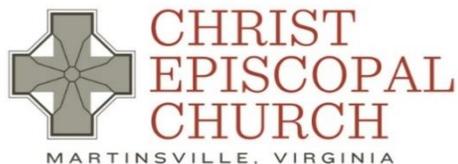
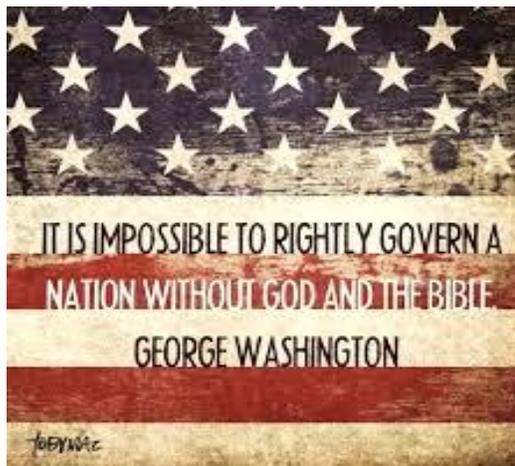


July 2024



321 E. Church Street
Martinsville, VA 24112
276-632-2896
www.christchurchmvl.org



We are a community of faith striving to love God fully and our neighbors as ourselves.

Dear members and friends of Christ Church,

Adding to our usual calendar of activities, I and several of you have begun studying the history of the early Church. Beyond the usual fascination of learning about the past, the early Church feels like a particularly relevant period to consider when reflecting on the challenges of the present. From the late First Century until the issuing of the Edict of Milan in 313, Jesus' followers in the Roman Empire lived under the threat of persecution; their religion (or, more specifically, their refusal to compromise their faith in one God by participating in sacrifices to Roman gods and emperors) was unlawful, and clinging to it publicly could result in ostracism, loss of one's job or property, arrest, and/or death. But as the Fourth Century went along, it became more and more socially and legally advantageous to join the Church, and before the end of the century, Christianity was the only legal religion in the Empire and pagans were subject to persecution, beginning more than a millennium and a half in which the Christian religion was the dominant cultural force in Western Europe, Britain, and eventually America.

Now, however, that Christian hegemony is broken; in some ways, the Twenty-first Century feels like the Fourth in reverse. Where it was once assumed that everyone was some manner of Christian (and not belonging to a congregation would hurt your standing), now there are increasingly few social benefits to Christianity, and in some settings even disadvantages (non-Christians assuming, sometimes correctly, that Christians are less educated or less willing to play nice with others).

Studying the early Church may thus help us to imagine how the Church today could survive and thrive under current pressures. For example, two of the theories about how the early Church grew (besides the activity of the Holy Spirit) are that Christians had larger families than their pagan counterparts and that Christians attracted many converts among the urban poor because they often nursed their neighbors in times of plague. Today, some churches have sought to reverse the decline by encouraging their married couples to have as many children as biologically possible or by finding situations that are unaddressed by government or other secular services and personally ministering to folks in those situations.

All of which is to say that studying the history of the early Church is more than just an exercise in curiosity; by considering the activity of the Holy Spirit in the past, we might better discern how she is at work in the present. All of you are invited to join us on July 10, when (after beginning with an overview last month) we will embark on our first in-depth session.

- Fr. John

A prayer for Christ Church in discernment

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family of Christ Church. Send your Holy Spirit to speak through us, that we may discern your will and be the community of faith you call us to be, striving to love you fully and our neighbors as ourselves. Guide our conversations, grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**The church office will be closed on Thursday, July 4th,
in observance of Independence Day.**

Wednesday Eucharist

On Wednesdays, we celebrate Holy Eucharist at Noon in the Chapel (enter via the glass Undercroft door at the back of the church building). These brief (thirty minutes) spoken services commemorate the saint of the day from the Episcopal calendar of Lesser Feasts and Fasts and are perfect for those who want to attend a service but are unable to come on Sunday mornings or who want an additional gathering for corporate prayer to help them through the week. Barring any unexpected developments, we will worship every **Wednesday in July (3, 10, 17, 24, and 31)**.

Kings Grant Eucharist

Because of Independence Day, Fr. John will celebrate the Eucharist in the chapel at Kings Grant at **1:30 pm on Wednesday, July 3**. In August, he will resume the regularly scheduled first Thursday of the month (August 1).

History of the Early Church

On **Wednesday, July 10 at 10:30 am in the Undercroft** (attendees are welcome and encouraged to stick around for Eucharist in the Chapel at Noon), we will be considering The Way Not Taken, reflecting on why and how the first-century followers of Jesus became a separate religion rather than a school or sect within Judaism. There's no assigned 'homework,' but if you're interested in reflecting ahead of time, you might acquaint yourself with the early chapters of Acts and, in looking at Peter's sermons in 2, 3, 4, and 10, as well as Stephen's sermon in 7 and Gamaliel's argument in 5, consider how those speakers understand Jesus' followers as something distinct from and yet still within Judaism.

Public Theology

Public Theology meets on **Wednesday, July 10**, at Mountain Valley Brewing (4220 Mountain Valley Rd, Axton). We begin with socializing and food around 6:00, with the discussion going from 7:00 to 8:00.

Summer Sundays

Continuing a summer tradition, we will have fellowship time with lemonade and cookies on the patio (or in the undercroft if it's raining) after the 10:30 service from **June 2 through August 25**; if you are willing to help bring beverages and treats or set up and clean up, please sign up at

<https://christchurchmvl.org/volunteering.cfm?ID=318>.

Volunteers are needed as follows.

July 14 (1)

July 28 (2)

Aug. 4 (1)

Aug. 11 (1)

Aug. 18 (2)

Aug. 25 (2)

Loaves & Fishes – July 31, 2024

Community members are invited to this free meal in our Undercroft from **5:00-6:00 p.m.** Spread the Word!

We need volunteers to help prepare, serve, clean up, and to send desserts, fruit, and items listed below. Please sign up on the following link [Christ Episcopal Church - Martinsville, Virginia \(christchurchmvl.org\)](http://christchurchmvl.org) to help or to bring something. Donations may be brought to the Office or Undercroft in the days leading up to each meal. We are serving dine-in only, with leftovers distributed as takeout only at the end of the meal.

Additional needed items include individually wrapped snacks, hygiene items (toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant), and household items (dish and laundry detergent - small bottles) to be handed out to the L&F attendees.

Thank you for being so supportive! Andy & Tara Williams and the L&F Team

SAVE THE DATE

The Dan Prince and Gene Medley Memorial Oyster Roast
is scheduled for Friday, November 1, 2024, at 6:00 pm.
Details to follow.

Pastoral Care Teams - Volunteers

We need more volunteers for the Pastoral Care Committee. These groups set up, clean up, and organize receptions for funerals, baptisms, confirmations, and when Bishop Mark comes. **We have one opening in June/December.** Everybody serves two months. We also need substitutes if the people scheduled for those months are unavailable. Contact Deborah to volunteer and for which month group at 276-632-2896 or office@christchurchmvl.org. Thank you in advance for volunteering!

Grace Network - Our Grace Network Assignments for July - September: Mac n Cheese. For July: toilet paper, feminine products, deodorant, and hygiene items. As a Church family, we have committed to helping Grace Network with stocking their food pantry for those in need. Please remember to pick up our assigned item the next time you visit the grocery store. You can bring your items to the Church office OR put them in the little red wagon in the Narthex.

Grace's reliance on your contributions is critical in helping those struggling in our community. Especially now with the state of the economy, people are hurting more than ever. We are consistently seeing about a 20% increase in food needs for our pantry. We are so blessed by each of your congregations and we are grateful for this chosen mission. God bless you all!
Blessings, Tracy

Prayer List

Every week during the Prayers of the People, we pray for the sick, injured, and those otherwise in need of our prayers; included is the list of (first) names of members of Christ Church for whom prayers have been requested and folks for whom members have requested prayers. To clear up confusion and provide more information for those who pray for the list during their daily prayers, we include the annotated prayer list in our Friday email (along with the bulletin and announcements). When you send a prayer request to Deborah or Fr. John, please let us know how much or little you would like shared with the congregation.

Let Deborah or Fr. John know if anyone needs to be added or removed from the list.

Prayer List

Sue (Rosser)

Julia (Hall)

Betty (Budde) - continuing treatment for multiple myeloma

Nathan (Jane Thomasson's nephew)

Tom (Howland)

Linda (Isley)

Betsy (Smith)

Mary Ruth (Reynolds)

Thomas (son of Lynn and Phil Gardner)

Nancy

Mark Gauldin

Pat (a friend of Natalie Coleman)

Patty Ann

Jane (Martin) – recovering from a compression fracture in her back

Estelle (a friend of Deborah Scarce)

Morgan (Holland)

Lee (requested by Tom Webster)

Server Schedule for July

Team #2 – Page Beeler, Frankie Smith, Janice Cain, Ruth Foley, Rita Hodges, Michael Hodges, Valerie Payne

July 7 – Pete Scouras, reader; Bob Bushnell, Rives Coleman, chalicers; Andy Quirk, Rebin Titus, Pete Scouras, ushers; Tyler Johnson, acolyte; Andy Williams, camera operator; Betty Budde, Natalie Coleman, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

July 14 – Hank Long, reader; Jay Dickens, Tom Webster, chalicers; Ben Lewis, Dan Cahill, Michael Hodges, ushers; Andy Williams, camera operator; Betty Budde, Natalie Coleman, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

July 21 – Will Zimmer, reader; Natalie Coleman, John Swezey, chalicers; Rives Coleman, Gus Barber, John Swezey, ushers; Andy Williams, camera operator; Betty Budde, Natalie Coleman, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.

July 28 – Susan Critz, reader; Hank Long, Beverly Lyle, chalicers; Ben Beeler, Kyle Trent, Bruce Mazurek, ushers; Andy Williams, camera operator; Betty Budde, Natalie Coleman, counters; Emily Williams, nursery.