

From the Interim Rector: Fr. Mark Michael

“I have hidden your word in my heart, that I may not sin against you.” Psalm 119:11

I recently talked with a friend who lives in Southeast Asia. He is a member of an Anglican church in a large city. As here at Saint Timothy’s, his congregation sends out several mission teams a year to serve the poor and distressed, working in a remote jungle village. Doctors and nurses from the parish staff a medical clinic and others provide programs for the children. My friend is the cook, and has learned through careful planning and plenty of last minute improvisation how to feed the team’s dozens of volunteers without the advantages of a well-equipped kitchen.

The mission team believes its most important work is smuggling Bibles. There are strong restrictions on sharing the Christian faith in his Muslim-majority country. Portions of the Scriptures have recently been translated into the language of the villagers. After several years of mission team visits, a number of the villagers have become

committed followers of Christ. There are restrictions on setting up churches and the villagers can’t afford to pay the salary of a priest.

But the through the work of my friend and others like him, they are learning to read God’s Word in their own language. The Bible provides comfort and encouragement to them. It reinforces the message of grace they have heard and instructs them in Christian living. It is their connection to the wider church, the gift that helps to sustain their vibrant and inspiring faith.

These Bibles must be printed in a different country, and they are passed through back-channels to a place where they can be packed among the team’s medical supplies and personal baggage. It is a risky venture, and no one quite knows what would happen if they were discovered. But my friend thinks the risk is worthwhile, because he has seen how powerful the Bible can be in drawing people to

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*Christmas Eve
Photos by Craig
Dubishar*

Sign Up for an Epiphany House Blessing

by **Mark Michael**
Interim Rector

Like me, you probably have a Nativity scene displayed in your home this time of year. It probably features shepherds and wise men coming to greet the Holy Family in a stable. It's a beautiful scene, to be sure, depicted on thousands of Christmas cards and in many great works of art. But it's probably not strictly accurate.

For one thing, the magi and the shepherds almost certainly arrived at different times. The Church has long celebrated the visits on two different feasts: the birth and the visit of the shepherds on Christmas, December 25, and the visit of the wise men on Epiphany, January 6. Matthew 2:11 also clearly says that the magi greeted the infant Christ and presented their gifts in a house, not a stable (though some scholars argue this could be two ways of describing the same place—a house that contained a section for animals).

That makes the Epiphany one of the very few events in salvation history that clearly happened in a house. The great appearances and acts of God most often happened outside: the flood, the calling of Abraham, the exodus,

the crucifixion, the resurrection. Others were set in the temple, like the calling of the great prophets. But the Epiphany happened instead at home, among the ordinary things of life, where most of us spend most of our time.

And so, for centuries, the Epiphany season has been a time for blessing houses. In my work as a parish priest in different congregations, I have always set aside a good deal of time in January to go and bless houses. I use the prayers from our Book of Occasional Services and mark in chalk above the door the year and the initials of the three wise men: C (for Caspar), M (for Melchior) and B (for Balthasar). The initials CMB are said to also represent "Christus Mansionem Benedicat," or "May Christ bless the house." It's one of my favorite duties as a pastor. I enjoy visiting with parishioners, and sometimes the home seems the very best place for an important spiritual conversation.

A calendar in the Narthex lists times that I am available throughout January. Please let me know if a different time would be more convenient for you instead. I look forward to visiting with many of you in the weeks to come. +

The Elements

by **Jill Cox**

FIRE - the killing explosion of death and dismay
FIRE - the flame of desire for peace, love and charity.

SNOW - the frigid stances of conflicting and unloving people
SNOW - the cooling of temper and greed.

WIND - the scattering of ideas, intentions and desires
WIND - the gentle caress of new life and emergence of beauty.

RAIN - the washing of sins and hurt, cleansing and refreshing
RAIN - the water of life, sustaining all creation.

FIRE - a greeting of old to persuade the sun to return
FIRE - a desire in the heart for the SON who will appear.

LOVE - the conqueror of all our fears and terrors
LOVE- everlasting, precious, redeeming and eternal. +

Annual Meeting Jan. 10

On January 10, St. Timothy's will elect new Vestry members during voting at both the 8 and 10 am services. New Vestry members will be announced at the Annual Meeting following the 10 am service. Additionally, the Rev. Mary Thorpe from the Diocese of Virginia will speak at the annual meeting about the search process for a new Rector. The Vestry will select members for the Search Committee at the Vestry Retreat the last weekend in January. Please plan to attend the Annual Meeting and luncheon to learn more about the search process, selection criteria for the search committee, and the proposed budget for 2016. Email Senior Warden Keith Sinclair with any questions at ksinclair1@msn.com +

STARs (Small Tasks Are Rewarding!)

by Nikki O'Malley

God's community at St. Timothy's is richly blessed with wonderful people of different ages, interests, and talents. We invite you to join in and share in the ministries and activities of this vibrant, growing and caring place. At St. Timothy's, we seek to draw closer to one another and to Christ as we worship, praise, sing, laugh, cry, serve, learn and play together.

Would you like to be a part of St. Timothy's active congregation but you don't know where to start? Consider becoming a STAR (Small Tasks Are Rewarding) volunteer: When a Ministry needs assistance for a one-

time or short-term task they will send an email requesting assistance. If you can help, simply reply directly to the email sender—if you can't help with a particular request, you will remain on the STAR list and will be called again in the future. Becoming a STAR is a wonderful way to find your Ministry niche and to give your time and talent to God.

With 2016 almost upon us, this is a perfect time to purge email lists. Please contact nikki.omalley@gmail.com to add or remove your email address from the STAR listing. Remember, you can add/remove your email address can from the STAR listing at any time. +

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God and filling them with new life.

Psalms 119 is the Bible's longest chapter, an extended meditation on the glories of God's word. The author rejoices in the wisdom God's word brings. He acclaims it as a great treasure, a guide in challenging times, a way of drawing near to God. Psalm 119 is an alphabetical acrostic, with each section beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It's a poetic way of saying that the Scriptures are the summary of all human language, the finest thing that can be said. Through them God speaks His life-giving Word.

Psalms 119 is the primary inspiration for a beautiful sixteenth-century English prayer, often attributed to King Edward VI (the same king who authorized the first Book of Common Prayer). For centuries, it was printed on the title page of the Geneva Bible, the most popular edition in the English-speaking world: "O Gracious God and most merciful Father, which hast vouchsafed us the rich and precious jewel of thy holy Word, assist us with thy Spirit, that it may be

written in our hearts to our everlasting comfort, to reform us, to renew us according to thine own image, to build us up, and edify us into the perfect building of thy Christ, sanctifying and increasing in us all heavenly virtue. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus' Christ's sake, Amen."

The Bible is "a rich and precious jewel." This is precisely the conviction that drives my friend to help bring it to the villagers he serves. He sees how it transforms people's lives, "renewing," "reforming," "edifying," "sanctifying" and "increasing in virtue." Through the Spirit's work, the Scriptures move off the page and into the inner lives of God's people. The Bible's letters become the pattern for our thoughts and deeds.

I know that some of you read the Bible each day, and can trace its work in your lives just as the prayer indicates. For several years, a small group has been gathering on Wednesday mornings to read and discuss the Sunday readings together, an experience which aids deeper participation in the liturgy. But for others of us, the "rich and precious"

jewel of the Bible is a gift rarely examined, and aside from the brief sections read at service on Sunday morning, God's word is absent from our lives.

This may be the time to change this. Here at Saint Timothy's this winter we have two new opportunities to study the Scriptures together. On Sunday mornings at 9, Pastor Allison and I will teach a class on the foundation stories of Genesis, from the Creation of the world to the calling of Abraham, texts which have deeply shaped Christian thought and which have been celebrated in so much great art and literature. On Tuesday evenings at 7:30, Jane Burkett will lead a class on I Corinthians, a vivid letter of Saint Paul's that gives insights into the struggles of the earliest Christians—which often seem remarkably like our own. Questions of all kinds and participants of all backgrounds are welcome at both classes.

I hope that this will be a season in which we all come to grow in our knowledge and love of the Scriptures. If the Bible is a precious gift that changes people's lives. See what God can use it to do in yours. +



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Submission deadline for the next issue: Friday, January 29, 2016

Questions, articles, or ideas, and comments for The Word are always welcome. Send materials via email to wordeditor@saint-timothys.org and put "The Word" in the subject line. Photos are also welcome; please identify key people in photos. Articles or letters may be edited.

Welcome, New Registered Members

Duane Francis Hartge
Savannah Grace Lamb

We have *many* active congregants who have been attending and donating to St. Timothy's for many years who are not registered members! Our goal is to aid the transfer of all congregants interested in being registered members of St. Timothy's.

Non-registered members can participate in all aspects of church worship except serving on the Vestry and participating in elections. However, the more registered members St. Timothy's has recorded the more delegates we can send to the conventions (thus giving us a stronger vote in diocesan matters).

If we don't have an email address for you and your family, or if your email has changed, update your information at www.saint-timothys.org or send the information to office@saint-timothys.org. To transfer your membership to St. Tim's, or to find out if you are a registered member, contact Nikki O'Malley (nikki.omalley@gmail.com) or fill out the Parishioner Information Form: www.saint-timothys.org/uploads/docs/info-form.pdf

2015 Vestry

Terms expire Jan. 2016

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Terms expire Jan. 2017

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Office Hours
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Fri, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
For appointments, please call
703-437-3790

Service Times

Sundays
8:00 a.m.
Eucharist, Rite I

10:00 a.m.
Rite II service with
Holy Communion
Godly Play,
ages 3-2nd grade
SPARK+, 3-5th grade
Christian Ed,
6-8th 9-12th grades
Nursery Care

Wednesday
12:15 P.M.
Eucharist and
Healing Service

Saturday
7:00 P.M.
Santa Eucharistia