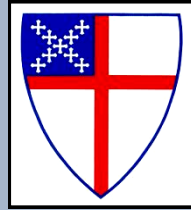


# The Builder

## Making Disciples for Jesus Christ

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



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### *From the Pastor*

#### *"Bless me, for I have sinned."*

So begins the traditional opening line of the personal "Confession of Sin." As Episcopalians, we routinely participate in a communal "confession" during our weekly service of Holy Communion. However, many Episcopalians are unaware that we also offer the sacramental rite of "Confession" to individuals. Yes, just like our Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, Episcopalians actually do "Confession," although we actually call it: "The Reconciliation of the Penitent." Our Catechism states that:

The Reconciliation of a Penitent, or Penance, is the rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution. [BCP 861]

The reconciliation of penitents is not a sacrament of the gospel in the sense that baptism and the eucharist are. The gospels do not show Christ instituting a rite to cover post-baptismal sin. They do, nevertheless, record Christ's commission to the apostles to forgive sin in his name (Matthew 16:19, 18:15; and John 20:22-23; see also 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 for the witness of St. Paul). Like the gospel sacraments, reconciliation is founded on the promise of Christ and on the paschal mystery that even in our sinfulness Christ died to redeem us from our sins.

In reconciliation, the baptismal experience of death to sin and resurrection to newness of life is renewed. Our sins are bound by the love and power of the Crucified One and loosed by our restoration to the risen life in Christ. Reconciliation is an act of Christ in his body the church. Although private and personal confession is often associated with "ministry to the sick" [aka: "Extreme Unction"] the Book of Common Prayer makes it clear that personal and private "confession" is available "for all who desire it...anytime and anywhere." [BCP 446] A further rubric states that, "The content of a confession is not normally a matter of subsequent discussion. The secrecy of a confession is morally absolute for the confessor, and must under no circumstances be broken." [BCP 446]

Why do we have personal and private confession or reconciliation of the penitent? Because reconciliation restores the sin-damaged relationship with Christ that was established in baptism. For although the baptismal bond cannot be broken [BCP 298], we can and do squander our baptismal inheritance. We live as if we were not united to Christ. The baptismal relation is denied by sin, but within the unbreakable bond of baptism, reconciliation, and restoration to the baptismal life in Christ are both possible and necessary.

When we come to the priest for confession, we come for the reconciliation of our sins. Our catechism defines sin as: "The seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation." [BCP 848]. From its definition we see that sin is not a series of wrong acts but a sort of disease of the will. The actions we call sins are the symptoms of the disease, the effects of seeking our own will rather than the will of God.

As a result, when we come to confession, we do not confess things that are not our own fault. Such things either are not sins or are the sins of other people. The goal of the priest is not to remove the symptoms of sin, but to root out the disease of sin itself from the soul by the power of the redeeming love of Christ.

Reconciliation is not a program for self-improvement but an opening of the soul to salvation and redemption through the Blood of the Cross, or by grace through faith. From beginning to end, reconciliation is the action of God, to whose call to repentance we respond. In other words, reconciliation is God's action, not ours. We merely respond. When the priest offers absolution to the penitent, the priest does not claim to forgive sins, the priest is merely the minister through whom Christ acts, "by the grace of the Holy Spirit."

When we come to the priest for confession, the priest and the penitent celebrate the sacrament together within the community of the universal Church. The sacramental sign is the laying of the priest's hand upon the head of the penitent and the declaration "the Lord has put away all your sins." [BCP 451]

The Reconciliation of the Penitent is an extremely personal and powerful experience for most individuals. Our denomination does not require personal or auricular confession to a priest, rather we believe that it is a sacramental rite in which "some should, all can, and none must" participate. The Season of Lent is a time to evaluate whether you may fall into one of these categories and desire to unburden yourself of the baggage of sin that may be crushing your spirit. Confession is properly done in the Church sanctuary and is **always available by appointment. During the Season of Lent, Pastor Lin will also be available following The Stations of the Cross on Thursdays at 5:30 pm.**

### Pastor Lin +

Sources: The Book of Common Prayer; *Praying Shapes Believing* and *Pastoral and Occasional Liturgies: A Ceremonial Guide* by The Rev. Dr. Leonel L. Mitchell



### *For All the Saints...*

March has many memorable "saints of the church," however, since Lent takes precedence, we often hear little about them during the Season of Lent.

#### **Richard Allen, First Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1831 ~ March 26**

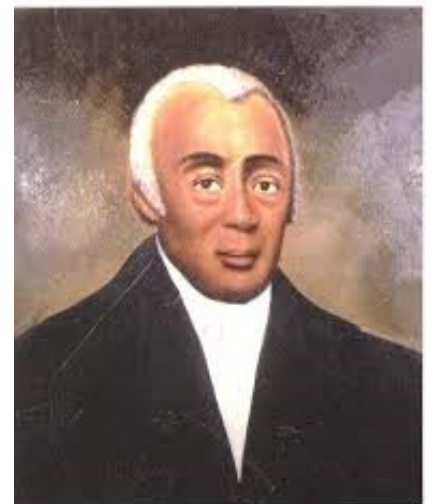
Ever wonder where the "African Methodist Episcopal" denomination came from? Well, here it is:

Richard Allen was born into slavery in 1760 in Germantown, Pennsylvania. Allen and his parents and siblings were later sold to Stokely Sturgis, whose plantation was in Delaware. The Methodists were already active in Delaware, and Sturgis allowed Allen to attend church. At the age of 17, Richard underwent a conversion experience and brought members of the Methodist Church into his master's home, where Sturgis heard a sermon by the great Methodist preacher, Freeborn Garrettson. Sturgis was himself converted, and he allowed Allen to hire himself out and in five years Richard Allen purchased his freedom.

In 1786, Allen became a preacher at St. George's United Methodist Church, but was restricted to only early morning services. As the black membership increased, the vestry decided to build a segregated section. Allen, along with his friend **Absalom Jones**, resented the segregation of his fellow black Christians, and in 1787, Allen and Jones led black worshippers out of St. George's.

Absalom Jones and others joined the Episcopal Church, however, Allen wished to continue in his Methodist tradition. He had been cooperating with Bishop Francis Asbury to spread Methodism among African Americans and in 1794m he founded Bethel Church in Philadelphia. The newly formed African Methodist Episcopal Church declared its independence and Allen became its first bishop.

Richard Allen remained an advocate of freedom for all people, even operating a station on the Underground Railroad for escaped slaves. He was an ardent believer in the brotherhood of all who belonged to Christ.



## John Keble, Priest, 1866 ~ March 29



John Keble was born in 1792 and received his early education in his father's vicarage. At fourteen, he won a scholarship to Oxford and graduated in 1811 with highest honors. He served the University for ten years as Professor of Poetry. After ordination in 1816, he had a series of rural curacies, and finally settled in 1836 into a thirty-year pastorate in a village near Winchester.

England was going through a turbulent change from rural to an industrial and urban society. Among the reforms of the 1830's, Parliament acted to abolish ten Anglican bishoprics in Ireland. Keble vigorously attacked this action as undermining the independence of the Church.

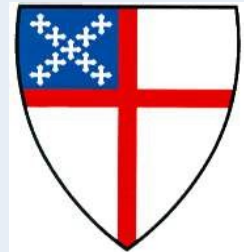
His Assize Sermon of 1833 was the spark that ignited the "Oxford Movement." Those drawn to the Movement began to publish a series of "Tracts for the Times" (hence the popular name "Tractarians")—which sought to recall the Church to its ancient sacramental heritage. John Henry Newman was the intellectual leader of the Movement [See "For All the Saints" in last month's February edition]. Edward Bouverie Pusey was the prophet of the Movement's devotional life, and John Keble was its pastoral inspiration.

Though bitterly attacked, his loyalty to his Church was unwavering. Within three years of his death at age 74, a college bearing his name was established at Oxford "to give an education in strict fidelity to the Church of England." For Keble, this would have meant dedication to leaning in order "to live more nearly as we pray."

### **MORE, "101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian"—**

Reason # 67: "Episcopalians believe in moderation in all things, including moderation."  
*Sheena A. Lawrence, Diocese of Atlanta*

Reason # 1: "When Anglicanism is at its best, its liturgy, its poetry, its music and its life can create a world of wonder in which it is very easy to fall in love with God."  
*Urban T. Holmes, III, [priest, theologian, seminary dean]*



### *March Cartoon*



## Thank You!

Thanks to those who have given to the **Rector's Discretionary Fund**, we were able to provide **Ms. T**, a young single mother who recently gave birth, with **rent assistance** and **newborn supplies**.

The extremely cold weather has hit several financially at-risk families particularly hard with power bills far outside the norm. We were able to support **two families** with the necessary funds to pay **their Dominion power bills** and avoid losing their heat.

Thank You to **our Prison Ministry Team: Adrianna Waddy, Sarah Rogers, and** dedicated volunteers bring the Good Central Virginia Regional Jail. Thank



**Frank Thomas, Steve Cushman, John Amos**. Each month these News of Jesus Christ to the inmates at the You for your dedicated service!

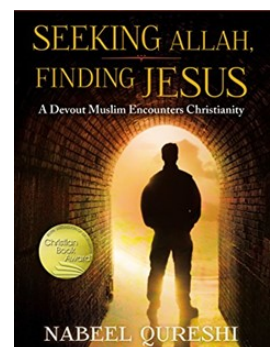
*Join Us for Lent Evening Prayer at 5:45p.m.  
Then our Wednesday Night Pot Luck & Program:  
"How a Devout Muslim became a Devout Christian."*

Explore the Muslim beliefs about Christianity and the arguments Muslims frequently use to refute the validity of Christianity. Arguments like:

- Jesus never claimed to be God, never said: "I am God"
- God is immortal, so why would God need a "Son?"
- Jesus did not really "die" on the Cross [he only swooned or was substituted for another]
- The Quran is the only "uncorrupted, perfect" book [the Bible is merely a corrupted "copy of copies," with many changes, additions, deletions, and completely different translations]
- Islam is a religion of Peace, Mohammad only fought "defensive" battles & the 'violent' verses in the Quran refer to specific, defensive contexts
- The Bible never uses the word: "Trinity" & the concept of a Trinity is thinly veiled Polytheism
- How can one person atone for another's sins?
- The "Quran" is the only divinely written work, its elegance cannot be recreated. This is further supported by:
  - ◊ The Fulfilled Prophecies; the Mathematical Patterns; the (advanced) Scientific Truths contained within, and its perfect textual preservation.

**If a Muslim were to offer these arguments to you, how would you answer?**

Come and explore the Christian response to these and other arguments as we walk with Nabeel Qureshi and follow his journey in *"Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus."*



**NOW SHOWING**



**During the early days of World War II, with the fall of France imminent, Britain faces its darkest hour as the threat of invasion looms.** As the seemingly unstoppable Nazi forces advance, and with the Allied army cornered on the beaches of Dunkirk, the fate of Western Europe hangs on the leadership of the newly-appointed British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (Academy Award nominee Gary Oldman). While maneuvering his political rivals, he must confront the ultimate choice: negotiate with Hitler and save the British people at a terrible cost or rally the nation and fight on against incredible odds. Directed by Joe Wright, **DARKEST HOUR** is the dramatic and inspiring story of four weeks in 1940 during which Churchill's courage to lead changed the course of world history. ~ *Fandango*

**Friday, March 23 at 7:00 pm in Robertson Hall**

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

# St. Thomas 2017-2018 Preschool

## March Preschool News!



Teddy Bear and PJs Day: Having fun with our furry friends!



Morning Explorations



Stacking, Sorting, Counting, and Patterns



Sensory Room FUN



Danny the Dinosaur is hungry for some letters!



# St. Thomas 2017-2018 Preschool

## *Valentines Day Celebrations*



Valentines Day was a day of love and friendship as our students celebrated each other with hearts and a special party!



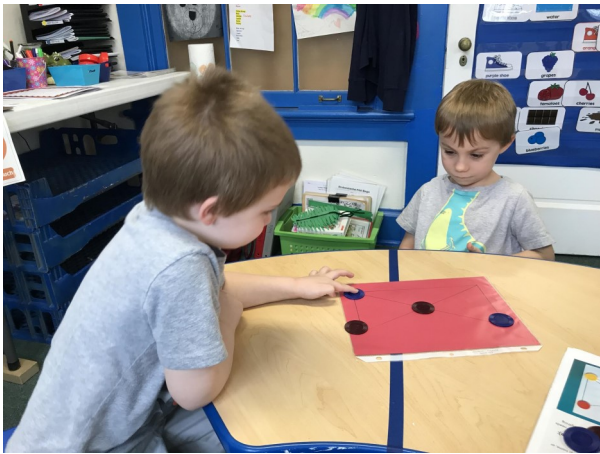
## *St. Thomas Preschool Chinese New Year Celebration*

### **Gung Hay Fat Choy!**

The children played the traditional Chinese game of Pong Hau K'i and Memory Match with the zodiac animals.

We were impressed with their adventurous palettes as they tried different Chinese dishes from Happy Garden.

We finished the day with our chopstick relay.



***The St. Thomas' Preschool Two-Day Program still has a few openings!***

Anyone interested contact [stthomascommpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:stthomascommpreschool@gmail.com) or 540-672-2337.



# March 2018

## St. Thomas Church

Key: Chapel (C); Conference Room (CR); Holy Communion (HC); Rector's Study (RS); Robertson Hall (RH); Youth Room (YR)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>Join us for Lenten Wednesdays</b>  <b>5:45 Evening Prayer &amp; Potluck</b>  <b>followed by : "A Defense for Christ," how</b>  <b>a devout Muslim became a Christian</b></p> 			<p>[28 February]            12:15 Community Service (Orange Baptist)  <b>5:45 Evening Prayer, Potluck &amp; Lent Program</b></p>	<p>1  <b>5:30 pm Stations of the Cross</b> †             7 Choir Practice</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3            9 am Centering Prayer</p>
<p><b>4 Third Sunday in Lent</b></p> <p>8:00 am HE I            9:00 Sunday Forum (RH)  <b>10:15 am HE I &amp; Sunday School</b>            1:00 pm Worship (Jail)</p>	5	6	<p>7            12:15 Community Service (Orange Baptist)  <b>5:45 Evening Prayer, Potluck &amp; Program</b></p>	<p>8  <b>5:30 pm Stations of the Cross</b> †             7 Choir Practice</p>	9	<p>10            9 am Centering Prayer</p>
<p><b>11 Fourth Sunday in Lent</b></p> <p>8:00 am HE I            9:00 Sunday Forum (RH)  <b>10:15 am HE I &amp; Sunday School</b>  <i>Daylight Saving begins!</i></p>	12	13	<p>14            12:15 Community Service (Orange Baptist)  <b>5:45 Evening Prayer, Potluck &amp; Program</b></p>	<p>15  <b>5:30 pm Stations of the Cross</b> †             7 Choir Practice</p>	16	<p>17            9 am Centering Prayer</p>
<p><b>18 Fifth Sunday in Lent</b></p> <p>8:00 am HE I            9:00 Sunday Forum (RH)  <b>10:15 am HE I &amp; Sunday School</b></p>	19	20	<p>21            12:15 Community Service (Orange Baptist)  <b>5:45 Evening Prayer, Potluck &amp; Program</b></p>	<p>22  <b>5:30 pm Stations of the Cross</b> †  <b>Vestry (RH)</b>             7 Choir Practice</p>	<p>23  <b>7 pm MOVIE NIGHT "Darkest Hour" (RH)</b></p>	<p>24            9 am Centering Prayer</p>
<p><b>25 Sunday of the Passion and Palm Sunday</b></p> <p>8:00 am HE I            9:00 Sunday Forum (RH)  <b>10:15 am HE II &amp; Sunday School</b></p>	<p>26  <b>6p Evening Prayer</b></p>	<p>27    <b>6p Evening Prayer</b></p>	<p>28  <b>6p Evening Prayer</b></p>	<p>29  <b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b>  <b>6 pm Holy Communion</b>  <b>7:30 pm Watch in the Chapel</b></p>	<p>30  <b>GOOD FRIDAY</b>  <b>Noon: Celtic Stations of the Cross</b>  <b>6p Holy Communion</b></p>	<p>31  <b>Holy Saturday</b></p>



~Anniversaries~

Pen & Suzanne Bresee

Henry & Judy Carter

Bob & Jeanne Kerstiens

~Birthdays~

03/01 Kirsten Samuels

03/03 Chris Dulin

03/04 Dabney Carr

03/04 Richard Floyd

03/04 Taylor Williams

03/08 Karin Merrill

03/09 Mary Brook Miller

03/10 Ann Marie Wood

03/11 Lynne Baines

03/11 Will Brockman

03/12 Bobbye Davies

03/16 Bob Kerstiens

03/17 Jonathan Yowell

03/20 Barry Barr

03/20 Harriet Moore

03/20 Nathan Ward

03/24 Sheperd Barfield

03/25 Carroll Johnson

03/28 Gilliam Likins

03/31 Diane Acree

***Food Pantry***

Special request for March is Shampoo, Soap, Cake Mix, and Frosting. 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 Donald, Vice President Mike, & Governor Ralph

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation:

**For:** Dana, Grace, Harriet, Margaret, Raymond, Terrell, Tom, and our men and women in our armed forces who are serving our nation around the world.

**And Especially for:** Blaise, Bo, Carol, David, Ellen, Jim, John, Karin, Linda, Lucille, Nadia, Palmer, Rachel, Robbie, Sam, Sarah, Sue, Toni and Whit; and the victims of religious oppression around the world, especially for those being affected by Isis.

*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.*

*Numbers 6: 22-26*