

From Father Nik

Last Sunday the Adult Sunday School began their Fall Study of the Sacraments. Our opening question was, “What is a Sacrament?” The answer to that question that is often heard in the Anglican-Episcopal tradition is based on the writing of St Augustine of Hippo in Northern Africa (AD 354-430). This Augustinian definition is that *a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace*. The catechism in our Book of Common Prayer joins to that definition a medieval development of the doctrine of sacraments—namely, that they are *effectual* signs. This means that sacraments don’t just signify grace, they also participate in and, thereby, confer that grace. Grace, of course, is God’s love for us—a love that calls us into being (creative), forgives and reconciles us with Him (justifying), restores us to His image and likeness as revealed in Jesus Christ (sanctifying), and will one day bring us to that promised land where our eyes will behold Him who is our friend and not a stranger (glorifying). Sacraments don’t just represent or symbolize this love; they are physical means by which we receive the gifts of God’s love.

Receiving and knowing God’s love in these physical, tangible signs reminds us that the Christian life is not a purely spiritual pilgrimage. Rather, God’s love is for each of us as a whole person—soul *and* body. And, in this way, the sacraments point us back to Jesus Christ who is the Word made flesh, God incarnate. It is this ancient tradition of the sacraments that has become especially appealing to some in our culture who are sick of the way the world devalues our bodies (constantly telling them in advertising how ugly or inadequate we are without the product being sold) and devalues our souls (telling us we are merely consumers who must only ever follow our basest appetites if we’re to be happy).

In an article for the Washington Post, Rachel Held Evans, the author of the book *Searching for Sunday*, which our small groups will be reading this Fall, explains that she left the evangelical church of her youth because it sought to remake the church in the image of our consumer-commercial world. She goes on to write, “What finally brought me back, after years of running away, wasn’t lattes or skinny jeans; it was the sacraments. Baptism, confession, Communion, preaching the Word, anointing the sick—you know, those strange rituals and traditions Christians have been practicing for the past 2,000 years. The sacraments are what make the church relevant, no matter the culture or era. They don’t need to be repackaged or rebranded; they just need to be practiced, offered and explained in the context of a loving, authentic and inclusive community.”

Flu & Pneumonia Shots

Available after worship on Sunday, September 27

Lemonade on the Lawn

Thanks to Tish Iorio for this morning's refreshments!
The Aderhold family will host next week's refreshments.

Blessing of the Animals

At 4:30pm on October 4, we'll remember St Francis of Assisi by gathering to bless our furry friends and critters.

Fall Small Groups

This Fall, the Thursday morning Men's Group & Women's Group
Will both read *Searching For Sunday* by Rachel Held Evans.



The book's chapters are organized according to the Seven Sacraments, so the Adult Sunday School will explore those sacraments in depth.

We'd like to organize another (co-ed?) small group to meet on a weeknight to discuss the book.

If you're interested, please let Fr Nik know.

Bishop Spong Discussion Group

meets Thursday, October 1 at 10am at St. James the Less

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 at 5:30pm on Sunday, September 20 at the Church of Our Savior, Montpelier.

The Adult Sunday School begins meeting this Sunday to explore the Sacraments.

Small Groups

The Women's Book Group will discuss *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle on Thursday, Sept 24 at 10am. Please contact Kathy for directions or more info: boysthree@embarqmail.com

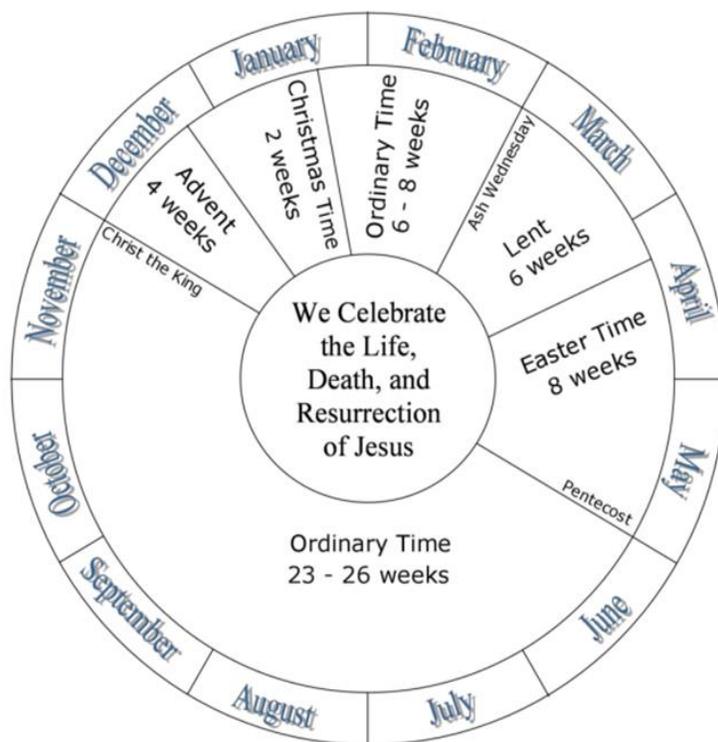
The Men's Book Group will meet Thursday, Sept 24 at 7:30am at **The Ashland Coffee & Tea** to finish discussing *The Wisdom of Stability* by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove.

Christian Formation

The Way of Discipleship classes for Confirmation & Reception will resume on Wednesday, October 7 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

- Thursday, Sept 17 – RMC Campus Ministries Council, noon-1pm
– Marriage Prep with couple, 4-5pm
– Attend Reynolds Lecture at the Polegreen Church, 8:30pm
- Monday, Sept 21 – Pastoral visit, 2pm
- Wednesday, Sept 23 – Clericus, 1pm
- Friday, Sept 25 – Young Rectors Group in Culpeper, 10am-noon
- Monday, Sept 28 – Coffee with The Rev Dr Ed Bushong, 10:30-12:30
- Thursday, October 1 – RMC Campus Ministry Council, noon-1pm

Looking Ahead

- Thursday, Sept 24 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am
– Women's Book Group, 10am-noon
- Sunday, Sept 27 – Flu shots available, 11:30am
- Wednesday, Sept 30 – Choir Rehearsal, 7pm
- Sunday, Oct 4 – St Francis Day Blessing of the Animals, 4:30pm

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.