

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
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The Rev. Julie E. Calhoun-Bryant,
Priest-in-Charge

January 11, 2022

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday the Gospel lesson and my sermon were about the Baptism of our Lord. One of the things that happened while Jesus was praying after his baptism is that the heavens were opened. This is from Luke's Gospel. In Mark's version the language is stronger: the heavens were torn open. The verb used is the root of our word schism. There's another place this verb is used, after Jesus' death on the cross. "Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom." (Mark 15:37-38, also Matthew and Luke) This was the curtain to the Holy of Holies where God was thought to dwell. It's tearing symbolizes for Christians unhindered access to God, achieved for all people by Jesus' death. God's relationship with us changed forever after Jesus' death. Rather than heeding the prophet Isaiah's warning, "Seek the Lord while he wills to be found; call upon him when he draws near", now God always is near to us.

We should never cease to be in awe of the fact that God has chosen to be available to us 24/7. Very few people are available to us 24/7. God is. By choice! Yesterday I was very glad of that. First a good friend texted to say that the night before he Ubered himself to the hospital because he was pretty sure his hernia had ruptured. It had and emergency surgery was scheduled for noon. I called him and we prayed over the phone together. Then I went to our new house to paint and discovered that there was no heat on the coldest day of this winter. In both cases I felt free to turn to Jesus and ask for help. Why did I ask for help? I asked because the cross tells us how very much Jesus loves us, his resurrection showed us that nothing is stronger than the power of God, and prayer is powerful because heaven is now open to us.

Here's the thing. As wonderful as it is that Jesus is always there to ask for help, he also desires that we turn to him with thanks and praise. "It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty." Beyond that, Jesus asks us to pray daily so that our relationship with our God deepens and grows. The more we talk to God, the more natural it is to turn to him in both good times and bad, as well as all the ordinary days in between. Earlier this month I had a conversation with someone about prayer. She noted that I tend to talk about Jesus while she prays to God and wondered if she was doing something wrong. Absolutely not! God has revealed Godself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This gives us several ways to approach God. Prayer is not a one size fits all kind of things. Approach God in a way that is meaningful and comfortable to you.

God has opened heaven to us. Wow! Our God is an awesome God.

Mother Julie+

Memorial Service for Herb Wickenden

Sunday, January 16 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Alban's
In person and on Zoom

Zoom Codes: 881 1431 1298 and 477292

In Person Schedule

Saturday	Emmanuel	Coffee Hour: 4:15 pm	Worship: 5:00 p.m.
Sunday	St. Alban's	Bible Study: 8:30 a.m.	Worship: 9:30 a.m.
		Coffee Hour: 10:30 a.m.	
		Herb Wickenden's Memorial Service at 2:00 p.m.	
Wednesday	Emmanuel	Bible Study: 2:00 p.m.	

Zoom Schedule & Codes

Sunday

8:30 a.m. Bible Study: **835 9000 0245 & 562087**

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

Use your telephone for Zoom

Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Herb's Service

Dial 1-646-558-8656

When prompted Enter

826 9515 6305#

881 1431 1298#

When prompted Enter

#

#

When prompted Enter

446765#

477292#

That will put you in Zoom's waiting room.

Tuesday

10:00 a.m. Morning Prayer: **824 6993 1403 & 680299**

Wednesday

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

Mother Julie's Schedule

Emmanuel

Saturday: 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

St. Alban's

Sunday: 8:10-11:30 a.m.

Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Days Off

Monday

Friday



Emmanuel's Giving Tree

The tree is outdoors and awaiting donations of hats and gloves for our neighbors.

Please put your donated items into a plastic bag for Lois McEwan or Sharon Chapman to place on the tree.

Thank you!

Dear People of St. Alban's,

As I was preparing this letter Sharon Houck called to tell me that her mother, Lucile Donahue, had just died. There will be a joint Memorial Service for Lucile and Jim Donahue at St. Alban's sometime in the spring. May she be this day In Paradise with our Lord.

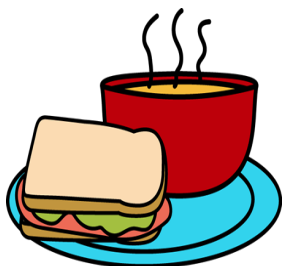
Cards may be sent to:

Sharon and Ray Houck
1010 Kingsbury Road
Washington, IL 61571

Thank You Emmanuel!

I want to thank the people of Emmanuel for the festive coffee hour before my first service with you on January 8. Your careful Covid practices showed how well you care for one another and the food was delicious.

I look forward to worshiping and serving our Lord together as we get to know one another better.



Martha's Kitchen is making quiche and 36 sandwiches on Tuesday, January 18 at 1:00 p.m. at St. Alban's. The food is taken to the Women's Opportunity Center in Liverpool, which trains women to enter or re-enter the workforce.