



ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL NEWS

June 2015

St. John's Episcopal Church is a diverse, welcoming Christian family. We are committed to using our God-given talents to continually grow and improve in our desire to worship, spread God's love, and minister throughout our communities.

Services

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist / Morning Prayer
9:15 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (with music)
5:45 p.m. Holy Eucharist
(Alternating Wednesdays)

FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK



As we prepare to elect a new Presiding Bishop, I thought this was appropriate for all of us to read. A group of General Convention deputies who came together as "The Acts 8 Moment" created this "memorial"—a cross between a petition and a manifesto—inspired by TREC (Task Force to Reimagine the Church) calling for the church to act decisively on what they see as a unique moment for a renewed and revitalized Church.

A Memorial to the Church

What is a Memorial?

At particular junctures in our common life, members of the Episcopal Church have come together to call upon its people and leadership to read the signs of the times, to discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and to act with boldness to proclaim the gospel in new contexts and situations. One concrete method that call can take is a Memorial to Church. We believe that we have reached one of those critical junctures in the life of our church, and respectfully submit a Memorial calling for the church to recommit itself to the spiritual disciplines at the core of our common life, to go into our neighborhoods boldly with church planters and church revitalizers, and to restructure our church for the mission God is laying before us today.

A Memorial to the Church

To the Deputies and Bishops of The Episcopal Church assembled at the 78th General Convention:

Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did. So there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:4-6, 8

In the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the newly formed church of disciples of the risen Savior found itself in a new situation. No longer could Christians depend on traditional ways of following Jesus and traditional places in which to do it. Driven out of their comfortable existence praying in the Temple in Jerusalem and waiting for the kingdom to come, they found themselves in new and unexpected neighborhoods, developing new ways of proclaiming the Word. Yet they found that the crowds were eager to hear the Good News of Christ and welcomed it with joy. The very loss of the old ways of being the church gave them opportunities to expand and multiply the reach of Christ's loving embrace.

(Continued on Page 2)

Rector

Fr. Doug Lasiter
dnlasiter@comcast.net
832-444-8153

Vestry

Mary Katherine
Blackburn
(Senior Warden)

Mike Strausser
(Junior Warden)

David Cassard
(Cemetery Warden)

Tucker Handley
(Clerk)

Jessica Guidry
Mickey Guillory
Sue Herpel
Gloria Hunter
Fred Sollars

Parish Treasurer

Sue Herpel

ECW President

Betty Duplantis

Organist

LaDonna Alexander

Secretary

Chris Robichaux

stjohnoffice@bellsouth.net
985-447-2910

(Continued from Page 1)

Our beloved Episcopal Church is in a similar situation. We must find new ways of proclaiming the gospel in varied and ever changing neighborhoods. Old ways of being the church no longer apply. We can no longer settle for complacency and comfort. We can no longer claim to dominate the political and social landscape. We can no longer wait inside our sanctuaries to welcome those who want to become Episcopalian.

We have a choice before us. We can continue, valiantly and tragically, to try to save all the rights and privileges we have previously enjoyed. We can continue to watch our church dwindle until it someday becomes an endowed museum to the faith of our forebears. We can continue business as usual until we lose our common life entirely. Or we can lose our life for Jesus' sake so that we might save it.

We, the undersigned, hold dear the Episcopal Church and believe passionately in the gift this church offers. Washed in the waters of Baptism and nourished from the deep springs of word and sacrament, we experience the power of God's presence as we open the Scriptures and celebrate the Eucharist. We stand in awe of the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the power of the triune God to love, to forgive, to make whole. We know the joy of serving God through serving others. We long for a world with every unjust structure toppled. We love this church enough to yearn for it to be transformed.

We recognize the importance of this present moment. We join the Task Force for Reimagining the Church in calling for the church to follow Jesus into the neighborhood, traveling lightly. Our deepest hopes and aspirations are not dependent upon any particular act of this Convention. Many essential steps are found in the daily walk of discipleship undertaken by congregations and individuals throughout the church, and we commend the work of many who are helping the church adopt these discipleship practices. This Convention, however, has the opportunity to act on a number of matters that can support God's faithful people, our parishes and missions, and our dioceses in living out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

Specifically, we call upon the people of the Episcopal Church to:

- Recommit to reading scripture, praying daily, gathering weekly for corporate worship, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom, knowing that engaging in these practices brings personal and corporate transformation;
- Share the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed, including learning how to tell the story of how Jesus makes a difference in our lives, even and especially to those who have not experienced true transformation;
- Pray and fast for the Holy Spirit to add day by day to those who come within the reach of Christ's saving embrace;
- Encounter Jesus Christ through loving service to those in need and through seeking justice and peace among all people.
- And we call upon those bishops and deputies gathered for Convention to the following actions as specific ways we may enter this time of transition in a spirit of exploration, discovering the gifts that the Holy Spirit has for us in this moment:
 - Engage creatively, openly, and prayerfully in reading the signs of the times and discerning the particular ways God is speaking to the Episcopal Church now;
 - Pray, read the scriptures, and listen deeply for the Holy Spirit's guidance in electing a new Presiding Bishop and other leaders, in entering into creative initiatives for the spread of the kingdom, and in restructuring the church for mission;
 - Fund evangelism initiatives extravagantly: training laborers to go into the harvest to revitalize existing congregations and plant new ones; forming networks and educational offerings to train and deploy church planters and revitalizers who will follow Jesus into all kinds of neighborhoods; and creating training opportunities for bilingual and bi-cultural ministry;
 - Release our hold on buildings, structures, comfortable habits, egos, and conflicts that do not serve the church well;

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)

- Remove obstacles embedded in current structures, however formerly useful or well-meaning, that hinder new and creative mission and evangelism initiatives;
- Refocus our energies from building up a large, centralized, expensive, hierarchical church-wide structure, to networking and supporting mission at the local level, where we all may learn how to follow Jesus into all of our neighborhoods.

Like those early followers of Christ, we find ourselves being scattered out of familiar and comfortable places and ways of being the church. Rather than be ruled by memory and consumed by fear, we can embrace this crisis, trusting that the Lord of Life will give us everything we need to spread the Gospel, proclaim the kingdom, and share the love of God. May God grant great joy in every city and neighborhood into which we go.

You can read more at www.episcopalcafe.com/a-memorial-to-the-church.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...



Wednesday Services

Wednesday evening Eucharist services continue this month, alternating between Trinity and St. John's. The schedule is listed in the bulletin and in the calendar online. Services begin at 5:45 p.m. here, and 6:00 p.m. at Trinity.

Mission Trip

We will be joining with Ascension Episcopal Church of Houston in a mission trip to Dulac Community Center, from **Sunday June 7 through Friday June 12, 2015**. We will stay in the dorms, and they are providing all meals (except dinner on Sunday.) The cost is \$250 per person. We will do painting, light construction, possibly work in food pantry or VBS-type activities. We will have at least one fun excursion included (probably something like a swamp tour.) Two parishioners have signed up, and more are welcome. To sign up or volunteer, please contact Fr. Doug at dnlasiter@comcast.net, or tel. 832-444-8153. All ages are welcomed!

Bible Study

Bible Study on Tuesday evenings resumed in April. Please contact Alice Strausser for location and details.

Vestry Meeting

The **Vestry** will meet Thursday, **June 18**, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Library. If you have items for the Vestry to consider, please advise Senior Warden Mary Katherine Blackburn or Junior Warden Mike Strausser by Sunday, June 14, 2015.

ECW

The next meeting of the **Episcopal Church Women** will be Sunday, **June 14**, at 11:30 a.m. in the Library. Contact Betty Duplantis at for more information.

A Welcome from the Vestry

After almost five years overseas in the U.S. Army, I was preparing to leave Vietnam. I asked the Army to send me back to school to get a degree. They basically said, “No, thank-you.” Therefore, I left active duty and wrote my wife to see if she could register me at school. She and our two daughters were living in Donaldsonville so she drove down to Nicholls State (neither of us ever having been there) and walked into the first building she found. She saw a man standing in the hall in a blue suit who looked important. She went up to him and said, “My husband is in Vietnam and wants to get back in time to start this fall semester but may not make it in time to register.” She wrote me that he basically said “come with me” and finding out all I needed was all the accounting classes, they went to the registration area (remember that nightmare?) and registered me. With that great “initially welcoming” attitude, we changed our plans about where to live and wound up staying in Thibodaux for over fifty years. How could we not?

As almost-Episcopalians (I was raised Roman Catholic and my wife was raised Methodist) we agreed to come to St. John’s after Father Pierson’s visit. He, also, was very “initially welcoming.” We started going, off and on, but mainly to the early service. Everybody was “initially welcoming.”

Father Charles Womelsdorf came along and asked us one day if we might be willing to do some of the readings at the service. We preferred not to (cannot be too pushy when you come to a new town, especially in the South) but he was concerned it might be getting a bit tiring for Russell and Anna Esteve, who both always came, but alternated with each other doing the early service reading. Father Womelsdorf said that he would talk to them first to be sure it would not hurt their feelings and we readily agreed to that. He called me at work later in the week and started laughing. I asked why, and he described the scene at the Esteves’ home. As he slowly broke it to them that this new couple might be willing to read every now and then to give them a break they did not say anything but just looked at each other. Then they both said, “Thank God – it’s about time somebody did that.” We became great friends with them because they appreciated us so much. They were so “initially welcoming” to us that the deep friendship has extended into the next generations. Our grave sites are in the “Esteve” area.

We later found St. John’s to be very typical of Thibodaux. When Margaret’s mother (years later) was bed-ridden in our home, some people from the Baptist Church called and asked if they could take Hilda to Sunday service. My wife explained that she was Methodist and one of them said, “We know—it’s very close to us so it will be no trouble.” How’s that for being “initially welcoming” to somebody you never met and maybe never will? Somebody from St. Joseph’s brought her communion!

A few years ago we went on the trip of a lifetime to Australia. We were only there a couple of weeks but it still shines as our “second favorite country.” Absolutely everybody was “initially welcoming.” We could not walk into a store or bar or house without somebody coming up to us and saying (in almost the same words every time), “You’re obviously from the States, mates. Where about?”

I have had a lifetime love of libraries and books. Australians love books. In Sydney there are numerous large book stores (remember them?). I had to spend some time in one (while Margaret was shopping on the same block) and I noticed a fairly large room labeled “travel.” I looked for travel books about America and there were hundreds. I even found a shelf

(Continued on Page 5)

(Continued from Page 4)

labeled “Cajun Country.” I picked up a fairly large one to see what kind of advice is given to Australians traveling in our country. I can still distinctly remember the very first sentence: “One must realize that, south of Lafayette, the people are ‘less than initially welcoming.’” It then explained that, once (we) they know you, “you will have trouble getting away, so don’t be put off at first.” OK, I can agree with that part. I still disagree that we are “less than initially welcoming.”

We do not go up and immediately bring people into our circles (like Australians do for all Americans) but we do welcome them. We just want to figure out their “place” in God’s universe first. That’s why we ask first, “Where are you from?”, “Where were you born?”, etc.

At a recent Vestry meeting, Father Lasiter mentioned something about some ideas for welcoming newcomers. I promise to help with that. We could also use at least one more Morning Prayer person and another LEM for the early service. David Middleton and I would be very “initially welcoming” to you.

Fred Sollars

Pastoral and Communion Visits to Parishioners

We began regular pastoral visits to homebound members of St. John’s in April. Please contact the office at stjohnoffice@bellsouth.net or 985-447-2910 to give Fr. Doug contact information to schedule a visit. We are also beginning Communion visits on Sundays. All visits can be scheduled through the office Tuesday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to noon, or you can leave a message on the phone if you call outside of office hours. The email and telephone messages are checked daily.



The Reverend Ron Clingenpeel celebrated mass at St. John’s recently, with the full attention of his dog, Ringo.

St. John's Calendar

Call or email the office
to schedule activities at the church or parish hall.
985-447-2910 or stjohndoffice@bellsouth.net

June 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 31 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality	June 1 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	2 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	3 5:45p Evening Service 6:30p Choir Practice	4 7p AA	5	6 5p GRACE LUTHERAN
7 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality	8 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	9 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	10 5:30 Cemetery Assoc. Bd Mtg 6:30p Choir Practice	11 7p AA	12	13 5p GRACE LUTHERAN
14 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality 11:30: ECW Mtg VESTRY AGENDA DUE	15 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	16 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	17 5:45p Evening Service 6:30p Choir Practice	18 6p VESTRY MTG 7p AA	19	20 5p GRACE LUTHERAN
21 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality	22 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	23 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	24 6:30p Choir Practice	25 6p TaWaSi 7p AA	26	27 5p GRACE LUTHERAN
28 8a Morning Prayer 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Morning Prayer 11:30 Hospitality	29 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	30 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	July 1 5:45p Evening Service 6:30p Choir Practice	2 7p AA	3	4 Independence Day 5p GRACE LUTHERAN

Fr. Doug's Thibodaux Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9am to 4pm.
Church Office Hours: Tuesday through Thursday, from 9am to noon.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- John Foley Pugh, II (6/3)*
- Grace Guthrie (6/8)*
- Kate Baumann (6/11)*
- Jacob Thibodeaux (6/14)*
- Elise Mejia (6/14)*
- DeVonne Herring (6/15)*
- Marie Sheley (6/17)*
- Calleigh Thibodeaux (6/24)*



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- David & Cynthia Cassard (June 12)*
- Jacob & Gretchen Thibodeaux (June 12)*
- Walter & Rita Lanier (June 22)*
- H.G. and Bennie Bourgeois (June 25)*

Weekly Meetings

Choir

Join us for choir practice on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm.
 Contact LaDonna Alexander at
 ladonna_alexande@bellsouth.net
 for more information.

Bible Study

All are welcome to join Bible Study on Tuesdays at
 6:30pm. Contact Alice Strausser
 for details and location.

AA Infinity Group

Alcoholics Anonymous meets in the parish hall Tuesday
 and Thursday evenings at 7:00pm.

CODA

Co-Dependents Anonymous meetings are on
 Monday evenings at 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the parish
 hall. For more information, call 985-447-8159
 or 985-526-8565 or visit www.coda.org.

Wednesday services

Wednesday evening Holy Eucharist services
 began in May, and alternate between Trinity
 and St. John's. The schedule for these
 services is listed here, and will be
 listed on the calendar at our website.

Wednesday Service schedule

June 3	St. John's	5:45 pm
June 10	Trinity	6:00 pm
June 17	St. John's	5:45 pm
June 24	Trinity	6:00 pm

St. John's Episcopal Church

718 Jackson Street
Thibodaux, LA 70301
Phone: (985) 447-2910, FAX: (985) 447-5192
www.stjohnsthibodaux.org
Follow us on Facebook.