# The Voice of the Holy Apostles

## Spring 2018

#### Clergy

The Rev. Blake Hutson *Rector* 

The Rev. Worth Stuart *Curate* 

The Rev. Marti Holmes *Deacon* 

#### The Vestry of Holy Apostles

Senior Warden Mike Lewellen 205-542-9869 srwarden@holyapostleshoover.org

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Charles McCormack

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### Dear Apostles,

The other day I was looking through some of my favorite books and came across Anne Lamott's *Traveling Mercies*. Even though I've read it before, I couldn't put it down. Honestly, I've enjoyed it more the second time. Lamott is witty, insightful, irreverent and humorous. She talks about faith in her own life and how she came to believe in God, and also came to believe in herself.

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles

In her chapter entitled *Grace*, she writes that grace is "that force that keeps infusing our lives and letting us off the hook. It is unearned love — the love that goes before, that greets us on the way. It's the help you receive when you have no bright ideas left, when you are

empty and desperate and have discovered that your best thinking and most charming charm have failed you. Grace is the light or electricity or juice or breeze that takes you from that isolated place and puts you with others who are as startled and embarrassed and eventually grateful as you are to be there" (139).

Grace is something we hear and talk about in church; something we need in our lives and receive from God — yet grace can be hard for us to put our minds around and understand. That's why Lott's description is so helpful — grace is more than a concept, grace is something we feel and experience, something we intuitively know when we have received it.

As we enter the Easter Season, we hear some of our favorite Gospel stories. One of them is the story from Luke where the disciples encounter Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Cleopas and a second, unnamed disciple, meet Jesus on the road. They did not recognize him and discussed their sadness at recent events with him. They persuaded him to come and eat with them, and in the meal at Emmaus they recognized him.

Luke's Emmaus story reminded me of Lamott's words about grace: *It is unearned love* — the *love that goes before, that greets us on the way.* Like the disciples who didn't recognize Jesus, I'm convinced that grace comes into our lives at times and moments that we may not be aware. I don't know about you, but I've looked back in my life and said "God was there. God had a hand in that. God was in that moment!"

Anytime we encounter grace, I think we encounter Jesus. The amazing thing is that grace comes from unlikely sources: people, animals, events and circumstances as well as loved ones and even our enemies. Grace can be clear and powerful, like a bolt of lightning; or maybe it's something we only recognize in hindsight. God finds us where we are and greets us with grace. Grace can come into our lives at times and moments we least expect as we make our way down the road of life.

So this Easter Season, look for grace. When you recognize it, stop what you're doing and look for God. Realize you've had an unexpected encounter with Jesus. May you be greeted this day and each and every day this Season ... by God's amazing grace!

# A Message From Our Curate



## WE ARE THE EASTER PEOPLE

Easter is a joyous time in the life of the Church. Our church is decorated with bright and beautiful

flowers. We dress in our Easter-finest suits and dresses made from seersucker and linen. Almost like Christmas, our kids await the sweet treats that are placed snuggly in their Easter baskets, while parents await a delicious Easter Brunch that comes after church. Of course, we know and remember the importance of Easter Sunday! We celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, and the promise that with Jesus's rising again we are freed from the bondage of Sin!

However, Easter doesn't end after Sunday, April 1. The Easter season lasts for fifty days, beginning at sundown on Saturday evening on the night before Easter Sunday and goes until the Day of Pentecost! For those entire fifty days, we celebrate! We celebrate the joy of Christ's Resurrection and the Hope of new life that comes with it!

But, would you believe it if I told you that Easter goes beyond even those fifty days? The truth is that WE ARE EASTER PEOPLE! As believers in the Risen Christ, we are called to live into the Hope that we receive in Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday every day! Living into that Hope means loving others as God loves us and serving others as we follow the example that Christ has set before us! So, let us walk in love, as Christ loved us and remember and live into our identities as Easter People!

> — Peace, Worth

# More Sunday School Revelations...

The exchange of the **Peace** has liturgical significance. It is the hinge point between the liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion. The **Peace** is an ancient Jewish greeting, often with a kiss on the cheek, with the words "*peace of the Lord…*" (see BCP pages 354, 406). Roots of the **Peace** can be found in Matthew 5:23-24.

**Sacrifice** ... our clergy each contributed to its definition, but this one was particularly profound:

To sacrifice is to "give up something you love for something you love more." A sacrifice is not so much about suffering as it is making that choice which is difficult ... sacrum facere; i.e., Latin: to make sacred; for example, Marti used the teacher who stepped in front of the children at the recent school shooting; he made his life sacred.

Of the Ten Commandments, **four** deal with our relationship with God; **six** deal with our relationships with our neighbors.

The root of the word, **Eucharist**, is *eukharisha* which is Greek for "thanksgiving." At the **Eucharist**, we give thanks for what God has given us, including his son, Jesus. We then remember Christ's death and ressurection, and we await his coming again (The Paschal Mystery). When we partake of the **Eucharist**, we unite ourselves to one another and to Christ in the Paschal Mystery.

There are **eight** Eucharistic prayers in our BCP because one "can't say it all in one prayer."

The moment of Consecration comes at the end of the Eucharist Prayer and is called **The Great AMEN** (all caps on page 336, 363 BCP). It lighlights the participation of the Eucharist by the entire community.

Reading **The Last Week** helps us understand the events of Holy Week, as written in the Gospel of Mark circa 70 A.D., as Mark followed Jesus's last eight days on earth chronologically from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday.

We compared Roman rule with Jewish tradition during Passover week in Judea. For example, Jesus arrives on a donkey (as an insurgent) at one gate of the city while Rome sent Pilate and soldiers for manpower during Passover, entering the city from the opposite direction. Jesus planned to confront the authorities. Jesus's message about love is in conflict with the domination system of political and economic oppression established by Rome. It ends, of course, at the **Cross**.

**Apocalyptic** doesn't mean the end of time; according to scripture, it is the revelation of God.

#### . . . . . .

### A synopsis of The Last Week from amazon.com:

Top Jesus scholars Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan join together to reveal a radical and little-known Jesus. s both authors reacted to and responded to questions about Mel Gibson's blockbuster The Passion of the Christ, they discovered that many Christians are unclear on the details of events during the week



leading up to Jesus's crucifixion. Using the gospel of Mark as their guide, Borg and Crossan present a day-by-day account of Jesus's final week of life. They begin their story on Palm Sunday with two triumphal entries into Jerusalem. The first entry, that of Roman governor Pontius Pilate leading Roman soldiers into the city, symbolized military strength. The second heralded a new kind of moral hero who was praised by the people as he rode in on a humble donkey. The Jesus introduced by Borg and Crossan is this new moral hero, a more dangerous Jesus than the one enshrined in the church's traditional teachings...

# **A Progress Report**

ast November, having just been nominated and approved as a new incoming member of the Vestry, I got a call from Father Blake. He asked me if I could come to the church the next night before choir practice to meet with him. My first thought was, why am I being called into the principal's office? Yes, I might have had that experience once or twice in my past! But as you all now know, the reason for the meeting was to find out if I would be willing to serve as Senior Warden for the next year. Shock, surprise, and fear were just a few of the emotions that I felt. So after a few days of prayer and contemplating, my answer was a resounding yes. And, my brothers and sisters, I could not be more humbled but happy to serve and help with our parish and Vestry to the best of my ability. After all, you and Holy Apostles deserve it!

I'm pleased to report that we have very strong and willing vestry. You can rest assured that they are putting in the time and effort to keep Holy Apostles running smoothly. In my opinion, we have the best Junior Warden in the entire Diocese in Patrick Schexnailder. Our building and grounds upkeep seem to be 24/7, but Patrick is always there to get the job done.

We had a very successful and productive Vestry retreat in mid-January. Highlights included the adoption of a balanced

budget, ministry liaison assignments for the year, and approval for several necessary upgrades to our building. We recently achieved a major milestone thanks to the *Lighting the Way* efforts — our mortgage balance just went under the \$700,000 mark (at \$698,000). At our February Vestry meeting, I am pleased to share with you that with 100% support of our clergy, staff and Vestry, Father Blake announced that he will be taking a sabbatical this year from May 15th through August 1st.

Last — but not least — the business side of a church is not always pretty. I have asked our Vestry to try and remember the Spiritual side of leading. Our theme this year is "*Bring our parish members in, heal them when needed, and send them out stronger*." We also have a special prayer that I encourage all of you to join us in. We know that there are families and individuals in the Hoover and surrounding areas who need a church home and church family. Our prayer is that God will help them find us and us find them.

I am honored and humbled to serve as your Senior Warden. I pledge my best. You deserve it!! Peace and Love to all.

> — Mike Lewallen, Senior Warden srwarden@holyapostleshoover.org

# Holy Apostles represented at 187th Diocesan Convention

The theme of the 187th Diocesan Convention was "Called Together," and this year the convention was asked to consider how we all are called together in the church's mission of reconciliation.

This year's theme was the second year of a three-year cycle based on Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's three foundations of the Jesus Movement.

Representing Holy Apostles at the convention, held in Decatur and hosted by St. John's Episcopal Church of Decatur, were The Reverend Blake R. Hutson, Rector; the Reverend Marti Holmes, Deacon; The Reverend Worth Stuart, Curate; and lay representatives Mary and Harry Babbitt and Lynn and Bill Gerdes.

Workshops and caucus elections were held at the DoubleTree Hotel while the business sessions and gala were held at the Ingalls Harbor Pavilion on the Tennessee River.

Hearings were held on the six resolutions that were pre-filed for consideration at the convention. Following these hearings, clergy and delegates were invited to the Princess Theatre in downtown Decatur to celebrate the opening Holy Eucharist.

Bishop Sloan begins convention with Holy Eucharist at Princess Theatre.

The first business session began at 4 p.m. on Friday, with 68 parishes and 107 canonical priests present.

Bishop Sloan introduced the keynote speaker, the Rt. Rev. Robert C. Wright, the 10th Bishop of the Diocese of Atlanta. Bishop Wright's remarks centered on the familiar invitation from Ephesians 5:2, "Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God." He said "walking in love, which means practically, taking up the ministry of reconciliation as individuals and collectively." Bishop Wright pointed to the many ways that we are sent gratitude. Bishop Wright reminded us that we should be encouraged in these times of division, as they are a "wonderful precondition for our light to shine."

Among several business items considered was a resolution that proposed a change to the canons that allowed deacons a representative vote at the convention, with one voting representative for every seven deacons. The proposed change would allow each deacon a vote. After the resolution was introduced, a motion to amend the resolution was made and approved. After brief discussion from the floor, the resolution, as amended, was voted on by orders and was approved by more than 75 percent in both Orders.

The Alabama Episcopalian will include a full rundown on the convention as will the Diocesan website, http://www.dioala.org/

Ou may have noticed that Holy Apostles has been having difficulties with the HVAC unit that supplies the Nave. Unfortunately, there were a couple of cold Sunday morning services in December, but certainly not by design! The Nave HVAC is the original unit installed with the building, and at 15 years old is simply at the end of its expected life. After prayerful conversation, the Vestry felt it was prudent to proactively replace this unit during the spring rather than wait until the unit catastrophically failed, which would undoubtedly be on a Sunday morning in the July-September time frame.

HA is fortunate that previous Vestry anticipated the need to replace this system, and we have been budgeting for it for some time. While this ~\$25k expenditure is a large expenditure for our church, I am pleased to report that we were able to cover the entire expense with saved funds. Please thank all current and past Vestry members for being such good stewards of our resources. Also, a special thanks to Jason Bennett and Charles McCormack for lending their time and expertise as we reviewed proposals!

While on the topic of new hardware, you may have noticed that we have recently installed a controlled access door to the church. This was made possible through a generous donation, with the Vestry voting to cover the balance. Ultimately, this door will result in Holy Apostles no longer issuing standard, metal keys to access the church—there are approximately 50 metal keys issued to various people! Instead, building access will be granted by programmable key fobs (similar to how hotel keycards work.) The fobs may be remotely deactivated (if/when a fob is lost or not returned without affecting other key holders) and the fobs can also be programmed to access the building only at specific times as needed. Using this system makes it easier to utilize our building more often—a consistent message from the congregation—and we are beginning to see outside community groups ask to meet in our space (e.g., a local Girl Scout Troop, a non-profit board, etc.) Rest assured, Holy Apostles has a building use policy in place to make sure that Holy Apostles' groups have a scheduling preference and outside groups requesting to use our space have a clear understanding of the building use expectations. I will be in detailed contact with current key holders as we transition to this new system, but the biggest impact for the rest of the Holy Apostles congregation is to train yourself not to access the building through the door closest to the office by default. We are still working on establishing a routine, and I appreciate everyone's patience as we change over to this new system. The transition to the new system should be completed by the end of April.

Outside, eight people helped me trim the holly bushes that line the parking lots. We reduced the height of these bushes from 4-5 feet to 30 inches, as well as thinned the sides to improve visibility from both a welcoming and safety perspective. Admittedly, the bushes do not look very attractive right now, but I anticipate them filling in as we approach Easter. The bushes will be kept at the lower height.

On another note, did you know that Holy Apostles has, thanks to a generous donation, an automatic external defibrillator (AED)? It is located above the water fountain, near the restrooms. Please familiarize yourself with its location...this is something we hope we never need to use, but it is there in case we do!

As always, please let me know of any thoughts you have (both negative and positive) with the building and/or grounds. Many eyes pass through our building throughout the week, and the Property Team and I depend on your ideas and concerns to maintain our beautiful space!

> — Patrick Schexnailder, Jr. Warden jrwarden@holyapostleshoover.org

## Parish Goals lead to Strategic Visioning Team

By Jason Whatley

ey everybody!! I am so excited to let everyone know that we have formed a Strategic Visioning Team to help us work toward the parish goals that our Vestry set for Holy Apostles last year. To give everyone a little reminder and background of how we got here — in the fall of 2016, our Vestry wanted to give our parishioners an opportunity to provide open and honest feedback and to dream big about Holy Apostles and our future as a parish. As a result, we entered into a contract with Leslie Manning of Ministry Architects and Leslie led our parish in three separate strategic visioning and listening sessions last year. The turnout for those sessions was awesome (over 80 parishioners participated) and because of those sessions, we now have a beautiful new parish Mission Statement, a clearly defined set of parish values, and a set of goals all based on the direct input from our parishioners.

Last fall our Vestry felt that it was important to keep the positive momentum that was the result of our strategic visioning efforts by continuing our partnership with Ministry Architects as we work toward and accomplish many of our new parish goals. And that's where we are today — forming a team of dedicated Apostles to help us be the parish that we all know we can be. Our Strategic Visioning Team is made up of Emily Bennett, Susan Jackson, Mike Lewallen, Mary Morgan, Jason Whatley, Fr. Blake Hutson, Leslie Manning (Ministry Architects consultant) and Bob Ferguson (Ministry Architects consultant.) This team had its first meeting in late January and will keep everyone informed as we make great strides in our planning. Please keep this team and our parish goals in your thoughts and prayers as we all work for Holy Apostles' future!!

- Jason Whatley

# Holy Apostles presents Vivaldi's *Gloria*

The Holy Apostles Choir, accompanied by a string quartet, harpsichord, and drums, performed Vivaldi's *Gloria* on Sunday evening, January 7, 2018. For me, *Gloria* is one of the most gorgeous works of classical music and made the service truly beautiful and gave us all a joyful evening to remember.

This performance was an awesome and thrilling experience for the choir. I was on a spiritual high for days afterward. Many people have expressed how much they enjoyed the beauty of this music, and how they were spiritually moved. The Nave was full to the brim, not only with Holy Apostles parishioners, but many visitors were with us as well. It could be, that for anyone who was not already a fan of classical music, the *Gloria* may have initiated a musical conversion.

Many, many thanks to Derek Kluz, our music director, for planning and organizing this event. Derek did yeoman's work — a fantastic job in fact — during the five-month rehearsal period. Derek must have seen something in the choir that we did not fully realize existed. Thank you, Derek, for having faith that we could pull this off. A heartfelt thank you also to the following folks who joined in with the regular choir: Frank Holmes, Sam Morris, Margaret Morris, Justin Aldridge, and the professional musicians and



vocalists, for adding their musical talents to the performance. The strings and harpsichord created yet another beautiful dimension. This experience will remain with me for quite a while, as I hope it does for all who were there.

- Charles McCormack





## **APOSTLES WITH FIRE WANTS YOU!**

Each year Holy Apostles' own "Apostles with Fire" plans and executes several exciting events. We start with the Gumbo Gala in April then quickly shift to Celebrate Hoover! Day at the end of April before finishing up with our annual Crawfish Boil in May. It's a sprint for sure and a lot of hard work goes into putting on these events. Did you know that Apostles with Fire also supports different charity auctions around Birmingham raising money for things like the Assistance League, Community Grief Support, and other causes? The Apostles with Fire also support parish events as well. Many have viewed our work as a "men's ministry" but that is simply not the case! Apostles with Fire is a ministry of and for the entire parish and we would love to have some new members! We are just beginning to prepare for our 2018 events and would love to have you on the team. Please contact Kenn Gaddis, Richard Eppes, John Ross Havard or Bill Davis for more information.



# A Message From Our Deacon



ermit the Frog is one of my favorite characters in the Muppets' cast. He is honest, realistic, intelligent, a little bit naughty, and loves a prank. Kermit is usually full of enthusiasm!

But, in a melancholy mood while reflecting on his own being, he sings:

"It's not that easy being green; Having to spend each day the color of the leaves. When I think it could be nicer being red, or yellow or goldor something much more colorful like that.



It's not easy being green. It seems you blend in with so many other ordinary things. And people tend to pass you over 'cause you're not standing out like flashy sparkles in the water or stars in the sky."

And, that song comes to my mind when I think of the life of a Christian. It isn't easy being a Christian, either.

As Christians, though, we are called to **do justice**, love kindness and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). We are to love the Lord your God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and love our neighbor as ourself. Living into this call is no flashy thing, nor one that will bring attention to ourselves. It can be the way, though, of changing the world deliberately, steadily, surely — just as a mighty Sequoia tree grows. The tiny Sequoia seed grows to be the largest of all trees (it takes 91,000 seeds to add up to a single pound!). It takes a LONG time. If you are looking for excitement, watching this tree grow would not be a good choice. That would be boring, mundane, ordinary for us — but it is not boring to the tree, or the vegetation and animals nearby!

It's not easy to decide to blend in — refusing to draw attention to ourselves. It is difficult to choose, instead, to serve, and, in this life of serving, bring compassion and love to those we meet and know who are near us. But, like the growth of the Sequoia tree, growing our love and true compassion for those near us can swell the hearts of others, grow the Christian faith community, and, in time, change the world.

Maybe it's not easy being green. But, at the end of his song, Kermit the Frog thinks it's beautiful to be green, as he sings:

"But green's the color of spring And green can be cool and friendly like And green can be big like a mountain Or important like a river or tall like a tree

When green is all there is to be It could make you wonder why But, why wonder? (why wonder?) I'm green and it'll do fine It's beautiful. And I think it's what I want to be."



— Deacon Marti

Slowly, and with some difficulty, I'm learning to live as a Christian. It's beautiful, it'll do fine, and it's what I want to be.

# The Gospel According to Huck

# Holy Apostles Adult Education

9:30 - 10:15 am April 8th through May 20th

oin us in joyous spring to learn about the surprisingly rich spiritual content of Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

Marvel at how the skilled Mississippi riverboat pilot Samuel Clemens navigates the depths and surfaces of our great Christian river, revealing its shoals of shallow understanding and its profound depths of mystery, love, and sacrifice.

Find out why Huck and Jim are like Moses and Solomon.

Laugh at the comedy of language and character and weep at the spiritual revelations they camouflage and embody.

Discover why Miss Watson takes Huck into the closet to pray, or why Jim is wise to believe that King Solomon "was gwyne to chop that chile in two."

Be amazed at how Exodus: 32 and Acts: 17 are keys to the novel.

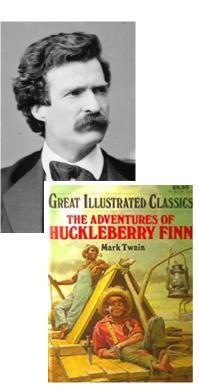
Savor the biblical riches woven into this often-banned, largely-misunderstood, and almost-always-shallowly-read "children's book."



You won't be listening to lectures, but will be able to join in guided discussions of scenes from this great American masterpiece. It'll be a delight. Don't miss it! The Holy Spirit will be there.

You don't have to read (or re-read) the book (though of course you would enjoy doing that, since it's a wonderful read and you are now a wiser reader than you were when you read it at age 14).

"The Gospel According to Huck" will be taught by the Reverend Marti Holmes and Jim Mersmann, retired UAB literature professor.





































# Calendar of Events

#### Weekly

Sundays	Holy Eucharist II (w/Nursery)	8:30am
	Christian Education (all ages)	9:30am
	Adult Ed (April 8-May 20) The Gospel	
	According to Huck	
	Choir Warm-up	9:30am
	Holy Eucharist II (w/Choir & Nursery)	10:30am
	Cursillo – Floating Reunion Group	11:45am
	EYC (thru May 20)	5:30pm
Mondays	Cursillo Reunion	5:30pm
Tuesdays	Bible Study with Deacon Marti	10:30am
	Cursillo Reunion	5:30pm
Wednesdays	Cursillo Reunion	3:00pm
	Choir Rehearsal	6:30pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs	Cursillo Reunion	6:30pm

#### Monthly

Men's Group Dinner	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	6:00pm
Vestry Meeting	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	6:00pm
Daughters of the King	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	6:00pm
Tapister's – Hoover Library	2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday	10:00am
Property Team Meeting	Last Monday	5:00pm
Healing Service	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday:	11:30am

4.1.18	Easter Sunday	
6:30am	Sunrise Service (outdoors, weather permitting)	
8:30am	HE II w/Nursery Care	
10:30am	Festival Eucharist w/Choir & Nursery	
11:45am	Easter Egg Hunt	
	NO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CLASSES TODAY	
	NO EYC	
4.2.18-4.3.18	CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	
4.8.18	The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter	
4.13.18	Parents' Night Out – EYC Fundraiser	
4.15.18	The 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter	
4.20.18	Gumbo Gala	
4.22.18	The 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	
4.25.18-4.27.18	Clergy/Clergy Spouse Conference @ Camp	
	McDowell	
4.29.18	The 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	
5.6.18	The 6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter (Youth Sunday)	
5.13.18	The 7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day)	
5.20.18	Day of Pentecost	
	Last day of Sunday School	
	Sunday School Leader Recognition Sunday	
5.27.18	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Trinity Sunday)	
5.29.18	EYC Six Flags trip	
6.3.18	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	
6.5.18	EFM Reunion	
6.10.18	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	
6.17.18	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Father's Day)	
6.24.18	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	







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For more information about Holy Apostles, contact our Rector at bhutson@holyapostleshoover.org or the church secretary at kmcadams@holyapostleshoover.org

#### Worship Schedule:

8:30 am Holy Eucharist with nursery9:30 am Christian Formation with nursery

9:30 am Adult Choir warm-up

10:30 am Holy Eucharist with choir and nursery

11:30 am Coffee Hour (fellowship following service)