



# THE FOURTH EPISTLE SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH MOBILE, ALABAMA

The Protestant Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast  
The Right Reverend James Russell Kendrick, Bishop  
Reverend John Talbert—Rector

Vol. XXXV, Issue 12

January 2026

## A MESSAGE FROM BROTHER JACOB

Dear Saint John's Family,

As I write this letter, my internship with Church of the Redeemer has come to an end. Part of the discernment process is that each candidate must take an internship for twelve weeks which is assigned by Bishop Kendrick. During this internship, the candidate is assigned various duties by the priest of the parish to which we are sent. Some of my duties included: preaching, officiating communion under special circumstances, proclaiming the gospel, setting the Lord's table for communion, distribution of the sacred host, teaching Sunday School, and some pastoral care. I also planned the music and Eucharistic prayers for Advent and Christmas.

During my time of serving at Redeemer, I was told by the Bishop to remember and keep in mind that everything counts in discernment. The little moments as well as the large moments, successes, failures, and even disappointments. Indeed, everything does count, and everything belongs, and discernment is something that never ends. God is always working!

I learned so much through the leadership of Fr. Talbert, and instruction and training with the Rev. Deacon Terry Goff, and the Rev. Mary Alice Mathison. I've also learned a great deal from the Redeemer and Saint John's communities about willingness and support in times when God is calling. One of the greatest lessons I have learned during this process, which I will be telling the Commission on Ministry during our final interviews, is that the willingness of St. John's and Redeemer to walk with me during this season of my discernment has been an absolute blessing. My heart is full of gratitude! Someone recently told me that this kind of discernment happens in community, and now I know exactly what that means. Everyone has played apart, everyone has been exactly where they were supposed to be. It's necessary to understand that community goes beyond the four walls of the Parish Church, and extends to my family, and my friends, the supportive and even the unsupportive. I'm so grateful it is not done alone.

The next step is coming home to St. John's on January 4th. The commission on ministry, the bishop and all the candidates will meet at Camp Beckwith on January 9 and 10th for final interviews and presentations. And the final recommendation by the commission to the Bishop and the Bishop's, which may or may not involve seminary. The primary objective has always been to ensure that God's will is done. Let us pray it be so.

Thank you, and God bless you all!

— Brother Jacob Taylor



## Vestry Meeting December 21, 2025

**Call to Order:** The St. John's Vestry meeting was called to order at 11:31 AM

**Adoption of Agenda:** Fr. Talbert added an item to the agenda: election of a Vestry Clerk. A motion was made by Kathe Gieseler and seconded by Eddy Velaski to accept the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

**Request for Excuse:** Absent Vestry members: Hugh Tomlin. Additional individuals in attendance: Louis Daniel, Cindy Gass.

**Opening Prayer:** Fr. Talbert led the Vestry members in the opening prayer.

**Presentation and Review of Minutes:** No minutes for November 2025. Kathe Gieseler asked to resign as Vestry Clerk. Fr. Talbert accepted her resignation. Kathe nominated Janet Buckley to be Clerk, seconded by Eddy Valaski. The motion passed.

### Reports

#### Financial:

**Financial Update:** Vestry Treasurer, Cindy Gass presented the Financial Report for the month of November.

In the month of November, income from all sources was \$29,735 we had expenses of \$14,843 This reflects a surplus of \$ 14,892 for the month of November.

**Budget 2026:** Treasurer Cindy Gass reported that there were still a number of pledges not returned which made finalizing the 2026 budget difficult. There will be follow-up with those congregation members who regularly pledge who have not returned a pledge card. A motion was made by Kathe Gieseler and seconded by Connie McLean to table the approval of the 2026 budget.

**Senior Warden's Report:** Senior Warden Connie McLean reported that the Scrip account at Regions Bank will be closed out and a new account for the ECW will be opened at Regions Bank.

**Junior Warden's Report:** In the absence of the Junior Warden Hugh Tomlin, Louis Danial gave the report. The old boiler has been removed and the new tankless system is in the process of being installed. The heating system should be back on line by the new year.

#### Ministry Reports

**ECW:** ECW members provided bags of "goodies" to the residents of Murray House

**Outreach:** Fifty-three Christmas gifts were delivered to Ashland Health and Rehabilitation Center by Fr. Talbert and Outreach members.

#### Priest's Report:

There will be a wedding at St. John's on January 3, 2026

On January 11, 2026 there will be baptisms, dedication of the font surround, and a reception to celebrate both the baptisms and the completion of the church building renovations.

Fr. Talbert will not be here on January 18<sup>th</sup>

#### Old Business:

**Update from the renovation committee:** The frame for the large window is finished; installation of the frame and the installation of the stained glass will happen the week of December 28<sup>th</sup>.

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**Fr. Talbert's Housing 2026:** Fr. Talbert asked the Vestry to approve the housing allowance statement:

*Whereas the Rev. John Keith Talbert is employed as a minister of the Gospel by St. John's Episcopal Church in Mobile, Alabama, which does not provide a residence for them, the vestry resolves that of the total annualized compensation of \$24,000 (total amount) to be paid to the Rev. John Keith Talbert during 2026, that \$24,00 (housing amount) be designated a parsonage allowance within the meaning if the term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.*

Kathe Gieseler motioned and Eddy Velaski seconded to approve the housing allowance.

The motion passed.

**Brother Jacob's Letter of Recommendation:** Fr. Talbert presented to the Vestry, the formal letter of recommendation that goes to the Bishop for Brother Jacob to start the process for ordination. The vestry signed the letter.

#### **Adjourn and Closing Prayer**

Fr Talbert led the Vestry in the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 PM. Motion by Helen Guthrie and seconded by Kathe Gieseler.



Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, prompting over seven million Ukrainians to seek refuge in other nations, primarily across Europe. This event has become the largest refugee crisis since World War II. In January 2023, as the Ukrainian refugee crisis unfolded, the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe (CECE) and Episcopal Relief & Development launched the Convocation Refugee Grant Program (CRGP) to help faith communities across Europe to deliver compassionate, targeted and effective support to refugees and displaced migrants. Since its launch, CRGP has reached more than 200,000 people in 28 cities in 12 European countries with the help of 21 local churches. In Wiesbaden, Germany, CECE and Episcopal Relief & Development support Ukrainian led cultural activities hosted by the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury that created a sense of belonging for Ukrainian refugees. Watch the video to learn more about how the church has become a sanctuary for Ukrainians in their city. Donations to the Ukraine Response Fund will help support refugee-led programs throughout Europe: <https://support.episcopalrelief.org/ukraineresponse> or send checks to Episcopal Relief & Development PO Box 5121 Boone, IA 50950 – 0121.

# Ministries at St. John's



## Outreach

### Saint John's Angel Tree—

Fifty-three Christmas gifts were delivered to Ashland Health and Rehabilitation Center by Father Talbert and members of the Outreach Committee. A big thank you to the members of St. John's who are always so generous to the Outreach projects.



**The Women of the Church** presented “goodie bags” to the residents of Murray Hall.



**ToLC December recap:** From December 1st to December 29th, Tree of Life Counseling had a total of 103 client sessions, with 8 sessions at no cost to the client and 64 sessions at a reduced cost or no copay charged. This equals 64% of our clients having access to mental health care they might not otherwise get during a critical holiday time. That's because of YOU! We wish peace and joy for every one of you in the new year. Remember, we are just a call or text away if you or yours need us - (251)422-6592 Happy New Year from Lee, Kristen and Takoda!



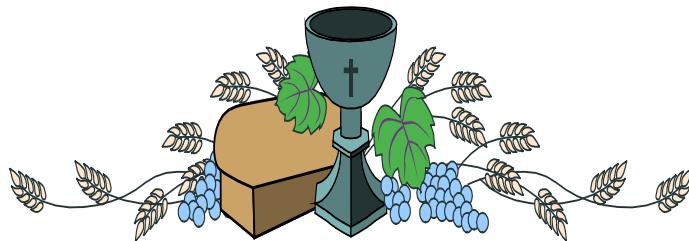
Christmas Eve saw the return of the Christmas pageant to St. John's, directed by our own Lilly Talbert. There were Mary and Joseph, shepherds, a narrator, three Wise people, an angel, a heavenly chorus and a star to show the way to the manger. Everyone there enjoyed either participating or watching. It was wonderful!



*Congratulations and blessings to Caroline and Landon Heavner  
who were married at St. John's on January 3rd .*



<b>Lectionary and Rota for January 2026</b>				
Date	January 4	January 11	January 18	January 25
	HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II	HOLY BAPTISM	HOLY COMMUNION	HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II
Lectionary Day Color	Christmas 2 White	Epiphany 1 White	Epiphany 2 Green	Epiphany 3 Green
Officiant	Fr. John Talbert	Fr. John Talbert	Dr. Nikki Shaw	Fr. John Talbert
Lectors/ Intercessor	Paula Ross Helen Guthrie Janet Buckley	Jan Joseph Leslie Talbert Br. Jacob Luke	Nikki Shaw Geri Moulton Kathe Gieseler	Paula Ross Helen Guthrie Janet Buckley
Eucharistic Ministers	Connie McLean Mary Sheffield Lee Dorsey	Br. Jacob Luke Kathe Gieseler Connie McLean	Lee Dorsey	Mary Sheffield Lee Dorsey Br. Jacob Luke
Altar Guild	Lee Dorsey Kristen Turner	Cindy Gass	Irene Yeager Br. Jacob Luke	Connie Anderson Bootsie Cieutat
Vestry Tellers	Helen Guthrie Connie McLean	Hugh Tomlin Eddy Velaski	Janet Buckley Kathe Gieseler	Helen Guthrie Connie McLean



**January 4—** Birthday Sunday

**January 11—** There will be a service of Baptism and dedication of the Baptismal font. A reception in the Great Hall will celebrate the baptisms and the finish of the church renovations.

**January 18—** Outreach Committee meeting

**January 25—** Potluck



The Prayer List will be updated on a monthly basis **starting in February.**

There will be more information about this in an email from Father John.



**For healing grace and continued strength, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ:**

Bootsie Ciutat, Eddy Velaski, Julie Garner, Pat Fulford, Marie Brown, Neva Bache, David Rich, Bob Anderson, Helen Guthrie, Mike and Frances Barbour, Carolyn Pearce, Ashley Garris, Audrey Garner, Jayson Chestang, Mary Catherine Warren

**For our Family and Friends:** Steve and Janice Garner, Frank Brown, JoAnn McPhearson, Chris Lion, Jeff Bishop, Colin Guthrie, Alilee Pillman, Sheila Velaski, Andy Williams, Nadine Evans, Calvert Johnson, Brenda Goolsby, Larry and Laurel DeBert, Anne Redd, Donnie Chestang, Louis Bell, Emily Brown, Dennis Clardy, Morris Levy, Joey Adams, Judy Lynch, Adam Strong, Angie Leon, David Hamilton, Donna Latham, Sheila Cassity Granger, Barbara Bonner, David Brunner, Mary Horner, Susan Hansen, Karl Gieseler, Randy Dunn, Sharon Lee Nolan, Peggy Sheffield, Eddie Hun, Katelynn Tillman, Karen Twilley, Nancy Payne, Donna Pigg, Tiffany Matthews, Betty Williams, Latecia Cushion Knight, Bonnie Jernigan, Britney Butler, Neal Tourné, Sandy Michel, Paul Nelson, Frances LeBlanc (priest)

Our sisters and brothers serving in the Armed Forces: Nicholas Boykin, Joshua Maddox, Marcus Rich, Ross Hussmann, Ellis Garner, Eric Mattoon, Joshua Maddox

Mary Jones	01/09
Eddy Velaski	01/10
Leslie Talbert	01/17
Nicholas Tarantole	01/17
Irene Yeager	01/19
Janet Buckley	01/24
Mary Frances Chestang	01/25
Emma Talbert	01/27



Craig and Shirley Hall – 1/31

## Contact Us

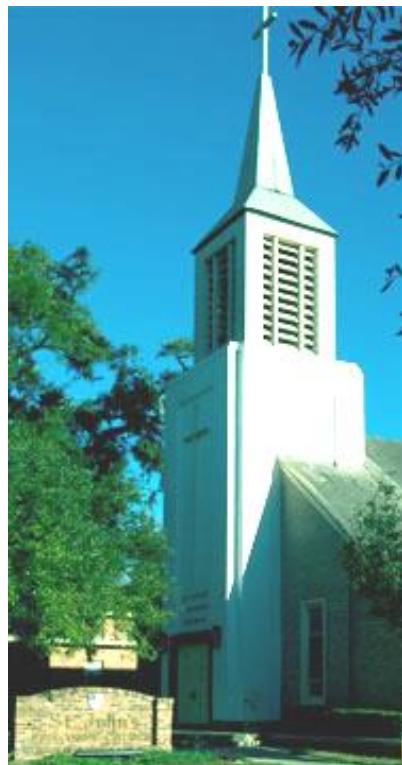
### Staff:

Fr. John Talbert  
Rector  
205-354-3699  
Louis Daniel  
Organist & Choir Director  
music@stjohnsmobile.org  
Kathe Gieseler  
Financial Secretary  
finance@stjohnsmobile.org  
Dr. Nikki Shaw  
Office volunteer  
office@stjohnsmobile.org

### Vestry:

Janet Buckley (clerk)  
Cindy Gass (treasurer)  
Kathe Gieseler  
Helen Guthrie  
Connie McLean (Senior Warden)  
Hugh Tomlin (Junior Warden)  
Eddie Velaski

Saint John's Episcopal Church  
1707 Government Street  
Mobile, Alabama 36604



### **Come Worship With Us!**

Sunday:  
10:00AM Holy Eucharist

Other Feasts and Holy Days are observed throughout the year; please see our website for the latest schedule.

### **Parish Office**

Telephone: 251-479-5474  
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**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.