



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. XXIII, Issue 2

February 2013

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

This year, we have one of the shortest Epiphany seasons. This means, of course, that the Season after Pentecost will be one of the longest. The rest of our calendar follows a nearly fixed form: 40 days for Lent, 50 days for Easter, and four weeks for Advent. It is this ebb and flow of the seasons that gives a rhythm to our ecclesial life that spills over into the secular world.

Christmas and Easter are the two obvious seasons that cross over. I'm sure that you've noticed Christmas decorations going up shortly after Hallowe'en. Those clever Cadbury Bunny ads start up about the time Lent starts.

Of course, we in Mobile experience the "*Mardi Gras*" season. This year, it seems like it started right after New Year's, but that may just be my sensitivity to it.

It isn't a celebration that is unique. There are corresponding festivals in many different cultures. In parts of Germany it's called "Fasching" or "Fastnacht". Brazil has "Carnival" and it's similarly known in other parts of Europe. All of them share a similar Christian root – preparation for the fasting that will follow. It is a sort of "getting it out of the system" excuse for a celebration.

The date for Christmas corresponds to the Roman Empire *Sol Invictus* celebration occurring near the winter solstice. It also matches up with ancient rites of the Celts and Scandinavian peoples as well. *Mardi Gras* has pagan origins, too. These same peoples celebrated a time at the end of winter where all the leftovers of their winter provisions were cleaned out, to make room for fresh.

In Christian practice, *Mardi Gras*, was the last day to purge pantries of fat and sweet items. Again, this was about preparing for the fasts of the succeeding season of Lent.

During the season of Epiphany, we have the great gift to walk with Jesus as he begins his ministry, to experience him as "God with Us", and to be his disciples. In these waning days of Epiphany (OK, *Mardi Gras*, too), we begin to reorient ourselves toward the Cross, the Empty Tomb, and Resurrection. In Lent we simplify our lives, jettisoning non-essential things, taking on a deeper sacramental life.

The Catechism tells us that sacraments are "outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace." It was through the sacrament of Holy Baptism that we each became members of the Body of Christ and in that moment, the Holy Spirit breathed new life into us and we were claimed by God for ever.

On Ash Wednesday (13 February), we will be invited to "a Holy Lent", to share in a season of penitence and fasting. Fasting is an ancient practice of self-denial, of postponing, of waiting. If you are able, observing Fridays as a fast day may afford an opportunity to deepen your faith and understanding. In fasting, the hunger we feel serves as a reminder, like a pebble in a shoe, constantly keeping our attention on the reason for the fast. We are penitent, sorrowful for our inability to live into the vision of life that God holds for us, seeking forgiveness and the strength to change how we live. It is preparation for the continuation of our journey with Jesus, a journey that takes us to the cross. He invites us to walk with him, to learn from him, to be loved by him, and to be reborn through him so that we can bring his message of love to the whole world.

I wish for you a holy and transforming Lent. It is preparation for the work we are called to do.

-- Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FEBRUARY LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple

We will celebrate the feast of the Presentation on Saturday, 2 February at a 12:10PM Mass.

“Presentation” is a new name for what’s previously been known as “The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary” and “Candlemas.” In the Eastern tradition, this feast is called “the meeting of Christ with Simeon.” In Jewish tradition, first born sons were to be dedicated to God in remembrance of the sparing of the first born of Israel and the exodus from Egypt. In Christian tradition, this marks the recognition by Simeon and Anna that the Messiah, long promised by God, has appeared.

The Martyrs of Japan

Gaining a foothold in Japan for Christianity was a costly enterprise. Francis Xavier and his Jesuit cohorts introduced it in the sixteenth century, baptizing close to 300,000 by the 1597. That year, however, was the beginning of 250 years of persecution. On 5 February 1597, six Franciscans and 20 converts were crucified at Nagasaki. In spite of this, Christianity survived. Today the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, established in 1859, is the Anglican-Episcopal church in Japan. We will commemorate The Martyrs of Japan at our Wednesday Said Mass on 6 February.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Season of Lent and is a fast day. It gets its name from the practice of the imposition of ashes, made from the palm branches from the previous year. We hold the ashes to be sacramental (not a Sacrament), which serve as reminders of our repentance or turning from old ways to the Lord. In ancient times, dusting with ashes was one way for a penitent to express sorrow and regret for sins and faults.

We will hold the Ash Wednesday liturgy twice on 13 February. The first will be a Said service at 10:00AM and the second a Sung service at 6:30PM. Throughout the day, the church will be open for prayer and imposition of ashes.

Saint Matthias

After Judas’ death, the disciples met and decided that they must replace him. They met, prayed and finally chose Matthias as the new twelfth disciple. We know nothing more of Matthias, where his mission field was, what he was like, or where he came from. We commemorate his life on Monday, 25 February at a Said Mass at 12:10PM.

George Herbert

Famous for his poetry and prose, George Herbert was described by Izaak Walton as “a model of the saintly parish priest.” Born in 1593, Herbert began his divinity studies in his early twenties. In 1626, he was ordained and served parishes in Fugglestone and Bemerton. Herbert died at the age of 40. We commemorate George Herbert at our Said Mass on Wednesday, 27 February at 10:00AM.



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

Mary Lou Varnes, Sandra Wilson, Cheryl Winters-Heard, Bud McLean, Bessie Southall, Gordon Moulton, Joyce Lee, Mary Jones, Lynn Seymour, Bootsie Cieutat, Matt Mattoon

For our Homebound:

Ray Campbell, Mae Dunn, Corinne Faust, Lois Hamby, Nell Kirk, Violet Kosko, Margie Mattoon, 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

For our Friends and Family:

Preston Stevens, Frank Morgret, Carol Hubbard, Irene Barrow, Wendell Jeffcoat, Danny Melton, Emily Steiner, Larry Kent, Markie Prior, Warren Bishop, Tom Ford, Jim Cieutat, Robby Shelton, John & Pat Cranton, Gabe Pippin, Steven Garner, Dot & Herbert Trehern, Steve & Muriel Donald, William & Barbara Dorsey, Andrea Murray, Anna Marie Brown, Betty Chenoweth, Mark Stiber, Maddie West, James Henry LeBatard [deacon]

In Memoriam

GWENDOLYN CRUIT JOHNSON

Gwen Johnson entered new life on 27 December after a long illness. Many remember her as a first grade teacher and for her involvement in Saint John's Sunday School. Gwen was one of the founders of Mobile Baykeeper and was well known for her environmental concerns. When she and Mike built their house on Bayou Road, she searched out wood from an old barn to use for the flooring. Beginning in about 1998, Gwen began to have difficulties remembering things and moving; the decline moved quickly for a while and then slowed. When I first met her some 5-1/2 years ago, she was unable to communicate. As we were having communion and saying the Lord's Prayer, she began to mumble along with us. I wish I'd had the opportunity to know her before her illness. Now her troubles are ended and she is whole again.

ANGELA A. MCGUIRE

Angela McGuire entered new life on January 3 after a brief illness. Angela was a lifelong member of Saint John's. She had a long career with Cooper/T. Smith Stevedoring, serving as Executive Secretary to David Cooper, Sr. Angela had great respect for her boss and was dearly loved by the Cooper family. Although she never married, Angela had a multi-decade "steady". Angela was sharp as a tack, though a bit forgetful. I always enjoyed being with her; her sense of humor was quick and highlighted her intelligence.

GEORGE "GALE" CHENOWETH

Gale Chenoweth died on January 15. Though not an active member of Saint John's, Gale's wife, Betty, was Alice Benton Walker's sister. Betty & Gale had three children, all baptized and confirmed at Saint John's. Gale owned "Gale's Garage" at the corner of Florida and Old Shell. Our Paula Ross used to work for him before joining the diocesan office in 1971. Gale was always regarded as a supremely honest man of the highest integrity.

-Thomas



Vestry

The January 2013 meeting of the Vestry & Wardens was called to order at 11:35 on Sunday, 13 January. The Agenda was approved. Wilmer Mayson was excused from the meeting; his daughter was in town.

The first item of business was the election of vestry officers for 2013. Fr. Heard appointed Butch Yeager as Senior Warden and the vestry confirmed the appointment. Elections for the other positions were held. The following are the officers for 2013

Senior Warden	Butch Yeager
Junior Warden	Chris Gass
Clerk	Nikki Shaw
Treasurer	Cindy Gass
Assistant Treasurers	James Christiansen, Eugene Johnston, Connie McLean

The minutes of the December meeting were approved as submitted.

Cindy Gass reviewed the preliminary December financial reports.

Fr. Heard reminded the vestry that a special Sunday School session "Introduction to Islam" will be led by the resident imam of Masjid Mobile al-Islam on 20 January.

Butch Yeager reported that the Sock It To Me campaign was completed and the socks delivered to McKemie Place.

Fr. Heard requested a date for the Annual Meeting; the vestry called the meeting for 24 February, in concert with the February 4th Sunday Potluck.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 12:15PM.

PLEDGE SUMMARY

As this newsletter goes to print, we have received commitments from 48 pledge units. Our total for 2013 stands at \$140,990. For 2012 we received 59 pledges totaling \$144,204

If you plan to pledge to the 2013 operating budget, please turn in a pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available in the church office.



Lent

LENTEN STUDY AND SIMPLE SUPPER

As part of our observance of the Lenten season Saint John's will once again be having a study series and simple meal on Wednesdays during Lent. The **meal will start at 6 PM** and be followed by discussion led by Fr. Heard. Don't worry, choir members, we'll be finished in time for rehearsal at 7.

The meals will have a meatless entrée and include salad, bread and dessert. There will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin for bringing meal items. We will need volunteers to bring/prepare parts of the suppers. The sign up is on the bulletin board.

Payment for the meals will be a little different this year: the **"cost"** for the meal will be **donations to our food barrels**—bring canned goods or other non-perishables to go into the food barrels and that will get you your meal.

In order to make sure we have enough food for the meals we will have "I'm coming..." sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

Lenten Suppers Schedule

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Wednesday, March 20, 2013



2013 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL FOCUSES ON HUNGER, HEALING

Each year Episcopal Relief & Development offers Lenten Mediations booklets which encourage readers to actively seek a closer relationship with God during the season of Lent.

"The season of Lent offers us an opportunity for reflection on our lives and how we relate to others, both near and far away," said Rob Radtke, the agency's President. "This year, we especially focus on hunger and the work of Episcopal Relief & Development's local partners to improve food supply and nutrition in their communities. When we experience physical hunger during a Lenten fast or acknowledge spiritual hunger in our lives this season, we open ourselves to

seeing hunger in all forms. By remembering Episcopal Relief & Development and the work it carries out on behalf of all Episcopalians, we can reach out in spirit and in action to alleviate hunger in the world around us."

These booklets will be available in the narthex at St. John's.



Parish Life

ST. JOHN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 30, 2012

Photos by Nikki Shaw



Cindy Gass and Irene Yeager



Karen Twilley and Vivian Gass



Makayla and Hannah Yeager



Joan-Marie Elam and Bootsie Cieutat



Leslie Lundberg with Bob & Paula Ross



Chris Gass with Vivian and Curtis



Mellissa Brown, Courtney Bryan, and Loraine Murray



WHERE DOES THAT FOOD BARREL FOOD GO?



Ever wonder why sometimes the food donation barrels in the Great Hall are full to overflowing and other weeks there's not much in them?

What life do those cans have after you put them in the barrels?

In the past few months there have been three different functions for our food donations. Sometimes, when the barrels are very, very full the donations get taken to the Bay Area Food Bank. The Food Bank distributes the food to Food Pantries and they, in turn, give the food to individuals in need.

In other months we have given the food donations directly to Catholic Social Services Food Pantry who pack it up and give it directly to individuals and families in need.

Lately, however, Saint John's has become a "mini-pantry."

If you spend any time at the church during the week you know that a surprisingly large number of community people knock on Saint John's door asking for assistance – sometimes they need money for living expenses, sometimes they need housing help and sometimes they need food. When food is the need Fr. Heard lets them choose from our food donations. Let's keep the food barrels full so that we can continue to help those who are in desperate need.

Mathew 25: 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.



How can you help?

Spring Cleaning? Put aside your "trash and treasures" for the ECW Rummage Sale.

Bring your trash and treasure items to the church. You can bring them anytime the church is open. A few reminders:

Please make sure items are clean.

If it is electric, make sure all the parts are included and it works.

No computer stuff this year (it didn't sell in the past).

RUMMAGE SALE APRIL 5 AND 6TH, 2013

We're taking clothes this year but they have to be in good condition (no stains or rips), washed and ironed (or dry cleaned), and on hangers.

Volunteer to spend a few hours helping to sort and price the items.

Tell your friends and neighbors about the sale (and all the other good things we do at St. John's) and invite them to come.

Volunteer to work at the sale, we need people to help keep the room organized and the tables looking neat; answer questions from our "customers" and to clean up afterwards. A sign up sheet will be on the bulletin board soon.



BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Geri Moulton	02/01	Lee Dorsey	02/15
Bob Sheffield	02/05	Thomas Heard	02/15
Jane Tate Moore	02/08	Debbie Ollhoft	02/15
Mary Sheffield	02/08	David Thompson	02/23



Jennifer & Samuel Tarantole
02/23



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

Gale Chenoweth

Beverly B. Hess
James Christiansen
Trip & Sandy Jones & Rhett Little
Roger & Susan McConnell
Mike & Fran Barbour

Nellie Doyle

Burkhard & Nell Dohm

Gwen Johnson

Bud & Connie McLean
Eugene & Emily Johnston

Angela McGuire

Alberta & Tina Cieutat
Eugene & Emily Johnston
James Christiansen
Joyce Lee

Contact Us

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Lella Lowe
Financial Secretary
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Jack Ruppe
Sexton

Vestry:

Bootsie Cieutat

Jan Dabney

Chris Gass, *junior warden*

Cindy Gass, *treasurer*

David Jones

Wilmer Mayson

Connie McLean

Nikki Shaw, *clerk*

Butch Yeager, *senior warden*



Saint John's Episcopal Church
1707 Government Street
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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 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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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.