

THE ALMANAC

St. Alban's Episcopal Church Monthly Newsletter

May 2011

*See! The winter is past;
the rains are over and gone.
Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves is heard in our land.
The fig tree forms its early fruit;
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.*

Song of Solomon 2:11-13



... even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Matthew 6:29



Rector's Notes

I love church. More specifically, I love our church, but the only way I ever got to loving our church was by making a commitment to church as church.

It is difficult to describe a call to ordained ministry. It comes to different people in different ways. For some it is cataclysmic, the proverbial Damascus road experience. For some it is subtle and nagging, like an ache that won't go away until you listen to it. But somehow you know God is calling you, and one day you muster the nerve to talk to someone about it. It was very scary, but I had opened a door that has led, over a period of many years, to the delightful place I find myself today.

On May 11 we get to share with Paula Engelhorn, who has served as our seminarian for the last two years, a most sacred threshold, as Bishop Buchanan will travel from the Diocese of Quincy to ordain her to the transitional diaconate at St. Alban's. Paula's process has been long and trying. Frequently the process is, as there are many, many steps to it, and many challenges to meet. But that evening the bishop will invoke the Holy Spirit to be present and to make her a deacon, which is a provisional step on the way to making her a priest, which will happen some months down the line. We, as the people of St. Alban's, have been very instrumental in Paula's priestly formation. She has not only learned a lot about the workings of church among us, but she has accepted the mantle of humble authority, which she will take with her to the people of St. George's Episcopal Church in Macomb, Illinois. She will carry experience and knowledge gained among us with her as well as the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the bishop, and the people who have called her and supported her calling. What a privilege this is!

But we have other ordinations as well. Remember, to ordain carries with it a less formal meaning, to appoint, to set apart. At the Great Vigil it was a delight to share in the baptism of Addie Vayas, a ninth-grader who made her own decision to adopt and be adopted by the body of Christ. Together we repeated our Baptismal Covenant with its five huge promises. These promises comprise all of our ordination as ministers of Christ. Think what a different world it would be if every Christian read these and recommitted ourselves every morning before we left the house:

- + to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers;
- + to persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord;
- + to proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ;
- + to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself;
- + to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

And on Sunday, May 15 our own Diocesan Bishop, C. Andrew Doyle, will visit St. Alban's to confirm five people, and receive and bless the reaffirmation of faith of a number of others. Confirmation, like all other sacraments, is the blessing and celebration of something God has already accomplished, in this case the commitment as an adult to live out those five promises of baptism and to recommit one's life to the ministry to be Christ to the world. Riley Scarborough, Landry Staub, Addie Vayas, Theresa Maden, and Sarah McCrary will receive the laying on of hands, which extends all the way back to the hands of the apostles themselves, and will accept the blessing and the empowerment to go forth in their lives of Christian service, evangelism, and fellowship.

If you have never been present at an ordination, I invite you not to miss either of these special occasions. They are truly sacred celebrations of the presence of the Holy Spirit working among us, and, as we know, the Spirit always has something new and surprising up her sleeve. And you can bet that there is something there for you as well.

Peace and blessings,

Margaret+

<http://www.epicenter.org/mediafiles/curriculum-the-bishop-is-coming.pdf>



THE BISHOP IS COMING



The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle
Ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Texas

In last month's *Almanac* we told you how to find Bishop Andy's blog on the diocese Website ... in case you wanted to get to know a little more about him before his visit.

Without even visiting the blog, you can tell that he is the father of young children by knowing that one of the very first things he sent to us in advance of his visit was a *children's book* (that's the cover to the left) full of things to answer the questions a child might have about bishops.

But some of us who (in words that Margaret once used) are "*reluctant to admit we don't know everything we think everybody else thinks we should know*" — we can sneak a peek at the book to find the answers to some questions about what bishops do and what they represent.

(And we can even color in his vestments and dress the bishop paper doll!)

SUNDAY MAY 15th

The **Triduum** is a single liturgy of Holy Week that takes place over three days.

Our regular services begin with an opening acclamation and close with a blessing and sending forth.

The LONGEST WORSHIP SERVICE



However, the Triduum is different. The *Maundy Thursday* liturgy begins with an opening acclamation, but concludes with the stripping of the altar and exiting in silence without a blessing. On *Good Friday* we have the Stations of the Cross and the Liturgy for Good Friday, which has neither an opening acclamation, the celebration of Holy Eucharist, nor a blessing. The *Great Vigil of Easter*, the last part of the Triduum, opens with the lighting of the Paschal candle, the Exsultet, and proceeds towards Baptism and Holy Eucharist and closes with the blessing and sending forth — to the next day's glorious celebration of Easter Sunday.

MAUNDY THURSDAY



GOOD FRIDAY



THE GREAT VIGIL of EASTER



Children's Ministry NEWS

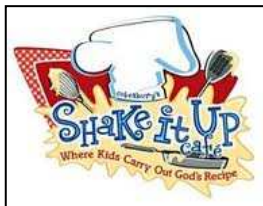
Happy Spring!



We have had a lovely time in Sunday School lately, learning about the teachings and miracles of Jesus and looking for our own little miracles as well. The children have had great success planting dried out, brown seeds and watching them grow into living, breathing, green plants, reminding us of the greatest miracle of all — Jesus' death and resurrection.



Easter Sunday was a blessed celebration surrounded by Easter lilies, eggs, and balloons! A huge “thank you” to everyone who so generously donated stuffed eggs for our Easter Egg hunt and especially those who took the time to blow up balloons. It really made for a fun time for our children.



It is time to start thinking about signing up participants and volunteers for our Vacation Bible School, which is being held July 11th through 15th, from 9-12am. Please invite friends and family members to join us for this fun and exciting event. Kids will be becoming

"chefs" and learning God's recipe for life while having a great time with crafts, science, music, games, Bible stories, and more. You can find registration forms on our website as well as all the details, so it is easy to get the word out to our community. If you have any questions, or if you are interested in volunteering, please contact me at any time.



This summer we will be having one combined Sunday School class for all ages using a multi-aged curriculum. If you have children over the age of nine (9), please come and visit with me about making them Sunday School helpers this summer. I will be putting out a teacher sign-up sheet the first week of May. Please prayerfully consider teaching and/or assisting with this great group this summer, you may be amazed at the joy it brings to your life!

God's Great Peace and Love, Catherine



EYC UPDATE

EYC UPDATE

by Brian Tarver

A weekend filled with card games, kickball, and capture the flag is usually a pretty fun three days. But when you include some program time led by Travis Smith, small group time, and cap it off with swimming at the Narrows, it becomes a "Retreat."

Youth are so often consumed with school, homework, sports, and even jobs that it is difficult to schedule in some much needed retreat time. The Youth Group had a great opportunity to get away from their lives and spend some time in community. And they made the most of it!

A trip to Peter Pan Mini Golf also gave the group a chance to enjoy spending some time growing together with competition, some frustration, and excitement. It is always nice to be out of the church building as a group, even if it takes you 10 chances on a Par 2 hole!

So don't forget to make some time for yourself, community, and God in your busy schedule. We struggle so often to schedule Sabbath time into our lives, and we overlook the importance of Retreat.

Take it from the Youth and remember to include kickball, Mini-Golf, and discussions about faith into your hectic life.

Coming Up:
 Happening and YES – April 29th- May 1st
 Relay For Life – May 13th
 Mission Trip to TN – June 25th – July 2nd

Our trip to Wellspring Retreat Center was great. And we have pictures to prove it!



OUTREACH

(See next page for web address and instructions.)

EVENTS & NEEDS

MAY 8th **SAFE PLACE** Shower

MAY 19th 6:30 PM
 Joint Dinner Meeting
COMMUNITY of HOPE & OUTREACH
 Speaker: Katherine Lehman, Volunteer Coordinator
MARBRIDGE <http://www.marbridge.org>

MAY 13th **RELAY for LIFE**



COMING SOON!

Stay tuned for pictures of the awarding of wonderful books to our Menchaca Kids!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

While Vacation Bible School is not officially a project of the Outreach Committee, it does provide a wonderful opportunity for our children to share a fun summer Christian formation activity with their friends. Watch for details to see how you can help. Consider helping your children invite some friends and offer to provide their transportation.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

Please continue to make your Amazon purchases by going first to [OUR AMAZON STORE](#) (or by going to our church website homepage to click on the link there) where all your purchases will help raise money for our St. Alban's/Menchaca SUMMER READING PROGRAM. Or make direct donations to this fund.



At St. Alban's we are joined in a circle of prayer for

SURVIVORS
 CURRENT PATIENTS
 HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS
 THOSE WE REMEMBER
 THOSE WHO MOURN
 &
 ALL WHO SEEK
 HEALING
 & A CURE



"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders ... and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Hebrews 12:1-2

Dear St. Alban's Family,

We are embarking on a new outreach opportunity –
The American Cancer Society's

RELAY for LIFE

On the evening of Friday May 13th through Saturday morning, our multi-generational team will take turns walking around the track to raise money and awareness to help the American Cancer Society create a world with less cancer and more birthdays.

Saving lives from cancer starts with one team, one participant, and one dollar at a time. Our team is doing our part to make sure that cancer never steals another year of anyone's life. Please join our team or make a donation. This is an incredible opportunity for fellowship and to **"transform lives through sharing the gifts of God's grace and love"** - - St. Alban's mission statement. The impact we can make together is much greater than what any of us could do alone!

You can choose to donate directly to the St. Alban's team in our efforts to raise \$1,000 or you can join our team and walk with us at the event. (Don't worry – we will be walking in shifts!)

There Are 3 Easy Steps!

1. Please click on this link:

http://main.acevents.org/site/TR/RelayForLife/RFLFY11PL/965224973?pg=team&fr_id=32241&team_id=930844

2. On the St. Alban's team page, you will see "Donate to our Team" and "Join our Team." Select which one you would like to do (If you plan to walk in the event, select "Join our Team" and then you will still have an opportunity to donate if you wish.) You can join our team as "Individual Registration on a Team" or "Survivor on a Team."

3. Follow the prompts.

Please feel free to email me at lisaeperez@gmail.com or call me at 512-517-0882 with any questions you have. I will also be in the PLC after both church services each Sunday with my laptop to help people register and donate.

Thank you in advance for your support of the St. Alban's Team and the American Cancer Society!

OUTREACH

Off the Hill Ministries & Contacts



Mentoring 1st and 2nd Graders at Menchaca Elementary School.
Contact: Jill Binder



A Reading Initiative to buy several books for 1st & 2nd graders at Menchaca Elementary School - books to own themselves to read over the summer.
Contact: Jill Binder



Joining teams to help build affordable homes for low income Austin families
Contact: JoeAnn Wright
Robert Mann



Assisting arriving refugee families with housing and other needs.
Contact:
David & Susan Saxon



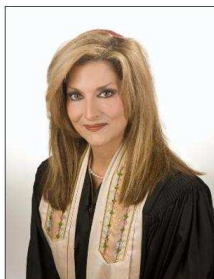
Provides meals and more for homebound and other people in need through programs that promote dignity and independence.
Contact: Judy Evans



Saint Alban's Inmate Literacy project trains and takes volunteers into county correctional facilities to tutor inmates.
Contact: David Polacheck



Trinity Center is a place where many homeless "neighbors" find loving friendships as well as other needed services.
Contact: John Rouse



SEDER 2011



The tables were set and the seder plates were prepared.

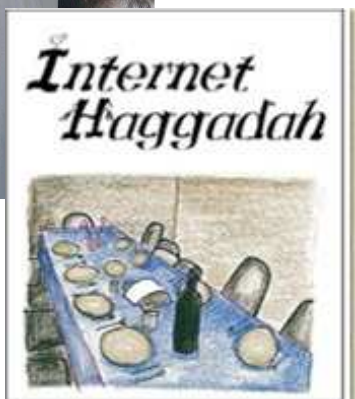
Once again we want to thank Marie Betcher, cantor of congregation Shir Ami, for leading us in our Palm Sunday seder meal.



There was plenty of ...



There were kids and toys ... to tell the Passover story..



And, of course, Elijah came — as invited!



Great Food! & Wine!

And even joyful dancing girls! Ummmmm women!

But, most important of all, we reflected again on the answer to ...

Why is this night different from all others?



PARISH TIDBITS

OUR FAMILY PICTURE ALBUM GROWS!

Boston Cole ... then



HOW FAST THEY GROW

& now!



And here he is introducing his *new* baby brother, Hudson!

from the family of Todd & Jennifer Sanders



We, know — keeping a happy secret is nearly impossible in our parish! But ...

John & Paula are leaving!

And why are we *both sad and happy* about that?

Graduation Ordination & a Call to Serve!



Paula's ordination to the Diaconate is going to be on May 11 at 7:30pm at St. Alban's. Let's keep John & Paula and the parish she will be serving in our prayers.

And then, there is that other race ...

LAUGHTER as well as PRAYER

While our support for our friends with the *Relay for Life* is serious business, we don't want you to think there is no laughter along the way.

Glenda & David are having their own race — to see who can grow their hair back the fastest!



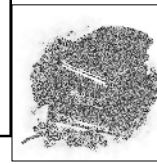
And Jerry is in a race of his own ... to pack on pounds! But *nobody* wants to challenge him on that one. (Everybody else had too much in reserve to start with.)



Glenda says David's beard does *not* count ... and she doesn't want to compete for *that* part of the prize!



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RECTOR



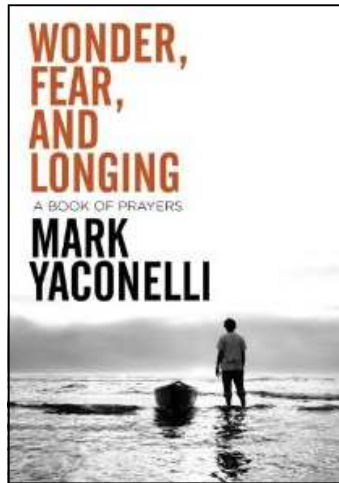
BOOKS

WEBSITES

Wonder, Fear, and Longing: A Book of Prayers by Mark Yaconelli

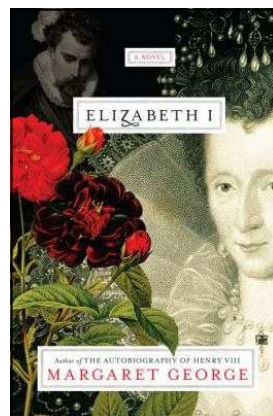
Yaconelli is the guru of youth ministry in the church today. This book is an invitation to everyone, written in gentle and reassuring language, to explore many ways to pray. He offers anecdotes, quotes from great spiritual leaders, and some suggestions for contemplative practices.

The chapters – love, longing, fear, suffering, compassion, rest, reflection, passion, wonder, and gratitude – encompass all the reasons we long to be in intimate conversation with God, and because Yaconelli is accustomed to addressing youth, he speaks well to the most vulnerable selves inside each of us.



Elizabeth I by Margaret George

George, who has written autobiographical novels of Henry VIII and Mary, Queen of Scots, gives us the gift of 688 pages of insight into this most fascinating queen, whose life and personality are so pivotal in the evolution of our faith tradition. It occurred to me, as we were discussing church history in our recent adult confirmation class, that as in the case of Paul in the first century, it took a unique person with a larger-than-life sense of self to shape and nurture the church at a critical and vulnerable point when it could have easily all fallen apart. Elizabeth is a fascinating character, and this is an entertaining and challenging portrait of her.



<http://www.ted.com>

Over 700 TED talks are online and available for video viewing.



TALKS
Karen Armstrong makes her TED Prize wish: the Cha



Standing for Technology, Entertainment, and Design, and initiated in 1984, since 2006 they have included the awarding of a \$100,000 prize to help the winner promote positive change in the world.

In her prize acceptance speech in 2008, author Karen Armstrong expresses her wish to found the Charter for Compassion.

<http://www.mefedia.com/>



This is a 21-minute talk by UC Berkeley professor Dacher Keltner about the physiological foundation of our human tendency towards altruism. He says that we are hard-wired for kindness and that sympathy is our strongest instinct. This science is supportive of the new film by Tom Shadyac, *I Am*, and is deeply spiritual as well as scientific. I think it offers great hope for the human race and the world.

CINEMA PARADISO

from Tony
Garcia



COLLATERAL

No one in the entertainment industry has perfected the crime drama to the level of Michael Mann. Mann was the creative genius who introduced the world to the glamorous streets of Miami, through the eyes of Sonny Crockett and Rico Tubbs. "Miami Vice" is still the model for all the current police and crime shows, depicting the smell and sites of the streets of the city where they are filmed as the main character of the show.

In this film, Jamie Foxx plays "Max," an LA cab driver, who unwittingly picks up "Vince," an international narcotics mob's hitman, played by Tom Cruise. Vince is contracted to eliminate the witnesses and prosecutor in a DEA case against an LA crime syndicate in one night. Lured by an extravagant tip by Vince, Max agrees to take Vince from one murder to the next, until one of the victims accidentally falls on top of his cab from the window of a fourth story apartment.

Max is faced with the extraordinary task of facing his own death in order to stop the impending carnage. The film becomes a morality play with Max and Vincent as the emblematic players.



COMING Sunday May 15th at 6:00PM
to The Parlor at St. Alban's Parish Life Center



Go to www.campallen.org/summercamp for more information. And they have stuff for *grownups*, too!



Photography Workshop

May 27-29, 2011



Summer Camp for Moms

July 22-24, 2011



Faithful Fitness

June 10-12, 2011

This retreat is designed to equip men and women with the necessary tools to live healthy, spiritually fit lifestyles. Attend sessions led by certified personal trainers, nurses, and other fitness experts. [Click here to learn more](#)

Coming to St. Alban's ... Starting in June ... Y'all Come!



Are you missing seeing your friends because they worship at a different service? Are you missing our famous St. Alban's pot lucks? Well, when we decided to experiment with the new worship schedule, the Vestry committed to holding an all parish pot luck brunch — and you can eat *anything* at brunch! — **on the first Sunday of every other month** in lieu of Christian formation.

Join us **Sunday, June 5** at 10:00 in the Assembly Room, and bring whatever you like. Nothing is more special than breaking bread with our sisters and brothers. The nursery will be open.



MAY 2011



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[Your feedback and suggestions are welcomed.]

PHOTO CREDITS

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Recently I have been thinking I ought to assign credit to those who snap those wonderful photos that absolutely are what make the Almanac pages shine with the spirit on our hill. But, you know ... there are too many of those who celebrate our community in that special way! If I put the names of all the photographers on their photos it would take away from the impact of the photos themselves. (And, here is my red face ...

I am just not well enough organized through the chaotic process of putting the Almanac together to keep the sources straight.) But I am grateful to all of them; and I know you all are also — because you *oooh* and *ahhh* over them all the time. But those who take the pictures don't always get to hear that. So THANK YOU to those who took the pictures appearing in this issue ... with apologies to any I forget.

Photos by: Brian Tarver - Jim Moore - Jack Shirley - Lisa Kittel - Todd Sanders

Our Vision: With God's help, St. Alban's embraces the growth of our community as we invite and welcome all fellow seekers to come and worship with us. We offer a variety of opportunities for spiritual growth and diverse worship experiences, and we actively share our faith in Christ with others through service, outreach and fellowship.

Our Mission: We seek transformation of lives through sharing the gifts of God's grace and love.