



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 James Russell Kendrick, Bishop

Vol. XXVI, Issue 1

January 2016

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

Here we are at the beginning of a new year.

How quickly did last year pass! It seems like it was only a few weeks ago that it was Holy Week and then Easter. In 2016, Easter Day will be March 27th; the earliest it can be is March 22nd. Ash Wednesday will be February 10th. Its earliest possible date is 4 February.

We'll be moving Easter Day into April over the next 10 years or so. It won't be until 2035 that Easter Day is earlier than this year (March 25th).

I'm sure that you've notice that Easter moves around. The other 'moveable dates' in our calendar are arranged from the date of Easter. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, forty days before Easter (remember that Sundays don't count!), and Pentecost is fifty days after Easter.

If you were to look in your prayer book on pages 880 through 885, there's enough there to make anyone's eyes cross. Thankfully, someone has done lots of work and it's very easy to figure these dates out.

Would you be surprised to know that it hasn't always been this way? I thought not.

Until the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325CE, the date of Easter varied from place to place. It had become a full-blown ecclesiastical controversy starting in about 190CE. For example, in Jerusalem, Easter always coincided with Passover, just as it had for the Jesus event. It didn't matter what day of the week it was: it was always the 15th day of Nisan and lasts through the 20th. Other locales kept Easter in the same period as Passover, but celebrated Easter on Sunday only.

There is another complication in this (of course!), and that's that in 325CE, the Roman Empire was using the Julian calendar, named for Julius Caesar, who also is responsible for its creation. The Julian calendar is very

math friendly because dates are made up of the year with the number of the day within the year appended to it. For example, Ash Wednesday will be 2015041 as a Julian date. February 10th is the 41st day of the year 2015. Yes it had months, mostly as we know.

The Council at Nicaea decided that Easter should be celebrated on the same day throughout the Christian world. They decided it should be on Sunday, but no agreement on the date. Syriac Christians held on to Passover, the 15th day of Nisan as a marker and, for them, Easter was the following Sunday.

It didn't end there. By the time missionaries from Pope Gregory I (590-604) arrived in England, they discovered Christians who had been converted by Irish missionaries (think Patrick of Ireland, Columba, etc) and already had traditions for dating Easter. Their source came from the Mediterranean basin and limited Easter to the 14th through 20th day of the lunar month. That is close to matching Passover. As you can imagine, a controversy erupted.

It was at a Synod called together in Whitby in 664 to decide the issue once and for all. The Celtic Christians did not prevail. But we're not done yet! In the 1580s, another Pope Gregory revised the calendar, giving us the Gregorian Calendar. It is what we use today. The Eastern church still uses the Julian calendar, conforming to the Sunday after Passover formula.

In 1997, the World Council of Churches proposed a reform for the dating of Easter. It was never implemented. If it had, we would all celebrate Easter on the same day, everywhere in the world. Calculating its date wouldn't have been any easier, but at least we'd all have the same answer!

--Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

On 1 January 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.

The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

“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 at 10:00AM on Wednesday, 6 January.



Baptism of Our Lord



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 at 10:00AM on Sunday, 10 January.

Hilary of Poitiers

We celebrate the life of Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, on Wednesday, 13 January at 10:00AM. Sadly, Hilary isn’t the first woman bishop; in the mid-300s, it was only men. Hilary was a defender of the ecumenical councils at Nicaea and its Trinitarian formula. In 355, he refused to sign a condemnation of Athanasius, under pain of exile, and continued to defend the church against the Arian heresy.

The Confession of Saint Peter

We commemorate Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ at 12:10PM on Monday, 18 January. This feast also marks the beginning of the annual Week for Christian Unity.

Fabian of Rome

According to Eusebius, Fabian was a layperson. In 236, at an assembly to elect a pope to succeed Antherus, a dove flew over the crowd and landed on Fabian’s head. This was taken as a sign of his being chosen by the Holy Spirit, so the bishops elected him as pope. Fabian was one of the first Christians to be martyred in the persecutions of Decius in 239-40. The stone slab which covers his grave still bears the words: “Fabian Bishop Martyr”. We will celebrate Fabian on Wednesday, 20 January at 10:00AM.

The Conversion of Saint Paul

We mark Paul’s acceptance of Jesus as his Lord and Savior at 12:10PM on Monday, 25 January. 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.

John Chrysostom

John was Patriarch of Constantinople and is one of the great saints of the Eastern Church. His surname was earned: Chrysostom means “Golden Mouthed”; he was a gifted orator and teacher. He also had an acute sensitivity to the needs of people. He wrote a manual called “Six Books On The Priesthood” that still stands as a measure of who and what a priest should be. We will celebrate John Chrysostom at a said mass at 10:00AM on Wednesday, 27 January.



Vestry

The regular meeting of the Vestry was called to order at 11:45AM on 13 December 2015.

The minutes of the 8 November meeting were approved as written.

Connie McLean reported that we continue to operate at a deficit; this month the amount was \$5,102.

Reporting for Outreach, Janet Buckley reminded that the gifts for the Azalea Gardens Nursing Home residents will be picked up on 15 December.

Janet also reported that the Parish Christmas Luncheon would be 27 December. This is a project of Parish Life and the ECW. The ECW is providing the main course.

Fr. Heard reported that the repairs necessitated by the lightning strike have been completed. Dobson Roofing has been notified to perform the roof repairs over the Great Hall. Alabama Power has agreed to settle our claim relating to the service entrance for \$2,000.

Fr. Heard asked the vestry to consider maintaining our 10% of Plate and Pledge offerings to the diocese. This motion was passed unanimously.

FLOWER CHART SIGN-UP

It's time to sign up for flowers for 2016! Please use the cards on the bulletin board to sign up to supply altar flowers for Sundays in 2016. As Sundays are covered we will update the flower chart and post it for all to see. Altar flowers cost \$50 per Sunday.



In Memoriam

We've lost two longtime members this past month.

Faye Farmer Owen died on 10 December at the young age of 88. Faye and husband, Billy, were baptized at Saint John's in October 1967 and confirmed in December 1967. Faye was buried in the Ebenezer Cemetery in her hometown of Ramer, AL.

Madge Genevieve Baker (nee Harvey) Died on 7 December. She was 84. Her son, Mike, worshipped with us on 27 December and we had a brief chat. Mike was baptized at Saint John's in 1972. His mom was married to John Martin Kelly at the time. Madge was baptized at Grace Chapel in 1936 and confirmed at Saint John's in 1945. She was interred at Pine Crest Cemetery on 9 December.

ELECTION

On Sunday, 13 December, the parish met to elect new Vestry and Diocesan Convention Delegates. The following were elected to serve the parish:

To serve on the St. John's Vestry:
Mr. James Christiansen, Ms. Cindy Gass,
Ms. Nikki Shaw

To serve as Delegates to Convention:
Ms. Janet Buckley, Mr. James Christiansen,
Ms. Connie McLean

To serve as Alternate to Convention:
Mr. Eugene Johnston

Congratulations to all.



2015 OUTREACH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Outreach Committee has had a busy and fruitful year. As you know, Outreach's budget is determined by the Vestry to be a percentage of Plate and Pledge giving, and this year we had approximately \$8,000 dollars with which to work. This money goes toward a variety of Outreach activities, focused on local as well as global organizations.

Not surprisingly, Episcopal Relief and Development is a recipient that we all feel very good about. We donated \$500 toward earthquake relief efforts in the spring, and have also donated \$1000 to the general fund of ERD. The general fund means that the money is unrestricted and is used wherever the greatest need is. This donation was matched by an anonymous donor 1:1, effectively giving ERD \$2000.

We continue to support The Penelope House here in Mobile, and gave them \$500 towards their efforts to protect and support women in abusive relationships.

We also support McKemie Place and their work with homeless women, both through meals and supplies. Our partnership with Church of the Redeemer is ongoing, and we hope to continue our work with them and perhaps expand into additional hands-on activities. Saint John's will be providing BBQ ribs and chicken for a special Christmas dinner for the women.

Our Angel Tree once again provided Christmas gifts to 67 indigent residents of Azalea Gardens where, for most of these folks, the gifts we provide are the only gifts that they will receive. We thank each one of you who contributed to this effort by your thoughtful donations of new clothing and personal items wrapped so festively.

We continue to support the HeadStart program in Mobile with our purchase of 1000 books for these young children. For many of them, this is the only book that they can call their own. We will continue this in 2016 with a purchase of 1632 books in this calendar year. Your help in stickering and boxing up these books is a great time of fellowship, and is very much welcomed!

We have made donations to the Bay Area Food Bank of both time and food, and as always, a good time was had by all Saint John's volunteers who packed food boxes at our work day in November.

As we enter the new year, we will take some time to evaluate our Outreach efforts: Do we want more activities that we can all get involved with? If so, please give us your ideas. Are there other local or national recipients that we can support? Are there others of you who would like to get involved? Please come join us at our first meeting of 2016 on Sunday, January 3 after Mass in the EfM room. We will have white boards ready for brainstorming.

As the incoming 2016 chairperson, I want to thank Kathe Gieseler for her able leadership in the past year, and for the energy of the rest of the committee members: Janet Buckley, Mary Sheffield, Mary Gieseler, Lee Dorsey, James Christensen, Connie McLean. All persons are welcome to join us; after all, yours are the donations that keep us reaching out to others in the name of Jesus.

-Cheryl Winters-Heard



Lent Madness—Mark Your Calendar

During Lent this year we will again take on "Lent Madness", adding Sunday morning activities in addition to the Wednesday night suppers.

PARISH LIFE



Above: Connie McLean, James Christiansen and Mary Gieseler “working the line” at the Food Bank.



Right: Food Bank volunteers Mary Gieseler, James Christiansen, Connie McLean, Janey Buckley, Wendy Cape, Mary Sheffield. (Missing: Thomas Heard and Cheryl Winters-Heard)



Above: St. John’s Cookie Exchange.



Above and below: “Bring your crèche to church” display.



Photos by Janey Buckley.



ERD MICRO-FINANCE PROGRAMS

On Sunday January 24 in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we will pray for Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil. Brazil is the largest and most populated country in South America. One-third of Brazilians live below the poverty line and, according to a study conducted by Episcopal Relief & Development and the Anglican Diocese of Rio de Janeiro, one in three women have suffered from exposure to violence.

Episcopal Relief & Development is responding to issues of poverty and gender-based violence in Brazil through the Servicio Anglicano de Diacono e Desenvolvimento (SADD), the development arm of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil. SADD is tasked with building the capacity of diocesan representatives through technical support and training to manage, monitor and evaluate social development projects across the country.

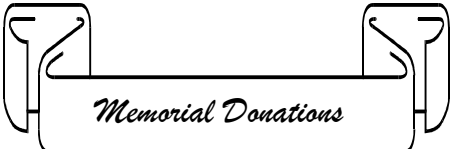
SADD supports nine dioceses and pursues a mission to transform lives and affirm values that promote social change. Bishop-elected volunteers help SADD work locally to train and empower diocesan contacts engaged

in projects to impact the social, emotional and spiritual transformation of marginalized people in Brazil. Episcopal Relief & Development has chosen SADD as a primary partner to help it achieve that vision: in a recent consultation with our staff, SADD decided to initiate a three-year (2015-2017) Integrated Provincial Strategic Plan that incorporates gender rights and gender-based violence prevention into its programs.

This is an excellent example of our micro-finance programs involving both women and men, which can be very effective in promoting gender awareness and empowering women. When women become breadwinners, they increase their role in household decision-making, which often enhances the whole family's well-being.

Please mail donations to support Micro-Finance Programs to:

Episcopal Relief & Development
P.O. Box 7058
Merrifield, VA 22116-7058



Memorial Donations

Saint John's wishes to extend a sincere thank you to Jean & Cliff Brown for a donation in memory of Glen Foreman, The Order of Polka Dots Past Queens and Emblems for a contribution in memory of Marjorie Mattoon, and Nell and Burkhard Dohm for a donation in memory of Nellie Doyle.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND RETREATS

35th Men's Conference and Retreat

Beckwith, March 4-5, 2016

"The Also Life: Life Beyond the Life We Know"

presented by the Rev. Barbara Crafton,
Priest, Author and Spiritual Director

Contact: Warren Jerrems @ Beckwith - (850)586-1030

Eight-day Centering Prayer Retreat

"Come by yourself to an out-of-the-way place and rest," Jesus said. In response to Jesus' directive, Contemplative Outreach of Pensacola will offer an eight-day retreat at Beckwith, March 12-19, the first of its kind in the area. The \$780.00 tuition includes all meals and seven nights lodging.

For more information, see the church bulletin board or call Carol Lewis at (850) 572-0967.



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	Mary Frances Chestang	01/25
Curtis Gass	01/16	Grayson Dennis	01/25
Nicholas Tarantole	01/17	Scott Escobio	01/26
Jeffery Yeager	01/17	Donna Waites	01/26
Irene Yeager	01/19	Bill Duke	01/31



Craig & Shirley Hall 01/31



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

Mac Pearce, Neil McPhail, Bob Anderson, Ashley Garris, Marian Boykin, Cookie Rich, Budd McLean, Joyce Lee, Donna Waites, Ben Schmerbauch.

For our Homebound:

Mae Dunn, Nell Kirk, Lorraine Murray, Alice Schablinski, 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:

Neal Tourné, Brandi Strickland, Sandy & Ray Michel, Brenda Bateman, Harley Grace Partsch, Connor Crist, Blake Bennet, Starley Anderson, Paul Nelson, Barbara Bassett, Krystal Hiatt, Midge Harden, Robert Cochran, Sr., Irene Barrow, Elias Bates, Donnie Chestang, Bill Jones, Mark Stiber.

Contact Us

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 Sexton

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Connie Anderson

Ron Brown

Janet Buckley

James Christiansen

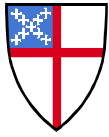
Cindy Gass

Eugene Johnston

Geri Moulton

Nikki Shaw

Butch Yeager



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Mobile, Alabama 36604

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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.

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to be the hands of Our Lord.