

From Father Nik

The disciples of John the Baptist told him all these things. And John, calling to him two of his disciples, sent them to the Lord, saying, 'Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?' And he answered them, 'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.'

~Luke 7:18-19, 22

Rather unexpectedly, John the Baptist reappears in the story of Luke's Gospel. The last we heard of him was Luke 3:19-20, which told us that Herod Antipas had "shut up John in prison." But after this exchange between Jesus and John, and Jesus' subsequent reflection on John's purpose and importance, the Baptizer will completely disappear from the story. Unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke doesn't tell us the story of Salome's dance and Herodias' request of John's head on a platter. Indeed, if we only had Luke's Gospel, we wouldn't even know that John the Baptist was executed but by an offhand remark from Herod Antipas when someone suggested that the wonderworking preacher in Galilee might be John the Baptist resurrected. "Herod said, 'John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?'" (Lk 9:9).

The burning question for the imprisoned John was whether or not Jesus was *he who is to come*. Luke has ordered this exchange to follow just after the story of Jesus healing the centurion's servant (Lk 7:1-10) and raising up the dead son of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:11-17). These two miracles echo stories from Israel's past about the prophets Elisha and Elijah. Since Elijah never died but was taken up into heaven by a fiery chariot riding on a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:1-12), many in Jesus' day had come to believe that this great prophet would return to herald the coming of the Messiah. It seems that Jesus' miracles might have elicited the belief that he was Elijah returned (Lk 7:16). When this rumor reached John the Baptist in prison, it raised the anxiety that Jesus was not the fulfillment of John's prophecy (Lk 3:16-17) but only another prophet sent in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the people for *he who is to come*.

Jesus' response to John's inquiry is two-fold. First, Jesus names all that he has done since the beginning of his ministry—healing the blind, the lame, the leper, and the deaf; raising the dead; and proclaiming good news to the poor (Lk 7:22). In other words, Jesus' miracles aren't just individual acts of mercy (like those of Elijah and Elisha) but signs that the Kingdom of God has come, and it has come in his person and work. Second, Jesus reiterates this point when says that John was a prophet "and more than a prophet" (Lk 7:26), since he was the one sent to prepare the people for *he who is to come*. "Yet," Jesus says, "the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John" (Lk 7:28). So, if John was a prophet, *and more than a prophet*, but less than the least in the Kingdom of God, and that Kingdom comes in Jesus' person and work, then Jesus cannot simply be a prophet. Jesus is the King of the Kingdom of God.

Spring Clean-Up Day

Saturday, May 21st – 10am-2pm

Bring your tools and elbow grease. Lunch will be provided
Look for the sign-up sheet on in the narthex of the church.

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, May 19.

Trinity Sunday at Trinity Church

See insert

Coffee Hour

One of our most important ministries at Fork Church is the ministry of Hospitality and Fellowship exemplified in our Coffee Hour/Lemonade-on-the-Lawn.

Please consider volunteering for a Sunday.

It doesn't need to be elaborate:
just a small snack or two, coffee, & lemonade

Continuing Education

Father Nik will attend a Lutheran-Episcopal Conference on Liturgy at Shrine Mont Monday, May 16 – Wednesday, May 18.

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 our Sunday morning worship; after which, they join their parents in church for Communion.

J2A Youth Group will meet this Sunday, May 15 at 5pm in the Parish House.

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 12, at 10am to discuss chapters 9 & 10 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* (Reader's Edition – Fortress Press). Please contact Kathy for directions: boysthree@embarqmail.com

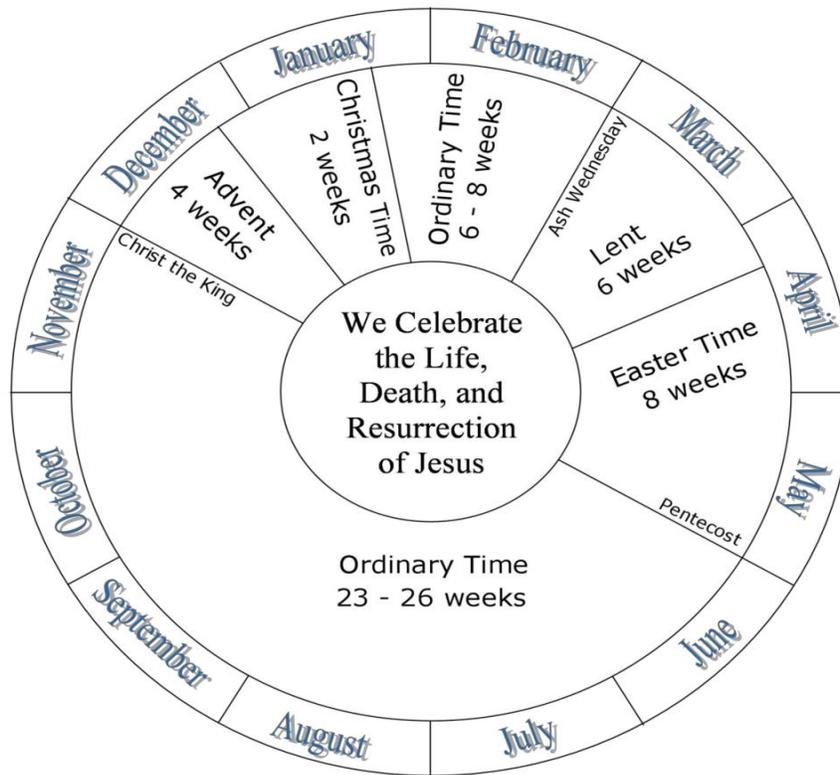
The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, May 12, at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea to discuss chapters 8-10 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* (Reader's Edition – Fortress Press).

Christian Formation

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

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

The Liturgical Year



Nik's Calendar

Monday, May 9 – Coffee with the Rev'd Dr. Ed Bushong, 10:30am-12:30pm
– Peter Paul Development Center Chapel, 5:30-6:30pm,

Tuesday, May 10 – Pastoral Visits

Thursday, May 12 – Pre-Marriage Prep with Couple, 3pm

Mon, May 16-Wed, May 18 – Episcopal-Lutheran Liturgy Conference at Shrine Mont

Looking Ahead

Wednesday, May 11 – Choir Rehearsal, 7pm

Thursday, May 12 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am

– Women's Book Group, 10am-noon

Sunday, May 15 – PENTECOST

Wednesday, May 18 – Choir Rehearsal, 7pm

Thursday, May 19 – “Augustine: Philosopher & Saint” Discussion @ SJtL, Ashland, 10am

Sunday, May 22 – Trinity Sunday

Tuesday, May 24 – Vestry Meeting, 7pm

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.