

## WOSA History

(The Women of St. Alban's held their annual luncheon at Clearwater's on June 10. At that luncheon, some of the goals for the upcoming year were set, including continuing with the fall fashion show/luncheon, lasagna dinner and a tea after Easter. Soo Owen, one of the members of the Women of St. Alban's, recounts in her own words the history of WOSA and goals of the organization).

"I know there was a group of church women in 1942. There were 50 women in the church at the time and 36 of those ladies were very active in the "Church Auxiliary," as was the name then. Through the years the numbers have fluctuated to the present day where all women are automatically part of The Women of St. Alban's, the name today. Their activeness today is strictly up to them. Presently, nine ladies are considered active.

"The mission of "The Women of St. Alban's" is to welcome all ladies (16 years and older) to work and to have fellowship with one another, for the Glory of God, as a unified group through our missionary projects, in our local charities and in our church.

"In the 40s and 50s, the "Auxiliary" was indeed very strong and the priest let them be both strong and vocal. Women were not elected to the vestry at that time in this diocese, but that didn't deter them from speaking to the Vestry when things needed to be done.

"(Making an office out of an unused room in the Guild Hall or seeing that the floors were refinished, remodeling the kitchen with a new stove and double sink with estimates or contracting for painting. Things that a Junior Warden handles now with the recommendation from the women's group were projects the women could afford and did their own investigative work then).

"In the early 60s, however, the "strong" tone of the women changed with the new priest who was quite an administrator and "ran" things in a very controlling way. More committees were set up. This time frame was the beginning of the construction of the present day St. Alban's.

"The sources of funding then were dinners, lunches, teas, dances and the women did the cooking and serving and charged outside organizations a fair price for said services. Within the church there were two rummage sales a year which brought in an average of \$150.00 each sale! Big money in those days! The sale of cleaning polish, calendars and cookbooks was an ongoing thing.

"The interesting thing about St. Alban's then was the church's location, which was in the dead center of town directly north and across the street from where The Kitchen Table is now. The big Guild Hall was the center of all social life in the city which was beside the church west toward the alley. There was a gym for dances/dinners, office, kitchen etc.

"In the late 50s there was a great need to have clothing and household goods available for a cheap price to those in need and St. Alban's was there for 20 years in that capacity.

Although, The Thrift Shop sold many things on consignment, it was a charitable "Outreach" to the community. I was a co-manager and treasurer of the shop until it closed, because of the advent of the "Garage Sale." One-thousand dollars was given to the church annually from the shop profits. This resale idea was the brain child of one of St. Alban's visionaries, Dr. Elizabeth Baldwin by name who had her practice on Central Ave., only a stone's throw away from the church.

"Today, our source of income is primarily from the lasagna Valentine Dinner sale and the fall style show/luncheon. Small projects like the baking pans sales have brought in a few dollars. We also have the rebates from both grocery stores which is about \$325 annually from Festival Foods and recently \$67.37 from Pick 'n Save.

"The proceeds from these various Ways and Means projects goes to: Vestments Fund (\$1000), gifts to seminarians (\$50.00 each), gifts to church children who graduate (\$25), annual rent for Soup or Socks (\$350), giving to Church World Relief, sponsoring 1-3 folks to hurricane-torn nations and Katrina to mention a few.

"The Women of St. Alban's decides where the money will go. Some donations are long-standing, others are considered as the need arises and the commitment to help is perhaps small by some standards, but it's what we can afford.

"In the early years, "dues" were collected at every monthly meeting, which were \$2. Those that were in arrears got their names published on a list that hung on the bulletin board. In about the early 70s dues were eliminated and we cut our meetings down to five a year. With many women in the workforce, the strength by numbers alone has vanished, but few as we are now, the dedication is still very strong and is the backbone of the organizations at the church!