

From Father Nik

Church is a community of forgiveness. That was the message explored and expounded upon in last Sunday's sermon. But in the Adult Forum beforehand, we delved into the early years of this community of forgiveness called Church. In particular, we saw in the book of Acts how St Peter and the other apostles organized this community in the city of Jerusalem in the years after Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Some of us were surprised to read that the earliest Christians not only "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers," but also that they "who believed were together and had all things in common," distributing their pooled resources "as any had need" (Acts 2:42-45).

In the context of that small Jerusalem community of Christian Jews, many of whom were peasants recently relocated from the Galilee, this way of living into the justifying grace bestowed by Christ made sense. But as the community grew, this way of living the Gospel became more and more difficult (Acts 6:1-6). And as the Church began to spread out into the wider Roman Empire, early Christians had to find new ways to proclaim the Gospel in word *and* deed. No longer selling their possessions so that the apostles could distribute the proceeds, the early Christians took up the ancient Jewish practice of *tithing*—giving ten percent of their wealth or produce to the community. But they also dedicated themselves to taking care of one another when hard times hit. Indeed, they not only took care of each other, they also took care of the pagans and non-Christian Jews around them when plagues and other disasters struck.

In late antiquity, some Christians returned to that early community ideal found in Acts, and thus monasticism was born. But for Christians who were not called to live as monks and nuns, the tradition of tithing and taking care of one another was centered on the parish church. Throughout our history, Christians have been extraordinarily creative about the ways we live and embody the Gospel of God's freely bestowed grace. For example, modern hospitals are descended from the *hospitality houses* financially supported by medieval Christians and run by monks and nuns. Even today, young Evangelicals have discovered and are experimenting with a *New Monasticism* in the impoverished neighborhoods of the inner city. But for most of us, we enact the Gospel by visiting with the ill and lonely of our community, by volunteering with organizations like CARITAS or the Peter Paul Development Center, and by pledging our tithe to our parish church. In this way, we can come to the table of the Lord, saying: *All things come of thee, O Lord; and of thine own have we given thee.*

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. The next meeting is Sunday, Sept 28 from 5:00 to 7:00pm. We will meet at the Church for the first half and then go down the street to Janeway (11538 Old Ridge Road) for pizza and a bonfire.

Adult Forum meets Sunday mornings at 9am. Through Nov 23, Don Schubert and Fr Nik are co-leading a study exploring the question: “What is Church?” Come join us for coffee and good conversation.

Christian Formation

Baptism – If you are seeking baptism or would like to reaffirm your baptismal covenant, please contact Fr Nik at KNicholasForti@gmail.com.

Confirmation & Reception – If you are interested in being Confirmed or if you have been Confirmed in another Christian tradition but would like to be officially Received as a member of the Episcopal Church, Fr Nik will be leading a Confirmation Class to begin soon. Please be in contact with Fr Nik (KNicholasForti@gmail.com) for more info.

Caritas – Thank You

We have received a lovely note from Erin Seymour, thanking all of our Fork Church volunteers for their help during Caritas at St. James the Less. The men “especially enjoyed the steaks” and Fork Church’s participation was greatly appreciated. The note is on the bulletin board in the back of the church.

Cookbook

The Fork Church cookbooks are in!

The cookbook committee will be selling them each Sunday.

You may also contact any committee member or contact Alexia Miles @-amiles6395@aol.com or tel. 252-7282 to arrange to get yours.

They will make wonderful Christmas gifts!

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Dessert and Coffee Evenings with Nik

We are having a series of Dessert and Coffee gathers so that Nik and get to meet members of the congregation on a more one on one basis. All of the events will start at 7PM. Below is a list of the dates and who will be hosting.

September 22 - Jim & Boo Smythe

October 2 - Jennifer& Howard Smith

October 8 - Scott & Lindsey Smythe

October 15 - Michael & Angela Woods

October 27 - John & Anne Rickman

Please select a date and let the office know. We will also be calling to confirm.

Nik's Calendar

Monday, Sept 15 – RMC Student Activities Fair, 5-7pm

Tuesday, Sept 16 – Pastoral Visits

Thursday, Sept 18 – RMC Campus Ministries Council Luncheon, Noon-3pm

Tuesday, Sept 23 – Pastoral Visits

Wednesday, Sept 24 – Clericus, 1-3pm

Thursday, Sept 25 – RMC Student Eucharist & Lunch, Noon-2pm

Looking Ahead

September 23 - Vestry Meeting - 7PM

September 28 - J2A Youth Group – 5PM

October 5th – Blessing of the animals – 4PM

J2A Youth Group – 5PM

October 17, 18th - Wellness “event” @ St. James the Less

October 26th - Halloween Service , – 5PM

Outreach Dinner @ St. James the Less