

SANCTUARY

Newsletter of St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Elberton, Georgia

Calendar

Holy Eucharist, Sundays,
10:30 a.m. SafeHouse Sunday
February 8

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.

Bible Study, Mondays at noon
(except on Feb. 9)

Feb. 16, Vestry meeting, 6 p.m.

Feb. 18, Ash Wednesday,
service at noon

Feb. 25, Lenten soup supper
(also suppers on Mar. 4, 11, 18,
and 25)

Mar. 15, Assisting Bishop Don
A. Wimberly celebrant at
Eucharist

Mar. 22, Instructional Eucharist

February Birthdays

Louise Martin, 7; Jim Jenkins,
13; Nancy Seymour, 15; Fr.
John Keeler, 19; Tim Heil, 29

Prayer List

Andrew, Betty & Richard,
Diane, Kim, Lori, Sara, Todd,
William, and others in our
hearts

Rector's Reflection



*Fr. John giving his yearly report
at the Annual Parish Meeting.*

This week I saw a very good short video about Ash Wednesday and Lent. It's on the Website bustedhalo.com. The video gives a short history of Ash Wednesday and Lent and reasons for this time in our church year.

The most interesting thing about the video is its emphasis on Lent as a season, as a time to be in community with each other, to take the journey as a group rather than as individuals.

There's a comparison of the Lone Ranger and Tonto. The Lone Ranger is individualistic, one single person, standing by himself, where Tonto is more group oriented, a member of a tribe.

It struck me that during Lent, a season of prayer, denial, and self-examination, we should think more about community and what we will receive from God at the end of the season as we celebrate Easter and the resurrection.

We celebrate Easter as a group, a tribe, a community. We should do the same with Lent. It's still a time of fasting, prayer, and denial; but it can be one of receiving, renewal, and community.

Fr. John Keeler +

Annual Meeting in Photos



On January 11, after church, we started off our annual parish meeting with a great potluck lunch. The wide variety of foods to sample ranged from roast beef, chicken casserole, vegetables, and salads to rum cake, key lime pie, and brownies. Debra Romine (left with Carole Coggins) did a wonderful job coordinating the meal. Nineteen were counted going through the lines.

Carole got around. Here she is (right) with Senior Warden Steve Jenkins and Fr. John Keeler, who, along with treasurer Charles Romine, gave their annual reports (see p. 3).



Finally, we elected Suzanne Moore and Allen Nicas to the vestry to replace retiring members Natasha Clay and Carole Oglesby. Suzanne and Allen are shown at left with Fr. John.

Annual Meeting Reports

Charles Romine, our treasurer, led off the reports section of the annual meeting with the financial report for 2014. He gave out copies of the balance sheet for the year and the 2015 budget that was approved by the vestry. He compared the estimated expense of items in the 2015 budget to estimated and actual expenses in 2014. Going into 2015 we have more pledges (16) than in 2013 (14) or 2014 (13), and the amount of money pledged is more than in either other year. In fact, the amount pledged for 2015 is more than was given in 2014. If anyone would like to see the treasurer's report, it is posted on the bulletin board of the church, or copies can be sent out by U.S. mail if requested.

After the treasurer's report Fr. John gave the rector's report, and Steve Jenkins presented the senior warden's report. They both looked back over 2014 and forward to 2015.

Fr. John said St. Alban's has 24 active communicants, and we average 18 in Sunday attendance. Forty-eight people attended the Easter service, 22 on Christmas Eve.

A big project for 2014 was the construction of the driveway with turnaround from the church parking lot to the parish hall doors to improve accessibility. Another grounds project was the addition of the Heritage Trail sign at the corner of Church Street and Brookside Drive; that not only supports a community endeavor but also marks our location very well.

In 2014 Fr. John began conducting a monthly service at Magnolia Estates. In missions, through our monthly SafeHouse Sundays we contributed to the needs of SafeHouse Ministries. At Christmas we joined with the Elberton Rotary Club, First Methodist Church, and First Baptist Church to supply local school children with needed coats, scarfs, and mittens; and we also gave needed and wanted items to three nursing home patients, one a member of St. Alban's. Our table at the Elberton Fall Festival served both missions and informational purposes; we familiarized fairgoers and vendors with St. Alban's while distributing coffee on a cold, wet day.

In 2015 a major church project will be renovation of the kitchen, for which St. Alban's has received a very generous donation. Some utilities will have to be reworked for the project. Updating the kitchen will make possible more frequent church gatherings and perhaps enable us to carry out fundraisers for missions goals.

Focus will also be on recruitment of new members.

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The Rev. John Keeler,
Rector

The Rev. Herschel
Atkinson,
Rector Emeritus

Carole Coggins,
Altar Guild Chair

Suzanne Moore,
Organist

Mary Randall, Verger

Vestry

Steve Jenkins, Sr. Warden

Charles Duke, Jr. Warden

Suzanne Moore

Allen Nicas

Debra Romine

Nancy Seymour

Robyn Keeler, vestry
secretary

Charles Romine,
treasurer

Lenten Soup Suppers 2015

There will be five Lenten soup suppers this year: on February 25, March 4, March 11, March 18, and March 25. Marilyn Slocumbe and Debra Romine will coordinate food, and Fr. John has selected a video series for the programs. The Promised Land (in the same series as the videos we found interesting last year) focuses on the journey of the people of Israel from the exodus to crossing the Jordan River, the journey in the wilderness.

Lenten soup suppers are always an enjoyable time for fellowship in the church. Please plan to come; guests are welcome.

Fr. John with Nancy Seymour at the annual Jack Frost Jump on Jan. 24, awaiting the time to leap into Lake Russell. Proceeds from this year's jump went toward charity care at Elbert Memorial Hospital.



Allen Nicas, who was elected to the vestry again this January, is shown here with his great-grandson Luke. Allen also has two great-granddaughters.



Barbara Brown Taylor Lecture



On Sunday, February 22, 2015, under the sponsorship of Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons, Dr. Barbara Brown Taylor will give two presentations at Central Presbyterian Church at 1404 North Boulevard, Anderson, South Carolina. The theme will be Holy Envy: An Antidote to Fearing the Religious Stranger: "Religious pluralism is a fact of life. People of other faiths no longer exist somewhere else in the world; they live next door, raising the question of how we will decide to live with religious difference. Can we afford to base our answers on the worst-case scenarios we see in the news, or is there another way?" The first presentation will be at 3 p.m.: "Who Is My Neighbor?" The second presentation will be at 7 p.m.: "What Would Jesus Do?"

Barbara Brown Taylor is an Episcopal priest and the Butman Professor of Religion at Piedmont College. The author of thirteen books, including *New York Times* best sellers *An Altar in the World*, *Leaving Church*, and *Learning to Walk in the Dark* (her most recent book), she was the subject of a recent *Time* magazine story and named as one of 2014's 100 Most Influential People.

Anyone from St. Alban's who wants to attend the 3 p.m. presentation can join a carpool leaving from the church parking lot at 1:15 p.m. After the presentation, participants plan to meet at a local Anderson restaurant for refreshments and to discuss the talk.

New Minister in Town

On Sunday, Jan. 25, at 4 p.m. Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Elberton installed their new pastor, Karen Schwindler. Lutheran clergymen and -women from the area participated in the worship service and installation. Clergy and members of St. Alban's received an invitation to attend, and four did so; both Fr. John Keeler and Fr. Herschel Atkinson were present. After the service, a reception (a sit-down dinner really) featured barbecue, Brunswick stew, and a host of tasty side dishes. It was a festive start to Pastor Schwindler's ministry, and we wish her well.

From SafeHouse

Reprinted from SafeHouse Administrator's report, Jan. 2015

Thank you, SafeHouse supporters! We are now entering our 20th year in ministry to Elbert County and our surrounding counties. I would love to report to you that we no longer find women as victims of abuse, that we no longer have the homeless due to financial collapse, and that we also no longer have people in need of food due to hunger; however, when I share our statistics with you, you will see it is just the opposite.

Year-End 2014

- Number of individuals serviced 6,790
- Number individuals × nights housed 1,906
- Meals provided to in-house guests 4,669
- Bags of food commodities from our pantry 5,406

Year-End 2013

- Number of individuals serviced 2,919
- Number individuals × nights housed 1,145
- Meals provided to in-house guests 2,393
- Bags of food commodities from our pantry 2,724

As you can see, in the number of individuals serviced from year-end 2014, we are at an increase of 57 percent. Statistics are necessary, but please note, these statistics represent men, women, and children in need of our services. Out of the number of individuals serviced for 2014, 1,385 are seniors aged 60+ and 2,186 represent children under 18 years of age.

Note Received

Suzanne Moore reports receiving a note of thanks from Nancy Hart Nursing Center "for all the gifts . . . to our residents. . . . The clothes all fit and the residents really appreciated them. Thank you for thinking of our residents in this way."