



The Little Church with the big heart



From Rev. Mark C. Bigley

Ordinary Time Can Be Extraordinary

Welcome to "ordinary time," the Season after Pentecost. The term "ordinary" may not sound very exciting. "Ordinary" can have the connotation of "boring." But in the spiritual life, the "ordinary" is the most fertile place one can live. For within the ordinary, the question arises: "How can I use my daily life, its patterns, plans, interruptions and so on to be a catalyst for the Spirit to saturate my life?" It's like eating a chocolate Sunday. The chocolate syrup goes on top of the ice cream but how does it make its way down to blend into the rest of it?

In my garden at home, I am learning how to make sure the water I give the vegetables reaches to the root of the plants. Unless the water gets to the root of the plants, then the plant will either stress and not bear its potential of fruit or even die.

Take your Sunday bulletin readings insert home with you this summer and read it before you go to bed. You'll find that the gospel stories are not the "highlights" of Jesus life, but the elbow to elbow, daily walking of life meeting him. I doubt if Jesus used a day planner. The gospels reveal Jesus meeting life as it came to him. Jesus is always bringing the Spirit into the daily situations of life. His presence interrupts the patterns of spiritual unrest, physical challenges and illness, emotional distress and naiveté. Jesus uses the daily to meet us in our resistance to the river of the Spirit flowing. There are no candy canes, Christmas Trees, and Easter eggs to distract us from the deeper work of the Spirit's longing to love the whole of us.

I find the most challenging places in my life to translate the gospel are in the momentary events in my life such as in my relationships. My interaction with Kathy reveals a whole lot about my strengths and weaknesses, my own unhealed wounds and where the presence of God works through me. Sunday at church can feel glorious and fulfilling while Monday brings with it what often feels like the opposite. But it is precisely the Monday experiences that I need to practice to attempt to see where the gospel needs to penetrate my being in a new way.

In the meantime, enjoy the summer and your vacations if you are blessed to have one or more.

Remember to sign up in the narthex of the church for a time when we can share stories over lunch.

*Peace be with you,
Mark*

Spiritual Formation and the Liturgy

How we pray shapes our lives. Genesis reveals that what comes from God's mouth creates. Being created in the image of God, what comes out of our mouths also creates: our identity, belief systems, spiritual foundation and our actions.

Cont. next page

from page 1

The church seasons reflect the expectation, birth, growth, manifestation, death and resurrection of Christ's life. The lectionary readings are aligned with these seasons of life. The *Book of Common Prayer* allows us to form the "work of the people" (liturgy) according to the different times in Christ's life by choosing prayers, scriptures and music to reflect these different periods of spiritual formation. This in turn shapes our lives more around the life of Christ through our worship.

It is for the reasons above that I will periodically "tweak" the liturgy in its prayers and music in order to reflect these themes of Christ's life so that they can be more deeply incarnated in our own. For example, Hymn 421 is a 16th Century Tudor era hymn of praise to which the words of the *Gloria in Excelsis* are ascribed. The tune, joyful and upbeat, corresponds to the mood of the Season of the Spirit after Pentecost. I want to try a trial of singing half the sequence hymn during the gospel procession and the last half of the hymn following the reading of the gospel to see if this creates a more balanced flow in the liturgy.

Our organist, Dale and I have been consulting with each other about choosing service music that fits in with the seasonal readings to shape our liturgy and lives around all the facets of Christ's life.

I would enjoy hearing your feedback on how these small changes from time to time are impacting your worship experience.

Peace,
Mark

News from the Senior Warden

Below is from a daily meditation series by Richard Rhor to which I subscribe. This particular one (maybe it was the Beatles song!) made me think of St. Alban's and our desire that it grow and thrive. As I read it, I began asking myself questions like, "what kind of foundation are WE building?" and "how can that foundation lead to a healthy St. Alban's?" As I've pondered it, I see glimpses of our firm foundation in our embracing the homeless, comforting the bereaved, welcoming the stranger and celebrating the victorious. What about you; what do you see? I pray that you'll ponder with me....

"CHURCH AS PERMACULTURE "

If we want a sustainable church, let's go to the lowest possible level and build it on that foundation (gathering positively around love and caring), and then keep rebuilding it with inherent tools (healing, forgiveness, and community building around projects). Just gather "two or three" (Matthew 18:20) loving, committed, servant-oriented people and we have the only real foundation for any healing and healthy church. In fact, without it, you can have the most organized and orthodox church in the world and no one will actually be changed or helped.

As the Beatles wrote in their song, "***Eleanor Rigby***":

" Father McKenzie [will keep]

writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear . . .

[Will keep] wiping the dirt from his hands

as he walks from the grave

[While] no one was saved "

Cont. next page

from the Senior Warden (cont.)

We have the product that everybody wants, it is all around us, and we still make it scarce, hard to get, dependent on experts, and thus finally unsustainable.

Starter Prayer: "God comes to you disguised as your life."

Adapted from Emerging Church Conference, Swannick, England, 2010 (unpublished), Richard Rhor. cac@cacradicalgrace.org “



SAVE THE DATES (in other words, mark your calendars now!)

- Sunday, August 21 St. Alban's ECW Hosts
- Sunday, August 21-28 St. Barnabas Birthday Tea
- Sunday, August 28 Host IHN Guests
- September 15-18 JOINT WORSHIP SERVICE 9:30 A.M. ONLY
- East Tennessee Cursillo #36 @ Grace Point
- (for more info ask Sarah Barys, Rick Blair, Mary Helton)
- September 30 & October 1 ECW Annual Flea Market



IHN (INTERFAITH HOMELESS NETWORK) NEWS:

A big thanks goes out to everyone who served during our last week of hosting IHN in May. Our guests spoke of their appreciation and enjoyment of the delicious dinners and evening fellowship. During our latest host week, we had over 35 volunteers with over 175 hours of recorded volunteer hours. St. Alban's had support from four members of Trinity Lutheran and also had some other volunteers from outside our church - Jan and Doug Buck's grandchildren, Zac and Ella, as well as, a friend of Allison Netusil, Carly Baker, and Maggie and Darrin Evans.

OUR NEXT HOST WEEK WILL BE AUGUST 21 - 28.

There are many ways to be involved during our host week. The volunteer sign-up board will be going up in the Narthex in mid-July with many opportunities to serve offered. Please consider how you may want to help in this outreach ministry as we open our doors and offer St. Alban's as a home for homeless families.

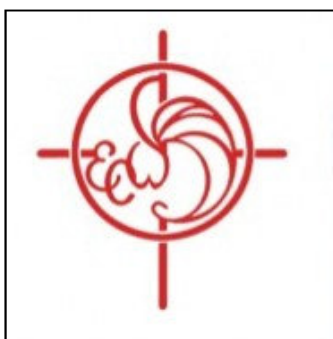


St. Alban's Farmer's Market

Every Saturday 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

For complete information please visit our web site at:

<http://www.stalbanepiscopal.net/farmersmarket.asp>



A big St. Alban's **Thank You** to the St. Alban's Episcopal Church Women (ECW) for purchasing a new refrigerator for the kitchen!

Dinner-in-the-Garden & Welcome for
Father Mark & Kathy

The Dinner-in-the-Garden and welcome celebration for Father Mark and his wife Kathy was a huge success even though the weather didn't quite cooperate. The dinner was held in Wynn Hall due to rain but was still a great event. There were approximately 70 attendees, including members of St. Alban's, guests from the Community Gardeners and others. The food was amazing and everyone had their fill and more. Before the end of the evening there was 'talk' of having another dinner in the fall. All in all, it was a wonderful time for all and a great welcome for Father Mark and his wife, Kathy.



To view ALL pictures go to St. Alban's website <http://stalbansepiscopal.net/>

Wow and Thanks! (from Father Mark)

Kathy and I were overwhelmed and humbled with the welcome you gave us Sunday evening at the dinner. Thank you for your presence, kindness and ministry at St. Alban's. We are glad that we are here! We look forward to the stories that God will create through us together.

Peace be with you,
Mark and Kathy