

# The Parish Paper

OF

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol. 43 No. 31

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity (Sunday Before Independence Day)

July 1, 2012

*We welcome this morning as our preacher Mr. Sam Martin, life-long parishioner of St. John's, former Marine, currently Second Lieutenant in the Georgia Army National Guard, and now studying in Divinity in preparation for ordination to the Priesthood and a ministry in the military chaplaincy.*

## STATE OF THE CHURCH

The 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church meets July 5 – 12 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The *seven hundred and fifty pages* of its "blue book" of resolutions and reports – bound in pale pink – is a monument to self-importance and irrelevance. If you insist, you may peruse it online at <http://generalconvention.org/gc/prepare>. There is much discussion about reform of this institution, though exactly what will come of it in the end is hard to say. A modest scaling back of expenditure and pretension would be a large accomplishment.

Part of the business of Convention will be consideration of the proposal submitted by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music for the blessing of same-sex partnerships. You can find their proposal online at <http://houseofdeputies.org/sclm-releases-excerpt-of-same-gender-blessings-report.html>.

Bishop Benhase has indicated that *as it stands* (which is open to amendment) he will not vote for the proposal. He does, however, believe that a rite that distinguishes adequately between marriage and same-sex blessing would win his vote. He has published a "Frequently Asked Questions" document about this matter, which you can read online at <http://gaepiscopal.org/docs/FAQBlessingRite.pdf>.

I hardly need say that the acute theological and ecclesial difficulties all proposals like

this create have been noted in these pages by Fr. Ralston, Fr. Carreker, and by me. I see no evidence in the General Convention publications, or elsewhere, that these difficulties have been overcome.

In the contemporary culture of sexual partnerships, both homosexual and heterosexual, it is considered intolerable that the Word of God should deny consenting adults the gratification of their emotional and erotic drives, which are identified as "civil rights". To non-Christians, of course, the teaching of the Bible and the Christian tradition is irrelevant; but to many Christians the idea that the Word of God and the contemporary culture are in contradiction is simply too painful to contemplate. It must be explained away, or denied outright. The theological difficulties, however, remain and are not abstract unless the Word of God and the will of God are mere abstractions. To treat any of them as though they were is to be cut off from the doctrinal core of one's religion.

That is not to say that there are not real difficulties in the current understanding and practice of Christian marriage, even among "conservatives". The advance of a "liberal" moral agenda in matters sexual has been made on the basis of a persistent and

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Mrs. Peter W. Schmidt ..... Financial Secretary  
Mrs. William D. Harrell ..... Parish Activities Director  
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*Clerk of Vestry* ..... Mr. J. Wesley Krulic  
*Treasurer* ..... Mrs. Stuart C. Clifford  
*Chancellor* ..... M. Tyus Butler, Jr. Esq.

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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.

**HOSPITAL VISITATIONS**

Please call the Church Office to inform the clergy if you or a loved one is in the hospital.

**ST. JOHN'S WEB SITE**

Parish Paper essays may be read on our web site:  
[www.stjohnssav.org](http://www.stjohnssav.org)

**VESTRY OFFERING CHAIRMEN**

8:00 Mr. Arthur D. Weed  
10:30 Mrs. R. Bartley Turner

**USHER CHAIRMAN**

Mr. John Riley

The flowers at the altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Phyllis Carolyn Bennett by Alfred and Carolyn Cooper and family.

And in loving memory of Paul Godfrey Hass by Dr. Thomas Philbrick.

**CHANCEL SOCIETY**

Mrs. Wm. B. McNeal II, Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard Sr.  
Mrs. Anne Mingledorff, Mrs. Philip F. Kirk  
Mrs. Jonathan D. Sprague,  
Mrs. Jeannie McMillan, Mrs. Shack B. Wimbish Jr.  
Mrs. Max M. Cooper

**ACOLYTES**

**8:00** Lawson Turner  
**10:30** Chris Dixon, Charles Perrie  
Patrick Perrie, Mikel Kelley  
Jamie McClellan

**COFFEE HOUR**

Mrs. Neil H. Victor, Sr.

**TUESDAY AND THURSDAY MORNING**  
**Men's Bible Study & Discussion Groups**  
**In the Reading Room, Cranmer Hall**  
**Tuesday 7:00 a.m. – Colossians (with Fr O' Brien)**

**Thursday 7:00 a.m.— Acts of the Apostles**  
(with the Rector)

**CHURCH OFFICE SUMMER HOURS**  
**Office closes at Noon on Fridays.**  
Open 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday.  
**Office closed Wednesday, July 4<sup>th</sup>.**

*The Rector is on vacation June 25<sup>th</sup> - July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Pastoral calls may be directed to Fr. O' Brien, or messages may be left at the Church Office.*

**THIS SUNDAY – 9:30 CLASS**

Fr. O'Brien (in the chapel)

*The Vision at Ostia, [the shared vision of St. Augustine and his mother, St. Monica]*

*It is not too late to increase your financial support in response to the Rector's recent appeal pertaining to our call to Jeremy Bergstrom. Contact Mrs. Schmidt in the Church Office (232-1251).*

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR CHURCH IN YOUR WILL

unaddressed weakness in the understanding and practice of Christian marriage. A legalistic crackdown will get us nowhere. There will be no real progress on this front, and nothing to be expected but continuing impasse both in the churches and in society in general, until there is a theological and practical recovery of the institution.

In the last few years moral conservatives have gone two ways – either leaving the Episcopal Church (for various destinations), or seeking to persevere within it – *in* the Episcopal Church but not altogether *of* it. The latter, obviously, is the path upon which we find ourselves at St. John's and, with due cautions and reservations, I think we have begun to find a way forward which allows us to stick boldly and openly to our theological principles without picking fights or getting into knock-down drag-out conflicts over money or property.

Being ready to stand by our convictions has been one side of this way forward. I must acknowledge here that the readiness of the Vestry and of Fr. O'Brien to support me in this witness has been crucial. The other side of this has been the response of Bishop Benhase to our united witness. We have some real theological differences with him, most evidently over same-sex blessings; yet he has responded to our witness, not with narrow or tyrannical spirit, but with a largeness of vision that deserves our respect. He acknowledges that the questions dividing us are fundamentally theological in character, and therefore that the process of working through them cannot be forced or put on a timetable. It is in that perspective that he has delegated his liturgical and sacramental functions to Bishop Henderson. The result is that instead of being locked into

combat, St. John's has room to breathe, and to move forward with integrity in its part of the Church's mission. I don't think that is such a bad place for us to be; and while I do not look at the proposals before General Convention with equanimity (don't get me started), I have some hope that St. John's can transmit unimpaired to our posterity its heritage of faith, morals and worship.

I love what God has already given us at St. John's, but what he has given us can only remain ours on the condition that we learn how to share it with others. To do that we shall need to receive yet more from him. The freedom we enjoy is not freedom to be a holy huddle, a religious club, a sectarian splinter; it is the freedom to receive more fully the tradition which God has given us, and to be changed by it.

GGD

#### PARISH KALENDAR THIS WEEK

##### Monday to Friday

8:15 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.

*Morning or Evening Prayer*

##### Except Wednesday July 4<sup>th</sup>

*Due to the holiday, there will be no services, and the office is closed.*

#### VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

**JULY 16<sup>TH</sup>—20<sup>TH</sup> \* 9 A.M. - NOON**

*Open (free of charge) to children 3 years old (and potty trained) through to those who have completed 1<sup>st</sup> grade and are moving into 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Register Now! Volunteers Welcome.*

#### SIGN UP FOR A SUMMER MORNING!

Parents &/or Grandparents are asked to sign up for one Sunday this summer, to teach a simple story-lesson to the Pre-School/Kindergarten class at 10:30 a.m. Sign-up sheets will be in Cranmer Hall beginning this Sunday or call Maryan Harrell 232-8887 or 272-7925.

**8:00 A.M. – HOLY COMMUNION**

COLLECTS, EPISTLE, and GOSPEL ..... 263 (194)

*A continental breakfast is available in Cranmer Hall following this service.*

**9:30-12:00 (Noon)—Nursery (Cranmer Hall)**

**9:30-10:15—ADULT CLASS Chapel)**

**9:30-10:15—Pre-School through Kindergarten Summer Program (Cranmer Hall)**

**10:30—Activities for Pre-School & Kindergarten (Cranmer Hall)**

**10:30 A.M. – SUNG EUCHARIST & SERMON**

HYMN #143 *God of our Fathers* ..... National Hymn

**ANTE-COMMUNION**

Collect for Purity ..... Prayer Book, page 67  
 The Ten Commandments ..... 68  
 KYRIE ELEISON: #710 ..... Healey Willan  
 Collects and Epistle ..... 263 (194)  
 HYMN #350 *Rejoice the Lord is King* ..... Darwall (#600)  
 The Holy Gospel ..... 264  
 The Nicene Creed ..... 71  
 HYMN #141 *My Country 'Tis of Thee* ..... America  
 SERMON ..... Mr. Sam Martin

**OFFERTORY**

Sentences  
 Anthem: *Laudate Dominum, Fr. Vesperae Sollone* ..... Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
 Presentation of Alms #139 and THE NATIONAL ANTHEM (#142, both stanzas)  
 Prayer for the State of the Church ..... 74

**THE HOLY COMMUNION**

Invitation, Confession and Absolution ..... 75  
 Sursum Corda #734 ..... 76  
 SANCTUS and BENEDICTUS #711 ..... Healey Willan  
 Prayer of Consecration: Institution, Oblation, Invocation ..... 80  
 The Lord's Prayer & Prayer of Humble Access (*said with the congregation*) ..... 82  
 AGNUS DEI # 712 ..... Healey Willan  
 HYMN #198 *O God, unseen yet ever near* ..... St. Flavian  
 MOTET: *O Taste and See* ..... Ralph Vaughan Williams  
 Thanksgiving (*said with the congregation*) ..... 83  
 GLORIA IN EXCELSIS #739 ..... Old Scottish Chant  
 Prayer for Our Country ..... 36  
 The Blessing (*Kneeling*) ..... 84  
 HYMN #282 *Praise my Soul the King of Heaven* ..... Lauda Anima  
 ORGAN: *Tu es Petrus* ..... Henri Mulet

*Everyone is invited to attend the Parish House immediately after the 10:30 service.  
 If you are a guest and visiting our Parish, please make yourself known.*

**12 Noon HOLY COMMUNION in the Chapel. (Collect, Epistle, Gospel as 8 a.m.)**