

The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

Last year I received as a Christmas gift the Lego Titanic. At the time it was the largest set Lego ever produced (over 10,000 pieces). I think now it is the second largest. It took several weeks to build, and when I finally got it together it came in at over 4 feet long. Thinking it would be nice to share it with others, I brought it to church where it has been sitting ever since. Looking at this gorgeous Lego set day in and day out for months on end has made me very interested in the history and legend of RMS Titanic. Since acquiring this sculpture I have watched a whole host of YouTube videos about the ship and its ill-fated journey. (And trust me, there's a *lot* of fascinating information about it on YouTube.) One day I was struck at my intense interest in the ship, and how much time I had spent watching videos and learning about it... all of that from simply looking at the amazing model while at church. This drove home to me the power and importance of art and images. And naturally it made me think of how important it is to have images of Our Lord Jesus Christ, images of the saints, and other types of Christian iconography in our lives, such as at home, in the car, in the office, etc. Perhaps if we had a lovely, tasteful image of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ displayed in a prominent place so we got to see it on a daily basis we would think more about Jesus than we currently do. Perhaps if we had a plaque or a calligraphic print that displayed a bible verse we would memorize the verse and think about it on a regular basis. ("Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" it, as we pray on the 2nd Sunday in Advent.) I have a work of art like that in my house. It is a small, 3" x 5" cast metal plaque with Psalm 37:4 on it, "*Delight thyself also in the LORD; And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*" The plaque once belonged to my parents, and was on display in the house where I grew up, so I used to see it all the time. And what I did, and have been doing ever since, is ponder the meaning of it which is basically this: put God first in your life, and you will get everything and more that your heart desires. I believe that in some small way God used that plaque to lead me into full time ministry where I try to reach people for Jesus Christ, and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. All of that from just looking at a picture!! If you find yourself forgetting about God in the daily grind I would encourage you to find some nice Christian art to display in your home, office, or elsewhere. You won't be the only one to see it... your kids, grandkids, and friends and family will see it too. Who knows what God will do in those people's lives through their interaction with the work(s) of Christian art that you have in your space? It may lead them to learn more about God and his Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church just as me staring at the Lego RMS Titanic has led me to learn more about that amazing ship. God is, of course, the first and greatest artist, so he will no doubt use art in our lives to lead us to him.

Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

October 2023

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UPCOMING PRAYER BOOK
HOLY DAYS:

Oct 18th - St. Luke

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

**Oct 27th - Ss. Simon & Jude
(vigil)**

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

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.

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

www.saintalbansjoppa.org

DIOCESAN SYNOD: *A Report on 55th Synod of the Diocese of the Eastern United States*

This month I flew down to Orlando to participate in the 55th synod of our diocese. We also had provincial synod. A diocese is part of a province; or, put another way, a province is made up of various dioceses. The American branch of our jurisdiction (the Anglican Province of America) consists of two dioceses: the Eastern United States under Bishop Chad Jones, and the Central and Western States, under Bishop Robert Giffin. While each diocese meets on its own annually, the entire province meets only once every three years. So every three years both dioceses meet in the same location for their synods and then together they hold the provincial synod.

What made this year even more interesting (and busy) was that two of our sister jurisdictions — the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC) and the Anglican Church in America (ACA)— met with us, and conducted their business in the same place as us. We all enjoyed daily worship and fellowship together outside of the meetings, and it was good to connect with old friends from those churches. (On the next page, by the way, I will try to explain the various major Anglican jurisdictions... who they are and how they/we relate to one another.)

Church synods are run much like a vestry meeting. The prebendary (a senior priest) calls the meeting to order. Then, making sure there is a quorum, opens the synod by introducing the bishop, who opens us in prayer and offers his greetings. After prayer, general instructions and announcements are given, and the minutes from the previous year's meeting are read and approved. The bishop goes on to give a charge to the synod, which is always very inspirational and challenging. He reports on his activities throughout the year. Note that these are reported to the entire church monthly in his "comprovincial" newsletter and quarterly in his "epistle" —both of which are always distributed to the parishes of the diocese. (N.B. You can read them on our website, or see them posted on the bulletin board in the parish hall. They are also e-mailed to each of you.) When our 'bishop ordinary' (the guy who runs the diocese and has the actual jurisdiction) is finished he introduces his assistant(s) — the 'suffragan bishop(s)'— to give a report of their activities.

The next item on the agenda is appointments. He appoints people to fulfill different roles in the diocese including chancellor, area deans, examining chaplains, domestic mission teams, etc. Other roles, according to the canons, are filled not by appointment but by

election, so that is what follows next. These include diocesan treasurer, standing committee, and representative to the provincial council.

Next comes reports from the various committees, including: examining chaplains (the clergy who test and examine men seeking holy orders); domestic missions (in charge of church revitalization and planting); diocesan summer camp; and any other group that needs to report to the synod. A lot of these groups receive funding from the diocese, so what follows this report is the treasurer's report, the proposed budget for the new year, and the taking of parish pledges. Our diocese and province is doing very well financially. We are stable, growing our assets, and putting them to good use. Generally there is a 5% budget increase each year, and the parishes of the diocese (which includes us!) are always generous and put us over the finish line.

After this comes any new business. This, as you can imagine, changes from year to year. This year we heard about the upcoming diocesan women's retreat and then some very interesting presentations on parish building projects (there are several going on right now, or ones that have been recently completed) and reports on a few of the parish schools of the diocese, including the St. Dunstan's Academy project, which is located in VA and will be a boarding school for high school age boys. You can read all about it here: <https://stdunstansacademy.org/> Another report was given on the upcoming Holy Land trip, but as violence is escalating over there right now I imagine the trip may be postponed.

That was pretty much it for diocesan synod this year. Provincial synod is run along much the same lines. The presiding bishop (who also happens to be Bishop Jones) gives an address; officers are appointed or voted in to fulfill various roles; the provincial budget is reviewed and voted on; etc. Different from diocesan synod are things like the foreign missions bishop's report on our partnerships in Ecuador, India, Philippines, and Haiti; reports from each diocese; the announcement of the upcoming lenten appeal. There is a report on the pension fund, and the recognition of visitors. This year we welcomed our retired bishop, the Most Rev'd Walter H. Grundorf (who also joined us at our diocesan synod), as well as some representatives from the Polish National Catholic Church with whom we have been in ecumenical discussions for a few years.

Please turn to page 4.

CHURCH HISTORY: *Making Some Sense of the Anglican Alphabet Soup (Part 1)*

In the previous article I wrote about the joint synods of the so-called “G3” communion of churches: the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC), the Anglican Church in America (ACA), and us —the Anglican Province of America (APA). Where did we come from? And what is our relationship to other Anglican churches (or “jurisdictions” or ‘denominations’) such as the Episcopal Church (TEC), the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC), the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), and others? What follows is a very brief history of the Anglican scene in the United States of America.

Anglicanism came to the shores of North America as it did throughout the world through English settlers. Wherever the British Empire went they took the Church of England (CofE) of which they were part with them. Immediately following the American Revolution the Anglicans here in the United States secured their own bishops and formed what came to be called the Episcopal Church (TEC). Until the late 19th century the only Anglican church (or jurisdiction) in the United States was TEC.

In about 1873 there was a small schism in TEC over issues relating to ceremonial, ritual, and theology. It was felt by those who began the schism that TEC was abandoning its reformation heritage by adopting “Romish” practices, such as using lighted candles in church, wearing certain vestments, and more. The CofE and other parts of the Anglican Communion were also going through the same controversy. The group that ended up leaving TEC called themselves the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) and are still around today, and even have some overseas branches. Since a bishop of the Episcopal Church helped found them they had no problem carrying on the ministerial succession, though they did not give it much credence at the time. Interestingly, as the years went on, the REC itself became more and more “Romish” and so today a lot of their parishes have services that are almost indistinguishable from ours here at Saint Alban’s.

The next major schism from TEC here in the USA occurred almost 100 years later. In the late 1960’s the increasingly liberal TEC began to make major changes to liturgy and theology. The canons regarding divorce and remarriage were essentially scrapped, women were allowed to enter into Holy Orders (i.e. be ordained), and a new Book of Common Prayer was imposed on the entire Church in a very heavy handed way. Many Episcopalians —both here and abroad— saw this as a

major breach of Catholic order and theology, and when it became apparent that they were not going to be accommodated in this new religion they formed the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC) in about 1977. Four bishops were consecrated for the new Church by Anglican Communion and Episcopalian Bishops at a great congress in Saint Louis, which also produced the Affirmation of Saint Louis, the founding document of the ACC. The people of the ACC referred to themselves as “continuing Anglicans”... the idea being that were ‘continuing’ where the old church had left off.

Now just prior to this —by about nine years— a group of Episcopalian clergy and laity who could see the writing on the wall and where the Church was headed, left and formed the American Episcopal Church (AEC). This jurisdiction was very successful (especially in the southeast) and planted many new congregations, a number of which are still around today. The AEC and ACC coexisted but were always something of rivals to one another.

Eventually there was trouble in paradise for the ACC. One of the bishops quit to become a Roman Catholic layman and the other three could not get along. There were also divisions among them along the old high/broad/low church lines. Furthermore, the Anglican/Episcopal bishops who consecrated them offered no council or advice on how to actually form and run a Church. They simply consecrated them and went home. The three bishops who were left went their separate ways in the early 1980’s. Bishop Morse pulled his diocese out and named it the Anglican Province of Christ the King (APCK). Bishop Mote stayed with the ACC. And Bishop Doren turned his diocese into the United Episcopal Church (UEC). Keep in mind, however, that all of these jurisdictions were almost the exact same in their 1928 Prayer Book style of worship and theology. All of those groups are still with us today. Though, with the exception of the ACC (thanks to its overseas dioceses), the UEC and APCK are very small.

In the early 1990’s there was a movement to unite the two largest continuing Anglican bodies: the AEC and ACC. A scheme was cooked up whereby the prelates of the two bodies would receive conditional consecration from overseas Anglican bishops in order to settle any doubts the groups had about the validity of each others’ orders. However, while everyone in the AEC was on board, only about half the ACC was on board. Next month we will continue the story and see how we have been going from disunity back to unity as continuing Anglicans. Stay tuned! ✠

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The agendas for each synod, the budget, and other information is on the bulletin board in the parish hall. Also, you can watch the synods online on our social media channels. Go to <https://anglicanprovince.org/> and scroll down to the bottom of the page to see our links to Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to find many videos of these events.

Peppered throughout the week's events were various lectures and workshops on pastoral matters, such as the calling and formation of healthy clergy, ecumenism and missions; and more. One of the treats was to meet and welcome the Rev. Calvin Robinson, an English clergyman and former news anchor who has been in the news quite a bit in the last couple years due to his staunch faithfulness to God and the Catholic and Apostolic faith in the face of severe persecution by the Church of England. He gave an excellent talk before the final synod Mass which you can see online.

Was there any bad stuff? Not really. The only downside to me was the cost. The hotel was literally across the street from Disney's Universal Studios theme park, so you can imagine how inflated all of the prices were. An 18% gratuity was added to all but two meals I had there! The crazy location was chosen by another diocese, not us. We have always been very careful to pick locations that are easy to get to and give us the most bang for the buck. I suppose in fairness to the other jurisdiction who chose the place it has to be said that it is hard to find a place that is the right size for such a big crowd and also in a good location (i.e. close to a major international airport). Next year we will have just our simple diocesan synod in the cozy little city of Greensboro, NC, so it should be a lot more affordable. Please remember to have a look at the documents from synod on display in the parish hall when you have a chance. ☩

PARISH NEWS & UPDATES:

Church Carpeting

We have had numerous problems with the carpeting in the nave bulging in various places as of late. While this has happened before over the years and we managed to fix it this time it was really bad and dangerous and could not be fixed. So vestry voted to remove it from the middle aisle. The faux wood flooring underneath actually still looks good after all of these years! However, when we begin the building project, we hope to have the entire nave floor stripped down to the original wood and beautifully refinished.

Special Thanks

Thanks goes to Gary Moses and Chuck Meyer for getting rid of the yellow jacket nest outside of sacristy! Orkin tried three times and couldn't kill them, and the parish secretary tried two cans of hornet spray to no avail. But Gary and Chuck got! Thanks, guys! Also, thanks goes to Tony Heeter for removing the damaged carpeting in the nave and installing the transition strips. It looks great! Finally, thanks goes out to the Wild Geese Quilt Guild who meet here on Wednesday mornings. They took it upon themselves to clean up the gangly weeds and vines that have been taking over the corner of the parish hall near the office steps. It looks absolutely marvelous! We really appreciate those sweet ladies. We also thank Kristi Sjöholm-Sierchio for getting the care packages together for our college and

graduate students. They will be mailed out shortly and we know the kids will appreciate them!

Building Project

We are now up to \$10,000 in donations! All we need it \$140,000 more to start Phase 1A. Does anyone have 140k they're not using? Don't forget that as with all gifts to St. Alban's any amount of money you donate to the church is 100% tax deductible.

All Saints' Day Service and Dinner

Join us on Wednesday, November 1st for Holy Communion and potluck fellowship dinner! We will have good music, good food, and good fun. A sign up sheet is in the parish hall. This is one of our quarterly dinners. The next one will be on the Epiphany.

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) ☩