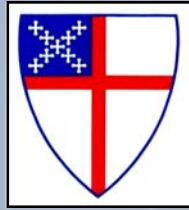


The Builder

Making Disciples for Jesus Christ

St. Thomas's Episcopal Church
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Issue No. 1

From the Pastor

As I write this, the first real snow of winter has just blown through. This time, much more than a minor nuisance for those traveling or without backup generators. At the same time, the landscape is actually quite pretty when one takes the time to observe. The sheer volume of this snow was quite unexpected. We were supposed to get several inches preceded by sleet rain, but temperatures were so abnormally high that any serious accumulation was expected to melt uneventfully. The funny thing about weather is that we just can't control it. Just when we think we have a handle on it and that we are reliably able to predict exactly what will happen....it doesn't. God's like that. Uncontrollable.

Just when we think we have a handle on God and believe we can reliably predict exactly what God will do next, well, God doesn't,"do what we expect" that is. Take Jesus for example. No one expected Jesus to be the living God. He would be a *human* Messiah or "Anointed One" yes, but not: the living "God made flesh." Yet the prophets, scribes, and Pharisees had been painstakingly combing Scripture for centuries, millennia actually, and they thought they had this "Messiah" all figured out....predictable and controllable.

He would be from the line of David, from Bethlehem. He would grow in knowledge, stature, and might. He would be anointed in the Temple like all the kings before him. He would defeat the invading oppressors of the day—Persians, Greeks, Romans. He would enforce a rigid adherence to the Law and thus bring peace to the people of Israel. He'd show the rest of the world, the non-Jews, the "non-people" that Israel is right and everyone else will be punished for the oppressions they had placed upon the people of Israel. Many of the Pharisees were waiting for just that...the God they could "predict and control."

But of course, Jesus, the incarnate God, knew that. He was far more than predicted and not at all controllable. He was not merely a king in the line of numerous other kings; he was God himself. He did not merely come to redeem Israel, but the whole world. He did not just vanquish Israel's enemy, Rome; he vanquished Death itself! He did not live in the glory and splendor of a palace; he lived and walked among the people. He did not curry the favor of the influential or placate the wealthy; he taught among the poor and empowered the powerless. He did not promote rigorous adherence to the Law; he rewrote the Law through the power of his love.

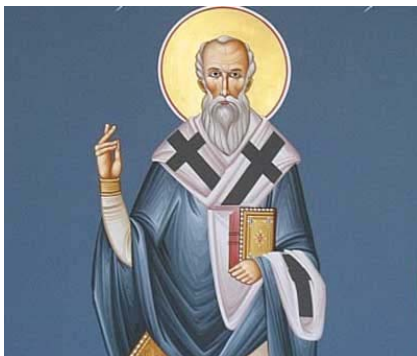
In the end, those who did not recognize Jesus for who he was, failed because they already thought they knew who he would be; they predicted and failed; they sought to control and they lost all. It's something we Christians need to remember too. Maybe that's why God gave us weather, to keep us humble, and to remind us that, after all, God is God, often unpredictable and always uncontrollable.

Instead of thinking, "Well, the weatherman got *this* one wrong!" Maybe we should take it as a Godly admonition and then thank God for reminding us of his awesome presence and for keeping us focused on who is *really* "in charge."

Pastor Lin +

For All the Saints...

Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr of Smyrna ~ February 23, 156



Polycarp is one of the oldest known martyrs of the church. Polycarp lived before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. and was known to have been a pupil of John, “*the disciple of our Lord,*” and had been appointed Bishop by the “*apostles in Asia.*” Some traditions also have Polycarp as one of the children that Jesus took into his lap when he bid them come [*Mark 10:13-16*].

Polycarp served as Bishop of Smyrna, just north of Ephesus in modern day Turkey, which along with Ephesus was one of the principal Roman cities in Roman Asia. The church has an authentic account of the martyrdom of Polycarp on February 23, which tells of Polycarp’s courageous witness in the Smyrna amphitheater. The Roman proconsul demanded that Polycarp “curse Christ.” Polycarp said, “Eighty-six years I have served him, and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” Although the magistrate was reluctant to kill the gentle and harmless bishop, the mob clamored that he be thrown to wild beasts along with the other Christians that day. Instead, the magistrate ordered Polycarp burned at the stake.

Before his ordeal, Polycarp is recorded as having looked up to heaven and prayed, “*Lord God Almighty,...I bless you that you have thought me worthy of this day and hour to be numbered among the martyrs and share in the cup of Christ,...may I be accepted before you today, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice...and for all things I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal heavenly high priest, Jesus Christ....now and for the ages to come.*”

The Church still reveres the treasured letters written by the faithful Polycarp to his Smyrna churches and to those in Philippi.

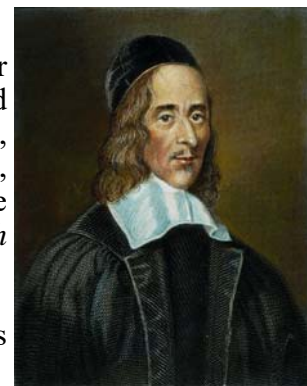
George Herbert, Priest ~ February 27, 1633

Born in 1593, to an ancient royal family, George Herbert served as the Public Orator of Cambridge before studying for Holy Orders. He was ordained in 1626 and served the parishes of Fugglestone and Bremerton. Herbert is best known for his prose work, *A Priest in the Temple: or The Country Parson*. His collection of poems, *The Temple*, was given to his friend, Nicholas Ferrar and published posthumously. Two of the poems are well known hymns and may be found in our current *Hymnal*: #592: “*Teach me, my God and King*” and #402/3: “*Let all the world in every corner sing.*”

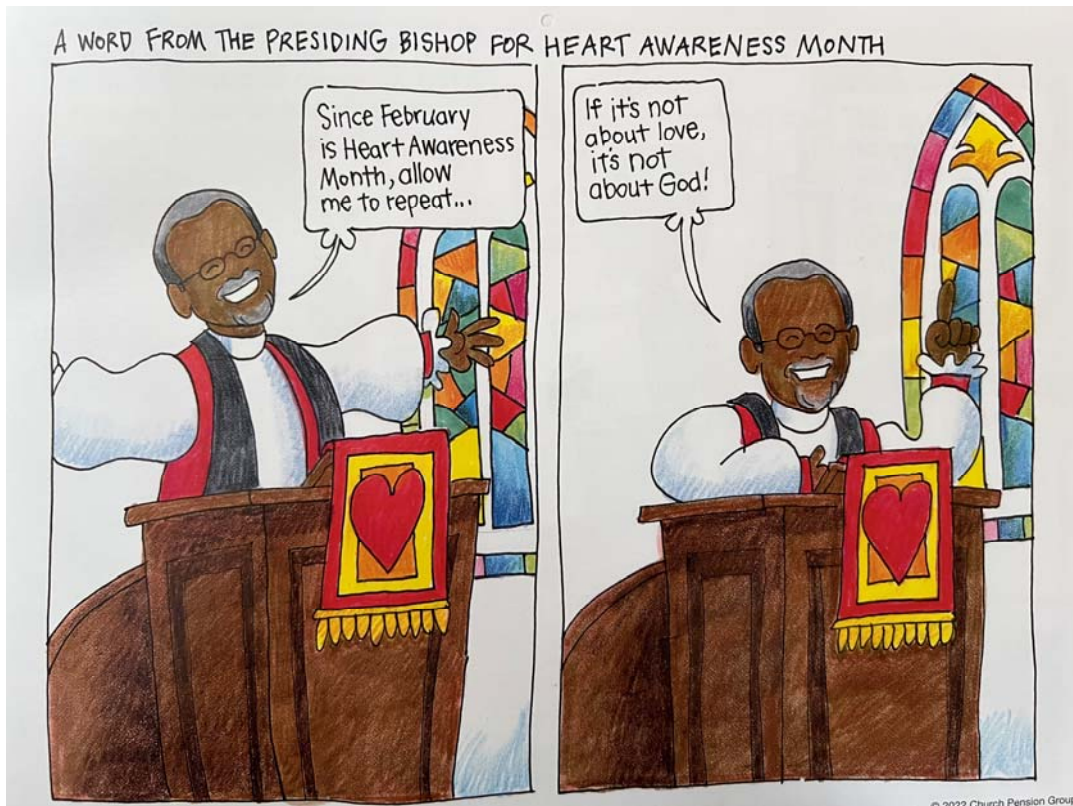
George Herbert continues to influence the Christian spiritual journey through his famous poem on prayer:

*Prayer, the Church’s banquet, Angel’s age,
God’s breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, the heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav’n and earth.*

Herbert’s words, “Nothing is little in God’s service,” have reminded Christians again and again that everything in daily life, small or great, maybe a means of serving and worshipping God.



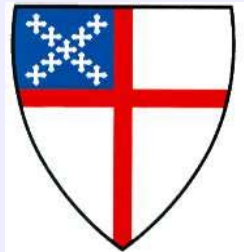
February Cartoon



MORE, “101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian”—

Reason # 36: “I love Anglicanism because the most stable seat, on rough ground, is a three-legged stool.” *The Rev. Selwyn Swift, St. Edmundsbury and Suffolk, Ipswich, Suffolk, England*

Reason # 44: “We promise to welcome you in Christ’s name. We will honor the gifts you bring. We will invite you into our community, or wish you well if you choose another path.” *Dorothy Isabel Crocker, Huron, Canada*



To everyone who so faithfully brings in *Pennies for Penny Sunday!* This past year the Youth Group Pennies were dedicated for “*NetsforLife*”®, an Episcopal Relief and Development project to provide life-saving malaria nets to equatorial families. Each net is large enough to safely shield and protect an entire family of ten people. **Thanks to your contributions, our Youth Group Penny Fund was able to purchase Malaria Nets for a record 32 families!**



Malaria and “NetsforLife”®

What is Malaria?

Malaria is a common but deadly disease caused by parasites. Humans contract malaria when a mosquito carrying the parasite bites them and injects the parasite into the bloodstream.

Who is most vulnerable to malaria?

Nearly one million people die from malaria each year, mostly children younger than five years old. Young children are most vulnerable because they have not built up any immunity to the disease, and without immunity, the infections tend to be more severe and life-threatening.

Pregnant women are also most at risk because their immune systems are compromised by their pregnancy. Moreover, infants born to women who had malaria during their pregnancies tend to be of low birth weight or premature, both of which decrease their chances of survival during their first years.

Where is *NetsforLife*® working?

NetsforLife® serves 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. As active and trusted members of local communities, the program has distributed over 11 million nets and trained over 82,000 malaria control agents.

What is unique about *NetsforLife*®?

The program collaborates with existing national malaria programs to mobilize, train, and educate volunteers in working together to eliminate the disease by instilling a “net culture”—defined as the community-wide understanding of the protective value of nets and the correct way to use and maintain them.

In addition to the distribution of nets, a main component of the initiative is education about malaria transmission and prevention. Communities learn about the importance of using mosquito nets and receive detailed knowledge about proper net use and maintenance.

Why are the nets effective against preventing Malaria and how long do the nets last?

Since most malaria-carrying mosquitoes bite at night, the simplest and most effective preventive technique is sleeping under an insecticide-treated bed net. An insecticide-treated net protects against malaria by repelling and killing malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

NetsforLife® only distributes long-lasting insecticide-treated nets approved by the World Health Organization along with the appropriate training and use of the nets. These “Long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLINs)” are infused with an insecticide that remains effective for up to 20 washes or up to three years. [Note: *NetsforLife*® are rated by their manufacturers for 5 years, however, *NetsforLife*® uses only 3 years as their “net effectiveness.” This is because net-effectiveness depends upon a variety of factors like temperature, intensity of the rainy season, the number of hand-washings in local water sources, the environment, and normal wear and tear, all of which contribute to decreasing the effectiveness of LLINs.

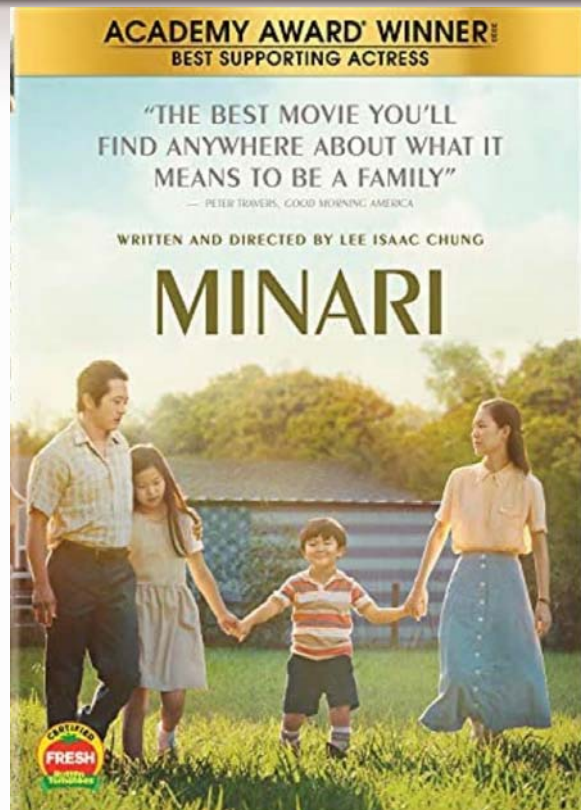
What does *NetsforLife*® do to replace nets when they wear out?

Net replacement is a critical piece to malaria control globally. *NetsforLife*® works with local partners to replace nets in communities to ensure the gains made in malaria prevention are maintained.

Thanks to Your “Pennies” this past year, we have directly impacted the lives and quality of life of at least 32 families.

Thank You!

NOW SHOWING



A tender and sweeping story about what roots us, *Minari* follows a Korean American family who moves to an Arkansas farm in search of their own American dream. Amidst the challenges of this new life in the strange and rugged Ozarks, they discover the undeniable resilience of family and what really makes a home. This film was nominated as one of the test ben files of 2020 by the American Film Institute and National Board of Review. It received three Screen Ac Guild Award nominations and 10 Critics' Choice Movie Award nominations. ~ *IMDB*

Friday, February 25th at 7pm in Robertson Hall

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



February 2022

St. Thomas Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>Chinese New Year</i> 	2 <i>The Presentation of our Lord</i> 	3	4	5
6 <i>The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany</i> Morning Prayer 8 am & 10:15 am	7	8		10	11	12
13 <i>The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany</i> Holy Eucharist 8 am & 10:15 am	14 	15	16	17	18	19
20 <i>The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany</i> Holy Eucharist 8 am & 10:15 am	21  <i>Office closed</i>	22	23	24	25 Movie night 7 pm 	26
27 <i>The Last Sunday after the Epiphany</i> Holy Eucharist 8 am & 10:15 am	28					



~Birthdays~

02/11 Sarah Soderbergh
02/14 G.W. Gray
02/15 Ginny Dulin
02/18 Sarah Likins
02/19 Sunithi Gnanadoss
02/20 Keith Frick



*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.*



Food Pantry

Special request for February is **canned fruit, canned peas, and toothpaste**. All food items and cash gifts are always welcome and appreciated. The clothes closet accepts clean, gently used clothing, towels, sheets, and blankets (no used underwear, please). You can drop off donations at the Love Outreach Food Pantry each Tuesday from 8:00-10:30 and on Wednesday from 8:00-12:00. 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:

Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury Michael, Presiding Bishop Susan, Jennifer, & Porter, bishops for this diocese

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

For the men and women in our armed forces serving our nation around the world.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation:

For: Terrell, Margaret, Harriet, Barbara, Ellen, Liz, Susie, William, Susan, and Earlene

Want to add something to The Builder? Contact Ann Wood at annwood304@gmail.com by February 22, 2020 with your information!

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

February 2022

