



The Albanac

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

January 2022



St. Alban's Celebrates the Christmas Season

Advent: The Season of Hope & Expectancy



Making Wreaths & Ornaments





Children Enjoy Making Gingerbread Houses





A Visit from St. Nicholas Delights Children



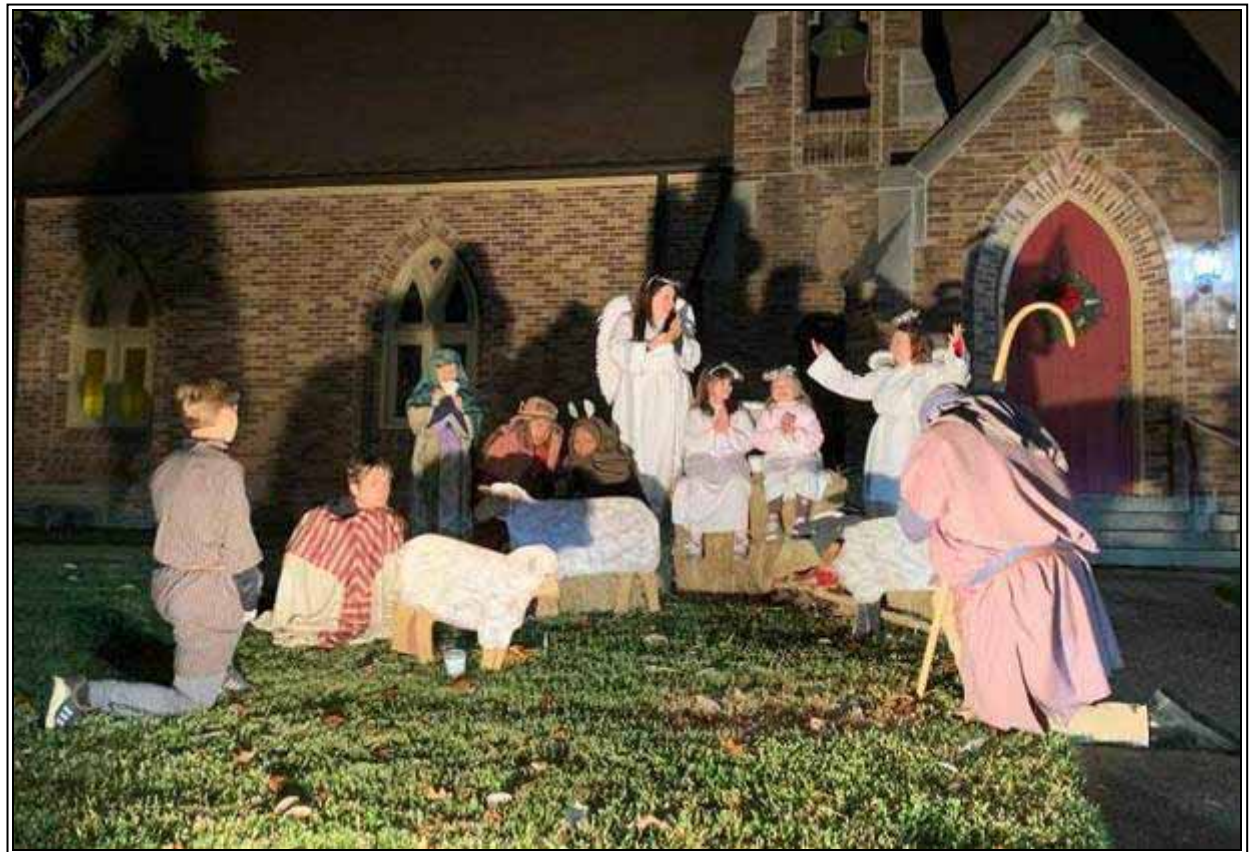
The Living Nativity

St. Alban's brought back the tradition of holding a Living Nativity on Sunday, December 19. A steady stream of cars drove along our luminary lined driveway to see scenes of angels and shepherds, wise men, and the holy family. The living nativity scenes were offered a glimpse of the true meaning of Christmas. Visitors were treated to hot chocolate and hot cider.

Once again, the St. Alban's community worked to make the event a grand success. Clarissa Horner organized volunteers to set up and to play the many roles. The preliminary construction work, the costumed characters, the food preparation, the fellowship, and the clean-up were all parts of the whole, making the Living Nativity a life-giving ministry for our members and guests.

Our volunteers feasted on soup and other treats supplied by church members. Thank you to everyone who chipped in towards this memorable night!





Christmas for Lifting Lives Ministries

It's the Christmas season. We are excited to partner with *Lifting Lives Ministries* to provide gifts and a tree for the homeless families at the Shelter. We were able to provide all the requested items, including: bikes, baby-dolls, toy cars, superhero toys and tablets for the teens. We also gave each family a laundry basket full of needed items: detergent, soap, towels, wash cloths, masks, toilet paper, paper towels, wipes, and Kleenex.

This year we are excited to have more congregation involvement. The congregation helped to buy and wrap gifts and deliver them to the needy families.





Wrapping Presents & Assembling Toys





In Memory
Elizabeth "Betty" Lassiter Biedenham



July 14, 1921 – December 17, 2021

Do You Know the Way Home?

Funeral Homily

Jesus said, *“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.”*

Betty Biedenharn knew the way home. She knew it in every sense. She knew what it was to grow deep, lasting roots in a place, to cultivate a home over a long lifetime of settling down and committing to one community. She knew what it was to grow a home—to add children and animals and friends of children and then spouses of children and then grandchildren and eventually great-grandchildren...to build rooms onto the house to accommodate a growing brood. She also knew what it was to expand the room in your heart, not just for family members, but for ever-expanding circles of friends and church family. She built a home that was brimming with hospitality, with generosity, with laughter, with love. Everyone gathered here today is a testimony to that, to the abundance of her love.

On her 99th birthday, we asked Betty to tell us some stories, and a surprising one emerged about how fast she would drive as she was running errands back and forth to town. She told us about driving a man whose truck was broken down into town and glancing back at him in the back seat only to find him fervently praying as she sped down Hwy 80. Another person who worked at the farm would hear the sound of her car on the gravel road speeding toward them and say, “Here she comes, here she comes!”

I love the image of Betty speeding down the road that led back home...she knew the way home, and she loved her home deeply, so deeply she just couldn’t wait to get back. In these last months, as she made trips to the hospital, her persistent question was always when she could go home. I think that once she made it back home this last time, part of her couldn’t bear to leave the place she had loved so much, the sounds and smells and familiar people that surrounded her in her last beautiful weeks. She took her time saying her goodbyes.

But thing is, Betty also knew the way home in the larger sense. She didn’t just know the way back to the farm, as much as she loved it and as much as her life revolved around it and her family. The farm was one center of her life, but this church was the other. Part of me still expects to look up and see Betty in her pew, to see her light up as she greeted people, or received communion. This church and her faith were her bedrock. The Psalm we read together, Psalm 121, was her favorite. Betty told us that she said that psalm to herself as she sat on her porch, looking out at the hills around her house. “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help? My help cometh even from the Lord who hath made heaven and earth...The

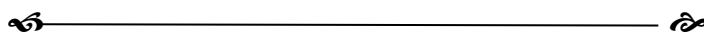
Lord himself is thy keeper...it is even he that shall keep thy soul.” In other words, Betty knew who she belonged to, and where her permanent home was. She knew that this earthly home and this church were just some of the many dwelling places in her Father’s house. She knew there would come a day when Jesus would come and lead her all the way home, directly into the presence of God.

She knew that her eternal home was not on this earth. That was another story we told on her 99th birthday. We talked about her dear sister Letty, about how different the two of them were, even though they were twins. About how Letty was outgoing and how she was always running late. Betty said she spent her entire life waiting for Letty. We joked that day that now the tables were turned and Betty was the one who was keeping Letty waiting. Betty loved that. But the reality was that Betty herself was getting tired of waiting. As much as she loved her family and friends who surrounded her here in this world, she missed her family and friends who had gone on to the next. She was ready for her reunion with not only Letty, but also her husband, and others. That is the particular beautiful ache of living to age 100, that, even as you are surrounded by loved ones, there are so many more who have passed on to Jordan’s farther shore.

There is no more waiting for Betty. That is at the heart of why we gather today. Her wait is over. She knew the way home. She knew that 100 years in this life is a short prelude to what is to come. And yet how well she spent her 100 years among us. How well she built a family and a home and a church. How wide and deep is her legacy of hospitality and generosity. But Betty has been called home. In the words of Henry van Dyke, in his poem, *Gone from My Sight*, “just at the moment when someone says, ‘there, she is gone,’ there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, ‘here she comes!’”

Here she comes! Here she comes! We bid her Godspeed in her journey and pray through the grace of God that we will see her soon.

*Rev. Elisabeth Malphurs
December 28, 2021*



Saying Goodbye to the Southall Family



Michael & Sally Southall and their children, Harris & Mary Michael, have been communicants at St. Alban's for over a decade. Recently, due to a job transfer, they announced that they are having to resettle in Atlanta. Church members have so many memories of their time spent at St. Alban's—Michael & Sally helping with church activities, (especially Dinner on the Grounds) and Mary Michael & Harris as members of the Sunday School class. Their cheerfulness and willingness to participate in all church activities will never be forgotten. So, it is with a smile and a prayer that we bid them farewell and wish them all the happiness in the world as they continue life's journey.

Rev. Elisabeth's Epistle

As this year comes to a close, and a new year begins, I am tired but grateful. I have been thinking back on all that we have been through together as a church community the past year, and I'm not sure whether I want to laugh or cry, or both. I want to cry when I think of some of the amazing people we've lost, some to cross-country moves and some who've crossed to Jordan's farther shore. But then I think about some of the wonderful experiences we've had together: all of our outdoor celebrations this year as we tried to stay one step ahead of the coronavirus; our joy as we have seen more and more people coming back after receiving their vaccinations; and even the pure delight that Salome, the church kitty, has brought us. This has been a year for the history books, and I am proud that we have not only weathered it together but have continued to reach out in care and concern for our neighbors.

One of the things I didn't realize when I was called to St. Alban's was how many different hats I would get to wear in any given week. In addition to worship leader and spiritual counselor, I have developed skills in wildlife management and figuring out just how much of an emergency any given leak is. But my favorite additional role is tour guide of our beautiful church and grounds. Last week a couple from Texas stumbled across our church as they were looking for a place to have a picnic lunch on their way back home. After we talked, I invited them inside to look around and even ring the bell. It is in showing people around that I remember how much our church has been through, how much history has come and gone, and how God has graced St. Alban's with the endurance to keep preaching the Gospel in unsteady and uncertain times. No matter what the new year brings, good, unexpected, or disappointing, St. Alban's will continue to be a beacon in our community of the steady and unfailing presence of God with us.

Bishop to Visit January 9

Bishop Seage is visiting St. Alban's on Sunday, January 9 for the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord. We will hold one service at 10:00 am. The youth of the church will be meeting with the Bishop prior to the service and everyone is welcome to stay after the service for a reception with the Bishop.

Annual Parish Meeting & Vestry Nominations

The Vestry has set the date for our Annual Parish Meeting for Sunday, February 6, following one combined service at 10:00 am. As we did last year, we will have the option for people to join the annual meeting via Zoom. More instructions concerning voting will be sent out as we get closer to the meeting.

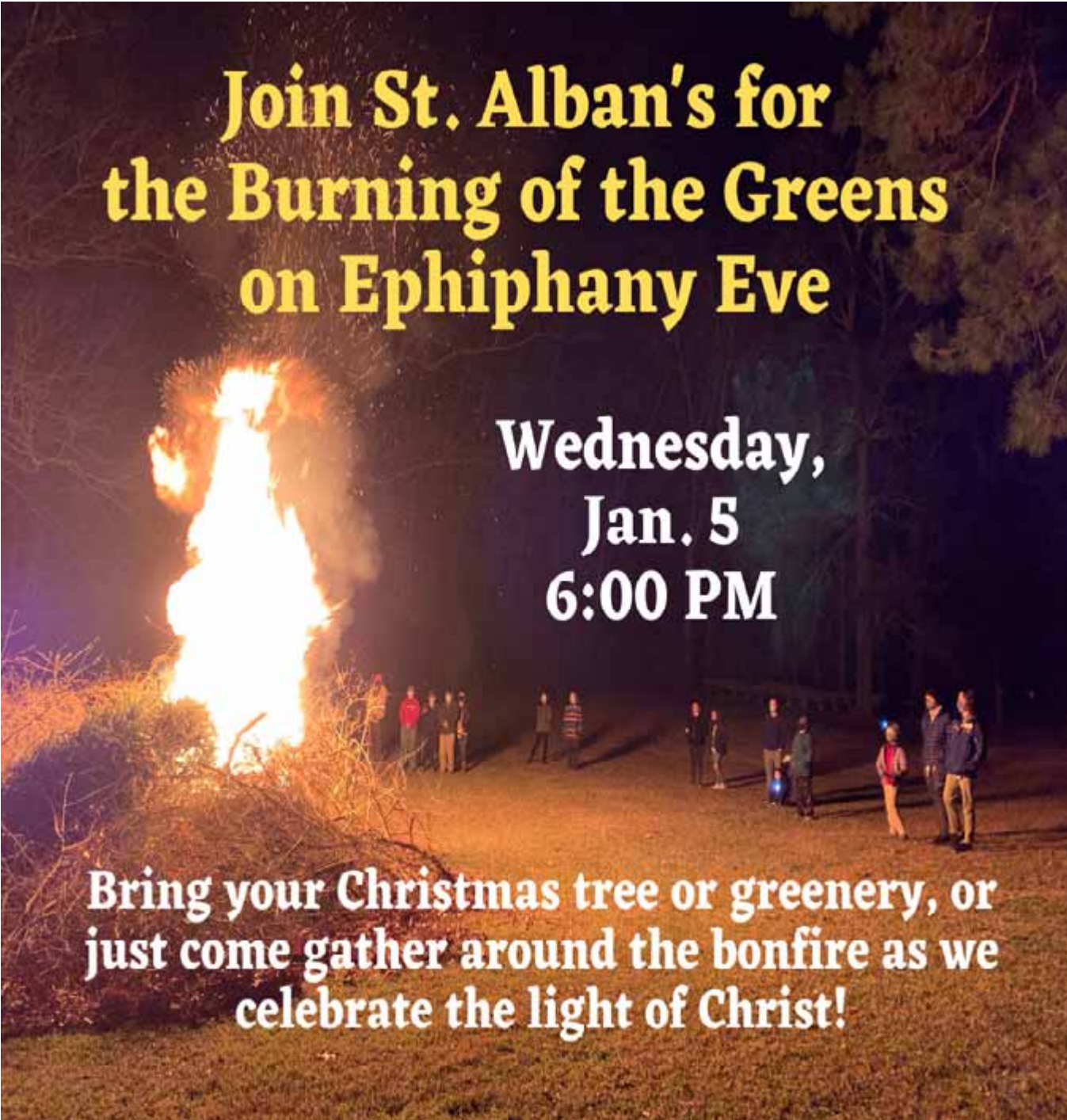
The Vestry Nominating Committee has nominated Penny Freund for Senior Warden (Elect one to serve a 2-year term) and Jeff Artman and Carolyn Gent of the Vestry (Elect two to serve 3-year terms). Nominations are still open; however, if you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for a Vestry position, please don't wait until the last minute. Serving on the Vestry is a responsibility that requires prayerful consideration, on the part of those being called to serve and those electing. If you have questions about the guidelines for serving on the Vestry, please speak with Senior Warden, Richard Price.

Altar improvements



The altar in the nave could use some cleaning, oiling and improvements. The top level of the altar where the flowers and tabernacle sit is water stained and has an unfinished warped board that is attached to the back of the altar.

The Vestry has approved a minor alteration that involves a complete overlay on the top level of the altar with a finished oak board, stained and varnished to match the existing altar. This will raise the top level $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch, making it match the level of the Credence table. We should have the overlay finished in the next few weeks and will install it temporarily on the altar, pending final approval by the Vestry.

A large bonfire of branches and greenery is burning brightly at night, casting a warm glow. A group of people, including children and adults, are gathered around the fire in a grassy area. The background is dark with silhouettes of trees.

**Join St. Alban's for
the Burning of the Greens
on Epiphany Eve**

**Wednesday,
Jan. 5
6:00 PM**

**Bring your Christmas tree or greenery, or
just come gather around the bonfire as we
celebrate the light of Christ!**

195th Annual Council in Natchez
January 28–30, 2022



Annual Council, which is the annual meeting of the Diocese of Mississippi, is being hosted by Trinity Episcopal Church in Natchez in celebration of their 200th anniversary over the weekend of January 28–30, 2022.

Council business meetings will be held at the Natchez Convention Center, in the heart of downtown Natchez. The Convention Center is conveniently located within a few minutes' walk of a number of restaurants, hotels, bed and breakfast establishments and shopping.

Dunleith antebellum home will be the site of the Saturday evening social gathering. In addition, we hope that you will join us at Trinity Church during the Saturday lunch break to celebrate 200 years as a congregation. It will be a festive occasion! The closing Eucharist Service on Sunday will be held at Trinity Church at 10:00 a.m.

In addition to Rev. Elisabeth and Deacon Josie, St. Alban's will be sending three delegates to Annual Council—Janice Herrington, Betsy Selby and Kerri Williams. Other members planning to attend as visitors are welcome and encouraged to come down to Natchez, especially for the closing Eucharist on Sunday morning, January 30. If you want to participate in the other events of Council as a visitor, you will need to register by going to the Diocesan website. You do not need to register to attend the closing Eucharist—as we get closer, watch the announcements for the time and location.

January Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 3 Lynda Hubbard | 19 Kenon Ruska |
| 4 Richard Selby | 26 Anna Selby |
| 8 Mary Carleton | 27 Betsy Selby |
| 17 Sergio Panelo | 29 Susan Price |
| 18 Virginia Rue Selby | |

Prayers for the People

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Allan & Joan | Charlie & Family | Jacob | Nita |
| Amanda | Cynthia | Jeff & Darlene | Norma |
| Ann & Jimmy | Dan & Mary | Jeff H. | Pat |
| Ashley | David | John & Lynn | Phil & Sally |
| Barbara | Diane | Kelley | Ria |
| Ben | Earline & L.J. | Loretta | Ricky |
| Bill & Karen | Estella | Mack | Ruth |
| Bob | Gary | Marcia | Sharon |
| Bryan & Jessica | Isabel, MK & Ted | Mike B. | Steve |
| Charlene H. | Irv | Mike & Family | Theresa |
| Charlene P. | Jackson | Nanette | Willie |

For the departed: Betty Biedenharn and Irene Cook



Weekly Events

Sunday

Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:30 am
Holy Eucharist Rite II, 11:00 am*
Sunday School, 9:30 am

Monday — Wednesday—Friday

Morning Prayer, 8:00 am*

Tuesday

Bibles & More, Social time starts at 6:00 pm Group from 6:30-8:00 pm

Wednesday

Spiritual 12 Steps Group, 7:30-8:30 am
Holy Eucharist Rite II with Prayers for Healing, 6:00 pm.*

Thursday

Ultreya, 12:00-1:00 pm

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

Event Calendar

Wednesday, January 5—Eve of Epiphany with Burning of the Greens, 6:00 pm

Sunday, January 9—Bishop's Visitation, 10:00 am (talk to Rev. Elisabeth if you're interested baptism, confirmation, or reception into the church)

Sunday, February 6—Annual Parish Meeting, following ONE service at 10:00 am*

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



Photography credits for this issue of the Albanac:
Rev. Elisabeth, Rebecca Drake, Jim Drake, Richard Price

Server Schedule

| Date | | Lay Worship Leader | Lector | Ushers | Chalice | A/V System |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------|--------------|
| Sunday 1/2/2022 | 8:30 AM 11:00 AM | Tommy Skinner Ann Tompkins | Sharon Cummins Beth Guynes | Jim Price The Artmans | Harvey Smith | Jim Drake |
| Wednesday 1/1/2022 | 6:00 PM | Theo Williams | | | | Harvey Smith |
| Sunday 1/9/2022 | 10:00 AM | Harvey Smith | Bishop Visit Richard Price | Jim Price Dawn Rickard | Theo Williams | Buck Cooper |
| Wednesday 1/12/2022 | 6:00 PM | David Pruett | | | | Harvey Smith |
| Sunday 1/16/2022 | 8:30 AM 10:00 AM | Tommy Skinner Richard Price | Ann Tompkins Buck Cooper | Jim Price The Halls | Lance Stewart | Harvey Smith |
| Wednesday 1/19/2022 | 6:00 PM | Tommy Skinner | | | | Harvey Smith |
| Sunday 1/23/2022 | 8:30 AM 11:00 AM | Theo Williams Harvey Smith | Beth Sojourner Sharon Hanks | Jim Price Ann Tompkins Dawn Rickard | Dawn Rickard | Buck Cooper |
| Wednesday 1/26/2022 | 6:00 PM | Theo Williams | | | | Harvey Smith |
| Sunday 1/30/2022 | 8:30 AM 11:00 AM | Ann Tompkins David Pruett | Morning Prayer | Jim Price Dawn Rickard Lance Stewart | | Jim Drake |