

Stay Connected – 1st March 2026

Second Sunday of Lent

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: John 3: 1-17

Peter's Blurb

"Come to St. Mark's – not just a church but a family!"

Well! What a huge weekend this has been in the Anglican Church of Bermuda. We started on Saturday morning with the Funeral Mass for the late Archdeacon Arnold Hollis at St. James' Church in Sandys Parish. It was a moving occasion with many tributes paid to a fine man who had given his whole life to church. As with so many black Bermudian priests he had challenges getting welcomed in his homeland and worked many of his years abroad. Following his ordination in Barbados in 1959 he returned to Bermuda where he gave his first sermon as a Deacon at St. Mark's. He did not find favour in Bermuda, however, and was "encouraged" to seek a ministry in the UK where he served in several parishes in England before moving to various livings in the USA. His return to Bermuda in 1977 was, finally, as Rector of St. James Parish and he was later to become Archdeacon of Bermuda until his retirement. The funeral service led by the Right Reverend Bishop Nick Dill, took the form of a High Mass, complete with Incense and Holy Water (a bit too RC for my liking 🙄) and was indeed a fitting tribute to the late Archdeacon and his contribution to the community in so many ways. Bandsmen at his graveside played "Abide with me" – an appropriate farewell. May he rest in the Peace of the Lord!

The old saying "When one door closes, another door opens" could hardly be more appropriate as Saturday's action returned to St. Mark's in Smith's Parish at 4.00 pm for the Installation of Rev. Terry Hassell as our new Priest-in-Charge, a very popular choice and very welcomed. Bishop Nick was once again front and centre as he did the honours, ably assisted by Archdeacon John Stow.



No-one has sent me any pics – not many would have been in position to take them – so I have culled some "snips" from the video that was made of the service. I apologize for any imperfections. The video of the entire service can be viewed, if you should wish to do so, at https://www.youtube.com/live/3pdUjUzn7Ik?si=E0M_TKYI55eFUHrz

The sound quality is a little erratic but "c'est la vie"



Following the customary readings and a lively sermon by Bishop Nick the choir sang an anthem "Goodness of God"



Bishop Nick then proceeded with the official part of the business – the Licensing of the Rev. Terry Hassell as Priest-in-Charge at St. Mark's Anglican Church, Smith's Parish and went on to bless Fr. Terry and present him to the gathering.



The action then shifted to Archdeacon John as it was his task to show Fr. Terry the significant parts of the church of which he was now taking charge. First was the entrance to the church where Fr. Terry was able to ring the steeple bell to announce to the world that he had arrived. Then it's back to the lectern where Fr. Terry leads the gathering in prayers.



Following these – shall we call them perambulations – we get down to the "Presentations". First up is young Ellie and Olivia Robinson, members of Junior Church, who presented Fr. Terry with a Bible so that "he can tell them God's story." Next up are Kaori and Kiera Trott, Readers, who present a Vessel of Water that he may be "one who baptizes into the community of Christ". Then it is the turn of Guild President, Pansy Nichols, who presents Fr. Terry with a Vessel of Oil "for the anointing of the Holy Spirit for wholeness of life". Synod Representative,



Gabriel Cabrall next presents Fr. Terry with a copy of the Canons of the Diocese to guide him in his “work with the committees and organizations of the church.” And, so that Fr. Terry will be able to manage his comings in and his goings out, our Churchwardens Nicki Horan and Lisa-Dawn Johnston present him with the keys to the Church in order that he can “let the doors of this place be open to everyone”.



Canon Anne Hines presents a Prayer Book so that he may “be among us as a person of prayer”. And last, but by no means least, Eucharistic Minister, Rochelle Simons presents Fr. Terry with the elements of Bread and Wine which he is to “share with us and with the whole church.”

Then, finally, with a few more words, Bishop Nick blesses the event and Fr. Terry is our new Priest-in-Charge!



All of these proceedings took place in front of a capacity congregation – not spare seat for love nor money. And it was a happy service with much love and approbation from all quarters. The choice of Fr. Terry as St. Mark's new Priest-in-Charge was obviously a huge success which bodes well for our church.

Following the service everyone gathered in the Parish Hall for an excellent light buffet and a glass of wine. The end of an interesting but highly satisfying day in church.

And then comes Sunday! Finally, Fr. Terry is leading his first service at St. Mark's Church as its Priest-in-Charge – leading his own parish! One can only imagine what that must feel like. A triumphant fulfillment of his calling? A culmination of all the years of study and training are completed – what a relief? A sense of joy at his life-long goal finally having been realized? Heady stuff! Highly emotional! And St. Mark's rejoices. We are fortunate and blessed as we welcome Fr. Terry and pledge our support to him and his family in his ministry amongst us.

Needless to say, Fr. Terry's first "official" service was very well attended. I was given to understand that members of HTC lobbied for their own service to be delayed to 11 am instead of their usual 10.30 so that they could attend St. Mark's to honour Fr. Terry who had worked and trained at Holy Trinity for several years. That in itself is a testament to the man. Their loss is our gain! We counted 85+ communicants which is about a third higher than usual. Let us all rejoice with Fr. Terry, Nicole and their family.

This is the day the Lord has made – let us rejoice and be glad in it!

And that's it for this week. Nuff said! Stay safe!

Peter

Guild News

The Guild's next membership meeting will take place on Sunday, 1st March in the Hall schoolroom following post-service refreshments. The guild will welcome any new faces who might be interested in the Guild's contributions to church social life and outreach to those who may be in need. It is a rewarding contribution to the wider parish community as well as a great way to get to know fellow church members.

Fr. Terry's First Words

March 1, 2026 - The Second Sunday of Lent

Gospel Reading: John 3:1-17

Sermon Topic: "When Faith Is Born"

It could have taken place in the shadows of a Jerusalem back alley, or perhaps atop a dark and secluded rooftop, or maybe far enough outside the city gates and under the cover of darkness, but somewhere hidden from public scrutiny, during the week of Passover Feast celebrations, Jesus has been summoned, in secret, by a man who has extreme prestige and who wielded great power and influence.

The gospel of John says he is a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish council (the Sanhedrin). He is a powerful religious leader and teacher. He is known for being the final interpreter of the Torah. He is one of the overseers of Temple practices. He had the authority to declare you a false teacher or blasphemer and could expel you from synagogue life. In other words, as a citizen of this deeply Jewish religious society, he was the HPIC (the Head Pharisee in Charge). The late Rev. Jesse Jackson, would proclaim, "He is somebody." Now, let's not overlook several vital pieces of information in the text, because they matter; He was a powerful leader; He came to Jesus at night; He called Him "Rabbi." These details matter because they reveal to us the true depth and texture of the biblical narrative.

In my understanding, the Bible tells the complete story of God—of God's love for humanity and humanity's response to that love. Our Gospel text this morning, then, is about more than a deeply religious leader seeking a public theological debate. Rather, it is about the humanity of a religious leader having a personal encounter with a loving God. As a result of an internal struggle, this man—who walks with power, influence, and status—seeks out Jesus outside the normal rhythms of public life, under the cover of night. Those three details matter. They

suggest that something quietly transformative is stirring within Nicodemus. Beyond his position and titles, we begin to see his humanity. He is curious—but cautious. He knows the Scriptures—but still has questions. He understands the rules, the culture, and the expectations. And he also understands what it might cost him to be seen with a controversial, boundary-crossing teacher. This is not merely a leader investigating a theological question. It is a man wrestling with truth—and counting the cost. So, he comes at night. Not because he doesn't care. But because he does. He calls Jesus' "Rabbi" because that's the language he knows. He asks questions the only way he can—quietly, respectfully, a little unsure. He doesn't have everything figured out. He's thinking it through in real time. And honestly, I don't know about you, but it feels very familiar to me.

How many of us came to faith like Nicodemus? How many of us, even this morning, have come like Nicodemus? How many of us arrived carrying questions, curiosity, and quiet uncertainty—Whispering what we don't understand. Embarrassed by our ignorance or afraid of what our asking might cost us? Some of us came late in life, after years of careful conformity. Some of us came in the middle of a crisis or simply stirred by curiosity. We may come with credentials and titles in hand, yet beneath them all lies the same essential vulnerability: our human longing to be known; to be understood.

Jesus received Nicodemus in the very posture that Nicodemus could not yet manage - with directness and compassion. Jesus did not scold Nicodemus for his night-time visit, nor did he reward him with a lesson in theology only the learned could understand. Instead, Jesus speaks about birth — “no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” What Jesus says is startling, even disorienting, but He is very intentional and deliberate. Jesus meets the man where he is and moves him into a new register of understanding: He speaks to him in the language of new life, of transformation, of Spirit. Notice the compassion implicit in Jesus' response. Notice how He reframes the conversation away from prestige, power, and law. Notice how He shifts it toward what is essential: the birth of a life re-centered in God. Jesus does not allow Nicodemus to remain in the comfort of the familiar, but neither does he push him away. Instead, Jesus invites him into an experience that must be received, not merely understood intellectually.

As a good Pastor, Jesus challenges him, without shaming him. He invites him in, without overshadowing him or making him feel small. Jesus speaks truth that awakens his heart, rather than condemns him as a person. And if we look closely, we see Jesus revealing a deep tenderness for those who struggle to imagine God at work beyond what is visible and measurable. And it is that tenderness—that deep well of compassion—that leads Nicodemus to ask a profoundly human and entirely sensible question: How can someone be born again?” It is the same question we still ask today. And Jesus answers in a way that honours our human limitation while urging openness to mystery. He says, “The Spirit is like the wind: unseen, unexpected, yet its effects are real.” In other words, “Faith is not about having all the right answers; it is about stepping into a real, lived encounter with the life-giving movement of God.”

So, what does Jesus' answer to Nicodemus mean for us as a congregation, in this space, in this time, right now? I'm so glad you asked, for this is the framework of ministry that I offer you today, as WE SET OUR SAILS FOR THE FUTURE.

First, Jesus's answer reminds us to value seekers in all their forms. People will come to God from different places: some boldly, some in secret; some with scriptural literacy, and some without. Our task is not to test their credentials, but to offer a safe space for honest questioning. To meet them with Christ-like compassion that both receives them and calls them to deeper life.

Second, His answer calls us to humility about spiritual knowledge. Nicodemus had authority and learning, yet his questions were real. We must be wary of equating theological certainty with spiritual maturity. The Christian life is centred on being formed by the Spirit, which is an ongoing work that can unsettle our assumptions and open us to the surprising ways that God acts.

Third, it invites us to embody the compassion of Jesus in our pastoral relationships. It means listening at night when people cannot sleep. It means welcoming those who knock in the margins of life. It means speaking truth that is rooted in grace. It means recognizing that conversion and growth are processes. For Nicodemus, that night

was the beginning of a new journey. Later in John's Gospel, we see him emerge more publicly, bringing spices to tend Jesus' body (John 19:39).

So, as we step into new waters together in this season of ministry, let us move forward with courage, expectation, and hope. If you feel like Nicodemus felt that night—uneasy, curious, quietly searching in the shadows—remember that Jesus meets you there, not with condemnation, but with compassion. He speaks light into your questions and invites you into new birth and new life.

If you are confident and well-taught, remember that knowledge alone does not make a disciple. A humble heart, open to the Spirit's movement, is the soil where true faith grows.

If you feel you don't know enough, take heart: the Bible is not a test to pass, but the unfolding story of God's relentless love for humanity—and our response to that love. You are already invited into that story.

May we, as a church family, become a people who step out of the night and into the light together—where questions are honoured, where grace is tangible, and where Christ is not merely discussed but encountered. May this be a season not just of learning, but of transformation. Not just of gathering, but of new birth. And may the living presence of Christ among us draw us ever deeper into His love—and send us out, radiant with that love, into the world that so desperately needs it. Amen!!!

Let us pray: Gracious God, who breathes life into weary hearts, meet us in our questions and our silence. Give us ears to hear your Spirit, courage to be born anew, and hearts compassionate as your Son's. Make our church a place of welcome for every Nicodemus who comes by night or by day. In Jesus' name, **Amen**

In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Father Don, Margaret Blanchette, Al Spearing, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara (Dyer), Vinette, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Tim, Audrey, Robert & Kalreeta, David, Rachel and for Valerie Johnstone and Hilda Warner. Also, for all and any others known to us.



Previous services and other videos are on our YouTube channel and/or our Facebook page at: and/or

<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>

Next Sunday

Next Sunday, **8th March** – services will be as usual – Peaceful Worship at 8 am and Contemporary Worship at 9.30 am both led by our new Priest-in-Charge Fr. Terry.

Coming Events

- **Life Group Startup** – The popular Life Groups have resumed but it **may not be too late** to get involved. Reach out to Cathy or Stephen West if you would like to know more: cathwest@gmail.com or cswestmd@logic.bm.
- **Holy Trinity Spring Sale** – this event will take place on **Saturday, 7th March from 9. am. to 2 pm** in their church hall. See poster below. Also - There'll be a prize draw on the hour every hour from 10.00 am on the day. If anyone can help with donating prizes, please call Mary Kay on 232-2789.
- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will be on **Saturday, 22nd March** (I think).
- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 1st April** in the Parish Hall.

Those of you who generously donate to the church by way of Standing Order may wish to double-check that your orders have not passed their end-by date and expired. Of course, if they have, we would love you to re-instate them. 🙏

Down the Debt – St. Mark's needs your help in reducing the size of our debt which inhibits future investment in

our church. If you feel you may be able to help with this please go to <https://stmarks.bm/donate/> where you will find details and an opportunity to donate.

Links:

Just a reminder – if you want to check vot's happnin' or vot's comin' dahn de road – you can find it all at our:

- **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>
- **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda>
- **Website:** <https://anglican.bm/churches/st-marks/>
- **Holy Trinity Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitychurchbda>

End Stuff:

Here's a thought. It is always a great time for us all to review our pledging. If each of us is able to increase our pledge by 10% that would be a great boost to our cash flow (which as you know is tenuous at best). And, with our in-person collections still inhibited by numbers restrictions, please consider the opportunity to convert to pledging by Direct Deposit (see below). Your support is vital.

As always, another huge thank you to all of you who continue to support our church family with your pledges and donations via online transfer.

Direct deposits can be made to: Butterfield Bank for the account of:

St. Mark's Church Wardens – A/c No. 20-006-060-104125-100.

- **For Grave Payments** – when paying Grave Maintenance fees be sure to enter Grave Number and Name of Lessee e.g. "Grave 273 Peter Nash" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Cash donations** – if you do not have an Envelope # just be sure to also enter your Name and "Donation" e.g. "Nash Donation" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

Use of the "Beneficiary" space is IMPORTANT – it is the only way we have to identify who is paying and for what.

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