FROM THE RECTORS:

Dear Ones,

My dear friend, Fr. Norman Bray, recently posted the following on Facebook:

I will probably be flayed for this but I am really struggling with this. I understand the anguish over the deaths in Connecticut, I feel that pain also. What bothers me is that on December 4 a typhoon hit the Philippines and the death toll now stands above 1,000 persons. Where is the pain and anguish for those families who have lost their dear ones? Did we talk about that and I missed it? I hope so. I would be even more confused if we only felt the pain of people like us.

He didn’t get flayed; actually, quite the opposite happened. Comments from friends included:

“You are right to bring attention to the fact that our empathies are frequently local, and need to be broadened until we start to see ourselves in solidarity with the entire human family, which, I would argue, is one of the primary tasks of Christian faith.”

“I think the reason that so many are emotionally involved in the CT tragedy is the amount of media play it has received, while the Philippines incident only got passing coverage.”

“Since so many people in the country today get their valuation on the importance of a subject from the main stream media; what the major news networks and the New York Times cover tends to be viewed as important and anything else not so much. The question must then be asked, why is Sandy Hook a big media story and the Philippines storm deaths just a scroll across the bottom of the screen?”

It seems to me that two factors, proximity and sensational value, drive our media’s choices about what stories are covered. We still should know. We should still be heartbroken by events from around the world.

This kind of parallels a conversation I had with a high school friend:

“I don’t know the answer to this question, and it is hard for me to understand how God could have been in Newtown.”

What I said was that God was there with each and every one of the victims, and also the shooter. I quoted Elie Wiesel, responding to a fellow inmate’s question at an execution in a prison camp, who said, “Where is God? Here He is--He is hanging here on this gallows.”

It is God’s presence at times like these that helps us to know how much we are loved. What happened in Newtown was not a part of God’s economy. It was not OK and never will be for the families who have been hurt by this. This was the action of a troubled person. At the end, God’s grace is big enough to love even him.

When we ask the questions like, “Where was God?” or “God, how could you let this happen?”, we put God on trial. What if God to ask us the same questions? How did we let this happen? Where were we when this happened?

I’m afraid my answers wouldn’t be adequate. We can’t blame anyone or anything without it turning back on us. I think that means we each bear some of the responsibility for what happened in Newtown.

God, grant us grace to see what we should do and the will to do it.

-- 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 Tuesday, 1 January 2010 at 10:00AM.

The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

10:00AM on Sunday, 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.

Julia Chester Emery

10:00AM on Wednesday, 9 January
Julia Chester Emery served for forty years as Secretary of the Woman’s Auxiliary of the Board of Missions. During that time, she tirelessly helped the church to recognize and inhabit its call to proclaim the gospel throughout the world. Her work emphasized education programs, development of leadership and commitment to mission. Emery’s crowning achievement was the creation of the United Thank Offering.

Baptism of Our Lord

10:00AM on Sunday, 13 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

12:10PM on Thursday, 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.

Phillips Brooks

10:00AM on Wednesday, 23 January
Phillips Brooks began his ministry in Philadelphia and after 10 years, returned to his native Boston to be rector of Trinity Church. Brooks was an eloquent preacher and possessed a charismatic personality that drew people to him. Brooks ministered with tenderness, understanding, and warm friendliness. He inspired men to enter the ministry, and taught many of them the art of preaching. He was conservative and orthodox in his theology; but his generosity of heart led him to be regarded as the leader of the liberal circles of the Church. He was elected Bishop of Massachusetts in 1891.

The Conversion of Saint Paul

12:10PM on Thursday, 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.

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 called to order on Sunday, 9 December 2012 at 11:35AM in the Parlor. The minutes of the November meeting were approved as distributed.

Cindy Gass reviewed the financial reports. At her suggestion, the Vestry voted to move $5,000 from the Thee Store account to our Operating account.

Reporting for Outreach, Butch Yeager reminded the Vestry that the Angel Tree contributions are due on 16 December and benefit Catholic Social Services. He also noted that Outreach will not expend all of its budget for 2012.

Janet Buckley reported that a Cookie Exchange will be held prior to the Greening of the Church on Sunday, 23 December.

James Christiansen reported that a work day has been scheduled for 15 December to do some outside clean-up and remove the ceilings in the Chapel and Baptistry.

Fr. Heard reported that the Commitment Campaign Letter will go out this week. He also reminded the Vestry that a meeting of the parish is to be held on 16 December to elect delegates to Diocesan Convention and new members for the Vestry.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20PM.

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**ELECTION**

On Sunday, 16 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. David Jones
- Mr. Wilmer Mayson
- Ms. Connie McLean

**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

Congratulations to all.

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**Prayer List**

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:
- Irene Barrow, Wendell Jeffcoat, Danny Melton,
- Joan Dymeck, Emily Steiner, Larry Kent,
- Markie Prior, Warren Bishop, Tom Ford,
- Jim Cieutat, Robby Shelton, John & Pat Cranton,
- Dot & Herbert Trehern, 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]

The Mother: Nancy Lanza

The Children: Charlotte Bacon, Daniel Barden,
- Olivia Engel, Josephine Gay, Ana M. Marquez-Greene, Dylan Hockley, Madeleine F. Hsu,
- Catherine V. Hubbard, Chase Kowalski,
- Jesse Lewis, James Mattioli, Grace McDonnell,
- Emilie Parker, Jack Pinto, Noah Pozner,
- Caroline Previdi, Jessica Rekos, Avielle Richman,
- Benjamin Wheeler, Allison N. Wyatt

The Teachers: Rachel Davino,
- Dawn Hochsprung, Anne Marie Murphy,
- Lauren Rousseau, Mary Sherlach, Victoria Soto

The Shooter: Adam Lanza
There was a huge response to this year’s Angel Tree project—gifts for low-income, elderly shut-ins—as you can see from this photo of the back of Janet Buckley’s car. Janet delivered over 30 gifts to Catholic Charities in time for a Christmas distribution. Thanks to all who participated!

**FOOD BANK VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

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.

Also, we are still collecting food in the food barrels in the Great Hall. Our goal: to fill them to overflowing by January 8th so we can take the donation to the Food Bank when we volunteer. Please contribute what you can; it is all going to a good cause.

**LEARNING ABOUT ISLAM**

On Sunday, 20 January 2013, Kamal Saleem will be with us for Adult Sunday School to give us an introduction to Islam. Mr. Saleem is the Imam of the Mobile Masjid of Al-Islam. They are of the Sunni sect of Islam.

Please plan on joining in this conversation at 9:00AM on Sunday, 20 January.
How many times have you sat or knelt or stood in your pew at Saint John’s and stared at the beautiful stained-glass window over the main altar? If you bring this newsletter with you the next time you come, the window will mean a great deal more to you.

A little background first: When “old” Saint John’s downtown was enlarged in 1860 (only seven years after it was built) a new chancel window was installed and then re-installed in “new” Saint John’s in 1956.

In the book *Saint John’s Church, Mobile*, written by Lucy Green Nelson in 1963, she describes the window this way: “A superb chancel window of stained glass… triple and lancet shaped…16 feet high by 8 feet in width…and cost $500.”

In a daytime service when the light shines through it, it is indeed spectacular!

Here are some of its symbols: At the very top is the Hebrew word for Jehovah/Father, to the left is a pelican feeding its own blood to its young, representing Jesus, and to the right is the descending dove portraying the Holy Spirit. All together – the Trinity, the foundation of our Episcopal faith.

The three arches containing these symbols also remind us of the Trinity. The arches themselves are symbolic of God’s love for us.

Coming down the gothic-shaped panels, we see the “alpha” symbol on one side and the “omega” on the other, representing Christ as the beginning and end of all things. In between these is a crown, portraying Jesus as King of Kings.

Continuing down the left side are crossed keys, an emblem of the priestly authority of the Church, and across from it is pictured a Mitre, traditional headpiece worn by Bishops, the ecclesiastic heads of our church. (The mitre traditionally represents the tongues of fire which lighted on the heads of the Apostles on Pentecost.)

In between these two symbols is the Latin cross, the form on which Our Lord was crucified.

Further down on the left side is a Chalice and on the right is a Paten. These are used in administering the bread and wine, the outward and visible signs of the Lord’s Supper which we receive at the altar rail in the Eucharist.

In between the Chalice and the Paten is the sacred monogram of the Cross entwined with the letters IHS, the first three letters of the Greek word meaning Jesus. A common interpretation is “Jesus, Savior of Men”. The cross atop this symbol signifies salvation.

Coming down in the center is a Baptismal font whereby we are received into Christ’s holy Church. Below the font are the words “God is love.”

On the left is a figure of John the Baptist who announced Jesus as the Messiah and Lamb of God, and on the right is Saint John the Divine, the beloved Disciple and writer of parts of the New Testament. Question: Which of these two figures is our church named for? None of the historical documents say. Who do you think, and why?

Another Question: The windows on each side of our beautiful altar window are Jesus on the left and ______ on the right. Who do you think it is? Should we vote?

-Joan-Marie Elam
St. John’s own Jeff Yeager has been named one of Mobile’s “40 Under Forty” - the Bay area’s brightest movers and shakers. According to the article in Mobile Bay Magazine, “These young professionals are the new faces of leadership.” Congratulations, Jeff!

PHOTOS NEEDED FOR NEWSLETTER!

Haven’t you enjoyed having so many pictures in the St. John’s newsletters? If you carry a camera to church events, please send photos to llowe@stjohnsmobile.org.

Jeff
Yeager, 29
Chief Software Architect,
ThyssenKrupp Steel

ALMA MATER Hawaii Pacific University
HOMETOWN Mobile
SPOUSE Jennifer Yeager
CHILDREN Makayla, 8, and Hannah, 3
BIGGEST FEAR Not experiencing enough of this world
GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT I’ve done a lot of good things, but I’d like to think my great achievement is still coming.
WHAT HAVE YOU HELPED THE MILITARY WITH YOUR TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE? I redesigned the support equipment management software, saving about $1 million for the first base that implemented the change. I received two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals and the Naval Aviation Enterprise Excellence Award in the process.
WHAT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS DO YOU SEE IN YOUR FIELD OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS? You’ll see almost every facet of business becoming increasingly dependent on software that is custom-developed to meet individual business needs.
Contact Us

Staff:
The Reverend Thomas Heard, rector
rector@stjohnsmobile.org
The Reverend Jayne Carson, deacon
deacon@stjohnsmobile.org
Louis Daniel
Organist & Choir Director
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Sexton

Vestry:
Bootsie Cieutat
Jan Dabney
Chris Gass
Cindy Gass
David Jones
Wilmer Mayson
Connie McLean
Nikki Shaw
Butch Yeager

Elsewhere in the Diocese

Marriage Enrichment Retreat at Camp Beckwith, January 18-20, 2013. This retreat assists couples in celebrating and nurturing their marriage. Sessions will include: celebrating what's right, listening as an act of love, exploring patterns of communication, handling conflict constructively, striking a balance between individuality and togetherness, honoring and supporting your spouse's spiritual journey! Retreat facilitators are Jan and The Rev. Marshall Craver of St. Paul's Mobile and Dr. Jackie Halstead of Nashville, TN. This retreat is limited to twelve couples, so sign up early! A brochure with registration form is on the bulletin board. Call Fr. Marshall Craver (251-463-6650) if you have any questions.

Memorial Donations

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

In Memory of Alice Walker
   Emily & Eugene Johnston

In Memory of Pat Thomas
   Karen & Michael Keel

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  Grayson Dennis  01/25
Curtis Gass  01/16  Scott Escobio  01/26
Nicholas Tarantole  01/17  Donna Waites  01/26
Jeffery Yeager  01/17  Doris Cunningham  01/28
Irene Yeager  01/19  Bill Duke  01/31

Craig & Shirley Hall  01/31
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

Thee Store Episcopal Books
Monday
   Wednesday
   Thursday
9 a.m.-1 p.m.
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.