



# Canterbury Tales

Roanoke, Virginia

Volume 23, Issue 6

November-December 2018

## A WORD FROM THE PULPIT

*Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?*

S. Matthew 11:3

What is your idea of what the Messiah should be; what image comes to mind. Fortunately for us, we have the luxury of 20/20 hind-sight. However, the followers of Christ, in His time, did not, other than the prophecies of scripture, giving a description of how what the Messiah would be. Isaiah gives a good description of the actions of the Messiah; he will heal the deaf, cure the blind to see, preach the good news, and bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and to release from darkness those who were present in the absence of the spiritual light. Isaiah also gives a great description of what the Messiah will be like; from Isa 40:11, "He will tend His flock like a shepherd, lift up the lambs into His arms, carry them close to His heart, and gently lead all followers." (Sounds like Christ to me.)

In S. Matthew 11:3 we read the question from S. John's disciples "*Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?*" John's question has been a puzzle to theologians and Biblical scholars from the very earliest times. Perhaps the premise of the question is that John's faith has wavered. Many questions were raised by John's question; were his expectations of the Messiah not being fulfilled? After all "*The unfruitful trees had not been cut down, the grain had not been winnowed, nor the chaff burned, nor should he see any visible tendency toward these results.*" Had John, in his prison cell, forgotten who this man, Jesus, was? The question could have come from a dawning faith, or a sense of doubt. John was in prison and the waiting fretted his soul. Jesus did not

fulfill either the hopes of the Messiah as the nation interpreted scripture (a conquering, mighty king and warrior along the lines of David), or the picture that John had. "Where was the axe at the root of the tree?" Or where was the "consuming fire?"

Did so great a prophet not know his God? He had foretold the coming of the Messiah. While teaching and preaching in the desert, John had recognized Jesus from those standing in the midst of the crowd. And, when he saw Jesus coming toward him, John cried out, "*behold the Lamb of God, behold him that taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.*" After Jesus came up from the Jordan River, John stated, "*I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*" John, as confessor, had venerated Jesus before men. And, as scriptures tell us when Mary came to visit with her cousin Elizabeth, she was pregnant with Jesus, and while still in his mother's womb, John leaped for joy,. Even in the womb, John knew his Messiah, the Lamb of God.

John is now languishing in prison for months, and his disappointment was natural; he wanted reassurance, and perhaps he had hoped that he could also urge Jesus to intensify His own actions.

John's disciples were like most of the Jews at that time, they were expecting a warrior, an earthly king to rid them, once and for all, from this foreign

invader, Rome, and any future invader and to restore the nation of Israel to its former glory. After all, the Messiah was to come from the lineage of the greatest King of Israel, King David. While David was on the throne, Israel prospered and no enemy ever overtook their nation. Israel was a power to be reckoned with as David sat at the helm of that nation. Therefore, it was only natural for the people to expect a warrior, a conquering king such as they had in David.

However, Jesus was certainly not preaching fire and brimstone, there were no plans being made to overthrow Herod or the Romans. Instead, Jesus was preaching love, conversion of heart, forgiveness of enemies and inviting sinners to repent. And He was certainly not scaring the masses into repenting.

We should remember that the clearest sign of the Messiah's coming is not vengeance, but love and goodness, *"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing . . ."*

Jesus did not come in a cloud of fire or in a storm, attended by a host of angels. He came as a little baby, humble, meek and needy. What a wondrous miracle when we now know that the little baby in a manger, the little baby who tugged at the heart strings of Mary and Joseph now tug at our heart strings to save the world from its sins.

Jesus did not answer their question directly, but instead went on with His works of grace; healing, raising the dead, and preaching the kingdom of God, so that these actions would be a more powerful and effective testimony to John's followers than mere words. Jesus did not work these miracles to satisfy the curiosity of the skeptics, but to strengthen the wavering faith of all who were present. Jesus was revealing to John's followers the fulfillment of the prophecy foretold in Isaiah. He told John's disciples to go back to him and give an account of what they had witnessed, that the prophecies were being fulfilled and that people's lives were being changed. Jesus' answer was an invitation to John to, perhaps, reconsider his description of the kingdom, for the Messiah might come through love rather than through violent judgment.

John's doubt was and could be perhaps a foreshadow of our own doubts. Most of us have, or perhaps some of us are still experiencing doubts and we need to be assured constantly of the hope found in

Christ's love, grace and mercy. He knows we will sometimes doubt because of our human nature. We might ask, is this the Christ? What do we wish in God's true Messiah? Are we impatient, are our expectations in error?

Even the Church sometimes seems impotent over the forces of evil. But, like John the Baptist, our task is to keep living out our faith day by day, to spread the Gospel and to trust that the Lord Jesus is also blessing us for our faithfulness. We are to be steadfast and faithful as Christians, and to adhere to the faith and truth given to us through God's Word, even with all the evil and persecution surrounding us. We are to constantly and consistently seek the divine support and encouragement found in scripture, and to draw on the strength from God through His Word. Without knowledge of God's scriptures, we can easily be led astray.

As John's two disciples leave, Christ make sure all present knew that John was not like the reeds that wavered in the winds. He was no weather vane who took his directions from the changing wind or political currents; he stood fast against the stream. Are we a weather vane, changing with each new political direction that the wind blows, as our society has caused to be in the mainstream of our thinking, or are we steadfast in our faith, in our trust in the one who came as a baby to reconcile God's people to Him and the one who comes in the day of judgment to gather up His sheep.

In light of all the evilness in this fallen world, we might be tempted to ask, "is Jesus the real deal?" In all that is happening to us and around us we might become discouraged and despaired. Probably, at one time or another, we have cried out, "O God give me a sign so that I know things will be alright." Well, He did give us a sign, He gave all mankind a sign; a star in the East sky to lead three men to a baby boy born in a manger over 2000 years ago, who now leads us back to God the Father. What greater sign than this one?

*"Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?"* asks John. No, we do not need to seek any other; Jesus Christ is the one true God, our Lord and Savior!

AMEN +

## FROM THE VESTRY

St Thomas of Canterbury  
Anglican Catholic Church

### Some Items from the September and October Vestry Meetings

#### SEPTEMBER VESTRY MEETING.

Present: Fr. Don Poff, Thomas Eldridge (Sr. Warden), John Shields (Jr. Warden), Chris Powell, Beth Rutherford, Richard Tomlinson, & Katie Eldridge (recording).

Opening Prayer by Fr. Don at 12:15pm.

Reading of minutes: Motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes with changes made and to approve minutes by Richard, 2nd by John. Motion carried.

Rector's report: Fr. Don Poff

- a. Visitations discussed
- b. Feeding America fundraiser went well.
- c. BRWC baby bottle fundraiser raised over \$200.
- d. BRWC Banquet: Thursday, September 27
- e. Blessing of the Animals: **Saturday, October 13th @ 1-2:30pm**
- f. Pre-Advent Retreat: @ St. Peters, details to follow
- g. Status of Rector - His son has surgery on Oct. 2nd; Fr. Don will be gone from October 1st-7th to help his son. The Vestry would like for him to take off time to help his son recover from this major surgery; Fr. Don requested until the 14th. Motion to approve that request by Tom, 2nd by John. Motion carried.

Hospitality - The hospitality committee wants to encourage people to bring what they can for Sunday coffee hour; several people have been donating money for coffee hour, which is lovely.

Next meeting October 28

#### OCTOBER VESTRY MEETING

Present: Fr. Don Poff, Thomas Eldridge (Sr. Warden), John Shields (Jr. Warden), Beth Rutherford, Richard Tomlinson, & Katie Eldridge (recording).

Opening Prayer by Fr. Don at 12:14pm.

Reading of minutes: Motion to approve the minutes by Richard, 2nd by John. Motion carried.

Preliminary budget for 2019 - we discussed the rector's and organist's salaries, the music fund, will discuss budget further in the next meeting

Junior warden report (John Shields):

- a. Richard put in new light bollards at the main entrance to the church
- b. We already have the new HVAC units installed in the Sunday school wing and in the narthex.
- c. The sanctuary update: Woods believes that they can do the HVAC work without cutting into the ceiling, but this may change as their work progresses.

Rector's report (Fr. Don):

- a. Visitations - Fr. Don took off some time for his son Chris' surgery, but he continued to check in on parishioners over the phone.
- b. Vestry candidates discussed (Chris and Richard are going off of the Vestry)
- c. Discussed how to prepare for Annual Meeting

d. Outreach Activities: meet @ the Sweet Donkey coffee house on Thursdays at 10:30am-12:00pm for informal morning prayer and Bible study - we keep the door open to encourage new people to join us

e. Treasurer position open – still working on candidates  
f. Next meeting: November 11<sup>th</sup>  
g. Annual Meeting: November 25<sup>th</sup>

#### FROM THE ALTAR GUILD (Diane Poff)

There is a need for more ladies to serve on the altar guild. This is a ministry in the church where the ladies can be very close to Christ as they prepare

the elements that will become the body and blood of our Lord. If you feel you have a calling to work with the altar guild, please speak with Diane Poff.

#### FROM THE HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE (Beth Rutherford)

Remember that on the first and third Sundays of the month all parishioners are invited to bring items for coffee hour. On the other Sundays,

there are still opportunities for you to sign up for coffee hour.

#### FROM THE FLOWER COMMITTEE (Joan Witt)

Time to order poinsettias. If you would like to order one or more please give the information to Joan or place your order in the alms basin. The cost is \$15.

Also, you can now sign up for altars for 2019. Please give that information to Joan, also. Remember, altars flowers are now \$45.

#### FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

The choir has begun another season of providing wonderful music for our services. We are fortunate to have Jane Vest with us every other Sunday.

#### BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

We are happy to announce the birthdays of St. Thomas' parishioners, and hope that news of significant anniversaries will also be called in, so we may post them in Canterbury Tales.

##### **NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

03 – Jo Hoover

##### **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

11 – Jackson Todd

11 – Natalie Tomlinson

12 – Chris Powell

14 – Richard Raymond

## FROM THE PARISHIONERS

### FROM "YE ED"

#### THE TRANSFIGURATION

Luke 9:28

With Jesus to the mountain's height  
Went Peter, James and John,  
His features shone with holy light,  
Most dread to look upon,  
Beside Him elder prophets stood,  
Moses the patriarch,  
Elias, fed on heavenly food  
By ravens from the Ark.

Then from the lowering clouds above  
A mighty voice boomed down  
"This is my Son, the King of Love,  
To Him shall be the crown!  
Hear Him—for out of mortal death  
Immortal shall He rise!"  
Then cleared away, as at one breath,  
The dull and misty skies.

But those disciples kept that sight  
Close-hidden in the breast,  
How Jesus stood in glory-light,  
God's Son made manifest—  
Great signs and wonders saw they there,  
Great powers would soon be given  
To such as kept, with fast and prayer,  
The mandate out of heaven.

10-28-18

## UPCOMING ACTIVITES

### UPCOMING EVENTS (Also see Calendar)

Every Thursday from 10:30 until noon we meet at the Sweet Donkey Coffee, in South Roanoke near Carilion Hospital, for Bible study. This location is used as a community outreach tool. See Fr. Don for info.

Nov. 4	All Saints Day (transferred)	W	
Nov. 11	Trinity 24	G	Vestry Meeting;

	Veterans Day (Former Armistice Day)		
Nov. 18	Trinity 25	G	Women of the Church Thank Offering
Nov. 22	Thanksgiving Day	W	
Nov. 25	Before Advent	G	Parish meeting.
Nov. 28-Dec 19	Beginning of our Advent Study <b>Each Wednesday</b> from 10:00am – 11:45 am beginning with Morning Prayer and again from 5:30 -7, starting with Evening prayer at 5:30.		
Dec. 2	Advent 1	V	Lessons and Carols
Dec. 6	Annual Christmas Carol sing-along		
Dec. 9	Advent 2	V	
Dec. 16	Advent 3	V	(Food box collection)
Dec. 23	Advent 4	V	
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	W	6:00 pm
Dec. 25	Christmas Day	W	9:30 am
Dec. 31	Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury	R	

## WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

### THANK OFFERING

We will be taking up the Women' Thank Offering on Sunday, November 18. This money goes to the Williamson Road Area Ministers Association. Checks are to be made out to the "Women of St. Thomas." ALL are encouraged to participate

### CHRISTMAS FOOD BOXES

The Christmas food boxes will be in the Narthex from Sunday, November 25 through Sunday December 16. The food goes to "Feeding America, Southwest Virginia. Please open your hearts up for those who are less fortunate than we.

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*A Traditional Parish for Contemporary Living*

# November 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 ALL SAINTS DAY	2 ALL SOULS DAY	3
4 ALL SAINTS DAY (XFERRED) <b>9:15</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC (White)	5	6  <b>7:00 pm</b> - ACNW	7	8  <b>10:30 – 12:00</b> Bible study-Coffee shop	9	10
11 TRINITY 24 <b>9:15</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC (Green)	12	13	14	15  <b>10:30 – 12:00</b> Bible study-Coffee shop	16	17
18 TRINITY 25 <b>9:15</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC (Green) <b>WOC Thank offering</b>	19	20	21	22  <b>9:30 am</b> Thanksgiving Day Service (White)	23	24
25 SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT <b>9:15</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC Parish Meeting (Green) <b>WOC Food collection</b>	26	27	28 <b>10:00</b> MP <b>10:30</b> Bible Study  <b>6:00</b> EP <b>6:30</b> Bible study	29  <b>10:30 – 12:00</b> Bible study-Coffee shop	30	

ACNW – Airlee Court Neighborhood Watch; HC – Holy Communion, SUVCW – Sons of Union Veterans of Civil War, MP – Morning Prayer, VW – Valley Writers, EP – Evening Prayer, BS – Bible study, WOC – Women of the Church

# December 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	31					1
2 ADVENT 1  <b>9:30</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC (Violet) <b>WOC Food collection</b>	3	4  <b>7 pm</b> ACNW	5 <b>10:00</b> MP <b>10:30</b> Bible study  <b>6:00</b> EP <b>6:30</b> Bible study	6 <b>10:30 – 12:00</b> Bible study-Coffee shop  <b>6:00</b> pm – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Christmas Carol sing-along	7	8
9 ADVENT 2  <b>9:30</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC (Violet) <b>WOC Food collection</b>	10	11	12 <b>10:00</b> MP <b>10:30</b> Bible study  <b>6:00</b> EP <b>6:30</b> Bible study	13  <b>10:30 – 12:00</b> Bible study-Coffee shop	14	15
16 ADVENT 3  <b>9:30</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC (Violet) <b>WOC Food collection</b>	17	18	19 <b>10:00</b> MP <b>10:30</b> Bible study  <b>6:00</b> EP <b>6:30</b> Bible study	20 <b>10:30 – 12:00</b> Bible study-Coffee shop  <b>6:30</b> pm – VW	21	22
23 ADVENT 4  <b>9:30</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC (Violet)	24  <b>6:00</b> pm Christmas Eve Service (White)	25  <b>9:30</b> am Christmas Day Service (White)	26  No classes	27  No classes	28	29
30 – FEAST OF ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY  <b>9:30</b> Christian Ed <b>10:30</b> HC (RED)	31					

**ACNW** – Airlee Court Neighborhood Watch, **HC** – Holy Communion, **SUVCW** – Sons of Union Veterans of Civil War, **MP** – Morning Prayer, **EP** – Evening Prayer, **VW** – Valley Writers, **BS** – Bible Study, **WOC** – Women of the Church