

From Father Nik

The word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness, and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

~Luke 3:2-3

John the Baptist was a prophet. Indeed, he was more than a prophet (Lk 7:26). In the words of his father, Zechariah, the priest, John was *the prophet of the Most High*, destined to go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people, Israel, in the forgiveness of their sins, and to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet in the way of peace (Lk 1:76-79). As prophet of the Most High, the harbinger of the messiah, John was the last of the great prophets of the Old Covenant, looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ.

As Moses was permitted to stand in the presence of the LORD, John was *filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb*, in which he leapt for joy when his mother, Elizabeth was visited by the pregnant Mary (Lk 1:15, 44). Like Moses, who led the Hebrew slaves out of captivity in Egypt and into the wilderness, to prepare them for entry into the Promised Land, John would call the Judeans and Galileans out into the wilderness *to make ready for the Lord a people prepared* (1:17). Like Moses' successor, Joshua who led the Hebrews across the River Jordan and into the Promised Land, John would have the people cross the Jordan, immersing themselves in its waters, and return home, baptized. Like the prophet Samuel, John was born of a barren mother (1:7), set aside for the vows of a nazirite (1:15), and made the herald for God's chosen king (1:68-69). Finally, like the prophet Elisha, John would exercise his prophetic ministry *in the spirit and power of (the prophet) Elijah*, denouncing the corrupt powers-that-be and calling for repentance (1:17).

However, John was not only a great prophet. He was a prophet from priestly stock (1:5). The primary role of the ancient Israelite priest was to make sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem on behalf of the people for purification and for the forgiveness of sins. This would have been John's destiny had he not been set aside for his prophetic ministry. Yet his priestly lineage showed forth in his prophetic message, for he preached *a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins* (3:3). Purity and Forgiveness were available to the repentant, John proclaimed, not in the Temple but through baptismal immersion in the River Jordan. He was *the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight* (3:4).

Confirmation & Catechism

It is traditional to prepare catechumens for Baptism or the reaffirmation of baptismal vows during Lent— as well as preparing confirmands for Confirmation and new members for Reception into the Episcopal Church.

These classes will begin next week.

Please let Fr Nik know if you are interested.

The Cost of Discipleship

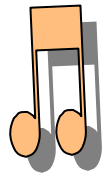
The Men's & Women's Book Groups are reading *Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Bonhoeffer Documentary

“Hanged on a twisted Cross” will be shown at 4:30pm in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 21.

Choir Rehearsal

In preparation for Holy Week and Easter Sunday
The choir will be rehearsing every Wednesday from
February 17 – March 16, at 7pm



Please keep the following in your prayers

Henry Vaughn, William K. Glave, Vern Cahill, Cierra Ryan, Marie Alexander, Susan Russo, Phyllis Bagby, Beryl Choi, Mary Franklin Fulghum *and* James Palmer, Lelia Hoge Smith, Katherine Cauthorne, Barbara Oates, Lucy Oliver, Virginia Turner, Jim Blanton, Glenn Schleede.

Christian Education

Godly Play Children are invited to hear the Word in a fun, learning environment in the Parish House during the first half of our Sunday morning worship; after which, they join their parents in church for Communion.

J2A Youth Group will meet on Sunday, February 28 together with the Youth Group from Church of Our Savior, Montpelier.

The Adult Sunday School meets Sunday mornings at 9am in the parish hall to study the Gospel according to Luke.

Small Groups

The Women's Book Group will meet next on Thursday, February 18 at 10am to discuss chapters 3-5 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* (Reader's Edition – Fortress Press). Please contact Kathy for directions: boysthree@embarqmail.com

The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, February 18, at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea to discuss chapters 3-5 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship*.

Christian Formation

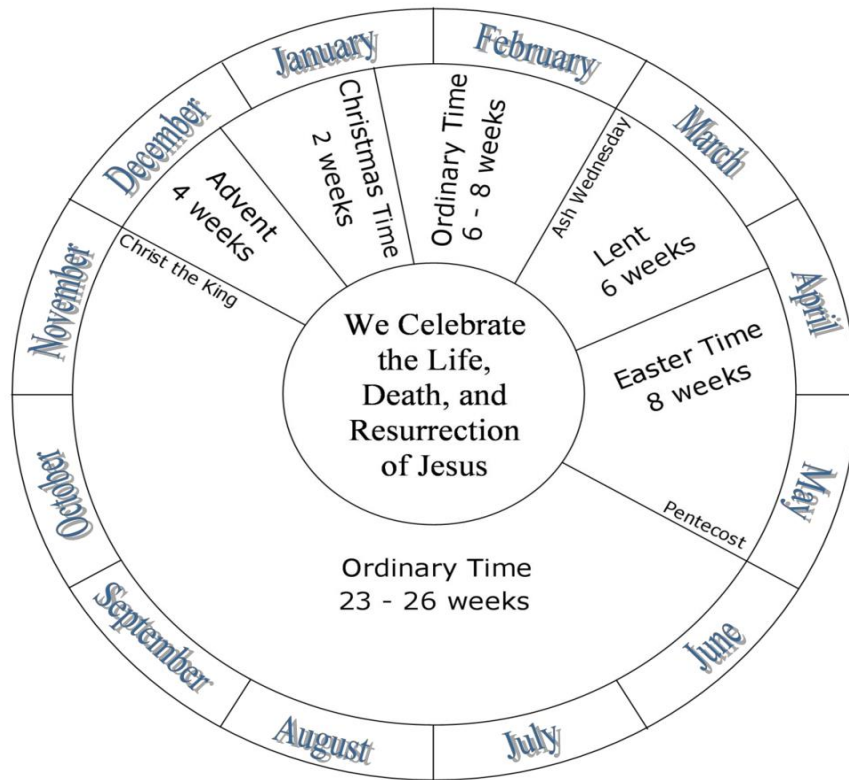
Catechism Classes will begin in Lent.

These classes are for those who wish to be baptized, confirmed, or received into the Episcopal Church.

If you have never been Baptized or Confirmed, and are interested in receiving these sacraments, please contact Fr Nik – KnicholasForti@gmail.com

These classes are also for those considering Reaffirming their Baptismal Covenant.

The Liturgical Year



Nik's Calendar

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

Wednesday, Feb 17 – First Confirmation/Catechism Class of 2016, 6:30-7:30pm
– RMC Episcopal-Methodist Campus Ministry, 9:30pm

Looking Ahead

Wednesday, Feb 17 – Choir Rehearsal, 7pm

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

– Women's Book Group, 10am-noon

Saturday, Feb 20 – Vestry Retreat, 9:30am-1:30pm

Sunday, Feb 21 – Bonhoeffer Documentary, "Hanged on a Twisted Cross," 4:30pm

Office hours: Jacquie Alleva, our office administrator, works Tuesday & Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons. If you would like to submit an announcement, please do so by noon on Thursday.