



# THE FOURTH EPISTLE SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH MOBILE, ALABAMA

The Reverend Thomas Heard, Rector  
The Protestant Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast  
The Right Reverend Philip Duncan, Bishop

Vol. XXI, Issue 1

January 2011

## FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

I thought I'd take a few more questions that have been asked over the years.

Q: I've noticed that whenever Jesus' name comes up, said or sung, you bow your head. Why is that?

A: There are a couple of things to look at in answering this. First, the great hymn in Philippians (2:9-11) says,

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Most likely, this was around in the early church and was incorporated by Paul in his letter to the community at Philippi.

"Bowing the knee" or "bending the knee" is a sign of respect and reverence. In a similar vein, the Prayer of Manasseh (see Canticle 14, BCP p. 90-91) has,

"And now, O Lord, I bend the knee of my heart, \* and make my appeal, sure of your gracious goodness.

This is clearly a position of supplication, kind of like we mean today when saying "on bended knee". For Old Testament times, the heart was the focal area of the body. Again, it is a sign of respect, devotion, and reverence.

Even today, if you were to be granted an audience with the Queen of England, you would be expected to bow to her upon coming into her presence. In times even as recent as the English Reformation, failure to do so could have had fatal consequences.

I don't believe I will be zapped if I miss bowing my head once (or at all, actually), but I continue the practice to remind myself of who I am and where my loyalty and reverence are due.

Jesus isn't the only name that evokes such a response from me. I also include Mary the mother of Our Lord and any saint that happens to be commemorated.

You might also have noticed that I bow deeply when saying "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit". This appellation is as close to having God's proper name as we have. I think it, too, is worthy of deep respect and reverence.

Q: I've noticed that you bow to the people just before you turn away. What's up with that?

A: That is simply a reminder for me of who I am in this community: I am your servant. I bow to you to remind me that I'm here because you want me at the altar for you. I bow to you to let you know that I haven't forgotten who it is that I am serving.

Also, you are a necessary party to celebrating the Mass. Unlike the Roman church where a priest can say mass by himself, our rubrics prohibit this practice. By the way, I think it's good. What we do in worship and celebration is supposed to be "in community", not "in private."

Q: OK, so why do you bow in the middle of the Eucharistic Prayer?

A: That happens when I am saying the words Jesus spoke at the last supper. They are called the "words of institution" or *verba*. It is with great humility that I am allowed to say Jesus' words and combine them with his actions in the Mass. It is, again, a reminder to me that I am simply the hands and the voice; it is the Holy Spirit that acts upon the simple elements of bread and wine and transforms them into the Body and Blood of Our Lord.

Enough for now, even though I have many more to share.

Next month, I'll talk about the deacon that the bishop is assigning to Saint John's.

--Thomas

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY LITURGICAL CALENDAR

### The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

This day we celebrate the naming of Our Lord on the eighth day after his birth, in accordance with Jewish custom. Naming is important to all of us; it establishes our identity. We will celebrate this feast on Saturday, 1 January 2011 at 12:10PM

### The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

12:10PM on Thursday, 6 January  
“Epiphany” comes from a Greek word meaning to manifest or appear. This feast concludes the twelve days of Christmas and marks the discovery of God Incarnate by the gentiles in the persons of the wise men. Join us to celebrate the visit of the Magi to the stable in Bethlehem.

### Baptism of Our Lord



10:00AM on Sunday, 9 January  
The First Sunday after the Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ is also known as The Baptism of Our Lord. On this day, we recount Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan by his cousin John the Baptizer. It is a particularly appropriate day for baptisms.

### Aelred of Rievaulx

We celebrate the life of Aelred, Abbott of Rievaulx on Wednesday, 12 January at 10:00AM. From 1143, Aelred founded a new Cistercian monastery at Revesby and was abbot of Rievaulx from 1147 until his death in 1167. His great work is *Spiritual Friendship*, where he teaches that while love is universal, friendship is a gift of God and a human creation, requiring great love and commitment to another.



### The Confession of Saint Peter

We commemorate Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ. This feast also marks the beginning of the annual Week for Christian Unity.

### Wulfstan of Worcester

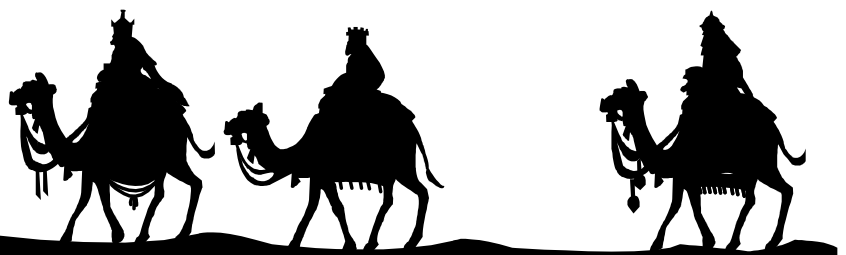
One of the few Anglo-Saxon bishops to retain his see following the Norman invasion of England in 1066, Wulfstan was particularly beloved for his humility, charity and courage. We will celebrate his life on Wednesday, 19 January at 10:00AM

### The Conversion of Saint Paul

12:10PM on Tuesday, 25 January  
We mark Paul’s acceptance of Jesus as his Lord and Savior on this day. Even though it is referred to as his conversion, the Pauline position seems to be more of enlightenment to a new reality, rather than rejection of his heritage in favor of Christ. This feast concludes the Week for Christian Unity.

### Timothy and Titus

Timothy and Titus are remembered as companions of Saint Paul. Paul frequently mentions them for their youth and their ability to handle great administrative duties and proclaiming the Gospel. We will commemorate their witness to Our Lord at a Said Mass on Wednesday, 26 January at 10:00AM.





# Vestry

## VESTRY SUMMARY

The Vestry met at its new time of 11:15 on the Second Sunday on December 12<sup>th</sup>. New vestry members Chris Gass and Butch Yeager were in attendance.

Outreach has sent money to Wilmer Hall, McKemie Place, Bay Area Food Bank and Loaves & Fish Ministries. Janet Buckley is attempting to schedule a workday at Bay Area Food Bank early in the year. Outreach did not spend all of its budget this year, leaving \$2,000 unexpended. This year, our Angel Tree benefitted residents of Partlow Developmental Center. All of the gift tags were taken by parishioners on the first Sunday they were available.

Eugene Johnston reminded the vestry of the Greening of the Church and Christmas gathering next Sunday.

The Rector reported that he had discussed the vestry's concerns about monetary support of our deacon. The bishop made it clear that there are no expectations of the parish to provide monetary support. If the vestry wants to provide for continuing education or travel reimbursement, that is their choice, but is not required.

The Vestry will meet on Sunday 9 January, as scheduled and will meet in retreat at the church on Saturday, 22 January from 9AM until 3PM.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55AM.

## ELECTION

On Sunday, 12 December, the parish met to elect new Vestry and Convention Delegates. The following were elected to serve the parish:

To serve on the Vestry for three years:

Mr. Chris Gass  
Ms. Nikki Shaw  
Mr. Butch Yeager

To serve as Delegates to the Diocesan Convention:

Ms. Kathe Gieseler  
Mr. Eugene Johnston  
Ms. Connie McLean

To serve as Alternate to the Diocesan Convention:

Ms. Connie Anderson

Congratulations to all.

## VESTRY RETREAT

On Saturday, 22 January, the Vestry of Saint John's will spend the day in retreat at the church. During its time together, the Vestry will elect its new officers, consider the 2011 budget, and participate in some workshops on leadership and future vision.



The retreat will start at 9:00AM and conclude at or before 3:00PM. Lunch and breaks will be provided. If you will be unable to attend, please contact the Rector.

## PLEDGE UPDATE

As of the end of the year, we have received commitments from 46 pledge units. Our total for 2011 stands at \$103,363. For 2010 we received 70 pledges totaling \$134,016.

If you plan to pledge to the 2011 operating budget, please turn in a pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available in the church office.

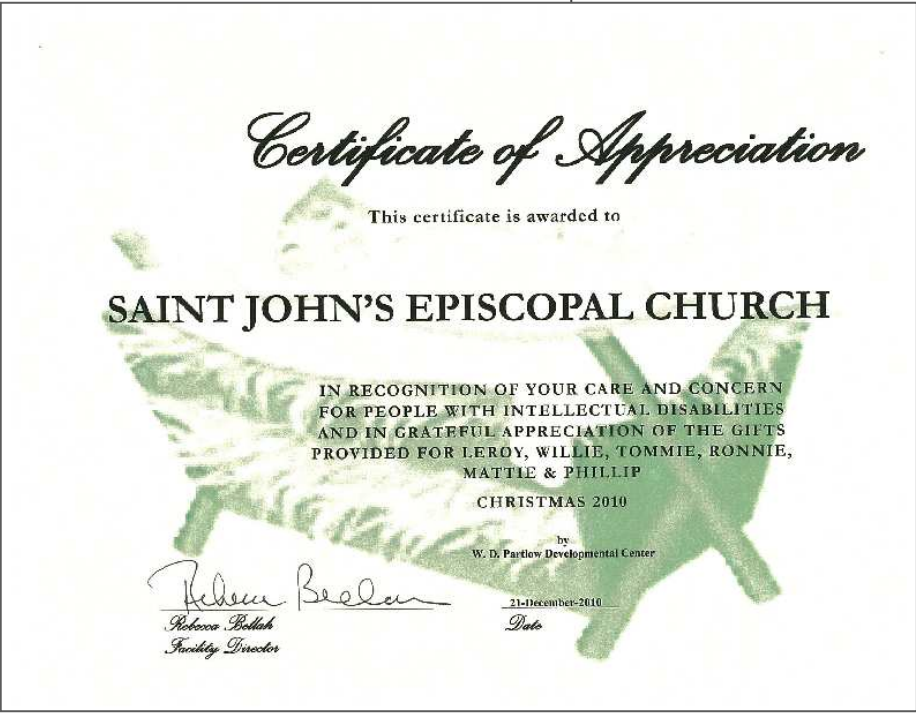
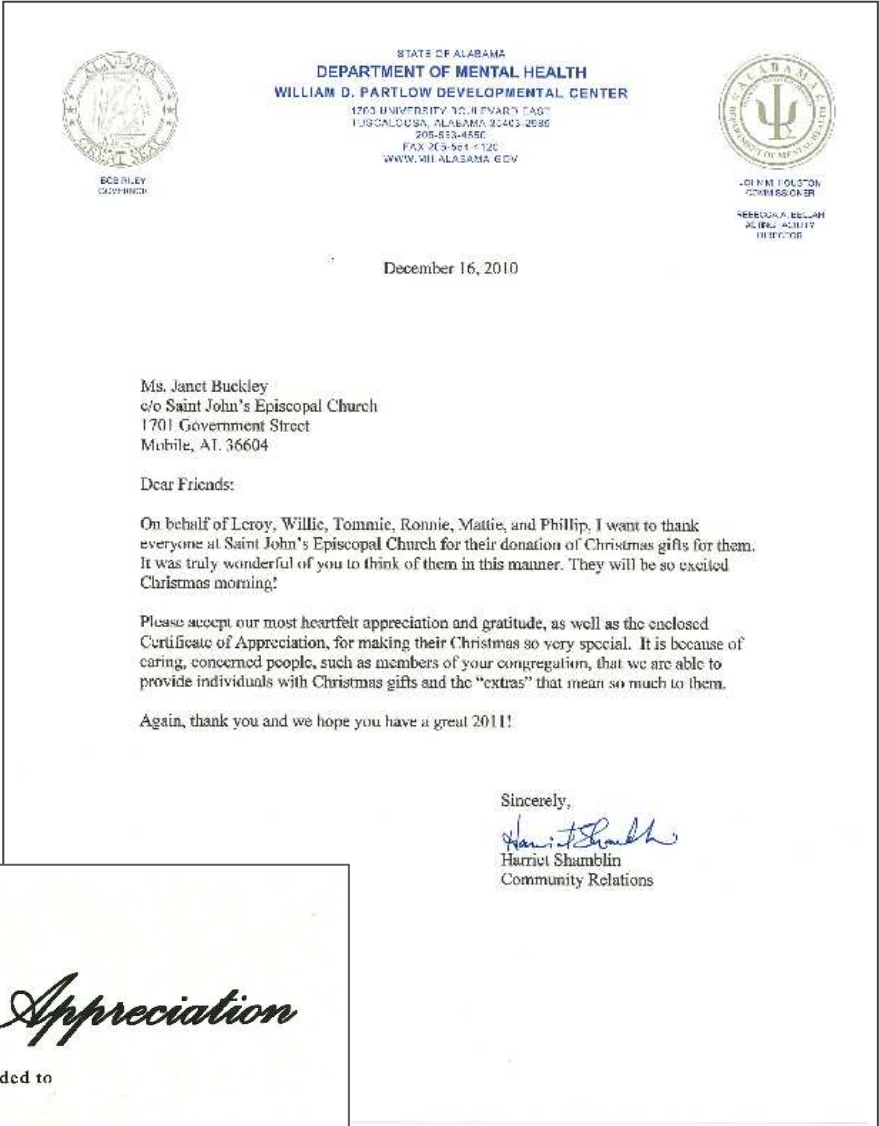


# Outreach

## Saint John's Angel Tree Benefits Partlow Residents

Inspired by our Outreach Committee, this year's Angel Tree provided for developmentally disabled Alabamians at the Partlow Center in Tuscaloosa. Six residents—Leroy, Willie, Tommie, Ronnie, Mattie, and Phillip—had a great Christmas with gifts they both needed and wanted.

All this was made possible by the generosity of Saint John's parishioners. All of the tags were taken from the tree by the end of the first Sunday.



# Outreach



Dear St John's Family,

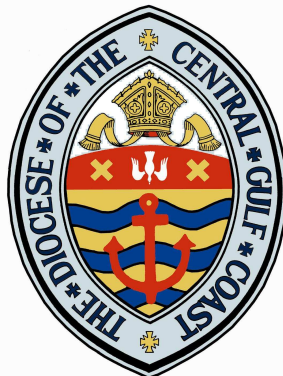
Thank you for your generous contributions to Episcopal Relief & Development this past year.

Much of the work of Episcopal Relief & Development focused on Earthquake Relief in Haiti. Sixty thousand homeless people have moved on to Episcopal Church property in Haiti. Another forty thousand people have been assisted with the medical ministry and the cash for work program.

Your donations to Episcopal Relief & Development have assisted over one hundred thousand people in Haiti, to date, and around two million more around the world that are hungry, sick, lack economic opportunity and victims of natural disasters.

Thank you for thinking of others.

Eugene Johnston  
Parish Representative, St John's Episcopal Church  
Diocesan Coordinator, Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast





## Memorial Donations

Saint John's wishes to extend a sincere thank you to the following individuals who made memorial donations honoring David Yeager, David Dabney and Nellie Doyle:

In memory of David Yeager:

Bob & Paula Ross  
Shannon Newberry & Ben Schmerbauch  
Eugene & Emily Johnston

In memory of David Dabney:

Eugene & Emily Johnston

In memory of Nellie Doyle:

Nell & Burkhard Dohm

We are thankful as well for gifts received:

In honor of Pat Thomas:

Karen Keel

In honor of Gordon & Geri Moulton:

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Langham




## Prayer List

**For healing grace and continued strength, we pray for our members:**

Audrey Garner, Mary Lou Varnes, Caitlin Bryan, LaVerne Foster, Bessie & Bill Southall, Shannon Newberry

**For our Homebound:**

Ray Campbell, Alice Cieutat, Ping Duke, Mae Dunn, Will Elam, Corinne Faust, Gwen Johnson, Nell Kirk, Violet Kosko, Margie Mattoon, Audrey Meador, Angela McGuire, Jane Tate Moore, Betty Plash, Alice Walker, Catherine Warren, Dot & Chick Wohlert

**For victims of war and their families, and members of our Armed Forces and their families:**

Jeffery Yeager, Ellis Eugene Garner, Eric Mattoon, Cheryl Garner

**For our Friends and Family:**

John McCormick, Bill Jones, Keith Malick, Lella Lowe, Myrle Benson, Judi Waldrop, Gloria Berry, Travis McBride, Vernon Faulk, Mickey Benson, Velma Pearson, Martha Morget, Christina Morget, Betty & Gayle Chenoweth, Steve Weinstein, Mark Stiber, Mary Hoeberechts, Maddie West, Jandy Watkins [priest], Dot Douglas [priest], Robert Graves [priest]

## Directory Update

Please make the following changes to the directory you received in May:

Leslie & Jeremy Lundberg  
16111 Mansion St.  
Foley, AL 36535

Joyce Lee - add e-mail address:  
grannyajlee@gmail.com



It's time to sign up for flowers for 2011!

Please use the dedication cards on the bulletin board to sign up to supply altar flowers for Sundays in 2011. As Sundays are covered we will update the flower chart, which is posted for all to see. Altar flowers cost \$50 per Sunday.



Faye Owen 01/07  
 Leslie Johnson 01/08  
 Bob Ross 01/08  
 Curtis Gass 01/16  
 Jeffery Yeager 01/17  
 Irene Yeager 01/19  
 Alexandria Havey-Smith 01/20

Janet Buckley 01/24  
 Scott Escobio 01/26  
 Donna Waites 01/26  
 Doris Cunningham 01/28  
 Gloria Lee 01/29  
 William Duke 01/31



Craig & Shirley Hall 01/31

## *Elsewhere in the Diocese*

Please join the Episcopal Community in welcoming a new women's ministry in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast. Join us for "Quiet Day and Taize Eucharist" on January 15, 2011 at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1608 Baker Court, in Panama City, Florida.

9:00 Registration and hospitality

9:30 - 11:30 Meditation and Quiet Time led by Pat Horn, Spiritual Director

***"In the Beginning, God..."***

11:45-12:45 Luncheon

1:00 - 1:30 'Taize' Eucharist

with installation of chapter and members in

The Episcopal Community

by the Rt. Rev. Philip Duncan, National Chaplain and Bishop of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

1:45-3:00 Meeting of The Episcopal Community

Registration, Hospitality, Luncheon \$15

Registration, no lunch \$5

RSVP to Nancy Young

207 Harrison Place

Panama City, FL 32405

Caterer donates profits from luncheon to the National Transplant Foundation

## Contact Us

### Staff:

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 Rector

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John L. Hobbs, Jr.

Organist/Choirmaster

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Lella Lowe

Financial Secretary

finance@stjohnsmobile.org

Jack Ruppe

Sexton

### Vestry:

Ron Brown

Janet Buckley

James Christiansen

Bill Duke

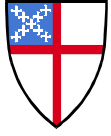
Chris Gass

Connie McLean

Nikki Shaw

Bill Sundie

Howard Yeager



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Mobile, Alabama 36604

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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 1<sup>st</sup>  
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

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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.