

From Father Nik

Unlike the Covenants that God established with Noah and Abraham, the Covenant with Israel at Mt Sinai included the Ten Commandments and *Torah*. Sometimes this word, *Torah*, gets translated as *the Law*. And Law often gets a bad rap in the letters of St Paul (in the New Testament) and then, especially, in Martin Luther's reading of St Paul's letters. Yet the Gospel of Matthew tells us that Jesus said, "Don't think I've come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I haven't come to abolish but to fulfill [the Law]" (Matt 5:17). And, in fact, Martin Luther wrote in his *Large Catechism*, "Anyone who knows the Ten Commandments perfectly knows the entire Scriptures."

God's Law is not opposed to His Grace. The Ten Commandments are not opposed to Faith. *Torah* is not opposed to Gospel. In fact, it is only when the Law is separated from Grace that it becomes a burden. It is when the Ten Commandments are separated from Covenant Faithfulness that they undermine themselves. For it is when the Ten Commandments and *Torah* are disconnected from the Covenant that God established with His people that they become an idol . . . *breaking the second commandment!*

What do I mean when I say that the Ten Commandments can become an idol? What I mean is that when the Ten Commandments are separated from the Covenant that God established with His people, then they become a to-do list for getting on God's good side. In this way, they become works by which we judge others and try to win our own righteousness. They become a Tower of Babel by which we hope to storm heaven. They become a graven image made by the work of our own hands—an idol.

The Ten Commandments, the *Torah*, are not works for gaining God's favor or winning righteousness; they are part of the Gift and Promise of Covenant. They are the Way (*halakhah*) of Covenant Faithfulness, the Journey of Faith for God's chosen people. For us Christians, Jesus—a member of God's chosen people, born under the Law (Gal 4:4)—is the Way (Jn 14:6) because he fulfills the Gift and Promise of the Covenant, opening it to us who have become members of his Body through Baptism. In this way, Christ saves us from making the Ten Commandments an idol rather than a Faithful response to God's amazing Grace.

Nik +

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, March 29 – 10am Eucharist
Maundy Thursday, April 2 – 7pm Eucharist
Good Friday, April 3 – 7pm Liturgy
Holy Saturday, April 4 – 10am Liturgy
Saturday, April 4 – 7:45pm Great Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday, April 5 – 10am Eucharist

Easter Church Flowers

Time to order, in \$15. increments and indicate your memorials/honors. Order forms in narthex of the church. Send checks, payable to Fork Church Flower Guild, to Trish Renn. The deadline is 3/26 to be on memorials list.

Also, we will need garden flowers for the Cross brought early to church Easter morning.

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.

Birthdays: Jesse Gordon 3/15; Paul Jalbert 3/15; Michael Thomas 3/15

African Team Ministries

Fork again is participating in the African Team Ministries sale of jewelry and artifacts. The African Team Ministries is a Christian Ministry that provides funding for orphan and refugee missions and evangelism in East Africa. They have experienced the worst drought in 60 years which has caused a severe food crisis in East Africa. The profits from this year will be used to purchase irrigation pumps and dig wells for the villages. The people are working especially hard on the items they will be sending. The arrival date will be announced shortly.

For more information on African Team Ministries, their website is

Africanteamministries.org

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, Sunday March 22 @ 5pm in the parish house.**

Adult Forum meets Sunday mornings at 9am. **During the season of Lent we're doing a six (6) week study of 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 March 19, the book is *Unglued* by Lysa TerKeurst. Please contact Kathy for directions or more info: boysthree@embarqmail.com

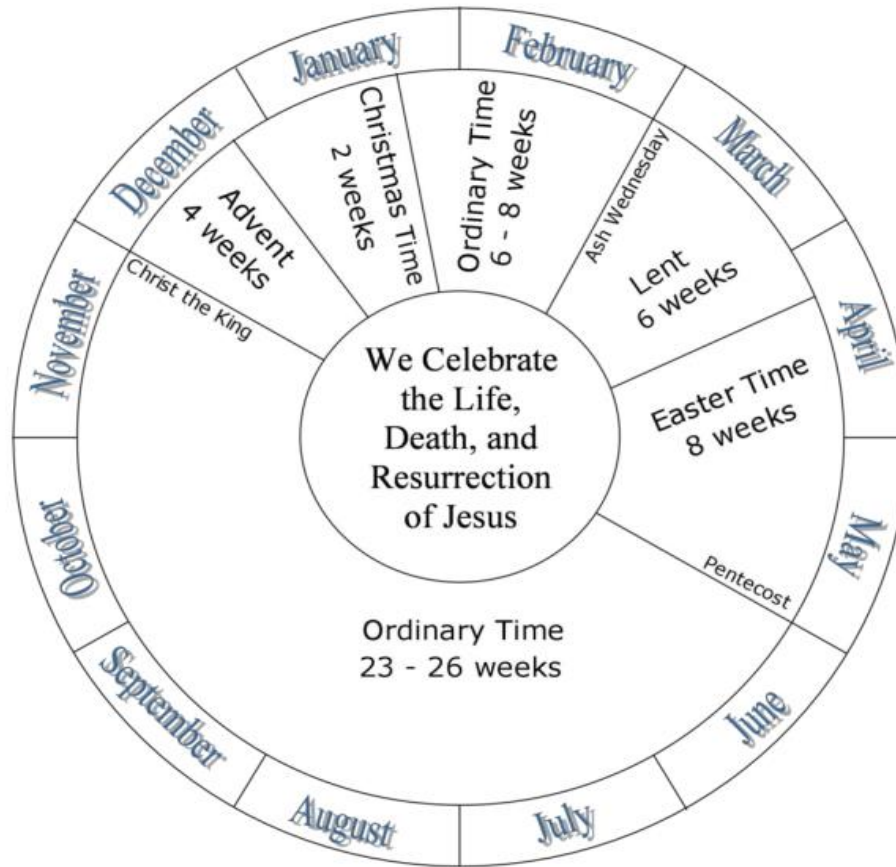
The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, March 19 at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea. They are reading *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* by Stanley Hauerwas & Will Willimon – (pages 103-111). Please join us!

Christian Formation

A Christian Formation class for those seeking Baptism, Confirmation, or Reception is meeting weekly during the seasons of Lent & Easter.

If you're interested in being Baptized, Confirmed, or Received into 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

Monday, Mar 16 – Meeting with the Rev. Dr. Ed Bushong, 10:30am-12:30pm
Friday, Mar 20 – Young Rector's Group, Culpepper, 10:30am-12:30pm
Thursday, Mar 26 – RMC Campus Ministry Council, noon-1pm
Tuesday, Mar 31 – Clergy Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30am

Looking Ahead

Tuesday, Mar 17 – Vestry meeting, 7-9pm
Wednesday, Mar 18 – Catechism & Confirmation class, 6:30pm
Wednesday, Mar 18 – Choir rehearsal, 7pm
Thursday, Mar 19 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am
Thursday, Mar 19 – Woman's Book Group, 10am-noon
Wednesday, Mar 25 – Catechism & Confirmation class, 6:30pm
Wednesday, Mar 25 – Choir rehearsal, 7pm
Sunday, March 29 – Palm Sunday, 10am