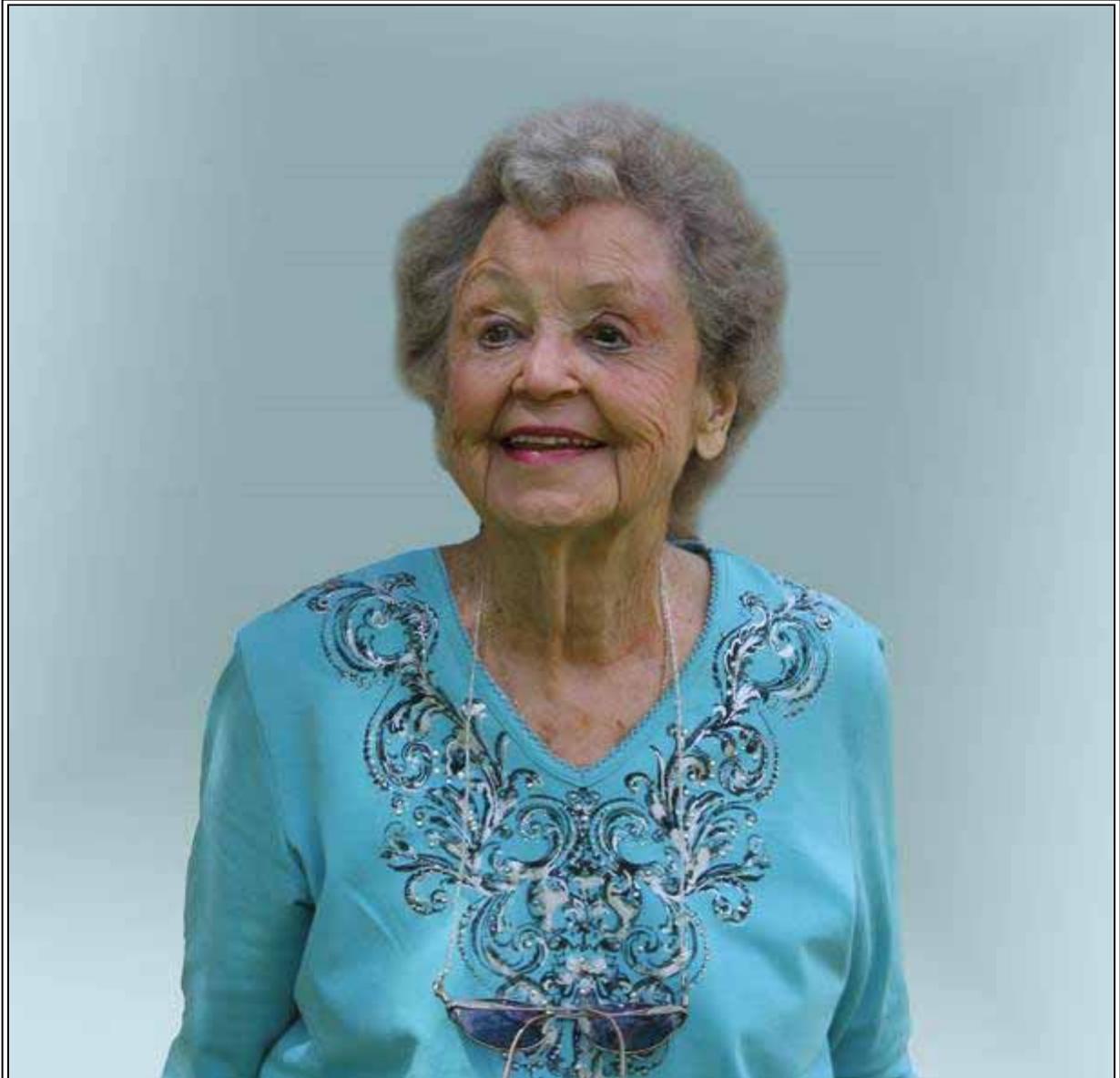




The Albanac

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF ST. ALBAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
5930 Warriors Trail, Bovina, Mississippi
www.stalbansbovina.org

September 2020



In Memory
Bertha Ragsdale Kolb

November 3, 1925—August 1, 2020

*Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,
where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting*

Remembering Bertha Ragsdale Kolb



Bertha was confirmed at St. Alban's Church in May of 1957. After the death of her husband, Charles, she often attended church with her beloved sister, Halley Jo Ragsdale, of Vicksburg. To know them was to love them.

Jim and I met Bertha when we first visited St. Alban's in 2009. We arrived early and settled quietly on the back pew waiting for the service to begin. Bertha saw us enter and immediately came to welcome us and make sure that we had a bulletin. She was so thoughtful and loving that she won our hearts that very day—and, in many ways her influence helped us to find our way back to St. Alban's where we were re-confirmed in 2010. Bertha rarely met a stranger and when greeting people she always wanted a hug or a kiss. For Bertha, hugs and kisses were better than the “pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!”

When I hear the hymn, *Go Forth for God*, I will always be reminded of Bertha. During her lifetime, she went forth for God, to the world in peace—she went forth for God, to the world in love—and she went forth for God, to the world in joy. What a wonderful thing to have shared precious moments with such a special person.

Becky Drake



When I think of Bertha, the word that describes her best is “committed.” To whatever she believed in, she was totally committed. Bertha believed in and loved God’s gift of flowers. She saw to it that flowers were always present at the entrance to the library. However, her biggest commitment was seeing that magnolia trees were planted along the Interstate in Vicksburg.

Bertha believed in music and not only did she sing in the choir, but she was also one of the donors of the new organ in the church. She believed in the Miss Mississippi Pageant and the opportunities it gave to young girls. Every summer Bertha would be seen with huge watermelons and a knife slicing up treats for the girls and their volunteer hostesses. She always honored several of the contestants with a party at her house on the night before the pageant.

Bertha believed in and loved her God. Every Sunday when she wasn’t singing in the choir, she could be found on the right-hand front pew of the church. Bertha you were so loved and will be so missed. I will see you again one day, my friend.

Joan Leese



Bertha was a long-time, very faithful member of St. Alban’s congregation, ECW and choir. Bertha shared responsibility with Carolyn Kitchens for weeknight choir rehearsal at her home. Choir members learned new music, enjoyed refreshments and were ready to sing Sunday morning.

Bertha’s husband Charles “Rip” Kolb joined our choir on Christmas Eve to sing with us in the performance of our Christmas cantata. He had a beautiful voice. For many years, Bertha hosted a Christmas party for the choir. She always welcomed us to her home with delicious party food and a beautifully decorated tree. Charles Kolb played Santa at our Sunday School Christmas party in the Parish Hall and the children thought he was the real Santa! Bertha donated his Santa costume to St. Alban’s and we used it for many years.



Bertha and Charles donated much of the money to purchase our beautiful German-made pipe organ. After his death in 1982, Bertha donated the St. Alban’s stained-glass window in his memory.

Bertha and her sister, Halley Jo, made fresh coconut cakes for us to sell at our ECW Country Market and those cakes were absolutely delicious and always the first to sell. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Beth Guynes

When we were kids, Betsy, Letty, and I, were strongly encouraged to sing in the choir. The choir pews were in front of the congregation. In those days there was no air conditioning, and the windows were open providing many diversions like the train, & bugs flying in to land on people in the congregation. We were silly, but Bertha didn't mind. She was always young at heart. The addition of air conditioning and the choir being located in the rear of the church were big improvements. *Ann Jones*



I was always fascinated by the fact that Bertha had one blue eye and one brown eye. As a little girl, I'm sure I stared at her rudely, but if she minded, she never let on. She would smile at me and stare right back.

Bertha never lost her warmth or Southern charm. She greeted everyone with a big smile and thanked anyone for doing the smallest things for her. She was gracious in offering whatever she had to anyone who needed it. She once lent me a powder blue antebellum gown to wear back when we had re-enactors at Dinner on the Grounds. It was lovely but cumbersome. I never saw Bertha have trouble moving among people in those hoop-skirted dresses, but I knew I was dangerous and never wore another one.

Bertha and her sisters loved to go on cruises, which they did for years and years. They would look forward to their trips, and Bertha and Halley Jo would tell us what they planned to see, and when they got back, would regale us with stories about what they had seen and done. I always imagined that the people on those cruises found them a true force of nature, possibly more so than they'd ever encountered before.

Betsy Selby



Bertha celebrating her 91st birthday with sisters, Haley Jo, Barbara and Martha

St. Alban's Blaze

As we explore the Bible this year, we will talk about how these ancient stories connect to our lives today. How are we part of this story? How do these stories help us understand our own? Throughout the year, we'll feature some of the stories that have helped us find our way or make meaning of things. These stories are like the blazes on a trail—they help show us the way, keeping us on the path.

For our first blaze, we asked Betty Biedenharn, the oldest member of St. Alban's, what her favorite Bible story is. Betty replied, "I like the one about feeding the 5,000 with one small basket of fish." Her daughter Ann, who was sitting next to her, asked, "Why do you like that one? Maybe it reminded you of



Betty surrounded by her seven children: (Bottom L-R) Ann, Letty, Betsy and Eva; (Top L-R) Max, Eric, and Easy

feeding us." Everyone laughed at this. And Betty acknowledged there was some truth to it: "Well, I never knew how many over seven I had. [The children] were so hospitable, they invited people to come eat and to stay and stay. We had several boys who lived with us, I mean literally, for a while..." Betty routinely found herself with her own seven children plus the additional guests they had invited over, some of them as semi-permanent houseguests. And yet, like Jesus in the story of the feeding of the 5,000 rather than seeing this as a burden, she sees the gift of having children who extended hospitality to their friends who might need a meal or even a place to stay. Betty also saw God's grace at work in how resources stretched to meet the needs of her family plus any additional guests.

The story of the feeding of the 5,000 is a blaze for Betty: it reflects how she has come to know how God works in her life. As we read the Bible this year, think about what stories might do the same for you. And if you're feeling inspired, please share your story with The Albanac!

Rev. Elisabeth Malphurs

Snapshots of Church Activities During the Pandemic



On Sunday afternoon, August 9, children and parents attended a children's Eucharist at the outdoor chapel. Rev. Elisabeth read and talked about the story of Jacob's Ladder. The children enjoyed decorating Peace signs for use during the service.

On July 14th, Betty Biedenharn celebrated her 99th birthday at St. Alban's by having communion with family members. Afterwards, Betty entertained everyone by telling her favorite Bible story—"The Feeding of the Five-Thousand."





Donations ready to deliver to *Lifting Lives Ministries*

Drive through backpack blessings for everyone returning to school. Each backpack contained goodies and a reminder that “God’s Got Your Back”



The backpack happies also included little wooden crosses and religious bookmarks

A Matter of Perception

By Dawn Rickard



Many of our perceptions are rooted in the place (or places) we were raised, in addition to family influences. What we view as beauty is also derived from the same things. My childhood was spent primarily in the western United States, in areas that were more arid and not as green as Mississippi. Several of my friends who grew up in the Deep South consider the desert unappealing due to its lack of trees and its dry climate. As lovely as the trees are, I have often responded to those friends that the trees block my view of the horizon. Although that opinion has been made in jest, I do find myself longing for the broad horizons that give me a better view of the sky, especially at dusk.

As beautiful as the trees and waterways are in the South, I will always love the Southwest. Many of my summer days were spent walking in the desert near my home. Truthfully, there is a great deal of brown—the dry earth tends to be that color. I quickly learned, however, that if you just look around, there is color everywhere you look. Vivid oranges and reds bloom on the cactus plants. Because there are so few trees, the sunset sees to melt directly into the mountain backdrop and the earth changes from its dreary brown into a fiery orange, then purple as the sky becomes a glorious red.

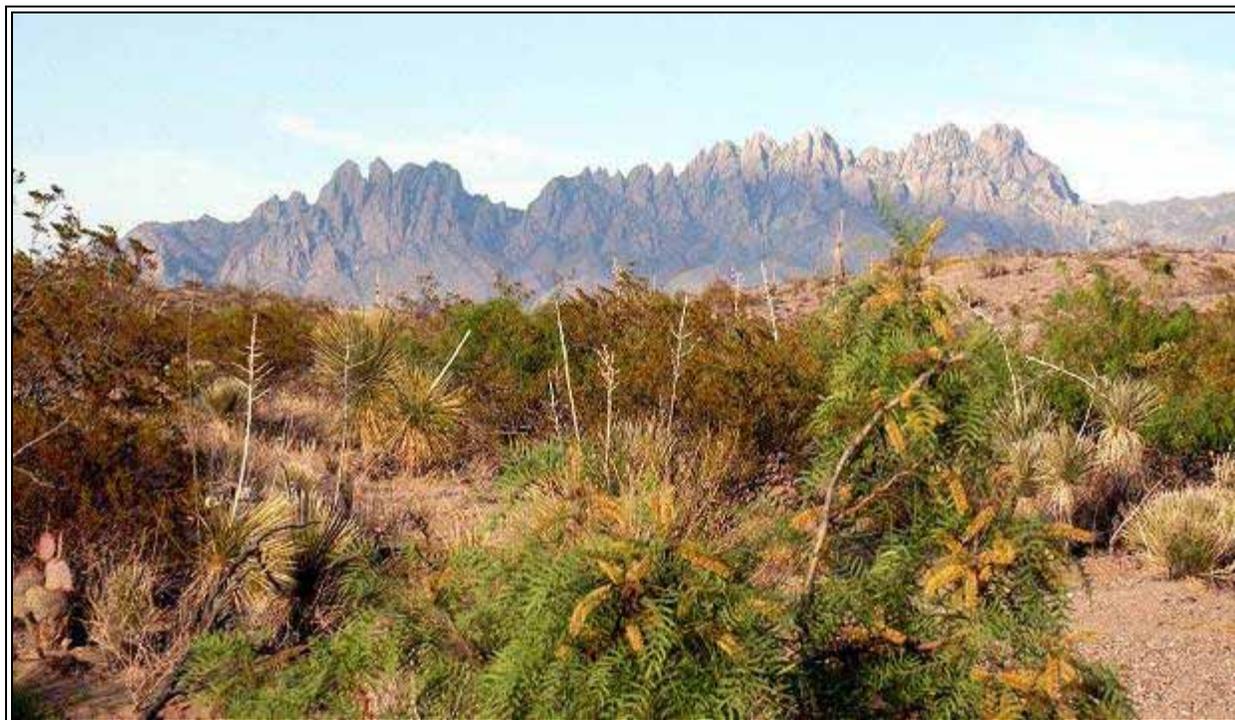
If you simply drive through the desert states, they may seem to lack color. If, however, you take time to stop and spend a little while, really seeing the land, you'll find bold colors bursting all around. I believe those moments largely influenced my faith when I was growing up. Think about it: It might seem that the trees and other

flora in the South are the way the Earth is “supposed” to look. It might be easy to take God for granted, since these are so plentiful.

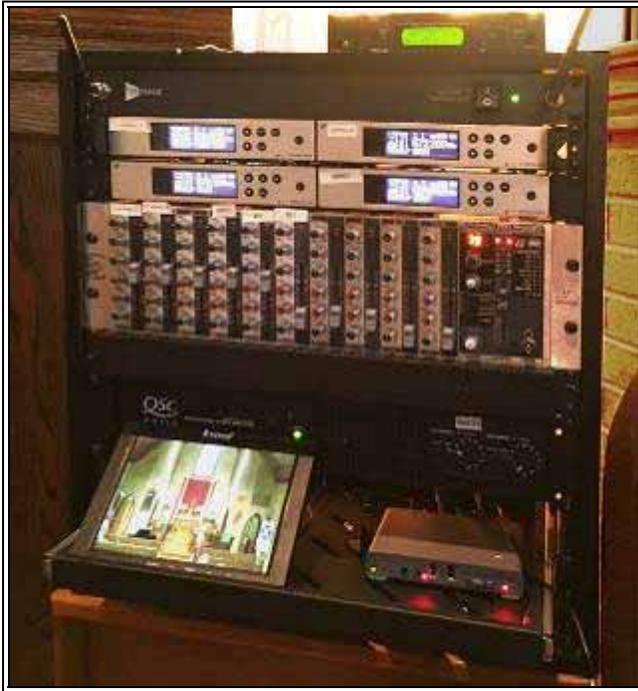
Growing up in the desert made me stand in awe of what God can do. In the vast brown desert, up pops a green cactus bursting with brightly colored flowers. If you take a walk in the desert and enjoy the color appearing in the midst of the arid earth, you can’t help but look skyward and know who made these little miracles. Going beyond their beauty, knowing these prickly cacti hold water that can provide sustenance if you’re stranded and thirsty, it’s clear the Lord definitely is present.

We have been very blessed in this nation. We have such a diverse geography—forests, swamps, ocean shores, beautiful waterfalls, mountains, and deserts. I’ve seen quite a few other countries, many of which are amazing, but this land called America is truly a treasure. It’s easy to understand how earlier Americans could write songs about America’s beauty and God’s grace.

Returning to the theme of ‘perceptions’ that I began with, our deeply rooted ideals also affect the way we perceive other people. Again, America is blessed to have a blended variety of nationalities that make up our population. Sometimes, perceptions about others can impact our ability to interact well with people who appear different from ourselves. Here again, God has created people of many colors and ideologies, and we should always appreciate *His* wisdom and ingenuity, remembering *He* didn’t make any mistakes in *His* creation.



Audio-Visual Upgrades



If you've been watching our worship services from home, you've likely noticed some changes (and some glitches) as we have worked on upgrading the church's audio-visual equipment. When we plunged into this new world of livestreaming our services in March, we did it using nothing more than Elisabeth's phone for several months.

While the phone got the job done, the sound and picture quality weren't very good. Several improvements helped us on that front, including a new MEVO live-streaming camera, a direct connection to our sound system, and the extension of internet cable into the nave (thanks to Chris Price and friends).

Since then, we've launched another series of improvements, including a high quality AViPAS camera, wireless microphones, sound equipment and a 70-inch TV monitor for broadcasting the service into the Parish Hall. This round of upgrades has been directed and installed by our "Tech Team," which includes Bruce Carleton, Jim Drake, Marty Garton, Shane Lauritzen, David May, and Harvey Smith. We are grateful for the many hours of volunteer work that have gone into researching and implementing these improvements.

We are still somewhat limited by our internet service at the church, which is quite slow and has hiccups in the connection at times. Unfortunately, we're at the limits of what our internet service provider can do for us right now. But we are hopeful that most weeks we will be able to livestream the services on Sunday and Wednesday to allow those worshipping from home to participate.

Thank you to everyone who has had a hand in helping St. Alban's improve our digital presence!



Rev. Deacon Josie's Journal



We are in the midst of a war. The enemy is the COVID-19 virus. We must equip ourselves to fight in order not become a casualty of the virus. Now is the time to put on the whole armor of God.

- First—Pray.
- Second—wear your face mask.
- Third—wash your hands, practice good hygiene.
- Fourth—practice safe-distancing.

Why is this necessary? We want to spread the love of Jesus everywhere and we can't do that if we are dead! So, we must armor ourselves and fight this pandemic to the end. We must remain vigilant even when we are tired of wearing a mask, washing our hands and practicing social distancing. The alternative could be a slow agonizing hospital stay without visits from friends or loved ones.

I don't know about you, but I have friends and former students who have died, and I was not able to say goodbye to them. I have not been able to comfort their families. I wear a mask, wash my hands, practice social distancing and pray because I want to be able to worship some time hopefully in the near future with my immediate family and my family at St. Alban's where we can exchange the peace with hugs, tears, and kisses of gratitude.

Love,
Josie

Rev. Elisabeth's Epistle

There is a popular series of preaching commentaries called Feasting on the Word. This phrase, "feasting on the Word," also came to define how I viewed our liturgy during the months when we could only have virtual services. We may not have had the Eucharist, but we gathered together to feast on Scripture and hear God's saving Word. Even now, I am acutely aware that many in our community are going without the Eucharist. Whereas before the coronavirus, we feasted together on Word and Sacrament, in our present circumstances we are by necessity much more focused on the Word.

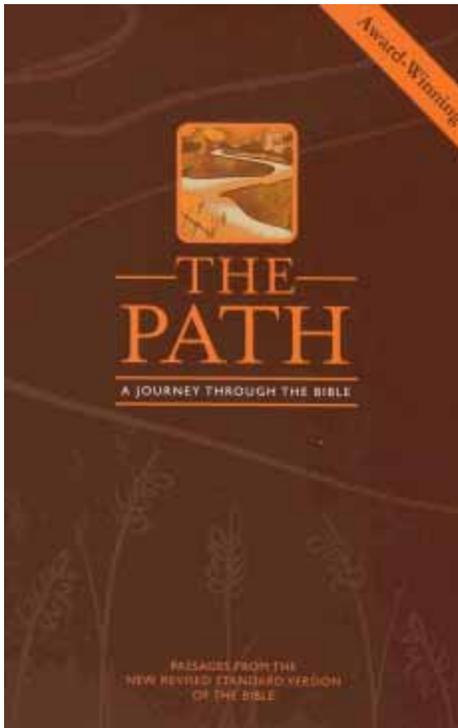
So what better time for us to really dig into that Word as a community? We believe the Holy Scriptures to be inspired by God, and to be one of the ways God continues to speak to us. We've all heard the foundational stories of our faith: Adam and Eve, Noah's ark, Jesus' baptism at the Jordan River. And yet, if you were asked to summarize the Bible, to give an account of how God has been working from the beginning of creation until now, what would you say? How do you understand the Bible as a whole? How do you understand God as revealed in those stories? And how do you understand your place in that story?

Those are some of the questions we're going to ask this year as we follow The Path, a guide to exploring the big picture story that the Bible is telling us about God's relationship with humankind. We start on August 30 with the story of creation. You're invited to explore this story on your own by reading in your own Bible or in The Path, which is an abridged version of the NRSV. The sermon on August 30 will be about the story of creation, and a series of small groups that week for children and adults will focus on exploring the story in more depth. We'll continue with one foundational story from the Bible each week until the beginning of Advent, when we'll take a break until after Christmas. By May, we will have traveled together from Genesis to Revelation. We'll not only know the Biblical story better, but we will be better able to talk about our place in the story as it continues to unfold. Come join us for the journey!

Announcements

The Path: Church-Wide Bible Study

St. Alban's is launching a church-wide focus on knowing and living our story by reading the Bible together this coming program year. All of us, kids to adults, will focus on the same Bible story each week, taking breaks for Advent/ Christmas and Lent/ Easter. Learn more in this video: https://youtu.be/WByf8VkiG_4 And consider getting involved in the following ways:



- Look for the schedule of readings and follow along either in your Bible or in *The Path: A Journey Through the Bible*. *The Path* is the abridged version of the Bible that we're using in our group. Paperback copies are available at the church for a suggested donation of \$15, or as a Kindle version for \$8.
- Listen to the sermon on Sunday mornings, which will relate to our reading of the week.
- Consider joining a small group to talk more about the week's story. We have one in-person small group starting on Tuesday, Sept. 1st, and two online Zoom groups, one during the Sunday school hour on Sunday at 9:30 am and the other Tuesday at 6:30 pm. Call the church for more details about joining one of these groups!

The Sacrament of Communion

If you have been missing communion, we now have some ways of being able to offer it. Rev. Elisabeth and Deacon Josie are making home communion visits, outside if at all possible. Elisabeth is also glad to meet you at the church if you would like to come mid-week for prayer and communion. Please call the church office to arrange for either of these ways of receiving communion.

September Birthdays

2 Dale Gibson	16 Judy Morrissey
Richard Stone	19 A. W. (Del) Price
4 Thomas L. Skinner	21 Lance Stewart
5 Riley Kitchens	24 Jerry McWilliams
7 Josie Williams	Peter Meyers
8 Richard Price	27 Mads Lauritzen
14 Linda K. Walker	28 Genevieve Rushing

September Anniversaries

4 Bobby & Mickey Barlow	24 Andy & Kristi Hall
18 Payton & Lanore Fulgham	25 John Thomas & Amanda Monti

Prayers for the People



Amanda	Cathy	Glenda	Nancy
Ann & Jimmy	Charlie & Family	Jackie	Nita
Anna	Cooper	Jackson	Norma
Ashley	Cynthia	Jeff	Patty
Ava	Dalton	Jimmy B.	Peggy
Barb	Dan & Mary	Jimmy P.	Rachael
Barbara	David	Joan	Rachelle
Beau	Diane	Joseph & Susan	Sara
Betty	Earline	Laurie	Scott
Bill H.	Ed	Lee Davis	Sheila
Bill & Karen	Eugene	Linda	Tom
Bobbie	Evan	Mark	
Brandi	George	Mary Frances	

COVID-19 Schedule

Please call the office if you need help with Zoom

Monday — Friday

Morning Prayer, 8:00 a.m.

Livestreamed on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StAlbansBovina/>

Sunday*

Holy Eucharist Rite I, Parish Hall, 8:30 a.m.

Holy Eucharist Rite II, Nave, 11:00 a.m.

Livestreamed on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StAlbansBovina/>

*Please RSVP for services here: <https://reopen.church/r/hpRZD960>

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. (on Zoom)

Tuesday

Bibles & More, Social time starts at 6:00 p.m. Group from 6:30-8:00 p.m. (on Zoom)

Wednesday

Spiritual 12 Steps Group, 7:30-8:30 a.m. (on Zoom)

Holy Eucharist Rite II with Prayers for Healing, 6:00 pm. Livestreamed on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StAlbansBovina/>

Thursday

Ultreya, 12:00-1:00 p.m. (on Zoom)

Server Schedule

	Sunday September 6	Sunday September 13	Sunday September 20	Sunday September 27
8:30am LWL	Ann Tompkins	Tommy Skinner	Theo Williams	Harvey Smith
11:00am LWL	Betsy Selby	Harvey Smith	Ann Tompkins	Richard Price
	Wednesday September 2	Wednesday September 9	Wednesday September 16	Wednesday September 23
6:00 pm LWL	Theo Williams	Tommy Skinner	Theo Williams	Tommy Skinner