

# The Sword

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" - Ephesians 6:17

St. Alban's Episcopal Church

November 2023

**From Fr. Bill....** "Lord, I thank you for sunshine, I thank you for rain, I thank you for joy, I thank you for pain. It's a beautiful day-ay-ay-ay. It's a beautiful day." *The Kiffness x Rushawn* (Original song by Jermaine Edwards)

November is National Gratitude Month. Imagine, one whole month in which we are reminded to reflect on those things for which we are grateful. One whole month! Pardon my incredulity, but I am flabbergasted that we – the entire human race – need a nationally designated month to remind us to be grateful. And only just one month, placed at the end of the year. I apologize for my indignation, but isn't gratitude something that we should do, say, every day of the year?

I admit, I am terrible about sending out thank you cards (my confession for the month), but I make a point of thanking people for all they have done for me. I also

make it a point to be grateful for all the blessings God has bestowed upon me. And, as I get older and more contemplative in my prayers, I find that I am grateful for not only the joy that I have received, but also those times that have been not so joyful – times that are often painful or sorrowful.

In an interview with Anderson Cooper, the comedian/talk show host Stephen Colbert spoke of how he is grateful for the hard times that he experienced in his life. He said, and I am paraphrasing here, if you are grateful for your life, which is

a positive thing to do, we ought to be grateful for all of it – the good and the bad. Now, Mr. Colbert wasn't saying, nor am I saying that God makes bad things happen. I do not believe that at all. But, the reality is that life is full of both the good and the bad, and we cannot pick and choose that for which we are grateful because God is present – fully present – in both the good times and the bad.

God has never promised us an easy life. Holy Scripture is full of examples of this. Yet, as the psalmist states in Psalm 36, God's steadfast love reaches to the heavens and his faithfulness extends beyond the clouds. And if that isn't enough, we have Jesus' own promise in Matthew 28 that he would be with us always to

the end of the age. Don't these promises just make you want to say "thank you" to God?

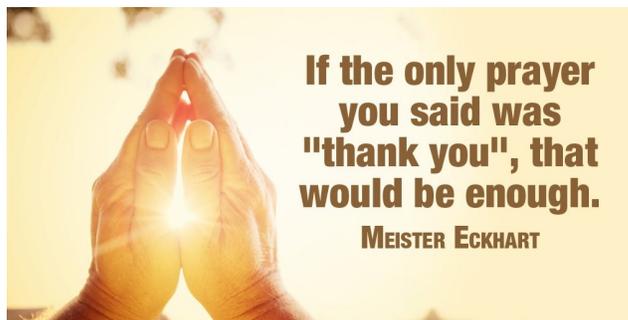
According to the German theologian Meister Eckhart,

"If the only prayer you said was thank you, that would be enough." I think this applies not only in November, but every day of our lives – sometimes several times a day. So this November, this nationally designated month of gratitude, let us give thanks for all that God has given us – the sunshine, the rain, the joy, and the pain – and

continue this practice of gratitude all year long.



Photo by Nathan Dumlao on unsplash.com.



**If the only prayer  
you said was  
"thank you", that  
would be enough.**

**MEISTER ECKHART**

The seasons are changing. For me, fall is way too short. I would like the cooler mornings and warm days to last a bit longer. We've gotten our six weeks of fall, and winter is on its way. I have heard many different people comment on how perfect this fall was, with beautifully changing leaves and glorious weather and bluer than blue skies. Fall is too short, and winter is coming in hard and fast. I don't want to say goodbye to fall yet.

Lately, goodbye is a word I've been using more than I'd like to. I would prefer to say "I'll catch ya later!" or "See you all next week!" Goodbye seems more final, more of an end. I suppose I don't use goodbye because it implies I won't see that person for a very long time.

Then, because this is my article and my ramblings I share, I dove down the rabbit hole to look at the word goodbye to maybe find why it is so final in meaning. According to Dictionary.com, the etymology, or history of the word, shows it is a contraction. Most people probably know that goodbye is actually short for the phrase "God be with ye." Imagine saying God be with ye to everyone you part company with. Now imagine meaning it. That would be a slightly different world for me.

Not stopping my search, and looking at Wikipedia (I cite my sources) in Middle Ages English, the word "adue" or "adew" was used, which is short for the phrase, "a Dieu vous comant" (I commend you to

God). A little earlier in history, the medieval Latin "ad deum" was the beginning of it all, simply meaning "to God." Coming back around to a more modern language, French, it is "adieu," which is also a contraction for "to God."

I have this image in my head of waving to a neighbor as they walk into the house and cheerfully saying, "To God!"

Back to seasons though, in the past couple of years I've had some different seasons of my life come to an end that I did not wish to end. I lost a stepmother who had just retired. Our family dog of 14 years passed away in September last year, along with a ferret a few months later. My mother lost her battle with cancer last October as well. I miss the season of vibrant life I had with each of them and I am grateful for the time I was given. Our season together was over, and I had to say goodbye.

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter

under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted" (Ecclesiastes 3: 1-2).

This portion of Ecclesiastes is much longer than what I quoted, and I encourage you to read it all. Great wisdom is to be found, especially for the closing of the seasons I have experienced. I was blessed to have the opportunity to say "God be with ye" at the end.



*For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.*  
Ecclesiastes 3:1



St. Alban's Daughters of the King celebrate with Bishop Kym and Daughters from the Episcopal Church in Colorado the Feast of All Saints at St. John's Cathedral.

On Sunday, November 19, representatives of St. Alban's various ministries will be in the Parish Hall following each service to share their ministry with us and show how you can join in if you feel so called. Be sure to join us on that Sunday.

As I write this, we are nearing our deadline for Thanksgiving fundraising. Thanks to your generosity we are very close to meeting our goal of providing grocery gift cards to families with children in the local elementary schools. While we have more requests than we did last year, the numbers are considerably smaller than we originally anticipated. Please continue to contribute as you are able – your gift of even a dollar can make a tremendous difference to those children and their families as they navigate a time when the whole nation seems to be celebrating with food that isn't available to them.

The gardens have been put to rest for the winter, but they are merely resting until our start up in about four months. We had true success with our offerings this year, and are making plans for even greater success in 2024. Many thanks to all of you who helped with the garden and grounds this summer and during clean up. It is a huge job and every helping hand is a blessing.

The free pantry continues to see heavy usage. We

have kept up with the demand well, but there is always a need for more. Since we are now experiencing very low temperatures, canned goods can no longer be safely offered. Please consider donations of granola bars, cup noodles, mac and cheese, oatmeal, breakfast bars, fruit snacks, dried fruit, cereal, etc. We currently have an abundance of dry rice and beans, but could use noodles and pasta. If you are not able to donate food directly, we can always use monetary donations, which can be made online or in the envelopes provided in the pews; if you use an envelope, please designate "pantry" on the outside.

We continue to collect your change for the Student Fund, which grows slowly, but it is growing and may soon be enough to make a difference to a student who otherwise would have to miss going to a play or being able to afford participating in other school activities.

Many, many thanks for your support, caring, and love in our efforts to Bless our community.

## Thanksgiving Offering



### Stepping Stones of Windsor Helping Neighbors In Need

Please join us for  
**Stepping Stones of Windsor's Soup Luncheon-  
Charity Fundraiser and Silent Auction**

**SUNDAY, 11/12/2023 11:00AM - 1:00PM**

**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
328 WALNUT STREET, WINDSOR**

Local soups, salads, rolls/  
bread & desserts will be served!

Cost: Free-Will Donation

COME AND LEARN HOW STEPPING STONES OF WINDSOR  
HELPS PEOPLE IN THE WELD RE-4 SCHOOL DISTRICT  
REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES AND HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE.

[STEPPINGSTONESOFWINDSOR.COM](http://STEPPINGSTONESOFWINDSOR.COM)



**SAVE THE DATE**

**COME SERVE  
AS HE SERVED**

**JOIN OUR COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT  
Saturday, Dec 2, 2023, 10 a.m. - Noon**

**DONATION DRIVE THRU**

**WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL: FRONT PARKING LOT**

**In partnership with:**  
Mary's Cradle ~ Windsor/Severance Food Pantry ~  
His Little Feet ~ Stepping Stones

**LightTheWorld.org**

## Advent 2023 Opportunities

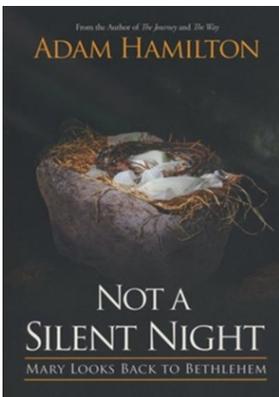


Advent begins Sunday, December 3. During this season, we are called to slow down, to breath, to be quiet. To help us prepare ourselves to engage in this most holy season of expectant waiting for the Second Advent of Christ's coming into the world, here are a couple of opportunities for you to engage in as you feel called:



**Intergenerational Advent Activity:** Join us Sunday, December 3 after each service for an intergenerational Advent activity making Advent wreaths. Candles, wreaths, and ribbons will be available for you to make your own wreath to help you count the days as we head toward Bethlehem and the birth of the Christ Child

**Sunday Advent Book Study: "Not a Silent Night: Mary Looks Back to Bethlehem"** by Adam Hamilton. Imagine what Bethlehem must have looked like from Mary's point of view and focus your own gaze on the Savior she knew as her beautiful child. Beginning with the crucifixion and resurrection, then backtracking through Jesus' life and ministry, Hamilton paints a fresh and moving portrait of the Messiah's life in this 5-week Advent study.



Books will be available for purchase at Words of Windsor or the Church.

**Advent calendars:** Let us countdown the days to the birth of Christ through Advent calendars. St. Alban's will help by offering the following Advent calendars to use as you feel so called:

**Prayer in Color Advent calendar** is the intersection of prayer and doodling. It is a visual, active, meditative, and playful way to pray. Write your prayer request in

the template provided, and then add your own colors, doodles, and style.

Use the season of Advent to help those in need by following the ideas in the **Reverse Advent calendar** and adding needed items into a box to be delivered to our Windsor/Severance Food Pantry.

**#AdventWord** is a global, online Advent calendar. Beginning the First Sunday of Advent through Christmas Day, take a picture inspired by the word of the day. Send your pictures to Fr. Bill and we will share them with the congregation. Advent Words for 2023 are pictured.



**The Way of Love Advent calendar** offers daily suggestions for engaging in the seven practices that encompass the Way of Love: turn, learn, pray, worship, bless, go, and rest.

**For Families and Children – an Illustrated Advent "God With Us."** The stories of Advent are stories for hard times. Jesus was born amid upheaval and historical change, and among people who seemed powerless. But when the world feels hopeless, Advent reminds us God is with us. In chaos, God is with us. In suffering, God is with us. In uncertainty, God is with us. In whatever our family endures, God is with us. This Advent resource invites your family to explore the ways in which Emmanuel, God-with-us, brings hope, peace, joy, and love to your home and community, especially during hard times. Use this Advent guide to center your thoughts on the ever-present hope that sees us through change and challenge. Each week you will explore how the good news of God-with-us changes our perspective and gives us courage for each day. We rejoice in Jesus' birth because God is with us.

