

## **Annual Ministry Report (September 2020)**

### **St. Alban's Chapel, Baton Rouge**

For ninety-two years, St. Alban's Chapel has served a place of refuge, hospitality, and worship for the LSU community. St. Alban's was the first Episcopal Chapel in the United States to be built on the campus of a state university. After ninety-two years, this ministry is as important now as ever. College students are particularly vulnerable to the trauma, isolation, grief, and loss brought about by the pandemic. Even with the restrictions brought about by the virus, students are back on the LSU campus and finding a home at St. Alban's Chapel.

Like all churches, the pandemic has required us to adapt, pivot, and revise our worship, programs, and expectations. Our congregation has shown itself to be resilient, creative, and flexible. Sunday attendance remains strong -- if you include the online viewing of our prerecorded services. That prerecorded service features a wide variety of students and non-students, assorted musicians, and even alumni from across the country. We have also resumed a small in-person Sunday service.

Much of our direct ministry to students continues to be done by our team of Campus Ministry Interns. Since 2007, twenty-six student interns have served St. Alban's Chapel. Currently, we employ five fabulous undergraduates who meet weekly with the chaplain for discipleship, help to lead worship, host a weekly small group Bible study for students, and plan social events to attract new students. Their creativity, passion, and commitment shape our campus ministry. These students are given an experience of leadership in ministry that helps to both identify and shape life-long callings.

We continue to employ a choir made up of students from the LSU School of Music. During these months of pandemic, they have provided music for both our prerecorded online service and our in-person worship. We are blessed to have a sanctuary designed with incredible acoustics, an organ that wonderfully suits the space, and strategic placement just down the street from the nationally recognized school of music. In 2016, we undertook a Legacy Campaign to restore our fine pipe organ and to repair and maintain the sanctuary and student center. We exceeded our initial goal of \$536,000 by collecting pledges for \$740,612 demonstrating the strong support of the current congregation, churches and individuals from across the diocese, and many former students. Already completed projects include repair of exterior roof, resealing of exterior walls, updates on the electrical system, upgrades to chapel apartment, audio/visual upgrades, and enhanced disability access and bathroom. We expect our renovated and refurbished pipe organ to be reinstalled sometime towards the end of 2020.

Until this past March, our "Lunch with C. S. Lewis" was our primary outreach to this campus of some 45,000 students. With the support of many churches from across the diocese, we were feeding between 100 and 150 students each week, many international students. For the past fifteen years, the goal of that ministry has been to present the Good News of Jesus Christ in a winsome and joyful manner -- along with a free lunch! We plan to resume that ministry when conditions are safe.

Under normal conditions, congregational life at St. Alban's Chapel also includes a weekly 6:00 Sunday Night Service and Dinner especially for students, provided by teams from this congregation. We have a vibrant Children's Education ministry, monthly Sunday Brunches, and numerous recitals and concerts in the sanctuary. St. Alban's also has a Book Club, a Ukulele Orchestra, a Film Group, an annual Crawfish Boil, and an annual congregational retreat at the Solomon Center. We also host four weekly AA groups. For decades, our community life has been profoundly shaped by the by the leadership of many of our members who are themselves in recovery.

We continue to be grateful to the whole diocese for your faithful financial and prayer support, especially through these months of pandemic. Thank you for appreciating the importance of the church maintaining a vital presence on the campus of this major state university!

The Rev. Drew Rollins  
*chaplain*