

From Father Nik

Are any among you suffering? asks James in his epistle. Let them pray, he advises. Are any cheerful? Let them sing praise. Are any among you sick? Let them call for the elders¹ of the church to pray over them, anointing them with oil in the Name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

The Anointing of the Sick is the name the Church now gives to that sacrament (or sacramental rite) formerly known as Extreme Unction, or Last Rites. The Church has changed the name to reflect a renewed connection between the sacramental rite and its scriptural foundation in James 5:13-14 (quoted above). For some time, the Church reserved this sacrament for those facing a grave illness or who were believed to be close to death. Now, following James' prescription of anointing for "any among you [who are] sick," the Church has encouraged the clergy to offer anointing to anyone suffering from physical, mental, or spiritual dis-ease, whatever the severity.

Still, there is something worthwhile in remembering that though this sacramental rite of anointing is for healing, it doesn't claim to save us from death. In fact, apart from healing, its other purpose is to prepare us for death. Jesus we should remember, was anointed by the unnamed woman at the beginning of the week of his Passion, and he explicitly connected that anointing with the preparation of his body for burial (Mark 14:3-9). This is important because it reminds us that although there is not a causal link between our sin and our sickness and suffering, they are, nevertheless, connected by death and death's power over our lives and our world.

When Scripture speaks of the world as being under the reign of death and a difficult place for Christians, it's not referring to Creation, which God made good. "The World," when spoken of negatively in the Bible, is this fallen Age in which we live, and in which our sin has so twisted God's good Creation, that its sickness distorts its beauty. Upon this sick and dying world, God sent his anointing—that is, his anointed one—by whom he would *save the sick, and would raise them up . . . forgiven*. Is there a balm in Gilead? "There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul." There is a balm in Gilead—the baby born in Bethlehem. There is a balm in Gilead—Jesus Christ, the Lord.

¹ "elders" translates the Greek *presbyteroi* which is usually rendered priests (or presbyters) in modern English.

Coffee Hour

Thanks to Tish Iorio for hosting today's refreshments!

Volunteers are still needed for Sundays in December

To sign up, please go to

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/9040449A5AA2FA57-coffee/25614452

Peter Paul Development Center

Christmas Gifts for the children of PPDC

Make your check payable to Fork Church,
put PPDC on the memo line,

and place your gift in the collection plate on Dec 13

You can also place cash in an envelope with PPDC on the front
or mail your check to Fork Church.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

The Flower Guild is preparing to green our sanctuary for Christmas.

Please consider making a gift

in Honor or Memory of someone meaningful in your life.

These will be published in the

Christmas Eve and Christmas service bulletins.

Please make your check payable to Fork Church Altar Guild by Dec 15.

(Suggested donation is \$25)

Send check with order form to:

Emily Dickson , 15003 Lane Mill Rd., Montpelier, VA 23192

Questions? Contact Emily at 339-1757 or emily.appleseed@gmail.com

Please Help Local Families Have A Safe Winter

It's come to light that some Hanover families who use wood for heat have unsafe chimneys.

The Wood Ministry is raising funds to help these families be safe when heating their homes.

We're partnering with Neat Sweep. Please make checks out to **West Hanover Wood Ministry**
and send to Richard Lear, 247 Burruss Mill Rd, Bumpass, VA 23024-4939

Bishop's Visit

Retired Suffragan Bishop, the Rt. Rev'd David Jones
will be with us for Sunday morning worship on December 20.

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 Saturday morning, December 19, in the parish hall to bake cookies for our home bound parishioners. They will deliver the cookies after worship on Sunday, December 20.

The Adult Sunday School meets Sunday mornings at 9am in the parish hall to explore the Sacraments.

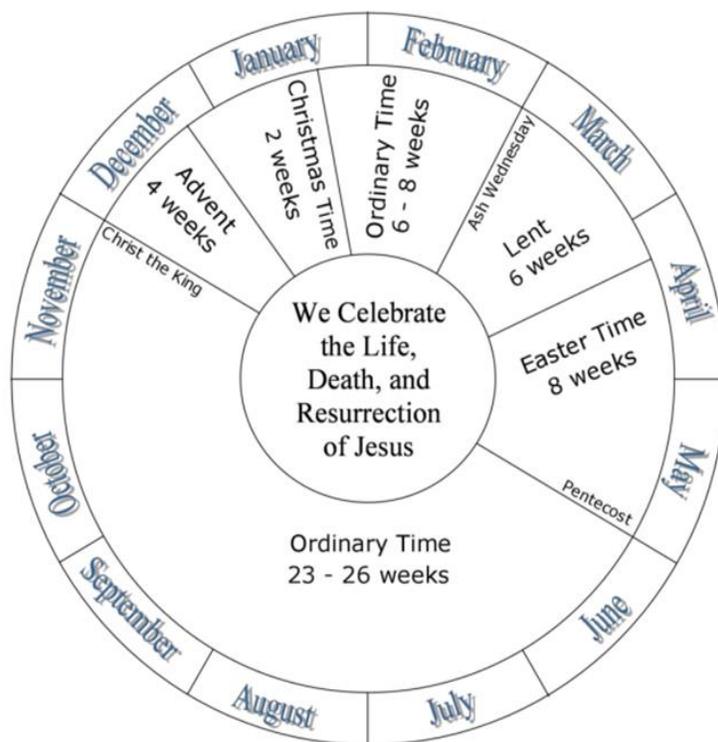
Small Groups

The Women's Book Group will discuss the sixth section of *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans, "Anointing of the Sick" on Thursday, December 17, at 10am. Please contact Kathy for directions:

boysthree@embarqmail.com

The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, December 17, at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea to discuss the sixth section of *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans, "Anointing of the Sick," (pp 203-233)

The Liturgical Year



Nik's Calendar

Wednesday, Dec 9 – St. James the Less Free Clinic dinner, 5:30-8pm
Thursday, Dec 10 – Funeral, St. Paul's Memorial, Charlottesville, 11am
Monday, Dec 14 – Coffee w/ Fr. Bushong, 10:30-12:30pm

Looking Ahead

Tuesday, Dec 15 – Vestry Meeting, 7-9pm
Wednesday, Dec 16 – Confirmation/Reception class, 6:30pm
– Choir Rehearsal, 7pm
Thursday, Dec 17 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am
– Women's Book Group, 10am-noon
Sunday, Dec 20 – Bishop's Visit 10am

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.