



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 8

August 2020

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

Well, I guess this is the new normal for church.

I can't say I like it. I miss you all. I know you miss each other and being together.

We're established in our "soft open" for worship. There are 10 to 12 regulars, so sitting physically distant from each other is not a problem. Remember, the church will hold 320 in the nave. In addition, we have a fairly stable cadre of folks joining us via Facebook Live; it tends to range from 15 to 20. I know of 3 households that join us by telephone; that's another 6 folks. All in all, we're reaching almost 40 every Sunday morning. I can't tell if anyone is watching afterward. I can't tell who it is that's watching, unless a comment is made.

What I think I miss the most is seeing your faces when I'm preaching. Those empty pews don't react, so I have a difficult time of gauging how my message is being received. Come to think of it, it's kind of like writing my newsletter article.

I also miss our time together in formation time, whether we're doing Bible Study or talking about current events and how we should be reacting or responding to them as followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

I don't see that happening any time soon. A couple of weeks ago, the Bishop of Missouri issued a directive that suspends public worship until 1 September. This comes at the same time that Alabama and Mobile County are experiencing significant increases in known cases and deaths related to COVID-19. There is still an expectation that the virus will be with us for some time to come.

Our Lenten Series was cut short this year by the pandemic. This is the Diocese's fiftieth anniversary, it's Jubilee year, with a different focus for each month of

the year. Needless to say, some of the planned activities have been shelved for a while.

The program for August is a book study. The book is Bryan Stevenson's Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption. You can order it from Amazon or other booksellers; it is also available for download.

We will take five (5) Wednesday nights, starting on the 12th of August. We'll begin at 7:00 PM via Zoom. I will make a study guide for our times together and post it on the website. It will include the chapter scope for each meeting and some things to think about prior to our group time.

The University of South Alabama read this book as an institutional project a couple of years ago. USA brought Stevenson to Mobile. Several other institutions of higher learning have also taken on this text. It is that important. The Diocese has a plan to bring Stevenson and Presiding Bishop Curry here as part of our Jubilee celebration. Not sure how that's going to work now; other folks are worrying about that.

The book is an engaging read. It reads quickly and is not difficult. It outlines a specific problems in our criminal justice system. It will afford us a fertile ground for conversation about those problems and our responsibilities as disciples of Jesus.

Perhaps the hardest part of being "in exile" is that our ability to talk together, look at issues from different perspectives, and form ideas about how to apply our faith to those issues really depends on being able to do that work together as a community of disciples. I'm hoping our book study will bear fruit beyond the study, and help us find a new way to be together.

--Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AUGUST LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

We will celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Thursday, 6 August at 12:00 PM. This will be a said mass commemorating Jesus' physical and spiritual re-manifestation. The Roman calendar didn't include the Transfiguration until just before the Reformation, and in The Episcopal Church, we didn't include it until the 1892 Prayer Book. It has, however, been in the Eastern church's calendar for a very long time. In their theology, the Transfiguration prefigures Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale is known for her contributions to the advancement of education in the field of nursing and its elevation to an esteemed medical profession. Perhaps not as well known is her history as an Anglican mystic. She was known as a frequent conversant with prominent church leaders, taking up topics of theological as well as social importance. We will celebrate her life and work on Wednesday, 12 August at our 10:00 AM said mass.

Saint Mary the Virgin

The Feast of Saint Mary the Virgin is known in the Roman church as The Assumption and in the Eastern tradition as The Dormition of the *Theotokos*. Perhaps the Greek *Theotokos* gets us to a place where we can truly grasp Mary's importance. It means "God bearer", that is the one who was mother to Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The tradition for this day cannot be supported by scripture, but is older than any surviving texts: Mary, for her service to God as *Theotokos*, did not suffer earthly death, but "fell asleep in God" and was taken to heaven. One of our Major Feasts, we will observe Saint Mary the Virgin on Saturday, 15 August, at 5:30 PM.

Saint Bartholomew

One of the Twelve, Bartholomew is known only by his inclusion in the list of disciples in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Some sources credit Bartholomew with the writing of a Gospel that was known to Saint Jerome and the Venerable Bede. Eusebius reports the existence of copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew that was purportedly given to the church by Bartholomew. We will celebrate Saint Bartholomew on Monday, 24 August, with a said mass at 12:00 PM.

OUTREACH

Hi everyone--Summer is rapidly coming to an end, and we have our annual shipment of books for the Head Start children in the Great Hall waiting to get stickers on them. Because of COVID19, we aren't able to do this during coffee hour after Sunday Mass, so we'd like to schedule a time for folks to come in during the week to sticker books. We can adequately social distance at our 6 foot tables, so we can handle 12 folks at our six tables (2 per table).

The dates selected for this are Wednesday, August 5 at 11:00 am (after Wednesday Mass), and Thursday, August 13 at 10:00. If additional times are needed, we'll schedule them later.

Please sign up to come help sticker the books on one or both of these dates:
office@stjohnsmobile.org

Thanks in advance for your help with this!
 Cheryl Winters-Heard





Vestry

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church was held via Zoom and called to order at 11:35 AM on 12 July 2020.

The agenda was approved as submitted. Geri Moulton was excused. The minutes of the 14 June meeting were approved as written.

Bootsie reviewed the financials, noting that Plate and Pledge income were down for the month. She added that the parish received a bequest from the estate of Joan-Marie Elam in the amount of \$7870.

Connie McLean reported that she has been trying to get information from Regions Bank in order to prepare our loan forgiveness documents for the Payroll Protection Program loan that we received.

Janet Buckley reported for Outreach that there are three projects in process. This month will be the last month of providing pizza for lunch at Saint Mary's Home, and Outreach is upgrading the DVD player for the home. Murray House will be receiving soft drinks, as the machine vendor is not allowed to enter the building right now. Finally, plans are being finalized for the sticking of books for the Mobile Head Start children.

Bootsie also reported for ECW that they continue to send cards to members of the parish.

Fr. Heard reported that the termite damage in the chancel was more extensive than previously thought. It is in the process of being repaired. Additionally, another location has been found and reported to Terminix.

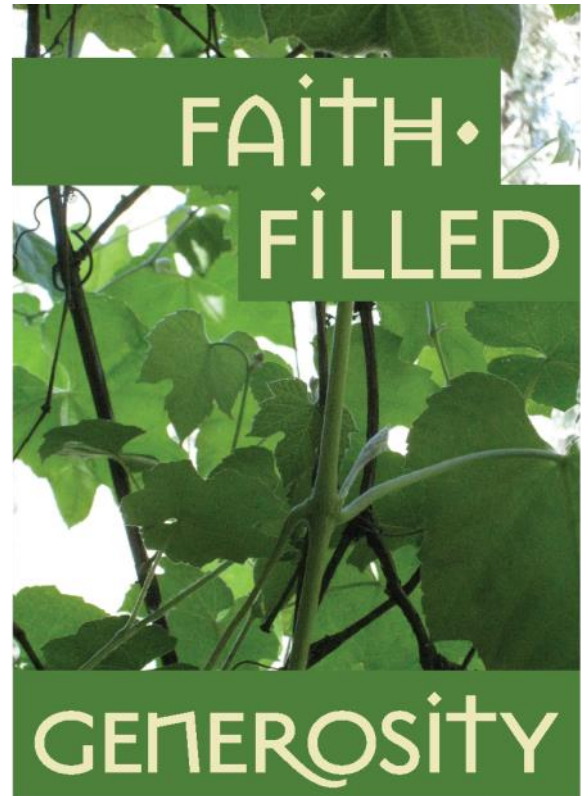
Thomas Roofing has not yet performed the repairs on the roof of the church.

The chiller compressor repairs have been completed. In the process, it was discovered that there are freon leaks in the system that are the result of corrosion and cannot be repaired. The system is at least 40 years old.

Following the Runoff Election voting, Mobile County has retained ServePro to clean the facilities.

Bids for termite protection have been received from Arrow and Cook's. Neither of these contracts include repair/replace coverage. The vestry opted not to choose either program.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.



Stewardship season usually begins in the fall of each year, and this year will be no exception, although the annual commitment campaign may look a little different. If you would like to help with the 2020-2021 stewardship program, please contact Father Thomas.



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

William Dorsey
St. John's ECW
Connie & Budd McLean
Janet Buckley

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE of the CENTRAL GULF COAST



AUGUST: JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION

Why are “Justice & Reconciliation” Important?

In the words of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, “We made a commitment to live into being the Jesus Movement by committing to evangelism and the work of reconciliation – beginning with racial reconciliation ... across the borders and boundaries that divide the human family of God. This is difficult work. But we can do it. It’s about listening and sharing. It’s about God.”

The Church also seeks to mobilize Episcopalians on issues of social change, and to build and enhance communities committed to transforming unjust structures in societies, and to accompany and enrich the ministry of Episcopalians working to be catalysts for equality, justice, and transformation.

During this Jubilee season, we invite you to take right action on justice and reconciliation issues that affect your communities. The Episcopal Church is rich with resources to help us do this vital work.



JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION AT SAINT JOHN’S

Please join Fr. Thomas on Wednesday evenings, beginning August 12, at 7PM on Zoom to discuss the book *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson. Register by calling or emailing the church (office@stjohnsmobile.org). Zoom meeting instructions will be sent out before each meeting.

You will be on your own to acquire a copy of the book, either by downloading to your electronic device or ordering online. The book is also in stock at Books-A-Million in Mobile.

Session I—August 12

Higher Ground (Introduction—Ch. 3) - Hope

Session II—August 19

The Old Rugged Cross (Ch. 4-7) - Redemption

Session III—August 26

All God’s Children (Ch. 8-10) - Compassion

Session IV—September 2

I’ll Fly Away (Ch. 11-15) - Justice & Freedom

Session V—September 9

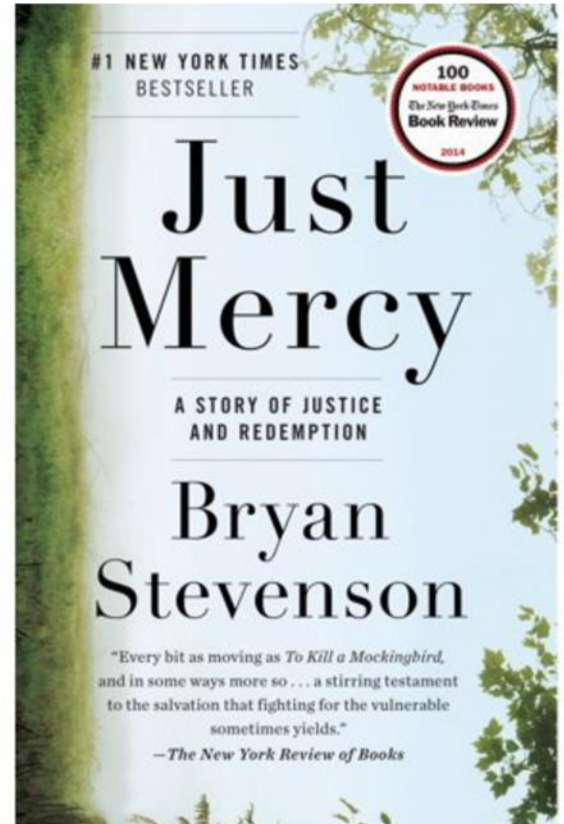
The Stonecatchers’ Song of Sorrow (Ch. 16-Postscript) - Forgiveness

The Commission on Racial Justice and Reconciliation
of the
Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast
invites you to

JOURNEY THE WAY OF LOVE
JOURNEY TOWARDS PEACE, JUSTICE AND
RECONCILIATION

JOURNEY TO JUBILEE

By joining in the Diocesan-wide reading, study and
discussion
of
Bryan Stevenson's Just Mercy



Jubilee Book Read

Commission on Racial Justice
and Reconciliation - Resources
<https://www.diocgc.org/racial-justice-and-reconciliation>

"The Opposite of Poverty is not wealth, the opposite of poverty is Justice." ~Bryan Stevenson~

Bryan Stevenson will be a keynote speaker at the 50th Anniversary Jubilee Celebration of the founding of our Diocese in December 2020.

Prepare for his time with us, prepare for Jubilee, by holding a **parish read/study** of his book and a viewing of the recently released movie between now and December 2020, at a time best for your congregation. Lent, a summer program or Advent might be ideal.

A spiritually and biblically focused study guide and other resources are available on the Diocesan Website. Feel free to adapt and use these creatively to enhance your parish's experience.

Just Mercy, Montgomery attorney and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, Bryan Stevenson, chronicles his quest for justice and mercy in the Criminal Justice System, particularly for the most vulnerable among us: poor people, people of color, children sentenced to life in adult prison, the mentally ill, those convicted unjustly, those on death row. He does this by taking the reader close to individual stories for, as his grandmother taught him, you have to get close to understand.

The universal spiritual themes of justice, mercy, compassion, hope, and forgiveness are woven throughout the book.



EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHES NEW COVID-19 RESPONSE WEB SECTION

Episcopal Relief & Development has added a new section to the website focusing on the organization's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and in the United States. These pages contain specific information about how Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting partners in the United States and around the world.

Episcopal Relief & Development is working with the Mother's Union in Tanzania in order to spread accurate information about the novel coronavirus and how to reduce its transmission. Mother's Union has a network in Tanzania of over 800,000 women engaged in micro-finance and small business training throughout the country. These women often hold dual roles as caretakers and providers for their families, making them incredibly valuable in preventing COVID-19.

In the United States, the US Disaster Program is supporting new emergency responses in California, Louisiana, Ohio and Oregon.

The organization is working with the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio through the diocese's ministry, Feeding the Beloved Community. This summer, volunteers and staff are serving 800 meals per week to vulnerable populations in four specific rural and inner-city communities that are marginalized by age, race and

finances. This innovative partnership leverages vegetable produce and pork grown by the diocese, and utilizes established networks of volunteers and other community support.

Additionally, the agency's Program staff continue to provide technical assistance as partners adapt existing programming to incorporate physical distancing and other protocols in order to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and program participants.

"COVID-19 has had a disproportionate effect on marginalized communities that were already struggling with food security and lack of access to resources," said Nagulan Nesiah, Senior Program Officer, Disaster Risk and Reduction, Episcopal Relief & Development. "Episcopal Relief & Development will continue to support both long-term partners and emergency responses with programs tailored to the needs and assets of their specific communities."

Donations to the [COVID-19 Pandemic Response Fund](#) (or send donation to **Episcopal Relief & Development P.O. Box 7058 Merrifield, VA 22116-7058**) will enable Episcopal Relief & Development to continue to support partners around the world as they meet needs created by the effects of the coronavirus.





Mac Pearce	08/01
Julia Heard	08/03
Andrew Lee	08/03
Kat Velaski	08/03
Kathe Gieseler	08/07
James Christiansen	08/11
Eugene Johnston	08/21
Erin Nelson Delaporte	08/25
Bootsie Cieutat	08/26
David Rich	08/27
Marion Wallace	08/27
David Jones	08/29



Michael & Mary Bonner	08/07
Robert & Charlynn Will	08/10
Curtis & Cindy Gass	08/19



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

Connie Anderson, Lee Dorsey, Kristen Turner, Cookie Rich, 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:

Gwendolyn Carey, Robin Gentry, Sara Lansang, Helon Jones, Helen Guthrie, Ouida McNider, Eddie Hun, David Clothier, Donnie Chestang, Katelynn Tillman, Karen Twilley, Nancy Payne, 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.

July Birthdays



Celebrating July birthdays at St. John's in 2019 with Caroline Chestang, Tina Cieutat, Mike Bonner, and Cheryl Winters-Heard. (Photo by Irene Yeager)

Contact Us

Staff:

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Jack Ruppe
 Sexton

Vestry:

Janet Buckley

James Christiansen, *junior warden*

Bootsie Cieutat, *treasurer*

Jan Joseph

Geri Moulton

Nikki Shaw, *clerk*

Mary Sheffield

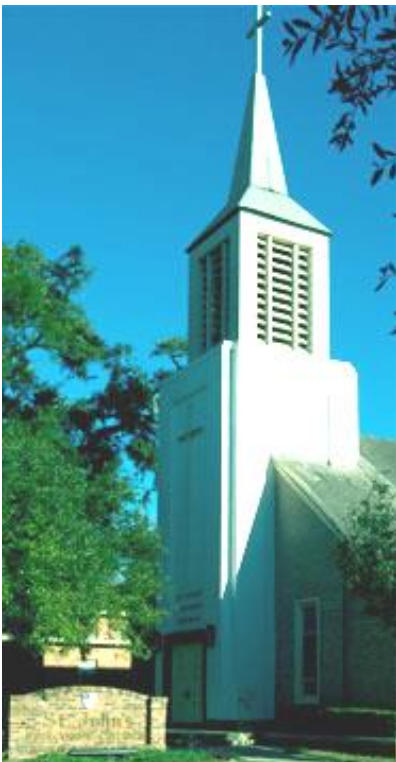
Kristen Turner

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.