

# The Evangel

May 15, 2014

Saint Luke's Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia

## Getting to know Bishop Ted

As an assistant bishop, the Rt. Rev. Edwin Gulick, Jr. visits parishes weekly throughout the Diocese of Virginia, baptizing, confirming, receiving members into the body of Christ, preaching and performing the duties of a pastoral leader. On May 4, Bishop Ted, as he is better known, performed his episcopal duties at St. Luke's, laying his hands on the heads of the confirmands, celebrating the Eucharist during the service and indulging in an obligatory barbecue platter afterward in the parish hall.

How did Bishop Ted discern his call to the priesthood? His roundabout answer informs our own struggle with the discernment process about our gifts and talents. There is no straight path, and there is never just one event or moment where it all becomes clear. There are many moments and many experiences along the way that factor into discerning our call. We need to remain open so we recognize what is important.

Bishop Ted is a life-long Episcopalian. His childhood was spent in a rural area, only a half-mile from the church he attended regularly. Being part of a church family had a huge impact on his life and his faith. He recounted a story about his first significant spiritual experience. It involved an initiative launched in the '50's called "The Lord's Acre Project." His father went "whole hog," insisting the family raise a pig for market, with the proceeds donated to the program. Every day, Bishop Ted fed and cared for the pig while it unmercifully bit his ankles at every opportunity. It's an experience that he'll never forget, and it taught him some very valuable lessons about life, sacrifice and faith.

Bishop Ted credits the formation of his faith and subsequent calling to being fully integrated into the church community as

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## Four confirmed, two received during bishop's visit

*In advance of Bishop Gulick's visitation, St. Luke's clergy held a series of educational classes for those who were confirmed and received into the Episcopal Church earlier this month.*

On a recent Sunday this reporter attended a session and received a refresher on the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist. Each participant in the class prepares a statement about their spiritual journey. Guided by Tuck and Ketlen, they reflect on how Christ has entered their lives, and how they came to accept Him as their Savior. Members of the class presented their faith stories recently at Adult Forum.

Cheryl Fellenz told me that she stayed away from the church for a long time, and finally she realized that God sent her a disciple and an answer through a passage in the Bible. One day she felt as though she was called (or compelled) to go across town, where she discovered an open Bible. She knew instinctively exactly where to look upon the page to see the words, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Cheryl jubilantly adds, "And he did!"



Monica Phillips

and described herself as being out of her comfort zone when it came to writing a piece contemplating her spiritual journey. But she did share that it was interesting to reflect where changes have occurred in her life, and how Christ was present in those changes. She felt the exercise was valuable and she gained insight about her beliefs.

Kathryn and Mike Tindle have been attending St. Luke's

since their daughter Madison was little. Maddie is graduating from Virginia Tech this month. Mike and Kathryn remain active in St. Luke's youth ministry. Taking the confirmation class and exploring their faith has led to many interesting discussions between them and with coworkers as well as some time spent "Googling" for

Monica and Eric Phillips are participating in various St. Luke ministries. Eric is serving on the vestry, and Monica is a choir member as well as being active in youth ministry. For Monica, being received into the Episcopal Church provides a common ground for them as a couple, knowing that their marriage is grounded in faith. They feel they are securing their future by exploring and declaring their faith, finding the right community in which to grow, and dedicating their time and talents as members of the body of Christ. As a trained, professional engineer Monica frequently writes reports filled with facts,



Mike and Kathryn Tindle

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Bishop Ted Gulick chats with parishioner Ben Wilmot and Elaine Moore.

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answers to questions posed by the clergy, or queries raised by their own curiosity. They raise thought-provoking questions about their faith, and you should talk with them to help you hone your arguments about your beliefs!

During the 1.5-hour class time on that Sunday, Tuck led the students through a discussion of the Rite of Confirmation and the Baptismal Covenant. What does it mean to be baptized? What does it really mean to be confirmed? When he directed us to find page 857 in the Book of Common Prayer, where the Catechism is located, a few of the class members expressed amazement in locating answers to some of the questions they were asked to fill out in their course leaflet. They discovered a review of our common beliefs and the foundation of our community in Christ.

While answers to our core Episcopal beliefs can be found “in the back of the book”, we live out our faith in community and actions. Part of our work as Christians is how we connect by proclaiming the Good News. Listening to the teachings and the discussions, I realized that attending a confirmation class periodically might be a good practice to stay focused and grounded.

Make sure you attend the Adult Forum to hear their faith stories. Take the time to reflect how you have accepted Christ into your life. Welcome the confirmands into the congregation, as we walk the path of faith together. — *Marjy Jones*

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a very young child. By the age of 11, he played the organ for two churches, tapping into his love of and gift for music. Bishop Ted spoke about involving kids in the faith community. He believes that children's capacity for faith and leadership is so much larger than they are able to exercise. His faith community took him seriously, and allowed him to make significant contributions while he was young. He urges us to get children passionately involved, since they are capable of so much more than we know. Not only are children formed by the community, but children help form the community through their own gifts of imagination and their own way of being persons of faith.

Understanding the importance of the gifts of children, and finding ways to allow them to express their faith at a young age led Bishop Ted to the priesthood.

Bishop Ted has a long history with Shrine Mont and Episcopal summer camps. From the age of 16 through his years at seminary, Bishop Ted was encouraged by Churchill Gibbons, the priest on the mountain, to discern a call to ministry. He experienced the depth, and the breadth and the diversity of the Episcopal faith in the summer camps. He has never left Episcopal

camping, and just last summer was called to Shrine Mont to confirm three campers. He's also discovered and recruited many diocesan leaders through the camping programs, a significant achievement.

Bishop Ted offered some advice to help individuals to discern their gifts. He firmly believes that God focuses us through our lack of talents just as much as the ones we possess. He views the world as a place where we are all interdependent. Bishop Ted admits that he personally cannot fix a leaky faucet, but he does possess the talent to call a plumber who has the appropriate set of skills! God gave us gifts and talents – just not *all* of them! We fixate and overthink our gifts, and don't necessarily ponder our limitations. Meditating on “All Gifts, No Deficits” can be soul killing. He reflected that as a young man in high school he did not play on the football team due to a lack of athleticism. However, he excelled in animal husbandry, and won many awards at the fair, proof that his talent was merited. Bishop Ted encourages us to embrace the fact that God has gifted and limited us to help us be a productive member of an interdependent community. He leaves us with a refreshing and thought-provoking way to discern our calling. — *Marjy Jones*

**WEAR RED**

**Pentecost Sunday,**

**June 8, 10 a.m.**

**Mount Vernon Community Park**

**8042 Fairfax Road, Alexandria**