

The Beacon of St. Alban's

“Illuminating the Word of God in the World”

Dear Friends in Christ,

Since the first time I saw the play “*Godspell*” in the 1970s (my that sounds so very long ago) I have loved the songs that echo through it. One of them is “*Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord.*” Advent is our time to “*prepare the way of the Lord.*” I know you have heard about Advent and preparation many times; but please excuse me while I ramble just a little. After all the name of this column is “The Rector’s Ramblings.”

As I write to you I will confess that at times Advent and Christmas seem to be overwhelming. I don’t think that I am the exception. I see it happening to many people, even those of us who live our lives with one foot in the secular world and one foot in the world of the Church.

It is easy for anyone to fall into the frenzy that holds our culture captive from Thanksgiving through Christmas Day. It is a time when people rush about from store to store, when special meals are prepared and parties are planned and attended. This time of preparation for a secular Christmas is hectic, sometimes selfish and always chaotic. We are surrounded by decorations that must be put up as soon as the holiday music begins to reverberate throughout every store and television commercial. Everyone and everything around us seems to be shrieking, “Hurry up and get ready!! There are homes to make ready, presents to buy and wrap and you have so little time – hurry, hurry, hurry!!” The never ending lists of things to do just go on and on. Sometimes it is difficult to shut all of those thoughts out, take a step back and really consider how we can “*Prepare the Way of the Lord.*” There is another song from “*Godspell*” we can look to as a lesson for Advent it is “*Day by Day.*” I sometimes use the lyrics of this song as I pray my Anglican Rosary: “Day by day, Day by day, Oh, dear Lord three things I pray: To see thee more clearly, Follow thee more nearly,, Love thee more dearly, Day by day.”



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As people who proclaim, “Emmanuel, God with us,” we look to the Church for guidance. The Church’s four week season of Advent allows us to rely on our collective spiritual compasses and plot our spiritual journeys as we together walk through the hopeful expectation of Advent until we arrive at the manger where we come face to face with the joy and peace of the Christ child wrapped in swaddling clothes.

The Church has given us this map of Advent so that we may turn away from the “busyness of the season” and “*Prepare the way of the Lord.*” We can take the road that although less traveled will be more fulfilling.

The Church has given us a pattern that we can hold in our hearts and take back to our homes. For instance, within the Church, there are no decorations during Advent. The altar is hung in the penitential color of

purple. There are no flowers on the altar only vases of evergreens. The lessons from the Bible that we read during this season are lessons of hope, yearning, peace and expectation. Advent is the time for clearing away the clutter of the year gone by and preparing the way of the Lord Christ in our hearts and our lives.

One of the most symbolic traditions that the Church gives us during this season is the Advent Wreath. The wreath which is a circle, like God, has neither beginning nor end. It symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that we have in God in Christ Jesus, the hope of newness, of renewal, and of eternal life. The four outer candles on the wreath represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent. As another candle is lighted each week, we are reminded of the growing light of Christ's presence. The light itself becomes an important image of the season. The light reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world that comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life, and hope. It also reminds us that we are called to be a light to the world as we reflect the light of God's grace to others.

The first Sunday of Advent we light the purple candle of hope. As we look at the light of this candle we celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ. The second purple candle is the Candle of Peace. We light the candle of peace to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and that through him peace is found. The third candle is pink and it is the candle of Joy. We light the candle of joy to remind us that when Jesus is born in us we have joy and that through him there will be everlasting joy on earth. Finally, the fourth candle of Advent is the Candle of Love and it tells us that God's love is a perfect love as it holds nothing back from us. God, in love, gives us everything we need to live a life of hope, peace and joy. The fifth candle in the center of the wreath is white we light this candle on Christmas Eve. It is the Christ candle, the candle that brings the light of Christ into the darkness of the world. It burns throughout the twelve days of Christmas. This Advent may your heart be filled with eager longing and preparation, and this Christmas may the peace of the Christ Child fill your entire being.

Cindy ✝

Favorite Advent Hymn- “O Come Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Emmanuel is the mid-19th century translation by John Mason Neale and Henry Sloane Coffin^{[1][2]} of the Ecclesiastical Latin text "Veni, veni, Emmanuel". It is a metrical version of the *O Antiphons* from the final week of Advent vespers, which now serves as a popular hymn. Its origins are unclear: it is thought that the antiphons are from at least the 8th Century, but "Veni, veni Emmanuel" may well be 12th century in origin.^{[3][4]} The text is based on the biblical prophecy from Isaiah 7:14 that states that God will give Israel a sign that will be called Immanuel (Lit.: God with us). Matthew 1:23 states fulfillment of this prophecy in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. It is believed that the traditional music stems from a 15th Century French processional hymn for Franciscan nuns,^[4] but it may also have 8th Century Gregorian origins. It is one of the most solemn Advent hymns.^[5]

Social Ministries

The Angel Tree is Coming!

For those of you new to our parish, the Angel Tree contains angels with names from Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services Holiday Sharing Program. With this program, parishioners buy Christmas gifts for children of families in need of help to make their Christmas merry. Also, we give each Mom with a small Christmas gift, along with two \$75 Giant Gift cards to provide the Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for their families.

As we did last year, we are sponsoring 10 families. Ten families total 34 children from ages 4 months - 17. For each child, there will be angels on the tree with a suggested gift written on the back. For younger children, it is suggested we give a book, toys, and clothing. For older children, it is suggested we give gift cards so they can choose their own books, games, or clothing.

Angel Tree gifts should be wrapped and labeled with the angel, and brought to church no later than SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16th. Deliveries will be made between noon and 2:30 p.m. that day.

Again this year, the Choir has volunteered to deliver gifts while caroling at the same time. All parishioners are encouraged to join them in caroling and gift delivery. So far, the Sunday School and Social Ministries will take part. It will be a fun experience for us while providing the Angel Tree families with some unexpected Christmas joy. Please join us if you can. And, don't worry if you don't sing well because the great voices in the choir make up for those of us who might be off key.

Our church has participated in this Holiday Sharing Program for years. The generosity of our parishioners has helped to give many, many children happier holidays through the years. Thank you for supporting this program. Giving these gifts brightens our own Christmas season, and we, too, are blessed by the experience.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will not be meeting in December. Their next meeting will be Tuesday January 8th at 1 PM in the vestry room.

St. Alban's Youth Group

By Amelia Gish

Saturday, November 17th the youth group went to the Happy Helper's headquarters, and wrapped gifts. We all wrapped donated gifts, and there were a lot more people there than expected. The gifts were for all ages, men, women, girls, and boys. Some were for an age group and some had specific names on them. The hardest present, I thought, to wrap was the basket balls. Some presents were boxes with coloring books, crayons and other trinkets in them. Some were games like trouble, or monopoly. Some presents were bracelet making kits or cool string backpacks. It was really fun, and I hope to do it again next year!



Origin of the Advent Wreath

Evidence suggests that the Advent wreath was not invented until the 19th century. Research by Prof. Haemig of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, points to Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808–1881), a Protestant pastor in Germany and a pioneer in urban mission work among the poor as the inventor of the modern Advent wreath. During Advent, children at the mission school *Rauhes Haus*, founded by Wichern in Hamburg, would ask daily if Christmas had arrived. In 1839, he built a large wooden ring (made out of an old cartwheel) with 19 small red and 4 large white candles. A small candle was lit successively every weekday during Advent. On Sundays, a large white candle was lit. The custom gained ground among Protestant churches in Germany and evolved into the smaller wreath with four or five candles known today. Roman Catholics in Germany began to adopt the custom in the 1920s, and in the 1930s it spread to North America.^[6] Professor Haemig's research also indicates that the custom did not reach the United States until the 1930s, even among German Lutheran immigrants.

Episcopal Relief and Development Gift Idea and Sandy Assistance

Episcopal Relief & Development and its coffee partner, Pura Vida Create Good, are pleased to present two Bishops Blend Christmas Box options for the 2012 holiday season. The Coffee Box includes three of the most popular Bishops Blend coffee roasts: smooth and rich Bishops Blend Regular Roast, extra-dark Kaldi's Roast, and Café de la Paz, a blend of Latin American beans roasted to perfection. The boxes are \$29 each, and are shipped with a personalized gift message.

A portion of Bishops Blend sales helps to sustain Episcopal Relief & Development's work worldwide. These boxes and more are in the Gifts for Life catalog, <http://www.er-d.org/GiftsForLife/>. Bishops Blend gift boxes should be purchased by December 11 in order to ensure delivery before Christmas, though expedited shipping may be requested. Orders can be placed online via <http://www.er-d.org/BishopsBlend/> or by phone at 877.469.1431.

Thanks to the generosity of Episcopalians from around the country, Episcopal Relief & Development is in the process of making emergency grants to impacted dioceses in support of parish-based relief activities following Superstorm Sandy. In the US, these funds will help congregations expand feeding ministries and facilitate the provision of shelter and transportation assistance for those in need. In the Caribbean, Episcopal Relief & Development support is helping to secure food, water and building materials for distribution in critically impacted areas.

Superstorm Sandy hit the Caribbean on October 25 before turning north along the US East Coast and making landfall in central New Jersey on October 29, causing severe damage. At least 181 people were killed by the storm, including 110 in the US. Episcopal Relief & Development has been working with leaders from the heavily impacted Episcopal dioceses of New York, Long Island, New Jersey, Newark and Connecticut to meet community needs. The organization also continues to support the Episcopal dioceses of Haiti and the Dominican Republic as they mobilize local resources and reach out to those hardest hit.

In New York and New Jersey, volunteers and donations of food, water and warm clothing made their way to areas of need over the weekend, though pockets of extreme devastation remain. Contributions to Episcopal Relief & Development's Hurricane Sandy Response Fund will help provide for basic needs, especially as people prepare for the Nor'easter predicted to hit the area on November 7. Individuals who live near impacted areas may contact their local Episcopal diocese for ways to help, and those in the New York City area can visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycservice/home.html> for information on volunteer opportunities.

"On behalf of the staff of Episcopal Relief & Development, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our church partners and all those who have contributed to the relief effort so far," said Rob Radtke, the organization's President. "I especially want to thank those congregations who collected a special offering yesterday [Sunday, November 4] for our Hurricane Sandy Response Fund, and all those who have been supporting us with prayers and messages of encouragement. We could not do this without you."

Episcopal Relief & Development has made available a number of resources to help congregations and individuals support healing and recovery after Hurricane Sandy.

December 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8:00 am Holy Communion 10:30 am Holy Communion	7:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	1:00 pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 7:30 pm Food Addiction Anonymous		6:30 pm Bell Choir 7:30 pm Choir	7:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous 7:30 pm Alanon 7:30 pm Alateen	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
8:00 am Holy Communion 10:30 am Lessons and Carols and Holy Communion	7:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	7:30 pm Ladies Guild 7:30 pm Food Addiction Anonymous		6:30 pm Bell Choir 7:30 pm Choir	7:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous 7:30 pm Alanon 7:30 pm Alateen	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
8:00 am Holy Communion 10:30 am Morning Prayer	7:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	7:30 pm Food Addiction Anonymous	7:00 pm Vestry Meeting	6:30 pm Bell Choir 7:30 pm Choir	7:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous 7:30 pm Alanon 7:30 pm Alateen	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10:30 am Holy Communion 12 noon Decorating with Wreaths and Poinsettias	5:00 pm Family Service and Live Nativity 9:00 pm Candlelight Service	Merry Christmas! Happy Birthday Jesus!			7:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous 7:30 pm Alanon 7:30 pm Alateen	
30	31					



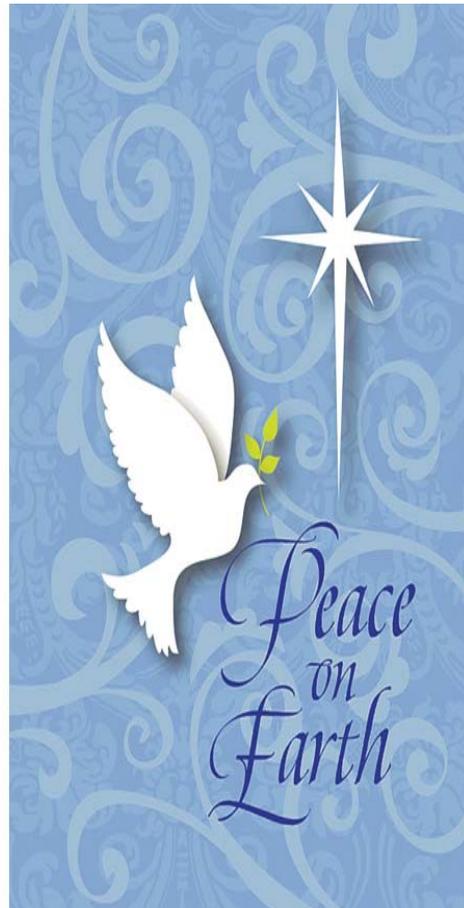
News & Happenings



Want to give thanks for something? Ask for prayers for someone? Celebrate your children or grandchildren's accomplishments? Send the information to lynnmcfarland@gmail.com and it will get published on these pages!

December Birthdays

- Carol DeGarmo.....12/2
- Thomas Parran.....12/3
- Richard Marshall, Jr.....12/4
- James Laning.....12/7
- Susan Payne.....12/7
- Maija Denson.....12/15
- Bill Davidson.....12/17
- Ed Buxton.....12/21
- Stephen Maceiko, Jr.....12/22
- Victoria Murphy.....12/22
- Mark Landry.....12/22
- Sharon Smith.....12/27
- Ruth Burns.....12/30
- Joan Rumenap.....12/31
- Dottie Moore.....12/31
- Susan Laning.....12/31



Deadline for the January issue of the Beacon is December 17th. Send your submissions to lynnmcfarland@gmail.com, or place them in the church office.

St. Alban's handbell choir and voice choir need your time and talent! Please contact Michael Arrington or come to the basement choir room on Thursday nights at 6:30 for handbells or 7:30 to sing!

Thanks to all who assisted with set-up and serving and cleanup at the Harvest Bazaar and Turkey Dinner. The Youth Group Rocks!

Help is needed on December 22nd at noon to decorate the church with wreaths and poinsettias. All ages welcome!

More acolytes are needed-Adults and youth can serve! Contact Brenda Gish at cedar-pup@cablespeed.net

The Altar Guild can always use extra helping hands around the holidays and throughout the year. Contact Brenda Gish at cedar-pup@cablespeed.net

The Beacon's email address:
lynnmcfarland@gmail.com

Anniversaries



December 10

Bill & Regina DeOrazio

December 16

Dee and Steve Smith

December 28

*Joe and Nora Biddle
10 years*

December 29

*Nancy and Steen
Westerberg
65 years*

Congratulations and may you have many more blessed years together!

CHRISTMAS COMMEMORATION



Our tradition is to remember our departed loved ones at Christmas time. The names will be commemorated on Christmas Eve during the Holy Eucharist service.

POINSETTIAS FOR THE CHURCH AT CHRISTMAS

Many Poinsettias are needed to decorate St. Alban's at Christmas. If you wish to make a donation for a Poinsettia, the cost is \$9 per plant. Poinsettias on the window sills may be taken home on Christmas Eve. We appreciate your donation.

Cut off date for submitting names is **DECEMBER 16th**. Please hand names into the church office or mail to: **St. Alban's Church, P.O. Box 61, Glen Burnie, MD 21060.**

Number of poinsettias: _____ Cash _____ Check _____
Please make checks payable to: St. Alban's Church.

Given by: _____

Please PRINT Commemoration names below:



Bishop Claggett Center Activities

The Bishop Claggett Center is the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland Retreat Center located at 3035 Buckeystown Pike, Buckeystown MD.

The Heavens Declare the Glory of God

Friday Dec 14 5 PM-Sat Dec 15 5 PM

Cost: \$120

Come see the stars and watch the Geminid meteor shower! Engage in discussion on nature and how it can help us understand scriptures. The speaker is Dr. Alex Storrs, a professor of astrophysics at Towson University, and parishioner at St. Bartholomew's - Ten Hills who will bring a large telescope for star gazing as weather permits. The Rev Anjel Scarborough, Grace Church Brunswick will be the chaplain.

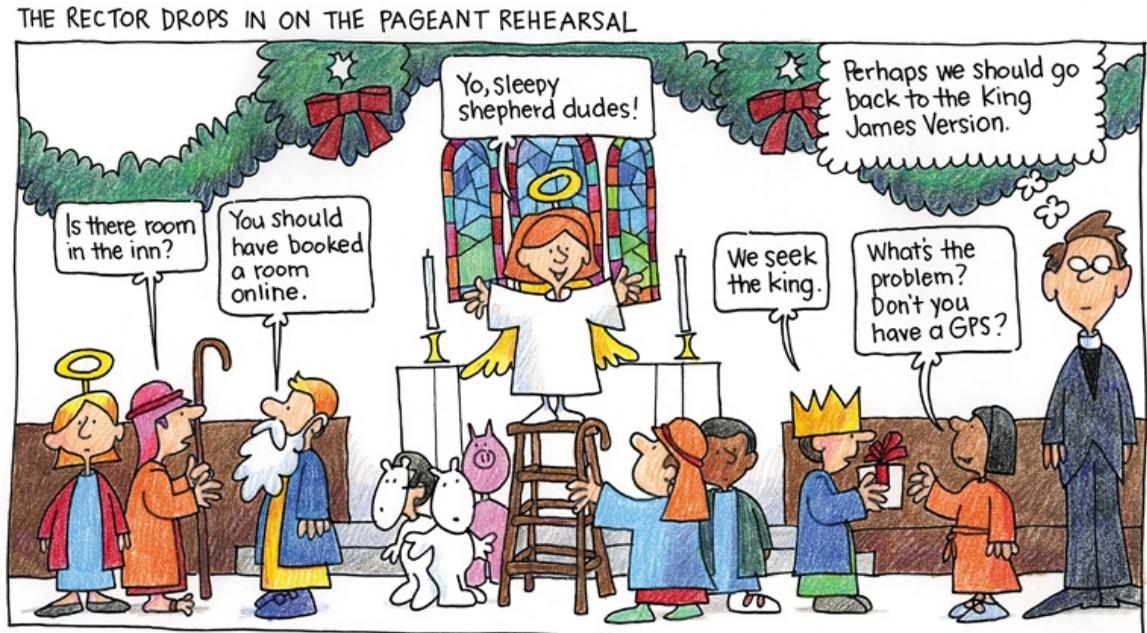
Women's Weekend

Jan 25-27, 2013

Cost: \$185

I Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Strengthens Me

An invitation to explore personal empowerment through Christ's strength. Women are invited to come together to worship and celebrate faith in prayer, song and meditation; hear inspiring speaker the Rev. Canon Angela Shepherd; be refreshed by workshops and activities; renew friendships and make new friends. The Eucharist will be celebrated on Sunday morning.



The Beacon of St. Alban's

St. Alban's Episcopal Church

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TheBeacon@broadstripe.net

www.st-albans.ang-md.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Sunday Worship Services

8:00 am - Holy Communion, Rite I (no music)

10:30 am - Holy Communion, Rite II (with music)

10:30 am - Sunday School, K-12 and Nursery

The Reverend Cindy Tipton-Zile, Rector

Church Office Hours Tuesday-Thursday 9-1

Rector's email address: tipmain@verizon.net