“Trending on Tuesdays,” October 10, 17, and 24 at 7 p.m., Saint Paul’s in Africa

On three consecutive Tuesday evenings in October Saint Paul’s will explore its connection to Africa. The series begins on October 10 with parishioner Maria Johnson telling of her travel to Ghana last March to volunteer in a school and library, her response to God’s call. Hear her story. The history of Ghana is closely tied to slavery in our country. It is also the birthplace of our Assistant Emmanuel. Our ministry “Room at the Inn” is settling a family who fled the Congo. What are the country’s history, culture, and politics? Why do refugees flee? Don’t miss finding out more of our overseas connection to Africa.

Write your own Icon!
Wednesday evenings beginning September 20

By Christmas we will have created our own Byzantine Icon to take home. No artistic experience is necessary. The course called “Advent: Angels and Wilderness” will be taught by accomplished iconographer Susan Kelly vonMedicus from the Prosopon School of Iconology. We will learn the ancient methods of icon painting (or writing) handed down through the ages that incorporate the application of gold leaf, and the float and highlight technique using egg tempera. This will be prayerful time for the student to grow spiritually and meditate on every step along the way. The cost of the course is $425 with a materials fee of $150. A non-refundable deposit of $250 is required at registration. Please contact parishioner Jonathan Nidock for more information and registration. The thirteen sessions run from 6 to 9 p.m. in the parish hall on Sept. 20, 27, Oct. 4, 18, 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, and Dec. 6, 13, 20. The class size is generally eight to twelve participants.

The Book of Revelation—Wednesday Morning Bible Study in the Dixon House Library

Every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m., our Assistant Emmanuel leads a study of Scripture. Beginning in September, we will examine the Book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, filled with dramatic and often terrifying symbolism, not unlike Hebrew apocalyptic literature of the time, this vision to John of Patmos beckons interpretation for the modern reader. We plan to read it verse by verse alongside both traditional and modern commentaries. Revelation provides a foretaste of the heavenly banquet and the New Jerusalem even as we endure trials in this life. While it might be viewed as a “liberation theology” for those under the yoke of Roman oppression during its writing, it also transcends time and space as it peers into a future where redemption and compassion will one day prevail, either in this life or the next. Everyone is welcome.

Education for Ministry, Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
in the Dixon House Library

Education for Ministry (EfM) provides participants with the education to carry out every Christian’s ministry. Mentored by multiple-certified parishioner Doug Anderson, this course helps with the often subtle task of interpreting the richness of the church’s faith in a complex and confusing world. A group consists of six to twelve participants and their mentor who meet weekly for nine months a year. Through study, prayer, and reflection, EfM groups move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God’s kingdom. You will dig deeper into the Christian faith with this in-depth, seminary generated course covering the Old and New Testaments, Church History and Theology. Discussion is interactive, developing much of each session to reflection on the readings, one’s faith and life experiences. Tuition assistance may be available. To learn more, contact Doug Anderson (moriturus@verizon.net).

Looking for other programs and resources available through the Center for Contemporary Mysticism at their website (contemporarymysticism.org).

Our purpose as a Christian community is “creating peace,” in part through spiritual nourishment. We think you will find these offerings spiritually enriching. We also “educate for life” in both meanings of this phrase. We believe that education is life long, and our aim through spiritual education is to understand and enhance life more truly. Our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry exclaims, “We need some crazy Christians, Sane, sanitized Christianity is killing us. That may have worked once upon a time, but it won’t carry the Gospel anymore. We need some crazy Christians like Mary Magdalene and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Christians crazy enough to believe that God is real and that Jesus lives. Crazy enough to follow the radical way of Jesus, Crazy enough to follow the radical way of the Gospel.” We think these offerings will help educate us to carry the gospel, so that our daily lives reflect the way that Jesus did and does live – giving, forgiving, doing justice, caring, and rising together.

Join us!
The First Christianity and Empires

September 17 – October 1

We begin our Faith Forums with a DVD series replete with glorious photography spanning the birth and development of the church as told by Oxford historian Diarmaid MacCulloch and based upon his book Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years, a foundational text for Education for Ministry (see below). MacCulloch loves turning points in history where the church is a dynamic community changing history and being changed by it.

September 17, the First Christianity

Professor MacCulloch goes in search of Christianity’s forgotten origins. He overturns the familiar story that it all began when the apostle Paul took Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. Instead, he shows that the true origins of Christianity lie further east, and that at one point it was poised to triumph in Asia, maybe even in China.

September 24, Catholicism: The Unpredictable Rise of Rome

How did a small Jewish sect from the backwoods of 1st-century Palestine, which preached humility and the virtue of poverty, become the established religion of Western Europe — wealthy, powerful, and expecting unflagging obedience from the faithful? Among the surprising revelations, MacCulloch tells how confession was invented by monks on a remote island off the coast of Ireland, and how the Crusades gave Britain the university system.

October 1, Orthodoxy: From Empire to Empire

After its glory days in the eastern Roman Empire, the Orthodox Church stood right in the path of Muslim expansion, suffered betrayal by crusading Catholics, was seized by the Russian tsars, and faced near-extinction under Soviet communism. MacCulloch visits the greatest collection of early icons in the Sinai desert, we have with us Susan Kelly vonMedicus, an adjunct faculty member at Villanova University teaching icon writing and author of a book of illuminations entitled Letters from Heaven (2000). She will speak on the art, writing and spirituality of iconography, See also her offering Byzantine Icon Writing Workshop by the Prosopon School of Iconology beginning September 20.

October 8, Canterbury Tales with Saint Paul’s: A Modern Version of an Ancient Pilgrimage

The story of Saint Paul’s summer pilgrimage accompanying our choir’s residency at St. Paul’s Cathedral begins at St. George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world, and ends at Canterbury, where Thomas Becket was murdered in the cathedral and where a young Episcopal Church seminarian, martyred in our Civil Rights movement, is honored in the Cathedral’s Memorial Book of Heroes and Martyrs. Between, parishioners experienced first-hand various places of the English Reformation and Church renewal.

October 15, Iconographer Susan Kelly vonMedicus

Following up on MacCulloch’s earlier DVD of the greatest collection of early icons in the Sinai desert, we have with us Susan Kelly vonMedicus, an adjunct faculty member at Villanova University teaching icon writing and author of a book of illuminations entitled Letters from Heaven (2000), She will speak on the art, writing and spirituality of iconography, See also her offering Byzantine Icon Writing Workshop by the Prosopon School of Iconology beginning September 20.

October 22, Protestantism—the Evangelical Explosion

Diarmaid MacCulloch is back with a DVD on Evangelicals. Today, evangelicalism is associated with conservative politics, but the whole story goes back to the perhaps forgotten evangelical explosion that was driven by a concern for social justice and the claim that one could stand in a direct emotional relationship with God. In Africa, it converted much of the continent by adapting to local traditions. See “Trending on Tuesdays” Saint Paul’s in Africa – Ghana and the Congo.

October 29 and November 5

Facing Into Holy Mystery: A God Beyond God

Dr. Phillip Bennett, Episcopal priest and practicing clinical psychologist, joins us to talk about God and mystery. He says, “We can never fully know or describe God because ‘God’ is a mystery greater than our comprehension…. Mysticism is grounded in the experience of the sacred, not simply an intellectual proposition. It is a willingness to be open to the Great Mystery of life without seeking to reduce it to easy answers and fixed categories.”

November 12, Why God Desires Our Trust More than Our ‘Correct’ Beliefs

Dr. Peter Enns, Professor of Biblical Studies at Eastern U., joins us to talk about his book The Sin of Certainty (2016) that combines reflections on his own spiritual journey with an examination of Scripture. The Sin of Certainty models an acceptance of mystery and paradox and argues that this path is the only way all believers can become mature disciples who truly trust and follow God.

November 19 and 26, Shakespeare and the Bible

Parishioner Dr. Kristin Poole, Professor of English at the U. of Delaware, will lead two sessions on Shakespeare and the Bible. Shakespeare quoted more from the Psalter than from any other book of the Bible and took his quotes largely from the Book of Common Prayer. In his play Love’s Labours Lost, the character Berowne was quoting from the Prayer Book Catechism when he said, “Not by might master’d, but by special grace.”

December 3, 10, and 17

Martin Luther’s Christmas Sermons

Phillip Cary, Ph.D., is Professor of Philosophy and Religion, and Scholar-in-Residence at the Templeton Honors College of Eastern University. In this 500th anniversary year of Martin Luther’s 95 Theses and as we begin our Advent preparation for Christmas, Professor Cary will discuss Martin Luther’s Christmas sermons. On October 31, 1517, Luther wrote a letter to his church superiors that included his 95 theses, targeting the abuse of indulgences.