

Tidings

The Newsletter of St. Paul's Anglican Church

May 2018



St. Paul's Anglican Church

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A Message from Fr. Toms

We have been celebrating a joyful Eastertide at St. Paul's. The month of April began on Easter Day as we remembered the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and how he appeared to his disciples. Since that Sunday, we have been studying how the Lord continues to make himself known to us in the breaking of bread, as we have been delving deeper into the significance of table fellowship with Jesus.

During April, five of the ladies of our church attended a workshop at the Church of the Holy Communion in Dallas. The weekend was a spiritual retreat for our women as they joined the other ladies in Dallas for a time of worship, teaching, and fellowship.

For the first time since 1956, my birthday fell on Easter Day. I wish to express my thanks for the wonderful food, fellowship, and gifts that made my 65th birthday so special. It is a joy to serve people who are so warm and loving toward their minister.

The month of May will be filled with many opportunities for spiritual growth as we will commemorate Ascension Day, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. The Ascension reminds us that Jesus Christ has been exalted as Lord and ruler over heaven and earth. The Ascension also reminds of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In John 7:37-39, we read, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified). After Jesus ascended to where he was before, the Spirit was poured out.

Many Christians give little attention to the importance of the Ascension, but every step in the process of our redemption is necessary. The Incarnation saves us, but not by itself. The cross saves us, but not by itself. The Resurrection save us, but not by itself. The Ascension saves us, but not by itself. The Holy Spirit must be poured out to continue the work of redemption. When the Holy Spirit is poured out, those who believe in Christ are transformed into his image as his Spirit comes to dwell in us. The Holy Spirit, by a mighty miracle, gives us the ability to believe the truths of Holy Scripture. The Holy Spirit has been poured out, has given us spiritual life, and has given us faith to believe the truths of the gospel, especially the truth of the glorious ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the father, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

We will also have the opportunity in the month of May to observe the wonderful mystery of the Holy Trinity. No one can understand all the mysteries of the Trinity. In

the words of the Athanasian creed, in many ways, the Trinity is “incomprehensible,” but that doesn’t mean that the doctrine of the Trinity is false. There are many things about God that will always remain incomprehensible to human beings. One of our readings for Morning Prayer on Trinity Sunday is from Isaiah 6 which describes Isaiah seeing the Lord high and lifted up. The seraphim continually say, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” which, of course, is where we get the words for the Sanctus that we sing with cherubim, seraphim, and all the company of heaven every Sunday. We believe that Isaiah had a vision of the triune God, and that the word “Holy” is repeated three times in honor of the Triune God--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God in three persons. This will be our occupation in heaven--to praise the glory of the Triune God--for we find in the book of Revelation that all creation, things visible and invisible, sing this great hymn to the Trinity throughout all ages. In all our grappling with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, trying to understand this doctrine within the confines of Western rationalism and logic, we have failed to realize that the Trinity is not a theological dilemma to be explained, but a mystery to be lived and experienced. When we have a true sight of this mystery of the Holy Trinity, we will be like Isaiah: we will see God’s holiness, we will see our sinfulness, and at the same time, we will see that this glorious triune God, who is merciful to us in spite of our sin, forgives us, and invites us to live in fellowship with Him, within this incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity. Though the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery, it is a mystery that can be experienced, for we are in union with Christ, which allows us to participate in the wonderful fellowship of the Trinity.

A Prayer for Ascensiontide—O LORD, who can speak of Thy power, or show forth all Thy praise? Thou didst come down to earth, and remainedst in Heaven; Thou art gone up to Heaven, and yet abidest with us. Everywhere Thou art, and everywhere all marvellous. Neither separated from the Father by Thine Incarnation in the flesh, nor separated from man by Thine Ascension into Heaven. Hear, O merciful God, the prayers of Thy people ; and as Thou, by Thine Ascension, art glorified on high, so pour down upon us Thy grace on the earth. Amen. —*Richard Cresswell*

A Prayer for Pentecost--O GOD, who didst miraculously send down thy Holy Ghost; to supply the absence of thy Son, to comfort his desponding followers, and instruct them in all things necessary to their great work, the conversion of the world; grant, *we* humbly beseech thee, that the same Holy Spirit which filled them with flaming and unconquerable zeal, may descend into *our* hearts, exciting *our* love, *our* joy, *our* zeal; and enabling *us* to bring forth those fruits of grace which are the only evidence of his blessed presence with *us*; through *our* Lord Jesus Christ, who, with thee, in the unity of the same blessed Spirit, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen. —*John Henry Hobart*

A Prayer for Trinity Sunday--O ETERNAL *Father*, who, by the visible descent of the *Holy Spirit* on thy eternal and well-beloved *Son*, hast given thy Church a glorious display of the Trinity of persons in the adorable Godhead; grant that *we* may both in heart and voice, acknowledge this high and supernatural truth; and rejecting all the fallacious suggestions of *our* finite reason, humbly adore the glory of the eternal Trinity; till *we* come hereafter to thy blessed presence, to see the mystery revealed, O God, *our Father*, in thy own glorious face, through *our* Lord Jesus Christ, who, with thee, and the Holy Ghost,

liveth and reigneth in the unity of the divine Majesty, world without end. *Amen.* —*John Henry Hobart*

Important Events This Month

Women's Bible Study (Tuesday Evenings at 7:00 P.M.)

The Women's Bible Study is becoming one of the strongest activities of our church. At the present time, the ladies are studying *Table Fellowship with Jesus in the Gospel: Studies in the Gospel of St. Luke*, by Fr. Toms. The Women's Bible Study is not only a time of learning the Scriptures, but a means of enriching the fellowship of our church and sharing our prayer concerns. Come be a part of this growing ministry of our church.

A Quick Look at This Month's Calendar

May 1, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

May 8, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

May 15, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

May 22, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

May 29, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

Happy Birthday!

Larry Curtis

Patty Birkett

Vicki Rogers

Happy Anniversary

Fr. Toms and Bettyna

Les and Scot Hixon

Around the Parish

