



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. XXXI, Issue 1

January 2021

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

By the time you read this, we will be in 2021.

Calendar year 2020 has been a very difficult for almost everyone. I say "almost" just to hedge my bet that no one has had a good year.

I'm sure we've all had moments or highlights in the year that stand out as positive times. For me, it was back at the start of the year. As you recall, I made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with twenty other clergy. You've heard bits and pieces through sermons. I had been looking forward to taking you along with me in Sunday Morning Adult Forum time, but, SARS CoV-2 shut down just about everything.

Our Suspension of Public Worship hit everyone. Even though we stand behind "The Church is the People, not the Building", I know how dear the physical place of Saint John's is to so many of you. When the suspension was lifted and we figured out the best way to keep folks safe, I was not a all surprised to see who came to church on our first Sunday back.

At the same time, our digital presence through Facebook Live became a ministry in its own right. We started out in the same way that many parishes did: using a cellphone to transmit our services. (In fact, there are still parishes that are still doing exactly that.) We graduated to using a web camera for a desktop PC and a laptop. That gave us a little better and more flexible setup. We added better sound to it.

We've stepped far beyond those simple setups: multiple cameras, remote positioning, and a PC that mimics a television studio control room. As you might guess, there is a bit of a learning curve, but we persevere. Kristen Turner is our ace producer and director. We have lots of opportunities for others to try their hand at it.

The really good news for us is that we received a grant from the State of Alabama that has paid for all of it.

So, where do we go from here?

I think the pandemic is going have long-lasting effects , worldwide. Will all of those changes be good? Probably not. For us, one of the changes that will stick with us is our live streaming of services. I think live streaming is a great outreach in our community and beyond. As most know, I also live stream Morning Prayer on weekdays. I've been amazed at the reach that I've seen. I have a fairly regular viewer in the Pacific Northwest, where it's 6:30 in the morning when he/she watches. If we add the in-person attendance to the live stream attendance we come out about where we were before the pandemic.

So what hasn't changed? Well, for starters, the world still needs to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the saving love of God. God' messge, brought to us through the Old Testament and the New Testament, is entirely about love. Now, I'm not talking about trying to convert everyone to Christianity. What I am talking about is sharing the good news of God that we have learned through his son, Jesus.

The message is entirely about love: love for God, love for our neighbor. It is common to Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and a basic tenet of most of the Asian-origin religions.

It is about a way of existing in the world. Just as Jesus was in the world, but not of the world, we can follow his example. We do that by ratcheting up our concern for all of creation: people, God's critters, things that grow, the blessings God has given us in the environment. We do that by making sure that all people are treated with respect, dignity, and love. We do that by ensuring that everyone's basic needs are met.

It's what Jesus would do. It is what we are called to do.

-- Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JANUARY LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

On 1 January we celebrate the naming of Our Lord on the eighth day after his birth, in accordance with Jewish custom. Naming is important to all of us; it establishes our identity.

The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

“Epiphany” comes from a Greek word meaning to manifest or appear. This feast concludes the twelve days of Christmas and marks the discovery of God Incarnate by the gentiles in the persons of the wise men. Join us to celebrate the visit of the Magi to the stable in Bethlehem at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, 6 January.



Baptism of Our Lord

The First Sunday after the Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ is also known as The Baptism of Our Lord. On this day, we recount Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan by his cousin John the Baptizer. It is a particularly appropriate day for baptisms at 10:00 AM on Sunday, 10 January.

Hilary of Poitiers

We celebrate the life of Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, on Wednesday, 13 January at 10:00 AM. Sadly, Hilary isn’t the first woman bishop; in the mid-300s, it was only men. Hilary was a defender of the ecumenical councils at Nicaea and its Trinitarian formula. In 355, he refused to sign a condemnation of Athanasius, under pain of exile, and continued to defend the church against the Arian heresy.

The Confession of Saint Peter

We commemorate Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ at 12:00 PM on Monday, 18 January. This feast also marks the beginning of the annual Week for Christian Unity.

Fabian of Rome

According to Eusebius, Fabian was a layperson. In 236, at an assembly to elect a pope to succeed Antherus, a dove flew over the crowd and landed on Fabian’s head. This was taken as a sign of his being chosen by the Holy Spirit, so the bishops elected him as pope. Fabian was one of the first Christians to be martyred in the persecutions of Decius in 239-40. The stone slab which covers his grave still bears the words: “Fabian Bishop Martyr”. We will celebrate Fabian on Wednesday, 20 January at 10:00 AM.

The Conversion of Saint Paul

We mark Paul’s acceptance of Jesus as his Lord and Savior at 12:00 PM on Monday, 25 January. Even though it is referred to as his conversion, the Pauline position seems to be more of enlightenment to a new reality, rather than rejection of his heritage in favor of Christ. This feast concludes the Week for Christian Unity.

John Chrysostom

John was Patriarch of Constantinople and is one of the great saints of the Eastern Church. His surname was earned: Chrysostom means “Golden Mouthed”; he was a gifted orator and teacher. He also had an acute sensitivity to the needs of people. He wrote a manual called “Six Books On The Priesthood” that still stands as a measure of who and what a priest should be. We will celebrate John Chrysostom at a said mass at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, 27 January.



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

Evia Daniel

Joyce Lee

James Christiansen

Mary Sheffield

Connie McLean

St. John's ECW

Patricia Thomas

Karen & Michael Keel

Mary Bonner

Mike Bonner

James Christiansen

OUTREACH

RECRUITING OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Would you like to be part of the Outreach Committee? We meet monthly (most months). We're meeting by Zoom usually on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30PM. If you are interested, please contact one of the Outreach members or Fr. Heard and we'll send you the next meeting Zoom link. Not ready to commit to meetings but have some ideas for Outreach projects? Let an Outreach member or a member of the Vestry know your ideas; we are always open for new projects and new ideas for this ministry.



2020 ANGEL TREE

Saint John's Outreach Committee thanks all of Saint John's for participating in this year's Angel Tree. The staff and residents of Azalea Gardens Nursing Home gave us a big "thank you" also.

We provided 40 gifts to long-term residents who otherwise would not be receiving presents.

COVID-19 made some changes in this year's project: Outreach Committee members did more shopping and wrapping; we all didn't get to see the presents under the tree; the Saint John's delivery elves could not go into the Azalea Gardens facility. But the project was a success! Thank you for being part of bringing the spirit of Christmas to a small part of the world.



We started with the tree and the tags.



Outreach members shopped for those who needed "shopping service" this year.



The packages around the tree ready to be delivered.



Saint John's Outreach Committee members Janet Buckley and Connie McLean unload the presents with the help of Azalea Gardens' staff.





Vestry

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church was called to order at 11:35 AM on 13 December 2020 by Fr. Heard. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

The proposed agenda was adopted and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted. Geri Moulton, Jan Joseph, and Bootsie Cieutat were excused.

Connie McLean reviewed the financial statements for November. She also reported that Regions Bank has had their PPP Loan Forgiveness Portal approved by the SBA. We have completed our filing, certified our submission and are waiting to hear from Regions.

Janet Buckley reported that the Angel Tree gifts will be delivered on Thursday, 17 December.

The ECW has sent a gift to McKemie Place in honor of Fr. Heard. They are also providing soft drinks and Christmas cards to Murray House. In addition, Christmas cards are being sent to members of Saint John's.

Fr. Heard reported that further termite damage has been found. It is a repeat of the sill plate for the Saint Andrew window that was previously repaired. A complete retreatment of the property has been started. In the process, a water pipe was broken and has been repaired.

A bid from Air Specialty to replace the chiller has been received. It is \$45,000. Additional bids will be obtained.

Fr. Heard has applied for another coronavirus relief grant. The application for a \$20,000 grant was submitted on 30 November.

Ballots for the Vestry and Convention Delegate elections will be counted on 17 December and the results announced on 20 December.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Fr. Heard at 12:00 PM

FLOWER CHART SIGN-UP

It's time to sign up for flowers for 2021! Please use the cards on the bulletin board to begin signing up to supply altar flowers for Sundays in 2021. As Sundays are covered we will update the flower chart and post it for all to see. Altar flowers cost \$55 per Sunday.



OFFICER ELECTIONS

Congratulations to our new Vestry members and Convention Delegates:

Elected to three-year terms on the Vestry are Cindy Gass, Connie McLean, and Butch Yeager.

Serving as Convention Delegates are Janet Buckley, James Christiansen, and Eugene Johnston. They will be backed-up by Alternate Delegate Connie McLean.



2021 PLEDGE SUMMARY

As this newsletter goes to print, we have received financial commitments from 21 pledge units for 2021 totaling \$74,560. In 2020, we received 41 pledges totaling \$192,513.

If you plan to pledge to the 2021 operating budget, please turn in a pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available in the church office.

December Birthdays



Celebrating December 2019 birthdays at St. John's with Sue Dyess, Susan Waites, Jan Joseph and Marie Brown. (Photo by Irene Yeager)



TREE OF LIFE COUNSELING CENTER MOVES INTO FORMER THEE STORE SPACE

I have worked as a therapist for almost 35 years and for about 33 of them I have primarily served children/youth who are in the custody of the State of Alabama – foster children – as well as youth who have been involved with the juvenile justice system and their families (biological, foster, adoptive, etc.). Most recently, I worked at St. Mary's Home as a residential therapist for children/youth who could not live in a regular foster home due to the need for treatment and behavioral interventions.

When St. Mary's closed abruptly in September 2020, I spoke with Father Heard about the possibility of using the former Thee Store space to open a private practice. Father Heard took my request to the vestry and they graciously approved. Since that time Kristen Turner and I have worked hard (with the help of friends) to renovate the space and create an office that will be a safe healing place for people in need. I am proud and excited to announce that the renovations are finished, and the office is open and ready to serve anyone in need of counseling. I am an approved Medicaid provider as well as an approved Mobile County DHR provider. I will work with anyone who has a need regardless of ability to pay regular fees, as part of the outreach of St. John's Episcopal Church.

My work and experience span all age groups and a variety of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression,

posttraumatic stress disorder, issues of attachment and addictions. I have worked with all age groups and have conducted sessions for individuals, groups, families, and couples. I have also provided training and education to groups such as childcare workers, foster families, and counselors/therapists. I spent many years working with pre-adoptive families who were adopting children with attachment disorders in order to better ensure the adoptions would create a lifelong family. Regardless of age, my preference is to work with individuals who otherwise might not have access to the services they need.

I believe that being a counselor/therapist is a calling and I cannot imagine not doing what I do. I have seen a little bit of everything in my years of working in this vocation and more often than not, under the problematic behaviors is a person who is hurting and in need of help.

I am thankful to St. John's and my church family for allowing me the opportunity to continue doing this work in a place I associate with loving and giving as well as healing and growth. I hope and pray that Tree of Life Counseling will grow and that the outreach of this parish will help to heal many who would otherwise not have access to these services. Please visit my website at www.tree-of-life-counseling.org. If you know anyone who might benefit from my services, please give them my telephone number (251-422-6592) and I'll do my best to accommodate their needs.

-Lee Dorsey



Check out the new look at Tree of Life Counseling!



EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Episcopal Relief & Development launched a new online prayer experience. It is designed to provide a curated list of prayers to guide supporters in praying for significant seasons in The Episcopal Church, disasters and other events.

“The staff and partners of Episcopal Relief & Development first turn to prayer when a disaster strikes, and our online community responds with compassion and joins us when we post our prayers to social media,” said Sean McConnell, Senior Director, Engagement, Episcopal Relief & Development. “This tool offers a new way for our friends around the world to join us in a community of common prayers.”

Content will come from The Book of Common Prayer, and other sources such as the organization’s Anglican partners, ecumenical friends, Seminary Ministry Partners, staff members, theologians and spiritual leaders.

Initially, the prayers selected focus on all of those who

were impacted by or responded to the record-breaking 2020 hurricane season. Future prayer experiences will expand to include prayers for liturgical seasons, other disasters, and Episcopal Relief & Development’s work with women, children and climate.



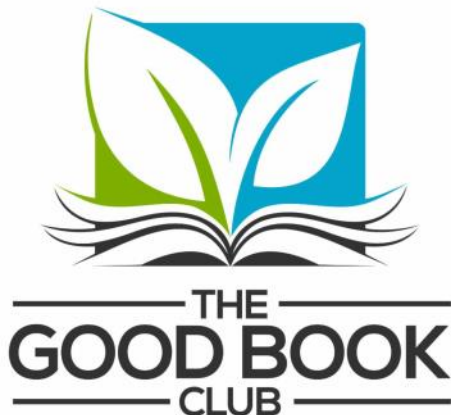
The tool includes an “Amen” button at the end of each prayer which enables users to easily share the prayer with friends and family on either Facebook or Twitter.

“Prayer is powerful. When we offer prayers for those impacted by disaster and for our partners who work with

them, we surround them with compassion, enfold them with support, and lift them up to God,” said Josephine Hicks, Vice President, Episcopal Church Programs, Episcopal Relief & Development. “This digital prayer experience invites everyone to join us in the power of prayer.”

Visit the main prayer hub at episcopalrelief.org/letuspray to learn more. Prayers that focus on the 2020 hurricane season are available at episcopalrelief.org/2020hurricaneprayer.

Elsewhere in the Diocese



We will again be participating in the 2021 Good Book Club, January 1 – February 16. Bishop Russell will be sharing weekly reflections on the Gospel of Mark. The readings can be found at www.goodbookclub.org.

Video reflections will be released the Thursday prior to the following week’s readings and available on our website: www.diocgc.org/news-and-stories/categories/good-book-club. Videos are suitable for individual or group study. Questions on how to host a Good Book Club at your church, contact Sally Crenshaw at crenshs@cox.net.



Happy Birthday



Bob Ross	01/08
Mary Jones	01/09
Eddy Velaski	01/10
Curtis Gass	01/16
Nicholas Tarantole	01/17
Irene Yeager	01/19
Alexandria Harvey-Smith	01/20
Janet Buckley	01/24
Mary Frances Chestang	01/25
Bill Duke	01/31

Craig & Shirley Hall 01/31



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

David Rich, Bob Anderson, Lisa Chestang, Carolyn Pearce, Mary Jones, Connie Anderson, Cookie Rich, Bob Ross, Jean Brown, Ashley Garris, Jerry Fulford, James Christiansen, Bill Duke, Audrey Garner, Joyce Lee, Marian Boykin, Ron Brown, Jayson Chestang, Budd McLean, Mary Catherine Warren.

For our Family and Friends:

Jason Taylor, Patrick Henry, Patsy Christiansen, Gwendolyn Carey, Helon Jones, Helen Guthrie, Eddie Hun, Donnie Chestang, Katelynn Tillman, Karen Twilley, Nancy Payne, Donna Pigg, Robert Levy, Tiffany Matthews, Betty Williams, Latecia Cushion Knight, 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*
rector@stjohnsmobile.org

Louis Daniel
 Organist & Choir Director
music@stjohnsmobile.org

Lella Lowe
 Financial Secretary
finance@stjohnsmobile.org

Jack Ruppe
 Sexton

Vestry:

James Christiansen

Bootsie Cieutat

Cindy Gass

Connie McLean

Geri Moulton

Nikki Shaw

Mary Sheffield

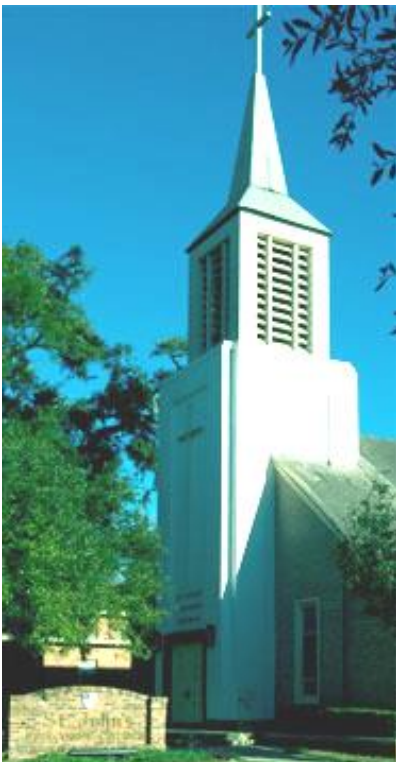
Kristen Turner

Butch Yeager

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.