



E-Pistle Week: 02/23/21 - 03/01/2021

February 23, 2021

WEEKLY NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS:

If you have a spiritual or medical emergency, Please use the Emergency Pager: 410-380-7052. Leave a call back number and a Vestry member will return your call as soon as possible.

April Herald Articles and Photos: Spring is coming! Share your pictures of “signs of spring” for the April Herald Newsletter’s Spring Theme. Please submit articles and photos for the Herald by Sunday, March 21st. Email photos and articles to stalbanssalisbury@gmail.com

Opening the Prayer Book: A Discussion of Bishop Jeffrey Lee’s book and the resources of our Book of Common Prayer. Remaining Zoom discussions, March 8 and 15 (7:00-8:30 pm). Jeffrey Lee’s book is available on Amazon in paperback and for Kindle. If you do not have a prayer book, you can find it online: <https://www.bcponline.org/>. For questions, contact Dee Rinehart at deerinehart43@gmail.com.

The St Alban's gift card raffle: The raffle will be on March 14 after the service. Proceeds will be given to the rector's discretionary fund which supports local families that have immediate financial needs.

Lenten study/prayer group will meet virtually Sunday evenings at 6:00, on March 7, 14, 21, and 28. The format will be based on the lectionary readings and sermon for each Sunday. Other ideas are welcome. If you are interested in participating, have ideas or questions, please contact Jim Cockey at james.cockey@gmail.com
Join Zoom Meeting click [HERE](#)
Meeting ID: 857 5073 5353 Passcode: 840463
One tap mobile
+13017158592,,85750735353#,,,,*840463# (D.C)
+16468769923,,85750735353#,,,,*840463# (NY)

Cold Weather Shelter for Men

The shelter is still looking for volunteers to check the men in, stay over night (men only) and supply meals. They will need 3 meals a day, but you can sign up for just 1, You can also donate food, new socks, underwear, gloves, hats, scarves, toiletries, personal sanitizer, masks etc., help with checking the men in, and men to stay overnight. Donations are greatly appreciated. The shelter will run THROUGH March 27th. Take your donations to the Langelier Building (after 5pm) on N. Division St. or contact Kim O’Grady pkogrady3@yahoo.com

Link to volunteer: <http://www.tinyurl.com/cespsignup>
Link to mealtrain: mealtrain.com/2y20d8
Questions: Wicomicoesp@gmail.com

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UPCOMING:

Service Schedule
Sunday Zoom Service at 9:30am

We are limited to a total of **50 people** in church as requested by the Bishop. **Please make a reservation for each Sunday service you are planning to attend.** For reservations: call or email the office no later than 10:00 am the Thursday before each service.

Please realize that our local COVID numbers are still elevated so please make your decision based on your own personal circumstances.

You will continue to receive the link and bulletin for each week’s service via email. Please mail in your pledge/offering.

Sunday, March 3rd:

Holy Eucharist Rite I Service, 9:30am

LECTORS: Sandy Grim, Vic Evans

TECH TEAM: Katherine West, Cristina Machin

CHECK-IN/GREETER: Arlene White

VESTRY PERSON/USHER: Vic Evans

ALTAR GUILD: Sandy Grim

Sunday, March 14th:

Holy Eucharist Rite II Service, 9:30am

Sunday, March 21st:

Holy Eucharist Rite I Service, 9:30am

Palm Sunday, March 28th:

Palm Sunday Service, 9:30am

Happy Birthday

Sandy Clark 3/02

Jenny Buchanan 3/08

Joyce Carey 3/08



EXCITING NEWS

The Bishop has given permission for The Rev. Alisha King to continue to serve as our Deacon until we transition to a New Rector.

THE 2020 PAROCHIAL REPORT FOR ST. ALBAN'S HAS BEEN FILED.

Please click [HERE](#) to view the 2020 Parochial report

Link to Vestry Minutes and Financials:

Please click [HERE](#) for the approved Vestry Meeting Minutes and approved Financial Statement.

(Minutes and Financial are posted once they are approved.)

Easter Flowers

Please make check payable to St. Alban's Church
and write "Easter Flowers" in the memo line. Return by Palm Sunday, March 28th
(Flower Offerings can be put in the offering plate on a Sunday morning or
sent to the parish post office box: St Alban's Church, PO Box 1511, Salisbury, MD 21802)

DONOR(S) _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

IN THANKSGIVING FOR _____

IN HONOR OF _____



Bishop's Lenten Reflection

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4:1)

The Season of Lent has a significantly crucial role in the advancement of deepening the faith within the individual Christian and corporate church. All through the history of the church, the act of contrition, repentance, spiritual transform, charity toward the other and almsgiving have defined the character of the church. As we are in this solemn penitential season, we as disciples of the risen Lord are called to robustly embody our Lord's model by paying careful attention to and understanding the ramifications of the devil's lure to distraction and attempts to redirect our focus from God unto things that are secular and mundane, earthed in our own ego or sense of self-importance. The TRUTH is that it is patently difficult to stay riveted to the virtues distinguishing Christ-like ideals that this season invites us to incorporate and practice. This reaffirmation of mind, body and soul toward the things of God calls forth a deliberate and determined sense of WILL to remain attentive to our Christian faith formation.

Jesus' first act after baptism was to wrestle with his inner self; to figure out the direction of his life his Father in heaven was calling him to incarnate. To obtain a deeper sense of this call, he chose to enter self-isolation, what John of the Cross would later term in his own spiritual awakening, "Dark Night of the Soul."

The Season of Lent is that period in our spiritual pilgrimage that invites a desire to enter self-isolation, self-introspection and self-critique. We enter this annual spiritual exercise in this forty day fast and prayer that leads to spiritual transformation so that for the succeeding 325 days of the year we are equipped to serve the world. I strongly believe that when we are ourselves healed and transformed by the Spirit, we are better equipped to be powerful forces for common good and practice grace filled works of faith. In truth, we cannot give what we ourselves do not possess. The aridity of the desert in the soul searching for answer could become fertile ground for immense spiritual awakening, contributing to the world becoming like the kingdom of God on earth.

The Roman Catholic theologian Ronald Rolheiser shares the following two stories from two icons of social and racial justice. Dorothy Day, in her biography, *The Long Loneliness*, shares how, shortly after her conversion to Catholicism, she went through a painful, desert time. She had just given birth to her daughter and her decision to have the child baptized, coupled with her profession of faith, meant the end of her relationship with a man she deeply loved. She suddenly found herself alone.

All her old supports had been cut off and she was left with no money, no job, few friends, no practical dream, and no companionship from the man she loved. For a while she just stumbled on, trusting that things would soon get better. They didn't. She remained in this desert.

One day, not knowing what else to do, she took a train from New York to Washington to spend a day praying at the National Shrine of Our Lady. Her prayer there was wrenching, naked. She describes how she laid bare her helplessness, spilling out her confusion, her doubts, her fears, and her temptations to bitterness and despair. In essence, she said to God: "I have given up everything that ever supported me, in trust, to you. I have nothing left to hold on to. You need to do something for me, soon. I can't keep this up much longer!" She was, biblically speaking, in the desert—alone, without support, helpless before a chaos that threatened to overwhelm her—and as was the case with Jesus, both in the desert and in Gethsemane, God "sent angels to minister to her."

God steadied her in the chaos. She caught a train back to New York and, that very night as she walked up to her apartment, she saw a man sitting there. His name was Peter Maurin and the rest is history. Together they started the Catholic Worker. We should not be surprised that her prayer had such a tangible result. The desert, scripture assures us, is the place where God is especially near.

Martin Luther King shares a similar story. In *Stride Towards Freedom*, he relates how one night a hate-filled phone call shook him to his depths and plunged him into a desert of fear. Here are his words:

An angry voice said: "Listen, we've taken all we want from you; before next week you'll be sorry you ever came to Montgomery." I hung up, but I couldn't sleep. It seemed that all of my fears had come down on me at once. I had reached the saturation point. I got out of bed and began to walk the floor.

Finally, I went to the kitchen and heated a pot of coffee. I was ready to give up. With my coffee sitting untouched before me I tried to think of a way to move out of the picture without appearing a coward. In this state of exhaustion, when my courage had all but gone, I decided to take my problem to God. With my head in my hand, I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed aloud. The words I spoke to God that midnight are still vivid in my memory.

"I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I've come to the point where I can't take it alone." At that moment Rev. King said, "I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced it before."

My beloved, God sends his angels to minister to us when we are in the desert and in the garden of Gethsemane. This incident in Martin Luther King's life demonstrates how the desert, as we know it, is the place where, stripped of all that normally nourishes and supports us, we are exposed to vulnerability, raw fear, and demons of every kind. In the desert we are exposed, body and soul, and vulnerable to being overwhelmed by chaos and temptations of every kind. But it is precisely because we are so stripped of everything, we normally rely on that this is also a privileged moment for grace.

Rolheiser answers the question, Why? "Because all the defense mechanisms, support systems, and distractions that we normally surround ourselves with so as to keep chaos and fear at bay work at the same time to keep much of God's grace at bay. What we use to buoy us wards off both chaos and grace, demons and the divine alike. Conversely, when we are helpless, we are open. That is why the desert is both the place of chaos and the place of God's closeness. It is no accident that Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King felt God's presence so unmistakably just at that point in their lives where they had lost everything that could support them. They were in the desert. Scripture assures us that it is there that God can send angels to minister to us - the desert is both the place of chaos and the place of God's closeness".

May this Lenten Season reassure that Jesus experiences the very physical, spiritual and emotional conditions as we do! As such be comforted, draw strength and inspiration from our Lord and Savior, by whose model and pattern we live into our Lenten discipline.

Every blessing and love! Wishing you a Holy Lent!

+San