



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. XXXVI, Issue 2

February 2026

Hello Saint John's Family,
In the coming weeks we will enter the Lenten Season; just as soon as we're done with all the Mardi Gras festivities and get our ash in church. (**Ash Wednesday services will be at 2PM on February 18th**).

This season, I am excited to invite you to a Christian Formation event on the Wednesday nights of Lent in collaboration with our brothers and sisters at Trinity Episcopal Church on Dauphin St. The Rev. Mark Fitzhugh and I will co-lead a 5-Part study we are calling "**Bear with me**", cheekily named so after 2 Corinthians 11:1 – "I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me!"

There are more than a handful of Greek words in the New Testament that have been translated into "bear" (or "bearing") in the English as ways to talk about our relationship with one another, with God, and how to faithfully live together on the earth.

However, no "bears" are meant to illustrate that there are any bears in the New Testament. (We can leave the animals for study on "mocking". [2 Kings 2:23/Galatians 6:7])

As for all the "bears" in the Gospels and Epistles, we hear them in stories about "branches that bear fruit", the calls for us to "bear one another's burdens", Jesus explaining how good soil "bears fruit in every good work" and how the love we share includes "bearing with one another and forgiving each other". The moment also arrives for Mary to "bear a son".

Over the 5 weeks of Lent we will explore the language of the New Testament, share a meal with our neighbors and talk about how the lives we each bear our crosses through the world. Come bear with us!
All sessions will be hosted by Trinity Episcopal Church at 1900 Dauphin Street.

Week 1: February 25th – John 15:1-8 "Bear much fruit" *Phérō (φέρω)*

5:30PM Stations of the Cross / 6:00PM Dinner and Discussion

Week 2: March 4th - Romans 8:14-17 "Bear Witness" *Summarturéō (συνμαρτυρέω)*

7:00PM – Celebration of New Ministry (with Bishop Russell Kendrick)

Week 3: March 11th – Matthew 20:1-16 "Bearing the burden" *Bastázō (βαστάζω)*

5:30PM Stations of the Cross / 6:00PM Dinner and Discussion

Week 4: March 18th – Ephesians 4:1-16 "Forbearance" *Anéchomai (ἀνέχομαι)*

Week 5: March 25th - Luke 1:26-38 "Bear a son" *Tiktō (τίκτω)*

7:00PM – Feast of the Annunciation (Holy Eucharist Rt II)





St. John's Episcopal Church
1707 Government St, Mobile, AL 36604
Vestry Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2026

Call to Order: The St. John's Vestry meeting was called to order at 11:39 AM

Adoption of Agenda: Fr. Talbert added an item to the agenda under New Business: Formation of an Historical Committee. A motion was made by Kathe Gieseler and seconded by Hugh Tomlin to accept the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Request for Excuse: Absent Vestry members: Eddy Velaski. Additional individuals in attendance: Louis Daniel, Cindy Gass (Treasurer) Charlynn Will.

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

Presentation and Review of Minutes: Minutes from the December 2025 meeting were presented. A motion was made by Connie McLean and seconded by Kathe Geisler to accept the minutes. The motion passed.

Reports

Financial:

Financial Update: Vestry Treasurer, Cindy Gass presented the Consolidated Financial Report for 2025. In 2025, income from plate and pledge was \$119,369.38 we had projected a budget of \$142,000.00 This reflects a deficit of \$22,630.62 from the 2025 projections however, due to a combination of non-budgeted income and a reduction in some projected cost, ST. John's actually ended the year with a difference of less than \$10,000 from the projected budget. It was noted that the church repairs and renovations costs associated with the termite damages are held in a different account from the regular church budget.

Budget 2026: Treasurer Cindy Gass presented the 2026 budget. Anticipated General Fund income: \$242,000. Budgeted General fund expenses (amended) \$267,45 Which results in a deficit of \$25,453.

A motion was made by Kathe Geisler and seconded by Janet Buckley to accept the financial report and approve the 2026 budget as amended. Motion passed.

Senior Warden's Report: Senior Warden Connie McLean reported that she is working at getting the Scrip account at Regions Bank closed out and a new account for the ECW opened at Regions Bank.

Junior Warden's Report: **Junior Warden** Hugh Tomlin, reported that the bathroom in the church needs a vent. He and Louis will work on getting that done.

Ministry Reports

ECW: ECW no report. Irene Yeager ECW President will be meeting with Fr. Talbert to discuss ECW projects.

Outreach: Outreach Committee had a planning meeting. Plans are to assemble One-Meal Lunch Bags in February, Forty Days/Forty Items Bags as a Lenten project (completed in March), Books for Head Start children in April and probably a food drive in May.

Priest's Report: FR. Talbert reported:

He will not be here on February 8th and April 12th;

He has been asked to be dean of Beckwith for the Senior High Camp this summer;

He is working on some youth ministry projects,

((con't from p.2))

Diocesan Convention: Eugene Johnston and Fr. Talbert are running for delegates for the National Convention which will be held this summer in Pheonix, AZ.

Fr. Talbert has submitted a resolution to the convention regarding defining the status of congregations.

Old Business:

Update from the renovation committee: The windows are completed. We still have the last of the contractor (Thomas) bills to finalize and pay. There is some electrical work to be done. The sound system and possibly some additional lighting has to go in and the kneelers on the pews that were shortened need to be re-installed.

New Business

Plaques and Memorials: Fr. Talbert discussed the need for there to be (going forward) a definition of what size, materials and content any plaques and/or memorials that are displayed in the church should be. The Vestry members agreed. A definition will be developed.

Use of Space:

Louis Daniel requested the Vestry approve the Southern Echoe Chorale using St. John's on Monday evenings for their rehearsals. Louis is a member of the group. A motion was made by Janet Buckley and seconded by Kathe Geisler to approve the use at no charge.

Louis mentioned that the Mobile Singing Children group might be interested in having their performance at St. John's

Gulf Coast Creation Care Donation: The Vestry approved a \$100 donation to Gulf Coast Creation Care to come from the Outreach budget.

Lights for the Parking Lot: Discussion centered around the need for security lights for the parking lot. Motion-sensor lights were suggested and possibly chains across the entrances to stop/deter through traffic and cars/individuals in the lot after the church buildings are unoccupied. Hugh Tomlin and Louis Daniel will look into the various possibilities.

Formation of an Historical Committee The space in the church that was formerly the baptistry has been suggested to be a history/mini-museum to house St. John's items of historical importance. Fr. Talbert suggested forming a committee to define what should go into the area and procedures for use. The Vestry suggested explaining this to the congregation and asking for volunteers.

Adjourn and Closing Prayer

Fr. Talbert led the Vestry in the closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 PM. Motion by Connie McLean and seconded by Kathe Geisler.

Respectfully submitted,



Janet Buckley, Clerk



Episcopal Relief & Development Offers Lenten Meditations by Sister Monica Clare

Beginning on Ash Wednesday and continuing throughout the 2026 season, Episcopal Relief & Development is offering daily Lenten Meditations in English and Spanish, inviting readers to reflect upon and deepen their spiritual practices.

This year, the organization has partnered with Sister Monica Clare—Episcopal nun, best-selling author and unlikely TikTok star—to create meditations that explore the theme of “Holy Habits.” In her meditations, Sister Monica Clare reflects on the Scripture readings for Vespers (Evening Prayer) to encourage habits that support and strengthen a life of faith.

“To maintain clarity in a world of constant change, we need to attend to our spiritual lives each day,” said the Most Rev. Sean W. Rowe, presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church. “Most often, spiritual growth happens not in grand moments, but through modest and consistent practices of faith. This Lent, Episcopal Relief & Development’s meditations help us build ‘holy habits’ to deepen our relationship with the Risen Christ. By embracing these habits, we can become more equipped to slough off what no longer serves us and draw closer to God and our neighbors.”

Episcopal Relief & Development invites everyone from the Episcopal community and beyond to participate in “Holy Habits” by subscribing to daily emails, downloading resources for further study and including the meditations in community prayer, worship and gathering time.

“Episcopal Relief & Development’s Lenten Meditations are an invitation to join a movement of prayer and reflection,” said Sean McConnell, Senior Director, Faith and Community Engagement, Episcopal Relief & Development. “People join this community of spiritual pilgrims from around the world, and many share these meditations with their own networks, friends and family. Lenten Meditations are a gift to our friends and supporters who give us so much of their own prayerful support.”

Click on this link to get the reflection sent to you daily [2026 Lenten](#).

THE SEASON OF LENT

Early Christians observed “a season of penitence and fasting” in preparation for the Paschal feast, or Pascha (BCP, pp. 264-265). The season now known as Lent (from an Old English word meaning “spring,” the time of lengthening days) has a long history. Originally, in places where Pascha was celebrated on a Sunday, the Paschal feast followed a fast of up to two days. In the third century this fast was lengthened to six days. Eventually this fast became attached to, or overlapped, another fast of forty days, in imitation of Christ’s fasting in the wilderness. The forty-day fast was especially important for converts to the faith who were preparing for baptism, and for those guilty of notorious sins who were being restored to the Christian assembly. In the western church the forty days of Lent extend from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, omitting Sundays. The last three days of Lent are the sacred Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Today Lent has reacquired its significance as the final preparation of adult candidates for baptism. Joining with them, all Christians are invited “to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word” (BCP, p. 265).

Ministries at St. John's



Outreach Committee Plans

The Outreach Committee met to plan future projects. Past and possible future projects were discussed. Decision was that for the next three months the projects will be:

February:

One Bag Meal Bags: Plans are to fill 100 bags on Sunday, February 15th. We will distribute them to those who come to our doors in need of food. Everyone is invited (and needed) to help.

March:

Lent Project: **Forty Days, Forty Items Project** – see Parish News for details.

April:

Books for Head Start Kids We will provide 800 books to the Head Start program so that every child gets a book to take home. We'll be putting our "A gift from St. John's..." stickers in the books and will need lots of willing hands-on Sunday, April 19th.

The Outreach Committee meets on the third Sunday each month, and projects are usually planned for that Sunday. Everyone is welcome to come to the meetings and be part of the planning and the "doing" If you have ideas for projects or organizations we should partner with, please contact Mary Sheffield.



ToLC January recap: From January 1st to January 31st, Tree of Life Counseling had a total of 94 client sessions, with 21 sessions at no cost to the client and 51 sessions at a reduced cost or no copay charged. 76% of our clients for the month of January were able to continue mental health care despite insurance changes or cancellations. We could not serve our community this way without the support of our Saint John's family. The whole community improves when people can get the care they need. THANK YOU for allowing us to continue this ministry into another year! We are just a call or text away if you or yours need us - (251)422-6592. And, if you can think of anything you'd like to see from us in the coming year, please let us know!

www.tree-of-life-counseling.org



On Sunday, January 11, Clare Hope Cameron was baptized by Father John Talbert at St. John's Episcopal Church. Her godparents are: Mark and April Atcheson and Geri Moulton. The members of St. John's are so happy to welcome Clare into our family! After the service a reception was held in the Great Hall.



Clare with godmother Geri Moulton.



Clare with Father John, Carolyn Pearce (g. grandmother) Jeanne & Eddy Velaski (grandparents) and Alex and Eileen Cameron (grandparents)



Clare with godparents, Mark and April Atcheson

Lenten Challenge: Forty Days – Forty Items



Wednesday, February 18th is the first day of Lent.

We traditionally think about Lent as a time to give something up: chocolate, meat, cake, an activity we love doing. This year we are suggesting combining this “give something up” tradition with “give something away.”

Each day remove one item from your closet, cupboard, dresser, or storage area; something you no longer wear or need but is still in good usable condition and put it into the bag we will provide (or your own box if you prefer).

At the end of the forty days, **on Palm Sunday**, bring the bag/box to St. John's and we will take the items to an organization that will get them to those who can really use them.



Geri Moulton	02/01
Mary Sheffield	02/08
LaNeisha Anderson	02/10
Alison Stoker	02/12
Candace Harsany	02/14
Lee Dorsey	02/15
Debbie Ollhoft	02/15
Lisa Chestang	02/17



Celebrating January birthdays with: Emma Talbert, Mary Jones, Irene Yeager, Leslie Talbert, Janet Buckley and Eddy Velaski.



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

Cookie & David Rich, Bootsie Cieutat, 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: Chris Velaski, Melanie Velaski, 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

Contact Us

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Vestry:

Janet Buckley (clerk)

Cindy Gass (treasurer)

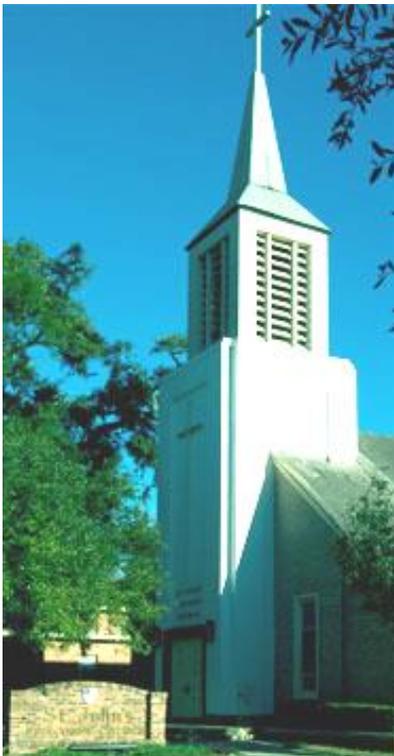
Kathe Gieseler
Helen Guthrie
Connie McLean (Senior Warden)
Hugh Tomlin (Junior Warden)
Eddie Velaski

Lectionary and Rota for February 2026				
Date	February 1	February 8	February 15	February 22
	HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II	HOLY COMMUNION	HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II	HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II
Lectionary Day Color	Epiphany 4 Green	Epiphany 5 Green	Epiphany 6 Green	Lent 1 Purple
Officiant	Fr. John Talbert	Dr. Nikki Shaw	Fr. John Talbert	Fr. John Talbert
Lectors/ Intercessor	Jan Joseph Leslie Talbert Br. Jacob Luke	Nikki Shaw Geri Moulton Kathe Gieseler	Paula Ross Helen Guthrie Janet Buckley	Jan Joseph Leslie Talbert Br. Jacob Luke
Eucharistic Ministers	Kathe Gieseler Connie McLean	Lee Dorsey	Mary Sheffield Lee Dorsey Br. Jacob Luke	Eugene Johnston Kathe Gieseler Connie McLean
Altar Guild	Lee Dorsey Kristen Turner	Cindy Gass	Irene Yeager Br. Jacob Luke	Connie Anderson Bootsie Cieutat
Vestry Tellers	Hugh Tomlin Eddy Velaski	Janet Buckley Kathe Giesler	Helen Guthrie Connie McLean	Hugh Tomlin Eddy Velaski



February 8th- Birthday Sunday
 February 15th- Out Reach (one bag meals)
 February 18th— Ash Wednesday— 2:00
 February 25th— Fourth Sunday Potluck

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

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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.