

# The Parish Paper

OF

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol. 43 No.52

The Sunday Next before Advent

November 25, 2012

## MEANS OF GRACE, HOPE OF GLORY

*A sermon by the late Robert Crouse, Priest.*

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18). At this time of year we have services of thanksgiving in which we thank God for peace and plenty, for the good land, and "bread without scarceness". In all this we give thanks, as the prayer of General Thanksgiving expresses it, "for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life". But, as the scripture ... insistently remind[s] us, there is more to it than that. Above all, we give thanks "for our spiritual mercies in Christ Jesus our Lord": above all, for God's "inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory". So say we in that prayer of thanksgiving: "for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory"; and perhaps one should consider more closely what we mean by those phrases.

By grace we mean God's love, as a free gift to us, making us children of his kingdom, nourishing us in the life of that kingdom, recalling us and strengthening us in that profession. And the means of that grace, the means of that free gift, are manifold: in word and sacrament, certainly; but also in every facet and circumstance of our lives, if we have eyes to see. We are compassed about on every side by means of grace, the means of discerning and receiving the free gift of God's love. We see that grace in the witness of the saints; we see it in one another, in works of truth and beauty, in words of kindness and compassion and support. The grace of God, in Christ the Word, is at the very heart of God's creation. As the poet, Hopkins, put it: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God. / It

will flame out, like shining from shook foil". Therefore, "in everything give thanks".

Even our deepest troubles and sufferings and bewilderment can be means of grace, when they shatter our shallow complacency or vain ambition or thoughtless confidence. Thanks be to God for the grace which brings us to the truth, and thanks be to him also for the troubles and mistakes which are a necessary part of that discovery. Even our worst sins can be means of grace, for they can show us, as nothing else can do, the depth of our wretchedness and the reality of our need. As St. Paul argues (Rom. 5:20), "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Therefore, "in everything give thanks": for the provident grace of God includes it all.

That manifold grace of God is "Christ in us the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27); and we give thanks for that hope of glory, "the glory that shall be revealed in us" (1 Pt 5:1), in the fullness of God's kingdom. For the kingdom of God, says Jesus (Mark 4:26), "is as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." The seed is grace, and the harvest is glory. That gracious seed is planted in us by word and sacrament, planted hiddenly in the depths of our souls, and nourished there within us by countless ways and means of which we are perhaps hardly aware. It springs and grows up, we know not how. Like the mustard seed of Jesus' parable (Matt. 13:31), God's grace, the incorruptible seed of his kingdom, seems the least of all seeds: we scarcely see it; only by faith do we know its presence. Yet secretly and

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The Rt. Rev. Scott Benhase ..... Bishop of Georgia  
The Rev. Gavin G. Dunbar ..... Rector  
1 West Macon Street ..... (912) 234-2209  
The Rev. Craig E. O'Brien ..... Priest Associate  
201 E. 49<sup>th</sup> Street Upper flat ..... (912) 308-4441  
Dr. Jeremy Bergstrom ..... (574) 389-7108  
..... Mail: 1 West Macon Street, Savannah, GA 31401  
Brian J. Taylor, DSM ..... Organist/Choirmaster  
Mrs. I. David Futrell, Jr. .... Parish Secretary  
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*President, Men of St. John's* ..... Mr. Richard L. Wright

Church Office ..... (912) 232-1251  
Fax ..... (912) 232-5559  
Parish House ..... (912) 233-3845  
Cranmer Hall ..... (912) 232-8887  
E-mails ..... (firstinitiallastname)@stjohnssav.org

**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 and recordings of Services and Sermons are to be found on our web site:  
[www.stjohnssav.org](http://www.stjohnssav.org)

**VESTRY OFFERING CHAIRMEN**

8:00 Mr. Arthur D. Weed  
10:30 Mrs. Richard S. E. Jennings

**USHER CHAIRMAN**

Dr. James McClellan

The flowers at the altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Henry King McCormick by Mr. and Mrs. R. Gilbert Wells.

And in loving memory of Ray Schmidt by Mrs. Ray Schmidt.

And in memory of Martha Feilis Belford by Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Lee Belford.

And in memory of Nancy Loraine Brown Windler by Mr. and Mrs. Edwin H. Culver and their family.

And in loving memory of Joanne Smith Merritt by her husband, Robert J. Merritt, and her son, Lee Smith.

And in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Johnston by their family.

The flowers in the chapel this Sunday are given to the glory of God and in memory of Mrs. Margaret Parker Bradshaw by Mr. and Mrs. John G. Bradshaw.

**CHANCEL SOCIETY**

Mrs. T. Herbert Guerry III, Ms. Anne H. Mingleдорff  
Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Mrs. Philip F. Kirk  
Mrs. Henry F. Inglesby, Jr., Ms. Jeanne H. Howell  
Mrs. Michael E. Donahue

**ACOLYTES**

**8:00** Lawson Turner  
**10:30** Clayton Compton  
Chris Dixon  
John Osborne, Jamie McClellan  
Mikel Kelly, Turner Stevens

**NO COFFEE HOUR THIS SUNDAY**

**TUESDAY AND THURSDAY MORNING**

**Men's Bible Study & Discussion Groups**

**TUESDAY** 7:00 a.m. – *Ecclesiastes* with Fr. O'Brien.  
(after Breakfast in Parish House Dining Room)  
**THURSDAY** 7:00 a. m. — *Acts*, with Fr. Dunbar  
(Reading Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Cranmer Hall)

**Women's Study & Discussion Groups**

(READING ROOM, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, CRANMER HALL)

**MONDAY** – NOON- 1 P.M. Romans (Dr Bergstrom)

**THURSDAY** 9:15 – 10:30 a.m. – Dorothy Sayers  
*The Mind of the Maker* (Fr. O'Brien).

**WELCOME NEW VESTRY MEMBERS**

Mr. John C. Helmken II  
Mr. E. Brian Culver  
Dr. Roland S. Summers  
Mr. Richard L. Wright

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR CHURCH IN YOUR WILL

hiddenly it has its growth, and finally a harvest which is beyond all reckoning – what St. Paul (2 Cor. 4:17) calls “the eternal weight of glory”, the glory of God himself, in which we are to share as sons. “The eternal weight of glory”: glory altogether beyond our imagining. “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

To be aware of that grace within us, to be conscious of that hope, is to give thanks. And so, in the prayer of thanksgiving, we ask for “a due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful.” Unfeignedly thankful: thankful without pretense, thankful without reservation. Surely not an easy matter: the world seems so full of troubles and failures, and tragedies, and ugly and just plain boring things, so full of sufferings and afflictions. We are not called to be Pollyannas, to pretend that everything is sweet and pretty. Rather, we are called to see, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8:18), “that the sufferings of this present age are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us ... we are saved by hope.” “We are heirs, through hope, of God’s everlasting kingdom”. And in that hope, we can praise God from the very depths of human discouragement and despair, unfeignedly thankful that even here are means of grace and hope of glory.

“That we may show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service” – so continues our prayer. We hear a great deal about Christian service these days, but sometimes it isn’t very clear what is meant by it. Sometimes it appears as though worship and service are alternative emphases: either you worship God, or you serve the world; as though bettering the world were somehow a possible end of our Christian life. It is indeed true that the work of the Church is the world’s salvation; but

that means that the world should see and serve its only meaningful end, the glory of God. It’s not a matter of alternatives: our service is first and finally the worship of God, and only in that perspective of faith and hope and charity is our service in the world worth anything at all.

This may seem to some a theological nicety, but I assure you, it is not. It matters crucially, in the most immediate, practical way, what is the foundation, the direction, the perspective of our lives. For Christians, that is to refer the whole of it to God, as the source and end of it, and that means “in everything give thanks”.

That is what we are up to in this Eucharist (“eucharist” means “thanksgiving”) and what we do here is offer up the bread and wine of our lives in the sacrifice of praise. Not in any confidence in our own good works, or any worldly achievement; but only in the confidence that by this thanksgiving, God will make for us “the bread of life and the cup of everlasting salvation”: “the means of grace, and the hope of glory”. RDC

#### PARISH KALENDAR THIS WEEK

**Monday – Friday** 8:15 a.m & 5:30 p.m.

*Morning or Evening Prayer*

**In addition, on Wednesday**

9:45 a.m. *Litany*

10 a.m. *Sung Eucharist*

**In addition, on Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup>**

**ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE**

*Holy Communion* at 8:15 and 5:30 p.m.

#### ECW MEETING

ECW Board, Parish House, Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.

ECW General Meeting, Parish House, Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, immediately following the 10:00 a.m. service. Fr. Dunbar music for Advent and Christmas. All are Welcome! *Sitter will be provided.*

#### MEN’S FORUM

*Good Food for Body and soul.*

*Thursday at Noon. Guests welcome.*

Modern Myths of Marriage

(Dr. Jeremy Bergstrom)

**8:00 A.M. —HOLY COMMUNION**

COLLECT, EPISTLE, and GOSPEL.....225

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

**9:30 — 12 Noon NURSERY** (*Cranmer Hall*)

**9:30 A.M. —ALL AGES CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

(*Chapel, Conference Room, and Cranmer Hall*)

**10:30—Pre-School Program continues—3 year olds through Kindergarten** (*Cranmer Hall*)

*Jr. Choir (grades 1-4) in Cranmer Hall.*

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

CARILLON

HYMN #484 *Lift Up Your Heads*.....Truro

Sentences Confession, Absolution and Lord’s Prayer .....Prayer Book 3-7

Versicles and Responses ..... 7-8

VENITE EXULTEMUS DOMINO (Hymnal #609).....9

Psalm #85.....446

First Lesson: Jeremiah 23:5 ..... 225

TE DEUM (Hymnal #613, 617)..... 10

Second Lesson: St. John 6:5 ..... 225

BENEDICTUS (Hymnal #638)..... 14

Apostles' Creed ..... 15

Versicles and Responses ..... 16

Collect For The Day..... 225

Other Collects and Prayers..... 17-20

The Grace..... 20

HYMN #137 *Come Ye Thankful People Come* ..... St. George’s Windsor

*1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grades children enrolled in Jr. Choir exit following the Cross*

THE SERMON..... Fr. O’Brien

**OFFERING**

Sentences

Anthem: *God Be In My Head*..... John Rutter

Presentation of Alms: Doxology #139 and Hymn #141 v. 4

PRAYER and BLESSING

HYMN #356 *At the Name of Jesus*..... King’s Weston

ORGAN: *Toccata for Organ*..... John Weaver

**There is NO Coffee Hour** this Sunday after the 10:30 service

*If you are a guest and visiting our Parish, please make yourself known.*

**12 Noon—HOLY COMMUNION (Chapel)** Collect, Epistle, Gospel p. 225