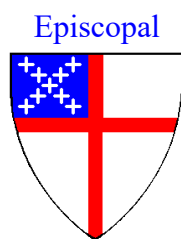


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The Rev. Julie E. Calhoun-Bryant,
Priest-in-Charge

December 5, 2023

New Prayer for Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

On Saturday the Presiding Bishop was present with us at the diocesan event at Grace, Utica. While here he fell and hit his head while in his hotel room Sunday morning and then flew home to Raleigh, NC. On Sunday he had surgery for a subdural hematoma (brain bleed) as a result of the fall. The surgery was successful and as of Tuesday he was recovering in the hospital. Please keep him in your prayers.

On Saturday the Presiding Bishop was our preacher. Ten of us gathered at Emmanuel to worship via Zoom at the diocesan Holy Eucharist. (Barbara Crane, my husband and I drove from Utica to Emmanuel during the one hour break before the service.) Many thanks to Michael LaMontagne for hosting and managing the technology and to Deborah McGavin for providing homemade pizza and wings!

On Advent 1 the Gospel lesson is about the return of Jesus Christ. My sermon on Sunday at St. Alban's opened with an anecdote the Presiding Bishop told on Saturday morning.

One day he was getting his 3 year old daughter ready to take to preschool and he told her to put on her rain coat. She asked how he knew it was going to rain. Michael explained to her that he had read it in the newspaper's weather report and had also heard the forecast on the news. She responded by running to the window and drawing back the curtain to let the sun shine in. "See Daddy," she said, "it's not raining." After a few more comments finally he told her, "Just put on your raincoat and let's go." Parents do that! After he dropped her off he reflected that his 3 year old daughter thought she knew more than her father. Isn't that special? Then he reflected that God must look at us like that. We think we know more than God does! Isn't that special? Time after time, year after year, God sent us prophets and messengers to tell us what we needed to know. Then God came himself to tell us. Merry Christmas!

Following our Presiding Bishop's lead I then reflected on our response to God's work. What is God's work and what is ours, for they are not the same? The Son of God came at Christmas to do what only God can do. Through his ministry, death on the cross, and resurrection Jesus did what only God can do: forgive our sins, conquer

death, and invite us to share in eternal life with God and the communion of saints. Our response is to share this joyful news with everyone. We cannot save the world. It's not our job to save the world. Through word and deed, ours is to live a life in which we serve as windows into the love God has for the world. Ours is to embody the love of God through a love of our own that recognizes how richly God has blessed us.

What does this look like when the world is full of war, violence, divisive politics, and deep suffering? Where do we look when we're running low on hope, when peace seems nothing but a lovely, unattainable dream? We look to God to do God's work. When the Son of God returns it will be with power and great glory to do, once again, what only God can do. Peace and justice may seem impossible for us. They are not impossible for God. It is God who will restore humanity, who will have the final word on human history. This is why we dare to hope - the Son of God will come himself and do this. However, that doesn't mean that God is doing nothing in the interim. No! God is at work on our behalf in ways unknown and often unknowable to us.

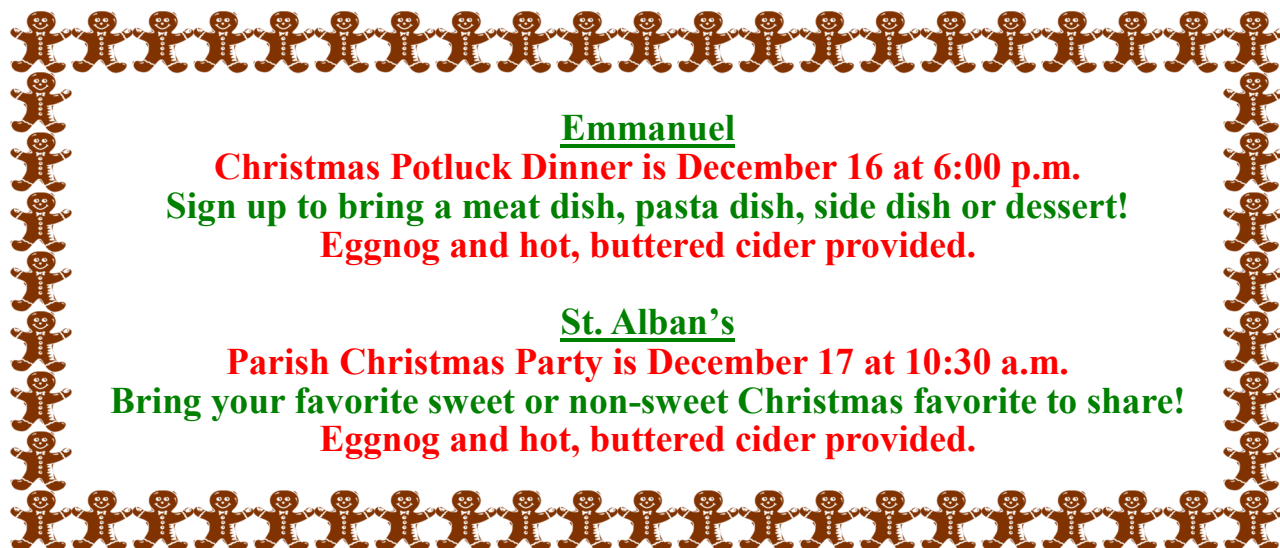
When we ponder the mystery of the Second Coming I think it's helpful to remember how Jesus came the first time. Jesus was born to Jewish peasants, not to royalty and not to a great military commander. As the heir of King David it was widely anticipated that the Messiah would be both. God surprised everyone and fooled many, first by Jesus' parents' low status in society and then by being condemned to death on a cross - a cursed death for a Jew in addition to a agonizingly physical one. Jesus came and told us that the Kingdom of God was very near and that we must reorient our lives to God and to God's purposes. He came with unfailing love and offered us forgiveness, healing, and hope. He invited us to share in this new life now, with a love, forgiveness, and hope of our own. Jesus came with joyful news and invites us to participate in God's joy. As our Presiding Bishop asked us to sing with him, "I've got that joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart." With such joy in the depths of our hearts we can love and pray for the world with the new life we've been given. And God is listening.

When Jesus at last returns I doubt it will be in a manner that anyone expected. So we are to let God do God's work, in God's way and in God's time. God has this. God has us. God has you, and the orphaned Israeli and Palestinian children, and the hostages, and all the people traumatized by war all around the world.

God has the people of our nation under his care. Pray for our leaders, work for justice, mercy, and peace, and vote for those working for justice, mercy, and peace.

Advent is a season of waiting on God to act in joyful expectation, and so Advent is a season of hope. May you find this hope and the joy of God's love down in your heart.

Mother Julie+



Emmanuel

Christmas Potluck Dinner is December 16 at 6:00 p.m.
Sign up to bring a meat dish, pasta dish, side dish or dessert!
Eggnog and hot, buttered cider provided.

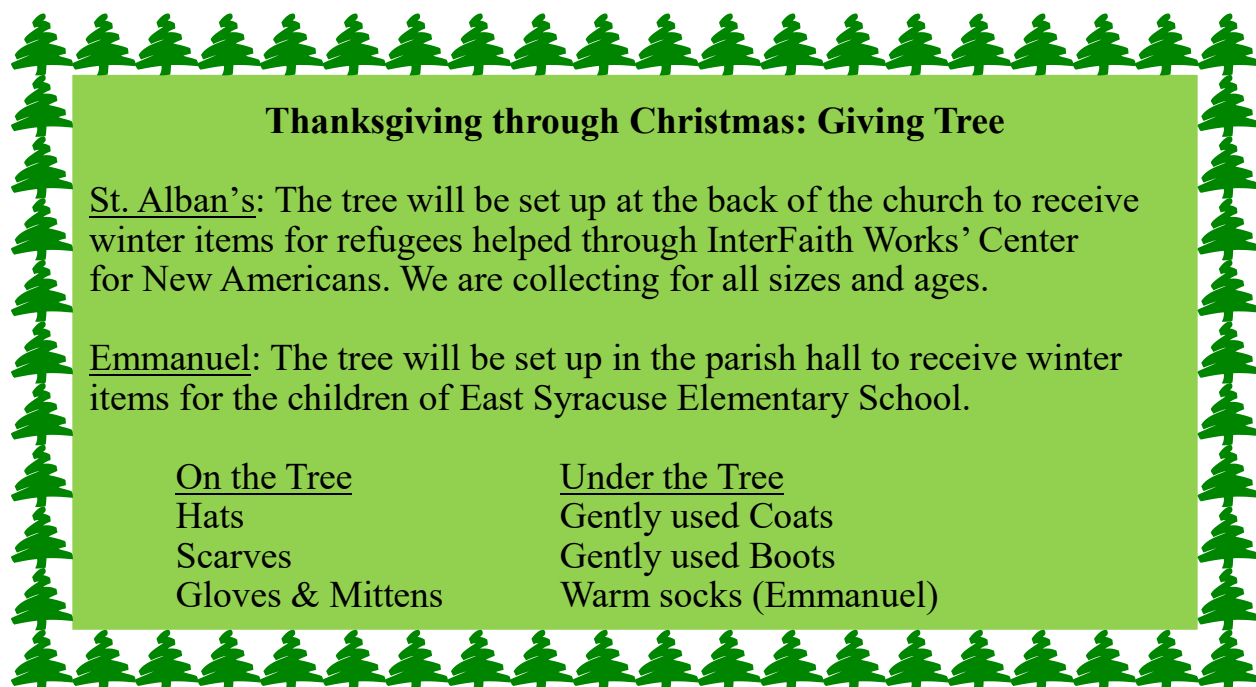
St. Alban's

Parish Christmas Party is December 17 at 10:30 a.m.
Bring your favorite sweet or non-sweet Christmas favorite to share!
Eggnog and hot, buttered cider provided.



Christmas Flowers and Decorations

Don't forget to sign up for or let Lisa know about your
Christmas flower memorials or thanksgivings.
Suggested donation is \$20.



Thanksgiving through Christmas: Giving Tree

St. Alban's: The tree will be set up at the back of the church to receive winter items for refugees helped through InterFaith Works' Center for New Americans. We are collecting for all sizes and ages.

Emmanuel: The tree will be set up in the parish hall to receive winter items for the children of East Syracuse Elementary School.

On the Tree

Hats
Scarves
Gloves & Mittens

Under the Tree

Gently used Coats
Gently used Boots
Warm socks (Emmanuel)

Thursday, December 7
6:00 p.m. Chinese Food Dinner (\$7)
7:00 p.m. Healing & Holy Eucharist

Service is also on Zoom:
836 0660 6389 & 371096



St. Alban's
December 7 at 11:00 a.m.
Clean and Shine



Emmanuel
December 9 at 1:00 p.m.
Meeting, Clean and Shine

In Person Schedule: Both Parishes & Friends are Welcome!

Wednesday Emmanuel * 2:00 p.m. Bible Study

Saturday Emmanuel * 4:15 p.m.: Coffee Hour
5:00 p.m.: Holy Eucharist, Church School on Dec. 16
& 23

Sunday St. Alban's * 8:30 a.m.: Bible Study
* 9:30 a.m.: Holy Eucharist
10:30 a.m.: Coffee Hour

* also on Zoom

Zoom Schedule & Codes

Saturday

5:00 p.m. Emmanuel: **812 9701 3112 & 381729**

Sunday

8:30 a.m. Bible Study: **825 2837 9378 & 695433**

9:30 a.m. St. Alban's: **826 9515 6305 & 446765**

Tuesday

10:00 a.m. Morning Prayer: **849 7442 6644 & 031228**

Wednesday

2:00 p.m. Bible Study: **840 0349 8213 & 586548**

**Mother Julie will be at St. Alban's on Monday, December 11
instead of Tuesday.**