



The Albanac

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

May 2020



“Alleluia! Christ is Risen!”

Keep Your Eyes on the Cross

Rev. Elisabeth Malphurs

As we set out to plan a Holy Week and Easter like none we've ever lived through, the planning team kept getting stuck. How would we share the different moods of Holy Week—the triumph of Palm Sunday, the despair of Good Friday, the surprising joy of Easter—without being able to invite anyone into our beautiful church? Then someone had an idea... how about using the cross at our outdoor chapel as a symbol of our Holy Week journey?

On Palm Sunday, the cross was draped in royal purple and accented with



palms, a sign of our welcome of Jesus into our hearts and homes, even as he was welcomed into Jerusalem and hailed as a king. As the week went on, the palms drooped, appropriately, it seemed, as we approached Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and our Messiah was crucified.

Then, on Saturday evening at dusk, the cross was transformed yet again. This time, the purple was replaced by white, symbol of our baptisms, reminder of those linen cloths found in the empty tomb.



To remind us that “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:5), the cross was surrounded by luminaries, which led all the way up the St. Alban’s driveway. Through the night, the luminaries pierced the darkness, a visible reminder that no matter how dark the world around us seems to get, we are guided by the light of Christ.

The outdoor cross has been a visible sign of our journey this Lent and Easter, a journey that has not been confined to the church, but has taken place out in the world, wherever our lives find us right now.



Easter Sunday with Rev. Elisabeth and Lance Stewart, musician



Rev. Elisabeth and family, Andrew, Buck & Henry, celebrate a virtual Easter Sunday

Embracing Change

By Dawn Rickard

It seems the world has changed in ways most of us would never have imagined. We've been living in what feels like a science fiction movie – people wearing masks to go to the grocery store, avoiding contact with each other, businesses closed to prevent further spread of the virus, stores that remain open counting the number of people as they enter. We see few, if any planes in the sky, fewer cars on the roads. I know I never would have believed an Easter Sunday when no one was in any of the churches. Finally, we were just adjusting to the new “normal” when our state was bombarded by a series of deadly tornadoes.

It made me wonder...how the world must have seemed to change so drastically for the Apostles and other who loved Jesus when he was killed. There was great fear, as well as sorrow, just as we've experienced those same emotions. There has been fear at what will happen, how will we survive without jobs, without being able to check on people we love, even fear at whether we would ever return to normal.

When Mary discovered the empty tomb and shared this curious news, the world was again different for them. Jesus appeared and showed her he was alive. After she shared the news with the apostles, they found their world filled with hope and promise. I pondered these thoughts as I walked outside one day in the sunshine. A cool breeze was blowing, and I felt God's promises as I admired the fresh green of the grass and the leaves on the oak trees. The day lilies and snapdragons in my yard were blooming in brilliant colors, reminding me that the world hasn't ended. Life will return to some semblance of what it was, perhaps with a few changes to our usual practices. Perhaps we'll be more cautious in our daily outings. We will, however, gradually regain our bearing and adjust to our “new normal.”

In a similar way, the people who loved the man Jesus had to adapt to their new normal. Their teacher had died, but their Messiah, their savior was still alive in a different way than they had known. In fact, even as they felt apprehension and wonder at their new normal, they were filled with awe and comfort, seeing for themselves the fulfillment of the things he had told them.

Even though we cannot put our hands in his side and prove to ourselves it's really him, as Thomas did, we look around at the signs of renewal and rebirth. We can take comfort amid a chaotic world that He is present. We have not been forsaken.

He is present in our daily lives, now and always.

Shelter In Place

By Richard Price, Senior Warden

While we look forward to resumption of services and activities at St Alban's, it's becoming more obvious that we won't be returning to pre COVID-19 conditions. We will be receiving guidance from the Bishop on how to proceed with services, so in the meantime, here are some of the questions we have been considering.

What will services look like? Prior to COVID-19, we were seeing attendance at the early service of 15-20 and 60+ at the 11:00 a.m. service. Will we have to limit the number attending to maintain six feet distance during services? Maybe designate "Holy space" between pews or along pews to maintain a safe distance?

How will we handle communion? Will we have to change the offertory to limit passing the plate? Will we need to place a box or plate near the door so worshipers can place their offering and the ushers can bring it forward during the offertory?

The virtual online services have been very good and enjoyed by some who have not been able to attend in the past (think extended family and members living out of state) and we may want to continue with some form of online broadcast once services resume.

Will special events, like baptisms, weddings and funerals, require changes to the service? Processions in the aisle may expose many worshipers to close contact and special provisions might be needed to ensure safe distances.

How are we going to sanitize and sterilize the church building between services? We may need to have cleaning supplies near entry ways and designated cleaners following services to sanitize doors, pews, etc.

Like so many churches, we enjoy coffee and gathering after each service, will we be able to serve coffee and visit? Oh, and the food, we've always had such excellent cookies, cakes, and assorted other treats after church. Will we be able to continue these?

Finally, a few comments about our fiscal status. Some areas of our routine operations have dropped below budget, such as altar flowers, however most budget items continue as budgeted and our income has been sufficient to cover our expenses, for the time being. Many of you have continued to maintain your pledge by mailing or dropping off your check at the church. We very much appreciate you getting your financial support to the church and we thank you. I would also like to commend our Finance Committee, treasurer, John Bonar and church administrator, Ann Tompkins for their outstanding work in monitoring and assessing our fiscal wellbeing.

Thanks be to God!

Keeping St. Alban's Beautiful (and Functional)

By Shane Lauritzen, Junior Warden

We would like to take a moment to thank a few of our members who have donated their time during this complex environment to help with projects on our grounds, church, and rectory.

Jim Drake made new letters for our outdoor cross and Buck Cooper installed them along with applying some serious elbow grease to cleaning up the cross and outdoor chapel.

Jane and Buddy Hanks planted new gorgeous arrangements in the flower beds in the middle of the ramp.



Richard Price oversaw the installation of new windows at the rectory; this has been quite a process and with help from Richard and others we have saved a good chunk of money on these repairs. These are just a few highlights of the many people who are pitching in to keep us going. If you are interested in helping out with some maintenance or have a particular project that you'd like to do, please contact me.

St. Alban's Financial Report

By John Bonar, Treasurer

It has been brought to my attention that some of our parishioners are concerned about the financial health of the Church during this unprecedented time of stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Let me assure you that, while we have not been able to meet at the church for our regular Sunday or Wednesday services, our parishioners have continued to faithfully find ways to continue giving on a regular basis and the church continues to be in very good financial condition.

As I reported to the Vestry in its April meeting, the church has on hand more than sufficient unrestricted cash reserves to see us through an extended period of cash flow shortfalls due to disruption of our normal operations from the pandemic. In addition, we are currently ahead of our 2020 budget in both pledged and unpledged receipts for our normal operations as well as receipts for designated gifts. Capital Campaign receipts are also well ahead of the budget which has allowed us to significantly reduce our construction loan at Guaranty Bank and Trust. This highly commendable level of giving by our community has continued through the first three weeks of April.

We have received several requests for suggestions on how our parishioners can more easily give to the church in a time when the church's normal services have been interrupted and the church is closed during the week. The following three methods of giving have been used by several of our members quite successfully:

1. **Mail** – you may mail your donation to
St. Albans Episcopal Church
5930 Warriors Trail
Vicksburg, MS 39180
2. **Direct donation through the Church's website.**
 - a. Go to St. Alban's webpage, <http://stalbansbovina.org>
 - b. Click on the **Donate Button** at the bottom of the page.
 - c. Select PayPal or Debit or Credit Card.
 - d. Under "Add a Note" – add designated purpose: Pledge, Capital Campaign or Other (such as Local Outreach, etc).
 - e. Click on the **Donate Now** Button.
3. **Bill Pay through your Bank** – Bancorp South, Trustmark Bank, Guaranty Bank, Riverhills Bank, and Mutual Federal Credit Union all offer Bill Pay. This feature is available through the bank's website or online banking App. Via Bill Pay, you can instruct your bank to issue a check directly to St. Alban's along with instructions such as Pledge, Capital Campaign, or other purpose.

May the Lord be with you and keep you safe.

Calling All Gardeners

By Susan Price & Tommy Skinner

What a beautiful new updated and expanded interior we have now! Many structural problems and maintenance needs were also addressed during the construction. As a necessary consequence of these actions, we now have a blank slate around the church in terms of landscape plants. This is good news!

In the late winter, the wardens and Elisabeth met to generate plans of action in several areas. One result was that Tommy Skinner and I were asked to head up a landscape committee to develop a landscape plan that will be implemented in stages. The thought behind this action is not just to put some pretty plants in, but to plan what and where to plant with thought given to plants that are indigenous to the area as well as those which historically are used in the South and what might have been seen around churches and homes in the 19th century and early 20th century. In other words, plants that have proven to be not only beautiful, but hardy enough to tough it out in our summer blast furnace!

The following is list as goals requested by the vestry.

1. Create a specific plan for the church foundation plantings. This will plan will designate specific plants to be used and their placement.
2. Plant new small trees around the entire property which will grow and be there as we have the normal attrition of older trees.
3. Demolish the creepy old lawnmower shed behind the church.
4. Address the brush pile near the play area.
5. Work on the Weissinger memorial bird sanctuary. Thin encroaching plants and plant additional bird food producing plants.

Below are a few brainstormed ideas that Tommy and I see as possible improvements.

1. In the cemetery, plant ornamental plants that are extra hardy, low maintenance and most likely seen in historic cemeteries. This work must be done with consideration to mowing, maintenance and leave adequate passage areas for future burials.
2. Reincorporate part of the old cemetery that has grown up around one of our huge cedars behind the church.
3. Do some updating of shrub plantings along the drive.
4. Create a labyrinth.
5. Create a Camellia memory garden off of the cemetery.
6. Create a Bible garden of plants mentioned there or have become symbolic (think passion vine, or dogwood etc)

To accomplish any of these goals, we need more than two people involved. Consider what you may have to offer to help create a specific plan to be our planting guide as well as the other goals listed. Perhaps you have some ideas to add and or enjoy gardening and want to be involved?? If that is the case, we want and need you!!! Please contact Susan Price 601.831.3106 so that you too, can help lead this effort to enhance our beautiful St. Alban's.

Lifting Lives Outreach During COVID-19

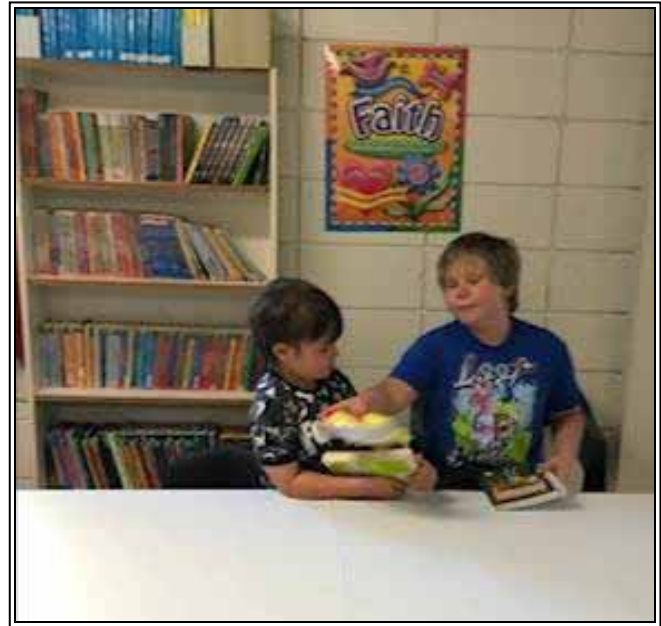
By Stacy Weaver

Lifting Lives outreach may look different during this uncertain time, but St. Alban's still brings a little brightness into their week. The weekly story-time has been canceled due to social distancing guidelines.

Instead of meeting as a group, I drop off snack and craft bags every Thursday. The snack bags are filled with protein-rich snacks that are prepared or microwavable because the residents don't have kitchens.

While we cannot do activities together, the children receive craft kits that they can do on their own. The children and their families all appreciate these diversions while they cannot go to school.

The children are excited to see me even with my new fashion accessories: mask, gloves and Lysol! They can't wait to get in the room to choose new books and are always excited about the snack bags and crafts.



I open the story-time room for one family at a time to get books from the library so they can continue to develop their reading skills. There are more children attending than usual because we now see others who would normally be in childcare or after-school care. Our average story-time attendance was around 10–15, but I now hand out 24 snack and craft bags weekly.

It has been a light in this darkness to see the resilience of the children during this crisis. They are still full of smiles and boundless energy. They adapted to the new normal and are making the best of the situation. The children at *Lifting Lives* are touched weekly because of the generous giving of St. Alban's community.

“Here I am, Lord”

By Betsy Selby

Since first coming to St. Alban’s three years ago, Natalie Blair Harris, her mom Amanda and her aunt Laurie have endeared themselves not only to my family but to the rest of our community as well.

This sweet young lady loves to participate in anything and everything at church and at school, and she does so with lots of enthusiasm, a smile on her face and a bounce in her step. She truly never meets a stranger and her attitude is contagious!



I’ve asked her the following questions over the past three years and have always gotten a yes:

Would you like to be a lector in church?

Would you like to help with the little ones in the nursery?

Would you like to be a confirmed as a member of St. Alban’s?

Could you help me with the luminaries?

We need help at *Dinner on the Grounds*.

Could you help with (fill in the blank)?

We’re doing (whatever) with Holy Trinity. Would you like to be part of that?

Our young people are meeting in Port Gibson. Would you like to go?

Would you represent our convocation at *Annual Council* in Tupelo?

Would you like to go to *Happening* in Jackson?

Would you like to go to the DOY (Division of Youth) weekend at camp?

Blair has multiple health issues, which nobody would ever know about until we’re asked to pray for her and none of which seems to hold her back for long. She was looking forward to seeing her friends from *Happening* and learning more about the Episcopal Church at DOY. Unfortunately, that weekend and summer camp were

cancelled because of the pandemic, but we're already talking about her being able to be on camp staff next year.

This spring, Blair will be graduating from River City Early College and Hinds Community College, Vicksburg Branch. In the fall, she will be attending Mississippi College, accompanied by Kimchi, her Labahoula service dog. At present, Kimchi is in West Monroe, Louisiana, finishing her service training at Delta K9 Solutions. Once Kimchi receives her certification, she will be able to accompany Blair to college as well as to South Korea when Blair becomes an exchange student.



Blair loves our Lord and has a soul for service. I'll be forever grateful that she and her family came to St. Alban's and have made us their church family.



When Blair starts to feel bad, Kimchi climbs on her stomach and applies pressure; the pressure treatment helps to stop the tremors!

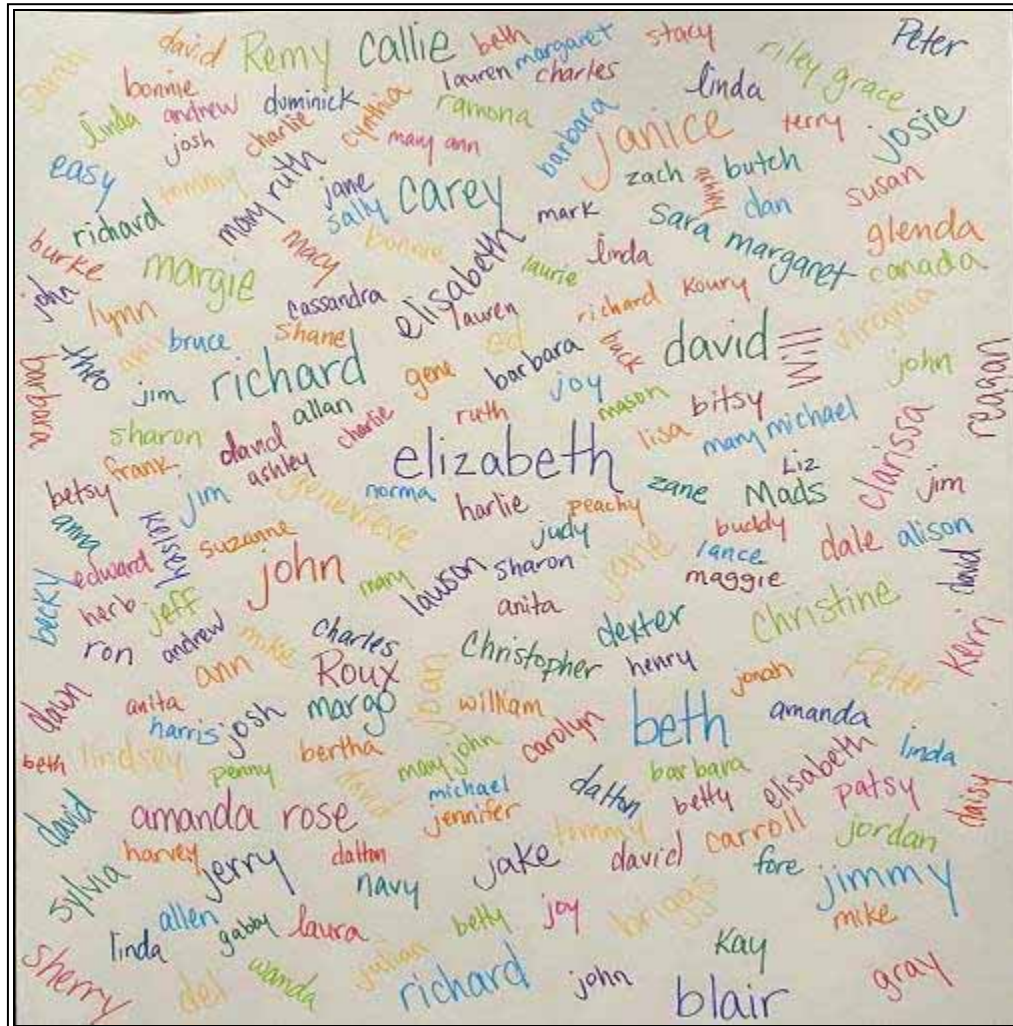
Rev. Elisabeth's Epistle

We've been reading through the book of Exodus in daily morning prayer, and each morning I am struck by what the Spirit might be saying to us in our current context through these ancient words. Exodus tells us the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Each morning, we have read some of the highlights of this part of our salvation story: Moses' birth and dramatic rescue from the river; the plagues; the first Passover; the parting of the Red Sea; and now the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites. Our world feels a bit like the wilderness these days—strange and unfamiliar! But just as God sent Moses to lead the people to the promised land, God sent Jesus, the one we refer to as “our Passover,” to lead us through any wilderness we find ourselves in. In the midst of our current crisis, here is what the Spirit has been whispering to me through our Exodus readings:

- God hears the cries of God's people. Then and now, when people are hurting, God hears and is working for our freedom—freedom from fear, from anxiety, from illness and death.
- God works through us, frail and fallible though we are. Moses protested God choosing him to lead the people out of Egypt. And yet Moses and Aaron, like you and me, are the leaders God picks. We each have a responsibility in this current crisis, a responsibility to be good neighbors, to seek the welfare of all. I try to remember this when I stay home instead of going out, or when I wear a mask out in public.
- Freedom is a process, and it takes time. The Israelites are led out of slavery in Egypt only to be led into the wilderness. Coronavirus is not going to go away in an instant. We are in the process of learning how to live with this new reality, even while we pray for therapeutic treatments and a vaccine.
- God provides sustenance in the wilderness. Sometimes we have trouble recognizing that God is providing, because the food is strange and unfamiliar, like manna was to the Israelites. But God is providing ways for us to connect with each other and blessings in the midst of this strange time.

The Exodus and the time in the wilderness became touchstones of our salvation story because they reveal so much about how God chooses to be in relationship to us. My prayer is that our current time in the wilderness of the world shaped by coronavirus will be a time in which we experience a deepening of our relationship with God. May we know that God, through Jesus Christ, is with us in our wilderness, and may we come to a deeper dependence on and trust in God.

Josie's Journal



I wanted to make a “word cloud” featuring the names of all of St. Alban’s parishioners. However, I could not find a program online to accomplish the project. Kerri decided to use her coloring pens to create a list. We used the listing of names in the church directory to be sure we didn’t leave anyone’s name off. Can you find your name?!

Staying at home week after week as we “shelter in place” can be a challenge but, to quote Philippians 4:23, “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*” I will hold all of you in my heart until we can safely worship together again. Remember to tell those you love that you love them.

I LOVE YOU (add your name)!!!!!!!!!!!!

Josie

May Birthdays

2 Robin Price Touns	17 Carey Price
4 Christopher Price Bitsy Sloan	18 John Tompkins
5 Tanner Kitchens	19 Dan Carleton Amanda Rose Price
10 Colby Langford Grant Touns	24 Dalton Glatt Gloria Hall
11 Brantley Dunaway	27 Ben Porter Jim Dooley
15 Gabby Rushing	
16 Matthew Guynes	

May Anniversaries

4 Easy & Mary John Biedenarn	29 Richard & Susan Price
18 Carey & Amanda Price	30 Michael & Sally Southall
22 Buddy & Jane Hanks	

Prayers for the People

For those Sick or in Need:

Ann & Jimmy Jones	David Wright	Linda Dooley
Ava Ahner	Diane Bailey	Linda McCool
Barbara Ramsay	Don Whittenberg	Mark Herrington
Beau Tucker	Earline Dantin	Mary Ruth Jones
Bertha Kolb	Estella	Nancy Whitten
Betty Biedenarn	Eugene Quarles	Nita Tassin
Bobbie Carlisle	Glenda Ferguson	Norma Jones
Brandi Toney	Jackie Pyles	Peggy Bowie
Chapin Family	Jackson Monti	Peter Meyers
Charley Chesnutt	Jeff Colvin	Rachelle Ferris
Charlie Brantley & Family	Jennifer Harper	Sara Wilkerson
Charlie Lutz	Jimmy Bingham	Sarah Rickard
Cooper Jamison	Joan Leese	Scott
Cynthia Strawn	Josie Williams	Sheila Rosser
Dalton Glatt	Joy Brabston	Steve Webster
Dan & Mary Carleton	Lee Davis Thames	Tracey & Jim Dantin

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

Morning Prayer with Music and Homily, 9:30 a.m.

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

Adult Sunday School, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

NEW 6-week class on the Acts of the Apostles starting April 19th

Tuesday

Bibles & More

The Gospel of John

Social time starts at 6:00 p.m. Group from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Spiritual 12 Steps Group, 7:30-8:30 a.m.

Evening Prayer with Prayers for Healing, 6:00 pm,

Thursday

Ultreya, 12:00-1:00 p.m.



Photography credits for this issue of the Albanac:
Rev. Elisabeth, Amanda Harris, Stacy Weaver