

THE ALMANAC

St. Alban's Episcopal Church Monthly Newsletter

OCTOBER 2011

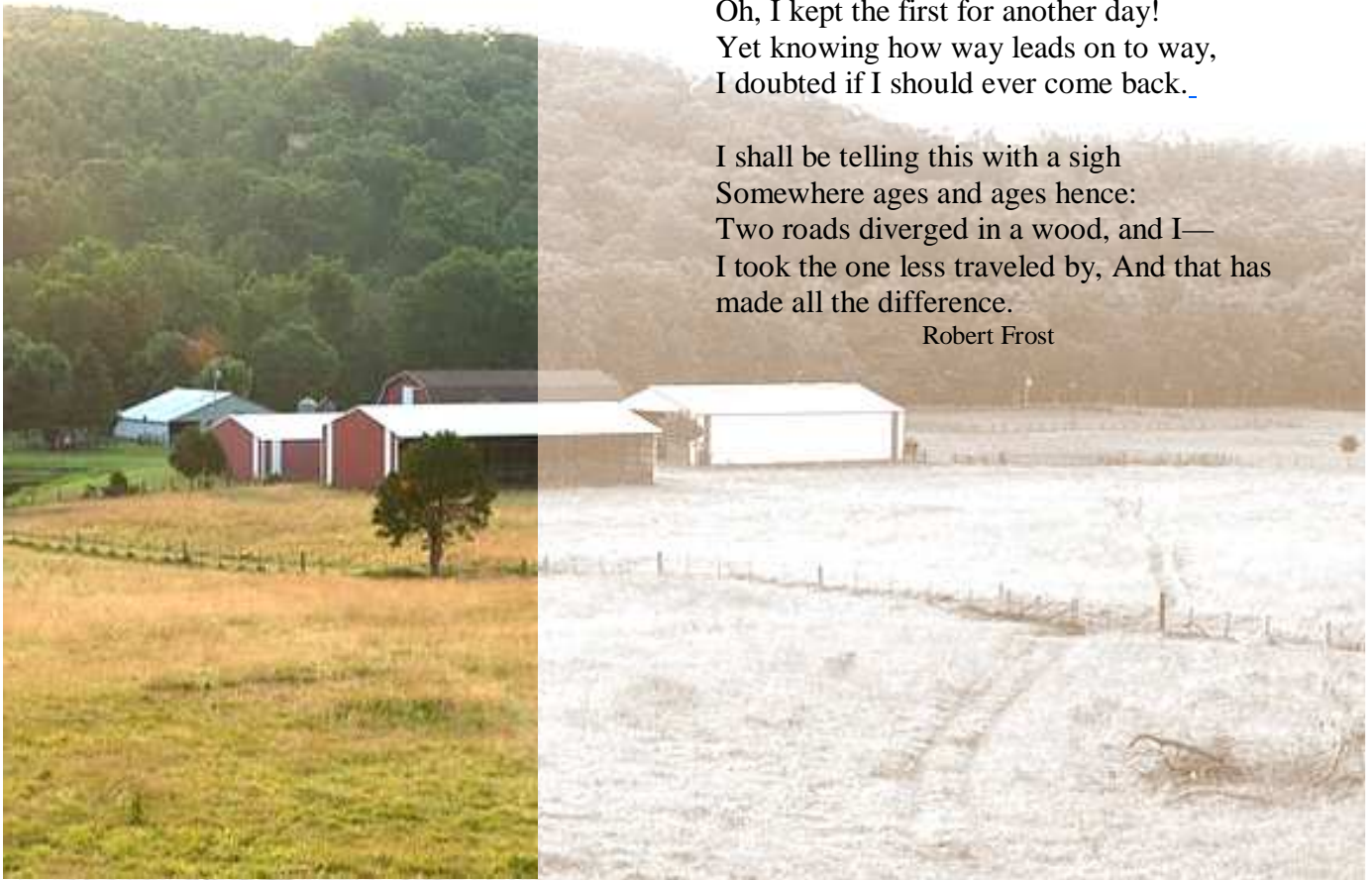
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by, And that has
made all the difference.

Robert Frost



"Now I'm turning you over to God, our marvelous God whose gracious Word can make you into what he wants you to be and give you everything you could possibly need in this community of holy friends."

Acts 12:32 *The Message*

COVER NOTE

from the Editor

Autumn always seems to be a time of transition: shorter days and longer nights, drawing toward the end of summer and vacations, the start of school, changes in the landscape. Many of those transitions require discernment in making choices: how to adapt to a new school year, what major to declare in college, working out the logistics of new schedules, how to prepare for the coming holidays.

Recalling Robert Frost's poem, *The Road Not Taken*, an image of a crossroads came to mind for the cover of our *Almanac*. The crossroads in the poem are in woods that I always visualize in the full bloom of autumn foliage. As I began to search through glorious autumn woodland photographs ... I was suddenly brought up short by the realization that such images might inadvertently cause grief to many of our close neighbors. Our nearby woods have burned; some are still burning.

Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ are grieving their loss and are faced with the necessity of having to make painful choices. In many cases those are choices they never thought they would have to face. We pray that God will guide them as they discern their next steps in rebuilding homes and lives.

And so, our cover image is split to remind us that our God's loving presence is with us always — not just when beauty surrounds us. We want our neighbors to know that we join with them in a heartfelt communion of celebration and hope as well as prayers filled with both thanksgiving and petition.

The wildfires that have raged over Texas are one more reason none of us will ever forget the summer of 2011. To date the people of St. Alban's have donated \$5287 to the victims of the Bastrop fire in the form of gift cards to HEB and Wal-Mart, the stores to which they have local access. We will continue to collect funds to send to them, so please contact Lisa Kittel if you would like to make a donation. Approximately 1800 families lost their homes, and their needs will continue over a long period of time. We also ask that you continue to pray for rain, as the fire danger continues.

Margaret+



Rector's Notes

“The genuine call of any person in a Christian community is rightly the concern of all — and a shared responsibility.” from Listening Hearts

The speaker was telling a story about some missionaries who returned to the United States after many years serving in a third world country. Someone in the audience asked what it was like to be home, fully expecting that the answer would reflect upon the comfort and abundance of home in contrast to the deprivations of their mission locale. The answer surprised nearly everyone. “We feel so sorry for you here. You have to make so many choices, it is crippling.”

I'd never thought of it that way, but I've become aware of how much of my time I do spend making choices. JB only likes one kind of Chex cereal. There are eight kinds of Chex and there are hundreds of other kinds of cereal, and is it just me, or does someone come in at night and rearrange them all? It always takes me way more time than I like to find my brand of shampoo. And that is just grocery shopping. Want to run out and grab a bite of lunch? Where? So many choices. I'm not saying that choices are bad; simply that they can be overwhelming if we let them.

It is also a gift and a blessing to have the freedom to make choices, and we do make choices daily in our lives. Small choices like which flavor protein bar do I want for breakfast, big choices like how much can we pledge to the church this year, and really big choices like what am I going to do with my life? The bigger the choice, the more we need others to help us reflect on our options.

When we're talking about those big choices, we sometimes use the word discernment. Maybe it's because we become reverent in the face of life-changing or life-directing decisions. Maybe it is because we are justifiably afraid to make these choices alone. Maybe it is because we acknowledge that God has given each of us eyes to see and ears to hear and minds to reflect in such a way that we do better together than we do separately. In the face of our biggest decisions we become aware as well of how interconnected we are and how the ramifications of our conclusions and our actions potentially impact others.

When I finally surrendered to the call to ordained ministry, I committed to always working on Christmas and Easter. Well, Christmas Eve, but that means that I sleep well into Christmas Day. I severely limited my ability to travel on weekends, which is the best time to visit grandchildren. I know you can look back at decisions you made that limited the options of your own families, but we can't not make decisions because of that. We simply need to do it thoughtfully.

How we handle our finances also has wide-ranging ramifications, some of which we will be talking about in our Money and Meaning classes on Sunday mornings. Obviously there are the family level decisions. Should we go to Disney World or put the money in a college fund? The Tweens and Youth are learning about sharing, saving, and spending, and the Tweens' posters resulted in some very thoughtful and energetic conversation from which we could all benefit.

There are also financial decisions that have more far-reaching impact. Martha and Rufus' Woody's decision to bequeath their home to St. Alban's not only resulted in our being able to pay down our debt by \$100,000 and provide a cushion for us in a rocky economy but also stands as an invitation for all of us to consider what sort of legacy we want to leave and to whom. Malcolm Riker and the founders of the church in the beer hall made enormous commitments so that we can gather here on Sundays to worship and welcome that tentative newcomer who is hungering for something in their heart. And so we can take our energies and our commitment and the good news of the gospel and our resources out into the world where they are so desperately needed.

So as we make our choices, large and small, I leave you with a quote I saw on Facebook. I don't know who said it: *I'd like to ask God how he can allow all the pain and hunger and suffering in the world when he could do something about it, but then I'm afraid that he'd turn and ask me the same thing.*

Peace and blessings,

Margaret+

Children's Ministry NEWS

Sunday School : Our Sunday School classes have been going well, with an average of 18 kids the first few Sunday's in September!

Our Tweens group, the **Faith Explorers** are "exploring" the concept of money and its effects on our spiritual lives. Lisa Pérez is doing an amazing job adapting the *Share, Save, Spend* curriculum to this age group and tying it in with relevant scripture to create a meaningful unit that is relevant to their lives. Thanks Lisa!!

(If you are interested in being a part of this class, please get in touch with me anytime. It is important that we have one or two extra teachers available to make sure that no one is having to do too much.)



Children's Chapel:



As always, we are having lots of fun singing, worshiping God, and learning His word during our special Chapel time for children ages 4yrs -5th grade. Children's Chapel takes place during both the 9am and the 11:15am services, and many times we have 15 or more children joining us. Please consider being a Chapel helper anytime, we can always use an extra hand.

Starting on October 16th and going through November 9th, I am trying to get people to cover both Children's Chapel times each Sunday while I am out with our new baby. There is a sign-up sheet in the Sunday School hallway. We need two people for each service, so PLEASE consider doing this small job that will help out in a BIG way. Once you have signed up, I will be more than happy to spend some time with you in preparation for your assigned day.

Upcoming Events: Please make a note of the dates for two very important events in October:

October 22nd, 5pm-8pm *Fall Festival*

Please mark your calendars for this special event that is sure to be tons of fun.

The Youth and Children's Ministries will be sponsoring a carnival (for all ages!) with:

- Face Painting
- Bounce House,
- Cake Walk
- Balloon Animals



... and a Fall-Themed Photo Opportunity, and a number of fun carnival games.

Our St. Alban's Brotherhood of St. Andrew's chapter will be sponsoring a dinner and silent auction to benefit Camp Allen scholarships for our kids.

PLEASE invite your friends and neighbors!

If you are able to volunteer to man any of the booths, please contact Catherine ASAP!

cont'd

Children's Ministry
cont'd **NEWS**

(more) **Upcoming Events**

October 15th 1:30pm Children's visit to Parson's House

Annie Downing will be leading the children in a visit to an assisted living facility where a number of our St. Alban's members lead worship each Sunday. The children will be presenting some songs for the residents and worshipping with them. Please get in touch with Annie or me if you are interested in being a part of this very special outreach day that will mean as much to our children as it will to the residents of Parson's House!



And... coming up in November & December ...

November 5th Pet Blessing, 9:30am at Menchaca Elementary School with the Blue Buckskin Whinchers !!

November 6th Children's All-Saint's Day program at 11:15am service

December 17th Dress Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Play (10:00AM)

(Please let us know as soon as you can if your child would like to be a part of this special program!)

December 18th Children's Christmas Play and Fireside Christmas dinner and carols (5:00PM)

A Special Thank You.....

Riley, June, and I want to extend a huge and heartfelt THANK YOU to all of you who showered us with love and gifts for our baby-on-the-way. If you weren't there to hear me, I'd like to repeat what I said after the 11:15 service.

We feel SO blessed to have found our church home in time to welcome this newest member of our family. Your love and support of us as a family, as ministers to your children, and as fellow followers of Christ has been overwhelming and we are so grateful. Thank you for trusting us with your precious children, and thank you for loving ours, even the one that hasn't arrived yet. We could not be more thrilled to be a part of this wonderful church family. God Bless you all!



Editor's Note:

We sure are going to have to scramble to get boy stuff if those doctor's images are misleading! (Well, he *could* be hiding uhm, a secret, right?)

EYC UPDATE

EYC UPDATE

by Brian Tarver

We are off and running with the fall semester. Even though most of the Youth are swamped with school and sports since summer vacation ended, it is always lively with the EYC. We have started two exciting programs with the Youth.

Share, Save, Spend

Over the coming months, we are taking part in a refreshing curriculum that helps people open a dialogue about healthy financial habits. During the Christian Formation hour, we will take part in discussion and activities that help Youth to rethink what they have learned about money.

It is essential that we teach people of all ages about how our values are reflected in our daily lives and our money choices. It is especially important to share with the young people today a message that is contrary to the advertising that focuses primarily on reaching teenagers. Americans experience over 5,000 advertising impressions each day. Our Youth are bombarded with ideas daily that shape their financial habits. We hope to help our Youth realign money habits and ideas about finances with our values as Christians.

Consider the Ravens

At Youth Group on Sunday afternoons, we have started a series called Consider the Ravens. Teenagers today live a more scheduled and busy life than ever before. This program is aimed at helping Youth cope with the anxiety and struggle that comes along with the daily pressure from peers, teachers, and parents. With the understanding of Luke 12:24, we desire that the Youth know God's unwavering love and His unconditional provision.

Upcoming events:

Oct. 22nd - Fall Festival

Oct. 30th - Halloween Party

Nov. 25th-27th – Happening and YES



OUTREACH

EVENTS & NEEDS

COMING SOON / HOW YOU CAN HELP



Buda CROP Hunger Walk 2011
November 6th
Watch soon
for more information
from coordinator
Kathy Luckett



St. Alban's HOSTS
Build Day
November 19th
•10 builders needed
• lunch team members needed

FOR MORE INFORMATION about OUTREACH

Brochures (available online or in print)

- Outreach Off the Hill
Outreach On the Hill

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

Please continue to make your Amazon purchases
by going first to OUR AMAZON STORE
(by going to our church website homepage to
click on that link there) where all your purchases
will help raise money for our various outreach
projects — especially our 1st Grade Readers Initiative.

Remember how much we have enjoyed greeting
new refugee families and helping to get them
established in their new homes in Austin?

- In September last year
we welcomed the
Esher family of three
(who quickly became
a family of four!) from
Iraq.
The next month we
welcomed a second
(much larger) family
—the Ukandas from
Burundi.



We Will Be Doing It Again — Soon!

A new refugee family will be arriving in
mid-October, and once again St. Alban's
is furnishing their apartment. If you wish to
help please bring furniture, bedding, pots
and pans, etc. to the Green Room and label
them 'for refugees.' If you need larger
furniture picked up, please call Dave Saxon.

(We will provide more information
about the exact arrival time & date
and the location of the apartment
as soon as we are notified of details.)

OUTREACH

Your KIDS HOPE USA Story of the Week

Second grader Sarah carefully guards her feelings, rarely showing joy, sadness or even compassion. She frequently says hurtful things to her mentor and others at the school.

When the mentor's father died, however, Sarah behaved very differently. "Miss Ruth," she said, "I heard your dad died and I feel sad for you." The next week, Sarah made three greeting cards for her mentor. Each card was covered with these words: "I love you Miss Ruth!"

When she learned that her cards had made Miss Ruth feel better, the little girl smiled.



Your KIDS HOPE USA Story of the Week

Four years ago, first grader Maria had serious self-esteem issues. So serious in fact that she used her long, thick hair to cover her face when she met with her KIDS HOPE USA mentor.

Several weeks ago, Maria had her hair cut for the first time. She donated her hair to *Locks of Love*, an organization that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children who suffer long-term medical hair loss because of cancer or other diagnoses.



IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS YEAR!

The stories above are from the national office; but soon we will be bringing you our own.

Five New Mentors join the 12 parishioners who mentored last year —

So ... currently 16 children at Menchaca Elementary School will have their own very "special friend" from St. Alban's.

If you would like to join their ranks ... contact Jill Binder to let her know you would like to attend this year's Mentor Training. (TBA)

Off the Hill Ministries & Contacts



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



Reading Initiative to buy several books for 1st & 2nd graders where we mentor. 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 or 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



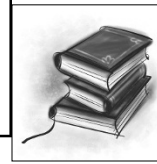
Saint Alban's Inmate Literacy project trains and takes volunteers into county correctional facilities to tutor inmates. Contact: David Polacheck



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

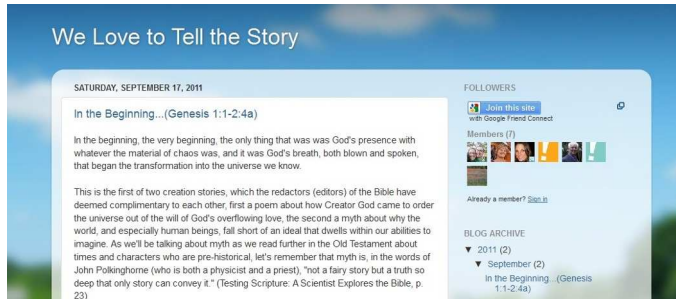


RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RECTOR



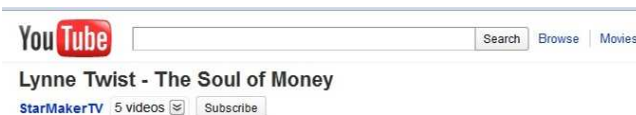
WEBSITES

BOOKS



<http://www.welovetotellthestory-margaret.blogspot.com>

This is the blog I've created to complement the biblical fluency project we are doing by reading the Narrative Lectionary in church. I'm trying to fill in and flesh out the narrative arc of the plot of the Bible as a whole. Blogging is a lot more intimidating than I thought it would be. But I'm going to keep trying, and have even another project in mind.



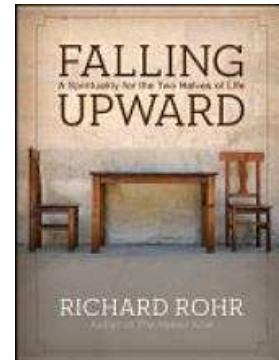
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5xIJg9WxJg>

Lynne Twist is a professional fundraiser for various non-profit global initiatives and the author of *The Soul of Money: Reclaiming the Wealth of our Inner Resources* (a book I couldn't put down!) In this 10-minute video she explains how it gives her great joy to help people align their resources with their deepest-held values.

Falling Upward:
A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life
by Richard Rohr

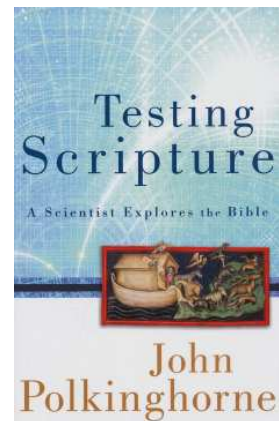
"Rohr offers a new paradigm for understanding one of the most profound of life's mysteries: how our failings can be the foundation for our ongoing spiritual growth. (He)...explores the two halves of life to show that those who have fallen, failed or 'gone down' are the only ones who understand up.

We grow more spiritually by doing it wrong than by doing it right...(He) takes us on a journey to give us an understanding of how the heartbreaks, disappointments, and first loves of life are actually stepping stones to the spiritual joys that the second have of life has in store for us."



Testing Scripture:
A Scientist Looks at the Bible
by John Polkinghorne

John Polkinghorne is a theoretical physicist and an Anglican priest. He is also an engaging, challenging, and clear writer. In his most recent book he takes on the subjects that make some people skeptical of the 'truth' and 'authority' of the Bible in a post-modern world. What he ends up with is a sense of what it truly holy, and that ancient texts and the most current scientific discoveries actually support each other.



Welcoming and Introducing Our New Seminarrians

Dear Friends,

Being one of your seminarrians is a real honor.

I feel God has taken me on just the right journey, one which I wouldn't trade for anything. I was born in Bryan, TX while my father finished his studies at Texas A&M. After graduation, his career took us to Houston until I was 13. Once again, my father's job moved us to Phoenix, Arizona where I attended junior high and high school as well as college. Upon graduating with an undergraduate degree in Biblical Studies from Grand Canyon University, I felt God directing me back home to Texas in order to continue my studies for the ministry.

While attending Truett Seminary at Baylor University, I met my wife, Suzanne ... and she fell madly in love with me! After graduating from Truett Seminary in 2002, we married and settled down in Waco. For most of our time in Waco, I worked at the Methodist Children's Home as a youth care counselor with young boys from 13-18 years old. Suzanne has worked as a hospice chaplain for about 8 years and continues to work on a part time basis for a local hospice in Austin.

Since junior high I have felt called to ministry. I have worked as a youth minister and been a part of educational ministries in Baptist and Methodist churches. I always felt these denominational affiliations were temporary, though I knew little else. In 2004, a friend asked if we would attend his confirmation into the Episcopal Church. After only a few steps inside the Episcopal Church I knew I had stepped into my future. It was like coming home, and I thanked God for steering my journey to that place. I like to say I didn't run away from the Baptist denomination, I ran to the Church.



Suzanne

Luke

Travis

That little guy — did we say “little”? — is the baby for whom so many of us prayed only a few months ago as he underwent open heart surgery. Travis & Suzanne assure us that he has made a full recovery to which we all say Amen & Thanks Be to God!

Suzanne and I were so blessed when God gave us our boy Luke, who is baptized Episcopalian. Luke is 17 months old now and is a very active little boy. Like so much of our journey, my wife and I feel St. Alban's is the perfect place for God to place us. We have loved our home parish in Waco and St. Alban's has a similar feel — warm and inviting, caring and authentic. We are so very thankful that you have offered us welcome and acceptance as you have.

Faithfully,

Travis Smith

Your seminarrian

ANNOUNCING ST. ALBAN'S

ADVENT MUSIC SERIES 2011

Remember these good times?
Great music and good friends!



We have an incredibly gifted Music Director who can do so much more than lead us in Sunday worship. Beyond sharing the gift of his own voice and instrumental music, David has also brought us the talents of his own students and brought other gifted musicians to perform at St. Alban's.

Mark your calendars and invite your friends for this year's extraordinary Advent series:

(All Concerts will begin at 5:00PM.)

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Sunday, November 27 | Dr. Thomas Echols, classical guitar |
| Sunday, December 4 | Dr. David Means, piano and voice |
| Sunday, December 11 | Handel's Messiah (the Christmas portion), St. Alban's choir supported by professional musicians and singers |
| Sunday, December 18 | Children's pageant, to be followed by Fireside Christmas youth dinner |

Now is the time to plan to attend these wonderful musical events and to help us insure that we will not only continue this tradition but build on it in the future with all kinds of musical presentations in our sanctuary.

Please support this gift to the community by contributing to *St. Alban's Concert Designated Fund* which has been established to promote the excellence of music for not only our members but our friends from down the hill and over the creek.

CINEMA PARADISO

from Tony
Garcia



THE LEGEND OF BAGGER VANCE

Directed by Robert Redford

Starring:

Will Smith

Charlize Theron



Robert Redford has been a key presence in American cinema for four decades. He won an Academy Award for directing *ORDINARY PEOPLE* and has directed other noteworthy films, such as *A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT* and *FIELD OF DREAMS*. I believe that his rugged good looks have often overshadowed his acting and directing skills.



In this film, Redford casts Matt Damon as a returning war hero, who was once the best golfer in Georgia. His relationship with Theron, who inherits her father's golf course, has been stifled since his return from WWI, an apparent victim of post traumatic stress disorder and alcoholism. Will Smith is cast as an angel, who poses as a caddie to help restore Damon to his golf game and himself. A serious, yet light-hearted romantic comedy, against a great spiritual backdrop, Redford spins this wonderfully refreshing tale of redemption and love.



COMING Sunday October 16th at 6:00PM
to The Parlor at St. Alban's Parish Life Center

St. Alban's 3rd Annual Blessing of the Animals

& Fund Raiser for the First Grade Readers' Initiative



**Saturday, November 5, 2011
9:30A.M-12:00P.M.**

**Menchaca Elementary School
12120 Manchaca Rd.
Manchaca, TX 78748**

Petting Zoo

**Door
Prizes**

Special appearance by
Clifford, The Big Red Dog!



Fun! * Music *** Face Painting**
All pets welcome - must be leashed or safely controlled.

Sponsored by [St. Alban's Episcopal Church](#)

11819 IH-35 South

Austin, TX 78747

Website: www.stalbansaustin.org

Phone: (512)282-5631

Rev. Margaret Waters, Rector

Katherine Muhlenbruch, Coordinator

(Donations of Pet Food for area animal shelters welcome.)

October 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	Friday	Saturday
						1 9:00AM-3:00PM Community of Hope Training (3 of 7) 10:00AM-12:00PM Klickety-Klack
2 9:00AM Eucharist & Children's Chapel 10-11AM (potluck) All Parish BRUNCH 11:15AM Eucharist Rite II & Children's Chapel 4-6PM Youth Group	3 7:00PM Book Study <i>A Hidden Wholeness</i> By Parker Palmer	4 10:30AM Tai Chi 6-9PM EFM	5 1-4PM EFM	6 9:30AM Adult Bible Study <i>Gospel of Matthew</i> 6:30PM-9:30PM Community of Hope Training (4 of 7)	7 6:30-9:00PM Mahjong	8 8:30-10AM B.O.S.A. 10-11:30 Acolyte Training (tentative)
9 9:00AM Eucharist & Children's Chapel 10:15AM Christian Formation 11:15AM Eucharist Rite II & Children's Chapel 4-6PM Youth Group	10 7:00PM Book Study TBA	11 10:30AM Tai Chi 6:30PM Outreach Mtg 6-9PM EFM	12 1-4PM EFM	13 9:30AM Adult Bible Study <i>Gospel of Matthew</i> 6:30PM-9:30PM Community of Hope Training (5 of 7)	14	15 10:00AM-12:00PM Klickety-Klack
16 9:00AM Eucharist & Children's Chapel 10:15AM Christian Formation 11:15AM Eucharist Rite II & Children's Chapel 4-6PM Youth Group 6:00PM Cinema Paradiso	17 7:00PM Book Study TBA	18 10:30AM Tai Chi 7:00PM Daughters of The King 6-9PM EFM	19 1-4PM EFM	20 9:30AM Adult Bible Study <i>Gospel of Matthew</i> 6:30PM-9:30PM Community of Hope Training (6 of 7)	21 6:30-9:00PM Mahjong	22 FALL FESTIVAL 5:00-8:30PM
23 9:00AM Eucharist & Children's Chapel 10:15AM Christian Formation 11:15AM Eucharist Rite II & Children's Chapel 4-6PM Youth Group	24 7:00PM Book Study TBA	25 10:30AM Tai Chi 6-9PM EFM	26 1-4PM EFM	27 9:30AM Adult Bible Study <i>Jonah & Elijah</i>	28	29 9:00AM-1:00PM Community of Hope Training (7 of 7)
30 YOUTH SUNDAY 9:00AM Eucharist & Children's Chapel 10:15AM Christian Formation 11:15AM Eucharist Rite II & Children's Chapel 4-6PM Youth Group 3-5PM S.A.I.L Training	31 7:00PM Book Study					

OCTOBER 2011

St. Alban's Episcopal Church

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ALMANAC Editor

Linda Crannell

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[Your feedback and suggestions are welcomed.]

PHOTO CREDITS

Photos absolutely are what make the Almanac pages shine with the spirit on our hill! (Here is your editor's red face; she is just not well enough organized through the sometimes chaotic process of putting the Almanac together to always keep the sources straight.) But we are grateful to all of you. So THANK YOU to those who took the pictures appearing in this issue ... with apologies to some because we have lost track of who sent in which pictures!

Cover: Tom Brotherton

EYC: Brian Tarver

Advent Concert: John Bennet Waters, Linda Crannell

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.