

SANCTUARY

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

March Calendar

Holy Eucharist, 10:30 a.m. (Eucharistic prayer Form A in Lent, Form B in Easter). Mar. 13, SafeHouse Sunday (also Daylight Savings Time change)

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., vestry room (no S.S. on Mar. 20 & 27)

Bible Study, Monday noon, vestry room (no B.S. on Mar. 21 & 28)

Mar. 2 & 9, Lenten Soup Suppers, 6 p.m., Parish Hall

Mar. 14, Vestry meeting, 6 p.m., vestry room

Mar. 24, Maunday Thursday, joint service at Holy Trinity Lutheran, 6:30 p.m.

Mar. 25, Good Friday, joint service at St. Alban's, noon

Mar. 26, Easter Vigil, joint service at St. Alban's, 7 p.m.

Mar. 27, Easter Sunday community service, First Methodist grounds, 7:15 a.m. (also regular service at St. Alban's)

March Birthdays

Boots Oglesby, 1; Tammy Elliott, 4; Nicola Britton, 13; Wyatt Moore, 17; Marilyn Slocumbe, 26

Prayer List

Betty & Richard, Dolores, Donna, Jennifer, Kim, Paula, others in our hearts.
Prayers for departed: George Segars

Rector's Reflection



Today's reflection is on a subject no one likes to talk about, but a subject we all should think and talk about with our friends and family, how we would like to be treated if we become seriously ill.

I attended a program on this several weeks ago and came back with the following thoughts:

- Talking about and reducing to writing your thoughts and wishes lets all concerned know what you want. They don't have to guess.
- It protects you and them from making a hard choice without knowing your wishes.
- It lets you be in control of your medical, personal, emotional, and spiritual needs and wants.

I brought back a document called *Five Wishes*. It is the most complete form I've seen. When filled out, it tells who you want to make medical decisions for you if you can't, medical treatment you want and don't want, how comfortable you want to be, how you want people to treat you, whether you want company or not, what you want your loved ones to know.

It's not a topic we're comfortable with, but one that's very necessary. Copies of *Five Wishes* are available in the church office.

Blessings, Fr. John+

Lenten soup suppers continue March 2 & 9

Reset clocks on March 13

Easter Sunday March 27

Our Path toward Easter 2016

On the day before Lent (Feb. 9 this year), Charles Duke cooked up the pancakes for twelve attendees at the annual St. Alban's Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. Bob and Marilyn Slocumbe provided sausage. A good time was had by all.

On Ash Wednesday (Feb. 10), Fr. John was robed and at the church from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to offer members ashes at a time convenient to them. The imposition of ashes was accompanied by a short service of prayers. Seven members availed themselves of the service. At 6:30 p.m., St. Alban's joined with First Methodist and Holy Trinity Lutheran churches in a joint Ash Wednesday service at First Methodist. The Rev. Karen Schwindler of Holy Trinity delivered the sermon, and estimated attendance was 150.



Charles Duke no longer has Tim Heil to back him up, but he is still cooking pancakes for us on Shrove Tuesday.

Our series of four Lenten soup suppers started on Wednesday, Feb. 17. Marilyn Slocumbe served up a distinguished beef stew (with garlic toast furnished by Allen Nicas and cake supplied by Robyn Keeler), and Fr. John talked to the eleven attendees about visual imagery in the Episcopal liturgy. On Feb. 24, fifteen of us ate well on vegetable soup and cornbread provided by Nancy Seymour (and two wonderfully decadent cakes by Marilyn), and Fr. John spoke on how we tell our story as Christians through language. At the Mar. 2 soup supper, his topic will be "How we tell our story with motion." At the final soup supper on Mar. 9, he will wind up his series on how Episcopalians tell their story as Christians by talking about how we fit together visuals, language, and motion.

Looking Forward

Our Palm Sunday service will feature, as always, distribution of palms, procession into the church, and dramatic reading of the Gospel by members. Several joint services are planned with First Methodist and Holy Trinity Lutheran churches for the week preceding Easter. On Maunday Thursday (Mar. 24) the 6:30 p.m. service will be at Holy Trinity, with Fr. John delivering the sermon. A Good Friday service will take place at noon on Mar. 25 at St. Alban's with the sermon by the Rev. Joe Watson of First Methodist. St. Alban's will also be the site of Saturday Mar. 26's Easter Vigil (7 p.m., sermon by the Rev. Joe Watson). In addition to the 10:30 a.m. service at St. Alban's on Easter Sunday (Mar. 27), there will be a community Easter Sunrise service on the grounds of First Methodist Church at 7:15 a.m.; Fr. John will preach the sermon.

From the February 15 Vestry Minutes

Fr. John welcomed new vestry members Marilyn Slocumbe and Louise Martin.

Charles Romine presented the treasurer's report, including a report from SafeHouse Ministries showing \$2,225 donated by St. Alban's in 2015. Motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report as presented. The vestry approved the motion unanimously.

Fr. John presented the rector's report. He reminded the vestry that Mary Randall is retiring and he is retiring in 2017 unless he, the vestry, and the bishop agree on another year's contract. He requests the vestry decide by August 8, 2016, whether they want him to stay on for another year. He also recommended that the vestry meet with Bishop Whitmore when he makes his visit on June 26. He asked the vestry to consider "expanding the bounds" of the congregation by joint activities with St. Andrew's in Hartwell and Mediator in Washington.

Under old business, Charles Romine conveyed Debra Romine's question about the sacristy ceiling and the wiring project. Fr. John said he will again contact Jason Brady about the sacristy ceiling now that the long rainy period seems to have ended. He will also contact Tony's Electric to proceed with the electrical work approved previously by the vestry.

Under new business, Fr. John asked the vestry to elect senior and junior wardens. The vestry unanimously reelected Steve Jenkins to the position of senior warden and elected Marilyn Slocumbe to the position of junior warden. Fr. John expressed thanks to them for agreeing to serve.

Fr. John reported on his meeting with John Bolton of the diocesan office and Natasha Clay. He said Natasha will be eligible in two years to go through the discernment process again.

Robyn Keeler, Vestry Secretary

SafeHouse End-of-2015 Report

Individuals serviced: 4,137

Bags of food given out: 3,942

Number of people sheltered times nights housed: 890

Number of children serviced (under 18): 1,372

Number of seniors serviced (over 61): 817

SafeHouse was open 365 days last year. Housing was provided every night.

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monthly by

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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
Marilyn Slocumbe,
Jr. Warden
Louise Martin
Suzanne Moore
Allen Nicas
Debra Romine
Robyn Keeler, vestry
secretary
Charles Romine,
treasurer

St. Alban Snaps

Nancy Seymour and
Fr. John Keeler at
Richard Russell Park
on January 30 to
participate in the fifth
annual Jack Frost
Jump sponsored by
the Elbert Memorial
Hospital Foundation.



Marilyn Slocumbe's grand-
daughter Aubrey in a proud
moment of her life, her first
driving lesson.

On Sunday Feb. 7, the Sunday School
class used Louise Martin's birthday as
an excuse for an informal coffee hour
in place of the usual lesson. The cake
and card were much appreciated.



Christian Site Destroyed in Iraq

Satellite photos have confirmed what church leaders and Middle East preservationists had feared: St. Elijah's Monastery, the oldest Christian monastery in Iraq, has been reduced to a field of rubble—yet another victim of the Islamic State's relentless destruction of heritage sites it considers heretical. One expert pinpointed the destruction between August and September 2014. New photos show that the 1,400-year-old monastery's stone walls "have been literally pulverized." Stephen Wood, an imagery analyst, reported, "Bulldozers, heavy equipment, sledgehammers, possibly explosives turned those stone walls into this field of gray-white dust."

St. Elijah's Monastery was believed to have been constructed by Assyrian monks in the late sixth century. It was later claimed by a Chaldean Catholic order. In 1743, its monks were given an ultimatum by Persian forces to convert to Islam. They refused, and as many as 150 were massacred.

Father Paul Thabit Habib, a Catholic priest from Mosul who now lives in Kurdish-administered Irbil, says that "the monastery attracted all the people from Mosul—Christians and Muslims. All the poets, historians, and travelers wrote about this monastery. It became a very important place for the history of the Church in Iraq."

In the 1970s, the monastery became a base for the Iraqi Republican Guard, and in 2003 one of its walls was damaged by the impact of a T-72 tank turret that was hit by a missile during the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. The U.S. Army itself used the monastery as a base before a chaplain recognized its importance and a commander ordered it to be cleared.



(Above) Satellite images showing the site of St. Elijah's Monastery in March 2011 and September 2014. (Left) St. Elijah's Monastery, or Deir Mar Elia, the oldest Christian monastery in Iraq.