

APR 13 *Palm Sunday*

8 AM, 9:30 AM, & 11 AM

APR 17 *Maundy Thursday*

Service at 7 PM

APR 18 *Good Friday*

Services at 12 PM & 7P M

APR 19 *Holy Saturday*

Service at 10 AM

[stmntts.org/HolyWeek](http://stmntts.org/HolyWeek)

# Help Make Easter Unforgettable!



Easter is one of the most joyful and welcoming Sundays of the year—and you can be part of the celebration!

Whether you have **five minutes** or a **little extra time**, your help makes a huge difference.

## A Few Ways to Help:

- Drop off a baked treat for brunch
- Help with Parish Hall set up
- Help set up the Easter Egg Hunt
- Offer a warm welcome with parking support

Many of these are quick, easy ways to help—perfect for busy schedules!

See the full list and sign up today and be part of the joy of Easter at St. Matt's!

[stmmts.org/EasterHelp](http://stmmts.org/EasterHelp)



# Spring PARISH WORK DAY

SAT. APRIL 12TH 9 AM - 12 PM

Join us for a family-friendly service event! Help spruce up our church and grounds for Easter.

Indoor and outdoor tasks for all ages available. Donuts, coffee, and a great time provided!

*Nursery care provided!*



## April Coffee Hours & Events

APR 06



### Backpack Buddies

Sun., April 6th at 10:30 AM

Help give back to the community by packing bags for HRTS Backpack Buddies on Sunday, April 6th at 10:30 AM

APR 13



### Peeps Sunday

Sun., April 13th at 10:30 AM

Love them or just here for the sugar rush! Join us to sample a variety of fun and unexpected Peep flavors and treats.

APR 25

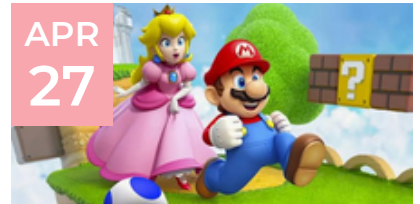


### Game Night

Fri., April 25th at 6 PM

Bring your favorite board game and a snack to share for a fun, family-friendly game night!

APR 27



### Super Mario Sunday

Level up your Sunday fun!

Meet Mario & Princess Peach, enjoy some power-up snacks, and bring the whole family for a morning of fun.



### Easter Flower Dedications

Honor loved ones and celebrate new beginnings this Easter by dedicating flowers to adorn the sanctuary on Easter Sunday.

Dedications must be submitted by April 13th. [stmmts.org/Flowers](http://stmmts.org/Flowers)



### Easter Egg Stuffing

Grab a few Easter Eggs and some candy during coffee hour, and enjoy fellowship while stuffing!

Our Annual Easter Sunday Egg Hunt is a highlight for the community, thank you for your support!



### Easter Candy Donations Needed

Nut-free, wrapped candies, and small toys needed to fill eggs for our annual Easter Sunday egg hunt. Items can be dropped off in the labeled bin by the back door of the church.

## April Small Groups



MON  
7 PM

### Bread of Life Book Group Mondays at 7 PM

Bread of Life Book Group will continue reading *Gentle and Lowly*, by Dane Ortlund.

All are welcome, no RSVP required.



THURS  
12 PM

### Thursday Bible Study Thursdays at noon

Our Bible study will continue to take a deeper look at the weekly lectionary readings.

There will not be a meeting on April 17th (Maundy Thursday).



SAT  
8 AM

### Men's Group Saturdays at 8 AM

Looking for connection, encouragement, and spiritual growth? Join the Men's Group on Saturdays at 8 AM for a time of prayer, Bible study, and fellowship.



APR  
12

### Women's Meet up at Parish Work Day

Sat., April 12th 9AM - 12 PM

Meet up with friends at St. Matt's to catch up while sprucing up the church for Easter! There are fun, supervised jobs for kids too! **Nursery care provided!**



## Cherished Belonging: Continuing the Conversation

### Wednesdays at 6:30 PM

Our **Lenten book series** on *Cherished Belonging* by Gregory Boyle continues through Wednesday, April 9th, with engaging discussions, a warm soup supper, and programming for children and youth. All are welcome—even if you haven't started the book!

Then, beginning Wednesday, April 23rd, we'll continue diving deeper into the book through **discussion-only gatherings** (no supper or children's programming).

Join us for thoughtful conversation, connection, and reflection.

Learn more:  
[stmmts.org/bookseries](http://stmmts.org/bookseries)



## Women Giving Back CLOTHING DRIVE



Mon., April 7th 5PM - 7 PM

Sat., April 26th, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Spring cleaning? If you have **women's or children's spring/summer clothing to donate**, consider dropping them off at **Women Giving Back**, located at **20 Export Drive, Sterling, VA**.

Your donation will help support this local nonprofit and make a meaningful difference in our community.

Please remember, donations should be taken directly to Women Giving Back—no drop-offs at the church.

For more information, visit [womengivingback.org](http://womengivingback.org)

paid summer internships

## Know a College Student Searching for a Summer Internship?

College-age students, **looking for a meaningful, paid summer internship?**

St. Matthew's is offering hands-on opportunities in a variety of areas from **children's and teen ministry, to marketing and graphic design.**

This program provides **real-world experience, mentorship, and a chance to make a difference** in our faith community. Interested?

Contact us at [office@stmmts.org](mailto:office@stmmts.org)

# APRIL MEMORY VERSE

I GIVE YOU A KINGDOM, JUST AS MY FATHER GAVE ME A KINGDOM.

-LUKE 22:29



## APRIL FAITH FACTORY: THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!

Get ready for a month of fun, faith, and exploration as we journey toward the most glorious day of the year—the resurrection of our Lord! This April, we'll dive into powerful Bible stories, including the **Prodigal Son, Mary and Martha, and the highs and lows of Holy Week.**

Our Sunday morning classes are more exciting than ever, with three age-appropriate classes designed to engage and inspire every child. Join us at 9:30 AM each Sunday!

- **Preschoolers:** Learn and play with Ms. Zorana in Classroom 3.
- **K-2nd Grade:** Sing, craft, and dive into Bible stories with Ms. Alex in Classroom 2.
- **3rd-5th Grade:** Solve word puzzles, conduct science experiments, and explore the Scriptures with Ms. Hilary in Classroom 1.

## kids coffee hour

Sundays at 10:30 AM



### Apr. 6 - Backpacks & Calm Craft

Help pack bags for HRTS Backpack Buddies and create your own calm down jar.



### Apr. 13 - Peeps Party

What's up party peeps? Taste test peeps flavors and get ready for some surprise peeps fun!



### Apr. 20th - Easter Egg Hunt

Join us between the 9:30 and 11:15 AM services for our annual Easter Egg Hunt & visit with the Easter Bunny!

### APR. 27TH - SUPER MARIO SUNDAY!

Level Up your Sunday! Come meet Mario & Princess Peach for power up fun and games!



## April Youth Events



SUN 9:30

### Donuts & Discovery Sundays at 9:30 AM

D&D will start a new series in April: **Big Questions from the Bible.** Let's dive into the Bible's biggest stories and find answers to the hard questions we all ask.



APR 06

### Palm Sunday Practice Sun., Apr. 6 at 10:30 AM

Youth interested in participating in our Palm Sunday Presentation will rehearse at 10:30 AM on Sunday, April 6th.



APR 13

### Palm Sunday Presentation Sun., Apr. 13 (all services)

Come support friends as they present the Passion of our Lord on Palm Sunday. Services at 8, 9:30 and 11 AM.



AUG 2-8

### Summer Mission Trip Spots Still Available!

Our Mission Trip to Florida still has a few spots available for any youth interested in attending. Contact [ben.meroa@stmtts.org](mailto:ben.meroa@stmtts.org) for details.