

# The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Every time I look around the church and think about how things are going at St. Alban's my heart is overcome with joy. Case in point, last month we instituted new members of our altar guild and had the annual meeting of our servers guild, which was *very* well-attended. I am very thankful that God has sent us so many faithful men and women to serve him in these important ministries. Our altar guild now has *ten* members, only three of whom were serving in that capacity when I arrived. The other seven ladies are all new, either to the church, the ministry, or both. Thanks be to God! And the servers guild now has *seventeen* men and boys! There were only five men in regular service when I first came - three of whom have since moved on to other churches. I was shocked when I arrived here that there were no boys regularly serving at the altar, even though we had a number in constant Sunday attendance. Now God has blessed us with a whole new crop of great servers. All of the people in these guilds are in regular rotation and do a marvelous job, and should know that I am very, very proud of them, and thankful for their ministry! Having lots of people involved in these ministries makes *everyone's* life easier, as it is more convenient to find a someone to switch with if there is a schedule conflict. In terms of the servers guild, the large number of men and boys means that we can have a more elaborate liturgy and also more room in the pews for visitors and members. Taking four or five guys who would normally be in the nave and sticking them in the sanctuary frees up lots of space for visitors, families, etc... and everyone knows that we need more space in the nave! Special thanks goes to Tim Browne, warden of the servers guild, and to Claire Burt, directress of the altar guild. These wonderful people organize and manage the respective schedules which frees me up to do other things. Have you ever thought about ways you can serve God in our church? God has given each of us special interests, talents, and spiritual gifts to be used for the spreading of His kingdom. What do you do with yours? If there is not a ministry where you feel comfortable serving, or that your gifts do not seem to fit, then perhaps God is calling you *start* such a ministry at St. Alban's! I would be delighted to discuss it with you. Every Christian is a minister of the gospel and should seek to use his time, talent, and treasure to glorify God and bring others to Christ. May the Lord bless each and everyone of you.

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

*J. Gordon Anderson*

February 2014

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UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

**February 24th - St. Matthias**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

**March 5th - Ash Wednesday**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

**March 12th, 14th, and 15th - Ember Day**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

**March 25th - The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Holy Communion @ 6:30 p.m.

**April 13th - 19th - Holy Week**

Services TBA

**April 21st - 22nd - Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week**

Services TBA

**April 25th - St. Mark**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

**May 1st - Ss. Philip & James**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

BIBLICAL STUDY: *Help! I need to buy a Bible!*

Believe it or not one of the most complex purchases one can make today is what Bible to buy. The amount of Bibles available for sale is staggering. If you go to Barnes and Noble and ask the clerk to help you find a Bible you will be lead to a *wall* of Bibles with different names, abbreviations, and more!

Immediately your head begins to spin. Which Bible should I buy? What is the difference between all of these different Bibles? The purpose of this article is to give some guidance in purchasing a Bible. Every single Christian should have a Bible that he or she reads and studies on a daily basis. Reading and studying the Bible each day helps us grow closer to God and to his Son, our savior, Jesus Christ. The Bible is the inspired word of God. Though written by people, God is their ultimate author, as he inspired these men and women to collect and write down these sacred texts. The number one thing to consider when buying a Bible is that you need to get one that you will actually read. So here are a few things to consider when purchasing a Bible.

**Physical Characteristics:** Open up various Bibles and examine the type and type size. Is the print large enough? Is it clear and readable? Hold the Bible in your hands. Do you like how it feels? Is it too heavy? Are the pages comfortable feeling? Are they of cheap newsprint quality or are they nice, durable pages that will endure years of use and study? Do you want a hardcover Bible or a leather bound Bible? Would you like to read a Bible with two columns like a newspaper or one that is printed more like a book? All of this stuff is often overlooked, but nonetheless it is important to consider. For just as no one really wants to drive around a cheap junky car, no one wants to read a cheap junky book. *Get a Bible with nice physical characteristics that you will look forward to reading. A decent leather bound Bible is always appealing.*

**What translation should I buy?** The Bible is a library of ancient books written mostly in Hebrew and Greek. What we read are translations from many different ancient texts. Lots of liberty can be taken with translations. Some are literal word-for-word translations of the texts, others try to capture the “meaning” of the text. Some attempt to amplify the text by adding words, others are translated in the language of the sixteenth century! Welcome to the

world of “Bible Translations.” There are many different translations of the Bible: KJV, NIV, NAB, NASB, RSV, and on and on. Which one should you buy? The Church uses the King James Version (KJV) for all services, so it is probably good to have at least one KJV Bible at home. (Note: you are allowed to own more than one Bible! In fact, it is good to have a few different Bibles in different translations for study purposes.) But for your own personal study it might be better to have a modern translation around. The Anglican Province of America recommends the NKJV (New King James Version), RSV (Revised Standard Version), and ESV (English Standard Version). The rector recommends these as well as the NIV (New International Version) for personal study. Each one has its own strengths and weaknesses. None are perfect. It is recommended that you find a key verse or passage of Scripture, such as John 3:16, or Genesis 1, and read it in a few different versions to find out which one is best for you. *The bottom line: you should buy a translation that is easy for you to understand and study. The NIV is an excellent Bible for use at home.*

**What type of Bible?** Besides considering physical characteristics and translations you have to think about what type of Bible you want. There are plain old “pew Bibles” - Bibles that contain *only* the sacred text. Then there are “reference Bibles” - Bibles that have the text and a cross referencing system. After that there are “study Bibles” and “devotional Bibles.” These contain added notes that help you understand the text and/or figure out ways to apply it to your life. Examples of study Bibles are “The Life Application Bible” and the “Catholic Study Bible” (both available in a variety of translations). Examples of devotional Bibles are the “Men’s Devotional Bible” and the “Students Devotional Bible.” Remember to be careful with Bibles that contain notes, as the notes are not the inspired word of God, but only the words of a human scholar. *In most cases buying a plain old Bible or a reference Bible will suffice. Reference Bibles will be marked as such on the box.*

All you have to do now is take a trip to Barnes and Noble and look at some Bibles! Plan to spend an hour or so perusing the stacks and looking through different Bibles till you find one that you want to buy. Use these guidelines to get started and feel free to call the rector if you need more specialized help! ✂

PARISH LIFE: *The Many Faces of Hospitality*

Hospitality is one of the most important things that we can offer to others. The dictionary defines hospitality as, *“the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.”* Hospitality, or the lack thereof, can make or break a church. To fulfill our mission to bring people to Christ we have to get people into the church, because the Church is his mystical body. Being members of the Church means we are members of Christ. On a pragmatic level our parish will not survive unless we can gain new members who give to the church of their time, talent, and treasure. So for the church to fulfill its mission, and even survive, we have to grow. And to grow one of the things we have to be is hospitable. Hospitality has many faces. Let us consider three ways that we can be - or fail to be - a hospitable parish.

**1) Make room for others in the church:** It is no secret that our building is inadequate for our life and ministry. The nave feels “full” when we have 40-45 people. But in actual fact we can and have accommodated upwards of 70 people at various times in the past. The reality is that we *could* seat more people in our present building if everyone made an effort to fill the pews. *But as it stands we often choose to sit right at the end of an empty pew thus making it difficult for anyone else to get in that pew!* This is not being hospitable to visitors or fellow members. For it conveys the idea that there is no room for them, or that they are inconveniencing you by having to climb over you. So as you enter a pew *please slide down as far as you can*

so other people - especially visitors and people with children - do not have to wiggle around you to find seating. Also, please remember to save the back pews on the Gospel side for parents with kids. *If people sense there is no room for them in our church then they will go somewhere else on Sunday morning and take their time, talent, and treasure with them.*

**2) Be friendly to all, and especially to newcomers:** We are a small enough church that we know when there are new people visiting. Make an effort to welcome visitors to the church by saying hello and engaging them in a brief conversation. If they stick around for coffee hour it means they are interested in the church, *so go up and talk to them.* Ask them some basic questions: What is your name? Where are you from? etc. *Never let them stand there all alone.* While we should be careful to avoid “trapping” them in a long conversation or pressuring them into doing things (remember, they are still just visitors) we should do all we can to make them feel welcome and show them that we are interested in them and care about them. The rector cannot get around and talk to everyone after Mass before they have to go, so other people in the church need to take the initiative to greet newcomers, answer questions, help them with the service, etc. One good thing about our building set up is that when we exit the church we are all immediately thrust into coffee hour. We need to capitalize on that by going up and talking to newcomers, as well as other regulars whom we do not always talk with or know that well.

One should add that learning names is of supreme importance. *If we don't acknowledge and engage people - especially visitors - they will sense that they are unwanted and will go somewhere else on Sunday and take their time, talent, and treasure with them.*

**3) Avoid potentially offensive talk:** We must exercise great care in discussing current events and political and social ideas as others might find those opinions, or the way that we state them, highly rude and offensive. Years ago the rector of a church was horrified to hear one of his parishioners loudly blaming “the Jews” for supposedly blowing up the World Trade Center and “controlling” the media. This person was apparently oblivious to the fact that an ethnically Jewish man with whom he was friends was a prominent member of the parish! We are, of course, free to hold any opinion about anything we wish, but we should be careful in how we share these views with others... especially those we don't know all that well, and most certainly complete strangers. Because they might think that if their views differ from ours then they are unwelcome in our church. *If you want something interesting and exciting to talk about with someone else then talk about Jesus and what he is doing in your life!*

These are just a few ways we can be hospitable to potential parishioners. What are some other ways that we may become a more hospitable parish family? ✠

SPIRITUALITY: *Yes, there's an App for that!* By Robert R. Marshall, Jr.

**Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight, at the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more...** - Mr. Beaver, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Whether you've had a smart phone for some time or recently entered the world of smart phones, you will appreciate the mobile site of The Cradle of Prayer. (cradleofprayer.org) The Cradle of Prayer offers daily recordings of morning and evening prayer appointed for that day. Each office is about 20 minutes long and is sung and read for you to pray along, read along or simply listen. Father Paul Blankenship, with occasional introductions and readings from Father Gavin Dunbar of The Prayer Book Society, is accompanied by soprano Stacy Stephens who sings seasonal verses of hymns, chants and canticles. Morning and evening prayer are made easy during your morning and evening commute; anytime at home; or during a walk on your favorite trail. Simply use your smart phone to go to their website. You will be taken to the mobile version or "app".

Morning and evening Anglican offices that combine ancient prayers into twice daily offices. Not since 1549, when the Book of Common Prayer was given to the people, has there been such an innovative means to pray through daily prayers.

Our prayer book evening prayer should be a *"Dearly beloved brethren, the sundry places, to acknowledge and wickedness; and that we confess them before the face of Father; but confess them with and obedient heart; to the end forgiveness of the same, by his And although we ought, at acknowledge our sins before do, when we assemble and for the great benefits that we set forth his most worthy praise, to bear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul..."* (BCP, page 5)



prayer are traditional combine seven daily offices. Not since Common Prayer was given been such an innovative easily accessible recorded

suggests that morning and routine for Anglicans: *Scripture moveth us, in and confess our manifold sins should not dissemble nor cloak Almighty God our heavenly an humble, lowly, penitent, that we may obtain infinite goodness and mercy. all times, humbly to God; yet ought we chiefly so to meet together to render thanks have received at his hands, to*

One of my favorite movies is *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. There is a scene where we see Edmund talking to the great Lion, Aslan. After having gone very much astray, Edmund has a private conversation with Aslan, the Lion (Jesus Christ). We don't know what was said. Aslan forgives Edmund, and all is well thereafter, never to be mentioned again.

Imagine how much better this world would be if more people confessed their sins, received absolution, read scripture, recited the Apostles Creed and prayed the Lord's Prayer twice daily. Of course there is no substitute for attending church; but if the opportunity to attend church is not there; won't you try evening prayer tonight and tomorrow morning with The Cradle of Prayer?

Take a minute to let the cradle of prayer know how you like their website and mobile app. Stacy and the other voices may be reached at [cradleofprayer@gmail.com](mailto:cradleofprayer@gmail.com) ☩