



The Seedling

The Newsletter of the Altar Guild of the Diocese of Long Island ✕ Autumn, 2023

From the President...

It was the second Sunday of the month, my week for Altar Guild duty. After preparing the altar for the Eucharist, I took my seat for the service. Just before the distribution of the bread and wine, I realized (oops!) I had forgotten to put out the second chalice. Has this ever happened to you? Have you ever forgotten to make sure you put enough wafers in the ciborium (bread box), added the second purificator in the burse, made sure there was enough oil in the candles? Like most of us, you are probably nodding your head, "Yes." We are very blessed to have wonderful, kind clergy who understand, who smile when we say, "I'm sorry. I forgot." I still remember, many years ago when, after a weekday service, Fr. McGarrett said to me "Jane, you forgot to put water in the water cruet". To this day, I've always wondered if he washed his hands in wine. That was more than 65 years ago, and his words are still with me.

We all have Altar Guild stories to share — some helpful, some funny, some sad and some joyful.

On Saturday, October 28, the Diocesan Altar Guild is inviting you to a Gathering of Altar Guild Members where we can share ideas, ask important questions and get needed answers. We will find out the best way to polish brass and silver, remove wine from linens, and the easiest way to iron these sacramental cloths. The list goes on ... and when we get together, a question or comment from one person will surely spark a question from someone else (maybe even a question that you had been too shy to ask!). I look forward to seeing you at our Meeting on October 28 at St. David's Church, Cambria Heights. Further information in this Seedling.

I have said it before and will continue to tell you: Serving on your parish's Altar Guild is not a job — it is a ministry and, for me, it is one of the best ministries we can offer to our Lord.

May God continue to bless you. In His love,

Jane Ames
President, Diocesan Altar Guild

Happy are they that dwell in thy house! They will be always praising thee. Psalm 84:3

From the Chaplain...

The Future Is Now

In July, I had the remarkable privilege of spending a very hot and humid week at the University of Maryland being a chaperone for the Long Island delegation to the triennial National Episcopal Youth Event. EYE, which is for youth in grades 9-12, is the second largest regular gathering of Episcopalians. The largest is, of course, General Convention.

At EYE, the attendees have the chance to get to know people from all over the Church, to participate in a wide variety of workshops and hear nationally known speakers. This year, the list of speakers included the newly elected chairman of the House of Deputies; the new bishop of Missouri, several very impressive teenagers, and, despite his health issues, the Presiding Bishop. Perhaps best of all is the high-energy worship every day. With a tremendous band and the chance to express themselves freely, the kids (and the adults) glorified God with exciting worship that was still completely recognizable as Episcopalian. Those gathered were absolutely not “God’s Frozen Chosen” as we oldsters can tend to be. The word that best describes those services is “joyful.”



Like Convention (Diocesan or General) there were a number of exhibitors from many ministries and organizations. As I have reflected on EYE, it occurs to me that we (by “we” I mean most altar guilds) missed a golden opportunity to invite youth into the ministry of altar guild. I think the National Altar Guild made a mistake by not being among the exhibitors. My suggestion that NAGA be an exhibitor next time will probably go nowhere, but it does not have to in Long Island.

Most likely, the days of “Junior Altar Guilds” have passed. That may be for the best, however, the youth of our parishes can be, and in fact are, a mission field for Altar Guild. When was the last time any of us invited a teenager to join in our ministry? We may assume that they would not be interested in it, but that is a mistake.

Take a look at the bright faces of our delegation in the photo. If we want them to be our future, we had better make them part of our present as well. I encourage you to invite the youth of your parish (girls *and* guys!) to explore the ministry we share. Who knows what doors it may open.

Faithfully,

The Very Rev. Laurence G. Byrne

P.S. I hope you will think about how your parish or the DAG or both can invite young people into the altar guild. Bring your thoughts on October 28th.

The DAG will be on the new Diocesan Web Site as soon as it is up! Here is a sneak preview of our page!



Welcome to the Diocesan Altar Guild Page.

The Diocesan Altar Guild, now in its 88th year, has a two-fold purpose. First, it is responsible for assisting at Diocesan liturgies, including those at the annual convention. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the “DAG” has the happy responsibility of aiding and strengthening the ministries of the people who comprise the altar guilds of individual parishes.

One of the benefits of being part of a diocese rather than just a congregation is that we can do more together than we can as individual guilds. Each year the Diocesan Altar Guild Board offers at least one hands-on workshop day for training and expanding knowledge about the myriad things that altar guild members do from week to week. Recent workshops have included how to care for precious metals and linens, discussion of the Church Year, new member recruitment, and more.

That is the more “Martha” side of Altar Guild ministry. There is an equally important “Mary” side (See Luke 10:38ff.) The Diocesan Altar Guild board also offers an annual Advent Quiet Day during which we gather for an intentional day of prayer, contemplation, and worship led by one of our bishops or another well-known speaker.

In addition to the above, we offer a vestment exchange at Diocesan Convention where clergy and A.G. members can swap liturgical items. We present newly ordained deacons with an altar guild manual, and newly ordained priests with handmade visitation stoles.

Finally, the DAG. Produces our quarterly newsletter, *The Seedling* which contains articles primarily aimed at altar guild members, but is of interest to many members of the Church.

The Diocesan Altar Guild is led by a dedicated executive board who are available for counsel, training, and hand-on assistance.

Thanks to Teddy Byrne and Mary Grace Puszka for updating our DAG logo!



The Diocesan Altar Guild presents an
Autumn Gathering
Saturday, October 28, 2023



What: In response to your requests following the Spring Workshop Day, the DAG Board is excited to offer a day to swap stories (horror or happy!) ideas, best practices and whatever may be on your mind. We will also have time to worship together.

Bring: Your biggest challenges to play “Stump the Board.” With any luck, we can help you get that stain out, make the metalware look nearly new or help figure out what to do with that pesky candle or tricky hanging. (Bring the actual things, not just questions!)

Who: Altar Guild members new and old, and all who wish to attend.

When: Saturday, October 28, 2023 9:30 AM– 2:00 PM

Where: St. David’s Episcopal Church 117-35 235th St, Cambria Heights, NY 11411

Cost: \$20 for a prepared box lunch (or you may “brown bag it”)

Questions : Please call Jane Ames 516 921 0580 or email: Jane.Ames913@ gmail.com

Register : Please register by **October 23**. Return the form below by mail to
Sally Bergmeyer, 33 70 165th St., Flushing, NY 11358



Autumn Gathering Registration

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

Preferred Phone _____ Parish _____

Please Circle One: Regular lunch Vegetarian Lunch No Lunch

For Box Lunch I am enclosing a check for \$20.00 made out to “Altar Guild, Diocese of L.I.”

Please register by October 21st

Mail this registration to: Sally Bergmeyer, 3370 165th St. Flushing, NY 11358



The Seedling wants to help answer YOUR questions about all things Altar Guild. We hope to housebreak your pet peeves and make the rough places plain as you go about your ministry. Please direct your questions to any of the board members and we will endeavor to answer them.

Dear Complaint Column: Our new rector thinks it would be “*amazing!*” if we used real bread instead of what he calls “holy poker chips” for Communion. (What are they teaching in seminaries these days?) Any recipes? – *Anne Onimus*

Dear Anne:

Although traditional wafers are easier, making altar bread could be a wonderful way to let people use or develop their gifts and to have an even greater connection to the heavenly banquet. There are a world of recipes on the internet. Here is one from the Diocese of Rhode Island. It *might* be the one used for General Convention in 2018.

St. Gregory's Abbey Altar Bread

Ingredients

- 7/8 cup lukewarm water
- 4 tbsp. honey
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour 1 pkg. active quick rising yeast

Directions

1. Measure the water into a mixing bowl and add yeast, stirring until the yeast is dissolved.
2. Stir in the honey, oil and salt.
3. Stir in the unsifted flour.
4. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured board and knead for 5 minutes until elastic.
5. Replace the dough in a greased bowl, cover with a damp towel and let it rise for 1 1/2 hours until double.
6. Roll out the dough to 1/4 – 1/2 inch thick and cut into rounds with a biscuit cutter, a tin can or a glass. Make a cross in each loaf with a serrated knife.
7. Transfer to a lightly oiled baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 10 – 12 minutes.

Note: Do not use stone ground flour or the bread will be crumbly. Pillsbury plain whole wheat flour works well. The recipe can easily be doubled.

Speaking of Bread...

The following article was shamelessly lifted from the National Altar Guild Association website.

SCOTTISH BREAD AND STEWARDSHIP

I come from a long line of pastors, mostly Presbyterian with an occasional Episcopalian to leaven the loaf. My maternal grandmother was given a recipe for communion bread during a time my grandfather served a congregation of recently arrived immigrants from Scotland. It has three ingredients: butter, sugar, and wheat flour. The bakers among you will immediately recognize this as the makings of traditional shortbread.



The Rev. Kelsey Hogue

Shortbread was not the common food of poor Scottish farmers, for the ingredients were scarce and expensive. Their regular every-day bread was called bannock, a quite heavy and dense loaf of barley and oatmeal that was cooked on a stone or in a cast iron skillet over an open fire. However, when it came time to prepare for Holy Communion, each household would offer a pinch or two of sugar, flour, or butter to make a communal loaf of shortbread. Why? The answer passed down through my family is this, “Because we bring to the Lord the best we have.”

This could be the unofficial motto of the altar guild. In a world of disposable cups and paper napkins, there are some traditions worth preserving. Does this approach take time, and care, and dedication? Of course, but the fruits of your labor become outward and visual signs of an inward and spiritual grace (BCP p 857). This is not through your good works, but rather through God’s blessing of your humble and heartfelt offerings.

Your stewardship can, and frequently does, result in the experience of a sacramental life. While most of what you do as an altar guild member goes unseen, and sometimes even unappreciated, do not keep your light under a breadbasket. Remember, you never know when someone hungry for God will find the bread of life because you were there to point the way. “Let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to the Lord.” (BCP p. 377).

The Rev. Kelsey Hogue, a retired priest assisting at Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in Broomfield, Colorado

Scottish Bread

Preheat oven to 325° and line a baking sheet or tin with parchment paper. In a large bowl, blend 2 cups salted butter, softened, until smooth, about 30 seconds on medium. Add 1 cup sugar and mix until thoroughly incorporated. Add 3 cups wheat flour and mix on low until crumbly. Spread the dough in the baking sheet to a ¼” thickness. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until just done (avoid browning, except slightly around edge). Allow to cool for 5 minutes. Using the parchment paper, lift the dough out of the baking sheet. Cut and/or score holes in the dough using a fork. Let cool completely on a wire rack.

Apropos of nothing.....

Does anyone know where *The Seedling* got its name?

SAVE THE DATE!
ADVENT QUIET DAY
SATURDAY DECEMBER 9, 2023
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
ROCKVILLE CENTER

MEMBERSHIP: ALTAR GUILD, DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND

Membership is \$15 for an individual and \$25 for a parish or mission. Dues paid now will cover through December 2024. Your membership dollars go to support our work in the diocese; provide assistance to all altar guilds; help defray the cost of workshops, programs and field trips. We also have a presence at our Diocesan Convention providing assistance with the Holy Eucharist, sharing information, and offering a clergy vestment exchange. We are also members of the National Altar Guild Association.

YES! I WANT TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD

Please make check payable to: "Altar Guild, Diocese of Long Island" and submit to:

Kyle Taylor, 95 Colonial Avenue, Freeport, NY 11520

Renewal New Member New Contact Info Individual Parish

NAME _____ PARISH _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Diocesan Altar Guild Directory

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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ALTAR GUILD

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