



THE ALTON ANGELUS

February 2018

The Reverend Cynthia A. Sever, Rector

*The Episcopal Parish of Alton has as its mission:
To live and show Christ in our midst.*



RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017

Byron and I now truly feel at home in Alton; it is a unique and wonderful place to live! I joined the Alton Community Service League in September to dig my roots deeper into the community. Byron sings in the choir at St. Paul's and attends and assists with all of the special events and services.

This has been a very busy year working with Vestry members and other volunteers to care for the parish and build the programs that were already in place, and those begun after I arrived.

I have come to know and love you all through conversations in my office, at coffee hour, and in dutch-treat lunch or dinner dates with you at your favorite restaurant. I still look forward to talking with you in any of these ways. If we haven't yet had a chance to get together, please let me know, so we can set up a time to get together. If we've already had a personal meeting, I'd love to get together with you again!

A survey taken last year asked parishioners what type of programming you desire. Most of the completed questionnaires said that ministry to children and youth, music ministry, Christian education for all ages, and a weekday evening Bible study were of high priority. There was also a strong desire expressed for an inter-generational vocal choir and hand chime choir, a Christian education program for adults (and continued for children), and "field trips" and social events for all ages. This list of desires led to the creation of several new programs last year. We've spent this year refining and growing these programs.

Adult Christian Education began in the fall of 2016, and is going strong under leader Diane Martin's leadership. She and others steer very lively weekly discussions. I assist in the choice of topics and procurement of materials for this class. Sunday school for children and youth is still offered on Sunday mornings at St. Paul's. Children of all ages are welcome to attend the main worship service at both churches

A fun and spirited weekday evening Bible study group for people with any level of knowledge about the Bible meets twice monthly, and the Tuesday morning Bible study begun more than thirty years ago is still going strong. I lead the evening Bible study sessions, and co-lead the Tuesday morning sessions with Mother Jane Flaherty. It takes a great deal of weekly study to prepare a sermon for Sundays, while also preparing to teach two classes on different books of the Bible!

Family Fun Night is very well attended! We have a new theme every month, and several activities that revolve around that topic: music, arts/crafts, science, and games. We always share a meal and worship together. This fall, we began the "Family Fun Night Choir." We sing one of the songs we learned in worship at the beginning of the 10:30 service at St. Paul's monthly under Gay Anderson's direction. It is a great deal of fun to sing with a large group of adults and youth! The purpose of Family Fun Night is Christian education,

building closer ties within the parish and within families, and to provide as many mentors as possible for our children and youth, thereby building a “safety net” underneath them. It also provides people who do not or cannot come to Sunday morning services with a worship community. Participants range in age from infants through grandparents. All parish members and their friends, family, and neighbors are welcome! We’ve had as many as 60+ participants at one session (the Reptile Theater)! Family Fun Night provided a parish Field Trip in September, when we visited our beloved choir director’s horse farm, Brier Bank Farm in Marine, Illinois.

In addition to the musical instruction at Family Fun Night, the children and youth of the parish are invited to head to the choir loft each Sunday morning at 10 a.m. for Musical Adventures for Young People. Gay Anderson will teach anyone who cares to learn about music, specifically singing. All children who can read are also invited to sing with the choir at the 10:30 service. Choir rehearsal begins at 9 a.m. The choir also needs adult members, especially sopranos. Any soprano who joins the choir will receive a fresh-baked dessert from the Rector!

St. Paul’s choir is thrilled with Gay Anderson’s leadership, and the congregation is wowed by her talent. She is a fun-loving, hard-working, faithful person, who is a delight to work within every way. Trinity Chapel continues to enjoy the services of the extremely talented Charles Smith. We are blessed to have them both.

PAWS is steadily growing, thanks to the help of several of our new parishioners who run pet sitting services. I think some parishioners are unsure of the reason for PAWS services. PAWS is not just a way to have fun with our pets. The goal of PAWS is to worship God and to give thanks for our pets, to strengthen bonds with our pets and within the parish, to have fun with others who have similar interests, and to provide non-Eucharistic worship opportunities for people who are newer to church life.

PAWS is one part of our long-term strategy for survival. We all know that the likelihood of our Sunday morning services growing exponentially is not great. Our society has changed. One way to ensure parish growth is via services offered at different times during the week, and sometimes aimed at specific groups of people, who for various reasons have been disenfranchised from the Church, or who have never belonged to a church: this is called parallel congregational development.

An upcoming worship experience will be the 12-Step Worship Service. It is based on the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, and incorporates readings, prayers, music, and meditation in a tranquil environment. I’ll be telling you more about this service as it develops. This is another example of parallel congregational development.

The main opportunity for growth and thus long-term survival of the Episcopal Parish of Alton depends on YOU! A priest can only do so much to encourage growth; the congregation must do the lion’s share of the work by:

Attending church weekly. This is a ministry of presence; your presence encourages others. The more people we have at worship, the greater the sense of well-being, spirit, and joy!

Speaking positively about our parish at all times, both inside and outside of our walls. If someone is upset about something at church, the only positive way to address the concerns is to go directly to the person causing the concern before involving anyone else, even if that person is the Rector! Gossip and negative talk can drive even committed members away, and damage the programs of the parish by planting doubts about the leadership and discouraging participation.

Telling others why our parish is important in your life, and inviting them to come with you by giving them one of our invitation cards, a special event flyer, or a bulletin. Speaking of the reasons our parish means something in your life is the best way to increase our membership! The future of our parish is up to you.

This coming Fall, we will be participating in the RenewalWorks program developed by Forward Movement publications. The program begins with a parish-wide spiritual assessment, after which Forward Movement will help us design workshops to address the needs we’ve identified. After a two year period, we will take another spiritual assessment. RenewalWorks will hopefully provide us with a spiritual renewal that will lead to growth and health. Because this is so important, we need a nearly 100% participation in taking the spiritual assessment.

If you can think of a program you would like to have, please let me know!

I trained several Lay Eucharistic Visitors and a Worship Leader during the past year. Our shut-ins are receiving Holy Communion regularly.

I would like to thank John Ulffers for his generous donation of a Tabernacle and presence light for Trinity Chapel. Now we can host the Reserved Sacrament, which is especially important for the Lay Eucharistic Visitors.

We have had two weddings during the past year, and have at least one possible ceremony already lined up for 2019.

Some of you wonder what I do all day. In answer, I can give you the highlights of the month of October as a typical example:

Two weddings that required premarital counseling and rehearsals; one funeral and pastoral care for the family; one round-trip drive to Jerseyville for memorial service planning; study, preparation, and teaching two different weekly Bible studies; four weekly celebrations of the Eucharist; Blessing of the Animals; one lunch meeting with a parishioner; much time for social media responses for parishioners; regular office work; Benjamin Godfrey Legacy Trail banquet; two days of Synod; one pre-Synod meeting; All Hallows Eve service and Halloween party at my house; one Trinity Missionary Society meeting; preparation for and presiding at our Vestry meeting; Chili Supper; lots of office work, study, and planning; two meetings with staff; research about a possibility for a new service; and greeting some new members.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of you who have volunteered to make our programs special. I so appreciate your hard work and support! I would also like to thank those of you who have attended our programs and special events. God bless you!

If you would like to see me, please call, text, or email me for an appointment: (585) 261-8970 or cin-dysever210@gmail.com. **I would be delighted to make time just for you!** One time I am usually in the office is Thursday afternoons, but please call me to make sure I'm there before you come over.

God bless you!

Faithfully,
Mother Cindy+

ANNUAL MEETING

Following are the results of the elections at the Annual Meeting on January 21, 2018:

Vestry Terms Ending January 2021:

Chuck Drennan
Tom Harris
Marti LoRusso
Beth Speith

Synod Delegates:

Tom Harris
Diane Martin

Synod Alternates:

Charles Buxton
Judy Jones

Deanery Representatives:

Tom Harris
Diane Martin

ShopWithScrip

Thank you to everyone who ordered ShopWithScrip gift cards to use as Christmas gifts for your family and friends. Now that you have seen how easy it is to use ShopWithScrip for gift giving, please think about using ShopWithScrip for your day-to-day shopping needs. Perhaps purchase one reloadable card that you would use regularly. For example, this might be a card you would use to purchase gasoline, groceries, or to dine out. Of course, there are many other options...over 700 retailers! The list of retailers is posted at both Trinity and St Paul's and can also be found at shopwithscrip.com. ShopWithScrip is an ongoing fundraiser for The Episcopal Parish of Alton; we appreciate your participation! Linda Dunnagan, Mimi Almonroeder and Ann Bromaghim will be happy to help you place an order or to explain the program.

Schnucks eScrip



Also, using your Schnucks eScrip card is a simple way to help with the church's budget. If you are not already doing so, pick up a card at the checkout counter on your next visit and use it each time you shop at Schnucks..

Please continue to remember in your prayers all those in need of healing.
Heavenly Father, giver of life and health, comfort and restore those who are sick, that they may be strengthened in their weakness and trust in your unfailing love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

February Birthdays

4 Donna Fisher
6 Sean Downey
10 Mother Cindy Sever
25 Bill Moyer

O God, our times are in your hand;
Look with favor, we pray, on your servants,
As each one begins another year. Grant that
they may grow in wisdom and grace,
And strengthen their trust in your goodness
all the days of their lives;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, FOR
PRESIDENTS' DAY

Vestry

Rector's Warden: Jeff Dunnagan
Parish Warden: Marti LoRusso
Clerk of the Vestry: Linda Dunnagan
Treasurer: Jasper Fisher
Mother Cindy Sever 585-261-8970
Mimi Almonroeder 462-7004
Jean Downey 466-2253
Chuck Drennan 550-0931
Jeff Dunnagan 467-2771
Diana Enloe 463-0391
Martha Fisher 259-3177
Harold Green 466-5732
Tom Harris 407-0173
Marti LoRusso 251-4921
Dan Plate 550-9534
Carl Slaughter 377-3757
Beth Speich 494-6374
Jasper Fisher, Treasurer 259-3177



St. Paul's Church

10 East Third Street

The Episcopal Parish of Alton

Alton, Illinois 62002



Trinity Chapel

1901 State Street

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Telephone: 618-465-9149

E-mail: epialton@episcopalalton.org
Rector: rector@episcopalalton.org
Website: www.episcopalalton.org
Facebook: [Facebook.com/episcopalalton](https://www.facebook.com/episcopalalton)
Angelus Editor: moyerb@charter.net