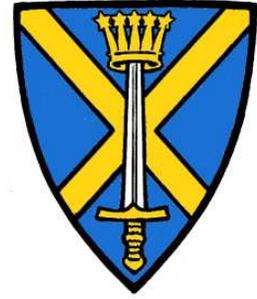


The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

In his Epistle Saint James writes that “faith without works is dead.” (James 2:14-26) Well it turns out that faith needs something else in addition to works in order to not be die, and that is money. Without money there can't be a church. Without your faithful stewardship St. Alban's cannot exist. Many times people look around the church and point out to me things that need to be done. Lately these include things like adding railings to make it easier to walk up and down stairs and repair broken light fixtures. While it is good and right be mindful of such things we should realize that the church does have an endless amount of money to pay for them. And we have all of regular expenses as well. We only have as much money as people give to us, and we are not able to quickly address these and other important needs, or make our normal budget, when financial support is lacking or absent. The scriptures encourage us to “tithe”, which means give 10% of our income to God. The tithe goes to church to support her work. In other words, we are not told to simply “give away” 10% of our income, but to give it to *God*, and he gets it when we give it to our church. Anything given above and beyond the tithe, to the church or otherwise, is referred to as an “offering.” An offering can be whatever we like... or nothing. But the tithe is God's. In reality, of course, everything is God's. All that we have, even our own life and breath, belongs to God, and we are simply stewards of it all. In his great love and mercy God asks us to give back the first fruits of all that he gives to us —10%— and let's us keep the rest. When we do that he promises to bless us financially and in other ways. It is impossible to be more generous than God! The beautiful thing about the tithe is that it adjusts to each person's income. So if you make \$500/month your tithe is \$50. If you make \$5,000/month your tithe is \$500. If your income takes a hit, then the tithe adjusts accordingly, and so on. Some, in lieu of giving to the church “treasure” opt to give her their “time and talent.” The giving of those is certainly important too! But we cannot neglect giving God his share of our treasure (well actually it's “God's” treasure that he's briefly given us charge over), because time and talent alone do not pay the bills. The tithe is what we need to aim for in our giving to St. Alban's. We may not be able to tithe right now, but the idea is to head in that direction. And as your pastor and priest, just as I tell you that God will bless you if you give generously to him, so I have to tell you that God will judge you if you are able to give and yet fail to do so. It is an axiom of Christianity that we will one day be judged for what we have done and failed to do in this life, and this includes what we have done with the financial resources with which we have been blessed.

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

October 2018

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Important News and Other Items

UPCOMING SERVICES:

Oct 18th - St. Luke

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

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

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

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 22nd - Ember Saturday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 24th - Christmas Eve

Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.

Dec 25th - Christmas Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Jan 1st - Circumcision of Christ

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

THEOLOGY: *A Sermon on St. Luke in Honor of St. Luke's Day, October 18th — by the Rev'd Harry Hancock*

The Christian religion owes a great debt to St. Luke. Most critical scholars agree that he was the author, not only of the gospel which bears his name, but also of the Acts of the Apostles. He is known also as the “beloved physician” and was the companion of St. Paul on some of his great missionary journeys. A good deal of the Acts of the Apostles is a kind of diary or log-book of their voyages together. St. Luke is among among the most reliable and accurate of all historians of antiquity, and his literary style is the best in the New Testament. He has a wonderful gift drawing the most vivid word-pictures, almost like an artist, who can convey a striking likeness with a few strokes. He never wastes a word, but makes every word he uses tell with all its force. His keen observation and attention to detail may well have been due to his medical training. This is tremendously important to us Christians because we are dependent on the New Testament for our knowledge of the life, character, and teachings of Jesus Himself.

We do not know very much about St. Luke's own life and character because he keeps himself very much in the background of his writings. He seems to have been very sensitive to the needs of the sick and the poor and the friendless; and he certainly tells us more about our Lord's mother and the other women than Matthew or Mark.

There is, however, one brief mention of St. Luke in the Second Epistle of Timothy, which gives, I think, a hint that he possessed one quality which we should all strive to copy. Let's look at the context in which this brief reference to St. Luke occurs.

St. Paul is nearing the end of his life. Not only is he getting to be an old man now, but he is in prison under sentence of death, and is waiting for the day of his execution, which, he seems to feel, cannot be far away. He is writing to his young friend and fellow worker Timothy, whose mother

Eunice and grandmother Lois were both well known to Paul. The end of the letter is sad. Paul urges Timothy to come back to him as soon as ever he can, and to bring with him young John Mark, who had been the cause of a bitter quarrel between Paul and his best friend Barnabas. That had happened many years before. The two old friends had parted, never to meet again. Twice Paul sailed past his friend's home on the island of Cyprus: but the first time the wind was against them, and the second time the captain couldn't spare the time to let Paul go ashore. And so they had never been able to shake hands and renew the old bond of friendship; and now Paul is lonely. Life has a way of getting lonelier as the years pass by. He is ready to forgive John Mark now, and to hope that mark will forgive him. He goes on to tell Timothy why he is lonely. It seems that, for one reason or another, his friends have gone away. One of them,

Demas, has forsaken both Paul and the Christian Faith, and gone back to a pagan life in Thessalonica: Crescens has gone to Galatia: Titus is about the Church's business in Dalmatia. Paul had sent Tychicus on a message to Ephesus, Erastus had remained in Corinth and Trophimus was so ill that he had to be left in Miletus. And then he says, “Only Luke is with me.”

Continued on the next page....



“St. Luke” continued from the previous page...

Only Luke! What a wealth of meaning those few words convey. From what we can gather out of his own writings from the Acts of the Apostles, it would seem that Paul was not always an easy person to live with! We are all a bit difficult to live with at times; but this seems to be true of so many great and gifted men. They become so absorbed and consumed with their work that they are apt to be somewhat merciless both to themselves and those around them. If Paul had a wife, I think she too would have been a martyr herself, not by dying for the Faith, but by living with it! Then, too, Paul's life had been full of danger; a hard, restless and homeless life of persecution, imprisonment, hunger and poverty. Yet Luke, the beloved physician, stayed with him to the end. There must have been many times when it was far from easy; times, perhaps, when Luke wondered whether he hadn't been a fool to give up a prosperous career as a doctor and become a kind of nurse-maid-secretary to this tempestuous soul for there was only one thing in life that mattered—the spread of the Gospel. But Luke had that priceless quality in his character which we call loyalty: the quality Jesus meant when he spoke of “putting one's hand to the plough and not looking back.”

Not looking back! That is the secret. Jesus, as always, had the truth of the matter. Just as it is fatal for a mountain-climber scaling a dangerous peak to look down from a dizzying height, so also it can be fatal to our loyalty, either to God or to those we love on earth, to spend too much time looking back over the road we have travelled. Of course, we cannot simply forget the past as if it had never been! That is neither possible nor desirable. It is from the past that we derive the lessons of experience to guide us in the present and the future. But when we do look back we must do it realistically and not through rose-colored spectacles. The past is apt to acquire a misty aura of sentimentality which distorts our view of it, so that we tend to remember what was happy and pleasant in the days gone by and to forget what was sad and ugly. That too is a good thing, and a blessing in itself, provided we do not form the unconscious habit of comparing the past unfavorably with the present; and then making

that comparison the basis of a gloomy outlook towards the future. Life can be miserable and a lonely business if “the only companion who stands at our side is the ghost of what-might-have-been.”

If Luke the beloved physician had been like that he would never have been able to stay with Paul to the very end. It is always easy to begin well, but it takes courage, devotion, and loyalty to see it through to the end. Many a great man has owed no small portion of his greatness to the unobtrusive but unswerving loyalty of a companion, such as St. Luke was to St. Paul. It may be a fanciful thought, but I sometimes wonder whether the unswerving loyalty and selfless devotion of the beloved physician might have been the inspiration of the passage in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians: “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” That, I feel sure is part, at least of the secret of the Christian soul's loyalty to God and his Faith through thick and thin. He presses forward because he knows that, even in the twilight of his earthly life, the future is still immeasurably greater than the past.

ALMIGHTY God, who didst inspire thy servant Saint Luke the Physician, to set forth in the Gospel the love and healing power of thy Son; Manifest in thy Church the like power and love, to the healing of our bodies and our souls; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. ❧

Reprinted from the book “Red Letter Days: A Series of Mediations on the Holy Days of the Christian Year” by the Rev'd Harry N. Hancock. Originally published by Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd. 1956

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

Seminarian Update - Mr. Mason Waldhauser

Dear Friends in Christ,

The classes have been awesome so far this semester! My favorite class is definitely Historical Theology. We've been reading the Epistles of Clement and Ignatius, the Epistle to Diognetus, and the Didache, which are some of the earliest Christian documents we have apart from the Bible. It's been really surprising to see how much doctrine is there from so early on in the life of the Church! They're talking about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and Baptismal regeneration already. I always thought those doctrines developed much later, but really they go back to the very beginning.

In New Testament, we've been discussing the Synoptic Gospels, which are Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The professor is arguing that Mark came first out of the three, and the other two worked off his text. At first I was skeptical, but this has actually given me a lot more insight into the passages that we've looked at than what I had expected. Apparently, the tendency is for Mark to write the most elaborately, then Luke will tidy them up, and Matthew will clarify any theological questions. It's been fun reading the Synoptics side-by-side and seeing how they approached the stories from different angles.

I am serving this year as an intern at a church out here called All Saints, which is in the ACC, one of the churches we entered intercommunion with back in October. I really like the priest there, and the parishioners are cool, too. I begin teaching an adult Sunday School class this Sunday, and we'll be discussing the life of prayer, going through different methods of conversational prayer with God as well as methods of meditation and Bible reading. I'm excited that we'll be learning something practical and helpful in being connected with God.

I just got out of a workshop the school was doing today on voice coaching. Next week, we'll have individual lessons, which I'm looking forward to. This will be a big help, because we do a lot of singing and chanting here! Fr. Pryor keeps a statistic for how much of the hymnal we have sung in chapel, and I think we're over sixty per cent since I began here. It's really nice starting and ending each day with choral music.

Thanks for all your prayers for me.

Mason

Hurricane Florence Relief:

Bishop Grundorf wanted to be sure our clergy and lay leadership are aware that the bishops of the Anglican Province of America, Anglican Catholic Church, Anglican Church in America, and the Diocese of the Holy Cross have called for the establishment of a fund to assist the parishes and missions of these intercommunion churches. Rebuilding efforts are underway! All donations to this fund will be directed to the congregations in need, and their parishioners impacted by Hurricane Florence. Bishop David Haines, rector of All Saints, Wilmington, reports the lower level of the parish hall was flooded. Other than multiple limbs down, there is no other damage to the church property. One of his parish families lost their home to flooding. To donate online, go to the APA website (www.anglicanprovince.org). Enter "Hurricane Florence Relief Fund" in the search box (or click the link at bottom of hurricane picture on the home page scrolling news pictures) and you will be directed to the donation site. (Also on the home page there is an update article "Surviving Hurricane Florence: A Personal Perspective" with additional pictures of All Saints Wilmington clean-up efforts.) **Q&A:** Can churches collect checks and send group check(s) to APA. Yes, Churches are welcome to collect checks from parishioners and send a group check to APA, just please note of "Hurricane Florence" in memo field. This saves the credit card processing fee on each donation as well. (from Diocesan Executive Administrator, Lisa Ulrich)

Rector's Forum

Beginning on Sunday, October 14th join us at 9:00 a.m. in the parish hall for our weekly rector's forum. This relaxed and interactive time will give us an opportunity to fellowship with one another and discuss different topics of interest and how they relate to our spiritual lives. It will be a great way for people to learn more about our church and for us to deepen our faith in God and relationships with each other. Light refreshments will be served.

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) ☩