

SANCTUARY

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

Calendar

Holy Eucharist, Sundays,
10:30 a.m. (SafeHouse Sunday
September 14)

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
starting September 7

Bible Study, Mondays at noon,
starting September 8

September 8, Vestry meeting,
6 p.m.

September 15, Holy Cross Day

September 22, St. Matthew,
Evangelist

September 29, St. Michael and
All Angels

September Birthdays

David Hagins, 1; Charles Duke,
2; Lucy Heil, 6; Joel Seymour,
15; Bob Slocumbe, 28

Prayer List

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

Rector's Reflection



We think of the end of August as the end of Summer although it isn't officially. Our minds turn to Fall things. School has started for a new academic year. Our Bible study and Sunday school groups are ready to begin. Football season has begun.

We begin to notice a shift in the light and shadows; the air will soon become crisper and the days shorter, as our yearly cycle tilts us away from the sun. The shortening of the days can depress us as we have less and less light each day. This even has a name, seasonal affective disorder, which means we don't like the shorter days and longer nights.

While I was convalescing in July, I read Barbara Brown Taylor's book *Learning to Walk in the Darkness*. Her idea in the book is that we need time in the darkness. We need sometimes even to embrace it and walk in faith and trust when the way is not clearly lit or the path ahead is not visible. We should prefer the darkness to the light from old lights that might no longer work.

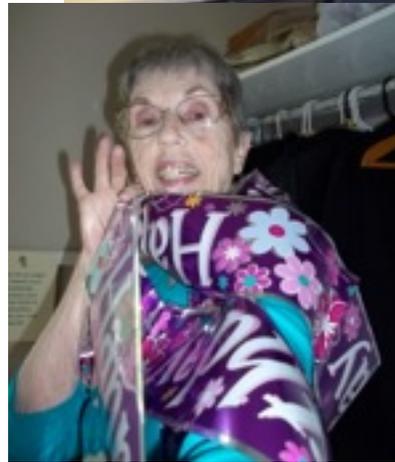
It's an interesting thought as our year shows us more darkness than light. It's not always safe, or predictable, but being a Christian is not a safe or predictable way to be.

It might be interesting for us to look at the fears we have of the darkness to see if they are real or just left over from other times and can be discarded. They might not be as scary as we thought. We might enjoy a walk in the dark and be surprised at what we find.

Fr. John Keeler +

A Birthday

On August 1 Mary Randall turned 80, and Carole Coggins surprised her with a Happy Birthday banner draped over her office desk (left top). Mary did her own thing with the banner and created a fashion statement (left bottom).



On Sunday August 3 St. Alban's members as a group remembered Mary's special day with coffee and chocolate cake in the parish hall before the church service. Allen Nicas led us in singing "Happy Birthday," and Fr. John presented to the birthday girl a birthday card with an enclosed Ingles gift card.

And a Retirement



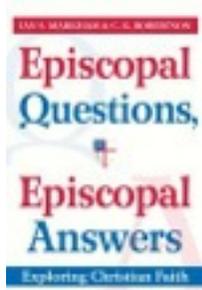
At the church service on August 3 we expressed appreciation to our retiring sexton, Lonnie Blackwell, for his faithful 45-year service to St. Alban's (he predated Herschel). Accompanying Lonnie were his wife Betty and daughter Monteary Almond.



At right Fr. John is shown presenting to Lonny a certificate of appreciation and a card with a check for \$500. Ms. Almond (on Lonnie's left) has succeeded him as St. Alban's sexton.

September Start

This month Sunday School and Bible Study are starting back up after summer break.



On September 7 at 9:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School participants will begin discussing a book titled *Episcopal Questions, Episcopal Answers* by Ian S. Markham and C. K. Robertson, New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2014. Three of the questions considered are What do Episcopalians believe about the Bible? Why do we practice infant baptism? and Why is our Book of Common Prayer so important? Fr. John says that buying the book is not obligatory, but it is available online if anyone would like to purchase a copy. Amazon lists it at \$12.54 for a paperback copy and \$7.99 for a Kindle version.

On Monday September 8 Bible Study will resume at noon; the discussion of St. Luke's gospel will continue from last year.

Both groups welcome new members.

SafeHouse

For January through June 2014, SafeHouse has posted the following figures:

Total number of individuals serviced: 3,338
 Meals provided for in-house guests: 2,742
 Total number of nights sheltered: 172
 Bags of groceries given: 2,768

At the end of 2013 the SafeHouse year-end total was 2,919 individuals receiving services. As you can see from the figures above, SafeHouse has already exceeded that number with a total of 3,338 for the first six months of 2014. The figures include food bank services, short-term shelter, and referral services.

SafeHouse is planning its 19th Annual Walkathon for Saturday November 1.

Diocesan Council

The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta will hold its 108th Diocesan Council on November 7-8, 2014, in Marietta at the Hilton Atlanta/Marietta Conference Center. Delegates from St. Alban's will be Steve Jenkins and Nancy Seymour; Allen Nicas has agreed to serve as alternate.



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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

Episcopal Relief: Trouble Spots

Sierra Leone and Liberia

Episcopal Relief and Development is working with the Anglican Diocese of Bo in Sierra Leone and the Episcopal Church of Liberia in response to the Ebola epidemic that has killed hundreds of people since the current outbreak began in March 2014. Through local partners, the organization is supporting awareness-raising efforts and providing personal protection equipment and disinfectants to under-resourced hospitals and clinics in the affected areas.

Additional funds will enable the Church to continue promoting accurate information via local radio, including facts about Ebola prevention and recommendations for how to treat sick people and the deceased. The support will also enable the Church to deliver increased food and medical supplies to hospitals and local Ebola Task Forces in four counties: Grand Cape Mount, Bong, Lofa, and Rivercess.

Iraq

ER&D is responding ecumenically to the current crisis in Iraq through the ACT Alliance, in support of Christian Aid UK's relief activities. ACT Alliance is a coalition of more than 140 churches and affiliated organizations active in more than 140 countries. In an update, the organization noted that implementing member Christian Aid has been responding to the Syrian refugee crisis since 2012 and recently expanded its operations to provide relief to Iraqis displaced by violence. Christian Aid is currently acting through local partners to distribute food, hygiene kits, and other necessities such as children's clothes to families who have fled active conflict zones in the northern mountains. Many of the refugees are persecuted religious minorities, including Christians.

More than 1.2 million people have been displaced since 2014 began. This is in addition to the one million Iraqis who were already internally displaced as of December 2013.

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.

