

The Parish Paper

OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol. 51 No. 18

Passion Sunday (Lent 5)

March 29, 2020

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LIVE THIS SUNDAY FROM ST. JOHN'S

10 A.M. – ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

By conference call with Fr. Dunbar
Call (605) 313-5889. Enter the access code 801881.
*Please mute your phones – send questions by email to
gdunbar@stjohnssav.org.*

10 A.M. – YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please email dsvihel@stjohnssav.org for details.

10 A.M. – CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

A short lesson video will be posted to St. John's Children's Facebook group at www.Facebook.com/groups/StJohnsSavChildren.

11 A.M. – MORNING PRAYER

Live-streamed on St. John's Facebook page at
www.Facebook.com/StJohnsSav
Have your Prayer Book ready.
Additional resources will be in Friday's email.

Morning Prayer begins on page 6
of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP).

Jeremiah 1:1-10 *The Call of the Prophet*

The Epistle: Hebrews 9:11 (BCP, pages 132-133)

The Holy Gospel: St. John 8:46 (BCP, pages 133)

Collects of the Day (BCP, pages 132, 124)

*If you need help getting on Facebook,
please call the Church office at (912) 232-1251.*

A TIME OF TRIAL

At this point, the outlook is challenging but not hopeless. If mass “social distancing” takes hold, the immediate threat of the pandemic can be broken, and we can then move to controlling the disease by temperature-checks, testing, contact-tracing, and targeted isolation for those at risk. This will permit economic, social, and (yes) religious activity to revive. Eventually, perhaps, there will be effective treatments and vaccines. But it is early days yet, and the outlook is constantly evolving. Right now, we are being put to the test. We shall see what is in us.

A test of our country. As in previous wars, the United States was not prepared for this conflict. There is a lot of catching up to do. The leadership of this country – its government, other institutions, and businesses – is being put to a test. Are these leaders able to listen to the best advice, to see the situation as a whole, to make the right decisions, and communicate them clearly and convincingly, so that the people they lead know what we are doing and why? Are the partisans on all sides capable of seeking the common good? Is the media (including all of us on *social media*) capable of sober, fair-minded reporting and debate? Are we ready to make the best of the leadership we have, while pressing for the leadership we need? This will be a test of our political discourse. And for us all: quick victory should not be counted on. There may be disappointments and defeats along the way. The pressure will be intense, but impatience will not help.

Are we ready to persevere? Are we ready for discipline and sacrifice?

A test of our families and our selves. Families are being thrown together into unwonted intimacy. The longer this lasts, the more the quality of our relationships will be put to the test. It's not just families either. We are all being thrown back on our own resources to an unusual degree. The glowing screen provides only so much escape. Perhaps we may have to turn it off and talk to one another – or even

UPCOMING AT ST. JOHN'S

◆ WORSHIP THIS WEEK ◆

All services are cancelled until further notice.

This Sunday, March 29th Passion Sunday (Lent 5)

10 a.m. *Children's Sunday School*
Lesson on St. John's Children's Facebook group.

10 a.m. *Youth Sunday School*
Email dsvihel@stjohnssav.org for details.

10 a.m. *Adult Sunday School
with Father Dunbar*
Call (605) 313-5889. When prompted
enter access code 801881.

11 a.m. *Morning Prayer*
Live-streamed on St. John's Facebook page.
Have your Prayer Book ready.
Additional resources in Friday's email.

Wednesday, April 1st
Midweek Live-stream Service at 10 a.m.
Litany (p. 54) and *Ante-Communion*
("Table Prayers" – p. 67).

Next Sunday, April 5th – Palm Sunday

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ONE WEST MACON STREET
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www.stjohnssav.org

To receive the Parish Paper by email (on Fridays), send name and email address to information@stjohnssav.org

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President, Chancel Society..... Mrs. Roland S. Summers

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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.

Services may be suspended for now, but your Church ministry is not on hold. Please continue to support St. John's financially. Also, please remember St. John's Church in your will.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The flowers on the altar this Sunday are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin J. Berger by Dr. and Mrs. Clifford J. Berger and family

EASTER LILIES

Wish to contribute towards the decoration of the Church? Download forms at StJohnsSav.org/Easter to indicate how the memorial, honorarium, or thanksgiving should read. The list will be published the Sunday after Easter.

For changes and updates, sign up for our weekly emails at StJohnsSav.org.

WEEKDAY STUDY & FELLOWSHIP

- **Tuesday Ladies Study**
Text or email Fr. Dunbar for details.
- **Wednesday's Faith + Fellowship**
The Youth of St. John's will chat remotely via Zoom. Please email dsvihel@stjohnssav.org for details.
- **Thursday Men's Bible Study**
Text or email Fr. Dunbar for details.

MIDWEEK LIVE-STREAM SERVICE

Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

Litany (p. 54) and *Ante-Communion* ("Table Prayers" – p. 67).

on St. John's Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/StJohnsSav
Have your Prayer Book ready.

(*quelle horreur*) listen to one another. Being so much thrown together, it will also be important to maintain what little privacy – physical and psychological – we do have. Some "time out" will be tactful.

In this situation, the monasteries, with their ordered routines of *ora et labora*, prayer and work, provide a model for living together. As John Keble says:

We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbor and our words farewell,
Nor strive to find ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.

The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.

In the imposed solitude of "social distancing", we may find peace, and perhaps also holiness, in a modest routine of shared chores, quiet joys, and, dare I say it, common prayer.

A test of the Church – and an opportunity for the Gospel. Christians are charged with a duty not only to pray for political leadership (1 Timothy 2:2) but also to uphold its lawful authority (1 Peter 2:13-17). Even as we hold leaders to account, and press for the leadership we need, we should be making the best of what leadership we do have, supporting it with serious intercession, seeking the common good, not indulging ourselves in the point-scoring of secular politics.

As for the churches themselves, we may come under great pressure. Funding and opportunities for ministry and to build congregations may be in short supply. Worse still, the crisis finds most Christians as most Christians often are – woefully unprepared, spiritually flabby, willful, rebellious, "our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim". Yet our faith is not in ourselves, but in Christ, and in the Gospel, and by

turning to him in repentance and faith, we may hope for a renewal of the love we have so often misused. "For lo! Between our sins and their reward, / we set the passion of thy Son our Lord".

Nonetheless, the time of trial is also a time of opportunity for the Church simply *to be the Church*, to be a community living under the Gospel, ruled by the Word and Spirit of God, and not by the world, the flesh, and the devil. In this grace, we shall have something to share with others who are needy, shaken and demoralized. It's an opportunity for us to bear witness to Christ, "not only with our lips" (though certainly with them) "but with our lives". For this is God's own Lent, and if we submit ourselves to his discipline, it will bring us to God's own Easter – through the wilderness of death, into the land of the living. Are we ready for this? Are we ready to *repent*?

O remember not our old sins,
but have mercy upon us,
and that soon;
for we are come to great misery.

Help us, O God of our salvation,
for the glory of thy Name:
O deliver us, and be merciful
unto our sins, for thy Name's sake.

Wherefore do the heathen say,
Where is now their God?

— GGD

"HI-FIVE" MINISTRY

We invite parishioners to get involved in a phone-based ministry of congregational care, that we are calling "Hi-Five" – volunteering to make a "check-in" call on five parishioners each week. This is designed to keep us connected, to encourage one another, and to support those in need. You can sign up at StJohnsSav.org/hi-five or call the Church office at 912-232-1251.