



# THE LION'S MARK

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR SAINT MARK'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

A COMMUNITY THAT GATHERS IN FAITH, SERVES IN LOVE, AND PROCLAIMS HOPE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

## THE RESURRECTION HASN'T HAPPENED

— FATHER SEAN MULLEN —

Did a man named Jesus, who claimed to be the Son of God, rise miraculously from the dead once a long time ago? Skeptics of faith argue that the story of Jesus' resurrection is built on shaky historical grounds and therefore only fools would believe such a thing. Where, for instance, is the archeological evidence for the Resurrection? Where exactly is the empty tomb? Where are the grave clothes that were left behind? Where is a patch of scorched earth from which Jesus launched his Ascension? Where is the proof? These questions are troubling to some believers or would-be believers, and less so to others. I take it for granted that people will and should ask these questions, and I want to re-phrase the question I started with: Has the Resurrection happened?

A great many people today assume that the answer is, obviously, no. Anyone can see what a vestige from another age the idea of the Resurrection is. Modern, thinking, enlightened people do not rely on faith, since faith (to this way of thinking) relies on the refutation of all the other accepted truths that a thinking person does rely on: reason, science, math, etc. So obviously Jesus has not been raised from dead.

Put aside the question of whether or not believing the story of Jesus does actually require a suspension of disbelief (I would say it does not). Let me repeat the question: has the Resurrection happened? Phrased this way I'm willing to join the skeptics in their response: No, the Resurrection has not happened. But by this I mean something very different from those who suppose the story of the risen Christ is little more than a fairy tale. I mean that the Resurrection has not happened because the Resurrection is still happening, and this is why we gather to rejoice in it and to participate in it day by day, not just once a year!

If we think of the Resurrection as a discrete act of Jesus that happened sometime between a Friday afternoon and a Sunday morning, then it becomes easy for us to think of it (without even meaning to) as a sort of really good magic trick (How did he do that?) And if we think of the Resurrection as an act of God that is

fixed in time, then the Church might not be much more than a scratched record that keeps skipping back to the same spot year after year to sing the alleluias and start the whole thing all over again. If the Resurrection has already happened.

But if the Resurrection hasn't happened, and is still happening, then something altogether different is taking place whenever we gather to give thanks for the risen life we share with Jesus. If the Resurrection is still happening then we are part of the living community of the rising Christ; we are being changed by Christ as he is changing the world; and new life is being poured into the world by God's grace even now.

The Resurrection is happening because what God accomplishes in a moment he gives to his people over centuries. Jesus is conquering the death that he has already conquered. What he has done once for all is still being unfolded so that we may wear his new life too – we are growing into that new life, even as he is altering it to fit us better. One clue to all this is that Jesus declared that “it is finished” before he had even breathed his last breath, before he had been put in the tomb, before his mysterious work of resurrection had begun in our sight. We tend to think there are steps that Jesus follows to accomplish his work (first, get arrested;

second, get beaten up; third get crucified, dead, and buried; fourth, harrow hell; fifth, rise from the dead; etc.), as if Jesus was baking a cake, and had to follow the recipe. But Christ's salvation of our lives was accomplished before we even knew it was beginning.

The saving work of God in the beaten, dead, and resurrected person of his Son is revealed to us in the timeline of the story of his Passion, death, and resurrection, but that saving work neither begun nor ended with the beginning and ending of the story, just as Jesus' life did not begin and Christmas and end on Good Friday. God has been saving his people for all eternity, just as he has been creating us for eternity. The life of Jesus is God's life translated into our time-bound, flesh-bound, earth-bound terms for our benefit, to give us



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# 10:00 FORUM

Join us for coffee and conversation at the Sunday Forum. We have a stimulating range of topics after Easter, and we are looking forward to hearing your thoughts and your questions.

— MOTHER NORA JOHNSON

**APRIL 3: POEMS FOR EASTERTIDE.** Join Mother Nora Johnson for poetry of the season. After a Lent full of reading George Herbert, will we have room for one more of his poems? Come and see.

**APRIL 10: FAITH AND AGING.** Roy Clouser, parishioner and emeritus professor of philosophy, will talk about how faith may change as we get older, and how aging changes our relationship with God. What changes and what doesn't? Don't miss this powerful discussion.

**APRIL 17: BEFORE I BECAME AN EPISCOPALIAN.** Mother Nora Johnson will lead a discussion about issues that Christians face as they change denominations. Did you belong to a different Christian tradition before you came to Saint Mark's? Come hear how your fellow parishioners have made that transition and what that journey might be adding to your faith.

**APRIL 24: BELIEVING IN GOD AFTER THE HOLOCAUST.** Ellen Charry, parishioner and professor of systematic theology at Princeton Seminary, will talk to us about how the Holocaust changed belief in God. Judaism and Christianity responded differently, but both were powerfully shaped by the violence and suffering of this period in history. Join us for an important look at how faith responds to experience.



**COMING IN MAY:** Join Father David for a series of presentations drawing on his great breadth of experience as a leader in Anglo-Catholic worship, most notably as rector of Christ Church, New Haven, Conn. and the Church of the Ascension, Chicago. Watch the

weekly bulletin for topics and dates. We are truly fortunate to have Father Cobb with us during Father Mullen's sabbatical, and grateful for his generosity in leading the Forum while he is here.



# THE 16TH BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA



## WELCOME THE REV. CANON DANIEL GUTIERREZ TO BE THE 16TH BISHOP DIOCESAN

On Saturday, March 12, the Diocesan Convention called the Rev. Canon Daniel Gutierrez to be the 16th Bishop Diocesan. He was elected on the fourth ballot, with 133 votes in the clergy order (of 194 clergy voting) and 100 votes in the lay order (of 126 parishes voting). Pending consents from a majority of bishops and dioceses in The

Episcopal Church, the bishop-elect will be ordained by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry at New Covenant Church, Germantown on Saturday, July 16. More details about the service will be released in the coming months. Father Gutierrez currently serves in Albuquerque, N.M. as Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of the Rio Grande.

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Bishop Clifton Daniel's final episcopal visit to Saint Mark's will be on Monday, April 25, the Feast of Saint Mark. A diocesan celebration of his ministry is planned for Saturday, April 30 at 4 p.m. at the Church of the Good Samaritan, Paoli.



## Resurrection

access to that life, and to show us the truth that is so easily obscured by the reality of our sinfulness and the powers of evil that rebel against the love of God.

It is an entirely typical human trait to diminish and dismiss that which we do not understand. The smarter we have become, the harder it has become for us to acknowledge that there remains much we do not know and cannot know. Older generations were comfortable in ceding this terrain to God, but our current generations are less humble, more self-confident.

But the increase of knowledge is not always accompanied by an increase in wisdom. Humility inhabits wisdom; and wisdom allows for the acceptance of things we do not know. Wisdom bids us sit in silence for a time in the mysterious Presence of the living God, before lifting our voices to worship, not to explain. Wisdom allows herself to be guided by love. The church at her best, seeks both knowledge and wisdom. It takes very little knowledge, but a fair measure of wisdom to embrace the love of a Savior whose resurrection is still happening.

The Good News is that if the Resurrection is still happening then Jesus has not passed you or me by! And we have not failed at our attempt to allow Jesus to be resurrected in our lives, even if we failed at keeping our Lenten disciplines. The Resurrection is happening – and it's happening to you and to me. Jesus is rising from the dead: from all that's dead in us. It remains for us to see what God has already accomplished and is still accomplishing. But every Easter God makes it especially obvious that he is trying to show us something that is Good News for us and for all humanity. As we journey through Eastertide, I hope you will be with us at Saint Mark's, but wherever you are I hope you will see again that the Resurrection is happening, and all you have to do is come and see!

# FAMILY FUN IN THE GARDEN

It's time, once again, for our annual Saint Mark's Easter Egg Hunt. On Easter morning, bring your brightest, biggest Easter basket and meet us at 10 a.m. by the garden gate. There will be plenty of eggs for all (and more M&M's than we can possibly eat). Our Easter Egg Hunt is a wonderful event for inviting someone new. We hope that it will be a celebration not just for Saint Mark's but for the city, so please do bring a friend or neighbor along.



It's hard to imagine how our families could have more fun in the garden than our annual Easter Egg Hunt, but on Saturday, April 16, we are going to try. On what will surely be a beautiful spring day, we will hold our first ever Family Garden Work Day. Come in the morning for our 10 a.m. Mass, wear your grubbier work clothes, and be prepared to dig in the

dirt. Libby Espey will have fun activities planned for even our youngest disciples that will not only help us to maintain our gorgeous gardens but will also help our children to feel what it is to serve their church community and their city in God's name. All families with children are welcome. For more information, please contact Mother Takacs at [etakacs@saintmark-philadelphia.org](mailto:etakacs@saintmark-philadelphia.org)



## SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 2016 SUMMER CHOIR CAMP

Our annual Summer Choir Camp for children will once again be held this coming August. The camp will include both Schola, for students aged 3-7, and Choir, for older children. Please mark August 1-5 in your calendars now, and be sure to start thinking of who you might invite to join us for a week of singing, storytelling, prayer, and fun. All children are welcome. Registration will soon be available on the Saint Mark's website.



## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

MOTHER ERIKA TAKACS

On Sunday, April 24, some of the children of Saint Mark's will make their first Holy Communion at the 9 a.m. Family Mass. Baptized children of all ages are welcome to receive communion at any time, but some of our families have been participating in a class to learn a little more about what Holy Communion means to the Church and in their own lives. This is a sacramental moment to be most celebrated, and I hope many of you will be on hand to congratulate our children.

## THE FERNANDA GUILD

MOTHER ERIKA TAKACS

One of the things I love the most about Saint Mark's is the way that this community has embraced the ministry of women. It moves and humbles me to know that in the early 1970s - before the ordination of women was officially approved by The Episcopal Church - Saint Mark's vestry voted to approve a resolution stating that they were firmly in support of women's ordination. I am proud and grateful to stand upon the shoulders of women like Mother Paulette Schiff and Mother Marie Swayze, whose ministries here were powerful examples of the contributions of women to the sacramental life of the church.

Women are an integral part of the life of Saint Mark's; they always have been, and I pray that they always will be. From the witness of matriarchs like Audrey Evans to the joyful faith of the little girls who dance their way from the soft space in the back of the church to the altar, the women of Saint Mark's show us all new dimensions of the Christian life.

On Wednesday, March 30, the women of Saint Mark's will begin a new adventure together: the Fernanda Guild, named after Fernanda Wanamaker, a woman who inspired her loving husband to give Saint Mark's gifts of astonishing beauty in her memory. I hope that women of all ages will join us for a time of prayer and discernment, sharing and storytelling, laughter, and (of course) food! We will meet at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Corinna Franklin - all of the women of Saint Mark's are welcome.





# TONGUES OF FIRE

SIMON THOMAS JACOBS

Of all the great feast days of the Church, I think Pentecost is perhaps my favorite. The vivid imagery – from the mighty rushing wind that filled the house to the tongues of fire – has inspired some of the most wonderful liturgical music ever composed. There is also something very “human” about the Pentecost story – ordinary people filled with the Holy Spirit and inspired to do great work: Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire, and lighten with celestial fire. These words, set to one of the most glorious of all plainsong melodies *Veni Creator*, capture a crucial aspect of our lives as Christians and especially those of us with active ministries within the church.

I have written before about the choosing of music for the church year in line with the lectionary. Sometimes this requires a rather open-minded approach to select choral and organ music that communicates the right message. For a feast such as Pentecost, however, there is almost an embarrassment of riches when it comes to appropriate repertoire. Clearly I am not the only musician to be inspired!

This Pentecost the choir will be singing the American premiere of a recently composed Mass setting by British composer Cecilia McDowell. Born in 1951, McDowell was a student of Kenneth Leighton at the University of Edinburgh and has risen to prominence in recent years with numerous commissions and awards. Described by the *International Record Review* as having “a communicative gift that is very rare in modern music” McDow-

ell’s music is often inspired by extra-musical influences, her writing combining a rhythmic vitality with expressive lyricism “which is, at times, intensely moving.” Nowhere is this more present than in her *Missa Brevis – Tongues of Fire*. As the name would suggest, this work was written for Pentecost and the composer writes, “I have always been captivated by the imagery of the ‘divided tongues as of fire’ and felt it would bring another element to the Mass with its intense drama.” It is very exciting for me to have the opportunity to present the first American performance of this work at Saint Mark’s, and is a testament to the parish’s rich and varied musical tradition.

At the offertory, Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585) depicts through music the apostles speaking in different tongues in his *Loquebantur variis linguis* (“The apostles spoke in many languages”). Six lines of intricate polyphony are woven together to create a coherent whole – a wonderful musical analogy for the apostles being able to understand one another despite speaking different languages. Could there be a better medium than music for communicating such an occurrence – a “language” that transcends all others.

The *Sortie* from Olivier Messiaen’s (1908-1992) *Messe de la Pentecote* will bring this year’s service to a close. Subtitled *Le vent de l’Esprit* (“The wind of the Spirit”) Messiaen attempts to capture the rushing wind that filled the house with a work of great power and intensity. In the middle section we hear the Lark – birdsong is central to much of Messiaen’s music – before the wind picks up again, the piece culminating with one of the most apocalyptic chords in all music!



## PARISH ELECTIONS

Diocesan canons and the parish bylaws guide the way in which the laity of Saint Mark's take part in decisions at the parish and diocesan levels. Each year in June, the eligible voters of the parish elect four members to Vestry, three representatives to the Diocesan Convention and two representatives to the Southwark Deanery.

The Vestry is responsible for the temporal affairs of the parish. The Vestry articulates and facilitates the mission and ministries of the parish with attention to things like growth, outreach, community fellowship and financial health. Regular Vestry meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. There are twelve members of the Vestry who serve a three-year term, with four members elected each year.

The Southwark Deanery is one of ten regions in the diocese, covering parishes in Center City and South Philadelphia. The clergy from each deanery meet monthly. Plenary meetings composed of clergy and lay representatives are scheduled quarterly to discuss specific concerns of its member churches and share in the work of ministry with each other. The Deanery elects representatives to Diocesan Council and the dean of the Southwark Deanery, as well as considering resolutions that will come before the annual Diocesan Convention.

Diocesan Convention is the governing body of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, composed of the clergy of the diocese and up to three lay delegates from each parish. The Convention is charged with considering a wide range of important matters facing the diocese, including passing the diocesan budget, electing members of other diocesan and churchwide bodies, and considering amendments to the diocesan Constitution and Canons. Diocesan Convention meets annually in November.

If you have any questions about being on the Vestry or about the other positions, please ask any Vestry member or one of the clergy.

## RUNNING FOR OFFICE

If you are interested in being on the ballot for the upcoming election, you need to be eligible to vote and have twenty eligible voters sign a nomination form. This form must be submitted to the Secretary of the Vestry (Louise Rees) or returned to the parish office by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 25. A list of eligible voters will be posted in the Parish Hall and on the ushers table in the back of the church. Ballots will be mailed out no later than Friday, May 29 and they must be returned by Monday, June 6 at 5 p.m.

Eligible voters are defined by canon as those members of the parish who receive communion regularly and "have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God." If your name does not appear on the list of eligible voters and you think it should, a mistake may have been made. Please contact a member of the Vestry or speak with Mother Takacs.

## TIMELINE

FRIDAY, MAY 6

List of eligible voters posted on the ushers table and in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY, MAY 23, 5 P.M.

Nomination forms (with signatures of 20 eligible voters) must be returned to the Secretary of the Vestry or the parish office.

FRIDAY, MAY 27

Ballots will be mailed out to all eligible voters.

MONDAY, JUNE 6, 5 P.M.

Ballots must be received in the parish office. (You may drop ballots in the collection plate on the previous two Sundays or return them to the office by hand or by mail.)

SUNDAY, JUNE 12

Election results posted on the ushers table and in the Parish Hall.

## HONDURAS TRIP DELAYED TO 2017

KENNETH PEARLSTEIN

After careful consideration, the clergy and leadership of Saint Mark's have decided it best to reschedule the planned mission to Honduras until the summer of 2017. News of the mosquito-borne Zika virus and the potential complications this virus brings to both men and women of childbearing years gave leadership cause for concern. At least two of our medical staff fall into the highest risk category and they have been rightly advised to stay behind. Another of our four doctors is an infectious disease specialist and has provided us thoughtful guidance in these matters.

In spite of our disappointment, there are some hopeful points to consider:

- We have consistently traveled to Honduras every three years since 2008. In postponing our mission, we have not lost any ground in maintaining this ambitious three-year cycle.
- Our formula for pursuing a successful medical mission to Honduras is tested, tried and true. In the future, all we need to do is rally again, and things will easily fall into place. I hope that you all will stand by me in my hope to reunite in 2017.
- We have maintained strong ties with the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras and the South American Missionary Society who support us in this current decision.

To all of you who have committed to this endeavor, please stay posted! Not only am I certain that there will be other missions to Honduras, I am also certain that this summer will offer local opportunities for us to utilize our various talents toward outreach at Saint Mark's.

## PARISHIONER PERSPECTIVE

EMILY MCGRAW

*Born in Bakersfield, California, Emily McGraw moved to Philadelphia ten years ago. She has been married to Micah for thirteen years, and they have a daughter Nico, a son Truman, and a cat Regis. She was confirmed at Saint Mark's in 2010. She serves on the vestry and as an acolyte.*

I had a doctor who knew we had been church hopping for a few years. He was also a musician. He said, "Oh! You have to go to Saint Mark's! The music! If I ever wanted to go to church on Sunday, which I don't, I would go to Saint Mark's!" We took his advice and showed up to an 11 a.m. Mass. The music was incredible, but so was everything else. Dr. Reeves passed away suddenly four years ago and I'll always be so grateful to him for pointing us in the right direction.

Nowadays if we don't come back we might shirk our coffee hour responsibilities. Our four-year-old daughter's week is really knocked off kilter when she doesn't see her friends and receive communion. What has always made me personally come back is the liturgy. I'm always amazed how alive and breathing the liturgy at Saint Mark's is. It always feels like an invitation to sit and stand and kneel with friends and strangers and be willing to accept God's love. What a gift.

Saint Mark's influences my personal life in lots of ways, but the biggest way by far is to try to live out the gospel in daily life. Saint Mark's takes the gospel very seriously. The ministries at Saint Mark's are a direct result of people hearing the gospel and then doing what it says. They make soup, feed the hungry, care for the poor, they create an incredible school from scratch. I fail, get lazy, and miss opportunities, but I am inspired to at least try and walk around remembering to keep the gospel on my mind, lips and in my heart. I need a lot of practice.

I think being a member of Saint Mark's parish family just means to come as you are. Saint Mark's is a church full of weirdos, myself included, and that's part of what makes it work. That's what I think. Just show up as yourself and do what you can and ask for what you need.

The family ministries are my main focus for my life at Saint Mark's right now and also serving as a vestry member. When my daughter Nico was born in 2011, she was like a celebrity baby. There were virtually no other babies at the 11 a.m. Mass. She was like the Bigfoot of the Locust Street Anglo-Catholics. Fast forward to 2015 when our son Truman was born: babies everywhere! Babies on their way! Toddlers! Full grown children reading music and singing! It's incredible. There's so much momentum, and so much I want to do to help. I would love to reach out to LGBTQ-parented families who are looking for a church home. I think a new parent support group would be great in the near future. It's frustrating for me right now to see the needs and potential and want to dive in make it happen really fast, but I can barely get everyone out the door in time for Schola on Sunday morning.

I've always been a little insecure about where I fit in in other churches that I've attended throughout my life. I'm not a visionary; I've never had a lot of money to give; I'm not very musical. Being a part of the community at Saint Mark's and watching the steadfast hustle of its diverse membership has snapped me out of most of my insecurities. Everyone has something to give. I'm not able to be there early Saturday morning to serve soup, but I can bring cheese and crackers on Sunday. I'm not very good at lighting the candles at the altar, but not so bad that I might light it on fire. I can listen to a friend at coffee hour who had a bad week. I can pray. I can ask for prayer. God calls all of us to live the gospel and to make it heard; we've just got to show up ready to go. And try not to set the Easter lilies on fire (I almost did that once).



JOIN US!

20s/30s  
SIMPLE  
SUPPERS

COMING UP:

APRIL 20  
MAY 18

Mark your calendars for our next 20s/30s dinner, on Wednesday, April 20th at 6:30 p.m. Other important dates include the May Simple Supper on May 18th and the parish picnic on the Feast of Corpus Christi (Sunday, May 29), when we'll need lots of volunteers to woman/man the grills and keep the burgers and dogs flowing. If you're interested in hosting a Simple Supper this summer, please be in touch with Mother Takacs.



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