



ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL NEWS

September 2015

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)

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.



FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK

This is an article written by my seminary professor of theology, Anthony Baker, that just appeared in the August 2015 edition of *Seminary Southwest*. Please just read and reflect.

Jesus Christ, Karl Marx, and Michael Brown

Human labor is not a commodity. Recent articles on "Ferguson, One Year Out," which I was reading alongside commentary on the Greek economic showdown, brought this central Marxist insight back to mind.

When I read economic and political journalism, I do so not with the insights and perspectives of an economist or a political scientist, but rather as a theologian who did enough rooting around in the Marxists and political economists in graduate school to shape my sense of what markets are, what good they serve, and what it looks like when they twist toward perverse ends. So my Marxist insight leads me to a question that, though generated by Marx, is primarily for me a theological question: is it possible to pay attention to economic systems without abstracting from the flesh and blood, desires and experiences, of actual human actors? Or simply put, can we exchange goods in a way that foregrounds, rather than suppresses, our humanity?

This is a Marxist question because it was Marx who first theorized that a system that aims to turn all human labor into a unit of trade will not be able to avoid alienating the human spirit that goes into that production. The streets of Ferguson boiled over last August because a white officer shot an unarmed black man; the attempts to address the unrest with new legislation about police practices and court processes have so far been unable to deal with the root of the problem: We generate wealth in a way that entails as its dialectical twin an army of poor laborers with little or no opportunity for a better life. And in Ferguson, as in the rest of America, this dialectical twin aligns disproportionately with African-Americans.

But as a friend reminded me in conversation this summer, it is also a theological insight, even though I hear Marx wagging his fulsome beard at me as I say this. (The trouble with Marx's theology is that he imagined the word "God" to mean a kind of super-player (Über-economicus?) who controls and manipulates all creative exchange, and so would be a limit or simply a kaibosh on human freedom. A richer theology of divine provision and generative grace might have changed Marx's mind about a good many things, and even addressed some of the problematic aspects of his theory. But I digress.) When I look at images of the streets of Ferguson, both last August when they were on fire and this August when they are quieter but still signs of complex segregation and barriers to opportunity, I see the humanity which God assumes in the Incarnation. When we allow lives (black lives, poor lives, abused or addicted lives, lives that sit on the periphery of economic growth) to remain invisible behind the systems of wealth that ironically depend

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Rector

Fr. Doug Lasiter
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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

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on them, we are doing something utterly at odds with the way God acts in Christ. God did not put in place a system of trickle-down salvation; God took on a particular human life, with all the sadness and joy and anguish and hunger and love that life entails, and said, "this is the way, the truth, and the life." The human birth of the divine Logos will always rebel against the sort of abstraction that implies that particular lives simply do not matter.

Human labor is not a commodity. Or it is not just a commodity. We work to make things we can sell (yes, including a curriculum for theological education). But the thing we make and sell does not replace the deep and complex human lives that lie in the shadows behind all the making and selling. When it does, then the poor and uneducated and unemployed and segregated classes have the most to lose, since commodification maximizes alienation on its margins. It may be years before a well-educated professor feels the effects of a system that values her only for what she produces; it will not take so long for the Jack-in-the-Box employee to come to this realization.

Where are particular lives invisible around you? Where is your own human spirit at risk of alienation? What would it mean to reflect God's entrance into human particularity in these places?

*Anthony Baker joined the seminary faculty in 2004. He teaches classes in both historical theology (focusing on a figure, an era, or a school of thought) and constructive theology (the building of persuasive arguments about God and creation). He is the author of *Diagonal Advance: Perfection in Christian Theology*, as well as various articles in *Modern Theology*, *Political Theology*, *The Journal of Anglican Studies*, *Anglican Theological Review*, and other journals and collections.*



Pastoral and Communion Visits to Parishioners

Please contact the office at stjohnoffice@bellsouth.net or 985-447-2910 to give Fr. Doug contact information to schedule a pastoral visit to homebound members of St. John's. We also schedule 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.



A Note from the Vestry

For the past few months, St. John's Vestry members have been providing articles for the newsletter. This is the sixth in the series.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Tucker Handley. I've been going to St. John's since I moved to Thibodaux in 2011, and I joined the vestry back in 2013. In thinking about what to write for the newsletter, I keep coming back to the issue of why it is necessary to attend church. After all, we can pray to God or read the Bible whenever we want. What difference does it make where we are physically?

To me, one of the most important reasons to attend church is being part of a faith community. The Christian faith is not something to be lived alone in one's bedroom with the shades drawn, but through relationships with others over coffee and potluck dinners, through laughter and tears both. Even though Thibodaux has many charms, it can feel lonely sometimes for a person who is not from the area. However, being at St. John's has given me a place to call home, a chance to belong to a Christian community of imperfect, flawed people like myself who nonetheless seek to meet Jesus through the Eucharist and the liturgy and to live out the consequences of that encounter through service to each other and the community we live in.

We can be gifts to each other just by being there, by being present and seeing what might happen. If we just stayed at home and prayed with the blinds closed, it would be more convenient and we could avoid meeting people that can be irritating or annoying, but then I think we would miss the point as well. Even though I will be leaving soon to take a job opportunity with an organization I worked for previously, I'll always remember the people of St. John's as they took in this stranger in a strange land and helped him continue along his Christian journey (stumbling at times, I'll admit).

Thanks for all that you have done for me here, and I'll see you in church!

St. John's Calendar

September 2015

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
August 30 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality	31 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	September 1 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	2 6:30p Choir Practice	3 5p (Private rehearsal-church) 7p AA	4	5 5p GRACE LUTHERAN
6 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality	LABOR DAY 7 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	8 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	9 9am Thibodaux Music Club 5:45p Evening Service 6:30p Choir Practice	10 7p AA	11	12 5p GRACE LUTHERAN
13 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality VESTRY AGENDA DUE	14 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	15 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	16 5:30 Cemetery Asoc. Mtg 6:30p Choir Practice	17 6p VESTRY MTG 7p AA	18	19 5p GRACE LUTHERAN
20 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality 11:30: ECW Mtg	21 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	22 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	23 Vestry Newsletter Article Due 5:45p Evening Service 6:30p Choir Practice	24 7p AA	25	26 5p GRACE LUTHERAN
27 8a Eucharist 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Eucharist 11:30 Hospitality	28 6p AA subgroup 7p CODA	29 6:30p Bible Study 7p AA	30 6:30p Choir Practice	October 1 6:30p TAWASI 7p AA	2	3 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

- Christopher Eschete (9/2)*
- LaDonna Alexander (9/7)*
- Julie Green (9/9)*
- Denise Fox (9/9)*
- Bill Borskey (9/10)*
- Kenneth Mejia (9/17)*
- June Butler (9/18)*
- Robert Breeding (9/19)*
- Betty Roth Hebert (9/21)*
- Wayne Galloway (9/27)*
- Murray Dennis (9/29)*

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



- Mike & Alice Strausser (9/4)*
- John & Murray Dennis (9/7)*
- Joseph & June Butler (9/13)*
- Christopher & Julie Eschete (9/23)*

Weekly Meetings

Choir

Join us for choir practice on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. Contact LaDonna Alexander at ladonna_alexande@bellsouth.net, or tel. 985-803-0652, 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 services during the month of September is listed here, and is included in the weekly bulletin and on the calendar at our website.

Wednesday Service schedule

- September 2** Trinity 6:00 pm
- September 9** St. John's 5:45 pm
- September 16** Trinity 6:00 pm
- September 23** St. John's 5:45 pm
- September 30** Trinity 6:00 pm

Self Defense Classes Offered



Our own Lucie Morvant led a Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Course at the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office Shooting Range July 29, 30, and 31. LaDonna, Rachel, and Bailey Alexander all completed the course. This basic physical defense course for women is available to all women ages 12 and up. The cost is \$10 to cover materials. The next course in Thibodaux will be November 16, 17, and 18, from 6:00pm until 9:30pm at the Law Enforcement Complex at 1300 Lynn Street. To register online go to lpsa.net and click on Services and Public Classes and follow the directions for RAD course. For more information contact DeAnn S. Barrios at 449-4436 or deann-barrios@lpsa.net. A class will also be held on September 14, 15, and 16 in Cut Off. The deadline to register is 11:00am on Sept. 11 for the September course and 11:00am on Nov. 13 for the November course.

Mark your calendar...

Sept. 9 The **Thibodaux Music Club** is hosting a concert on Wednesday, September 9, at 10:30 a.m., featuring St. John's Music Director, LaDonna Alexander, who will accompany soprano Alison Arthurs. The public is invited to attend this concert free of charge.

Sept. 11-13 TaWaSi Antique Show is Sept. 11-13, 2015.

The annual TaWaSi Antique Show is scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, September 11-13, 2015, at the Warren J. Harang Jr. Municipal Auditorium. There will be more than 48 dealers offering antiques, furniture, estate and costume jewelry, glass, rugs, vintage clothing, books, linens, etc. Tickets are \$10, and proceeds fund community programs including scholarships and support for area nonprofit organizations, including the St. John's Historic Cemetery Association and Music at St. John's Concert Series. Tickets are available from Lesley Marcello and Sue Herpel.

St. John's Episcopal Church

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