



# St. Alban's Episcopal Church

A R C A T A , C A  
T H E R E V . S A R A L . P O T T E R , R E C T O R

Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves but you do not notice?

Isaiah 58:3

Dear People of St. Alban's,

In the above verse from the book of the prophet Isaiah, the people of God ask why God seems to take no notice of their devotion, their outpouring of worship, their pleading to God. We do not know the specific content of their prayers, but God's answer is stunning. They fail to do justice.

These ancient words have haunted me ever since the mass shooting in Las Vegas on October 1 and continued to do so in the weeks that have followed with the shooting in Sutherlin Springs, Texas and closer to home in Tehama County. Following the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, CT in 2012 we, as a nation, said "no more." But mass shootings have become a monthly, if not more frequent occurrence. Little to nothing has changed regarding our laws and approach to gun violence and so nothing has changed. And as long as nothing changes nothing *will* change. In another week, another month and next year there will be more grieving their loved ones. We can wring our hands, fast and pray and wonder why God appears not to notice. God's answer will continue to be the same. When will you do justice?

Justice may have many elements in this and any situation, but at a minimum it must include the legal restriction of assault weapons as part of the equation. To do otherwise is to suggest that the desire of some citizens to ever more powerful weapons super cedes the right of fellow citizens to their own lives. This is a nation that subscribes, at least in part, to the rule of law. So the law must be a tool in accomplishing the work of justice.

Some have suggested that a legal remedy will fail because it cannot cure the evil intent in men's hearts. As Christians we are in the business of conversion



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*Saint Alban's is a community of disciples growing into the full maturity of Christ. Our mission as a community worshipping in the Episcopal tradition is to be devoted to God through prayer, study and action; faithful in welcoming the stranger and serving the needs of our parish and beyond.*

## NOVEMBER VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Present: Mary Bockover, Diana Cooper, Shirley Curtis, Liz Finney, Leah Lu, the Rev. Sara Potter, Tina Rousselot, and Bob Webb.

The Vestry finalized plans for a congregational study of the book *Toxic Charity* to begin the first week in January. The study is meant to be a foundation for a larger discussion of St. Alban's outreach ministries to follow, including envisioning outreach possibilities in Haiti. (Please see the article on the book study on page 4 for further details.)

Several candidates are willing to stand for election to Vestry for the upcoming year. The diocese has a policy of recruiting enough candidates that voters have a choice for every diocesan elective office, and the Vestry discussed the pros and cons of doing so at the parish level. Citing her family responsibilities and the travel needed to fulfill them, Leah Lu asked to resign at the end of this Vestry year, leaving a one-year term open in addition to the two three-year terms open for this year's election.

The Vestry approved a bid from Fortuna Iron Works for \$590 to install new handrails on either side of the steps at the entry to the church, with funds to come from the proceeds of the Talent Show and the remaining amount to come from Capital Improvements.

In its review of extensive materials on local wages prepared by Diana Cooper, the Vestry found that St. Alban's secretary and sexton positions, as well as its rector salary, are lower than other comparable positions, so the Vestry plans to make increasing those salaries a priority in setting this year's budget, both to keep St. Alban's competitive in the job market and to ensure that its valued employees are compensated fairly.

## YOUR VESTRY

Shirley Curtis, Senior Warden awazzuk@att.net	839-1536
Bob Webb, Junior Warden spider.man@suddenlink.net	826-9127
Mary Bockover Mary.bockover@humboldt.edu	822-9123
Diana Cooper dawcooper@gmail.com	822-4716
Leah Lu leahpattesonlu@gmail.com	826-2985
Tina Rousselot tinaupnorth@suddenlink.net	822-6619
Vacancy	
Liz Finney, Clerk finneyliz@gmail.com	845-4498
Dan Scofield, Treasurer d_m_Scofield@yahoo.com	822-9123



## Holden Evening Prayer and Soup Supper for Advent

Please join us **Wednesdays** in Advent (December 6, 13 and 20) at 5:30 p.m. for Holden Evening Prayer—a simple sung setting of vespers in the sanctuary—followed by a meal of soup and bread and a simplified Eucharist in the Parish Hall. Experience some joy and spirit as part of your Advent preparations. All are welcome. There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall to help with bread and soup.

## Health Ministry at St. Alban's

Here we are in Advent, starting to walk the path towards Bethlehem with hearts, minds and bodies leaning into it with a sense of urgency, expectation and excitement, depending on our age and responsibilities. One way to manage all that the holiday season presents is to nourish our inner life in preparation for a visit to the manger. This year, Living Compass has published a booklet called *Living Well through Advent 2017* that Susan Wahlstrom RN, the Coordinator for Diocesan Partners in Ministries of Health, has made available to us for free. Additionally, Mother Nancy wants to use it for the Advent Forums so I hope some of you will be inspired to take the Advent journey using this wonder-filled guide. I will be!

Emily Arents, RN, Parish Nurse

### **Witness: A Journey to St. Alban's by Garrett Purchio**

A little over two years ago I attended my first service at St. Alban's. I had come to this church in search of a new place to worship. I had attended a Baptist church locally for over nine years. However, over the course of that spring and summer I had a falling out with that church and left a few months prior to coming to St. Alban's. For a few months I was in limbo about where to go next. I filled the gap on Sundays by attending the "church of the San Francisco 49ers" which was a temporary distraction but I knew that this would not suffice. I needed to find a new church home.

In all honesty I knew very little about the Episcopal church and I didn't know what to expect. What drew me to this congregation was a former HSU professor of mine, Mac McClary. I deeply admired and respected Mac, and still consider him the best comedian never to have hosted a late-night talk show. I credit Mac with instilling in me a desire to help college students learn, which is what drew me to seek out a career as an academic librarian. I decided that if St. Alban's was good enough for Mac, then the very least I could do was give it a chance.

I walked in the doors on that October 11th morning and was greeted warmly despite not really knowing anyone here. I remember several things about that service. The first was that in the middle of the service we had an earthquake drill. We all walked outside and stood in the parking lot until the drill was over. I thought to myself that this place is spiritual and practical. It doesn't get any better than that. The other was that, after attending a Baptist church for nine years, I was stunned to discover that for communion was done a little differently here. I took the communion from the chalice and thought "Hmm, this isn't grape juice." I still look back on that service very fondly, and little did I know at the time that I had taken the first step to finding my new church home and family.

In the time that I have attended St. Alban's I have grown to appreciate the rich tradition of the Episcopal church, especially in the service each Sunday. I love to greet each of you in the exchange of peace, I enjoy singing hymns (especially since this church is filled with some of the most gifted

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## **Rector's Letter** *(Continued from page 1)*

of life, of changed hearts. But if that is all that is needed, why do care to have a fair and just legal system at all? I am put in mind of the words spoken by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at his address in 1963 at Western Michigan University,

*"But we must go on to say that while it may be true that morality cannot be legislated, behavior can be regulated. It may be true that the law cannot change the heart but it can restrain the heartless. It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me but it can keep him from lynching me and I think that is pretty important, also."*

Indeed.

The prophet goes on to note that when the people do justice, God listens to them. Even more, he goes on to say, their, "light shall rise in the darkness and [their] gloom be like the noonday."

As we enter these darkening days, may we be people who seek the Light.

Advent Blessings,  
Sara+

## **Toxic Charity?: A Congregational Study for Epiphany**

"In the United State there's a growing scandal that we both refuse to see and actively perpetuate. What Americans avoid facing is that while we are very generous in charitable giving, much of that money is either wasted or actually harms the people it is targeted to help." (Robert D. Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help*, p. 1, Harper One, 2011) Lupton was featured in a segment on PBS's "Religion and Ethics Newsweekly" in 2015. You can view that informative segment at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2015/11/25/july-3-2014-rebuilding-urban-neighborhoods/26354/>. Lupton's thought provoking *Toxic Charity* was also featured as our Bishop's Book this past spring and was discussed at the Congregational Leadership Conference also held in the spring.

One of the St. Alban's Vestry goals for this year has been to assess our outreach efforts both locally and globally. In April the Haiti Team and several others read *Toxic Charity* in preparation for the trip to that nation. In an effort to establish common language and concepts for evaluating our Outreach ministries the Vestry is inviting the entire congregation to a study of *Toxic Charity* early in 2018. Consider this your first New Year's resolution! The study will be followed by a period of evaluation and prioritization of existing and new Outreach ministries in Lent 2018.

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### Spiritual Forum for December

The Spiritual Forum is held between 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. in the Library

A lively and spirited discussion of religion, philosophy, literature, history, and personal faith

*For the Advent season, the forum will be using a seasonal resource guide from Living Compass called **Living Well Through Advent 2017**. Participants will receive a copy of the booklet, which provides daily reflections in Advent to assist in appreciating the wonder that is all around us.*

Sunday, Dec. 3	Practicing Wonder—First Sunday in Advent
Sunday, Dec. 10	Practicing Wonder—Second Sunday in Advent
Sunday, Dec. 17	Practicing Wonder—Third Sunday in Advent
Sunday, Dec. 24	No Forum
Sunday, Dec. 31	No Forum

### **Toxic Charity?: A Congregational Study for Epiphany** *(Continued from page 4)*

To enable these discussions, we have scheduled five discussion groups who will each meet for five weeks to explore the material in *Toxic Charity*. To accommodate various scheduling needs the sessions will be offered at different locations and different times during the week. The sessions are limited to seven participants plus the facilitator. These sessions will begin the week of January 7<sup>th</sup> and be completed by February 4<sup>th</sup>.

The schedule and locations follow:

Location	Time
St. Alban's Chapel	Sundays, 9:15 to 10:15 a.m.*
St. Alban's Parish Hall	Tuesdays, 12 noon-1:30 p.m.
Home of Connie & Bob Webb	Tuesdays, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Home of the Rector	Wednesdays, 6:30 to 8 p.m.*
Home of Tina Rousselot	Thursdays, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

\* child care provided

Advance registration is required. Sign-up sheets are located in the Parish Hall. Participants are asked to make every effort to attend all five sessions. Finally, participants are expected to have read the first two chapters of *Toxic Charity* prior to the beginning of the first session. Copies of the book may be ordered through St. Alban's (sign-up sheet is posted). The cost is \$16.00. Payment for books ordered through St. Alban's is due no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>. Checks should be made out to "St. Alban's" with *Toxic Charity* noted in the memo.

Outreach to our community and beyond is an essential part of St. Alban's mission. Be part of the discussion. Let us together examine our outreach mission and help determine the direction we should take.

**Witness: A Journey to St. Alban's by Garrett Purchio** *(Continued from page 3)*

I enjoy singing hymns (especially since this church is filled with some of the most gifted and talented voices I have ever heard), and in my opinion nothing is better than the organ. What stands out to me is the strong level of community and participation in the service. Together we sing hymns, together we recite prayers, together we take the communion, and together we listen to the sound of young children making adorable noises. I love seeing the body of Christ worshipping together. In addition to the weekly service, I have also enjoyed the different activities that I have participated in. This includes the Christmas pageant, the Blessing of the Animals service, and the Sanctuary services, just to name a few.

My favorite activity at St. Alban's is Camp Living Waters. I've participated in camp over the past two summers and it means the world to me. This is my absolute favorite week of the year. I spend most of my time in the kitchen, helping to prep food, cook, or clean. This past summer I also took on the responsibility of making sure the kids and staff had plenty of ice cold water to drink, hence how I got the nickname "Ice Man." Being on the kitchen crew is a never-ending cycle since we have to feed 50 to 60 people three times a day for the entire week. Despite the long hours and the toll it takes, I wouldn't give it up for the world.

Camp Living Waters was a real turning point for me in the summer of 2016. I remember laying in my tent midway through the week, very sore and tired. My tent's zippers were broken and I remember a few bugs crawling in my tent and being paranoid about them crawling all over me. It was then that I realized that night that one year earlier was the night I had decided to leave my former church. I considered having to leave that church a spiritual low point for me. Yet here I was a year later, having a great time and feeling a renewed sense of purpose in my spiritual journey. I was a part of something that I consider to be very special. For seven days I am immersed with a group of amazing people focused on growing closer to God. To all of the campers and staff members, thank you for making that time special for me and for everyone else that attends. I firmly believe that Camp Living Waters makes a difference.

I am thankful beyond measure for this church family for taking me in two years ago. It has been a wonderful ride and I look forward to the journey ahead.

## **Extreme Weather Shelter**

The Extreme Weather Shelter (EWS) for Arcata will be in operation again beginning Friday, December 1 and continuing through mid-March. The EWS is a collaborative effort of Arcata House Partnership (AHP), St. Alban's and three other area churches. The Extreme Weather goes into operation on nights when the temperature will drop below freezing or during successive nights of rain. Guests do an intake at the Annex in Arcata, receive a meal, dry bedding and are transported to the host church at 7 p.m. They return to the Annex at 7 a.m. the next morning for a light breakfast. St. Alban's acts as host on Sunday and Tuesday evenings as needed. Jan Ramsey is an overnight volunteer with the EWS. If you would like to learn more about being a volunteer for the EWS speak with Jan and then contact Jesse Drucker from AHP at (707) 633-6236.

## Bishop Election

The Rt. Rev. Barry Beisner, Bishop of Northern California, announced in early September his intention to retire at the end on June 2019. A Search Committee has been formed and is now underway with their work of forming a diocesan profile. The election of the new Bishop is scheduled for February 9, 2019 at a location yet to be determined. Please note, *those elected at our Annual Meeting in January to serve as delegates to Diocesan Convention in November 2018 will also serve as delegates to the special convention to elect the Bishop.* Please also note that delegates to Convention attend a pre-convention Convocation in mid-October (usually at Christ Church, Eureka) and present at forums on Sunday mornings before and after Diocesan Convention.

## Welcoming the Stranger Task Force: Immigration and Refugee Ministries

In the 2014 in convention the Diocese established a Welcoming the Stranger Task Force on Immigration and Refugee Ministries. The Task Force is guided by the work of the Episcopal Migration Ministries of the Episcopal Church, and aims to find tangible and practical ways to help address and raise awareness for the needs of refugees, immigrants, and all people suffering as a result of oppression, injustice, and terror in the world. The Task Force aims to follow in the Jesus movement and help our neighbor, the stranger, in their time of need. Lynn Zender, a member of St. Martin's, Davis, serves as the convener. As the convener Lynn provides regular updates through email to interested members of the Diocese on a wide variety of concerns related from legislation on Capitol Hill to the work of Episcopal Migration Ministries. If you would like to receive updates from Lynn please contact her at [LynnZender@sbcglobal.net](mailto:LynnZender@sbcglobal.net). Please let her know you a member of St. Alban's!



## Spit, polish and shine those boots!

Do you own a favorite pair of cowboy boots? Are they black, brown, multi colored, alligator skin? On **Sunday, December 10** all those owners of cowboy boots are asked to wear them to worship. Why? Because it will be fun (and Mtr. Sara is jealous of Wyatt Wheatley's super cool boots. She is wondering if anyone has a more impressive pair.) We will circle up at the end of each service in the center aisle to take a picture of...the boots.

Caroling Party  
Friday, December 15, 2017  
6:00 P.M.



Join us in bringing Christmas cheer to our Sunny Brae neighbors. Song books provided and all will return to the church to for hot cocoa, cider and treats. Bring a flashlight, all ages are invited and children are most welcome to join in this joyous holiday tradition.



# Saint Alban's Episcopal Church

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«Title»«First»«Last»  
«Address»  
«Post Office Box»  
«City», «State» «Zip/Postal Code»



Remember to order your copy of *Toxic Charity* by Friday, December 15 - see pages 4 & 5 for details

## Meetings, Clubs, and Other Regularly Scheduled Events

### Weekly Gatherings

<u>Group</u>	<u>Day and Place</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Choir Rehearsal	Sunday, Sanctuary	12:15 p.m.	Nan Voss-Herlihy
Spiritual Forum	Sunday, Library	9:15 a.m.	Mtr. Nancy Streufert

### Monthly Gatherings

<u>Group</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Bible Study	2nd and 4th Mondays, Library	6:30-8:00 p.m.	Bob Webb
Book Group	1st Monday, Parish Hall	6:00-8:00 p.m. (Potluck at 6) 7:00 p.m. Discussion	Betty Price
Craft Group	3rd Monday, Parish Hall	3:00-5:00 p.m.	Evaonne Hendricks
Vestry	3rd Sunday, Library	12:30-2:30 p.m.	Shirley Curtis
Wisdom Group	3rd Wednesday, Parish Hall	11:30-1:00 p.m.	
Worship Committee	1st Saturday, Library, every other month	10:00 a.m.	Mtr. Sara Potter