



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. XXX, Issue 7

July 2020

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

As I write this, we are about one week away from beginning our fourth month of non-public worship. There has to be a better term for what's happened to us. Remote Worship doesn't quite cut it either, even though that's what we've been doing. If you've got a suggestion, please let me know; I'm all ears!

Your Vestry and some past leadership have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss our readiness to come back together again on Sunday mornings.

Part of that conversation has been about what being "ready" to welcome folks back to the building will look like, with appropriate safeguards and strategies in place. Over the past few weeks, we've been experimenting with things, tweaking a little here and there. One of the things that I can promise is that it won't be the same as it was before the pandemic.

Our most important consideration is our mutual safety.

Because the virus is transmitted primarily by aerosol droplets, and singing amplifies the distance that droplets travel, there will be next to no singing. We won't have a choir to help us with hymns or sing an offertory. We also won't be singing hymns or service music.

Everyone will wear a facemask, beginning with exiting vehicles and ending upon returning. If you are a reader, you may remove yours while reading. Of course, you can remove yours when receiving communion.

We have hand sanitizer stations to the left of each entry to the church. Use it.

To the right of the doors, you'll find service leaflets and offering plates. You know what to do.

We will not be using the center aisle. It provides physical distancing from folks sitting in the pew. Use the other aisles.

We will be using full-text service leaflets. In the leaflet, there will be an insert that will remind us of our rules. We will not be using the prayer book or the hymnal.

We've marked places in alternate pews with blue painters' tape to indicate 6-foot spacing, in accordance with MCHD, ADPH, and CDC recommendations. Do not assume that you can sit in your "regular" spot; let's be flexible.

One of the great challenges to us will be our affection for each other. Hugging isn't safe. Congregating in aisles to visit isn't safe. Passing the peace, as we're used to, isn't safe; a nod or something will have to do. How many of you remember when it was introduced in the 1980s? Probably what it should look like for a while.

Until we figure out how to accomplish them safely, we'll have no Adult Forum or Coffee Hour. If you think of a way that we might do it, please speak to me or one of the Vestry.

For communion, we will only share the bread. I will bring it to each person while they remain in their pew. We won't be sharing the cup; there are too many issues despite of the anti-microbial properties of the wine.

So, finally to what you really want to know: When are we going back to public worship? Well, it's complicated. At the start, we said 14 days of flat or declining new cases in Mobile County. We haven't seen that yet. Being "open" means anyone can come and we don't believe we're ready for that. Instead, we will continue with a "soft open". If you're inclined, you may enter via the breezeway door and join the few that are here. If you're unsure or not ready, we will continue to live stream our services and carry the audio via conference call. I think we'll do that even after we are "open."

If you have questions or concerns, don't be silent.

--Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JULY LITURGICAL CALENDAR



Vestry

Saint Mary Magdalene

We will celebrate the feast of Saint Mary of Magdala on Wednesday, 22 July at our 10:00 AM 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 keep him straight 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. a Said Mass will be offered on Saturday, 25 July at 5:30 PM

Mary and Martha of Bethany

With their brother, Lazarus, Mary and Martha of Bethany figure prominently in the Gospels of Luke and John. Luke recounts Martha's complaint that her sister lets her do all the work. Jesus recognizes the different vocations of the sisters: one active and busy; the other contemplative. John's Gospel brings us Martha's confession of Jesus as Messiah in the story of Lazarus' death. Also, John identifies Mary as the woman who anointed Jesus at the supper in Bethany. We will celebrate Martha and Mary of Bethany, two very different women, passionately devoted to Our Lord at our Wednesday Said Mass on 29 July.

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church was convened via Zoom on Sunday, 14 June 2020 at 11:15 AM.

The financial statements were reviewed. We are tracking close to projected budget items. It was pointed out that our Pledge numbers are on-track, thanks to our members sending in their offerings in a timely manner.

Fr. Heard presented the 2019 Audit report to the Vestry. The Vestry voted to receive the report. A copy will be forwarded to the diocesan office.

Janet Buckley, reporting for Outreach, said that the committee planned to continue the program of books for the Head Start children, in spite of the church not using the Great Hall at the moment. In addition, she reported that the committee is considering a donation to a food bank to help with food insecurity in our state. Outreach will discuss a potential project for Murray House with Connie Anderson.

Bootsie Cieutat reported that the ECW, while not meeting, is keeping up with each other through phone calls and cards.

Louis Daniel reported that work in the garden continues.

Concerning the termite infestation and damage, Fr. Heard presented the Scope of Work document received from the contractor. He will confirm with the contractor that a stained glass/art glass contractor will be employed for the removal and reinstallation of the lancet windows. He also reported that he has arranged appointments with Arrow Exterminators and Cook's Pest Control to inspect and bid on taking over the termite bond.

Fr. Heard reported that ceiling tiles adjacent to the bell tower have fallen as a result of moisture. He presented a proposal from Thomas Roofing to inspect and repair the damaged shingles and the flat roof of the bell tower. This is estimated to cost \$5,085. The Vestry approved the proposal.

Fr. Heard reported that Air Specialty has been retained to address an oil leak in the #1 compressor for the chiller. The cost estimate is \$2,914.

(Continued on page 4)

ONLINE CHURCH: AN APPEAL FOR FUNDS

Have you been enjoying Saint John's on Facebook on Sundays? Daily for Morning Prayer? On Wednesdays? Have you noticed how the picture has become much clearer? How you can see more of our beautiful church and altar? How you can hear all the participants better? Yes, we've upgraded the video and sound equipment so whether we stream it on our phones or on our large screen TV (and everything in between), the experience has definitely improved. Not quite the same as being there, but it is getting closer...

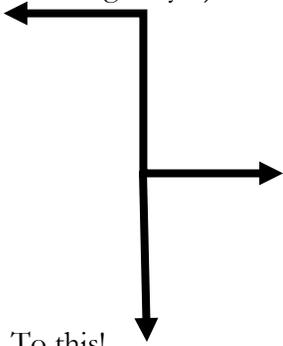
Of course, all the new electronics cost money. When the Vestry put together this year's church budget we

never imagined we would have "virtual church" and need to spend funds on developing the capability to "broadcast" our services. The equipment (new cameras, sound system, wiring,) has already cost over \$5,000. You can show your appreciation for being able to enjoy our wonderful services virtually and in the future when we are back open they will still be broadcast, by making a contribution to the **electronic equipment fund**. Thank you.

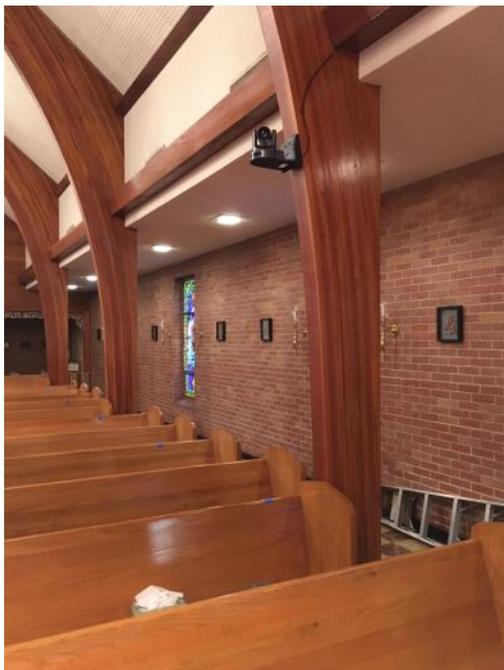
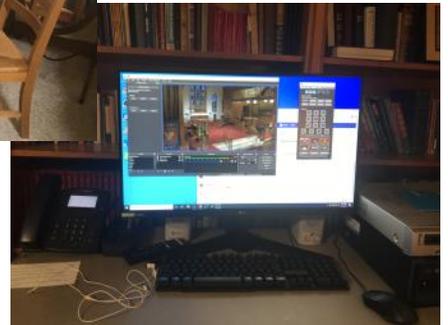
-The Vestry



From this (will continue to use for Morning Prayer)



To this!



OUTREACH

Outreach Committee continues with “pizza parties” for the young people at St. Mary’s Home. We are also reaching out to Murray House to see what we can do to help make their isolation a little more bearable.



In discussion with Connie Anderson, the Murray House administrator, a suggestion came up: sending the residents mail—cards, notes, postcards all help to break the tedium of being isolated from family and friends. It’s okay if you don’t personally know the resident, a note or card lets them know that they are thought about and cared about by someone in the “outside world.” Contact Janet Buckley (janet.buckley@wku.edu or 331-3304 text or talk) if you would like the name(s) of residents and their addresses if you would like to be part of this mission project.

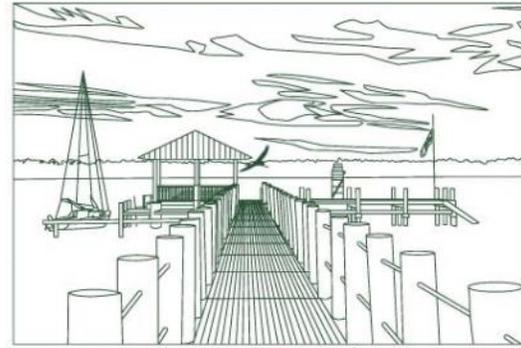
-Janet Buckley

(Continued from page 2)

The Vestry discussed how to handle reimbursing for the live streaming equipment. It was voted to charge this to the Evangelism line item. This will let us account for the expenditure, even though it was not forecast.

Mary Sheffield presented the Gulf Coast Creation Care to the Vestry. The GCCC is an inter-faith alliance committed to responding locally to the global climate crisis. The Vestry voted to become a GCCC congregation, represented by Mary and Fr. Heard. Fr. Heard will pay the dues from his discretionary fund.

Elsewhere in the Diocese



Getaway by the Bay

The Beckwith staff is excited to share their newly created summer programming – **Getaway by the Bay** – weekend retreats at Beckwith. We have enjoyed the creative process of visualizing what Beckwith can be this summer. We are blessed to be able offer an exciting opportunity for experiencing the ministry of Beckwith while implementing new safety guidelines.

Getaway by the Bay is an opportunity for friends, families, couples, and individuals to join us at Beckwith for **4 day/3 night retreats** in July. Each getaway begins with **dinner Thursday evening though breakfast Sunday morning**. Come enjoy a change from your own home and experience the peace and beauty of God’s front yard and Weeks Bay.

Make it your own special retreat! Walk our grounds, read a book on the porch, swim, canoe and kayak on the bay, fish, get creative in arts and crafts, play pickleball, or ride your bike along County Rd 1. The summer camp leadership team will join the Beckwith staff to help facilitate activities, games, challenge course, and water activities.

Getaway dates are:

Thursday July 9 – Sunday July 12

Thursday July 16 – Sunday July 19

Thursday July 23 – Sunday July 26

Thursday July 30 – Sunday August 2

Register online at <https://www.beckwithal.com/getaway2020.html>.

We will be practicing and encouraging social distancing from other groups for the health and safety of all. There will be new practices and procedures for check-in, check-out, meals, etc. during these retreats. We hope you will embrace a willingness for change and adaptability as we learn a new way together.

SABBATH AS RESISTANCE

Well known author, Walter Brueggemann, wrote a short book entitled, *Sabbath Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now*. Other leading authors, like Barbara Brown Taylor, have argued for a similar return to Sabbath-keeping. These authors reminds us of two important faith guideposts: remember the Sabbath and keep it holy; you cannot pour from an empty cup.

In this month of our Jubilee year, we are called upon to examine our own spiritual wellness, our Sabbath-keeping, our spiritual disciplines and habits, and perhaps our own call to a Sabbath-as-resistance. What we say 'yes' to is as important as what we say 'no' to as well.

Sabbath, in so many ways, encompasses that beautiful line from the Rite I Eucharistic liturgy: *And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee.*

As we hear news of increasing statistics of the experience of depression, anxiety, addiction, violence and alarming rates of suicide, might our churches become beacons of Sabbath-keeping-and-resistance such that we encourage one another in new ways of wholeness and accountability?

Instead of averting our eyes to others, or to our own reflections, could some of us be called to provide a healing space for a person(s) who feel they need to be heard, to be seen, in order to find Sabbath in their own lives? What might such a ministry look like?

Perhaps this is already happening in your church or in your own spiritual journey? Or maybe it is a new way in which your faith community could make a difference in the wider context of your worship and fellowship? How might greater periods of silence in our liturgies this month draw us deeper into the reality of God's dream of shalom for all in the Kingdom?

One way to consider this and seek further information would be to consider persons from your congregation for Mental Health First Aid training (<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>)

If you would like to discuss and consider this idea further, please contact Rev. Dr. Joy Blaylock: joyblaylock@diocgc.org.

JULY: OUR SELVES, OUR SOULS, OUR BODIES

CREATING SABBATH SPACE IN YOUR CHURCH

1. Prioritize people over theology or politics. We can keep each other safe only by prioritizing healing and love.
2. Become educated and aware of all varieties of social and economic oppression. We should know how our communities are being impacted by various forms of oppression or injustice.
3. Listen rather than speak. We should be asking those in crisis what they need in order to feel safe, to heal and experience Sabbath.
4. Have referrals ready to assist in the future help and healing of those in crisis.



EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT'S US DISASTER PROGRAMS

The US regularly experiences a wide range of natural disasters. Hurricanes, tornadoes and floods threaten the South, Midwest and other regions each year. Blizzards and ice storms impact the country's northern areas, and earthquakes and wildfires are ever-present in the West. In recent years, the US has seen an uptick in record-breaking disasters. For example, the US was impacted by approximately 31 separate disaster events, including five hurricanes, three inland floods, two wildfires, two droughts, 12 severe storms and four winter storms since 2017. Especially today, as the changing climate exacerbates the frequency and intensity of these events, support for impacted communities must be immediate, and recovery must be strategic and sustainable.

Episcopal Relief & Development's US Disaster Program connects, equips and inspires leaders in The Episcopal Church to prepare for and respond to disasters in their communities, particularly focusing on helping vulnerable groups of people to withstand the impact of a disaster and to return to a state of normalcy after an event.

During a disaster, Episcopal Relief & Development assists diocesan leaders with response by providing

access to technical, educational and financial resources. Year-round, Episcopal Relief & Development offers preparedness trainings and resources to diocesan leaders in order to increase their resilience and to be well-positioned to respond. *Recently, the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast received \$250,000 to assist with the recovery of Hurricane Michael.*

Diocesan Disaster Coordinators are a key part of the US Disaster Program strategy. Appointed by bishops, they serve as liaisons for Episcopal Relief & Development staff, work with congregations to develop preparedness plans and assess the damage and needs following a disaster. Through the program, coordinators can also receive assistance from Partners in Response and Resilience, a group of experts who support church leaders as they discern their role in the disaster recovery process.

To support the [Disaster Funds](#) which include the COVID-19 virus Disaster, Hurricane Relief Fund and US Disaster Fund, mail checks or money orders Episcopal Relief & Development P.O. Box 7058 Merrifield, VA 22116-7058. Please specify which fund you would like to support in the memo line.



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

Joan-Marie Elam
Janet Buckley
Mary & Bob Sheffield

LaVerne Foster
Janet Buckley

REMOTE WORSHIP INSTRUCTIONS



Here are the ways you can join us for worship!

 **Facebook Live** hosts our Sunday, Wednesday, and Feast Day masses, as well as Fr. Heard's Morning Prayer at 8:30 Monday through Friday.

If you are on Facebook, a "like" on our page will enable notifications of the start of a service.

You don't have to be on Facebook to be able to watch with us. Just go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/349597065159312/live/>



Not on the internet ? You can dial in to a conference call and listen to the service!
Just dial 267-930-4000.

Listen to the prompts and enter the access code:
502 859 915 followed by "#".



HAPPY
HAPPY!

Caroline Chestang	07/08
Catherine Warren	07/08
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

June Birthdays



Celebrating June birthdays at St. John's with Jerry Fulford, Ron Waites, Connie Anderson, and Connie McLean. (Photo by Irene Yeager)



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

Bob Ross, Lisa Chestang, Jean Brown, Ashley Garris, Jerry Fulford, Mary Bonner, Bootsie Cieutat, James Christiansen, Bill Duke, Audrey Garner, Joyce Lee, Marian Boykin, Ron Brown, Jayson Chestang, Budd McLean.

For our Homebound:

Mary Catherine Warren.

For our Family and Friends:

Stuart Edwards, Robin Gentry, Sara Lansang, Helon Jones, Helen Guthrie, Ouida McNider, Eddie Hun, David Clothier, Donnie Chestang, Katelynn Tillman, Karen Twilley, Nancy Payne, William Dorsey, Donna Pigg, Sue Sheffield, David Shippee, Robert Levy, David Green, Tiffany Matthews, Betty Williams, Latecia Cushion Knight, Evia Daniel, Bonnie Jernigan, Britney Butler, Neal Tourné, Sandy & Ray Michel, Connor Crist, Paul Nelson, Krystal Hiatt.

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

Ryan Hurt, Jacob Hester-Heard, Marcus Rich, Ross Hussmann, Ellis Garner, Eric Mattoon.

Contact Us

Staff:

The Reverend Thomas Heard, *rector*
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Louis Daniel
 Organist & Choir Director
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Lella Lowe
 Financial Secretary
finance@stjohnsmobile.org

Jack Ruppe
 Sexton

Vestry:

Janet Buckley

James Christiansen, *junior warden*

Bootsie Cieutat, *treasurer*

Jan Joseph

Geri Moulton

Nikki Shaw, *clerk*

Mary Sheffield

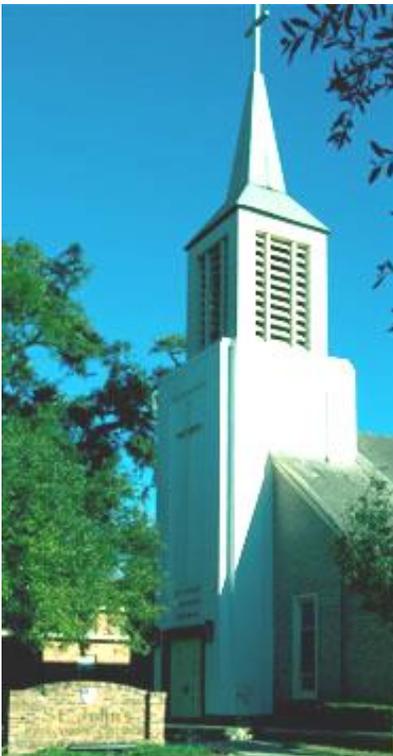
Kristen Turner

Ron Waites, *senior warden*

Saint John's Episcopal Church
 1707 Government Street
 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.

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.