



Winged Lion

A publication of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Prattville, Ala.



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February—the month of love with Cupid's arrows flying here and there. That's how we like to think of it sometimes. But every month is a month of love if Christ is at the center of your life. Not only God's great and wondrous love for you, but also your love for the people.

By now you all know of my admiration for Fred Rogers from children's television. What I admire most about his is the sincerity of his kindness. It was said of Fred that there was no false pretense, no acting, no pretending to be someone he was not. Now, of course, that is an easy thing to do when we allow our inner id (our instinctive impulses) to rule us. But it is not so easy a thing to do when we aspire to be more than our base impulses; when we aspire toward being a person of kindness and goodness.

I recently watched a program about Fred's legacy called "Our Assignment from Fred Rogers" in which his now late wife, Joanne, and others talked of how Fred worked at being kind. It helped me to know that he strove with all his might and will to be the person that those of us who grew up with Mr. Roger's Neighborhood remember. His kindness, his ability to listen, his patience and gentleness—these were goals that he set for himself and practiced regularly until they became his second nature.

Second nature... that is what Christ brings to us. Our first nature is centered in self. It is about what *I* want and what *I* expect; it is about what gives *me* pleasure. Our first nature has no qualm with lying, deceit, stealing, manipulation, mocking others, taking

FROM THE RECTOR

advantage of the simple and weak. Our first nature says: If you strike me, I will strike back all the harder.

Christ recognized the failure of our initial nature—so he came to begin a process of restoring us back to our intended selves—to the people God had originally intended us to be. That is why he said we must be born again... born anew to a different existence, a different way of being.

Our second nature is that which sets aside much of what we want for the sake of other people. It is what stands up for the marginalized and weak. It is what causes us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and all those other things that Jesus said that when we do them to the least, we are doing it unto him.

Who were the people Christ ministered to? His friends and neighbors? No. Lepers, beggars, prostitutes, tax collectors...the rejects of society.

When we understand that our first nature is what gets in the way of this world evolving into what it was intended to be, then we can better understand him when he says things like: 'Turn the other cheek;' 'Pick up your cross;' 'Be willing to lose your life and thus you will find it;' 'Love even your enemy;' and when He called us to be as servants to one another. These things don't come naturally to us, they are not often part of our first

nature, but they have to be worked at... often.

To be genuinely concerned for someone else's welfare is, I believe, *learned* behavior. It doesn't come naturally, but is something we learn along the way. If we are putting all the focus on ourselves, on our goals, our dreams, our wants and desires on our beliefs, then we are making an idol out of our own first nature rather than making room for Christ to bring about change in us.

For some people, the task is more difficult than for others, but it is never easy work for any of us. Learning to love someone for who they are and not what we want them to be is one of the most difficult tasks any human being can take on; but it is also one of the most freeing.

I pray that this February, this month of love, we allow God to continue the work he has begun in us. I pray that he molds you and me into the people he has longed for us to become, and I pray that you and I not only allow him to chip away all the negative things that hold us back but that he brings to us the gifts of a new and wondrous second nature.

**Blessings,
Fr. Scott**

Vestry met January 26 to continue churches' planning for future

The St Mark's Vestry met on Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in Ray Hall.

Scott opened the meeting with a devotional and with prayer.

After the opening, we traditionally start with the Treasurer's Report. However, James Miller, our Treasurer had a previous commitment and came later.

We then approved the minutes from our December meeting. Next, we moved on to Old Business; first item was that last month, Paul Whaley and Gordon Faulk had done the paperwork to apply for another Alabama Faith-Based Grant.

We (and all other churches) are still waiting to hear if we are approved.

Paul then discussed repairs to the plaster and brick work in the sanctuary. Before this can proceed, we need the brick sealed. Paul communicated this to Scott, along with quotes from 2 sources. In turn, Scott emailed this info to the Vestry on Jan. 11, to let us know we'd need to vote on it at our meeting on the 26th.

Gordon Faulk noted this was the kind of thing that needed to be moved on right away and made a motion via email to authorize Paul Whaley to accept the quote of Cory Bagwell for \$4,200 for sealing the brick. Rob Gaston seconded the

motion, also via email; Scott polled all members and the motion passed.

Paul contacted Mr Bagwell and advanced him a third of the contract price. Mr Bagwell is prepared to proceed with the work as soon as the weather permits. Scott also found the vote needed to be included in the minutes for the next meeting and we did that.

Next, Scott briefly discussed the annual Diocesan Convention which will be held online on Feb. 6, 2021. St Mark's gets 3 lay delegates from the parish and originally, it had been John Park, Andy Hobbs and Harriet Hobbs. The Hobbs are unable to attend so John and Lynn Dunbar will take their place.

The last item of Old Business was property deeded to the church by Larry Vinson upon his death last month. This includes his house and lot he owned in downtown.

While we have not received official word on this, family members have told Scott these were Larry's wishes. Once this becomes official, Scott has asked four members of the parish to form a committee to determine what to do with the property. More on this later.

From there, we went to New Business. The first item we had was Lenten Preparations. Scott and Carolyn Miller are busy with this.

We next discussed the Fall Fundraiser. In October, 2019, we

had a Chili Cookoff that was one of St Mark's most successful fundraisers ever. At the beginning of 2020, the Vestry affirmed we would have it again in October, only to have to cancel due to the corona virus.

Scott wanted to hear the feelings of this year's Vestry about having it again, and all in attendance were supportive. We'll need to get this started at least in May to get on the calendars of the various organizations in town.

Last, Scott discussed Vestry committees, especially the "Envisioning the Future/Ministering to the Current Demographic" committee. This last one came about at last year's Vestry Retreat in January 2020, but, again due to the virus, was not very active. Scott expects this to change this year as people come back to church.

We then had James Miller's Treasurer's Report. Normally at this point, we'd have committee reports but since this was our first meeting of the year, we dispensed with these. Scott then led us in the Lord's Prayer, and closed the meeting with a blessing. The next Vestry meeting will be Feb. 23, 2021.

**ROB GASTON,
COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR**

In case you don't have it yet, the number to reserve a slot for getting the vaccination is 855-566-5333. (Thank you Carolyn Miller.) If you are in a group 75 or older you can call and schedule your shot. However, if you in a high-risk category, (diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, asthma, cardiac) you can also get on a waiting list for another time.

You may experience increased stress during this time of great uncertainty in our world. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Here are 30 days of self-care ideas to focus on healthy coping strategies, building your resilience and a better you.

Call someone you love	Catch-up on a podcast or listen to an encouraging video	Stretch for 5 minutes	Get rid of 5 things you never use	Unplug from social media and news for the day
Go to bed 1 hour earlier than normal	Write down 10 things you are grateful for	Read a book for 15 minutes	Plan your meals for the next day	Meditate for 10 minutes before you begin the day
Call or text someone and tell why you're grateful for them	Take a 20-minute walk outside	Learn how to cook a new recipe	Do something you've been avoiding	Schedule a video chat with a friend
Turn off your phone or don't use it for 1 hour	Spend 5 minutes meditating, praying, or self-reflecting	Play a board game with family or virtually with friends	Talk to someone you can trust (EAP, crisis hotline, family/friend)	Send an encouraging text to a co-worker
Prepare for and have a difficult conversation	De-clutter a room, desk, or drawer	Do something nice for someone else	Check-in on your neighbors	Take one hour of "you" time to do a favorite activity
Remind yourself of 3 things you like about yourself	Review your budget or make one if you don't have one	Write down 3 things you like about your spouse/partner or a friend; tell them	Ask a co-worker to tell you one thing you're great at and one thing you can improve upon	Clean something in your house

THANK YOU LES!

Les Amidon has been showing up early every Sunday morning to video our first service for broadcast on the web for our parishioners who aren't yet attending. Thank you Les! We certainly couldn't do it without you.

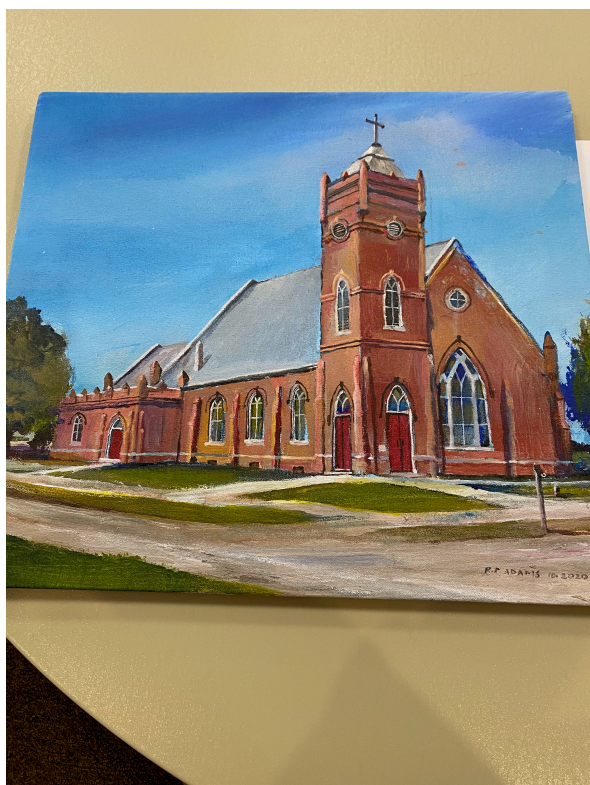
Eldest member of St. Mark's Celebrates 101st!



St. Mark's eldest member was honored with a parade for her 101st birthday last month as people from Montgomery, Selma and Prattville gathered to celebrate. Balloons and Happy Birthday banners waved in the breeze as well-wishers honored Helen Lattal, a WWII Women's Army Corps veteran. Born in Connecticut, Helen enlisted shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor and was one of the first women soldiers to arrive in England in 1943.

Because of her shorthand and typing skills, she was assigned to work for General Doolittle and General Ira Eaker at 8th AF headquarters. She also served as the private secretary for Col. Elliot Roosevelt, the commander of the 8th Army Air Reconnaissance Wing, and later with General James Hill at Cheddington, England. "I was so proud to serve," she told the Selma Times-Journal. "My family was very patriotic. I had top secret clearance," even though she was the rank of of corporal. "I was grateful that I could do the job. I think it is great that women have come so far in the military," she said, acknowledging how times have changed over the nearly 80 years since she enlisted. "We were called the Trail Blazers." After the war, she worked on pretrial investigations prior to the Nuremberg Trials.

Helen resided for many years in Selma where she worked with the American Red Cross, becoming not only our eldest but our furthest distanced member of St. Mark's. Her only son, Paul Whaley, serves as St. Mark's parish administrator.



Gift

Gratitude is expressed to Gene Kerlin for four paintings he recently commissioned of all the buildings which have housed St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The paintings will soon be framed and placed in the parish hall. The buildings depict the old courthouse (which housed services for several years), the old Presbyterian Church on Gin Shop Hill (center below) which allowed Episcopalians to hold services once a month, and the original church purchased from the Methodists. This is an extraordinary gift of great historical value for which we all thank Gene.

