



THE CANTERBURY CROSS

September 2018

St. Thomas à Becket Episcopal Church, Morgantown, WV 26508

THE RECTOR'S CORNER: ON THE LESSER FEAST OF JOHN BUNYAN

On the one hand, I suppose you could say that a day commemorating the life and work of John Bunyan (August 29) on the liturgical calendar isn't all that strange. He was born and baptized in England in 1628. He was a prolific author, penning dozens of works on the Christian faith; most notably *The Pilgrim's Progress* which was an extremely popular, protestant version of Dante's *Inferno*. Bunyan's masterpiece is the recounting of a dream describing a Christian's journey through life, past Hell, and onto Heaven, which influenced countless writers including Dickens, Hawthorne, and Shaw to name a few.

On the other hand, I suppose you could say a commemoration of this man by the Anglican Church is rather strange. While he was a baptized member of the Church of England, in his adult life he was anything but a member in good standing. Bunyan was active in the *nonconformist* church movement. Eventually, he was arrested and imprisoned because he "devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service" and for holding "several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom." A crime which carried a three month sentence, for which he served 12 years due to his unwillingness to agree to forgo preaching upon his release.

Upon gaining his freedom he immediately applied for and received a license to preach, granted by a Church and State which had become more allowing of religious pluralism during those 12 years. Still, five years later, he spent another six months in prison, again for refusing to attend the parish church.

So why is a man who is criminally non-Anglican commemorated by the Anglican Church? *A mea culpa?* Perhaps. Because as a famous English Christian his legacy belongs to this tradition? Maybe. But as far as I'm concerned, it's because John Bunyan's work possessed something undeniable, even to those who disagreed with him: Divine Truth.

What Bunyan was able to do with his work was speak about God with zeal in a manner which made the hearts of people stir. While every church believes they are *right* when it comes to their beliefs on God and Truth, no church ought ever be so foolish to believe that God cannot and would not bless others with many gifts, Truth being one of them. This is something we ascribe to the work of the Holy Spirit and She doesn't discriminate. When one reveals Truth, when one gives glory to God through word and deed, when one manifests a part of the Divine Will in any way, this is God at work. And God can work through nonconformists, like John Bunyan, and Catholics, Baptists, Jews, Muslims, Deists, Agnostics, and Atheists. So, let us give thanks for John Bunyan, both for what he did and even more so for what He did, and let us always be open to see God at work through anyone.

In Christ,

Father Tony Setley

DEACONAL TO BEGIN A NEW ENDEAVOR

Beginning in September I will be drawn away from Sunday worship at St. Thomas à Becket at least once each month. Bishop Mike has asked me to serve as one of the leaders of a new diocesan venture, the West Virginia Iona School.

This program is designed to equip future leaders for our parishes. Specifically, the focus will be on those interested in becoming deacons. It is a three-year program and our first class is coming together for the initial gathering the weekend of September 7-9.

Following this first meeting, onsite sessions will be held during the second weekend of each month and will last from Friday evening to Sunday noon from September through June. I will continue with my duties at St. Thomas including regularly worshiping with you at other times.

ONE PROUD MAMA

~ BY AMANDA BOSTIAN ~

This summer, my son (age 5) was spending a week with his grandparents and they took him to an indoor bounce house facility. My son had played lots of games and received a prize with his hard-earned tickets. When he was taking a break from all the bouncing and playing to snack on refreshments (i.e. candy and soda), a boy who was, as the boy's dad said, "special" (i.e. intellectually disabled) took one of my son's candies and tried to drink his drink.

The boy then proceeded to grab my son's prize. Of course the boy's father redirected him away from my son, but it didn't take long for my son to think about what had happened. He told my mother-in-law that he wanted to give his prize to the "special" boy so he went over and handed it to the boy's dad. After my mother-in-law relayed this message, I had a grin on my face from ear to ear. I was one proud mama.

As I reflected on the story a little more, it reminded me of the many blessings that come from the gift of giving. God blesses us and our giving in ways often beyond our comprehension. This act from my child reminded me just how special God's blessings are.

SIGN UP TO MAKE, SERVE HABITAT LUNCH



Will it be one, two, or three? Whichever you choose, hungry house-building volunteers will be happy you signed up to provide a noon meal for them on **Saturday, Sept. 15th**. Volunteers are needed to **prepare the lunch from 10:30 to 11:30 am, as well as deliver and serve lunch from 11:30 to 1:00 pm**. There will be a carpool to the work site.

The lunch date is several days away. But planning is now underway, which includes recruiting parishioners to (1) provide cookies; (2) prepare sandwiches and pack other lunch items; (3) deliver and serve lunch.

The set of three sign-up sheets are again on the table in the Narthex, as they are at this time every year for St. Thomas to support Habitat for Humanity's Building on Faith Week. If you have questions or if you are interested in helping Habitat for Humanity in any way, please contact Kathy Fedan (intothewoods@frontiernet.net).

YOUTH GROUP AND SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP OUTREACH

Over the next few weeks the children of Sunday School will be doing some lessons to help them think about what pets need and how to take care of pets. The outreach for the rest of August and September will be pet supplies; this includes food, treats as well as litter and cleaning supplies like Clorox wipes and paper towels.

We hope the congregation will help with these efforts. Donations can be put in the cradle in the Sunday School room.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Fall Sunday School will begin **September 9th**. As we transition from summer Sunday School to fall, we will continue to need teachers and assistants.

A sign-up will be in the narthex and we hope parishioners will help until a new Sunday School Director is hired. Lessons will be provided as they have in the past.

YOUTH GROUP

The Youth Group will begin meeting Sundays during service beginning **September 16th**. The Youth Group is open to children 6th – 12th grade or those who completed confirmation classes.

The students who completed confirmation classes have been spending the summer participating in a variety of independent community service projects.

Over several Sundays in October they'll each present a 1-3 minute report to the congregation before October 21st. We hope, once confirmed, that the Youth Group will participate in group community service projects together every couple of months.

We will continue hosting several work days for Pahl Hill. Jeffrey Carver has removed several downed trees and has been cutting the wood so it can be dried. He hopes to create several benches and other things needed for the outdoor worship space.

Most of the work needed is gathering and cutting wood to clear the area and create stacks of wood for future camp fires. Stay tuned for more information.

WELCOME HOME SUNDAY: SHARE GREETINGS, FOOD ~ FROM YOUR VESTRY ~

We have designated **Sept. 9th** as Welcome Home Sunday. Besides kicking off a new season of Sunday School, book studies, outreach projects, Becket Arts, and other activities, we will recognize our newer members at a potluck **after the 10:30 a.m. service.**

This recognition is something we've traditionally done once a year. But, for a variety reasons, time has gotten away from us! And some parishioners pointed out this omission. So, we are now renewing and refreshing that tradition. The recognition part of our Welcome Home celebration will be very casual: no speeches, just a stand-up-and-be-recognized moment.

Everyone: Come and renew friendships. Also take the

opportunity to greet and introduce yourself to someone who is not new to the church but may be new to you.

So, all of us are invited to be part of the celebration on Sunday, Sept. 9th. And everyone is invited to bring a side dish or dessert to share. The meat--and other protein --will be provided.

LINDA'S HAVING HER CAKE AND EATING IT TOO

St. Thomas celebrated Linda Yost's service as Parish Administrator at the Coffee Hour on August 26th. It was a heartwarming and delicious event.

"I am truly grateful for St. Thomas and all the people in it," Linda said. "Thank you to everyone for your thoughtfulness."



St. Thomas Families LOVE Peterkin Camp and Conference Center by Angela Carver

Seven of our youth group and two of our Sunday School kids attended one or more of the camps at Peterkin this summer. Many have gone for five or more years. The week-long camps offer kids the opportunity to delve into the spirit through church services, crafts, games and socializing. Here are some quotes from our youth about Peterkin.

About Intermediate Camp (4th – 8th graders)

James said: "I love Peterkin, especially the elective classes and going on the hike to prayer hill. We spent a lot of time talking about Jesus in small groups."

Kate said: "Peterkin was really fun. We learned about the life of Moses, Ruth, and King David. Chapel was fun and I love the songs about things I can actually understand. Peterkin also had fun activities where I learned in small groups of my friends."

Samantha said: "Peterkin makes me feel joyful. I love the songs we sing at Compline. They make me feel peaceful. Peterkin is awesome."

Madelyn said: "I love meeting new friends and the counselors make it a safe and fun place to learn."

About Senior Camp (9th – 12th graders)

Anna said: "I made lots of new friends and I look forward to seeing old friends every year! This year, we focused our discussions on the Saints. I really enjoyed Porch Talk with Father Jay where we studied the Bible and had time to talk to him about our ideas and concerns. Senior Camp this year was my favorite time at Peterkin yet!"

The Claycomb Twins said: "Peterkin has been the greatest thing that has ever happened to us. That's all we need to say."

About Family Camp

Danny said: "I like the pool."

Alexander said: "I like the hike to the waterfall, seeing the frogs, singing songs, meeting friends, going to the pool, doing crafts, making the sheep . . . EVERYTHING!"

Melina said: "I loved meeting up with my Peterkin friends that I met the year before and catching up."

We encourage all families to experience Peterkin. There are so many offerings.
Check them all out at Peterkin.org



Our Worship Schedule

The Rev. Tony Setley, Interim Rector
The Rev. Al Prichard, Deacon



Sunday

8:00 a.m. (Rite I, spoken)

10:30 a.m. (Rite II, with music)

Nursery care and Sunday School with children's worship are offered during the 10:30 a.m. service.

Wednesday

Holy Eucharist, 12:00 noon in Chapel (check calendar)

Please contact us at

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