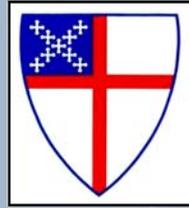


The Builder

Making Disciples for Jesus Christ

St. Thomas's Episcopal Church
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June 2021

Issue No. 5

From the Pastor

This month we enter: *The Season After Pentecost*. This “Season” is often referred to as the Church’s “teaching season” because our lectionary focuses on the teaching ministry of Jesus. You may also note that our Old Testament lessons fall into a semi-continuous narrative, which in Year B focuses primarily on the Davidic story and Wisdom literature. Along with Genesis and the Exodus, David’s story is essential to the faith of Israel and the foundation of our own Christian faith. As Christians, we would say that David “pre-figures” Christ. However, David’s relationship with God also prefigures our relationship with Christ, because David demonstrates how someone “*beloved of God*” can and should live in relationship with God.

So whether you are attending church every week, or following the Sunday lectionary at home or on vacation, I hope you will take the time to read David’s amazing story. It is a story of love, relationship, loss, betrayal, murder, faith, hope, and the full spectrum of the human condition. David does some amazingly great things and he does some really foolish things. He is, in a word, the potential “everyman,” which is precisely why his story is so valuable to us.

This month of June we also will hear a lot of “seed” parables, parables about small things that grow beyond measure. These are stories about God’s Kingdom and our role in that kingdom. Although David’s story is not intended to parallel our gospel passages, there are some similarities, especially when it comes to small beginnings. If you remember, God tells the prophet Samuel to anoint a new king over Israel, a king to replace Saul. God sends Samuel to anoint a son of Jesse. Samuel is surprised that God does not choose Jesse’s oldest son, nor his second, third or even seventh son. Instead, God chooses David, the eighth and last son.

Even though the world sees David as the youngest and the smallest Jesse’s sons, God sees the greatest and the best—from the least comes the most. So it is with God’s Kingdom. God does not judge things the way we do. We tend to value outward and visible things, things that affirm our judgment about a person’s worth, things like education, wealth, position, accomplishments, and authority. However, as God told Samuel, “*the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.*” [1Sam 16.7] That’s really what Jesus is talking about in his various seed parables. By human standards, the tiny ‘mustard’ seed is inconsequential, barely worthy of notice, but it grows into something magnificent, something that provides both food and shelter.

We disciples are like mustard seeds. God has searched each of us. God knows us. God values us. Although the world may see little in many of us, God sees much. All too often we foolishly compare ourselves with others. The result is that we can either grossly over-inflate our worthiness or inversely depress our worth. When that happens, we have the same problem that Samuel had, we judge by what we see and not by what God sees. Jesus tells us, and David shows us, that even the least can be the greatest, the last can be first, and every disciple can be a seed of greatness in God’s kingdom.

Pastor Lin +

For All the Saints...

The Martyrs of Uganda, 1886 ~ June 3



On June 3, 1886, thirty-two young men, pages of the court of King Mwanga of Buganda, were burned to death at Namugongo for their refusal to renounce Christianity. In the months following, many other Christians throughout the country died by fire or spear for their faith.

These martyrdoms completely changed the dynamic of Christian growth in Uganda. Introduced by a handful of Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries after 1877, the Christian faith had been preached only to the immediate members of the court, by order of King Mutesa. However, his successor realized that these converts gave their loyalty to Christ above the traditional loyalty to the king. Martyrdoms began in 1885 (including Bishop Hannington and his companions in October of that year). Mwanga first forbade anyone to go near a Christian mission on pain of death, but finding himself unable to cool the ardor of the converts, Mwanga resolved to wipe out Christianity.

The Namugongo martyrdoms produced a result entirely opposite to Mwanga's intentions. The example of these martyrs, who walked to their death singing hymns and praying for their enemies, so inspired many of the bystanders that they began to seek instruction from the remaining Christians. Within a few years the original handful of converts had multiplied many times and spread far beyond the court. The martyrs had left an indelible impression that Christianity was truly African, not simply a white man's religion. Most of the missionary work was carried out by Africans, rather than by white missionaries, and Christianity spread steadily. Uganda is now the most Christian nation in Africa.

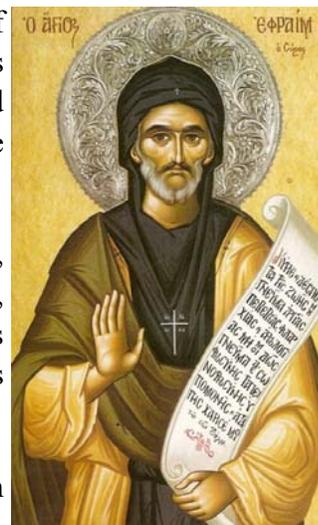
Renewed persecution of Christians by a Muslim military dictatorship in the 1970's proved the vitality of the example of the Namugongo martyrs. Among the thousands of new martyrs, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, was Janani Luwum, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Uganda, whose courageous ministry and death inspired not only his countrymen, but also Christians throughout the world.

Ephrem of Edessa, Deacon, 373 ~ June 10

Ephrem of Edessa was a teacher, poet, orator, and defender of the faith—a voice of Aramaic Christianity, speaking the language Jesus spoke, using the imagery Jesus used. Even to this day, Christians throughout modern day Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, still speak Aramaic and are often called: Aramaic Christians. So powerful are Ephrem's hymns that they still enrich the liturgies of the Syrian Church to this day.

Ephrem was born at Nisibis in Mesopotamia [modern day Iraq, southeastern Turkey, southwestern Iran, and northeastern Syria]. At eighteen, he was baptized by James, Bishop of Nisibis. It is believed that Ephrem accompanied James to the famous Council of Nicaea in 325 [which produced our Nicene Creed]. He lived at Nisibis until 363, when the Persians captured the city and drove out the Christians.

Ephrem then retired to a cave in the hills above the Syrian city of Edessa, which



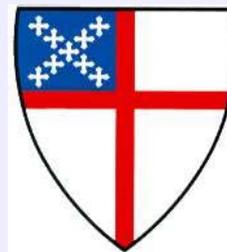
became the center for the spread of Christianity in the East long before the conversion of the western Roman empire. It was there that Ephrem wrote most of his spiritual works. His writings were influential in the development of Church doctrine and of the theology of numerous early Christian scholars like Jerome [who wrote the Latin translation of the Bible, The Vulgate] and who said: “I have read in Greek a volume of his on the Holy Spirit; though it was only a translation, I recognized therein the sublime genius of the man.” Ephrem believed that hymns were of great value in supporting the Christian faith, so he composed many of his own hymns for use in Christian gatherings.

During a severe famine in 372-373, Ephrem distributed food and money to the poor and organized a type of ambulance service for the sick. He later died of exhaustion, from his long hours and dedication to relief work. The Church is blessed to have many of Ephrem’s writings, written in Aramaic, of 72 hymns, commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and numerous homilies. In his meditation on our Lord’s Passion he wrote: “*The Lord himself has become the altar, priest, and bread, and the chalice of salvation. He alone suffices for all, yet none suffices for him. He is Altar and Lamb, victim and sacrifice, priest as well as food.*”

Today, our hymnal still contains one of Ephrem’s hymns: Hymn # 443 *From God Christ’s deity came forth.*

MORE, “101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian”—

Reason # 15: “When asked if he was saved, then Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple replied, “I have been saved, I am being saved, I hope to be saved.” That understanding of faith, hope, and humility reinforces me as an Episcopalian / Anglican.”
Dean George L. W. Werner, Diocese of Pittsburgh



Reason # 28: “We have the liturgical beauty of the Roman Catholics combined with the local authority of the Southern Baptists.” *Cynthia McLeod, Diocese of East Tennessee*



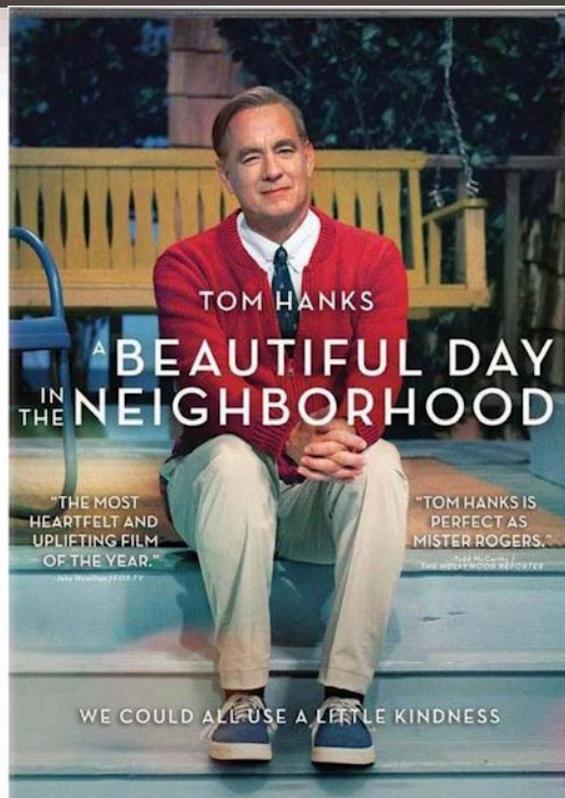
To our dedicated **Church Lawnmowing Volunteers!** Despite the many persistent challenges of COVID, you ensure our beautiful historic Church always looks cared for, loved, and maintained. We can always use willing volunteers to mow, edge, and trim, either using your own equipment or the Church’s. If you would like to participate, please call the Church Office or check the Mowing Schedule placed outside the front doors on Sunday. Our Sexton, Virginia Donnelly, will gladly explain what is required.



Abigail Yowell, Graduating from JMU Class of 2021!

NOW SHOWING

(TENTATIVELY)



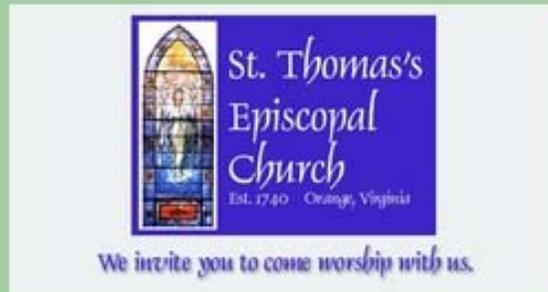
Based on the true story of a real-life friendship between Fred Rogers and journalist Lloyd Vogel.

Two-time Oscar-winner Tom Hanks portrays Mister Rogers in *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, a timely story of kindness triumphing over cynicism, based on the true story of a real-life friendship between Fred Rogers and journalist Tom Junod. After a jaded magazine writer (Emmy winner Matthew Rhys) is

assigned a profile of Fred Rogers, he overcomes his skepticism, learning about empathy, kindness, and decency from America's most beloved neighbor. ~IMDB

Friday, June 25 at 7:00 pm in Robertson Hall

~ cost of admission is one non-perishable food item ~



Due to Capacity limitations at the Inn at Willow Grove,
the Reception In Honor of the Life of Jennifer Hulsey
will now be held on
Saturday, June 5th, from 6-10pm
at
"The Residence" at Woodberry Forest School



Rector's Discretionary Fund Needs Your Help

The Rector's Discretionary Fund (RDF) needs your Assistance! Thanks to the current COVID pandemic, many in our local community have lost employment. Although stimulus checks plus COVID rent and utility relief have held creditors at bay, many continue to struggle with the basic necessities for their families. Please consider a tax-free contribution to the Rector's Discretionary Fund or "RDF." **ALL monies in this account go to helping families in crisis right here in our county of Orange.**



Orange Elementary School students still need our help with snacks and emergency clothing!

There continues to be a need to support the food insecure children in our community. It is easiest for school officials to receive monetary donations from St. Thomas, rather than actual snacks and/or clothing, at this time.

Please make your checks payable to St Thomas Episcopal with "outreach in/out" on the memo line.

Thank you!!!

The Outreach Committee

“Penny Sundays” return on the first Sunday of the month. Money placed in the basket goes to *Nets for Life*, a malaria relief agency.

June 2019

St. Thomas Church



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
<p>6 The Second Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>Rite I — 8:00 A.M. Rite II—10:15 A.M.</p>	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>13 The Third Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>Rite I — 8:00 A.M. Rite II—10:15 A.M.</p>	14	15	16	17	18	19
<p>20 The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>Rite I — 8:00 A.M. Rite II—10:15 A.M.</p> <p>Father's Day Summer begins</p>	21	22	23	24	25	26
<p>27 The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>Rite I — 8:00 A.M. Rite II—10:15 A.M.</p>	28	29	30	<p>5:30 Vestry meeting</p> <p>Movie night 7 pm <i>It's a Beautiful Day</i></p>		



~Anniversaries~

Will & Kristen Brockman Desiree & Richard Floyd
Joanie & Ray Palmer Donna & Dan Robinson
Malaika & David Rogers

~Birthdays~

06/02 Griffin Floyd	06/05 John Amos	06/05 Maddie Keating
06/06 Mary Lou Seilheimer	06/07 Caroline Keating	06/10 Daisy Floyd
06/11 Barbara Collins	06/11 Gwen Watson	06/12 Gabrielle Nigmond
06/14 Cecelia Hohman	06/14 Don Place	06/15 Sammy Higginbotham
06/15 Caroline Merrick	06/16 Cynthia Levin	06/17 Lily Robinson
06/18 Adrianna Waddy	6/20 Deacon Barfield	06/20 Samuel Barfield
06/22 Marty Gray	06/23 Elaine Baskerville	06/24 Thomas Merrick
06/28 Grayson Butterfield	06/30 Cynthia Arnold	

Food Pantry

Special requests for June are *Toothpaste, Pancake Mix, and Syrup*. All food items and cash gifts are always welcome and appreciated. You can drop off donations at the Love Outreach Food Pantry each Tuesday from 9:00-10:30 and on Wednesday from 8:30-12:00. Their mailing address is: Love Outreach Food Pantry, Inc., P.O. Box 788, Orange, 22960. You may also bring any donations to the church to be delivered.



*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you and be
gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give
you peace.*

Please submit entries for the July-August issue of
The Builder by June 24th to
annwood304@gmail.com or to the church office.

Prayer List

We pray especially for our church's leadership:

Michael, Presiding Bishop; Shannon, Susan & Bob, bishops for this diocese

Our country: President Joe, Vice President Kamala, & Governor Ralph

For our own needs and those of others.

For: Our Governor, Ralph, and all members of our Virginia Assembly as they continue to navigate this pandemic in our midst.

And Especially for: Margaret, Harriet, Anne, Shirley, Barbara, Ellen, Liz, Susie, Cindy, William, Gordon, Pierce, David, Don, Carolyn, Pat, Charles, and Paul

Please feel free to submit your prayer requests via phone (540-672-3761) or email (stthomas3@verizon.net) for inclusion in the morning prayer bulletin.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
119 Caroline Street
Orange, VA 22960

June 2021

