

From Father Nik

Karl Barth, a Swiss Reformed Pastor and—arguably—the most important Protestant theologian of the modern era, is known for his stand against Nazism. Unlike his younger friend, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Barth avoided danger by maintaining a safe distance from the Third Reich. Nevertheless, he was an outspoken critic of Nazi policies, and he offered encouragement and support to the Confessing Church—the small remnant of Christian pastors in Germany that resisted the Nazification of the Church). In May of 1934, Barth authored the foundational document of the Confessing Church, ‘The Barmen Declaration,’ in which he identified Germany’s religious nationalism, unquestioning devotion to Hitler, and rhetoric of divine sanction for the rise of Nazism as idolatry. Six months before that, he preached these words in his 1933 Christmas Sermon:

“That the shepherds of Bethlehem will find the child ‘wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger’ is, according to the sacred text, to be a sign for them that this child is the Saviour, Christ the Lord, and that peace has been established between God in the highest and man on earth. Thus man has received definite and real counsel, direction and hope. Of all this, the swaddling clothes and the manger are to be the ‘sign.’ How strange!—for the swaddling clothes and the manger speak of segregation, poverty, oppression, and need Whoever seeks divine revelation will seek in vain unless he follows this sign. One can and must be content with this: revelation is never present where we expect to see heaven on earth, or a glorified earth and God in harmony and even in union with man. Revelation never has a recognisable form, its wisdom and power can never be proved, its triumph is never apparent, its success is not tangible and its benefit not for immediate enjoyment.”

In 1933, Germany had seen the swift and brutal rise to power of Hitler and the Nazi party, and many thought this was surely a sign of God’s Providence at work in History. But God’s power is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 12:9), and all of history is under the judgment of the one born in Bethlehem. The sign of God’s revelation—His self-disclosure in history—is swaddling clothes, the dressing of peasant babies, and a manger, a feeding trough used as a crib because the baby’s parents were too poor to provide a proper home. The marriage of heaven and earth, of the Divine Son of God and creaturely human nature, was (and is!) the Jewish child, Jesus. “Whoever seeks divine revelation will seek in vain unless he follows this sign.” *Nik+*

Christmastide & Epiphany

Sunday, January 3 – 10am Lessons & Carols with Eucharist

Wednesday, January 6 – The Feast of the Epiphany

Sunday, January 10 – 10am Epiphany Pageant & Eucharist

Important Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, January 12 – Vestry Meeting, 7-9pm

Thursday, January 24 - Annual Meeting

Monday-Wednesday, January, 21-23 – Diocesan Annual Council

THANK YOU

for your generous donations to the Western Hanover Wood Ministry.
Through the generosity of Fork Church & the Church of Our Savior,
they were able to collect over \$8000 – exceeding their goal.

Because of you, there will be many grateful families
in Hanover enjoying a warm winter in 2016.

Coffee Hour

Volunteers are still needed for Sundays in January

To sign up, please go to

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/9040449A5AA2FA57-coffee/25614452

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 again in January.

The Adult Sunday School meets Sunday mornings at 9am in the parish hall to explore the Sacraments.

Small Groups

The Women's Book Group will discuss the seventh section of *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans, "Marriage" on Thursday, January 7, at 10am. Please contact Kathy for directions: boysthree@embarqmail.com

The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, January 7, at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea to discuss the seventh section of *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans, "Marriage," (pp 237-256).

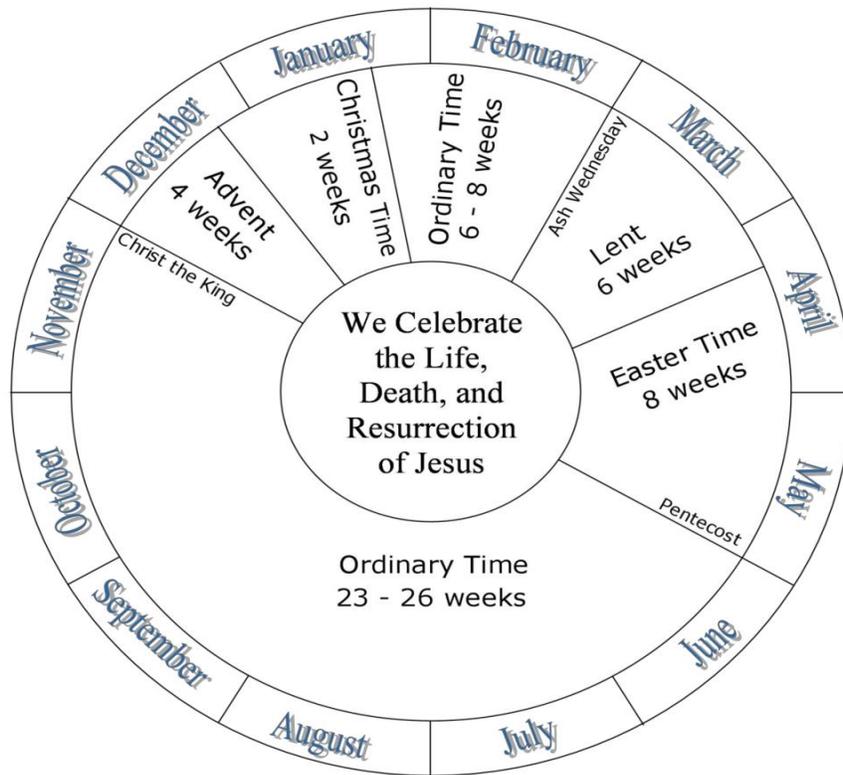
Christian Formation

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

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

The Liturgical Year



Nik's Calendar

Monday, Dec 28 – On-Line meeting with Fr. Ben & Fr Phil, 3:30-5pm
Monday, Jan 4 – Peter Paul Development Center Chapel, 5:30-6:30pm
Tuesday, Jan 5 – Coffee with Fr. Ed Bushong, 10:30am-12:30pm
Friday, Jan 8 – Young Rectors Group, 10am-12:30pm
Thursday, Jan 14 – Fresh Start, 9:30am-3:30pm
Friday, Jan 15 – New Rector Boot Camp, 9:30am-4:30pm

Looking Ahead

Sunday, Jan 3 – Lessons & Carols with Eucharist, 10am
Wednesday, Jan 6 – Choir Rehearsal, 7pm
Thursday, Jan 7 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am
– Women's Book Group, 10am-noon
Sunday, Jan 10 – Epiphany Pageant & Eucharist, 10am
Tuesday, Jan 12 - Vestry Meeting, 7-9pm
Sunday, Jan 24 - Annual Meeting

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.