

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

July 2023

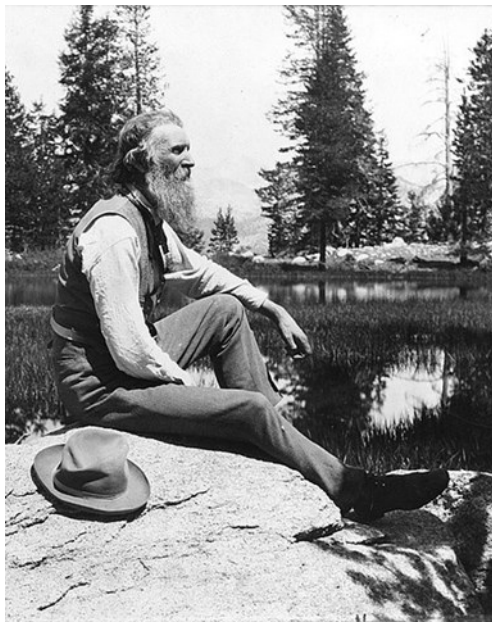
From Fr. Bill.... *Hiking — "I don't like either the word or the thing. People ought to saunter in the mountains — not hike! Do you know the origin of that word 'saunter'?' It's a beautiful word. Away back in the Middle Ages people used to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages through which they passed asked where they were going, they would reply, 'A la sainte terre, to the Holy Land.' And so they became known as sainte-terre-ers or saunterers. Now these mountains are our Holy Land, and we ought to saunter through them reverently, not 'hike' through them." — (Photo and quote: John Muir)*

I have never been much of a “hiker.” And please don’t ever, ever ask me to run — I have never liked running even when I was young. I much prefer to walk, or even better, to stroll along, taking time to enjoy all the sights and sounds of the world around me. Like John Muir, I like to “saunter.”

Merriam-Webster defines “saunter” as “to walk in a slow, relaxed manner, without hurry or effort,” which is probably why I am so drawn to this quote from John Muir. It is known on Google as the “saunter quote.”

John Muir was not a linguist or etymologist (the study of the origins of words). He was instead a naturalist, author, environmental philosopher, botanist, zoologist, glaciologist, and early advocate for the preservation of wilderness in the United States. While his etymology of saunter may not be exactly correct, I like his imagery of the mountains being our Holy Land.

I have often found places of nature as being what the ancient Celts called “*caol ait kweel antich*” or a “thin-place” — places where the veil between the divine (heaven) and the mundane (the earth) is so thin that people are able to feel God's presence in a real and palpable way. I've written about those places that I've ex-



perienced these thin places: the Sea of Galilee, Devil’s Garden at Arches National Park, Devil’s Tower in Wyoming, Glacier Bay in Alaska. The common denomina-

tor? God is found in God’s creation. God spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden, to Abram under the oaks of Mamre, to Moses on Mount Horeb, to Jesus at the River Jordan, to the apostles on the road to Emmaus, and on a beach in Galilee. God is found in God’s creation. More importantly, God was experienced not while any of these biblical figures were rushing (or, God forbid, running) about, but sauntering!

This summer, I invite you to go out into God’s creation and become a “*sainte-terre-er*” — a Holy saunterer. Wherever you go — the mountains, the grasslands, the beach, the trails, the city, etc. — treat it as *sainte terre*, or Holy Land, for that is what

it truly is. God sanctified creation since the beginning of time, calling it “good,” and continues to sanctify it each and every day. Each day is a new creation, a new opportunity to experience God’s presence in a real and palpable way. When you find that thin place, don’t rush through it. Instead, slow down, take time to experience it all, sights and sounds. Take time to saunter.

My work life revolves around somebody having a big idea. Large ideas, impressive ideas, expensive ideas. Stores with five acres under one roof. Museums that are designed to last for 100 years. Ground-breaking power turbines to clean the air. Sometimes, I am blessed to be involved in those planning meetings where the idea is communicated. Then the architects, engineers, financiers, and construction managers (me) all decide what the best way is to achieve that big idea.

What is apparent is how much communication is needed. The intent of the big idea is what the team strives to preserve. Do we communicate the intent to everyone? Speaking from experience, that would take way too long. There is no reason to tell the tile setter that his grout, tile color, and octagonal tile shape are part of a neo-classical design element and that's why it was selected. No, the tile setter just needs to know where to put the tile.

Some people do need to know the big picture, so they can make sure all of the little details work toward that same common goal. The trick is telling the right people. That's really what God does. One of the tenets of my theology is that God is whispering to all of us, everyone, everywhere, all of the time, and we just have to shut up long enough to listen. God is telling us right now what His big idea is and what His intent is.

To start, God sent out the prophets in the Old Testament to make sure the right people were told the right things at the right time. In that part of our human his-



tory, the world was generally a patriarchy. We know that God used women like Esther to speak to people in power, but the prophets were generally all men that would be respected and listened to by the powers that be. The Old Testament showed that people in power tended to stay in power, and often didn't do everything God was asking.

So, God changed His advertising plan. Sent a different person with the same message. Jesus didn't teach to the people in power much. There were interactions, sure, but that wasn't his target audience. Jesus preached to the masses: the feeding of the 5,000, the sending of the disciples, the sermon on the mount. The masses were found to be hungry for the message, and it was received fairly well.

"Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He's the one who will keep you on track" (Proverbs 3:6).

Instead of pushing God's love to the people that want to maintain the status quo, or to the people that already know that love within St. Alban's four walls, maybe I need to be advertising God's light to the people outside. Maybe we all should be listening for a way to help our fellow humans in a way that St. Alban's hasn't before. Maybe we need to be more intentional in our thoughts, actions, words, hugs, food, gardens, pantries, fellowship, and love. I mean, St. Alban's already helps our community a lot.

Maybe we can do a little something more. We just need to listen.

We Gather Together — Worship and Rejoice Hymn 81 — by Henrietta O'Neal

Imagine a table of such great length and width that all the peoples of the world could gather around to "ask the Lord's blessing." The sounds and sights of an event would be unusual. Each would be wearing the different styles and fabrics and colors popular in his or her part of the world — and each would be speaking and singing in the language of their country. But to the host — Our Lord — there would be no confusion because God knows each one as "his own." And each would be able to sing to God the hymns that have come from the hearts of worshipers in his or her country.

The Dutch and Germans sang the hymn, "We Gather Together," long before an English translation was made. The words first appeared in 1625, written in the

Dutch language by an unknown author to celebrate Dutch freedom from Spanish sovereignty. Around 200 years later, the words became more popular when included in Edward Kresser's collection. A German translation by Carl Bieber and an English translation by Theodore Baker allowed the hymn to become known to congregations around the world.

As you read or sing the words to this hymn imagine the hope of moving toward a spiritual victory in which God's Kingdom of Love toward one another will become a reality!



The “it” in this case is St. Alban’s “why.” Why a “why?” Because a why is your core belief or beliefs. It is why you exist. A why inspires action. A why is different from what you do and how you do it. It drives what you do and how you do it. Some of you may be familiar with Simon Sinek, the inspirational speaker. If not, you might want to listen to his TED talk, “How Great Leaders Inspire Action.” He clearly outlines the need to have and understand your why.

The Vestry has been working on defining St. Alban’s “why” since our Vestry Retreat. We thought we had it and then realized we didn’t when Canon Vanessa met with us for our mutual ministry review in May. She asked us if we had a why and we proudly told her we did. And then she asked us what it was. To our dismay and embarrassment, none of us could tell her our why. It needed revision.

At our June Vestry meeting we revisited what we had written and thought back to what we heard from the congregation last Fall during the stewardship campaign.



At that time, we asked the people of St. Alban’s to answer the question, “If you had to describe all that St. Alban’s is to me, what would that one word be?” When Father Bill turned the answers into a word cloud, the largest word, which means it was the word written down most often, was love.

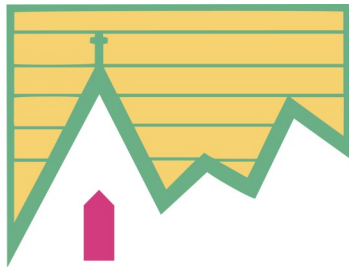
Serving also is important to the people of St. Alban’s. Just about all of our ministries serve others: feeding people through Red Door, Little Free Food Pantry, Thanksgiving Food Drive, contributing to the Windsor Food Pantry, creating a gleaning garden that is open to everyone. We serve others in our parish community and beyond.

The transformative love of Christ also is important. Christ’s love, manifested in us, changes lives. We have seen it happen. We believe it can and does happen.

Love. Serve. Transform.

If a visitor to St. Alban’s asks you what St. Alban’s “why” is, will those words roll off your tongue? Will they inspire you and others to action? The Vestry believes we’ve got it this time. Do you agree?

The Simplicity of Stewardship: Financial Update June 24



St. Alban’s is blessed to have received 50 estimates of giving totaling \$180,035 in support of the Ministry Budget for 2023. Thank you!

Pledge and Plate Income Update June 24: Through June 24 we have received \$94,382 from pledges and plate offerings, including from members who have given their annual, semi-annual, and/or quarterly gifts in advance. The budget amount through June 24 was \$93,590. The advance gifts received, together with a smaller than anticipated deficit in 2022,

Church FINANCES

provide St. Alban’s with a good start to 2023 with cash balances held at Bank of Colorado amounting to \$27,130 as of June 24.

Total Income and Expense Update May 31: Through May 31 total income received amounted to \$100,613 compared to the annual budget of \$222,050, and total expenses amounted to \$98,990 compared to the annual budget of \$231,006. June financial results, including expenses, will be available around July 15. Monthly financial statements are posted in the Parish Hall.

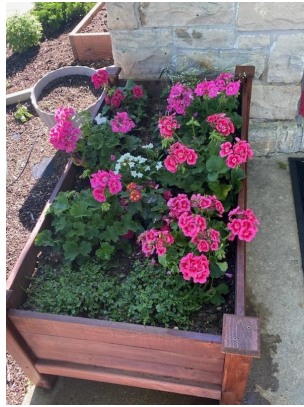
The Finance Committee reviews monthly results and subsequent monthly estimates, and keeps Vestry informed of unusual income and expense variances. Questions may be directed to Treasurer Don Filegar at 720-837-3383 or defopa63@gmail.com.



On Saturday, July 1 we began our St. Alban’s Holy Saunter at Windsor Lake. On this and upcoming saunters, we will experience the Eucharist in God’s creation. Windsor Lake is 2.25 miles around and is a low-impact walk. We will offer our opening prayers at the Bandshell, saunter for a time, read scripture, and continue on, stopping at times for reflections, prayers, and to share the Holy Eucharist. St. Alban’s Holy Saunter will be offered once a month throughout the summer and the fall. Stay after our worship to attend Windsor’s Farmer’s Market.

Growing our Gardens

The Church garden is constructed, planted, and growing. The final wooden container is being weather proofed, and we hope to initiate late season vegetables in this stall to fill out the planters for 2023. There are still some details to complete, like mulching and bordering, but we are close to completion. Many people from the community have stopped to praise the appearance of the flower and vegetable gardens as beautiful and welcoming, and we can all take pride in the many comments and praise.

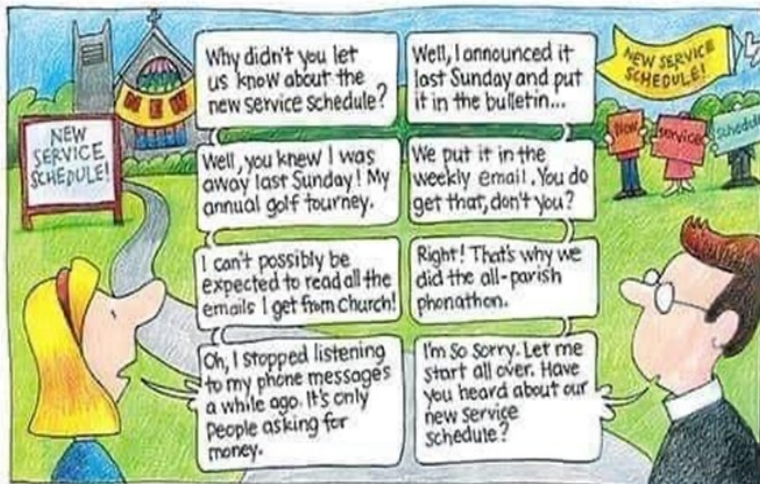


Our next area of concentration is the Walnut side of the Church, which now has box planters. The front yard tree area will be completed soon to bring curb presence to our Church.

As the season progresses you will see additional efforts made to rework some of the older gardens to blend in line with Saint Alban's new look.

Red Door Lunches

Red Door Lunches — St. Alban's free community meal — is St. Alban's longest-running Outreach ministry. Red Door Lunches is offered Saturdays, July 8 and 22 from noon to 1:30 p.m. Please sign up in the Parish Hall if you wish to help set up, bring food, serve, or clean up.



St. Alban's Mowing Team

Thank you to St. Alban's Mowing Team for keeping our grounds beautiful. The following people are scheduled to mow in July: July 1-8, Bobby Bearden; July 9-15, Adam Hinojos; July 16-22, Chuck Mason; July 23-29, Zach Rae. Please put grass-clippings in garbage bags instead of dumping them loose in the trash can. If you need to swap schedules, please contact Chuck Mason at 303-961-1243. Mower, gas, trash bags, and blower are located in the shed.

Contemplative Prayer Group

St. Alban's Contemplative Prayer Group will meet July 15 from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Chapel and is open to seasoned contemplatives and those who have never tried this way of praying before. As Meister Eckhart has said, nothing in the world is as much like God as silence. Come and dwell with God.

Healing and Prayer Service with Holy Eucharist Wednesdays @ Noon

Join us Wednesday, July 5 at noon for our Healing and Prayer Service with Eucharist. Prayers of healing and the laying on of hands will be offered at each service, followed by Holy Eucharist. Each week will highlight a different saint in the Church.