Cafeteria Christianity

The barber shop in my home town was a center of male public life. As in days gone by, older fellows with hardly enough hair to cut would come in every day of the week just to sit and talk. Saturdays were busy, of course, and boys and their parents would occupy many of the chairs in the small shop. Every day after school, teenagers would stop by to see if either of the barbers needed anything, knowing that a generous tip would be given to the one who returned with a cup of hot coffee. Pithy signs covered the walls, imparting anecdotal wisdom to anyone willing to read them. One of those signs is still emblazoned on my memory—partly because it seemed a little strange in a barber shop. It read, “This is not Burger King. You do not get it your way. You either take it my way, or you don’t get the darn thing.”

Expletive notwithstanding, perhaps that sign should be tacked to the front door of every church. This is the Christian community. This is not Morrison’s Cafeteria. You do not get to pick and choose which parts of our life together you will place on your own tray and which parts you will leave for someone else. We are in this together—all the way. We are God’s family. We are the Body of Christ. We cannot allow our membership (think “body part”) in the church to be more about taking than giving. The church does not exist for your pleasure. We, the church, exist for the pleasure of God.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul encourages his readers to stick together, writing, “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel” (1:27). The “one spirit” he refers to is the Holy Spirit—the one, unifying, animating presence of God within each of us and at the heart of our community. Being of “one mind” is a reflection of the Holy Spirit’s work, and it means more than simple agreement. The “mind” Paul writes about is the ψυχή or “pschye” that his readers would have understood as the very breath of life—the animating spirit or soul—that is found within every person. In other words, Paul is exhorting the Philippians to make their gospel-unity manifest at the deepest possible level. And he asks us to do the same.

Increasingly, ours is a world of choices. The five channels of broadcast television became the hundreds of channels available through cable or satellite, which are now being replaced by the on-demand streaming of shows and movies. The variety of apples in the produce aisle was once limited to red, green, and yellow, but now there are types to suit even the most discriminating palate. My children will never know what it means to think Neapolitan ice cream is “fancy” because it comes with all three flavors. Choice itself is not a bad thing, and I am chief among those who celebrate the inclusion of even the most eccentric options on a menu. But the gospel calls us to set aside all our differences in order that we might be united as those who belong to Christ. When the church forgets that our deeply held unity must transcend the pick-and-choose culture of our day, we begin to preach a gospel that conforms to our own whimsy rather than the gospel that shapes us into God’s unified people.

What does your experience of the Christian community look like? Are you perusing the offerings and selecting only those that suit your appetite? Are you fitting church into your busy schedule only when it works for you and complaining that the church should do more to accommodate the busy lives of contemporary families? Try letting go of the “what-has-the-church-done-for-me-lately” attitude and embrace a “what-have-I-given-to-my-Christian-community” approach to living out your faith. If you are holding back or hanging out on the sidelines because the church is not exactly what you think it should be, jump in more fully. The church is its members—its body parts—and you are one of them. Give yourself totally to Christ by giving every ounce of your being to the community of the faithful. Quit waiting for the church to conform to your individualized preferences, and instead let your participation in the life of the church shape you into the Christian God is calling you to be.

Yours faithfully,

Evan D. Garner
Newly Elected Vestry Class of 2016

We congratulate the newly elected Vestry Class of 2016: Joe Propst, Julia Roth, Carol Sartain, Julie Sneed, and Grant Thompson.

Toxic Charity

I want to invite you to take part in the Sunday morning Christian Education class focused upon Robert Lupton’s Toxic Charity. As we study this book, we are exploring how St. John’s can most effectively serve those in need. Instead of just doing good so that we feel good, we are wondering how do we serve others to show them God’s love without doing them harm, without creating dependency, and without disrespecting those in need?

**February 2:** “The Anatomy of Giving” and “Needs vs. Relationships” – Read Chapters Three and Four for today (34 pages)

**February 9:** “Beyond Us-Based Giving” and “No Quick Fixes” – Read Chapter Five and Six for today (38 pages)

**February 16:** “Wise Giving” – Read Chapter Seven for today (24 pages)

**February 23:** “Take the Oath” and “Service with Dignity” – Read Chapters Eight and Nine for today (38 pages)

**Reading Guide: Chapter Three:** “The Anatomy of Giving”

-While reading this story of Christmas think about what do you observe when you serve? (31-33)

-Take note of Jacques Ellul’s quote; do you agree or disagree with it? (34)

-Why does charity go unexamined, unlike how most businesses are run? (35)

**Parity vs. Charity:** What are some examples from your life of redirecting charity into systems of genuine exchange? (38)

**When Justice and Mercy Meet:** Why does higher charity (or parity) require both justice and mercy? (39-42)

**What about the Homeless?** Which response to the homeless is correct? (45-47)

**Reading Guide: Chapter Four:** “Needs vs. Relationships”

-Read the two descriptions and record your thoughts/emotions to both. (51-54)

**Cheap Food:** Read the story of Lupton’s meeting with a church food co-op (54-57). Do we not engage on deeper levels because life is messy?

**Needs Based Relationships:** Need begets more need… How do we stop the cycle? (58-61)

**When We Learn to Trust “Them”:** What is the outcome that we want from our outreach ministries? (61-63)

Your brother in Christ,

Seth+
Cabin #2 in Bethany Village
Camp McDowell

The Vestry voted to commit our parish to raising money for one of the ten cabins to be built at Bethany. The cost is significant—$100,000—but the benefits to our church, to the Diocese, and to people from all over is far deeper and richer than a dollar-figure.

The chairpersons for the campaign are Allyson and Ed Land and June and Steven Hall.

In the coming weeks, every person at St. John’s will be contacted about Bethany Village, and we hope that every single one of us will take part in the campaign so that the cabin that is to be built will be a gift of all of us. For generations to come, may we stand alongside those who shared the vision for making Camp McDowell a place where all of Jesus’ friends can gather and experience the beauty of his creation.
The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple

The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple, February 2

Daily Office and Sunday Readings

7:45 a.m. Childcare available through the 10:30 service
8:00 a.m. The Holy Eucharist, Rite I
8:45-9:30 a.m. Breakfast, Parish Hall
9:30-10:15 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. The Holy Eucharist, Rite II (Children’s Church)
5:30 p.m. Super Bowl Party for the Whole Parish in the Parish Hall

The loose offerings on the first Sunday of each month and all checks so designated will be shared between the Clergy Discretionary Accounts. Please note on your check “Discretionary Accounts.

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<th>Vestry Person</th>
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<td>Jack Thomas, Jr.</td>
<td>Jimmy Adams, David Rice</td>
<td>M.M. Tweedy, Bobby Straub</td>
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<td>Lawson DeMent C</td>
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<td>Jackson Stewart ES, Mary V Holman GS, Mitchell Powell C, Cricket Powell &amp; Nathan Stewart TB</td>
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<td>Flower ReArranger</td>
<td>Sandra Pippen</td>
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<td>Flower Deliverers</td>
<td>Lucy Key, Sandra Pippen</td>
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<td>Childcare</td>
<td>Mary Newman, Joanne Peterson</td>
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<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>M.M. Tweedy, Jack Thomas</td>
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Super Bowl Party for Everyone

Sunday, February 2, from 5:30pm through Halftime
Join us in the Parish Hall
for super snacks, fellowship, games, prizes, & the big game on the bigger screen!
Bring a snack to share. Families & friends are invited!

CCC Soup Kitchen – Monday, February 10

St. John’s will be the volunteer team for the CCC Soup Kitchen, providing a meal to over 300 people, serving the meal, and cleaning up afterward, on Monday, February 10.

YOU CAN HELP by making 2 dozen pimento cheese sandwiches sealed in individual Ziploc bags and bringing them to the church kitchen the morning of Sunday, Feb. 9

We’re cooking soup on Thursday Feb. 6, at 1:00 p.m. in the church kitchen.

Monetary Donations are always appreciated to help pay for the cost of the food St. John’s will prepare and serve to over 300 men and women. Volunteer to prep, cook, serve, clean-up—contact Dashiel McKay at 256-274-9300.
**Children’s Ministries**

**Saturday, February 1**
**10:00 a.m.-Noon in the Parish Hall**

ALL kids from 4yrs-5th grade are invited to come and help make soup for the sick and shut-ins. Soup will be delivered on Sunday, February 2 (Super Bowl Game Day). Nursery provided. Parents are welcomed to help! RSVP to Amy Calame at mattcalame@charter.net

**JOIN US IN SUNDAY SCHOOL— 9:30am**

Infants and Toddlers: Nursery care begins 7:45 a.m. through 10:30 a.m. service.
2½yrs old (if Potty-Trained)-Kindergarten: Godly Play
1st – 3rd Grades: Episcopal Church Curriculum (ECC) Primary Cross
4th – 5th Grades: Episcopal Church Curriculum (ECC) Intermediate Cross

**CHILDREN’S CHURCH**

Children’s Church *(currently offered the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sunday and whenever there’s a 5th Sunday in the month)* during the 10:30 a.m. service for 3rd grade and under. During the 10:30 service, children follow the procession out during the Sequence Hymn and return during the Peace. Two volunteers lead the children in prayers, readings, and songs (a service leaflet guides the whole thing!). Please think about being a part of Children's Church. Volunteers please call the church office to be included on this rotating schedule, (256) 353-9615.

**EYC (6th-12th)**

**THIS WEEK WITH ST. JOHN’S EYC**

**EYC Dinner this week will be held at Moe’s Southwest Grill** (1241 Point Mallard Pkwy), January 29, 5:30-6:45pm. Text Kristin if you are planning to come & bring $5 for dinner!

**Sunday school continues this Sunday, February 2, 9:30am in the classrooms.**

**EYC Super Bowl Party this Sunday, February 2, 5:30pm (kickoff to halftime).** There will be lots of good food, snacks, a big TV, and friends to hang out with! Bring a snack to share; friends, families, & the whole parish are invited to join us.

**LOOKING AHEAD:**

- EYC Breakfast, February 5, 6:30am at Java Jaay Café (1713 6th Ave. SE)
- EYC Winter Olympics, February 9, 5:30-7:00pm in the Parish Hall

**Don't forget to register!**


Kristin Hanson, Director of Youth Ministries [http://stjohnsdecatur.dioala.org/youth.html](http://stjohnsdecatur.dioala.org/youth.html)

[http://stjohnsdecatur.dioala.org/youth.html](http://stjohnsdecatur.dioala.org/youth.html) ● O (256) 353-9615 ext. 104
Altar Flowers & Communion Wine Contributions

Altar Flowers Contributions are given to the glory of God and in memory of loved ones, or in thanksgiving for particular people, or in celebration of special occasions such as a birthday or wedding anniversary. A donation of $60 will sponsor the flower arrangements arranged by the Flower Guild. A form is available from the Parish Hall, Office, or print a form here PDF.

A Communion Wine Contribution is another way to honor a special person or event. Please call the church office, 256-353-9615. Wine dedications are $10 each.

Evensong

Evensong 5:30pm Sunday, February 23
Taken from the 1662 version of the Book of Common Prayer, this service includes some of our favorite prayers and canticles. Bring your friends and family to this wonderful service of worship sung by the choir and clergy of St. John’s.

A Lasting Gift

St. John’s Tree Fund is a wonderful gift for any occasion (i.e. birthday, anniversary) — long lasting and meaningful to the recipient. Monetary Donations of any amount are most welcomed to help support the tree fund. To give a tree, the cost is $175.00 per tree. A Tree Form is available from the church office or may be printed here>> Tree Fund Form (PDF)

#TEDx

2014 #TEDx Manhattan "Changing the Way We Eat"
The Magnolia Room
216 Moulton Street
Decatur, AL 35601
Saturday, March 1, 2014 from 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM

View a live webcast of the 2014 TEDx Manhattan conference "Changing the Way We Eat", where leaders in farming, food service, hunger relief and food activism will come together to discuss current challenges we face in our food system.

Several local speakers will be in attendance, including Dr. Jerry Spencer from Grow Alabama, who will share information about his growing network of farms and how you can sign up to join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). For a complete list of speakers, visit www.TEDxManhattan.org.

Lunch is being provided by Chipotle at no charge to our guests, and both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase throughout the day. Presenters and local vendors will have information available and even some goodies for sale!

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., as the broadcast begins promptly at 9:30 a.m. Cocktail reception to follow to benefit the CCC Soup Kitchen here in Decatur. Spaces are absolutely free, but limited. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. All proceeds from beverages sales benefit the CCC.

Have questions about 2014 TEDx? Contact Jessica Hess. Link to full event site: http://bit.ly/Lkmrx1
Diocesan Convention

183rd Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama
Feb. 21 - 22, 2014
Hosted by St. Thomas, St. Alban’s and Holy Apostles
at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham

St. John’s delegates are John Thornton, Bobby Greene, Dodie Hall, Sue Hennessy, Steve Sandlin, and Rachel Wiley.

Follow the Diocesan Convention online: http://dioala.org/convention/general_information.html

Prayer List

OUR PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS

We pray for family and friends who are ill or distressed: Allison Alexander, Karen Cunningham-Becker, Bob Bell, Mary Bingham, Robert Bumpus, Ava Campbell, Aaron Castell, Michael Clayton, Linda Engelman, Jeannette Evans, Kaine Farrell, Mae Garner, Patricia Glomb, Sally Jo Green, Susan Hamilton, Steve Hammond, Edith Haney, Jamie Harold, Tania Harris, Dick Haughaboo, Randy Haynes, Marty Heaner, Harold Henneman, Sherry Holland, Erle Hughes, Mary Reilly Hunt, Valerie Hunter, Mike Jennings, Barbara Johnson, Denise Jones, Roy Klusendorf, Karla Kohl, Anne Lane, Deidre Lee, Jane Hollon Lee, Betty Ware Leonard, Dena Lewis, Peter McConnell, Erin Merker, Tommy Meuth, Ruth Moore, Philip Moss, Ross Newman, Will Parish, Ken Penegar, Joanne Peterson, Mary Ford Pheny, Laura Phillips, Joey Pizzitola, Bill Poole, Bethany Pridmore, Scott Richards, Braelyn Richardson, Ann Worth Russell, David Sandlin, Margaret Sellers, Kathy Slaton, Debra Smith, Dwight Smith, Jeannie Smith, Nathan Smith, Leo Spain, Emma Strane, Judy Straub, Maggie Swafford, Michael Terry, Mike Towers, Geraldine Tubb, Ann Turner, Chuck Weaver, Noa Williams, and Mary Yarbrough.

We pray for those who serve in and with the Armed Forces, especially: Michael Blair, Steven Blair, Lindsey Cantrell, Trey Colantonio, Chad Harper, Christopher Harwell, Gray Keenum, Mark Nelson, Jonathan Roth, and Jason Skiby.

We pray for: Sarah Miller, our seminarian; for Good Shepherd, Decatur; Trinity Church, Demopolis; St. John's Deaf Church, Birmingham; for our companion diocese of Haiti and its bishops, Zaché and Oge; for the Diocesan Commission on Ministry; the Department of Christian Formation; and for all youth ministers and EYC advisors.

We pray for the departed, especially: Marie Louise Parent, and Barbara Perry.

If you are hospitalized or in need of a clergy visit, please notify the Church Office (256-353-9615). Please remember that area hospitals do not notify us about admissions.

Happy Anniversary!

02/03 Betty & Chuck Weaver
02/06 Katie & Jim Mitchell
02/11 Janet & David Varner
02/16 Squee & Foster Bailey
02/18 Ann & Brian Stewart
02/22 Jody & Chris Singer
02/28 Martha & Harold Selman

If your celebration is not listed here, please forgive us. Call or email us with any updates.256-353-9615; churchoffice@stjohnsdecatur.org

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

02/01 Elizabeth Weinbaum
02/01 Lynn Haney
02/01 Isabelle Leavitt
02/02 Drew Davis
02/02 Peter Neil
02/02 Pat Hennessy
02/04 Katie Mitchell
02/04 Kelley Gillikin
02/05 Porterfield
02/05 Edith Haney
02/05 Evelyn Bibb
02/06 Gary Baker
02/07 Lee Grimes
02/07 Jeff Leavitt
02/08 Mandy Dolly
02/09 Dalinda Willis
02/10 John Howell
02/10 Mary Horton
02/12 Banks DeMent
02/13 Hilton Wiley
02/14 Beth Sprague
02/15 Martha Freeman
02/15 Andy Dye
02/15 Ellie Fite
02/15 Samuel Garner
02/16 James Adams
02/18 James Gordon
02/18 Linda Stone
02/19 Sandra Pippen
02/20 Mary Kay Temple
02/20 Kate Rickart
02/21 Jeannie Self
02/21 Mary McKimmon
02/22 Clint Shelton
02/23 Michael Adams
02/23 Jimmy Adams
02/24 Kerry Standridge
02/25 Billy Middleton
02/25 Conan Signa
02/27 Teri Hunt
02/28 Lisa Dye
02/28 Bo Bailey, III
02/29 Stuart Thornton
The Month of February

View the Church Calendar Anytime Online at: http://stjohnsdecatur.dioala.org/calendar.html

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<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7:45am Childcare 8:00am Holy Eucharist I 8:45am Breakfast 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Holy Eucharist II 5:30pm Super Bowl Party, Parish Hall</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10:00am Rector’s Bible Study</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7:00am Men’s Brkf &amp; Bible 8-9:30am Yoga 11:30am ECW Brown Bag Lunch</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>7:45am Childcare 8:00am Holy Eucharist I 8:45am Breakfast 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Holy Eucharist II 11:45am Delegates to Dio. Convention Meeting 4-5pm EYC Confirm.Class 5:30pm EYC Olympics</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10:00am Rector’s Bible Study</td>
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<td>7:00am Men’s Brkf &amp; Bible 8-9:30am Yoga 11:30am ECW Lunch</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>7:45am Childcare 8:00am Holy Eucharist I 8:45am Breakfast 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Holy Eucharist II Noon Vestry Retreat Ends 5:30pm EYC</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10:00am Rector’s Bible Study</td>
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<td>7:00am Men’s Brkf &amp; Bible 8-9:30am Yoga 11:30am ECW Brown Bag Lunch</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>7:45am Childcare 8:00am Holy Eucharist I 8:45am Breakfast 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Holy Eucharist II 4-5pm EYC Confirm.Class 5:30pm Evensong</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10:00am Rector’s Bible Study</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7:00am Men’s Brkf &amp; Bible 8-9:30am Yoga 11:30am ECW Brown Bag Lunch</td>
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SAVE THE DATE: SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER & TALENT SHOW, TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 5:30PM
**Weekly Update**
For Week Ending January 23, 2014

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<th>Required Weekly</th>
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<td>$15,079</td>
<td>$17,161</td>
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**Year-End Giving Statements**
Year-End Giving Statements were mailed on January 16. Please thoroughly compare the statement with your records for any discrepancies. Should you find any issues or have any questions; please contact Vickie Reed at 256-353-9615

Current Building Fund Debt: $343,928
St. John's holds tithing—the giving of the first 10% of our financial resources to God’s work in the world—as the expected practice for Christians. We believe that proportional giving is integral to spiritual growth. The Rector tithes, and each member of the Vestry is either tithing or taking specific steps toward achieving that goal. We invite all households in the parish to join us in faithful stewardship by calculating what percentage of their resources they give to God and by developing a plan to become tithers. *A copy of the parish’s full financial reports is available in the Church Office. If you have any questions, please contact the Treasurer, D. Hall.*

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**St. John’s Parish Staff & Vestry**

**THE PARISH STAFF**
Mon.-Thurs. 9:00 a.m.-Noon; 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

- p 256-353-9615 | f 256-350-0514

The Rev. Evan D. Garner, **Rector, ext. 102; evan@stjohnsdecatur.org**
The Rev. J. Seth Olson, **Curate, ext. 103; seth@stjohnsdecatur.org**
Vickie Reed, **Financial Administrator, ext. 101; vickie@stjohnsdecatur.org**
Kristin Hanson, **Director of Youth Ministries, ext. 104; kristin@stjohnsdecatur.org**
Ann Stewart, **Director of Communications, ext. 105; ann@stjohnsdecatur.org**

- Pamela Payne, **Choirmaster**
- Stan Evans, **Assistant Treasurer**
- Foster Bailey, **Organist**
- Suzanne Thompson, **Interim Nursery Coordinator**
- Ken Schuppert, **Chancellor**
- Joanne Peterson, **Nursery**
- D. Hall, **Treasurer**
- Mary Newman, **Nursery**

**THE VESTRY**
Class of 2014 Bobby Greene, **Senior Warden**; Cassandra Moore; Clint Shelton; M.M. Tweedy; Renee Wenzler.
Class of 2015 Dodie Hall, **Junior Warden**; Janet Morgan; Karen Sawyer; Bobby Straub; Jack Thomas, Jr.
Class of 2016 Joe Propst; Julia Roth; Carol Sartain; Julie Sneed; Grant Thompson
Margret Ann Templeton, **Clerk for the Vestry**

St. John's Episcopal Church • 202 Gordon Drive SE • Decatur, AL 35601