

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
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April 20, 2021

Dear Friends,

At the Morning Prayer service on Zoom this morning we celebrated the Feast of St. Anselm, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. Anselm was learned scholar and theologian, as well as a man of piety. "His spirituality is best summarized in the phrase, 'faith seeking understanding.' He writes, 'I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order that I may understand. For this, too, I believe, that unless I first believe, I shall not understand.'" (Lesser Feasts and Fasts)

We cannot prove that God exists. That is a matter of faith. Yet, once we truly believe we no longer require proof. Our experience of God deepens our faith without needing scientific evidence to back it up. We grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. This is why it's so important both to live our faith and to share our faith. We need to live our faith so that when we share it our words match our actions. We need to share our faith so that others will know the love of God in Jesus Christ. We are not secular humanists. We care for others because God first cared for us. Christians minister in the name of Jesus Christ and give God the glory.

In this world we live by faith, not by sight. Thanks be to God that one day we will at last meet Jesus face to face when we are welcomed home into the Kingdom of God.

May the joy of Easter live in your heart,

Mother Julie+

+++++ Worship +++++

Organist Cynthia Bromka-Skafidas, Videographer David Houston, Kate Bell and I have been discussing when and how to move live organ music from the recorded service on Saturday to the In-Person/Zoom service on Sunday. Kate leads the Protestant service at Loretto on Sunday and David would like to return to In-Person worship on Sunday. So ...

May 1-2: David will make the move to Sunday; Kate will become our Saturday videographer.

May 8-9: Cynthia will make the move to Sunday and David will record her prelude and postlude to add to the recorded service on the following Saturday.

Many thanks to David, Kate, and Meg for being there every Saturday since last summer to record the service for the website. David, of course, has been at St. Alban's every Saturday since March 25, 2020, except when I was on vacation.

Cynthia, your music is a blessing to us!

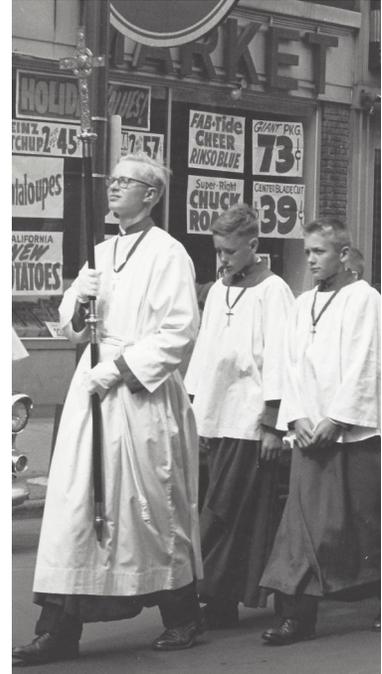
David Gregg's Memorial Service

Saturday, May 1 at 2:00 p.m.

In-Person and on Zoom

Zoom Codes

886 0623 8834 and 396021



Use your telephone for Zoom on Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Dial 1-646-558-8656

When prompted Enter **826 9515 6305#**

When prompted Enter **#**

When prompted Enter **446765#**

That will put you in Zoom's waiting room and I will let you in.

The Sunday service is both In-Person and on Zoom.

The Bishop allows 50% capacity, which leaves plenty of room for you!

Wear a mask, enter and sign in at the ramp door entrance,
and sit in a pew not filled with books.

Zoom Calendar

Sunday 8:30 a.m. Bible Study 835 9000 0245 & 562087
9:30 a.m. Worship 826 9515 6305 & 446765

Tuesday 10:00 a.m. Morning Prayer: 868 3084 1089 & 114552

Church Attendance

Since we have returned to In-Person worship our average Sunday attendance has been 45 people. This includes those worshipping in the pews, on Zoom, and on YouTube.

The Sunday Mother Julie was on vacation, April 11, the attendance was 16 people.
Where did you worship God that day?

Mother Julie's Easter 3 Sermon: April 18, 2021

Have you ever had news that what so good you couldn't wrap your mind around it? Maybe it was:

- An acceptance letter from your dream college that you never thought you'd get into
- A promotion at work you were sure someone else would get
- Driving home from your boyfriend's sister's wedding and having him pull the car off to the side of the road to propose
- A positive pregnancy test after many negative ones

Such life changing events take time to sink in. Our brains can't process the information fast enough. A whirl of thoughts and emotions spin through our hearts and minds. We say:

- Is this really happening?!
- Can this be?
- It's too good to be true.
- I don't believe it!

That first Easter evening the disciples experienced what they thought was impossible - their Lord was raised from the dead and standing right there in front of them. They were startled and terrified, thought they were seeing a ghost. They had given up their homes, their families, their responsibilities to follow Jesus. They had chosen to put their faith in Jesus and Jesus alone. And then suddenly he was gone, and all their dreams had died with him. How could Jesus be standing in front of them? It was too good to be true, or, as Luke puts it, they disbelieved in their joy.

It took a little convincing on Jesus' part. He showed them his hands and his feet and invited them to touch his wounds. They still weren't so sure, so he asked them if they had anything to eat. They gave Jesus a piece of fish and he ate it in front of them. But what convinced the disciples that the person standing in front of them was really Jesus was that he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. He laid out how Moses, the prophets, and the psalms all spoke about the suffering of the Messiah and his rising from the dead. He explained that repentance and forgiveness of sins was to be proclaimed in His Name to all nations, beginning with Jerusalem. Then he gave them a mission. The disciples were his witnesses of all these things and must proclaim them to the world, but not yet. For the next 40 days the resurrected Lord will continue to appear to them and others in preparation for that mission. Then 10 days after Jesus' ascension they will receive power to accomplish their mission when the Holy Spirit descends on them at Pentecost. We call these days the Great 50 Days of Easter.

What happens next will change not just our own lives, but our corner of the world. Do we, do you, trust these witnesses, who tell us that Jesus is risen from the dead? Do you believe their testimony that through his death on the cross we have received forgiveness

of our sins? Do you believe that we are invited to share in Jesus' resurrection to eternal life? If you believe these things in your heart, mind, and soul, then you are required to share in the disciples' mission. There is no secret knowledge, or secret handshake, or secret entrance to get you into the kingdom of heaven. The news is to be shared with those God has given you to share it with - starting with your own family and friends.

How will people know that St. Alban's is more than a just pretty stone building on the corner of Meadowbrook and Scott? What else will draw them to us besides the daffodils blooming in the yard? How will our neighbors know that we are an Easter people, a people filled with joy and hope and love? It's time to start looking outward again. Like the disciples we are filled with a whirl of thoughts and emotions when we think about going out into the world again, even with the protection the vaccines give us. We are hopeful; we are afraid; we are weary; we long to end the pain of isolation.

So let's take our cue from Jesus and the disciples.

- Jesus showed them his hands and his feet, ate a piece of fish in front of them. Start by coming to church when it's safe for you to do so. Most of us are fully vaccinated or in process. We still wear masks and observe social distancing. Sit in a pew that's not filled with books.
- Jesus gave the disciples the gift of time to prepare. There were 50 days between receiving their mission and actually beginning it. It takes time to quiet the swirl of thoughts and feelings coursing through us and get used to a new reality.
- Jesus appeared to them more than once. They gathered together privately at the beginning, giving the disciples time to get used to being with their resurrected Lord. So we will need time to get used to being in each other's presence again. After more than a year of isolation it will feel strange to be together. It will take some getting used to. But, as I can attest, at the Easter Day service the predominant feeling among the 24 people sitting in the building was joy.

Because Jesus came to us as a human, and lived as a human, he understands that life-changing news takes time to absorb and act on, even when it's wondrous news. The message of Easter is life-changing news. Jesus knows the workings of our hearts and minds because he not only participated in our creation, but lived as one of us - a created being subject to the vicissitudes of the world. But he has given those who believe in him a mission to share the love of our crucified Lord, whom God raised from the dead, and bestows on us the forgiveness of sins and the invitation to eternal life.

We are an Easter people. Our joy can never be taken from us. Don't keep it to yourselves. Amen.