

# THE LION

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## *Message from the Rector*

*Reverend Russell*  
Guest Columnist

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### The “What” and “Why” of **ASCENSION DAY**

What is Ascension Day? It is the fortieth day after Easter; it is the day on which Christ Jesus ascended into heaven in order to sit at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, as we confess in the Creed. However, we should not think of Christ’s ascension so much as our Lord rising up to a place, but more in terms of our Lord rising up to a position of power. Here it might be helpful to think of Ascension Day as Christ our King’s coronation day, as we hear in Psalm 110, “The LORD says to my lord: ‘Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.’” And again, the being seated at the right hand here is not really a reference to a place, but a position.

So why is Ascension Day so important? Well, ultimately Christ our King takes His rightful place on His Father’s throne. And because Christ has risen to such a high position, all those that follow Him rise as well. The Apostles are no longer just students of Christ, but teachers as well. And this would never have happened if our Lord had not ascended. The disciples would have never learned to truly walk by faith had Jesus remained with them like He had in the past. In fact, our Lord even tells us, “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor (*the Holy Spirit*) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” [John 16:7]

If the Ascension had not occurred, then Pentecost would have never come. But because the Ascension has occurred, the Spirit is sent, the Apostles mature, and the Church grows. Jesus said that His Kingdom was not of this world and Ascension Day should remind us of this fact. Christ is now present with His people in a mystical and much more intimate way than He ever was while He walked the earth. He dwells in hearts rather than in castles; He feeds us with the spiritual food of His most precious Body and Blood, instead of just the earthly fruits of our toil and sweat; and rather than rule over us by the power and might of a mortal army, He rules over His Church by the love and Spirit of the immortal God.

This is why Ascension Day is so important and this is why the Church considers it a Holy Day of Obligation. For it is the coronation of our victorious and heavenly King: the Ascension of not only Christ to the heavenly Most Holy of Holies, but in many ways the Ascension of all those who love and follow Him, as well. Therefore, as we pray in the Ascension Day collect: “May we also in heart and mind ascend, and with Him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.”

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## *Curate's Corner*

Reverend Russell

In the last newsletter I was asked to write a brief biography explaining a little bit of my background and somewhat describing who I am. However, in this newsletter rather than tell you more about who I am I have chosen to focus on what I am and how exactly I fit in here at St. Mark's. I currently am a postulant, which is basically just a fancy word for a candidate for Holy Orders. I am not yet a deacon. I am not yet a priest. Technically, I am not even a seminarian since I have already graduated from seminary; so there are a lot of limits as to what I can and cannot currently do.

Right now I am simply a postulant and may technically be called Reverend since I was at one time an ordained Lutheran minister. As a postulant, there is a certain process through which I must go in order to become ordained in the Anglican Province of America (APA). This process is laid out in the Constitution and Canons of the APA. My particular case falls under the jurisdiction of Canon 10, which concerns ministers from other Christian traditions that are not in fellowship with the APA becoming deacons and/or priests.

I have already fulfilled many of the requirements outlined in Canon 10, but some I have not. I have already completed the written prayer book exam and the written canonical exam, but I still have to meet with various committees in order to be personally interviewed and examined. The members of these committees consist of clergy and laymen from all over the Diocese of the Eastern United States and they are only able to meet a few times out of the year, usually in January and July. My first oral examination with the Board of Examining Chaplains is to take place on July 28th. I would look to be ordained into the diaconate shortly after the successful completion of this oral exam, as well as other interviews and evaluations.

Canon 10 states that before I am ordained a priest, I must serve as a deacon for four months. I also would once again need to meet with those committees with which I met prior to becoming a deacon, in order to be further examined and evaluated before becoming a priest. Canon 10 also states that I would need to take some online classes in order to receive a Certificate in Anglican Studies. Please note that since I finished my written exams, I have already applied for those online classes and hopefully by the time you read this, will have already started them.

All of this might seem like an awfully long process, but if one considers everything that is required of a man studying to become a heart surgeon, one shouldn't be too surprised to learn of everything that is required of a man studying to become a priest - a physician of the soul. Even though I served as a Lutheran minister for eight years before coming here to St. Mark's, I still have things to learn about serving the Church as a priest within the Anglican tradition.

Hopefully that explains a little bit about where I am in the process of becoming a priest in the APA. Father Mike has been a great mentor and guide throughout this entire process and St. Mark's has been a terrific place to worship, learn, and serve. The arrangement that was made prior to me coming to St. Mark's was that I must be ordained a priest by the end of July 2016 and at the current moment, it looks like I am right on track.

Peace in Christ,  
Rev. Russell

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## ***Music Notes***

Kathleen Knott, Music Director/Organist

### **“ The Lone Wild Bird” - An American Hymn**

In preparations for Pentecost, the choir sang the beautiful American hymn “The Lone Wild Bird.” This hymn paints a picture of the Holy Spirit coming as a “lone, wild bird in lofty flight.” The text was written by Henry McFayden in 1925. The author was from North Carolina and his father participated in the Battle of Gettysburg and eventually became a minister after being a prisoner of war. The tune was written by Graham (first name unknown) and included in William Walker’s edition of *The Southern Harmony* (1835). This collection of tunes became one of the most popular southern singing books of the 19th century, and was designed to provide a tutorial for singing by using shaped notes. The tune for this hymn is called PROSPECT and was selected by the well-known organist David Johnson to fit the McFayden poetry:

1. The lone, wild bird in lofty flight  
is still with you, nor leaves your sight.  
And I am yours! I rest in you,  
Great Spirit, come, rest in me, too.
2. The ends of earth are in your hand,  
The sea’s dark deep and far off land,  
And I am yours! I rest in you,  
Great Spirit, come, rest in me, too.
3. Each secret thought is know to you,  
the path I walk my whole life through;  
my days, my deeds, my hopes, my fears,  
my deepest joys, my silent tears.

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## ***Cleanliness is next to godliness***

Fr. Mike Ward

Ok: so no one knows who really said it first. It certainly wasn’t Solomon or any of the other writers of the Proverbs. As a matter of fact, this old proverb isn’t even in the Bible. But it should be a sign posted in the parish hall. Empty boxes stacked in the corner; crumbs swept off the table or falling to the floor; “stuff” spilled on the top of the stove; half-filled cups of coffee and half-filled cans of soda lying around; “leftovers” stacked in the refrigerator; they all mean the very same thing: someone else gets to tidy up the parish hall, clean the kitchen, and sweep the floor. Either that or our old friends the ants are going to find a nice well-stocked home inside our parish hall. Neither of those prospects is terribly appealing. Please, *please*, PLEASE: let’s ALL keep the parish hall neat, tidy...and clean!

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## *Upcoming Holy Days*

### June/July/August

June 11	(noon)	–	Feast of St Barnabas the Apostle
June 24	(noon)	–	Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist
June 29	(noon)	–	Feast of St Peter the Apostle
July 4	(10a)	–	Independence Day
July 25	(No Service)	–	Feast of St. James the Apostle
August 6	(noon)	–	Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ
August 24	(noon)	–	Feast of St. Bartholomew the Apostle

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