Come, labor on: the work continues…

In 1984, my family moved to Honolulu -- quite a change for folks from Minnesota. My dad was just three years out of seminary, and had served as an assistant pastor in an independent Lutheran church in suburban Minneapolis. For his second "post" he took a job teaching Bible courses at various churches around the island of Oahu.

As it turned out, one of those churches was Episcopal church: Calvary Church in Kaneohe, on the windward side of the island -- a vibrant congregation, energized by a sense of mission, mixing hymns and praise songs, in a context of a high Anglo-Catholic liturgical approach. Something about the ceremony and order, the vestments, the flickering candles, the reverence, the hymnody...even as a nine-year-old, I knew immediately I'd found "my church." On our third or fourth Sunday at Calvary Episcopal in Kaneohe, I was conscripted as an acolyte; one of the scheduled torch-bearers didn't show. (Acolytes missing-in-action is not a problem unique to St. Alban's, I promise you!) I was handed a red cassock and a white cotta, given a torch, and told to mirror what the other boy did.

For me, it was a kind of thrill, to get to be a part of the action, and feel as though I had in some sense helped to make the worship more beautiful. I'm sure that, in reality, I stumbled through the service, but for me, it was an unforgettable and (if you can believe it) very exciting opportunity. Something about being given a job to do really cemented my connection to the Episcopal Church, and made a lifelong impression on me. Through my childhood, as the son of a pastor, I was not free to choose my own church so, for many years, I went to church with my family, but always WISHED I was down the street with the Episcopalians.

Over the past eight years or so, as I worked through the process of spiritual discernment that is at the heart of preparation for ordained ministry, this "entry point" kept coming back to me again and again. That feeling of being needed to perform an essential function, of being trusted enough to do it well, and the feeling of being included right off the bat -- that feeling has never left me.

Think about that: I don't remember the acolyte coordinator's name. I wish I could thank her. She said, by her words and actions, "we need you...here's a job to do!" From that simple act, she gave me a new identity: from that moment onward, in my heart, I was an Episcopalian.

St. Alban's is a welcoming, inclusive parish church. One thing we do well, I think, is to reach out in friendship to those who visit us. And I think inclusiveness is important -- being friendly, conscientious, noticing new faces, and reaching out a hand in welcome. But I think that part of being inclusive is also about sharing the duties that make this Church what it is. St. Alban's is much like many other congregations, in which a small percentage of the congregation does the vast majority of the work. Nearly all of the ministry we do here at St. Alban's, whether parish ministry or mission/outreach, is led by laypeople and supported by lay volunteers. Nothing happens without active engagement of the people of St. Alban's.

As in most churches, there is a reliable group of thirty or forty folks who can be counted on to show up for just about everything. Some of them are leaders in more than one of our vital ministries. St. Alban's has approximately five hundred people in its membership -- it's a fairly large congregation, by current standards. That means, though, that 90 percent of us are relying on 10 percent to do the bulk of the work.

Are you part of the 10 percent? Or are you in the 90?

A few weeks ago, as I was talking on the phone with Bishop Shannon, planning for the confirmation service, I said, "St. Alban's is a really special place." Bishop Shannon said, "It surely is -- there's no place quite like St. Alban's!"

And so, I wonder: what might we be capable of doing, in terms of ministry and outreach, if that 90 percent of us started to be more actively involved? What if the 10 percent started giving folks in the 90 percent jobs to do?

God is doing amazing things in Annandale, and St. Alban's is lucky to be a part of that -- God's mission in our community. There is much untapped potential here, too, and I invite you to dream with me: what might we be able to accomplish, if we all increased our commitment and active engagement? What possibilities might lie ahead? Fr. Paul
We had an amazing clean up day on June 9 (see photos below). Thank you to all who came and helped us. There were closets cleaned out, curtain rings hung, windows washed, pews polished and yard work that I can’t even begin to describe. Our outdated kitchen was a particular challenge to clean. Thank you to all who helped: the team captains; Ralph Hassig, Fay Froh, Delores Baisden, (I can’t thank myself, but I was one too) and especially John Clements who arranged for team captains and provided delicious coffee and Danish. Well done, good and faithful servants!

Final countdown for the parking lot has begun. It will be tremendous when it’s completed.

As Fr. Jeff returns from his sabbatical, I will be returning to just being your Senior Warden. It has been a challenge that I was privileged to take on. There are so many of you to thank. This entire congregation supported and helped me in ways you may not even know. Our Vestry and Clergy were wonderful, reassuring and appreciative. Our staff went above and beyond with anything and everything I asked of them. I am humbled and grateful.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer. Welcome home Fr. Jeff! -Nancy Harrell

Opening the Gift of Sabbath

One of the people I follow on Twitter is Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg. She uses Twitter to discuss Judaism, Torah and social justice issues. Every week, Rabbi Danya lets her Twitter followers know that she will be offline for 25 hours for the Sabbath. The third time I read her notice, I realized that I had been spending a lot of time reading social media and being on one device or another far too many hours every day.

I use my devices for many positive things, both personal and work related. A contemplative prayer app, a daily prayer app and podcasts on my phone help me explore my relationship with God and with the world. I keep up with family, friends and ongoing work issues. I support leaders I work with using social media. But I often find myself reading and re-reading posts, tweets, and emails without focus or purpose.

Sabbath is a time set aside for rest, for time with family and friends. It’s a time to set aside busyness and to be refreshed. It’s a gift that I often don’t easily accept.

Unlike Rabbi Danya, I won’t be turning my devices off for a 25-hour period each week. Instead, I plan to set aside small blocks of time when I turn them off and focus on what is around me IRL (in real life). Summer, when things are a little slower and there are fewer activities, is a much easier time for me to begin this practice, this opening of the gift called Sabbath.

I invite you to consider beginning or renewing a regular Sabbath practice, whether it’s 25 minutes or 25 hours. Refreshment and rest nourish us and our relationships. Refreshed and rested, we see the abundance around us more clearly. And we more easily hear God’s call to us.

-DeaconTheresa
Stewardship

Fundamental to Christian stewardship is the recognition that all that we have—from our material well-being to our community of loved ones—are blessings from God. “From your own have we given back to thee, Oh, Lord” is a familiar confession heard in churches around the world. And while our gifts of money and service ideally should come back in some measure to the church, it certainly is not our only option when considering how best to give back some of that which God has given to us. There are hundreds of charitable options that also can be considered in this regard. The important point for Christians is to acknowledge the blessings we have received by giving back in ways that honor our Lord.

We are halfway through the Church year here at Saint Alban’s, and soon we will begin another campaign to gather commitments of money and offers of service for 2019. (Don’t forget Rally Day this September if you want to know more about the service opportunities available to you!) We hope that you will give every consideration to making St. Alban’s the focal point of your giving. Lots of good things are going on in our parish, and we’d love to do more with your help.

That said, it bears repeating that the important point is to clearly and loudly recognize that all good gifts from above by giving back in ways that express our thanksgiving for the blessings we have received.

-Ron Vogel

WHAT WE DO WITH WHAT WE GIVE:
Bethany House for Women and Children

Eliminating Domestic Violence One Family at a Time

Bethany House of Northern Virginia, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, faith-based organization located in Fairfax County, Virginia, that provides emergency shelter and supportive services to women and their children who are escaping domestic violence, helping them regain health and dignity. Once the families are stabilized, they help them get reestablished in their community by providing temporary housing and support. Because Bethany House is funded by grants and donations from businesses, churches and individual community members, they are able to receive women in need from all over Northern Virginia and the greater Washington Metropolitan Area. They provide women with safe, restorative care and shelter while giving them the resources they need to help them transition into independent lives free from abuse.

St. Alban’s is one of those churches that provide financial contributions. Based on parishioner pledges, the Budget Committee and Vestry approves an annual budget for the Outreach Committee. The Outreach Committee apportions part of this budget to donate money directly to Bethany House. In addition, parishioners participate by donating school supplies and Christmas gifts during the two giving drives during the summer and winter. Look for the school supplies collection dates coming in August.

Nancy McSlarrow has spearheaded this ministry since 2005 and is now stepping down. We appreciate all she has done to help fulfill our mission to demonstrate God’s love in the world. We are thankful that Molly Chilton will now head this important outreach ministry.

For more information, please contact Molly Chilton or Moira Skinner.

Thank you Nancy McSlarrow for 13 years as our St. Alban’s representative to Bethany House.

-Moira Skinner
The Confrmands and their Sponsors:

Nathan Albergottie; sponsor Diane and Daniele Albergottie
Harry Baisden; sponsor Delores Baisden
Emma Cheek; sponsors Marc and Jane Cheek
Emma Conkle; sponsor Norma Condra
Heath Conkle; sponsor Art Deverill
Tamara Conkle; sponsor Patricia Shepherd
Olivia Findorff; sponsor Maureen Findorff
Grace Gelman; sponsor Meredith Gelman
Kevin Holland and Kyle McKenzie; sponsor Fr. Paul Moberly
Julia Lesko; sponsors Jack and John Lesko
Doris Lewis; sponsor Steve Lusk
Andrew Sobol; sponsors Christine and Horacio Sobol

The Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston with Fr. Paul and Deacon Theresa;
The confirmands being prepared for confirmation by Bishop Johnston.

Betsy Anderson with the newly confirmed Andrew Sobol and Emma Conkle.
Parish Picnic June 24

Photos by row:
- Nancy Calvert tests the slide; the picnic spread; Gwen Jillson in the Moon Bounce.
- Fr. Jeff and Bishop Johnston; Olivia and Maureen Findorff; Jane Cheek and Izanne Zorin.
- Meredith and Grace Gelman Diane, Nathan, and Daniele Albergottie; Ray Hanlein and Alan Aument greet Fred Holmes.
- Barbara Hallman, Fred Holmes and Betty Petersilia; Jinsun Cho and Katy Oh.
Hurricane Victims' Benefit Concert June 30

St. Alban's hosted a five-hour benefit concert in Frizzell Hall on June 30 to raise money for victims of 2017's horrific hurricanes. A big thanks to Harry and Delores Baisden who pulled it off without a hitch and to all the performers and volunteers who made it all happen.

Harry and I can't thank all of you enough for your help with the Benefit. Without all your cooking, table-moving, money-handling and general schlepping, we couldn't possibly have pulled it off. One of the things that makes St. Alban's such a great church is the family you can count on to come to your aid when you need it. We took in about $3,000 to send to Episcopal Relief and Development for hurricane relief. We are so blessed! Thank you again. -Delores and Harry

Photos by row:
- David Lesko and Harry Baisden open the show.
- Fr. Jeff, Fr. Paul, Laura DePasquale; Harry and Delores Baisden; Fr. Paul & Gerardo Mazariagos.
- Joseph Kim (Jinsun Cho’s son) & Jonathan Le; Stacy Sun; Harry as a “Dame” with “A Bunch of Guys.”
- Benny Robles and “A Bunch Of Guys,” with Harris Andrews, Ronnie Hardcastle and others; Cathy Williams & Tom Tycz enjoy the show.
- Olivia DePasquale sings ballads on guitar; Illuminare.
Betty Wingate died on May 18 at Mary Washington Hospital in Fredericksburg. Scott Massey, grandson of Sheila Massey, died on June 16. A funeral was held for Scott at St. Alban’s on June 29.

Please keep Sheila and the family and friends of Betty and Scott in your prayers.

"Receive, O Lord, your servants Betty and Scott into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light."

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Next Edition September 2018
Articles/photos welcome!
Submit by August 15 to bhallman1@cox.net

St. Alban’s Episcopal Church
6800 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 703-256-2966
www.stalbansva.org

Birthdays

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Annual Parish Weekend at Shrine Mont

Due to new policy at Shrine Mont, we need to provide a head count by mid-July. Please email the church office at info@stalbansva.org or Nancy Calvert by 7/12/18 and let us know if you plan on coming!

billandnancycalvert@verizon.net

Rates for this year's retreat (which includes two nights, three meals/day, and t-shirt) are:

- **Single adult** $210.00
- **Double adult** $162.00
- **4-12 years old** $70.00
- **0-3 years old** $10.00

We will have registration forms available in the next few weeks and begin taking payments at that time. Scholarships are always available to help defray the cost. Please contact Fr. Jeff or Deacon Theresa for more information.

Summer Food Service Program

A letter from Patrick Ross, After School Specialist, Poe Middle School: (excerpted)

Good afternoon everyone,

Thank you for providing after-school meals for our students again this year! You truly make an impact at our school through this ministry!

As the school year winds down, I wanted to share exciting information with you regarding a summer lunch program we will be hosting at Poe. Our school has been designated by Fairfax County Public Schools as a FEEDS BBQ site for this summer! Children 18 years and under will be able to eat for free and adult lunch is available for $2. Meals will be served Monday through Friday from 11:00 am-1:00 pm starting on June 18 and continuing until August 27. This is open to everyone and all are welcome! No registration is required.

Additional information including other food service sites can be found at this site: https://www.fcps.edu/feeds.

Thanks and have a great afternoon! Patrick
SAVE THE DATE!

Parish Life Events
Mark your calendars for these family-friendly Parish Life events:

**Ice Cream Social**
Sunday, September 2
(after both services)

**Oktoberfest**
Saturday, October 13

**Chili Cookoff**
Saturday, January 26, 2019

More details to come as we get closer to each date. We look forward to seeing you at these events!

**Annual Parish Weekend**
September 28-30 Shrine Mont

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**July and August Calendar Highlights**

July 8-13 **Youth Mission Trip** to Hurley, Virginia
August 6-10 **Vacation Bible School**
August 15 **Kick Off Bazaar Meeting** 6:30 pm, parish hall

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Happy Summer! Sunday School students and their teachers said goodbye to the school year with an end of year party in June. Thanks to our students for their active participation and a big thanks to our dedicated teachers.