FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

The 44th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast is less than four weeks away. We do have them every year, but this one has an additional activity: the election of the Fourth Bishop of the diocese.

After Bishop Duncan announced his intention to resign, the Standing Committee solicited names of folks to serve on the Bishop Search Committee and the Transition Committee. There were many volunteers from across the diocese - a good geographic cross-section. The Standing Committee named the two committees and the Search Committee got to work.

You might recall the survey that was taken. We had a couple laptops in the Great Hall for several weeks, as well as paper copies of the survey for the computer disinclined. The data from the survey was used to create a diocesan profile, a document that was circulated throughout the national church. Nominations for candidates were received by the committee and pared down to the final four candidates. Each candidate underwent a thorough background and reference check before being moved forward. The Search Committee’s last action was to present their proposed slate to the Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee announced the names of the candidates along with brief bios for each. A period of Nomination by Petition was opened. Since there have been no additions, I’d have to guess that there weren’t any petitions.

The Transition Committee prepared and distributed a booklet containing more detailed information about each candidate and information about opportunities for folks in the diocese to get to meet and interact with the candidates. There were five formal events: lunch at Saint Francis Gulf Breeze and Saint Mary’s Andalusia and “walkabouts” at Nativity Dothan, Saint John’s Monroeville, and Saint Paul’s Daphne.

What’s a walkabout? It’s got nothing to do with Australia. These are open gatherings where the candidates and spouses move between groups of folks where they answer questions. Since we had four candidates, the attendees were split into four groups, with the candidates spending about thirty minutes with each group.

The Saint John’s delegation attended the event at Saint Paul’s Daphne. I think there were about 400 people in attendance that evening. The questions posed to the candidates were asked by the Transition Committee. I don’t know how this was handled at the others locations. Except for a group gathering after the four sessions, there was no opportunity for individual attendees to ask questions of the candidates.

As President of the Murray House Board of Directors, I did have the opportunity to meet the candidates when they came to Murray House for dessert and a tour. Their time was very limited, so there was no opportunity for any in-depth conversations.

At Diocesan Convention, after we have concluded the usual work, we will reconvene for the single purpose of electing our fourth bishop. There is no electioneering, there are no campaign speeches. We will worship, pray, sing some hymns, vote, and do it until there is an election. We will be seated by orders, that is, clergy together and laity together. For a bishop to be elected, he or she must receive a majority of votes from each order. After a few ballots, someone may withdraw - or not. It is rare, but on occasion, a convention has been deadlocked and no election occurred.

This is an important moment for our diocese. I and your delegates ask for your support and your prayers that the Holy Spirit will lead us the candidate who will be the best for us and the larger church.

--Thomas
The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple

“Presentation” is a new name for what’s previously been known as “The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary” and “Candlemas.” In the Easter 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.

Cornelius the Centurion

We will commemorate Cornelius the Centurion at our Said Mass on Wednesday, 4 February at 10:00AM. Cornelius is thought to be the first Gentile to profess the Christian faith, along with his household. As commander of 100, he would have been a Roman citizen and a well-paid career military man. Tradition holds that Cornelius was the second bishop of Caesarea and he and his family were integral with the first Church there.

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 18 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 Tuesday, 24 February at a Said Mass at 12:10PM.

2015 Pledge Summary

As this newsletter goes to print, we have received financial commitments from 41 pledge units. Our total for 2015 stands at $111,664. For 2014 we received 48 pledges totaling $155,424.

Fourteen of the pledge cards submitted for 2015 were increases over 2014; sixteen families held their pledges constant from the prior year; eight families decreased their pledges; and three families that didn’t pledge in 2014 turned in a pledge card for the new year.

If you plan to pledge to the 2015 operating budget, please turn in a pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available in the church office.
**UPCOMING OUTREACH COMMITTEE PLANS**

The Outreach Committee met to discuss upcoming plans and projects.

We will continue our ongoing mission with McKemie Place: on the fourth Thursday of every month St. John’s provides the paper goods (plates, cups, utensils, etc.), the dessert, and the beverages for dinner and Redeemer provides the meal food and the servers. McKemie Place is the homeless shelter for single women and has a maximum of 65 residents every night.

We plan to expand our activities with Azalea Gardens; we provide Angel Tree Christmas gifts to; members of the Outreach Committee will be meeting with the facility administrator and the activity coordinator to discuss other projects.

The Outreach Committee will continue to provide books for the preschool children enrolled in the Head Start program (all 1463 of them!).

We will, again, coordinate with Mobile Community Action to provide food boxes for Thanksgiving and Easter time. Coming up soon: “Spring Break Survival Boxes” for low income families with young children. We’ll pack them with breakfast and lunch food that children like.

We are gathering information about a work day at the Food Bank. Let us know if you have any other ideas for projects, especially those that can involve the whole Parish. Thank you to all, you make Outreach happen!


**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. We will begin with Evening Prayer at 5:30PM in the church. 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 entree and include salad, bread and dessert. There will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board for bringing meal items. We will need volunteers to bring/prepare parts of the suppers.

We will be asking for a $5.00 donation per person per meal, or you can buy a “book” of five tickets for $20.00.

The funds collected will be donated to Penelope House. The mission of Penelope House is to provide safety, protection, and support to the victims of Domestic Violence and their children through the provision of shelter, advocacy, and individual and community education.

**Lenten Suppers Schedule**

Wednesday, February 25, 2015
Wednesday, March 4, 2015
Wednesday, March 11, 2015
Wednesday, March 18, 2015
Wednesday, March 25, 2015
## February 2015 at Saint John's

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<th><strong>Sunday</strong></th>
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<td>Epiphany 4</td>
<td>10 A MP</td>
<td>2 Presentation 830A MP</td>
<td>3 Anskar of Scandinavia 830A MP</td>
<td>4 <strong>Cornelius the Centurion</strong> 830A MP 10A HE+Unction 7P Choir</td>
<td>5 Martyrs of Japan 830A MP</td>
<td>6 830A MP</td>
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<td>Epiphany 5</td>
<td>9 A SS</td>
<td>9 830A MP</td>
<td>10 830A MP 630P Winning Solutions</td>
<td>11 830A MP 10A HE 7P Choir</td>
<td>12 830A MP</td>
<td>13 Absalom Jones 830A MP</td>
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<td>Last Epiphany</td>
<td>9 A SS</td>
<td>16 Thomas Bray (tr) 830A MP</td>
<td>17 Janani Luwum 830A MP 630P Winning Solutions</td>
<td>18 <strong>Ash Wednesday</strong> 830A MP 10A HE 630P HE 730P Choir</td>
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<td>Lent 1</td>
<td>9 A SS</td>
<td>23 Polycarp of Smyrna 830A MP</td>
<td>24 <strong>Saint Matthias</strong> 830A MP 1210P HE 630P Winning Solutions</td>
<td>25 830A MP 10A HE 5P EP 7P Choir</td>
<td>26 830A MP</td>
<td>27 George Herbert 830A MP</td>
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<td>2 February</td>
<td>HE II, EP-B</td>
<td>5 Epiphany</td>
<td>B Epiphany</td>
<td>2 Chronicles 4:3-6</td>
<td>Paul Brown</td>
<td>Connie Anderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 February</td>
<td>HE II, EP-B</td>
<td>Last Epiphany</td>
<td>5 Epiphany</td>
<td>2 Kings 2:1-12</td>
<td>Paul Brown</td>
<td>Connie Anderson</td>
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The first Sunday after Epiphany, also the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ was chosen by St. John’s, Mobile (AL) as the Sunday to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Episcopal Relief & Development. During the service prayers were offered for the continued success of the organization as well as past accomplishments.

During the coffee hour, the congregation was treated to a 75th Anniversary cake and brochures that chronicled the history of Episcopal Relief & Development. Originally named the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, it was set up to assist those persons displaced by WWII in Europe. The Fund, renamed in 2000 to Episcopal Relief & Development, now serves over three million people in approximately 40 countries.

A committee was established at St. John’s to develop ideas to commemorate Episcopal Relief & Development’s 75th Anniversary. Members had to be the organization’s age or older. The committee members are Joan Marie Elam, Joyce Lee, Thelma Lomers, Neil McPhail and ex-officio members Eugene Johnston (parish representative) and Fr. Thomas Heard (Rector).

**British Park Rededication**

On Tuesday, 10 February, British Park will be rededicated at 12:00PM. This ceremony coincides with the last battle against England during the War of 1812. This was the Battle of Mobile Bay, which actually happened after the treaty had been signed. News didn’t travel so fast in those days.

So, you’re asking yourself, “Why does that matter?” Well, it’s because British Park occupies some of the property of the original Saint John’s church and the gates to the park are from Saint John’s. Fr. Heard has been asked to offer the invocation at the ceremony, keeping the Saint John’s connection alive. Should be fun!

**Diocesan Convention**

Saint John’s has been asked if we would be willing to help Trinity - Mobile with convention. There are lots of jobs available, so if you’re interested, please let Fr. Heard know. We’ll also be using our van to transport folks from the adjunct parking at Murphy High School. We’re looking for volunteers to drive and help welcome our sisters and brothers from across the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast.
For healing grace and continued strength, we pray for our members:
Audrey Garner, Violet Kosko, Caitlyn Brown, Margie Mattoon,
Pat Fulford, Jan Joseph, Budd McLean, Joyce Lee, Donna Waites,
Ben Schmerbauch, Matt Mattoon.

For our Homebound:
Doris Cunningham, Mae Dunn, Corinne Faust, Marietta Ford,
Nell Kirk, Lorraine Murray, Bessie Southall, Mary Lou Varnes,
Catherine Warren, Chick Wohlert

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:
Wayne Bradley, Fred Lloyd, Rocky Rockwell, Mike Davis,
Jean Cochran, Julia Federle, David Shippee, Marsha Gilmore,
David Pearce, Connor Crist, 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, Mark Stiber, Anna Marie Brown,
Mary Joan [religious].
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.

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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.