



Godspeed



St. Alban's Newsletter

Volume V, Issue II

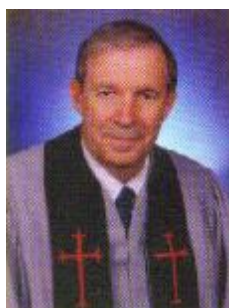
February, 2009

Wednesday Evening Lenten Program



The seven famous "I Ams" of the Gospel of John

Discussion lead by The Rev. Tom Witzel



The Rev. Tom Witzel received his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin (Madison), and his theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has pastored Continuing Congregational Churches (NACCC) in Wisconsin (Spring Green, Lone Rock), Ohio (Bowling Green), New Jersey (Chester, Randolph) and Sun City, Arizona. He and wife Sara have been married for 48 years, and have two married daughters.

Session One: Wednesday, February 25th, 6:30 p.m. Session Four: Wednesday, March 18th, 6:30 p.m.
Session Two: Wednesday, March 4th, 6:30 p.m. Session Five: Wednesday, March 25th, 6:30 p.m.
Session Three: Wednesday, March 11th, 6:30 p.m. Session Six: Wednesday, April 1st, 6:30 p.m.

We will begin each session with a Soup Supper from 6:30 p. m. to 7:15 p. m. in the Library / Conference Room. The Soup Supper will be followed by our Lenten program: *The seven famous "I Ams" of the Gospel of John*; a guided discussion lead by Tom Witzel. Please bring all the questions you always wanted to ask. The Lenten Program will end at 8:30 p. m. I am very excited about this program and hope to see all of you there.

In His Love
Fr. Verne Walter

"The proper study of mankind is man," wrote Alexander Pope in his famous essay: Study of Man. We Christians would put the matter differently; we believe the proper study of mankind is Jesus.

Jesus shows us the clearest and most accurate picture of God. "He that has seen me has seen the Father," says Jesus at the end of his life (John 14:9)

Jesus also shows us the clearest picture of what God has designed US to be. Although we cannot hope to arrive at perfect Christ-likeness, this picture gives us a direction toward which to strive.

We are so blessed to have this revelation of what God is like, and this pattern for ourselves, vividly revealed in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In the Gospel of John, we see the deepest and most divine picture of Jesus.

During our 2009 Lenten study, we will study this picture of Jesus in the famous seven "I Ams" of John. Our six evening sessions, beginning with Ash Wednesday, February 25, will combine good fellowship, conversation and deeper insights into our Lord and Savior... with whom we soon shall spend all eternity.

The Rev. Tom Witzel

Inside this issue:

<i>Wednesday Evening Lenten Program</i>	1
<i>Fr. Walter's Reflections</i>	2
<i>The State of St. Alban's 2008</i>	
<i>Deacon's Notes</i>	3
<i>Soup or Socks</i>	3
<i>The Vision for St. Alban's in the year 2009</i>	3
<i>Elected To The Vestry</i>	4
<i>Valentine Lasagna Dinners</i>	4
<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	5
<i>Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>	5

Special points of interest:

- Saturday, February 7th—Work Day for Lasagna Dinners.
- Wednesday, February 11th—Vestry meeting 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, February 13th—Lasagna pick-up between 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at St. Alban's
- Sunday, February 15th—WOSA meeting 11:30 a.m.
- Tuesday, February 24th—Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 25th—Ash Wednesday services 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 25th—Lenten Program and Soup Supper 6:30 p.m.
- Friday, February 27th—Stations of The Cross every Friday evening starting February 27th, 6:00 p.m.



Fr. Walter's Reflections



Fr. Verne Walter

The State of St. Alban's 2008

The Parable of the Garaged Car:

Once there was a man who bought a beautiful car and kept it in the garage. He would regularly go at least once a week to polish and admire it. Though he would spare no expense to purchase the finest wax and polish, he would never find anything left over with which to purchase gas. So the polished car continued to sit in the garage. Even as the surface was lovingly polished, the gaskets, hoses, and tires dried out and deteriorated until one day the car could no longer run. Beautifully polished, however, it nevertheless sat in the garage until the owner died and the family sold the car.

In 2006, we took the car out of the garage. Our driving skills were a little shaky. We just missed the trash can on the way out of the drive way and nearly hit the car parked just across the street, but never the less we were to be congratulated as a parish. We had taken the car out of the garage.

In 2007, we manage to buy a little gas for our car, and took it out for a spin around the block. We had a little trouble with

consistency. The driving was erratic, and we sputtered, stopped and started again many times before we finally made it around the block. Getting use to the controls on the car again, took a little time, but we finally became somewhat familiar with them; gas pedal here, brake there, steering wheel over there, more to the left no to the right, no the other right. Where are we? Who's got the map? What map? Who needs a map anyway? But we are to be congratulated as a parish. We bought a little gas, and have taken our car out for a spin. Guess what? We made it around the block.

The year of 2008 can be divided into roughly two parts. First, up until the end of June we were meeting or exceeding our goals of the first year of our Five Year Strategic Plan. As of the end of June 2008, our average Sunday Attendance stood at 43, already ahead of the planned 40 for the end of 2008.

Our Total Operating and Restricted Income as of the end of June 2008 was \$2,000.00 above our budget amount.

We had started the process of developing and implementing a marketing strategy for advertising.

A web site was in the beginning stages of development.

A parish wide stewardship program was established and implemented in the parish.

A "Greeter" program had been established.

Data was being compiled to examine existing programs; and to create new programs that will assist the parish in its growth and member satisfaction.

We hired a part time secretary who is working 3 hours a day, 5 days a week. The new secretary replaced our former secretary who was

limited to working 4 hours a day, 2 days a week.

We found a volunteer to oversee the yard maintenance.

We found a volunteer to lead MEN/SA (the men of St. Alban's).

WOSA (the women of St. Alban's) group elected a new President and was in the process of establishing new and meaningful programs for the group which includes: fund raising for both outreach and internal use, fellowship, and spiritual development.

Rev. Tom Witzel had volunteered to lead a bible study between Sunday services, using the lectionary texts for that Sunday, beginning in September; in addition to an in-depth study of God's Word one evening a week, on Thursday nights, also beginning in September.

We currently have a Women of Faith group that meets every Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for a light luncheon with faith sharing based on the Forward Day by Day booklet.

All seemed to be going well until the second half of the year. Troubling economic news began to become prominent in the national news and our daily lives. It became increasingly difficult to maintain the parish structure. The result was that we ended the year with an average Sunday Attendance of 39, one short of our Five Year Strategic Plan goal for 2008. And Our Total Operating and Restricted Income at the end of 2008 was \$18,000.00 below our budget amount; leaving us with an operating deficit of \$69,000.00 which was \$22,000.00 over our 2008 budget of \$47,000.00. This is not sustainable. A new direction has been planned.

The many changes and challenges this past year made

our heads swim. As the economic conditions continue to deteriorate in our national economy, we find ourselves standing outside of the tomb of darkness and despair, basking in the light of hope, joy, and abundant life with Christ. We need to learn as never before to walk in faith with the help of The Father, and The Son, and The Holy Spirit. We will come into new life.

It has been almost four years since Ruth and I joined you on this journey into new life. We are still excited about your journey and your trusting in God's guidance. We are delighted to be here and thank you for your love, support, and commitment.

Many exciting changes have taken place at St. Alban's during this past year, and there are new and great challenges that lie before us. We will be choosing new leaders in just a little while. And I am certain that they will be the right leaders at the right time for St. Alban's. God has been gracious to us. Pray for these new leaders; for the other leaders who will continue on; and for your rector and my wife Ruth, as this New Year unfolds before us. We need your prayers, support, and helping hands.

There has been growth at St. Alban's this past year but not enough. The average Sunday attendance has grown from 27 in 2005, to 32 in 2006, to 37 in 2007, and to 39 for the 2008. We have 110 members of whom 65 are active. Five new members have joined us this past year, as we continue on our journey towards Christ.

Your Vestry has been working very hard dealing with the new financial realities we find ourselves in; and planning a new way forward.

I believe that the proposed budget for 2009 provides the

Continued on page 4



Deacon's Notes



Deacon Georgeanne Cusic

As Christians, we are called to find hope in difficult times. This year may bring some trials to many of us. I received the following in a Christmas card. It may help us all to keep a hopeful attitude in 2009.

- If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep... you are richer than 75% of this world's people.

- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet and

spare change in a dish someplace... you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

- If you woke up this morning with more health than illness... you are more blessed than the millions who will not survive this week.

- If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation... you are more fortunate than 500 million people in the world.

- If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest or physical harm... you are more blessed than 3 billion people in the world.

- If you can read this message... you are blessed

because unlike 2 billion people in the world you are able to read.

- If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder... you are blessed because you can offer healing touch.

- If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful... you are unique because many of us can but most do not.

Remember, throughout this New Year to be thankful for what you have. Keep this list handy and reread it when life is getting you down.

Our great patriarch, Abraham, understood that he was given many blessings by God. He pledged that he would use those blessings to bless others. That is the same call we have as Christ's

followers. Our blessings come to us as a vehicle to share with the needy where ever we go. Let us all go forth into our hurting world with arms full of blessings and use them to bless others.

For God has blessed us to be a blessing...!

Deacon Georgeanne

Soup or Socks

Our days to volunteer at the food pantry occur the last week of the month. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. If you would like to volunteer but have not done so before, let me know. The training is not difficult and is easily arranged. You will never have to work alone at the Food Pantry so there is always someone around who has answers.

Deacon Georgeanne

The Vision for St. Alban's In the Year 2009

"Where there is no vision, the people perish:" (Pr 29:18, KJV).

As a resurrection community, we continue to walk in faith towards the sun. It is not the sunset of darkness, of things done and things left undone, of broken and unfinished dreams, and the ending of life we walk towards. We walk east, into the sunrise of new life and new possibilities, new dreams, and new things to do in Christ's name. We have a vision: *"A welcoming community spreading the joy of Christ's word and love."* We are in good health, poised to fulfill our vision and to welcome change.

With extended hands and a joyful spirits we welcome our guests. We are blessed by their visit, and we believe that God has directed our paths to intersect. Our meeting with them is not an accident but a divine appointment,

so we want to express Christ's love to them with genuine warmth. We're delighted to know them, and we're excited to share with them the marvelous ways in which God's hand is at work in our church. We believe that they will discover that our fellowship is truly a family, rich in the relationships that matter most. Growing together, we worship, we serve, we laugh, we cry, we learn, and we reach out to our world with life-transforming truth. We reach out to them, as well. Our doors are open. Our hearts are open, too. If they have been thinking, praying, searching and hoping for a place to belong, we say again – Welcome! Welcome to our vision.

This is the year of great economic uncertainty. This is the

year we also put much more gas in our car and get back on the road again, driving faster in faith, depending on God's strength not our own. This is the year we put into practice on a larger scale our vision: *"A welcoming community spreading the joy of Christ's word and love."* This is the year we show and make known to our community what it means to be a "Welcoming Church" in a time of fear and uncertainty. This is the year we drive in greater faith not greater fear. This is the year we get on the road again, growing in spiritual strength, in serving Christ by spreading his word and love. This is the year, the second year of our "Five Year Strategic Plan" for growth. This is the year we grow in stewardship and began to learn what it means to Partnership with God. This is the year we grow together in worship, prayer,

and fellowship in Christ's name. This is the year we learn to depend on Christ and no one else; trusting in Him as we never have before. As members, of St. Alban's Episcopal Church, this is the year in which we can make a decisive difference in the spreading of God's Kingdom. This is the year to walk in hope not in fear. This is the year that you don't want to miss.

In His Eternal Love,

Fr. Verne L. Walter, Rector



Vestry Members Elected

Congratulations to Marshall Cusic and Jane Frodl-Lubeck (Junior Warden) who were elected as new Vestry Members to a three year term, January 2009 through January 2012.

Other Vestry members are Bill Knudson - Senior Warden, Peter Dyke, John Pitsch, and Tom Witzel.

Two lay persons were elected to represent St. Alban's at the Diocesan Convention in October, 2009: Ronald Lubeck and Jane Frodl-Lubeck.



SHROVE TUESDAY

Please join us for a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, February 24th in St. Alban's Parish Hall from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. This is the last celebration before Lent starts with Ash Wednesday on February 25th.

The State of St. Alban's 2008

CONTINUED

best way forward for the second year of our Five Year Strategic Plan in these difficult times for our national economy. The proposed budget for 2009 continues to help in freeing me up to provide more pastoral care and opportunities for growth in the parish by providing a part time secretary Monday through Friday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to Noon. It provides the funds necessary to meet our goals for the second year of our Five Year Strategic Plan; while at the same time continuing to look for ways



Valentine Dinners

Valentine lasagna dinners are available again this year, thanks to the hard work of the Women of St. Alban's. For \$25, you can get a dinner that includes all the trimmings. The money raise by the dinners will fund projects by WOSA. In addition to meat based lasagna dinners, there are vegetarian spinach lasagna dinners available as well. Sign-up sheets are posted in the Parish Hall. The dinners will be ready for pickup on Friday, February 13th between 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.



to cut the budget where necessary. It provides for a web site for St. Alban's, along with more advertising dollars and new plans to reach more potential members and new opportunities to reach newcomers in the Marshfield area. New spiritual programs are in the planning stages.

A sense of love, caring, fellowship, and service continues at St. Alban's. It is particularly important for us as a parish, to bring the image of Christ into focus for the world around us in these tough economic times, through the way we "love and serve the Lord" in all we do and say.

Make every stranger we meet glad to have met us.

Bring peace to everyone we meet.

Say only nice things about people.

Look for the image of Christ in all of creation.

If we are successful in practicing these four steps, then people will want to join us because; they feel loved and accepted; and because they too, want to share that love and acceptance with the world.

We are a church where the Gospel is preached, Disciples of Christ are made, and lives transformed; a "Welcoming Church" which serves Marshfield and the surrounding communities.

Great things are happening at St. Alban's Episcopal Church as we continue to move forward, and the need for your financial

support continues.

I find the state of the parish to be in fair health, however we face great challenges and changes ahead, and we need to stay true to our Vision: "A welcoming community spreading the joy of Christ's word and love".

We are not alone on our journey. Our Lord, Jesus Christ is with us. Remember always the words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ: "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

In His Eternal Love,

Fr. Verne L. Walter, Rector



Treasurer's Report

	December 2008		Year-to-Date	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
<u>Income</u>	\$ 48,656	\$ 54,134	\$113,130	\$131,060
<u>Expenses</u>	\$ 15,893	\$ 17,461	\$181,919	\$178,211
<u>NET</u>	\$ 32,763	(\$ 36,673)	(\$ 68,789)	(\$ 47,151)



To contact the Treasurer:

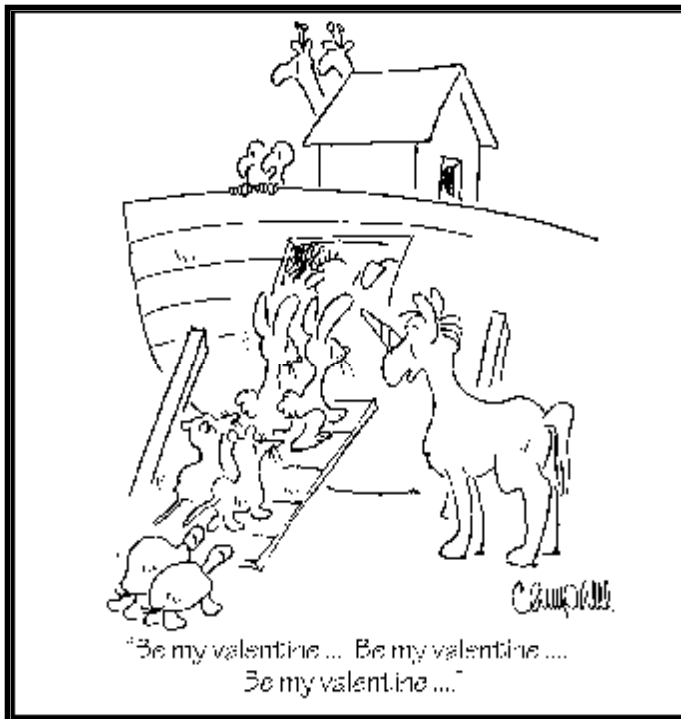
Hudson S. Owen, 1311 N. Wood Ave Marshfield, WI 54449
 Phone: 715-387-1484 or email: shudowen@verizon.net

Ministry Opportunities

The following ministry opportunities are open at St. Alban's:

- Altar Guild.
- UTO coordinator.
- Sunday School Teacher.

If you are interested in one of these ministries, contact Fr. Walter. Parish Office 387-1330



This Month's Anniversaries Birthdays

February	<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Anniversaries</u>
2	Mike Clermont	
4		Bill Knudson and Marla Morgan
9	Leah Clermont	
11	Friedl Anderson	
15	David Junkhan	
18	Ian Clermont	
	Peter Dyke	
27	Andrey Stojic	

If you have a birthday or anniversary in February and your name is not listed above or you find errors either in spelling of your name or date of birthdays and anniversaries, please call the Parish Office so that your records can be updated..

Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for March 2009 newsletter: Monday, February, 23, 2009

Items Welcomed
 Parishioners are welcomed and encouraged to submit items and notes for the monthly St. Alban's newsletter. Items may be sent via e-mail to: stalbansnewsleter@yahoo.com, left in the newsletter box at church, or by calling the parish office at 387-1330.

Classes Being Offered At St. Alban's

Baptism: for all ages.

First Communion: instructions for small children with parents on receiving Holy Communion, the Body and Blood of Christ.

Confirmation: for older children and adults who wish to express faith and commitment to Christ and to be received into the Episcopal Church by prayer and the laying on of hands by the Bishop.

Contact Fr. Walter. Parish Office 387-1330

February 2008 Service Schedule

Sunday 1 - 7:30 a.m. Eucharist Rite I
10:00 a.m. Eucharist Rite II

8 - 7:30 a.m. Eucharist Rite I
10:00 a.m. Eucharist Rite II

15 - 7:30 a.m. Eucharist Rite I
10:00 a.m. Eucharist Rite II

22 - 7:30 a.m. Eucharist Rite I
10:00 a.m. Eucharist Rite II

COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS THE 10:00 SERVICE

In emergency call:

Rector: Fr. Verne Walter, Home Ph. 389-8390
Deacon: Rev. Georgeanne Cusic, Phone 387-3087

Parish Office Hours:

9:00 a.m. - Noon, Monday
9:00 a.m. - Noon, Tuesday
9:00 a.m. - Noon, Wednesday
9:00 a.m. - Noon, Thursday
9:00 a.m. - Noon, Friday
Closed - Saturday
Closed -- Sunday

Parish Office: 387-1330

Rector: Fr. Verne Walter, 389-8626

SR. WARDEN: Bill Knudson, 384-2500

JR. WARDEN: Timothy McCollum, 387-4096

TREASURER: Hudson Owen, 387-1484

COME WORSHIP WITH US!!

"A welcoming community spreading the joy of Christ's word and love"

St. Alban's Episcopal Church
1413 S. Felker Avenue, PO Box 158
Marshfield, WI 54449

February 2009 Newsletter



TO:

*Your way, O God, is holy;
Who is so great a god as our God?*

Psal m 77:13