

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
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December 14, 2021

Dear Friends,

Over the four Tuesdays of Advent I will be writing about faith, hope, joy, and love. Today's theme is joy. Since I am getting my Covid booster on Tuesday morning I am sitting down to write this on Saturday afternoon. Wendy Wickenden called a short time ago to tell me that Herb had just died and as I was checking email I watched a drone video of the destruction from the tornado in Mayfield, Kentucky, where many people have died. In the midst of such grief and sorrow how can one ponder joy?

God provides us many opportunities for joy, some we see and grab hold of, some we don't recognize and therefore miss. Joy can be brief and fleeting and it can resonate deep within us for many years. The deeper the joy the harder the loss when its source is taken away. As wonderful as joy is, it can only last when it is based in the Lord. We say that the joy of the Lord is our strength because such joy is real and is based in faith in our eternal, almighty, loving God; therefore, it can never be taken away from us.

In ten short days I will read the Christmas Gospel once again: In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Luke 2:8-14)

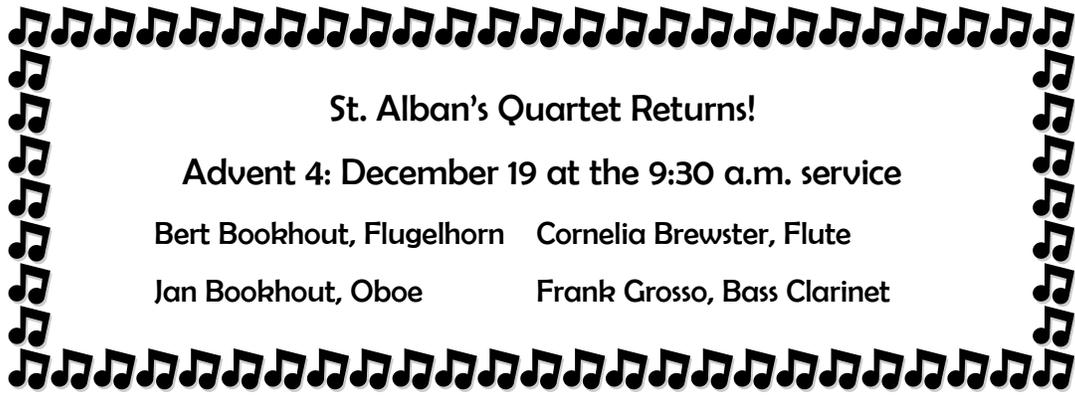
This is why we can ponder joy in the midst of sorrow, even if we can't summon it. Jesus Christ is God incarnate - God made human. God acts boldly and sacrificially on behalf of all humankind, and that is cause for celebration. Rather than abandoning us to the powers of sin and death, God sent his only-begotten Son to save us by becoming one of us. And so we find the joy and, in the words of St. Paul, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:4-7)

May the Joy of the Lord be your strength,

Mother Julie+

Thursday Evening Advent Study

Dec. 2, 9, and 16 on Zoom - We will gather to eat dinner and chat at 6:00 p.m. At 6:30 p.m. I'll present biblical studies on Faith, Hope & Joy, and Love. If you can't Zoom join me in my office.

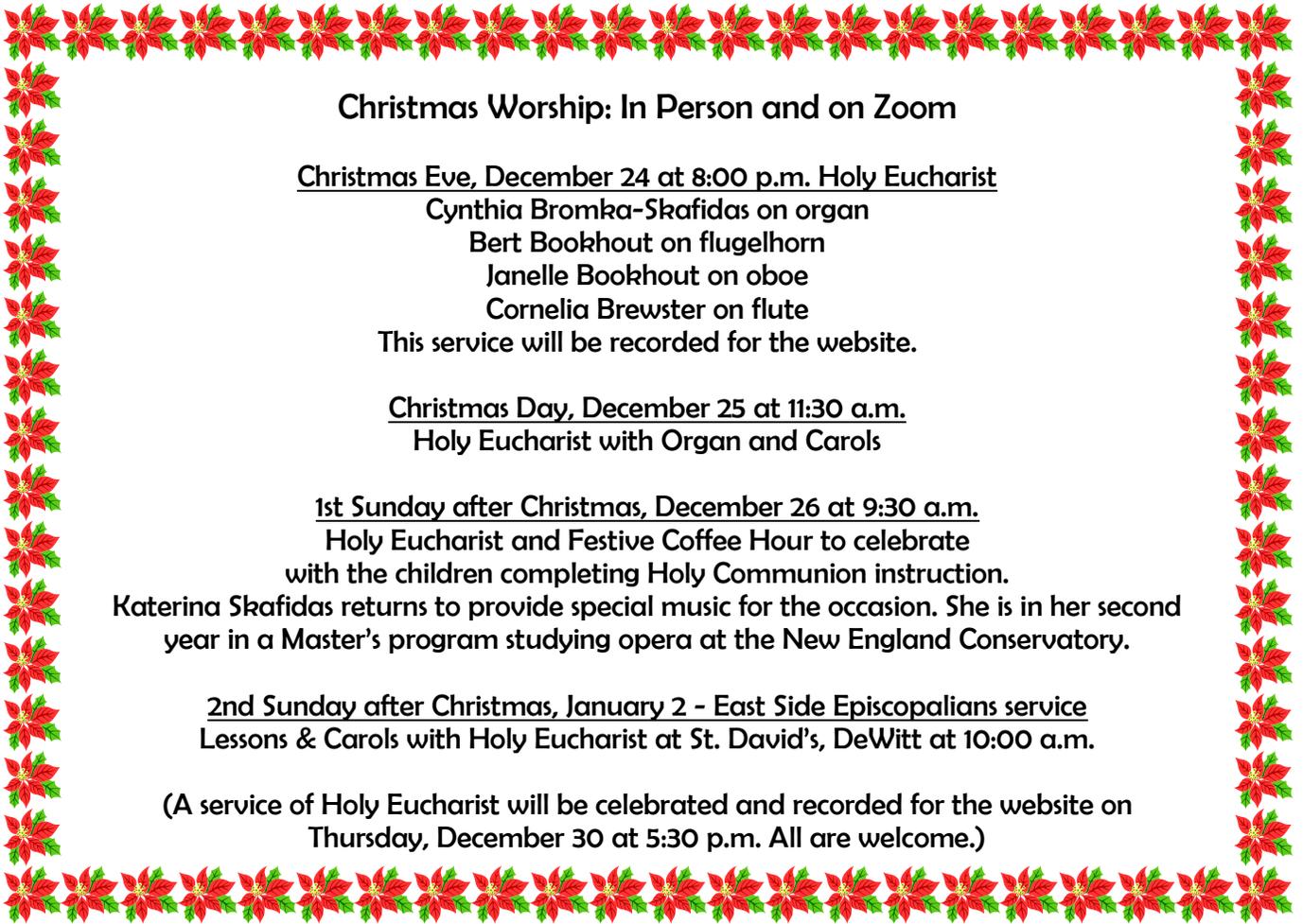


St. Alban's Quartet Returns!

Advent 4: December 19 at the 9:30 a.m. service

Bert Bookhout, Flugelhorn Cornelia Brewster, Flute

Jan Bookhout, Oboe Frank Grosso, Bass Clarinet



Christmas Worship: In Person and on Zoom

Christmas Eve, December 24 at 8:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Cynthia Bromka-Skafidas on organ

Bert Bookhout on flugelhorn

Janelle Bookhout on oboe

Cornelia Brewster on flute

This service will be recorded for the website.

Christmas Day, December 25 at 11:30 a.m.

Holy Eucharist with Organ and Carols

1st Sunday after Christmas, December 26 at 9:30 a.m.

Holy Eucharist and Festive Coffee Hour to celebrate

with the children completing Holy Communion instruction.

Katerina Skafidas returns to provide special music for the occasion. She is in her second year in a Master's program studying opera at the New England Conservatory.

2nd Sunday after Christmas, January 2 - East Side Episcopalians service

Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist at St. David's, DeWitt at 10:00 a.m.

(A service of Holy Eucharist will be celebrated and recorded for the website on Thursday, December 30 at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome.)

Use your telephone for Zoom

Dial 1-646-558-8656

	<u>Sunday at 9:30 am</u>	<u>Christmas Eve</u>	<u>Christmas Day</u>
When prompted Enter	826 9515 6305#	820 7263 1779#	860 0413 2186#
When prompted Enter	#	#	#
When prompted Enter	446765#	310697#	540798#

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

December 16-21 Calendar, with Zoom Codes where Needed

Thursday	6:00 p.m.	Advent Thursday Study: 834 3382 8700 & 900643
Saturday	11:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist in person and recorded for the website
Sunday	8:30 a.m.	Bible Study: 835 9000 0245 & 562087
	9:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist: 826 9515 6305 & 446765
Tuesday	10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer: 868 3084 1089 & 114552



Giving Tree

The tree will be in the church through Christmas to be decorated with hats, scarves, gloves, and mittens for refugees arriving in the Syracuse area. It's filling up fast!

New or gently used coats and boots may be placed under the tree.



St. Alban's Boutique is Open

Jan Bookhout's sewing room is busy with activity and new items are being added. She also takes requests. Thanks to both Jan and Kathleen Eckermann for their contributions. There are no set prices. Take what you like and donate what you can. All proceeds benefit the Mission Fund. We use the fund to purchase food for Martha's Kitchen, for year end charitable donations, and for other projects as they arise.