

From Father Nik

Absalom Jones (1746-1818) was born & raised the slave of an Episcopalian in colonial Delaware. When Jones was about 20, his master moved to Philadelphia, taking Jones with him. There in Philadelphia, Jones met his wife, was freed, and became a recognized leader of the African American community in the city. He also began attending St George's Methodist Church where he was licensed as a lay preacher. At St George's, Jones met Richard Allen (1760-1831), an inspiring young preacher who had bought his own freedom & had been traveling the preaching circuit with white Methodists before returning to his native Pennsylvania.

For a time, Jones & Allen seem to have been relatively at home at St George's, helping to swell attendance as they drew in more African Americans. Nevertheless, the sin of racism, which provided the spiritual roots that anchored & fed the sin of slavery, proved a bond that wouldn't be broken by manumission alone. Tension at St George's grew in proportion to the growth in black attendance until an incident during worship expressed that tension in a definitive confrontation. The white leadership of St George's decided to segregate the congregation by restricting all black attendees to the newly constructed gallery. Jones & Allen, however, sat in their usual pews. During the opening prayer, a white member tried to physically force Jones from his knees. After some back-and-forth, Jones said to the man, "Wait until prayer is over, and I will get up and trouble you no more." After the congregation intoned the last "Amen," Jones & Allen stood and silently led the black half of the congregation out of St George's.

The two men had created the Free African Society in 1787, a mutual aid organization that also served as a forum for religious devotion & instruction independent of the suspicious & paternalistic oversight of the white Methodist leadership. Some members of that society decided to start their own congregation within the Episcopal Church, under the oversight of Bishop White. At the time, Richard Allen—who would later found the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church—was too committed to the Methodist denomination to break from it. However, Jones sought ordination in the Episcopal Church to be a pastor to his flock. In 1794, St Thomas' African Episcopal Church was started. The following year Absalom Jones was ordained as a deacon and then a priest in 1804. Today, it is Allen & the Mother Bethel AME Church he founded that are remembered and remarked upon. As the Rev'd Dr Harold Lewis has written, "The fact that the first black Christians in America were Anglicans, and that it was the Episcopal Church that established the first black schools and trained the first black teachers, that Absalom Jones was the first black minister ordained in the United States in any major denomination, and that St. Thomas' Church, Philadelphia, was the first truly constituted black congregation are forgotten if they were ever known" It's time for this history to be remembered and reclaimed.

Nik+

CARITAS is Coming

CARITAS is a shared ministry that helps break the cycle of homelessness by providing shelter and stability our neighbors who have lost both.

The CARITAS guests will be staying at
St. James the Less, Ashland from September 5 to 12.

**Fork Church is responsible for
the evening of Sept. 8, the morning of Sept 9,
and bag lunches for Sept 9.**

Look for the sign up sheet in the narthex of the church.
Let's all put our faith to work!

Lemonade on the Lawn

Thanks to the Godly Play children for this morning's refreshments!



Bishop Spong Discussion Group

Ruth Syman-May & Janet Taylor are leading
a discussion group based on
St Paul's, Richmond's 2015 Lenten Lecture Series
by Bishop John Shelby Spong.

**The next meeting is 10am Thursday, August 20
at St. James the Less.**

All are welcome!

Christian Education

... is Taking a Break for the Summer.

Godly Play needs volunteers this summer for:

- sorting & cleaning Nursery toys & equipment;
- helping with special summer events during the first part of church on Sundays from June 14 until August 16;
- reorganizing the Godly Play stories & the supply closet.

Please call Boo Smythe at 804-357-3319 if you can help.

J2A Youth Group will meet again in September, **but stay tuned for occasional summer events.**

The Adult Forum will meet again on Sunday, September 13.

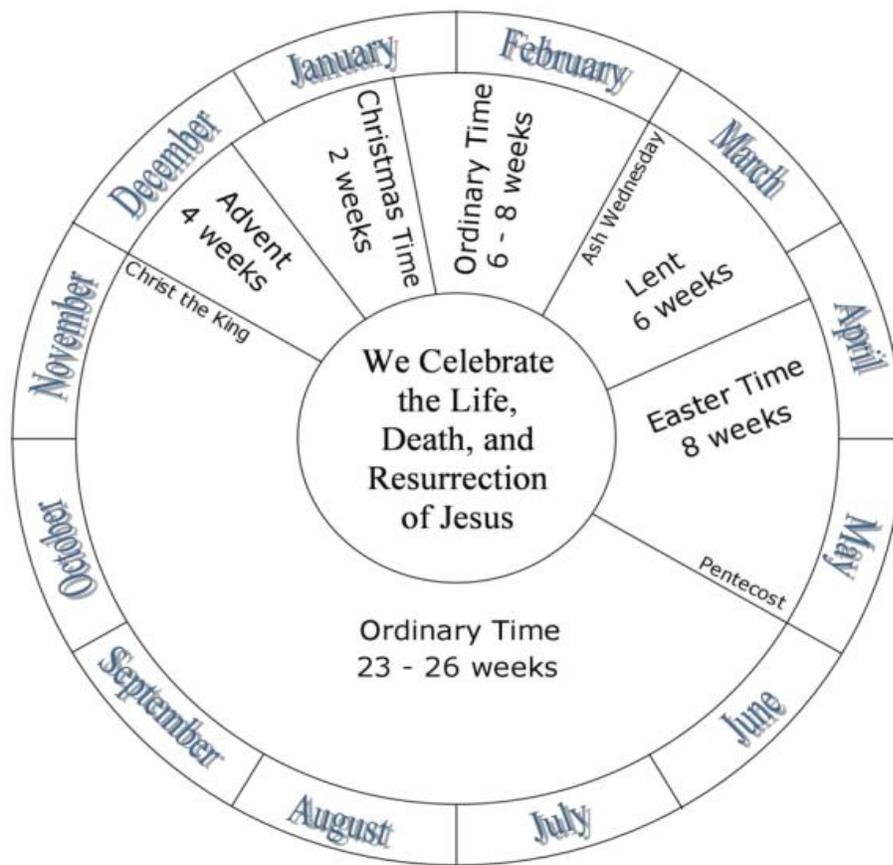
Small Groups

The Women's Book Group will meet again in September. They are reading *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle over the summer. Please contact Kathy for directions or more info: boysthree@embarqmail.com

The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, August 20 at 7:30am at **The Caboose in Ashland** to finish discussing the book, *Killing Jesus: A History* by Bill O'Reilly & Martin Dugard.

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



Nik's Calendar

Friday, August 7 – Young Rector's Group, 10am
 – Smith-Polat Rehearsal, 6pm

Saturday, August 8 – Smith-Polat Blessing of Marriage, 6pm (reception to follow)

Monday, August 10 – Day off (transferred from Friday, August 7)

Thursday, August 20 – Region XI Meeting, 6:30pm

Looking Ahead

Monday, Aug 10–Thursday, Aug 13 – Vacation Bible School at SJtL

Thursday, August 20 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am

–Bp Spong Discussion Group, 10am at SJtL

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.