



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 2

February 2016

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

There is much going on in the Church. Yes, that's with a big "C".

The recent Primates' Meeting in Canterbury brought mixed results. The Primates were unanimous in continuing to work together for unity within the communion. This is a good thing. The Primates passed a resolution sanctioning The Episcopal Church for a period of three years.

If it seems to you that sanctions are a little contradictory with the desire to continue to work together, you'd get no argument from me.

I will say that I think The Episcopal Church has been set up as the scapegoat for the Anglican Communion. By that, I mean that The Episcopal Church is carrying the burden of all of the anxiety and conflict within the Anglican Communion. Are we totally to blame? Absolutely not. Do we have some complicity in all this? Sure, we've pushed the edges of the envelope on several occasions, but let's be clear: not all the events were innovations. For example, Florence Li Tim-Oi was ordained to the Anglican priesthood in 1944 and served until her death in 1992. V. Gene Robinson is not the first gay man to be consecrated bishop.

Scapegoating has been around for a very long time. It figures in ancient Jewish practice defined in Leviticus 16:8, where a goat was cast into the wilderness, symbolically carrying the sins of all of the people on Yom Kippur. There are also ancient Syrian records describing a similar practice from 2300 BCE.

In psychology, the scapegoat is also referred to as the "Identified Patient", or "IP". I've talked about this previously in a discussion of Family Systems theory.

In a dysfunctional family, the IP is the individual who appears to be presenting the problem or symptoms. This selection by the family is entirely unconscious and

the family's reaction to any improvement of symptoms results in further separation and blaming, while appearing sympathetic. At its very root, the projection of blame is really about avoiding responsibility for what's really going on. The IP is the signal that there is deep-seated inner conflict within the family.

Scapegoats are also found in organizations and corporations; they're families of a different kind – and can be just as dysfunctional. When something goes badly, there is a search for someone to blame for it. Usually it ends up being someone far down on the organization ladder.

The Anglican Communion is an organization that isn't any different than any other family, and it's just as dysfunctional. The old adage, "The presenting problem usually isn't the real problem at all" is likely applicable here. It will be very interesting to see what develops over the coming months. Enough on that.

There is a renewed consideration of fixing the date of Easter for all Christians. The proposal has been around for a while, so we'll have to wait and see what kind of traction it gets. As you recall from last month's column, it has been a contentious issue almost since the first Easter.

Recently, a group of Orthodox Rabbis have issued a statement affirming Christianity as legitimate. This is a real breakthrough in interfaith relations. I think of it as their response to *Nostra Aetate* from 1965.

I think we've all been pretty impressed with Pope Francis and his openness. Two things have happened very recently: First, some Lutherans were permitted to receive communion. Second, Francis has recently apologized for how the Roman Catholic Church has treated other Christians.

I can't wait to see what happens next!

-- Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FEBRUARY LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ at the Temple

We celebrate this day on the 2nd of February. Also called “The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin” and “Candlemas”, this celebration reminds us that each Jewish first-born was to be dedicated to God, in remembrance of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. This event was the catalyst for Simeon and Anna to recognize Jesus’ true identity.

Anskar, Bishop of Scandanavia

Born in Corbie, France in 801, he answered the call of the king of Denmark for Christian missionaries in 826 and established a school and a mission. He was called to Sweden in 829 to do similar work. Anskar was consecrated Archbishop of Hamburg in 831 and continued his work among the Scandinavians. It took over 100 years for his work to bear fruit. We will commemorate Anskar’s life and work at our Wednesday Said Mass on 3 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 10 February. The first

will be a Said service at 10:00AM and the second a Sung service at 6:00PM.

Throughout the day, the church will be open for prayer.



Janani Luwum

Janani Luwum was ordained priest in 1956 in Canterbury. He returned to Uganda to care for 24 congregations as well as teaching at a theological college. He became Bishop of Northern Uganda in 1969 and was elected Archbishop of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Boga-Zaire in 1974. Luwum and the other Anglican bishops and Roman Catholic cardinal archbishop came into direct conflict with Idi Amin, the Ugandan military dictator because of their condemnation of the regime’s brutality. In February 1977, Luwum and his colleagues were summoned to the palace of Amin. The others were sent home and Luwum was never seen alive again. His bullet-riddled body was reportedly found, his death attributed to an automobile accident while resisting arrest. We will commemorate the life and service of Janani Luwum at our said mass on Wednesday, 17 February.

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 Wednesday, 24 February at a Said Mass at 10:00AM





Vestry

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church was called to order at 11:56AM on Sunday, 10 January 2016.

The proposed agenda was adopted. Eugene Johnston was excused. Geri Moulton was absent.

The minutes of the 13 December 2015 meeting were approved with correction.

Connie McLean reviewed the financial reports.

Janet Buckley reported that Outreach has purchased books for HeadStart, and will continue to provide support to McKemie Place and Penelope House. She also reported that Cheryl Winters-Heard has agreed to chair the committee for 2016.

The Fourth Sunday Potluck will have a Mardi Gras theme.

Fr. Heard reported that we are still waiting to be scheduled for roof repairs by Dobson Roofing. MEJAC used the building for a meeting on 17 December and 6 January. They may also meet here on 17 January. He reported that there have only been 25 pledge cards returned out of the expected 41. Fr. Heard distributed a spreadsheet that assigns follow-up calls to each vestry member. He reported that the attendance for the Vigil Mass held on Saturdays at 6:00PM has averaged 3.14, far short of the 10 that was projected. Discussion ensued, ultimately leaving the decision to continue with Fr. Heard.

James Christiansen reported that a replacement title for the van has been received.

Fr. Heard nominated Cindy Gass to be Senior Warden. Butch Yeager nominated James Christiansen to be Junior Warden and Nikki Shaw to be Clerk. James Christiansen nominated Janet Buckley to be Treasurer. All were unanimously elected.

A budget committee was formed, consisting of Janet Buckley, James Christiansen, Cindy Gass, and Butch Yeager.

There will be a Vestry Retreat in February.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 12:55PM.

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 Stations of the Cross at 5:30PM in the church. The **meal will start at 6PM** 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 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 17, 2016

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Wednesday, March 16, 2016





OUTREACH COMMITTEE UPDATE FEBRUARY 2016

The meetings of the Outreach Committee will continue to be held on the first Sunday of every month in 2016, and we continue to invite all of you to join us!

We met the first Sunday in January to plan outreach activities for the coming year. As you know, we get 5% of plate and pledge offerings for our work, and as of the writing of this newsletter article, we still do not have a budget number, in part because we are still waiting for pledges to come in. If you haven't done so already, please send in your pledge card, knowing that our ability to help others depends entirely upon your generosity!

Activities that are under consideration for this year include the beginning of a Partnership in Education relationship with a local elementary school to assist with classroom needs and supplies. This may also expand to include the opportunity to read to children on a regularly scheduled basis, with group transportation coordinated by St. John's. We would like to support a discretionary fund for Murray House to help residents who may need occasional assistance with buying personal items. We will ascertain what on-going needs Penelope House may have, and are considering holding a "shower" to help with these needs.

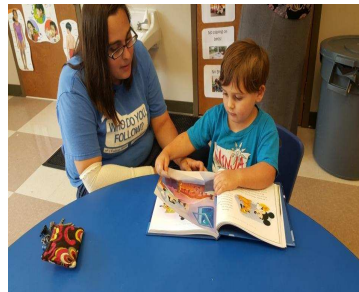
We will continue to support McKemie Place by feeding the women there, and supplying paper goods for meals.

We solicit any volunteers who may wish to help on the fourth Thursday of every month, either in meal preparation or in serving (or both!) Please contact one of us for more information.

We will continue with our giving trees, with our gifts of books to all children in Head Start in Mobile County, with Spring Break food boxes as well as Thanksgiving boxes to needy Head Start families. We will continue to support our indigent neighbors in a local nursing home who would not have gifts at Christmas but for St. John's generosity. We will continue to support the Bay Area Food Bank with our time and our donations.

We are trying to strike a balance between "Outreach by checkbook" and hands-on Outreach activities. Both the financial support required and the support of our activities very much depend upon your helping hands, and we thank you for your on-going help. Stay tuned to this page for upcoming opportunities!

-Cheryl Winters-Heard

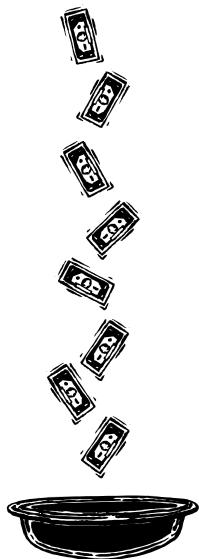


2016 PLEDGE SUMMARY

As this newsletter goes to print, we have received financial commitments from 31 pledge units. Our total for 2016 stands at \$111,928. For 2015 we received 47 pledges totaling \$141,152.

Nine of the pledge cards submitted for 2016 were increases over 2015; sixteen families held their pledges constant from the prior year; four families decreased their pledges; and two families that didn't pledge in 2015 turned in a pledge card for the new year.

If you plan to pledge to the 2016 operating budget, please turn in a pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available in the church office.





LENTEN SERIES FOR 2016

Lent Madness

For Lent this year, we're going to take on the full Lent Madness program within our parish. We'll match up our selections against the broader church just to see how we do. There are some challenges to taking this one due to our traditional schedule, so we're going to start a little early; otherwise we'll know what everyone else has chosen before we choose.

Sunday, 7 February	Helena v. Monnica Matthias v. Absalom Jones Cyril v. Methodius
Sunday, 14 February	Julian of Norwich v. William Wilberforce Meister Eckhart v. Drogo Constance v. Dominic
Wednesday, 17 February	Christina Rosetti v. Joseph Roch v. Gertrude
Sunday 21 February	Columba v. Kateri Tekakwitha Clare v. Denis Sojourner Truth v Søren Kierkegaard
Wednesday, 24 February	Lawrence v. Albert Schweitzer Dietrich Bonhoeffer v. Athanasius
Sunday, 28 February	Vida Dutton Scudder v. F.D. Maurice Frances Joseph Gaudet v. John Mason Neale Elmo v. Barnabas
Wednesday, 2 March	Saintly Sixteen – Left Bracket
Sunday, 6 March	Saintly Sixteen – Right Bracket
Wednesday, 9 March	Elate Eight – Left Bracket
Sunday, 13 March	Elate Eight – Right Bracket
Wednesday, 16 March	The Golden Halo

We have copies of the Saintly Scorecard available to take home and we'll post two copies of the bracket: One to keep track of our election and the other to record the larger church's elections.





“WALK THE PATH OF LENT” WITH EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT’S 2016 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

Episcopal Relief & Development invites you to **“Walk the Path of Lent”** with this year’s Lenten Meditations series, featuring reflections on spiritual practices written by the organization’s staff, partners and friends from around The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

In these poignant meditations, program staff, disaster response volunteers, board members and others share the breadth of spiritual practices that give them strength for the journey.

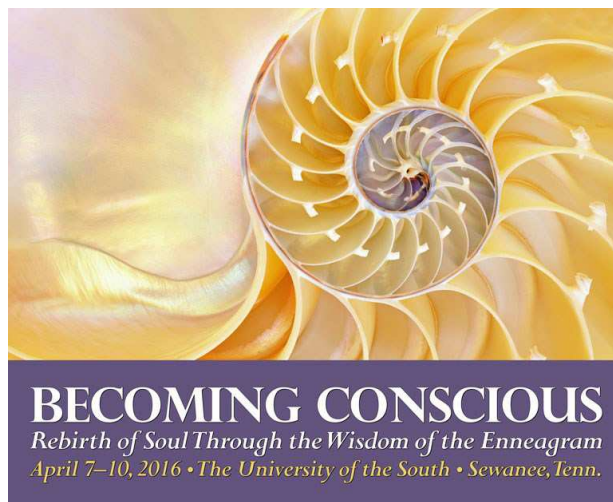
"If you are like me, discerning the best Lenten spiritual practice can be difficult," said Sean McConnell, Episcopal Relief & Development’s Senior Director of Engagement. "Why not spend this Lent holding in prayer those who are working with the world's most vulnerable, walking alongside participants in our programs from day to day."

During the 2009 General Convention of The Episcopal Church, Lent was designated as a time for remembering Episcopal Relief & Development’s work to heal a hurting world. Many congregations will observe **Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday** on the first Sunday in Lent, February 14.

"The best support you can give Episcopal Relief & Development is to hold our program staff and

international partners in your prayers," said Rob Radtke, the organization’s President. "These faithful people begin their work with a sense that God has given all things necessary to transform lives. We have invited them to share the sources of their spiritual strength with us, and to give us an opportunity to share in their spiritual practices."

The Lenten Meditations booklets are available here at St John’s and the digital versions of the English and Spanish booklets are available online at episcopalrelief.org/Lent, and all are invited to sign up for daily email meditations.



UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND RETREATS

Thirty-fifth Men’s Conference & Retreat **March 4, 5, and 6** **At Beckwith Camp and Conference Center**

Join The Reverend Walt Kindergan, The Reverend Barbara Crafton, and men from around the diocese for a weekend of fun, prayer, worship, and learning with others who are seeking faith, direction, and encouragement in building a closer relationship with God.

Barbara Crafton will presenting
“The Also-life: Life Beyond the Life we Know”.

The Wisdom of the Enneagram

Are you seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus the Christ? Have you considered issues surrounding your deepest motivations that might be standing in the way of your spiritual growth? How can we come to a deeper understanding of each other as individuals and yet collectively continue together as followers of Christ? In an effort to explore answers to these and other questions that we all experience and to provide tools for our collective spiritual growth, **the Commission on Cursillo is offering a workshop on March 18-19, 2016.** This in-depth conference will afford you the opportunity to come in touch with an enlightening and ancient system that has served as an illuminating means of personal awareness, self-realization and spiritual growth.



Geri Moulton	02/01	Lee Dorsey	02/15
Bob Sheffield	02/05	Thomas Heard	02/15
Mary Sheffield	02/08	Debbie Ollhoft	02/15
LaNeisha Anderson	02/10	Lisa Chestang	02/17
Alison Chestang	02/12	David Thompson	02/23



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

James Christiansen, Emily Johnston, Jayson Chestang, Ashley Garris, Marian Boykin, 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:

Ann Hall, John Hawlicheck, Lou McBeath, Angie Leon, Doug Turner, Louis Koen, Neal Tourné, Brandi Strickland, Sandy & Ray Michel, Brenda Bateman, Connor Crist, Blake Bennet, Starley Anderson, Paul Nelson, Barbara Bassett, Krystal Hiatt, Robert Cochran, Sr., Irene Barrow, Elias Bates, Donnie Chestang, Bill Jones, Mark Stiber, Dennis Brown[priest].

Contact Us

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Vestry:

Connie Anderson

Ron Brown

Janet Buckley, *treasurer*

James Christiansen, *junior warden*

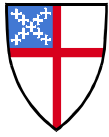
Cindy Gass, *senior warden*

Eugene Johnston

Geri Moulton

Nikki Shaw, *clerk*

Butch Yeager



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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

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9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

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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.