

## Isaiah 49:1-6, A Poetic Rendering

By Michael Davis

Listen to me all of you sea-side lands;  
Give ear all distant peoples of the Earth!  
Lord YHWH called me from inside the womb,  
Brought knowledge of my name before my birth.  
He set my mouth to be like a sharp sword  
And covered me in shadow in his hand,  
O made he me a well-wrought arrow shaft  
Quick-quivered and awaiting his command.  
"You are my servant," says my Lord to me,  
"You, Israel, by whom I glorify."  
"Yet I'm grown weary fruitlessly," I said,  
"For emptiness and breath my strength runs dry.  
Surely the Lord I AM will judge me right,  
For with my God are both my work and wage."  
But now the Lord, the one who formed me speaks,  
The one who made me servant takes the stage,  
Who bade me beckon Jacob to return;  
Through me, brings Israel back into his fold.  
I will be glorified within His eyes  
Who is my God and refuge strong and bold.  
He says, "Too light that you should only serve  
To raise up scattered Jacob from his sin  
And rout the remnant of my Israel

No! All tribes shall look and see my light  
within --  
Be my salvation unto Earth's far end!  
Hear, Israel, and let your God contend!



### Remember That You Are Dust, contd.

The problem is that we forget we are *only* dust. We forget that we have been made by God and for God. Moreover, we live our lives forgetful of the terrifying truth that "to dust you shall return." These words are the end of God's curse on Adam and Eve as they leave the garden, and they are the shroud under which humanity has lived ever since.

Lent is about being reminded of this connection between sin and death. First, there is the original sin in the garden and the resulting curse of death. Then there is our own sin and the spiritual death we face. The emphasis of Lent, though, is the connection between our sin and the merciful death of Christ on the cross for us. Easter isn't good news without death. The empty tomb doesn't matter if there was never a body in there. Lent is about recognizing our sinfulness and mortality vividly displayed in the cross so that we can fully celebrate all that is accomplished in Christ's glorious resurrection.

Join us this Lenten season – through the more somber music, the darkened colors, the subdued liturgy – in acknowledging our sin and frailty before the Lord God.

The May-June issue of the St. Peter's Newsletter will be published on Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to contribute an article, please submit your work along with any accompanying images to the editor, Mrs. Grace Wiley, via email to [gewiley38@gmail.com](mailto:gewiley38@gmail.com) by Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Articles may be edited for length and content. If you have any questions, contact the church office at (205) 879-7173.

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# ST PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH Newsletter

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## ADOTS Clergy Retreat

By the Rev. Dcn. John Bacon

Clergy from St. Peter's attended the annual diocesan clergy retreat on February 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. Our days were ordered around our common time of prayer and Scripture, and we shared in a blessed time of fellowship, encouragement, and edification. Bishop Bill Murdoch, from the Diocese in New England, led us through rich Biblical teaching and stirring testimonies on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He graciously encouraged us to surrender to the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit as ministers within Christ's Apostolic and Catholic Church. He also provided practical tips for how to guide the people of God into the liberty which the Spirit provides.

This was my first retreat as an ordained minister. I was deeply encouraged by the comradery and unity of the ministers who attended, and was personally convicted and touched by the Spirit of God, being reminded that our sufficiency is not of ourselves, but of God. I thank God for leaders who are convinced that we are jars of clay, set apart for sharing heavenly treasure. Please join me in praying expectantly in the days ahead as we seek to yield ourselves to God's mission.

## Youth Outreach Project at Grace House

By the Rev. Peter Smith

Eleven students and four leaders took part in the SPYM (Saint Peter's Youth Ministry) Spring outreach project on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. Our group went to Grace House Ministries in Fairfield to take part in their "Second Saturday Serve Day." Grace House is a ministry which provides housing and care for girls eighteen and under who either don't have parents or whose parents have been abusive. St. Peter's already partners with Grace House financially, so it's a natural relationship for the youth ministry to expand on.

We brought our students to Grace House 2 years ago, and helped clean out a condemned house which was in the process of being renovated. This time our students cleaned up all the trash around

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## Meet the Russells

By Anna Russell

Andrew and I are so happy to be a part of the St. Peter's community. This was the first church we visited after moving to Birmingham in July, and after visiting a handful of other churches, we quickly realized that St. Peter's is where God was calling us to make our church home.

It has been a big and busy year for the two of us, and the loving and welcoming community at St. Peter's has been such a help to us as we've transitioned to moving here. In May 2016, both of us graduated from college. I graduated from Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, AR while Andrew graduated from Belmont University in Nashville, TN. We were high school sweet hearts, so we did all four years of college in a long-distance relationship. We both enjoyed our time in college, but it was such a relief for the long-distance season to come to an end.

After graduating, we married in June 2016 and then immediately moved here to Birmingham. In late August, we began our first semester as graduate students at Beeson Divinity School. Both of us are pursuing our Master of Divinity and plan to graduate in December of 2019. After four years of two different colleges, we love going to school together. It comes in handy to have a built-in study buddy!



Shortly after committing to St. Peter's as our new church home, Andrew and I began to attend youth group on Sunday nights to volunteer with them and get to know the youth. They are such an amazing and fun group of kids, and I'm so humble and thankful to now get to serve them as their youth minister. Andrew works at Beeson in the media and marketing departments. He's a very talented media filmmaker, editor, and designer and loves getting to put these skills to good use while we are in seminary. After seminary, both of us hope to enter full-time vocational ministry, but we are open to wherever the Lord may lead us and whatever doors he may open.

We love coffee, hammocking, and hiking. I love yoga and baking, and Andrew loves reading and writing. We love having friends, old and new, over to our home to share a meal and hope to do that with many of you in the months and years to come. Thank you so much for welcoming us with loving arms into the life and ministry of St. Peter's!

### Youth Outreach Project, contd.

the city block, cleaned out and organized the two-story storage shed, moved chairs from one building to another, and bagged/boxed up things in storage and moved them to another building. After we finished, our female students and youth leaders had the opportunity to spend time with the Grace House residents. Finally, as is customary at all youth ministry gatherings, the students and leaders enjoyed pizza together on the Grace House playground before we departed.

The next SPYM outreach project will be this Summer. Stay tuned!



## Why Are We at St. Peter's?

By EJ and Christina Smith

Word. Spirit. Sacrament...and Love.

It was a really solemn and heavy moment. We had made it all the way through the service without a hitch. Having four very active children, it was almost a miracle that we had made it that far. Archbishop Foley lifted the water up and began to baptize our oldest son with the cool liquid from the fount. As soon as the water hit his neck, Colin exclaimed, "Ahhhhhhhh!" Then he laughed.



There was a moment when we wanted to crawl under the closest piece of furniture, but then everyone chortled along with him and smiled. Recovering, and being put at ease, we remembered why we had joined St. Peter's in the first place.

A few months before, we had been looking for a community of worship that would not only disciple and stretch us, but one that would embrace the six of us, broken and quirky as we are. For many years, we had had a lot of mixed experiences in churches of all stripes. We never expected perfection, but we wanted to know that our children were safe and that they would have the basics of the faith, that we taught them at home, augmented.

So, we visited around, took some suggestions from some friends, and we walked into the front doors of St. Peter's cold turkey. We found a multinational group of smiling people who practiced the historical faith, that hungered for orthodox teaching, and who had a high view of Scripture. But all of that would be empty without one thing: love.

From the first day we showed up, we were loved. When our kids are rowdy, we are loved. When we are struggling in our faith we are loved. When we just don't know what to do, we are loved.

"Word, Spirit and Sacrament" are what is advertised on the website. Those promises are kept here, and extremely important to us. However, it is the one word that they left out that drew us here the most: "Love."

EJ and C5 (Christina, Chloe, Colin, Clara, and Caleb) Smith

## Remember That You Are Dust

By Will Weir

As we approach Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent, I'm reminded of how one of my professors summarizes the Christian understanding of humanity: "We are dust with a role and a relationship." We were created from dust with a role (tending the garden) and a relationship (to God and each other). But the human problem is not that we are dust. In fact, we just celebrated at Christmas the fact that Christ himself took on our dustiness. Being dust is nothing to be ashamed of.



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