



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 Philip Duncan, Bishop

Vol. XX, Issue 12

December 2010

FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

I am often asked questions that begin with “Why do we...” and cover a wide range of topics. This month, I’ll take the top two questions that come after the ‘why don’t we use the hymn boards anymore’ (which I’ve talked about previously) and try to explain the theology behind them.

“Why do we sing so much of the service?” This one has two answers: first, when I came to Saint John’s, I was told that singing the service was normal. I guess it was some years ago, and it is once again. The second answer is what’s behind it in the first place.

You might have heard “To sing is to pray twice” or something similar. This is usually credited to Saint Augustine of Hippo and comes from his commentary on Psalm 73. What he actually says is:

“For he that singeth praise, not only praiseth, but only praiseth with gladness: he that singeth praise, not only singeth, but also loveth him of whom he singeth. In praise, there is the speaking forth of one confessing; in singing, the affection of one loving.”

Over the years this has been abridged to a variety of forms. At the root of it, though, is still the idea of using music as a component part of our worship. While hymns can be used to cover some action or activity, singing of prayers is nearly as old as the Christian Church itself and harkens from our Jewish roots as well.

While I’m not a fan of Biblical proof-texting, I assure you that there are at least 15 Psalms and at least as many other citations that enjoin us to sing to the Lord.

There is another reason to sing our prayers, and it is purely practical. I’m sure, as we’ve been saying The Nicene Creed together, that you’ve noticed there’s always someone who’s ahead and others who are

behind. By singing together, where we have both pitch and rhythm, the differences in our speech patterns are minimized and we come closer to being “one body and one voice” as we make our prayers to God.

The next most popular question is “Why do we use incense?” Burning incense goes back to ancient Near Eastern times, where it was used as an offering to the gods and as an honor to the king. It was used in connection with animal sacrifices, probably also functioning as a deodorizer.

In scripture, there are many references to incense: Aaron burned incense morning and evening; we even have a formula for the incense used in the worship of Yahweh in Exodus. It’s sweet smell and rising smoke symbolize something pleasing to God and our prayers rising up to God. Psalm 141:2 perhaps says it best:

“Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”

Early Christians found symbolic meaning as depicted in The Revelation to John. Remember, too, that frankincense was one of the gifts brought by the Magi. It symbolizes Jesus’ kingship.

For Christians today, incense is also a symbol of reverence and dedication, being something pleasing and acceptable to offer to God. In our liturgy, the altar is censed, the offering on the altar is censed, and all the people are censed as signs that all are offered to God as a “pleasing offering”. The censing of the people is a special way of saying that everyone present in the church is counted as family and has a vital part to play in worship.

— Thomas

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DECEMBER LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon

Ferrar founded a religious community at Little Gidding, Huntingdonshire, England in 1626. The community survived only nine years after his death in 1637. Ferrar was devoted to the life outlined in the Book of Common Prayer, observing the Daily Office in its entirety. He was remembered by Izaak Walton in his Life of George Herbert. T.S. Eliot titled the last of his "Four Quartets" 'Little Gidding'. Ferrar will be commemorated at a Said Mass at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, 1 December.

The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Resurgence in Marian devotion throughout the Anglican Communion keeps the mother of Our Lord firmly in view through the Conception, Annunciation, and Assumption observances. Conception will be observed Wednesday, 8 December at 10:00AM

Saint Thomas the Apostle

Thomas, called "the twin", will be commemorated at a mass on Tuesday 21 December at 12:10PM. Thomas is recorded in John's Gospel in several incidents. Seemingly somewhat literal minded and inclined to skepticism, Thomas was a staunch friend. According to Eusebius and others, Thomas evangelized the Parthians. Christians of Malabar, India claim that Thomas brought the Gospel to India.

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

We will celebrate the birth of Our Lord at two liturgies. On Christmas Eve, with music beginning at

10:30PM, the 11:00PM Solemn Mass and Procession will welcome the Babe of Bethlehem. The Wise Men will begin their journey this night as well. On Christmas Day at 10:00AM, we will have a Said Mass.

Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Stephen, one of the first deacons of the 1st century Jerusalem church, was the first recorded martyr for the cause of Christ. His story is contained in the Acts of the Apostles. In it, a certain Pharisee named Saul is standing by. We will commemorate Stephen on Monday, 27 December with a Said Mass at 12:10PM.

Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

We will commemorate Saint John, the patron of our parish, at a Said Mass on Tuesday, 28 December at 12:10PM. His feast is being transferred to Sunday precisely because he is our Patron, as permitted by the rubrics of the prayer book. While historical data is suspicious of the apostle and the writer of the fourth Gospel being the same person, this has been the Church's view since the second century.

The Holy Innocents

We will commemorate The Holy Innocents on Wednesday, 29 December at a Said Mass at 10:00AM. This feast commemorates the children Herod the Great slaughtered out of fear of the Babe of Bethlehem. Though not supported by secular history, the Church, since at least the 4th century, has honored these innocents as martyrs.

CALL FOR MEETING

The Vestry of Saint John's has called a Meeting of the Parish for Sunday, 12 December 2010 for the purpose of electing new members of the Vestry and Diocesan Convention Delegates and Alternates. The meeting will be held in the Nave after Mass. This year, we will be electing 3 persons to 3-year terms on the Vestry. We will elect 3 delegates to Diocesan Convention and 3 alternates, as well. Please contact a member of your nominating committee—Connie Anderson, Cindy Gass, Joyce Lee, Eugene Johnston, and Ron Waites—or Fr. Thomas if you are interested (or know someone who is interested) in running for vestry or diocesan convention delegate.

This Sunday will also be our Financial Commitment In-Gathering, so bring your completed pledge cards with you to church on the 12th (or mail them in if you are unable to attend that day).



OUTREACH IN DECEMBER

The St. John's "Angel Tree" will be up by the first Sunday in Advent. This year's tree has tags with specific gifts requested by 6 developmentally disabled residents of the Partlow Center in Tuscaloosa. These folks are unable to live on their own because of their disabilities, and the Partlow Center provides them with a safe and nurturing place to live. Many of these residents have either been abandoned by their families or they have no family members around to visit them. While others around them receive gifts and loving visits, the six individuals that our tree is sponsoring have no one. Consequently, Christmas can be a sad and bleak time of year for them. Truly, these are our neighbors, and are among the neediest neighbors that we have.

Each tag has the name of a resident with a specific gift request. We are asking that you take a tag (or two or three) from the tree, purchase the specific item requested, and return it NO LATER THAN SUNDAY DECEMBER 12th, unwrapped and with the identifying tag on the gift. In order for us to help make Christmas a little merrier for our adoptees, we **MUST** get them sent to Tuscaloosa by the 13th.

To help the Outreach Committee track the gifts to make sure that we get all of them to Partlow Center on time, we are asking you to do the following:

1. Take a tag (or two or three) from the Angel Tree, and find the tag number.
2. Find the numbers of the tags on the sign-up sheet.
3. Write your name and phone number next to the number of your tags.

This information will help us to make any followup phone calls if we need to.

If you would prefer, gift cards from Walmart in any amount can also be donated. These folks take field trips as a group to Walmart, and they like to choose things to buy for themselves.

Please remember, we must have the gifts identified with their recipient at church by the 12th of December, and please, purchase only those gifts on the list or only gift cards from Walmart.

Thank you for reaching out with generosity and love to our disabled neighbors!

—The Outreach Committee

THE FOURTH THURSDAY MCKEMIE PLACE PROJECT

Saint John's Outreach Committee has taken on the project of assisting Redeemer in providing the evening meal for the women who stay at McKemie Place. McKemie Place relies on area churches and community organizations for the meals provided to the women who find refuge at the shelter. We and our partners from Redeemer will be providing an evening meal that consists of an entrée, vegetables, bread, beverage and dessert and the paper goods to serve it. The meal has to be delivered to McKemie Place and volunteers serve the meal to the residents.

McKemie Place is the only emergency overnight shelter for single homeless women in all of Mobile, Washington and Baldwin Counties. Since McKemie Place opened its doors, hundreds of women have sought refuge at the shelter, away from the risk of becoming victims of violence and crime. Referrals come from many sources—service organizations, social service agencies and churches...even local police departments. McKemie Place is frequently at its capacity of 75 women, and the need for shelter continues to grow.

McKemie Place does more than just provide dinner and a place to shower and sleep. They make sure that the women work with case managers from area social service agencies to help them find permanent housing, rehabilitation programs, GED or college programs, and employment.

This is an ongoing monthly project: If you wish to assist in preparing or purchasing the supplies for these meals, getting the food to either Redeemer or McKemie Place, and/or serving the food see Janet Buckley.

—Janet Buckley



Vestry

Due to the University of South Alabama football game on 11 November, the Vestry postponed its meeting until after Mass on Sunday, 14 November.

The Vestry approved the Report of the Audit Committee and agreed to act upon its recommendations.

The Rector reported that a power outage/surge on 2 November damaged the disc on the server in the office.

The disc has been sent to a data recovery firm for analysis and data retrieval. A claim will be filed with Church Insurance to help defray the \$1,800 expense, the balance will be paid from the Computer line item in the budget and the Discretionary Fund.

The Financial Commitment In-Gathering will be delayed until 12 December and coincide with the Parish Meeting for election of Vestry and Convention Delegates.

The Vestry decided to move its regular meeting to the second Sunday of the month at 11:30.

The Rector announced that the bishop will place Deacon Jayne Carson at Saint John's following her ordination at Diocesan Convention. Jayne's first Sunday with us will be 13 February.

Directory Update

Please make the following change to the directory you received in May:

Audrey Meador
11626 U. S. Highway 90, Apt. 118
Daphne, AL 36526
(H) 251-316-5018

Parish Life

SAINT JOHN'S PARISH CHRISTMAS PARTY AND DECORATE THE CHURCH DAY



It's time to put on those Christmas sweaters and ties and celebrate the coming of the Christmas season at Saint John's. Bring your family and friends to church and to our annual Christmas Party.

When: Sunday, December 19th, 2010

Where: Parish Hall after Sunday Service

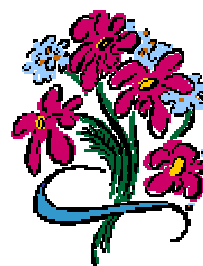
There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board so you can indicate what "goodies" you will bring for the luncheon. The ECW are providing the ham but we need the "fixin's" and (of course) desserts.



There is a separate sign-up sheet to let us know if you are willing to stay on to help "deck the halls" of the church so that our wonderful Christmas services will also be beautiful.

FLOWER CHART SIGN-UP

It's time to sign up for flowers for 2011!



Please use the cards on the bulletin board to begin signing up to supply altar flowers for Sundays in 2011. As Sundays are covered we will update a flower chart and post it for all to see. Altar flowers cost \$50 per Sunday.

DECEMBER 2010 AT SAINT JOHN'S

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
EfM = Education for Ministry MP = Morning Prayer HE = Holy Eucharist SS = Sunday School			1 Nicholas Ferrar 830A MP 10A HE + Healing 7P Choir	2 830A MP	3 830A MP	4
5 Advent 2 9A SS 10A HE	6 830A MP 1130A Loaves & Fish	7 830A MP 530P EFM	8 Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary 830A MP 10A HE 11A ECW 7P Choir	9 830A MP	10 830A MP	11
12 Advent 3 9A Breakfast 10A HE Elections & In-Gathering 1130A Vestry	13 830A MP	14 830A MP 530P EFM	15 830A MP 10A HE 7P Choir	16 830A MP	17 830A MP	18
19 Advent 4 9A SS 10A HE 1130A Party & Greening the Church 5P Evensong	20 830A MP	21 Saint Thomas 830A MP 1210P HE 530P EFM	22 830A MP 10A HE 7P Choir	23 830A MP	24 Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ 830A MP 1030P Carol Service 11PHE	25 Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ 10A HE
26 Christmas 1 9A SS 10A HE	27 Saint Stephen 830A MP 1210P HE	28 Saint John 830A MP 1210P HE	29 Holy Innocents 830A MP 10A HE 7P Choir	30 830A MP	31 830A MP	

LECTIONARY AND ROTA FOR DECEMBER 2010

Date Service	5 December HE-II	12 December HE-II	19 December HE-II	19 December Evensong	24 December HE-II	26 December HE-II
Lectionary Day	A Advent 2	A Advent 3	A Advent 4	Year 1, Advent 4 Evensong	Christmas Day I	Christmas 1
Lessons	Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 Romans 15:4-13 Matthew 3:1-12	Isaiah 35:1-10 Canticle 15 James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11	Isaiah 7:10-16 Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25	Psalm 8, 84 Genesis 3:8-15 John 3:16-21	Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-20	Isaiah 61:10-62:3 Psalm 147 Galatians 3:23-25, 4:4-7 John 1:1-18
Greeters	Martha & Max Grice	Irene & Butch Yeager	Connie & Bob Anderson		Paula & Bob Ross	Joan Marie Elam
Lectors	Eugene Johnston Ron Waites	Mary Sheffield Scott Escobio	Kathe Gieseler Cheryl Winters- Heard	Ron Brown	Ron Waites Bud McLean	Cheryl Winters-Heard Ron Brown
Intercessor	Pat Fulford	Denise Dunham	Connie Anderson		Paula Ross	Janet Buckley
Eucharistic Minister	Connie McLean Mary Sheffield	Burch Yeager Paula Ross	Geri Moulton Eugene Johnston		Ron Brown Connie Anderson	Ron Waites Connie McLean
Eucharistic Visitor	Paula Ross	Ron Brown	Ron Waites			Eugene Johnston
Altar Guild	Pat Fulford Cindy Gass	Pat Fulford Cindy Gass	Mary Sheffield Janet Buckley		Mary Sheffield Janet Buckley	Mary Sheffield Janet Buckley
Vestry Tellers	Bill Duke Ron Brown	Cindy Gass Janet Buckley	Eugene Johnston James Christiansen		Connie McLean Bill Duke	Connie McLean Bill Duke



Pat Pritchard	12/04	Marie Brown	12/12
Craig Hall	12/05	Bailey James	12/14
Jack Ruppe	12/08	Leah Betts	12/16
Max Grice	12/10	Mae Dunn	12/19
Marie McPhail	12/10	Jeff Dennis	12/21
P. L. Pritchard	12/10	Roy Duhon	12/25



Bob & Connie Anderson	12/05
Thomas Heard and Cheryl Winters-Heard	12/11
Mike & Gwen Johnson	12/12
Mike & Frances Barbour	12/24



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

Mary Lou Varnes, Caitlin Bryan, Jane Tate Moore, Carolyn Pearce, LaVerne Foster, Alice Schablinski, Bessie & Bill Southall, Leah Betts, Shannon Newberry

For our Homebound:

Alice Cieutat, Ping Duke, Mae Dunn, Will Elam, Corinne Faust, Gwen Johnson, Violet Kosko, Margie Mattoon, Audrey Meador, Angela McGuire, Betty Plash, Dot & Chick Wohler

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

Jeffery Yeager, Ellis Eugene Garner, Eric Mattoon, Cheryl Garner

For our Friends and Family:

Bill Jones, Keith Malick, Lella Lowe, Myrle Benson, Judi Waldrop, Gloria Berry, Travis McBride, Vernon Faulk, Walter Mayson, Mickey Benson, Velma Pearson, Martha Morget, Christina Morget, Betty & Gayle Chenoweth, Steve Weinstein, Mark Stiber, Mary Hoeberechts, Maddie West, Robert Graves [priest]

Contact Us

Staff:

The Reverend Thomas Heard
Rector
rector@stjohnsmobile.org

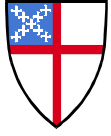
John L. Hobbs, Jr.
Organist/Choirmaster
music@stjohnsmobile.org

Lella Lowe
Financial Secretary
finance@stjohnsmobile.org

Jack Ruppe
Sexton

Vestry:

Ron Brown
Janet Buckley
James Christiansen
Bill Duke
Cindy Gass
Eugene Johnston
Connie McLean
Bill Sundie
Ron Waites



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; 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

Thee Store Episcopal Books

Monday, Wednesday

& Friday

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

and by appointment

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.