



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 10

October 2020

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

By our liturgical calendar, we are following the “A” Lectionary Year. If you divide the year by three and there is no remainder, it’s Year A. Which year is determined by the first Sunday of Advent. 2019 is evenly divisible by three, so it’s Year A. (If you’re interested, the ins and outs of the Sunday Lectionary are on page 888 of your BCP.)

Because it is Year A (and has been since Advent 1), we are reading the Gospel According to Matthew. For the most part, we are reading it sequentially, with occasional omissions. There are points where we venture into another gospel (usually John) because of what is going on in the church year.

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) which went into use on the First Sunday of Advent in 2007, provides two tracks for the Old Testament reading and Psalm, while the two New Testament readings are the same. One of the underlying ideas in the RCL was that people in the pews didn’t know the stories of the Old Testament. To remedy that, Track 1 of the RCL covers the major stories of the Old Testament over the three year cycle in the Season after Pentecost. We used Track 1 for the first year, and from this preacher’s perspective it was very difficult. RCL Track 2 coordinates the Old Testament and the Psalm with the New Testament readings.

The complaint about not knowing the stories did not extend to the Gospels. That is precisely because we do read almost all of them over the course of the three year cycle. One of the benefits of this is that we get large chunks of Jesus’ teaching spread out over several weeks. In September we had four significant teachings, each of them deals with the behaviors of a righteous person.

First was how to deal with someone who sins against you. It outlines a process and a final punishment if the sin is not confessed and repented. Second was on the

topic of forgiveness, Peter’s asking how many times to forgive. Jesus illustrated his position with the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant. The third centered on the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. The householder paid the same wage to each laborer irrespective of the amount of time they had worked. Finally, last Sunday, the obvious topic was Jesus’ Authority, but the Parable of the Two Sons leads into thinking about what it is to be faithful, obedient, and a follower of God.

Over these four weeks we’ve delved into:

- Sin, Admission, and Repentance
- Forgiveness
- Grace
- Obedience

What I don’t see in this list is Confession. Of course we do that each Sunday. We do it so often that sometimes I think we’re only going through the motions; besides, not many folks take advantage of auricular confession.

2020 has brought us many things. One unexpected thing is the Jewish Days of Awe or High Holy Days falling at the end of September. Over the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the *Avinu Malkeinu* is recited or sung:

Our Father, our King, hear our prayer
Our Father, our King, we have sinned before you
Our Father, our King, have compassion upon us
and upon our children
Help us bring an end to pestilence, war, and famine
Cause all hate and oppression to vanish from the
earth
Inscribe us for blessing in the Book Of Life
Let the new year be a good year for us

Here is a prayer of confession, a prayer of renewal, and a prayer of hope for the future.

-- Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OCTOBER LITURGICAL CALENDAR

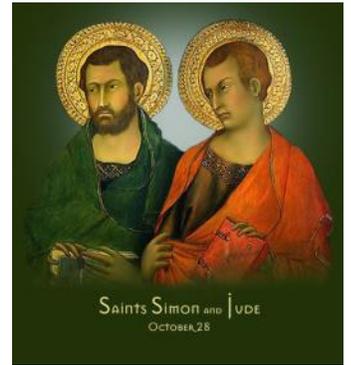
On Sunday, 4 October, we will have a **Blessing of Animals** in the Garden at 3:00 PM. We'll be observing the feast of **Saint Francis of Assisi** and remembering his devotion to all of God's creatures, great and small. Bring your pets to the garden so that they can celebrate Francis' wisdom with us.

At our Wednesday mass on 14 October, we will remember **Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky**, Bishop of Shanghai from 1877 to 1883. Schereschewsky was born into a Jewish family in Lithuania and his early studies seemed to be sending him to the rabbinate. While in graduate school, he became interested in Christianity. He emigrated to the US and entered seminary to train for the Presbyterian Church. After two years, he joined the Episcopal Church and continued his studies at The General Theological Seminary. Schereschewsky had a natural facility with languages and joined the missionary field in Shanghai. Living in Beijing, he translated the Bible and parts of the Prayer Book into Mandarin. Paralysis struck him in 1883, yet he continued his work the next 20 years.

Continuing our recognition of apostles and evangelists, we will celebrate the life and ministry of **Saint Luke the Evangelist** at a Said Mass on Monday, 19 October at 12:00 PM. Luke, the self-identified author of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, brings his own perspective on the person and ministry of Jesus and Jesus' continuing effect on the world. Luke's account of the spread of the early church and the ministry of Saint Paul help us to craft a picture of the world in the first century. His portrayal of the radical hospitality and inclusion that Jesus manifested still stands today as a standard by which we can judge our ministries.

We will remember **Saint James of Jerusalem**, the brother of Our Lord, at a said mass on Friday, 23 October at 12:00 PM. Sometimes called "James the Just", James supported the inclusion of Gentiles in the church. According to a second-century chronicler, James provoked the ire of some factions in Jerusalem because of his success at bringing new converts into the church. Taking James to the pinnacle of the Temple, they commanded him to recant his faith and Jesus. When he refused, James was thrown from the roof and then cudgelled to death.

Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles will be remembered at our Wednesday mass on 28 October at 10:00 AM. Sadly, our knowledge of these two original apostles is quite lacking. Simon is referred to as "a Zealot" and Saint John mentions Jude in his account of the Last Supper. Tradition associates both with the region of Persia, now Iran. Some accounts call them martyrs, some say that both died peaceful deaths in Edessa or Beirut.



The Epistle of Jude brings us a unique doxology:

*"Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing,
25 to the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen."*



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Please join us at Saint John's on Sunday, 4 October at 3:00PM in the courtyard for a blessing of all of our furry, feathered and finned friends. All types of animals are welcome, but please respect others and leash or restrain your pets.



Vestry

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church was called to order at 11:32 AM on Sunday, 13 September 2020 by Fr. Heard.

The proposed agenda was adopted and excused absences were noted for Geri Moulton and Bootsie Cieutat. The minutes of the 9 August meeting were approved as submitted.

Connie McLean reviewed the financials for August. She reported that Regions is still waiting for the Small Business Administration to approve the portal for PPP forgiveness.

Janet Buckley reported that the Head Start books have been stickered and are ready to be picked up and distributed to the children. Outreach plans to provide food boxes in November. The parish will be given the option to have Outreach do the shopping or bring in the required items. Outreach will check with Azalea Gardens Nursing Home to see if they are willing to receive items from outside.

The ECW is discussing making a contribution to hurricane relief.

Fr. Heard reported that Terminix has not yet sent a contractor to estimate the repairs to the Crucifixion window.

Fr. Heard reported that the grant application filed with the Alabama Coronavirus Relief Fund has been approved. We will receive \$10,800 for our audio/visual and network infrastructure needs.

Fr. Heard reported that there are only two vestry members who need to do Safe Church training. He will approach each of them individually.

A request has been received to use the space previously occupied by Thee Store for a counselling service to serve children, teens, and families. The business will be called Tree of Life Counselling. He asked if the Vestry would consider this a form of our outreach to the community. Janet Buckley moved, Jan Joseph seconded, a motion to endorse Tree of Life Counselling as an outreach program of Saint John's. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 PM.

PARISH LIFE

PINK SUNDAY

St. John's will be holding **Pink Sunday** on Sunday, October 21 to acknowledge the need for more awareness, research, and treatment for breast cancer. Even though you may not be worshipping in-person, you can still **wear pink** to show your support for those fighting cancer; to admire the survivors; and to honor those taken. You could even take a picture to show-off your pink and post it on the Saint John's Facebook page before or after the service! We will have information, discussion, and prayer. Please join us and WEAR PINK!!

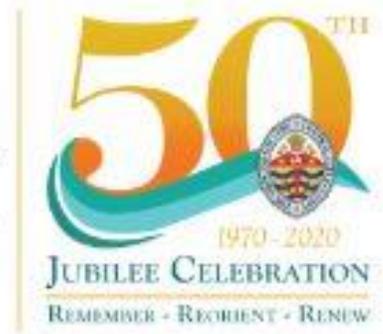
October is
Breast
Cancer
Awareness
Month

September Birthdays



Celebrating 2019 September birthdays at St. John's with Mary Bonner and Jason Chestang. Also pictured—Mary Jones. (Photo by Irene Yeager)

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE of the CENTRAL GULF COAST



OCTOBER: EVANGELISM

Why is “Evangelism” Important?

Every baptized Episcopalian has vowed to proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ. For us, evangelism is the spiritual practice of seeking, naming and celebrating Jesus’ loving presence in the stories of all people...and then inviting everyone to more!

Right now in this season of social distancing and discord, an unprecedented time when we’re experiencing so much separation, it’s especially hard to imagine how we might build on or deepen our connections with God and each other.

We might assume, on the surface of things, that we can’t “connect” - but we can! There really *is* so much to which we *can* invite people, and the reality is that they - and we - might need that invitation now more than ever.

Even in the midst of a pandemic, we invite you to give evangelism a try this October. Try it out with new eyes and an open heart. We know that God is always present even when we may not be meeting in person. Now is a time when we especially need to remember our connections and hear the stories that name and celebrate God’s loving presence and give us all the opportunity to share those stories.

FOOD DRIVE: THANKSGIVING FOOD BOXES FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

Your Saint John’s Outreach Committee is still planning a fall food drive. Our goal is **to fill twelve boxes with non-perishable food**. The boxes will be delivered to sixteen families who are in need. The Outreach Committee budget will be providing a ham and fresh fruit to go in each box.

The families have been chosen by Mobile Community Action, a social services agency that serves low income families. All of the families have young children; many are grandparents raising their grandchildren. The MCA social workers will be picking up and delivering the boxes to the families on Wednesday, November 18th. We want to have all the **contributions for the boxes in by Sunday, November 8th**.

You can start bringing your food (or money) contributions to the church on Sunday or Wednesday mornings. If, because of the COVID-19 health crisis, you are not coming to the church, members of the Outreach Committee will be glad to do your shopping for you, just send a check to Saint John’s (write “food drive” on the comment line).



Thanksgiving Food Drive

Our goal is to provide a box of food that will help them out for the week of Thanksgiving when children are not receiving school breakfast and lunch. Take the shopping list on page 5 to remind you what we want to provide in each box.

Thank You,
Outreach Committee



Saint John's Fall Food Drive

dry cereal
canned peas or corn
canned fruit cocktail
pudding cups
fruit or applesauce cups
grits

cookies or snack cakes
canned peaches
dried beans
rice
boxed macaroni and cheese

Freely giving our all to God

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind”....

And ... ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” – MATTHEW 22:36-39

BY ROB TOWNES

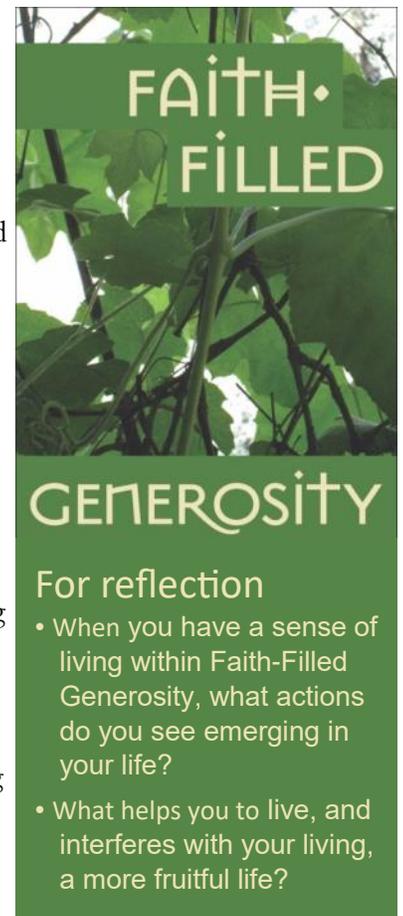
There’s a saying that the chicken who lays an egg makes a contribution, but the chicken who makes a sandwich offers a sacrifice. One could say that Jesus was alluding to the latter when he responded to the question as to which was the greatest commandment, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all of who you are.”* He was asking for more than a contribution; he was asking for the sacrifice of our all.

As the Latin root of the word suggests, a sacrifice — a *sacrum facere* — makes one holy. Giving generously of that of which you are a steward — your heart, soul, mind and all your possessions — is life giving. And it is countercultural. As the bumper sticker declares, “S/He who dies with the most toys wins.” That’s a powerfully seductive statement. Only with God’s help can we avoid being allured into thinking that it is in acquiring possessions that our life gains meaning. May we grow in the wisdom that a rich life results in trusting that it is in God we live and move and have our being.

This reflection is written while visiting Green Bough House of Prayer in Scott, Georgia. Here the three residents, with the company of 77 associates, have dedicated their lives, their all, to God and have taken on a Rule of Life to embrace silence, prayer, simplicity and living in the present moment, and accept all as coming from God. Do all for God. Offer all to God. This to me is a beautiful example of Faith-Filled Generosity.

Very few members of the Church dedicate themselves to full-time contemplative living, but all of us are invited to learn to live Jesus’ greatest commandment, trusting that in so doing, Faith-Filled Generosity will flourish in our lives.

As we move back into our church buildings, remembering only too well the COVID-19-caused absence of normalcy, may we re-enter with a renewed commitment to freely giving our all to God and faithfully loving our neighbors as ourselves.



Rob Townes received his Master of Divinity degree from Emory University’s Candler School of Theology and has spent his professional career as a nonprofit and church fundraising consultant.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS AS HURRICANE SALLY MAKES LANDFALL

Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting Episcopal dioceses along the Gulf Coast in response to Hurricane Sally. The organization's US Disaster team is holding daily coordination calls with the dioceses of Central Gulf Coast, Louisiana, Western Louisiana and Mississippi as they prepared for the hurricane and are now monitoring its impact.

Hurricane Sally made landfall early Wednesday morning in Alabama as a Category 2 hurricane, prompting water rescues, dropping trees and threatening catastrophic flooding. The storm is moving at only 3 mph, dropping more than 24 inches of rain in some areas.

"In the midst of a hurricane, it is important to remember to take steps to ensure your own safety," said Tamara Plummer, Program Officer, Episcopal Relief & Development. "Once Hurricane Sally has passed, our partners will begin assessing the most

urgent needs in their communities." Bishop Russell Kendrick in a video address to the diocese, thanked Episcopal Relief & Development for its support during Hurricane Sally.

Flood water can move quickly and is potentially dangerous so it is imperative not to walk, drive or swim in flooded areas. Generators should be used outdoors and away from windows due to potential carbon monoxide buildup.

Please continue to pray for individuals and families in the Gulf Coast. Learn more about how to prepare for disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires at <https://www.episcopalrelief.org/> Donations to the [Hurricane Relief Fund](#) will support Episcopal Relief & Development's response to Hurricane Sally and other storms or send donation to **Episcopal Relief & Development P.O. Box 7058 Merrifield, VA 22116-7058.**

If you would like to make a donation to help with Hurricane Sally relief, you may write your check to St. John's and note "hurricane" on the memo line. We will forward all donations to the diocese to use where it is most needed. From the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast: "Monetary donations are appreciated at this time to help recover and maintain critical ministries that serve the needs of the affected communities."

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING IS RESPONDING TO COVID-19

The United Thank Offering Board has elected to postpone the upcoming 2021 grant focus of *Act: Turn love into action by caring for God's creation to protect the most vulnerable who will bear the largest burden of pollution and climate change. The new 2021 focus is: Recovering with love and gratitude: An Episcopal Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic in Local Contexts.* The previous focus, centering on creation care, will be used in the 2022 granting cycle.

The goal of the UTO Board is to help individual groups and congregations respond to the needs of their community created by COVID-19. As always, 100% of all ingathering funds will be issued in the form of grants to groups and congregations who are serving their communities out of gratitude. During difficult times like these, practicing gratitude is the best way to help reduce stress and maintain our relationships with each other and God.

Please check out the UTO website (<https://episcopalchurch.org/united-thank-offering>) to look for newsletter articles and monthly sermons all based on gratitude. In November, there will be a weekly series based on thankfulness which can be used individually or corporately. It is a great way to put giving thanks back into the holiday of Thanksgiving. Our society draws us all into the commercialism of Christmas making it difficult to really appreciate the true meaning. Spending a little time during the month of November practicing thankfulness is an excellent way of centering ourselves on Christ and reminding us of all that we have rather than on what we don't have.

Joyce Landers, UTO Vice-President (St. Mark's, Troy)



Charlynn Will	10/04
Meagan Clanton	10/08
Bob Anderson	10/11
Kay Meador	10/11
Marjorie Duhon	10/13
Shirley Hall	10/14

Pam Velaski	10/24
Chris Velaski	10/24
Madison Hughes	10/25
Jeweliana Barbour	10/27
Audrey Garner	10/30



Ron & Marie Brown	10/07
Budd & Connie McLean	10/22



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

Carolyn, Lesley, Irene, David, Mary, David, Connie, Cookie, Bob, Jean, Ashley, Jerry, Mary, James, Bill, Audrey, Joyce, Marian, Ron, Jayson, Budd.

For our Homebound:

Mary Catherine.

For our Family and Friends:

Gwendolyn, Sara, Helon, Helen, Eddie, Donnie, Katelynn, Karen, Nancy, Donna, Robert, Tiffany, Betty, Latecia, Evia, Bonnie, Britney, Neal, Sandy & Ray, Connor, Paul, Krystal.

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

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Lella Lowe
 Financial Secretary
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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

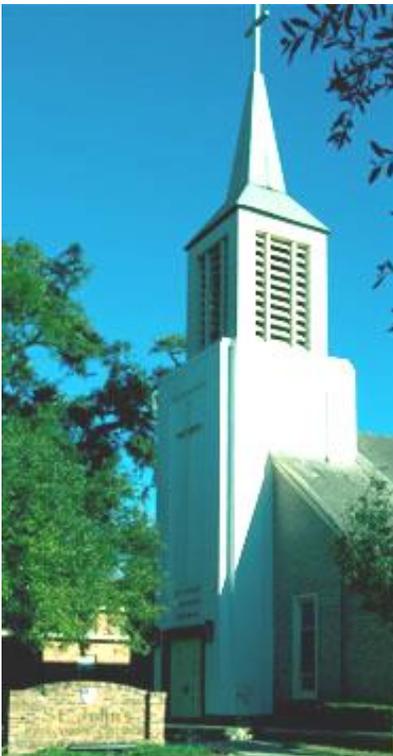
Kristen Turner

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.