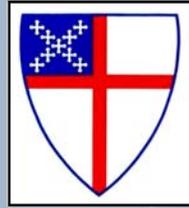


The Builder

Making Disciples for Jesus Christ

St. Thomas's Episcopal Church
(540) 672-3761
Rector: The Rev. Dr. Lin Hutton



www.stthomasorange.org
email: stthomas3@verizon.net
Editor: Ann Wood

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May 2021

Issue No. 4

From the Pastor

It is often said that, “*Every new beginning, is some other beginning’s end.*” With a long-anticipated end in sight to this Pandemic, I certainly hope COVID-19 will prove to be the same! But it also occurs to me that Spring is like that. Spring is the beginning of a new year of growth in creation. The grays and browns of winter give way to the lush, bright colors of spring—pinks, reds, yellows, purples, oranges. Flowering dogwood, apple, cherry, plum, pear, and other fruit trees brighten our world and shower us with golden dustings of pollen. Tulips, snowdrops, fuchsias, pansies, irises, provide a riot of color and signal a new growing season as the spring wheat rises in the fields.

Spring marks a new beginning. But it also marks the end of an earlier beginning—the school year. Ten months ago, children and their families were preparing for another year of education in an undesired COVID-restricted world of online, remote learning and the near cessation of the routine school plays, dances, club activities, and athletics. As spring and its fine weather begin, teachers are trying to maintain order in the final weeks of their year, as students finally begin to interact again in-person, yet while already anticipating the end of this year’s journey and the freedom of summer. The next year’s cycle is too far away to notice or care about; at least for now.

Easter is like that too. It is the “end of a beginning” that started in Advent with the preparation for a holy birth; and it is the beginning of a new life that began with an empty tomb and the resurrected Christ. Like children starting a new school year, the disciples relearn what it means to be a disciple as the resurrected Christ walks with them and teaches them how to live after his death. The end of that journey with Christ starts a new beginning as the disciples go forth into the world to spread the Good News that Christ is alive, that we have been saved from sin and death, and that a new world, a New Jerusalem, awaits us at this journey’s end.

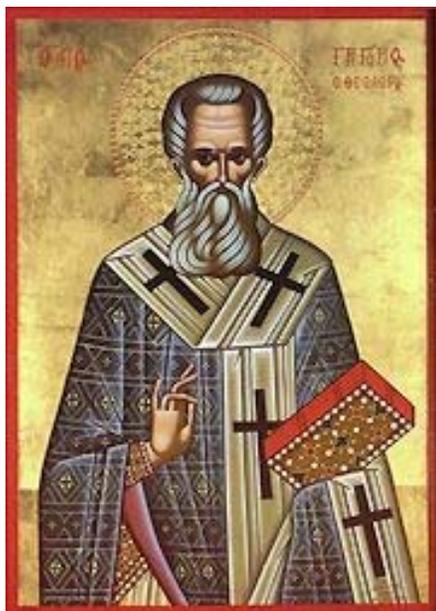
Theologians have often used a “circle” or a “sphere” to represent God as neither the two dimensional circle nor its three-dimension, spherical twin have beginning or end. No matter where you begin, you always end up where you started. It goes on and on, without end, yet always in constant relationship every other element of the circle or sphere....sort of like, well, God.

Christianity is called a “revealed” religion. It is not based on science or logic, but on what God progressively reveals about God’s self to humanity, either indirectly through nature or directly through the Law, the Prophets, and finally his own Son. In the end, every new beginning is some other beginning’s end, and it goes on and on, over and over. As if, maybe, by enough repetition, we might just learn something and, in the end, gain enough love, insight, understanding, and wisdom that we finally discern the face of God in every cycle of the never-ending circles of beginnings and endings.... whatever they may be. As a personal, spiritual meditation, perhaps you might try pondering and wrestling with this concept. See how many different circular patterns you can find and then seek to discern God’s presence in them.

Pastor Lin +

For All the Saints...

Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishop of Constantinople, 389: May 9



Gregory of Nazianzus is one of the three great “Cappadocian Fathers,” which include: Basil of Caesarea and Basil’s younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa. Born to a local bishop in Cappadocia (now Turkey), Gregory of Nazianzus studied rhetoric in Athens with his friend Basil. Gregory’s insightful theological understanding and laudable defense of his father’s orthodoxy in the face of numerous church heresies of the time brought him to prominence and led to his (unwilling) ordination.

Gregory was happy to live out his priestly duties in the intellectual world of theological studies, however, Basil forced him to become the Bishop of Sasima to counter claims by rival heretical factions within the Arian Heresy.¹ In Gregory’s own words, it was, “a detestable little place without water or grass or any mark of civilization.” He felt like, “a bone flung to dogs,” and his friendship with Basil was seriously broken. Gregory’s belief in where he ought to serve, versus where he was sent to serve, deeply wounded his pride and damaged his aspirations for anything better. To further Gregory’s depression, members of his family died as did Basil of Caesarea, dashing all hope of recovering from the appearance of exile. Gregory’s health declined and forced his removal to Constantinople.

However, in 379, Gregory recovered from near death with a new vigor and resolve. Suddenly on fire with the love of God, Gregory delivered five sermons on the doctrine of the Trinity. The clarity, strength, and joyous insight of these theological sermons are still studied to this day. The following year, the new Roman Emperor Theodosius entered Constantinople and finally expelled the heretical Arian bishop and clergy that had dominated the region. Theodosius turned to Gregory to become the first orthodox Bishop of Constantinople. On that day, despite the rain, a shaft of sunlight broke through and illuminated Gregory in the midst of the crowds at the Great Church of Hagia Sophia. The man who had once thought power and prestige the most important elements, had gained the humility to handle both in the shadow of illness and loss. One year later, in 381, Gregory led the Council of Constantinople that completed the Nicene Creed we say today. Among the Fathers of the Church, Gregory alone is known as “The Divine” and “The Theologian.”

The “Arian Heresy” is one in which Jesus, the Son of God, is not co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, but rather is a lesser divine being, yet higher than the angels.

Jackson Kemper, First Missionary Bishop in the United States, 1870: May 24

The General Convention of 1835 made all the members of the Episcopal Church members also of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, and provided for missionary bishops to serve in the wilderness and in foreign countries. Jackson Kemper was the first such bishop. Although he was assigned to Missouri and Indiana, he laid foundations also in Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Kansas, and made extensive missionary tours in the South and Southwest.

Kemper was born in Pleasant Valley, New York, on December 24, 1789. He graduated from Columbia College in 1809, and was ordained deacon in 1811, and priest in 1814, where he served Bishop White as Assistant at Christ Church, Philadelphia. In 1835, Kemper was ordained as the first Missionary Bishop, and immediately set out on his travels.

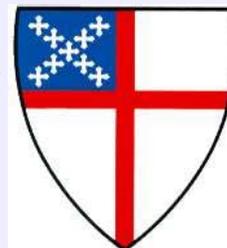
Because Episcopal clergymen, mostly from well-to-do Eastern homes, found it hard to adjust to the harsh life of the frontier—scorching heat, drenching rains, and winter blizzards—Kemper established Nashotah House, in Wisconsin, in 1842; and, later, Racine College, founded in 1852. Both these institutions reflected Kemper’s devotion to beauty in ritual and worship.



Kemper pleaded for more attention to the Indians and encouraged the translation of services into native languages. He described a service among Oneida Indians which was marked by “courtesy, reverence, worship—and obedience to that Great Spirit in whose hands are the issues of life.” From 1859 until his death, Kemper was diocesan Bishop of Wisconsin. He is more justly honored by his unofficial title, “The Bishop of the Whole Northwest.”

MORE, “101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian”—

Reason # 32: “The Episcopal Church taught me that Jesus came to challenge, not just comfort; to overturn, not to maintain; to love, not to judge; to include, not to cast aside.”
The Rev. Canon Elizabeth R. Geitz, Diocese of New Jersey



Reason # 48: “Being an intelligent, strong woman is not a drawback in the Episcopal Church.”
Cynthia Jo Mahaffey, Diocese of Ohio



St. Thomas Church is exceptionally grateful to **Mr. Will Likins, Ms. Elaine Baskerville, and Ms. Virginia Donnelly** for working to clean up our fallow, winter Memorial Garden prior to Easter. If you get the chance, **please thank them for their service!**

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

John 15:12

Getting a COVID vaccine is your way of saying to those around you:

“I love you. Your health & safety are important to me.

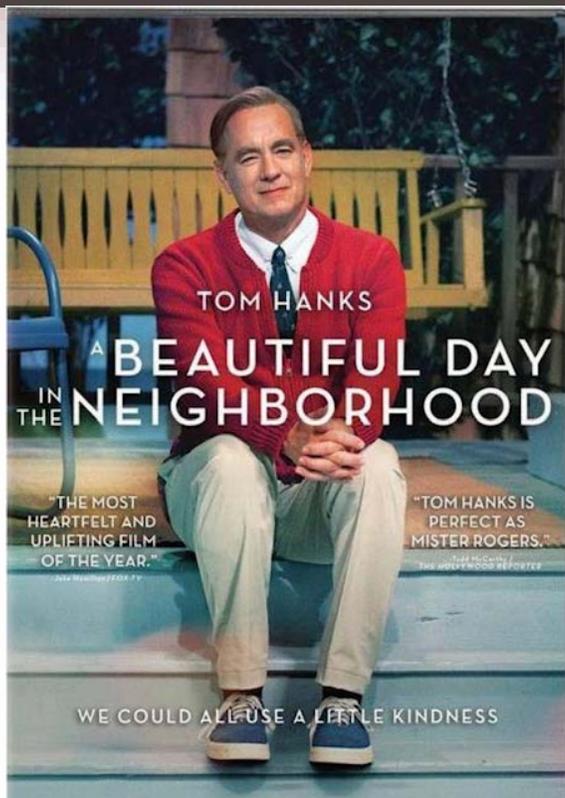
Even though I may not want to get vaccinated,

I will do so for you, because

I Love You!”

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, May 21 at 7:00 pm in Robertson Hall

~ cost of admission is one non-perishable food item ~
Please follow mask and social distancing guidelines

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.**



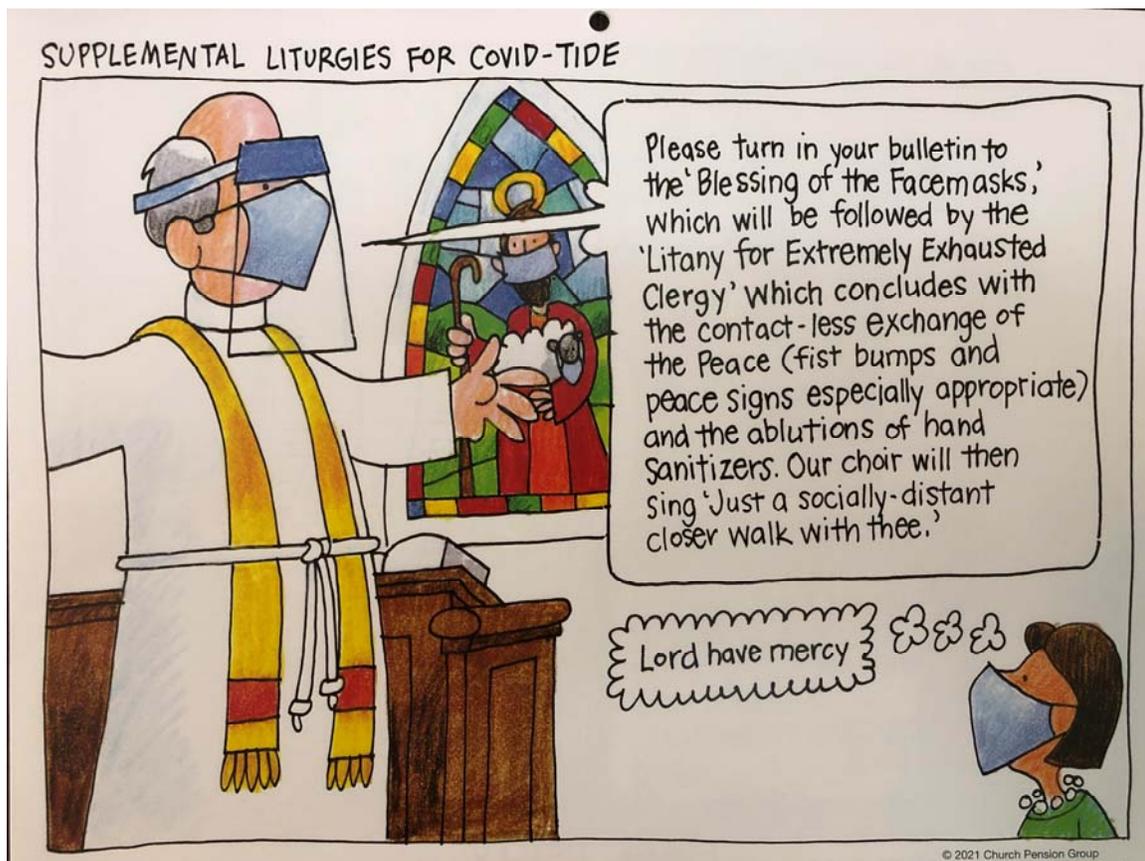
Orange Elementary School students still need our help with snacks and emergency clothing!

It is easiest for school officials to receive monetary donations from St. Thomas, rather than actual snacks and/or clothing, at this time. This helps minimize the handling of the items while Covid transmission is still a concern.

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

Thank you!!!

May Cartoon



May 2020

St. Thomas Church



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>“I give you a New Commandment, that you love one another.” John 13:34</p> <p>Getting a Covid vaccine, whether you wish to or not, is a way of saying to others: “I am a Christian and I love you!”</p>						1
<p>2 <i>The Fifth Sunday of Easter</i> 8:00 am Holy Communion Rite I 10:15 am Holy Communion Rite II</p>	3	4	5	6	7	8
<p>9 <i>The Sixth Sunday of Easter</i> 8:00 am Holy Communion Rite I 10:15 am Holy Communion Rite II</p>	10	11	12	<p>Ascension Day</p>	14	15
<p>16 <i>The Seventh Sunday of Easter: The Sunday after Ascension Day</i> 8:00 am Holy Communion Rite I 10:15 am Holy Communion Rite II</p>	17	18	19	20	<p>21 Movie night 7 pm “It’s a Beautiful Day” — Mr. Rogers’ story</p>	22
<p>23 <i>The Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday</i> 8:00 am Holy Communion Rite I 10:15 am Holy Communion Rite II</p>	<p>24 Newsletter items due</p> 	25	26	<p>27 5:30 pm</p>  <p>Vestry Meeting</p>	28	29
<p>30 <i>Trinity Sunday</i> 8:00 am Holy Communion Rite I 10:15 am Holy Communion Rite II</p>	<p>31</p>  <p>Office closed</p>					



~Anniversaries~

Bob & Kris Brockman

~Birthdays~

05/02 Joanie Palmer
05/09 Pen Breese, Jr.
05/11 Mary-Parke Johnson
05/14 Sarah Rogers
05/23 L. Borden Lee
05/28 Grayson Wood
05/29 Lisa Wagner
05/30 Doug Arnold

Food Pantry

Special requests for April are *Salt, Pepper, and Hamburger Helper*. 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.



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 the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

For: Our Governor, Ralph, and all members of our Virginia Assembly as they seek 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.

*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 June issue of *The Builder* by May 24th to annwood304@gmail.com or to the church office.

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

May 2021

