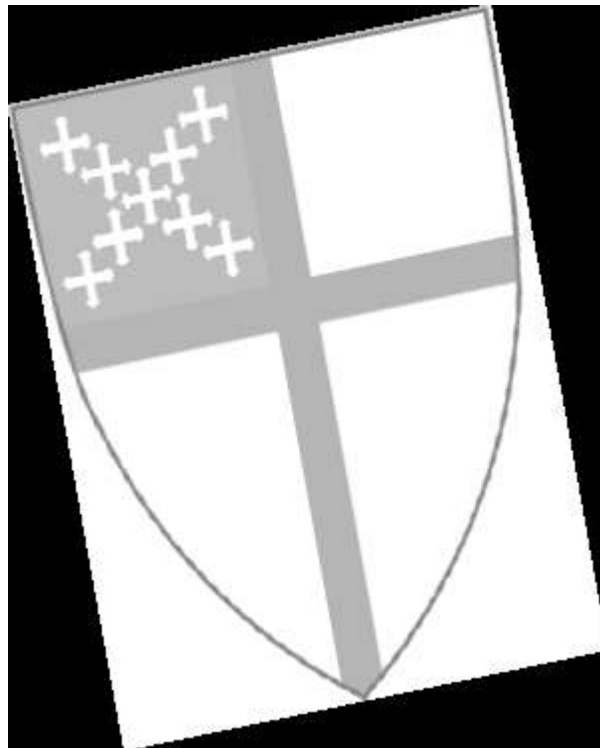


May 4, 2008

# ST. ALBAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT



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A parish of the Episcopal Church USA in the Diocese of Washington

## Prayer for a Church Meeting

Almighty and ever-living God,  
source of all wisdom and  
understanding, be present with those  
who take counsel in St. Alban's  
Annual Parish Meeting for the  
renewal and mission of your Church.  
Teach us in all things to seek first  
your honor and glory. Guide us to  
perceive what is right, and grant us  
both the courage to pursue it and the  
grace to accomplish it; through Jesus  
Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The Book of Common Prayer p. 818*

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## *Agenda*

LUNCH (graciously provided by the Africa Roundtable)

CALL TO ORDER & OPENING PRAYER

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT (Kate Bouve)

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT (Jim Sottile)

TREASURER'S REPORT (Chris Holmes)

RECTOR'S REPORT (Scott Benhase)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

- The election of wardens
- The role of the Vestry in choosing Assistant Clergy
- Age qualifications for election to parish offices

PARISH CONVERSATION WITH RECTOR & WARDENS

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE COMING YEAR & ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ELECTION RESULTS\*

CLOSING PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT

\*Newly elected vestry persons should remain following the meeting for a brief meeting.



# Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting

May 6, 2007

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NOTES

# Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting

May 6, 2007

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# Senior Warden's Report

Kate Bouvé

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The past year, my first as Senior Warden, has been as varied as our diverse, complex parish. While there has been joy, fellowship and laughter, there have been difficulties, losses, and the unexpected. And things happen fast! So this is a good time to stop, reflect, take stock and count my blessings.

Among my blessings is the fine staff of St. Alban's. I am impressed by their skill and energy as they carry out their ministries. They have been unfailingly helpful to me and I thank them. Among my blessings are the outstanding clergy of our parish who work tirelessly to care for our children and youth, who encourage outreach, who preach and teach, study and learn, and support the sick, the dying, the troubled, and the grieving. Among my blessings are you, the wonderful parishioners of St. Alban's, who generously contribute your time, talent and treasure to the life of our parish. You have upheld me when I needed your support and encouragement. You are a rich source of insight, advice, good humor and energy. I hope I am the same for you.

The past year was marked by continuing transitions, and there were more farewells. Norman Scribner, our beloved music director retired. Doug Greenaway, resigned after seven years of loving service as our pastoral associate. Associate Rector Margot Critchfield's dream of becoming a rector of her own parish became a reality when she was called to St. Stephen's Church in Cohasset, Massachusetts. We sent them on their way with tears, love, gratitude and our best wishes.

The transitions continued with the arrivals of three new clergy persons: Tim Boggs, Assistant Rector for Stewardship and Outreach Ministries; Harriette Sturges, Deacon and Coordinator of Children's Ministries; and Erin Hensley, Assistant Rector for Youth and Young Adult Ministries. And Sonya Sutton became our new Director of Music and works to expand the music experiences that enrich our worship. These people are a blessing in our lives and it has been a joy to work with them.

We've faced some neighborhood issues. The Parish has been in dialogue with the National Cathedral in two key areas – parking and the relationship between St. Alban's and the Cathedral Congregation. The parking issue is not a new one. I learned from our historian Ruth Cline that parking has been a problem on the Close for the last fifty years! As part of the parking garage project, the Cathedral Foundation assessed all the institutions on the Close a parking fee to help defray the expenses of the garage and the care of the roads on the Close.

Thanks to the work of Scott, Vestry member Mark Shima and his Parking Committee, we reached agreement on a fair assessment. St. Alban's pays \$4,400 annually for daytime parking in the four spaces in front of the Rectory.

The issues surrounding the Cathedral Congregation prompted dialogue with the Cathedral and the Diocese about collaboration and parish bounds. Bob Smith has ably led a group of parishioners that has met with representatives of the Cathedral Congregation with the goal of creating a Covenant between the two institutions. At this writing, a Cathedral-St. Alban's Covenant has been drafted and will be presented to the Vestry of St. Alban's and the Cathedral Chapter for their consideration. You can look forward to a full discussion of the draft Covenant in the coming months.

Also in our future, a large group of parishioners will soon embark on the adventure of the Planning Retreat, an effort to create a five-year plan for the parish. By the end of this weekend-long event, the participants hope to discern our shared aspirations, reach consensus goals that the full parish can support, and create an action plan that turns dreams into realities. The retreat will take place at the end of May and you'll be hearing lots more about it.

Financial matters continue to be a challenge. We finished 2007 with a balanced budget, achieving a major goal of Scott and the Vestry. Because overall pledge income is down, however, and in order to live within our means, the 2008 budget was reduced from 2007 levels. The impact is seen in the largest budget category – personnel expenses. It is with deep regret that lay staff reductions will be made by the end of June. We will deeply miss these fine individuals who have contributed greatly to the work of our parish. Provision has been made for severance pay and time off for interviewing. The remaining staff - and parishioners as well - will have to pick up the workload.

In late summer 2007 and in keeping with diocesan guidelines, the Parish undertook its first Mutual Ministry Review. This was an effort to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the ministries of the parish. Usually such reviews are done among the Rector, Wardens and Vestry, but because it was our first review and the past year had been so eventful, we sought the views of the entire parish. A wide range of opinions were expressed and it was painful to deal with the unhappiness of a number of parishioners. The Vestry spent many hours in discussion with Scott considering the comments and preparing the report to the parish that identified the principal strengths of our mutual ministry and the challenges we face. The Vestry and Rector committed to actions that build on those strengths and address areas needing improvement. These include greater transparency, clear prompt communication, and more dialogue when changes are contemplated. We call on the parish to join with the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry to work on these issues with mutual love and respect.

Despite the challenges we face as a parish, I see and feel a constant, unifying theme: St. Alban's parish endures. We are stewards who play a role in the on-going story of this parish. We can bring our best and brightest gifts and leave St. Alban's better than we found it. Meanwhile we are blessed by the gifts of shared faith and shared community. We may not always agree and we may not always succeed in our efforts, but I am confident that we will remain in loving communion and respectful dialogue with one another. May God bless us and guide us in these endeavors.

# Junior Warden's Report

Jim Sottile

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If you're like I was before being asked to stand as Junior Warden, you don't have a very clear sense of just what the Junior Warden does. Any of you who are considering standing for Junior Warden in the future should stop reading now – I don't want to discourage you! For everyone else, the Junior Warden's work focuses on the Parish's property and finances, working with the Property and Finance Committees as well the Parish staff, plus those additional jobs that the Rector and Senior Warden deem appropriate for the junior member of the leadership team to take on. I report below on last year's work planning for the long term maintenance of our property, working to keep our spending within budget and updating our Employee Handbook.

## **Property**

The Property Committee is charged with overseeing the maintenance and improvement of the parish's buildings and grounds. The Committee worked on three significant maintenance projects in the last year: 1) refurbishing four Satterlee Hall bathrooms; 2) exterior painting work on high windows in Nourse Hall, Satterlee Hall and the Rectory; and 3) substantial renovation of the bathroom in the room adjacent to Trenbath in Satterlee Hall to improve handicapped accessibility. The refurbishing of four bathrooms in Satterlee and the exterior painting work was completed in late 2007 at a total cost of \$15,500 (\$12,300 for the painting and \$3,200 for the bathrooms). The Vestry has approved a budget of \$8,000 for the renovation of the handicapped accessible bathroom in Satterlee Hall, and that work will be completed this summer. These projects were (or will be) paid for from the Parish's Reserve Fund which is used for capital and non-routine maintenance projects as well as to provide liquidity to cover cash flow needs during the course of a year. The Reserve Fund increased from \$456,000 in 2006 to \$535,000 in 2007 from income on its investments and the receipt of certain undesignated bequests, 90% of which are dedicated to the Reserve Fund under a 2006 Vestry resolution.

The Property Committee also retained the Stone House Group (with the Vestry's approval) to assess the maintenance and improvement needs for the Rectory and Satterlee Hall over the next ten years. The Stone House Group's report identified maintenance and improvement projects with a cost of over \$1.6 million (in 2008 dollars). The largest single project is the replacement of the HVAC system in Satterlee which is now at or near the end of its expected useful life. The expected cost to replace it is over \$530,000. The Vestry is working on plans to address the maintenance and improvement projects identified by Stone House, including how to fund such projects.

## **Finance**

The Finance Committee advises the Rector and Vestry concerning the annual operating budget and reviews and reports to the Vestry on the Parish's monthly financial statements. It is also charged with overseeing the investment of the Parish's Reserve and Endowment funds.

The Rector, Vestry and Finance Committee worked closely together this past year to monitor the Parish's financial results against the budget and identify and take appropriate steps to avoid running an operating deficit. The parish ended 2007 with a very small operating surplus.

Pledges for 2008 were down from 2007 leading to a \$74,000 decrease in budgeted income. To maintain a balanced budget, planned spending for 2008 therefore had to be cut substantially. Since personnel costs are nearly 60% of the budget, the cuts necessarily focused in that area. The Vestry approved a budget that will eliminate two staff positions effective May 31, 2008 – the receptionist and communications assistant.

The Finance Committee monitored closely the investments in our Endowment Fund in light of challenging conditions in the markets. In February 2008, on the Committee's recommendation, the major remaining stock holdings in the Endowment Fund were sold. Substantially all of the Reserve and Endowment Funds is now invested in money market or bond funds.

The Finance Committee is working on a set of investment policy guidelines in conjunction with the Stewardship Commission that are designed to provide clear guidance for investment of the Endowment Fund.

## **Employee Handbook**

Updating the St. Alban's Employee Handbook this year fell in the category of other interesting assignments the Rector and Senior Warden found appropriate for the Junior Warden. Our existing personnel guidelines were more than ten years old and had become quite obsolete. They did not comply with existing D.C. and federal laws and did not reflect the parish's current policies and procedures for employees. We therefore undertook a wholesale revision of the personnel guidelines, in consultation with personnel professionals, and produced a new Employee Handbook which has now gone into effect.

## **Conclusion**

When I sat down to compose this report, there seemed no unifying theme. As I reflect on the last year, however, I am most struck by the commitment of many parishioners to do the often unglamorous work needed to sustain a community of faith in the world. Let me single out a few examples. Annie Bissell spent countless hours on the sorely needed refurbishment of the bathrooms in Satterlee. Clem Dinsmore produced a thoughtful set of policies to guide investment of our Endowment Fund. Chris Holmes, our Treasurer, engaged in the painstaking process of reconstructing old financial records necessary to move forward on audits of the Parish's financial statements. All the members of the Property and Finance Committees spent many hours analyzing and identifying solutions for our maintenance and financial needs with invaluable assistance from Ron Hicks and Vilma Smith. Many parishioners increased their pledges substantially in a time of economic uncertainty. All of these were acts of love for this Parish and the people of this community. With parishioners like these who dedicate their time and talents to this Parish, I can only be optimistic about our future.

# Treasurer's Report

Chris Holmes

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**Table 1** presents St. Alban's Operating Fund activity for the years 2004 through 2007.

**Table 1** **St. Alban's Operating Fund Activity**  
**2004-2007**

*Dollar amounts in thousands*

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Budget 2008</b>
Total operating income	1,629	1,681	1,471	1,577	1,452
Support from other funds & parish organizations	20	64	41	26	74
Total operating expenses	1,716	1,738	1,678	1,602	1,526
Net operating activity	(67)	6	(166)	2	-
Transfer from (to) Reserve Fund	70	(6)	166	(2)	-
<b>Net change in Operating Fund balance</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Beginning in 2004, the Vestry authorized a transfer to (from) the Reserve Fund to the extent of any surplus (deficit) in the Operating Fund balance at the end of the year. In addition to pledges and other income from external sources, the Operating Fund receives support from within the Parish. In 2008, budgeted support includes an additional \$19,000 from WSA, and \$19,600 from the Capital Campaign/Transformation Fund, to help fund Parish Outreach.

In 2006, the Vestry decided to change the way the Parish recognizes income from pledges. In previous years, pledge receipts were recognized as income in the year received, regardless of the year to which the pledge related. For example, if a parishioner prepaid a portion of their 2006 EMP pledge in 2005, the contribution was counted as 2005 income. Beginning in 2006, pledge receipts received in advance of the associated pledge year are deferred and recorded as income in the subsequent year. Accordingly, at December 31, 2006, the Operating Fund deferred \$107,724 of 2007 pledge receipts received in 2006. In previous years, those advance pledge payments would have been recorded as income upon receipt. At December 31, 2007, the Operating Fund deferred \$103,510 of 2008 pledge receipts received in 2007. The change in accounting method for pledges was the principal reason for the operating deficit in 2006. The remainder of the 2006 operating deficit was primarily due to clergy compensation and benefits exceeding amounts originally budgeted.

In 2007, total operating income exceeded our budget by approximately \$40,000. However, our total operating expenses also exceeded our budget by a similar amount. We incurred higher than expected costs for utilities, health insurance, building maintenance, food & beverages, and computer & printing supplies. The 2007 operating surplus was \$1,643, which has been transferred to the Reserve Fund. For 2008, the Vestry again approved a balanced operating budget despite an expected decline in pledge receipts.

**Table 2** breaks down our operating expenses by category, as a percentage of total operating expenses. Our largest expense is personnel—the salaries and benefits for our clergy and lay staff. The next largest component is buildings and grounds, which includes maintenance, utilities and insurance. Diocesan support, outreach expenditures, parish programs, and parish office costs are proportionally smaller expense categories.

**Table 2** **Expenses by Category**  
*Amounts listed as a percentage of Total Operating Expenses, 2004-2008*

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Budget 2008</b>
Personnel	58	61	58	57	57
Buildings and Grounds	15	16	18	20	20
Diocesan Support	9	8	8	9	9
Parish Outreach <sup>1</sup>	7	4	6	5	5
Programs	7	7	5	5	4
Parish Office	4	4	5	4	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100

By far, the largest portion of our operating income comes from pledges, with Sunday plate offerings, distributions from the Nasselli Trust, contributions, and designated gifts making up the remainder.

**Table 3** shows the amount of pledge income for the years 2003 through 2007 and the percent of operating income accounted for by pledges.

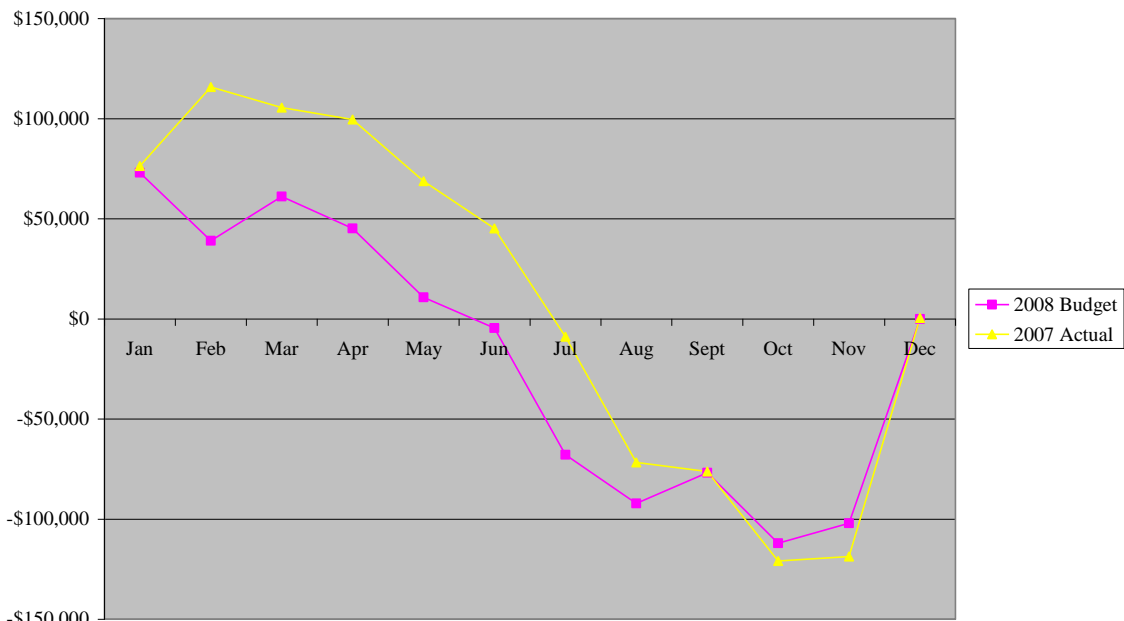
**Table 3** **Pledge Income**  
**as a Percent of Operating Income**  
*Dollar amounts in thousands*

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Budget 2008</b>
Total operating income	1,629	1,681	1,471	1,577	1,452
Pledge income	1,425	1,435	1,193	1,361	1,278
Percent change in pledge income	6.4%	0.7%	(16.9%)	14.1%	(6.1%)
Pledge Income as percent of operating income	87%	85%	81%	86%	88%
Number of Pledges	696	619	533	503	439

The decrease in 2006 pledge income and subsequent increase in 2007 pledge income are principally due to the change in accounting method for pledges discussed above. However, 2008 budgeted pledges are approximately 6% less than 2007 and 11% less than 2005. While the amount of the average annual pledge has been steadily increasing, the total number of pledges has been steadily declining.

The following graph shows the pattern of Operating Fund activity for 2007 and 2008.

**Operating Fund Year-to-Date Surplus (Deficit)**



Including interfund transfers

While we incur expenses fairly evenly throughout the year, we receive a significant portion of our income in December.

St. Alban's has three unrestricted funds besides the Operating Fund: the Reserve Fund, the Clergy Incentive Fund, and the Endowment Fund. In addition, the Parish has a Designated Gifts Fund where expenditures are subject to donor-imposed stipulations.

**The Reserve Fund** is utilized for capital and extraordinary maintenance expenditures. The Reserve Fund also provides liquidity to finance operating activities during the year and to cover any deficit in our Operating Fund balance at the end of the year. Effective in 2006, the Vestry resolved that 90% of any undesignated bequests would be allocated to the Reserve Fund.

**The Clergy Incentive Fund** consists of contributions designated by the Vestry to be used for clergy education, compensation, and spiritual development. In 2006, the remaining balance of the Clergy Incentive Fund was expended for the costs of the search, retention and relocation of the new Rector.

**The Endowment Fund** was created in 1999. From 2001 through 2005, the Endowment Fund was allocated 90% of any undesignated bequests to the Parish. Beginning in 2005, a portion of the accumulated investment income of the Endowment Fund has been used to support parish operations. Beginning in 2006, the Endowment Fund provided internal financing for the renovation of Nourse Hall. At December 31, 2007, the Capital Campaign/Transformation Fund owed the Endowment Fund approximately \$320,000, which will be repaid, in part, by future receipts of capital campaign pledges. The balance of the Endowment Fund is currently invested in money market and international bond funds, as overseen by the Finance Committee.

**The Designated Gifts Fund** holds monies given to the Parish to be used for a specific purpose.

**Table 4** shows the annual balances for the Reserve Fund, Clergy Incentive Fund, Endowment Fund, and Designated Gifts Fund for the years 2003 – 2007.

**Table 4 Reserve Fund, Clergy Incentive Fund, Endowment Fund, and Designated Gifts Fund Balances, 2003-2007**

*Dollar amounts in thousands*

<b>Year</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Reserve Fund	671	583	543	456	535
Clergy Incentive Fund	119	89	36	-	-
Endowment Fund	590	642	673	717	744
Designated Gifts Fund	178	140	111	108	96

In the fall of 2003, the Vestry authorized the *Transformed for Ministry* Campaign. A portion of the money raised – \$500,000 – has been designated by the Vestry to provide grants to support the involvement of parishioners in transformational ministries. Through 2007, \$228,490 has been disbursed in transformation grants.

**Table 5** shows the campaign income for the years 2001 – 2007, the expenses associated with campaign fundraising, costs of the Nourse Hall building project, the amount of transformation grants disbursed, and the closing balance.

The Capital Campaign/Transformation Fund ended 2007 with a deficit of approximately \$320,000, which has been internally financed by the Endowment Fund. Approximately \$415,000 of capital campaign pledges remained outstanding at the end of 2007. Based on parishioner commitments, these pledges are largely expected to be received in 2008.

**Table 5 Capital Campaign/Transformation Fund, 2001-2007**

*Dollar amounts in thousands*

<b>Year</b>	<b>2001-2</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>To Date</b>
Pledge receipts	286	234	1,158	985	412	252	3,327
Investment income		1	17	27	122	10	177
Fundraising expense	(22)	(37)	(22)	(4)	(1)	(1)	(87)
Building project cost	(7)	(24)	(28)	(134)	(1,547)	(1,768)	(3,508)
Transformation grants			(39)	(88)	(70)	(32)	(229)
Balance, end of year	257	431	1,517	2,303	1,219	(320)	(320)

<sup>1</sup> Does not include funds disbursed by WSA and the Transformation Grant Fund. Also, does not include costs associated with the use of parish facilities for outreach activities.

# Outreach Commission Report

The Reverend Timothy A. Boggs

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The Vestry created a Parish Outreach Commission in 2007, which is working to strengthen and expand the outreach ministries of the parish and to develop a coherent, collaborative, and comprehensive approach to better support and stimulate the outreach work of St. Alban's community. The Commission's efforts should give us all a clearer picture of how the Parish can best use its many gifts, including financial resources, to respond to the call to "be doers of the Word and not hearers only..." (James 1:22).

The Commission respected the insistence of the Rector and Vestry to maintain a balanced budget for St. Alban's Parish. For 2008, this balanced-budget approach required great care and understanding of the mission of each outreach ministry as well as creative and collaborative use of funds to meet each ministry's financial needs.

St. Alban's Parish budget currently supports five ministry groups: feeding ministries (SOME casseroles, Grate Patrol, and Christ House); The Crossroads Shelter; seniors program (Super 60's salary support); and institutional grants. A Parish contribution to the global Millennium Development Goals has been added to the proposed 2008 Outreach budget. A copy of the Commission's recommended budget is attached.

After working with all concerned, the Commission recommended to the Rector and Vestry that the parish draws upon its five traditional outreach funding sources to collaboratively support the outreach ministries at St. Alban's in 2008. These sources are pledges, Workers of St. Alban's (WSA) Grants, the Transformation Fund, Mustard Seed Offerings, and special fundraising events. This approach will bring all our outreach work under one common St. Alban's umbrella, while honoring the independent and creative judgments of the parish outreach funding groups. Good work toward this cooperative approach has already begun.

The Commission will continue to meet throughout the year to monitor the actual expenditures of the outreach ministries; to consider how the Parish can better support its outreach activities; to publicize how deeply the Parish is committed to reaching out to the needs of the world beyond Mt. St. Alban; and to provide guidance for new ministries that may develop.

The Commission presented its outreach ministries budget recommendations for 2008 to the Vestry, which has incorporated them into the 2008 Parish Budget.

**St. Alban's Outreach Commission  
2008 Members**

Vestry Representative

And Commission Chair: Kammie Hedges

Parish Representatives:

Maria Estefania

Lauri Fitz-Pegado

Joanne Brainard

Representative from operating budget-supported ministries:

Crossroads Shelter: Peter Spalding

Feeding Ministries: Susan Morris

Institutional Grants: Lisa Birchard

Ex Officio Representatives:

Mustard Seed: Jeff Harwood

Transformational Fund: Jane Schubert

Workers of St. Alban's: Mary Jane Shackelford

Youth Representative: Charlotte Morris

John Masters (alternate)

Clergy Liaison: The Rev. Tim Boggs

# Young Adult Ministries Report

The Reverend Erin Hensley

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Of the 116 newcomers who filled out a pledge card, page in the welcome book, or online submission form between July 3, 2007 and April 20, 2008, 100 of these individuals or families were in the MD, VA, and DC area. 36 of these 100 individuals or families are known to be young adults, people in their twenties and thirties. Of these 36 young adult individuals or families, many have chosen St. Alban's to be their new church home. For instance,

- 3 of the 36 young adult newcomer individuals or families have had a child baptized this year and 2 of the young adult newcomers by May 11, 2008, will have been baptized as adults.
- 3 of the 36 young adult newcomer individuals/families will be confirmed, received, or reaffirm their baptismal vows during the diocesan confirmation service on May 17, 2008.
- 5 of the 36 young adult newcomer individuals or families are couples preparing for marriage. In addition to these five couples, 5 other couples who are young adults participated in our spring pre-marital classes in 2008. All 10 of these couples are members or are in the process of becoming members of St. Alban's Parish.

Young adults are being incorporated into the life of the parish. Young adults, both newcomers and those who have been at St. Alban's longer than six months, are serving in numerous ministries throughout the parish--as Stephen ministers, lay readers, greeters, Hospitality Commission members, choir members, and leaders for J2A and Senior Youth groups. The Alban Course on Sunday mornings as well informal conversations with clergy and other parishioners has helped them find out more about St. Alban's. The monthly and weekly gathering of adults in their twenties and thirties has been an important, informal way for many who are young adults to get to know one another. The St. Alban's After Hours monthly gathering has had very low attendance, while the weekly gathering has been more popular. On average, 4 or 5 people come every Wednesday to the pub quiz at Ireland's Four Fields. In total since October, there have been about 25 people who have come to the pub quiz at one time or another.

The focus of young adult ministry this year has been on having more young adults in our midst and developing relationships within and outside of the young adult demographic. The successes we have had this year are especially due to timely follow up of newcomers, reenergized greeter ministry, and Web site revisions by our new parish administrator, Eric Gustafson. At the end of our parish strategic planning weekend in May, we will be clearer about who we, as a parish, want to be with God's help. This clarity of vision and mission is something young adults look for and appreciate in churches.

According to the Percept data in 2008, the largest group in our area is the “up and coming” group, young adult professionals. This group accounts for 54.7% of the households in the 3 mile radius around St. Alban’s Parish. With the above data in mind, the focus for young adult ministry in the coming year is to continue to keep the doors open for young adults and to help those who are here go deeper into the life of the parish and their ministries. In order to do so, we need to consider the following growing edges:

- Craft the Web site in such a way that says and shows who we are as well as offers up to date and accurate information
- Consider more media-savvy ways of reaching out and reaching in to young adults--social networking online groups, art, music, film
- Create opportunities for working professionals (single, married, and married with children) to engage in short-term direct outreach and or advocacy opportunities

Young adults, like all other age groups of St. Alban’s, are important parts of our community of faith. This year we have made strides in welcoming young adults and lifting up young adults as leaders in the parish. Still, there are young adults in our area without a church home and there are young adults already in the parish with untapped gifts to offer this parish and the world. With God’s help, we will continue to learn from and with them as we grow in faith and love.

## Deacon & Coordinator of Children’s Ministries Report

The Reverend Harriette Sturges

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This has been a year of new beginnings for me: new diocese, new parish, new children, new parents, new ways of doing liturgy, new classrooms--the list could go on and on. With the cooperation of the leaders, parents, and children, I introduced a new curriculum, The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, for our children ages 3-10, which is what I was hired to do. In addition to the Sunday routine, we added a Kids Reaching Out Program, knitting lessons to equip us for some of our ministries, Advent Activities, and Stations of the Cross. The parents of new babies are organizing a get together. There has been a lot of new life, as there was fertile soil to begin with. I am the clergy liaison for the Healing Ministry, the Lay Readers’ Ministry and the Eucharistic Visitors’ Ministry. As deacon, except for my liturgical role, I have been observing and exploring where God is calling me. I also serve on the diocesan Commission of Ministry. Thank you all for your welcome and support here.

# Music Director's Report

Sonya Subbayya Sutton

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## THE YEAR IN REVIEW (May 2007-May 2008)

Since last May's annual meeting there has been quite a bit of activity in the music program at St. Alban's. On Pentecost Sunday, 2007, Norman Scribner retired after 47 years of faithful and vibrant service to this parish. The summer of 2007 began a year of what I believe to be unprecedented activity for musicians in the parish. Choir members sang for Ordinations at the Cathedral on June 9, sang with a Dixieland band for St. Alban's Day and hosted a profitable yard sale that helped to clean out corners of our buildings and begin the process of raising funds for a proposed choir trip to Italy. Planning for that trip shaped the rest of the year in many ways.

Three events in early fall were designed to create some excitement around music, showcase a variety of talents, and raise money for financial aid to be given to singers who wanted to go to Italy but couldn't afford to do so. In September we had a concert that took the audience to our three main venues – Trenbath, the sanctuary, and Nourse Hall. Mr. Carl Nourse of Columbus, Ohio, who has given us two pianos, was in attendance, and promised to underwrite a future performance of his favorite large-scale work, Rutter's *Mass for the Children*, and has since made provisions in his will for a large gift to begin an endowment for music at the parish. David Geyer gave a concert of his own songs, and a successful Choir Gala dinner and auction featured soprano Rosa Lamoreaux and raised nearly \$17,000 for financial aid. After Christmas, two more events created a sense of community and gave our talented musicians a chance to shine. On Epiphany we hosted an evening of opera favorites (preceded by a potluck dinner), and in February we had a final pre-trip concert, followed by a reception. All were well attended and generated much enthusiasm for music and community at this parish.

53 members and friends of St. Alban's went to Italy February 21-28, 2008. They formally sang in four venues, participated in worship services four times, and informally sang in several other places. It was truly a pilgrimage, led by Canon Eugene Sutton, that was spiritual as well as musical. Money raised in 2007 was used to help singers who would not have been able otherwise to go on the trip, and the money left over (about \$1500) was used towards the cost of musicians on Easter morning.

The nine services with music between Palm Sunday and Easter went well from my perspective. I believe our resources were well-used – amateur and professional musicians all had plenty to do, but I don't think we were overextended. A few minor differences from previous years: a soloist rather than the choir led music on Maundy Thursday and at the 6:30 service on Good Friday, and the choir for the Three Hours service sang only in the first hour. Two soloists and a string quartet presented Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater" in the second hour, and a men's ensemble sang in the third hour, including a new work by member David Caleb. Brass players on Easter morning added much to the 9:15 and 11:15 services. Though the cost is very high, I hope we can have the same musicians return next Easter.

## CHOIRS

The adult choirs are being reshaped a bit because there is now only one musician on staff, and because of budget cuts, but I think the transition is going smoothly. There are three adult choirs: Canterbury Choir (adult volunteers with paid section leaders), Salisbury Choir (auditioned volunteers), and Alban Singers (professional singers). They sing together and separately and are assigned to the 9:15 and 11:15 services. One or more of these choirs have sung for 80 services. Small groups – quartets, men’s and women’s ensembles – and soloists have sometimes been pulled from those larger groups and sang for an additional 10 services. Members of the choir also sang in massed choirs for the Diocesan Convention and Ordinations in January. There are 11 members of the Alban Singers, 37 members of the Canterbury Choir, and 6 members of the Salisbury Choir. My obvious hope for the coming year is to recruit many more into the Salisbury Choir, which primarily sings at 11:15.

Young singers have been divided into two choirs – the St. Cecilia Choir for first and second graders and St. Alban’s Choristers for third through eighth graders. There are 9 members of the St. Cecilia Choir, and 12 Choristers. Both groups rehearse on Wednesday afternoons, and have sung for 17 services, including twice at Washington Home. A few members participated in a choir festival at Washington National Cathedral in February, which drew over 500 singers from around the country.

One of our professional singers, Sarah Frook, has been a great help to me this past year, occasionally taking part of a rehearsal, some accompanying, and taking primary charge of the St. Cecilia Choir on the Sundays that they sing in Children’s Chapel. This has been a new venture, and I hope having them in Chapel has been a good experience for all. Sarah moves on to graduate school this fall, and I hope to be able to find another musician as versatile as she is to help me in various capacities.

The Handbell Choir, renamed St. Alban’s Angelus Ringers, has 8 members (and would be very glad to recruit one or two more) who have contributed their sound to 19 services. They rehearse on Saturday mornings in the church balcony and provide the greatest opportunity for an intergenerational musical experience, though we have not been successful at recruiting teenagers (could it be the 9am rehearsal time??).

St. Alban’s continues to provide rehearsal space for many groups, notably Choral Arts Society and Singing A-Z, and we play host on occasion to visiting choirs, including the South African Bokamoso theater group, and this April, the Roedean Girls Choir from South Africa. We also allow several musicians to use our space and instruments for practice time, recitals, and teaching.

## PERSONAL NOTE

There has been some concern expressed over my work schedule, but I can honestly say that I have not found it to be an onerous or unworkable one. Besides musical help from Sarah, I have had almost the entire work of maintaining the music library taken off my hands. Barbara Morrison has worked diligently this past year to catalogue the library on the computer. Anton Vanterpool works on keeping music filed and organized. I find that people in all the choirs are stepping up to take charge of non-musical matters (vestments, folders, and most important, pastoral care of each other), which has freed me up to plan and prepare for our liturgies. There's never enough time for a musician to practice, but I do try to keep up my playing, and have played several recitals in the past year, and intend to accept more playing invitations away from the parish as I'm able.

I hope that in next year's budget there will be a consideration of my request to hire a part-time assistant, and until then, I am hopeful that I will be able to find another singer who has some keyboard and conducting skills as well, to take Sarah's place this fall.

There is also concern about what it will mean for me to be married to the newly-elected Bishop of Maryland, and I can only say that things have a way of working out, and all intentions are to stay at St. Alban's and continue to work as I have. I have my husband's full support to do so, as he has my full support in his new work in the Diocese of Maryland.

There is wonderful energy, enthusiasm, and goodwill among the singers, and that feeds me, as I hope the music feeds our entire congregation.

# Verger's Report

Ronald Hicks

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When I came here, I was fortunate to have a state of the art computer network in place, thanks to Bill Hall. Since then, I've upgraded all the Windows 98 and NT4 PCs to Windows 2000 Pro and this past year the NT4 server (which I had previously increased from 1 to 4 machines) to Windows Server 2003 and Exchange from 5.5 to 2003. A few of the original Micron machines are still in use, but many have been replaced by more powerful PCs that were donated to the parish. All users now have their own printers, most of which have been donated or came free with new server hardware that had to be purchased. Our use of email has greatly expanded from just in-house use to a contact list of about 900 addresses, enhancing the communication between the staff and parishioners. Our membership database and financial system software are at the latest version. Our membership database continues to need work on the completeness and accuracy of the information. SonicWall, our firewall appliance supplier, ended support for the SOHO/50, so we upgraded to their TZ/170. Their Gateway AntiVirus and Website Content Filter continue to protect us well from malicious programs and accidental viewing of objectionable websites. Last November there was a sharp increase in the spam we were receiving, and I installed Microsoft's Intelligent Mail Filtering, which is now blocking over 1000 spam messages a day. The renovation in Nourse Hall included seven network connections, and two are being used: Barbara Morrison works in the Scribner Music Room creating an Access database of our choral music, and a PC and printer, gifts from Evelyn Davis, are in the Vesting Room, mainly for convenient access to phone numbers in the membership database. During the building renovation, we provided internet access to the staff of the general contractor, Whiting Turner, and now provide internet access to the St. Albans School Japanese class meeting in Warner House library. The Early Childhood Center and Iona's Super Sixties program access the internet through our network, too. Lately I have established a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and am able to manage the firewall from a remote site and can remotely access my documents at work; the latter capability I will roll out to other staff as needed and if they have home machines capable of being VPN clients. Also, I will be rolling out Outlook Web Access on an as-needed basis, too; as an alternate approach, I've been using free Yahoo accounts as a means for staff to access and answer their email anytime, anywhere. I have set up Outlook Mobile Access to my smart phone, a Sprint Motorola Moto Q, and will roll OMA out to other staff who have a capable smart phone. We are currently using Office 2000 except for Outlook, which is at 2003. With the addition of Eric Gustafson to our staff, we have realized our long held dream of bringing website development in-house, essential to being able to have sufficient time for it to be sophisticated and current in content. On my wish list for this year is to connect to the network the dedicated computer in the Nourse Hall boiler room, which controls the new HVAC system, so that the HVAC system can be monitored and adjusted not only from my office machine but, through the VPN, from virtually anywhere. We passed on to Russell Ayers two pickup truck loads of computers and related equipment which was either surplus parish owned equipment or donations in excess of our needs; Russell in turn shipped it to needy organizations in Africa. Sadly, this activity of Russell's has ended.

As the one in whose lap fell the newly renovated Nourse Hall, I am very pleased with how it turned out. The Building Committee did a superb job, as did the project manager, Realco of Alexandria; the architect, MTF Architecture in Arlington; and the general contractor, Whiting-Turner of Baltimore. Initial problems with excessive noise and some plumbing problems were all resolved in a highly responsive and professional manner.

Satterlee Hall is the facility next in need of attention. Not only is the HVAC system beyond its expected life span, but the configuration of entrances and interior spaces makes it challenging to provide a safe and secure environment for staff and visitors.

The St. Joseph Guild is in need of a few more men and women who are handy with hand and power tools to take on some light repairs. Also, the Light Brigade has lost all its members, which were only two anyway. A few people who are comfortable on a ladder are needed to come in on a regular basis to replace burned out bulbs.

With respect to the liturgical aspects of being the verger, I thank Dee Dykstra and Betty Dietel for their assistance with weddings, and to George Bisset and Stephanie Faul for their coverage of the 8:00 AM and 5:30 services respectively. I could use one or two more to help with overseeing and trouble-shooting of the Sunday morning activities; David Johnson has been a welcome assistance in this regard when I have been away. This involves knowing everything that is going on, where everything is that anyone might need, how everything works and how to fix it if it can be fixed, to be able to look over any room and know if anything that is needed is missing or out of place, and to know the flow of events and to exercise 'air traffic control' skills as necessary. If anyone has an eye for detail and the big picture at the same time and can commit to a Sunday morning that begins at 7:00 AM and ends around 2:00 PM, and would like to work with me in a sort of apprentice capacity, email me.

Finally, I express my appreciation to our sextons Armando Pineda, and his staff, Virginia and Pasiano, for their unflagging responsiveness to our needs with respect to janitorial service, event setup, and security. The St. Alban's buildings are very heavily used by outside groups, and this creates a demand far greater than most parishes experience.

# Director of Parish Administration's Report

Eric Gustafson

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When I arrived at St. Alban's at the beginning of the year, I truly hit the ground running...and haven't looked back since. Already the position of Director of Parish Administration has presented me with some of the most daunting AND exciting challenges of my professional life. At the end of last year Reverend Benhase created a brand new position in line with his vision for unifying, updating, and streamlining the communications and data management aspects of parish administration—a position for which I felt particularly well-suited. The scope of the new position covers not only the day-to-day administrative aspects of the traditional parish position, but also responsibility for upgrading and maintaining our website, automating and expediting the flow of critical information, and integrating data sources into a unified system.

On the website side, we have, to a large degree, altered the time-critical pages from “static” to “dynamic.” In short, this means that, through a system of tables and custom computer code, we now have a system that “feeds” data to the pages, keeping them up-to-the-minute. This “dynamic” restructuring also is allowing us to post automated forms (such as the newly released Time and Talent form) that are capable of responding intelligently to user input (most significantly, by sending out automatic e-mails to chairs of the various ministries). Future projects may include password-secured on-line access to the parish directory and the ability to update one's own personal contact information. Down the road we hope to be able to provide on-line scheduling support for the chairs of our many ministries, access to video and audio files of services, and easy-to-use site searching options.

On the local side, we expect to be able to streamline the production of Sunday liturgies; the tracking of information regarding marriages, baptisms, and other special occasions at St. Alban's; and the processing of schedule and announcement items. The last-mentioned is one of my pet projects (currently in development) and will be unlike any other system I have devised. I look forward to the day when the sometimes overwhelming task of coordinating the flow of information becomes almost effortless.

I especially would like to say a big thank-you to the current staff for their unstinting assistance in helping me to find my footing. Thanks, as well, to the many parishioners who have stopped by my office to introduce themselves and offer their support as well. A special personal thank-you must go to office volunteer Sharon Whittle, whose faithful shepherding of the Sunday liturgy production has enabled me to devote more of my Friday hours to system development and coordination.

# Building Project Report

Doug Lapp, Chairman; and Marc Fetterman

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To address problems created by poor circulation in the Narthex and adjacent Nourse Hall, St. Alban's Church created a West End Committee and hired an architect who, in 2001, recommended a broad array of modifications to enhance each of our buildings. The Church embarked on a Capital Campaign and the Vestry appointed a Building Committee, hired Realco Project Management Services as the project manager, and MTF Architecture as architects for the project. While various events combined to limit the scope of the project, the following goals were established: (1) increase gathering space adjacent to the Narthex; (2) reconfigure the main floor assembly room in Nourse Hall to make more efficient use of this space; (3) reconfigure and upgrade restrooms and mechanical systems serving Nourse Hall and the Church; (4) improve circulation between the Narthex and the upper and lower levels of Nourse Hall; and (5) make more efficient use of the lower level of Nourse Hall.

Design and construction documents were produced in late 2005 and early 2006, with regular input from Realco and various contractors on preliminary costs. Construction bids were received in June 2006 and, after evaluating these bids, the Vestry contracted with the low bidder, Whiting-Turner Construction, to perform the renovations and authorized the expenditure of \$3,614,819 for the project. Whiting-Turner Construction began work on August 7, 2006, and the "Building Final Inspection" was obtained on April 17, 2007. Whiting-Turner, its sub-contractors, Realco, and the Building Committee worked for the better part of the past year to address the punch list, and this effort is virtually complete. (Several minor hardware issues are being addressed and should be resolved within the month.)

The Building Committee and the Vestry are very pleased with the design developed by MTF Architecture, with the excellent oversight of the project provided by Realco Project Management, and with the quality of the construction work carried out by Whiting-Turner Construction. We are also delighted to reiterate that the project was completed on schedule, and within the budget authorized by the Vestry.

An important remaining step is raising additional funds to pay for this project. All are encouraged to fulfill existing pledges, and make new gifts to the Capital Campaign.

## **Members of St. Alban's Building Committee**

Gordon Avery

Ron Hicks

Ann Bissell

Nick Karas

Lee Foster-Crowder

Doug Lapp, Chairman

Rick Dirksen

Karen Strimple

Marc Fetterman

# Stewardship Commission Report\*\*\*

The Reverend Timothy A. Boggs

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In 2007 The Vestry created a new Commission to help better coordinate and grow St. Alban's Stewardship ministries. The Stewardship Commission presented its recommendations to the Vestry on April 15<sup>th</sup> and asked that the Vestry take a period of a few weeks to review and digest the recommendations before taking any action upon them. Vestry action on the Report is expected in the summer of 2008. This report summarizes the Commission's recommendations to the Vestry.

Over the past months, we have been meeting periodically and conducting outside research. Together we have prepared these proposals for the consideration of the Vestry. We believe that this report outlines a dynamic and important fresh course for the Parish, one that will build our Stewardship Ministry for God's work at St. Alban's Parish.

The Members of the Commission are Joe McLean, Chair, Alexander Netchvolodoff, Co-Chair, Nathalie Bramson, Erinn Gray, Danette Gentile Kauffman, Chris Larsen, Suzy Mink, Jennifer Martin and Robert Pettit. Assistant Rector Tim Boggs assisted us.

The Report is divided into eight parts. Each of these will need to be considered individually, but each of the parts relates to the others, and together they weave a strong fabric that will support a clear goal: inspiring energetic and faith-filled stewardship of the time, talent and treasure of the Parish. The eight parts are:

**Part 1) Governance of the Endowment.** Based upon best practices of the Episcopal Church and St. Alban's governance traditions, this part was prepared with pro bono counsel. This part spells out how the Endowment of the Parish should be governed going forward. The aspiration is to have clear rules and easily understood practices, emphasizing integrity, care and transparency. These will provide proper governance while reassuring and stimulating donors. The governance recommendations would expand the role of the Finance Committee in the deployment of Endowment monies.

**Part 2) Endowment Growth.** Based upon recommendations and practices of other parishes and charities around the country this part outlines a recommendation for expanding, revitalizing and increasing Parish awareness of the Endowment Fund.

**Part 3) New Celebrations Gift Program.** This part recommends the creation of a new effort at St. Alban's to nurture, stimulate and honor gifts to the parish that are made in memoriam, thanks, blessings or tribute. This is totally distinct from annual pledges. St. Alban's has received many such gifts in the past, but much more can be done to encourage and honor them. This part proposes a plan to correct both of these practices and build a fresh giving program. Unlike bequests, these gifts are typically received during the life of the donor and have the potential for special resonance of Christian witness and engagement in the life of the parish.

**Part 4) Time and Talent.** This part recommends an enhanced program to continue our Parish commitment to seeking and honoring the pledges of time and talent that are made by many in our community. We acknowledge that improvements in this ministry are needed and suggest ways of doing so. We note the recent improved parish technology in this area.

**Part 5) Children and Youth.** Young people are such an important part of St. Alban's, and this recommendation seeks to better invite them into a life of generous giving that is so close to the heart of our faith. The potential for Parish growth is emphasized in this recommendation.

**Part 6) Spiritual Growth.** The Parish continues to make great strides in deepening the faith of us all, and we recommend that the topic of Stewardship be more deeply included in our ministry of spiritual growth. There are clear scriptural and theological understandings on which to base this work, including that our giving of time, talent and treasure is to be done in response to God's unconditional love and the countless expressions of God's grace in our lives.

**Part 7) Annual Giving.** The excellent traditions of the Parish to encourage every member to pledge each year have been studied by the Commission and a number of fresh recommendations are made. The key feature of this recommendation is to have a dynamic EMP Campaign while building a consciousness about pledging that is alive throughout the year, not solely during pledge season.

**Part 8) Re-launch of Phoebe Nourse Society.** As we rekindle interest in the endowment, celebration gifts and bequests, our fine legacy society will be a key vehicle for attracting and honoring donors of all three of these types of gifts. Building on many best practices and the experience of other parish and church experts, we propose a re-launch of the Phoebe Nourse Society and a concerted effort to increase participation.

\*\*\*The Commission provided its 2008 report in final unabridged form to the Vestry for its consideration at its April 15 meeting. The Vestry will need time to consider the Commission's various proposals.

# Transformation Fund Report

Jane Schubert

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The Purpose of the Transformation Grants Fund is to encourage and equip the people of St. Albans to fulfill their Baptismal promise of furthering Christ's work for peace and reconciliation in the world. The focus of Transformation is to support members of our congregation in ministries which make innovative use of members' spiritual gifts and offer opportunities for other St. Albanites to join these ministries.

The Fund is an integral component of the Capital Campaign, representing a tithe for outreach from the campaign funds. The fund was established in 2003 and is administered by five Trustees plus a Chair. We encourage members of the parish to submit applications. Trustees apply a set of guidelines approved by the Vestry as the basis for reviewing the written applications. Applicants may be invited for further discussion with the Trustees. Reviews typically occur quarterly (March; June; October; December), although reviews may occur more frequently. The criteria set forth in the guidelines and application forms are available on the parish website ([www.st-albans-parish.org/outreach/world](http://www.st-albans-parish.org/outreach/world)).

The Transformation Trustee Chair serves on the newly created Outreach Commission as an ex officio member. Transformation funds are now considered as one source of support within the overall outreach ministries.

Here is a summary of the activity between May 2007 and April 2008.

<b>Applications</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Received	11	\$82,538
Approved	8	52,538
Pending	2	15,000
Withdrawn	1	15,000

The total amount of money disbursed from the Transformation Fund from January 2004-April 2008 is \$266,528 (approximately one-half of the funds designated for Transformation Grants).<sup>1</sup>

The ministries supported through this year's awards include:

- supplies, transport, and incidental expenses for St. Albans volunteers' rebuilding efforts in the Gulf coast area (Laurie Crowe -\$1,500 & Derrick Crowe -\$5,000 – two trips);
- supplies used by Senior Youth on their Mission trip to St. John's Parish in Belize to rehabilitate the church (James G. Connell, III -\$3,000);
- support to Low-Vision support group and clinic in the Washington National Eye Center (Isabele Pryce - \$5,000)

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<sup>1</sup> A "matching grant" for \$15,000 to Central Union Mission has been approved but not yet disbursed.

- expansion of Grate Patrol Feeding Ministry from two to six deliveries per month (Susan Morris-\$7,038);
- expansion of play therapy for preschool children enrolled in Bright Beginnings, a licensed child care center in DC for children whose families live in shelters and transitional housing (Maria Estefania - \$15,000); and
- matching funds (with DC Chapter/Safari Club International) to provide supplies such as mosquito nets, medicines, school, sewing and other materials in a large duffle bag (Blue Bag) to villages, clinics, schools in remote African communities. Blue Bags delivered by Safari Club members (Jim Tate - \$1,000).

The stories of these and all ministries supported by the Transformation Fund are found in the Storybook. The updated version will be distributed at the Parish Fair in September.

Information about the Transformation Fund activity is disseminated throughout the year by: hosting a booth at the Parish Ministry Fair; providing hospitality for Back Porch with the Rector; producing articles for the Storybook; reporting activity to the Parish through the Chronicle, weekly fora, and weekly bulletins.

We welcome your application. Please contact any Trustee for additional information and encouragement.

Jane G. Schubert, Chair

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# Faith and Everyday Leadership Report

Tim Coughlin

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How can we better live our faith every day in our families, communities and places of work? Sixty-four parishioners at St. Alban's are engaged in a new ministry of study and discussion about doing just that. Our guide for living faith everyday is the Prayer Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi which we undertake to say every day. It contains all the guidance we need, but it is not always easy to live by its tenets.

With the assistance of a curriculum and reading resources prepared by the Alban Institute, we are discussing our efforts to live our faith everyday with each other, learning from our shared experiences and the course readings, which cover an interesting range of examples and perspectives. Our sessions together have included personal faith narratives from Liz Leland, John Buchanan, Pat Petrash and Alexander Netchvolodoff in plenary session, and from all of the rest of us in individual small group discussions.

Our ministry is open to all in the parish who would like to participate or even just attend a session to find out what it is all about, and our next meeting is at 12:30 p.m. for lunch in Satterlee Hall on Sunday, June 8. This will be a particularly important session, since we will have both the continued sharing of our faith journeys in small groups and a total participant discussion of program development for next year based on reflection about the five meetings of our first year together. If you would like to come, please call me at (202) 530-3371 or e-mail [tcoughlin@edgemoorinv.com](mailto:tcoughlin@edgemoorinv.com).

## Readers' Forum Report

Lynn Freeburger

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The Readers' Forum meets monthly on the second Saturday in the Saterlee Hall library. Typically there are 8 people in attendance. Four new people have joined us this year. During the year, we generally read fiction. We usually choose a robust nonfiction book for the summer, such as JOHN ADAMS by David McCullough. The group is well over 10 years old. Members of the group nominate books, and we vote on the nominations. We take turns reviewing a book and salient information about the authors.

What follows is a list of the books we have read or will read during 2007 and 2008.

MARCH	Geraldine Brooks	FAITH AND POLITICS	John Danforth
THE GOOD BOOK	Peter J. Gomes	GILEAD	Marylynne Robinson
OLD FILTH	Jane Gardam	THE HIDDEN RIVER	Kate Grenville
AN INHERITANCE OF LOSS	Kiran Desai	ISHMAEL INSTRUCTS ISAAC	John Kaltner
THE MAYFLOWER -	Nathaniel Philbrick	BE NEAR ME	Andrew O'Hagan
CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH	Dorothy & Thomas Hoobler	WATER FOR ELEPHANTS	Sara Gruen
A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS	Khalad Hosseini		

# On Beads of Prayer Report

Didi Smith

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We began the ministry of **On Beads of Prayer (OBOP)** at St. Alban's in mid-2005, by assisting the participants in a youth pilgrimage to Greece to buy and string prayerbeads for the trip. We then formed a group of parishioners and others interested in exploring this Protestant approach to prayer, some to help with stringing, some with praying, some with selling. We designated an Advisory Committee, chaired by our former rector, The Right Reverend A. Theodore Eastman, which also includes our rector, Scott Benhase. Bishop John Chane encouraged and supported us when he emphasized the "great hunger" that he perceived to get closer to God through prayer.

**OBOP** debuted at St. Alban's at an Advent mini-fair in the fall of 2005. We built a website, [www.onbeadsprayer.com](http://www.onbeadsprayer.com), and the ministry took off. We provide prayerbeads to St. Alban's clergy to give to shut-ins, hospital patients and couples about to be married. We gave a three part Lenten series in 2006 on how to make and pray with prayerbeads, and one Lenten evening on this year's theme of forgiveness. We had a booth at the Episcopal General Convention in Columbus in 2006. A highlight for us was when the military chaplaincy of the Episcopal Church appealed to **OBOP** to make and give prayerbeads to the military.

We accepted the challenge and started a ministry of prayerbeads to be distributed by chaplains to the troops in the Middle East and at VA hospitals. Several parishes in this Diocese have joined St. Alban's in this effort, most particularly St. Luke's DC and Trinity DC. Many individuals and organizations, such as WSA and the Mustard Seed, have generously contributed to the cost. Since September 2006, **OBOP** has made and delivered over 2,300 sets of prayerbeads to the troops in harm's way! The response from the troops and the chaplains has been heartwarming.

Other initiatives this year included presentations of the prayerbead ministry to: retreats for Diocesan middle-schoolers; a session at the Washington National Cathedral; Episcopal parishes in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and South Carolina; Lutherans in South Carolina; and an Anglican parish in Cape Town, South Africa;

**OBOP** had a table at the Diocesan Convention in January 2007. 20 parishes signed up for programs for Lent and after, from downtown Washington to Southern Maryland, for seniors, women's groups and Sunday schools (including kids at St. Alban's). We also spoke to the annual meeting of Episcopal Church Women and to Episcopal Senior Ministries. This year during Lent we visited an additional ten parishes. St. Alban's volunteers have joined us in trekking around the Diocese.

The ministry continues to expand its outreach. As a result of a lot of hard work by a lot of people, the growth in less than three years has been amazing. It is exciting, fun and spiritually rewarding. We are most grateful to those who have joined us. We continue to need more volunteers and donations.

# Hospitality Ministries Report

The Reverend Erin Hensley

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Our God is a God of radical hospitality. God delivered us when we were slaves in Egypt. God called us to remember our times in the wilderness and show God's mercy to the aliens in our midst. God in Christ ate with tax collectors and Pharisees and showed mercy to the least of these in society--those living with leprosy and blindness, those in the taboo social groups. We are called to remember God's hospitality towards us by showing radical hospitality to all--friend, enemy, and stranger. At St. Alban's the Hospitality Commission strives to facilitate such practices in our common life together. During worship, fellowship, Christian education, and outreach, with God's help and the help of each other, we will welcome the stranger and one another as God in Christ welcomes us. We are especially called to welcome the stranger. At the same time, we are all called to go deeper into our lives in Christ in this parish community and in the world.

Key successes of the year include:

- Timely follow up with newcomers. Since July 3, 2007-April 20, 2008, 116 individuals or families have signed a pew card, a page in one of our welcome books, or an online welcome form. All have been contacted via email and/or phone within the week of their visits by a member of the clergy staff and sometimes by greeters as well.
- Newcomers dinners. The average attendance overall at newcomers dinners in September, December, and March was 15 newcomers and 11 parishioners, with the December dinner having 28 newcomers and 19 parishioners in attendance.
- Vestry members joined the greeters' team. In addition to being available to parishioners, vestry members have been greeting on Sunday mornings with a kind "Hello" as well as talking with newcomers in coffee hour and introducing them to clergy and other parishioners.

One of the biggest highlights of the year is the beginning of the Hospitality Commission, commissioned by the vestry in 2008. Members of the Commission include: Lacey Gude (Chair), Erin Hensley (clergy liaison), Joanne and Alfred Brainard, Nathalie Bramson, Claude Chafin, Steve Cherry, Marcy Fisher, Kim Hurst, Mishelle Kelly, Rob Mercer, Susan Morris, Nan Pierce, and Bob Woolfolk. The first meeting of the commission was April 5 and the second meeting is scheduled for May 18. All members of the commission are enthusiastic about the work and joy ahead, as we go about trying to reflect the radical welcome of God. The Hospitality Commission is the larger structure that brings together the greeters ministry, newcomers' dinners, special receptions, newcomer incorporation, and hosting Back Porch with the Rector.

The Hospitality Commission will continue to meet and strive for open doors for newcomers and parishioners who have been here longer than six months to go deeper into parish life and their ministries here and in the world. This broad approach to hospitality is still being defined, and we are excited about the journey and work ahead.

These are our hopes and dreams for the next year:

- Provide a special welcome to new members on St. Alban's Day
- Make service bulletins and Web site more newcomer friendly
- Educate parishioners about the greeting ministry, especially how this ministry differs from ushers
- Discern what other areas may need to be included in terms of overall hospitality
- Create a welcome center in the narthex that is especially geared for newcomers
- Step back to look at where God is inviting us to go in terms of welcoming the other, looking at where we are in terms of hospitality, and building the needed bridges or doors in order to get there

With God's help we will become more hospitable and more aware of God's vision for welcome here. Our ultimate hope is that hospitality, that radical welcome of the other that God showed us first, will be something all parishioners claim as their ministry here at St. Alban's Parish.

# Young Adult Ministries Report

The Reverend Erin Hensley

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St. Alban's has much to celebrate about youth ministry here. Our leaders-Anne Large, Mark Edwards, Maggie Daher, Wendy Stengel, Emma Wilson, and Emily Cherry- are trained and caring; our teens are intelligent and inquiring; our parents are concerned and active.

Key developments of the year include

- The year began with new leaders participating in Journey to Adulthood as well as Safeguarding God's children training.
- In October we had a parent meeting to discuss the main themes and shape of the curriculum. In January we had a J2A parent meeting and in March we had a senior youth parent meeting.
- The Youth Ministry Committee (YMC) has met monthly to pray for youth, their leaders, and their families. The YMC- Amy Slemmer, Allan Thorson, Candice Brown, Catherine Master (2007,) Donna Palmer (2008,) Jim Sottile, Jonathan Hadfield, Jonell Easton, Kim Matthews, Robin Boineau-has also been invaluable in sharing institutional memory about what worked or did not work in the past in terms of special events as well as processing this year's events.
- Throughout the year parents and teens have received weekly email updates with reminders about what's happening in upcoming weeks and months.

The primary work of Rite 13ers (6th and 7th graders) has been building community. They spent a whole day at Hemlock outdoor education center to solve problems together

They have continued in this work of community by learning more about each other, God, prayer and having fellowship during a movie afternoon, the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, and Grate Patrol. There are 18 Rite 13ers, with an average Sunday attendance of 9 youth.

The work of J2Aers (8th and 9th graders) has been learning more about self and society. They have begun to work on adult skills- active listening, information management, and negotiating, for instance. There has been ample room for practice of these skills in the midst of many events- painting their room, deciding on top choices for the pilgrimage, and working very hard on chili sales and Café St. Alban's. There are 24 J2Aers, with an average Sunday attendance of 10.

The primary work of Senior Youth (10th and 11th graders) has been understanding and exploring Christian ministry. They have learned about what ministry is and are committing to particular ministries in the church and world. In the spring of this year they are exploring confirmation. There are 15 Senior Youth, with an average Sunday attendance of 3. Half of the senior youth worked on the painting of their room.

The seniors in high school, otherwise known as Every Given Sunday, have occasionally met in the fall and the spring. There are 9 seniors in high school in the parish, with between 1 and 3 attending sessions with topics such as cooking in college 101 led by Chef Neil Wilson.

Another reason to celebrate is teen's participation in worship here at St. Alban's. 26 youth faithfully serve as acolytes and 20 youth faithfully serve as ushers at the 9:15 service. Their understanding of the body of Christ deepens as they continue to serve in these important roles. With the help of youth acolyte coordinator Catherine Master in the fall, and now Donna Palmer, and Hollis McLoughlin, youth usher coordinator, teens have remained active leaders in the 9:15 service.

Youth's faith in each other and in God also grows in the Sunday morning teen service, a separate service at the St. Alban's School little sanctuary. Amy Slemmer and the Rev. Loren Mead have been faithful facilitators of this important ministry. The teen service has a more conversational approach to the liturgy of the word and includes sharing how one's life relates to the gospel and current events. The hope is that next year there will be more adult facilitators of the service as well as teen leadership in the liturgy of the word and the table.

Like any other ministry, youth ministry here has challenges as well as celebrations. This year challenges have included:

- leader recruitment and support.
- face-to-face parent communication.
- timely communication of events.

We are working on these challenges with the following thoughts in mind:

Ideally, each group should have at least one male and one female leader who are not married to each other, which provides a good model for non-romantic relationship between the sexes. In addition to considering this goal, we must remember that leading a Journey to Adulthood group is a serious time commitment. A Journey to Adulthood leader is one who enjoys being with teens, is flexible, formed in their faith, and able to handle "teachable" moments. The seniors in high school have particularly felt a leadership gap this year. The Youth Ministry Committee and the Journey to Adulthood coordinator are addressing this challenge with plans for discernment for new leaders beginning a full year before new leaders are needed.

We also are working on the communication gaps between the clergy coordinator, parents, and leaders. We know that hectic schedules and especially full Sundays contribute to this challenge. But we have learned many lessons this year and anticipate real improvements. Some very simple measures are called for such as more clarity about roles, more parent leader meetings, and phone call versus email conversation. All of these measures are part of plans for next year. Our ministry at St. Alban's is always a work in progress. With God's help youth ministry here at St. Alban's will be even better.

# PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

At its meeting on March 18, 2008, the Vestry approved amendments to the Parish By-Laws. The amendments will be considered at the Parish Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 4, 2008, following the 11:15 service. The By-Laws require that the parish have 30 days notice of proposed amendments to the By-Laws. Three changes are proposed:

## **Election of Wardens**

The current practice is for two candidates to be nominated to stand for Senior Warden. The candidate receiving the most votes becomes the Senior Warden, and the candidate in second place is appointed Junior Warden. The proposed new language calls for separate election of the Senior Warden and the Junior Warden with two candidates to be nominated for each position. Candidates for Senior Warden would be required to have at least two years experience as a Vestry member (including service as Junior Warden).

## **Hiring of Assistant Clergy**

St. Alban's current By-Laws state that the Rector hires assistant clergy with the advice of the Vestry. This is inconsistent, however, with Diocesan Canon 25 which states that assistant clergy shall be nominated by the Rector and selected by majority vote of the Vestry. If approved, the amended language would make St. Alban's practice consistent with the Canons.

## **Age Qualification for Wardens, Vestry and Diocesan Delegates**

Currently, the By-Laws require that Wardens, Vestry Members, and Diocesan Delegates be 21 years of age by the date they assume office. The change is to lower the age requirement to 18 years of age. Deleted text is indicated by *italics*, and **new text is indicated by bold brackets**[ ].

## **ARTICLE III**

### **The Vestry**

#### **Section 4. Selection of Rector and Hiring of Assistant Clergy and Staff.**

*b. The Rector, with the advice of the Vestry, is empowered to hire such assistant clergy and lay employees as are required for the administration of the Parish within the limits set by the Vestry. The Rector is further empowered to set the tenure and duties of said assistant clergy and lay employees.*

**[b. The Vestry shall, by majority vote of the whole Vestry, elect assistant clergy from among the clergy of the Episcopal Church or other clergy authorized by the canons of the General Convention to officiate in the Episcopal Church. This election shall be at the nomination of the Rector after consultation with the Bishop in conformity with the canons of the General Convention.**

**Assistant clergy shall serve under the authority and direction of the Rector, who sets their tenure and duties.**

**c. The Rector, with the advice of the Vestry, is empowered to hire such lay Employees as are required for the administration of the Parish within the limits set by the Vestry.**

**Lay employees shall serve under the authority and direction of the Rector, who sets their tenure and duties.]**

## ARTICLE IV

### Election of Wardens, Vestry Members and Lay Delegates to the Diocesan Convention.

#### Section 1. Qualifications for Office.

Wardens, members and Officers of the Vestry and Lay Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Diocesan Convention must be qualified voters as prescribed in Article II, Section 3, except that they shall have reached their *twenty-first* [eighteenth] birthday by the date they assume office; and be either confirmed or received in this Parish or shall have submitted thereto a letter of transfer from another Episcopal church. **[Candidates for Senior Warden must have completed at least two years of Vestry service either currently or in the past.]**

#### Section 3. Wardens, Terms and Eligibility for Office.

*Wardens shall hold office for a three-year term, or until their successors have been elected and qualified, except as otherwise herein provided. Wardens may serve for two successive three-year terms if so elected. No Warden having served for two successive three-year terms, or if elected to either of said terms fails for any reason to serve any part of either term, shall be eligible for election to the same position as Warden until the lapse of four years after the date of his election to the term or any part thereof which he has served; provided, that any Junior Warden serving any of said terms shall be eligible for election at any annual Parish Meeting to the Office of Senior Warden, and may serve as Senior Warden for two successive three-year terms if so elected, but thereafter shall be subject to the aforementioned lapse of four years from the date of his election to either term before becoming eligible again for election as a Warden.*

**[Junior Wardens and Senior Wardens shall each be elected for a three-year term. At each election, two candidates will be presented for both Junior Warden and Senior Warden. If either a Junior or Senior Warden is so nominated and elected, they may serve for one additional term after which an interval of six years is required before they are once again eligible for these offices. Further, an outgoing Junior Warden may stand for Senior Warden, requiring the same process of nomination and election as would otherwise be required.]**

#### Section 6. Nominating Committee.

At the stated meeting of the Vestry in January, the Rector *or in his absence the Senior Warden* **[and both Wardens]**, with the approval of the Vestry, shall appoint a nominating Committee (from qualified parish voters), composed of *not less than two Vestry members other than Vestry members eligible to be candidates at the next succeeding annual Parish Meeting for election to vacancies on said Vestry and among the Lay Delegates.* **[outgoing Vestry members, outgoing Diocesan Delegates, and such other Parish members as the Nominating Committee shall choose. It is understood that potential Nominating Committee members should decline if considering standing for any of the vacant offices being considered.]** The Rector, *or the Senior Warden in his absence,* **[and both Wardens]** will designate one of the Vestry members to be chairman of the committee. The Rector shall make provision to announce to the Parish the names of the members of the Nominating Committee and its purpose during the succeeding months. At the next stated meeting of the Vestry following appointment of the Committee, the chairman shall report to the Vestry:

a. A list of *not less than one and no more than two* candidates for each vacancy to occur among Wardens and Vestry members and shall designate these candidates specifically selected as candidates for Wardens, further assuring the Vestry that all such candidates have indicated their willingness to be nominated and to serve if elected;



*Photo by Heather Hunt*

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