

St. Alban's Chronicle

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
3001 Wisconsin Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20016
February 15, 2006

Traditional and Contemporary Spiritual Disciplines

Jane Volkema, Director of Communications and Evangelism

Reconciliation of a Penitent: A traditional spiritual discipline

How simple it is for us to go to God in prayer and say "I'm sorry, please forgive me." But have you ever thought about what this would be like with another human being present?

At a time when I felt there was something in my life I just couldn't get past or put behind me—literally "something" was getting between me and God—my parish priest suggested confession. He gave me a copy of Martin L. Smith's book *Reconciliation: Preparing for Confession in the Episcopal Church*. It gave me simple guidelines on how to prepare for a private confession, emphasizing preparation as a large part of the process. To actually sit down and write on paper my sins of anger, envy, greed and pride wasn't easy.

I found private confession different from the corporate confession in *The Book of Common Prayer*. There was no generalizing of my offences to others and God. As I made my confession I was sad, and at times I cried. But confession gave me a place to cut loose the baggage of guilt and shame I carrying around with me. The words of *The Book of Common Prayer* became alive to me.

Now there is rejoicing in heaven; for you were lost, and are found; you were dead, and are now alive in Christ Jesus our Lord. Go in peace. The Lord has put away all your sins. (BCP p. 451)

Keeping House—Simply:

A contemporary spiritual discipline

I moved to Washington, DC in July 2002. Coming from a convent where I was not allowed many belongings, I arrived in DC with one smallsuit case containing two outfits and little else. Prior to entering the convent I had sold most of my things. However, on the advice of the Novice Guardian, what few things I kept, and my grandparent's furniture were put in storage for five years, or until I took final vows.

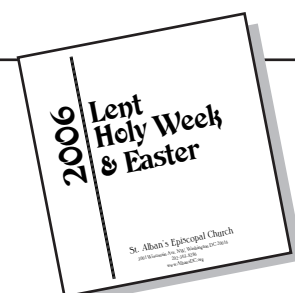
Now, after living here for more than three years, there is more "stuff" filling my one-bedroom apartment than what came from the storage unit. I often take a look around my apartment and wonder, Where did all this stuff come from?

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To note

Lent, Holy Week & Easter

Pick up a copy of the new booklet listing all of St. Alban's events, programs and services for the seasons. The booklets can be found in the information racks in the Narthex. Take extra copies and give them to your friends, neighbors and co-workers.



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

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

WEDNESDAY

11:15 am Healing Eucharist

THURSDAY

Noon Centering Prayer

SATURDAY

9:00 am Prayers for St. Alban's

CLERGY

The Rev. J. Carlyle Gill, Interim Rector
The Rev. Margot D. Critchfield, Senior Associate Rector
The Rev. Louis T. Wheeler, Jr, Associate Rector
The Rev. Douglas A. Greenaway, Assistant Rector
The Rev. Loren B. Mead, Honorary Associate

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN
Carolyn Seaton

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Ron Hicks, Director of Operations
Norman Scribner, Director of Music
Wilma Smith, Director of Financial Affairs
Sonya Subbaya Sutton, Director for Parish Music Ministries
Jane Volkema, Director of Communications and Evangelism

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David Johnson, Community Life
Marcia Welch, Communications Assistant

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Bill Bond, Secretary; Christopher Holmes, Treasurer

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Paul Brewster, Bob Dunn, Diana Dykstra,
Cay Hartley, Douglas Lapp, Chris Larsen,
Susan Morris, Jim Nix, Tricia Pinkard,
Jon Sawyer, Jo Turner, Bob Witten
Duncan McKenna, Youth Representative,
Mary Jane Shackelford, WSA Board

ST. ALBAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Web site: www.AlbansDC.org

Continued from Cover

My first excuse for accumulating things was the novelty of having money. Although far from having money to burn—it was more than the \$10 a week I received in the Order to be used for a Metro card.

When I began to feel I was outgrowing my apartment, I decided it was time to start living more simply. I began by giving at least one bag of donations to the Opportunity Shop every month, and I have since upped that donation to one bag a week. My closets have significantly more room and it isn't as difficult to decide what to wear with fewer choices. Next I simplified the kitchen. I sold the dishes (place settings for 10) I purchased at an estate sale. Although I got them for a good price, it was far more than I need. I now have only the number of dishes I need and 50 percent more cupboard space. The open shelves alone give me a sense of a simpler life. I have cancelled catalogs I was receiving, avoiding the temptation to purchase more *stuff*. I have limited the amount of time I spend reading magazines, newspapers and watching the television. I get just enough news to know where my prayers are needed, and spend my newly-carved spare time for prayer. And I avoid spending money on Sundays, as my spending causes someone else to work.

Having and maintaining a busy life with lots of stuff takes a lot of time. Time that could be better spent with God and serving others.

Fasting: A traditional spiritual discipline

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
—Matthew 6:16-18

Because of this passage I am uneasy admitting this is a spiritual discipline that I practice—in particular, during Lent. So I am not going to dwell on this one. By fasting I am reminded that so many others don't have the choice to fast. Also, when I do feel hungry, fasting reminds me that God is with me. When breaking the fast I am more appreciative of the food I have and of those who labored that I could eat.

Singing God's Word:

A contemporary spiritual discipline

A spiritual discipline—probably my favorite—is singing the Gospel. I use four tonal endings I learned at the Convent, to signify verbal punctuation. Singing the Gospel slows my reading to allow me to pay more attention to what I am reading. Also, it seems to help me gain more clarity of the passage.

Other Spiritual Disciplines:

- Keeping a Rule of Life
- Spiritual Direction
- Centering Prayer
- Volunteering
- Meditation
- Journaling
- Retreats

For more information on these spiritual disciplines and others that might be right for your spiritual growth, contact me or one of our clergy staff at 202-363-8286.

St. Albans teens take over the Little Sanctuary!

Have you heard that St. Albans has a new worship service? We do! It is a relaxed and informal worship service geared toward our teenagers. Now when families arrive for the 9:15 a.m. service the teens and tweens can peel off and head for doughnuts and hot chocolate at the Little Sanctuary. Are you as surprised or frustrated as I am at the machinations involved with getting a teenager out the door on time on Sunday mornings? Perhaps knowing that there will be minimal standing, singing, sitting, and kneeling required for their church attendance will speed your child's departure. If that doesn't help, remind your child that Krispy Crèmes, fruit and Starbucks hot chocolate await him or her at the Little Sanctuary (and that the multicolored sprinkled doughnuts go fast!)

Each Sunday we socialize before beginning our service at 9:30 a.m. by

discussing what is on our minds. We cover what the week was like, what challenges lay ahead of us and what it is like to be between the ages of 12 and 20 years old. After that we cover a topic of the teenagers' choosing. So far we have talked about the lyrics of the Black Eyed Peas, the influences and current applicability of the Chronicles of Narnia and the Philip Pullman trilogy -- His Dark Materials. After a comfortable conversation we hear the Gospel appointed for the Sunday, consider its relevance or resonance and then we celebrate the Eucharist. The priests who have helped us have been terrific about explaining the context of the Gospel and some of the confusing parts of our Eucharistic prayers. We end our brief time together by choosing our upcoming topics.

This is an evolving ministry and we are all learning. It feels good to be goofy

and to laugh in church because we have dropped a book, or someone has forgotten to bring the big host for the priest to bless and break, or because we aren't quite sure when we want to sit or stand. It is a privilege to hear the youth of our parish grappling with pressures and trying to discern the role of church and faith in their lives.

The teen service will happen every Sunday for the rest of the program year and then we will evaluate to see if it meets a need and makes sense to continue. Thank you to all of the parents who have shared a teen or tween with us for this sacred time, and we extend an open invitation to all of our teenagers to try the service out. This is a rich and rewarding adventure and we are grateful for your support.

—Amy Whitcomb Slemmer

Teenagers!

St. Albans has a cool worship service for you!

Every Sunday in the Little Sanctuary at 9:30 a.m. a group of your peers gathers to talk, eat doughnuts and consider the topic of the day before participating in a relaxed Eucharist and heading off to the Senior Youth, J2A and Rite 13 programs.

Our tone is lighthearted and our time together is scripted by you.

Join us —bring your ideas —come as you are and prepare to

ENJOY

yourself in church!

February Parish Forums

10:30 am Sundays,
Satterlee Hall

The Church in the City

February 19

Reid Detchon, Executive Director, Energy Future Coalition and Senior Advisor to the United Nations Foundation

“The Moral Implications of our Energy Choices”

Reid Detchon will discuss three critical energy challenges on which the Energy Future Coalition is focusing—global oil dependence, climate change, and energy poverty. His forum will draw our attention to a diocesan-supported program to promote wider use of wind power. He is a former speechwriter for Vice President George H.W. Bush, and for Senator John Danforth. Mr. Detchon chairs the Environment Committee of the Commission on Peace of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and serves on the Vestry at St. Columba’s.

Alternative February Parish Forums

10:30 am Sundays, Nourse Hall

February 19

Catherine May, M.D., psychiatrist and emergency physician

“Medical, Psychiatric, and Spiritual Relief: An Episcopal/Lutheran Disaster Response on the Gulf Coast”

Catherine May provided care to hurricane refugees in a tent clinic in Long Beach, Mississippi and on a docked cruise ship in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Dr. May will relate how these different groups of people coped with flood, and tornado, near ground zero of the storm.

February 26

Your Diocesan Delegates

“What happened at this year’s convention?”

St. Alban’s Diocesan Delegates—Sandara Barker, Bill Hall, Jane Schubert, Rich Turner and Katie Wilson—will report on the actions of the 111th Convention of the Diocese of Washington. The convention was held the weekend of January 27 and 28.

NOTE:

Fellowship Sunday will also be held at 10:30 am on February 26, in Trenbath Assembly. This month’s host is The Africa Roundtable. There is much for us to learn about this outreach program; stop by for good food and great information.

Parish Forum Preview

March 5

Search Committee “Update on Rector Search”

Series on “Money, Sex, Power, and the Christian Life”

March 12

Prof. Sondra Wheeler, Wesley Theological Seminary “A Rich Ambiguity: the Bible’s Treatment of Wealth”

March 19

Prof. Denis Sullivan, University of Maryland – “Sex in Byzantine Saints’ Lives: Some Non-Canonical Views”

March 26

No Forum, Fellowship Sunday

Parish Forum Recordings

Here is a list of previous Parish Forums you might want to purchase on cassette. If there is a forum you missed, contact Kitty Bayh at KittyB@st-albans-parish.org for a cassette tape (\$3.00).

February 5 Series on the “Church and the City” Martin Trimble, Washington Interfaith Network

January 29

Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis — “Political Earthquake in Israel: Is Peace Closer or Farther Away?”

January 15

Marion Wright Edelman — “Leave No Child Behind”

January 15, Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President of the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF).

January 8

The Rev. Margot Critchfield, Pat Petrash and Prue Hoppin — “After the Holidays: A Follow-Up on Alcohol and Drug Dependence at Home and at Work”

December 18th ~ Loren Mead

“Mission at Christmas: God’s Mission in Jesus, Our Mission in the World”

December 11th ~ Richard Parkins

“Welcoming the Stranger”

December 4th ~ Elizabeth Fisher

“At home with St. Nicolas”

Sunday Parish Forums

Sunday Parish Forums for adults presents speakers and panels on a wide variety of subjects of interest and concern, such as ethics, theology, scripture, international issues, raising children and youth, the church in the city, world religions, art, literature, alcoholism and drug abuse, Episcopal Church matters—and more. Presenters come from within and outside our Parish community. Contact person: Cynthia Cohen ccohenp@aol.com.

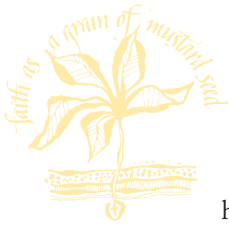
Mustard Seed Offering

Sunday, February 19

The Mustard Seed Offering will go to the St. Thomas Health Clinic in New Orleans. The Clinic lost its roof in Katrina but struggled to reopen to provide services to the city's poor. Now this essential, life-sustaining service—one of just two free clinics in the city that has lost 90 percent of its health care capacity—needs our help to remain open. There is a \$7,500 insurance payment due and no money to pay it.

The Clinic is located in the Saint Thomas/Irish Channel area, one of the poorest districts of New Orleans just blocks from Trinity Episcopal Church which helped found it and whose members provided funds to repair major Katrina damage. St. Alban's Gulf Coast Revival group is partnering with Trinity Church to assist where our help can best be used. The St. Thomas Clinic is a priority.

For nearly 20 years, this non-profit health clinic has provided a full range of diagnostic and treatment services to the underserved and uninsured population in its community. The Clinic is both a dispenser of quality physical and mental health care services and also a teaching and organizing facility. The clinic works closely with the Louisiana State University Medical School which is contributing to the restoration of these essential community services by providing staffing support. Dr. Don Erwin, St. Thomas' Medical Director, explained in his request for emergency help that staffing is contingent on the clinic's retaining appropriate insurance.



Visit their website <http://www.stthomasclinic.org> and please be prayerfully generous on February 19.

Coach of the Year

St. Alban's parishioner Paul Brewster was honored as DC Stoddert Soccer League's Coach of the Year.

Stoddert is a collection of volunteer commissioners and coaches, travel managers, parents, referees and players—a very substantial community of well over 10,000 people. This non-profit organization for almost 30 years has successfully staged countless soccer games for tens of thousands of children.

For more information call Tom Gross, League Administrator 202-338-9005, ext. 302. Or, next time you see Paul, congratulate him and ask him how you can participate in the DC Stoddert Soccer League.

Easter Memorial Flowers

Remember a loved one with an Easter flower memorial. To contribute, contact Adelaide Brown at 202-363-1917 by Saturday, April 1st.

Lenten Retreat Day

Saturday, March 4

with the Rev. Suzanne Guthrie



Using Teresa of Avila's metaphor of the *Interior Castle*, Suzanne will guide us along the soul's mystical journey through conversion, dark nights, illumination and union, toward Christian maturity. The day will consist of lecture, discussion, guided meditation, reflection time, with the usual antics and general silliness as well.

The purpose of the day is to give the participant life-long tools to discern the mood and mode of holiness in daily life, and to show

how the church teaches us the mystical journey in the observance of the seasons of the Christian year.

Rev. Guthrie is Episcopal Chaplain at Cornell University, columnist for *Christian Century* and *Episcopal Life*, author of several books, and well-known retreat leader. She is known for teaching and leading retreats on Christian mysticism, the Bible and prayer. She's particularly interested in ritual play and worship as a way of sanctifying time and place for sacred encounter.

Sign up to attend after services on Sunday or by calling the Parish Office 202-363-8286. \$10 suggested donation to attend.

Black Ink

It is a great pleasure to announce that St. Alban's 2005 Operating Budget finished the year with a small surplus!! A few more year-end adjustments are likely, but the estimate is \$10,000. There was belt-tightening on the expense side of the ledger, but the surplus is largely the result of the generosity of parishioners in two areas. Some paid more than they pledged. Others responded to Carlyle's plea for special contributions to reduce our operating budget deficit. Many thanks to all who made this good news possible.

This doesn't mean we're out of the woods financially. The 2006 operating budget is very lean and pledging has not yet reached 2005 levels. But it is gratifying to see that when we asked for financial help, the parish responded so generously.

Kate Bouvé
Junior Warden

Vestry members and Diocesan Delegates needed to lead and serve St. Alban's

At the Annual Parish Meeting on May 7, St. Alban's will elect four new members of the Vestry and two new Diocesan Delegates. These leaders will serve at a critical and exciting juncture in our parish life: new Vestry members will help welcome a new rector, oversee our building renovation, and strengthen our financial picture, while Diocesan Delegates will help us strengthen the Episcopal Church regionally and participate in the dialogue on emerging Church issues.

Vestry Service:

The Vestry is the governing body elected to make decisions for the people of St. Alban's; Vestry members serve three-year terms of office. Expectations of Vestry service include the commitment to prepare for and attend regular meetings (at least one per month), fulfill committee assignments, serve as liaison to assigned parish ministries or groups, actively support the pledge campaign, participate in new member welcome, and attend a broad spectrum of events to encourage dialogue with parishioners. A critically important initial Vestry retreat is scheduled for May 12-13. Being on the Vestry is—at the same time—a humbling, joyful, tiring, and awesome responsibility.

Diocesan Service:

Diocesan Delegates represent St. Alban's parish at the Convention of the Diocese of Washington, held every year in January, and at the regional meetings held in the fall. Delegates report back to the parish in Sunday forums. Delegates also advise the Vestry and Parish of Diocesan

business, such as, resolutions before the Convention (seeking advice from the Vestry and Parish as to positions on an issue), Diocesan budget, and Diocesan priorities. St. Alban's Delegates seek to engage proactively in Diocesan work by serving on committees and standing for elected positions. Delegates are invited to attend and participate in Vestry meetings [with voice but not vote].

The Nominating Committee, comprised of outgoing Vestry members and Diocesan Delegates, is leading the search for potential candidates with the skills and commitment to serve during this critical period. It will announce its slate of candidates by the end of March so that the congregation will have ample time to get to know the candidates better prior to the May election. If you are interested in being considered as a potential candidate, recommending a potential candidate, or would like to find out more about what these positions entail, please contact any member of the Nominating Committee, listed below, by February 26. Any person who considers standing will receive additional information on what they can expect and what will be expected of them. The committee's consideration of candidates is kept confidential. To be eligible to serve, candidates be at least 21 years of age; with record of their baptism filed with the Parish Office.

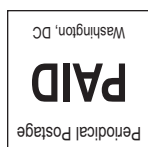
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Submit articles for the *Chronicle* to: JaneV@st-albans-parish.org

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



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