

## From Father Nik

The Church is a community of witness. We are a community given the words to witness by the Word made flesh. We are a community given the faith to witness by the one who was faithful even unto death on a cross. We are a community given the courage to witness by the one who conquered the source of our fears—sin and death—when he was raised for our justification and as a promise that we will be raised with him. We are a community of witness gathered together by Jesus Christ, who is the object of our witness. Our witness as a community to the grace and revelation of God in Christ is the gospel we proclaim. In word and sacrament, in our virtues and vows, in the confession of our sins and the forgiveness we offer those who trespass against us, in worship and friendship and service, we—the Church—are a community witnessing to the redemption of the world through the covenant God has established with us in his Son our Savior, Jesus Christ.

To be a community of witness requires discipline. Being friends with Christ means being his disciple. Being a disciple means cultivating the habits that embody the virtues of true faith, hope, and love, which we each receive through grace at baptism. This talk of cultivating habits might sound like the kind of solitary training that depends on the person's personal strength and willpower, but that is not the way we are sanctified. St Paul reminds us that though we develop the habits of cultivation, God alone gives the growth (Rom 3:7). And the means by which God gives the growth, the medium of God's sanctifying grace, is the community of witness—the Church. We need one another to be disciples.

There are many ways that the Church mediates God's sanctifying grace to make us better disciples. One of those ways is through making possible and supporting Christian marriage. When two Christians discern that their relationship can add to the up-building of the Community of Witness, they enter into the covenant of marriage. In this way, the couple is saying to the Church that their lives together, in this covenantal relationship with one another, will help cultivate the habits of those grace-given virtues of hope, faith, & love. In other words, being married will make them better disciples of Jesus. And the Church community responds by blessing the marriage and pledging to support the couple in their covenantal relationship. In this way, the couple becomes for the Church a witness to God's love and covenant with us, and the Church surrounds the couple in a community of witness to the one who makes their love possible.

This Sunday, Aaron and Emily have given us, the community of witness known as Fork Church, the great gift of blessing their new marriage. May their love for one another be a witness to God's love for us in Christ. May their marriage be a witness to God's everlasting covenant with the Church. And may we never fail to witness to them God's deep love and concern for them, for their relationship, and for their sanctification.

*Nik+*

## **Celebration of a New Marriage**

Emily Gill & Aaron Lazar invite you to celebrate their new marriage with a reception in the Parish House after the Eucharist this morning.

They had a small, family only wedding yesterday.

## **Parish Dinner & 2014 Opera Viewing**

Saturday, April 25 we will celebrate our new kitchen with a parish dinner and viewing of the 2014 opera in the parish hall.

*(Donations encouraged: \$5 per person, \$20 per family)*

## **African Team Ministries**

The African Team Ministries' artifacts and jewelry will be available on Sunday, April 26, after church in the Parish House.

## **Out Reach Dinner**

Sunday, April 26 at St. James the Less

The menu is chicken, baked potato, tossed salad, green beans & pie

## **Godly Play**

On Sunday, May 3 the Godly Play children will perform a program in church. This will be a program highlighting the life of Jesus. We will assign roles and practice during the regular Godly Play time for the next 3 Sundays. Please bring your children to church so they can help us tell the story of Jesus' life.

## **The Unique Boutique Arts & Crafts Festival**

Will be held on the grounds of Fork Church September 19th, 2015 & is seeking artist & craft persons to participate in the inaugural show & sale. For more information go to the website ([uniqueboutiquefestival.com](http://uniqueboutiquefestival.com)) or email at [uniqueboutiquefestival@gmail.com](mailto:uniqueboutiquefestival@gmail.com) or speak to Amy Newell, Alice Noland, Linda MacDonald, or Emily Dickson

Fr. Nik will be away from Monday, April 27 through Saturday, May 2.

And he will be at the Spring Clergy Retreat at Shrine Mont Monday, May 4 through Wednesday, May 6.

**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.

## 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 worship, then join their parents for Communion.

**J2A Youth Group** meets twice a month for fun, fellowship, food, & formation. **The next meeting is this evening Sunday, April 19 @ 5pm in the parish house.**

**Adult Forum** meets Sunday mornings at 9am. **During the seasons of Lent and Easter we're studying St Paul's Letter to the Galatians.** Come join us for coffee and good conversation.

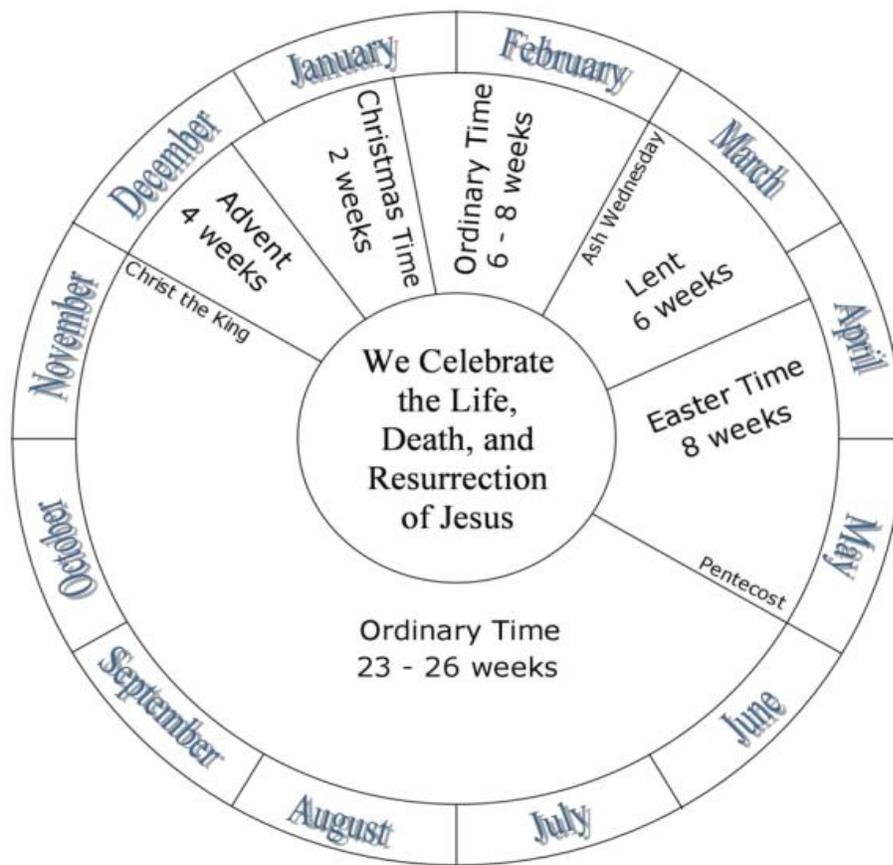
## Small Groups

**The Women's Book Group** meets every other Thursday at Kathy Thomas' house from 10am-noon. The next meeting is Thursday April 30, the book is *Daring Greatly* by Brene Brown. Please contact Kathy for directions or more info: [boysthree@embarqmail.com](mailto:boysthree@embarqmail.com)

**The Men's Book Group** will meet Thursday, April 23 at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea. They are reading *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* by Stanley Hauerwas & Will Willimon – (pages 144-156). Please join us!

## Christian Formation

If you're interested in being Baptized or would like to become a member of this Church, please contact Fr Nik – [KNicholasForti@gmail.com](mailto:KNicholasForti@gmail.com)



### Nik's Calendar

Thursday, Apr 16 – Fresh Start, 9:30am-3:30pm  
 – Racism Listening Session, 7-8:30pm  
 Friday, Apr 17 – Young Rector's Group, 10am-12:30pm  
 Monday, Apr 27-Saturday, May 2 – Fr Nik is Away  
 Monday, May 4-Wednesday, May 6 – Spring Clergy Retreat at Shrine Mont

### Looking Ahead

Saturday, Apr 18 – Gill/Lazar wedding, 11am  
 Sunday, Apr 19 – Gill/Lazar reception for the parish after Eucharist, 11:30am  
 Sunday, Apr 19 – Youth Group, 5pm  
 Tuesday, Apr 21 – Vestry Meeting, 7pm  
 Wednesday, Apr 22 – Catechism & Confirmation class, 6:30-7:30pm  
 Choir rehearsal, 7:00pm  
 Thursday, Apr 23 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am  
 Saturday, Apr 25 – Parish Dinner, 6pm  
 Sunday, April 26 - African Team Ministries art & jewelry sale, 11:30am  
 Monday, Apr 27-Saturday, May 2 – Fr Nik is Away  
 Thursday, Apr 30 – Woman's Book Group, 10am-noon