



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. XXVIII, Issue 7

July 2018

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

Two weeks ago, I did something I hardly ever do in my sermons: I took issue with an incident of “proof texting” that had happened during the week. It was Jeff Sessions’ quotation of Romans 13:1-2

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.” (RSV)

So, I get that he’s trying to justify actions pointing to Saint Paul’s statement in the Letter to the Romans. I get that, I really do. The problem that I have with it is two-fold. First is the history of quotation of that passage. Here’s just a short list of its previous uses:

- Opponents of the American Revolution cited it to demand obedience to the King.
- Slave owners to justify their ownership of human beings
- Nazi sympathizers during World War II
- Enforcers of the Apartheid regime in South Africa
- Contemporary application to topics such as taxes, same gender marriage, abortion, etc.

Clearly, when one’s position corresponds to the government’s position/laws, this gets trotted out as justification.

That brings up the second and more serious problem: taking the text out of the context in which it was written. The Letter to the Romans is, perhaps, Saint Paul’s clearest exposition of justification by faith.

Paul’s claim is that justification by faith is a gift of grace and that adherence to the law alone is

insufficient. A few verses later he summarizes the Ten Commandments and points to the law of love as the ultimate mark of righteousness.

I challenged those in church two weeks ago to look into “the late teen chapters of Leviticus” to see what might be applicable to the event Sessions was referencing. Much to my surprise, I got a phone call on Wednesday of that week. The caller (who shall remain anonymous) told me that she had found Leviticus 19:33-34 to be on point. She then cited another three or four passages from throughout the Bible as having similar themes. I congratulated her on her efforts.

Proof Texting is probably as old as the Bible itself. I suspect that if one looks hard enough, one can find a verse or two to justify any position one might have. Historically, the entire Letter to Philemon was used as justification for the institution of slavery in the United States and England. The logic was that “it must have been OK in Roman times.” Need I point out that the 19th century was far removed from the Roman Empire?

I think it is common to look to scripture to help us cope with the changes and chances of life, and I think that’s a huge part of why we have them. When we do, I think we have to always ask if:

- We are living into the righteousness to which God has called us, and
- We can find examples of Jesus doing the same thing.

If the answer to either of those questions is “No”, then I think it’s time to reconsider our position and seek a something that is consistent with our Baptismal Covenant and is in a Godward direction, .

--Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JULY LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Independence Day

Independence Day is one of the “Other major feasts”, which include apostles, evangelists, Saints Mary the Virgin, Joseph, Mary Magdalene, James of Jerusalem, Stephen, and Michael and All Angels, as well as The Holy Innocents and Thanksgiving Day.

Independence Day entered the calendar with the proposed prayer book of 1786. It didn’t make it into the 1789 Prayer Book, due to concerns of appropriateness since most of the clergy of the church had been British loyalists. Independence Day finally entered our calendar with the 1928 Prayer Book. We will observe Independence Day at our 10:00AM Said Mass on Wednesday, 4 July.

Benedict of Nursia

Benedict is perhaps the person most responsible for the shaping of monasticism in the Western Church. Founder of the Benedictine order, Benedict’s written rule by which all of the monks governed their lives survives today in its original form. Benedict’s true innovation was the division of the day: four hours of liturgical prayer, six hours of work, five hours of spiritual reading, one hour to eat, and eight hours of sleep. In the Divine Office, all of the Psalms were read each week, and the entire Bible read each year. We will commemorate Benedict at our Wednesday Said Mass on 11 July at 10:00AM

Saint Mary Magdalene

We will celebrate the feast of Saint Mary Magdalene on Monday, 23 July at a 12:10PM Said Mass. Surnames were not a feature of Palestine in the first century, so it was customary to use genealogical and geographical annotations to differentiate between people of the same name. Saint Mary Magdalene features prominently in the Gospels of Luke and John. In Luke, she was healed by Our Lord who cast out seven demons from her. She became a follower immediately. In John’s Gospel, Mary Magdalene is the “Mary” at the tomb who recognizes the resurrected Jesus and tells the disciples, “I have seen the Lord.” In the Eastern tradition, Mary is held as equal to the apostles.

Saint James the Apostle

James is sometimes called “the Greater”, to differentiate him from James the brother of our Lord, and the other apostle named James. With his brother John, the sons of Zebedee were also known as the “Sons of Thunder”, due to their dispositions. James is accorded the honor of being the first of the apostles to be martyred for Our Lord. We will celebrate James at a Said Mass on Wednesday, 25 July at 10:00AM.



Happy
Birthday

Saint John’s celebrates the June birthdays of Jerry Fulford, Connie McLean, Pat Fulford, Neva Bache, Ron Waites, Connie Anderson.

(Photo by Irene Yeager)



Vestry

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church was called to order by Fr. Heard at 11:30AM on Sunday, 10 June 2018.

Darren Anderson was excused.

The minutes of the 13 May 2018 meeting were approved as corrected.

Connie McLean reviewed the financial statements.

Janet Buckley reported for the Outreach Committee that the Head Start Books will be stickered in July.

Reporting for Parish Life, Janet said that the fourth Sunday in July would be the parish picnic.

Fr. Heard reported for Darren Anderson who was at work: Darren says the sprinkler system installation will likely happen around the end of June. He is still pursuing an estimate for Great Hall roof repairs. The roofer feels that it is time to replace the roof rather than patch it. The sewer line replacement is complete and a claim has been filed with Church Insurance.

Fr. Heard introduced Louis Daniel who distributed sketches for the rehabilitation of the garden and discussed the reasons for what he proposes. The vestry will take this up again at the July meeting.

Fr. Heard reported that MEJAC has used the Parlor for a meeting on 24 May, and Mobile County used the Great Hall as a polling place on 5 June.

There being no updates to Old Business and no New Business presented, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15PM with prayer.



PARISH LIFE

THIS AND THAT

Congratulations to Will Anderson. Will was inducted into the Junior Honor Society at Hankins Middle School. But wait, that was not his only honor. He received awards in both math and science and the Principal's Award. This award is given to the best all-around student in the 6th grade. Darren and LaNeisha Anderson are the proud parents. The proud grandparents are Connie and Bob Anderson.

Scrip orders will be taken on July 8 and back on July 15. Summer is a good time to take a friend to lunch. Get the list from Bootsie Cieutat and check out the options. Have fun and help the church!



The ECW is planning a Wine and Cheese party for Murray House later in July. Bring an appetizer and enjoy the party. It sounds like lots of fun. Look for details to come.

-Bootsie Cieutat

JULY'S FOURTH SUNDAY POTLUCK: PARISH PICNIC

St. John's annual inside-outside Parish Picnic will be held on Sunday, July 22nd. Our "grill master" Junior Warden Darren Anderson has volunteered to do the duties on the grill again this year. The rest of us have the task of providing all the traditional picnic "fixings". The sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board. So let's dress for a picnic and eat picnic foods but we'll leave the bugs outside!



-Janet Buckley

OUTREACH

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS!!

Once again the St John's Outreach Committee is providing books to the Head Start and Early Head Start children in Mobile and Washington counties. The Outreach Committee will be asking everyone to help in putting stickers into the books. The stickers read: "A gift from St. John's Episcopal Church with hopes you will become a lifetime learner." There are 1200 books so we will be busy!

Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive school readiness program that serves low income three and four year old children and Early Head Start serves 100 children ages 0-3. The purpose of the program is to get the children, no matter what age, ready for school. These books will be provided to the children to take home and keep.

The books come from First Book, the National Book Bank which receives the books from publishers and then distributes them to organizations that will provide them to low income children and their families. Although the Book Bank gets the books at no cost from the publishers, organizations have to pay shipping and handling to receive the books. St John's Outreach Committee paid for the books to get to Mobile to be distributed to the Head Start children.



Please see the below message from interim rector of Trinity, Apalachicola, the Rev. Donna Gerold:

Sunday night, June 24 there was a devastating fire in Eastpoint FL, just east of Apalachicola. Over 30 homes are a total loss, some losing cars as well, many belonging to oystermen, fishermen and shrimpers. Franklin County is one of the poorest counties in Florida so resources are slim.

Trinity Church is collecting cash contributions to forward to Franklin County Emergency Relief Funds, 100% of which will go to disaster relief. If any church or individual is interested in contributing cash, please **make check to Trinity Church, in the memo line indicate Eastpoint Fire relief, and send to** Trinity Church, PO Box 667, Apalachicola, FL 32320. Trinity will be writing one check and sending it on to Franklin County Emergency Relief. Please do not send any items at this time, more details will follow.

Please join us in offering prayers for the Eastpoint community.

The Rev. Donna Gerold



LENTEN SUPPER CONTRIBUTION

The proceeds from our Lenten Supper series were designated for Ozanam Charitable Pharmacy. Our Outreach Committee matched the proceeds and \$550 was sent to the pharmacy. We received an acknowledgement letter with some metrics about Ozanam's work in the community:

28,000 generic prescriptions dispensed to 1,671 clients in three counties, amounting to over \$2,000,000 in medication.

Doesn't it feel good to be making a difference in our community?



Over the next few months, we will hear from members of the congregation about their attitudes toward giving to the church. Our first contributor is long-time member James Christiansen:

I was reading something about giving, and the discussion evolved into all of the opportunities that abound today asking for our contributions to worthy causes. I began to wonder “why do I give to the church, and why do I increase that amount every year?”

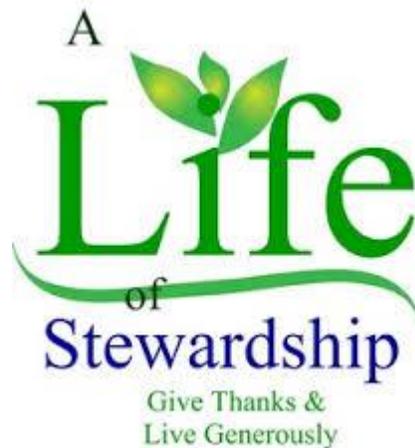
I realized that at an early age, while being taken to church, that it was emphasized that you should put something in the offering plate. I started at a very early age doing that, mostly from a meager allowance, with the emphasis being “make sure part of this goes to the church”.

As I got older and started work, I realized that part of my income should go to the church, so I started making monthly contributions. Once married and when children came along, the same practice that I was taught was taught to our children. Getting involved with the church more and more, I came to realize, not only the importance it had in my life, but also the benefits that seemed to be coming my way by being a church member and contributing to its growth. As I matured and as work income increased, I realized that church

expenses increase as well, and that I needed to increase my amount of giving.

A lot was said in annual stewardship meetings about tithing, which implied giving 10% of our income as offering. Realizing that this was not a possibility with two small children and frequent job changes, I strived to give a regular percentage of my income, with an increase each year, no matter how small that increase may have been in a given year. My lifelong goal has been to reach a true tithe (and still is!).

The church is an important part of my life, and its future greatly concerns me. While there are many other opportunities that I see and hear about that make me want to contribute to other causes, my first consideration is St. John’s, and the first check I write every month is to St. John’s.



Realizing at an early age that you spend what you get, I determined early in life that the first check goes to the church. If you take God’s “cut” off the top, then you spend what is left. The church’s check always comes out first. Having done this, I perceive that over my life I have received many benefits, and I attribute them to putting God first in my life.

-James Christiansen

THEE STORE BOOK SALE PLANS



As part of the closing of Thee Store, we are planning a public sale of the remaining items.

Most of the items still left from Thee Store are books although there are some religious items

left too. The sale will be “marketed” as a book sale so we need to have some “general interest” books for sale too. The sale will be in late September or early October, on a Saturday.

We will take donations of any books or religious items you want to donate to the sale. The money from the sale will go to St. John’s general fund. If you would like to help out with organizing the merchandise, pricing items, setting up, selling, and/or cleaning up, we will have more information in next month’s newsletter. Right now: start putting aside those books or religious items to add to our sale. If you have questions see Janet Buckley, Connie McLean, or Mary Sheffield.

JONATHAN DANIELS PILGRIMAGE SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 2018

The Jonathan Daniels Pilgrimage will take place in Hayneville, Lowndes County, Alabama on Saturday, August 11, 2018, organized by the Diocese of Alabama and the Diocese of Central Gulf Coast. Over its 22 years, the pilgrimage has grown into one of the most recognized pilgrimages of our Church, bringing people from many dioceses and seminaries across the country to the spot where Daniels, an Episcopal seminarian from Keene, New Hampshire, was shot to death in August 1965 trying to protect an African-American teenage girl. The event is held annually on the second Saturday of August.

The Pilgrimage begins at 11:00 a.m. in front of the courthouse in Hayneville, the place where an all-white jury in a sham trial lasting less than an hour found Jonathan's murderer, Tom Coleman, not guilty. Pilgrims march to the jail where Daniels and his companions were held, and from there to the place where he was killed at a small country store that has since been razed, then back to the courthouse. In a moving Eucharist, the judge's bench of that 1965 trial becomes the altar on which the sacrament is consecrated. Fourteen other martyrs of the Alabama civil rights movement are recognized and honored in this service as well as Daniels.

Following the Pilgrimage and lunch, attendees are invited to a special forum on the issues related to immigration: "Coming to America: Who Should We Welcome, What Should We Do?" Participants will share their personal experiences relating to immigrants and deliberate on the issues related to immigration using a non-partisan guide published by the National Issues Forum Institute. There is no cost to participate, but space is limited. Everyone is encouraged to register online at <https://goo.gl/SDYiBs>.



EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT RESPONDING TO THE VOLCANO ERUPTION IN HAWAII

Episcopal Relief & Development is partnering with the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii and Church of the Holy Apostles in Hilo to provide emergency assistance after the Kilauea



volcano first erupted on Hawaii's Big Island on May 3. Lava flows from the volcano wiped out hundreds of homes. Thousands were forced to evacuate, including some members of Church of the Holy Apostles which is located about a half-hour north of the evacuation zone. An eruption at Kilauea summit jolted the area on Wednesday, June 6 with the force of a 5.4 magnitude earthquake.

Episcopal Relief & Development's support is providing laundry services for evacuees staying in emergency shelters and nine air purifiers for schools in impacted areas. Air quality in the Puna District has worsened due to sulfur dioxide from the eruption. Local authorities have been distributing masks to shield from the ash, but the masks do not protect against vapors and gases. As a result, air purifiers are needed, especially in schools.

The Rev. Katlin E. McCallister, the priest-in-charge at Holy Apostles has been in regular communication with the Diocese of Hawaii, based in Honolulu on Oahu, as her congregation responds to the needs of its members affected by the volcano and participates in the broader disaster response.

"This disaster continues to unfold and cause more damage," noted Katie Mears, Senior Director, US Disaster Programs. "We are inspired by everyone rising to the challenge to help those most in need. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and communities affected by this crisis."

Please [pray](#) for those impacted by the volcano eruption. Donations to the [US Disaster Fund](#) *Episcopal Relief & Development P.O. Box 7058 Merrifield, VA 22116-7058* will help Episcopal Relief & Development respond to this crisis and other disasters in the US.



Caroline Chestang	07/08
Catherine Warren	07/08
Max Stiber	07/10
Tina Cieutat	07/13
Regina Harvey-Molyneux	07/20
Cheryl Winters-Heard	07/21
Carolyn Pearce	07/26
Mike Bonner	07/31



Bob & Paula Ross	07/12
Darren & LaNeisha Anderson	07/15
Lavelle & Debbie Ollhoft	07/20



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

Chick Wohlert, Mac Pearce, David Rich, Joyce Lee, Neil McPhail, Marian Boykin, Ron Brown, Jayson Chestang, Budd McLean.

For our Homebound:

Bea Brown, Joan-Marie Elam, LaVerne Foster, Mary Catherine Warren.

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

Jacob Hester, Marcus Rich, Ross Hussmann, Josh Vernor, Ellis Garner, Eric Mattoon.

For our Friends and Family:

Bonnie Adler, Chris Christiansen, Connor, Georgia Morrison, Rolf & Cheryl McInnis, David Green, Laurie Williams, Melanie Boulter, Ted & Sadie McGill, Larry Kent, Frank Thompson, Tiffany Matthews, Betty White, Augusta Wombaugh, Betty Williams, Lee Bert Benbow, Eddie Chubb, Kelley Lynd, Kay Barnes, Latecia Cushion Knight, Evia Daniel, Charles Geck, Jerry Wigfield, Karen Davis, Mary Jo Vinson, Bonnie Jernigan, Kaye Turner, Katelynn Tillman, Britney Butler, Angie Leon, Johnny Leon, Neal Tourné, Sandy & Ray Michel, Connor Crist, Paul Nelson, Krystal Hiatt, Elias Bates, Mark Stiber.

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Janet Buckley, *clerk*

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Cindy Gass, *senior warden*

Kathe Gieseler

Jan Joseph

Connie McLean, *treasurer*

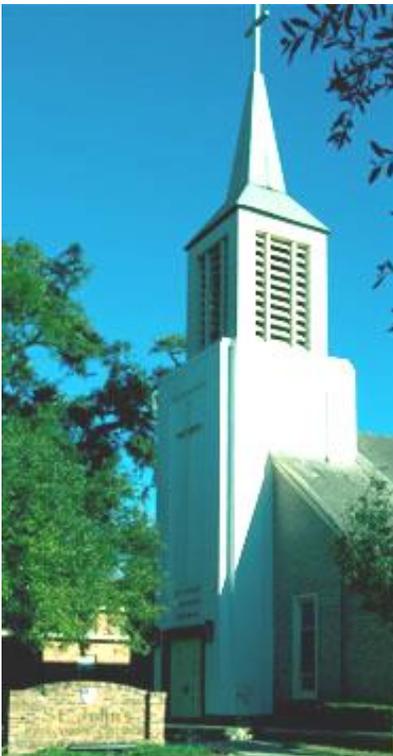
Nikki Shaw

Ron Waites

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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.

Telephone: 251-479-5474

Fax: 251-473-1230

www.stjohnsmobile.org

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.