

# The Parish Paper

OF

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

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The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

August 5, 2012

## HOLY COMFORT

*Revised from 2007*

Pop culture reference: I was watching one of those “ripped from the headlines” crime shows, whose plot, after the usual sensational twists and turns, ends with a beautiful young attorney’s boldly breaking the law in order to secure justice against a child molester. There was, however, a final twist: in the last scene, she is being raked over the coals by the judge in chambers, who correctly divines that the attorney’s zeal for justice is driven by guilt for having failed before to protect another child from. The last line is the judge’s: “nothing can assuage that guilt”. Cue credits.

Guilt, it is generally agreed in pop culture today, is a bad thing, probably the result of early childhood experiences with manipulative parents. When faced by guilt, our culturally-conditioned, reflexive response is to deny any rational basis for it. “You did nothing wrong”; “don’t blame yourself”, “nobody’s perfect”. Granted, manipulative parents do exist, whose children may struggle with irrational feelings of guilt. On the other hand, honest, searching self-examination soon turns up moral failures in every soul. In various ways, and to various degrees, in our various vocations in life, we have all failed one another, and failed God. We have done wrong, and sometimes very wrong: “we have done those things which we ought not to have done”, and, still worse, “we have left undone those things which we ought to have done”: and saying “you’re not to blame” or “nobody’s perfect” does not

adequately address our responsibility. In fact, it diminishes us as human beings, to be told that moral failure is something trivial. Human dignity does not begin with the self-justifying moral vacuity of “nobody’s perfect”, but with the honest confession that “there is no health in us”.

There is a much worse thing than feelings of guilt: the *inability* to feel guilt. Sociopaths cannot feel guilt. Unrestrained by the voice of conscience, they are capable of enormities of crime, such as we have recently with sadness learned of near at hand in the horrors of Colorado and far away in Syria. We should thank God for guilt: in the absence of something better, it serves to restrain in some degree our corrupt passions, and to prevent society from exploding in violence and chaos.

But there is something better than guilt: not the compulsive desire to “assuage guilt”, but the forgiveness of sins. Oddly enough, the same pop culture which holds guilt to be a bad thing, does not believe in the forgiveness of sins or the redemption of sinners. And this perhaps is not just pop culture speaking, but something deep in the unregenerate human soul. We may grant this view-point some basis: unless we had God’s word for it, we should not know that there in fact is forgiveness of sins. But we do: “This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save

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**St. John's Church**

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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 Mr. R. Scott Howard

**USHER CHAIRMAN**

Mr. Ross Haire

The flowers at the altar are given to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for the birthday of my beloved husband by Mrs. Peter Woodbury Schmidt.

And in loving memory of Julie Backus Smith by Bill Cathcart.

And in thanksgiving for the birth of Lachlan Jin Randolph Brooks by Angela Brooks Najam and Jordan and Austin Nichols.

**CHANCEL SOCIETY**

Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard Sr., Mrs. Philip F. Kirk  
Ms. Anne Mingledorff, Mrs. David A. Young  
Mrs. John R. Reiter, Mrs. George Fawcett  
Mrs. Max Cooper

**ACOLYTES**

**8:00** Cord Helmken  
**10:30** Lawson Turner, Chris Dixon  
Charles Perrie, Patrick Perrie  
Hunt Wasden, Jamie McClellan

**COFFEE HOUR**

Mrs. David Young

**SUNDAY MORNING 9:30 A.M.**

**ADULT CLASS (CHAPEL)**

Articles II-V of the *Thirty Nine Articles*  
(the Rector)

**TUESDAY AND THURSDAY MORNING**

**Men's Bible Study & Discussion Groups**  
(READING ROOM, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, CRANMER HALL)

**Tuesday 7:00 a.m. – Colossians**, with Dr. Bergstrom, supplying for Fr O' Brien.

**Thursday 7:00 a. m. — Acts of the Apostles**, with Fr. Dunbar

**BAZAAR BUSINESS**

The **canners** need fresh veggies and fruits (figs, peppers, pears, peaches, apples, mangos, etc) sugar, mint, pecans and half-pint jars. Jane Pressly 233-6551.

Storage unit available for **White Elephant** and **Treasurer Room**, contact Betsy Howard at 398-1326 or [betsyd6@aol.com](mailto:betsyd6@aol.com)

**CHURCH OFFICE SUMMER HOURS**

*Office closes at Noon on Fridays.*

Monday through Thursday 9—4:30 p.m.

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR CHURCH IN YOUR WILL

sinner” (1 Timothy 1:15). “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:1). These indeed are comfortable words. When we look honestly at ourselves we find much reason to lose heart, but when by faith we hear and apply to ourselves these words they fill us with comfort, strength and courage. In them faith may rest in Christ, and find a stability and strength that is not of our own making and does not depend upon our own merits and works.

Those who deny that God *can* forgive sins have not begun to grapple with what it means to be *God* – “with whom nothing is impossible” (Luke 1:37). Those who deny that God *does* forgive sins have not yet fully engaged with the apostolic testimony to Jesus Christ. But those who do begin to know the comfort of our religion: the impossible and amazing hope of new life for the lost. The forgiveness of sins changes everything; for it is completed in the regeneration and renewal of our corrupted and weakened nature, to serve God in holiness and righteousness.

The soul’s true comfort is not found by denying guilt. Nor is it found by assuaging guilt. It is found in the forgiveness of sins. I know sincere Christians who find that hard to accept – and at times, in the faithlessness of despair, I am one of them. That’s understandable: but it’s also not true. And unless we do believe it, we cannot know the comfort of our religion. GGD

Fr. O’Brien is out of town this week, as he travels with some of our teenagers to the St. Michael’s Youth Conference, where he is an instructor.

### ELLIOT HOUSE OF STUDIES

This is the last Sunday the Rev’d Horace Tipton will be with us. It has been very satisfying and also fun having him in our midst, to study Augustine’s *Confessions*, and the sacramental teaching of the Reformers, to take part in our daily prayers, and to gain experience in officiating at public worship. It has also been a great opportunity for us to learn more about his work with the Anglican Church of Kenya, in Planting Faith Ministries (in honour of whose mission today’s closing hymn was chosen, *Hail to the Lord’s Anointed*.) You can find more about this excellent mission on [www.plantingfaith.org](http://www.plantingfaith.org).

### PARISH KALENDAR THIS WEEK

#### Monday, August 6th THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

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

*Holy Communion  
with Morning or Evening Prayer*

#### Tuesday- Friday (Chapel)

8:15am & 5:30pm

*Morning or Evening Prayer*

#### In addition, on Wednesday

9:45 a.m. *Litany*

10:00 a.m. *Sung Eucharist*

### GREEN-MELDRIM HOUSE

This month the work on the portico which began earlier this summer will resume and be completed. Work on the kitchen renovation has continued and is also on track for completion later this summer. Access to the house will be through the side door, but the work may require closing the house on certain days. Closings will be posted on the Green Meldrim House Facebook site.

**8:00 A.M.—HOLY COMMUNION**

COLLECT, EPISTLE, and GOSPEL ..... Prayer Book, page 200  
*A continental breakfast is available in Cranmer Hall following this service.*

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

**9:30-10:15 A.M.—ADULT & YOUTH CLASSES**

**Pre-School through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Summer Program (Cranmer Hall)**  
**10:30—11:30 Activities for Pre-School & Kindergarten (Cranmer Hall)**  
**Jr. Choir—1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> Grade (Cranmer Hall)**

**10:30 A.M. — MORNING PRAYER & SERMON**

CARILLON

HYMN #155 *New Every Morning is the Love* .....Melcombe  
Sentences, Confession, Absolution and Lord’s Prayer ..... Prayer Book, pages 3-7  
Versicles and Responses ..... 7-8

VENITE #610 ..... 9  
Psalm #59 ..... 411  
First Lesson: I Corinthians 10:1 ..... 201

BENEDICTUS ES DOMINE #626 ..... 11  
Second Lesson: St. Luke 15:11 ..... 201

BENEDICTUS #634 ..... 14  
Apostles' Creed ..... 15  
Versicles and Responses ..... 16  
Collect for the Day ..... 200  
Collects, Prayers, and Grace ..... 17-20

HYMN #411 *O Thou to Whose All-searching Sight* ..... Grace Church  
Children attending Jr. Choir (grades 1—4) exit following the cross

THE SERMON ..... Fr. Dunbar

**OFFERING**

Sentences  
HYMN: *The Rose of Sharon* ..... A. C. MacKenzie  
Mr. Lowell Roberts, Baritone  
Presentation of Alms: Doxology #139 and Hymn #141

PRAYER AND BLESSING

HYMN #545 *Hail to the Lord’s Anointed* ..... Woodbird  
ORGAN: *Prelude and Fugue in F (BWV 556)* .....attr. to Johann Sebastian Bach