

## From Father Nik

Throughout this summer, we've been tracing the first decades of the Episcopal Church after being separated from the Church of England as a result of the American Revolution. We've seen how the Episcopal Church during the Revolution was divided between loyalists & patriots, which was a far more profound division than the modern rift between conservatives & liberals. Yet, the Church wasn't overcome by this division; rather, it overcame the divisive politics of the time by being a community wherein the strictly loyalist Samuel Seabury & the fiercely patriotic Samuel Provoost could both be counted as founding bishops. We've seen how religious disagreements—such as those between John Henry Hobart & the High Churchmen of the North and the Low Church Evangelicals of the South like William Wilmer & William Meade—were also overcome & the two parties held together by a shared commitment to proclaim the Gospel as known in the Anglican tradition & to worship together using the BCP. Finally, we've seen how the wisdom & leadership provided by the Most Rev'd Dr William White gave the Episcopal Church structure, purpose, and the resources to produce a new generation of Episcopal clergy & laity who would take the Church from surviving to thriving.

There are those who would have us believe that the struggles of the Episcopal Church today are insurmountable. Discouraged by conflict, they fear that the Church can't handle the political disagreements between her members. Despairing over the statistics, they worry about the decline in church attendance—a trend that's apparently spread beyond the mainline denominations. But I suggest that there's far more reason to be hopeful than not. First & foremost, we can be hopeful because we are the followers of Jesus Christ, who makes hope possible & in whom we have rightly placed our faith. His faithfulness to his Church—and to us—is unfailing, and his promise to be with us forever is the basis of our hope.

It was their faith in Christ that gave Episcopalians hope during the American Revolution when their fellow countrymen looked on them with suspicion for their loyalty to the Church of England. It was faith in Christ that gave William White the courage to organize the Episcopal Church into a new denomination even before we had any bishops & when it was unclear if the Church of England would ever deign to consecrate American clergy as bishops in apostolic succession. It was faith in Christ that convinced the women of Virginia to continue to pass on the Anglican traditions & Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church in their homes even as the Commonwealth was disestablishing the Church & seizing its property for public auction. It was faith in Christ that kept a community in St Martin's Parish of Hanover gathering on Sunday mornings in their church at the Forks through all of this turmoil even to this day. Things are far better for the Church now in 2015 than they were in 1815. Still, our faith gives us hope that even in the Church's darkest days, God raises up people like White, Hobart, Wilmer, Meade, and the lay women of VA to fulfill his promise to be with us & lead us to a new day. *Nik+*

## *CARITAS is Coming*

CARITAS is a shared ministry that helps break the cycle of homelessness by providing shelter and stability our neighbors who have lost both.

The CARITAS guests will be staying at St. James the Less, Ashland from September 5 to 12.

**Fork Church is responsible for the evening of Sept. 8, the morning of Sept 9, and bag lunches for Sept 9.**

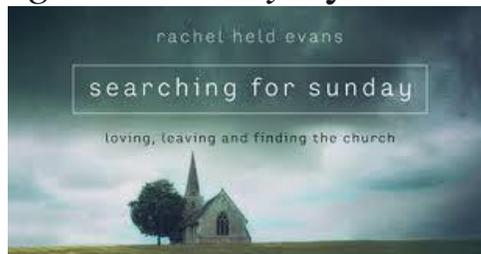
Look for the sign up sheet in the narthex of the church.

## **Lemonade on the Lawn**

Thanks to the Droppman family for this morning's refreshments! Mazie Florance will host next Sunday.

## ***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**

The group meets at 10:00 on Thursday mornings at St. James the Less.

## **Christian Education** *... is on break for the Summer.*

**Godly Play**, our Sunday School for children, will resume in September.

**J2A Youth Group** will meet on Sunday, September 20 with the Youth Group of Church of Our Savior, Montpelier.

**The Adult Forum** will meet again on Sunday, September 13. During this Fall, we will be exploring the Sacraments.

### **Small Groups**

**The Women's Book Group** will meet on September 10 at 10am for a social. They 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](mailto:boysthree@embarqmail.com)

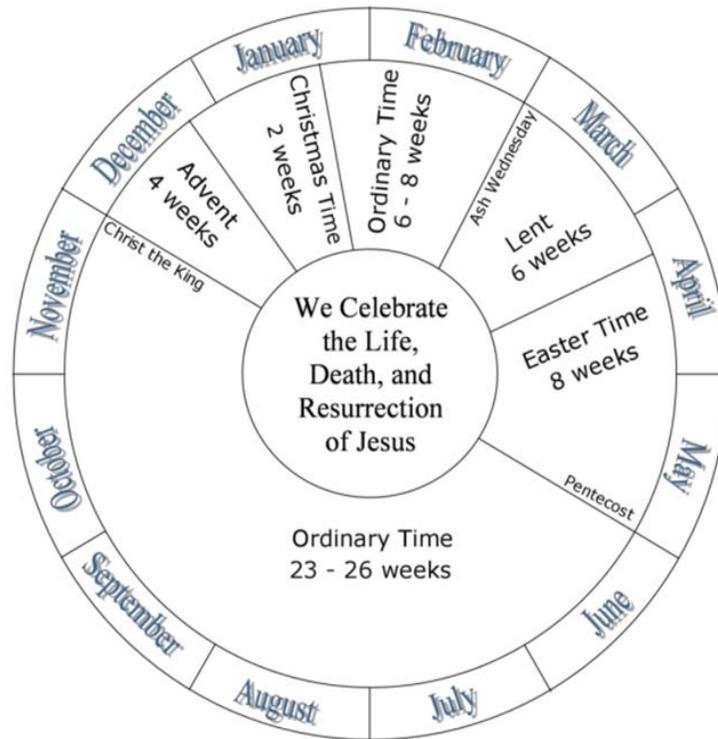
**The Men's Book Group** will meet Thursday, Sept 10 at 7:30am at **The Ashland Coffee & Tea** to discuss chapters 3 & 4 (pp 59-106) of *The Wisdom of Stability* by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove.

### **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](mailto:KNicholasForti@gmail.com)

# The Liturgical Year



## Nik's Calendar

Sat/Sun, Sept 5/6 – Fr. Nik away to officiate at a wedding in Ohio  
Tuesday, Sept 8 – Clergy Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30am  
Wednesday, Sept 9 – Marriage Prep with E. & P., 2:30-3:30pm  
Thursday, Sept 10 – Marriage Prep with couple K. & B., 7-8pm  
Friday, Sept 11 – Young Rectors Group in Culpeper, 10am-noon  
– House Blessing for Ben & Adrienne, 6pm  
Sunday, Sept 13 – Episcopal Campus Ministry Event at RMC, 6:30-7:30pm

## Looking Ahead

Monday, Sept 7 – Office closed for Labor Day  
Tue, Sept 8-Wed, Sept 9 – **CARITAS** – St. James the Less, Ashland  
Thursday, Sept 10 – Men's Book Group, 7:30-8:30am  
– Women's Book Group Social, 10am-noon  
Sunday, Sept 13 – Christian Ed (Godly Play & Adult Forum) begin for the Fall  
Tuesday, Sept 15 – Vestry Meeting, 7-9pm

**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.