

January 2008

The Grapevine

The newsletter of St Albans Episcopal Church,
Brandywine Hundred, DE



Rector's thoughts December was a wonderful time of carols, parties, gifts, and celebrating the birth of the Lord. Now it is time to get moving on the search process. By the time you read this, the Vestry will be scheduled to meet with the search consultant appointed by the Diocese. The consultant and I will work with the Transition Team to engage you in a process of identifying the identity, values, mission, and future direction of St. Albans. These important conversations will shape the heart of the parish profile that will be shared with potential candidates as they decide whether to be interviewed for the position of rector here. Watch for ways to be involved and please take part.

P.S. Questions regarding the interim. (As folks ask me questions, I will try to share the answers with you each month. And I do hope you will feel free to ask any questions you have.)

Is the Transition Team the same thing as the Search Committee? No. The Vision Team is a small group that guides the process of gathering information for the profile. As they near the end of their work, a larger Search Committee will be appointed to carry on the process.

Can't you just stay and be the rector? Several of you have asked this question in some form. The answer is 'no'. This is not a possibility. There are a number of good reasons for the policy that states that: *The interim rector will not under any circumstances be a candidate for call to the congregation.* Even if that were not the case, there are two other good reasons I would not be a candidate. The first is the call I feel to interim ministry. I believe my gifts for ministry, personality and training lead me to this work. The second is that Patty and I love where we live and do not want to move. Communing works for interim ministry, but a regularly called priest should be part of the congregation's community.

God's peace,

Jim +

Living the Questions: An Exploration of Faith For some folks faith means having arrived and having all the answers. For others, faith is a journey and a wrestling with questions that have no simple answers. I am in the latter group. If you are too, I invite you to join me on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. in the Vestry room. We will watch and discuss video presentations by contemporary Christian thinkers. A few of the topics covered are: compassion: The heart of Jesus' ministry; evil, suffering and a God of love; and creativity and the stories of creation. We will begin on Sunday, January 20th. **Jim +**

Bishop's Annual Visit Bishop Wayne Wright will join us for the 10:30 a.m. worship service on January 13th to preach, confirm, and celebrate the Eucharist. You will have an opportunity to greet him before the service and at the coffee hour after worship. Undesignated offerings for this Sunday will be given to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund to be used to meet special needs in the diocese.



From Don Candlemas 2008 - The Presentation: The traditional celebration of Candlemas (exactly 45 days after Christmas) will be held again this year at St. Albans on Saturday, February 2, at 7:30 PM. Commemorating two rituals that grew out of ancient Jewish traditions - Presentation of the first born son in the Temple and the Purification of the Mother, the service of Candlemas at St. Alban's church will feature a candle-light procession and special music led by the parish choir and guest singers from other parishes in the Diocese of Delaware including St. David's in North Wilmington, Church of the Ascension in Claymont, and St. Thomas Church in Newark.

The Festival of Candlemas is one of the oldest in the church calendar, dating back to its regular observation in Jerusalem in the 4th Century, AD. It came to be called Candlemas as the practice of blessing all candles to be used in the coming year in the church occurred at this service. Likewise, the people would bring in candles to be used in the homes to be blessed. Candles are lit in the windows of homes at Candlemas to remind all that Jesus is "the Light of the world." Candlemas also happens to fall on an important quarter day as it is halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox.

The observation of Candlemas provides an opportunity for many spiritual connections; the beauty and sanctity of Motherhood is found in the commemoration of Mary's ritual purification; the wonder and glory of God's love for us is found in the ritual presentation of Jesus in the Temple; and the warmth and glow of candlelight on a dark winter night reminds us of the glorious resurrection of our Lord yet to come at Easter. Our faith encourages us to "light the darkness" of the world by spreading the joy of the Gospel message of love.

So what can you do on Candlemas? Dress up in your best clothes and come sing songs of praise at the best candle party of the year. Incidentally, for those of you who like to keep the Christmas decorations up as long as possible, Candlemas is the very last day to keep the tree and greens indoors. Take them outside and add them to the mulch pile!) We hope to see you all on February 2, at 7:30 PM. **Don**

Vestry Highlights At the December meeting, your Vestry:

- Approved an alcohol policy for church functions
- Approved \$2000 outreach for Claymont Community Food Closet
- Continued work on new Saint Albans website – stay tuned!
- Planned the Greening of the Church and soup/chili luncheon for December 23
- Revived the 'Books for Kids' program with A.I. DuPont Children's Hospital
- Confirmed support of Sister Sheila's deaconate process
- Identified need to create Transition Team to start the search process for a permanent rector – we need a few good folks! **Bill Gail**

Alcohol Policy The Diocese has asked each parish to adopt a policy concerning the use of alcoholic beverages on church property. In response, the Vestry has adopted the following policy statement:

- All applicable federal, state and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
- Alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Food prepared with alcohol does not need to be labeled if the alcohol is evaporated by the cooking process.
- Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal attractiveness and accessibility.

- The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event.
- Food must be served when alcohol is present and the serving of alcoholic beverages should conclude well before guests are scheduled to leave.
- The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the vestry. Such groups or organizations must also assume responsibility for those persons who might become intoxicated and must provide alternative transportation for anyone whose capacity to drive may thus be impaired.
- Recognizing the effect of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, it would be advisable to consider the nature of the function at which alcoholic beverages are proposed to be served.
- the use of other illegal mood altering substances is forbidden at any function.



A message to the congregation - I hope this note finds you all in good spirits this holiday season. The reason I write this is in regards to the St. Alban's on-going book drive: "Books for Sick Kids." This is a charity that collects new and used childrens books and donates them to A.I. DuPont Children's Hospital. Unfortunately, after Rev. Roy's departure, the charity slowly came to a halt. In his absence, I have decided to continue this fantastic outreach program. What I will need from you folks is donations of any unwanted new or used childrens books that you may have lying around your house. There will be labeled box at the entrance of the church where the books will be collected. I will be taking the books to the hospital on a monthly basis.

This is a fantastic outreach program that will cheer up those who really need it so your help is greatly appreciated! Thank you so much and have a terrific holiday! Phil Stanley

Adopt-a-Family Thank you to all the members of St. Albans for your generous support of our 2007 Adopt-a-Family outreach program. This year we raised over \$3,600 in donations and gift cards to support 4 needy families. These families all had between 6 and 9 children and had experienced a hardship at one point in their lives. We were able to provide these families with gifts for a brighter holiday. Additionally, we were able to support a new program through the Adopt-a-Family called Adopt-a-Mom which helps to provide baby items for families that are unable to purchase these items themselves. Many of these families have medical issues or some are grandparents or relatives that have been asked to accept custody with little or no notice. St. Albans collected diapers and wipes to assist with this program and I was able to deliver 19 packages of diapers and 14 containers of wipes to the Claymont Community Center. Thanks to everyone for your generous support of these most deserving programs. *Karen Olmstead*

Annual Meeting Notice The annual congregational meeting of St. Albans Episcopal Church will be held on Sunday, February 3, 2008 following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Annual reports are due in the church office no later than ***January 14th***.

St. Albans New Website Visit www.stalbansde.org to see our new website. Thank you Ed and Becky Meyers for all your work. If anyone has suggestions for improving the website, let Becky know your ideas.



Food Closet First of all I want to thank you all for your generous contributions for the Holiday Baskets. We exceeded our goal and contributed 106 cans of Sweet Potatoes and 153 cans of Sweet Peas. I also want to thank you for all the other items that were contributed during the year and for all the hours of time contributed by members of St.

Albans. Although the shelves at the Food Closet are bulging from holiday food collections, there are still several items in short supply. Items most needed in January are: **macaroni and cheese, grape or strawberry jelly, peanut butter.** Best wishes to everyone for a very Happy New Year.

Sr. Sheila Brigid

January Birthdays

Peter Stefanide 1/8
Doris Cummings 1/8
Christine Hansen 1/9
Ched Manion 1/11
Page Traxler 1/12
Greg Pierce 1/13
Bettye Stout 1/14
Jim Cummings 1/16
Mary Meyers 1/17

Nancy Young 1/17
Graham Wright 1/18
Joe Weed 1/20
Jerry Harrell 1/21
Bob Morrow 1/21
Gary Young 1/22
Ruth Norman 1/23
Hazel Yeagle 1/25
Eric Wegner 1/25

Alexandra Lane 1/25
Callie Manion 1/26
Anne Alexis Harra 1/26
Joan Hicks 1/27
Christopher Olmstead 1/29
Norma Mariner 1/29
Ted Griffin 1/31
Andrew Hawkins 1/31
Rita Berryman 1/31

January Anniversary

Daniel & Barbara Krieger 1/2/76

Flower Chart The new 2008 flower chart is on the bulletin board in the hall. Please write in your names beside the dates you wish to make a donation to pay for our church flowers.

Remember to pray for Jimmy McKeon, Thomas Kerr, Erin Brennan, Doris Wissler, Nancy Norman, Roger Goldyn, George Wood, Mary Kelly, Barbara Covell, Jean Coffin, Joe Price, Jane Weber, Hazel Yeagle, and Bob Lenhart.

Church Services: Sunday, Holy Eucharist Services: 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. – Wed. Eucharist & Healing Service: 5:45 p.m.
Office Hours: Mon.-Wed. 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; Thur. 9:00 to 1:00 p.m.; Fridays - Closed

Contact Information: St. Albans contact information: Phone: 478-7778; Fax: 478-7762;
Interim Rector: The Rev. Jim Wolford; Phone: 443-553-9172;
Organist/Choir Director: Donald McFarland;

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