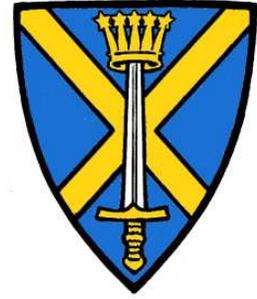


The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Don't forget to join us on Sunday, November 18th for our annual meeting. There will be ONE service of Holy Communion at 9:00 a.m. that morning. Immediately following we will have brunch and then our annual meeting. Please be sure to be in church this special day. The annual meeting will give us a chance to look back and see where we've been and look ahead to see where we are going. One of things we will do is elect new vestrymen. Rotating off of the vestry are Kristi Sjöholm-Sierchio and Jason Tayler. They have done a great job the last three years and can now take a well-deserved break. Nominated by the vestry to replace them are Stephanie Brown and John Myers. Both relatively new to the parish, Stephanie and John have dived right in and gotten involved in a number of ways here at the church. I look forward to their assistance and input in this important ministry. Please pray for them, and also for the rest of the vestry: Jim Rutledge, Edwin Okoye, Alfred Okutoyi, and Linda Tillinghast, and of course the rector! We have been blessed by a good number of visitors lately. Please be sure to always greet them and make them feel at home. If you see them fumbling through the service as though they are lost offer to help them. After the service is over talk to them some more. If it's after the 10:00 a.m. service invite them to stay for refreshments. If you really hit it off with the person or people invite them out to lunch after the service or some other time. One couple joined us years ago when they visited the church and after the service a parishioner and his wife treated them to lunch! They joined and later had two kids, and were very active here until being transferred to another state for work. They always mentioned to me, though, what a big impact that hospitality made on them. Yes, it is powerful. Hospitality is one of the most important aspects of evangelism. We have a reputation for being a super friendly church family. Let us continue to be that way. I look forward to the end of the current ecclesiastical year and the beginning of the new one in Advent, which is right around the corner (December 2nd). December 2018 will mark eight years since my family and I moved back to Maryland so I could serve as rector of Saint Alban's. It's been a wonderful time and we look forward to many more happy and blessed years here with you all!

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

November 2018

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UPCOMING SERVICES:

Nov 1st - All Saints' Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 2nd - All Souls' Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 22nd - Thanksgiving Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Nov 30th - St. Andrew's Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 8th - Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 19th - Ember Wednesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 21st - St. Thomas' Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

 THE CHRISTIAN YEAR: *Reflections on All Saints' and All Souls' Days, by the Rev'd Charles K. Riepe*

In truth the feast of All Saints (November 1st) is the feast of all those who, having been made holy by the sacrament of baptism and having lived their lives in such manner as to receive the fruit of redemption, are now in the presence of Christ the King.

Nowadays a saint is considered one whose name has been solemnly recorded in the Church's calendar by the process known as canonization. Yet Paul in his letters is constantly referring to the "saints" at such-and-such a place, or is sending them his greetings. Since the time of Paul predated the papal process of canonization is can only be concluded that the apostle had something else in mind when he used the term saint.

The original meaning of the word saint is simply anyone who has been made holy by baptism, and who continues to abide in the sacramental life of the Church. For the word saint means holy. In pauline usage for instance the word means "to the holy ones at Corinth." in a word the holy ones, or saints, are members in good standing in the Church. It is in this context therefore that the feast of all saints must be understood.

The history of the feast of All Saints has its source in the consecration of Rome's Pantheon by Pope Boniface IV around the year 610. The Pantheon had been of course a pagan temple dedicated to "all the gods" and Boniface named it the Church of Our Lady and All Martyrs. The dedication of the Pantheon took place on the thirteenth day of May and was a widely celebrated feast. Sometime before the year 800 the idea of a feast of all saints took hold under the pontificate of Gregory IV, who reigned from 827 to 844. King Louis the Pious introduced the feast to France.

Still another date for the observance of this feast was the octave of Pentecost, to this day the time when all saints are commemorated in the Greek rite. The feast therefore is an ancient one, venerated through many centuries.

The main idea behind the feast of All Saints, as we have already suggested, is that it is another aspect of the Easter theme, one closely related to the feast of Christ the King (always the last Sunday of October). For in this feast the Church celebrates

the ultimate meaning of redemption. Whereas during Advent the liturgy contemplates in general the end of the world and the second coming of the savior, here the final establishment of the heavenly kingdom is narrowed down to a particular aspect: the triumph of those who have gone before us and all those who will come after us until Jesus comes again. And while the Church is in truth only celebrating and venerating those who are now in God's presence, still the feast implies the triumph of all those who are friends with Jesus.

The feast of All Souls (November 2nd) continues the theme of all saints. Here the Church is remembering all those who have gone before us but who because of their human frailty are still in the process of being cleansed from their sins before entering the presence of Christ their king. These souls also are living in the light of Easter even though that light may be as yet somewhat dim to them in their present state. Still it is because of the light that they are where they are and in God's good time they will live in its full brilliance.

The actual feast of All Souls is monastic in origin and dates from the Cluniac (Monastery of Cluny, France) system of the tenth century. While the feast became quickly popular among secular (i.e. diocesan) as well as religious clergy, it was not until the fourteenth century that it was accepted in Rome. The idea of saying three masses for the dead originated in Spain toward the end of the fifteenth century. But only recently was the custom made a part of the Roman Rite; it was introduced by Benedict XV in 1915.

As is always the case, the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the mass is the central manner of commemorating the dead. The canon of the mass (i.e. Prayer of Consecration) is a eucharistic prayer, which is a prayer of "thanksgiving." (Eucharist means thanksgiving.) It might seem strange to be so emphatic in giving thanks on the occasion of a death. Yet when we recall that we are in fact giving thanks for our redemption, for the fact that death has lost its eternal sting, we realize how appropriate it is that we here give thanks to God.

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PARISH LIFE: *Building Renovation Updates and Wishlist*

The modest renovations to the parish hall recently undertaken have been well-received by both parishioners and friends of the church. Our new “coffee house” style meeting area has been hailed as attractive and inviting by all who were familiar with it before. A member of the Flying Geese Quilt Guild that meets every Wednesday morning at the church commented the other day that the new arrangement and furniture has made it a lot easier to socialize, and has helped them have more “community” with one another.

If anyone would like to help with its continued redesign/renovation we are still in need of the following items: 1) a conference table and chairs for the library; 2) a flat-screen TV to be mounted to the wall in the library; 3) two large wooden tables and chairs to replace the plastic folding tables and metal chairs in the parish hall. (These we want to replace because the folding plastic and metal stuff is simply not warm and inviting. In fact it’s the opposite: clinical, cold, and pragmatic.) The furniture items for the parish hall and library may be purchased new or used... or maybe there is something laying around your house that you’d like to get rid of that would work. As for the TV it is probably best that we get one that’s new. Please see the rector if you have something, would like to donate something, or know of someone who would. Remember that corporations are often willing to give old furniture to non-profit organizations like St. Alban’s, especially if there is a tax-deduction involved.

Besides finishing up the parish hall and library there are a couple of other small renovations that need to be done around the church of which we should be aware. The first is the porch/entrance way off of the church. In the 1980’s when St. Alban’s first began holding services in its “new” building this entrance served as the main entrance of the church. (There was no parish hall at the time.) That is one of the reasons why there is a built in coat rack in the room. As time went on and the building was expanded this entrance was used less and less by regular attendees, perhaps because it is not directly off of the parking lot. So over the years it has simply moldered. A couple of

years ago some generous parishioners paid to have the rotted flooring replaced, and as a result the floor looks great. But the old drop ceiling is in dismal shape and the lighting is terrible. *So we want to replace the drop ceiling and change the lighting. We have a quote to get that done for about \$900.* I hope that we can get that done in the new year as this entrance is still the main entrance for first time visitors! It is extremely important that a person’s first impression of the church be a good one, and part of that has to do with the physical structure itself.

The next modest renovation is to finish the bathrooms. We need new flooring in the men’s and ladies room to match the recently installed flooring in the kitchen. *We have a quote to get that done for about \$700.* The cost is such because of the difficulty of removing the toilets, and working around the plumbing equipment in the men’s room. One of the other things we need for the men’s room in addition to flooring is a new sink and vanity. There is no need for me to go into details as to why right here. Just take a look at it one Sunday morning and the need will be obvious.

Finally, and probably more costly, we need to renovate the kitchen. When we eventually expand the facility the current plan, for a variety of reasons, is to keep the kitchen and bathrooms in their places. The hope is to engage a company like IKEA to come up with a completely new design for us that will make the best use of the space. While it is not 100% necessary for a church to have a kitchen it is very nice to have one because it makes hospitality so much easier. Our kitchen has a lot going for it: it’s bright, conveniently located, and has a good amount of space (especially vertical space). All it really needs is some good old fashioned TLC (“tender loving care”). The new flooring and new refrigerator are definitely a step in the right direction.

These modest but very important renovations will bridge the gap between our current facility and what we have lined up for down the road. If you would like to help with this phase of our building program please see the rector. ☩

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

Socializing Before Services

Please try to keep pre-service socializing in the parish hall so as not to disturb those who come early to church to meditate and pray before services begin. Thank you!

Active Shooter Awareness Training, Part 2

The second of our active shoot awareness training sessions will be held on Sunday, November 25th immediately following the 8:00 a.m. service. This session will focus on self-defense, and will once again be led by Chuck Meyer. A third and final training session that recaps sessions one and two will be held in December. Please see the rector, Senior Warden Kristi Sjoholm-Sierchio, or Chuck Meyer if you have any questions.

Blessing “Awakenings” House in Bel Air

Last month Fr. Anderson was asked by Susan Kelly to bless the new assisted living facility where she is executive director. A fantastic time was had by all and the church received lots of good PR. Please note that Fr. Anderson is always available to make appearances at events, bless places and things, and so on. All you have to do is ask! It is a great way to get our name out in the community.

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) ☩

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Since all of us, following Christ, hope to pass through death to life and resurrection, it is not surprising that some of the texts of the liturgy of the dead have a pronounced Easter character. In the Offertory Verse for instance the Church prays that the departed souls may “pass from death to life.” The Proper Preface reminds us that “in the same Christ the hope of a blessed resurrection has dawned for us.” And in the Gospel Jesus tells us that he is the resurrection and the life.

All these references bear out Paul’s remark that, through his resurrection, Jesus is the “firstborn of the dead.” Thus, although every Christian must undergo his Good Friday, his death, he also has his Easter Sunday, his eternal life in Christ, awaiting him. How appropriate then that the holy mass, which contains both these elements, should be the worship we offer for the dead.

Another interesting feature of the liturgy of the dead is its treatment of hell. Since hell only has meaning because there is something to be deprived of, the Church, in her liturgy, treats of hell in the context of heaven. This is clearly

exemplified in the collect for the burial mass: “Forget him (the departed) not forever, but command your holy angels to receive him...” and again in the same prayer: “Let him not experience the pains of hell... but bring him to eternal happiness.”

Even the Dies Irae (Hymnal 468) which is sung as the sequence hymn on all souls’ prays for a place among the sheep far from the accursed goats, and reminds Jesus that we and our sins are the reason why he came into the world. There is no explicit mention of purgatory: its existence is taken for granted, otherwise there would be no reason to pray for the dead.

Finally the use of black vestments and mournful music is a reminder that all of us will some day return to the dust whence we came. We are all children of Adam, all under the same sentence; and while we are no longer uncertain or frightened about what lies on the other side of the grave the Church would have us remember how meaningless and desperate our end would be without our risen lord. ☩

Adapted from “Living the Christian Seasons” by the Rev’d Charles Riepe (Herder & Herder, 1964)