

THE LION

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Issue 5

Message from the Rector

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”

Revelation 21:5

(revisited)

As I was thinking about what I might write for this issue of *The Lion*, I remembered a meditation that I had written several years ago as Easter approached. Digging through my files I found it, and it still conveys exactly what I always feel this time of year. With that in mind, I thought it worth publishing again. With only a few minor changes, here is what I wrote.

I love late March and early April, when the flowers are beginning to bloom and the trees are beginning to push forth new leaves. Those of us who have grown up in Florida can always recognize the telltale signs that spring is on its way: it's not the weather that tells us, it's the plants and animals that remind us that spring is just around the corner. The azaleas begin to bloom; the bougainvilleas begin to blossom, and the oaks push out their soft, bright-green leaves. The old gives way to the new and there is a feeling of newness about everything around us.

There is a reason Ponce de Leon named our particular part of the New World “La Florida” when he first saw it on April 2, 1513: it was close to the Easter season, the Feast of Flowers or “Pascua Florida” in Spanish, and the peninsula was ablaze in new growth. Calling the newly discovered land “La Florida,” or “flowery land,” was fitting at the time, and it has remained so for over five hundred years.

But it's not just trees and plants that show signs of new life in the spring. Young squirrels are playing in the trees, not quite yet as brave as their mothers who will take a peanut from my hand, and the chirping of newly hatched birds will soon be heard as well. Bees are beginning to collect nectar from flowers to make their honey, and the smell of citrus blossoms will soon fill the air.

Once again the cycle is complete. Another spring is us upon. Old things have passed away, and all things are becoming new.

We see this same cycle lived out in the annual liturgical cycle of the Church. Summer (Trinitytide) becomes fall (Advent), fall becomes early winter (Christmas and Epiphany), and then walk with our Lord through the deep winter desert of Lent and Holy Week, only to once again reemerge with him in the full flowering of spring – Easter! It has been the annual life-cycle of the Church since her earliest days.

Remarkably, our lives show this very same progression. We are born and grow (spring), enter into the prime of our lives (summer), move towards our “golden years” (fall) and, eventually, enter the winter Lent of our old age. It is the natural cycle of “seedtime” and “harvest” that God has infused into his creation.

But there will be a day when this cycle will be broken, and that day is the Eternal Sabbath of the new heavens and new earth that God has promised us. In the fullness of our redemption – which includes the renewing of *all* creation, not just the spiritual part – when we are finally resurrected from the grave, we will be living in the “eternal spring” of our Risen Lord. In other words, in the resurrection, when heaven and earth are finally joined as one, we will be living in the reality of Easter forever.

Message from the Rector – continued

We receive a small taste of this every year when, on Easter Sunday morning, we rejoice with shouts of *Alleluia!* as we celebrate the rising of Jesus from the tomb, the “firstfruits of them that slept” as St Paul puts it. Jesus has blazed the trail for us, showing us in his own resurrection what we have to look forward to and what we will be that final day when heaven and earth finally meet in the fullness of redemption. It will be the final day of the world as we know it, but the first day of the world as it was always intended to be. It will be the first day of our eternal spring – the first day of Easter – forever!

Music Notes

Kathleen Knott, Music Director/Organist

An Easter Hymn

One of the most uplifting and beautiful hymns that we sing during the liturgical season of Easter is “This Joyful Eastertide” (# 192 The 1982 Hymnal). The text for this hymn was written by the English Anglican priest George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934). Woodward is best known for “writing religious verse, both original and translated from ancient authors.” It is interesting to note that he wrote the text for this hymn specifically for the VRUECHTEN tune. This tune was originally a Dutch folk tune for a love song. The tune is unique in that it features melisma in several sections. In addition, the text and tune fit wonderfully together. The refrain which repeats “arisen” rises with the repeated musical motives.

Every stanza includes the refrain:

Had Christ, that once was slain,
Ne'er burst his three day prison,
Our faith had been in vain:
But now is Christ arisen, arisen, arisen, arisen.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank St. Mark's vocal choir and handbell choir for all their hard work in preparations for the Bishop's visit, Holy Week and Easter.

Reverend Russell

St. Mark's is very excited to be joined by Rev. Randall Russell and his family. The following is a brief biography to introduce St. Mark's new Curate to the congregation and our extended St. Mark's family.

Rev. Randall Russell was born on June 30, 1980 in Kewanee, IL to Charles and Jean Russell. His mother worked as a middle school teacher and later as a principal and his father was a police officer and the city of Kewanee's first police K-9 handler. Rev. Russell's father is now retired and his mother passed away on March 10th of this year. The Russell family thanks everyone at St. Mark's for their thoughts and prayers. Rev. Russell also has a younger sister, Becky, who works in fashion retail in Chicago, IL.

After high school graduation in 1998, Randall attended Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2002, majoring in Classical Civilization and Pre-Seminary Studies. After college he went to Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN where he earned his Masters of Divinity in 2006.

Since seminary, Rev. Russell has served as a Lutheran pastor in Iowa, Michigan, and most recently New York, where he also served as a teacher and religious head for the church's K-8 school. In his free time he

Reverend Russell – continued

enjoys spending time with his family, watching movies, and, of course, cheering on his Green Bay Packers!

In 2007 Rev. Russell married his wife Amy, a Michigan native who loves to read and create various goodies in the kitchen. Amy is currently a stay-at-home mom to the couple's two children. James is 7 and in the first grade at Vero Beach Elementary. He loves all things superhero (especially "The Flash" who is his favorite hero) and has discovered tennis since moving to Florida. Eleanor (Ella) is 4 and enjoys playing with her doll house, helping mom cook, and exploring all the interesting activities Vero Beach has to offer. The Russell family also has one cat named Stoli.

Rev. Russell's goal is to be ordained a priest in the APA by July of 2016 and then to faithfully serve Christ and His Church wherever he is needed most.

Treasurer's Message

Cal Brown

In December of 2014 our Vestry approved St. Mark's budget for 2015. The budget provides the required operating expenses for 2015 for St. Mark's to do the work of our Lord and keep our doors open. The budget was set at \$360,000.

What does this mean? In simple terms, it means St. Marks must receive \$360,000 in tithes and gifts.

We know that during the winter months, tithes and gifts received by St. Mark's are up which helps us meet the budget during the slow summer months. I must report that for the months of January and February 2015 our contributions are \$26,000 less than this same period last year. To meet this year's expenses, I encourage each of you to ask yourself, "Am I giving what the Lord wants me to give?"

Lastly please pray for the well-being of St. Mark's. May the Lord be with you.

Confirmation

Fr. Mike Ward

On Passion Sunday, March 22nd, the Most Rev. Walter Grundorf, the Presiding Bishop of the APA, as well as our diocesan bishop, conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation upon Frederic (Rick) Hahn, Michael Libbey, Amy, James, and Eleanor (Ella) Russell, Blake Smith, and Scott Stradley. A reception followed in the parish hall, as we not only welcomed Bp. Grundorf to our parish, but also celebrated this sacramental milestone in the lives of our newly minted Confirmands. Congratulations, one and all!

Lay Pastoral Care Ministry

One of the great characteristics of the Anglican tradition is that, as Anglicans, we carry on today with the deeds begun by the earliest followers of Christ. The church is made up of many parts and each of us serves God in unique ways. The early church was committed to praying for and helping each other. Likewise, here at St. Mark's, the Lay Ministers have accepted a responsibility to be of service to our church with a goal of bringing us all closer together in our community of Christ. The Lay Ministers have begun getting to better know some parishioners. The Lay Ministers are devoted to praying for each parishioner every day, as well as being available to help with spiritual and daily life needs. The Lay Ministers meet on a regular basis to explore ways to be of greater service to all, as well as to pray for all parishioners, to study, and to participate in Evening Prayers together as a group.

...The Least of These...

Fr. Mike Ward

That's what Jesus called those whom we reach out to help, *the least of these*, and that is what St Mark's has made as its primary ministry focus in our community: reaching out to *the least of these*: the poor, the homeless, the near-homeless, those on the fringe. They are, as Pastor George Lynch once put it, "The stepped on, the stepped over, and the stepped around." Our ministry teams continue to provide a hot chicken dinner each Friday at *The Source*. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all who donate not only their time, but also all the food that is served. Jesus reminds us that *when you did it to the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you did it to me*.

This ministry is the primary outreach ministry of our parish. We have been at it for a long, long time, and I know that it can be tiring, but it is a very important ministry and one that, frankly, isn't overtaxing. It only takes a couple of hours (at the most) one Friday per month. If you would like to be on a team, or serve as a substitute on a Friday when a regular team member cannot be there, please contact Joyce Smith at 772-231-5425. Thank you and God bless each of you for your ministry to and for him.

Upcoming Holy Days

April/May/June

April 1 (8:00 a.m. and noon) – Holy Wednesday
April 2 (7:00 p.m.) – Maundy Thursday
April 3 (noon) – Good Friday
April 4 (4:00 – 5:00 p.m.) – Confessions
April 6 (noon) – Easter Monday
April 7 (noon) – Easter Tuesday
April 25 (10:00 a.m.) – Feast of St Mark, Apostle and Evangelist
May 1 (noon) – Feast of St Philip and St Jude
May 14 (noon) – Feast of the Ascension of our Lord (Day of Obligation)
May 25 (noon) – Whit-Monday
May 26 (noon) – Whit-Tuesday
June 11 (noon) – Feast of St Barnabas the Apostle
June 24 (noon) – Nativity of St John the Baptist
June 29 (noon) – Feast of St Peter the Apostle

St. Mark's Anglican Church

Rev. Canon Michael L. Ward, SSA
Rector

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