

NEWSLETTER



Saying Grace

There is confusion about (and much disdain for) Christianity, a direct result of the practices and statements of those who profess it that contradict the core teachings of scripture and the tradition. This is a problem that seems urgent for our time but in truth has troubled the Church since the beginning. The biblical record, especially Saint Paul's letters to the church (eg. Corinthians and Galatians) indicate the presence of sharp division. In fact, Paul spends much of his energy proclaiming the message of God's grace in Jesus Christ that overturns all the ways of the world. In the early letters to Corinthians he speaks clearly about the power of the powerless, and the wisdom of the weak. He does the same in his letter to the Romans in chapter 14. This is the vision of the Church that echoes most faithfully the actual practice and teachings of Jesus.

As many of you know, I continue to find guidance in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's clarity about the heart of Christian practice. Such clarity might help remove any confusion about true and false claims to the religion.

"Christian love and help for the weak mean the bowing of the strong before the weak, of the healthy before the suffering, of the mighty before the

exploited. The Christian relationship of the strong to the weak is that the strong should always look up to the weak, and never look down on them. Weakness is holy. Therefore, we give ourselves to the weak. In the eyes of Christ, weakness is not the imperfect compared to the perfect; rather, strength is the imperfect, and weakness the perfect. The weak do not have to serve the strong, but the strong the weak -- and not out of charity, but out of concern and respect. It is not the mighty who are right, for ultimately the weak are always right. Thus Christianity means a revaluation of all human values and the thus the establishment of a new order of values in light of Christ. " [Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1935 The Collected Works.]

I remain hopeful that our congregation will continue to be a witness to Jesus Christ in the world and pursue the things that make for peace and justice.

In October we will be blessed to have Colby King preaching. Mr. King has been a faithful Christian witness in his professional life as an award-winning journalist. I hope you will join us in welcoming him. (See below for more information.)

Pastor Roy



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

What does the Bible and the church have to say about what is going on in our world and in our nation today? We are fortunate to have Dr. Bill May lead conversations on "Testing the National Covenant: Fears & Appetites in American Politics" for our adult education for September and October. Dr. May will weave in insights from his book of that name and from scripture and the conversation will center on the Bible's response to the world's tendency to fear.

YOUTH GROUP KICKS OFF SEPTEMBER 8

If you are new to Saint Mark or have a rising 6th grader, you are invited to join the Saint Mark youth group! We have a weekly email with our youth group activities where you can get all the info you need and RSVP for our gatherings. If you want to be included on that email, please email our YG communications coordinator Barb Welsh at yg.smpc@gmail.com.



SEPTEMBER + OCTOBER CALENDAR OF YOUTH GROUP EVENTS

September

Sept. 8- Kick off party: You Belong Here

*Sept. 15- Games + Discussion night
(MS: 5-6, dinner 6-6:30, HS: 6:30-7:30)

MS: Who are you?

HS: Enneagram: What's your number?

*Sept. 22- Saint Mark Shelter Meals, make food and bag lunches, 12-2

*Sept. 29- Games + Discussion night
(MS: 5-6, dinner 6-6:30, HS: 6:30-7:30)

MS: What does it mean to be a child of God?

HS: Enneagram: What does your number mean?

October

Oct. 6- Where do we find God's love in the natural world? Hiking + picnic after church.

*Oct. 13- Finding Joy in God: Game night with Dave P?

Oct. 20- Family Sabbath, no youth group

*Oct. 27- Finding Joy in Fellowship with each other: Pumpkin Carving, both groups, 5-7 pm



BIG SING WITH JOHN BELL, HYMN WRITER & SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADER

Explore songs familiar and unfamiliar from around the world! What we sing shapes what we believe. For example, the image of Jesus as 'gentle, meek and mild' is a hangover from Victorian hymns. But song can tell the full story of Jesus—and inspire our faith and our work for social justice. The Big Sing is meant for everybody, especially those who were told in their early days that they 'couldn't hold a tune.' A great opportunity to feed your soul and learn from this energetic, enthusiastic faith leader! John Bell, a minister in the Church of Scotland and a resource worker for the Iona Community, works throughout the world on liturgy, spirituality and social justice. His music has been translated and published across the globe. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Hymn Society of the USA and Canada, and last year was awarded the Thomas Cranmer Medal by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Wednesday, Oct. 2, 7 – 9pm

Refreshments available at 6:30 pm at
The New York Avenue Presbyterian
Church

Sponsored by the McClendon Scholar
in Residence Program



ADVENTURES OF FLAT JESUS

Saint Markers took Flat Jesus and the church with them on their summer adventures. It was a great way to stay connected to one another and to Christ all summer long!



THE ART OF LIVING + THE ART OF DYING CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

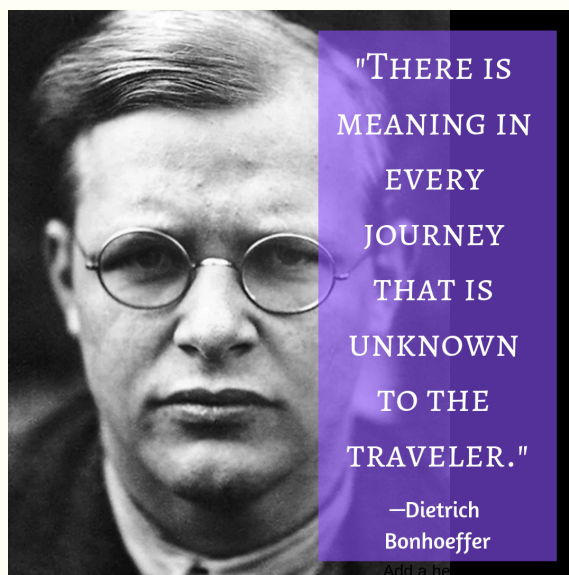
Pastor Roy Howard will be leading a pastoral conversation on the Art of Living Well and the Art of Dying Well. Older and younger people are invited; those who are preparing for the end-of-life concerns as well as those who are caring for parents or spouses facing the same. We are all seeking to live well.

What are your questions about end-of-life that you would like to ask and discuss? Join the conversation with those who are likely share your concerns.

Hosted by Betty and Jerry Lowrie at their Fox Hill residence in Bethesda from 3-4:30pm Sunday, October 13th and Sunday, October 20th.

Contact Pastor Roy to attend and for questions:

pastor@saintmarkpresby.org



BONHOEFFER EVENT RESCHEDULED

We're happy we've been able to reschedule the remarkable opportunity to experience Dietrich Bonhoeffer - pastor, theologian, and member of the German resistance against the Nazis - as he is brought to life onstage by Al Staggs. Bonhoeffer remains an important voice and witness for our time. We'll join him in his prison cell and listen to his struggles with evil, injustice, and God, as well as his passion for life. Share with your friends and colleagues. Invite your neighbors, particularly those who may want to know about the Christian witness during political unrest.

Saturday, October 12, 2019 at 7pm at Saint Mark. Link for tickets forthcoming.



SPECIAL GUEST IN THE PULPIT – WORLD WIDE COMMUNION SUNDAY – OCTOBER 6

Colbert I. “Colby” King who writes a column—sometimes about D.C., sometimes about politics—in the Washington Post will be our guest in the pulpit for World Wide Communion Sunday. He is a voice for justice and against racism. He was previously a guest of Saint Mark in our Faith in Public Life Series and spoke eloquently of his own background, including how deeply the Christian faith has influenced his life and writing. He and his wife are active members of St. Columba Episcopal Church in Washington DC.

In 2003, he won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary “for his against-the-grain columns that speak to people in power with ferocity and wisdom.” King joined the Post’s editorial board in 1990 and served as deputy editorial page editor from 2000 to 2007. Earlier in his career, he was an executive vice president of Riggs National Bank, U.S. executive director of the World Bank, a deputy assistant secretary at the Treasury Department, Democratic staff director of the Senate’s District of Columbia Committee, a State Department diplomat stationed at



the U.S. embassy in Bonn and a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Adjutant General’s Corps. King grew up in Washington and attended Howard University. He is married to Gwendolyn Stewart King and has three adult sons. We will share a celebratory brunch with a global focus following worship.