FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

The three commemorations that follow Christmas Day are sometimes referred to as “the companions of Christ.” These days are:

12/26 — Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr
12/27 — Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist
12/29 — The Holy Innocents

All of these dates were in widespread observance by about the fifth century. They might seem as though they’re not related, but let’s take a look.

Stephen is attributed to have two “firsts”. In Acts, when the Apostles figured out that they needed designated individuals to handle the ministry to the poor, widows, and orphans, they called on the community to name seven people to be set aside for this ministry, that which is traditionally of deacons. Stephen is the first named of the seven, which leads some to label him as the first deacon.

His second “first” is that he is held to be the first martyr of Christianity. Again, it is a story out of Acts and there are no other stories to discount it. The Acts account also identifies a young man named Saul, who may be the Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, who we know as Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist is next in the list. He may or may not be the brother of James, or the Beloved Disciple, or the writer of the Gospel of John, or the writer of the Revelation to John. But it is possible that he is all four; there is no limit to what God chooses to do. John is remembered because of his writing and his companionship of Jesus. The Gospel of John is a theological and Christological work, leading us to a deeper and more concise understanding of God, Jesus, and their interrelationship.

The Holy Innocents are the victims of Herod’s rage, as recounted by the Gospel of Matthew. We have much documentation from the first century concerning events and people. There is good evidence that Herod the Tetrarch was ruled by anger, and quite capable of violent acts. We don’t, however, have an account of this event other than in Matthew.

These three commemorations share something unique. Stephen, John, and the Holy Innocents were contemporaries of Jesus. They also express the extremes of martyrdom, ranging from will to deed. A ‘martyr to will’ chooses his/her path; that covers Stephen and John. A ‘martyr to deed’ has the path chosen for him/her. Stephen and the Holy Innocents share this one. Stephen is both. I think the most distressing, though, are the Holy Innocents, a genocide of extreme horror.

I think we can all name at least one genocide without thinking too hard. That we humans can inflict this kind of terrible act is beyond my comprehension, yet the list just in the 20th and 21st centuries is anything but short: The Armenian Genocide following World War I, the Sino-Japanese war atrocities, the Holocaust of World War II, the 1975 Cambodian genocide, the 1994 Rwandan genocide of 500,000 Tutsis, the 1995 Serbo-Croat execution of Muslims, the 2003 Sudanese genocide, and now what’s happening in Aleppo and other locations in Syria. These are the Holy Innocents.

Do I need to say that it is wrong? Can anyone who calls himself or herself a Christian condone any of these? I weep for the children of Aleppo, but I must also stand and speak against it. I must, in Jesus’ holy and blessed name, demand that it stop.

We must all do this.

—Thomas
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

This day 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. We will celebrate this feast on Sunday, 1 January 2017 at 10:00AM.

The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

12:10PM on Friday, 6 January
“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.

Baptism of Our Lord

10:00AM on Sunday, 8 January
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 Baptist. It is a particularly appropriate day for baptisms.

The Confession of Saint Peter

10:00AM on Wednesday, 18 January
On this occasion, we commemorate Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ. Of course, we also remember how human Peter is: often bumbling, stumbling, impetuous, intense, and with rough edges. This feast also marks the beginning of the annual Week for Christian Unity.

The Conversion of Saint Paul

10:00AM on Wednesday, 25 January
We mark Paul’s acceptance of Jesus as his Lord and Savior on this day. 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.

In Memoriam

BESSIE MAE SOUTHALL
5 MARCH 1926 – 2 DECEMBER 2016

We lost our sister, Bessie, on Friday, 2 December after a long, debilitating illness. Bessie was one of the sweetest people I've ever had the pleasure to know. I'm sure I don't know everything, but I never heard a sharp word from her. Bessie’s illness robbed her of the ability to speak and, eventually, the ability to swallow. During it all, her spirits were bright and she wrote like the wind on her little dry erase board. I was able to offer her last rites less than a week before. Bessie didn’t fear death; sometimes I think she longed for it to end her suffering. I will miss her greatly.

Memorial Donations

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

Alice Schablinski
Irene & Butch Yeager
Connie & Budd McLean
Emily & Eugene Johnston
James Christiansen
Bessie Southall
Irene & Butch Yeager
Bob & Paula Ross
Charlie, Ann, Corey & Justyn Phillips
Connie & Budd McLean
James Christiansen
Emily & Eugene Johnston
Catherine Grimes
Emily & Eugene Johnston
Edith Heard
Connie & Budd McLean
James Christiansen
Emily & Eugene Johnston
Patricia Dever Thomas
Karen & Michael Keel
VESTRY SUMMARY

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John’s Church was called to order on 11 December 2016 at 11:35AM.

- The minutes of the 13 November meeting were approved as submitted.
- The financial statements were reviewed. A report on the new Scrip program was received.
- Due to Christmas Day falling on the 4th Sunday of December, the potluck/Christmas Party will be deferred until 8 January as an Epiphany Party.
- The Nominating Committee made a preliminary report to the Vestry.
- The Vestry voted to keep the contribution to the diocese at 10% of Plate and Pledge Offerings for 2017.
- The Audit Committee will be working this week.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 12:35PM.

OFFICER ELECTIONS

Congratulations to our new Vestry members and Convention Delegates who were elected at our meeting on 18 December. Serving three-year terms on the Vestry are Darren Anderson, Kathe Gieseler, and Connie McLean.

Serving as Convention Delegates are James Christiansen, Eugene Johnston and Connie McLean. They will be ably backed-up by Alternate Delegate Janet Buckley.

2017 PLEDGE SUMMARY

As this newsletter goes to print, we have received financial commitments from 19 pledge units for 2017 totaling $66,148. In 2016, we received 38 pledges totaling $123,360. For 2015, we received 47 pledges totaling $141,152. Data back to 2012 are represented in the graph.

If you plan to pledge to the 2017 operating budget, please turn in a pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available in the church office.

SAINT JOHN’S PARISH EPIPHANY PARTY

We’ll wrap up the Christmas Season with a new addition to our schedule of parish events: a gathering close to Epiphany. Bring your family and friends to church and stay for a good time with our parish family.

When: Sunday, January 8th, 2017
Where: Parish Hall after Sunday Service

The ECW is providing the main course, but we need all the “fixin’s” and (of course) desserts.

Parish Life

St. John’s Episcopal Church
Pledges Received

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Pledged</th>
<th># Pledges</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>144,204</td>
<td>151,910</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>155,424</td>
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**JANUARY 2017 AT SAINT JOHN’S**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
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<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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<td>10A HE</td>
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<td>830A MP</td>
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<td>6 The Epiphany</td>
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<td>1130A Outreach</td>
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<td>1130A Epiphany Party</td>
<td>Julia Chester Emery</td>
<td>William Laud</td>
<td>830A MP</td>
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<td>13 Hilary of Poitiers</td>
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<td>12P Vestry</td>
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<td>Agnes of Rome</td>
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**MP = Morning Prayer**

**SS = Sunday School**

**HE = Holy Eucharist**

**Omitted:**

01/08 Harriet Bedell, Deaconess and Missionary, 1969
01/22 Vincent, Deacon of Saragossa, and Martyr, 304
# Lectionary and Rota for January 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Lectionary Day</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Lessons</th>
<th>Greeters</th>
<th>Lectors</th>
<th>Intercessor</th>
<th>Eucharistic Ministers</th>
<th>Eucharistic Visitor</th>
<th>Altar Guild</th>
<th>Vestry Teller</th>
<th>Nursery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Episcopal Relief & Development and its Ghanaian partner ADDRO (the Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization) are working with UK-based Against Malaria Foundation (AMF) to distribute more than 2.6 million mosquito nets in Ghana. This partnership is active in three regions – Northern, Upper West and Greater Accra – and will contribute significantly to the country’s goal of universal net coverage.

“ADDRO and Episcopal Relief & Development have long worked with the National Malaria Control Program as collaborators in the country-wide effort to prevent this deadly disease,” said the Rt. Rev. Jacob Ayeebo, Bishop of Tamale and Executive Director of ADDRO. “This new partnership with AMF is very exciting, as it leverages these relationships and our robust methodology to deliver millions of nets and track our success in reducing malaria.”

The rural Northern and Upper West regions have some of the highest malaria prevalence rates among children under age 5, and despite rapid urbanization in and around the capital of Accra, malaria remains endemic year-round. Since 2006, ADDRO has implemented the NetsforLife® methodology in collaboration with the National Malaria Control Program and the Ghana Health Service, with support from Episcopal Relief & Development. The project expansion enabled by AMF will send 9,800 trained local volunteers to reach nearly 1 million households, educating communities about malaria, distributing mosquito nets and ensuring follow-up for 2.5 years after distribution.

“During the last ten years of testing and improving our model, NetsforLife® has shown that preparing communities through education and then regularly following up after net distribution dramatically increases the correct and consistent use of mosquito nets, which is key in preventing malaria,” said Abagail Nelson, Senior Vice President for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Trained local volunteers will follow up with participating households every six months for the duration of the program, ensuring net use and maintenance and providing education on other integrated health topics such as diarrhea and pneumonia.”

In addition to household net use surveys, the program will work with district health management teams to gather monthly numbers of malaria cases, in order to track changes in rates of illness and access of health services. A mobile data entry system using smart phones will be piloted in one district and later implemented more widely if feasible.

The St. John’s Scrip program is off to a great start. Many of you have participated, leading to over $600 dollars being raised for St. John’s in a short time. THANK YOU!

To continue this success your participation is needed. In the 2017, Scrip will be collected on the second Sunday and you can pick up your order on the third Sunday, earlier in many cases. To view all 750 participating retailers visit https://www.shopwithscrip.com/, and click on “retailers”.

Remember that in addition to grocery and discount stores there are dining, department and travel buying options. All purchases help St. John’s!
For healing grace and continued strength, we pray for our members:
Marian Boykin, Jean Brown, Ron Brown, Mary Jones,
Jayson Chestang, Budd McLean, Joyce Lee, Donna Waites.

For our Homebound:
Mae Dunn, Joan-Marie Elam, LaVerne Foster, Lorraine Murray,
Catherine Warren, Chick Wohlert, Becky & Art Youngblood.

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:
Laura Howard, J.W. Wallace, George Lee, Barbara Curry,
Evia Daniel, Marsha Gilmore, Charles Geck, Donny Chestang,
Barbara Bonner, Judy Wonson, Cliff Federle, Louis Bell,
Jerry Wigfield, Karen Davis, Charlie Coles, Anna Marie Brown,
Mary Jo Vinson, Kellie Roberts-Bryars, David Bryars,
Bonnie Jernigan, Kaye Turner, Katelynn Tillman, Britney Butler,
Ann Hall, Angie Leon, Neal Tourné, Sandy & Ray Michel,
Brenda Bateman, Connor Crist, Starley Anderson, Paul Nelson,
Krystal Hiatt, Robert Cochran, Sr., Irene Barrow, Elias Bates,
Bill Jones, Mark Stiber.

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Jack Ruppe
Sexton

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

Alexandria Harvey-Smith 01/20
Janet Buckley 01/24
Mary Frances Chestang 01/25
Donna Waites 01/26
Bill Duke 01/31
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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and by appointment
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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.