

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

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you might be healed.

James 5:16a

Dear People of St. Alban's,

In November Kate Lehre commented during her witness that if she could change one thing about St. Alban's it would be to have lots of confessional booths throughout the sanctuary so that worshippers could have a private space during particularly emotional moments in worship. It may come as a surprise to some to learn that we have within the Episcopal Church a tradition of formal confession more commonly known as the *Reconciliation of a Penitent*. Some might ask, if we offer a general confession each week during corporate worship why would someone seek out the sacrament of reconciliation? Simply put, there are times when we need to hear the words of absolution offered for specific sins that are particularly burdensome to us, to hear the words of forgiveness offered to us for our own particular occasions of sin and receive wise counsel. Others seek out the sacrament at moments of significant transition or decision making—an adult preparing for baptism, in preparation for marriage or an ordination, or at the end of life. You may remember when Marylee Bytheriver spoke to the congregation in the late fall of 2015 following her second cancer diagnosis and her decision not to seek more invasive treatment that one of the things she prioritized was a life review which concluded with the sacrament of reconciliation. In my own practice, the sacrament is a way of annually renewing and deepening my relationship with God.

A few practical notes. Confession can be sought out at any time though the season of Lent, Holy Week and Holy Saturday are especially appropriate times. There are two forms of the rite beginning in the Prayer Book on page 447 and either can be used. For anyone seeking the sacrament for the first time I recommend a significant period of preparation, 2-3 months is not uncommon. Two excellent resources for getting started are *Reconciliation: Preparing for Confession in the Episcopal Church* by Martin L. Smith and *Speaking of Sin: The Lost*



Continued on page 4

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.

Health Ministry at St. Alban's

One of the more obvious monthly National Health Observances would be that February is American Heart Month. Healthy choices to lower risks of developing heart disease I've talked about in these articles before:

- ⇒ Watch your weight
- ⇒ Quit smoking and stay away from second-hand smoke
- ⇒ Control your cholesterol and blood pressure
- ⇒ If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation
- ⇒ Get active and eat healthy

But just to stress their importance, if you follow the last bit of advice, you'd be taking care of the first and possibly also the middle one. Most of us no longer smoke, and thanks to California laws, 2nd-hand smoke isn't very prominent. Did you know that if you have a glass of wine daily, you're considered a moderate drinker? Hmmm. Lent starts this month, a really good time to take on a new positive behavior and any of the above suggestions would be a good Lenten choice.

Emily Arents, RN, Parish Nurse

The book group meets February 5 in the parish hall

6 p.m. Potluck

7-8 p.m. Book Discussion of:

Accidental Saints finding God in all the Wrong People by Nadia Bolz Weber

The book for March 5 is *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians who helped win the space race* by Margot Lee Shetterly. Paperback lists for \$15.99 (368 pages). Books can be made purchased from Northtown Books with a 10% discount (please let Betty Price, 822-1007, know you want one so she can order the book) or you can get the it from your favorite bookseller. It is also available at the Humboldt County Library.



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

Language of Salvation by Barbara Brown Taylor. The former provides an overview of forgiveness in Jesus' ministry, the development of the rite of reconciliation in the Church and practical information for someone preparing to receive the rite for the first time. The latter explores the process of reconciliation in the Christian faith—confession, pardon, penance and amendment of life—that is, how we name sin and ask God to help us do something about it. Mtr. Nancy and I are both available to assist if this is a spiritual practice you would like to explore.

The season of Lent is traditionally a time to engage in intentional spiritual disciplines as a means of cleaning house or taking stock of our life with God ("Lent" comes from an older word for spring). It could be exploring the Daily Office, a corner stone of Anglican spirituality, by joining the congregation for Morning Prayer on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Fridays at 7:30 or a.m. or for Stations of the Cross on Fridays at 12 noon (see Mtr. Nancy's article on page 6). It could be fasting, both in the traditional sense of abstaining from food especially on Ash Wednesday or Good Friday, but also abstaining from anything that seems to demand our time or attention in ways that should be reserved for God and our closest relationships (e.g. a regular Sabbath from email or our electronic devices). The struggle to integrate such practices often tells us as much as the practices themselves. The idea of adding anything else to already busy lives may be enough to send us over the figurative edge but that too tells us something about how we are stewarding our lives. Lent is a gift to us from the Church—a season to tell it like it is, to name the brokenness in our lives and the life of the world—all the better to receive the gift of new life offered to us at Easter.

Blessings,
Sara+

Learn About *Food for the Poor* on February 11



FOOD FOR THE POOR

Saving Lives... Transforming Communities... Renewing Hope

Food For The Poor is one of the largest international relief and development organizations in the United States. Its work is motivated by its faith in God, spreading His unconditional love, regardless of race, wealth, or creed as it ministers to the poorest of the poor in 17 countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. By providing lifesaving food, secure housing, clean water, healthcare, emergency relief, micro-enterprise projects and education opportunities, it is giving the poor a chance at a better future, and showing them God's love.

On **Sunday, February 11** the Rev. Bill Beers will be with us as our preacher and guest at the adult forum to speak to the ministry of *Food for the Poor*. Please plan to join.

Spiritual Forum for February

Spiritual Forum will return in March

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

Sunday, February 4	No Forum – <i>Toxic Charity</i> discussion
Sunday, February 11	<i>Food for the Poor</i> The Rev. Bill Beers
Sunday, February 18	No Forum— Forum returns in March
Sunday, February 25	No Forum— Discussion of Ideas Generated during <i>Toxic Charity</i> study

Arcata House Partnership (AHP)

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Christmas Offering. A total of \$ 1,410 was given with \$ 470 going to support the Extreme Weather Shelter. There is no emergency shelter in Arcata so on nights when the temperature drops below freezing or we have multiple nights of rain AHP and several local congregations including St. Alban's work to provide emergency shelter. Guests arrive at the Annex on or after 2 p.m. and receive dry clothing, bedding and an evening meal. They are transported to the host church at 7 p.m. and return to the Annex at 7 a.m. the next morning. AHP budgets 10-12 nights per winter to operate the Extreme Weather Shelter so our gift and any other additional funds allow them to operate more nights if needed.

The Adult Shelter on Boyd Road (formerly known as the Night Shelter) is still in operation but its focus has changed somewhat. No longer an emergency shelter of limited duration residents can stay for a longer period of time as they work with a case manager toward permanent housing. We have for many years prepared meals for the Night Shelter on the first and third Monday of each month and the fifth Monday when there is one. Many thanks to those who have cooked so faithfully over the years. If you would like to join their ranks the sign-up sheet is located in the parish hall.

The Way of the Cross in Lent at St. Alban's

Pilgrimages to symbolically relive the last steps of Jesus in Jerusalem began shortly after A.D. 313 when Constantine, Emperor of Rome, in his Edict of Milan ended the government-sanctioned persecution of Christians. We have evidence of these pilgrimages from the fourth century Spanish nun, Egeria, who chronicled her experience as she walked the route between Pilate's judgment seat and Mount Calvary, known to pilgrims as the Via Dolorosa ("Way of Sorrow").

The devotion known as the "Way of the Cross" or the "Stations of the Cross" is an adaptation to local usage of this custom whereby the offering of prayer at a series of "stations" traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death takes place along the walls of one's church sanctuary. As in past years, St. Alban's will offer the Way of the Cross services during the Lenten season, now with our beautiful collection of original metal artwork by Haitian artist Jean Sylvestri made from steel oil drums that depict the Stations of the Cross.

This year, the service will be held every Friday at noon beginning February 23 and on Good Friday. As part of your Lenten devotion, please consider joining us and the millions of pilgrims around the globe who participate in this very meaningful tradition of the Church. And let me know if you would like to be an officiant, reader or acolyte on any Friday we offer Stations of the Cross.

Mother Nancy+

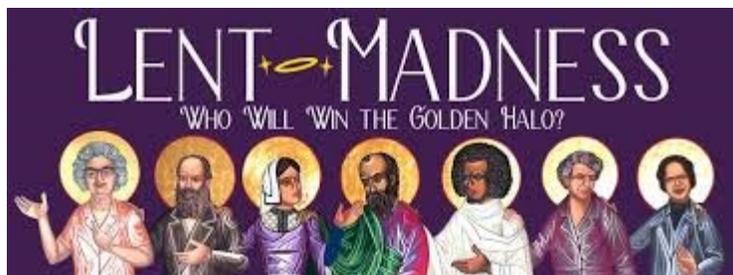


Ash Wednesday
Arcata Plaza
February 14, 2018
12:30 p.m.— 1:30 p.m.

On Ash Wednesday, February 14, St. Alban's will be offering "Ashes to Go," a new approach to a centuries-old Christian tradition.

St. Alban's is part of a new nationwide movement that has clergy and lay people visiting transit stops, street corners, coffee shops, and college campuses to mark the foreheads of interested passersby with ashes and invite them to repent of past wrongdoing and seek forgiveness and renewal.

Rev. Sara explains that, "Lent comes from the word for lengthening of days as we head into Spring. In the life of the Church this is a season of spiritual renewal, marked by repentance or change, in the face of our mortality. The ashes of Ash Wednesday are a sign of our mortality and our intention to seek renewal and a changed direction Godward. Ashes to Go is a way to mark that new beginning publicly and in a way that connects the traditions of faith with everyday life."



With its unique blend of competition, learning, and humor, Lent Madness allows participants to be inspired by the ways in which God has worked through the lives of saintly souls across generations and cultures. Throughout Lent, thirty-two saints will do battle to win the coveted Golden Halo.

Based loosely on the NCAA basketball tournament of a similar name, this online devotion pits saints against one another in a bracket as voters choose their favorites throughout this penitential season. Here's how to participate: on the weekdays of Lent, information is posted at <http://www.lentmadness.org> about two different saints. Each pairing remains open for 24 hours as participants read about and then vote to determine which saint moves on to the next round. Sixteen saints make it to the Round of the Saintly Sixteen; eight advance to the Round of the Elate Eight; four make it to the Faithful Four; two to the Championship; and the winner is awarded the coveted Golden Halo.

The first round consists of basic biographical information about each of the 32 saints. Things get a bit more interesting in the subsequent rounds as we offer quotes and quirks, explore legends, and even move into the area of saintly kitsch.

This year Lent Madness features an intriguing slate of saints ancient and modern, Biblical and ecclesiastical. 2018 heavyweights include John the Evangelist, Margaret of Scotland, Richard Hooker, Katharina von Bora, and the apostles Peter and Paul.

The full bracket is online at the Lent Madness website <http://www.lentmadness.org> and, while not necessary to participate, you can order *The Saintly Scorecard: The Definitive Guide to Lent Madness 2018* at <http://www.forwardmovement.org>. This companion guide includes biographies of all 32 saints, a full-color bracket, information about how to fully participate, and a series of Pocket Lent trading cards.

If you're looking for a Lenten discipline that is fun, educational, occasionally goofy, and always joyful, join the Lent Madness journey. Lent needn't be all doom and gloom. After all, what could be more joyful than a season specifically set aside to get closer to Jesus Christ?



Saint Alban's Episcopal Church

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**Ash Wednesday
12:30 Arcata Plaza**

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