

From Fr. Nik

In the section on “Communion” in *Searching for Sunday*, Rachel Held Evans provides a sweeping survey of the sacrament of the Eucharist in Christianity’s two thousand year history. The story is a powerful testimony to the centrality of this act of sacramental worship and fellowship for the Church in every generation. What it lacks in detail and nuance, it makes up for in evocative description and earnest devotion. However, there’s a creeping sense of loss in her story as the current of history takes the Church further and further from the casual meal shared by friends in remembrance of their teacher and Lord. Although Evans provides a few anecdotes to give us glimpses of hope for a return to those early meals or remembrance and fellowship, it remains obvious from her story that the Church’s ritualized Eucharist presided over by a priest has fallen far from its origin.

I’m sympathetic with Evans’ devotion to good food and sharing a meal with friends. And, in fact, early Eucharistic meals were probably full meals. There’s only one problem with Evans’ suggestion that those early Eucharistic meals probably weren’t ritualized or presided over by some sort of clergy; it’s not true. Three of the Gospels suggest that Jesus’ Last Supper was a *Pesach Seder*—that is, a Passover Supper. If it was, then it followed a very ritualized structure, with each dish eaten in a specific order between the recitation of Psalms and ancient, memorized prayers surrounding the retelling of the story of Israel’s exodus from slavery in Egypt. At least in some of those earliest Christian communities, these Passover rituals informed their weekly observance of the Eucharistic meal. It is true that some communities, like the one that produced the first-century prayer book, the *Didache*, did not make that connection with the Passover Seder. Still, the *Didache*—written just seventy years after the crucifixion—contains two Eucharistic Prayers that the Bishop-Priest (alone) is to use at the meal.

Even earlier than the *Didache*, St Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth about the Eucharistic meal. Paul was taking them to task for having one Eucharistic meal with an overabundance of fine, sumptuous food and good wine for the rich members of the Church and then holding a second meager Eucharistic meal for the poorer members of the Church. “What!” Paul writes, “Don’t you have your own homes to eat and drink in? (1 Cor 11:22)” Paul then reminds the Corinthian Christians that the Eucharistic meal is not just another dinner with friends by reiterating the ritualized words of the Eucharistic Prayer. “For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:23-26). What’s at stake is the body and blood of Christ. What’s at stake is grace. This is a sacramental view of the Eucharist. *Nik+*

Coffee Hour

Thanks to the Nancy & Jack Haar for today's refreshments!
Jeannette Harrison will be hosting next Sunday's refreshments.

Volunteers are needed for all Sundays in December

To sign up, please go to

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

Godly Play Children

will be performing today, Sunday November 8th for the
Feast of All Saints.

Heavenly Creations Arts & Crafts Show

St. James the Less, Ashland

Friday, November 20 – 6-8:30pm

Saturday, November 21 – 9am-4pm

Thanksgiving Day

Eucharist at 10am on Thursday, November 26.

The Liturgy will be from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer,
in keeping with the historic origin of Fork Church.

Advent Wreaths

Will be made in the parish hall after worship on
Sunday, November 29th.

Interested in Serving on Vestry?

Contact Fr Nik – KnicholasForti@gmail.com; 804-291-6124

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 today, Sunday November 8, at 5:30pm, in the parish hall.

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 third section of *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans, "Communion" on Thursday, November 19, at 10am. Please contact Kathy for directions:

boysthree@embarqmail.com

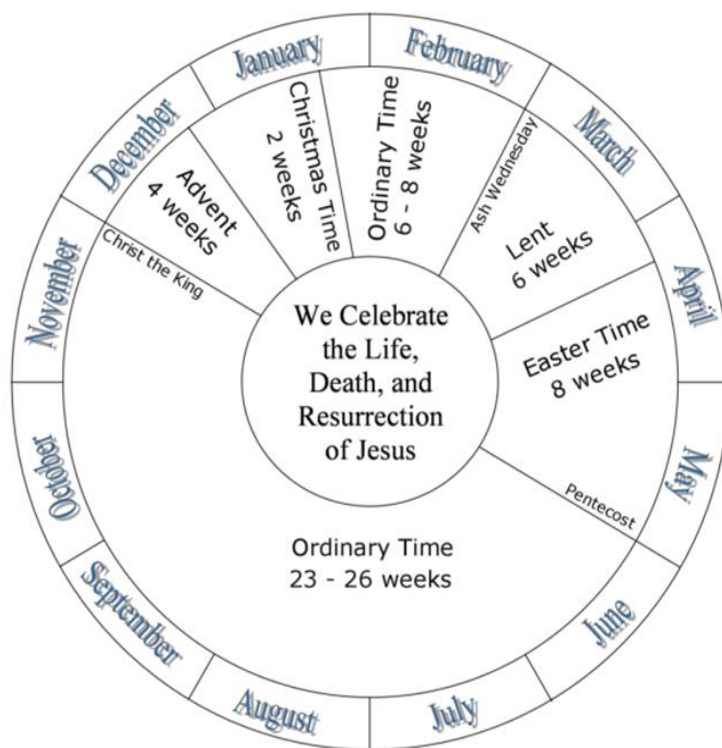
The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, November 19, at 7:30am at Ashland Coffee & Tea to discuss the third section of *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans, "Communion".

Christian Formation

The *Way of Discipleship* class for Confirmation & Reception meets on Wednesdays at 6:30pm.

If you're interested in being Baptized or would like to become a member of this Church, please contact Fr Nik – KNicholasForti@gmail.com

The Liturgical Year



Nik's Calendar

Tuesday, Nov 10 – Lunch w/ Brian Turner, 12-1pm

Thursday, Nov 12 – Fresh Start, 9:30am-3pm

Looking Ahead

Wednesday, Nov 11 – Confirmation/Reception class, 6:30pm

– Choir Rehearsal, 7pm

Sunday, Nov 15 – **Parish Hall Use:** Old Dominion Morgan Horse Asso, 2-4:30pm

Tuesday, Nov 17 – Vestry Meeting, 7-9pm

Wednesday, Nov 18 - Confirmation/Reception class, 6:30pm

- Choir Rehearsal, 7pm

Thursday, Nov 19 - Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am

- Women's Book Group, 10am-noon

Thursday, Nov 26 – Thanksgiving Day Eucharist, 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.