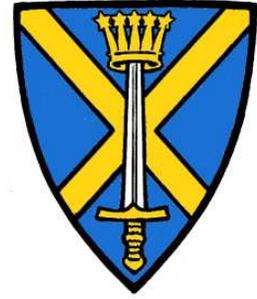


The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

When I was a kid there was a tv commercial for a local law office and lawyer where the narrator said, "When you call the law office of Joe Smith (or whatever his name was) you don't get handed over to staff and associates... *you talk with Joe Smith.*" Well in many churches today, particularly the large so-called "megachurches" parishioners are "handed over to staff and associates." The pastor has neither the time nor inclination to deal with his people and instead manages a staff of paid and volunteer people do his job for him. Visiting the sick is a perfect example. The Bible speaks of calling "the elders of the church" to anoint you when you are sick (James 5:13). The word translated "elder" is *presbuteros* which means "old man" and which is translated as "priest" in English. The point is that it is the ordained *clergy* of the church who have the primary responsibility of visiting their flock and tending to their spiritual needs. While it is laudable and highly important that laity minister to one another using their spiritual gifts, far too often clergy use this as an excuse to shirk their own duty. One of the things that Saint Alban's has always had to offer is accessible clergy. I am *always* available to get together for counseling, prayer, visitations, sacramental and spiritual needs, special social occasions (e.g. recently I blessed an assisted living facility at the request of a parishioner who is its executive director) and more. I love doing stuff like that. And I love each and every one of you and enjoy spending time with you to share God's love and the power of the Holy Spirit. A priest is also a pastor, and the word "pastor" means "shepherd." I minister to you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). The Book of Common Prayer tells us that the office of a priest is to "minister to the people committed to his care," not "hand them over to staff and associates". While it is very important for laity to exercise their spiritual gifts and ministry within the Church, please don't forget that the clergy are by their very vocation empowered and gifted to do so as well. We encourage the laity to discover and use their gifts in the ministry of the Church. But don't be afraid that doing that means that I will fail to do my job! Far from it. In our increasingly impersonalized world, where we interact with machines and devices more than people, rest assured that it is still possible to get good, one-on-one pastoral care and attention when you need it. I stand ready to serve you.

Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

January 2019

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Updates from the Church

UPCOMING SERVICES:

Jan 1st - Circumcision of Christ

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Jan 25th - Conversion of St. Paul

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Jan 30th - Beheading of Charles I, King & Martyr

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Feb 2nd - Purification of St. Mary the Virgin

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Feb 25th - St. Matthias

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Mar 6th - Ash Wednesday

Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.

Mar 25th - Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr 14th-20th - Holy Week

Schedule to be announced

Apr. 22nd - Easter Monday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr. 25th - St. Mark

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

BUILDING PROJECT: *Building for the Glory of God and the Future of Our Church*

The other day, after Morning Prayer and Holy Communion for St. Stephen's Day, I decided that I wanted some sushi for lunch. Unlike a big greasy burger, sushi is a great meal for filling up but not feeling tired afterwards. So I left the church and drove ten minutes down U.S. 1 to Perry Hall to eat at Chopstix, which is a great place to go. As I was driving there —again, only ten minutes from church— I saw numerous new housing developments all around me... apartments, condos, and single-family homes. The area is booming with new families and people, and it's so close to the church. This got me thinking to our own neck of the woods right around the church. Just at the end of Old Joppa Road is a gorgeous and very large development of apartment homes... only three minutes from Saint Alban's.

What an opportunity is before us! Where will all these people choose to attend church? Do they even know about Saint Alban's? Surely, among all of these new people, there are some who would love to call a church like ours home! My thoughts went immediately to some recent vestry discussions: we have to advertise! In addition to our online presence the vestry discussed putting an add in Harford's Heart, and/or send out a targeted circular mailing to let people know that we're here and to come and visit us! But then I remembered the wise words of one vestryman. He said he agreed that we need to reach out to these people, but that we were not ready to yet. Indeed I have never forgotten those wise words.

Why aren't we ready? Well, a huge part of it — the biggest part in my mind— is our building. Our entire physical plant is outdated and too small. In just the last few months we've welcomed over twenty-five new families and people to our church and we are now bursting at the seams. We have a choice before us: expand the building or slowly watch people drift away because there is not enough room. The only choice it to expand the building because, as our friend Fr. Bill Smith once told me of St. Mary's Church in Emmorton, if you have a small building (like he did for 40 years) the church will grow and shrink, grow and shrink, and grow and shrink without end. A building, in other

words, plays a huge role in keeping a church from growing.

The standard, dare I say "Episcopalian," answer to this problem is something along the lines of how to solve cash flow problems... that is, to look for a quick fix. "What expenses can we cut?" (Not, "Gee, maybe I need to give more to the ongoing work of the church.") The "quick fix" with building problems is along similar lines: "Why can't we just add another service?" It's a good question... but rarely do those who ask consider that the clergy need to be compensated for the extra services and activities! (And besides that, there are numerous other problems to the "adding services"/quick fix mentality that I do not have time to get into right here.)

In short, quick fixes don't provide long term solutions to problems. So, with regard to the building, the vestry has been discussing steps to take to someday soon build a new church. The idea is to build an entirely new nave (main worship space) and convert the existing nave into an elegant parish hall. While design plans laid out by my late predecessor of blessed memory, Fr. Ray Unterburger, envisioned the old 1914 schoolhouse being reclaimed entirely for a new nave, we have now realized that idea is too cost prohibitive to be realistic, as it requires the moving of kitchens and bathrooms (the most expensive parts of a renovation). The other problem with the using the old building as a church is that it is horribly inefficient in terms of heating and cooling. On the rare occasions that we use a parish hall for meals it would be fine to use that space and heat and cool it appropriately. Otherwise, it would be better to shut it off so as to save energy and be better stewards of the environment.

So the current working plan is to build a modest new church and convert the existing facility into parish hall and office/multipurpose room space and have it all meld together in one seamless, architectural and aesthetic plant. But first we have to have some engineers come and do some site work on the existing property so we can find out what we can do with the amount of property that we have in light of current development regulations, *(continued on the next page)*

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which changed in Harford County in 2010. Our current building encroaches upon the area designated as a septic reserve. In 2010 the amount that has to be set aside for a septic reserve was halved by the county. This opens up to us new possibilities with our “building envelope”... what we can do in terms of actual building with our 2.5 acres of land. For all of this to be sorted out, and prior to designing a new addition, we have to get a “site engineer” out to look at the property in relation to the new laws and regulations.

So that is where we are. We need to get a site engineer out here to tell us what we can do with our land under the current laws and then move forward from there. The estimated cost for this is \$10,000. Will you help with this?

We need to build a new church. The 25+ new people and families that have started attending church in the last three months, along with everyone else who has been here all along, are out of room. What about all of the people in the new homes all around us... where will they go? Will they be able to find a place in our wonderful parish family? When they come to St. Alban's will they find an attractive, contemporary building that is still quaint and elegant? Or will they find a beat up, cramped building with chipping paint on the inside, misaligned windows, bad lighting, noisy HVAC system, pews with broken kneelers and littered with scuff marks and holes, no nursery, and on and on? The choice is ours. Let us be mindful that our charm and liturgy and traditions can only take us so far. It needs to be packaged in a good facility.

Our new church and physical plant will be glorious. The parish hall area where we currently gather for refreshments will still be used in that capacity. This is a no-brainer because it is right next to the kitchens and lavatories. The rarely used exterior entrance will be entirely redesigned and brought up to code. It will have an exterior that will clearly identify it as the main entrance to the building. A parking lot will go out in front of the church so people will be able to park and enter into the new entrance, or, go directly into the new parish hall (the old church) for community and social functions. This part is not a new idea, as old

plans drawn up for the church decades ago envisioned much of these concepts, such as a parking lot in the front of the building and a substantial exterior entrance. The other half of our parish hall, where the vestry and office are located, would be divided up into classroom and office space.

Finally, and most important, a new church would extend out opposite the old one into part of our current parking lot. Because of the way the property and current building sit it is likely that a new church in that area would have to be multi-level, thus allowing for additional office and fellowship space in what would be traditionally called an “undercroft.” This would effectively seal off the utterly bizarre and poorly thought out entrance off of our current parking lot, the problems of which have been discussed many times. Thus, one would enter the building right at the “coffee hour”/reception area (which would be slightly enlarged) and then go right to get to the church, left to get to the parish hall, or straight for offices and classrooms.

As for the new church itself it would be fairly simple and straightforward... three walls and a roof with an equal number of windows on either side for optimum natural lighting. It will be energy efficient and accessible, with lots of space to move around so people don't feel so cramped. This will be accomplished in part by adding side aisles, which are not only a convenience but also a safety feature. We will need to buy new pews, of course, since ours are on their last legs. But other than that we already have everything that we need for our new church. The building itself would be constructed of metal which is most affordable and will give us the biggest bang for our buck. And metal buildings can have any number of exteriors put on them, from stone to simple siding, so we can make the church look however we want for a great price. (I am told that the buildings on Disney World's “Main Street USA” are all metal just with different exterior treatments.) Naturally we would build something that complements the style of our current building... something colonial and country.

Those are just some current working ideas. Before we get to finalizing anything and moving forward

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we have to get a site engineer out here to tell us what we can do with our building envelope, and for that we need approximately \$10,000. Will you make a commitment to fund this important step forward for Saint Alban's Anglican Church and for the

Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? Please see me if you have any questions. Thank you, and may God bless and keep you! ☩

Father Anderson

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES: *Please note these important items!*

2019 Epiphany Proclamation

Know ye beloved brethren that as by God's favor we rejoiced in the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so too we announce to you the glad tidings of the Resurrection of Our Savior. The Sunday of Septuagesima will fall on the seventeenth day of February. Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the most holy Lenten fast on the sixth day of March. On the twenty-first day of April ye shall celebrate with greatest joy the holy Pasch of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Ascension of Our Lord will occur on the thirtieth day of May. The feast of Whitsunday on the ninth day of June. The twentieth day of June is the feast of Corpus Christi. The first day of December will usher in the Advent of Our Lord Jesus, to whom be honor and glory eternally. Amen.

Family Ice Skating Trip

The rector is trying to put together a family ice skating trip for Saturday, January 19th. We will meet at the church for dinner at 5:00 p.m. and then head over to the ice skating rink in Abingdon. Please see the rector for more details and if you're interested in coming.

Confirmation Class

Youth confirmation classes will meet every other Sunday beginning January 6th following the 8 am and 10 am services. They will last for approximately half an hour.

Shrove Tuesday Cajun Dinner Night

Come on out on Tuesday, March 5th at 6:30 p.m. for Evening Prayer followed by our annual Shrove Tuesday cajun themed potluck dinner. This is always a great time with music and fantastic food and

fellowship. Invite a friend! It's a great way to introduce people to our parish family.

Lent 2019

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday which falls on March 6th this year. There will be two services of Holy Communion that day with the Imposition of Ashes. Our devotions and activities will remain much the same as always. On Tuesdays during Lent (except the 2nd of each month, when "Grace, Grit, and Thanksgiving" meets) we will have Evening Prayer followed by a dinner and a study on the seven sacraments. Then on Fridays we will have Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 12:00 p.m. The usual Prayer Book Holy Days services that fall during Lent will be observed on their specific days.

2019 Episcopal Visit and Confirmations

On Sunday, March 17th, the Second Sunday in Lent, our suffragan bishop, the Rt. Rev'd Chandler Holder Jones, SSC (a former rector of this parish!) will be here to celebrate the Holy Communion, administer the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, and receive new members. We will have a record number of people this year! Thanks be to God. Be sure to come out and welcome Bishop Jones. He is one of the nicest, and godliest men you'll ever meet, and he is bar none one of the best preachers out there. You won't want to miss his visit.

Thank You!

The Anderson family thanks the church for the generous Christmas gift! May the Lord bless each and every one of you for your kindness. ☩