



"Have you not known, have you not heard those who wait for the Lord shall mount up with wings like eagles."

Isaiah 40:28,31

St. John's Episcopal Church

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Rector:
Robert C. Wisnewski, Jr.

Associate Rector:
Jamie Osborne

Priest Associate
Deonna D. Neal

Staff:
Libby Poole
Financial Administrator
Fay WorriLOW
Parish Secretary
Anne Tippett
Assistant to the Rector

Christian Formation
Sarah Collier
Director of Children's Christian Formation
Joleen George
Director of Youth Ministries

Music:
Joel Gregory
Organist and Choirmaster

Maintenance:
Mike Jarrell, Superintendent
Myron Smoke

Vestry of St. John's:
Bill Eskridge Sr. Warden
Jimmy McLemore, Jr. Warden

Class of 2020
Dick Arrington
Georgia Holmes
Austin Huffaker
Alice Longshore
Jean Smyth
Bob Young

Class of 2021
Virginia Banister
Richard Bradford
Kathryn Dailey
Mike Jenkins
Stephanie Norrell
Todd Westhauser

Class of 2022
John Carter
Will Gunter
Katie Keller
Mary-Nelms Parsons
Nick Prillaman
Radney Ramsey
Emily Wise

Treasurer
Helen Wells

Clerk of the Vestry
Anne Tippett

Easter - The Eternal Christ

Jesus doesn't become the Christ. Christ becomes the Jesus.

We talk a lot about grace in the Episcopal Church but do we really believe it? Face it. At some level you probably think that those who are good get rewarded with heaven and those who are bad are punished in hell. Unless we cling to some sort of cosmic justice, we think, the problem of evil isn't really solved. We live in the hope that somehow God will triumph over all that is evil, that the forces which corrupt and destroy life will be defeated, that being fully with God means the elimination of that which is evil. God isn't just some pushover who lets bad things happen forever. At some point he'll make it all good. Isn't that what we think heaven is, the place where goodness reigns?

When we speak of the saving act of Jesus Christ on the cross, we are quick to speak as well of the importance of our choice to accept that saving act. God doesn't force anyone to love or accept love. He expresses love and then leaves it to us to accept or reject. Even when we talk about the loving forgiveness that God gives to each and every person in the whole world, we also imagine our choices having some sort of eternal effect. If we keep saying no to the gift, it's like the gift was never given, right? So at some point there's got to be some cutoff, we think.

The problem with that thinking is that it elevates our choices above God's choices. Jesus's death on the cross and his rising to life again is God's single action, in this way of thinking. It was gracious and generous and all that but God did his thing and now it's up to us to buy in or opt out. If we say yes, well and good, but if we say no, out we go to the eternal fires where all the other ungrateful people will be thrown. If we say no, reward-and-punishment theology says that's where grace stops. If you turn down the gift, you don't get the gift. The importance of our accepting the gift can easily become our focus and the gift itself is discounted.

In Lent we focus on the earthly Jesus and the sacrificial giving of his life for us to see a model of God's sacrificial way of loving. When we see life through reward-and-punishment lenses, it leads to a misunderstanding of this Jesus. It leads us to see him as the ultimate good person who is given Christhood status as a reward of sorts. We reduce Jesus to a mere example of that which is good and think our job is to become good too so that we can be rewarded. Goodness is a worthy aspiration, certainly, but the heart of Christianity is about a great

deal more than that. Christianity begins with the truth that goodness eludes our grasp. And that runs the reward-and-punishment train right off the tracks.

Easter is the celebration of the Resurrection of this Jesus and his Ascension. Here we speak of this earthly Jesus returning to the eternal Father. Returning is the key concept. Jesus doesn't go there after his resurrection; he returns there, which means he was there before he was here. Easter doesn't reveal Jesus as rewarded with Christhood status. Easter reveals the eternal Christ who has come to us in a particular form, Jesus of Nazareth. We celebrate the Risen Christ. Christ is the eternal expression of grace, part of the Triune God which has always existed and always will. In a way it is wrong to say that Jesus is God. Christ is God, part of the greater God that cannot be expressed in just one way, and Christ becomes Jesus for us.

To say that Jesus becomes the Christ is rather like saying that we are rewarded with heaven. Jesus doesn't become the Christ. Christ becomes the Jesus. Similarly, salvation isn't us working our way up to God. Salvation is God coming to us in love and forgiveness. Easter proclaims the truth that we are resurrection people. But resurrection has its deeper meaning in incarnation. God comes to us. What that means is that grace rules rather than reward-and-punishment. The Risen Christ reveals the eternal purpose of God. God comes to us in our Jesus. God comes to all people in all times and in all places. Jesus shows us the particularity of grace: it's not just some fuzzy concept. Christ shows that grace is not confined to a particular expression: it always has been and always will be.

In Easter we allow this Jesus whom we love to return to the Father so that we may know the eternal love of God for the world in an even deeper way. The eternal Christ comes to us for a season to show us eternal grace. Jesus returns to his Father because grace is unconfined. God loves us into loving God and each other.

Yours faithfully,
Robert C. Wisnewski, Jr.

THE LESSONS:

Acts 5:27-32
 Psalm 150
 Revelation 1:4-8
 John 20:19-31

THE COLLECT:

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery hast established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Flowers on the Altar this Sunday are to the glory of God and in memory of:

Molly Ledyard McGough
 Joseph M. McGough, Sr.
 Danella Kennedy Ledyard
 William Morgan Ledyard
 Ethel A. Mahan
 Oscar C. Mahan

MINISTERS SERVING THIS SUNDAY

ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER:

Joel Gregory

ACOLYTES: E. F. Marshall, A. M. Clark, A. Screws, E. Strickler, S. Miller, M. Selman H. Habermacher, JEB Clark

LAY EUCHARIST MINISTERS: C. Moore, V. Banister, T. Campbell, M. Clark

LAY EUCHARISTIC VISITORS:

B. Beale

VESTRY: 7:30 R. Bradford

10:30 B. Eskridge, G. Holmes, T. Westhauser, W. Gunter

ALTAR GUILD: K. Funk, C. Moore

PASTORAL CARE: D. Wakefield, B. Cannon, M. Carter, C. Majors, A. Screws

FLOWER DELIVERY: J. Drummond, V. Wilkerson, B. Smith

Flowers by the St. John's Flower Guild

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

How the Bible was Put Together

Meeting **April 28-May 26**

in the Parish Hall

Led by the Rev. Dr. Deonna Neal

In this class we will look at how the Bible, as we hold it in our hands today, was put together.

We will begin with how the Hebrew Scriptures came into being, followed by the development of writings after Jesus' death, and then conclude with how the final "canon" of the Bible was established in the 5th century.

A Historical-Critical Study of the Letter to the Philippians

Led by Jamie Osborne

Meeting **May 5 to May 26** in the library

This course will focus on Paul's letter to the Philippians and will be based on Dr Paul Holloway's recently published Philippians: A Critical and Historical Commentary. Dr. Holloway is Professor of Classics and Ancient Christianity at The University of the South where he teaches courses in both the School of Theology and the College of Arts and Sciences. The commentary is recommended but not required for the course.

JOLEEN GEORGE TO BECOME PARISH SECRETARY

We are excited to announce that Joleen George will become our new Parish Secretary when Fay WorriLOW retires the end of May. Joleen will continue to serve as our Director of Youth Ministries and will add to her duties all parish communications, social media, data base maintenance, publications, and parish records. You may reach Joleen at Joleen@stjohnsmontgomery.org.

GOODBYE TO FAY WORRILOW

Fay WorriLOW, our Parish Secretary the past 26 years, is retiring the end of May. If you would like to contribute to a monetary gift to be presented to her when she retires, please contact Libby Poole, our Financial Administrator (libby@stjohnsmontgomery.org or 262-1937). Mark your gifts for Fay WorriLOW. Thanks, Fay for your great work among us.

JOY AND CONCERN

Your prayers are requested for the following parishioners: Sarah Spratling, Emily Wise, Shirley Price, Glen Price, Rod Frazer, Valerie Lee, Sarah Stone, Florence Jordan, Christopher Marshall, Karen Jarrell, Jim Thomas, Eddie McDowell, Joe McGough, Cynthia Hill.

Prayers are also requested for these friends: Gloria Hudgeon, John Robertson, Johnny Smith, Mary Linger, George West, Sandra Cauthon, Randy Rushton, Phil Dotts, Doris Thornton, Tommy Oliver, Ruth Jones, Karen & Angelo Pacheco, Acra Hackney Samuels, Margaret (Marty) Hackney, Ed Sellers, Tom Broadhurst, Ricky Hatfield, Willie Fred Gamble, Monica Powell, Chase Pickett, Al Perkins, Debbie Steindorff, Betty Harper, Jennifer Pruitt, Pam Litel, Aaron Hines, Catherine Riddell, Hugh Lee Earnest, Daphne Oliver, Dawn Damato, Dottie Campbell, Scott Bradford, Mary Steindorff, Jack Mitchell, Margaret Carlson, Paula Hamm Roberts, Kim Barnhart, Lavada Spears Person, Charles Colvin, Cookie Zibilich, Charlie Smith, Clemmon Barlow, Chuck Holley, Sandy Lynn Stevens, Masha Kloberg, Andy Silverman.

Please notify us when you are sick or hospitalized so that we might provide pastoral care.

MARY AND MARTHA GUILD MEETING

Tuesday, April 30th
 at the home of
 Georgia Holmes
 782 Felder Avenue

Our speaker is Deonna Neal

5:30-7:30 pm
 5:30-6:00 - have a drink and visit
 6:00-7:30 - eat supper & hear Deonna's talk

Please bring individually packaged, single serving, unrefrigerated **MEATS** (ex: cans/packs of tuna, cans of chicken, Vienna sausages, potted meat, canned beef) for our Backpack Program.

SNACKS FOR SAWYERVILLE!

For the month of April, our ingathering is single serving trail mix for **SawyerVille Day Camp**.



Youth Sunday

May 5

Please join us for a youth led service (10:30 am) followed by a hot dog lunch and inflatables for the kids!

ECW Spring Picnic

All Women of the Church invited to attend our

Annual Spring Picnic

Monday, May 13, 2019
 Noon

At the home of Seibels Marshall

3025 Jamestown Court

If you last name begins with
A through L: Please bring a salad
M through Z: Please bring a dessert

EVENTS AROUND THE CORNER

- Family Promise Week—April 28 through May 4
- Mary & Martha Guild Meeting—April 30 @ the home of Georgia Holmes 5:30 pm
- Youth Sunday—May 5
- Parish Picnic—May 5 after the 10:30 Youth Sunday
- EYC Lock-in—May 10 & 11
- ECW Picnic—May 13 @ the home of Seibels Marshall
- VBS—June 3-6

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

SUNDAY, April 28

- 7:30 am Holy Eucharist
- 8:15 am Breakfast in the Parish House
- 9:15 am Christian Formation for all ages
- 10:30 am Holy Eucharist
- 4:20 pm Children's Choir
- 5:00 pm Jr. & Sr. EYC
- 9:00 pm Compline on FB Live

MONDAY, Apr 29

- 12 Noon Clergy Led Bible Study in the Small Dining Room
- 6:00 pm Men's Group in the Library

TUESDAY, Apr 30

- 7:00 am Holy Eucharist
- 8:10 am Morning Prayer on FB Live
- 8:30 am Prayer Group

WEDNESDAY, May 1

- 11:30 am Centering Prayer
- 3:30 pm Coffice @ Café Louisa
- 5:30 pm Holy Eucharist

THURSDAY, May 2

- 12:05 pm Holy Unction and Holy Eucharist
- 6:00 pm Adult Choir Practice

St. John's Faithfulness

Required Weekly

\$35,331.16

Received Sunday

\$36,120.21

Required to Date

\$565,298.56

Received to Date

\$564,856.79

Building Fund Debt

\$27,000

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Montgomery, Alabama
36104

«LA_LABEL_NAME»
«AD_ADDRESS_1»
«AD_ADDRESS_2»
«AD_CITY», «AD_STATE» «AD_ZIP_CODE»

The Eagle is available on the
internet at
www.stjohnsmontgomery.org

VBS REGISTRATION GOING ON NOW!

Deadline is MAY 20!

June 3-6, 2019

St. John's is hosting VBS, and this year our theme is a modified version of "Farm Fresh Faith!" Children rising Pre-K4 through 6th grade may participate. Look for registration forms online!

**** *Volunteers NEEDED-***

Please email

sarah@stjohnsmontgomery.org

