As I write this, we are now fully engaged in the season of Lent, the forty days from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday. If you’re trying to count days, skip Sundays, because they are considered “mini-Easters”.

For Christians, Lent has traditionally been a time of penance. In the Western church tradition, penance was associated with the sacrament of confession: a penitent was given a penance to perform (or two or three) after making confessing and being absolved of his or her sins. In the Eastern church, penance is customarily called the Sacred Mystery of Confession. In their view, the sacrament is one of reconciliation with God through healing. In Reformation churches, penance became non-sacramental: repentance and contrition for behaviors/attitudes/actions leading to change in moral behaviors; true repentance and amendment of life would, in turn, lead to God forgiving.

For Anglicans, the status of confession as a sacrament is ambiguous. The 39 Articles refer to it as one of “the five commonly called sacraments.” On the other hand, corporate confession in the liturgy of the word is treated very sacramentally, almost as a prerequisite for receiving communion. Once again, the Anglican *Via Media* straddles the issue! By the way, the 1979 Prayer Book contains rites for Reconciliation of a Penitent. [NB: You won’t find them in the register of services (because they are confidential), but I do hear confessions now and again. Call and make an appointment if you feel the need.]

What is common to every view of penance and confession that I have encountered is *reconciliation*: with God and with each other. On that, everyone seems to agree, and why not? Wanting to move ourselves into right relationship with God and with each other and with God’s creation is a no-brainer. It is the actual practice that tests what we are really made of.

Isn’t that always the way? Things sound so easy on paper, but then you try to live into it and all the resolve and good intentions seem to crumble like a house of cards. We give up or take on something for Lent, as a sign of our repentance and contrition. We start out doing really well: we don’t miss that glass of wine or we’ve been really faithful in reading the Daily Office. Then something happens that breaks our schedule and we miss a day, then it’s two and after a while we’ve given up what we gave up or took on. Yes, it happens to me, too!

Abraham, David, and all the other characters in the Old and New Testament stories weren’t sinless, some of them far from it. I think our tendency to fall away from God is, like it or not, a part of our being human, a part of our imperfection. I think what that means is that we have to continue to seek reconciliation and to strive for right relationship, knowing that God will always forgive us if we’re committed to changing our ways.

How great is it that God doesn’t keep score, but wipes out our past sins whenever we turn back to God and repent? God’s grace, the unwarranted, undeserved and abundant gift of forgiveness and promise flows over us like a river, washing away our past transgressions and recreating us in a new present. All that God asks of us is repentance and return: to be truly sorry for our faults and to turn back to God. Perhaps Charlotte Elliot (1789-1871) says it best:

> Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
> Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,  
> Because Thy promise I believe,  
> O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

God’s heart can bear all that we do and don’t do and leave room for more. God’s promise of eternal life awaits each of us. God asks only that we believe and return.

May your Lenten pilgrimage open your heart for a deeper surprise at Easter.

-Thomas
The 2010 Outreach Committee met Sunday, February 7 to talk about the new organization of Vestry committees, what it means to Outreach specifically, and to discuss how best to organize St. John's Outreach activities. The members for the coming year are Ron Waites, Chairperson, Connie McLean, Howard Yeager, Max Grice, James Christiansen, Pat Pritchard, Janet Buckley, Cheryl Winters-Heard, and Eugene Johnston. A preliminary budget is anticipated to be approximately $7,200, of which $1,000 has already been sent to Episcopal Relief and Development for aid to persons affected by the Haiti earthquake.

The intent behind the reorganization of the Vestry and the expansion of the Outreach Committee is to consolidate all outward-reaching projects and funding under the umbrella of a single committee. In the past, the Outreach Committee has been primarily a “checkbook” Outreach group, which has been effective in disbursing funds to carefully chosen local and global charities. However, we realize that there are also many other “hands-on” outreach activities going on, and it has been difficult to know about these and appropriately celebrate these activities. Some of the ways that we know our St. John’s family is reaching out are through the knitting ministry of baby blankets for Mobile Women’s and Children’s hospital, knitting of prayer shawls, meals served to McKemie Place and to Loaves and Fishes, mentoring for literacy, Bay Area Food Bank, and Christmas Giving Trees. If there are other outreach activities that you are involved in, or if you know of a member of St. John’s who is volunteering for something that extends our helping hands to the world around us, or if there is something that you would like to explore getting involved in, please contact any of the members of this Committee.

In essence, the Outreach Committee will focus on three areas:

- Funding of local and global efforts that St. John’s supports
- Coordinating activities that offer opportunities for participation for the parish
- Publicizing and celebrating the outreach that we do

To help us better understand what we are already doing, and what we want to do in the future, please answer the following questions. Put this in the offering plate or bring it to the office.

---

**What are my volunteer and outreach activities?**

**What do I think St. John’s ought to do for outreach?**

**Name:**
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MARCH LITURGICAL CALENDAR

John & Charles Wesley
We will commemorate these two Anglican priests at our Said Mass on Wednesday, 3 March at 10:00AM. Raised in the rectory of Epworth, Lincolnshire, England, John and Charles were the 15th and 18th children of the family. Educated at Christ Church, Oxford, they and a group of their friends became known as “Methodists”, flowing out of their strict discipline to the worship and doctrine of the Prayer Book. Ordained in 1728 and 1735, both came to Georgia in 1735 in missionary efforts. After their return, both experienced a change in their relationship to Christ. John wrote, “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation.” From these experiences, the revival movement was born. Credited with founding the Methodist church, the brothers did not live to see the schism within the Church of England. They died in 1791 and 1788. Both received their final rites as priests of the Church of England.

Patrick of Ireland
Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, will be commemorated on Wednesday, 17 March at 10:00AM. Patrick, born about 390, was captured by Irish slave-raiders at about 16 years old. He escaped at about 21, returned to Britain and was educated for the priesthood. He tells us that he was ordained bishop of no particular See and that a vision called him to Ireland. He began a remarkable missionary effort throughout Ireland that continued until his death in about 461.

Saint Joseph
We will remember Joseph at a Said Mass at 12:10PM on Friday, March 19. Joseph was a pious Jew. He is counted as a descendent of King David and a carpenter by vocation. Joseph is considered to be the patron saint of working men and women. What we know of him is that he trusted in God, even when what God asked was to be a challenge to his daily life.

The Annunciation
The Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated on 25 March at 12:10PM. This celebration commemorates the visit of the angel Gabriel to Our Lady and her assent to God’s request to be Theotokos, or God-bearer. Her answer, like that of Abraham, was “Let it be to me according to your word.”

Sunday of the Passion or Palm Sunday
Holy Week begins on 28 March with the Liturgy of the Palms in the Garden at 10:00AM and processing into the church for the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist. Palm Sunday is an odd mix: the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem and the Passion of Our Lord all rolled into one. Don’t let this be your Holy Week: plan to be a part of Saint John’s observance of the Triduum – the three days, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Great Vigil of Easter.

Holy Week

Sunday, 28 March 2010
The Sunday of the Passion
Blessing of Palms, Procession and
Solemn Mass at 10:00AM
Sermon by the Rector

Thursday, 1 April 2010
Maundy Thursday
Evening of the Lord’s Supper at 7:00PM
Sermon by the Rector

Friday, 2 April 2010
Good Friday
The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Said Liturgy at 12:00PM
Sung Liturgy at 7:00PM
Sermon by the Rector

Saturday, 3 April 2010
Holy Saturday
The Great Vigil of Easter at 7:00PM
Sermon by the Rector
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Morning Prayer</th>
<th>Holy Eucharist</th>
<th>Evening Prayer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**March 2010 at Saint John's**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Service</th>
<th>7 February HE-II</th>
<th>14 February HE-II</th>
<th>21 February HE-II</th>
<th>21 February Evensong</th>
<th>28 February HE-II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lectionary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lessons</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lessons</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greeters</strong></td>
<td>Martha &amp; Max Grice</td>
<td>Mellissa Brown</td>
<td>Joan Marie Elam</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thelma Lomers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lectors</strong></td>
<td>Cheryl Winters-Heard</td>
<td>Mary Sheffield</td>
<td>Pat Fulford</td>
<td>Ron Brown</td>
<td>Janet Buckley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denise Dunham</td>
<td>Ron Brown</td>
<td>Eugene Johnston</td>
<td></td>
<td>Geri Moulton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intercessor</strong></td>
<td>Connie Anderson</td>
<td>Eugene Johnston</td>
<td>Janet Buckley</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ron Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eucharistic</strong></td>
<td>Eugene Johnston</td>
<td>Howard Yeager</td>
<td>Connie Anderson</td>
<td>Mary Sheffield</td>
<td>Ron Waites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister</strong></td>
<td>Ron Brown</td>
<td>Geri Moulton</td>
<td>Connie McLean</td>
<td>Ron Waites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eucharistic</strong></td>
<td>Paula Ross</td>
<td>Ron Waites</td>
<td>Eugene Johnston</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ron Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Altar</strong></td>
<td>Marie Brown</td>
<td>Pat Fulford</td>
<td>Pat Fulford</td>
<td>Neva Bache</td>
<td>Bill Duke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guild</strong></td>
<td>Lorraine Murray</td>
<td>Cindy Gass</td>
<td>Cindy Gass</td>
<td>Donna Waites</td>
<td>Eugene Johnston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vestry</strong></td>
<td>Ron Brown</td>
<td>Janet Buckley</td>
<td>James Christiansen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tellers</strong></td>
<td>James Christiansen</td>
<td>Bill Duke</td>
<td>Cindy Gass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the February ECW meeting, committee representatives reported that all areas - ECW room, kitchen, etc. - are in good order. Paula Ross reported on cares and concerns of parishioners. Money making projects were recommended and the group discussed whether to have a rummage sale this year. This item of business was tabled until next month. There was also discussion on the amount to be charged for books from the Book Nook. The group recommended that a sign be erected notifying everyone that donations would be accepted for use of the books.

-Audrey Garner

As most of you know, Saint John's office is staffed by a different volunteer four days a week: Joyce Lee on Tuesdays, Betty Taylor on Wednesdays, Irene Yeager on Thursdays, and your reporter on Mondays.

One Monday morning last month I set out from home earlier than usual so that I could take a truckload of stuff to the recycling center further down on Government Street. I deposited it all and returned to my car. MY KEYS WERE LAYING ON THE SEAT LOCKED UP TIGHT! I cursed, then I prayed. Two very nice workers tried the coat-hanger maneuver but it did not work (does it ever?). So, I called the church and told Father Thomas what had happened. "Someone will be right there," he said. In the meantime, I answered the telephone at the recycling place, giving directions and guessing answers to other questions.

Lo and behold, here comes the Rector in his little red car to pick me up, take me home to get spare keys, and take me back to the recycling center. (Where is James Christiansen when you need him????) Talk about chagrin...though Father Thomas was very kind and gracious about the whole thing.

Finally, back at the church office, I am busy at the desk when the doorbell rings. A distraught lady was there asking if she could use our phone to try to get her power turned back on. She made several calls and as I was seeing her out, she turned to me and said, "I just hate that someone your age has to work."

Do we volunteer office folks get extra brownie points for humiliation and insults?

-Joan Marie Elam
For healing grace and continued strength, we pray for our members:
Margie Mattoon, Mary Sheffield, Irene Yeager, Audrey Meador, Alice Schablinski, Bessie Southall, Bill Southall, Leah Betts, Stephen Lee, Shannon Newberry, Ashley Garris, Gloria Lee

For our Homebound:
Alice Cieutat, Mae Dunn, Will Elam, Corinne Faust, Gwen Johnson, Violet Kosko, Vevia Lund, Angela McGuire, Audrey Meador, Jane Tate Moore, Betty Plash, Dot & Chick Wohlert

For victims of war and their families, and members of our Armed Forces and their families:
Steven Garris, Jeffery Yeager, Ellis Eugene Garner, Eric Mattoon, Cheryl Garner

For our Friends and Family:
Mary Lou Johnston, Olivia Thompson, Nevaeh Hall, Morgan Kwan, Bill Staley, Vernon Faulk, Hazel Barr, Vieva Steele, David Yeager, Mark Stiber, Robbie Hinson, Anne Brabner, Marian Yearby, Tucker Stuckey, Phebe Lee, Julie Hinton, Helen Baker, Joe Stroeker, Gracie Stroeker, JoAnn Alioto, Shirley Mayson, Rodene Nestman, Michelle Walker, Jim Owens, Maddie West, Kevin Brown [Priest]

For those who have died:
Bill Boller, Jeffery Byrd

We Need…

A New Microwave Oven

The microwave oven in the kitchen is on its last legs. If anyone knows where we could get a new one for a reasonable price (or even free!), please see Father Thomas or James Christiansen.

Contact Us

Staff:
The Reverend Thomas Heard
Rector
rector@stjohnsmobile.org

John L. Hobbs, Jr.
Organist/Choirmaster
music@stjohnsmobile.org

Lella Lowe
Financial Secretary
finance@stjohnsmobile.org

Jack Ruppe
Sexton

Vestry:
Ron Brown
Janet Buckley
James Christiansen
Bill Duke
Cindy Gass
Eugene Johnston
Connie McLean
Bill Sundie
Ron Waites

LENTEN SUPPER

FRIDAY, MARCH 19
6:30 P.M.

Watch for details in the Sunday bulletin and on the bulletin board in the hallway.
Saint John’s Episcopal Church
1707 Government Street
Mobile, Alabama 36604

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Come Worship With Us!
Monday—Friday:
8:30AM  Morning Prayer

Sunday:
9:00AM  Adult and Youth Christian Formation
10:00AM Holy Eucharist

Wednesday:
10:00AM Holy Eucharist; Healing on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

Other Feasts and Holy Days are observed throughout the year; see our website for the latest schedule.

Parish Office
Monday-Thursday
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Telephone: 251-479-5474
Fax: 251-473-1230
www.stjohnsmobile.org

Thee Store Episcopal Books
Mon-Wed & Fri:
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Sundays after church and by appointment

Telephone: 251-479-5086

Saint John’s: The Episcopal Church in Midtown Mobile
Grounded in shared sacramental life and moving into the world to be the hands of Our Lord.