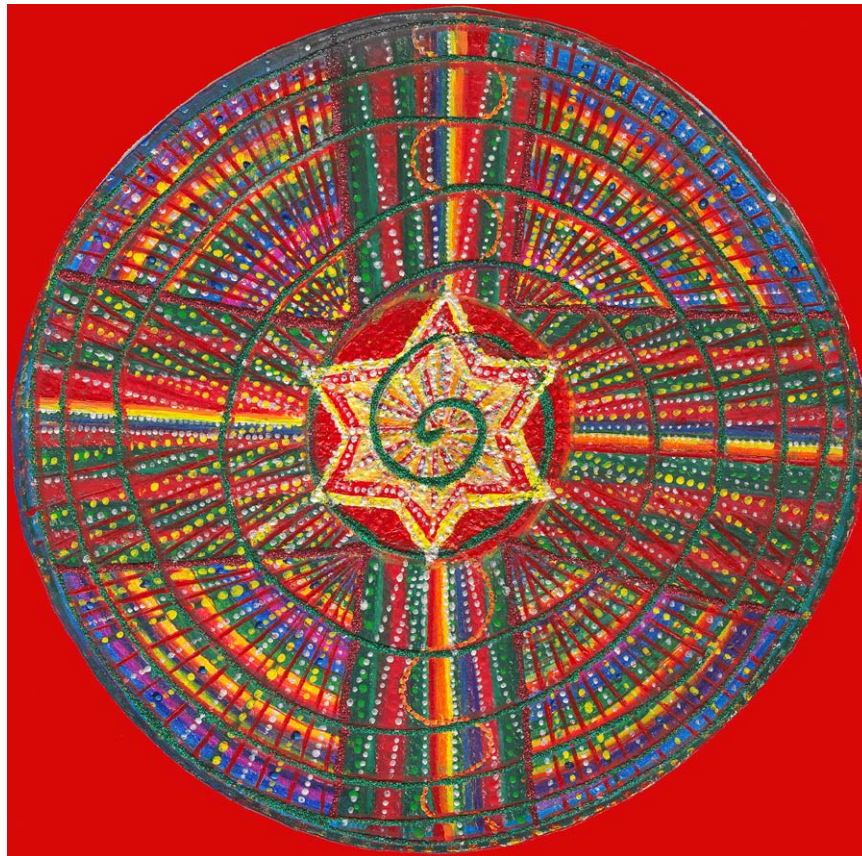


# THE ALMANAC

St. Alban's Episcopal Church Monthly Newsletter

Dec/Jan 2009-2010



I bring you  
good news of great joy  
that will be for all the people.



## Rector's Notes ...

### Where did the year go?

December is a month filled with traditions. The Advent wreath, the nativity characters marching along the church ceiling towards the manger, our Sunday evening musical programs, the children's musical, and then Christmas Eve with the glorious chaos of the pick-up pageant – will we have a Mary this year? how many wise men? – and the magical reverence of the midnight mass. At home it is putting out the myriad of manger scenes, the needlepoint stockings of my grown sons, the mini-tree with angels from all over the world.

What we don't do at our house anymore is shop and give a lot of wrapped up presents. Of course there will always be toys for the children, but the adults we know don't need or want more stuff, so maybe ten or more years ago John Bennet and I began to give people animals in the form of donations to Heifer International. Inside you will read the story of a remarkable woman whose life has been changed, probably even saved by the work of this organization and who is changing and saving lives in return. And there are other organizations – Partners in Health, Living Waters, and more – who do very Christ-like work in the world.

**The year is drawing to an end. I'm suggesting that we might use this time of darkness and transition to evaluate the time past and look forward to the new year with the traditional spiritual practice known as the Examen.** It is not difficult. It simply takes time, reflection, and intention. There are five steps.

1. **Be Mindful:** Stop. Breathe. Be where you are. Be present to God, who is always present to you. Feel the love of God.
2. **Be Thankful:** No matter how difficult a year it has been, there is something to be grateful for. Some people carry gratitude journals, and it is not a bad idea. Many people in this world go to bed hungry and in danger. Little things count for a lot. Name them.
3. **Be Humble:** Where has God been in this year and we did not realize it at the time? What has God given us that we thought we earned or deserved?
4. **Be Reflective:** What are the events and relationships of this year that have shaped my life? Our life as a parish? Have we grown closer to God because of them?
5. **Be Responsive:** As my spiritual director told me once, "Now how are you going to thank God?"

So, my dear ones, as we move into what can be such a busy month, I wish you a still center in your being, free from stress, free from the jangle of the marketplace, a place where the Christ child will find a warm and gentle home and where you will hear the angels singing.

Peace and blessings,  
*Margaret+*

## Triumph of a Dreamer

Nicholas Kristof wrote in the New York Times in an op-ed piece, “any time anyone tells you that a dream is impossible, any time you’re discouraged by impossible challenges, just mutter this mantra: Tererai Trent.”

Tererai was born in Zimbabwe, had less than a year of schooling, and was married off at the age of eleven by her father to a man who beat her regularly. She quickly had five children, whom she cared for as she also tended the family’s cattle.

She accepted her lot in life and that she would undoubtedly die young, but after about twelve years a woman named Jo Luck visited her village and challenged the women to reclaim their lives, to dream dreams, and to dare to make them come true. Ms Luck is the head of Heifer International, an aid group that gives farm animals to poor people all over the world to provide milk, eggs, honey, wool, and power. When that animal gives birth, the first offspring is returned to Heifer International to help another family.

Tererai scribbled down four “absurd goals based on accomplishments she had vaguely heard of among famous Africans.” One: study abroad. Two: earn a BA. Three: earn a Master’s Degree. Four: a PhD. She began to work with Heifer, saving every cent to take correspondence courses. With help she applied to Oklahoma State University and was accepted.

Her husband refused to allow her to take her children unless he went too, so with \$4000 from her mother’s sale of a cow and her neighbors’ sale of their goats, they set off. Once enrolled in college, working full time, and doing all the child care and housework – men in her culture sit on the couch and drink beer – and enduring even more beatings, the family had little food and she resorted to eating food from dumpsters. She thought of quitting but considered all the African women she would be letting down if she did.

Eventually she managed to get her husband deported for domestic violence, but when he became sick with AIDS (she remained HIV negative) he returned and she nursed him until his death. She earned her BA, moved on to her MA, and next month will receive her PhD at Western Michigan University, where she wrote her dissertation on AIDS prevention in Africa. She continued to work for Heifer and has remarried.

To me she is living proof that the little we contribute, in the right hands, with the guidance of God can change lives, and that each changed life has the power to change other lives.

## *Margaret+*

In the **Heifer International** catalogue one shops for animals -- a whole ark for \$5000, a heifer for \$500, a water buffalo for \$250, a lamb for \$120, a flock of chicks for \$20. As an expression of our gratitude as we approach our celebration of the birth of Jesus, let us fill the jars in the narthex and the Assembly Room with our loose change, larger bills, and checks and see what kind of animal St. Alban’s can give to someone like Tererai who is daring to dream that she may have her life changed and may touch others with hope. If this is not peace on earth, good will to all, I don’t know what is.

[www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)



November 23, 2009



Dearest friends,

What an amazingly fun and thanks filled day we shared yesterday (Sunday, November 22)! The decorations were beautiful, the food spectacular as always, and the fellowship superb. You are a wonderful family of faith who knows how to both work and play together so well! How blessed Tom and I have been to journey with you.

Thank you seems most inadequate to express my gratitude for your love, encouragement and support these last 4 1/2 years. You have gifted me with material gifts time and again, and I gratefully thank you once more for your amazing generosity, even in these difficult economic times. The 'purse' will be a great help to us as we establish a second home in Houston.

I already treasure the likeness of the Pantocrator Icon of Christ, and it will now be framed with not only your photos but your signatures as well, to forever remind me how well you serve as the body of Christ here at St. Alban's. Pantocrator is the Greek word meaning 'ruler of all' and it is fitting that it should be a most special gift received on the feast day of Christ the King.

The photo of St. Alban's and prayers of the members of the Community of Hope will be a reminder to continually remember you in my prayers. This is one of the most creative, unique and meaningful gifts I have ever received. St. Alban's is blessed with the gifts and talents of so many who share them so freely.

May God richly bless you individually and collectively in the years to come. Know that you will always hold a special place in my heart. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

Ann+

EDITOR'S  
CORNER

by  
Linda Crannell



Advent is here again!

The season when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Vestments change from the green of Pentecost to the purple of Advent.

The wreath arrives with three purple candles and a pink one surrounding the white Christ candle.

And statues of the characters present at the nativity begin their march around the walls of St. Alban's.

Advent is a joyous time and one of times when I am happiest to be a part of this church community.

The first time I ever entered this building was to attend one of our wonderful Christmas concerts.

But at St. Alban's the "advent" represents more than the birthday of Jesus.

I see advent happening here every day of the year.

When the Community of Hope serves through all its ministries and nurtures those in our own parish; when the Outreach Commission mentors children through Kids Hope USA; when members befriend the homeless at Trinity Center and serve them at the Right to Sight clinic; when they go into prisons with SAILS and KAIROS; when an individual with signing skills takes a half-day off work to accompany a deaf homeless man to eye surgery; when loving hands knit and crochet prayer shawls; when busy adults take time to teach our children of the love of God and to support our youth in their spiritual growth and their efforts to serve the Lord; when men and women do the "housework" and the discipline and the other services that create our wonderful opportunity to worship; when the voices of our musicians soar to "sing a new song to the Lord!" — when these things and many more happen we are participating in something that makes Advent last all year.

Advent is about the coming of the Christ Light into the World.

Whenever we bring the Love of God to others we shine that Christ Light anew.

And so we observe Advent again, and again.

## Happy Hanukkah 2009!



Hanukkah (aka Chanukah) is the last in our series of Jewish Holidays for this year. Scholars tell us it is a holiday that was almost certainly celebrated by Jesus with family and friends.

### What is Hanukkah all about?

Hanukkah commemorates the military victory of the Jewish Macabees over the Greek-Assyrians and the rededication of the Second Temple. Greek culture, it seems, had entered Palestine rather peacefully, but when Greek religion resulted in the plunder and desecration of the Temple, the Jews revolted. Judah Macabee and his four brothers organized resistance fighters known as Macabees. They reportedly used guerilla tactics to miraculously succeed and drive the far larger Greek-Syrian army out of Judea. You can read about the battles in the four books of Macabees in the Apocrypha.

The Hanukkah story proclaims the message of the prophet Zechariah (4:6), "Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit." The ritual purification and reclamation of the Temple began on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the Hebrew month of Kislev in 165 BCE. According to the Talmud (a commentary on the teachings of the rabbis), a single days worth of oil found in the temple burned for eight days until more pure oil could be obtained to provide light for the work of restoration.

### How is Hanukkah celebrated today?

This Jewish holiday is celebrated in the home with family and friends for a period of eight days. This year it will be celebrated beginning at sundown on Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. The Hanukkah Menorah holds nine candles, lit during each of the eight nights. The lighting of the candles is a central observance of Hanukkah, and the candles are to be placed by a window or a door to fulfill the commandment "to publicize the miracle." Everyone in the household gathers around and blessings are recited while lighting the candles and an ancient chant, *Hanerot Hallala* is sung. A central candle on the Menorah (in addition to the eight) sits higher than the others and is used to light the others. It remains burning so any candle that might be accidentally extinguished can be easily lit again. Like our Advent Wreath, one candle is lit the first night, two the second, etc. Gatherings of family and friends (both Jews and Gentiles) are held on the nights of Hanukkah and are especially fun for children. The Hanukkah story is sometimes recited, special foods are served and games are played.

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*(continued)*

## Hanukkah Blessings

The first two blessings below are recited each night. The third, a blessing of joy traditionally recited during each Jewish festival, is recited only the first time the Hanukkah menorah is lit.

**BLESSING 1:** Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

**BLESSING 2:** Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season.

**BLESSING 3:** *This blessing is recited only on the first night or the first time one kindles the Hanukkah lights.* Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this time.

## Traditional Foods

Foods rich in oil are traditional to commemorate the miracle of the oil. Potato Pancakes (Latkes) are a favorite in the United States. In Israel a special jelly filled donut called a soofganiot is prepared and enjoyed. You will find a recipe for the Potato Pancakes (Latkes) below. They are so good that they can, and often are, eaten on any of the other 357 days of the year.

### Potato Pancakes (Latkes)

4 large potatoes	½ t. white pepper
1 medium onion	1 T. flour
1 large egg	½ t. baking powder
1 t. salt	vegetable oil (for frying)



1. Grate potatoes and onions. Transfer to colander and squeeze to press out liquid.
2. In large bowl mix egg, salt, pepper, flour, baking powder. Add potatoes and onions, and mix well.
3. Heat oil in deep, heavy skillet.
4. Drop 2 T into pan for each pancake. Flatten to 2 ½ - 3 inch diameter.
5. Fry over medium heat 4-5 minutes on each side, or until golden brown and crisp.
6. Drain on paper towels.
7. Stir mixture before each new batch and add more oil as needed

Serve with hot applesauce, sour cream and/or sugar



## Family Hanukkah Games

The traditional Game of Dreidel is played with a four-sided spinning top that has four different Hebrew letters on each side. Each player gets an equal amount of pennies, candies, or raisins and begins by placing one in the pot in the center. Players take turns spinning the dreidel and act according to the letter face up when the dreidel stops. The winner is the one with the most accumulated at the end. It is so simple that all ages can play together from toddlers to grandparents. The custom of giving Hanukkahgelt (money) to children is traditional. It has evolved, in modern times, into gift giving. Sometimes gifts are given to children on each of the eight days of Hanukkah. **Happy Hanukkah!**

Ann+

**OUTREACH UPDATE**

Jill Binder

Our kids Hope project continues to be an exciting time for St. Albans mentors and Menchaca Elementary first and second grade students. Our mentors are blessed with truly amazing students and look forward to their one hour per week with them. They are always greeted by excited students, appreciative teachers and warm and considerate office staff. In fact, the mentors insist that they are getting more from their students than they give to them. I'm not sure the students and teachers would agree but what is evident is that we all gain from our time together. God's wonderful work is a blessing to all.

Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, was an especially important date for our fledgling program. Our mentors spent a marvelous evening sharing their student experiences in a joint meeting with the outreach commission, the EFM group and mentor prayer partners. Our stories were from the heart and at times, there was not a dry eye in the room.

St Alban's Kids Hope project is making great strides in creating a positive difference in the lives of many students who deserve a better life. The Kids Hope program is working and for those of you who are still thinking of coming aboard, we have a place for you. So "all aboard" is a standing invitation! Ann Brotherton, as always, provided the worship a most meaningful prayerful moment with a special reading and closing prayer she had written especially for the gathering. Thank you Ann.

Again this year St. Albans delivered food to El Buen to use for Thanksgiving baskets for the less fortunate. The generosity of our parish is truly amazing. Thanks to all of you for all you do.

**KID'S HOPE  
UP CLOSE**

Jerry Inman

It was with some trepidation along with a slightly bruised and twisted arm, that I volunteered to mentor a student at Menchaca Elementary School. We received training and orientation before our actual meeting and learned that we might be helping a child with some difficult issues. Feeling that I might need all the help I could get, I was glad to learn I had Ann as my prayer partner. I was the first mentor to venture forth into (early) academia – first grade! I hadn't been in a classroom for more than 50 years!

The first meeting went well. I met with a first grade teacher and the student she believed needed some assistance. He is a neat little boy and the first thing he wanted to do was read to me from some books he carried around in a freezer bag. We then went on to his assignment of pronouncing words, creating sentences from flash cards and writing certain letters.

He has a little brother and when I asked what his name was he responded, "He's not here yet!"



It took me a few seconds to figure out his Mom is pregnant. So, moving right along — We have continued with work on vowels and the different sounds they make, his hand writing skills and creating sentences.

We spend one hour each Monday morning together sitting at a small table in one corner of the hallway. (It does have an adult size chair.) I had been searching for a Big Chief Tablet and some kind soul found one that is going to help this little guy a lot -- especially with his hand writing skills. I can see some improvement in the four sessions we've had; and his teacher has begun to give us more challenging assignments. So far I think both of us are up to meeting them.



LITTLE GUY

**FIRST REPORT  
CARDS!**

VERY BIG GUY

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

November 1<sup>st</sup> was a fantastic celebration of All Saints' Day! The children processed into the service with banners and sang "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God" for the anthem. They did a wonderful job and sounded beautiful. Hopefully, through their Sunday school lessons, they learned the importance of the Feast of All Saints. So many wonderful things happen in Sunday school, I feel so privileged to be a part of it. Your children are the greatest!

Fireside Christmas, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 20<sup>th</sup>, will be another grand performance of the 'Sunday School Players'. We will be performing the play, "Good News of Great Joy".

This year the play is a traditional Christmas pageant with carols. The audience will have a big part in the singing of some of the songs and the children will sing the others in the play. They will be traditional carols.

We will need tons of help with learning lines and songs, coming up with costumes and doing set design. So call and let me know how you can help. It's going to be hard to beat last year's performance, but we'll try our best. We really have some great little performers!

We will be practicing for the play on the Sundays of Advent, beginning November 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:30. We only have 3 Sundays to practice, so we may need to call practices during the week. I will contact you with the times of the practices.



Of course we can't just jump to the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent and Fireside Christmas. We need to enter into Advent as a holy season. It is a very special season, one that often gets forgotten in the excitement of Christmas. During Advent we remember that there was a time when Jesus had not yet come to earth with his message of love and hope. We think about the days that led up to Jesus' birth in a manger in Bethlehem. Most of all, we think about ways in which we could do a better job of being the kind of people Jesus wants us to be.

See some of the ways in which our Families can 'keep' Advent on the next page.

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY** continued

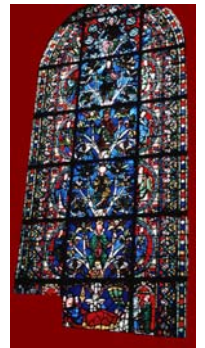
Some of the ways in which our Families can 'keep' Advent are explained below.



**The Good Deed Manger** – An empty manger is placed in some prominent spot in the home. Next to the manger is a little bundle of "straw", which can be real straw, pine needles, or something similar. Each evening during this season, the family gets together to talk about the good things they've done for others during the day (for example, helping someone with his/her homework, writing a friendly note to someone who's feeling down, sharing your cookies with your sister, etc.). For every good deed done, the person who did the good deed gets to place one "straw" in the manger. On Christmas Eve, you place the Baby Jesus in the manger, on the soft bed you've made for him with your good deeds.



**The Jesse Tree** – A Jesse Tree is a special way of recalling the Biblical events that led to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. The tradition has its roots in a beautiful window in the cathedral in Chartres, in France, on which the story of Jesus unfolds "from the root of Jesse." If you would like some ideas on making the Jesse Tree, give me a call or send me an email.



**The Advent Wreath** – Many families enjoy having their own Advent wreath service at home during the season. You can buy Advent wreaths in many Christian stores, but it's very easy (and fun!) to make your own. It is an evergreen wreath, which represents God's unending love for us with four candles on the wreath and one large one in the center, which is the Christ Candle. There are 3 purple or blue candles, the candles of Promise, Hope and Light and 1 pink candle (for the third Sunday) that is the candle of Love or Joy. Each night the candle of the week is lighted and a scripture of the day is read or certain prayers are said. There are books that you can get with Advent Wreath Devotionals.



**The Advent Calendar** – The Advent Calendar is a special calendar with little windows for each day. Behind each window is either a scripture quote to be prayed or a suggestion of a good deed to be done for the day.

These are just a few examples.

If you would like different ideas or need help making these, just let me know.

*Have a Happy and Holy Season.  
Christ's Peace,  
Pam*

# EYC UPDATE

## EYC UPDATE

The EYC is Here to Help

by Charlotte Gemar



[Bishop Doyle with EYC youth at Sun One activities at Zilker Park.]

**The youth of St. Alban's continue to share the love of Christ by serving God's people. Whether it is at home, in their communities, or within their parish, they are active and visible. Despite busy schedules, they are available to help when needed and do so with a smile, laughter, and enthusiasm. Sometimes their help consists of fellowship but whatever they do, they do it for God's people rather than for themselves.**

EYC members currently serve the people of St. Alban's as acolytes every Sunday morning at the 10:30 service and at "special" services throughout the year. It is only rarely that there have not been enough youth members to fill all the needed positions for the service and this is due to their willingness to help even when it is not their turn and with five minutes notice. Have you taken a moment to thank them for their ministry? If not, please do so as many participate in this ministry from the beginning of middle school to their graduation from High School.

Youth members also serve this parish in a variety of other ways. They are Greeters, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, coffee hosts with their families, nursery attendants, and helpers with Children's Chapel to only name a few. EYC members are vital to the success of the *Vacation Bible School* program each summer and assist with such events as the *Fall Festival* by providing activities for the children attending.



# EYC UPDATE

## EYC UPDATE

### The EYC is Here to Help

continued

On the fifth Sunday of a month, EYC members provide a Youth Services Sunday for everyone to enjoy serving as acolytes, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, ushers, and greeters. After this service, they go directly to Parson's House and provide a service for the residents to include the gift of music.

Since July 2009, the youth of St. Alban's have been assisting the Starlight Foundation with providing an event each month for seriously ill children and their families. In addition, recently, the youth devoted their Sunday youth group time to making "vent pads" that will be used by the Dell Children's Center Pediatric Intensive Care Unit to protect the chests of patients from the respirator's (ventilators) tubing.

The youth group has also been serving the people of St. Alban's by participating in Diocesan activities making St. Alban's presence known to others. On a Sunday afternoon recently, several members of the youth group attended the Sun One activities at Zilker Park with Bishop Doyle. (See photo on previous page.)

They had the opportunity to meet Bishop Dolye and many members of Episcopal youth groups in Austin.

Five members of the EYC attended the *YES* and *Happening* (spiritual retreat) events at Camp Allen. [One mother wrote of her gratitude to Dede Saenz who provided transportation and stayed for the weekend, "I know they were thankful for having a familiar loving adult to hang with them over this powerful weekend! Here is a snapshot of the Joy!"]

In December, the youth of St. Alban's will be fixing dinner for the parish on the Sunday before Christmas and will go caroling the week of Christmas.

Many of our acolytes are looking forward to attending the Acolyte Festival in February at All Saints in Austin. They will be escorted by two of our vergers, John Gemar and Nelson Smith. At the Festival they will be representing St. Alban's in the procession during the special service to bless the ministry of acolytes and will be participating in the acolyte Olympics showing their acolyte skills and agility.

The New Year holds many exciting opportunities for the youth of St. Alban's to share God's love with others. Planning has already begun for fund raising (including a golf tournament in March), mission trips, and service projects. The youth will continue to help others in need and look serving the people of St. Alban's.



Making "vent pads"



# CELEBRATING

## OUR OPPORTUNITIES for JOYFUL SERVICE

On Sunday, October 11th, after many months of study, five **verggers** were installed at St. Alban's.

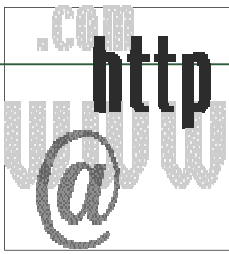
Top row (L to R): Ron Robertson (former training officer, Mace Chapter of the Verggers' Guild), Jerry Inman, John Bennet Waters  
Bottom row (L to R): John Gemar, Susan Tennison, Margaret Waters, Nelson Smith, and Richard Evans (president, Mace Chapter of the Verggers' Guild.)



On Sunday, November 15th, members of the latest training class for the **Community of Hope** received their commissions as lay chaplains at St. Alban's.

Top Row (L to R):  
Nelson Smith, Alice Smith,  
Ann Brotherton, Margaret Waters,  
Carole Clester

Bottom Row (L to R):  
Mary Giberson, Mary Helen Inman,  
Linda Crannell, Madeline Hoffman,  
Lyssa Williford, Wendy Woodruff,  
Robert McVey



# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RECTOR

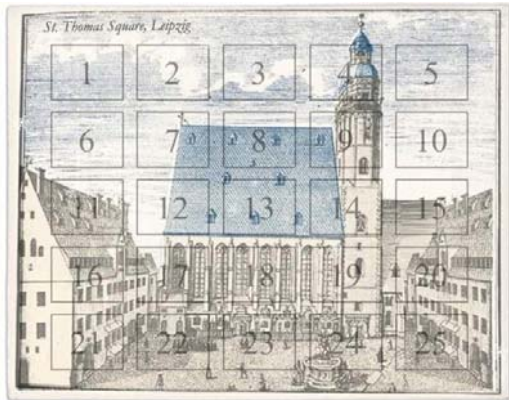
## WEBSITES

When I was a child, I think getting my new Advent calendar was as special as Christmas itself. Here is a lovely musical Advent calendar to which you can return each day for a different lovely little bit of Bach.

A Bach Christmas Calendar



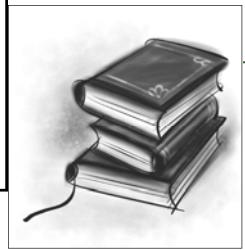
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/bach/adventcalendar/>



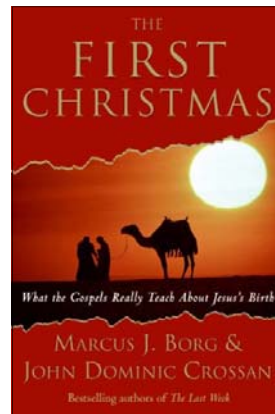
[adventconspiracy.org](http://adventconspiracy.org)

Christmas can [still] change the world.

I may have put this in last year's December Almanac, but I love the message of this organization. Wouldn't Advent be more meaningful if we spent more time in worship and service than at the mall?



## BOOKS



### The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus's Birth

by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan

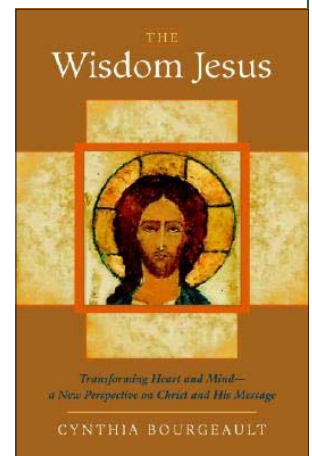
This duo of scholars offers us a close and clear reading of the familiar story of Jesus's birth as a means of preparing our hearts to let Him be born again in us.

### The Wisdom Jesus: Transforming Heart and Mind – a New Perspective on Christ and His Message

by Cynthia Bourgeault

“If you put aside what you think you know about Jesus and approach the Gospels as though for the first time, something remarkable happens: Jesus emerges as a teacher of the transformation of consciousness.

Cynthia Bourgeault is a masterful guide to Jesus's vision and to the traditional contemplative practices you can use to experience the heart of his teachings for yourself.”



## Discover Classes to begin January 10

**On Sunday, January 10 we will begin an eight-week series of Discover Classes. They will meet in the Upper Room from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Child care will be provided. We ask that you let us know you will be joining us so that we will be certain to have adequate materials and so that we will have appropriate programs for your children.**

Gil Rendle, who is a congregational development expert I admire, says:

“A healthy congregation is one that —

- 1) receives **new members** (who come in bringing with them new ideas and expectations);
- 2) **passes on the faith** from one generation to the other;
- 3) is in **earnest dialogue** about what is important.”

This statement expresses well what we hope to achieve in this class.

Who is invited? Anyone who is relatively new to the church and is considering being baptized, confirmed or received when Bishop Dena Harrison visits St. Alban's on May 9. But you are also invited if you've been an Episcopalian or a member of St. Alban's for a long time and you would simply like to enter into what is certain to be a lively conversation and to enjoy some small group fellowship. Everyone has something to contribute to this class and everyone may receive benefit.

We will use the book Your Faith, Your Life: An Invitation to the Episcopal Church as our jumping off point. It costs \$10, but I'll be happy to provide it for anyone for whom the cost might be an obstacle. The classes will be as follows:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| January 10  | Our faith journey thus far: who we are and how we got here          |
| January 17  | People of the Book: we are shaped by the stories of the Bible       |
| January 24  | History 101: how did we get from Galilee to Austin?                 |
| January 31  | What is faith? The foundational beliefs of our church               |
| February 7  | no class: Super Bowl Sunday   |
| February 14 | The Body of Christ: what is the Church?                             |
| February 21 | Praying shapes believing: the Book of Common prayer and our worship |
| February 28 | Outward and visible signs: the sacraments of the church             |
| March 7     | What is God calling you to do? Spirituality and service             |

Please plan on joining us for these discussions. Although we will cover quite a lot of material, it is always your questions that are most important. If you know someone beyond St. Alban's family who would like to come, please invite them.

*Margaret+*

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

## The Blanton

Museum of Art



**PAOLO VERONESE**  
The Petrobelli Altarpiece  
Reconstructing a  
Renaissance Masterpiece  
October 4, 2009 -  
February 7, 2010



### BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART TOUR YOU ARE INVITED!

- WHO ?** Thursday Morning Bible Study Group and any other members of St. Alban's or friends who would like to go.
- WHAT ?** Docent guided tour of the Petrobelli Altarpiece by Paolo Veronese (\$2 per person for docent tour – museum free on Thursday)
- WHEN ?** Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12:45 PM  
Car pool from the church to the Blanton for lunch.  
Leave from the parking lot at 11:15 AM or meet in café at Blanton
- WHERE ?** Blanton Museum of Art – meet at entrance to museum at 12:45.  
MLK at Congress – Parking in Brazos Parking Lot (\$3, if validated)
- WHY ?** The Petrobelli Altarpiece is on tour and this is the only showing in the United States (10//09 – 2/7//10). The missing piece of the altarpiece was discovered in a collection donated in 1998 to the Blanton. Painted in 1565, it was cut into four pieces for sale in 1788 when the Franciscan Order was suppressed. Two hundred years later it has been reunited.

You may go to the Blanton website for an interactive exploration of the Petrobelli Altarpiece.  
[http://www.blantonmuseum.org/works\\_of\\_art/exhibitions/veronese/index.cfm](http://www.blantonmuseum.org/works_of_art/exhibitions/veronese/index.cfm)



## Advent and Christmas at St. Alban's

### **Sunday, November 29, 5:00 pm**

Celtic Harpist, Stephanie Taylor, Scotland Program with Jim Glendinning  
Music in the sanctuary, followed by an informal reception in Parish Life Center

### **Sunday, December 6, 5:00 pm**

Piano and Song: David Means and Joel Quade  
Music in the sanctuary, followed by an informal reception in Parish Life Center

### **Sunday, December 13, 5:00 pm**

The Westwood High School Choir, Dr. David Means Director  
Music in the sanctuary, followed by an informal reception in Parish Life Center

### **Sunday, December 20, 5:00 pm**

"Good News of Great Joy"  
A musical by the Children of St. Alban's, Pam Graham Director  
Parish Life Center  
Supper by the Youth of St. Alban's, Charlotte Gemar Director  
Christmas Carol Rehearsal, Dr. David Means, Director, with the St. Alban's Choir

### **Monday, December 21, 6:30 pm**

Blue Christmas  
Solemn and comforting worship with Holy Eucharist  
for people for whom this season is not jolly because of loss or sorrow

### **Thursday, December 24, 5:30 pm**

Rite II Holy Eucharist with 'pick-up 'pageant' and Christmas Carols  
All children are invited to come as any character in the Nativity Story  
Pageant will take the place of the sermon

### **Thursday, December 24, 11:00 pm**

Festival of Lessons and Carols with Midnight Mass  
Music by the Choir of St. Alban's, Dr. David Means Director

### **Sunday, December 27, 10:00 am**

Holy Eucharist, Rite II



## Blue Christmas

A Liturgy for those who have suffered loss  
Monday, December 21  
6:30 p.m.



Cries of “Merry Christmas!” and non-stop caroling contrast with the feelings of many people at this time of year. For those suffering from the recent or impending death of loved ones, for those whose families are in crisis, for people hurt by divorce or separation, and for those who have lost their jobs, it can be a very isolated and dreary time. Every greeting and every song reminds the grief-stricken of how unhappy life is at this moment.

Many churches have begun to recognize that Festivals of Lessons and Carols, celebrations of Christmas, and children’s pageants do not meet everyone’s needs. To fill this gap this year we at St. Alban’s will offer a Blue Christmas service, a Service of Solace or Longest Night. People who are not having a very merry Christmas and friends who support them are invited to come and sit with one another in a liturgy that speaks of the love of God for the grieving.


We will gather in the early darkness to experience the presence of Christ’s love even as we are accompanied by emotions of very real sadness. People are encouraged to bring readings to share, photos or objects of remembrance

We will receive laying on of hands for healing and Holy Communion in remembrance of the One who loves us in sorrow and joy. Your friends, neighbors, and family members are most welcome. Following the service the alumni of Walking the Mourners’ Path grief recovery group will host an informal wine and cheese reception.

# December 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November 29 1st Sunday of Advent  <b>5:00 PM</b> Celtic Harpist, Scotland Program, Wine & Cheese Reception to follow		1 <b>10:30AM</b> Tai Chi  <b>6:00-9:00PM</b> EFM	2 <b>12:30-3:30PM</b> EFM  <b>7:00PM</b> The Art of Engaging Holy Scripture	3 <b>9:30AM</b> Bible Study  <b>1:00PM</b> Blanton Art Museum Trip  <b>4:00-5:30PM</b> Staff Meeting	4	5 <b>10:00AM</b> Klickety-Klack
6 <b>8:00AM</b> Eucharist Rite I <b>9:30AM</b> Christian Formation <b>10:30AM</b> Rite II <b>12:00 noon</b> Youth Council Meeting <b>5:00 PM</b> Dr. David Means & Joel Quade Music Concert, Wine & Cheese Reception to follow	7 <b>6:30PM</b> Kerygma Bible Study	8 <b>10:30AM</b> Tai Chi  <b>6:00-9:00PM</b> EFM  <b>6:30-8:PM</b> Outreach Meeting	9 <b>1:00-4:00PM</b> EFM  <b>7:00PM</b> The Art of Engaging Holy Scripture	10 <b>9:30AM</b> Bible Study  <b>6:30PM</b> Circle of Care Meeting @ the Kittels'	11	12 <b>8:30AM</b> Brotherhood of St. Andrew  <b>1:00PM</b> Vestry Mtg  <b>7:00PM</b> EYC Christmas Party at the Gemars'
13 <b>8:00AM</b> Rite I <b>9:30AM</b> Christian Formation <b>10:30AM</b> Rite II <b>5:00 PM</b> Westwood H.S. Choir, Informal Reception to follow	14 <b>6:30PM</b> Kerygma Bible Study	15 <b>10:30AM</b> Tai Chi <b>6-9:00PM</b> EFM <b>7:00PM</b> Daughters of the King	16 <b>1:00-4:00PM</b> EFM  <b>7:00PM</b> The Art of Engaging Holy Scripture	17 <b>9:30AM</b> Bible Study Christmas Celebration	18	19 <b>10:00AM</b> Klickety-Klack
20 <b>8:00AM</b> Rite I <b>9:30AM</b> Christian Formation <b>10:30AM</b> Rite II  <b>5:00-8:30PM</b> Children's Musical Play & EYC Fundraising Dinner	21 <b>6:30PM</b> Blue Christmas	22  <b>4:00PM</b> EYC Christmas Caroling & Dinner	23	24 <b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>  <b>5:30 PM</b> Children's Pageant & Christmas Eve Service  Office Closed  <b>11:00PM</b> Festival of Lessons & Carols Christmas Eve Service	25 <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>  MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!	26
27 <b>10:00AM</b> Eucharist Rite II  Note: <b>SPECIAL TIME</b>	28 Sr. High Midwinter Retreat  Office Closed	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE	NEW YEAR'S DAY HAPPY 2010!!!	

# January 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">May you have a very</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">HAPPY &amp; BLESSED NEWYEAR</p>					<p><b>1 NEW YEARS DAY</b> Office Closed</p>	<p><b>2 10:00AM</b> Klickety-Klack</p>
<p><b>3</b> <b>8:00AM</b> Rite I <b>9:30AM</b> Christian Formation <b>10:30AM</b> Rite II</p>	<p><b>4</b> Office Opened</p>	<p><b>5</b> <b>10:30AM</b> Tai Chi <b>6-9:00PM</b> EFM</p>	<p><b>6</b> <b>1:00-4:00PM</b> EFM <b>6:00PM</b> Rotation Teachers' Meeting <b>7:00PM</b> The Art of Engaging Holy Scripture</p>	<p><b>7</b> <b>9:30AM</b> Bible Study <b>4:00-5:30 PM</b> Staff Meeting</p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>9</b> <b>8:30AM</b> Brotherhood of St. Andrew</p>
<p><b>10</b> <b>8:00AM</b> Rite I <b>9:30AM</b> Christian Formation Young Adults Breakfast with Margaret <b>10:30AM</b> Rite II <b>4:00-6:00PM</b> Adult Confirmation Class #1 <b>4-6:00PM</b> EYC <b>5:00 PM</b> Cinema Paradiso</p>	<p><b>11</b> <b>6:30PM</b> Kerygma Bible Study</p>	<p><b>12</b> <b>10:30AM</b> Tai Chi <b>6-9:00PM</b> EFM <b>6:30-8:PM</b> Outreach</p>	<p><b>13</b> <b>1:00-4:00PM</b> EFM  <b>7:00PM</b> The Art of Engaging Holy Scripture</p>	<p><b>14</b> <b>9:30AM</b> Bible Study  <b>6:30PM</b> Circle of Care Meeting</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>16</b> <b>10:00AM</b> Klickety-Klack  <b>10:00 AM</b> <b>SHREDDING DAY</b> @ St. Alban's</p>
<p><b>17</b> <b>8:00AM</b> Rite I <b>9:30AM</b> Christian Formation <b>10:30AM</b> Rite II <b>4:00-6:00PM</b> Adult Confirmation Class #2 <b>4-6:00PM</b> EYC</p>	<p><b>18</b> <b>6:30PM</b> Kerygma Bible Study</p>	<p><b>19</b> <b>10:30AM</b> Tai Chi <b>6-9:00PM</b> EFM <b>7:00PM</b> Daughters of the King</p>	<p><b>20</b> <b>1:00-4:00PM</b> EFM  <b>7:00PM</b> The Art of Engaging Holy Scripture</p>	<p><b>21</b> <b>9:30AM</b> Bible Study</p>	<p><b>22</b></p>	<p><b>23</b> <b>1:00 PM</b> Vestry Meeting  <b>3:00-5:30PM</b> "IT'S ONLY a GAME!"</p>
<p><b>24</b> <b>8:00AM</b> Rite I <b>9:30AM</b> Christian Formation <b>10:30AM</b> Rite II <b>12 Noon</b> <b>ANNUAL MEETING &amp; Potluck Lunch</b> <b>4:00-6:00PM</b> Adult Confirmation Class #3</p>	<p><b>25</b> <b>6:30PM</b> Kerygma Bible Study</p>	<p><b>26</b> <b>10:30AM</b> Tai Chi  <b>6-9:00PM</b> EFM</p>	<p><b>27</b> <b>1:00-4:00PM</b> EFM  <b>7:00PM</b> The Art of Engaging Holy Scripture</p>	<p><b>28</b> <b>9:30AM</b> Bible Study</p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b> <b>10:00AM</b> Klickety-Klack</p>
<p><b>YOUTH SUNDAY</b> <b>8:00AM</b> Rite I <b>9:30AM</b> Christian Formation <b>10:30AM</b> Rite II <b>4:00-6:00PM</b> Adult Confirmation Class #4</p>						

# Brotherhood of Saint Andrew – St. Albans Chapter

## *2010 - Albert S. Bowles Memorial Scholarship Grant*

### Application for Half Grant to Summer Camp at Camp Allen

\*\*\*\*\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please check all of the groups in which you are a participant at St. Albans Church:

\_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School

\_\_\_\_\_ EYC

\_\_\_\_\_ Acolytes

\_\_\_\_\_ Youth Sunday Services (Usher, Lay Reader, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. List any other activities that you have participated in during the last year. (For example: helping to clean up after Parish Hall activities; helping with church yard work; talent show; etc.)

3. Do you attend Communion Services regularly? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why do you wish to attend Camp Allen?

5. Would you be willing to attend a Brotherhood meeting upon your return from Camp Allen and tell of your experiences? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Applicants must be in grades 3 through 12 for consideration of a Grant.

# DECEMBER JANUARY

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[Your feedback and suggestions are welcomed.]