



# 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 9

September 2020

## FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

I think this month, my column seems to be mostly observations and random thoughts.

We continue in our same worship pattern. The “soft open” we are using is bringing twelve to fifteen people to the church on Sunday mornings. There are also a few that come on Wednesdays. Our “viewership” has remained a pretty constant fifteen to twenty-five. That’s the number of devices that are connected to our Facebook Live Stream. Since we don’t know the identities of those, we don’t really know how many folks are watching.

There have been a couple of variations from that pattern. On the thirteenth of August, we hosted our annual book stickering party. Eight folks labelled all the books. It brought some folks that we don’t usually see on Sundays; it was good to see them again. One of our volunteers brought some breakfast goodies to share. We knocked out labelling over 1000 books in just about an hour and I think everyone was pleased to be here and doing something. Some great conversation happened during the work. And, we were physically distanced at opposite sides of our six-foot diameter tables.

Of course, we are a polling place and the runoff election was held here. We used the church and the parlor as voter check-in venues to maintain physical distancing and the Great Hall was used solely for voting. The county was very appreciative. The workers were even happier because they did not have to be in a tent in the parking lot. It worked very well. What will happen in November remains to be seen.

We have finally begun to see a significant reduction in new cases of COVID19 in Mobile County. That is good for all of us. I don’t seem to remember to say it very often, so let me put it out there for you:

- Wash Your Hands
- Don’t Touch Your Face
- Wear Your Mask
- Stay Home
- Maintain Physical Distance

It works. We have been very fortunate in our congregation. Only five people have contracted the virus and all have recovered or are recovering. Four know how they were infected. Two were infected through their workplaces. One is not sure. Please remember that wearing your mask is to protect those around you. You wear your mask because you love your neighbor.

At the end of the Vestry meeting, we had a small group conversation about privacy concerns. The issue raised was the full names of the folks on our prayer list, both friends & family as well as our own. Through live stream and internet posting, those names are there for ever.

As we moved to live streaming our services, about the only thing we changed was the elimination of singing. That was because singing causes greater dispersal of microdroplets.

A couple of weeks ago we changed how we handled the prayer list. We included first names and last initial in the online bulletin and the prayers that were read. It was universally disliked. Last week, it was just first names. If you’re in church, the bulletin has the complete list, but it isn’t on the internet and out there for anyone. The Vestry will formally talk about this and the newsletter this month.

Bottom line, if you have asked to have someone added to the prayer list, be sure you have their permission to do so. Otherwise, let their name be on your heart and know that we support you.

-- Thomas

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEPTEMBER LITURGICAL CALENDAR

### The Martyrs of New Guinea

At our Wednesday Said Mass on 2 September, we will commemorate the Martyrs of New Guinea. The second largest island in the world is still a frontier for Christian missionary work because of its terrain and diversity. The first missionaries arrived in the 1860s with the Anglicans arriving in 1891. During the second world war, eight missionaries and two Papuan martyrs were betrayed to Japanese invaders. Their witness is part of this day's celebration, but also the faith and devotion of Papuan Christians who risked their lives to care for the wounded and damaged.

### Constance and Her Companions

Also known as the Martyrs of Memphis, Constance and the Sisters of Saint Mary worked tirelessly and at personal risk to minister to the victims of Yellow Fever in Memphis in 1878. Working alongside doctors and priests, the epidemic finally passed, but not before so many had fallen. We will remember their devotion to their brothers and sisters at a Said Mass at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, 9 September.

### Holy Cross Day

On Monday, 14 September at 12:00 PM, we will celebrate the Feast of the Holy Cross. Eusebius tells us that it was Helena, mother of Constantine, who discovered the True Cross buried at Golgatha. She was entrusted to build a suitable housing for it, that would inspire attraction and veneration. Whether or not Helena actually found the cross, her work stands today as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This day, we honor the implement of execution that brings us life and salvation.

### Ninian of Galloway

Ninian, a Romanized Briton, appears in a brief account in the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Martin of Tours was a great influence on Ninian where he gained his ideals of an Episcopal-monastic organization for missionary work. Along with Patrick of Ireland, Ninian is part of the continuity between the ancient Roman-British church and the developing Celtic Christianity of Ireland and Scotland. We'll celebrate Ninian's life and work at a Said Mass on Wednesday, 16 September at 10:00 AM.

### Saint Matthew

Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist will be commemorated on Monday, 21 September at a Said Mass at 12:00 PM. Legend holds that Matthew the Tax Collector became a disciple of Jesus and later wrote an account of the life and works of Jesus. We know this today as the Gospel of Matthew.

### Saint Michael and All Angels

One of the Major Feasts of the Church, we will celebrate the Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels at a Said Mass on Tuesday, 29 September at 12:00 PM. Angels have found a place in contemporary society with many identifying a personal guardian angel. But angel comes from the Greek "*Angelos*" which means "messenger". This day we commemorate all the messengers and agents of God throughout the course of history.

### Jerome of Bethlehem

We will celebrate the feast of Jerome of Bethlehem at our Wednesday, 30 September Said Mass at 10:00 AM. Jerome, a priest and monk, died in about 420. Pope Damasus tasked Jerome with making a new translation of the Bible into Latin, known to us as the Vulgate.



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

William Dorsey

Fran & Mike Barbour

Boots & Charlotte Buckelew

Sharon & Daniel Garland

Mary & Bob Sheffield

Ouida McNider

St. John's ECW



## Vestry

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church met on Sunday, 9 August at 11:30 AM via Zoom.

The proposed agenda was adopted. All members of the Vestry were present. The minutes of the July meeting were approved as submitted.

Bootsie Cieutat led the vestry through the financial reports, noting that Plate & Pledge were up significantly. Connie McLean reported that she had been in contact with Regions Bank concerning the Payroll Protection Program, noting that the bank's portal is not yet functional for us to apply for loan forgiveness.

Janet Buckley reported that the Head Start books are to be stickered this month and distributed to the children in September.

Fr. Heard reported that the termite damage in the chancel has been repaired. The damage to the frame of the northern west window has been inspected by Terminix and we are waiting to be contacted for repair estimate. He also reported that the repairs to the church roof have been completed. The irrigation water line was broken during the process, has been repaired, and is being paid for by the roofing company.

Fr. Heard reported that McKemie Place is still staying at the mission during the day. Their new facility will be ready in late fall.

Fr. Heard reported that he has applied for a grant from the State of Alabama Coronavirus Relief Fund. The grant would reimburse our expenses for the Live Streaming setup and allow us to expand it.

Regarding Safe Church Training, Fr. Heard will find out how long the certification is valid and who needs to do retraining.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.



## Season of Creation 2020: Jubilee for the Earth

An on-line series designed to help communities of faith act to protect creation.

Presented by

September 6, 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

### *Transforming Faith, Transforming Earth*

Dr. Robert Gottfried, The University of the South  
followed by a panel discussion

**GULF COAST  
Creation Care**

A faith-based  
climate action alliance

September 20, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

### *Creation Care from Varied Faith Perspectives*

Interfaith Panel:

The Rev. Bob Donnell, All Saints Episcopal Church, Moderator  
Imam Kamal Saleem, Mobile Masjid of Al Islam  
The Rev. Ellen Sims, Open Table United Church of Christ  
Mr. Glen Mutchnick, Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim  
– Springhill Avenue Temple  
Dr. Stephen Wilson, Spring Hill College  
Ms. Candice Dunston, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mobile

September 27, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

### *We Need Courage - Not Hope - to Fight Climate Change\**

Anna Jane Joyner, Climate Activist

Register for all Zoom sessions on our website:  
<https://gulfcoastcreationcare.org/upcoming-events>. Sessions will also  
be livestreamed on our Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/GulfCoastCreationCare/>.



St. John's is a founding member of Gulf Coast Creation Care, an interfaith group whose mission is to focus the Gulf Coast community's moral attention on the climate crisis and to mobilize all people toward bold and just action. The group is offering a series of webinars in September to celebrate the Season of Creation. Visit the GCCC website to sign up for all three webinars: <https://gulfcoastcreationcare.org/upcoming-events>.

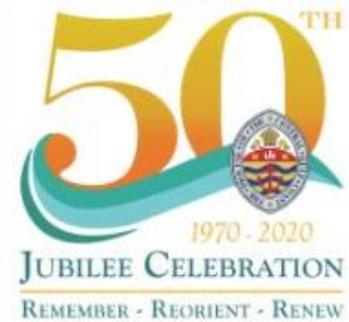
To my Wonderful St. John's Family,

Thank you all so much for your calls, cards, support and prayers for me and for Darren. I love and appreciate each and every one of you. I am happy to report that Darren is back at work and I am on the mend and back at Murray House.

The residents tell me daily how much they enjoy the lovely flowers from St. John's, and they are absolutely thrilled to have the Cokes! Many thanks for your kindness and generosity. Again, I have to say how proud I am to be a part of such a loving church family.

-Connie Anderson

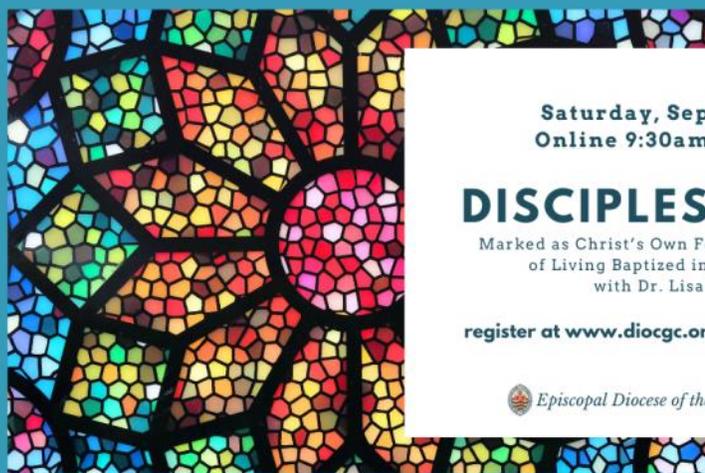
# EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of the* CENTRAL GULF COAST



## SEPTEMBER: DISCIPLESHIP & DISCERNMENT

### Why are “Discipleship & Discernment” Important?

Spiritual growth is such a priority in the life of our diocese that we have named “Discipleship” and “Discernment” as two of our three initiatives. We want to encourage a culture of discipleship and discernment in every congregation. Wherever stage any individual of any age is on in their faith journey, our goal is that they have access to support and resources that help to form them as a disciple in the image of Christ. We are now in the “Renewing” phase of our Jubilee timeline, and that means that we need to be intentionally looking ahead and discerning how we are being called to move the Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast into the next 50 years. As a group of disciples, we cannot achieve that goal without first intentionally participating and going deeper into our own faith formation.



**Saturday, September 19**  
**Online 9:30am to 2:30pm**

### **DISCIPLESHIP DAY**

Marked as Christ's Own Forever: A Celebration  
of Living Baptized in Today's World  
with Dr. Lisa Kimball

register at [www.diocgc.org/event-registration](http://www.diocgc.org/event-registration)

 Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

Lisa Kimball was baptized in the same service in which her father was confirmed, at St. Clement's Episcopal Church in Berkeley, CA. She grew up living in four major cities in four countries and can count on one hand the number of Sundays her family missed church. As a recent college graduate, Lisa accepted a coffee-hour invitation to help with the church youth group. Twenty-five years later, having

served on the staff of five Episcopal congregations, two dioceses, and as a consultant/trainer across the United States, she received her Ph.D. in Work, Community, and Family Education from the University of Minnesota. Lisa's dissertation on the significance of godparents in the 21st century wove together her interests in human development, experiential learning, faith formation, church history, and popular culture. Today she focuses on discipleship practices, and the relationship between Christian education and healthy faith communities in times of rapidly shifting patterns of religiosity. Lisa is married to the Rev. Dr. Patricia Lyons, with whom she shares a passion for compelling church and adventures in their RV, “Minerva.”

Register for Discipleship Day with Dr. Lisa Kimball at <https://www.diocgc.org/event-registration>.

## MIRACLES: TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENTS

BY J. DAVEY GERHARD

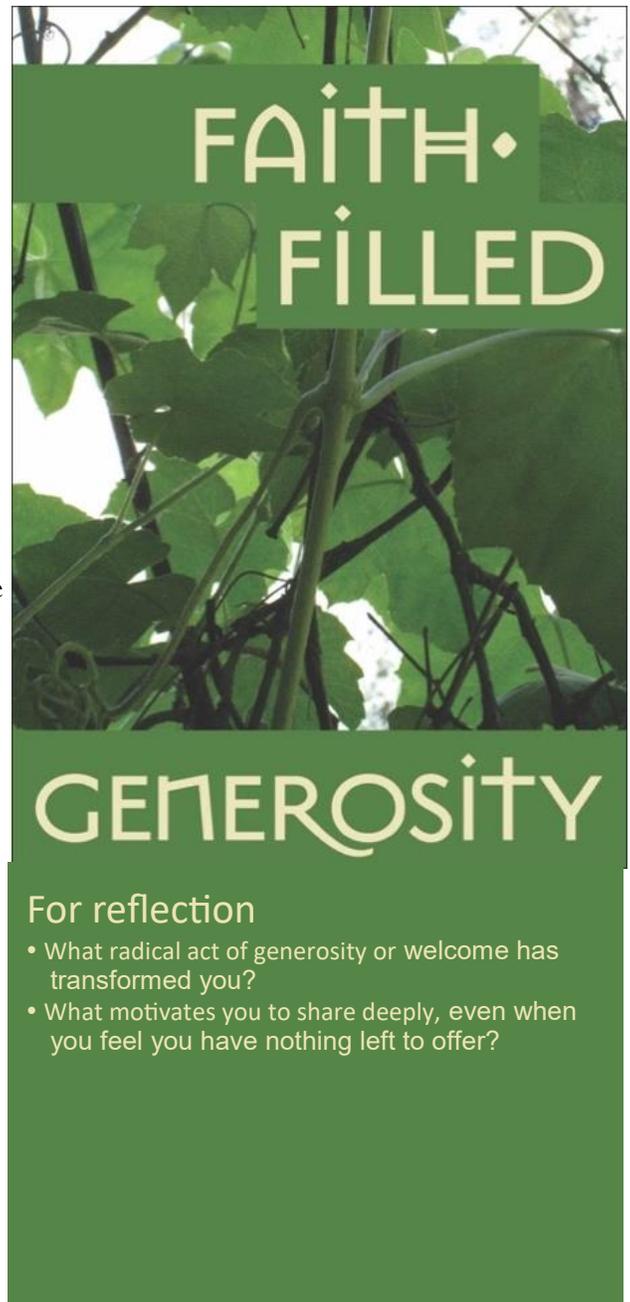
The Gospels of August 2020 contain two transformational stories in the ministry of Jesus that weave the strongest threads in our Christian tapestry. What do these stories have in common? Radical hospitality and abundance. Together these two hallmarks of Christian values form our view of the Kingdom of Heaven and inform how we relate to our neighbors. August is a month of Faith-Filled Generosity.

The first of these transformational moments occurs beside the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus spends a long day healing and teaching a great crowd. Do you, like me, wonder what he was teaching? Was he empowering them to free themselves from the oppression of worry and to focus on loving their neighbor? Was he reminding them that they were perfectly created children of God? Did he cure all kinds of diseases that day: emotional pain, disease, spiritual bleakness? Whatever it was, it lasted late into the day, and, in yet another act of compassion, the Savior did not want them to leave before they had their fill of teaching, of healing, and of nourishment.

Scholars debate the actual miracle that occurred next. Did Jesus make a feast from a few scraps of food? Or did he unlock the sharing and compassion of the crowd, so that their own pocketful of food created a feast when combined with their neighbors' pocketful? Debating this miracle, to me, seems like counting angels on the head of a pin – the truth is that people were fed, a problem that needed a solution was solved, love happened here.

Scraps of food also feature in the second of August's transformational Gospel passages, as we learn about Jesus' conflicted relationship with the Syrophenician Woman. Jesus does not appear in this story as the virtuous, blameless hero — quite the opposite. If a passerby had filmed this on their phone and uploaded the scene to Twitter, would we have canceled Jesus for the racist and dismissive way he treats this woman who is outside the fold of the chosen people of God? When Jesus demands to be fed before tending to a sick child, and then compares the child to a dog, some might have backed down. Who is to argue with a man rumored throughout the countryside to be the Son of God?

When the Syrophenician Woman advocates for her child, and stands up to Jesus, two transformative miracles occur. The first is that the child is healed. The second, the transformation that echoes throughout the rest of history, is that Jesus himself is changed. From this moment he realizes his ministry is to heal all who come to him: Galilean, Samaritan, Phoenician, Jew, Pagan, regardless of religion or culture. We are the inheritors of this grace, of this generosity. When we share our gifts with the world, extending hospitality and creating abundance, it's nothing short of a miracle. Amen.



*J. Davey Gerhard is the Executive Director of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship, and lives and teaches his faith in San Francisco, California.*



## “SEMPER GUMBY” IS THE MOTTO FOR THE ROSEBUD EPISCOPAL MISSION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting The Episcopal Church in South Dakota through the Rosebud Episcopal Mission. Working with network of Sioux Tribe leaders who formed a COVID task force, a relationship with a local community grocery store and scrupulous volunteers, the mission is providing relief to one of the nation’s hardest hit groups. According to APM Research Lab, in the US, one in every 1,500 indigenous Americans has died, compared to one in 2800 white Americans—making them the second most at-risk ethnic category in the US after Black Americans. Indigenous people are particularly susceptible to getting the coronavirus disease for many factors including pre-existing conditions and poorer nutrition.

“Semper Gumby,” a mix of Latin and nod to the clay animation cartoon character, is the mission’s motto which means “always flexible.” Each day, the Rev. Dr. Lauren Stanley, Erroll Geboe, Danny Gangone and other members of their response team face failing infrastructure and a lack of medical supplies which causes a range of need, and they do their best to find the items. It is with great heart that they assess needs and deliver supplies over a widespread area in coordination with the tribe health representatives and the community chairman. By working with an established point person, they are able to maintain the privacy of individuals making requests for aid, asking

for anything from eggs to pencils and crayons to entertain out-of-school children.

“I received a call from one of our elders, to whom we normally supply firewood through our #FirewoodfortheElders program. I thought she was calling for firewood, because it had been very cold the night before (38 degrees),” said the Rev. Dr. Lauren Stanley, who leads the efforts. “Instead, she was calling simply to say, ‘Thank you’ for helping her get supplies. She said she was beginning to get desperate for bleach and other cleaning supplies, because of her own health, and the health of her grandchildren, whom she is raising. That call alone made all the miles worth it.

Trinity Church, Mission



## August Birthdays

Celebrating August birthdays in 2019 at St. John’s with David Jones, James Christiansen, Kathe Gieseler, and Bootsie Cieutat. (Photo by Irene Yeager)



Thomas Creel	09/02
Ron Brown	09/06
Jayson Chestang	09/08
Mallory Chestang	09/09
John Creel	09/08
Barbara Vann	09/12
Jim Hayward	09/15
Lavelle Ollhoft	09/19
Jeremy Anderson	09/20
Mary Bonner	09/20
Thelma Lomers	09/22
Rhett Barbour	09/23
Ashley Garris	09/26



Jan & Mark Joseph	09/02
Regina & John Molyneux	09/02
Jeanne & Eddy Velaski	09/08
Erin Nelson & Chris Delaporte	09/12
Irene & Butch Yeager	09/29



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

Mary Jones, David Jones, Connie Anderson, Lee Dorsey, Cookie Rich, Bob Ross, 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:**

Elizabeth Smyth, David James Marrocco, Gwendolyn Carey, Sara Lansang, Helon Jones, Helen Guthrie, Eddie Hun, Donnie Chestang, Katelynn Tillman, Karen Twilley, Nancy Payne, Donna Pigg, David Shippee, Robert Levy, 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:**

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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

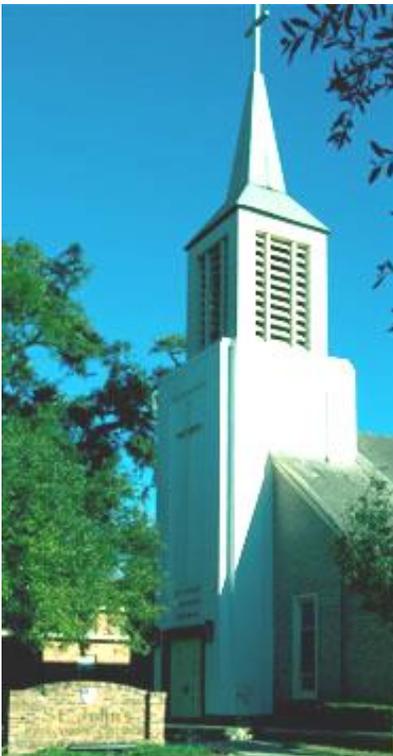
Kristen Turner

Ron Waites, *senior warden*

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 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 1<sup>st</sup>  
 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](http://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.