



# The Wider Circle

*"Shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free"*

Volume 15 Number 5

May 2017

### May Dates:

- 7, 21; Sunday School
- 13; Confirmation

### Upcoming Dates:

- June 3; Bowie Baysox game
- June 10; Capitol Pride Parade

## Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends,

In the ordination vows to become a priest in the Episcopal Church, each person to be ordained is asked "Will you be diligent in the reading and

study of the Holy Scriptures, and in seeking the knowledge of such things as may make you a stronger and more able minister of Christ?" (to which the response is, "I will.")

Last fall a group of a half-dozen St. Georgians embarked on a study of the book of the prophet Isaiah. We have been meeting twice a month since then, and are on *(continued on page 2)*

## Love a Parade!

Easter has arrived, spring weather is finally here, but it's hard to believe that we're already into the month of May. Within a month, a St. George's tradition is coming around again as we will be marching through downtown DC in the Capital Pride Parade.

The parade kicks off Saturday, June 10th at 4:30 PM at 22nd and P NW in DC and winds through a 1.5 mile route until it ends at 14th and S NW. We will have our giveaway items including the ever popular bouncy balls.

There will be a meeting

with the parade organizers this month and we will know more information about where we have been placed in the parade and where we will line up. I will pass along any information received from that meeting.

If you'd like to participate in the parade, you could walk with the St. George's group. We will have a truck available for those who may not be able to walk the entire route but would like to ride with us.

We are looking to add another vehicle to our contingent so if anyone has a truck or converti-

ble that they would like to add to the parade, let me know.

Even if you cannot be at the parade, you can still help us out by letting your friends know about the parade so they can cheer us on. We also could use financial donations as they cover the cost of registration for the parade and for the giveaway items.

I hope to see you next month for the Pride parade, whether it's walking with us or cheering us on. If you'd like more information about the Pride parade, feel free to get in touch with me.

- Michael Mangiapane

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Mary Frances,  
Treasurer  
Ed Neuschler,  
Bookkeeper

Mary Rogers,  
Convention Delegate  
Karen Horrocks,  
Alternate

## Letter from the Rector (cont.)

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track to finish in June. (Isaiah is a long book – 66 chapters!) Also, starting a couple weeks into Lent, another half-dozen St. Georgians have been meeting weekly as we work through the gospel of Matthew, using the Fifty Day Bible Challenge resource *A Journey with Matthew*.

I have to say that it is one of the joys of my ministry to be able to read and study the bible with these groups of parishioners. I gain insights and am invited to think about these formative stories of our faith differently as I reflect on, am challenged by, and wrestle with the scriptures with others - all of us on our own spiritual journeys, yet fortunate to be walking this part of those journeys together.

It has also been a learning experience reading these two books, Isaiah and Matthew, straight

through. I have realized that the lectionary we use for Sunday worship really shapes our perspective. For instance, we miss much of the message of the prophet Isaiah because we only hear a few portions of that book over the course of a year, and we hear most of them in Advent. So naturally, we hear those readings in the context of the coming birth of Jesus, and that changes their meaning.

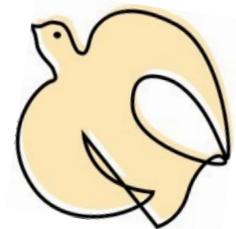
The same is true of the gospel of Matthew. Reading it all the way through over these days, I have gotten a different perspective on Jesus. Did you know that Matthew's Jesus is more confrontational and edgier than the other gospel writers portray him? It's easy to miss when we hear only a few stories from the gospel, which are usually the 'greatest hits.'

Also, I can't emphasize enough how the experience of reading the bible is changed when we are

doing it with others. Last summer I read the gospel of Luke when St. George's offered another of the fifty day bible challenge books, this one *A Journey with Luke*. I couldn't do it with the group, so I read it on my own, and I have to say reading Matthew and reflecting on it with the group has made for a much richer experience.

There will be more opportunities to read the scriptures together, and I have to say that I can't wait. I hope some of you will consider joining a class or a group the next time one is offered, and be able to read the bible with some fellow St. Georgians. You won't look at whatever part of scripture you read the same way again.

Blessings,  
Connie+



## Sunday School in May and June

It is hard to believe but we are coming to the end of another Sunday School year. There are only four more classes left!

The upcoming dates for the final classes are May 7 and May 21, and June 4 and June 11.

We will also thank this

year's teachers during the 10:00 service on Sunday, June 11. So mark these dates and let's finish the year strong!

## Letter from the Vestry

What does the Valley of the Dry Bones have to do with the St. George's New Member and Welcoming Committee? Well, let me explain... This year I participated in the Great Vigil of Easter for the first time in many years. It was a beautiful evening with a dramatic thunderstorm that came (thankfully) after we entered the sanctuary.

I gave a reflection on Ezekiel 37:1-4. This is the part of our salvation story that takes place in the Valley of the Dry Bones. As I noted during the service, this reading was the first I struck from the list when Connie sent out the options for reflection.

This story of the dry bones doesn't have much going for it, at least at first glance. By the time we hear it in the Vigil, we are well into the service and still have quite some time to go. And by the time we get to that service, we've had a long Holy Week and I'm ready to push through, turn on the lights, say Alleluia and celebrate.

The passage is more than a little spooky and after Googling "Ezekiel, Valley, Dry Bones" one evening while looking for information, I saw some art-

ists' interpretations of the scene that are kind of scary. Even the ones that depict God breathing life back into the bones are a little disturbing.

But I didn't find the other readings particularly inspiring, so I decided to tackle this passage that I've avoided for a long time. And I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to study and reflect on these words.

These past few months have reminded so many of us of the Valley – we've seen a lot of sadness, despair, concern and anxiety. Some of us have friends who are worried about being deported, losing a job, or seeing hard won rights taken away. There is so much uncertainty, and so many desperately need hope.

This is why I appreciate the reading from Ezekiel. It reminds us that God can restore us even when we are at our lowest point, with no life at all, in the depths of despair.

Ultimately, it's a powerful message of hope. Nothing beats the Resurrection, but the image of God literally putting muscle, sinews and skin back on skeletons and then breathing life into them ranks pretty high when it

comes to a story about God's power to bring life and hope.

And as I reflect on hope part of this story, I immediately think of St. George's and the many ways our congregation demonstrates God's love in a world that desperately needs it. St. George's is place of refuge and hope, especially in the current political climate.

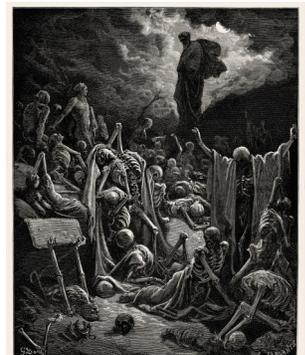
We are a part of God's breathing life back into the bones, of helping restore the broken bodies (literally and figuratively). And our church provides so many opportunities for hope-filled ministry.

One important way we do this is through our hospitality to newcomers. I still remember my first Sunday at St. George's – the warm welcome from Connie, the greetings from the different members of the congregation, the invitation to join everyone for coffee.

I also enjoyed the Newcomer's Brunch, the perfect opportunity to hear from other newcomers and members of St. George's, to learn about what brings people to St. George's, and what makes

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*The Valley of Dry Bones is ultimately a message of hope—a hope that is found in the many ways St. George's demonstrates God's love in a world that desperately needs it.*



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**Mission Statement:**

*The mission of St. George's is to build a Christian community of love and support that actively seeks and includes all people.*

*We commit ourselves to spiritual growth through worship and education that empowers us to follow Christ's example in the world.*

**Vestry (cont.)**

*(continued from page 3)*

them want to stay. This experience really set the stage for our family as we discerned our next step in joining a congregation, and that initial welcome was a great introduction to the hopeful and loving ministry of St. George's.

In the coming year, my

fellow vestry members and I want to focus on this ministry, reviving some aspects of it from previous years and considering opportunities to do things differently. When I need some inspiration, one of many places I can look is the passage from Ezekiel, a story of hope, of bringing life back, of restoring a

body.

And I look forward to hearing from the congregation about how St George's can continue to bring hope, and how our New Member and Welcoming Committee fits in. Please join the conversation!

- *Charlotte Colvin*



**Confirmation—May 13 at the Washington National Cathedral**

On Saturday, May 13th at 10:00 am, two members of St. George's will take a next step on their faith journey and take part in the sacramental rite of Confirmation.

Jenna Jones and Anaya Shaw-Taylor have been preparing for several months, and the service at the Cathedral on the 13th will be the culmination of all of their work

and learning.

Everyone is invited to attend this service and offer your support to Anaya and Jenna.