



# 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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June 2021

## FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

For the last couple of months, I've taken you on a bit of a tour of the history of Saint John's. A good bit of that has originated in Lucy Green Nelson's St. John's Church, Mobile—A History. Some of it, however has come from our original Parish Register. This book, begun in 1853, contains hand-written entries by the clergy serving Saint John's, recording the sacramental acts performed. There are four sections to it: Baptisms, Marriages, Confirmations, and Burials. Parts of the original register were completely filled by 1920.

As I've read through the Burial sections, I couldn't help but notice how the handwriting of the particular priest showed their moods or stresses. For example, when Fr. Nevius made the entries for his two children, his sorrow and hurt are visible in his writing. It is cramped and much more angular than his usual script.

Some were incredibly meticulous in their entries, providing additional bits of information. Some appear to have chosen to make many entries at the same time, having deferred from the date and time of the event. Some are neat and orderly; others exactly the opposite.

One, in particular, seemed to be oriented toward the statistical character of the register. Each year, the parish files a report with the national office. It is called the Parochial Report. It contains lots of numbers. How many morning/evening prayer services, how many eucharists, how many burials, baptisms, marriages. And it includes average attendance for each category. As you might imagine, 2020 was as weird for this report as it was for us who were "not in the pews" for a good portion of the year. One measure that is used to judge the size of parishes is Average Sunday Attendance. That one took quite a beating in 2020. Another is the Easter Sunday attendance. It didn't fare well either.

Fortunately, there were some modifications made. I suspect we'll see more in the future.

Average Sunday Attendance is really a horrible measure. Consider a parish that is a vacation destination or has "snow birds" that appear or disappear for half of the year! The average in those places doesn't reflect the reality of their situations.

That one who seemed to care about careful and accurate tracking was Dr. Tucker. He began his tenure in 1885 and numbered each entry he made. That reduced the problem of annual reporting much easier, and in his time, it was a narrative report delivered at diocesan convention. During his tenure, Dr. Tucker recorded over 6,000 baptisms!

I wrote last month about the Yellow Fever epidemics. As we're emerging from the COVID pandemic, I did a little digging into the register for the era of the 1918 Influenza pandemic.

From April 1918 through May of 1919, Dr. Tucker recorded 121 burials. He was pretty reliable to note cause of death if he knew it. So we find over that period, 29 deaths that were reported to have been caused by Tuberculosis, pneumonia, or "heart failure". That is 23.9% of the total! It is important to remember that influenza is the illness that creates situations where other modalities take over. Pneumonia was the most common cause for persons infected with flu. Known tuberculosis cases would often succumb to pneumonia, but tuberculosis would be the recorded cause.

Dr. Tucker's last burial was #2374 on 1 October 1941. He retired shortly thereafter. He entered new life on 10 November 1941, having served us for 56 years.

—Thomas

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JUNE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

### Martyrs of Lyons

On Wednesday, 2 June, we will commemorate the Martyrs of Lyons at our regular 10:00 AM service. The Martyrs of Lyons are alternately known as Saint Blandina and Her Companions. In 177 in Lyons, France, Christians were suffering horrendous persecution during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180). In Lyons, the persecutions were particularly brutal and always ended in death. Blandina's martyrdom is chronicled by Eusebius where he reports that she was suspended on a stake, as if hanging on a cross. Blandina, a slave, inspired her sister and brother Christians who were fighting. Eusebius writes, "For they looked on her in her conflict, and beheld with their outward eyes, in the form of their sister, him who was crucified for them, that he might persuade those who believe in him, that every one who suffers for the glory of Christ has fellowship always with the living God." This image of Blandina is cited as evidence that the priesthood is open to women.

### Columba of Iona

Saint Columba was born in about 521 in Ireland. An argument over a copy of the Psalter that he'd made put him at risk of excommunication, so he chose to be a missionary to Scotland. Arriving with 12 companions in 563, he was granted land on the island of Iona off the Western coast. His abbey became a cultural and diplomatic center. The revival of monasticism he inspired created a resurgence in Christianity after the collapse of the Roman Empire. We will remember Saint Columba at our Said Mass on Wednesday, 9 June at 10:00 AM.

### Saint Barnabas

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 Friday, 11 June at 12:00 PM.

### Joseph Butler

Joseph Butler was Bishop of Durham 1750-1752, only after declining to be the Archbishop of Canterbury. Butler was probably one of the greatest minds in the English Church and his apologetic for orthodox Christianity against Deism set faith on a rational footing. We will remember Joseph Butler at the 10:00 AM Mass on 16 June.

### Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

On Thursday, 24 June, we will observe the **Feast of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist** at 12:00 PM. John the Baptizer, one of the "Johns" commemorated in the 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".

### Saint Peter & Saint Paul

On Tuesday, 29 June at 12:00 PM, 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.



## Vestry

The regular meeting of the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry of Saint John's Church was called to order at 7:05 PM in the Great Hall. The meeting was in-person with a few virtual attendees.

It was voted to approve the agenda as proposed. It was voted to approve the minutes of the 11 April meeting as submitted.

Bootsie Cieutat was excused. Mary Sheffield, Kristen Turner, and Nikki Shaw attended via Zoom.

Connie McLean presented the financials for April. She noted that we have received \$29,770 in the second round of the Paycheck Protection Program.

Fr. Heard reported that sequestering the insurance proceeds and the PPP funds in the Episcopal Church Foundation program would be too costly. ECF has a 100 basis point annual fee structure. He reported that our former Merrill Lynch account is not available. He has spoken with Benjamin F. Edwards & Company who would be happy to set up an account to hold the funds. They suggest that a deployment of 80-20 cash-equities for growth and accessibility. It was voted to open an account and follow the recommended strategy.

Mary Sheffield reported that Bay Area Food Bank is seeking volunteers for distribution. These opportunities are both weekdays and Saturdays.

The ECW will be meeting in the Great Hall this month for the first time since last February.

Fr. Heard reported that the Campbell Law firm has been engaged. We are waiting for the report from the state investigator to be released. Campbell will be sending its entomologists to inspect our property. Once that is completed, repairs for the third incident can be undertaken by Terminix.

Fr. Heard reported that the Lathan Company and Ethos General Contractors are coming to look at the damage to the church and value the necessary repairs.

The Vestry voted to take the motion to reconsider the 2021 Budget off the table. Following extensive discussion, it was voted to rescind the 3% raises in the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

## FATHER HEARD WINS AWARD

On May 14, the Mobile Law Enforcement Foundation and the Exchange Club of Mobile held their annual Law Enforcement Recognition Banquet and Mobile Police Department Awards Presentation at the Battle House. Numerous officers and civilian law enforcement personnel were given awards for outstanding work in their areas, including Father Thomas Heard. With two other chaplains, he received an award given by head Chaplain Edward Connick for his service and his willingness to be called in whenever a chaplain is needed. As Chaplain Connick said "You are there for us whenever we need you, without hesitation." Chaplain Connick himself received the Employee of the Year award for 2019.



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

George Seymour Lee, Jr.

James Christiansen

Joan-Marie Elam

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Elam



# OUTREACH

## FROM HEAD START: THANK YOU FOR THE BOOKS!

This year's school year was quite different: our children started a month late and it was remote/virtual services for six weeks. When we did come back together, our classes were much smaller, we social distanced, we wore masks, and some families chose to keep their children on remote services. But whether it was in the classroom services or remote services, the children really enjoyed the books provided by Saint John's. They especially like that the books were theirs to keep! Thank you for your kindness and generosity to the Head Start and Early Head Start children. We appreciate you and we thank you for helping children become life-long learners.

Janet Buckley, Head Start Director



## *Elsewhere in the Diocese*

### UNITED THANK OFFERING ANNOUNCES COVID-19 GRANT AWARDS

By Penelope Dawson

Pensacola, Florida, May 20, 2021 — United Thank Offering announced the grant recipients for the Spring 2021 granting cycle, and we are excited to share that the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast will receive funding for St. Mark's, Troy, Food Pantry. The focus of the granting process this year was 'Recovering with Love and Gratitude: An Episcopal Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Local Contexts.'

#### **St. Mark's Food Pantry**

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Food Pantry ministry in Troy, Alabama, provides supplemental food to people in need in the community. Alabama has the 3rd highest poverty rate in the United States, with a child food insecurity rate of 33%. In the initial months of the pandemic, when schools, churches and businesses closed, food insecurity increased markedly. Nationally, charitable food distribution increased by 50% in 2020. Locally, St. Mark's expanded its



distribution beyond the church pantry by adding distribution sites at the Boys & Girls' Club and the Charles Henderson Child Health Center, increasing support for families and individuals. Shelf stable food and face masks were included in each bag

"Choosing which grant applications to fund and not fund is always difficult, but during this extraordinary time of suffering in the global Covid-19 pandemic we

had to prioritize mere survival over thriving," shared Sherri Dietrich, UTO Board President. The UTO grant will make it possible for St. Mark's Food Pantry to purchase two freezers, expanding our capacity to include frozen food available through the area food bank. In 2020, the first year of the pandemic, St. Mark's Food Pantry distributed more than 13 tons of food. At the current rate of increased distribution, we expect to be able to distribute more than 25 tons of food by the end of 2021.

# Every Perfect Gift

*“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above...”*  
— James 1:17 NRSV

## What is the best gift you have ever received?

I have been asked this question throughout my life by many people in different contexts. Possible answers to a parent or a teacher could be a new walkie-talkie set (these were the Seventies), a bike, a horseback ride with my grandmother, or when I was a teenager, a jeep in the driveway with a big red bow on it. Later it could have been my education, a chance to study abroad, canoeing with my dad on a quiet river, making Christmas cookies with my mom.

## Every Perfect Gift

What did these perfect gifts give me, aside from the pleasure of the possession? **They each taught me about living in the moment**, appreciating what I had - whether it was long afternoons playing “secret agent” in the backyard with my best friend and our walkie-talkies, or singular moments like listening to the sound of the current of a river on a quiet summer afternoon with my father. They also taught me generosity, for the delight I had in experiencing the gifts called me to share such moments and experiences with others. **This is the relationship between receiving and generosity, and it’s a pattern that, once it takes root in us, continues in perpetuity.** The more we practice generosity, the more abundance we recognize around us.

## Every Generous Act

In many congregations it is the practice to sing the Doxology as our gifts — the elements of the Eucharist and our offerings — are brought to the altar for blessing. “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,” it begins; and these words remind us of the font from which springs all generosity, all love, all gift. We are called in that moment to reflect on this cycle of abundance sparked with the first light and made manifest in the Creation, in the calling of prophets, and in the gift of God’s own son on Earth. **As we share our gifts through the Eucharist and through our service to the world, we participate in the ongoing creation of abundance and generosity.**

## What is the best gift you have ever received?

The theme and image for *Every Perfect Gift* are wrapped in the metaphor of the butterfly and chrysalis. Of all the metaphors of gift that could be used, why did we decide on this one?

To the ancient Greeks, the butterfly represented the image of rebirth and freedom. The word they used for butterfly was *psyche*, and if you are thinking that sounds familiar, you are correct! It also means spirit. The humble and beautiful butterfly contains the philosophical and spiritual idea of the soul breaking free from its shell — free to **discover, to inspire, to create, to communicate, to share.**

These are also spiritual gifts, gifts that when we free ourselves to serve in the world, we need and share with others; and they are gifts of our stewardship. **As we share our time, talent, and treasure with our church and with the world, we unleash those same gifts in our communities: discovery, inspiration, creativity, communication, sharing.** Through the ministries that are enabled by our gifts, the inspiration we show to our neighbors to unlock their generosity in the world, and the stories we tell about ourselves and our experiences, we participate with God in an abundant vision for the world. **Every perfect gift comes from God above.**





## EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT AND THE ANGLICAN ALLIANCE EXPAND DISASTER AND RESILIENCE CAPACITIES THROUGH THE RESILIENCE COURSE

Episcopal Relief & Development and the Anglican Alliance have created The Resilience Course, a year-long cooperative learning exchange to increase the disaster resilience and response capacity of congregations and dioceses around the Anglican Communion. Since October 2020, over 140 people from 42 countries representing 23 Provinces have enrolled.

“We believe that cultivating our capacity to address disaster resilience and response will equip our churches to do better in accompanying the most vulnerable communities in our midst in times of crisis,” said Nagulan Nesiah, Senior Program Officer, Disaster Resilience, Episcopal Relief & Development.

The number of climate-influenced disasters has doubled in the past 20 years and floods, hurricanes and other events can devastate communities. The Resilience Course shares learning, skills and best practices to build both a church and community’s resilience and their capacity to respond to a disaster. It is the result of three years of collaboration, exploration and sharing between Episcopal Relief & Development, the Anglican Alliance and other Anglican churches and agencies across the Communion.

Each two-hour session of the Resilience Course has a particular theme and consists of a Bible reflection and a recorded thought piece followed by live discussion in which participants will reflect together and learn from one another. The goal is to build their capacity to respond and improve their community engagement. Sessions are facilitated by 16 faculty members from around the world. Each month there is one homework assignment (up to one hour per month.) The course is offered in six

languages including Arabic, Burmese, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

“Learners have expressed their excitement at the opportunity to engage in Portuguese and to connect with other learners from Angola and Brazil, as well as facilitators from different countries – a celebration of unity in diversity,” said the Rt. Rev. Carlos Simao Matsinhe, Anglican Diocese of Lebombo, Mozambique.

“Bringing together learners from a wide range of countries from across the Anglican Communion has enabled some fantastic conversations about experience and challenges in developing local resilience and disaster response capacity, and about the underlying structural forces that create or aggravate disaster,” said Dr. Janice Proud, Disaster Resilience and Response Manager, Anglican Alliance.

To send a contribution by mail to Episcopal Relief & Development: P.O. Box 7058 Merrifield, VA 22116-7058 or go to <http://www.episcopalrelief.org>.





## May Birthdays



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



Celebrating May birthdays in 2019 with Cookie Rich, Paula Ross and Pat Fulford. (Archive photo by Irene Yeager)



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

## PRAYER Requests

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

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

### For our Family and Friends:

Juanita Faith, Jeff Pelham, David Partsch, Carol Wiggins, Shirley Cochran, Lynn Strange, Peggy Sheffield, Cliff Federle, David Sheffield, Patsy Christiansen, Gwendolyn Carey, Helon Jones, Helen Guthrie, Eddie Hun, Katelynn Tillman, Karen Twilley, Nancy Payne, Donna Pigg, Robert Levy, Tiffany Matthews, Betty Williams, Latecia Cushion Knight, Bonnie Jernigan, Britney Butler, Neal Tourné, Sandy Michel, Connor Crist, Paul Nelson, Krystal Hiatt.

### For victims of war and their families, and members of our Armed Forces and their families:

Joshua Maddox, Ryan Hurt, Jacob Hester-Heard, Marcus Rich, Ross Hussmann, Ellis Garner, Eric Mattoon.

## Contact Us

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Bootsie Cieutat

Cindy Gass, *senior warden*

Connie McLean, *treasurer*

Geri Moulton

Nikki Shaw, *clerk*

Mary Sheffield

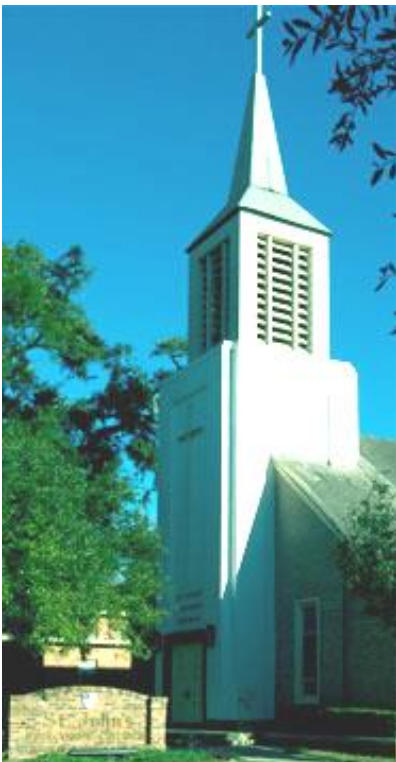
Kristen Turner

Butch Yeager

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**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.