

While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him; so he went in and took his place at the table. The Pharisee was amazed to see that Jesus did not first [ritually] wash before dinner. Then the Lord said to him, “Now You Pharisees [ritually] clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. . . . But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honor in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces. Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves and people walk over them without realizing it.” One of the lawyers answered him, “Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us too.” And Jesus said, “Woe also to you, lawyers! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not lift a finger to ease them.”

—Luke 11:37-39, 42-46

I suspect we don't often think of the scenes from the gospels in which we find Jesus in the midst of an argument or debate. We certainly don't think of him insulting others. Yet, here in this passage, which Luke shares with Matthew, we see Jesus debating with scribes and Pharisees. And one with whom he's arguing—a man described as a lawyer, which means a scribe who's an expert in the Law of Moses—says he's been insulted by Jesus. Jesus' words *are* insulting; however, the point is not to hurt anyone's feelings. In our culture, it's considered a logical fallacy and impolite to make *ad hominem* attacks against someone with whom we're debating. It's considered “crossing the line” of decency because insults in our context are meant to be emotionally harmful to the other person. But in Jesus' context, insults were an accepted part of debate, so they weren't understood as personal jabs. In fact, a teacher who couldn't engage in the give-and-take of witty and insulting repartee wasn't considered worth listening to.

So, when Jesus declares the Pharisees to be like unmarked graves over which people walk, he's throwing one of these *ad hominem* barbs. He's saying that Pharisees, who are the most concerned with maintaining purity are actually leading others into impurity. It's an insult. We should be careful not take these insults as actual descriptions of the scribes and Pharisees or their teachings. Rather, we need to look past the jibes to the heart of the debate. I think Jesus' point is this: Justice and the love of God, the heart of faith, are being neglected (11:42) in favor of rules and to-do lists that were originally meant to help build faith but have become a distracting burden (11:46). Religion centered on keeping rules and doing things leads us to focus on ourselves and self-righteousness; however, a faith in God and his love for us frees us up to love God and seek justice for those He loves.

Godly Play for the Summer

We're exploring Biblical stories from the Old & New Testament about water.

- Aug 7 – Jesus' baptism,
- Aug. 14 – Jesus calling the disciples at the Sea of Galilee,
- Aug. 21 – Jesus' resurrection appearance at the Sea of Galilee.
- Aug 28 – No class
- Sept 3 – No class

Local Blood Drive

Saturday, August 20th, 12:30-4:00pm

The Latter Day Saints (Mormon) Church

14573 Scotchtown Road, Montpelier

To make an appointment, log into www.vablood.org or call
Mike Holle at 540-872-1466

Lemonade on the Lawn

Thanks to Angela & Barbara Woods for this morning's refreshments!



Parish Retreat at Shrine Mont

Together with Church of Our Savior, Montpelier – Sept 16 to 18.

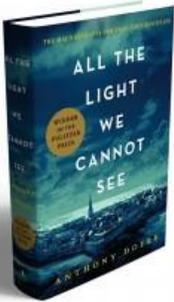
Please contact Fr Nik if you're interested in going

SUMMER READING

The Women's Small Group

The Women's Group is reading *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.

This novel won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction & Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction. A #1 *New York Times* Bestseller, the *New York Times Book Review* had this to say about it:

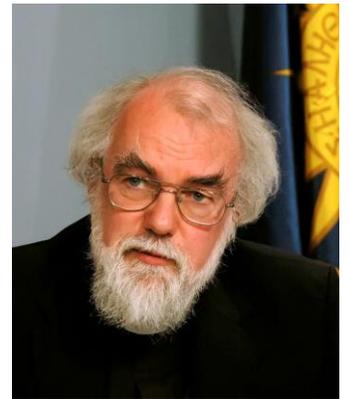


“Tackling questions of survival, endurance and moral obligations during wartime, this book is as precise and artful and ingenious as the puzzle boxes the heroine’s locksmith father builds for her. Impressively, it is also a vastly entertaining feat of storytelling.”

The Men's Small Group

Beginning in July, the Men's Small Group will be reading *Being Christian* by Rowan Williams, The 104th Archbishop of Canterbury.

“What are the essential elements of the Christian life? I am not thinking in terms of individuals leading wonderful lives, but just in terms of those simple and recognizable things that make you realize that you are part of a Christian community. This little book is designed to help you think about four of the most obvious of these things: baptism, Bible, Eucharist and prayer. . . . In this book we shall be looking at what those activities tell us about the essence of Christian life, and what kind of people we might hope to become in a community where these things are done.”



-from the Introduction

July 7 – Finish Discussing Bonhoeffer’s *Discipleship*

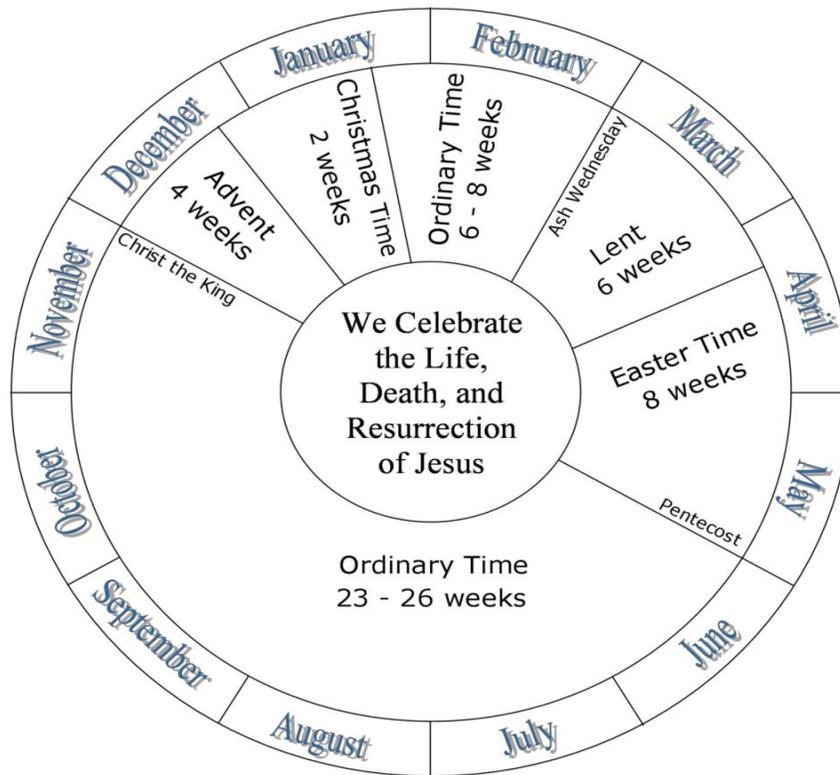
July 21 – *Being Christian*, Chapter 1, “Baptism,” pp 1-19

August 4 – *Being Christian*, Chapter 2, “Bible,” pp 21-40

August 18 – *Being Christian*, Chapter 3 “Eucharist,” pp 41-60

September 1 – *Being Christian*, Chapter 4, “Prayer,” pp 61-82

The Liturgical Year



Nik's Calendar

Monday, Aug 8 – Sunday, August 14 – Away on vacation

Monday, Aug 15 – Coffee with the Rev'd Dr Ed Bushong, 10:30am – 12:30pm

Thursday, Aug 18 – Region XI meeting, 6:30pm

Monday, Aug 22 – Coffee with the Rev'd Dr Ed Bushong, 10:30am - 12:30pm

Looking Ahead

Thursday, Aug 18 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am

Office hours: Jacquie Alleva, our office administrator, is in the office on Tuesdays (11am-3pm), Wednesdays (11am-3pm), and Thursdays (1pm-5pm).

If you would like to submit an announcement, please do so by 1pm on Thursday.