

## From Father Nik

*When a great crowd had gathered and people from town after town came to him, Jesus spoke in a parable. . . . As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen." Then his disciples asked him what the parable meant. He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to others they remain parables, so that 'looking they may perceive, and listening they may not understand.' No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light. So, pay attention to how you listen."*

~Luke 8:4, 8b-10, 16-18a

Jesus taught in parables. A parable is a story—a certain type of story. It's not the type of story that gives an account of how the world came to be, and how we came to be in the world. It's not the type of story that explores the way the world is. It's not even the type of story that satirically critiques the world. A parable is a story that overturns the world as we know it. It's a story that starts with a familiar scene, inviting us to anticipate the ending, only to shatter our expectations as it confronts us with an ending that defies the way we believe the world works. In this way, a parable prepares those who hear it for the possibility of something new, something not of this world.

The Gospel according to Mark can give the impression that Jesus spoke in parables to confound the crowds but taught his disciples in clear terms. Luke's Gospel suggests that this is not the case. Luke helps us see that the issue is not us against them, insiders as opposed to outsiders, disciples versus the crowd. The issue is having *ears to hear*. The issue is *how you listen*. The issue is having the faith that comes from hearing the word of God. To hear the parables rightly, and thereby to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, is to hear them as making possible something new, something not of this world, that overturns all our expectations. That new thing that overturns our world and all of our expectations is Jesus Christ, himself.

Jesus Christ, and him crucified, is the great parable. He's the dispossessed peasant whom angels proclaim as King of God's Kingdom. He's the uneducated worker who teaches with an authority that exceeds the most learned in the land. He's the one who heals us by his own wounds. And the cross is his greatest parable. It's a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, as St Paul says (1 Cor 1:23). By the cross, Jesus overcame the bondage of sin by being bound by nails through his flesh. He overcame human violence by turning the cheek, praying for his persecutors, blessing those who cursed him, and loving his enemies. By the cross, Jesus overcame death by dying. If we are to hear his parables rightly, we must always hear them in light of this ultimate parable, Jesus Christ crucified for us.

*Nik+*

# **Spring Clean-Up Day**

Saturday, May 28 – 10am to 2pm

Lunch Provided.

## *Coffee Hour*

Thanks to Hugh & Sally Campbell for this morning's refreshments!

*Volunteers are still needed.*

## **Learn about St. Augustine**

A small group of parishioners from Fork & SJtL  
are meeting at

10am every other Thursday at St. James the Less

to listen to and discuss the Teaching Company Course,  
“**Augustine: Philosopher & Saint**” by Phillip Cary.

If you are interested in joining the discussion,  
they will meet again at

10am on Thursday, June 2.

## **Parish Picnic**

The Parish Picnic will be

Sunday, June 12 at

Mount Olympus Farm

## **Reminder from the Vestry**

The loose offering collected on the first Sunday of every month  
goes to the Rector's discretionary fund,  
by which he helps those in our community in need.

## **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 worship.

**J2A Youth Group** will meet **this Sunday, May 22**, for bowling with the Youth Group from Church of Our Savior, Montpelier. **Please bring \$15** to cover the cost of bowling and dinner. We will meet at the church at 5pm to head down to the **AMF Bowling, Shrader Lanes (8037 Shrader Rd, Henrico)** by **6pm**. Youth can meet us at either the church or the bowling alley. We will return to the church by 8pm.

**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, May 26, at 10am to discuss chapter 11 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* (Reader's Edition – Fortress Press). Please contact Kathy for directions: [boysthree@embarqmail.com](mailto:boysthree@embarqmail.com)

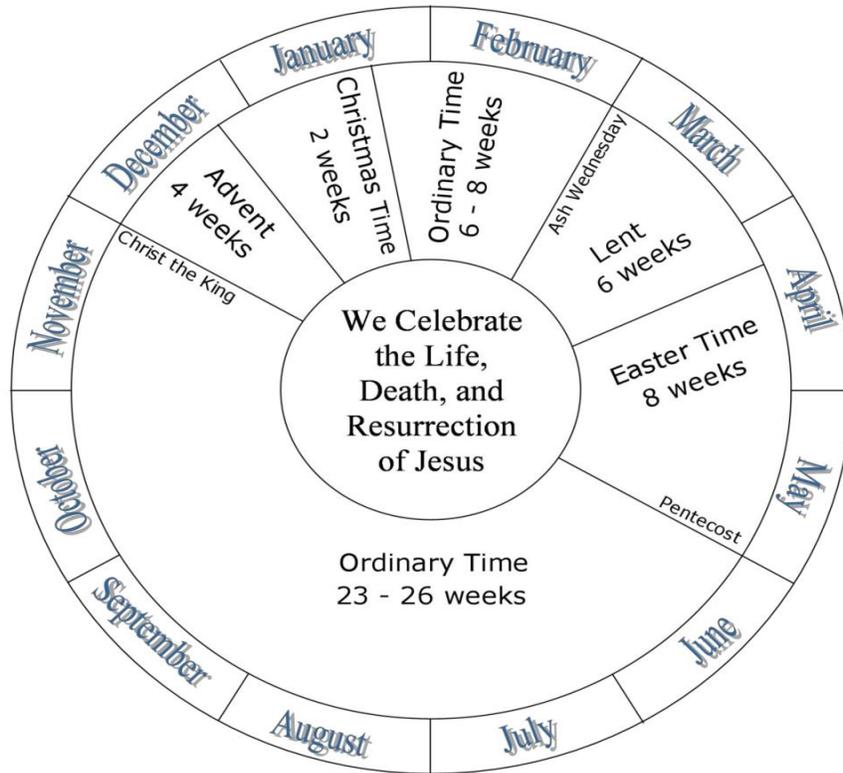
**The Men's Book Group** will meet Thursday, May 26, at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea to discuss chapters 9-10 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* (Reader's Edition – Fortress Press).

## **Christian Formation**

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, May 23 – Lunch with Dr David Holmes, Charlottesville, 12:30pm

Tuesday, May 24 – Executive Committee Meeting, 7:30-8:30am

Thursday, May 25 – Cluster Meeting, Church of Our Savior, 11:30am

Thursday, May 26 – Meeting with Fr Phil & Fr Ben, 9:30-10:30am

– Coffee with the Rev'd Dr Ed Bushong, 11am-1pm

– Region XI meeting, 6:30pm

## Looking Ahead

Tuesday, May 24 – Stewardship Meeting, 6pm

– Vestry Meeting, 7pm

Thursday, May 26 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am

Women's Book Group, 10am-noon

Monday, May 30 – MEMORIAL DAY

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