

## From Father Nik

Christ is not only the great Prophet who is the end and fulfillment of prophecy, he is also our one, true High Priest. The High Priesthood of Christ was the topic of last Sunday's sermon, in which we discussed how strange it is that Jesus is spoken of in such a way. He was not of Zadok's lineage, as the High Priest of the Jerusalem Temple was meant to be. And, in fact, he wasn't descended from Moses' brother, Aaron, as all of the Temple priests were. For that matter, he wasn't even a Levite—that is, from the tribe God had set apart from among the offspring of Israel to serve in all the ways necessary for the sacrifices of the Temple to occur. Christ had no legitimate claim to priesthood in the judgment of his society and culture. Moreover, his relationship with the Temple in Jerusalem—the site of Priestly office and sacrifice in his time—was ambiguous at best. When he visits the Temple as an adult, he doesn't seem to have made it past the outer portico where the money-changing occurred before causing such scene that it becomes unsafe for him to proceed further or even hang around.

Jesus, it seems, was no priest and certainly no High Priest. Yet this is precisely what Scripture claims about him (Heb 7). One of my professors from seminary has suggested that in the pattern of these kinds of claims Scripture is teaching us something about how we are to read its witness. A wooden, literal reading of Scripture, moving from historical categories to Jesus, would see here a contradiction. But Scripture is the witness, and Christ is the one about whom the witness testifies. Therefore, Scripture teaches us to read its witness as always reflecting on and pointing to this peasant, whose priestly vestment was the very flesh of his humanity and whose sacrifice was no less than his very own self.

The priests of old make sacrifices from God's creation to God on behalf of the people of God and mediated His blessing to them on behalf of Him. But Christ, who is fully God, being the eternal Son of the Father, and fully human, being the Son of Mary, was not only everlasting priest but also everlasting sacrifice. Therefore, his once-and-for-all sacrifice of himself (once offered) for us, puts to an end our attempts to please God by making sacrifices from His own creation to Him. In this way, Christ reveals to us the free gift of God's love for us, which we rightly call Grace. It is God's Grace—His love for us—that makes our existence, our lives, and all we do possible. And it is that Grace that comes to us in our own humanity, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laying in a manger, to redirect our love to Him who loved us first. He is our great High Priest because he invites us to address God as Father with him, because his Holy Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words, and because it is by him, with him, and in him that we lift up our hearts to the LORD.

*Nik+*

## **Advent Evensong**

The choirs of Fork Church & St. James the Less invite you to a joint Advent evensong at SJtL on Sunday, Dec. 21 at 5:30pm.

## **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

**5pm** – Family/Children's Eucharist

**11pm** – Christmas Eucharist (*preceded by Christmas music*)

## **Fork Cookbook**

The cookbook makes wonderful Christmas gift!  
Buy yours today from any cookbook committee member.

## ***Look What's Cookin* – 2015 Stewardship'**

The 2015 Stewardship Letter & Pledge Card have been mailed.

If you have any questions or need a Pledge Card,  
please contact Scott Smythe ([scott@virginiaberryfarm.com](mailto:scott@virginiaberryfarm.com)).

## **Outreach Dinner**

The next Outreach Dinner will be 5pm, Sunday, Dec 28 at SJtL.

Menu: Beef stew, Green Beans, Biscuits, Salad & Pie

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

The Fork Church Annual Meeting will be Sunday, Jan 25, 2015

## **Help a Friend Get To Church**

Please consider occasionally driving a fellow parishioner to church.

If you are interested in volunteering for this ministry,  
contact John Rickman – [annerickman@embarqmail.com](mailto:annerickman@embarqmail.com)

## Christian Education

**Godly Play** is currently in session. 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** meets twice a month for fun, fellowship, food, & formation. **We will be having pizza and then delivering cookies after church today (Dec 21).**

**Adult Forum** meets Sunday mornings at 9am. **On Sunday, Jan 4, we will begin a seven (7) week study of The Reformation.** Come join us for coffee and good conversation.

## Small Groups

**The Women's Book Group** meets every other Thursday at Kathy Thomas' house from 10am-noon. Please contact Kathy for directions or more info: [boysthree@embarqmail.com](mailto:boysthree@embarqmail.com)

**The Men's Book Group** will meet Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea. They are reading *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* by Stanley Hauerwas & Will Willimon – (pages 53-68).

## **Christian Formation**

If you are seeking Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, or would like to reaffirm your baptismal covenant, please contact Fr Nik – [KNicholasForti@gmail.com](mailto:KNicholasForti@gmail.com)

### **Nik's Calendar**

Tuesday, Dec 16 – Clericus at SJtL, 9am-noon  
– Clergy & staff lunch, 12:30pm  
Monday, Dec 29 – Meeting with Fr. Bushong, 10am

### **Looking Ahead**

Thursday, Dec 18 – Men's Book Group, 7:30am  
Saturday, Dec 20 – Rehearsal, Advent Pageant 10am  
Saturday, Dec 20 – Youth Group makes cookies, 10am  
Sunday, Dec 21 – Youth Group delivers cookies, 11:30am  
Sunday, Dec 21 – Godly Play Advent/Christmas Pageant @ 10am Eucharist  
Sunday, Dec 21 – Advent Evensong @ St James the Less, Ashland, 5:30pm  
Wednesday, Dec 24 – Children's Eucharist, 5pm  
– Midnight Mass, 11pm  
Sunday, Dec 28 – Outreach Dinner at SJtL, 5pm