

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

It is hard to believe that we are in the midst of Lent, and that Easter in all of its glory will be upon us by the end of the month! As spring comes I am hoping that we can get around to some important projects that need to get done here at church. These include having the exterior of the building painted and some work done on our gutters, repairing the office stairs, and replacing the light fixtures in the older section of the parish hall. I wish that is all that there was that needed to get done, but the reality is that there is a lot more stuff we need to do to make this place look great. A run down, worn looking building dishonors God. I have been fortunate enough to visit many parishioners in their homes and never once have I seen mismatched and torn flooring in the kitchen, burned out lights, scraped and cracked furniture, etc. Most of us simply wouldn't tolerate those things in our homes. Well, neither should we tolerate those things in God's home! This house of worship is God's house. It is a place to meet him in word, sacrament, and neighbor. So it needs to be in tip top shape at all times. Furthermore, a run down building makes a very bad impression on visitors. It conveys a "we don't care" attitude. And if we do not care about our church then why should they? Why should they join us? And guess what: they don't join us. Many visit but then go somewhere else. I think a large part of why they do that is our building... its condition and size and some other things. But I know that we *do* care about Saint Alban's Church, and that we want people to come and join our fellowship and community, so what I hope to do is sit down with the junior warden, and then with the vestry, in order to come up with a comprehensive proposal on what we can do to refresh and restore our building so it looks as great as it can. I also hope that we can have a fun parish work day sometime in the spring to get the place looking gorgeous after this long cold winter we've had. If you have not been able to make it out to any of our Lenten activities there is still time! We've had some great discussion, prayer, and fellowship on Tuesday nights, and the various Masses and other devotions (Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on Fridays at noon) have been very meaningful and enriching as well. If you have been coming to some or all these thank you! Please keep coming. If you've come only once or twice, come back! We'd love to have you, and the devotions get better the more they are practiced. Our Holy Week schedule is on page 3. Please have a look at it, as there are important changes this year in terms of service times. As always, if there are any questions about the devotions or services, or anything else feel free to ask me. May God grant each of us a holy Passiontide and Eastertide. God's peace be with you!

Affectionately, your Friend and Pastor,

J. Gordon Anderson

March 2016

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Important News and Other Items

UPCOMING HOLY DAYS:

Mar 20th - 26th - Holy Week

The schedule is on page 3.

Mar 28th - Easter Monday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Mar 29th - Easter Tuesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr 6th - Annunciation

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Apr 25th - St. Mark

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 2nd - Ss. Philip & James

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 3rd - Rogation Tuesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 4th - Rogation Wednesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

May 5th - Ascension Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

LITURGICAL THEOLOGY: *The Psalmody of the Mass*

Psalmody is the reading of an appointed Psalm or Psalms during the Eucharistic liturgy. The Christian liturgy has always contained readings from the Psalms. We at Saint Alban's read portions of the Psalter (another name for the book of Psalms) at our 10:00 a.m. celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Those, however, who attend this service have probably noticed that the way we read the Psalms is very different from the way other churches read them. Whereas churches with a more contemporary liturgy read one entire Psalm all at once - usually after a reading from the Old Testament - we at Saint Alban's have short responsive readings from various Psalms peppered throughout the service. These selections from the Psalms go by the name "minor propers" and consist of the Introit, Gradual or Tract, Alleluia, Offertory verse, and Communion verse. While on certain occasions these minor propers include other passages of scripture with the Psalm (or are not a Psalm at all), they are for the most part entirely from the Psalms.

In the past under my tenure at Saint Alban's we have experimented with having a choir chant these "minor propers" or having the priest read them aloud on his own. Under my predecessor, the Rev'd Canon Raymond Unterburger, the church, for a time, read the Psalm after the manner of the newer liturgies. Lately, however - thanks to our new comprehensive worship bulletin, which contains the Sunday service *in toto* - we have been reading these Psalm verses responsively, and to great effect.

At this point, one might be wondering why we have little bits and pieces of Psalms sprinkled throughout the service. Isn't the newer way of including a Psalm at Mass more convenient because we read an entire Psalm, or at least a larger portion of one, all at once? Doesn't that help us get more out of it? And aren't there are some churches in our diocese and elsewhere that read an entire Psalm after an Old Testament lesson *and* all of the Psalmody of the minor propers. Why don't we do that?

The reason that we read the Psalms the way we do is certainly not that there is anything wrong with reading them the other ways. Indeed the 1928 Book of Common Prayer makes allowance for a Psalm to be read between the Epistle and Gospel when it says in the fourth rubric, "Here may be sung a Hymn or Anthem." Inasmuch as Psalms are songs it is perfectly reasonable (but by no means *required*, as some clergy erroneously believe) to include an entire Psalm at that point in the liturgy. The choir of men and boys at the church I attended while in seminary would chant (Anglican Chant) a Psalm at that point in the liturgy, and it was always very beautiful and edifying. And as far as reading or singing a Psalm between

the Epistle and Gospel *and* reading (or chanting) all of the minor propers is concerned, well, that is acceptable, but I always thought that was just plain overkill. (But that is just my opinion.) And furthermore, churches that use modernistic liturgies, such as the Episcopal Church, often *have* to include a Psalm read at a certain point because it is *required* in their liturgy. But we have a *different, older* service, and that means that we have a certain amount of flexibility as where to include the Psalms (or even to include them at all).

We read the Psalms the way we do not only because it conforms most naturally to our authorized liturgical books (the American and Anglican Missals) but because it is more in keeping with the tradition of the western Mass as it developed. Despite the fact that it arose at the time of the Reformation, the Book of Common Prayer was strongly medieval in its theology and structure. This is still the case with the 1928 American Prayer Book, which very closely resembles the original 1549 English Prayer Book. In fact, our Prayer Book service of Holy Communion has rubrics that allow for all of the traditional "minor propers" to be said or sung in their traditional place! So it just makes sense to me to read the historic minor propers of the Mass in the way they were edited and in their proper place during the liturgy because in so doing we are keeping with the medieval traditions which our Prayer Book continues, albeit in a Reformed manner. Put another way, it is more "Anglican" to do it this way... at least to my way of thinking.

Ultimately, though, the Mass is simply not the place to read through large portions of the Psalter. Truncated verses from the Psalms are interspersed throughout the Mass for specific theological and liturgical purposes, namely, to enhance the celebration of the Holy Mysteries and give expression to the teaching of the Church *and* what is in our hearts as we join in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice.

If one is interested in reading (or even chanting) the Psalms in their entirety then he or she is encouraged to pray the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer. It is these daily services of Church, where we pray her prayers in union with all of God's people around the world that we delve into the beauty and mystery of the Psalms... and read through the entire Psalter once a month! I think that we would get a lot more out of the Psalter, and indeed the whole bible, if we would pray Morning and Evening Prayer on a daily basis instead of trying to add interminable Psalms and Old Testament readings to Sunday Divine Service. ✠

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR: 2016 *Holy Week Schedule at Saint Alban's Church*

Join us this month for our schedule of services for Holy Week. This is the most spiritually intense week of the Christian Year as we journey with our Lord Jesus Christ to Jerusalem so he may offer up his life on the cross of calvary for our salvation. Attending the Holy Week services is the best way to prepare for the joy of Easter morning, where we celebrate his mighty resurrection. Our schedule is slightly different from last year, so please read this carefully.

Palm Sunday - March 20th, 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion:

On this day we commemorate Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. There he was welcomed by palm waving masses, many of whom thought he would instigate a war with the occupying Romans and throw them out of the Promised Land. But as we read in the Passion according to Saint Matthew - the Gospel for that morning - things didn't quite pan out that way. Instead Jesus died alone on the cross, abandoned by his disciples and even his heavenly father! We will have our usual 8 am and 10 am services that morning with the Blessing and Distribution of Palms at each service.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Easter - March 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion:

The highlight of these days is the reading of the other passion narratives. On Monday and Tuesday we read the Passion according to Saint Mark. On Wednesday we read the Passion according to Saint Luke. (More of Saint Luke's Passion may be read on Maundy Thursday, but we also have the option on that day to read about Christ washing his disciples feet.)

Maundy Thursday - March 24th, 12:00 p.m. Holy Communion

We are trying a new somewhat odd time slot for this service this year. I have noticed that our evening services in general are poorly attended. Part of that is, I think, due to people not wanting to drive at night on the cold, dark country roads that surround our church. If that's the case I can certainly understand it. Another factor is that some very active members have hellish commutes and evening services and events are hard to get to on time. So this year we are having our Maundy Thursday service as early in the evening as possible! That will make it easy for those who work nearby to come during lunch, and also for retired and elderly people, and those who hate driving at night, to attend. On this day we commemorate the institution of the

Lord's Supper and the famous mandate ('mandatum novum', or "new commandment") that Christ gave to his disciples found in John 13:34. *"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."* The sacrificial love about which Jesus speaks is illustrated by him in the washing of the disciples' feet, and ultimately in his atoning death on the cross. We will for the first time ever have the ancient ceremony of "The Washing of Feet" at this Mass! You won't want to miss it. Following the service a procession will form to carry the Blessed Sacrament to a secure place. (Alas, we do not have room for an "Altar of Repose" at Saint Alban's.) The main altar will be completely stripped in preparation for Good Friday.

Good Friday - March 25th, 12:00 p.m. Solemn Liturgy, and 7:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross and Evening Prayer:

Last year's turnout for this service was great! Let's do that again. We had a lovely service singing and chanting all of the ancient Collects, readings, Biddings and Prayers, and so on. We also heard a sermon, venerated the cross, and we made our communion from the reserved sacrament. I was told that the informational booklet that contained the liturgy and also all of the historical data about this unique service (one of the most ancient liturgies of the Church) was very helpful. We will try an additional evening service this year for those who absolutely cannot attend the noon service. But please, if you have to choose, come to the noon liturgy as that is the main service for the day. Plan ahead *now* to get off of work that day or least part of the day around the noon hour!

Easter Even - March 26th, 11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer and 12:00 p.m. Blessing of Paschal Candle, Evening Prayer, Renewal of Baptismal Vows, and Ante-Communion

We are not having an Easter Vigil this year as we did last year because the low turnout (again, typical for most of our evening services here) just doesn't make it worth it. So what we are going to do instead is go back to our older custom of reading Morning Prayer followed by decorating the church for Easter and then, when we are all done, reading Evening Prayer and the Ante-Communion. This is always a fun time with both adults and kids in attendance. The only new twist will be that we will bless the Paschal Candle at this service and renew our baptismal vows. Come on out for this service, help us decorate, and then glorify Jesus on the day of his resurrection! ☩

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

Weekly Giving

As you may recall, we missed a Sunday service in January due to severe weather. That has thrown off our finances a bit. So please remember to stay current with your giving, and if you miss a Sunday to stay caught up with your pledge and tithe. We ourselves may miss church from time to time because we go on vacation, or stay home sick, or something else. But remember that the bills never never stop coming to church! Thank you.

2016 Choir Schedule

We are always looking for volunteers to sing in our choir! Will you consider joining to sing for some special upcoming services? Because we are such a small church our choir only sings for very important Holy Days, so if you "join" the choir you are not making a commitment for the rest of the year, or your life. It is just a short commitment for some very special services, so please consider joining. You will glorify God, edify your fellow parishioners, and have your own soul enriched. Here is the schedule:

Sunday, March 6, 2016 from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Rehearsal

Sunday, March 13, 2016 from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Rehearsal

Sunday, March 20, 2016 - 10:00 a.m. - Sing at Palm Sunday service

Friday, March 25, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. - Rehearse for Good Friday service. Sing at Good Friday service at 12:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 27, 2016 - 9:30 a.m. - Rehearse for Easter Sunday service. Sing at Easter Sunday service at 10:00 a.m.

Recent Memorial and Thanksgiving Appointments

The parish has recently acquired a set of "Sarum Blue" vestments. It is a combined memorial and thanksgiving set of vestments to be used only during the Advent season. A chasuble, maniple, stole, and chalice veil was donated by Fr. Edelman, and the rest of the set (burse, pulpit fall, and altar frontal) were given by an anonymous parishioner, and as a memorial to the late Suzanne Foster who faithfully served on the altar guild for many years. An additional stole for an assisting priest was donated by Fr. Anderson. The tradition of using blue during the Advent season is observed by many Anglican/Episcopal parishes and has its roots in medieval England. We have also acquired a black casket pall designed and made by Mr.

Richard Luzar of Oxford, England. This was purchased as a memorial to the late Elizabeth "Mayo" Bryan using some funds from a bequest she left to the church. There is a lovely memorial inscription to her on the reverse side of the pall. This will make celebrating Requiem (funeral) Masses a lot easier as we previously had to borrow a black casket pall from either Grace and Saint Peter's Church or Mount Calvary Church, both down in Baltimore City. These unique gifts will stand as memorials to the faithfulness and devotion of the donors, as they are used in the sacred liturgy to the glory of God.

Saint Alban's Memorial Fund

Did you know that Saint Alban's Church has a memorial fund? Enshrined in our parish by-laws (Article X), this fund is used to purchase memorial items in memory of those who have died. Many times when a loved one dies, or when we die, provisions are made for donations to be given to various charities. Please remember to list Saint Alban's Church as that charity, or one of the charities. We need the money to survive and continue our ministry. Small donations go into the memorial fund, while large bequests go into the money market account, with the vestry authorizing a portion of the bequest (typically 10%) to be spent on a memorial to that generous individual. All donations to the church are tax deductible. Please see Fr. Anderson for more details. Please also remember the church in your estate planning. There is a sheet prepared by the diocesan treasurer that is hanging on the vestry bulletin board which tells of different and non-traditional (but still highly effective) ways you can give to the church. Please have a look at it!

Easter Egg Hunt

Please bring in candy, stickers, erasers, and other items for kids that can be stuffed into Easter eggs for our annual Easter Egg hunt on March 27th after the 10 a.m. Mass! Place the items in the designated basket in the parish hall.

Quote of the Month

"Our kingdom go" is the necessary and unavoidable corollary of "Thy kingdom come." For the more there is of self, the less there is of God. The divine eternal fullness of life can be gained only by those who have deliberately lost the partial, separative life of craving and self interest, of egocentric thinking, feeling, wishing, and acting.

Aldous Huxley, quoted in "A Treasury of Quotations on Christian Themes" by Carroll E. Simcox (Seabury Press, 1975) ❧