

St. Alban's Chronicle



St. Alban's Episcopal Church
3001 Wisconsin Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20016
February 15, 2005

Facing Loss and Finding Gifts

Jo Turner, parishioner

Twenty-two years is a long-term relationship by any standard. That's how long Frank and Mary Wade have been among us at St. Alban's. It's not surprising then that the thought of their absence and the great change in our relationship brings a heavy sadness, and perhaps even some anxiety. Their impending departure may trigger memories of other losses in our lives. There may be fears, not the least of which is a fear of the unknown. We are already grieving.

It may be helpful to consider what professionals in end-of-life care know as anticipatory grief. It feels just as sad as any other grief, but—if we choose to look carefully—there are blessings to claim and the time to embrace them.

Time itself is a gift, even if it is less time than we might wish. During this time, we can complete any unfinished business we may have with Frank and Mary. There is time to reflect, to ask that question, have that talk, say I'm sorry or say thank-you. Write! Talk! Embrace!

We have an amazing opportunity to validate and celebrate the impact that Frank and Mary have had on our lives, both corporately and individually. There are some fine stories to tell, memories to soak in, pictures to gather. It is a chance for personal generosity of every kind. Unlike our reaction to a sudden or unexpected loss when we might feel we must cling to bravery, anticipatory grief offers the opportunity to fully feel and express honest emotions; laughing and crying are both healthy outlets and work best as shared activities! We'll make sure that we have plenty of occasions to share.

Grief is not magically over when we first notice we don't feel quite so bad. But God is at work, and there comes a fine moment when we realize that grief is giving birth to a renewed sense of self. For many who have experienced losses of all kinds, this self is probably wiser and stronger. Frank and Mary Wade have changed us, and that change is their lasting gift to us all. All those things that we grieve—what we have loved, admired, laughed at, absorbed, counted on, what we learned—are integrated into the person we are becoming, and we thank God for it. We will be better, wiser Christian human beings when Frank is no longer the rector we miss but the friend, teacher and prophet who has enabled us to step into our future with passion and hope.

From the Editor

This is the first in a series of articles that will address the subject on the stages of transition.

Website option

During this time, many of us have well-wishes to share with with Mary and Frank. A Guestbook has been created specifically as another way to convey your thoughts and prayers to the Wades. Your message can be posted either publicly for all to read, or privately to Mary and Frank.

Access the Guestbook on our website at www.AlbansDC.org and click on the Guestbook icon.

In brief

For additional information on these events, contact the Parish Office at 202-363-8286, Office@st-albans-parish.org

Wednesday Bible Study will not be held on Wednesday, February 16th.

Thursday Lenten Series with the Rev. Dr. Francis H. Wade begins on Thursday, February 17. Details on Page 2.

Lenten Quiet Day Sunday, February 20 at Cathedral College (formerly College of Preachers) Details on Page 2.

St. Alban's/St. Philip Parish Exchange will be held February 20, 2005. Representatives from our sister parish, St. Philip the Evangelist, Anacostia, will speak at St. Alban's Parish Forum. In exchange, the Rev. Douglas A. Greenaway will be preacher at St. Philip. Additional details will be in the Sunday announcements.

4th Sunday Fellowship Sunday, February 27 following morning services. Hosted this month by Workers of St. Alban's (WSA). Satterlee Hall.

Instruments of Worship Sunday, February 27 at 7 pm. in the Church. Featuring Norman Scribner and Sonya Sutton, organists, and other instrumentalists from the parish.

Newcomers' Dinner Saturday, March 12 at 6 pm. Parishioners bring potluck to welcome our newest members and guests. Nourse Hall.



We welcome the faithful, the seeker, and the doubter, for God's embrace is wide and God's Good News is for all.



2000 Sundays: Reflections on Retiring

The Rev. Dr. Francis H. Wade

As we walk together toward April 24 and our last Sunday together, I have been thinking about the road behind and ahead. These brief pieces are a way of sharing the experience with you. I am thinking of things I will miss, things I anticipate and things that I hope to keep as the future becomes the present. The title—2000 Sundays—comes from the rather startling number of Sundays that I have been privileged to serve in congregations.

I will certainly miss the powerful intimacy of being a parish priest. Being allowed into the lives of individuals and families at times of importance is, for me, the most awesome honor of parish ministry. Marriages, divorces, births, deaths, ups, downs and all arounds have been my lot with you and, while it is often exhausting, sometimes frightening and constantly humbling, it is the richest fare one could imagine. I shall miss it.

I anticipate a re-ordering of my vows. I have publicly made two sets of vows before God. One was at marriage, the other at ordination. For 2000 Sundays and most days in between them, the ordination ones have held sway. Mary is marvelously patient and that has been a hallmark of her ministry to me and, indirectly, to the Church. I am excited about the prospect of putting the marriage vows at center and asking the Church for the gift of patience.

One thing I expect to keep and hopefully expand is the discipline of prayer. The morning ritual of reading, praying and centering is lifeblood to me. With a different kind of time schedule I want to do more of it. One thing that will be different is that my prayer list now comes from the appointments I have in a day and the issues in your life and mine. That will change as my calendar clears and my mind has a little less traffic. That is why I want to remain part of the prayer chain as the one exception to my necessary disengagement from St. Alban's.

Lenten services and programs

Thursday Lenten Series Begins Thursday, February 17 "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" This year's Lenten Series will focus on Bible study. We will gather in Satterlee Hall at 6:30 pm for a light dinner, followed by the program and closing worship. Weekly topics:

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|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| February 17 | Foundations: Creation to Abraham |
| February 24 | A House Built: Moses to Saul |
| March 3 | The House Collapses: Elijah to Isaiah |
| March 10 | A New Home: Jesus |
| March 17 | A New Life: Acts to Revelation |

Lenten Quiet Day Sunday, February 20 Using the rhythm of lectio divina, meditation and silences, the Rev. Carlyle Gill will lead this quiet day at Cathedral College (formerly College of Preachers) 9 am to 1 pm on February 20. Registration sheet in the narthex.

Lenten Reading Groups These small groups, of approximately eight participants, will meet once a week during Lent for discussion on this year's book selection: *Living on the Border of the Holy: Renewing the Priesthood of All* by Louis William Countryman. There will be a separate sign up sheet for each group depending on when they meet; be sure to sign up for the time slot you want. The book will be available for \$18.

Fridays during Lent It is the Lenten practice of some to fast on Fridays—to refrain from solid food until the evening meal, which is customarily meatless. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday may also be observed by fasting. This practice is suggested for healthy adults only.

Reconciliation The Reconciliation of a Penitent is available for all who desire it. Contact one of the clergy to schedule an appointment for a private confession.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. ALBAN'S

SUNDAY

- 8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite I
- 9:15 am Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- 11:15 am Holy Eucharist, Rite I
- 5:30 pm Holy Eucharist, Rite II

TUESDAY

- 7:30 am Holy Eucharist
- 10:30 am Morning Prayer

WEDNESDAY

- 11:15 am Healing Eucharist

THURSDAY

- Noon Centering Prayer

SATURDAY

- 9:00 am Prayers for St. Alban's

CLERGY

- The Rev. Dr. Francis H. Wade, Rector
- The Rev. J. Carlyle Gill, Senior Associate Rector
- The Rev. Margot D. Critchfield, Associate Rector
- The Rev. Loren B. Mead, Honorary Associate
- The Rev. Douglas A. Greenaway, Assistant Rector
- Charles Fels, Seminarian

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

Carolyn Seaton

DIRECTORS

- Day Dodson, Director of Children's and Youth Ministries
- Ron Hicks, Director of Operations
- Norman Scribner, Director of Music
- Sonya Subbayya Sutton, Director for Parish Music Ministries
- Jane Volkema, Director of Communications and Evangelism

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- Shirley Dickey, Receptionist
- David Johnson, Community Life
- Vilma Smith, Finance Administrator
- Marcia Welch, Communications Assistant

VESTRY OFFICERS

- Gordon Avery, Senior Warden; Kate Bouvé, Junior Warden;
- Nathalie Bramson, Secretary; Christopher Holmes, Treasurer

VESTRY MEMBERS

- Joe Beach, Paul Brewster, Bob Dunn, Diana Dykstra,
- Cay Hartley, Dennis Jones, Douglas Lapp, Chris Larsen,
- Tricia Pinkard, Mary Jane Shackelford, Jo Turner, Monica Welch;
- Duncan McKenna, Youth Representative,
- Russell Eckel, WSA Board

ST. ALBAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Web site: www.AlbansDC.org

Giving at St. Alban's: A Look in the Mirror

We need to talk about money, even at the risk of upsetting parishioners who think St. Alban's talks too much about it already. We're going to talk about it in the next Chronicle as well, when the finance committee will share a straightforward look at the parish's fiscal health, the cost of a search for a great new rector and the transition period before he or she arrives.

It is true that we are God's hands on earth, and at St. Alban's there are many hands doing God's work in wonderful ways. It is also true that money is the fuel that keeps the work of the church alive and moving ahead. Our fuel should be a renewable resource, but it's not being adequately renewed through pledges. And unlike many large churches, St. Alban's does not depend on a large endowment to support its operations.

As of January 28, we received 553 commitments for 83 percent of the 2005 pledge goal, the third consecutive year that we have fallen short of already tight budget goals in a time of rising costs. Moreover, 2004 was the first year with a shortfall between the amount pledged and the dollars actually received. Members of St. Alban's need to have a clear picture of who we are as givers and decide if we are satisfied with what we see.

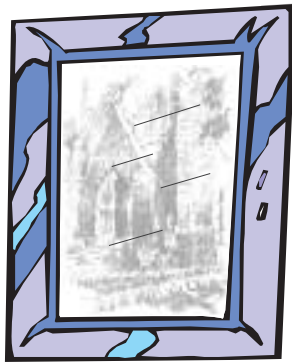
Some of the picture is not new, nor is it very different from what goes on in churches nationwide. According to a recent study, Protestants give an average of 2.6 percent of their personal income after taxes—not an overwhelming figure. Moreover, around 50 percent of households pledge at St. Alban's. Diocesan statistics show that comparable parishes join St. Alban's in this percentage, but wouldn't it be great if we could be the parish that does better than everyone else?

Surely we believe we have something special here. We need to question why—individually and corporately—we are satisfied with this dwindling status quo and reticent about accepting financial responsibility for being God's people. Here are some figures to think about.

Compare these statistics from the 2004 Diocesan Journal, based on the 93 parishes in the diocese:

- St. Alban's ranks 5th in membership with approximately 1100 households, but 30th in percentage of communicantes who pledge (48.8 percent).
- St. Alban's ranks 2nd in the number of pledging units; yet 31st in average pledge-dollars.

We are one of the largest parishes in a diverse diocese that includes



urban DC parishes and rural Southern Maryland congregations, yet a full third of these parishes give more generously than we do.

We are grateful for the many who increased their pledges for 2005, but there are fewer pledges thus far, and the reason is unclear. Last year, St. Alban's received 620 pledges by January 31. This year, we'd received 553 pledges by January 28.

Last year, 25 St. Alban's households, or 2.5 percent of us, accounted for 30 percent of all money pledged. Half of the entire pledge commitment was borne by 73 households. God bless them, but most of us can do better.

And just one more piece of information to take to heart: Our sister parish St. Philip the Evangelist of Anacostia—a congregation of limited financial resources—has an average individual weekly pledge of only \$7 per week less than St. Alban's.

If you have questions about what our money pays for, open St. Alban's Parish Ministries and Activities Book. If you have concerns about why your pledge is needed or how it is managed, talk to us or a vestry member, and read more in the next Chronicle. If you'd like to help change our collective reflection in the mirror, here are some things you can do now:

- If you haven't pledged yet this year or have never pledged, this is a time of opportunity and blessing in your relationship with God and God's Church. Pledge packets are in the narthex or can be mailed on request. Your stewardship chairs would be happy to talk with you if this needs more discussion.
- If you choose not to pledge, it would help your church to know why. Vestry cannot make sound financial decisions without understanding the giving culture of the parish. The e-mail addresses for the pledge campaign chairs are below, or you may place a note in the designated box in the narthex.
- If you've already pledged but are called to do more, send a new pledge card or note to our finance director, Vilma Smith, and she can amend your commitment.
- If your January letter from the parish finance office shows that you didn't hit the mark on your 2004 pledge, try to do so soon. It may be a new year and a fresh page, but last year's expenses wait to be met.

Thank you for reading about a topic most of us would rather ignore. But we are called to witness with every aspect of our being, by our work, our time, our prayers, and our financial resources. "They will know we are Christians by our love" is a fact. As uncomfortable as it may make us, they will also know we are Christians by our checkbook.

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Tom Snitch
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Rector Search Committee

The work of the Search Committee is coming along nicely. The Profile Subcommittee met on Sunday, February 6 and discussed elements necessary for production of the Profile book. This subcommittee also gave thought to possible dates to hold parish focus group discussions.

The entire Search Committee, consisting of both the Profile Subcommittee and the Prospects Subcommittee, met on Monday, February 7. The bulk of the meeting was spent in brainstorming what we—as a parish—are looking for in a rector. If you would like to add to this discussion, your ideas can be submitted through the suggestion box in the Narthex.

Members of the Profile Subcommittee are: Peter Albert, Fred Darr, Liz Leland, Bob Pinkard, Mary Snitch, and Lizzie Thorne; Jane Volkema (ex-officio); and Linda Bickford, Chair. The members of the Prospects Subcommittee are: Barbara Conyers, Rachael Freytag, Jeff Harwood, Dennis Johnson, Alex Netchvolodoff, Amy Slemmer, Jim Sottile, Linda Wilson, and John Daniel Reaves, Chair.

Workers of St. Alban's Op Shop to host 4th Sunday Fellowship

Sunday, February 27, Satterlee Hall

Come to 4th Sunday Fellowship following the morning services to see a showcase of agencies and charities that our amazing Opportunity Shop helps to support. Come see what WSA and the Op Shop are doing for our community, nation and world!

The reception will take place in Satterlee Hall during the fellowship hour after both the 9:15 and 11:15 services. The donations given help support some awe-inspiring agencies.

Don't miss it. In the midst of winter it's sure to warm your heart.

WSA Treasurer's Report

Margery Dunn, Treasurer

In 2004 WSA received \$144,500 income from sales through the Opportunity Shop. This is \$6,500 more than 2003.

WSA supported outreach by giving \$93,700 to 40 organizations in the community. Other grants and payments totaled \$35,700 for the parish; \$2,065 for the Diocese, \$3,000 for the nation; and \$11,500 for the world. Our total outreach for the year was \$147,374.89. Thank you to all Op Shop staff, volunteers, donors and shoppers.

Mustard Seed Offering

February 20

This month's offering will go to the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund (ERD) to assist those affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami. Fortunately, there has been an outpouring of support since the Dec. 26 disaster, however, long-term assistance will be needed probably for more than a decade at least. This offering allows our worshipping community a specific time and place to contribute to this effort. You can also donate to ERD through its website, www.er-d.org.

Examples of where ERD is helping: Church of North India assisting on Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where 6,000 people are still missing, and almost all ten Episcopal churches in the islands have been washed away. In Thailand with an Anglican parish to provide emergency assistance to people in remote villages. In

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Instruments of Worship

Sunday, February 27 at 7 pm

Featuring

Norman Scribner and Sonya Sutton, organists,
and other instrumentalists from the parish.

Indonesia with Church World Service to distribute food, medicines, blankets, and health kits to Aceh Province.

Our parish's Mustard Seed offering began with disaster relief in mind, and the offerings have since been designated to a variety of development and advocacy programs as well as relief.

Intensive Centering Prayer Retreat

March 13-19, Cathedral College

This week-long retreat will provide opportunities for prolonged periods of silence and Centering Prayer. There will be a review of the Centering Prayer method and opportunities to view Thomas Keating's tapes on the Spiritual Journey.

This retreat is a fabulous opportunity to prepare yourself for Holy Week in the quiet setting of the National Cathedral close.

During the retreat we will enter into Centering Prayer three times a day. Holy Eucharist will be celebrated every day with lectio divina.

The retreat will be led by the Rev. Sandy Casey-Martus of the Alta Retreat Center, and the Rev. J Carlyle Gill, Associate Rector at St. Alban's Parish. There will be opportunities to meet one-on-one, for spiritual direction, with Rev. Casey-Martus or Rev. Gill.

Cost are \$680 for a single room, \$560 for a double—scholarships available. For additional information about this retreat contact the Rev. Carlyle Gill at CarlyleG@st-albans-parish.org or 202-363-8286.

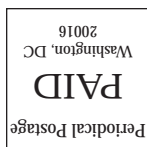
Submit articles for the Chronicle to: JaneV@st-albans-parish.org

Articles for the March 1, 2005 Chronicle must be received by February 15, 2005

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St. Alban's Communications Team: The Rev. Carlyle Gill, The Rev. Margot Critchfield, Sonya Sutton, Jane Volkema and Marcia Welch

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