The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085

My dear People:

Happy holidays to you all! The official holiday season is in full swing and we are excited about all that it has to offer. We at Saint Alban's trust that God will continue to bless us with new members, warm fellowship, and edifying worship in the months and years ahead. In this season of thanks I am especially grateful to serve as your rector. This year in December I will officially tie our founding rector, Fr. Jack Cooper, as the longest serving rector of the parish. And by God's grace I hope to one day completely surpass his tenure. This is a truly a wonderful place to serve, and, although we are not without our challenges, I know that God has great things in store for us as we carry out our mission to proclaim the Catholic and Apostolic faith of the Church in its Anglican expression. I would ask each of you to pray for the mission and ministry of our church, and to beseech the Lord that he send us new people and families so we can expand our parish and continue to thrive. I sincerely thank everyone who has given to our building project and the other initiatives that we undertake. I realize that the economy is bad and that everyone and their brother is asking you for money. That makes what you give to the church ever so important and meaningful. So, from the bottom of my heart, I say, "Thank you!" You know, when you give to Saint Alban's you are giving to a ministry that will actually last and that will be used by God in your life and in the lives of others. We would not be here today were it not for the generations of faithful people that have come before us who generously gave of their time, talent, and treasure to form and grow this parish. Don't forget that —as stated in the diocesan canons and the parish by-laws— Saint Alban's owns its property and assets, and that we cannot be 'closed by the bishop' or any other person. So you may give with confidence to this parish, knowing that your money will be put to good use right here, and will not ever be sucked away by greedy bureaucrats in clerical collars many miles away, which is —sadly— the case in other Christian denominations. In closing I would ask that, of your charity, you please remember the people who suffer from the loneliness and depression that this time of year can trigger. Reach out to friends and family and loved ones whom you sense could use a little cheerful lift and word of hope. God calls us to be salt and light in this world and to lead others into his kingdom and into a personal relationship with his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Ask God to make you an instrument of his peace and joy and to use you in some small way to bless others. May the Lord richly bless you and keep you all of your days!

Faithfully, your priest,

J. Gordon Anderson

November 2023

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UPCOMING PRAYER BOOK HOLY DAYS:

Nov 1st - All Saints'
Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.
Nov 23rd - Thanksgiving
Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.
Nov 30th - St. Andrew
Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.
Dec 20th - Ember Day
Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.
Dec 21st - St. Thomas
Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.
Dec 22nd - Ember Day
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.
Dec 26th - St. Stephen
Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.
Dec 27th - St. John
Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Please see the parish website for the complete list of Sunday and Holy Day services offered each month.

www.saintalbansjoppa.org

CHURCH HISTORY: *Making Some Sense of the Anglican Alphabet Soup (Part 2)*

When we left off last month the AEC (American Episcopal Church) and large portions of the ACC (Anglican Catholic Church) were planning to unite into one church. This took place around 1991 at a unity service in Deerfiled Beach, FL. The new body named itself the ACA (Anglican Church in America). The old AEC ceased to exist, while the remnant ACC continued on... but in 1997 the ACC suffered another schism (supposedly over doctrinal matters) known as "The Allentown Schism." The group that left them styled themselves the Holy Catholic Church—Anglican Rite" (HCC-AR). That group later split into two groups, and now almost nothing remains of either of them.

Going back now to the ACA... in 1995 there was a major dispute over an episcopal election in the church which resulted in a rupture in the fledgling jurisdiction. Most of the old AEC parishes pulled out and reconstituted as the Anglican Province of America (APA — St. Alban's jurisdiction) under Bishop Walter Grundorf; though a few decided to stay with the ACA. The APA and ACA each began periods of slow but steady growth

Whatever happened to the UEC and APCK jurisdictions that broke from the original ACC? In 2007 they patched up their differences with the ACC and each signed an intercommunion agreement with her. The three jurisdictions remain friendly and cooperative, albeit still as separate jurisdictions. The UEC was always —and has remained— very small. Under their bishop, the Most Rev'd Peter Robinson, they do not interact much with their continuing Anglican brethren.

The west coast/California-based APCK, under the leadership of Bishop Robert Morse, generally stuck to itself since their departure from the ACC, and shied away from interactions with other traditional Anglicans. But in 2003, the APCK suffered a schism when a large portion of their parishes left to form a separate diocese because (for various reasons) they could not morally assent to the leadership of Bishop Morse's successor. They named themselves the Diocese of the Holy Cross (DHC) and eventually came under the able leadership of the longtime bishop, Paul Hewitt, who was an APCK bishop who left with them. Later in 2007 a large portion of the eastern diocese of the APCK left them to join the ACA. The APCK carries on smaller, but now under their current archbishop try to maintain cordial relations with the other traditional Anglican groups that came out of the Episcopal Church in the late 1970's.

We pause here to mention that over the years from 1977 — 2007 there were a few other schisms in the Episcopal Church, incursions from foreign Anglican Communion bodies, and even a few neo/quasi-Anglican bodies that came into being. Most were small and insignificant and eventually disappeared completely, while others —which were never really very Anglican to begin with— eventually developed their own unique traditions and historical trajectory.

All of this infighting and schism and realignment understandably gave the Church(es) which left the Episcopal Church (TEC) a bad name. Would they ever unite? Would they ever be able to build the institution and really grow? Many had their doubts, and a lot of traditional and conservative Anglicans were simply content to remain in TEC. But in 2004 something happened within the Episcopal Church that orthodox laity and clergy could no longer ignore. TEC elevated Bishop Gene Robinson, a man who divorced his wife in order to marry another man, to the episcopate. This caused an international outrage and —to make a long story short— lead to the creation of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). It also lead to Pope Benedict XVI establishing the so-called "ordinariates" where disaffected Anglicans could become Roman Catholic but still maintain their own parishes and many of their Anglican traditions and liturgies. Let's briefly consider these two groups.

Unlike the "continuing" Anglican jurisdictions, the ACNA has much more variety in liturgy and theology. They have parishes that use the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, the old Missals, but also their 2019 Book of Common Prayer (based on the TEC 1979 Prayer Book). An ACNA parish in one town and diocese might have a rock band and clergy in no vestments, while one in another place might have the highest Anglo-Catholic liturgy known to man. Like the continuing churches, the ACNA has dioceses that overlap each geographically, meaning two parishes in the same area might be under different bishops. Some ACNA dioceses allow the ordination of women to the diaconate and priesthood (or just the diaconate). Rather inconsistently one might argue, none of them allow the consecration of women to the episcopate. There can be major differences in other important theological matters —such as infant baptism— from parish to parish, and diocese to diocese, as well. The ACNA *(The article continues on the next page.)*

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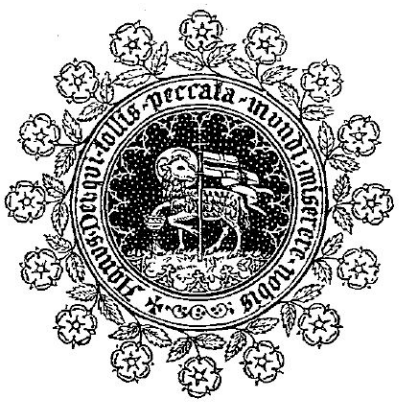
has excelled at planting new churches (just as the continuing Anglican churches did decades earlier) and has lots of dedicated members, both lay and ordained. But they could hardly be called 'classical Anglican' in style because of the liturgical and theological confusion (more so the former than the latter). Liturgically speaking, they may be likened to the early Methodists, who sprang from the Church of England and used the Book of Common Prayer for worship... *but only as an* option, which lead to the Prayer Book tradition dying away and the formation of an entirely new denomination and tradition. One does indeed wonder what will become of the ACNA down the road, as it has a not insignificant amount of infighting about these matters.

As mentioned a moment ago, the Roman Catholic response to the Gene Robinson consecration was to establish the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter (OCSP). Geared obviously towards Episcopalians of the Anglo-Catholic tradition, this non-geographic body allowed for entire congregations and their clergy to enter into communion with the Roman Catholic Church in a structure made just for them called an "ordinariate." As such, they would have their own national "Ordinary" (i.e. bishop) to oversee them and provide the sacraments. This was something of a development of the old "Pastoral Provision" established by the late Pope John Paul II whereby married Anglican clergy were allowed to be ordained as Roman Catholic clergy and serve in their parishes. Now, under the new structure, Episcopalians who fled TEC would have their own dedicated bishop and services based on the Book of Common Prayer and other Anglican models. Some continuing Anglican and neo-Anglican parishes also joined the Ordinariate, The ACA was particularly hard hit by this. Alas, the OCSP never really took off among Anglicans and Episcopalians and so remains pretty small to this day. The faithful men and women of this body remain something of outliers on the larger American Roman Catholic scene, which is largely modernistic in its liturgy and general theological outlook.



The formation of the ACNA and OCSP lead the four of the continuing Anglican jurisdictions of the ACC, ACA, APA, and DHC to take a good hard look at themselves. They wondered why Episcopalians fleeing TEC formed these new groups instead of simply joining them. Could all of the years of division be a turnoff to people? These and similar questions lead the four jurisdictions to meet in a joint synod in 2017. At this synod many old friendships were renewed and differences were put away, and the ACC, ACA, APA, and DHC entered into full communion. A few years later the DHC folded into the ACC. These jurisdictions —collectively known as the G3 communion of churches— work together, sharing clergy, resources, and goodwill and fellowship. The ultimate goal of the G3 intercommunion agreement is full, organic union, but that will take a while, as the jurisdictions have canonical and procedural hurdles to sort out. But as things stand today, we are in good spirits and trying to work together to advance the Kingdom of Heaven by means of the classical Anglican tradition. The good news is that the G3 is attracting interest from other traditional Anglican jurisdictions, especially the APCK which previously seemed to shun any sort of traditional Anglican ecumenical movement like this.

Time does not allow us to explore some of the many other small little groups that use the name Anglican. Suffice it to say they are so small that many of them exist only on paper. The strange thing about America is that anyone can start a church and call it whatever they want. Anyone can start a church and call it Anglican, or whatever. The same phenomenon happens in other American Christian traditions (e.g. Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, and even Roman Catholic). *Whether a church or jurisdiction can truly and authentically lay claim to their label and all that it implies is the real question!*

To some extent the division on the late 20th century American Anglican scene was to be expected. It takes strong personalities and wills to lead people and start new institutions or seek to preserve old ones in the face of heterodoxy and decline. And strong personalities will often clash with one another over vision and direction. How that conflict is handled and resolved is what is most important. What we have learned about ecumenism over the years is to take things slowly even if you have a lot in common, and just stay focused on the basics: glorifying God by building strong parishes and leading people into a deeper knowledge and love of him. ✠

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

Annual Meeting

Thanks to everyone who came to church at 9:00 a.m. for the joint service this month and stayed on for the annual meeting. The food and fellowship was wonderful and of course the meeting went well. The 2024 budget was approved and two new members of the vestry — Nick Kalathas and Kristi Sjoholm-Sierchio— were added. Special thanks goes out to Gayle Harting and Daniel for their three years of service on the vestry.

Harford County Sheriff's Office Toy Drive

Please be sure to bring in your unwrapped toy for children up to the age of 13 by December 10th so we can get them to the office to be distributed to needy children. You may all also donate hats and gloves for all ages. If you wish to make a financial donation write a check out to Saint Alban's and we will write the sheriff's office one lump sum check. Thank yo for your generosity!

Why Bells?

Do you ever wonder why we use bells during the Holy Communion service? We do so because they are part of the tradition of the Western Church. In olden days when the liturgy was still in Latin and much of it mumbled silently by the priest and clergy, the ringing of the bells alerted the laity that the bread and wine had, at the *Words of Institution*, become the Body and Blood of Christ. Although we as Anglicans —thanks to our vernacular liturgy— know when this change takes place, the ringing of the bells at that moment is maintained to emphasize the majesty of that important moment. They are also rung at the *Sanctus et Benedictus* to emphasize the holiness of God, and at the *Ecce Agnus Dei* to let the faithful know that it is time for them to come to the altar rail to make their communion.

4th Sunday in Advent (December 24th) — ONE 9:00 A.M. SERVICE!

Since the Fourth Sunday in Advent falls on Christmas Eve we will have just one 9:00 a.m. service that morning. It will be a sung communion service without incense. Please note this does NOT count as a Christmas service! Our Christmas services will be as usual: Christmas Eve on the 24th at 5:30 p.m. and Christmas Day on the 25th at 10:00 a.m. Please make a note of this!

Contact Updates

Please be sure to let the rector or his secretary know of any updates to your address, home phone, mobile, and e-mail so you can stay in touch with the parish.

Painting Help

The church could use some volunteers to help paint the wainscoting in the nave. The 1980's mauve is being painted over in a bright white to freshen and brighten up the place. A few sections have already been done and it looks great. Please let the rector know if you would like to help. No experience or tools are necessary.

Building Project

Don't forget to give in support of our building project! Every little bit helps. As with all gifts to St. Alban's any amount of money you donate at any time is 100% tax deductible. *We are now up to $11,000 in donations!*

Social Media

Check us out on social media on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter! There are announcements and other important bits of information about us posted on these platforms on a regular basis.

Thank You For Your Support

"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) ✠