

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

August 2023

From Fr. Bill... "Formation, Formation, Formation."

Where has the summer gone? August is upon us, and teachers are readying their classrooms and making lesson plans for the upcoming school year. Like teachers, St. Alban's is planning for our program year: discerning what programs will be offered to help form us into the disciples Christ is calling us to be.

In the church, disciples are not so much made, but formed. "Made" implies that it is a one-time, one-and-done event. Yet, scriptures tell us, "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand" (Jeremiah 18:6b). Formation takes time, shaping, changing, and often starting over again and again. This is why Bishop O'Neill always stressed formation as being imperative in the life of any disciple.

Yes, baptism is an important part of discipleship, but it is only the beginning. It is the first faithful step taken, followed by worship, prayer, and study.

Gathering together for worship, and sharing in the bread and cup forms us as disciples. Through worship, we not only join with Christians everywhere, but every Christian throughout history who gathered together to remember the New Covenant given to us by Christ himself in the Eucharist.

Engaging in daily prayer also forms us as disciples. Through prayer, we develop and strengthen our own personal relationship with God through the Spirit. There are many resources to assist in your prayer life, such as the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer, online prayer apps, or a devotionals such as *Forward Day by Day*.

Last, there is study. We study to see where the Spirit is working in the world and to see where in the world the Spirit is calling us to go to continue God's mission and ministry in the world. We at St. Alban's take our spiritual formation very seriously.

Faith Seeking Journey, offered Sundays at 11:30 a.m. offers space and opportunity to explore your questions about Christian history, scripture, and how to listen to God speaking in and through the beauty and mystery of the Episcopalian liturgy. Our Sunday Morning Book Study (9 a.m. in the Parish Hall) is completing its current discussion on Megan Nilsen's book, *A Beautiful Exchange*. Beginning in September, our Thursday Evening Book Study (7 p.m. on Zoom) will be reading, *The Universal Christ* by Richard Rohr.

One other offering is Sacred Ground. A ministry of the Episcopal Church, Sacred Ground is a sensitive, prayerful resource that creates space for difficult, but respectful and transformative dialogue on race and racism. Participants are invited to walk back through history to peel away the layers that brought us to today, reflecting on family histories and stories, as well as important narratives that shape the collective American story. Four circles, hosted by clergy and lay leadership across the diocese, are now open for registration. Registration is free; I encourage everyone to join me as we walk this Sacred Ground.

Formation is a life-long practice that shapes us into the true, authentic selves God is calling us to be. As our kids start their return to school, I encourage you all to join us in worship, prayer, and study, and together we will be formed into the One Body that is Christ.



Birding and Brunch ————— by Lucy Thames

“All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
’Twas God that made them all.

Each little flower that opens
Each little bird that sings
He made their glowing colors
And made their tiny wings.”



Lazuli Bunting by Judy Holt.

If you want to get outside and enjoy God’s bright and beautiful creation, come birding with us every Tuesday morning. We will meet at a nearby birding spot and spend time listening, watching for, and identifying birds. Locations we have visited include Eastman Park, Lory State Park, and Fossil Creek Reservoir. Have a favorite spot? Let us know!

Makes no difference if you have never identified a bird in your life, you are absolutely welcome anyway. If

you’re worried you cannot keep up, it’s not a problem. Sometimes the best birding is in the parking lot, although you certainly can take a short hike to see more birds. But maybe you want to bring a lawn chair and sit and wait for the birds to find you, and that’s fine too.

After we enjoy 45 minutes to an hour of birdwatching, those of us who want will make our way to one of the great nearby breakfast spots. So far we have visited First Watch, Silver Grill Cafe, and Vern’s for brunch.

My favorite bird we have seen so far was the blue Lazuli Bunting at Lory State Park. We have seen robins, goldfinches, wrens, and many other “little birds that sing.” Grab your binoculars if you have them and come join us. Please contact me, lucythames@hotmail.com, if you want to receive the weekly texts to let you know where to meet next.

Faith Seeking Journey Takes off in September

Embarking on a faith journey alone is hard. It’s hard to get started and hard to keep going. Instead, join us this fall in the Faith Seeking Journey (FSJ) class at St. Alban’s. Gathering as a small group every Sunday from September through May, we share each other’s stories, laugh a lot, ask questions, and take our time to explore Christian history, scripture, and how to listen to God speaking to us in the beauty and mystery of the Episcopalian liturgy. We explore the power of prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. We share our questions and doubts in a safe place.

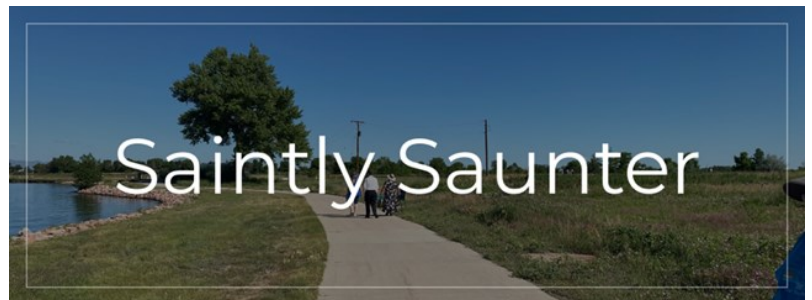


New to St. Alban’s or to Christianity? The Faith Seeking course welcomes all, wherever you are in your faith walk, because we all are made to seek God and God’s presence in our lives. The FSJ group will begin meeting on Sunday Sept. 10 at 11:30 a.m. in the Little House. It is led this year by Vicki Swanson and Zach Rae. Registration forms will be

available August and September in the Parish Hall before and after Sunday services, or contact Vicki Swanson at vswanson4@icloud.com.

Saintly Saunter

Join us Saturday, August 5 at 8 a.m. at the Treasure Island Demonstration Gardens at Eastman Park. We will offer our opening prayers, "saunter" for a while, read scripture, and continue on, stopping at time for reflections, prayers, and to share the Holy Eucharist.



“The Lord’s My Shepherd” — by Henrietta O’Neill

As we sing hymns in church, we seldom think about the long years of our church history. There were many years when people believed that only songs that appeared in the Bible should be sung. Those songs are found in the Psalms. The Psalms have often been called the “Songbook of the Bible.”

The Psalm songs are hard for us to sing because they do not have the rhythm, or meter, to which we are accustomed. Because of this, for many years a number of persons attempted to make arrangements of the Psalms to fit familiar tunes that everyone knew.



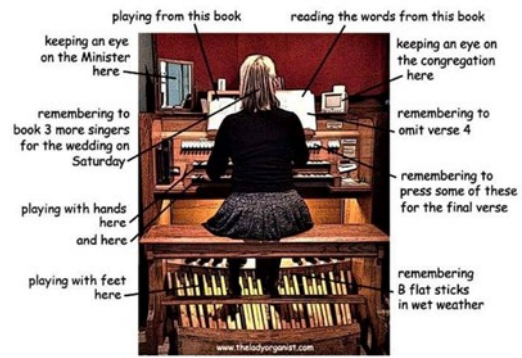
Those arrangements are called paraphrases. The hymnal that included only Psalm paraphrases was “The Scottish Psalter,” printed in 1650. The hymn, “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want,” is one of the better paraphrases. Do you know from which of the Psalms it was arranged?

In the Episcopal Hymnal #663, “The Lord My God my Shepherd Is,” is written to the tune Crimond. It is a paraphrase of Psalm 23. The same hymn can be found in the Worship and Rejoice Hymnal #86. Take some time and compare the words of the hymn to the 23rd Psalm.

Honoring Our Music Director

We celebrate and give thanks for our incredible Music Director, Henrietta O’Neill!

O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven, be ever present with your servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth. Grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (prayer for Church musicians and artists, BCP 1979).



THE CHURCH ORGANIST



Sacred Ground is a sensitive, prayerful resource and ministry of the Episcopal Church that creates space for difficult, but respectful and transformative dialogue on race and racism. Participants are invited to walk back through history to peel away the layers that brought us to today, reflecting on family histories and stories, as

well as important narratives that shape the collective American story. It holds as a guiding star the vision of beloved community, where all people are honored, protected, and nurtured as beloved children of God. Four circles, hosted by clergy and lay leadership across the diocese, are now open for registration. Registration is free. Dialogue Circle 1 meets every other Thursday via Zoom, 10–11:30 a.m., beginning Sept. 14, with a meet and greet on September 7. The facilitators are the Rev. Nancy Johnson Bookstein, St. Brigit, Frederick, and Abby Mooney, Holy Comforter, Broomfield. Please join Fr. Bill in this most holy conversation about race and racism. Other Dialogue Circles are offered via zoom at other dates and times. Please contact Fr. Bill for more information.

A week after the Fourth of July, I had to make an unexpected and very long drive to the Western Slope. Since we all know that I-70 can be packed full of cars, I generally travel through Steamboat Springs, then up to Walden to leave the state and come back to Windsor via Laramie. The longer route is actually substantially quicker and better for my mental health.

So, being famished and finding fast food to be a “good” option, I found myself pulling into the quickly moving drive-through of a major chain in Laramie. The time was 9 p.m. and since I was tired, everyone else was too. After I placed my order, out of the loud-speaker booms: “Thanks for your order! We’ll have that ready as soon as you get to the window.”

My brain melted a bit by the onslaught of sound after being alone with my thoughts for the previous four hours, but I was intrigued. The volume of the person speaking was loud, but boisterous and surprisingly happy. I drove around the corner to the window where a small woman with a big smile handed me my drink and my food, and with the same loud voice and jovial tone said: “Thanks again for visiting! Enjoy your meal and come back soon!”

I’ve never been so pleased to have fast food in my life.

We’ve had many visitors come to our little church in the past couple of months. Some were vacationing, some seeking, and some being brought by parishioners.

A younger family came in, saw we had babies in the pews, and felt enough at home to stick around for coffee hour. This is after a loud and enthusiastic, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! The mother, whom I greeted as she walked in, told me after the service that it must not be

so bad to be so exuberant; to shout out unabashedly our Alleluias. She appreciated St. Alban’s, and I hope that she also saw God at work in our lives.

I don’t know all of the reasons you wonderful people of St. Alban’s come to church nearly every Sunday. I know that you all do, even

when I don’t get to. For me, I know that after a long, long work week, I need Jesus. I *really* need Jesus. I also need to come see you all and your infectious laughter, enjoy the good conversation and, most importantly, bask in your enthusiasm.

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of this return is drawing near” (Hebrews 10: 24-25).

I’ve been musing about that fast food worker’s unbridled enthusiasm for a couple of weeks now. That joyful greeting and sendoff has made me a little more intentional in being a positive force, rather than letting the world bring me to its level.

Imagine if the whole world was a just a little bit, *more*.



Bring Your Veggies to Church

St. Alban’s has a new gleaning box for harvested produce from our Community Gleanings Garden. If you have excess produce in your own gardens, please bring them to church on Sundays where we will bless it and place it in our new gleaning box!



Internet Security 101

Do you have questions about the internet? Are you concerned about being hacked or falling victim to internet scams? If so, we have help for you. Join Chuck Mason and Tavish Roberts-Mitchell on Sunday, Aug. 13 at 9 a.m. in the Parish Hall for an Internet Security 101 Class. Materials will be provided for you. No need to bring anything other than an inquiring mind!

