



ST. ALBAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Little Church with the big heart

From Rev. Mark C. Bigley

Advent Cross Cultural

Tis the season (Advent) and I find myself in the traditional bind—in the words of a fellow member on this last Sunday of Pentecost: "This is your busy season, isn't it? I paused for a moment, and reluctantly said, "Yes." I'm not afraid of work. But the deeper calling of Mary's example to *wait*, be *still* and to *ponder* what the birth of our Lord might mean again in my and our hearts calls me to go in a different direction. I remember going to Lamaze classes for the birth of my children. Even for the husband to be an effective support takes intention, time and focus, paying attention to the breath of the birthing mother, participating in that breathing. This breath calls one inward.

With the greatest feeling of incongruence, the environmental pull of our culture attempts to pull me away from myself and the soulful solitude into an unsanctified "busyness" that leaves me short of breath and unfocused. The hymns and carols of the season played since Halloween will cease to exist in our environment by the day after Christmas.

I'm not really bah humbugging! I just want to make sure the joy I receive isn't counterfeit, that it's the Christ child in the manger and not something else posing as a great pretender. I want to prepare so that when the sun goes down on Christmas Day, I won't feel like Christmas is over for another year, but that Christmas is just beginning.

This is why the liturgy is so important as one way to prepare for God's shaping us anew, besides taking time out for solitude each day. In **Advent** we will use Prayers of the People Form II. This is the only form that uses silence for the response to the bidding prayers—a few moments to be still after each bidding.

At the Breaking of the Bread, there will be no fraction anthem—what there will be is *silence*. Watch for your reaction after you hear the bread break. Most likely, we will all feel the compulsion to *say something*. We're used to talking. Listening and pondering, however is a different story. Advent catches us off guard, just like God does. God rarely intervenes according to our day planner. God moves into our personal space and being when we least expect it. If we're too busy and preoccupied, we miss the call. Being quiet, falling into solitude, allows us to dive beyond the surface of the superficial bleating of the culture to hear *The Call* from a deeper space within. Silence is like a deep pool, calling us to jump in.

We will also shift to Eucharistic Prayer B from Advent through Epiphany. Eucharistic Prayer B is "pregnant" with images of the incarnation and manifestation of Christ in the world.

As we take time to ponder, we will find that the Rose of Christmas (symbol of the Nativity)—will bloom naturally *within us* and *on time*.

Peace be with you,
Mark

After the breaking of the bread.....Silence

Contemplative Corner

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matt. 6:6

“Let me rest in your will and be silent. Then the light of Your joy will warm my life.”

Thomas Merton

News from the Senior Warden

CALL FOR VESTRY NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee members--Sherri Bishop, Charlie Brown and Jim Shearouse--are seeking nominations for the 2012 St. Alban's Vestry. Each vestry member shall be elected to serve for a period of one year and can be elected to serve for three years but no more than three consecutive terms. The Bylaws require that the Rector confirm the nominees are Communicants in good standing AND no person may be nominated who has not consented to the nomination and agreed to serve if elected.

If you want to nominate yourself or someone else for one of these SEVEN POSITIONS—or you have questions--please contact

Sherri Bishop @ justsherri@epbfi.com

Charlie Brown @ browncbkb@aol.com

Jim Shearouse @ Jim@shearouse.com

Deadline for submission of names is December 24, 2011.

ECW Christmas party.

To be held December 6th at the home of Sherri,

4740 N Forest Rd, Hixson 870 6021, starting at 6pm.

Bring finger foods to share, & a wrapped ornament (about \$5), for the gift exchange.

All women of the church are welcome.

Looking forward to seeing everyone,

Dawn Harkness.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to the generous ladies of Bible Study that fold the weekly service bulletins

IHN NEWS

Metropolitan Ministries' Share Your Christmas (our Angel Tree)

Metropolitan Ministries is very grateful for your participation in providing Christmas gifts to families in need. As a reminder, gifts need to be brought in by Sunday, December 4th. On December 4th help is needed in organizing the gifts so they can be taken to the library for bagging up. If you can help, please meet by the Angel Tree following the 10:30 service. On December 12th, beginning at 9:30am, help is needed to load and transport the gifts down to the Kenco warehouse at the corner of 31st Street and Alton Park Blvd. If you can help, please call Sarah Barys #645-2517 or email sbarys@comcast.net

On Saturday, December 17th the distribution of the gifts to the Metropolitan Ministries' families will take place at the Kenco Warehouse. Youth are invited to participate – please contact Sherri Bishop (#870-6021 or email justsheri@epgfi.com) if you are interested in helping out that day.

Many thanks to you all for your involvement in our annual Angel Tree to help Metropolitan Ministries with their Share Your Christmas.

Our upcoming IHN host week – December 11-18th

Our Interfaith Homeless Network families will be arriving the evening of December 11th. On that day, following the 10:30am service, help is needed in unloading the trailer, setting-up the beds and making Wynn Parish Hall readied for our guests arrival.

On Sunday, December 18th our IHN guests will be leaving our church. Help is needed beginning at 6:30am in the loading of the trailer and the cleaning of the church prior to the 8am service.

A grateful thanks goes out to all of the volunteers who help make our church a home to the homeless 4 times a year.

Stewardship and capital funds campaign.

If you haven't turned in your pledge for our Stewardship and Capital Funds Campaign, please mail or bring it to the church no later than December 4th so the vestry can plan for our 2012 budget.

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday January 8th, 2012 please plan to attend.

Vestry Meeting, December 14th at 6:00 pm in the library to formulate the 2012 budget.

All are invited to attend this important meeting. If you have any input or requests for your ministry, please inform one of the Vestry members, Fr. Mark or attend this meeting with your input.

*Christmas Eve Festal Eucharist at
5:30 p.m. Saturday Dec.24th*



Come welcome our Savior



Poinsettias for Christmas

There will be a sign up sheet in the narthex for those of you would like to donate a poinsettia for the decoration of the church during the Christmas season

The donation is \$10.00 each. Your participation is appreciated.

The Altar Guild.