

## From Father Nik

Luke alone among the gospel writers begins his story in the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke also is the only Gospel to end in the Temple (Lk 24:53); although, we should remember that the end of the Gospel is not the end of the story. This suggests that Luke's story is especially interested in the relationship between Jesus and the Temple. So, we shouldn't be surprised when Luke's nativity account, unlike Matthew's, tells the story of Jesus' first visit to the Temple while still a newborn.

In his letter to the Galatians, St Paul wrote that in the fullness of time, Jesus was "born of a woman, born under the law" (4:4). Luke's Gospel puts some narrative flesh on those proverbial bones when it mentions that eight days after Jesus' birth, "he was circumcised, and called Jesus, the name given by the angel" to Mary (2:21). Then, we're told, that Mary observed the period of purification—just over a month—required of a woman after giving birth. And with Jerusalem only a two-or-three hour walk from Bethlehem, the holy family made their way to the Temple for Mary to make the sacrifice for purification "according to the Law of Moses" (Lk 2:22-25). The particular commandment Luke refers to is Leviticus 12:6, which requires a new mother to offer a year-old lamb and a turtledove for sacrifice, but allows for two pigeons to be offered as a concession to those who "cannot afford a lamb." Mary's offering is the two pigeons (Lk 2:24).

In these verses, an important theme of Luke's Gospel is revealed to us—namely, Jesus was of lowly birth, and his Good News is for the poor (Lk 1:48, 52-53; 4:18; 6:20-21). Other important themes of Luke's story are highlighted in short order with the appearance of Simeon and Anna. These two saints of Israel have been given the gift of prophecy, and the spiritual sight to recognize the child in the outer court of the Temple complex as the long-awaited Messiah. Simeon's prophetic song, *Nunc Dimittis*, sums up one of the main points of Luke's story—that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises to His chosen people, Israel and the extension of those promises now to all nations (Lk 2:32). And while other writers of the time would have omitted the witness of a woman as a matter of course, Luke not only recounts Anna's recognition of Jesus but also her continual proclamation of the Gospel from that day forward (2:38). In this way, Luke shows that with the arrival of Jesus in human history, the time has come when God pours out His "Spirit upon all flesh," so that the sons *and daughters* of Israel will prophesy (Acts 2:17-18).

## 221<sup>st</sup> Diocesan Annual Council

of the Diocese of Virginia has been rescheduled for Sat, March 5.

### Parish Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting will be held in the church after worship this Sunday. The Vestry and Treasurer will report to the congregation, and three new vestry members will be elected.

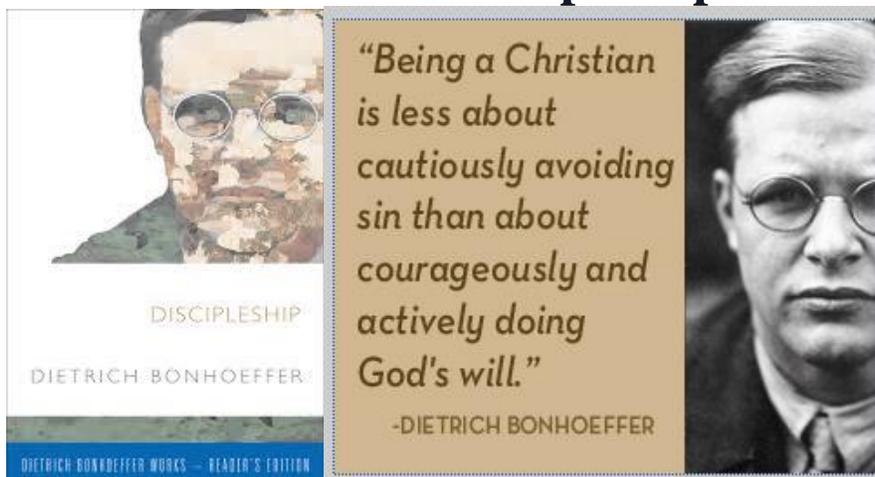
## LENT

Lent begins with *Ash Wednesday* on February 10 – we'll observe the holy day with Eucharist & imposition of ashes at 6:30pm.

Before the Lenten fasting begins, we'll indulge in a **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** from 6:30pm to 7:30pm on Tuesday, February 9.

It's also 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 on Wednesday, Feb 17 at 6:30pm.

### The Cost of Discipleship



Starting in the February, the Men's & Women's Book Groups will be reading *Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

## 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 at the church on Sunday, January 31 from 5 to 7pm. Please bring \$5 for Pizza.

**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 4 at 10am to discuss the first 2 chapters of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* (Reader's Edition – Fortress Press). Please contact Kathy for directions: [boysthree@embarqmail.com](mailto:boysthree@embarqmail.com)

**The Men's Book Group** will meet Thursday, February 4, at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea to discuss the first two chapters of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship*.

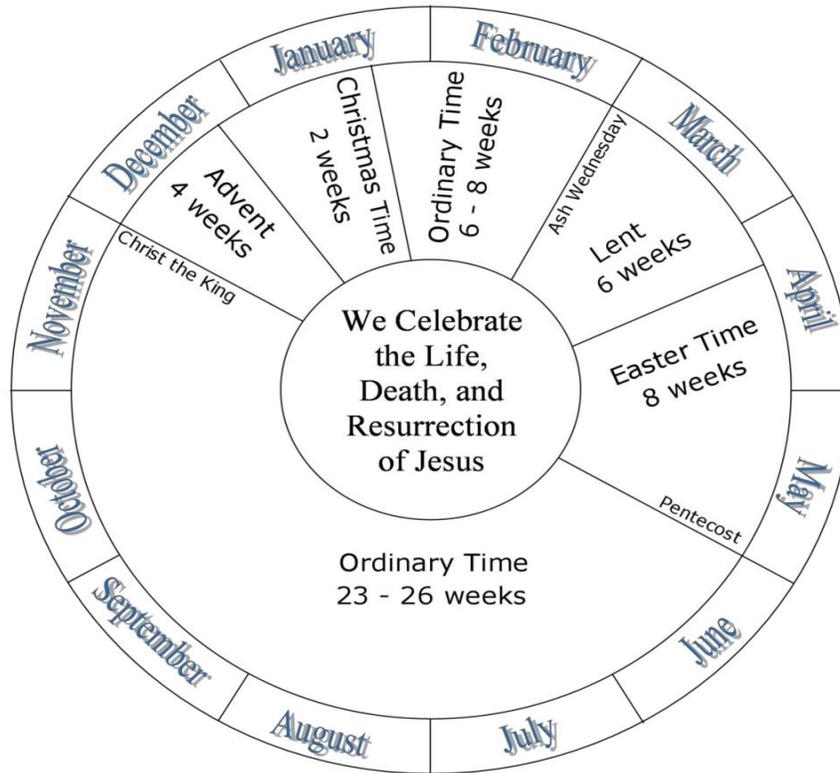
## Christian Formation

Catechism Classes will begin in Lent on Wednesday, Feb 17 at 6:30pm. 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](mailto:KnicholasForti@gmail.com)

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

# The Liturgical Year



## Nik's Calendar

Monday, Feb 1 – Coffee with the Rev'd Dr Ed Bushong, 10:30am-12:30pm  
– Peter Paul Development Center Chapel, 5:30-6:30pm

Friday, Feb 5 – Young Rectors Continuing Ed Group, 10am-noon

Wednesday, Feb 10 – RMC Episcopal-Methodist Group: Ash Wednesday Liturgy, 9pm

Thursday, Feb 11 – Fresh Start, 9:30am-3:30pm

## Looking Ahead

Thursday, Feb 4 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am

– Women's Book Group, 10am-noon

Tuesday, Feb 9 – Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Parish Hall, 6:30pm

Wednesday, Feb 10 – Ash Wednesday: Eucharist at 6:30pm

Saturday, Feb 13 – Vestry Retreat, 9am-2pm

Thursday, Feb 21 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am

– Women's Book Group, 10am-noon

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