



St. Alban's Episcopal Church
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August 18, 2020

Dear Friends,

Saturday was the Feast of Saint Mary the Virgin, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Episcopalians we venerate Mary as Theotokos (God bearer), Mother of our Lord, and Chief of the Saints. Though our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters celebrate the day as the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we do not hold to this doctrine in The Episcopal Church.

The online Dictionary of The Episcopal Church states: "The Assumption of Mary is the belief that the Mother of Jesus was taken up body and soul into heaven. Though not in scripture, it was described in apocryphal stories of the fifth century. It originated in the lack of scriptural data on Mary's death. It found support in the absence of bodily relics of the Virgin, in meditation on Jesus' filial love, and in a liturgical feast which dates from the fifth century. This feast was known as Memory of Mary in the fifth century and was celebrated as the Dormition in the sixth century on August 15. In the seventh century it was called the Assumption in the west. It was universally accepted by piety in Byzantium. It became a theological opinion in western theology. As the belief spread it was featured in iconography and gothic sculpture (as at Canterbury Cathedral). Though accepted by most Reformers, the feast was not included in the Book of Common Prayer. The belief was eventually abandoned in the churches of the Reformation. It was preserved in Orthodoxy and by some Anglicans as a pious belief. It became a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church in 1950."

On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII defined the Assumption of Mary to be a dogma of faith: "We pronounce, declare and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma that the immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul to heavenly glory." What the pope solemnly declared was already a common belief in the Roman Catholic Church. (underlining is mine)

As Episcopalians we also differ with Roman Catholics in that we do not hold to the doctrines of the immaculate conception or the perpetual virginity of Mary, neither of which is found in the Bible. The immaculate conception is a dogma of the Catholic Church which states that the Virgin Mary was free of original sin from the moment of her conception. It proved highly controversial in the Middle Ages, but revived in the 19th century and was adopted as Church dogma when Pope Pius IX put forth *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854. However, Episcopalians do believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, as outlined in the Bible and in the Apostles and Nicene Creeds. Many people confuse or conflate Mary's immaculate conception and Mary's virgin birth of Jesus.

The teaching that Mary was a perpetual virgin goes against the passages in the Bible which speak of and sometimes name Jesus' brothers and sisters. Roman Catholic teaching says that they were actually cousins or other close relatives, not half-siblings through Mary.

We are all united in our belief that Mary, while still a virgin, was chosen by God to bear Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-39). What amazing faith Mary had, saying yes to God despite the humiliation and possible physical harm her “Yes” cost her. Just imagine Mary saying to her parents, to her fiancé Joseph, “I’m pregnant, but it’s all good because God is the father of my baby. I’m still a virgin.” Joseph could have had her stoned to death.

To be the bearer and mother of God must have been an awesome undertaking. Mary’s “Yes” to God changed the course of her life and helped shape Jesus’ early years. For this we honor her as chief among the saints and look to her example of obedient faith.

Mother Julie+

Send a card to welcome Stephen (Frank) Terry to his new group home!
Frank looks forward to getting mail. He is Carolyn Bashaw’s brother and lived with Carolyn and Louis on Scott Avenue for many years. After your signature add “a friend from St. Alban’s”.

22 Lakehurst Drive
Auburn, NY 13021

Sunday Morning Schedule

8:30 a.m. Bible Study in the Fellowship Room and also on Zoom

9:30 a.m. In-person Holy Eucharist (no singing or exchanging the peace) - 15 people maximum
6-9 people have participated to date. There is room for you!

10:30 a.m. Zoom service led from my office

Zoom Code and Password for Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. - 817 9328 0104 and 400978

Zoom Code and Password for Worship at 10:30 a.m. - 870 3167 4090 and 923019

Zoom Code for Tuesday Morning Prayer at 10:00 a.m. - 868 3084 1089 and 114552

Use your telephone for Zoom on Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Dial 1-646-558-8656

When prompted Enter 87031674090#

When prompted Enter #

When prompted Enter 923019#

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

Thursday Evening Zoom Class

We continue to work through the “39 Articles of Faith” at the back of The Book of Common Prayer.

Zoom Code and Password - 858 6751 9278 and 211036