



# 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 12

December 2011

## FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

For some reason, I looked back at my articles for *The Fourth Epistle* today and was amazed at finding a consistent theme in a couple of years: Advent as a time of anticipation and preparation, tied-up with seeking a closer relationship with God.

This year, we will be reading from The Gospel According to Mark, or more conversationally know as just "Mark." Mark is the shortest of the canonical gospels and was long thought to be an abbreviated form of Matthew. This has everything to do with the arrangement of our Bible; the gospels are arranged in what is believed to be oldest to newest order. Through various critical methods, bible scholars have concluded that Mark is the oldest, followed by Matthew, Luke, and John.

The writer of Mark has a unique style to his gospel. First, the original Greek is rather coarse. The other canonical gospels are a much more refined form of Greek. This lets the writer of Mark say things with a little more punch. It also features shorter sentences that are easier to grasp when listening to it.

Some scholars believe that Mark was intended to be the script for an oral presentation of the history and ministry of Jesus. You can probably read it from beginning to end in less than forty-five minutes.

The early church may well have kept it around because of its brevity and to-the-point presentation.

Here is another of Mark's strong points: his spare language keeps us close to the main points without the distractions of unnecessary details. The writer also assumes that his audience is aware of the events of Jesus' time as well as the events of their own time. This

has a two-edged effect: the writer doesn't explain things that are well known, but also doesn't explain things for the rest of us.

We will make our way through Advent, accompanied by Mark's account of Jesus' baptism, John's account of the ministry of John the Baptist, and Luke's story of Gabriel's visit to young Mary, finally arriving at the Christ event, the incarnating of God as a human, to live, love, laugh, cry, and die as one of us.

I encourage you to take advantage of opportunities to seek God out in the midst of your busy life. Take a few minutes out to search for God's presence, to pray for strength to be upright and righteous in God's sight.

On Wednesdays in Advent, Joan-Marie Elam will be leading a prayer study group. The series will start on 11/30 with "Praying like a grown-up" and continue for the following three weeks. The group will meet on Wednesdays in the meeting room at 10:30AM.

I encourage you to take time with your Bible and read through the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany stories. I know that Luke's shepherds are a necessary part of my Advent preparation.

I also invite you to take the time to read all the way through Mark in a single sitting. We will get to know his work better through the course of the year. Why not start now and find the parts that really speak to you?

Advent, the twelve days of Christmas, Epiphany and Lent will fly by and it will be Holy Week before we know it. Mark is an excellent guide for us; take some time and learn from him.

— Thomas

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DECEMBER LITURGICAL CALENDAR

### Ambrose of Milan

We will commemorate Ambrose, Bishop of Milan at our Said Mass on Wednesday, 7 December at 10:00AM. Ambrose did not seek to be a bishop. In fact, though he was raised in a Christian family, he was not baptized until just before his consecration as bishop! Ambrose, governor of the region, became involved as a mediator in the election of a new bishop for Milan in 373. His efforts to mediate the disputes between the orthodox and Arian factions resulted in the crowd calling for his ordination. He resisted, but eventually was hastily baptized and ordained on successive days. Ambrose was a strong bishop, solid theologian, and hymnist.

### Saint Thomas the Apostle

Thomas, called “the twin” will be commemorated at a mass on Wednesday, 21 December at 10:00AM. Thomas is recorded in John’s Gospel in several incidents. Seemingly somewhat literal minded and inclined to skepticism, Thomas was a staunch friend. According to Eusebius and others, Thomas evangelized the Parthians. Christians of Malabar, India claim that Thomas brought the Gospel to India.

### The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

We will celebrate the birth of Our Lord at two liturgies. On Christmas Eve, with music beginning at 7:30PM, the 8:00PM Solemn Mass and Procession will welcome the Babe of Bethlehem. The Wise Men will begin their journey this night as well. On Christmas Day at 10:00AM, we will have a Said Mass.

### Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Stephen one of the first deacons of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jerusalem church was the first recorded martyr for the cause of Christ. His story is contained in the Acts of the Apostles. In it, a certain Pharisee named Saul is standing by. We will commemorate Stephen on Monday, 26 December with a Said Mass at 12:10PM

### Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

We will commemorate, Saint John, the patron of our parish at a Said Mass on Tuesday, 27 December at 12:10PM.. While historical data is suspicious of the apostle and the writer of the fourth Gospel being the same person, this has been the Church’s view since the second century.

### The Holy Innocents

We will commemorate The Holy Innocents on Wednesday, 28 December at a Said Mass at 10:00AM. This feast commemorates the children Herod the Great slaughtered out of fear of the Babe of Bethlehem. Though not supported by secular history, the Church, since at least the 4<sup>th</sup> century has honored these innocents as martyrs.



## CALL FOR MEETING

The Vestry of Saint John’s has called a Meeting of the Parish for Sunday, 4 December 2011 for the purpose of electing new members of the Vestry and Diocesan Convention Delegates and Alternates. The meeting will be held in the Nave after Mass. This year, we will be electing 3 persons to 3-year terms on the Vestry. We will elect 3 delegates to Diocesan Convention and 3 alternates, as well. Please contact a member of your nominating committee—Bill Duke, Connie McLean, and Bill Sundie—or Fr. Thomas if you are interested (or know someone who is interested) in running for vestry or diocesan convention delegate.



## Vestry

### VESTRY SUMMARY

The regular monthly meeting of the Vestry was called to order at 11:27. Butch Yeager was appointed to serve as Clerk. A minor correction to the minutes of the October meeting was made.

- Connie McLean reviewed the financial reports, noting that our projected deficit will not be quite as large as previously thought.
- Butch Yeager, reporting for Outreach, noted that monies and projects for 2011 have totaled \$3,324.50.
- Reporting for Parish Life, Janet Buckley update the vestry on two coming events: December 11 will be a Blue Jean Sunday, and December 18 will be the Christmas Dinner and Greening of the Church.

The Rector reported that the 1700 Church Street property acquisition is still pending the approval of a demolition permit.

The Vestry named a nominating committee, composed of its outgoing members: Bill Duke, Connie McLean, and Bill Sundie.

The Vestry called a meeting of the Parish for 4 December 2011 for the purpose of electing Vestry members and Convention Delegates and Alternates.

Butch Yeager reported that the ECW has offered to cover half the cost of a replacement ice machine and moved that the Vestry accept the offer. The motion carried. Fr. Heard will contact the vendor on Monday.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20.



## Outreach

### OUTREACH IN DECEMBER

The St. John's "Angel Tree" will be up by the second Sunday in Advent. This year's tree has tags with specific gifts requested by about 20 long-term residents of the Kindred Healthcare Center in Mobile. These folks vary in age from older retirees to young developmentally disabled people who have nowhere else to go. Each requires some care, and the Kindred provides them with a safe and nurturing place to live. Many of these residents have no family members around to visit them. Most of these folks have nowhere else that will accept them due to their financial situations. While some of the other residents may receive gifts and loving visits, the individuals that our tree is sponsoring have no one. Consequently, Christmas can be a sad and bleak time of year for them. Truly, these are our neighbors, and are among the neediest neighbors that we have.

Each tag has the name of a resident with a specific gift request. We are asking that you take a tag (or two or three) from the tree, purchase the specific item requested, and return it by December 18th, wrapped with a gift tag on it. Please be sure to write the full name of the recipient including the last initial on the card.

Please note that where makeup for women has been requested, we have been told that "pretty things" (and probably good smelling things!) are desired since the only lotions and creams and shampoos available to the residents are the large industrial sized kinds.

Our Outreach Committee has also been able to make a sizable donation to Episcopal Relief and Development to help neighbors around the world. Our St. John's donation was matched 1:1 by a generous anonymous donor, so our effectiveness was doubled!

Thank you for reaching out with generosity and love to our neighbors in need!

—The Outreach Committee

### 2012 PLEDGE CARDS NOW DUE

*In The Spirit Of Giving...* If you plan to turn in a pledge card for 2012, please do so as soon as possible. You may mail your card in the envelope provided, or drop it in the alms basin on Sunday.

# Parish Life

## BLUE JEANS SUNDAY: DECEMBER 11



It's time to get the church ready for the Christmas season: we'll clean up the garden (bring those rakes and hoes); we'll polish up the Great Hall; and the Altar Guild will polish the silver and brass in the church.

Wear your comfy cleaning clothes and be ready to help out! We'll start right after the service and, with many hands, should be finished in a couple of hours. Snacks and beverages will be served.

We want to make the church and grounds look as beautiful as our Christmas services.

—Parish Life Committee

## FOOD BANK POSTPONED

Volunteering at the Food Bank has been postponed until after the first of the year. We will continue to collect canned goods in the Great Hall through December.



## Directory Update

Please make the following change/additions to the directory you received in May:

Change: Philip & Denise Dunham  
1409 Altair Lane  
Mobile, AL 36693

Add: Lee Dorsey  
118 Crenshaw St.  
Mobile, AL 36606  
(251) 422-6689

Add: Fran Barbour e-mail  
fbarbour@usouthal.edu

## SAINT JOHN'S PARISH CHRISTMAS PARTY AND GREENING OF THE CHURCH.



It's time to put on those Christmas sweaters and ties and celebrate the coming of the Christmas season at Saint John's. Bring your family and friends to church and to our annual Christmas Party.

**When: Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Where: Parish Hall after Sunday Service**

There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board so you can indicate what "goodies" you will bring for the luncheon. The ECW are providing the meat but we need the "fixin's" and (of course) desserts.



There is a separate sign-up sheet to let us know if you are willing to stay on to help "deck the halls" of the church so that our wonderful Christmas services will also be beautiful.

## FLOWER CHART SIGN-UP

It's time to sign up for flowers for 2012!



Please use the cards on the bulletin board to begin signing up to supply altar flowers for Sundays in 2012. As Sundays are covered we will update a flower chart and post it for all to see. Altar flowers cost \$50 per Sunday.



## Special Music

Saint John's wishes to extend a sincere thank you to those who made memorial donations honoring the following:

Hortense Bruce

Bud & Connie McLean  
Eugene & Emily Johnston  
Butch & Irene Yeager

Ping Duke

Curtis & Cindy Gass  
Ben Schmerbauch  
Tina Cieutat

Audrey Meador

Katherine E. Hamlin  
Donald & Terry Scott

Bill Southall

Mike & Fran Barbour

Gloria Dei Chorale and Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Louis F. Daniel, will present their Christmas concert "Noel! Noel!" on Sunday, December 4, 2011, at 7:00 PM at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 1453 Old Shell Road, Mobile. Included on the program will be seasonal works by Dan Forrest, K. Lee Scott, Morten Lauridsen, and Maurice Duruflé, and Louis Daniel's "Love, Come This Blessed Morn." Soprano Khara Molsbee is the featured soloist; she will sing Caccini's "Ave Maria" and John Jacob Niles' "I Wonder as I Wander." A new piece, "Sancta Madonna," will be debuted at the concert; it is a collaboration by local composer Matthew S. Still and Chorale director Louis Daniel, and is dedicated to the memory of the Rev. Ernest Hyndman, who passed away in August. The concert is free, but all donations at the door will go directly to Victory Health Partners. A reception will follow the concert. For more information, contact Marian Boykin at 251-533-9810, or visit the Chorale's website: [www.gloriadeichorale.org](http://www.gloriadeichorale.org).



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Healing a hurting world

## THE GOLD GIFT BOX

Our new premium Gold Box is truly a treasure! With two bags of Bishops Blend coffee, two boxes of tea and four bars of luxurious Single Origin Guatemalan chocolate, the Gold Box is guaranteed to please. Two Pura Vida ceramic mugs complete this ultimate Bishops Blend package.

- 1 Bag Bishops Blend Regular
- 1 Bag Cafe de la Paz
- 1 Box Fair Trade and Organic Bishops Blend Earl Grey Tea
- 1 Box Organic Bishops Blend Moroccan Mint Tea
- 1 2oz Single Origin Guatemalan 70% Dark Chocolate (New Pura Vida Product)
- 1 2oz Single Origin Guatemalan 41% Milk Chocolate with Almonds (New Pura Vida Product)
- 1 2oz Single Origin Guatemalan 70% Dark Chocolate with Sea Salt (New Pura Vida Product)
- 1 2oz Single Origin Guatemalan 41% Milk Chocolate (New Pura Vida Product)
- 2 Pura Vida ceramic mugs
- Episcopal Relief & Development flier and coupon for 15% off of next order of Bishops Blend products
- Personalized Gift Message

Bishops Blend Christmas boxes can be purchased through December 16 to guarantee delivery in time for Christmas. Expedited shipping is available after this date. Orders can be placed online via <http://www.er-d.org/BishopsBlend/> or by phone at 877.469.1431.



## LAST YEAR FOR TAX-FREE CHARITABLE DONATIONS FROM IRAs

by Coastline Editor

If you are 70.5 years of age or older and are considering making a donation to a charity, you may wish to consider the option of making the contribution from your IRA account.

For 2011, you can donate up to \$100,000 to your favorite charity, provided it is an eligible charitable organization, tax free from your traditional IRA, Roth IRA, or a SEP or SIMPLE IRA. To be considered valid, the distribution from the IRA to the charity must be made directly. It cannot pass through your hands or other accounts. Note: These distributions are not permitted from ongoing SEP or Simple Plans, i.e. plans to which a contribution has been made for the year.

Here are the pertinent facts related to making a donation using this provision of the law:

The distribution is not taxable and does not add to your income for the year. The advantage is that your income remains low and helps to minimize taxable Social Security income and tax disadvantages associated with higher income.

There is no charitable donation, as the distribution was tax free. However, this can be a considerable benefit to taxpayers who take the standard deduction and do not itemize anyway.

If you have not already taken your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year, the charitable distribution can count toward this year's RMD. Without Congressional action, 2011 will be the last year in which this option will be available.

This article was taken from <http://precisioncorpssc.com/client-sites.com/25890/Last-Year-for-Tax-Free-Charitable-Donations-from-IRAs/>

## Elsewhere in the Diocese

### A Tudor Christmas

December 16, 2011

6:00 p.m. Photos

7:00 p.m. Feast



Tickets \$60 per person through December 9  
\$60 per person beginning December 10

Episcopal Church of the Redeemer  
7125 Mitt Road, Mobile Alabama  
251-639-1948

Join us for an evening of feasting and fun!

Musical Entertainment by  
Mithril

tudorchristmas.eventbrite.com

www.redeemerepiscopal.org

Medieval period dress optional.



### CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL ADVENT MUSIC AT NOON

Wednesday, December 7

Enen Yu, *violinist*, Bob Holm, *pianist*

Wednesday, December 14

*Mithril Duo:*

Andra Bohnet and Tom Morley

11:30 a.m.

Holy Eucharist, Rite II in the Chapel  
A luncheon will follow in the Chapter House.  
Lunch is prepared by the ECW.



Pat Pritchard	12/04	Marie Brown	12/12
Craig Hall	12/05	Bailey James	12/14
Jack Ruppe	12/08	Leah Betts	12/16
Max Grice	12/10	Mae Dunn	12/19
Marie McPhail	12/10	Jeff Dennis	12/21
P. L. Pritchard	12/10	Roy Duhon	12/25



Bob & Connie Anderson	12/07
Thomas Heard and Cheryl Winters-Heard	12/11
Mike & Gwen Johnson	12/12
Mike & Frances Barbour	12/24



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

Caitlyn Bryan, Joyce Lee, LaVerne Foster, Alice Schablinski, Ashley Garris, 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 Wohler

**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:**

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

**Staff:**

The Reverend Thomas Heard, *rector*  
rector@stjohnsmobile.org

The Reverend Jayne Carson, *deacon*  
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Louis Daniel  
Organist & Choir Director  
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Lella Lowe  
Financial Secretary  
finance@stjohnsmobile.org

Jack Ruppe  
Sexton

**Vestry:**

Ron Brown

Janet Buckley

James Christiansen

Bill Duke

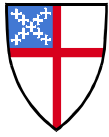
Chris Gass

Connie McLean

Nikki Shaw

Bill Sundie

Howard Yeager



Saint John's Episcopal Church  
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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 1<sup>st</sup>  
Wednesday of the month.

Other Feasts and Holy Days are  
observed throughout the year; please  
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](http://www.stjohnsmobile.org)

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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.

# December 2011 at Saint John's

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MP = Morning Prayer SS=Sunday School HE=Holy Eucharist EfM=Education for Ministry				1 830A MP	2 830A MP	3 1030A Petro Recitals
<b>4 Advent 2</b> 9A SS 10A HE 11A Parish Meeting 1130A Outreach	5 830A MP	6 830A MP 530P EfM 6P Winning Solutions	<b>7 Ambrose of Milan</b> 830A MP 10A HE+Unction 1045A Prayer&Study Group 7P Choir	8 830A MP	9 830A MP	10
<b>11 Advent 3</b> <b>Blue Jean Sunday</b> 830A Breakfast 9A SS 10A HE 1130A Vestry	12 830A MP	13 830A MP 530P EfM 6P Winning Solutions	14 830A MP 10A HE 1045A Prayer&Study Group 7P Choir	15 830A MP	16 830A MP	17
<b>18 Advent 4</b> 9A SS 10A HE 1130A Christmas Party & Greening of the Church	19 830A MP	20 830A MP 530P EfM 6P Winning Solutions	<b>21 Saint Thomas</b> 830A MP 10A HE 1045A Prayer&Study Group 7P Choir	22 830A MP	23 830A MP	<b>24 Christmas Eve</b> 730P Carols 8P HE
<b>25 Christmas Day</b> 10A HE	<b>26 Saint Stephen</b> 830A MP 1210P HE	<b>27 Saint John</b> 830A MP 1210P HE 6P Winning Solutions	<b>28 Holy Innocents</b> 830A MP 10 HE	29 830A MP	30 830A MP	31

# LECTIONARY AND ROTA FOR DECEMBER 2011

Date Service	4 December HE EP-B	11 December HE EP-B	18 December HE EP-B	24 December HE EP-D	25 December HE EP-D
Lectionary Day	Advent 2 B Advent 2	Advent 3 B Advent 3	Advent 4 B Advent 4	Christmas Eve ABC Christmas Day I	Christmas Day ABC Christmas Day III
Lessons	Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8	Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11 Psalm 126 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8,19-28	2 Samuel 7:1-11,16 Canticle 15 Romans 16:25-38 Luke 1:26-38	Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14(15-20)	Isaiah 52:7-10 Psalm 98 Hebrews 1:1-4(5-12) John 1:1-14
Greeters	Connie & Bob Anderson	Joan-Marie Elam	Connie & Bud McLean	Paula & Bob Ross	Thelma Lomers
Lectors	Paula Ross Eugene Johnston	Ron Waites Scott Escobio	Pat Fulford Janet Buckley	Connie McLean Ron Brown	Janet Buckley
Eucharistic Ministers	Geri Moulton Butch Yeager	Paula Ross Ron Brown	Mary Sheffield Eugene Johnston	Connie McLean Butch Yeager	Ron Brown
Eucharistic Visitor	Ron Brown	Eugene Johnston	Ron Waites		Ron Brown
Altar Guild	Connie Anderson Jennifer Tarantole	Connie Anderson Jennifer Tarantole	Kim Partsch Irene Yeager	Kim Partsch Irene Yeager	Kim Partsch Irene Yeager
Vestry Tellers	Ron Brown Bill Duke	Janet Buckley Connie McLean	James Christiansen Bill Sundie	James Christiansen Bill Sundie	Chris Gass Ron Brown
Nursery	Cheryl Winters-Heard Lee Dorsey	Nikki Shaw Jennifer Tarantole	Pat Fulford Connie Anderson		