

SANCTUARY

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

Calendar

Holy Eucharist, Sundays,
10:30 a.m.

- Sunday August 3: Lonnie Blackwell will be recognized for his long service to St. Alban's.
- Sunday August 10 is SafeHouse collection day. (The SafeHouse food bank currently assists about 200-250 families per month, so what we collect is needed!)

Sunday School and Bible Study, in recess until Sept. 8

August 6, *The Transfiguration*

August 11, Vestry meeting,
6 p.m.

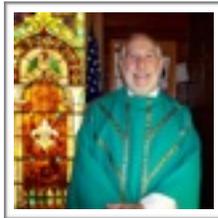
August Birthdays

Mary Randall, 1; Steve Jenkins, 16; Thomas Barclay, 16; Allen Nicas, 25

Prayer List

Becky, Ben, Beth & Bill, Betty & Richard, Emma & Bob, Larry & Diane, Mersadees, Paula, Sara, William, others in our hearts

Rector's Reflection



The long season after Pentecost gives us an opportunity to reflect on the events of the Incarnation and Pascal cycles in our church. We use this season as a time to examine and go deeper into our lives in relation to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. What do God's actions in the world mean for us and the way we live our lives?

One of the things we see throughout the season is hope. We see through both daily readings and Sunday readings that the Kingdom of God is here and now, as well as still to come. We see the presence of God in the world.

This is very close to us during year A as we read the parables according to St. Matthew.

Parables are extended metaphors that catch the attention of the listener since they talk about things in real life that the listener knows to be true. They often deal with agricultural themes since Jesus first told them in an agricultural society. The people who heard them knew how seeds were sown, how weeds affected wheat and the size of mustard seeds and the plants the seeds produced. They saw the truth of the surface story and then went deeper into the meaning of the metaphor.

We often need to work a little harder on the surface, but in doing so we also get to the deeper story, the one that shows us that God is still active in the world we live in and in our individual lives. We see in these stories that there is indeed good news for us. This is God's promise to stay with us always. There is hope.

Fr. John Keeler +

July 14 Vestry Meeting: Excerpts

Charles Romine presented the treasurer's report, noting the driveway project came in at \$3,157.17 under budget. All bills related to it have been paid. He also noted that in June income exceeded expenses.

Charles Duke, junior warden, reported the pressure-washed walls have been scraped and primed and are ready for a painting party.

Steve Jenkins, senior warden, reported he is waiting for an estimate from the landscaper about the price of a drip irrigation system. After discussion, the vestry decided not to proceed further with this because of the considerable replumbing expense. Sprinklers can be used as needed. Grass will be planted now, and hardy shrubbery after the summer heat has subsided.

Fr. John reported that he will begin conducting services monthly at Magnolia Estates.

Under old business, . . . discussion took place about waiting for pledges of earmarked donations before beginning the kitchen project; buying a new sink from the memorial fund (estimated \$500 for a base cabinet for the sink and approximately \$200 for the sink itself); replacing the hot water heater with a new tankless water heater, which Carole Oglesby has and will donate if it can be used in the available space; and the replumbing required for a tankless water heater. The vestry will readdress these subjects next month.

Under new business, Fr. John presented the diocesan letter stating the minimum pledge from St. Alban's, 10 percent of the average income for 2011, 2012, and 2013, is \$7,282. After discussion, motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously to pledge this amount.

Also under new business, the minutes from September 13, 2010, were reviewed in relation to St. Alban's policy on flowers for the hospitalized. Motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously to keep the \$75 limit but allow it to be spent on a gift other than flowers if that would be more appropriate for the individual.

These same minutes answered the question of what had been the restrictions on Arnold Oglesby's bequest to St. Alban's. There were no restrictions. Motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously to combine all memorial fund money into one account.

Fr. John noted it is time to think of selecting delegates to annual diocesan council. He will announce this and seek volunteers; the vestry will select delegates at the August meeting.

Fr. John announced the retirement of long-time sexton Lonnie Blackwell. Motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously to give him a retirement gift of \$500 and invite him and his family to a church service at which he will be recognized for his service to St. Alban's. His daughter will be offered the job at his request.

Robyn Keeler, Vestry Secretary

Sunday School and Saints

Sunday School is on summer break right now, and Fr. John is keeping us guessing so far about his plans for it in the fall. We paused on a high note after several months' discussion of Episcopal saints, often in pairs, like Augustine and the Venerable Bede (from whom we get a lot of our knowledge of Augustine). Some of the saints discussed were familiar and some were unfamiliar or unexpected.



One of the unexpected (to me, at least) was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45), whose most important work is *The Cost of Discipleship*, a study of the Sermon on the Mount, in which he attacked "cheap grace" (benefits of Christ without the cross) as a cover for ethical laxity and preached "costly grace." Bonhoeffer believed in active Christianity, a combination of prayer, faith, and action. He felt that Christianity and the secular world were not separate realms but one and that Christians should play an active role in the world around them.

When the Nazis took power in Germany, he became one of the founders of the Confessing Church, a Protestant schismatic church in Germany that arose in opposition to government-sponsored efforts to nazify the German Protestant church. Although he left Germany in 1939 for Union Theological Seminary in New York, he was soon writing, "I have made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period in our national history with the people of Germany." He returned to Germany on the last scheduled steamer to cross the Atlantic.

Back in Germany he joined the Abwehr (a German military intelligence organization that was also the center for plots to kill Hitler). Bonhoeffer did not justify his involvement in such plots but accepted that he was taking guilt on himself and must hope for God's grace.

On April 5, 1943, Bonhoeffer was arrested not for conspiracy but because of long-standing rivalry between SS and Abwehr. He was held in a military prison until the failure of the July 20, 1944, plot on Hitler's life and the discovery in September 1944 of secret Abwehr documents that revealed Bonhoeffer's connection with the conspiracy. Then he was moved first to a high-security prison and later, in February 1945, to a concentration camp. Upon the April 4, 1945, discovery of the diaries of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the Abwehr, Hitler ordered the death of the Abwehr conspirators. Bonhoeffer was hanged on April 9, 1945, just two weeks before U.S. soldiers liberated the camp.

Bonhoeffer is commemorated as a theologian and martyr by the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and several members of the Anglican communion, including the Episcopal Church (USA), on the anniversary of his death, April 9.

Keep your ears open for information about the Sunday School program for the fall. And come if you can.

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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

Natasha Clay
Carole Oglesby
Debra Romine
Nancy Seymour
Robyn Keeler, vestry
secretary
Charles Romine,
treasurer

Lonnie Blackwell
retired on July 29
after serving as St.
Alban's sexton for
forty-five years (since
1969). Here he is
shown pausing from
his vacuuming so
that Mary Randall
could snap his photo.



More photos from Mary's collection:
(left) the Jenkins family—from the
late 1980s?, and (below) is that
John with Robyn?



It's hard to think of Fr. John
and Robyn as great-
grandparents, but here is
their son Owen Keeler with
his grandson Grayson on the
day of his birth, July 27, at
Athens Regional Hospital.
Baby and mother Mersadees
are both doing well.

