

From Father Nik

On that first Christmas day over two thousand years ago, God chose not to come to us in a spiritual way, as a deep feeling or a profound thought or even as a vision, but in a concrete, material, corporeal way, as a baby born of a woman. As the sermon from Christmas Eve emphasized, if God is to show and bestow His love for us who are material and corporeal creatures, then He, himself, must become one of us, material and corporeal. And in taking on our material, corporeal nature, He calls us back from the temptation to over-spiritualize and over-sentimentalize the gift of his Grace—the free love he gives to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Still, it's hard not to over-spiritualize and over-sentimentalize Christmas. Every Christmas, as the season winds down in the days after December 25, I always hear a friend or family member lament that they were too busy to feel as if they really kept Christmas that year. A good many modern Christmas songs and TV specials—whether they be secular or spiritual—tell us that Christmas is a feeling you hold in your heart. The Christmas Spirit is ours for the having if we're only willing to be joyful and extra affectionate towards family, friends, and neighbors. The trouble is: one of our neighbors just cut us off in the Target parking lot so they could snag the last open space anywhere near the entrance, the friend whose gift we spent all that money on didn't even send us a card, and our family started driving us crazy about ten minutes after arriving for Christmas dinner! And just how, exactly, are we to find the time to figure out how to be perpetually joyful between work, shopping for gifts, writing cards, baking cookies, & warding off that nasty cold that's been going around?

By the time the decorations start to come down, it can sometimes feel like we failed Christmas. Sure, we got all those cards sent and all those gifts wrapped just in time to make it to Midnight Mass, but we never did what we've been told we have to do to really observe the holiday. We never really felt it. We never caught that Christmas Spirit. But God didn't send us a Christmas Spirit; He sent us a soft and sweet, yet sometimes whiny and often smelly infant. So, even if you never caught that Christmas Spirit, you didn't miss or fail Christmas. You can't fail Christmas. Christmas isn't really about what you feel or think or do. Christmas is about how much God loves you—a love so profound that it entered into Creation in a tangible way. Christmas isn't something you do, Christmas is God's gift to you. Christmas is God's freely bestowed love for you (and the whole world) embodied in a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Nik+

Merry Christmas!

Fork Cookbook

Buy yours today from any cookbook committee member.

Look What's Cookin' – 2015 Stewardship

The 2015 Stewardship Letter & Pledge Card have been mailed.

If you have any questions or need a Pledge Card, please contact Scott Smythe (scott@virginiaberryfarm.com).

Youth Dinner

The Youth are invited to gather for dinner in the Parish House

On Sunday, Jan 11 at 5pm

Our recently confirmed youth are especially encouraged to attend.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Fork Church Annual Meeting will be Sunday, Jan 25, 2015

Help a Friend Get To Church

Please consider occasionally driving a fellow parishioner to church.

If you are interested in volunteering for this ministry, contact John Rickman – annerickman@embarqmail.com

The Rev'd Bob Partlow

Ruth has created a Caring Bridge Profile for Bob to keep friends and family informed of how his treatment is coming. If you are interested in keeping up with the Partlows and letting them know that they are in your thoughts and prayers, you can go to www.caringbridge.org and search for “Bob Partlow.”

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 Sunday, January 11 @ 5pm in the parish house.**

Adult Forum meets Sunday mornings at 9am. **On Sunday, Jan 4, we will begin a seven week study of The Reformation.** 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. Please contact Kathy for directions or more info: boysthree@embarqmail.com

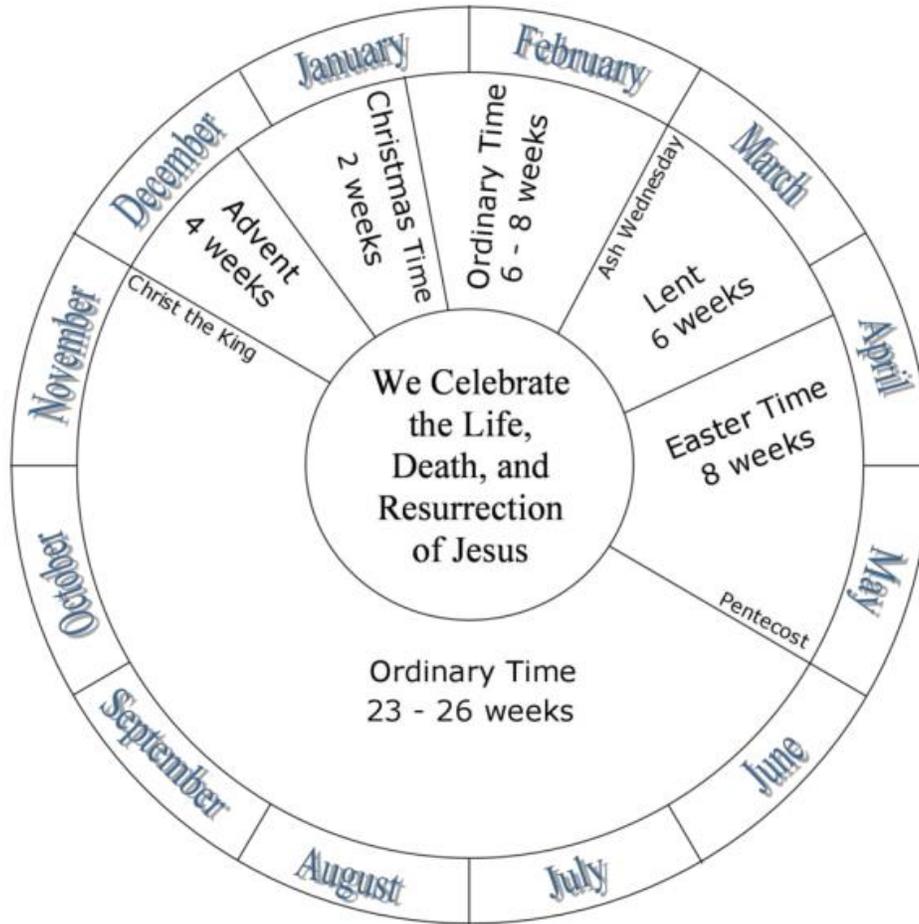
The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea. They are reading *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* by Stanley Hauerwas & Will Willimon – (pages 53-68). Please join us!

Christian Formation

An Adult Christian Formation class will begin meeting during the season of Lent – (beginning in mid-February).

If you are interested in being Baptized, Confirmed, or Received as a member of this church, or if you would like to reaffirm your baptismal covenant, please contact Fr Nik – KNicholasForti@gmail.com

The Liturgical Year



Nik's Calendar

- Tuesday, Jan 6 – Clergy Colleague Group, 9-11:30am
Rector installation @ St. Stephen's, Culpeper, 7pm
- Thursday, Jan 8 – Fresh Start, Fredericksburg, 9:30am-4pm
- Tuesday, Jan 20 – Vestry Meeting, 7-9pm
- Thursday Jan 22 - Jan 24 – Diocesan Annual Council, Richmond

Looking Ahead

- Tuesday, Jan 6 – The Feast of the Epiphany
- Thursday, Jan 8 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am
- Sunday, Jan 11 – Youth Group Dinner, 5-7pm
- Thursday, Jan 22 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am
- Sunday, Jan 25 – Annual Meeting