

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

July was a whirlwind of a month for your old rector and his family! We celebrated the 1st birthday of our niece and the 4th birthday of our son. There was diocesan synod the third week of July, followed by the funeral of a parishioner, a wedding (the same day as the funeral) of some other parishioners, and an automobile accident involving me and my son. On top of this was the usual sermon preparation, bible study class, Holy Day and mid-week services, meetings (parish and diocesan), sick visits, off-campus Holy Communion services, and all of the work that a secretary would normally do but that I have to do because we do not have a secretary. So July was indeed a crazy month. Thankfully, and by the grace of God, I made it through all of this. This amount of work got me thinking about the old adage that during the summer months things slow down at church. *No they don't.* The reality is that God's work never stops. Contrary to popular belief, God does not go on vacation during the summer. And aren't we glad that is the case?! Imagine if God just stopped answering prayers, and didn't sustain us or support us for three or four months out of the year. What if we prayed to him and the Holy Spirit told us that God was at the ocean that week; or that God was at a baseball game; or that God just needs to take a break and sleep in and can't help us now? That is absurd to imagine! God is *always* in our presence, in our midst, and indeed indwelling us in the person of his Holy Spirit. He never "takes a break" from us. He never needs to just "get away" from us for a while. His being creates and sustains us, and so he is always there for us when we need him. Well, just as God never takes a break from helping us, guiding us, and providing for us, so we should never "take a break" from God... from worshipping him *every* Sunday at church in the offering of the Holy Eucharist, fellowshiping with his people, giving of our tithes and offerings for his work, serving those in need in his name, and the like. *Christianity is a way of life.* It is not a couple of events that we come to when we eventually decide that we have the time or inclination. A mark of spiritual maturity - that God is doing something in our life and that we are trying to cooperate with his Holy Spirit who is doing the work within us - is that we live out our faith day after day, month after month, year after year out of thanksgiving to almighty God. The life devoted to Jesus Christ is above all a life of *thanksgiving* to God who is our maker and sustainer, and the source and ground of our being. When we finally come to the realization of what he has done for us we will have no choice but to offer to him our *entire* lives, at *all* times, and in *all* places. That is what we call "conversion." God is always there - 365 days of the year - present to us and sustaining us. So may we serve him and draw close to him 365 days out of the year as well, and not take summers off.

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

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News, Updates, and Upcoming Events

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

August 6th - Transfiguration

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

September 17th, 19th, 20th - Ember Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

October 18th - St. Luke

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

October 28th - St. Simon & St. Jude

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

November 1st - All Saints Day

Holy Communion at 6:30 p.m.
followed by dinner

November 27th - Thanksgiving Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

December 1st - St. Andrew

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

December 17th, 19th, 20th - Ember Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

DIOCESAN NEWS: *Overview And Highlights From Our 2014 Diocesan Synod*

Last month Frannie Flatau, Tyler Phass, and Father Anderson flew to Orlando, Florida for diocesan synod. Every summer the entire diocese gathers together at one of our churches to conduct the business affairs of the diocese. Tyler and Father Anderson left on Sunday afternoon, July 13th, because Tyler had to meet with the Bishop's Advisory Committee and the Board of Examining Chaplains on Monday and Tuesday as part of the ordination process. He was very well-received and is now an official postulant for holy orders for the diocese. Tyler left on Tuesday evening to get ready for his wedding, and then Frannie Flatau came down. She was St. Alban's official lay delegate to synod. Frannie has tirelessly served in this capacity for many years and is well-known throughout the diocese. She has served in many important diocesan leadership committees including the finance and standing committees.

Synod is full of meetings. The first meeting attended by clergy was the clergy conference. Bishop Grundorf leads this meeting, the purpose of which is to discuss items of relevance to clergy. One of the things we discussed this year was the effect of the Affordable Care Act on clergy insurance. Many clergy, including Father Anderson, have their insurance premiums paid by the church. Thus, in terms of taxes, it has been treated as a reimbursable expense. This will change under so-called "Obamacare." *As of this year the 10K that the parish pays for Fr. Anderson's annual healthcare benefits will now be treated as income - albeit with a small deduction - by the IRS!* So essentially, Father Anderson, and many clergy like him, are being bumped up to a new tax bracket without any corresponding increase in income! Needless to say this is going to be a

major burden for already financially-strapped clergy.

Synod typically has a guest speaker. This year it was the Rt. Rev'd. Stephen Scarlett, founding rector of St. Matthew's Church in Newport Beach, CA. Bishop Scarlett and his staff have done a great job building St. Matthew's from the ground up, so these days he gets asked by many other parishes and dioceses to share some of his thoughts and tips on building a successful and vibrant parish that is still classically Anglican. Bp. Scarlett was a dynamic speaker and gave some good suggestions as to how to think about missions and ministry in our tradition and in this postmodern age. We have used the "Inquirer's Class" he developed here at St. Alban's and it was very well done. An article by the bishop is included in this issue of *The Centurion*.

Synod is also full of worship services. At each synod we celebrate the official liturgies of the Church as found in the Book of Common Prayer. These include Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Litany, and, of course, Holy Communion. All of the services were held in the hotel, where an altar was set up on a large platform. The services begin at 7:00 a.m. each day and continue at various intervals throughout the three days when synod is officially in session. It is always interesting to see how other clergy officiate and assist at the services as the bishop assigns different clergy to roles in the liturgies. The liturgical highlight of synod is always the official "Synod Mass" - a "pontifical" (i.e. celebrated by the diocesan bishop) Solemn High Mass. The 20-person choir at this year's service was excellent and the bishop had a great sermon as usual.

The business meetings of synod last for about three days and consist of committee reports, parish reports, addresses by the bishop, comments

from visitors, new and old business, election of officers, appointments, and more. In many ways synod is like a glorified annual parish meeting. A link to Bishop Grundorf's synod address may be found on the diocesan website: www.anglicanprovince.org

One of the more interesting aspects of this year's business meeting was the report from a deacon from the province of the Philippines on the progress that the church is making in that part of the world. This dedicated man - married with several kids - travels most of the week serving several parishes scattered about the countryside in his diocese. It was inspiring to see his slideshow that showed the construction of new churches and other buildings to be used for the ministry.

There are also workshops at synod. This year there was a good one about church music, lead by the organist/choirmaster from our pro-cathedral in Oviedo. A highly esteemed educator and musician, he spoke at length about the Psalms and their place and role in the liturgy of the Church at two sessions of synod.

One of the best parts about synod from a clerical perspective is that it gives clergy a chance to fellowship with people in the ministry from around the country, catch up with old friends, and be reminded that they are not alone in the ministry and mission of the Church. Parish ministry can get very lonely, so it is nice to have synods and clergy conferences where clergy can recharge spiritually, emotionally, professionally, and more.

We in the APA are blessed to have so many people - lay and ordained - working together to make a wonderful synod. Maybe YOU can come next year! ✂

SACRED SCRIPTURE: “*Ephesians 5 and Marriage*” by the Rt. Rev’d. Stephen Scarlett

We were recently blessed to celebrate the marriage of Tyler and Holly Phass. The following is a brief meditation on Ephesians 5, the epistle appointed for a Nuptial Mass in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, by the Rt. Rev’d Stephen Scarlett. Bishop Scarlett is the founding rector of St. Matthew’s Church in Newport Beach, CA, and Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Holy Trinity, in the Anglican Catholic Church, which is one of our sister dioceses. This article is reprinted by permission.

Ephesians 5:22-32 is the longest and most theological passage about marriage in the New Testament. But it is not read at many marriages these days; what it says about headship and submission makes people uncomfortable. The favorite alternative seems to be 1 Corinthians 13—which is about speaking in tongues and spiritual gifts, not marriage. Ephesians 5 is the epistle for a marriage in the Book of Common Prayer. Consequently, I’ve had many opportunities to think and preach about it over the years. This has been a good lesson in why we should continue to read and learn from passages that make us uncomfortable.

The standard dismissal of Ephesians 5 is that it reflects St. Paul’s ancient patriarchal prejudice and is, thus, unfit for our enlightened age. I’ve come to realize that St. Paul is not talking about either first century patriarchy or twenty first century gender correctness. He is commenting on the story of the fall in Genesis 3. In Genesis 3 Eve had a conversation with the serpent that led to the first sin. Adam stood by watching and listening, but did nothing except join in the rebellion. This is a basic pattern in a disordered marriage. A wife acts on her own, without respect for her husband; in response, the husband checks out and leaves his wife alone.

Eve had received the commandment not to eat the fruit through her husband, who had received it from God. Eve did not trust/believe the word her

husband got from God and rebelled against it. Adam stood by and let his wife do battle with the evil one all by herself; then he passively participated in the sin. Enter St. Paul meditating on the drama of redemption: “Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord.” That is, undo the pattern of the fall by trusting God and this man God has given you. Do not rebel. “Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.” That is, do not abdicate your responsibility for the woman God has given you; love her, fight for her, die for her, slay the serpent/dragon for her. The wife is addressed first because Eve sinned first.

The ideal New Woman is exemplified in the New Testament by Mary. She received God’s word through a messenger named Gabriel, and she believed and trusted it: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38). The role of the New Man is exemplified by Christ who died for his bride on the cross and, thus, conquered the evil one. The vocation of bride and groom in a Christian marriage is to follow this new pattern.

This is central to the spiritual growth of each partner. Trust is a central issue for women.

Feeling abandoned, they develop a pattern of trying to control things rather than a pattern of faith, obedience and prayer. Fear of being inadequate for the task is a central issue for men. They are afraid that they do not have what it takes to provide, protect and conquer evil; so they abandon their responsibility and leave their wives alone. In the disordered pattern created by the fall, each partner’s natural tendency exacerbates the fear of the other. Ephesians 5 is the remedy.

First Corinthians 13 is a beautiful passage. But marital love will only reflect the patient, kind, longsuffering and selfless *agape-love* of 1 Corinthians 13 when it conforms to the redemptive pattern of trust and sacrifice prescribed in Ephesians 5. ✠



PARISH NEWS: *News, Updates, and Thoughts from St. Alban's Church***New Quilt Raffle**

By now most of us have probably noticed the beautiful new quilt in the parish hall. It is entitled "Blue Skies" and was designed by Bonnie Hunter and executed by our own Tammy Jones. We will once again raffle off this quilt to raise money for our rose vestment set. We are currently about \$1,200 away from the set. The pricing for the tickets will be the same as usual (\$1/each or 6 for \$5.00). The raffle will run from mid-August to December, just in time for Christmas! Thank you, Tammy, for your artistry.

Baby Blessings

We are starting a new tradition here at St. Alban's. As we all know, Steve and Linda Tillinghast serve as foster parents and often bring beautiful little babies with them to church. The presence of these little ones is such a blessing. Jesus loved children, and said that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless we become like little children. (Mark 10:13 ff.) So what we are now going to do is bless these little babies when they come to church. This is not Holy Baptism, but a rather a simple blessing for little children found in one of our authorized liturgical books called *The Priest's Manual*. We want to welcome these babies to God's house and share his love for them in a small, but significant way, by giving them his blessing. This blessing may be given to other children in the parish and community as well, and is a good first step to getting unchurched parents into the church and their children eventually baptized, so please see the rector if you would like to have a baby in your life blessed.

Weekly Altar Flowers Beginning in September

Beginning in September we will have new flowers on the altar each Sunday. We currently have flowers for two weeks at a time. It was that way when the rector arrived in 2010. But since so many people sign up for flowers and the list fills up so incredibly quickly we will begin offering flowers each Sunday. The cost will remain the same (\$35/Sunday).

Fall Parish Work Day

Pencil in on your calendars Saturday, September 13th for a parish work day! We will meet at the church in the morning and gussy up the property a bit. There is a lot of work to be done, but many hands will make it light. (It will also make it lots of fun.) After we are done the

work we will grill up some food and have a picnic together! Make plans now to join us for workday.

Savory Bake Sale Sunday

Attention St. Alban's Cooks! Sunday, September 14th please bring some friends to church to partake of our first annual *St. Alban's Sweet & Savory Bake Sale*, sponsored by the altar guild! Think fall days and bring in your favorite dishes, cakes, pies, or casseroles. Make sure containers do not have to be returned! Don't forget to bring cash or checks and take home your dinner or dessert! *Claire Burt, Altar Guild Directress*

Monthly Men's Breakfast

Men of St. Alban's, are you interested in getting together once a month for a breakfast and fellowship time at a local restaurant or elsewhere? Please let Father Anderson know.

October Art Museum Tour

Join us Saturday, October 11th at 10:00 a.m. as Father Anderson leads a tour of the Baltimore Museum of Art. The BMA has a *very* fine collection that is worth checking out. We will study examples from most of the eras and movements represented and, of course, enjoy each others' company and fellowship while we do it. And one of the best things is that the museum is free! So plan now to join us for this fun event in October!

All Saints' Day Service & Dinner

Join us on Saturday, November 1st at 6:30 p.m. as we celebrate All Saints' Day followed by a parish potluck meal. More details will be forthcoming.

What is your bounden duty as a member of the Church?

My bounden duty is to follow Christ, to worship God every Sunday in his Church; and to work and pray and give for the spread of his kingdom. (BCP p. 291)

Please remember St. Alban's in your estate planning

- "The Minister is ordered, from time to time, to advise the People, whilst they are in health, to make Wills arranging for the disposal of the their temporal goods, and, when of ability, to leave Bequests for religious and charitable uses." (BCP, p. 320) ✠