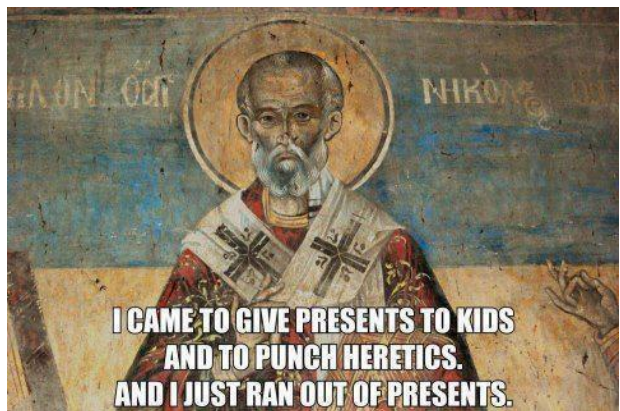


From Father Nik

In last Sunday's sermon, I suggested that the two different views of Confirmation in our Prayer Book might not be as much at odds with one another as some think. The Protestant view of Confirmation as an adult Affirmation of the Faith and the Catholic view of Confirmation as the Church confirming the work of the Holy Spirit begun at Baptism go together hand in glove, the former following from the latter. It is by the Holy Spirit, whose sanctifying work is in and through the Church, that anyone can make the affirmation of faith, "Jesus Christ is Lord" (1 Cor 12:3). This requires the confirming acknowledgement of the Church because such an affirmation is not just a slogan but also a way of living—a way of living that both constitutes the Church and is made possible by the Church. It's for this reason that some parts of the Church ask Confirmands to adopt the name of a saint (who will be their patron) at Confirmation. They're to become imitators of that saint just as that saint, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, was an imitator of Christ (1 Cor 11:1).

This Sunday is the Feast of my own patron saint, Bishop Nikolaos of Myra—Wonderworker, Defender of Orthodoxy, and Patron of Sailors and Children. These days, of course, Saint Nicholas is best known by the name Santa Claus—Jolly Old Elf, Drinker of Coca-Cola, and Patron of Christmas Commercialism. The supersession of the 4th Century bishop by the modern, secular Santa has led some Christians to feel we should forget about the saint of Myra entirely, feeling that he is beyond redemption for Christians committed to the true meaning of Christmas rather than the secular festival of consumerism often simply called, "The Holidays."

However, as an undaunted admirer of St Nicholas, I'm not yet ready to abandon him to this fate. Rather, I believe that this is a challenge to the Church to tell a better story about Santa than the overly sentimental and secular versions. Many TV shows, movies, and storybooks have sought to retell the origins of Santa Claus in a way that completely divorces him from his true



origins as an historical bishop. But it's up to the Church—that is, it's up to *us*—to tell the story of the saint who survived persecution, who embodies God's grace by always giving to others without condition, who stood up against those who would hurt others for their own gain, and who was fiercely faithful to his Lord Jesus Christ.

Nik+

Coffee Hour

Thanks to Vicky and Mac Chenault for hosting today's refreshments!!
Tish Iorio will be hosting next Sunday'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 6 or 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.

A Message from the Treasurer

Thank you for all your generous donations during 2015!

Through November, we've received \$77,400 of the \$91,700 that was pledged for 2015.

If you're able, please complete your pledge before the end of the year.

And if you have questions about your status, please email me at boysthree@gmail.com.

To date, I've received 24 pledge cards for 2016, totaling \$64,640.

So, we're well on our way to achieving our goal of \$100,000 in pledges!

Thank you to everyone who has already pledged or plans to pledge for 2016!

I look forward to receiving the rest of your pledges soon so I can begin the budgeting process.

If you need a pledge card, they are available in the church office.

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 Sunday December 6, at 5pm, in the parish hall. Bring a gift of \$5 or less for the "White Elephant" gift exchange.

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

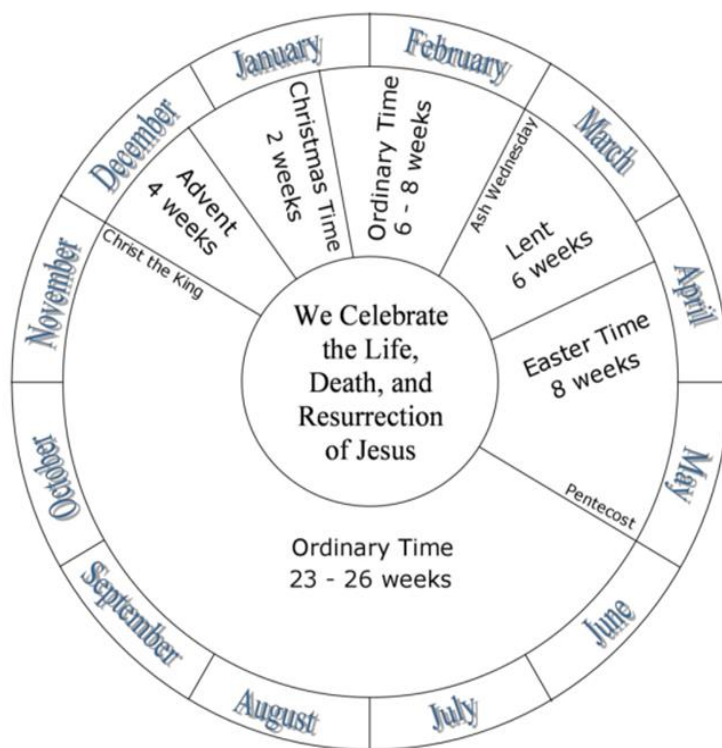
Small Groups

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

Tuesday, Dec 8 – Lunch with the Rev'd Brain Turner, noon (Fredericksburg)
Wednesday, Dec 9 – St. James the Less Free Clinic dinner, 5:30-8pm
Thursday, Dec 10 – Fresh Start, 9:30am-3:30pm

Looking Ahead

Sunday, Dec 6 – Youth Group Christmas Party, 5-7pm
Wednesday, Dec 9 – Choir Rehearsal, 7pm
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

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.