

# The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

This month from the 9th - 13th Frannie Flatau and I were away at diocesan synod in Melbourne, Florida. It went well, and a brief report is on the parish website. Each year the churches of the diocese are asked to make a financial pledge for diocese for the upcoming fiscal year. The vestry of St. Alban's voted to give the diocese \$3,000 in 2013.

I would like to remind everyone of a few liturgical notes. Please remember that when we recite the Nicene Creed we say, "...one, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." If you have ever found yourself reciting the Creed and then getting lost towards the end that is probably why. Please make a mental note of it.

We have been blessed with a number of visitors to the church lately. I would like to ask everyone to make a point of meeting and greeting visitors so they feel at home. While we do not want to pounce on them, or trap them, we do want to make them feel welcome by acknowledging their presence, and letting them know that we appreciate their visit. Also, if you see that they are lost during the service (indicated by things like not using the Prayer Book, or flipping around looking for the right page) please help them out by pointing them to right page.

On a similar note, I encourage us to take time to visit and talk with our regular fellow parishioners before and after services. For many of us, Sunday is the only time that we get to see each other. If we habitually rush out after services, or always only talk to the same people, we will not get to know each other, and what we have been up to. That means we will have no idea how to pray for and help each other out as needed. To be clear, we surely do *not* have to engage in an hour-long gabfest with anyone. But staying to chat for even 5-10 minutes can go a long way to building up community and fellowship within the church.

Summer is always a busy time, full of travel and family fun. Let us remember to care for our souls amidst the constant busyness. God has called us to be His sons and daughters through faith in Jesus Christ. This relationship, like all others, must be nurtured through concrete actions. When we spend time with God each day in prayer, Scripture reading, and works of charity and God will work in our lives in powerful ways!

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

*J. Gordon Anderson.*

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UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

**July 3rd - Independence Day (Eve)**

Holy Communion @ 12:00 p.m.

**July 25th - St. James the Apostle**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

**August 6th - The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

**August 24th - St. Bartholomew the Apostle**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

**September 21st - St. Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist**

Holy Communion @ 10:00 a.m.

*Prayer Book Holy Day Masses last a little over half an hour and always include Morning Prayer! Please make time to come out for these important days as you are able!*

LITURGY & THEOLOGY: *The Constitution and Canons of the Church*

In our supercharged political environment we hear a lot about the Constitution of the United States of America, as well as the laws of the land, and what they are and allow. America is a country that is blessed to be a *democratic* country ruled by law. As our history has shown there are many benefits to being governed by this system.

Well we may not be aware that the Church is also democratic, and is governed by a constitution and a set of laws called canons. Ours in the Anglican Province of America (APA) are derived from those of the Episcopal Church, which were derived from the Church of England, which were derived from Medieval tradition and western canon law. They may be found online on the APA's official website: [www.anglicanprovince.org](http://www.anglicanprovince.org)

The reason the Church has a constitution and set of canons is so it may run effectively and be able to fulfill her mission to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations. We read very early on in the scriptures about situations arising in the Church where there were disagreements that had to be settled. Laws are drawn up to help people avoid or settle disagreements. As the Church grew it was only natural that she developed a set of laws to govern her corporate life for the good of all. Ultimately the canons of the Church are based on the foundations of scripture and theology. Since the APA is a branch of Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church,

we have a constitution and set of canons to help govern our corporate life.

Our constitution, which precedes the canons, consists of a Solemn Declaration which states the basic "reason for being" of our Church. In this declaration we declare ourselves to be in full communion with all traditional Anglicans in the world as a part of Christ's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It states our basic beliefs about the faith: the Bible, the Creeds, and the Ecumenical Councils, and that we partake of the same sacraments and have the same church order as Christ's Church has always had. It also states our intention to maintain the doctrine, sacraments, and ministry as always practiced by the Anglican Churches.

The constitution continues with twelve articles. These articles are concise statements of the most basic and important laws of the Church. They address: Provincial Synod (Art. 1), Bishops (Art. 2), Bishops for Foreign Lands (Art. 3), Standing Committees (Art. 4), New Dioceses (Art. 5), Territorial Jurisdiction (Art. 6), Protection of Parish Property (Art. 7), Ministers (Art. 8), Ecclesiastical Courts (Art. 9), Worship (Art. 10), and Amendments (Art. 11).

The canons of the Church follow the constitution. There are fifty-four canons that are spread out over the following areas: the Ministry (Title 1); Ecclesiastical Discipline (Title 2); Worship (Title 3); Organization and Administration (Title 4); and

Canonical Legislation (Title 5). The canons are instructions/rules pertaining to each of these areas. For example, the canons in the section on the ministry (Title 1) give the rules and regulations for those wishing to be ordained, those who examine them, duties of clergy, what to do with people ordained in other churches, and so on. The canons on organization and administration address synods, meetings, parishes, missions, and dioceses, and how they are organized and run.

In addition to the Constitution and Canons of the province, there are diocesan canons, which are rules and laws for each particular diocese of the Church. These will vary somewhat from diocese to diocese, but they are similar to each other insofar as they must agree with the national constitution and canons.

The constitution and canons of the Church are easily available and may be understood by just about anyone. If you have any interest in how the Church is organized and run, a good place to start is by looking at these documents. ✠



PARISH LIFE: *What is St. Alban's Anglican Church about?*

A number of years ago the people of St. Alban's began strategic planning for the future of the church. One of the results of this planning was our mission statement. Do you know what the mission of St. Alban's Anglican Church is? You should! It is written on the front of every bulletin and posted on our website. Our mission is *to proclaim Christ's Gospel through traditional worship and compassionate service*. This is a great statement, and a lot of time went into formulating it. But is this *all* that St. Alban's is about? Obviously a mission statement cannot encapsulate everything that a church or organization is about. That is the case with us.

Part of our vocation is to be a witness for the Christian culture and tradition that has helped shape our world. In ancient times, the Church was responsible for preserving Greco-Roman culture, while the world around her fell apart. The ancient monasteries preserved the learning and culture of the classical world for future generations. This culture in turn influenced the art, liturgy, and theology of the Church. If the Church had not preserved these great traditions, then the world might have forever lost the wisdom and achievements of former generations.

Today our culture is under attack. It is not being assaulted by barbarian hordes, but rather by an enemy that is more subtle but just as real: "popular culture." Nowadays the disciplines of reading, study, and contemplation have been jettisoned in favor of incessant entertainment: television, surfing the internet, and texting. Less and less people today

know how to listen to and appreciate great music and art. We have lost the art of being quiet and still. Instead there are TV sets everywhere (airports, restaurants, barbershops, waiting rooms, etc.). We must constantly connect to everyone and everything in the world with our smart phones and never miss a beat. We are obsessed with the "new," and with technology, and forget that we are spiritual beings with a soul and divine purpose to our lives. This "entertainment" culture has even seeped into the Church in some communions.

But against these trends stand churches like St. Alban's which, especially in the sacred liturgy, remind the world that there is still a God, and that we can learn much from the received traditions of the past. The beautiful liturgical prose of the *Authorized Version* of the Bible and the classical *Book of Common Prayer*, as well as the great hymns of the faith, still have much to teach us. The quiet, contemplative service of the Church teaches man to be still and look through the noise of the world and into the heart of the divine. The effort that our service requires, as well as its repetition, honors our Creator and repays the soul richly for years.

The mission of St. Alban's is to *proclaim Christ's Gospel through traditional worship and compassionate service*. Part of that mission is preserving and passing on the traditions that we have inherited from generations of believers before us which have been responsible for not only spreading the Gospel of Jesus but also for shaping our entire culture. ☩

## PARISH NEWS &amp; NOTICES:

**Thank you** to everyone who helped with the yard sale and the pony show! We could not have had these events without you. We really appreciate you!

**Episcopal Visit & Confirmations:** Our suffragan bishop, the Rt. Rev'd Chandler Holder Jones, SSC, will be here on Sunday, September 16th to confirm and receive new members. If you need to be confirmed please see Fr. Anderson. Those who have recently transferred to St. Alban's and who have already been confirmed in the Episcopal/Anglican tradition will simply be received. Please be sure to attend church that Sunday!

**Are you interested in prayer?** This fall we will be organizing an intercessory prayer group that will meet at the church one or two evenings a month to pray for those on the prayer list and anyone and anything else for which we want to pray. See Fr. Anderson for details.

**Mark Your Calendar:** On October 7th our guest preacher and celebrant will be the Ven. Dave Iyke from the Church of Nigeria. He will be in town visiting friends and has graciously agreed to take part in our *International Day* celebration, where we give thanks for the "Catholicity" of the Church! Be sure to come on this important day. ☩

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**LITURGICAL PLANNING: *Have you given thought to how you would like your funeral done?***

These days it is customary for people to plan for their future through things like living wills and estate planning. While making such plans we should also consider planning our funeral arrangements.

The main liturgical resources for planning funerals in our church are the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and the 1940 Hymnal. Generally speaking, in planning a funeral one has the option of having a simple burial service with just scripture readings and prayers, or a service of Holy Communion (called a *Requiem Mass*), or a combination of the two.

*The Order for The Burial of the Dead* (pp. 324-332) contains a selection of Psalms and scripture readings for use at a burial service. Which of these Psalms and passages would you like read at your funeral? Do you want incense used at your funeral? What about special music? Also, which hymns if any would you

like to have sung? The 1940 Hymnal contains a number of suggested hymns on pp. 222-227.

In terms of the readings and hymns it is important to remember that these resources, the 1928 BCP and 1940 Hymnal, contain the liturgy and service of the Church. While there are no doubt other relevant passages in scripture not found in our service, as well as good hymns not found in our hymnal (such as "Amazing Grace") we should bear in mind that the suggested passages and hymns have been carefully chosen to convey the Church's doctrine and theology about death and burial. So choices of scripture readings and hymns should be made from the selection in these books.

The parish has a funeral planning sheet that is available for use in planning your service. All are encouraged to get one, fill it out, and give it to the rector to keep on file. Planning your service now will save lots of stress for your family down the road! ☩