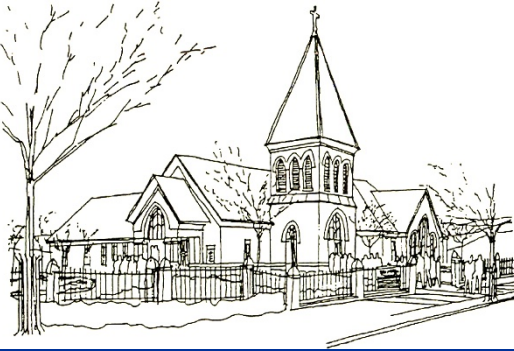


Connections

July / August 2010



New Sunday School Schedule for Kindergarten - 5th Grade Starting in September!

In May, the Christian Education Committee solicited feedback from the full congregation on the topic of the Sunday School schedule. Thanks to everyone for their valuable input!

Based on feedback, the committee recommended a new Sunday School Schedule for K-5th grade children.



The new schedule will be effective starting September 12th when the new Sunday School year kicks off. Classes will:

- Begin at 10:15 AM before the 10:30 AM worship service begins
- End just prior to the Peace during the service. Children will be brought from their classrooms to join their parents for the remainder of the service.

Middle School and High School Sunday School will begin at 9:15 AM as in previous years, ending at 10:15 AM.

We have high hopes for a great year for all ages and look forward to seeing everyone in September!



Greetings from Cristo Resucitado!

Costa Rica Trip Builds Relationships

Costa Rica's 6 ½ million people are mostly Roman Catholic—but there's a lively and active Anglican presence in the 17 Episcopal churches in the Episcopal Diocese of Costa Rica. Several years ago, Bishop Michael Curry and Bishop Hector Monterroso formed a Companion Diocese relationship. They recognized our connection as members of the Body of Christ. And, they were looking for ways to bring us closer together, to grow the Church in Costa Rica, and to help to support its outreach ministries. Although Costa Rica is one of the most stable and economically-solid countries in Latin America, there are still those who don't experience all the benefits.

Recently, Peter Macon, Martin McCoy, and I had a chance to build relationships and learn about those needs on a trip down to San Jose and Heredia in Costa Rica.

We began the trip with a delightful dinner with Bishop Monterroso and his wife, Sandra, in their home on the

day we arrived. On Sunday, we worshipped with the congregation of our partner parish, Cristo Resucitado, in their space over a storefront near downtown Heredia. We met Fr. Jorge, Melvin the music minister, Ana, Esteban, Senor Marcello, Alphonso, Gloria. We ate cake, and made a banner. And we shared our banner from St. Alban's, took pictures, and introduced our congregation via the group photos we took on Pentecost.

They welcomed us with open arms and hearts. When they give the peace, you KNOW you've received the peace! I read the Gospel in English, and Fr. Jorge read in Spanish, and he preached on the Trinity as a community of love that is a model for how we should live.

We had lunch at a great restaurant in Heredia, to the sound of a rooster crowing, while we ate what might have been his near relative.

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About Belonging

Belonging to a church is a hassle, and yes, it's worth the hassle. Many, many times in my career I've reminded folks of that. Belonging to a church anchors and centers our lives in divine values and presence. Belonging to a church provides us genuine community, a spiritual home, a family of faith with people of shared values, including a celebration of diversity. Belonging to a church connects us with God, who in Christ is reconciling the world to Himself.

Belonging to a church builds into our lives the rhythms of discipleship: "We gather to worship. We scatter to serve." Belonging to a church offers help to us when we need it the most. Belonging to a church helps us celebrate life's "transcendent" transitions—birth, graduations, vocations, marriage, and yes, death. And on and on and on!

What brings you here? And what does it mean to "belong" to St. Alban's Episcopal Church?

In the next few weeks, led by our Vestry, our church will seek to clarify and promote this concept of belonging. Let me introduce this initiative, which really excites me.

We currently have three "levels" of belonging to St. Alban's, namely *friends*, *active members* and *voting members*. We leave it up to each individual to decide the level with which he or she feels most comfortable. These levels and their guidelines result from diocesan requirements - what our Bishops insist on - as well as our own experience of what suits St. Alban's. Let's look more closely at these groupings of belonging...



Friends of St. Alban's are those who have some connection to our parish but who do not yet wish to become members. Examples may include preschool parents, contributors to Music at St. Alban's, newcomers who have visited us, or those who for whatever reason allow their membership to lapse. As priest and rector, I consider these people to "belong" to our faith community as much as active or voting members, albeit within a grouping of their choosing.

Active Members of St. Alban's are those who choose to meet the following qualifications: (1) provide a statement or record of their baptism in any Christian faith heritage, to the church office, (2) have made at least one *recorded* financial contribution during the past year of any amount, (3) have received Holy Communion here at least three times in the past year, (4) live within one hundred miles of St. Alban's, and (5) have completed a membership form, available from the church office in a new format.

Voting Members of St. Alban's are those who: (1) fulfill the five qualifications for active membership (2) provide a statement or transfer record as having been confirmed in a church of the Anglican Communion or "received" as confirmed from the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, or the Eastern Orthodox Church, and (3) are at least sixteen years old. (Voting members have the privilege of voting on the annual budget and others matters at the annual meeting, plus serving on the Vestry.)

Hope that helps. Be looking for a church-wide initiative to update and standardize our records with a new membership form, beginning soon. (*See facing page for more information.*) And feel free to ask me any questions about the guidelines and requirements for membership.

I am honored to belong to this faith community, and I hope you will belong, at whatever level suits you the best. Yes, I suppose it's something of a hassle, but it's worth the hassle!

-- *Father David*

Parish Membership Update Project FAQ's

Q: When does the update project begin, and what will I be asked to do?

A: The project will start the last week in July. Emails will be sent out with the form you will be asked to complete. You will be able to return the completed forms via email or drop them in the designated box located in the Narthex. Blank forms will also be available in the Narthex.

Q: Why are you asking for my information again, since I have been attending St. Alban's for many years?

A: It has been some time since we have requested information or updates. As a result, we feel our information is outdated and does not properly reflect the status of parishioners attending St. Alban's.

Q: Do I need to send a separate form for each member of my family?

A: Yes, please. We need information on each individual for the reports we must submit to the diocese annually.

Q: One of my family members attends a different church. Do you need information on them?

A: Yes, even if not all members of your family attend St. Alban's, we would like to know about your family.

Q: What if I don't remember in what year I was baptized?

A: Simply write the estimated year, and the church denomination.

Q: What if I don't remember when I was confirmed?

A: Simply write the estimated year, and the church denomination.

Q: What if I have no idea if I was ever baptized or confirmed? How should I complete the form?

A: In this case, please write "don't know" in the section requesting your dates of baptism and confirmation.

Q: I was confirmed in another church. How do I become received into the Episcopal Church?

A: Father David, Mother Elizabeth Marie or Deacon Rebecca will be happy to discuss the process of being received into the Episcopal Church with you!

Q: I am an adult. Can I still be baptized?

A: Absolutely! You can become baptized at any age. Contact the Parish Administrator for the next Sunday when baptisms will be performed and let Father David, Mother Elizabeth Marie or Deacon Rebecca know of your desire to become baptized.

Q: I've been baptized but haven't been confirmed. Can I still do so?

A: Yes! Many people wait until later in life to be confirmed. Talk to Father David, Mother Elizabeth Marie or Deacon Rebecca about the next steps to be confirmed.

Q: A requirement to be an active member is a "recordable contribution." What is that, and why is it important?

A: A recordable contribution is any contribution for which we can identify the source of the funds: a check, or an envelope with the giver's name on it. Unfortunately, we cannot identify the source of cash contributions.

Q: I prefer to give cash only, but would like my contribution recorded. What do I need to do?

A: Simply place the cash in an envelope with your name on it, at least once a year. It's that simple!

Q: Who do I talk to if I have questions about membership?

A: Father David, Mother Elizabeth Marie or Deacon Rebecca can help you with any questions you still have about membership.

Stewardship: Reaching Up and Reaching Out

Older tradition required that witnesses be asked three times if a couple was to be married and a blessing received. Doing so required clarity of purpose, a clear commitment of love, and to be in grace.

Stewardship is analogous to this practice. We ask each of our family members in St Alban's to prayerfully consider a commitment in treasure, time, in your specific talents. Our appeal is in this tradition, and it requires all of us to think how each event, mission, practice, function, or expense allows us to reach farther and reach higher. These are the two great commandments – reaching up and reaching out.

We will ask again for your prayerful considerations in the coming months, and offer classes and discussion in the theological context of giving. But I challenge us all to reflect how each event in our life – both in church and beyond – calls for reaching farther and wider. This is the challenge and the joy of our life together.

We give from our harvest to God grateful thanks for our blessings. This is a fundamental call of faith.

Walk in love along the way,
Peter Macon, Stewardship Chair

Vacation Bible School 2010 ... We Had a Galactic Blast!

St. Alban's space cadets had a Galactic BLAST during our cosmic adventure with God. Forty-three young parishioners played games, heard Bible stories, made crafts and learned about God's creation during VBS 2010! We are so grateful to ALL THE WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS who cooked, planned, taught, sang, danced and photographed to make this possible. A special thanks goes out to our youth volunteers: **Simon Eve, Sophia Hobbes, John Patrick Shaw and Matthew Shaw.** Their time, talent and expressions of faith are shining examples for all of us!





Antonio National Park, where we saw white-faced Capuchin monkeys, squirrel monkeys, and iguanas galore.

But it wasn't all play—we were made aware of the issues of rural poverty, and small pockets of people who need help in an area where there is no Episcopal presence.

We are going back ... in August! If you want to join our mission trip, to work on Hogar Escuela and do other projects, to meet and worship with the wonderful people of Cristo Resucitado, to see how *you* can make a difference ... just contact Peter Macon or Deacon Rebecca.

Trip dates are August 27 - September 1, and you can use frequent flyer miles to reduce the cost. We'll stay at Diocesan House, which is cozy and relaxing, take Sunday off for worship, and visit to a volcano. We'll save space for *you!*



St. Alban's at Concert on the Green

Parish Life invites St. Alban's parishioners to enjoy food, fellowship, and music at the next Davidson Concert on the Green, from 6:00-9:00 pm on August 13th. Bring your chairs, coolers, and an appetizer to share. Look for fellow parishioners and their tents along the Main Street side of The Green! For concert info: www.ci.davidson.nc.us/concerts.

Costa Rica Trip
Continued from Page 1

We also visited the site of the Hogar Escuela that we're building in Heredia, a combination day care, pre-school, after-school program for up to 150 children, and a job training center for their moms. Many of these children are the children of Nicaraguan refugees or illegal immigrants, poor single women and their children, squatters living in tin shacks or in public housing. The moms work up to 12 hours a day as domestics or in other low-paying jobs, and if their children can't stay with a neighbor or extended family, they're home alone.

The Hogar Escuelas are a wonderful response to this need, providing a safe, supervised and caring haven for the children, and offering an opportunity for a better job to their moms. The land in Heredia has been initially graded, the plans are finished, and by the time you read this, all the permits should be in hand!



Our group met with Millie and Sylvia, the architect and engineer on the project, who have come up with a design that not only works incredibly well on a small site, but also is highly replicable for other Hogar Escuelas. Building in Costa Rica isn't exactly like building here, but there are building codes, permit regulations ... even rezonings that have to be navigated.

We also visited the existing Hogar Escuela Barrio Cuba, which has been operating for 40 years and is the model for the program. In the midst of a very low-income area, its brightly-painted entrance welcomes children and their parents. Inside, there are classrooms, a chapel, a modern kitchen, an area for Godly Play, and a great playground. A beautiful computer lab for children and their moms, provided by Christ Church in Charlotte, was dedicated the day before we arrived in Costa Rica. The kids looked truly happy and receive such good care.

Peter provided an educational program for the pastors and senior wardens of the parishes (and we'll be seeking funding to expand that program). One goal of the program is to build up and empower the lay leadership of the Church—because in a hierarchical Church, as many people don't realize, the lay order is at the TOP of the pyramid. The clergy supports their growth and ministry.

Martin and I played hooky to explore the Central Pacific coast and Manuel

Parish Notes

Calling All Sunday School Teachers, Helpers & Coordinators!

We are blessed with a wonderful group of committed Sunday School volunteers from last year, but, as always, there are some holes to fill.

Please contact Richard Terry (892-7557, riterry@davidson.edu) or Mother Elizabeth Marie Melchionna (892-0173, em@gostalbens.org) if you are interested in contributing to this vital ministry.

Of course we need teachers, but there are also opportunities to help organize the Sunday School year, recruit teachers, communicate with parents, or assist with youth activities beyond the Sunday School morning program.

No previous experience is required ... just a love of children and a willingness to help. There is plenty of support for everyone. Teachers work in pairs and our coordinators work together to create and implement a great program. Even if you aren't sure where to plug in, give us a call and we'll find a way for you to help.

Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Summer Picnic

Rosalie Allen has reserved the pool cabana on the lake in the Davidson Pointe neighborhood for August 10th at 11:30 am. All St. Alban's women are invited to bring a chair and a salad or dessert to share, and enjoy a light lunch. Drinks, plates, cups, etc. will be provided. For directions and more information, please call Jeannette Roberts (704-892-0276).

Also, regular monthly ECW meetings will resume in September -- the second Tuesday each month at 10:00 am.

And thanks to all who contributed supplies for the new cottages at Thompson Child and Family Focus in May. We had quite a carload!

Don't Forget Your Pledges!

With summer in full swing, please don't forget your church home. Some of our pledges are behind, and we want to encourage everyone to keep theirs current. Thank you, and enjoy the rest of the summer season.

Mission Statement

In joyful response to the message of Christ, we gather in community to worship God and to love and serve our neighbors as ourselves.

Disciples 2010-11 Set to Kick-Off

Disciples Bible Study will meet again during the Fall, Winter and Spring of 2010-11. A Disciples upper-level class will be offered, and we would like to introduce a beginner-level Disciple I class. Classes will meet once a week for 2 ½ hours.

This small study and discussion group explores what the Bible is trying to tell each of us, and it is a fantastic opportunity to grow with others in our St. Alban's family. Throughout the year you will be amazed at what you learn, at the ways Christ works in other people's lives, and how blessed we all are.

The Disciples in our congregation would be happy to talk with you about how much the studies have meant to them. Contact Vivian Rogers-Cannon (dcvrc@hotmail.com or 704-895-3226).

