FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

I write to you from one of the many waiting rooms at M.D. Anderson in Houston, Texas. It’s a fantastic place: highly organized, client-focused, and exuding excellence; just the place you want to be when a threat to life and health presents itself. Enough of that.

Last Saturday, I had the honor to preach at the ordination of our senior seminarians to the diaconate. Bruce and Lori Fehr, Lauren Flowers, and Kara Slade will be ordained as priests in June or so. Their time as deacons is limited and is sometimes called a ‘transitional’ diaconate. We also sometimes speak of ‘permanent’ or ‘vocational’ deacons. Those are all invented terms; both the Prayer Book and the Constitution and Canons of the church make no distinction between those who are called to serve the church as deacons and those who are called to serve the church as priests or bishops.

The work of a deacon is different from that of a priest or a bishop. The Prayer Book says:

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God’s Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ’s people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

The one sentence in the middle of the charge is, to me, the most important for a deacon: _to interpret to the church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world._

The deacon is to be the eyes and ears of the church and to represent the church in the world. It is a ministry of service in the world, one that requires meeting people where they are, being present with them on their own terms. We can see this in a deacon’s liturgical attire: the stole is worn over the shoulder and tied up on the side so that it stays out of the way of their work.

Deacons are probably the oldest order of ordained ministry in the church. We know of them from the Acts of the Apostles. Most famous, of course, are Stephen and Philip, then the unnamed seven deacons of Jerusalem. Their work was specifically to look after and care for the widows and orphans of the community. By their being in the world, they would have seen not only what the widows and orphans needed, but also other issues and needs in the community. By bringing these needs and concerns back to the church, they were teaching the church how to be the hands of Jesus in the world. After all, we are _all_ called to that role, whether layperson, deacon, priest or bishop.

Next were the bishops, or ‘overseers’, who took over from the Apostles and moved the church forward. Ignatius of Antioch said, “Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Church.”

Priests were the last of the three orders. They came into being as the church grew larger and the bishop couldn’t be in all of them at the same time.

We hold ordination to be indelible, that it is permanent and unchangeable. Because we confer orders sequentially, all ordained persons are deacons. That doesn’t go away, and neither does the work that goes along with it. Sometimes we need to be reminded of it. Sometimes we need to get our hands dirty again and keep connected with the real world.

-- Thomas
**Clement of Alexandria**

We will commemorate Clement of Alexandria at our Said Mass on Wednesday, 5 December at 10:00AM. Clement was a priest and philosopher living in Alexandria, Egypt from about 150 to 210. He founded the Christian Catechetical School and was a teacher of Origen. His life coincided with the age of Gnosticism, a movement that claimed special knowledge of salvation. Clement was influenced by it, but did not succumb to its lures. His most famous writing was “What Rich Man Will Be Saved?”

**Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr**

Stephen one of the first deacons of the 1st 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 Wednesday, 26 December with a Said Mass at 10:00AM

**Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist**

We will commemorate, Saint John, the patron of our parish, at a Said Mass on Thursday, 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 Friday, 28 December at a Said Mass at 12:10PM. 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 4th century, has honored these innocents as martyrs.

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**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS**

Look for Christmas poinsettia signup cards in the Narthex and the Great Hall beginning Sunday, December 9. Deadline to place your order is Wednesday, December 19.

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**FLOWER CHART SIGN-UP**

It’s time to sign up for flowers for 2013! Please use the cards on the bulletin board to begin signing up to supply altar flowers for Sundays in 2013. As Sundays are covered we will update a flower chart and post it for all to see. Altar flowers cost $50 per Sunday.
The regular meeting of the Vestry was convened at 11:45AM on 11 November.

Cindy Gass led the review of the budget. The Vestry voted to fund our deficit from Undesignated Gifts and Memorials, beginning with the Thomas Mabus account.

There was a discussion of the poor attendance for Children’s Sunday School.

Butch Yeager announced that Kathe Gieseler is the chair of the Outreach Committee. Outreach has sent monies to Episcopal Relief & Development for Hurricane Sandy efforts. The Giving Tree has returned to the Great Hall to collect socks for McKemie Place.

Janet Buckley announce that we will not have 4th Sunday Potlucks in November and December. She announced the Parish Christmas Party for Sunday, 30 December.

The Vestry voted to call a Meeting of the Parish for Sunday, 16 December 2012 for the purpose of electing Vestry and Convention Delegates.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 12:20PM.

ANGEL TREE

The St. John’s “Angel Tree” is up.

This year’s tree has tags with specific gifts that will be going to elder shut-ins identified by our sisters at Catholic Charities. These are low income ladies and gentlemen who do not have a network of family or friends to provide them with the “extras” that make the holidays special.

Each tag has the name of an individual with a specific request.

We are asking that you take a tag (or two or three) from the tree, purchase the specific items requested, and return by Sunday, December 16th, wrapped or in a gift bag with a gift tag on it. Please be sure to write the full name of the recipient on the package.

The social workers from Catholic Charities will deliver our gifts.

FOOD DRIVE AND VOLUNTEERING AT THE FOOD BANK

Buy too many canned goods for Thanksgiving?
Got carried away with the buy one get one free deal?
Do you really need five boxes of spaghetti?
Want to help the community?

The food barrels are up in the Great Hall: we want to fill them to overflowing by January 8th so we can take the donation to the Food Bank when we volunteer. We are hoping to break our last year’s Lenten drive donation record of 400 pounds of food.

So whether you donate one can, two cans, or a case of cans, it is all going to a good cause.

St John’s is scheduled to volunteer at the Food Bank on Saturday, January 8th (8:00 to Noon). Our volunteer work will involve sorting and categorizing food donations and/or other tasks the Food Bank staff needs done.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

-Janet Buckley
Parish Life

THE GREENING OF THE CHURCH
Sunday, December 23rd, 2012

We’ll spend some time after the service on the 23rd to “deck the halls” of the church so that our wonderful Christmas services will also be beautiful. We’ll need willing hands, creative talents and some magnolia leaves...cookies and cider after we are finished.

VENTURE CREW NEWS

The Crew had a wonderful weekend on their rock climbing trip to Cherokee Rock Village. In addition to participating in four different climbs on rock faces up to 70 feet high, the scouts went on a hike and got to do some rock scrambling. That's climbing up and over huge boulders without using any ropes or climbing gear. Our guide, Lauren Rose, manages the rock wall at the University of South Alabama and assists with USA's outdoor recreation program. She was a fantastic instructor and her passion for the sport really inspired the boys to continue with more rock climbing trips.

All of us want to thank the friends and family of Will Elam for making this trip possible. Without their support, this adventure would not have happened. Thanks again.

Daven Ervin, Sam Escobio and Anthony Hall also helped out at the November breakfast. They really enjoyed giving back to the parishioners who have always been so kind and generous with our Venture Crew. Since we had a few that couldn't participate because of illness and being out of town, the scouts are looking for something else to do to help out around the church. So keep them in mind if any project ideas come up in the future.

Congratulations to Anthony Hall for earning his Eagle rank. He joins Sam Escobio, Jennings Halliday and Josef Straughn in achieving this honor. Daven Ervin has earned his Venturing Outdoor Bronze award. Congratulations again to all the scouts.

-Scott Escobio

Saint John's children's Sunday School Class displaying their Thanksgiving baskets (from left): Addison Fairley, Ainsley Fairley, Vivian Gass, Curtis Gass. (Photo by Irene Yeager)
After serving as an Episcopal parish church for 100 years in the downtown area (now the Church Street Historic District— in sight of the Mobile Civic Center), Saint John’s Rector, the Reverend Edgar Pennington, said this in his report at the Annual Meeting in 1950:

“For a number of years prior to my arrival to this parish, there has been a growing realization that Saint John’s Church should be moved to a location more favorably situated in regard to the growth of the city. No longer is our Church in the midst of the majority of its membership; but far more of its members live closer to other Episcopal parishes and the temptation to transfer to the Church more conveniently located and to send one’s children to a nearby Sunday-school is a reality which cannot be ignored.

Our church has a long and illustrious history and naturally we dread the prospect of the future lessening of its membership and its capacity for service. And yet its present location portends an eventual loss of its capacity for service.”

The new Vestry of 1951 decided to move the parish of Saint John’s “out west” and purchased lots on Government Street between Breamwood and Weinacker Avenues for a new church building. There was a faction in the church that did not want to move its location, but it was pointed out that 230 families lived in the old Saint John’s area and 327 families lived in the new location, the “new property being more accessible to the majority of our members and more directly in the avenue of Mobile’s inevitable development.”

Unfortunately, after a brief illness, the Reverend Pennington died in December, 1951, and the Reverend James B. Roe came on board in November, 1952. Mr. Roe was originally from Maryland and had served as a Chaplain in the U.S. Army, retiring as a Major.

In 1953 John J. Carey and associate Edward Baumhauer were chosen architects for the new church, which would have a seating capacity of 300 with air conditioning, heating and parking space.

It was thought that many of the original furnishings from Downtown Saint John’s would be moved to the new church, but when plans were posted at the back of the church, many parishioners were unhappy that a new type of squared-off window would be used in the nave instead of moving the memorial windows from the original church. A petition was signed by 100 members asking the Vestry to reconsider, but the cost of moving and repairing the memorial windows would be too expensive.

The steeple of the new Saint John’s was to be in memory of the Reverend Gardiner C. Tucker and the renovation of the organ in memory of the Reverend Edgar Pennington. Mrs. Edith Christiansen was Parish Secretary and Ira Swingle was Organist/Choir Director.

-Joan-Marie Elam

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**Directory Update**

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

- Audrey Garner
  105 Homestead Village #5
  Fairhope, AL 36532

- Betty Plash
  5601 Girby Rd. #203
  Mobile, AL 36693

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**Memorial Donations**

Thank you to the following people who have made recent memorial donations:

- In Memory of Alice Walker
  Pam, Bill & Bryce Privett

- In Memory of Will Elam
  Joan-Marie Elam
Donors making end-of-year gifts to Episcopal Relief & Development will be able to double the impact of their contributions, thanks to a group of very generous supporters who have pledged $300,000 in matching funds toward the 2012 Matching Gift Challenge. Between November 1 and December 31, gifts of any size – online, via mail or by phone – will be matched dollar-for-dollar as long as matching funds are available.

Gifts to any fund, including through Episcopal Relief & Development’s Gifts for Life program, are eligible for matching. The matching amount will go to the Global Needs Fund, which helps sustain the organization’s life-giving programs in the areas of greatest need.

“The Matching Gift Challenge is a great opportunity for people to multiply the impact of their gifts,” said Judy Sawler, Episcopal Relief & Development's Manager of Direct Marketing, who oversees the campaign. “A gift of $25 will be worth $50; a gift of $250 will be worth $500. And each and every gift will help strengthen communities and transform lives worldwide. We hope our supporters will take advantage of this opportunity.”

Gift matching is automatically activated when a contribution is made to one of Episcopal Relief & Development's listed funds (http://www.er-d.org/donate-select.php). These funds support the organization's year-round efforts to alleviate hunger, promote health, create economic opportunities and respond to disasters like Hurricane Sandy. Donations to the Global Needs Fund will help ensure that Episcopal Relief & Development can respond to urgent needs and continue its vital programs.

“We are extremely grateful to all of our supporters for their commitment and generosity, and particularly to those donors who have made this year’s Matching Gift Challenge possible,” said Rob Radtke, President of Episcopal Relief & Development. “The funds raised during this campaign will do so much to sustain the work that we do on behalf of Episcopalians, in collaboration with our Anglican and ecumenical partners around the world.”

To have your gift matched, simply make a donation between now and December 31. Donate online http://www.er-d.org/donate-select.php, or call 1.855.312.HEAL (4325). Gifts can also be mailed to Episcopal Relief & Development, PO Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058.

**MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE 2012: DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!**

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**CHURCH BUILDS COMMUNITY THROUGH POST-SANDY RELIEF WORK**

At left: The Episcopal Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew in Brooklyn, New York, serves as a “holy warehouse” for Hurricane Sandy relief supplies. Each day, the church is filled with and then emptied of donations distributed to storm victims. More than 20,000 volunteers have helped with the effort, which has received hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of donations. Photo/Michael Sniffen

Above: Members of a wide variety of churches and other community groups helped prepare meals at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Morristown, New Jersey, for the 10 days it served as a post-Sandy warming, charging and feeding station. Photo/Sharon Sheridan
Contact Us

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Sexton

Vestry:
Ron Brown
Janet Buckley
James Christiansen
Bootsie Cieutat
Jan Dabney
Chris Gass
Cindy Gass
Nikki Shaw
Butch Yeager

Pat Pritchard 12/04  P. L. Pritchard 12/10
Craig Hall 12/05 Marie Brown 12/12
Jack Ruppe 12/08 Bailey James 12/14
Dana Escobio 12/09 Leah Betts 12/16
Ainsley Fairley 12/10 Mae Dunn 12/19
Max Grice 12/10 Jeff Dennis 12/21
Marie McPhail 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:
Cheryl Winters-Heard, Bud McLean, Bessie Southall,
Gordon Moulton, Joyce Lee, Mary Jones, Lynn Seymour,
Bootsie Cieutat, Matt Mattoon, Ashley Garris

For our Homebound:
Ray Campbell, Mae Dunn, Corinne Faust, Lois Hamby,
Gwen Johnson, Nell Kirk, Violet Kosko, Margie Mattoon,
Angela McGuire, Jane 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, Joshua Wetzel

For our Friends and Family:
Danny Melton, Joan Dymeck, Emily Steiner, Larry Kent,
Markie Prior, Warren Bishop, Tom Ford, Jim Cieutat,
Robby Shelton, John & Pat Cranton, Dot & Herbert Treherm,
Gabe Pippin, Steve & Muriel Donald, William & Barbara Dorsey,
Steven Garner, Andrea Murray, Anna Marie Brown,
Betty & Gayle Chenoweth, Mark Stiber, Maddie West,
James Henry LeBatard [deacon]
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; 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

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