

THE SHIELD

Summer 2021



THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Dear Family and Friends of St George's,

On April 18th, we dedicated the icon of Saint George inside the church. It is now displayed on the wall beside the Baptism of Jesus window.

An icon is a flat picture – a painting actually – that depicts God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, a saint, or an angel (and sometimes more than one of these). The word “icon” comes from Greek and means “image” or “resemblance.”

An icon is more than just a painting. It is created to be an object of devotion, a focal point for our prayers, much like the cross on the altar. It is not a decoration, but a means of making it easier to communicate with God through prayer. An icon draws us into a place of closeness with God and the person depicted in it. For this reason, it is not correct to say that an icon is “painted” – it is “written,” just like a gospel or epistle. It is a parable or inspirational story conveyed in a picture.



Our icon of Saint George shows him in armor. This is appropriate because, as far as we know, he was a Roman soldier in the early fourth century. He was a member of the Praetorian Guard, an elite unit who protected the emperor and carried out his most difficult missions. He was also a Christian, which put him – along with hundreds of other Roman soldiers and officers – on the wrong side of Emperor Diocletian, a former soldier who was devoted to the ancient gods of Rome.

It is thought that George was decapitated on April 23, 303 A.D. in Diocletian's capital city of Nicomedia (present-day Turkey). The sarcophagus of our patron saint is in the Greek Orthodox Church of Hagios Georgios in Lod, Israel, which was built in 1870 on the

site of a basilica where his bones had lain for 1500 years.

Diocletian began a persecution to rid the military of followers of Jesus. This was the last of the persecutions of Christians; a year later Diocletian fell into ill health, abdicated, and was followed by Constantine, the emperor who ended the persecution of Christians by declaring Christianity as a legal religion in the Roman Empire and then was himself baptized.

As I said in my sermon on April 18, the story of Saint George is very similar to that of Saint Patrick or Saint Nicholas – there was probably a real person, but his memory is confused by many legends, some of which are unbelievable and a few are even impossible (because they happened at a time when he could not have been alive).

In 1311, the English king, Edward III, used the soldier-saint George as his rallying cry during the Hundred Years' War, and crusaders from England emblazoned his cross on their shields, cementing George's role as a patron saint of England.

Our icon was written last fall by a Dominican priest, Father Guy Mackey, a friend of Father Tom. It is based on a fourteenth-century Byzantine icon of Saint George that is in a museum in Athens. The only difference is that the cross on the shield in our icon reflects the modern style, which is also part of the British flag.

This is the only icon in our sanctuary, and I hope that it will serve as a stimulus for prayer and devotion. It is not important whether George actually slayed a dragon (an 11th-century story). The dragon has long been depicted in Christian art as a representation of the power of evil, and George is an example of a Christian fighting against sin and evil, even unto death.

What is important is that George – the Christian soldier in the army of pagan Rome – remained steadfast in his faith in Jesus, even enduring many tortures trying to break him. His firm faith, and his willingness to die for that faith, are powerful reminders that we are all called to witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Our Lord, no matter the personal cost to us.

I hope that you will take a moment to study the icon of Saint George, and perhaps to find inspiration in it.

May God bless and keep us all!

Father Tom +

DEDICATION OF THE SAINT GEORGE ICON + Sunday, 18 April 2021

Christ is the icon of the invisible God; all things were created through him and for him.

℣. The Word became flesh:

℟. And dwelt among us.

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY GOD, whose Son our Savior manifested your glory in his flesh, and sanctified the outward and visible to be a means to perceive realities unseen: Accept, we pray, this representation of **Saint George**; and grant that as we look upon it, our hearts may be drawn to things that can be seen only by the eye of faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[This prayer is from the Book of Occasional Services 2003.]

O LORD OUR GOD, who gave to your servant **George** grace to lay aside the fear of man, and to be faithful even unto death: Grant that we, unmindful of worldly honor, may fight the wrong, uphold your rule, and serve you to our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[This prayer was prayed at the funeral of Prince Philip on April 17, 2021.]



FATHER TOM'S BIBLE STUDY

The expression “throwing the baby out with the bath water” applies especially to the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in our Protestant Episcopal tradition.

Henry VIII wanted a divorce. The Pope refused to grant it, so in 1538, Henry declared that he was the Supreme Head of the Church of England, and that the Pope had no authority over him or the country.

But Henry was at heart a devout Catholic, so he was careful not to go too far. In 1539, Parliament passed *The Act of Six Articles*, in which Henry preserved such “catholic” practices as priestly celibacy, confession, and so-called “private” masses for the dead.

Henry’s son Edward VI was greatly influenced by Protestant theologians, who wanted all vestiges of Catholicism banned. So in 1547, all shrines, images, relics, stained glass, statues, and mention of the saints was made punishable by imprisonment and even death. And in 1548, ashes on Ash Wednesday and palms on Palm Sunday were also banned.

Gradually over the succeeding reigns of Mary and Elizabeth the First, the rubber-band effect of England going back and forth to “catholic” practices gradually evened out and quieted down.

Finally, by the mid-1600s, “Anglicanism” as a recognizable denomination of Christianity was visible. The Prayer Book was restored, and it contained the calendar of saints from the Catholic Church prior to Henry, which included feast-days for Mary.

However, Roman devotions to Mary (and those of the Greek Orthodox Church, as well) were minimized.

The praying of the Rosary, and any prayers honoring Mary or asking for her intercession were frowned upon and quickly died away.

In the rush to “protestantize” the Church of England, the mother of Jesus became a minor character in the long cast of saints and martyrs.

Until the mid-1800s...

A movement called variously “The Oxford Movement” or the unusual word “*Tractarianism*” (because they spread their ideas using small printed booklets called *tracts*) began around 1833 at Oxford University.

Over the next 30 years, the movement gained popularity, although there was also strong opposition to it from the more “low church” Anglicans. Finally, what we call today “Anglo-Catholic” or “high church” was permitted in the Church of England, and also, much more gradually, in our own Episcopal Church – in the 1870s, for example, our House of Bishops attempted to ban the use of altar candles and vestments.

Today, the terms “high church” and “low church” seem outdated. We are all just *Episcopalians*. Some of us are more conservative or liberal than others, but there is no formal definition of divisions. Our differences over church decorations or clergy vestments may or may not reflect our feelings on social or political issues.

But to return to the bath water, an indifference to the mother of Jesus is almost universal in our Episcopal Church. However, there are pockets of renewed interest in Mary’s role in Jesus’ life.

I, as a Dominican, belong to a world-wide Order of Anglicans who recognize that Mary



played an important role in her son's life and ministry, and who honor her in various ways.

But wait – isn't Mary a saint, just like all the other saints? In other words, what makes her special or more important than Peter, James, and John, or Paul, Timothy, and Silas. Or, for that matter, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?

After all, she didn't write a Gospel, although in 1896, an ancient scroll was discovered in Cairo and taken to Berlin for translation. It contained a "Gospel of Mary," but scholars disagree as to which "Mary" was meant, since there were several women by that name in the gospels.

As far as we know, Mary didn't die for her faith in Jesus. She didn't travel the known world, spreading the Good News of the Kingdom.

So, what makes Mary more significant in our faith than any other saint?



I think the answer is three-fold.

First, Mary is the fifth most often mentioned person in the New Testament. She must have been important to the early Christians for them to have had so much to say about her in the scriptures that they wrote.

Second, she was present at so many of the events in Jesus' life: his incarnation, birth, circumcision, epiphany, presentation in the Temple, first miracle, and crucifixion.

And third, on the cross, Jesus spoke to John, the Beloved Disciple, and said, "Behold your mother." He was entrusting the care of Mary to the disciple who was his closest friend. So often, Jesus' words in the gospels are addressed not only to the people who were right there with him, but also to all of us who read them today. I believe "Behold your mother" applies to us, too.

In our Prayer Book calendar of Saints, Mary gets more "major" feast-days than anyone else: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Purification, and her day of death (August 15).

And yet, we hardly ever mention her, and since her feast-days usually fall on days other than Sundays, we also don't come to church to observe them.

This might be a good time to mention why we care about "saints" at all. We believe that they are given to us as gifts from God to show us that it is possible to live a life of devotion and holiness, even while still knowing that they are sinners like all the rest of us.

More than anything else, the saints serve as examples of how to love God and neighbor. Some of them did that by quiet, almost invisible acts of devotion, charity, sacrifice, and love. Some died for their faith, and others lived long lives in which they preached, taught, and demonstrated how to be righteous servants of God.

Saints do not have any power to make things happen; only God can save us, and only God can cause or prevent events in our lives.

But saints can and do one important thing: they *intercede* for us. That means they pray for us, or perhaps they are able to speak directly to God on our behalf.

In my life as a priest, many people have asked me to pray for them, and I always do. But I know that I am a sinner, and that my prayers are really not any better or more effective than anyone else's. Yet, it is somehow helpful, to those who ask, to know that I am praying for them.

Many people remember others in their lives – perhaps a grandparent, teacher, priest, or friend – who are now dead. And they may call upon those people to ask God to help them in their lives.

We do not believe that the prayers of a saint are any better than anyone else's, or that God listens to them first, or more often, or is more likely to do what they ask. But it gives us comfort to know that they still love us enough to speak for us to God, to add their prayers to ours or to ask for things that we may feel unable or unworthy to ask.

The Communion of the Saints, the Great Cloud of Witnesses, the Heroes of the Faith, the Holy Women and Holy Men whom we remember and honor, are always there and always willing to pray with us and for us. And the mother of Jesus is perhaps one who receives the most requests.

In the Rosary, I say one prayer over and over.

The first half simply quotes the Gospel of Luke: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee" – the words of the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation; "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus" – the words of Mary's cousin Elizabeth at the Visitation.

The second half is a request that Mary intercede for us: "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." Not "save us" or "bring us to heaven" – just "pray for us." Mary surely prayed for Jesus as he hung dying on the cross, so her association with prayers at our hour of death is clear.

I cannot imagine my prayer life without this invocation of the mother of Jesus, and I hope that, as we celebrate the month of May and all the joy of spring-time, we will all remember Mary's life, her love for Jesus, and God's love for us in giving her to us.

TRINITY SUNDAY AND THE NICENE CREED

One of the first big theological battles in Christianity took place in the early 300s. It represented the culmination of a long debate about the nature of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus never referred to himself as the Son of God, although people talking about him did use that language. He called himself "the Son of Man" and sometimes "Son of David." By the time the gospels were written (50 to 100 A.D.) it was clearly a part of Christian belief that Jesus was God's Son, although what that meant was not specified. The Gospel of Mark begins with the simple statement, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." [Mark 1:1 NRSV]



Frequently, Jesus was given that title by those who opposed him. Satan uses the words when tempting Jesus in the desert; various demons about to be exorcised by Jesus call him that, and the Temple authorities demand to know if that is who he is.

Paul's theology, though, made it clear that the early Christians believed that Jesus is the Son of God – see Romans 1:4 and 5:10. And the author of the Book of Revelation said, "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God..." [Revelation 2:18]

Still, the question of just what is meant by "the Son of God" was still a problem for Christians. Converts from Judaism were very clear in their belief in One God (monotheism), so in their minds, Jesus was God's Son, but he was distinct from God and not a "co-God."

Paul, however, used many expressions that indicated that Jesus was at least equal to God: "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." [Romans 10:9] "at the name of Jesus every knee should

bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” [Philippians 2:10-11]

Some Bible scholars think that Paul was actually declaring that Jesus was the one true “Lord” (*Kyrios* in Greek)—a title that the Roman emperors claimed for themselves—rather than setting Jesus as an equal to the Jewish God.

The Jewish notion of God’s Spirit was simply that the Spirit (*Shekinah* in Hebrew) was a manifestation of God, a way that God acts in human lives, and not a distinct entity. The New Testament mentions the Spirit four times as frequently as the Old Testament, even though it is less than one-third as long. Clearly, Christians saw the Spirit as more than just a way for God to speak or act—the Spirit had a distinct role, apart from Jesus and God.

Confusion and controversy boiled quietly until the year 325. By then, Christianity was the official religion of the Roman Empire, and bishops were free to speak openly about their faith. A result of that freedom was open disagreement on the nature of God and the roles of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Although there were many opinions, the Christian world was most divided into two major camps. The followers of a bishop named Arius insisted that there was only God, and that Jesus was “adopted” as God’s Son and raised from the dead by his Father.

The Emperor Constantine didn’t like the battles among Christians, so he summoned the world’s bishops to the town of Nicaea in Turkey and sat them down until they could agree on something. (Constantine was not a very devout Christian, and he cared more about ending the disputes than about what was decided.)

The outcome of the Council of Nicaea, which was the first world-wide council of Christians, spent many words expressing that Jesus is *God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father*. If you’ve ever wondered about those words, they are an attempt to resolve a whole set of contradictory beliefs about Jesus.

The followers of Arius argued on for 50 years but lost the battle. However, they continued to insist on what they believed for another 400 years.

At that point, we had God the Father and Jesus the Son of God—both are God, equally and eternally. The original Nicene Creed simply ended with the words, “And we believe in the Holy Spirit.” No effort was made to explain that further, and there was no indication that the Holy Spirit is also God, equal to the Father and the Son.

That was taken care of in the year 381, at the Council of Constantinople, where the additional sentence about the Spirit became part of the Nicene Creed: *the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father; with the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified; he has spoken through the prophets*.

Did you notice something missing there? “Who proceeds from the Father” doesn’t mention the Son. That was another point of argument among Christians. The Third Council of Toledo (Spain) in 589, made the words, “and the Son” official, although there is still a lot of debate over whether they are theologically correct.

It took almost seven centuries for the Church to finalize the words of our Nicene Creed, and on Trinity Sunday, we do our best to understand what is unquestionably a sacred mystery—*Three in One and One in Three*.



PARISH & LITURGICAL CALENDAR

May 9	Sixth Sunday of Easter <i>Mothers Day</i>
May 13	Ascension Day
May 15	<i>Parish Work Day – 9 AM to Noon</i>
May 16	<i>Vestry Meeting – after the service</i>
May 23	Pentecost
May 30	Trinity Sunday
May 31	The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary <i>Memorial Day</i>
June 19	<i>Parish Work Day – 9 AM to Noon</i>
June 20	<i>Vestry Meeting – after the service</i>
June 20	Fourth Sunday After Pentecost <i>Fathers Day</i>
June 29	Feast of Saints Peter & Paul <i>12th Anniversary of Fr Tom's Ordination as Priest</i>
July 4	Sixth Sunday After Pentecost <i>Independence Day</i>
July 17	<i>Parish Work Day – 9 AM to Noon</i>
August 6	Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord
August 15	Feast of Saint Mary the Virgin (observed)
August 21	<i>Parish Work Day – 9 AM to Noon</i>
September 6	<i>Labor Day</i>

NOTE: All services are broadcast live on [our Facebook page](#) and also recorded for viewing at any time.



Information from Our Parish Nurse – Sharon Logsdon

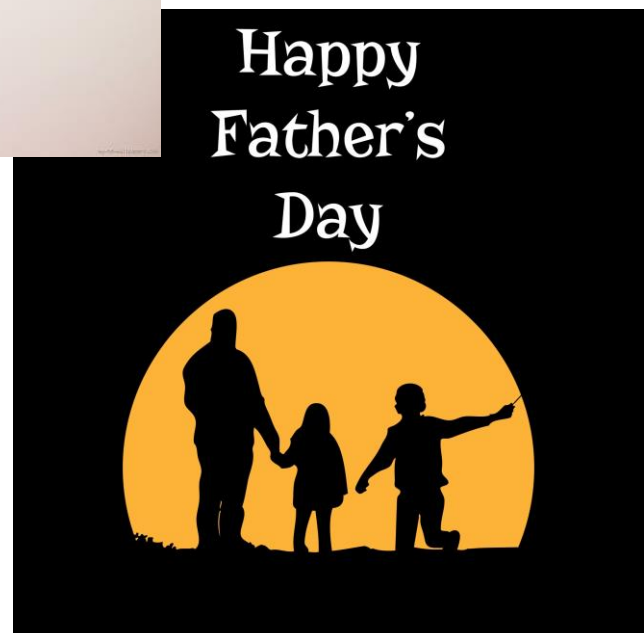
Current confirmed cases and deaths from COVID19

Allegany County cases
Confirmed 6,781
Deaths 206

Have you had your vaccine? The vaccine will help protect you and others from possible long-term medical problems and or death. Thank you for the continued use of masks and self-distancing while at any church functions and gatherings.

The Month of June is also **Alzheimer's Awareness Month**. All of us know someone with memory issues. Some of our memory issues are easy to explain; others have long term effects on family, home, and financial status. For information regarding Alzheimer's and things to look for or preplanning for persons care please see the table in the GYM I am available to help with doctor's appointments or home sitting as needed

Contact Sharon @ 301-520-6512



Saint George's Prayer List

Joshua Abbot
Ruth Beal
Porter Beard
Harold Bishop Jr
John Bridges
Rusty Bridges
Shirley Bridges
Bud Bridges
Dennis Carder
Emily Carnell
Jerome Cassidy
Ellen Jenkins Davis
Dawn Downey
Cindy Emmerick
Robert Flynn
Clarence Finzel
Rita Frankenberry
George Frankenberry Jr.
Charles Glass
Darrell & Mary Sue Glass
Jeff Hall
Evelyn Hausrath
Angela Hill
Judy Hudson
Tyler Kisamore
Grace Lepley
Carol McCleaf
Diana Michael
Elaine Miller
Carolyn Monahan
Frank Morgan
Janet Reynard
Henry Snyder
Sandra Swanger
Janie Taccino
Grayson Turano
John J. Watts, Sr



Prayer for the Sick

O God of heavenly powers, by the might of your command you drive away from our bodies all sickness and all infirmity: Be present in your goodness with your servants for whom we pray, that their weakness may be banished and their strength restored; and that, their health being renewed, they may bless your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Those Who Care for the Sick

Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit, that by their ministries the health of the community may be promoted and your creation glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Birthdays & Anniversaries



May

Birthdays

Elliott Stallings
 Myrna Lancaster
 Walker Geary
 Vicky Glass
 Kara Tummy
 Sue Hausrath
 Jeff Lewis
 Logan Smith
 Ronald Ellis
 Patti Femi
 Melanie Preston
 Robbie Weatherholt
 Susan Cripps
 Barbara Festerman
 Sam Kreiger
 Krista Barry
 Carla Geary
 J. Daniel Arnold
 Delany Downey
 Olivia Warne
 Beth McConn
 Eva Davis
 Michael Warne

Anniversaries

Robert & Jane Otto
 Carla & Brian Geary
 Patti & Johns Femi
 John & Gwen Watts
 Theresa & Denis Brion

June

Birthdays

Matthew McConn
 Mitchell McConn
 Lynda Folk
 Paige Geary
 Ellen Davis
 Michael Preston
 Joseph Winn
 Andrew Jacob Soles
 Alison Cline
 Edward Bridges
 Addison Preston
 Stacy Preston
 Marty O'Baker
 Russell Bridges, Jr.
 Robbie Festerman
 Craig Stevenson

Anniversaries

Jim & Hye Rice
 Eric & Krista Anna
 Michael & Melanie
 Preston
 Russell & Shirley
 Bridges

July

Birthdays

Jared Lee Clark
 Kim Bartholow
 Arthur Weatherholt
 Brad Tummy
 Carol Brown
 Hannah Johnson
 Krista Blank
 Irene Werner
 Christopher
 Festerman
 Mingi Sue Jenkins
 Jennifer Cripps
 Cadon Joseph Winn
 Elizabeth Webster
 Emily Ann Stallings
 Judy Branham
 Sydney Leigh Phillips
 Flannery Davis

Anniversaries

Ken & Stacy Preston
 Jim & Judy Branham

August

Birthdays

Harold Bishop, Jr
 Matt Logue
 Chris McConn
 Evelyn Hausrath
 Heather Lewis
 Claire Geary
 Faith O'Donnell
 Shirley Bridges
 Dawna Simpson
 Rob Johnson
 John Femi
 Henry Snyder, Jr.
 Karen Bonner
 Valerie Preston

Anniversaries

Shannon & Chris Davis
 Gail & Bob Krieger
 Holly & Mike Warne
 Dee & Marty O'Baker
 Carla & Thomas
 Kaufman
 Tom & Tammy Beal
 Judy & Tom Hudson

God's Blessings!

Saint George's Episcopal Church
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Contact Information

Links are active in PDF version only

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The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

www.episcopalmaryland.org
1-800-443-1399

The Anglican Communion

The Most Rev. and Right Honourable
Justin T. Welby, *105th Archbishop of Canterbury*

The Episcopal Church

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, *27th Presiding Bishop*

The Diocese of Maryland

The Right Rev. Eugene T. Sutton, *14th Bishop of Maryland*

The Right Rev. Robert W. Ihloff,
Assisting Bishop, 13th Bishop of Maryland

Parish Officers, Staff & Volunteers

Dee Stallings	Senior Warden, Organist, Vestryperson (2023) Treasurer of the Women of St George's
Jim Rice	Junior Warden, Worship Leader, Acolyte Leader, Vestryperson (2022)
Ken Preston	Treasurer, Vestryperson <i>ex officio</i>
Lynda Folk	Assistant Treasurer, Vestryperson (2022)
Peggy Hess	Registrar, Altar Guild, Eucharistic Visitor, Secretary of the Women of St George's, Vestryperson <i>ex officio</i>
Karen Bonner	Altar Guild Chairperson, President of the Women of St George's, Vestryperson (2023)
Sharon Logsdon	Parish Nurse, Eucharistic Visitor, Parish Secretary
Jeff Hall	Vestryperson (2024), Usher
Karen Preston	Vestryperson (2024), Parish Secretary, Altar Guild