

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

We are now in the season of Lent. When we think of Lent we think of *discipline*. We ask ourselves, "What is my 'Lenten Discipline' going to be?" But this begs a question: "What is discipline? One of the definitions given in the dictionary for *discipline* is "the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior." Related to that we may understand Lent as a time of spiritual training to help us become new creations in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)... to become the people that God wants us to be... the people we pledged to be at our baptism or confirmation, the people we ask for God's grace to be each time we confess our sins and receive absolution, and whenever we receive the Holy Eucharist. During the forty day season of Lent it is most appropriate to take on additional devotions as a way to mortify the flesh and draw closer to God. To assist us in this numerous activities and offerings are available at the church throughout this time of year. It is also appropriate in Lent to make a private, sacramental confession of our sins to a priest. This tradition has always been part of Anglicanism and is one of the most wonderful ways to grow in grace and the Holy Spirit. The clergy are happy to instruct those who are new to this spiritually healing sacrament. And let us not forget to make an extra effort to practice the disciplines of fasting and almsgiving during Lent. In terms of the former, find something pleasurable to give up Monday - Saturday for the forty days of Lent. (Sundays are always excluded from fasting.) In terms of the latter, give extra money to a worthy cause, such as the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, about which you may find information on the website and in the bulletin. But as we engage in these disciplines in order to prepare for the joyous feast of Easter, *let us resolve to do so with goal of becoming a holier and more devout Christian throughout the rest of the year*. Lenten disciplines mean nothing if we are spiritually unchanged - even in a small way - after the forty days. As I have written many times before, discipline is the key to the Christian life. The Christian life is something that we "do." To be a Christian is to adopt a particular way of "being" in the world. The point of the additional devotions that we offer at Church during this time of year is to give us an extra "push" in our walk with God and spiritual life, so please do take advantage of them! The schedule is posted on the website, and the details of the activities are found on page 2 of this magazine. We have activities during the day and during the evening to try to accommodate everyone's schedule. So please don't just *say* you'll come out... actually *come* out to some of these events, and then make an effort to pray, fast, give alms, and make your confession to me, Fr. Edelman, or another priest during these forty days. Grow in God's grace. Feel and know his love for you and become a new creation in him. The clergy do it, so why don't you do it too!

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

March 2015

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Holy Week Schedule

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

March 25th - Annunciation

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

March 29th - April 4th - Holy Week

See Schedule on Page Four

April 6th - Monday in Easter

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

April 7th - Tuesday in Easter

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

April 25th - St. Mark

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 1st - Ss. Philip and James

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 11th - 13th - Rogation Days

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

LENTEN SCHEDULE: *Brief Explanations of our Lenten Services and Activities*

Each year during Lent we offer additional opportunities of worship and devotion to our Lord. During the season of Lent it is customary to participate in such activities so as to advance in our knowledge and love of God. What follows is a brief explanation of 2015's offerings. Please make an effort to attend one or more of these as you are able.

Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. -

Evening Prayer & Study of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion: Evening Prayer is one of the official liturgies of the Church as found in the Book of Common Prayer. It descends from the old medieval monastic offices of Vespers and Compline. The interesting thing about Evening Prayer is that when you pray it you are engaging in over 2,000 years of prayer! Contained within the pages of this service are the prayers of the ancient Jewish people (e.g. the Psalms), the prayers of the early and medieval Church (e.g. the Collects and Canticles), the prayers of the Reformation era, the prayers of the modern era, and of course our own prayers added to all of that! It is a simple, quiet, mediative service of praise and devotion that connects us with God's people across space and time. After the service we will eat dinner. For now we will just ask people to bring their own, but if we want we can decide to go in together on a pizza or share a meal. We'll play that part by ear. During and after dinner we'll have a discussion on the "Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion." These are Reformation era statements on Anglican Church doctrine and discipline bound together with the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. Though drafted hundreds of years ago they still inform the life of the Church on some level today.

Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. -

Mass & Rosary: We will be celebrating the Holy Eucharist according to the rite of the English Missal (1958). The most notable thing about this Mass will be the use of the so-called "Gregorian Canon" - the Prayer of Consecration from the old pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church translated into beautiful Elizabethan-style English. The use of this sublime and ancient prayer is a venerable tradition within Anglo-Catholic parishes like ours. Those who attend the 10:00 a.m. Mass will find this service easy to follow. A special booklet is provided to help you follow along. After the Mass we will be praying the Holy Rosary. Yes, as we have learned from some literature around the Church, many Anglicans pray the rosary from time to time. It is a beautiful, contemplative form of prayer to be prayed by the whole Church - not just Roman Catholics! A primer and explanation on the use of the rosary will be provided.

Thursdays at 11:30 a.m. -

Morning Prayer & Bible Study: On Thursdays we will continue our usual service of Morning Prayer and Bible Study. Morning Prayer basically follows the same format as Evening Prayer, but has different readings, prayers, and canticles. The Bible study that follows is based on the proper readings for that morning or evening. In addition to studying the Bible we get into all sorts of interesting discussions and topics during the course of the study, delving into history, philosophy, theology, archeology, art, and more! It is a really fun, laid back time. One person who attends said that she has learned more about the Bible in this study in the last couple years than she has in her whole life! It is a relaxed time, full of wonderful people who want to know and love God more. Come and join us! I'd be remiss, of course, if I did

not plug the optional parish lunch that follows at Bob Evan's in Bel Air. All are welcome to join us for that afterwards.

Fridays at 12:00 p.m. - Stations of the Cross & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:

The service of Stations of the Cross is a great Lenten devotion whereby we symbolically walk with the Lord as he is judged by Pontius Pilate and then goes forth to die on the cross. In the ancient Church Christians would go to the Holy Land to reenact the last hours of Jesus' life. As travel to the land became more dangerous and even impossible due to the Moslem invasion Christians began to observe the "stations" in their local churches through this devotion. During the devotion we sing the old medieval "sequence hymn" *Stabat Mater* (Hymnal 76). Don't worry... we sing it in English, not Ecclesiastical Latin! After "Stations" we have the brief service of "Benediction." This devotion has its origins back as early as the 14th century. It is a veneration of our Lord Jesus in his sacramental Body. In other words, a consecrated Host - the Body of Jesus - is placed on the altar in a special object called a "monstrance" so we may worship and adore Him. After a short period of prayer and singing the priest picks up the monstrance and blesses God's people with the Body of Christ! It is a beautiful and spiritually powerful service that helps assure us of God's presence and his love for us.

Do come out and join us for these services. They are offered for our spiritual growth. A lot of work goes into planning them. Lent is a time engage in extra devotions and deepen our faith in God. For the next few weeks can you not engage in at least one extra devotion during the week to draw closer to God and grow in love for him? I hope to see you there! ☩

LITURGY & WORSHIP: *Good Friday and Holy Saturday Service Notes*

This year our Holy Week schedule will be slightly different from previous years. The main changes are with our Good Friday and Holy Saturday services.

First let us look at Good Friday. It goes without saying that everyone should try to be present for this service. Ask for time off of work now so you may observe the passion and death of our Lord Jesus on the cross for the salvation of the world. We will have one service for Good Friday this year, and it will be at 12:00 noon on April 3rd. The service will be the “Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday” as found in the missal. According to the renowned Anglican liturgical scholar Dom Gregory Dix this is one of the most ancient liturgies of the Church. The liturgy is divided into four sections. A booklet will be provided to help everyone navigate the service. The first section consists of lessons from the Old and New Testaments, Psalm verses called “Tracts”, and the Collects for Good Friday from the Book of Common Prayer. The second part of the service are the solemn prayers of the faithful. These prayers are very similar to the “Bidding Prayer” found on page 47 in the Book of Common Prayer. The third part of the liturgy is the “Veneration of the Cross.” A large, veiled crucifix is held up and slowly uncovered while an antiphon is sung. Then are said (or sometimes sung in the larger churches) the “Reproaches” which are laments taken from the scriptures and other sources. Important composers over the years have set the reproaches to music. The last part of the service is the communion of the faithful. We will receive the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the “reserved” sacrament. By ancient tradition the bread and wine are not consecrated on Good Friday, so we reserved the sacrament the night before on Maundy Thursday and receive communion the next day from that “pre-sanctified” sacrament. Since there is no Prayer of Consecration at this service it finishes up pretty quickly. The entire service should take no more than one hour. In addition to chanting the “Tracts” (Psalm verses) in the first part of the service we will sing a couple of hymns at various points. The choir will also sing a piece of special music.

Now let’s look at our Holy Saturday service. This service is being held because we were so crowded on Easter Sunday last year. We decided against having an additional service on Easter Day because that would have entailed switching the times for the other services which would have just confused everyone. Also, the clergy and organist just do not have the energy to do three such major services in one morning. So we are having an “Easter Vigil” at 7:00 p.m. on April 4th. This will be in many ways a typical Holy Communion service, but it will

have some additional elements added to it, which is good, because these elements are part of the life of the church that we rarely get to see or celebrate (though we have indeed done them here before, especially when Fr. Unterburger was here). Here is how the service will be structured. At the beginning of the liturgy we will have the Blessing of the New Fire and Paschal Candle, and the chanting of the ancient hymn *Exsultet*. The second part of the service will be the ancient lessons or “prophesies.” These are a series of passages of scripture that talk about our redemption in Jesus Christ. I would like to let members of the church read these lessons, sort of like at a “Lessons and Carols” service, so there will be a sign-up sheet in the parish hall for anyone who is interested in reading these. Next we sing the Litany, and then after that the baptismal font is blessed. While I am not anticipating having any baptisms that evening, the font still gets blessed, and then we renew our baptismal vows and sprinkled with the water in blessing. After all of this the solemn mass of the paschal vigil is celebrated. As with Good Friday, a booklet will be provided to help everyone through the service. Note that because the service is so rich in scripture and tradition there will not be a sermon offered at this Mass. The Easter sermon will instead be offered the next morning at our typical Sunday Masses.

I know that we historically have trouble getting people out for evening services because of our location in the deep dark country, but it would be really great if we had at least twenty of our people come to this service to make room for the “Christmas and Easter Christians” on Easter Sunday. We all know that our church building is dinky, tiny, and completely inadequate in terms of its size, so we need to try to make room for our guests in whatever way we can. This is one of the ways we can do that.

Here is one more thing to think about: if you come to church for the Easter Vigil that frees you up to visit your family or friends at their church on Easter Day! The vigil “counts” for your Easter obligation. But you can still come to church the next morning and attend again, at St. Alban’s or somewhere else, if you want. So if you are curious about or interested in the ancient traditions of Easter, and do not really care about hearing a sermon or listening to the choir sing then come on out on Holy Saturday for this vigil. The turnout for this will basically determine whether or not we have a third Easter service again down the road. ☩

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

Choir Rehearsal

Join organist and choirmaster R. Warren Glock beginning on Sunday, March 15th at 11:40 a.m. to rehearse for our Holy Week and Easter services! The choir will be singing only anthems... no liturgical chants. Questions? See Mr. Glock or Fr. Anderson.

Please Remember Your Pledge

Though snow stops us from having church services from time to time it does not stop the bills from coming! Please be sure to send in your pledge so we may keep our doors open. St. Alban's is entirely self-supported. We rely on your faithfulness and generosity to remain afloat.

Rose Vestment Debut

Join us for "Rose Sunday" (Lent 4, March 15th) as we use for the first time the church's rose vestment set, bought and paid for by all of you! The set is, to put it bluntly, absolutely stunning. This of course is what we expected, knowing that they were made by the man who is probably

the nation's top vestment designer, and whose work is found in such prestigious Episcopal churches as St. Thomas, Fifth Avenue, St. Paul's "K" Street, Grace Cathedral, and more. This set will serve St. Alban's well for generations to come. Thank you for your generosity and support, and your love for God and worshipping him in "the beauty of holiness."

Standing Notices:

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

"My bounden duty [as a member of the Church] 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) ☩

HOLY WEEK SERVICES AT ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH

Palm Sunday, March 29th

Liturgy of Palms and Holy Communion at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

Monday Before Easter, March 30th

Morning Prayer and Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday Before Easter, March 31st

Morning Prayer and Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday Before Easter, April 1st

Morning Prayer and Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd

Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, April 3rd

Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday at 12:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 4th

Easter Vigil at 7:00 p.m.