

Happy New Year! And The Advent Wreath

by Dee Rinehart

The First Sunday in the season of Advent is the beginning of a new church year and the appearance of the Advent Wreath. At the beginning of the service each Sunday, we light candles to mark our journey through the four Sundays of Advent to Christmas.

We can mark the weeks of the season with family Advent Wreaths at home, on Sundays, or each night during Advent. During the first week, light a single candle and continue adding a candle each week during the four weeks. On Christmas Eve and continuing through the Christmas season, if you like, light all five candles.

Included below is an example of the practice you can use at home with your own Advent Wreath. You will begin with a prayer before lighting the candle(s) and then reading and discussing a passage of Scripture. The prayers below come from the Church of England (<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons/advent#mmml8>). The readings come from the *Episcopal Book of Occasional Services*.

Week 1 Prayer: God of Abraham and Sarah, and all the patriarchs of old, you are our Father too. Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of David. Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth to make our hearts ready for your Holy Spirit to make his home among us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**

Reading: Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. (Matthew 24:42-44)

Week 2 Prayer: God our Father, you spoke to the prophets of old of a Savior who would bring peace. You helped them to spread the joyful message of his coming kingdom. Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, to share with those around us the good news of your power and love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**



Reading: The word of God came to John, son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’” (Luke 3:2b-6)

Week 3 Prayer: God our Father, you gave to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age a son called John. He grew up strong in spirit, prepared the people for the coming of the Lord, and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins. Help us, who have been baptized into Christ, to be ready to welcome him into our hearts, and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**

Reading: As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Luke 3:15-16)

Week 4 Prayer: God our Father, the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of your Son. Though Mary was afraid, she responded to your call with joy. Help us, whom you call to serve you, to share like her in your great work of bringing to our world your love and healing. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**

Reading: In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. (Luke 1:39-42)

Christmas Prayer: God our Father, today the Savior is born and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light. Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy, to live in the light of your Son and to share the good news of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who has come into the world. **Amen.**

Reading: This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about.... An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). (Matthew 1:18-23)

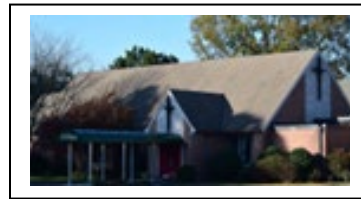


Instructions for Making an Advent Wreath



- Use a wreath base, either straw wreath forms or grape vine.
- Decorate with evergreens, berries, nuts, pinecones, or ornaments of your choice.
 - To place the candles, it is recommended to use four short candlestick holders or pillar candles. Space the candles outside the wreath, leaving the center part for the fifth one, the Christmas candle.

December Worship and Events



Sunday Morning Holy Eucharist Services:

- 8:00: Rite I – Spoken
- 10:00: Rite II

To view, Sunday morning services click the following link: St. Alban's Church Salisbury <https://www.youtube.com/@stalbanschurhsalisbury9651/streams>

- December 24: 10:00 P.M. Christmas Eve Service – The Rev. Laura Dorsey
- December 28: Regular 8:00 A. M. Service; 10:00 A.M. Lessons and Carols and Eucharist – The Rev. Sheila McJilton

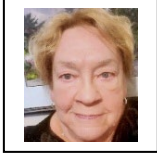
Note: **There will be no Prayers for Our Nation Service in December.** This Evening prayer Service will resume on Monday January 12, at 5:30 P.M. followed by a soup supper

Events:

- Safety Committee Mass Shooter Preparation: December 2, 4:00 P.M.
- December 7 and 14: Advent Soup Lunches (Donations for Joseph House)
- December 19: Brass Polishing – 10:00 A.M.
- December 21: Greening of the Church – after the 10:00 A.M. service
- December 25 and 26 – Parish Office Closed
- January 1 and 2 – Parish Office Closed



From the Vestry

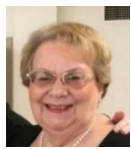


Dee Rinehart, Senior Warden

The parish By-Laws establish a Vestry of nine members, elected for a term of 3 years. Each year the congregation elects three new members, each member may agree to be nominated for a second consecutive term. This year Sandy Grim has agreed to be nominated for another term. Please join me in thanking Shelly Madsen and Kim O'Grady for serving this congregation faithfully and well. Our newly elected Vestry members are Sandy Grim, Germaine Marshall, and Paulette Primus. We welcome them and thank them for agreeing to serve on the Vestry.

As of the date of the Vestry meeting, 44 pledges for 2026 had been received. Pledges are still being received, and we would like to have a total income figure in time for the December 16 Vestry meeting. At that meeting we will address the 2026 budget, as we need to meet financial obligations beginning January 1, 2026. Thank you for supporting the ministries of our parish.

The December Vestry meeting will be a potluck dinner meeting, hosted by the Wests. Newly elected Vestry members are included in this meeting. We will also be electing Vestry Officers for 2026.



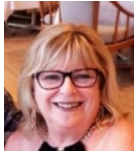
Communications

Arlene White, Junior Warden,
Communications Liaison

> Birthdays and Anniversaries Update – The posters are down from the breezeway, and the lists have been given to the office volunteers to call those individuals who had not checked their information.

> 2026 St. Alban's Directory Update – Beginning in January, the congregation will receive information, directions, and a form to complete to update the directory. It will be possible for you to update your picture if you desire.





Worship

Sandy Grim, Worship Liaison

St. Alban's Prayer Circle

Several years ago, a Prayer Circle was formed at Saint Alban's. This ministry was originally led by Judy Grim, a former member of St. Alban's and later led by Jean Rickards. This was a ministry of several ladies who provided prayer support services for the congregation. It enabled parishioners to request prayers for loved ones, friends, and members of the community. Prayer Circle members included Vera MacKenzie, Lucille Kantzes, Emma Shehan, Nancy Gagner, Juanita Isaac, Vi White, Ruby Helt, and Sandy Grim.

At this time of uncertainty in the world and the absence of a rector at St. Alban's, the need for prayer and support for one another is critical to our spiritual health, deepening our faith and providing support to our parishioners and the community. This can lead to spiritual growth, stronger bonds, and prayers answered.

How does this work? The prayer circle receives prayer requests by phone, email or in person for someone in need. The request is shared from one person to another within the prayer circle group until the circle is completed. The names are placed on a list and distributed to the prayer circle members for their ongoing prayers. The prayer circle members are committed to the confidentiality of the information, people, and situations on the prayer list. Prayers of healing and courage are offered daily for the people on the prayer list. The group meets monthly to update the prayer list and to pray together as a group.

If you are interested in joining this special ministry, you may contact Sandy Grim by phone at 410-430-9078 or by email at sandongrim@verizon.net. An interest sheet will be posted in the breezeway as well.

By praying for the needs of others, God's love can be spread to everyone!



Jeremy Cox, Internal Property Liaison.

The Safety Committee will be hosting a sheriff's office representative on Tuesday, December 2, at 4 p.m. in the parish hall. The goal is to gather information as we continue to formulate our safety plan. There will be a presentation and light refreshments. While this



meeting is geared towards Safety Committee members, anyone in the congregation may attend, and your input is encouraged. If you have any questions, please contact Jeremy Cox at jcoxreporter@yahoo.com.

16 new chairs have been purchased for the parish hall. Try them.



Walt West, the Grounds Liaison.

The engineering design for the stormwater abatement is in-hand. The catchment will take some of our parking lot on the Twilley Center side. It is designed to handle a rainfall of 9 inches and will be planted with water tolerant plants. The next step is to advertise for bids. Once we know the cost, we will seek grants to defray the expense. We will keep you informed of the progress.



Nancy Linck, Finance Liaison.

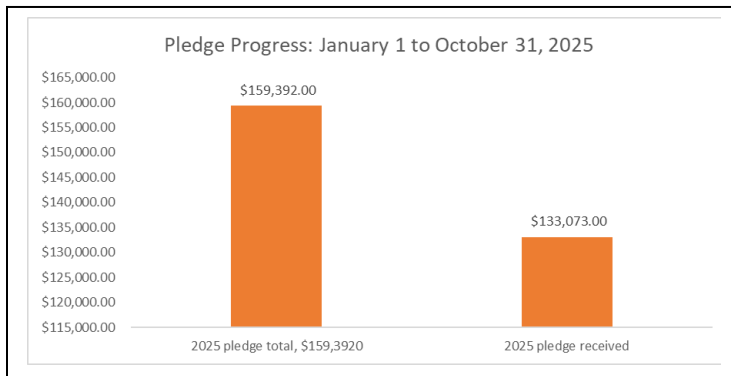
Go Tell it on the Mountain: A Christmas Reflection

by Canon J. Davey Gerhard

Mountaintops are amazing places. Certainly, they are remote and difficult to access, but once there, great things happen. Perhaps it is a moment to take in the wonder of Creation as one looks across great vistas. Maybe it is seeing how small the buildings and people down on the ground are and recognizing our humility and place in the world order. It might just be a feeling of achievement or arrival at having made it to the top. It is no wonder that so many important moments in the Bible take place on mountains. They are a place of direct communication with God, access. They are a place of mystery and transfiguration. They are a place to receive instructions. They are a place to be tempted and to win. The thing in common with mountains is that no one is the same when they return. Something has changed. In the Christmas Carol *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, the singer tells us that the news of the birth of Jesus is so good that we must ascend the heights to shout it out. It is as if the song bursts forth from our souls, needing to be shared with a world in need. What could it be that is so important that it needs to be communicated so urgently? I have many versions of this famous carol in my Christmas playlist, but it wasn't until I listened to Mahalia Jackson's slow, almost bluesy version, that I understood



what the real message was. This is not about kingship or messiahship or miracles - the infant born in a manger came to do more than claim his spot of authority. He came to save us from oppression, to begin the change within us that transforms God's breath of love into an act of redemption in the world. That's the news that must be shared with a world full of longing



83% of pledge paid--83% of the way through the year.

Jenny Buchanan, Pledge Secretary

Life at St. Alban's

Auction News

by Cristina Machin, 2025 Auction Chair



The 2025 St. Alban's Fall Auction raised over \$11,000 that will be distributed among Women Supporting Women, H.O.P.E., and the St. Alban's Discretionary Fund. We could not have done it without you! Thank you for your prayers, your donations, your hard work, and your presence. In addition, the leftover food (and we had a lot due to a small math calculation mishap!) provided lunch for

over 100 people the following Tuesday, part of the Tuesday meals organized by H.O.P.E. And we will continue the spirit of fellowship in 16 "parties" that will take place in 2026.

Bendiciones to all of you (Blessing to you all),

Cristina

P. S.- It is never too late to join the fun! We will start thinking Fall Auction 2026 next Spring- Stay Tuned! (Look for photos in January.)



Vox Concordia Winter Concert

We have one more chance to see the Vox Concordia Winter Concert, on December 7, at 3:00 P.M., at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Berlin, MD. Our Parish Musician, Veronica Tomanek, directs this ensemble, to which Becca Jones-Hocmuth, Arlene White, Kathy Slaughter, and Maarten Pereboom lend their voices to the music.



Food Distribution to Families from Salisbury Middle School

by Katherine West



On Saturday, November 15, volunteers from St. Alban's helped distribute food and a hot meal to families from



Salisbury Middle School. Many thanks to George Demko and Becca Jones-Hochmuth who spent the morning serving spaghetti to over 50 people, and to Deb Rossi, who partnered with SMS to provide hot showers and food distribution at H.O.P.E.

SOCIAL SUPPERS 2026

By Cheryl Hoke

The Fellowship Committee will be starting “Social Suppers” in the new year. This will be an opportunity to see old friends and make new ones in informal settings involving FOOD over the course of a year.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HOST: There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the breezeway. Couples and/or individuals can sign up for how many people you can comfortably host, typically 6 or 8. You will be matched with a mix of some people you know and do not know well. Once your group is established, you will independently decide how often you'd like to meet in the coming year, setting the dates and times that are convenient for all – maybe monthly or quarterly or around certain holidays. The host chooses the main course and asks the others to provide an appetizer, side and dessert that works well with the main course. Dinners can be simple, like soup or hot dogs, or it can be a fancy meal. You can play games or go on a picnic or just hang out. Whatever your group decides.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE BUT ARE UNABLE TO HOST: There is a separate sheet in the breezeway to sign up too.

Please indicate if you have dietary requirements or might need transportation. In 2027, new groups will be formed. Sign-up deadline is Sunday, December 21. If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Hoke / cherhoke@gmail.com.

Salisbury Middle School's Annual Holiday Shop

by Katherine West

Salisbury Middle's Annual Holiday Shop for students will be held on December 18 and 19. Students have the opportunity to use their Eagle Bucks (good behavior bucks) to purchase new or gently used gift items for their family or friends. Students can also use Eagle Bucks to have their items gift wrapped.

Every year we rely on the generosity of the community to help stock the holiday shop. When you have a free moment at home, take a look around for new or gently used items that you no longer want and could be re-gifted by our students. It's a great way to get rid of unwanted or unneeded items.

Suggested items include:

- Holiday decorations
- Gifts for dad
- Purses/Scarves/hats/gloves
- Costume jewelry
- Sporting equipment
- Candles • Coffee mugs



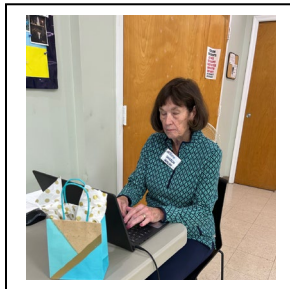
- Toys • Anything that would make a nice gift

***Gift bags, bubble wrap, and tissue paper are also needed (used bags and tissue paper are great! We also need shopping bags for students to carry gifts home.) ***

If you bring items to church, please leave them on the table in the Joy room at the end of the back hallway, or contact Katherine West (kwest@myweps.org) and she can pick up items. If you are interested in gift wrapping on December 18 or 19, there will be a sign-up sheet in the breezeway. Thank you for supporting Salisbury Middle!

Photos from the 55th Annual Meeting November 23

by Jeremy Cox



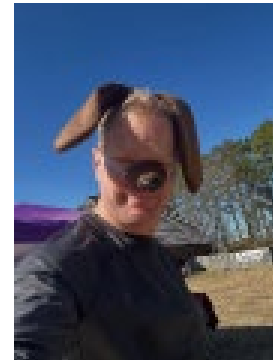
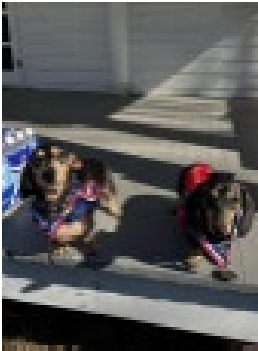
Heavenly Father, we thank you for St. Alban's Episcopal Church, our community of faith. Grant us deliberate patience, that we may seek and follow your guidance in all that we undertake as a congregation. Help us listen and work together with hearts united in our care for all people and your creation. Guide us in discerning a future for our parish and send us a priest who will shepherd this parish and share



with us in spreading Jesus' radical love in the world. We pray all this in the name of your blessed Son, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Coxes at Paws on Pemberton

from Jennifer Cox



Paws on Pemberton with these good boys on November 8! Doug Douglas and I took third, while Jeremy and Wrigley finished the challenge! Fun times.

Hanging out with Susan Boyle

by Michell Ben

Like many people, in 2009, I watched Susan Boyle's performance of "I Dreamed a Dream" on Britain's Got Talent and instantly became a fan. That Christmas, Susan was invited to sing on Oprah Winfrey's Christmas show. Susan sang "Oh Holy Night" accompanied by a youth choir. She wore a long green gown that was custom made for the Christmas show. In 2011, Susan auctioned this gown to raise money for charity. I won the gown and was overwhelmed when it arrived at my house. I took the gown out of the garment bag and held it up. It was awesome to see the big, sequined bow that trimmed the front of the gown and to feel the satin lining. I was surprised by how heavy it is and by how many layers of fabric are on the lower half of the gown.



I am getting a little older and am having some health issues that can occur with age. I decided that I needed to give the gown back to Susan. Since this gown was worn at the height of Susan's career, and on Oprah's show, it was an important garment, and I knew it might give me



the opportunity to meet Susan in person. I was put in touch with Susan's manager Geroldine. I wrote to Geroldine saying that I was in possession of the Oprah gown and that I wanted to give the gown to Susan in person. It was extremely exciting when Geroldine returned my email and said that Susan agreed to welcome me to her home to allow me to give the gown to her. It was other worldly to get this email with this unbelievable welcome from Susan.

When we finally got our passports, I emailed Geroldine and told her that we would be in Edinburgh on November 3rd and that I could meet her and Susan on November 4th, which was



my birthday. It was a joy flying into Edinburgh. There were large expenses of farmland and foothills that are the remains of cooled magma reservoirs from volcanos that went extinct 340 million years ago. Since then, ice ages have eroded the land, leaving these massive volcanic plugs that rise hundreds of feet above the land. When we arrived in Edinburgh, we were astounded to see Edinburgh castle atop its 443-foot volcanic plug. As one looks at the castle and the rock it is on, it takes up most of your line of sight. The volcanic plug

goes from below street level up into the sky, and the castle occupies the whole expanse of the plug. It is almost as far across the landscape as you can spread your arms.

The big day came to give the Oprah gown back to Susan. We called the highly regarded Black Cab service to take us to Blackburn, Scotland, where Susan lives. I had memorized the appearance of Susan's duplex thanks to Google Earth. We were excited and nervous as we took our seats in the cab. We rode past medieval architecture and through farmland for about half an hour. Soon, I realized that we were in Susan's neighborhood. Then the cab turned onto Susan's street and drove slowly past every duplex. I felt hyper-focused and awestruck as I looked at each home. Then there it was, Susan's home. I told my twins, "That's it!" We are here. My twin's eyes got wide, and they were speechless. We were all in disbelief, as we got out of the cab. The boys stared at the home as I asked the cab driver to stay in the area so he could take us back to Edinburgh. I told him that I didn't want Susan to see him parked in front of the house. He laughed and said that he would hide down the street and wait for us to come back out of the home.

We knocked on the door, but there was no answer. Soon we went to the other side of the duplex to try our luck there. Before we reached the door, we were met by a lady that was on her cell phone and said Susan and Geroldine would be here shortly. I was guessing that this was a security measure. I was imagining that Geroldine and the lady were discussing what we looked like and if we seemed menacing, if so, Geroldine wouldn't bring Susan to the house. Luckily, I had planned carefully so that we would pass a visual inspection and look pleasant. We went back to Susan's side of the duplex and waited. Soon, a large light-colored van pulled up, and a dark-haired lady got out and greeted us. I looked back at the van and saw a small lady slowly get out



of the van and walk towards us. It was Susan. My mind tried to process the unbelievable image that I was seeing. She was small and very shy. She came toward me and looked at me suspiciously. I smiled and held out my hand and said, “Hi Susan.” She shook my hand, and I said that her nails were beautiful, which she appreciated.

There was a big double chair at the entrance to the living room that Adam and David managed to jam themselves into and sat together. I sat on the sofa with Susan and then laid the gown on the coffee table. She had a slight smile on her face as she looked down at the garment bag. I unzipped the bag and revealed the large satin sequined bow wrapped around the front of the gown. Susan smiled at the dress as though it was a long-lost friend. She told me that she still has the shoes that were made to match the gown. She continued to gaze at the gown a while longer and then her shyness was gone, and she looked at me and smiled as I joked about not being able to style my hair due to the wind and constant drizzling.



Susan smiled at me and said, “You look great.” Geroldine asked us if we had come to Scotland for the sole purpose of returning the gown to Susan, and I said, “Yes.” Then Geroldine gave

Susan a card to sign for me. Susan had to write each letter very carefully due to the stroke. She spelled my name with no ‘e’ on the end. I am thinking of changing the spelling of my name now. Just kidding.



After the pictures, Geraldine thanked us and again said my bringing the gown back to Susan was amazing. She told Susan that she was going to hang the gown up with her other frocks. The boys and I stood up and said goodbye to Susan. We walked out of the home, and I saw my taxi man lurking a short way down the street. We got into the cab and returned triumphantly to Edinburgh.

A few days later, we visited Kensington Palace and toured London on a red double decker bus before coming back to the United States.



Please join us for worship and fellowship this Advent and Christmas.



From our Outreach Partners

From the Society of St. Andrew - Delmarva Facebook Page

Want to make your donation dollars go twice as far? **Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore** will match donations to registered charities through their Shore Gives 365 site! We receive calls every day: Neighbors looking for fresh food for their family's table. Food pantries with bare shelves as need outstrips their budgets. Ordinarily, each dollar donated to SoSA allows us to share, at no cost, 20 servings of nutritious food! With the match, that same dollar can now share 40 servings! Thank you for your support!



<https://www.shoregives365.org/organization/SoSADelmarva>

Help and Outreach Point of Entry

From the Facebook Page

We're honored to be a Feeding Our Neighbors Grant recipient! 🌻

Thanks to a generous grant from the Richard A. Henson Foundation, administered by the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore (CFES), HOPE is able to strengthen two vital programs for our community:

- Prepared Lunches — providing hundreds of hot, ready-to-eat meals every Tuesday and Thursday and bagged lunches on Wednesdays at our Emergency Day Shelter.
- Mini-Pantry — ensuring that individuals and families in crisis can access essential groceries when traditional food bank hours or resources are out of reach.

We are deeply grateful for this partnership, which helps us meet the immediate hunger needs of our neighbors while building long-term community stability. 💙

It starts with a meal, it grows into HOPE 🍽️🌻



Women Supporting Women

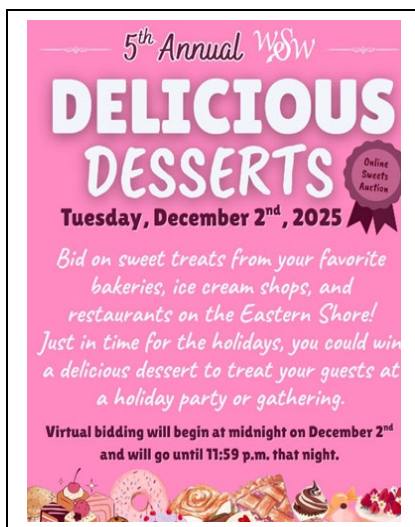
From the Facebook Page

Women Supporting Women is a nonprofit organization started in 1993. WSW's mission is to provide awareness, support, and education, and uplift those affected by breast cancer, we offer a variety of free programs and services for men, women, and their families confronting this disease.

For over 30 years Women Supporting Women has been a beacon of hope for individuals facing breast cancer to community members on Delmarva. Our organization is built on the principle that no one should face breast cancer alone. We are your local, grass-roots non-profit organization here on Delmarva, guiding those newly diagnosed through their breast cancer journey. With mentoring services, WSW provides the compassion and understanding you would expect from a friend or family member.

Funding raised throughout the year stays local and is used to provide all our services free to breast cancer survivors from beach to bay on the Delmarva peninsula. In 2022 Out of every dollar, 72 cents went back into our local community. We are here to encourage those going through their breast cancer journey with as little or as much information as they feel they need. To learn more about WSW, visit www.womensupportingwomen.org or stop by the Salisbury office located at 1320 Belmont Avenue, next to the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore.

WSW's Delicious Desserts Online Sweets Auction



The countdown is on for the sweetest day of the year! On Tuesday, December 2nd WSW is holding the 5th annual Delicious Desserts Online Sweets Auction, and there's no better time to mark your calendars! Bidding will open at midnight on December 2nd, with the auction closing at 11:59 p.m. that night.

Expect cake, pie, donuts, bagels, cupcakes, and more treats, as well as gift certificates, from your favorite bakeries and restaurants on the Eastern Shore! To check out which businesses have already donated, click the link below! And don't forget to register (free!) so you're ready to bid on December 2nd. Stay tuned to WSW's social

media for sweet sneak peeks!



Christ-Centered, Radically Embracing People and Creation

With these words, we articulate our parish identity. We strive to follow Christ in welcoming all people. We offer baptism and Eucharist to all, as well as the pastoral offices of reconciliation, ministry to the sick, and Christian burial to those who ask. We do not discriminate regarding gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, identity, or mental capacity. Couples requesting marriage are asked to meet with the rector and meet the civil and Episcopal Church requirements. While we do not discriminate based on gender, the clergy may decline to officiate for other reasons.

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
302 St. Alban's Drive
Salisbury, MD 21804

