

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE LION'S TALE

VOLUME 2017, ISSUE 2 MAY /AUGUST 2017



St Mark's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Our Intentional God

Jesus Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Before we get too far from Holy Week I want to once again thank the many people who were so generous with their time and talent which made our celebrations happen. I suspect that most folks only see the tip of the liturgical iceberg, so to say. The Floral Guild and the Altar Guild members made the church a place of beauty. The Ushers and Greeters shepherded the faithful with hospitality and welcome. Our wonderful Choir rallied around the celebrations and blessed us with music that made our prayer resound. The Worship Ministers moved with ease and made the services special. Of special note is the Holy Week readers of the Passion narratives on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. And I cannot offer enough thanks to our dedicated and gifted staff who are always called to double and triple duty in addition to their day to day responsibilities in the weeks of preparation for this sacred week. They always rise to the occasion.



The life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus exemplify for the world just how intensely and intentionally loving God is. Not only did he send his Son into the world, but after the world rejected him, killed him, and evicted him from the planet, the Father sent him right back in his resurrection. St. Paul reminds us how important the resurrection remains for our lives as followers of Jesus. He says in 1 Corinthians 15:17, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain."

And even more pointedly, God sent Jesus back to the same apostles who had abandoned him, betrayed him and denied him. A greater miracle than coming back to life is going back to those disciples who

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- *Outreach*
- *Parish Life*
- *Education & Formation for All Ages*
- *Worship*

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FROM THE RECTOR, CONTINUED

were losers, betrayers, cowards, and deniers! Jesus might have discarded them and started off with a new and better kind of apostle. But he went back to the original disciples, as flawed as they were, to clearly proclaim that nothing they could do would make Jesus not love them. The same applies to us: nothing we can do will make God love us less and nothing we can do will make God love us more.

Not only did he come back to them, he reinstated them and commissioned them to spread the good news: "As the Father sent me, I send you" (John 20:21). He relied on those flawed apostles, as he relies on us. It is through our risen Lord that God communicates new life and transforms us. We do not just live by his teachings or follow his example. We live in his presence through which he communicates the power of the Holy Spirit to us and we become the body of Christ in the world.

Easter represents the gospel – the good news – that what God did for Jesus he wants to do for us. Easter revealed the identity of God as one whose love never lets us go, as one who loves humanity not just in this world but even through death and beyond. God did not and does not give up on loving our world.

Jesus Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Blessings, David

Newcomer Welcome Event
is Tuesday, June 20, 6pm at Father David's house.
Look for an invite in the email.

A Note regarding Deacon Sally Gunn:

Effective Wednesday, April 26, Bishop Johnston has granted a leave of absence for personal reasons for an undefined length of time to Deacon Sally Gunn.

I have assured Sally that she is in the prayers of this church.

I ask that her privacy and that of her family be respected.

SHARED MINISTRY: FINANCE**Operations Update as of March 2017**

March Budgeted Pledge Income:
 \$87,324 Actual
 \$57,750 Pledge

Average Sunday Attendance: YTD - 124.25 (March)

2017 Pledge Campaign update: 96 pledge units, total \$273,931! Well on way to a goal of 100 pledges. Your generous pledging reduces our reliance on the investment account to fund operations, allowing the principal to grow and earn more interest to fund capital projects and improvements.

SENT MINISTRY: OUTREACH**Yard Sale 2017!**

Early totals put us at over \$3700.00 for the Yard Sale and \$200.00 Bake Sale proceeds that support our Food Pantry! Yard Sale proceeds will benefit ACTS and other area non-profits.

Thanks to all who donated, sorted, shopped and helped clean up!

**Reading Stars Program 2018**

Not a typo—Reading Stars is being revamped and will return in the Summer of 2018. GHTC needs reading helpers with its Camp on the Hill, July 17—August 12, you can volunteer for one day or one week, or all four weeks.

For more information, contact Malinda dre@stmarksrva.org.

SENT MINISTRY: CARITAS INTAKE



Join the FUN
in July!

St. Mark's is hosting CARITAS Intake **NIGHTLY** between 5 and 7:30 p.m. from Saturday, July 8th through Friday, July 28th.

This Intake Ministry provides the CARITAS staff and the shelter women with a valuable in-town check-in space, close to neighborhood resources including the showers at First Baptist Church and the Broad Street bus line.

Additionally, we offer the ladies a congregation from whom to receive fellowship, snacks and cold beverages while awaiting the arrival of the CARITAS bus for transportation to their overnight shelter site.

The Intake Ministry provides congregants with three weeks' worth of opportunity to contribute light snacks, bottled water or other beverages and/or provide service time in set-up and distribution of snacks to the ladies.

"Keep it Simple" works best for this ministry with fruits, chips, cookies, cupcakes, veggie trays, or cheese and crackers as suggested donations. Get to know the ladies. Get to know your fellow congregants. Get to use the new refrigerator/freezer!

Sign up for this fun, rewarding and EASY ministry by contacting suzanne_long@hotmail.com or by using the on-line sign-up form on the St. Mark's website (<https://www.stmarksrva.org/community/outreach-ministries/>) or by following the link that will be provided in the e-Ministry News & Updates.

For more information about the work and goals of CARITAS, visit www.caritasva.org.

SENT MINISTRY: FOOD PANTRY

Outreach Hospitality Ministry: Food Pantry & Soup Kitchen: How you can help

Pack bags before each distribution on the
2nd and 4th Saturdays, and
Serve on 2nd & 4th Saturday mornings, 9-10:30am

Donate food for the bags: Tuna, Vienna sausages, canned chicken or Spam, Hearty soups, stews, or chili, Pork and beans, Canned ravioli or spaghetti O's, Mac & cheese mix, Fruit or applesauce cups, Vegetables, Granola bars, Pop tarts, Single serving instant oatmeal or grits, Peanut butter, Packaged crackers, Single serving water or juice, Pudding cups, Cookies.



Reminder...the Food Pantry Ministry can provide hospitality only through your generosity. Please remember to pick up some easy open proteins, canned pasta, veggies, nutrition bars, fruits, soups or hearty stews.

Toiletry Items for Food Pantry: As you travel and stay in hotels/motels, please pick up the small toiletry items offered to you. Our Food Pantry Guests who are grateful to receive them.

Clothing Donations: Warm clothing and rain wear needed for guests of our food pantry. **All men's basics:** coats, hoodies, jeans, khakis, rain suits, underwear, socks, scarves, belts, socks, gloves, sneakers, boots, ponchos, and collapsible umbrellas. Also, we get requests for sleeping bags, backpacks, and rolling suitcases.

Soup Kitchen is both 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 9:00—10:30am

Come and help serve and share fellowship with our Food Pantry guests. Donations of fresh fruit (especially oranges and bananas) are welcome. Contact Karen Kincaid, 233-4215.

Wednesday Night 12 Step Group Hosts:

Provide a St. Mark's presence in the building during this important support ministry to those in recovery. Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00pm.

**To share in this ministry of presence and giving please contact Ed Street,
ed.street@suntrust.com. Thank you!**

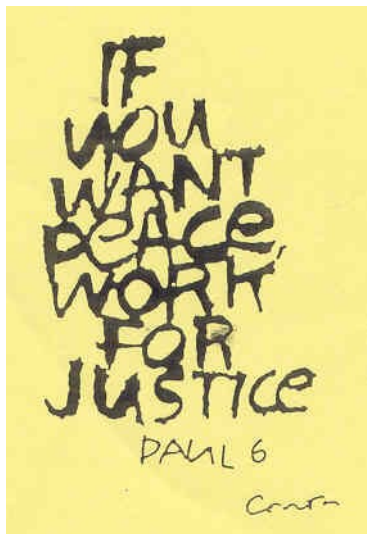
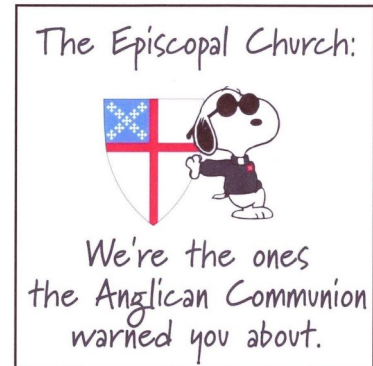
SENT MINISTRY: CONNECTION AND JUSTICE & ADVOCACY

Evangelism = Invitation = Connection

Beginning late in 2016 and continuing into 2017, St. Mark's Evangelism Team is discerning its mission in the church and in the community. For many of us the word "Evangelism" no longer represents what we do, and for some of us it conjures up negative stereotypes of proselytizing at best and religious bigotry at worst—not what we are about.

What we are about is "intentional invitation," meeting those in our community and listening to what speaks to them, what their hopes are, what their story is and isn't when it comes to church. Invitation is the words Father David speaks every Sunday, welcoming all to the table.

St. Mark's is a remarkable community in that it sees itself as more than a set of four walls and our 151st year will likely involve the interpretation of what that means for the call of the church in the community, what it means for us as individuals called to follow and serve in community. Evangelism for us is invitation, intentional and spirit-led invitation into ministry that connects us as individuals and as community to Jesus and leads us to God.



Justice & Advocacy **Building a new ministry team on the foundations of St. Mark's commitment to community**

The mission of the Justice & Advocacy Team is to be faithful to the call of the Gospel upon our lives as we seek to serve the community and the world in which we live through service, partnerships, financial support, sweat equity, activism and advocacy. Team members as a group and as individuals work for the just and equitable treatment of all God's children through activism and advocacy on the issues of gun violence, equal treatment under the law, racial, gender, ethnic, and economic fairness. This Team builds on the individual activism and advocacy of many church members and friends. It serves as a coordination point for new initiatives and for the support of ongoing ministries.

To learn more about this ministry team contact Vestry liaison Paul Williams, paul.williams@richmond.edu or Malinda Collier, dre@stmraksrva.org

GATHERED MINISTRY: FELLOWSHIP

Come On Now—Everyone Wants to have Fun!

Where better than at St. Mark's with friends new and old

Neighborhood Dinners
Tuesdays at 6pm,
May 3, June 7, and our
Picnic on July 11.



A delicious dinner with
beverage and dessert all for
\$5.00

Lunch Bunch

Meets Second Sundays after the
10:30 service



Contact Phoebe Davis,
pdavis@ahmdirect.com or
Karen Franklin, forpop247@gmail.com to
join the Bunch

Fish Fry! July 11 @ 6pm

It's our annual picnic



Come for fun and fellowship, great food of course:
fried fish, mac & cheese, baked beans, and more!

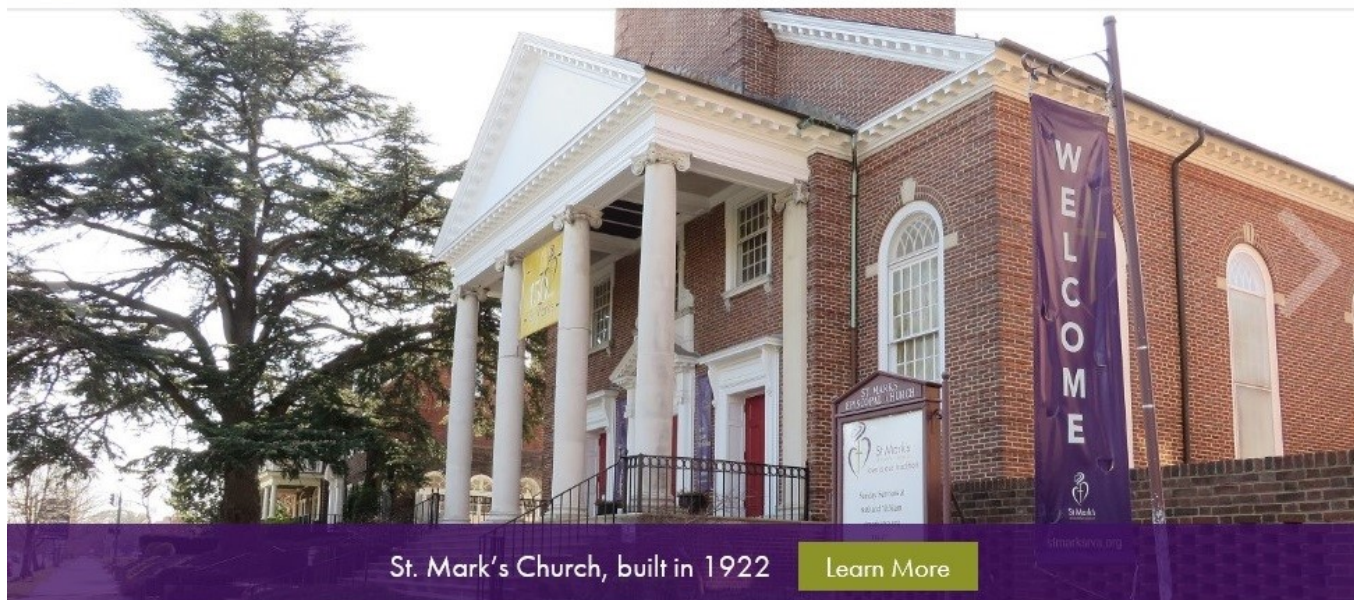
SENT MINISTRY: A NEW WEBSITE



love is our tradition

GIVE >

About Worship Ministry Community News Events



Our new website launched in late April!

The new site is a much more dynamic and useful tool in our social media kit. This platform allows for video and audio, rotating images and easy to navigate menu bars.

Keeping our online message vital and fresh is a necessity in this media-driven world of ours. We need a social media team made up of folks who are interested in the various media platforms—everything from the web to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

If social media is your thing, please consider joining our team and contributing time, material and expertise to keeping our e-light shining bright.

Contact Malinda Collier, dre@stmarksrva.org or
Suzanne Long, Suzanne_long@hotmail.com

GATHERED MINISTRY: FELLOWSHIP

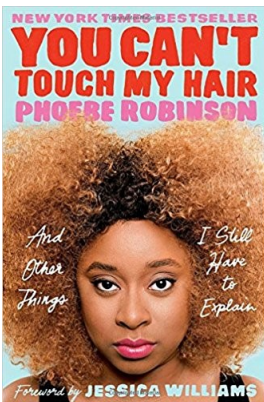
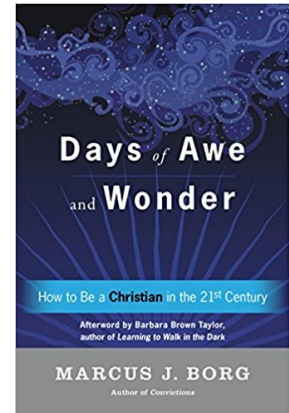
Summer Reading Suggestions:



Days of Awe and Wonder: How to Be a Christian in the Twenty-first Century by Marcus Borg

“In these pages, Borg’s deepest wisdom shines through—framed in the best of biblical scholarship, Jesus shines forth as a ‘spirit person’ who invites all people into lives of awe and wonder for the sake of the world. Read and meet Jesus again and fall into God’s all-encompassing love.”

(Diana Butler Bass, Author of *Grounded: Finding God in the World— A Spiritual Revolution*)



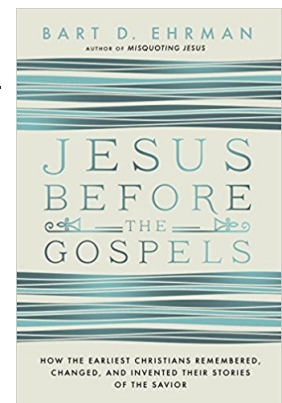
You Can't Touch My Hair: And Other Things I Still Have to Explain by Phoebe Robinson

“*You Can't Touch My Hair* is the book we need right now. Robinson makes us think about race and feminism in new ways, thanks to her whip-smart comedy and expert use of a pop culture reference. The future is very bright because Robinson and her book are in it.”

(Jill Soloway, creator of *Transparent*)

Jesus Before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented Their Stories of the Savior by Bart Ehrman

“With his typical humor, passion, and vivacity, Ehrman explores the ways that memory shapes, distorts, changes, and preserves the stories of Jesus passed along by the Christian community. Ehrman’s provocative book raises engaging questions that drive readers back to the sources of our information about Jesus.” (*Publishers Weekly*)



GATHERED MINISTRY: WORSHIP AND MUSIC



FRIENDS OF MUSIC CONCERT

JUNE 11, 2017

4:00 P.M.

Choir, Organ and Violin

Music by Johann Eccard, Anthony Caesar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Nicholas Wilton

Noting significant turning points in Christian history, including
The Annunciation, The Presentation of Christ, The Encounter on the Road to Emmaus,
The Ascension, and others

Pentecost Sunday is June 4 - Wear Red!

At Pentecost, God's promised Spirit enters into the church and empowers it to know and do God's will. Now the people of faith can be a sign and witness to what God has done in Christ, namely, established God's reign of justice and peace. On this holy day we are made aware of our vocation to be a community of faith in which God's reconciling power is made present, conscious and active in our lives, that we might be the body of Christ, God's reconciling presence in the world to the end that all people are restored to unity with God and each other in Christ.

John Westerhoff



GATHERED MINISTRY: WORSHIP

A Holy Week Reflection

We are now in the great 50 Days of Easter taking a few moments to reflect on our yearly path through Lent and Holy Week to this glorious season seems appropriate.

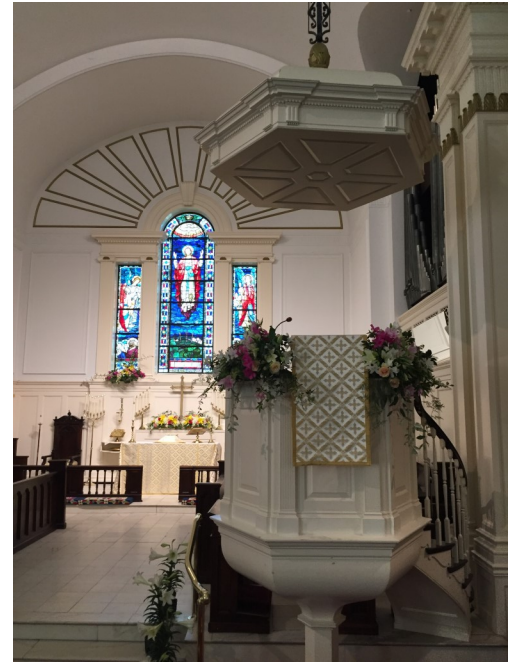
The first 6 months of the church year are the story of Christ's life. Beginning with Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, all culminating in Easter & the Ascension; then Pentecost - the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide the early church and the church today. Often referred to as ordinary time these 6 months complete the yearly cycle. And then we begin again. Wise sages developed this circle of observance to help teach, guide and sustain us in our pilgrimage of faith and daily endeavors to serve God.

The services of Holy Week – Palm Sunday, Wednesday Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, The Great Vigil and Easter morn is each distinct in Christ's life and ministry. Over time the unique liturgies, scriptures, prayers, and music help us grow in faith and understanding by bringing a more in depth grasp of Jesus's ministry, what those around him experienced, how they responded, and how we respond in our lives today.

We too visit the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the Upper Room, Calvary's Hill and the Empty Tomb. There we find ourselves with the same human doubts and fears that those early disciples and apostles experienced and the same yearnings for divine guidance, grace, joy, and assurance found in Christ's teachings, example, and in the Easter Life of Christ's Resurrection. When we say, Love is our Tradition, it is grounded in God's gift of love and salvation given through Christ Jesus to all that we may have eternal life.

During confirmation many years ago, much time was spent learning about the sacraments, especially Baptism and the Observance of the Eucharist. Those in the class were in many places in their knowledge of the Bible and beliefs. The priest said something that has always guided me, "When you come to the Lord's Table wherever you are in your path to grow closer to God be assured that with an open heart and right spirit you will receive a spiritual blessing giving pardon & strength to move onward in your journey, to live & serve in Christ's kingdom here on earth and in the hereafter." Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Sanford Eberly, Worship Team



GATHERED MINISTRY: FORMATION

Faith to Fate Advance Care Planning

There is an old adage that only two things in life can be counted on: death & taxes. Ironically the two kind of go together... In my life, having just gone through the decline and death of my mother I will share with you that the one thing that made a difficult time less painful was knowing all the decisions had been made. In my mother's case there was agreement that there would be no tubes, no ventilators, no extraordinary measures to prolong living when life was really gone. And this was supported by written documents. It also helped tremendously that all the final arrangements were made with her when she could still make choices. And it was a blessing that her financial house was in order, too—no mysteries as to where the bank accounts were or what investments she held. As the end of Mom's life neared we could focus on making sure she was not in pain (palliative care), and prepare ourselves to say goodbye.



This didn't happen on its own. There is no magic that makes sure death happens without family emergency room arguments, unnecessary pain for a loved one, and those we leave behind are not left bewildered and beset by planning when they've no clue what to do. It takes intentional effort and careful consideration on the part of the person with their family, and it takes legal and financial expertise. It takes planning.

The church can play a role in helping families have these conversations and make these plans. *Faith to Fate* is a program designed work within churches to both educate on end of life issues and help people prepare the documents necessary to protect themselves and loved ones. Its three-part program provides needed information on end of life - what "doing everything" really means and how advance care plans and medical advocates can help avoid unnecessary pain and suffering. *Faith to Fate* also provides education about wills and power of attorney—legal protections for you and your loved ones. Education results in action as by the third session professionals are on hand to help draft and notarize a will, POA, and advance care documents for participants.

The church has a role to play and we will be sharing more information on *Faith to Fate* and other faith-based programs to help individuals and families make decisions around end of life and estate issues.

Malinda Collier

Did you know the church keeps funeral service files? Yes, you can plan your funeral or memorial service in advance, you know, make sure that no one sneaks in the hymn you never liked or forgets that Eucharistic Prayer A is your favorite. Put it all down on paper and St. Mark's will store it for you. Contact Father David to create your service—kind of like being able to listen in that one last time.

GATHERED MINISTRY: FORMATION

Coffee & Conversation

Sunday Mornings
9:30am in the Library

Join us for a discussion of the Sunday readings – how they apply to life when written—and today. It will enrich your worship experience and deepen your understanding of the Bible. We take August off.

LECTIO: GUIDED BIBLE READING

Lectio Study Group—On-line Bible Study

As Christians, we are called to read and learn about our faith so that our life together as a community, our ministries, and our spirituality can grow stronger. Here we integrate how God is present in the daily experiences of our lives and the dynamic relationship we have with God. The study of Scripture offers us such an opportunity. If you have an interest, a small group has begun using an online Bible Study called *Lectio*. They gather on first Fridays at 8am, Carytown Panera with Fr. David for coffee or breakfast to discuss the material. If you have an interest in this method of study please contact Fr. David at rector@stmarksrva.org to join the group.

The study materials are available on-line through Seattle Pacific University
<http://blog.spu.edu/lectio/>.

BUCK'S BIBLE BONANZA

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS 7:00 - 8:00 PM
THE LIBRARY

A study of the books of the bible.
Open to everyone.
Currently reading Paul's letters

WEDNESDAY AM BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS AT 10:00AM

Meetings held in the Library.
Currently reading
Jesus Before the Gospels

GATHERED MINISTRY: FORMATION

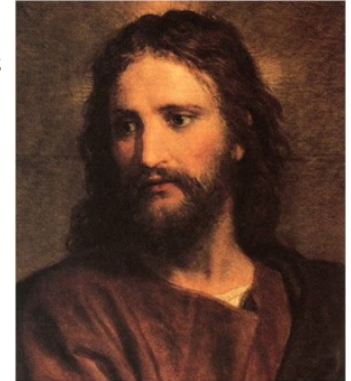
Children's Worship Continues on Sundays through June at 10:30am

Please invite friends to join us in our Godly Play story, songs and prayers. The children are honored in the processional and then join together downstairs to hear and tell the lessons of the season and the day.

During the early Summer we will hear the stories told about Jesus after his death and resurrection.

Children's Worship is best suited for children ages 4-11, but we welcome younger children with a parent to be with them and older youth to serve as readers and helpers. Children return at the Peace to share the Eucharist with their family.

Children's Worship will not meet in July & August.



VBS — EXODUS!

June 27, 28 & 29

6:00 - 7:30pm

Best for ages 4-11

\$30 per child includes all supplies and a light child-friendly supper + dessert

The Old Testament, the first part of the Bible, the scriptures about the Hebrew people is the story of our God and our faith. These stories are full of action and adventure and are about a people who try to understand what it means to be God's favored ones, God's chosen ones. These stories will help us understand that, too.

The Exodus is about God and Moses delivering the people from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. They walk through the desert and through the sea.

God provides for his people. God loves the people like a mother and watches over them like a father, and scolds them and corrects them when they do wrong and rejoices in them when they offer their worship. God in these stories tells us what we must do to be faithful.

Join us for three evenings of fun and learning.

Please register your child or children with Malinda, dre@stmarksrva.org by June 1.

If you would like to share in this ministry, please contact Malinda

GATHERED MINISTRY: FORMATION



Family Foyer Group

Our Family Foyer Group gathers for seasonal fun and outings. These include a fall visit to a pumpkin patch or State Fair, Christmas Party, Spring fun at the ball park or bowling alley and a summer pool party. A new group for families with younger children is forming! To find out more, contact Malinda, dre@stmarksrva.org

Summer Youth Mission Work (grade 6 and up)

In-town Summer mission and service learning opportunities:

July Shalom Farms in Midlothian

The farm has moved but the work continues.
Keep an eye on the emails for our July work days!



Camp on the Hill with GHTC August 7-12, training day is August 7

The Summer Camp on the Hill is seeking adult youth volunteers to mentor and supervise small groups of rising 3rd and 4th graders from the Richmond's East End participating in a one-week activity packed summer camp. Missioners assist camp counselors during reading sessions and may travel with the campers on field trips. The one week camp will take place at Good Shepherd Baptist Church located on East 28th Street, August 7-12.

Contact Malinda Collier, dre@stmarksrva.org with questions and if you want to volunteer.



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love is our tradition

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CHURCH

520 N. Boulevard
Richmond, VA 23220
Office: 804-358-4771

Clergy and Staff Email:

David Niemeyer:

rector@stmarksrva.org

Buck Aiken:

buckman356@comcast.net

David Wheeler:

wheeler.david10@gmail.com

Malinda Collier: dre@stmarksrva.org

Steve Barnes: office@stmarksrva.org

Pastoral Emergency:

804-690-6807

or

therev.jdavidniemeyer@gmail.com

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www.stmarksrva.org—check it out, check it often!

Dates to Remember:

First Tuesdays: Neighborhood
Dinner (except July & August)

June 11: Friends of Music @4pm

June 20: Newcomer Welcome

June 27, 28 & 29: VBS 6-7:30pm

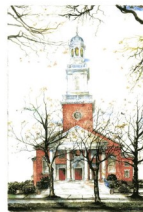
July 8-28: CARITAS Intake

July 11: Picnic

2nd & 4th Saturdays: Food Pantry

Worship Times:

Sundays: 8:00 & 10:30 am



ST. MARK'S STAFF

The Very Rev. J. David Niemeyer, Rector

The Rev. Charles D. (Buck) Aiken, Jr., Associate Rector

Malinda Collier, Director of Lay Ministry

David L. Wheeler, Organist, Choirmaster

Steve Barnes, Church Administrator

Hannah Crooks Nursery

Noah Cozart, Sexton

ST. MARK'S VESTRY

Senior Warden:

Suzanne Long

Junior Warden:

Mike Gephart

Suzanne Long, Treasurer

Karen Franklin, Register

Charlie Boisky

Jim Contner

Mike Gephart

Mickie Jones

Dolores Ramiza

Sam Shute

Amy Strite

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER—
DECEMBER ISSUE OF *THE LION'S TALE* IS
FRIDAY, AUGUST 11