



The Cross & the Sword

The monthly newsletter of Saint Alban's Parish Family

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December 2021



There is surely no shortage of ways in which being a faithful follower of Jesus Christ of Nazareth asks us to act contrary to our gut instincts, especially in the context of our contemporary culture. Let's face it: most of us are not especially skilled at waiting. Yet year after year, during the four week period leading up to Feast of the Incarnation—commonly known, of course, as Christmas—that is exactly what we are called to live into, if not exactly celebrate (at least not at first). Our smart phone, digitalized, next-day delivery, Amazon-framed, 21st Century gigabyte perspective does not find the idea of deferred gratification compatible with the rest of our lived experience. Patience is a challenging virtue to embrace and practice; at least it is for me.

Perhaps this season of collective expectation can help us—or even train us—for the other ways and situations in our lives where we have to wait. Whether we happen to like it or not seems to weigh very little in the matter.

Be it a matter of waiting on the results of a feared medical test, the arrival of a newborn baby, a letter of acceptance or rejection from a desired institution of higher learning, the outcome of a job interview, the resolution of a personal crisis or the definitive end of an emotionally exhausting pandemic, the task of waiting appears to be both everywhere and unavoidable. So, what are we to do? It is at this moment that the wisdom of the Advent Season could really prove useful.

The dual nature Advent—that aspect of this period that looks both backward and forward at the same time—can potentially provide a much-needed sense of perspective. When remembering our past challenges we may recall our previous successful capability to withstand the tensions of waiting—regardless of whether things “went our way” or not.

Looking ahead, we can know with confidence—even if it's only for a fleeting moment of time—that “this too, shall pass” and *eventually* the weight of anticipation will be lifted from our weary shoulders.

Advent waiting can also call us into a renewed commitment to living as fully as possible in the present moment *and* to inviting (or imploring) God to be there with us while we do. One of the most important and persistent questions that has been asked of me by most—if not all—of my spiritual directors throughout my life has been, “where is God in all of this for you?” and “have you invited God into the

situation that's currently troubling you?" Trusting Jesus while we wait can be a very tall order, but oddly enough that's when we most need to lean on His ability to do for us what we find all but impossible to do for ourselves.

Finally, we can remember that we don't have to do this admittedly hard work of expectant waiting all by ourselves. The early stages of trustfully reaching out for support can seem like lifting a mountain but they almost always pay off in the end, even if the desired sense of relief takes longer than we'd like.

I pray for us all in this Holy Season of Waiting. "Come, Lord Jesus."

In the Peace of Christ,
Fr. Michael r. +

STEWARDSHIP



Donations were over \$8,500 for October. For 2021 so far, we are also \$19,800 over budget which is helping secure our future and significantly reducing our planned deficit. If it is more convenient you can always donate through Tithe.ly. Also, please link St. Alban's to your Amazon Smile account and your Kroger plus card. This is easy money to St. Alban's and it helps both of these companies direct their donations in the direction you want. Our expenses as always continue to be managed frugally, so together with good management and faithful donations we continue to thrive. We want to thank and welcome the many new people that have visited us and we hope that you stay and become a part of our community. Thank you for your 2022 pledge and thank you for making this a successful campaign. David Birchfield

WORSHIP COMMISSION

Happy New Year! No, I am not a month early. On the Church calendar, Advent marks the beginning of the new church year. This year we are making this transition period a little more emphatic by switching to the Rite I service for the

four Sundays of Advent. For many of us this will mean using unfamiliar words to express basically the same praises and petitions. This will probably force us to pay a little closer attention to our service bulletins than usual, and that is not a bad thing. In so doing, some of us may discover new shades of meaning in what is otherwise so familiar. In any case, we will return to the Rite II service on Christmas Eve.

On the second Sunday of Advent, December 5, Andrea Pink and Beth Potosky will be admitted to the Order of the Daughters of the King. They have spent the last several months in study and preparation. Please remember Andrea and Beth in your prayers as they enter into a new stage of their Christian journey.

Elaine Fazzaro

FINANCE

Contributions for the month of October were \$1,100 over budget, once again helping to offset part of our deficit budget. We will still end the year with a deficit budget but it will not be quite as significant as we originally expected. Right now we have met our income that was budgeted for year end and that is amazing!

In addition, your pledges for 2022 have put us in a better position for next year as we all have heard how prices are increasing on nearly everything. We will still be working with a deficit budget; however, it will be smaller than this year's deficit.

Each month when I look at our income and expense report I recognize what a loving, caring God we have and how amazing all of you are. Please continue to pray for St. Alban's and continue being the loving, faithful Christians you have always been.

Marilyn Rafter

What are Icons?

By Rose Tinder-O'Brien

Several people at St. Alban's have approached me with questions about icons and my prayer is that many of you will have your questions answered in this article.

The term icon is a transliterated Greek word meaning "image." Jesus, for example, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation (Col. 1:15). Icons of Christ and his saints depict the reality of the Incarnation: because the Son of God became Man, he can be imaged. Christians honor—or venerate—icons, but never worship them, as worship is due the Holy Trinity alone. The honor given to icons passes on to the figure(s) represented on the icon as a means of thanksgiving for what God has done in that person's life.

The next icon Fr. Michael will bless will be "The Veil of Veronica," an image "not made by human hands" but coming from the cloth that wiped Jesus' brow during his Passion. Theotokos, a title for the Virgin Mary, means "God-bearer." St. Luke the Evangelist is given credit for writing (e.g. painting) the first Theotokos image of Mary. "Tenderness" is another major type of icon of the Mother of God, where the cheeks of Jesus the Child and Mother Mary are pressed together tenderly.

"Wonder Working" icons are those associated with miraculous occurrences like healing or sudden conversions. A popular icon of Jesus is called "The Pantocrator," meaning "Ruler of All." A "Deisis" is a supplication grouping with a seated figure of Christ or the Mother of God at its center and saints, angels of prophets bowing on either or both sides of the throne. The spiritual concept behind a "Deisis" image is that of God becoming human so that we might become more like God.

There are specific canons (rules) an iconographer must follow when painting (or writing) an icon, such as standards of measure and proportion, which are precisely adhered to with a steady hand. Artistic originality is actually not the goal in this work of holy image-making. If these rules or canons are not followed then the image becomes simply a religious painting, not an icon in the proper sense of the term. There is a stylistic tradition of removing the realistic depiction of the human form in an icon called "dematerialization" which underscores the fact that icons are meant to communicate spiritual as well as physical realities.

Hopefully, this clears up some of the questions that many of you have shared with me; I will end by asking one of my own. There are two verses in the Gospel of St. John (Jn. 8:6 and 8:8) where Jesus bends down to write on the ground while forgiving the woman taken in adultery. What did Jesus write? Many people refer not to painting icons but to "writing" them (also to "reading" them rather than

to looking at them). Did Jesus write words or images that would be considered icons? Mysteriously, St. John does not say.....

Next month look for: "Writing the Veil of Veronica (a name which, by the way, means simply 'True Image')"



December 5th at noon we will have a St. Nicholas Day celebration in the Parish Hall; it will be a party to usher in the beginning of our Christmas. Celebrations and I've heard there is to be a VERY special guest!!

Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the Parish Hall – Fr. Michael continues to lead a Bible Study on the Book of Genesis, followed by an informal Eucharist. ALL ARE WELCOME!!

ALSO....an **evening Bible Study and Eucharist** will continue on **Thursdays** in the Parish Hall **at 6:30 p.m.** We are currently looking at the Book of Acts. ALL ARE WELCOME



Lunch Bunch will be dining at Green Frog Inn, 820 Spring Street, at 12:30 pm. on Tuesday, December 14th. Please sign up on the sheet on the "Communication Station" bulletin board that is to your right as you leave the sanctuary, indicating if

you will go to the restaurant directly or if you would like to arrange for a ride from St. Alban's.

VESTRY will meet on Tuesday, November 14 at 7:00 p.m.

YOUTH GROUP will meet on Sunday, Dec 12th and 26th at 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

ALTAR GUILD

Altar Guild members will prepare the sanctuary for Christmas on Sunday, December 19th after Sunday service.

Fr. Michael will be out of town on the 27th of December until Tuesday January 4th, 2022. We will be having Morning Prayer on Sunday, Jan 2nd.

Also Please note: The office will be closed on 12-27-2021. Office will reopen on Tuesday, 12-28-2021.

SPECIAL SERVICES:



Christmas Eve Eucharist and Pageant will be at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 24.

Christmas Eve Eucharist – 11:00 p.m.

On this solemn night in the life of the Church we gather together At 11:00 p.m. for a service of worship, adoration and wonder at the great love of God in sending his Son into the world to be our Savior. Incense will be used at this service.

Christmas Day - Eucharist – 9:00 a.m.

Worship with us at 9:00 a.m. on Christmas Day. This simple and peaceful service is a great way to start your Christmas Day.



On Sunday, December 26th, First Sunday after Christmas, we will be celebrating a baptism for Jamie Newport-Haas, grandson to Fr. Michael and Molly Haas.

Church Directories

Updated directories will be sent electronically the first week in December to all members for whom we have e-mail address. If somehow we have missed your contact information, then please tell us. We want the directory as complete as possible. A few hard copies of the directory will be available in the narthex

Contribution Statements

December statements will be sent electronically in December to all members that have e-mails, others will be mailed.

Offering envelopes will be available for 2022 in December. They will be on the table in the narthex next to the stairs.

Deadline for the January newsletter is Thursday, December 17.

December Birthdays

4 Sonja Primeau
7 Gary Pink
10 Norm Grams
11 Jane Spice



18 Jo McMahan
23 Laura Michael
27 Larry Shaw

and Anniversary
21 Ed & Mary Brooks



*If your birthday or anniversary has not been listed,
please notify Debbie at 485-8022, so that we may add your date to our records.*

REMEMBER IN PRAYER ESPECIALLY: Jerry Anderson, Cheryl Banks, Gene Bateman, Mindy Blech, Neal Birchfield, Anthony Branch, Ray Brandes, Denny & Anne Butler, Dick Camp, Vincent Carboni, Pete Cola, Elliot Culwell, Jane Davidson, Kari Doepke, Donna, Kathie Edington, Don Elbrecht, Joey Fazzaro, Mason Feller, Earline Francis, Lawney and Lisa Francis, Chris Foreman, Denise Frede, Glen Grate, Brook Gresback, Fr. Michael Haas, Gary, George Imhausen, Claire Irvine, John Jeffries, Pat Kerlin, Julie Lieb, MJ & Missy, Maureen McMahan, Rick McMahan, Janet McQuain, Carl Michael, Francis and Bobbie Mustapha, Steve Potosky, Canon Henry Randolph, Sandra, Mary Shuman family, Rick Spice, Susan, Mariane Sumners, Melissa Surlles, Betty Wiseheart.

Military: Kaylee Collins, Sean Collins, Matthew Michael, Danny and Robert Scribner.

Vestry Stewardship

Operating Fund

Operating income October	\$ 8,936.31	Operating inc. for 2021	\$ 99,486.56
Operating expense October	<u>11,508.11</u>	Operating exp. for 2021	<u>112,053.31</u>
Net loss for October	(\$2,571.80)	Net loss for 2021	(\$12,566.75)



At the regular meeting of the Vestry on November 16

It was noted that:

- a) Boiler System Issue: Exhaust pipe replacement cost \$675
- b) Update on green bean drive: currently have 9 flats
- c) George discussed donating clothing to National Guard for Afghani refugees Indianapolis.

It was moved that:

- a) Parish Hall lights: Kenny moved to approve replacing the florescent components of the light fixtures of the parish hall, kitchen and stairwell with LED components, with the work being done by George Shamp and the materials covered by a member of the congregation \$305, seconded by Elaine. Passed.
- b) Pricing to replace nursery bathroom: Flooring and installation \$910, plumbing fixtures \$539.19, plumber (Andy Firestine) \$2,000-\$3,000. Total Estimate \$4,449.19 – could potentially save about \$500 by leaving the urinal. Kenny made a motion to approve up to \$4,450 to redo the nursery bathroom, seconded by Cindy. Passed.

New Business:

- a) 2022 Budget approval: Marilyn moved to adopt budget as presented for 2022, seconded by Laura. Passed unanimously.
- b) Nomination Committee: Nominating committee: Cindy, Elaine, Christina and Laura

ST. ALBAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Sunday Eucharist Service: 9:30 a.m. In person or on-line.

Live streaming Service from Saint Alban's YouTube channel! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATo1XzD8KUK>

It will also be posted on our Facebook page and it will be archived on our YouTube channel.

Vestry

Cindy Spice	Senior Warden
John Lorenzen	Junior Warden
Laura Michael	Fellowship
Elaine Fazzaro	Worship
David Birchfield	Stewardship
Marilyn Rafter	Financial
George Shamp	Outreach
Kenny White	Property
Amanda Fazzaro	Christian Formation
Jane Spice	Care Connection
Christina Connelly	Communications Director

Church Staff

Priest-in-Charge	The Rev. Michael Roeske
Office Administrator	Debbie Grosjean

Office Hours

9:00 - 1:00
Monday through Friday

Office phone 485-8022