

SANCTUARY

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

Calendar

Holy Eucharist, Sundays,
10:30 a.m. (except on Oct. 5,
when we will have Morning
Prayer). SafeHouse Sunday
Oct. 12

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
(except on Oct. 5)

Bible Study, Mondays at noon

Oct. 13, Vestry meeting, 6 p.m.

Oct. 18, St. Luke the Evangelist

Oct. 23, St. James of Jerusalem

Oct. 28, St. Simon and St. Jude
Apostles

October Birthdays

Dolores Jefferson, 20

Prayer List

Becky, Ben, Belle, Beth & Bill,
Berkeley, Betty & Richard,
Emma & Bob, Grayson, Larry &
Diane, Laurie, Lee, Mersadees,
Paula, Sara, Suzanne, Walter,
William, others in our hearts;
prayers for departed: Betty
Sweeny and others in our
hearts

Rector's Reflection



In recent weeks there has been a movement on Facebook asking people to post each day things they are thankful for. It's a project sponsored by Christian Churches, and it's tied in with calling to mind all of the gifts God has given us. It's a good use of social media.

People have listed things you might expect: family, friends, health, faith. They have also listed things that most of us haven't thought of, things that are the product of some thought, some going deeper, things that are the result of prayer and closer observation of the world around us. These have given me the most thought and the most delight; they have made me go deeper in my own conversations with God.

I want to share one of these with you in this reflection. I'm thankful for chipmunks. That might sound silly, but it's true. I'm blessed to have an office with a large window that overlooks the side yard of our church. This side yard is the home of several chipmunks. They are very busy creatures that either move at full speed or are completely still. They move with purpose to find food or to stay safe from predators. They always seem to have an escape plan. Chipmunks are a delight to watch, and I'm thankful for them.

Thankfulness is for the big things in our lives, but it's also for the smaller things, the things that make us smile, the things that delight us. We are blessed in a variety of ways large and small, and we should spend some time every day smiling and being profoundly grateful.

Fr. John Keeler +

Quilt Trail

St. Alban's is now a way station on the Elbert County Quilt Trail; our sign, depicting the Episcopal shield, became the fifteenth in Elbert County when it was erected on September 16.

After the Stephen Heard Chapter of the DAR took on as a project the formation of a county quilt trail, the members obtained a grant from the Hart EMC that allows them to offer signs at greatly reduced prices to churches, businesses, and individuals. Each quilt square pattern can be used only once in the county, after which it is retired.

The Elbert County Quilt Trail is the third in this part of Georgia. Hart and Franklin counties also have quilt trails. The DAR members are working on a brochure and a Website for the Elbert County Quilt Trail.

In many parts of the United States quilt trails are popular. Often the quilt squares are placed on barns, though not yet in Elbert County. Ours are all free standing like the one in the photo.



After the Sept. 21 Eucharist, Mary Randall took photos of some members next to the new sign.

Sunday School and Bible Study Underway

Adult Sunday School participants have been enjoying discussing the issues raised by the book *Episcopal Questions, Episcopal Answers* by Ian S. Markham and C. K. Robertson. So far they have puzzled over such questions as Is there any evidence that God exists? What is God like? Can I have doubts and still be an Episcopalian? Why does God allow evil and suffering? Can I believe in evolution and be an Episcopalian?

Bible Study has paused in the discussion of St. Luke's gospel to consider women in the Bible. So far attendees have talked about Eve, Sarah, Hagar, and Lot's wife and daughters.

Both groups welcome new members. Your opinions and points of view would be appreciated.

Fall Festival

At the September 8 vestry meeting, it was decided that St. Alban's will have a table at the Elberton Fall Festival from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on November 1. Coffee and water will be available for Festival goers. Informational literature about St. Alban's (brochures, bookmarks, newsletters) will be distributed.

Volunteers will be needed to staff the booth, also to set it up and take it down. There is a sign-up sheet in the back hall.

The annual SafeHouse Walkathon has always taken place early on the day of the Fall Festival, and it will open the festival again this year.



Betty Sweeny

Betty Sweeny (shown at right) died on Sept. 20 in Athens. Her daughter Sara and son-in-law David Baldwin (also in photo) were good members at St. Alban's for a number of years, and Betty sometimes came with them. We always enjoyed Betty's company and extend our sympathy to Sara, David, and her other relatives and friends.

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St. Alban's Episcopal
Church
109 Brookside Drive
Elberton, GA 30635

Website: [www.stalbans-
elberton.org](http://www.stalbans-elberton.org)

Tel.: 706-283-4563

Email:
stalbans@elberton.net

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

ER&D: Trouble Spots. Part 2

In September we covered the response of ER&D to two foreign crises. This month we have information (thanks to Carole Oglesby, who keeps up with such matters for us) on a domestic crisis.

Central American Migrant Crisis

ER&D is assisting St. John's Episcopal Church in McAllen, Texas (part of the McAllen Faith Community for Disaster Recovery), as the congregation provides relief to hundreds of Central American migrants who crossed through Mexico to seek asylum in the United States. A sudden influx of people, including thousands of unaccompanied minors, has overwhelmed the Border Patrol and created a humanitarian crisis in towns along the U.S.-Mexico border—including McAllen. Misinformation about U.S. laws governing amnesty and asylum has contributed to the crisis.

The *New York Times* reports: "Since October [2013], the Border Patrol has apprehended more than 160,000 undocumented immigrants in its Rio Grande Valley sector and more than 33,500 unaccompanied minors in Texas." An estimated 200 people per day arrive in McAllen alone.

Central American migrants who surrender to the Border Patrol and request asylum upon entering the U.S. are entitled to a hearing, but because of the high volume of requests, hearing dates may be up to two years away. Unaccompanied minors cannot be released on their own, so they are being transferred to detention centers and emergency shelters to await placement in some kind of custodial situation. Adults or families with relatives in the U.S. can receive bus tickets to go and join them, but the capacity of the bus lines is limited, and volunteers in McAllen report that wait times for seats can be up to two days.

"These people have traveled long distances . . . and have nothing when they arrive and surrender," wrote the Rev. Nancy Springer, Assistant Rector at St. John's. "Local churches in McAllen are working to provide them with a hot meal, a shower, and a place to rest." St. John's parishioners put together hygiene and nutrition packs, prepare and serve meals, and launder linens.

You can contribute toward ER&D disaster assistance by U.S. mail (P.O. Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058), by telephone (855-312-4325), or at www.episcopalrelief.org on the Web.

