FROM THE RECTORS:

Dear Ones,

The beginning of the season of Advent will be just around the corner when you receive this edition of our newsletter.

Advent is a time of anticipation and expectation - a time of waiting and hoping. At our parish, as many others, we mark the season of Advent with a blue superfrontal, paraments and vestments. But it wasn’t always so. I’m sure many of you remember using purple for Advent. I’m also sure that you remember it being a penitential season, much like Lent.

The use of blue during Advent comes from two sources: Mozarabic (Spanish) and Sarum rites. The Mozarabic rite has bled over into our liturgy in the tone that is used with Eucharistic Prayer D. We use this one on Christmas Eve, Easter Eve, and Easter Day.

“Sarum” is the old name for Salisbury, England. The Sarum Rite is from the 11th century and is attributed to Saint Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury. He was appointed to the See of Salisbury by William of Normandy in 1078. If you’ve guessed that we know him as “William the Conqueror” you get extra points. Notice how the name reflects on one’s perspective. It was in 1066, the Battle of Hastings, that brought William his victory over the English.

Sarum rite is uniquely English and is the basis for Cranmer’s Common Prayer of 1549. The rite is very complex with choreography of the altar party being the most memorable feature. If you venture to some other cities to Anglo-Catholic parishes, you can experience bits and pieces of Sarum rite. From a priest’s perspective, there are several things that are said privately or outside the hearing of the people. Our Collect for Purity comes from this rite and is actually a prayer said in the sacristy, before the altar party comes into the church proper. It was in 1066, the Battle of Hastings, that brought William his victory over the English.

The Sarum Blue actually evolved out of a practice in the church of using different violet hues for Advent and Lent. Advent used a blue-violet and Lent used a red-violet. The red-violet is said to have been in anticipation of Good Friday. The blue-violet Advent was chosen to be different from the red-violet of Lent. I think the blue hue was probably a nod to the Marian festivals, remembering Mary’s role in Advent.

Mary, the theotokos or God-bearer, is the one through which God takes on human form, becomes mortal yet remains sinless. God is incarnated as Jesus to show us what God’s love for us is like. He comes among us to care for us, teach us, and love us.

It is the incarnation of God as Jesus that Advent anticipates and expects. Advent is a prelude to Christmas where we celebrate exactly that.

Anglo-Catholics are all about the Incarnation. That God would expose God’s self to humankind’s arbitrary, capricious, and violent ways is a miracle in and of itself. Through the mystery of the Incarnation, we share in God’s work in the world. We are called to be Jesus to each other and to be Jesus to the world around us. Through our modeling of Jesus, we share in God’s work in the world as partners, living into our calling to be stewards of God’s creation.

Jesus comes among us as Emmanuel, God with us, to be for us a tangible presence of God in the world. God who we can touch, with whom we can speak, and with whom we share life. It is through Advent that we prepare ourselves for Jesus’ coming and being among us.

We’ve been here before, haven’t we? Yet somehow, each year Jesus’ coming is a little different, a little deeper.

—Thomas
**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DECEMBER LITURGICAL CALENDAR**

**John of Damascus**
We will commemorate John of Damascus at our Said Mass on Wednesday, 4 December at 10:00AM. John lived in the early 700s, son of the tax collector for the Mohammedan Caliph of Damascus. He became a monastic in 715 and was ordered priest in 726. That year also saw an edict against Holy Images issued by the Byzantine Emperor. John wrote three treatises against the Iconoclasts, arguing that pictures were not idols and what they represented was worthy of respect. John is known to 21st century Anglicans as the author of Easter hymns: “Come, ye faithful, raise the strain,” and “The day of resurrection.”

**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 Thursday, 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 Friday, 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 Saturday, 28 December at a Said Mass at 5:00PM. 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 1. Deadline to place your order is Wednesday, December 18.

**NOMINATIONS FOR VESTRY & CONVENTION DELEGATES**
Please contact a member of your nominating committee—Joan-Marie Elam, Chris Gass, Eugene Johnston, Nikki Shaw, or Butch Yeager—or Fr. Thomas if you are interested (or know someone who is interested) in running for vestry or diocesan convention delegate.

Elections will be held at a parish meeting on Sunday, December 22 in the Nave after Mass.
Twelve Boxes of Groceries Go to Area Needy Families for Thanksgiving

Cans of veggies and fruits, bags of grits, rice and beans, cups of pudding, jello, and fruit were brought into the Great Hall and deposited into twelve boxes. The Outreach Committee bought a ham for each box. Twelve families, many headed by grandparents raising grandchildren, received groceries for the holidays: thank you St. John’s. (Photo top right: Bootsie Ciuetat, Connie McLean, Mary Jones, and Tina Ciuetat start filling the Thanksgiving boxes.)

Angel Tree

The St. John’s “Angel Tree” will be up on Advent Sunday. The gifts will be going to residents of Azalea Gardens Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center Home (formerly Kindred Nursing Home). The tags have names and requests for specific items. The list of items was given to us by the Activity Director of the nursing home.

Our Christmas gifts are going to low income, senior, long term residents of Azalea Gardens who do not have a network of family or friends to provide them with presents 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 15th, wrapped or in a gift bag with a gift tag on it. Please be sure to write the name of the recipient on your package. We will be delivering the gifts on December 16th.

-Janet Buckley
St. John's ECW met on November 17 with Marie Brown, presiding and 12 members present. Wendy Cape was welcomed as a new member. Paula Ross gave the opening prayer and the 'thought for the day'.

The Minutes of the October meeting were approved and the members learned that they had a balance of $4,281.82 in their account as of the end of October.

The following business was conducted:

- Approved a contribution to the Endowment Fund in memory of Joseph Stroecker and Jim Ciutat.
- Discussed going out to lunch as a group or having a luncheon at the church in December. Further details will follow.
- Elected Connie McLean to serve as Treasurer.
- Irene Yeager purchased the supplies for Marian Boykin to make new bows for the Christmas wreaths.
- The ECW will be collecting small personal supplies for the residents of Murray House.
- The ECW will furnish the meat for the annual church Christmas party. A committee was formed to take care of the decorations, etc. for this dinner. The ECW will pay for any 'out of pocket' expenses for the decorations.
- Approved funding for poinsettias for shut-ins. Eucharistic Visitors will be asked to deliver them when serving home communion in December.
- Decided to have another “Cookie Swap” on December 15.
- Janet Buckley announced that St. John's will again have an Angel Tree and hoped that all would take a name and help.
- Janet spoke briefly regarding refreshments during our fellowship time after church and asked that we encourage all to sign up for a Sunday.
- Connie gave us a report on Bud, and all expressed their delight in having him in attendance.

Paula M. Ross, Secretary

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**COOKIE EXCHANGE**

Remember lots of yummy cookies laid out across two long tables? Remember the “if you brought you can take” instructions? It was the St. John's Cookie Exchange: we're going to do it again.

On Sunday, December 15th, after the service, we will have our Christmas Cookie Exchange. Bring two or three dozen cookies (or candy or slices of cake) and we'll all walk around the table filling up our plates. This is a chance to get a great plate of a variety of goodies without having to cook but once.

Remember: the more participants, the more variety!

-Janet Buckley

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**THE GREENING OF THE CHURCH**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2013**

We will spend some time after the service on the 22nd to “deck the halls” of the church so that our wonderful Christmas services will be beautiful. We will need willing hands, creative talents and some magnolia leaves...cookies and cider after we are finished.

-Janet Buckley
SAINT JOHN’S PARISH CHRISTMAS PARTY

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

When: Sunday, December 29th, 2013
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.

-Janet Buckley

BOOK NOOK EXPANDS

The Book Nook in the Great Hall has been re-worked and we’re very indebted to James Christiansen (the perennial Saint John’s “go to” guy) for re-figuring the shelves to make more room. Sorry, we gave up keeping it in alphabetical order, but we do have three categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Inspirational.

Please use and enjoy!

-Audrey Garner & Thelma Lomers

FLOWER CHART SIGN-UP

It’s time to sign up for flowers for 2014!

Please use the cards on the bulletin board to begin signing up to supply altar flowers for Sundays in 2014. As Sundays are covered we will update the flower chart and post it for all to see. Altar flowers cost $50 per Sunday.

Memorial Donations

Saint John’s wishes to extend a sincere thank you to those who made donations in memory of the following:

Shannon Brabner Newberry
Ben Schmerbauch
Jim Cieutat
Bud & Connie McLean
Joyce Lee
St. John’s ECW
Joe Stroecker
St. John’s ECW

Religious Freedom Walk
...Celebrating Diversity

Join us for a 1 mile walk and interfaith candle lighting.

With every step we celebrate the diversity of worship and belief in our community.

Sunday, December 1, 2013
Spring Hill College
2:30 p.m.

(Walk begins at St. Joseph’s Chapel; enter from Dauphin Street to park.)

Free—no charge
Episcopal Relief & Development announced Nov. 20 that it is a Grand Challenges Explorations grant winner, an initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant will allow Episcopal Relief & Development, in collaboration with its Ghanaian partner, the Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization (ADDRO), to pursue an innovative global health and development research project, titled “Testing a Financing Solution & Technical Assistance Package to increase Women Smallholder Farmers’ Labor Productivity through Ownership of Donkeys with Ploughs.”

“It is a tremendous honor for Episcopal Relief & Development to receive the Grand Challenges Explorations grant from the Gates Foundation,” said Rob Radtke, the agency’s president, in a press release from Episcopal Relief & Development.

“Innovations such as the donkey plough can increase farming efficiency, allowing women to increase their harvests and devote the time they save to other endeavors such as building skills and marketing produce. Empowering women economically helps bring all members of a community into fuller participation in the creation of a brighter future for their families.”

Radtke told ENS that, for ADDRO, the grant is a “huge feather in their cap.” Receiving the grant, Radtke said, “shows that we’re always trying to be innovative and creative in coming up with solutions to intractable problems.” The grant, Radtke noted, is “a real vote of confidence in faith-based organizations.”

Episcopal Relief & Development’s project will promote an innovative, labor-saving strategy for women smallholder farmers – the donkey plough, according to the release. Most women farmers in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to oxen for farming and are consigned to grueling and time-consuming labor using hand tools, according to the press release. Women’s access has been limited by cost, cultural taboos and the difficulty of managing oxen due to their large size. In the 1990s, a plough was developed for use by a single donkey, which would be more affordable and practical for women, and would save 18 or more days of labor per hectare of land versus using a hand hoe alone. The donkey plough has not been widely popularized to date, however, and cost is a major obstacle.

Episcopal Relief & Development and ADDRO will provide women smallholder farmers the opportunity to acquire the necessary equipment, as well as improved seeds and fertilizer, through affordable credit. The project will test two credit options through a revolving loan fund designed to be financially sustainable, and participants also will receive skills training in donkey care, farm business management and agricultural techniques. The loans will cover the cost of a donkey, a plough and a cart, enabling the owners to earn extra income and repay their loans more quickly by renting the donkey set to others for farming and transporting goods.

Grand Challenges Explorations funds individuals worldwide to explore ideas that can break the mold in solving persistent global health and development challenges, according to the press release. Grand Challenges Explorations is a $100 million initiative that was launched in 2008. More than over 850 people in more than 50 countries have received grants. The grant program is open to anyone from any discipline and from any organization. Initial grants of $100,000 are awarded two times a year. Successful projects have the opportunity to receive a follow-on grant of up to $1 million.
For healing grace and continued strength, we pray for our members:
Matt Mattoon, Bud McLean, Joyce Lee

For our Homebound:
Ray Campbell, Doris Cunningham, Mae Dunn, Corinne Faust, Lois Hamby, Nell Kirk, Violet Kosko, Margie Mattoon, Jane Moore, Mary Lou Varnes, Catherine Warren, 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:
Bobby Smith, Margo Guess, Evia Daniel, Dennis McCants, Angela White, Ashley Garris, Rick Sundic, Regina Fielder, Brandy Greer, Sandy & Ray Michel, Preston Stevens, Carol Hubbard, Danny Melton, Emily Steiner, Larry Kent, Warren Bishop, Robby Shelton, John & Pat Cranton, Dot Trehern, Gabe Pippin, William & Barbara Dorsey, Steven Garner, Andrea Murray, Anna Marie Brown, Betty Chenoweth, Mark Stiber, James Henry LeBatard [deacon]

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David Jones
Wilmer Mayson
Connie McLean
Nikki Shaw, clerk
Butch Yeager, senior warden

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 & Frances Barbour 12/24
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

**Thee Store Episcopal Books**
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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.