

# *Tidings*

The Newsletter of St. Paul's Anglican Church

June 2018



## **St. Paul's Anglican Church**

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## *A Message from Fr. Toms*

May was a month of many celebrations at St. Paul's as we drew nearer to the Lord during the feasts of the Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. As we continue our study of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, these festivals increase our understanding of how God uses the worship of the Church to call people to himself through the power of the ascended Christ.

May was also a bittersweet month as we said farewell to two of our faithful members, Frank Leonard and Imerson Joao. While rejoice with them that they have received their degrees and are leaving Baton Rouge to begin new jobs in faraway places, will miss the faithful service they rendered to our church. Our prayers go with them, knowing that the Lord will continue to use them in their new areas of service.

We will be observing several festivals during the month of June. June 11<sup>th</sup> is the festival of St. Barnabas, the missionary companion of the Apostle Paul. Though his name was Jose, he was called Barnabas, which is translated, "Son of Encouragement." The word translated "encouragement" can be translated "encouragement," or "exhortation. As we go through the book of Acts we see what a helper, encourager, and advocate, Barnabas really was. The Aramaic equivalent for this title may be "Son of Refreshment." When Barnabas was with people, he refreshed them. Wouldn't it be great if the surname of every single person in this church, starting with me, was "Encouragement." We are told that the apostles gave him that name. Whenever they thought of Barnabas, they thought—encouragement. What is the name that comes to people's mind when they think of you? If the apostles wanted to pick a name to go with your name, what would they pick? How we need a church full of encouragers! We have quite enough critics. We have quite enough complainers. We have quite enough people who drag us down and make us feel blue. But where are all the encouragers? Let us realize what a great need there is for encouragers in this world. The world is possessed more and more by the critical, the cynical, and the skeptical. Let us be like Barnabas, that our whole lives could be summed up in that we were sons and daughters of encouragement.

June 24<sup>th</sup> is the feast day of St. John the Baptist. People often ask, "When is a person filled with the Holy Spirit." The answer of our Prayer Book is that a person receives the Holy Spirit at the time of baptism. In the baptismal service, we pray, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this Child (thy Servant), that *he* may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation." These words are in agreement with what the Apostle Peter said on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). It is the teaching of our church that our children do receive the Holy Spirit at the time of baptism.

Some groups object to this teaching, saying that child cannot receive the Holy Spirit until they have repented and believed the gospel. According to these groups, a person must have reached a certain age, an age when they can exercise somewhat of an adult

understanding of the gospel before they can really believe. After they have really believed for themselves, then they receive the Holy Spirit. But is that always the case? On the feast of St. John the Baptist, we celebrate the birth and ministry of the one who came before our Lord Jesus Christ to prepare his way. When did John the Baptist receive the Holy Spirit? In Luke 1:15, the angel Gabriel told Zacharias, "For he [John the Baptist] shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." Was John exercising a cognizant repentance and faith while in the womb of his mother? Of course not. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit filled John the Baptist from the time he was in his mother's womb, and that condition of being filled with the Holy Spirit continued throughout his life. John always demonstrated in his life that he was someone who was governed and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

How do we explain this fact that John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb? We can't explain it. It is something that is beyond our understanding. But that John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb becomes obvious even when he is in the womb. Remember Mary, who was carrying Jesus in her womb, visited Elisabeth, who was carrying John. When Elisabeth and Mary meet, Elisabeth exclaims, "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:44). How do we explain the happy fetus leaping for joy? Something is happening here that is beyond what we can explain through various logical arguments. It is interesting that as one reads the various commentaries on this verse, there are all kinds of arguments concerning whether John was capable of propositional religious knowledge even in the womb. Isn't it strange that we think that the only God works is through propositional religious knowledge, logical facts and arguments? We seem to think that if John had a religious experience in the womb, then he had to be capable of logical thought and receive propositional truth. Why is it so difficult for us to believe that God was at work in the soul of this child long before he had the ability to understand or articulate any great truths? In some mysterious way, John the Baptist knew that he was in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and he leaped for joy. If it was possible for John the Baptist to be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, why do we think it impossible that our children could be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time of their baptism? It is our duty as Christian parents to believe that the Holy Spirit has been granted to our children in baptism, and we are to nurture our children so that they might know how to live in obedience to the Spirit of God, teaching them not to grieve, resist, or quench the Holy Spirit who was given to them in baptism. Look upon your children as having received the Holy Spirit, and see it as your duty to work in conjunction with the Spirit of God to see to it that your children mature in spiritual things, knowing the word of God and how to worship. Who knows, perhaps your children might grow up to always be sensitive and obedient to the Spirit of God. Perhaps your children, like John the Baptist, might be great in the sight of the Lord, turning many of God's people to the Lord their God. Perhaps they will be instrumental in turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to the fathers.

June 29<sup>th</sup> is the feast day of St. Peter the Apostle. When Jesus asked his disciples, "Whom do ye say that I am?" The famous reply of the Apostle Peter was, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Of all the disciples, I suppose that Peter is the one in

which we see ourselves. We see a man who spoke when he wasn't supposed to speak, who doubted when he should have had faith, who said things he shouldn't have said, who acted hypocritically on occasions, and who even denied his Lord. The Apostle Peter is a wonderful reminder to us all of how God can take weak and stumbling people, and turn them into rocks. When Peter confessed that Christ was the Son of the living God, Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon bar-Jonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." If we have confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, it is because God revealed that great truth to us. Let us bless the name of God for having revealed to us his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

**A Prayer for the Feast of St. Barnabas—** O LORD God Almighty, who has built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, under Christ the head corner-stone; and didst endue thy holy Apostle Barnabas with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost; leave us not destitute, *we* humbly beseech thee, of thy manifold gifts and talents, nor yet of grace to make a right use of them always, to thy honour and glory, through Jesus Christ thy Son *our* Lord. Amen. —*Bishop John Henry Hobart*

**A Prayer for the Feast of St. John the Baptist—** O GOD, whose gracious providence calls *us* this day to celebrate the nativity of John the Baptist; grant, *we* beseech thee, that as *we* now fulfil the prophecy of thy holy angel, by rejoicing in the nativity of this great forerunner of thy Son, so *we* may improve both *ourselves* and others, by imitating his life; and may endeavour to learn those excellent lessons which he exhibited of mortification, humility, self-denial, zeal for justice, courage in defending the truth, and generous activity in doing good; through *our* Lord Jesus Christ, who, with thee and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth, ever, one God, world without end. Amen. —*Bishop John Henry Hobart*

**A Prayer for the Feast of St. Peter--** O ALMIGHTY God, the Saviour of all those who trust in thee; may the example of thy holy Apostle, St. Peter, teach *us* not to expose *ourselves* to temptation, or to trust to *our* own strength. Let us ever acknowledge that *our* help standeth in thee, O Lord, who made heaven and earth; in the powerful intercession of the blessed Jesus, *our* advocate with the Father; in the comfortable assistance of thy Holy Spirit, whereby *we* are sealed to the day of redemption. And grant that, while we are watchful over our heart and ways, *we* may constantly rely on the succours of thy powerful grace; that thus neither the pleasures of life, nor the fear of death, may ever prevail on *us* to quit the way of thy commandments; but that *we* may always abound in the work of the Lord, looking for the glorious recompense of reward, through Jesus Christ *our* Lord and Redeemer. Amen. —*Bishop John Henry Hobart*

## *Important Events This Month*

### *Women's Summer Book Read (Tuesday Evenings at 7:00 P.M.)*

During the Summer months, the ladies will take a break from their usual form of study and discuss the book, *The Keeper of Lost Things*, a novel by Ruth Hogan. The ladies will continue to meet on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 P.M. for this discussion.

## *A Quick Look at This Month's Calendar*

**June 12, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Book Study**

**June 19, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Book Study**

**June 26, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Book Study**

## *Happy Birthday!*

Julia Leonard

Sophia Achord

Imerson Joao

# *Around the Parish*

