



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

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FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

We seem to be caught between two worlds: One that prioritizes caring for all of its inhabitants, and one that prioritizes caring only for itself. I'd like to think that, most of the time, every one of you would identify with the first. But, where we are isn't a static state: it can change, day to day, moment to moment. Phil Ochs, a 1960s protest song writer/performer introduced one of his songs with,

“The definition of a liberal is somebody who is 30 degrees to the left of center in good times and 30 degrees to the right of center when it affects them personally.”

When we find ourselves being challenged by life, it's a natural tendency to 'circle the wagons' to afford the greatest protection. This isn't a new phenomenon. It was described by Augustine of Hippo, who was Bishop of Hippo (North Africa) from 395 to 430 CE. A prolific writer, Augustine left two important texts for us, [Confessions](#) and [The City of God](#).

Augustine wrote [The City of God](#) around 410CE, as a response to the sack of Rome by Alaric the Visigoth. In it he writes:

“Two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The earthly city glories in itself, the heavenly city glories in the Lord...In the one, the princes, and the nation it subdues, are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love.”

Augustine was describing what he considered to be the distinctions between the natures of the Church and the world. The Church is created with love as its model. It is formed by the self-offering, self-sacrificing, and self-emptying love of Christ.

For Augustine, it would be antithetical that a Christian could place self above others. A Christian's true

responsibility is to the love that God has shown and he/she is called to demonstrate that love in the world.

Of late, we seem to be bit of a punching bag to politicians and pundits whose faith seems to be about themselves. Last week, the President declared churches to be essential and that they open last Sunday.

We are essential. We are open. Our building will remain closed.

Your vestry and some invited others met last week to discuss plans for opening for public worship on 31 May. The overwhelming sense was that it was too early. We talked about the criteria that we must meet to be able to open. More than half of the folks participating said that, because of their personal situations, even if we opened, they would not be present. Age, health, others at home, and concern for others were the underlying reasons.

Today (26 May), the Mobile County Health Department reported that last week was the highest number of COVID-19 cases in one week for the county.

I would love to have all y'all back here! It would be wonderful, but it would be Augustine's earthly city - the one that does what it wants without regard for others. I can't do that; I love you too much to put you at risk.

We will continue to worship remotely. We will continue to pray and study and grow in faith together. We will continue to be the church and we will continue to do it from home.

Our decision to come back into the buildings will be made in concert with our bishop and taking in the best intelligence we can.

Let us continue to live that selfless love that doesn't demand, but calls each of us to remember our responsibilities to love one another as the Lord loves us.

-- Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JUNE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Visitation (the short name for it) commemorates the visit of the Blessed Virgin to her cousin, Elizabeth. You will recall that Elizabeth is the mother of John the Baptist, and is also pregnant at the time of Mary's visit. Luke's gospel tells this story and is the source for the canticle Magnificat. We will celebrate this feast at 12:00PM on Monday, 1 June.

Martyrs of Uganda

On Wednesday, 3 June, we will commemorate the Martyrs of Uganda at our regular Wednesday service. In 1886, 32 men were burned at Namugongo because they refused to renounce Christianity. In the months that followed, many more Christians met their deaths for their faith.

Ephrem of Nisibis

The Syrian Church calls Ephrem "The harp of the Holy Spirit", and retains several hymns of his composition in its liturgy. His writings had a strong influence of the development of church doctrine. He may have been present at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and lived in his hometown of Nisibis until 363. He moved to a cave in the hills above Edessa, which, sustained by barley bread and dried herbs, is where he composed most of his writings. We will commemorate his life and work at our mass on Wednesday, 10 June at 10:00AM.

Saint Barnabas the Apostle

Our first knowledge of Barnabas comes from Acts 4:36-37:

Thus Joseph who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas (which means, Son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

His missionary efforts earned him the title of Apostle. Barnabas was from Cyprus, a Jew of the Diaspora. It was Barnabas who brought Paul to the Apostles in Jerusalem, testifying to Paul's experiences. He later settled in Antioch and sent for Paul to assist in leading the church there. We will commemorate Barnabas' life at our Said Mass on Thursday, 11 June at 12:10PM.

First Book of Common Prayer

As has been our custom over the last few years, we will commemorate the First Book of Common Prayer at our Wednesday, 17 June said mass. This commemoration is to be placed in an open day in the week following Pentecost. As has also been our custom, we will use the rite from the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.

Nativity of John the Baptizer

On Wednesday, 24 June, we will observe the Feast of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist at a mass at 10:00AM. John the Baptist, one of the "Johns" commemorated in our main window in the chancel, is chronicled in all four of the Gospels. The son of Elizabeth and Zechariah, John was destined to be the herald of Jesus' ministry. John had his own crowd of disciples that followed him, calling people to repentance and baptizing them as a symbol of their new lives.

John is remembered in Advent as Prophet and in Epiphany as the baptizer of Our Lord. In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist is the figure who declares Jesus to be "The Lamb of God". We remember John also for his ascetic ways, dressing in camel's hair and eating wild honey and locusts, as well as his denunciation of Herod.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul

On Monday, 29 June at 12:00PM, we will observe the Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. While sometimes at odds with each other, their joint leadership of the church is commemorated in remembering their martyrdom at Rome. Tradition holds that Peter was crucified head downward and Paul was beheaded, as befitted a Roman citizen.



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 "#".



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

LaVerne Foster

Connie & Bob Anderson

Joan-Marie Elam

Barry Bolson

Bootsie & Tina Cieutat

Mary Cook

Connie & Bob Anderson

Betty Jo Bethea

Joan Bergman

Neva Bache



Vestry

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church was called to order at 11:45 on Sunday, 10 May. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

The proposed agenda was approved.

James Christiansen, Bootsie Cieutat, and Geri Moulton were excused.

The minutes of the 19 April meeting were approved.

The financial reports for April were reviewed.

Fr. Heard reported that through the efforts of Connie McLean and Lella Lowe, Saint John's has been approved to receive funds from the Paycheck Protection Program. He, Lella, and our auditor are working to ensure that we maximize the amount of the loan that can be forgiven.

Janet Buckley reported that Outreach is sending pizza for lunch for the kids at Saint Mary's Home. This will be one per month for three months.

Fr. Heard reported that Terminix has requested another contractor to work up an estimate of the

repairs. This is, of course, after we've already had an adjuster to validate the first contractor's estimate.

Fr. Heard reported that the women of McKemie Place are remaining at the United Methodist Inner City Mission on a 24 hour basis. Their construction/remodeling project at their new property has been slowed significantly. It is their current belief that it will be ready for occupancy sometime in the fall.

The parochial report remains unfinished.

A conversation centering on our live streaming outreach through Facebook took place. Additional equipment has been procured to improve the quality of our transmission. In addition, Fr. Heard is working on a way to allow non-internet parishioners to 'dial in' to a conference call bridge that will carry the audio of our services.

We are still waiting to hear from the bishop concerning the resumption of in-person worship.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10PM.

OUTREACH

OUTREACH IS ALSO REACHING OUT

Sometimes it's the little things that have changed that make us realize how much has changed...

"How are you?" "How's the family?" "How you doing?" Questions we use as greetings; conversation starters; questions that were automatic, as were the answers: "Okay" "Fine, fine."

Now I find myself actually asking those questions and listening carefully to answers. Because now it matters—it probably always mattered -- but now the answer affects all of us in this time of physical distancing and contagious virus. Is everyone okay? Are you okay?

We lament not seeing each other and being confined to working at home and/or staying at home. Text messages, phone and Facebook have become our "lifelines" to keeping up our friendships, of keeping in touch, in asking "How are you?" of someone we regularly saw in person.

Keep in touch... call someone you haven't talked to since the last time we were in the church building together, drop someone a card or a note (wow, real mail!), tag them on Facebook if you see something you think they'd like. Stay in touch even if we can't touch. Let's reach out to each other.

-Janet Buckley

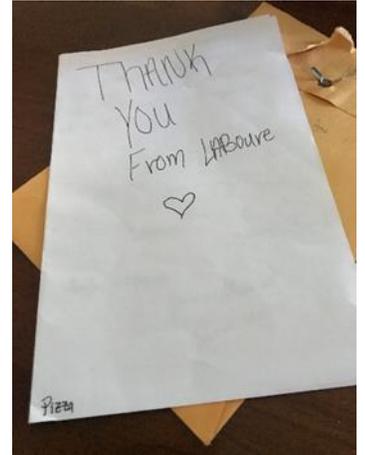


PARISH LIFE

PIZZA, PIZZA, PIZZA!!

On May 12th twenty large pizzas (that's a lot of pizza!!) were delivered to St. Mary's Home for the children and staff to enjoy as special treat. Saint John's Outreach Committee provided the treat and will "surprise" them again on the second Tuesday of June and July.

The requirement for social distancing and school being held online rather than in the school buildings has been particularly difficult for the youth living at the facility. No one can go out and no one (except staff) comes in: they know it's for their protection but it doesn't make it any easier (think patience and teenagers!?!). Pizza for lunch (especially when it's a surprise) was a welcomed treat. We received a sweet thank you card from the girls unit (the program is called Laboure) telling St. John's we were "awesome".



If you have any suggestions about other ways Outreach can help a socially isolated community please let one of the Outreach members know.



St. Mary's Children's Home
Caring for children since 1838

Why are “Liturgy & Worship” Important?

Our liturgy is the church’s public worship of God. The term is derived from Greek words for “public” and “work.” The church’s public worship of God is the work of the Christian people. The life of Christ active in the church by the Spirit is expressed through our liturgy.

The unity of the members of the church in Christ is expressed most fully in liturgy. Liturgy expresses the church’s identity and mission, including the church’s calling to invite others and to serve with concern for the needs of the world. Whether the liturgy is done by many or few, it is the corporate liturgy of the whole church.

Background of Early Liturgy and Worship

When the diocese was formed in 1970, we were using the 1928 Prayer Book. Our theology was more conservative, in the sense of using the language of sin and judgement – and hell more prominently.

The language in the 1928 Prayer Book is derived from English spoken in the 16th and 17th centuries, but much of the form is from much earlier.

The first Christians had no explicitly liturgical books. Apparently they continued the ritual pattern of Judaism, but interpreted and remodeled it in accordance with the Christian gospel.

Once the church moved further from its Jewish roots and sought to adapt itself to the languages, culture, and thought of the Gentile world, there developed a type of book, the church order, which contained descriptions of various liturgies, models for prayers, and directions for the conduct of rites. The most important of these orders still extant are: the *Didache*, an Eastern document probably dating from the second century; the *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, usually considered a Roman document (c. 215 CE); the *Didascalia*, a third century Syrian document; and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a Syrian document of the late fourth century which used the three earlier church orders as sources.

Early in the fourth century, Christianity was officially recognized by the Roman State. The ensuing monastic movement and theological controversies led to the elaboration of the liturgy, more theological definition

within the rites, strict regulation of the functions of various orders or ministers, and the establishment of fixed, written texts.

The 16th century Reformation, and the invention of the printing press, led to many new liturgical texts in Europe and England. Following King Henry VIII’s break with the papacy, the *Book of Common Prayer* was introduced in England. *The Act of Uniformity* required its use beginning on Whitsunday, June 9, 1549.

Following the American Revolution, in 1789, the American *Book of Common Prayer* was adopted. It was revised in 1892 and again in 1928 and in 1979.

In the early church, active participation of all those present was assumed, with the Bishop, or Elder, or Presbyter (Priest) leading the assembly. In later centuries and into the Middle Ages, participation by the laity diminished. It was revived after the Reformation and in our current liturgical forms lay participation is assumed and encouraged.

Before the adoption of the 1979 Prayer Book, Morning Prayer was the normative Sunday morning service, with Eucharist being held approximately once each month. This was generally true throughout the Episcopal Church.

Most of the above adapted from Marion J. Hatchett, Commentary on the American Prayer Book (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).



EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT AND US PARTNERS RESPOND TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting Episcopal Dioceses in the United States in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The organization's US Disaster Program is providing resources, technical support and funding to meet specific needs related to the pandemic in communities around the country.

Since mid-March, the US Disaster team, in partnership with the Presiding Bishop's office, has been holding weekly calls with bishops and key leaders in Episcopal dioceses to address the novel coronavirus pandemic. Initial steps included faith-based resources to help bishops and diocesan staffs determine how to safely conduct services and to maintain community in a pandemic. As the pandemic progressed and states issued stay-at-home orders, the US Disaster team offered weekly webinars on a variety of topics such as mental health, isolation, institutional support and immigration, as well as other resources to help diocesan partners address the widespread impact of the coronavirus. The US Disaster Program continues to provide technical support as partners determine how to best respond to the unique needs in their communities, whether that be mental health care, medical care, financial assistance or other needs.

"Episcopal Relief & Development collaborates with partners to tailor very specific responses to specific needs in each community through our asset-based approach," said Katie Mears, Senior Director, US Disaster Program, Episcopal Relief & Development. "By working with dioceses to leverage local gifts and resources, we meet needs that are not being met by other organizations. I am continually impressed by how the Church has risen up and found innovative ways to be present in their communities and to serve their neighbors."

In North Carolina, Texas and Puerto Rico, the US Disaster Program is working with long-term partners to adapt programming in light of the coronavirus and physical distancing guidelines. Many marginalized communities were already dealing with issues such as lower income or inconsistent employment, mental health concerns, lack of medical insurance and substandard housing. All of these challenges have become even more of a concern in light of the pandemic.

The Episcopal Farmworkers Ministry in North Carolina is working to meet the increased demand for their services particularly related to food, offering culturally-contextualized public health messaging and working with the state government to create standards for businesses that protect the needs of their workers. The Episcopal Diocese of Texas' Hurricane Harvey Recovery Program is working to reduce the stigma around mental health services and to connect people with mental health resources. While

following physical distancing protocols, the diocese is also continuing to provide food to vulnerable communities through the Abundant Harvest Ministry. The Episcopal Diocese of Puerto Rico's Programa REDES is delivering food, water and supplies to help individuals and families who are recovering from the earthquakes earlier this year and now have been impacted by the effects of COVID-19.

Rural communities in the United States often lack access to mental health care. Additionally, the stigma surrounding this care often means individuals don't ask for help. For example, the rate of suicide in rural Missouri has skyrocketed in recent years and the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to exacerbate the situation. The Episcopal Diocese of Missouri is training 70 volunteers in Randolph and Boone counties in first aid for mental health to help identify individuals at risk in their communities and to connect these individuals with local behavioral health resources.

In Pendleton, Oregon, the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon is assisting individuals and families who have been affected by both the coronavirus and historic floods that devastated the community in early February, damaging or destroying more than 400 buildings and homes. The diocese had to adjust plans for the flooding response quickly as stay-at-home and social distancing guidelines were issued. The closure of non-essential businesses created other economic concerns. With the support of Episcopal Relief & Development, the diocese is providing assistance with rent, food and other needs to impacted individuals and families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has curtailed many of the services available to migrants in shelters on the US-Mexico border, such as La Casa Shelter, which is supported by the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona. The diocese is working with shelter staff to implement physical distancing and provide virtual support to keep all of the residents safe and healthy as they navigate the US immigration process. The Diocese of Arizona has a long-standing relationship with Cruzando Fronteras and the shelter. With the support of Episcopal Relief & Development, it is leveraging these relationships to adapt the emotional, physical and pastoral assistance provided to migrants in the shelter under the current situation.

Make donations to the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Fund by sending a check to **Episcopal Relief & Development P.O. Box 7058 Merrifield, VA 22116-7058** to enable Episcopal Relief & Development and their partners to continue to provide emergency assistance to communities, both in the United States and around the world, that have been impacted by the coronavirus. In the coming weeks and months, additional updates will be provided about the ongoing response to this crisis.



Connie Anderson	06/03	Emily Johnston	06/10
Neva Bache	06/05	Ron Waites	06/12
Jerry Fulford	06/07	Connie McLean	06/16



David & Kim Partsch	06/06
David & Mary Jones	06/11
Bob & Mary Sheffield	06/28

May Birthdays



Celebrating May birthdays at St. John's with Cookie Rich, Paula Ross and Pat Fulford. (Archive photo by Irene Yeager)



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

Neva Bache, 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:

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, Alicia Logan, Jacob Hester-Heard, Marcus Rich, Ross Hussmann, Ellis Garner, Eric Mattoon.

Contact Us

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Bootsie Cieutat, *treasurer*

Jan Joseph

Geri Moulton

Nikki Shaw, *clerk*

Mary Sheffield

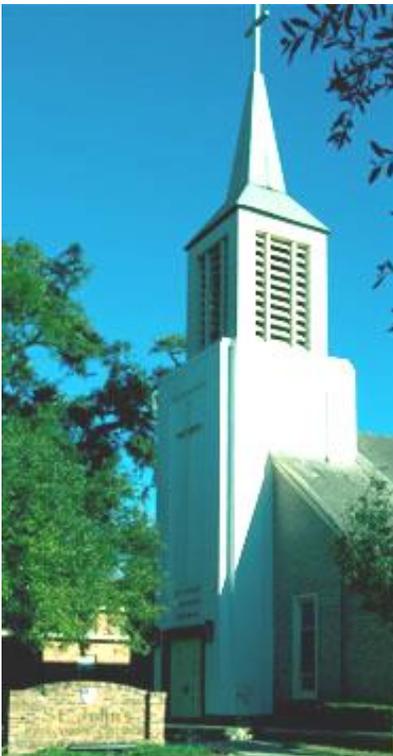
Kristen Turner

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 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.