



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

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FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

“Growing older certainly isn’t for the faint of heart.” I don’t know to whom to attribute this, but as more and more time goes by, I am thoroughly convinced of its truth. It may surprise you to know that I’m not thinking of myself or anyone of you. Sure, we have our contingent of aches and pains, weakening eyes and bodies, and things that just don’t work like they used to. Unlike the subject of my thinking, we can express what we are sensing to our doctors, families, and friends.

Like each of us, our building is growing older. The church will be 59 in March, the parish house a couple of years younger. Over the years, just as we’ve all experienced in our own homes, there have been small roof leaks, hot water heaters that quit working, toilets that won’t shut off, and a host of others. We all know about those, and know we just have to take care of them and move forward.

This has been a tough year at Saint John’s and it seems like it’s been one problem after another. Let me go through the big items with you.

Our electric service was getting less and less reliable. Almost every time it rained, one or two phases of our three phase power would blow a fuse on Alabama Power’s pole. After getting their engineers involved, the finger pointing began. That wasn’t pretty. Our contractor believed the problem was in Alabama Power’s equipment; Alabama Power believed it was in ours. The arrangement of equipment on the pole was outdated by today’s standards. After all, it’s been there since 1956, and things do change. Long story short, one day after two fuses blew, neither one would hold when replaced. Alabama Power knew they had to replace their equipment and mobilized a team to do so. Less than eight hours after they started, we had a new pole, transformers, switches, and drop line to our building. Back in business.

The problem was in Alabama Power’s facilities, mostly suffering from “old and worn”, but because of our

connection point coexisting on their pole, they couldn’t work on it and neither could we. I think we are very lucky that there was no harm done to our facilities.

Last month, some enterprising folks decided to help themselves to copper air conditioner lines and a couple of outdoor faucets. We were lucky that the AC units could be repaired rather than replaced. We didn’t replace the faucets, because we don’t really need them these days. A high water bill and HVAC contractor’s repair bill later, all has been restored to normal.

A couple of weeks later, our sexton, Jack Ruppe, heard water dripping and located the source in the air handler for the first floor education wing. An original component to the unit simply corroded enough that it began to leak. It was an expensive repair due to the amount of time it required. There’s more though, we have three more of them and they’re all in similar shape.

We also noticed water dripping in the church. The carpet by the front doors was soaked. James Christiansen went up to the air handler space above the narthex and found the source: the heat exchanger coils have developed a leak and the water covering the floor was just seeping through the concrete. The supply lines to the unit have been turned off and several folks are working on solutions for us. In the mean time we don’t have any heat in the church. If it gets too cold in there, we might just move the Great Hall.

All of this has gotten me to thinking about some important questions. What do we do if we can’t afford to fix these things? What if Saint John’s didn’t exist any more? Why is Saint John’s important? What are we willing to do to be sure Saint John’s is around for another 160 years?

Let’s plan to tackle these questions together. Look for announcements of times and places. It should teach us a lot about ourselves.

--Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DECEMBER LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Saint Andrew the Apostle

Normally, Saint Andrew, patron saint of Scotland, is commemorated on 30 November. But that's Sunday, Advent I. So, we will commemorate Saint Andrew at a Said Mass on Monday, December 1 at 12:10PM.

Saint Thomas the Apostle

Thomas, called "the twin" will be commemorated twice this year. Since Thomas' day falls on a Sunday, the mass commemorating him will be on Monday 22 December at 12:10PM.

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 10:30PM, the 11:00PM 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 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 looking on. We will commemorate Stephen on Friday, 26 December with a Said Mass at 12:10PM.

Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

We will commemorate Saint John, patron of our parish, at a Sung Mass on Saturday, 27 December at 5:30PM. While the historical data doesn't hold that the apostle and the writer of the fourth Gospel were the same person, this has been the Church's view since the second century.

The Holy Innocents

Once again, because the feast falls on Sunday, we will commemorate The Holy Innocents on Monday, 29 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.

NOMINATIONS FOR VESTRY & CONVENTION DELEGATES

Please contact a member of your nominating committee—Bootsie Cieutat, Jan Dabney, Cindy Gass, Marie Brown, Joan-Marie Elam, 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 7 in the Nave after Mass.



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 28th, 2014
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 is providing the meat but we need the "fixin's" and (of course) desserts.



ANGEL TREE

The St. John's "Angel Tree" is up. The gifts are going to residents of Azalea Gardens Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center Home (formerly Kindred Nursing Home).

The tags have names and ages of the nursing home residents and requests for specific items. The list of items was given to us by the Activity Director of the nursing home. Some were requested by the residents themselves; for those residents who have trouble communicating, the staff suggested needed items.

The 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 14th**, wrapped or in a gift bag with the angel tag on it. We will be delivering the gifts on December 16th.

This year, the Outreach Committee is providing a "shopping service." There will be a basket and some envelopes next to the tree, choose an "angel", put it in the envelope with the amount you wish to spend (check or cash), and a member of the Outreach Committee will do your shopping for you.



Parish Life



THE GREENING OF THE CHURCH Sunday, Dec. 21st

We'll spend some time after the service on the 21st to "deck the halls" of the church so that our wonderful Christmas services will also be beautifully decorated. We'll need willing hands, creative talents, and some magnolia leaves...cookies and cider after we are finished.

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 14th, 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 and only have to cook but once.

Remember: the more participants, the more variety!





Vestry

The Vestry met on 9 November in the parlor. Fr. Heard convened the meeting with prayer. The proposed agenda was adopted and the minutes of the previous meeting approved as distributed.

Committee reports

- Outreach is planning on a Giving Tree for Azalea Gardens Nursing Home residents again. The tree will be up on 23 November for parishioners to take tags. Delivery to the nursing home is to be 21 December.
- Parish Life reported that there will be no ECW meeting in December and that the Cookie Swap will take place on 14 December. The church will be decorated on 21 December. The parish Christmas Luncheon will be held on 28 December.
- Physical Plant reported that the ceilings in the baptistery and chapel are complete and bids for a suspended ceiling for the parlor are being solicited.

Rector's report

- Fr. Heard reported that the at-large members of the nominating committee are Joan-Marie Elam and Marie Brown.
- He reported receiving the annual stewardship letter from the diocese. For the first time in his experience, the diocese has actually asked for 10% of Plate & Pledge, which we have been

doing. He asked for and received the sense of the vestry for continuing this practice.

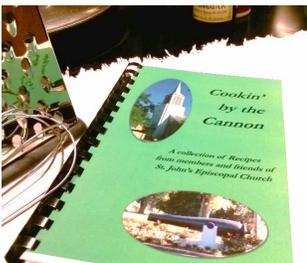
- Saint John's has been approached by a company to do a pictorial directory. This will be considered after the first of the year.
- Fr. Heard asked the vestry what time to have the Christmas Eve service. Overwhelmingly, the vestry said a midnight mass.
- Fr. Heard reported that he is beginning conversations with copier vendors as our lease ends 15 April 2015. Cindy Gass asked what the residual value of the current machine is and Fr. Heard agreed to find out.
- Fr. Heard reported that the copper theft we experienced on 23 October has been repaired. James Christiansen added that sheet metal covers for the exposed lines are being fabricated and should be installed soon.
- Fr. Heard informed the vestry of an emergency repair to the first floor education wing air handler. The auto bleed valve simply rotted off. There are two others that are not in good shape either. These problems are the result of the age of the units (53-56 years).

Old Business

- The sale of the 256 Weinacker lot was completed.
- The Building Use Committee will report its recommendations in January.

ST. JOHN'S ECW

ST. JOHN'S COOKBOOK AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE



Cookin' By the Cannon, the St. John's cookbook, is now available for purchase! For a mere \$15 you will get 212 pages of 357 delicious recipes and many blessings. Literally "many blessings": there are over 30 blessings for food prayers included in the cookbook.

This will make a great Christmas present!

The Cookbook Committee wishes to thank everyone who contributed recipes, blessings, titles and have taken an interest in this project. *Bon appétit!*

-ECW



EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT 2014 MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

In honor of Episcopal Relief & Development's 75th Anniversary Celebration, a group of generous donors has pledged \$750,000 in matching funds for the organization's 2014 Matching Gift Challenge.

"We are excited and extremely grateful for this 75th Anniversary match, which is our largest ever match amount," said Joy Shigaki, the organization's Senior Director of Advancement. "I am inspired by the energy and commitment of our donors around the 75th Anniversary Celebration, and hope that our supporters will take advantage of this special opportunity to see their contributions have doubled the impact toward healing a hurting world."

Any donation to the organization between October 30 and December 31 will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, up to the total match amount. This includes contributions through *Gifts for Life*, Episcopal Relief & Development's alternative giving catalog, and monthly donations scheduled during the Challenge period.

The matching amount for all donations will go to the 75th Anniversary Fund, which enables the organization to respond to needs where they are greatest. The overall fundraising goal of the 75-week-long celebration is to secure \$7.5 million to support programs that touch the lives of more than 3 million people in nearly 40 countries.

"This is a time for all Episcopalians to commemorate their shared legacy of compassionate care and striving for justice through the work of Episcopal Relief & Development," said Rob Radtke, the organization's

President. "It is with much gratitude that I invite everyone to join the celebration and consider how their gifts of time, talent and treasure can contribute toward the growth of relationships and initiatives that create thriving, connected communities."

Gift matching is automatically activated when a contribution is made – online, via mail or by phone – to one of the organization's listed funds. For an even bigger impact, Episcopal Relief & Development's 75th Anniversary Campaign toolkits provide fun and engaging resources to help congregations rally around a particular program area.

To have a gift matched, simply make a donation between now and December 31. <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/what-you-can-do/donate-now>, or call 1.855.312.HEAL (4325). Gifts can also be mailed to Episcopal Relief & Development, PO Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



Look for Christmas poinsettia signup cards in the Narthex and the Great Hall beginning Sunday, November 30. Deadline to place your order is Wednesday, December 17.

FLOWER CHART SIGN-UP

It's time to sign up for flowers for 2015! Please use the cards on the bulletin board to begin signing up to supply altar flowers for Sundays in 2015. As Sundays are covered we will update the flower chart and post it for all to see. Altar flowers cost \$50 per Sunday.



Elsewhere in the Diocese

ST. PAUL'S, DAPHNE HOSTS 6TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF NATIVITIES

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Daphne, AL, will host its Sixth Annual Festival of Nativities to usher in the Christmas season. This special exhibit has featured over 200 nativity displays in a variety of mediums, representing religions and traditions from countries all over the world.

"It is an honor for St. Paul's to again host this celebration for our community. We hope that people of all faiths and beliefs will visit and enjoy the craftsmanship and the collections that people have created," said Debbie Quinn, Festival of Nativities planning committee member.

The exhibit will be held in the church's Life Center, located at 28788 North Main Street in Daphne, AL. This special Christmas season tradition will open to the community as follows:

**Friday and Saturday, Dec. 12 & 13, 10 am - 4 pm;
Sunday, Dec. 14, 8:30 am - 3 pm**

To-date, contributing local artists include: Lee Holmes, Candace Pryor/Tom Jones Pottery, and Debbie Rawls Holobaugh. Also contributing a specially-created nativity scene will be participants of The Exceptional Foundation of the Gulf Coast. This is a rare opportunity to see such a vast array of international history and traditions on display locally. In addition to the nativity scenes, Mike Lyons, Lyons Share Gallery, will create ten stables made from recycled wood framing material. These will be available for sale at the event.

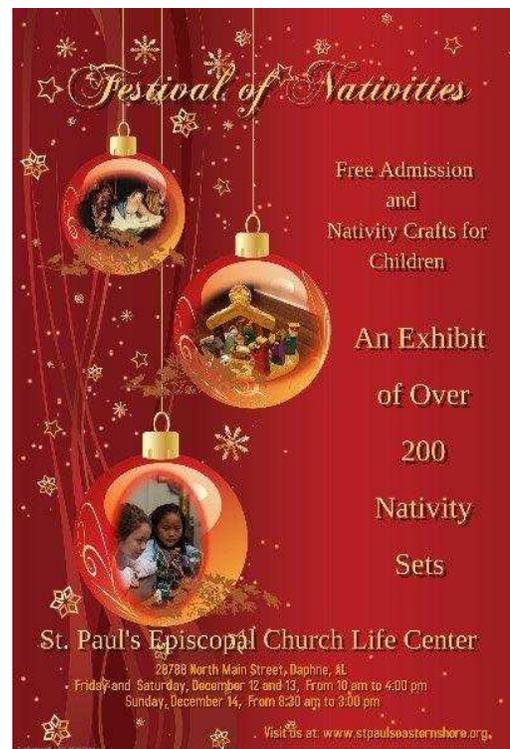
No admission will be charged and refreshments will be available. The exhibit is especially child-friendly, with a crèche play area, puzzles and books provided - all especially designed for students aged four years and up. For more information or to schedule group/school tours, call the church office at 251.626.2421, email debbiequinn@bellsouth.net, suecodysells@yahoo.com or visit www.stpaulseasternshore.com.

[About the Festival of Nativities](#)

The Festival of Nativities exhibit has featured a vast assortment of over 200 nativity scenes in past years. These handcrafted masterpieces have been designed and constructed with mediums such as clay, glass, hay, paper, porcelain, and wood, as well as other, more exotic materials, like abalone shells, alabaster, balsa wood, and bamboo. Additionally, this year, there will be works of Bay area artists available for purchase, with a wide range of perspectives on the story of the birth of Jesus, stemming from different time periods, international faiths and cultural origins.

About the History of Nativity Scenes

Defined as a "model or tableau representing the scene of Jesus Christ's birth," the custom of crèche showcasing began in the year 1223. St. Francis of Assisi is widely recognized as the catalyst for this tradition, as he is said to have been inspired by the sight of shepherds in the fields of the Italian village Greccio one moonlit night while traveling. He encouraged those in his community to reenact the Nativity, and the tradition spread to France, Germany, and from Europe to other continents.





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|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| 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 |



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|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Bob & Connie Anderson | 12/07 |
| Thomas Heard and Cheryl Winters-Heard | 12/11 |
| Mike & Fran Barbour | 12/24 |



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

Cookie Rich, Pat Fulford, Jan Joseph, Thelma Lomers, Paula Ross, Budd McLean, Joyce Lee, Jean Meador Brown, Donna Waites, Ben Schmerbauch, Matt Mattoon

For our Homebound:

Doris Cunningham, Mae Dunn, Corinne Faust, Marietta Ford, Nell Kirk, Violet Kosko, Margie Mattoon, Lorraine Murray, Bessie Southall, Mary Lou Varnes, Catherine Warren, Chick Wohler

For victims of war and their families, and members of our Armed Forces and their families:

Ellis Garner, Eric Mattoon

For our Friends and Family:

Julia Federle, Tricia Forbes, David Shippee, Marsha Gilmore, David Pearce, Louise Barnett, Connor Christ, Shirley Demaree, Guy Phelps, Frances Bridges, Erica Long, Bill Jones, Evia Daniel, Dennis McCants, Angela White, Sandy & Ray Michel, Preston Stevens, Carol Hubbard, Emily Steiner, Larry Kent, Warren Bishop, Robby Shelton, John & Pat Cranton, Dot Trehern, William & Barbara Dorsey, Andrea Murray, Anna Marie Brown, Mark Stiber, Mark Wilson [*priest*]

Contact Us

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Lella Lowe
 Financial Secretary
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Jack Ruppe
 Sexton

Vestry:

Connie Anderson

Janet Buckley

James Christiansen

Bootsie Cieutat

Jan Dabney, *clerk*

Cindy Gass, *senior warden*

David Jones

Connie McLean, *treasurer*



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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 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

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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.