



The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist
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The Rev. Thomas M. White, Rector

Autumn 2018

Dear Member or Friend of St. John the Baptist Parish,

We've all seen cars in Sussex County with "LSD" stickers on them, short for "Lower, Slower Delaware." Living as we do in a beach resort area, the idea behind "LSD" is that life here is more carefree, relaxed, laid back...slower. Several times, though, during this summer past, I found myself in the local grocery store chuckling as I observed shoppers, certainly many of them on vacation, hurriedly pushing their carts, sprinting up and down the aisles, rapidly tossing items into their carts, not a moment to spare, after all, they're on vacation! They obviously had brought their busy, hectic way of life with them to their vacation in LSD.

With autumn upon us, even in LSD the pace of our lives quickens. For our parish it's the start of a new Sunday School and program year. Already our Sunday School has met three Sundays. Bible study will resume shortly, more about that further down, and we're hoping to form a choir, and a women's group (for men too!) focusing on women in the Bible. As the pace in our lives and the church quickens, I hear anew the psalmist singing God's call: "Be still and know that I am God!" Psalm 46:10. In our busy lives, do we take time to slow down, to stop, to be still in order to connect and commune with God? With the holidays here before we're ready, this will be an even greater challenge, but therefore even more needed.

Suppose each of us resolved right now to take just ten minutes every day to sit still, close our eyes, breathe in slowly, hold it for ten seconds, then breathe out slowly, as we focus on God's blessings in our life or on needs for which we might seek God's help, or pray for others' needs. Meditation, prayer, Bible study, worship...all ways we can strive to respond to God's call "Be still, and know that I am God." Now, I have a favor to ask. As we gather in God's house each Lord's Day to worship, let's greet and chat with our fellow worshippers until the organ prelude begins. Then for the next ten minutes, until Mass begins, let us be silent, be still, preparing our spirits for divine worship. Let us pray, or open the Book of Common Prayer and read a couple of the psalms, or close our eyes and simply meditate and contemplate. If not, out of deference to our fellow worshippers, let's still be silent, during Mass also. We have a fellowship gathering after worship to share fellowship and conversation. And I would ask, also, that unless it's unavoidable, we enter or leave the sanctuary during Mass only during the hymns, or at the sharing of the Peace, or during the distribution of the Holy Communion....seeking to create a

mood of reverence for God and to respect the sacredness of divine worship. I'm sincerely grateful.

Let me now herald upcoming happenings at St. John the Baptist. **Bp. Kevin Brown**, newly ordained and consecrated last December as bishop of the Diocese of Delaware, will make **his first official visit** to our parish on **Sunday, October 7, 10 a.m.**, celebrating and preaching at Mass. He will receive new members into our congregation that day. A luncheon in the parish hall will follow Mass, to which you are cordially invited. In preparation for Bp. Brown's visit, our ministers of music are seeking to form a choir to sing, not only for the bishop's visit, but regularly at Sunday Mass, a **choir** for all who love to sing praise to God, not just for those who know how to sing! The **first rehearsal** is this coming **Wednesday, September 26, at 5:45 p.m.**

The day before Bishop Brown's visit, on **Saturday, October 6, 11 a.m.**, all pet lovers are encouraged to bring their beloved creatures, great, small, and in-between, for the annual **Blessing of the Animals**, in celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, which is October 4. *All* pets are welcome!

This **Friday, Sept 28, 2 p.m.**, Sharon Lamando will lead our **Book Club** in the parish hall to discuss the novel, "Home Fires: The Story of the Women's Institute in the Second World War." This novel of historical fiction takes an in-depth look at the essential role of women in WW II Britain.

"**Colonial Sampler**" is the chance for you to learn 18th century English country dancing, led by our member, Paul Smith. Come to the parish hall on **Wednesday, October 3, 6:30 to 8 p.m.** Comfortable shoes are encouraged! Fun is assured!

One of my cherished ministries is our **Stockings for Soldiers project**. During the summer sewers have been busy cutting out Christmas stockings from festive holiday fabrics and are now sewing them. Soon these stockings will need to be filled as gifts for the sacrificing and serving soldiers far from home at Christmas. For the next several Sundays beginning Sept 30, a list of needed items will be included in the Sunday bulletin. Please respond generously and place your donations in the designated box in the parish hall. Also, monetary **offerings for Episcopal Relief and Development** are being asked to support the relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Florence's devastation, as well as continuing aid to victims of recent hurricanes. Make your checks payable to "The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist," but designated "Episcopal Relief and Development." Then our treasurer can send one check on behalf of our parish.

With the advent of fall, Deacon Paula is wanting to form a **women's group, and because we are a completely inclusive community of faith, men are invited and welcome** as well! This group will take a look at biblical women and provide fellowship also. Stay tuned!

Due to popular demand, **Bible study** will resume on **Tuesday, October 9, and meet every Tuesday following, 7 p.m.**, in the parish hall. We will continue exploring the Scriptural texts for the upcoming Sunday.

Bp. Brown has made evangelism the number one priority for his ministry among us and for the congregations of the diocese. A **one-day evangelism retreat, "Invite, Welcome, Connect,"** for priests, deacons, and lay people will be on **Saturday, October 20, 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., at Christ Episcopal Church, Christiana Hundred.** All who are interested in growing the church through the "Good News" of faith, mercy, and love in Jesus Christ are encouraged to attend. Speak to Sharon Lamando or me if you would like to go. We will carpool.

Deacon Paula has already proven to be a God-given gift to our parish and, for sure, to me! She has graciously written a letter to you that accompanies this. Deacon Paula, I thank God for you and your ministry in our midst!

Obviously autumn is a busy time in our parish life, but amid all our activities, let us find the time to "be still and know that I am God." For that time will prove to be well worthwhile!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Tom