

Covid Update

The Diocese has stated that each Church may establish its own Covid protocols. Our Vestry has voted to return to the full Eucharist. We may now go to the altar for the bread and wine, however, this is optional. If you wish Father Lockwood to come to your pew, please let him know. The "Peace" will still be exchanged from our pews. No hugging for the time being. We will continue to monitor Covid activity in Columbia County and update as necessary.

Church Calendar:

Parish events:

Blessing of Bikes, Trikes, Cages and Conveyances 7/16 3pm

Bring your favorite mode of transportation and Father will bless it. Then plan to stay for a barbeque. Please bring a covered dish to share, the church is providing drinks. Invite your friends and family to the event.

July 16 1pm Music in the Park Shatford

July 23rd and 30th Father Lockwood will be away and Morning Prayer will be the service.

August 13th 3pm Parish picnic We will join with Christ Church for fun and fellowship, Bring a dish to share

August 19 10 am Shatford Park Do you like to play Cornhole or want to learn the game. The LVPA is holding a tournament on this day which the community is welcome to sign up for. Watch for flyers to give the details, food will be available for purchase as well and it is fun to watch.

August 20th Town Picnic: 12 -4pm Join your neighbors for fun and fellowship at Shatford Park there is music, games, vendors, and food. The town provides meat, corn on the cob, and drinks, the community provides the sides. The parish will have a table in the vendor section. Are you able and willing to man the table for an hour?

August 27 9am Parish brunch and discussion regarding nomination for Bishop. Please bring a dish to pass and we will enjoy a meal while we discuss and decide on the nomination you want Mary to vote for on September 9th at the Diocesan Convention for the 10th Bishop of Albany.

Sept. 9 10 am Cathedral of All Saints Diocesan Convention to elect the 10th Bishop of Albany

Results of Convention held via Zoom on June 10.

These clerical personnel were elected to the Standing Committee

Rev. Katherine Alonge-Coons Very Rev. Tom Malioneck

These lay persons were elected to the Standing Committee

Jean Stevens-Lauria 3yrs Sue Ellen Ruetsch 3years

Barbara Breen 2years Gary Sorensen 1 year

These clerics were elected to be delegates to the General Convention to be held in 2024.

Rev. Katherine Alonge-Coons Rev. Laurie Garramone Rev. Meaghan Keegan

Rev. Scott Garno

These people were elected as Lay representatives to General Convention

Sarah Garno Christopher Cassidy David Malsan Mary Jones

These priests were elected to serve on the Great Cathedral Chapter This group oversees the Cathedral along with the Dean.

Rev. John Scott 3 yr. Rev. Martin Yost 2 years

Lay person elected to The Great Cathedral Chapter

Louise Woods 3 yr.

Clergy representative at large to serve on Diocesan Council

Rev. Dr. William Lytle 2 yr.

These people were elected to serve as Trustees of the Diocese

Timothy Condon 4yr. Rev. Laurie Garramone 4yr.

Clerical positions filled for the Disciplinary Board

Rev. David Carlson 3yr Rev. Denise Moore 3yr

Lay position on the Disciplinary Board

David Malsan

We had reports from Christ the King, Mission Committee, Bishop Search Committee, and the Trustees. The report from the Albany Task Force on Communion Across Difference is included in this report.

The Wage and benefits committee gave a report and the Convention voted to go with their recommendation of a 3% increase in clergy stipend to start in 2024. I gave Richard the information so he can review it and make a recommendation to the Vestry.

The Convention voted to continue the Reduced Standard Assessment Formula in use by the Diocese for the past several years.

The Convention voted to approve the 2024 Diocesan Operating budget of \$1,601,563.00. I have the breakdown and will post it on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall for anyone to look at. This includes monies for a new Bishop who is expected to be Ordained/ Consecrated in February of 2024.

Programs:

Charlies Pantry: Our members give nonperishable food items and household supplies as well as support the fuel fund. A food basket for donations is located in the back of the sanctuary. Eugenia delivers the food twice a month to Charlie's Pantry for distribution. This Pantry is open to the community in need on Saturdays.

Domestic Shelters: Members give personal hygiene products for the residents of the shelter to use. In addition, this month we are collecting blankets, sheets, and towels for the shelter to use.

Animal Assistance: We are partnering with a group of young people whom Bitsy has been teaching. We are helping with their service project collecting items that might be used in an animal shelter. Food, toys, blankets, soap, brushes, and combs to name a few. The students will give these items to the Pittsfield animal shelter.

Bates Fund Raiser: The Bruce Bates family home was destroyed by fire on February 11th. We thank God that no one was hurt, but everything is gone. The Bates have been members of our parish and they and their children and grandchildren were active members. Right now, until further information can be obtained, a financial collection is being made. You may drop off a financial contribution at Mavericks in New Lebanon, send a check to the town clerk or donate on the Go-Fund-Me page set up by their son on Facebook. The Town will be opening the free store and the Columbia County Burned-out Victims Fund will be available, if needed.

Building Fund: Money Needed for Sanctuary Repairs

We plan to paint and repair our Sanctuary in 2023. Please think about donating to our Building Fund. Also, as we all know, the price of fuel oil has increased, so please keep that in mind. Thanks again for all your generosity during 2022. With your help we are continuing to provide worship and fellowship in these difficult times.

From Father Frank Lockwood

I wish that Christianity never became a legal religion. Or at least wish that it had never become the “state religion”. Why? Simple, once it became legal it lost its meaning, lost its power and very quickly became corrupted by politics and power. Those who followed “the Way” as it was sometimes called (I believe it was short for “the way of the Nazarene” referencing Jesus {Y’shua} being from Nazareth) were the fringe of society. They were forced to do things in secret. There was a steep price to pay if you got caught practicing this fringe cult’s beliefs. To be a believer meant having to literally die to self because you would lose everything if caught.

Today, the Faith has been so watered down, scarred and polluted that I do not believe it would be recognizable to a first, second or even third century believer. The moment that it became a culture—following its becoming the official state religion of the Holy Roman Empire, it started to become integrated with the culture. This integration was the opposite of what was preached by Jesus and later affirmed in the council of Jerusalem (see Acts Chapter 15). Jesus pushed against the “traditions of men” being taught. He focused on the matters of the heart and what that was supposed to look like for the believer. James will address this at the council when he says that they should not require the gentiles (non-Jewish followers of Jesus) to follow the Law (Kosher living) since it was impossible for them (James and the other Jewish believers) or their forefathers to successfully do so. This was an intentional de-culturalization of the faith.

Yet, to this day, many churches attempt to re-culturalize it. There is often what appears to me to be a demand for conformity within the Church. Even going so far as to push for laws that will cause non-believers to conform to our Faith. It did not work for Israel, what makes us think that we are so special that it will work for us? I know I don’t expect it to. I expect it to cause the opposite reaction. Just as the early believer “rebelled” against the establishment (Pharisees and company) so too I expect that there will and already has been a strong rebellion against the forced Christian/Church culture.

We judge individuals who look different than us. We judge them for the clothing they wear, the way they speak, the music they listen to, the foods they eat and every other aspect we can. If it does not conform to our expectation of what it should look like, then we judge it as wrong. We then pour over the scripture to find a verse or two that will allow us to condemn it as not acceptable within the faith and thus attempt to repressurize the believer to greater and greater conformity. In so doing we create a greater and greater chasm between the us and God once again teaching as doctrine the precepts of men as if they are the will of God.

No wonder everyone rebels against the faith.

When God created us, what do you think he imagined? Drones moving to and fro taking care of the world around them? He created the ants and bees in order to watch that structure. He also created so much other diverse organisms. From solitary creatures to great herds and flocks. From humungous herbivores to tiny little blood drinking insects. In the midst of all of this diversity, he named none of it to be made in his image. Nope. Not at all. Until he made us. It is us that were created in his own image—including the gift of free will. I will be so bold to even go so far as to say that in his image he also gifted us with the gift of being able to create as well as we express in the arts and sciences. And you think that he did this so he could have a bunch of automatons walking around? That we all must not appear in any way different from each other?

One of the beauty of Pentecost was each hearing God’s deeds in their own language. To those standing on the outside listening, it had to sound like a mosh pit of noise. Until the Spirit threaded through and knit it all together. That is the picture, I believe, of what God is looking for in his Church. The diversity of humankind

stitched together by the Spirit that to an unbeliever sounds like noise yet to God's ears he hears a choir of the highest heavens in perfect harmony echoing throughout time.

The older I get, the more convinced of this I become.

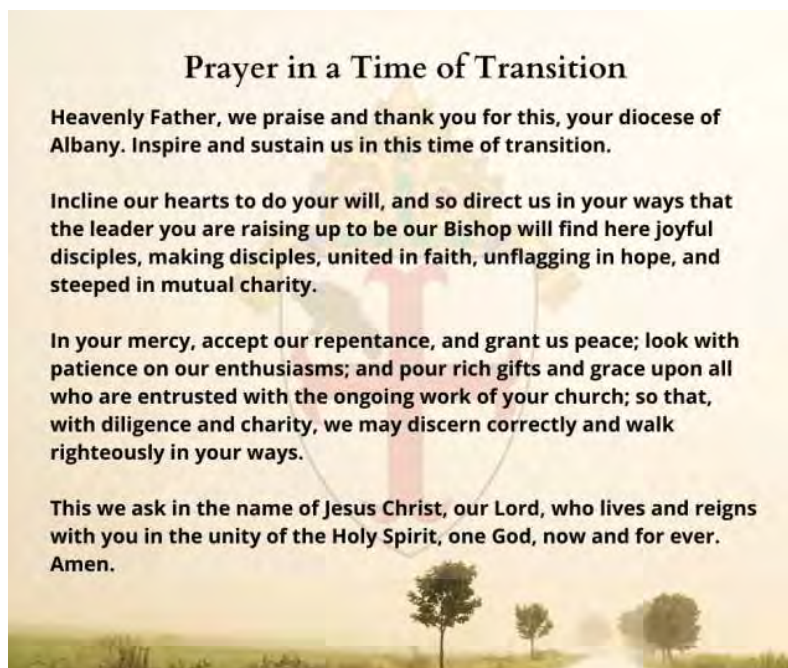
Prayer for Profile and Search Committee, written by Janet Papa:

Heavenly Father, graciously guide the minds and hearts of the Profile and Search Committee as they conduct and review interviews and collect follow-up information in this phase of our search for the next Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany.

Grant them such trust in you that whatever might keep them from following the process put in place through the Holy Spirit's guidance of Christ's church will be overwhelmed by faith and love. Give them clarity and courage to acknowledge and to release into your loving hands any anxiety or fear; protect them from anger, bias, agendas, or particular expectations that threaten to distort their understanding of your will or interfere with their unity, good will, and devotion. Heal them of any wounds and enable them to discern your voice amid the voices of personal needs and concerns that would make it hard for them to hear or follow you.

We ask you, Holy Spirit, to give them humility, trust, wisdom, clarity, and your overall guidance. Give them all true discernment of your voice, your ways, and your will, in Christ our Great Shepherd, to the glory of the Father. Let them follow in the examples of faith set forth by Jesus Christ to trust you to provide the candidate whom you desire to fill this office. Lord bless and guard the candidates, so that, from among them, we will receive the shepherd who, by your power, will protect, feed and tend the flock of Christ.

Grant us all grace to obediently follow Jesus, and to receive, in unity, your chosen leader. We pray for discernment to choose a leader who hears your Word, lives your love, and keeps in the ways of your truth; who follows in the steps of Jesus, and will continue the work you have prepared for them to do, so that we, your Diocese of Albany, may bring honor and glory to your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



NEW LEBANON LIBRARY BOOK SALE A SUCCESS

