

The Parish Paper

OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol. 50 No. 4

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 23, 2018

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December 23, 2018

8:00 A.M.—HOLY COMMUNION

Collects, Epistle, and Gospel.....Prayer Book, page 95, 90
The Order of Service begins on page 67 of the Prayer Book. The Gloria is omitted.

8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. NURSERY for birth - age 3 (*Cranmer Hall, 1st floor*)

9:00 A.M. – FAMILY ADVENT SERVICE (*Chapel*)

9:30 A.M. – ADULT & YOUTH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
(*Cranmer Hall, Green-Meldrim Library*)

10:30 A.M.— A PROCESSION WITH ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS

Details of the service are found in the Sunday Service Booklet.

*There will be a special Coffee Hour today with eggnog.
If you are a guest and visiting our Parish, please make yourself known.*

12:00 P.M. NOON—HOLY COMMUNION (*Chapel*)

PREPARING FOR HOLY COMMUNION

As it is the duty of communicant members to receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood on Christmas, here are two short statements about preparing the heart and mind to receive it to our benefit. The first is from the historic Prayer Book. Catechism; the second from a sermon by Austin Farrer, a mid-20th century Anglican priest and theologian.

Question. What is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper?

Answer. To examine themselves, whether they repent truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men. (The Catechism, in the *Book of Common Prayer*)

It is hard to prepare for Communion, because it is hard to face the truth. But it is not at all complicated or puzzling. You have merely to accept what you know God demands of you, and to renounce what you know he forbids you, and to be sorry. Remember something to thank him for, and someone to pray for, and you have made your preparation. (Austin Farrer, *Fish out of water*, in *Said or Sung*)

Further counsel on preparation for Communion is set forth in the Exhortations in the Prayer Book on pages 85-89.

THE LORD IS AT HAND

On the last Sunday of Advent, the Sunday before Christmas, we might expect some modulation into the themes of Christmas, but if we are expecting a Nativity story, we shall be disappointed. What the ancient church gives us to hear on this day is "the witness of John", the last and greatest prophet of Christ (John 1:19-28). John had stirred the crowds with his proclamation of the coming of God's kingdom, and his call to repentance and baptism before the coming judgment. He stirs curiosity (though not conversion) even among elite circles in Jerusalem, who dispatch an official delegation to investigate his claims: Who does he think he is? What John gives them, however, is a set of resounding and ever-tenser negations "And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No". (I think the quiet humor of this exchange is brought out beautifully in Orlando Gibbon's setting of these words in the anthem, "This is the record of John".)

John makes no claim to be Someone - and yet he is not precisely Nobody, either. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias". It's as if John said, 'never mind who I am, just listen to what I say'. Unlike every supporting actor and warm-up act in history, John's whole ambition is to direct the attention of his listeners to the main attraction, and then get out of the way. If he administers baptism, an authoritative act, it is not on

his own authority that he does so: "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose". With extraordinary humility John diverts attention from himself toward the unrecognized presence of Christ.

John knows what he is not. He knows that what he proclaims he cannot accomplish. And because of John's radical humility, because he knows what he is not, he is able to discern the hidden presence of the Lord. "There standeth one among you whom ye know not". Because he knows what he lacks, he is sensitive to the coming of the one who can supply all his need: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). If we are to discern the presence of Christ among us, we too must learn what we are not.

In today's epistle lesson (Philippians 4:4-7) St. Paul also wants us to be all expectation, all attention, to the one who "standeth among you". "The Lord is at hand" he declares to the Christians of Philippi - and that presence makes all the difference. In the world they may have sorrow, but Paul tells them, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice". In the world they may meet with hostility, but Paul says "let your moderation" (or gentle forbearance) "be made known unto all men". In the world they may meet with many uncertainties, but Paul bids them, "be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which

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STANDING NOTICES

The occasional Sacraments of Baptism, Matrimony, Penance, Communion and Unction of the Sick, and the Office of Burial of the Dead are always available by appointment, at announced times, or as necessary. Please call the Church Office to notify the clergy if you or a loved one is in the hospital or hospice.

VESTRY OFFERING CHAIRMEN

8:00 a.m. Mr. Arthur D. Weed
10:30 a.m. Mrs. Gary M. Schubert

USHER CHAIRMAN

Mr. R. Scott Howard

ACOLYTES

8:00 a.m. Henry Osborne
10:30 a.m. Jackson McClellan, Jacob Perkins, Edwin Shepherd, William Taylor, Haddon & Whit Watson, and Malcolm & Wesley Worsham

ALTAR FLOWERS

The flowers at the altar this Sunday are given to the glory of God and in memory of Mr. Shack B. Wimbish, Jr. and our parents by Mrs. Shack B. Wimbish, Jr.

And in loving memory of Dr. Edwin Collier Shepherd and Betty McCuen Shepherd by Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Shepherd, Jr. and family.

And in loving memory of Mahla and Arthur Wilson by Mr. and Mrs. Randolph K. Wilson.

CHANCEL SOCIETY

Mrs. John G. Bradshaw, Jr.,
Mrs. Jayne G. Holland, Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr., Mrs. James C. Pedrick, Mrs. T. Herbert Guerry, Mrs. H. Emerson Thomas, Jr., Mrs. Wiley A. Wasden III, Mrs. Shack B. Wimbish, Jr., Mrs. Henry F. Inglesby, Jr., Mrs. Roland S. Summers, Miss Elizabeth Wasden, Mrs. Rhett N. Willis, Mrs. Michael N. Thompson, and Mrs. Morgan W. Murray

COFFEE HOUR CHAIRMAN

The Women of St. John's with Mrs. Mytrice Lewis's Eggnog

ROAMING GREETER

Mrs. Lee M. Alderman, Jr.

SUNDAY 9:30 A.M.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR YOUTH:
Cranmer Hall – 3rd Floor

Middle School – David & Kalista Svihel
High School – Rick Wright & Martin Sullivan

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS:

God's Promise to David with Fr. Dunbar
CH3-Reading Room
Collects Study with Father O'Brien, Will & Mary Helen Burdell, Green-Meldrim House (in the library)

The Gospel According to John with Jack Wray – CH3-Room 309

**NO WEEKDAY CLASSES
THIS WEEK**

**CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT
WITH HOLY COMMUNION**

The Sunday School Pageant will take place during the first part of the Communion service: pageant players will depart during the hymn just before the Creed (and may return during the Offertory hymn). All children are welcome to stay throughout the service and to receive a blessing at the altar.

CHRISTMAS AT ST. JOHN'S

Monday, December 24th

CHRISTMAS EVE

8:15 a.m. Morning Prayer
with Holy Communion

5:00 p.m. Pageant and Family Eucharist

10:30 p.m. Prelude Music for Christmas

11:00 p.m. Solemn Eucharist

Tuesday, December 25th

CHRISTMAS DAY

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
10:30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

Wednesday, December 26th

ST. STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
8:15 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
Morning Prayer & Evening Prayer
with Holy Communion

9:45 a.m. Litany

10 a.m. Holy Communion

Thursday, December 27th

ST. JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

8:15 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
Morning Prayer & Evening Prayer
with Holy Communion

Friday, December 28th

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS
8:15 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
Morning Prayer & Evening Prayer
with Holy Communion

Saturday, December 29th

NO SERVICES

Sunday, December 30th

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
8:00 a.m. & Noon Holy Communion
10:30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

*No Breakfast, Family Service, Youth Education,
Nursery, Children's Church or Coffee Hour.*

Monday, December 31st

NO SERVICES

Tuesday, January 1st

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
10:30 a.m. Holy Communion

passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus". In the awareness that the Lord is at hand, joy, gentle forbearance, prayer, thankfulness, and peace may be ours, in a world where they are scarce commodities.

"There standeth one among you whom ye know not, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose". "The Lord is at hand". That's what Christmas means: his presence among us, "God with us", not only in his birth, but "always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 1:23, 28:20); in the midst of his disciples, and "wherever two or three are gathered in his name" (18:20); in the Word of God, and in the Sacraments; in our neighbour, and in "the least of these my brothers". To recognize and rejoice in his presence, requires we know what we are not. Knowing what we lack that only he can supply, will fill us with such desire and longing, that we shall sing from our hearts: "O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel; that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel".

GGD

All communicant members of St. John's Church should receive the Sacrament on the Feast of Christmas (or during its Octave, ending January 1) unless prevented for reasonable cause.

WOMEN OF ST. ST. JOHN'S

The Board will meet **Monday, January 7th** at 10:00 a.m. in the Green-Meldrim House. The General Meeting will be held **Wednesday, January 9th** in the Green-Meldrim House after 10:00 a.m. chapel.

2019 OUTREACH WORK

Mark your calendars for the 2019 Outreach Work Saturdays at Tybee's Fresh Air Home: **January 12th and May 4th, 2019.** Call Cathy Baxter with any questions at (912) 704-5111.