



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. XXII, Issue 1

January 2012

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

This past week, I've had a couple of new experiences. Some were interesting, some a bit distressing. Let me share them with you:

On Monday, Frank Morales of WPMI ("Local 15") called asking if he could interview me concerning a new letter written by Alabama Bishops to our Governor, Dr. Bentley. I hadn't heard about the letter and said so. Frank indicated where I might find it on-line and promised to bring a copy with him for the interview. I agreed.

I agreed because, no matter what was in the bishops' letter, the foundational theology supporting opposition to the Beason-Hammon Act (formerly referred to as HB 56) would still apply.

The bishops' letter called for repeal or revision of the Act and relied on the following points to make their case:

- The law must respect and complement the federal constitution and laws.
- All people are human beings and must therefore be afforded basic human rights.
- It is patently wrong to use children as pawns in legal maneuvers.
- The Act makes no provision for funding to cover the increased costs incurred by law enforcement.
- Laws should not victimize people.

Our Lord calls us to seek out the oppressed, the poor, the sick, the hungry and minister to them as He would have done.

The interview went quite well, I think. I'd had sufficient time to think about what I'd say so that I didn't come across as a blithering idiot.

Sadly, one of the most significant parts of it was left on the cutting room floor. In that section, I reflected on the bishops' reference to Micah 6:8b "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and

to walk humbly with your God?" The Old Testament law code demanded hospitality to the sojourner and the alien. The hospitality shown was required to be equal to that shown to an honored guest. I suspect a sense of 'entertaining angels unawares' underlying this; after all, Angels visited Abraham and Lot, and Jacob wrestled with God!

Those 'aliens' were from other countries, so you see, immigration is closely tied to hospitality and human rights. Sadly, the United States has only really equated human rights with civil rights since the 1960s. I think it is also important for each of us to remember that very few of our families are indigenous to this country.

Now for the bad: On Tuesday, I found a message on the church's voicemail. It had been left on Monday evening. The caller identified herself as black, and sounded as if she might have been older. She didn't leave her name or phone number.

In her three minute and thirty second message, I was called 'a false prophet' (the bishops, too), told that I was going to hell, needed to read Timothy and Acts 2:38. She went on to say that "immigration has nothing to do with civil rights" and the law is for the lawless. She called for me to seek Jesus, and repent and be baptized. Then she told me I was going to hell again.

Yikes! If Jesus had been operating as this woman is demanding, the outcasts, the sick, the friendless, the needy – most of the folks Jesus could be found with – would not have been touched by his message of love and inclusion, much less healed of afflictions, fed, and forgiven.

The message of the Babe of Bethlehem is one of acceptance, inclusion, love, and support. How can we call ourselves Christians if we do not hold those same values? It takes courage to stand with Jesus, but it's what we have to do.

—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 Sunday, 1 January 2012 at 10:00AM.

The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

12:10PM on Friday, 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, 8 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.



The Confession of Saint Peter

10:00AM on Wednesday, 18 January

On this occasion, we commemorate Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ. Of course, we also remember how human Peter is: often bumbling, stumbling, impetuous, intense, and with rough edges. This feast also marks the beginning of the annual Week for Christian Unity.

The Conversion of Saint Paul

10:00AM on Wednesday, 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.



EPISCOPAL VISIT

On Sunday, 15 January, we will receive our bishop, The Rt. Rev. Philip M. Duncan II, as he makes his canonical visitation to Saint John’s. The Canons of The Episcopal Church require each diocesan bishop to go to each parish and mission of the diocese in an official capacity. The canons say:

Canon III, Article 12, Sec. 3. Duties [of a Bishop Diocesan]

(a) Each Bishop Diocesan shall visit the Congregations within the Diocese at least once in three years. Interim visits may be delegated to another Bishop of this Church.

(1) At every such visitation the visiting Bishop shall preside at the Holy Eucharist and at the Initiatory Rites, as required, preach the Word, examine the records of the Congregation required by Canon III.9.5(c), and examine the life and ministry of the Clergy and Congregation according to Canon III.9.5.

Your Vestry will be on a planning retreat on Saturday, 14 January. We will invite Bishop Duncan to join us toward the end of our time together.

On Sunday morning, we will convene a gathering at 9:00AM in the Great Hall to meet with Bishop Duncan. This is an opportunity for you to ask our bishop any questions you might have about the church, the diocese, or The Episcopal Church.

Following our 10:00AM Mass, there will be a reception for the bishop in the Great Hall.





Vestry

VESTRY SUMMARY

The regular meeting of the Vestry convened at 11:46 on Sunday, 11 December. The absences of Bill Sundie and Nikki Shaw were excused. Fr. Heard asked Butch Yeager to serve as clerk *pro tempore*. The minutes from the 13 November meeting were approved with corrections.

Connie McLean reviewed the financial performance, noting that our deficit is somewhat less than projected. The Vestry voted to deplete the Temporarily Restricted Repairs and Maintenance fund as we have in the past expended much more than this amount but have not been diligent in charging those expenses to the fund. The Vestry wondered about other fund accounts and requested that the financial secretary review the funds and recommend actions.

Butch Yeager reported for Outreach that the Giving Tree benefitting Kindred Nursing Home residents has been completely stripped of tags by members of the parish.

Reporting for Parish Life, Janet Buckley reminded the vestry that Sunday, 18 December will be the parish Christmas Luncheon and Greening of the Church

Fr. Heard reported that pledges are still trickling in. We have received 42 of the 57 that we expect, with the anticipated amount near \$146,700. Concerning the required audit report, Fr. Heard asked and the Vestry approved the appointment of Bootsie Cieutat and Jan Dabney to the Audit Committee.

The Vestry will meet in retreat on Saturday, 14 January 2012, beginning at 9:00AM at the church.

Fr. Heard announced that Saint John's Episcopal Visitation will be Sunday, 15 January 2012. Butch Yeager will confer with the ECW concerning a reception for the bishop after Mass.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40PM.

ELECTION

On Sunday, 4 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:

Ms. Bootsie Cieutat
Ms. Jan Dabney
Ms. Cindy Gass

To serve as Delegates to the Diocesan Convention:

Mr. James Christiansen
Mr. Eugene Johnston
Ms. Connie McLean

To serve as Alternate to the Diocesan Convention:

Ms. Janet Buckley
Mr. Ron Brown
Ms. Connie Anderson

Congratulations to all.

VESTRY RETREAT

On Saturday, 14 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 2012 budget, and participate in some workshops on leadership and future vision.

The retreat will start at 9:00AM and conclude at or before 2:00PM. 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 44 pledge units. Our total for 2012 stands at \$115,080. For 2011 we received 56 pledges totaling \$145,908.

If you plan to pledge to the 2012 operating budget, please turn in a pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available in the church office.



NEW ORGANIST FOR ST. JOHN'S

Our semi-new Organist and Choirmaster (he came to us in August), Louis F. Daniel, is as thrilled to be a part of Saint John's as we are to have him.

"I really love it here," Louis says. "Even though I grew up Methodist, the Episcopal Hymnal is my favorite and working with Father Heard's amazing musical background is a real pleasure."

Louis was born and raised in Pascagoula. He was always interested in music and was a substitute organist when he was in the 10th grade! He went to Southern Miss in Hattiesburg and received his BA in Music Education, vocal emphasis with a piano minor. He came to Mobile's USA for voice and organ lessons. And listen to this: He re-built his mother's home after Katrina! Talk about multi-talented.

Although he lives in Mobile's mid-town with his two greyhounds, Crunch and Gravy, he teaches music to 3rd and 4th graders at Lower Elementary School in Moss Point. "This age student appeals to me," Louis says, "because they are still enthusiastic and haven't yet acquired a lot of attitude." He also teaches Basic Reading.

Louis has a beautiful baritone voice. He has given several recitals, been a part of the Mobile musical theatre scene and played organ for area Episcopal, Catholic and Protestant churches.

How does he feel about Saint John's 113 year-old organ? "It's a real Episcopal organ, lovely tone and an exceptional number of stops." How about our choir? "We are few in number but have a good sound. The voices we have are excellent but it would be good to have more members." The choir rehearses on Wednesday night, 7-8:30PM, and an hour before the 10:00AM service on Sundays. And when you see in

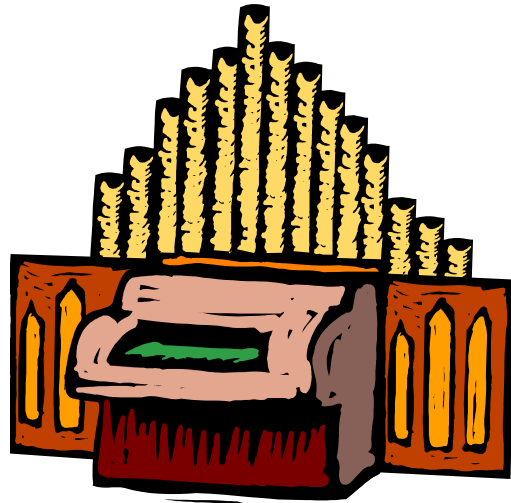
your Sunday service leaflet "setting by Louis F. Daniel", it means Louis wrote the music! Louis is also the director of the Gloria Dei Chorale, a 32-member group for all ages. He instructs the members in music theory as well as vocal technique.

We are indeed glad to have Louis F. Daniel among us: talented, charming Southern gentleman.

* * * * *

Since I wrote the above about Louis, I attended the Gloria Dei Concert at St. Mary's Catholic Church on December 24 and I was blown away! Thirty-one beautiful voices (men and women) were joined with the Mobile Chamber Orchestra to present an outstanding program. Saint John's was well represented with Marian Boykin, Charlynn Will, Becky Youngblood, Cheryl Winters-Heard and Father Thomas Heard as members of the Chorale. Louis Daniel directed and looked smashing in full dress!

--Joan Marie Elam



Thanks

When Pat Thomas went to the Lord, I inherited the St. John's "In-House Newsletter Processing" Committee. This means we get the church newsletter folded, labeled and sorted for mailing. Each month Becky Youngblood, Leah Betts, Ben Schmerbauch and I are there, and others come when asked: Neva Bache, the Cieutats, Joyce Lee and Fran Barbour. Thanks to one and all.

—Joan-Marie Elam



Happy New Year to all of you, dear friends! With your help, we have made it a happier 2012 for a number of our neighbors, namely, 25 lonely residents of The Kindred Home who have no one else to bring Christmas to them. Our Angel Tree was a great success with many of you contributing a personalized gift to the men and women whose names we received. Outreach will also contribute \$500 to Kindred for purchasing bulletin boards for residents' rooms so that they may display notices, cards, photos, and other personal items. We are so grateful to each one of you for sharing Christ's love with others. Our Parish Christmas luncheon also found many of you writing Christmas cards for these residents from their St. John's family. Thank you all very much for sharing our joy in Jesus' birth with others!

As mentioned last month, we also donated \$1000 to Episcopal Relief and Development. We received a warm thank you note from ERD for this donation. Because we made our donation in November, it was eligible for a matching donation from an anonymous donor, effectively bringing our donation to \$2000. This will go a long way to supporting local and global efforts during times of crisis, want, and disaster. Our thanks to all for your regular contributions to St. John's which enable us to continue our outreach to our neighbors around the world. Five percent of your pledges and plate offerings are budgeted to Outreach activities, and we can do even more with your increased support.

—Cheryl Winters-Heard



EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT RECEIVES \$350,000 AWARD FROM CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION TO LAUNCH A PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS

Episcopal Relief & Development is pleased to announce that it is the recipient of a \$350,000 grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for work in rural Zambia. This grant will support the incorporation of early childhood development into the integrated community development program currently run by the organization's partner, the Zambia Anglican Council (ZAC). Episcopal Relief & Development will raise funds to match the full amount of the grant, enabling the project to reach an estimated 4,000 families in areas with a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

The prevalent rate of HIV/AIDS in Zambia is among the highest in the world, leaving hundreds of thousands of children orphaned or vulnerable. Parents who are HIV-positive may succumb to the disease, or be too sick to provide sufficient care for their children. This responsibility often falls to a relative or a sibling, who may lack the resources or knowledge to support the child's health, growth and development.

The program will work with 4,000 families affected by HIV/AIDS, addressing the interrelated needs of children under five and empowering their parents or caregivers to support their healthy development. Conrad N. Hilton, founder of Hilton Hotels, established the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation as a philanthropic trust in 1944. In 1950, the Foundation was legally established as a nonprofit corporation, separate from Hilton Hotels Corporation. Upon his death in 1979, Conrad Hilton left nearly his entire estate to the Hilton Foundation. Hilton family members serve on the Foundation board.

“Our vision is for communities with healthy, thriving children, empowered caregivers, and communities equipped to support the vulnerable in their midst,” said Abigail Nelson, Senior Vice President for Programs at Episcopal Relief & Development. “We are extremely pleased to receive this recognition from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and to be a part of this vital and expanding initiative.”

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2011

See, your salvation comes – Isaiah 62:11

The great prophets before Jesus proclaimed a vision of a nation and a people redeemed. We continue to share that yearning – as the Christmas hymn puts it, “the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.” We’ve seen abundant hopes spring up in the past year across the Arab world and Eastern Europe, and in the global Occupy movement. Those voices seek a world of greater justice, communities in which decisions and the gifts of creation are more available to all. Our understanding of salvation is most profoundly about justice in community, and as Christians we believe that help and healing for all are grounded in the incarnate presence of God – among us and within us.

We look for salvation to the one who came among us in the most humble way, a helpless child born in a scandalous way to a poor peasant couple. The Incarnation, God with us, changed the world in ways that we insist are leading to the ultimate healing of all creation. “See, your salvation comes,” says the prophet in every age, yet it is not yet fully come upon us. We live in hope for its fullness. May hope be nourished within us, in each and every human being and community, for the journey toward God’s healed and holy future.

That proclamation of coming salvation is a part of Isaiah (Isa 62:6-12) that will be read in some congregations at Christmas, but if you don’t hear it, go and read the whole of it. Its centerpiece speaks of what that salvation looks like:

The Lord has sworn...

I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies,

and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have labored;

but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the Lord, and those who gather it shall drink it in my holy courts.

Isa 62:8-9

That is not a vision of pristine isolation, but a vision of comfort and healing to a people frequently at war, occupied, or exploited by superior forces. The fear of powerful others taking and using for themselves the produce of the poor is healed and transformed into a society in which the gifts God provides will be shared by all. For when salvation comes, that society will

be called, ‘the Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord’; and you shall be called, ‘Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.’

Isa 62:12

Jesus comes among us to remind us of a world living together in peace, to reclaim and make real that vision of creation for all humanity and all God’s creatures. That world is put right as relationships between God and humanity are set right. The relationship between God and human beings cannot be set right without equal healing of relationships between us mortals. See, your salvation comes! Will we welcome that healing?

**The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church**

ORDINATION OF TRANSITIONAL DEACONS

Congratulation to the six individuals who were ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons in Christ’s one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church on Wednesday, December 21 at Christ Church Cathedral in Mobile. The newest deacons in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast are: Robert Patrick Dixon, Darin Stant Hyer, Joseph Paul Mathews, Sandra Kirby McLeod, Erin Jean Warde, and Peter Reginald Wong.

Our own Father Thomas served as litanist for the ceremony.

Make them, O Lord, modest and humble, strong and constant, to observe the discipline of Christ. Let their lives and teaching so reflect your commandments, that through them many may come to know you and love you. As your Son came not to be served but to serve, may these deacons share in Christ’s service, and come to the unending glory of him who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Faye Owen	01/07	Alexandria Harvey-Smith	01/20
Leslie Johnson	01/08	Samuel Tarantole	01/21
Bob Ross	01/08	Janet Buckley	01/24
Mary Jones	01/09	Scott Escobio	01/26
Curtis Gass	01/16	Donna Waites	01/26
Nicholas Tarantole	01/17	Doris Cunningham	01/28
Jeffery Yeager	01/17	Gloria Lee	01/29
Irene Yeager	01/19	Bill Duke	01/31



Craig & Shirley Hall 01/31



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

Sebra Strong, Joan-Marie Elam, Caitlyn Bryan, Joyce Lee, LaVerne Foster, Alice Schablinski, Ashley Garriss, Alice Walker

For our Homebound:

Ray Campbell, Mae Dunn, Will Elam, Corinne Faust, Lois Hamby, Gwen Johnson, Nell Kirk, Violet Kosko, Margie Mattoon, Angela McGuire, Jane Tate Moore, Betty Plash, Mary Lou Varnes, Catherine Warren, Dot & Chick Wohlert

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

Eric Mattoon, Cheryl Garner, Michael Brabner

For our Friends and Family:

Erich Albrecht, Randy Baxley, Steven Garner, Joy Russ, Andrea Murray, Paul & Bonnie Dueitt, Pam Sullivan, Ronald Raines, Emily Steiner, Karen Mullen, Mary Fournier, David Jones, Anna Marie Brown, Jim Owens, John McCormick, Keith Malick, Gloria Berry, Travis McBride, Vernon Faulk, Velma Pearson, Betty & Gayle Chenoweth, Mark Stiber, Maddie West

Contact Us

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Ron Brown

Janet Buckley

James Christiansen

Bootsie Cieutat

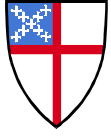
Jan Dabney

Chris Gass

Cindy Gass

Nikki Shaw

Butch Yeager



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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; please
see our website for the latest schedule.

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