

# The Parish Paper

OF

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol. 44 No. 44

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

September 22, 2013

## OUR BROTHERS IN THE EAST

Some of you may have seen the news reports about the Christian village that was caught in the conflict between the unspeakable Assad regime and some equally unspeakable Al-Qaeda-linked insurgents in Syria. The village is remarkable, not only because it is Christian, but also because it is one of the few places left in the entire world where Aramaic is still spoken. In the time of Jesus, Aramaic (closely related to Hebrew) was the common language of the Middle East, and the New Testament preserves for us some words in Aramaic that Jesus himself spoke - *Abba* (Father), *Amen* (Truly), and *Eli, eli lama sabachthani* (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me). Those words, so full of comfort and sorrow, bespeak the long, fruitful, and sorrowful history of the Christians of the Middle East.

In the 7th century, when the Arabs, unified under the preaching of Mohammed, swept out of the deserts of Arabia to conquer a vast empire that stretched from southern France to India, lands that at that point had been Christian for half a millennium became the core of their new empire. North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, the Anatolian highlands of modern Turkey, these were all provinces of an empire that was as Christian as it was Roman. Moreover, these were no backwaters of little significance (as we may tend to regard them today). Because the center of power shifted to the north Atlantic in the 19th

century, we forget that until the 17th century, the most powerful states in the world were found in the Middle East. Constantinople itself was not to fall until 1453, but the most important Christian societies of the ancient world - cultured, wealthy, sophisticated - came under alien rule at a time when western Christians were mostly dirty, smelly barbarians of little culture or wealth, and of very little consequence.

Christians in the Magreb (western North Africa) came under great pressure from successive waves of Islamic militants, and the last of them were converted to Islam in the 15th century. Further east, however, the Christian communities had better luck or were more resilient, despite being submerged in an ever-rising Muslim sea for fourteen hundred years. This was partly because the first Muslims were slow to accept converts: they preferred to be a ruling elite. Partly this was because most Muslim regimes provided Christians (and Jews) with a kind of protected status as second-class subjects. Their more impressive churches might be seized for mosques, their pockets squeezed by special taxes, the practice of their religion subject to capricious impositions, but, by and large, they usually escaped the worst forms of persecution. As a result, the churches under Islam exhibited an extraordinary vitality. It is a remarkable testimony that, already possessing important theological and liturgical literatures in Greek, Armenian, Georgian, Syriac, Aramaic, and Coptic, they adopted

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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

VESTRY OFFERING CHAIRMEN

8:00 Mr. Arthur D. Weed

10:30 Mrs. Richard C. E. Jennings

USHER CHAIRMAN

Mr. Benjamin W. Baxter

The flowers on the altar this Sunday are given to the glory of God and loving memory of Edna and Jack Fitzpatrick and other loved ones by their family.

The flowers at the Baptismal Font are given to the glory of God on the occasion of the baptism of Miss Eloise Robertson Jones, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Bryan Jones. Jr. by Mr. and Mrs. Edwin H. Culver.

CHANCEL SOCIETY

Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr, Mrs. T. Herbert Guerry III
Ms. Anne H. Mingleddorf, Mrs. Martin R. Sullivan
Mrs. Nicholas Farley, Mrs. Jeanne H. McMillan
Mrs. Joseph R. Ross, Mrs. Gary Schubert

ACOLYTES

8:00 John Osborne
10:30 Chris Dixon
Charles Perrie
Jamie McClellan, Patrick Perrie
Turner Stevens, Finn Repella

SPECIAL COFFEE HOUR CHAIRMAN

Mrs. R. Brooks Dawson, Jr.

9:30 A.M. SUNDAY YOUTH & ADULT EDUCATION

- Dr. Bergstrom will meet with Upper School students 3rd floor classroom on the right.
Fr. Dunbar: What makes St. John's the church it is: Word, Worship, and Works. (Reading Room)
David Noble: Shakespeare makes love AND war in the history plays. New title, same class.- Conference Room (above chapel)
Jack Wray: on the Book of Daniel (3rd floor classroom on the left)

WEEKDAY STUDY GROUPS

- Mondays Noon-1 p.m. Women's Study: Athanasius On the Incarnation, with Dr. Bergstrom, Reading Room. - Begins this week!
Tuesdays 7 a.m. Men's Breakfast, Parish House Dining Room (enter by kitchen door), with Dr. Bergstrom
Thursdays 7 a.m. Men's Bible Study, on Judges, Reading Room, Cranmer Hall. (Fr Dunbar)

BAZAAR NOTICES

Canning—Jane's Canners meet in the Cranmer Hall kitchen at 10:30 on Wednesdays. Figs, pears, apples, etc. are needed for chutneys.

Storage—for the white elephant is available. Written instructions for use of storage facility are available in the church office.

Books—it's time to start gathering those books for the book sale (no magazines please!) Please be sure to separate or valuable books (1st eds, autographed copies, very old, etc) as they will be prices separately. Please contact Marilyn Solana( iohope41@aol.com) or Cameron Spencer (Cameron19spencer@aol.com)

PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR CHURCH IN YOUR WILL

the Arabic of their oppressors and made it one of the great languages of Christian theology and liturgy.

In the twenty-first century, that long history increasingly appears to be in its final stages. The fall of the Ottoman empire was the end of a multi-cultural, multi-religious polity; the western contagion of nationalism shaped the successor regimes. The secularized Turks, newly conscious of their national identity, expelled most of the Greek Christians from Anatolia, and, in the first great genocide of the twentieth century, massacred millions of Armenians. (Unlike the Germans, the Turks still do not admit their guilt, and they persecute historians and journalists who tell the truth.) In the Arab states, Christians came to be more and more regarded as a fifth column for the West. (In Israel, sadly, they are regarded as dangers to the Jewish state.) To be truly Arab one must be Muslim. The recent convulsions in Iraq, Syria and Egypt, have been even worse. On the one side, there is the rise of militant Islam - Wahabi, Salafi, Al-Qaeda, Muslim Brotherhood. On the other side, there is the cynical manipulation of sectarian fears by the old dictatorships. In any case, the results have been dire. The ancient Christian communities of Iraq have withered; the ancient Christian communities of Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt (where they still constituted about ten per cent of the population, and had been flourishing under hostile conditions) are under increasing pressure. (An engaging snapshot of the Christian communities of the Middle East just before the catastrophe began is provided in William Dalrymple's *From the Holy Mountain*, 1997.) The likelihood is that large numbers will seek safety abroad, as refugees, exiles, or emigrants. Some will

seek freedom of religion in the U. S. A., though I fear many will be turned away from the Statue of Liberty. Others may find refuge in Australia, Canada, or western Europe. Let us hope that not too many will be terrorized or murdered. The crossing of red lines may not seem to matter much right now, but the consequences are appalling. The most ancient Christian communities in the world are in danger of disappearing before our eyes. *Eli, eli, lama sabachthani*. GGD

### **MICHAELMAS BRASS**

If you would like to contribute to the costs of the brass for Michaelmas (September 29<sup>th</sup>) please send a cheque to St. John's Church with "Brass" in the memo line, with note of intention (memorial or thanksgiving), if any. Gifts will be acknowledged in the Michaelmas Parish Paper.

### **PARISH KALENDAR THIS WEEK**

#### **Monday to Friday**

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

*Morning or Evening Prayer*

#### **In addition, on Wednesday**

9:45 a.m. *Litany*

10 a.m. *Sung Eucharist*

### **ON THE WEB SITE!**

If you have not signed up for our Parish Paper, or the weekly newsletter, please visit [www.stjohnssav.org](http://www.stjohnssav.org) and enter your email at the bottom of the home page. If you have signed up and are not receiving them, please check your junk mail or spam to see if it was filtered there. If so, please tag as "not Junk or Spam".

### **NEXT SUNDAY 5:30 P.M.**

### **CHORAL EVENSONG FOR**

### **MICHAELMAS**

Reception on the Mall to follow.

**8 A.M.—HOLY COMMUNION**

COLLECT, EPISTLE, and GOSPEL.....Prayer Book, page 213  
*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.: ALL AGES CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
*Cranmer Hall and Conference Room.*

**9:30 A.M. – NOON: PRESCHOOL-PRE-KINDERGARTEN**  
*(Cranmer Hall –activities for children during the 9:30 education and/or 10:30 service times)*

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

HYMN #302 *O That I had a Thousand Voices* .....Mentzer  
 Sentences, Confession, Absolution and Lord’s Prayer ..... Prayer Book 3-7  
 Versicles and Responses .....7-8  
 VENITE (Hymnal #610) ..... 9  
 Psalm #33 ..... 378  
 First Lesson: Ephesians 4:1 ..... 213  
 TE DEUM (Hymnal #615, 619) ..... 10  
 Second Lesson: St. Luke 14:1 ..... 213  
 HYMN#450 *As Pants the Hart* ..... Martyrdom

**THE MINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM OF** page 273

*Miss Eloise Robertson Jones*

BENEDICTUS (Hymnal #634)..... 11  
 Apostles' Creed ..... 15  
 Versicles and Responses ..... 16  
 Collect for the Day ..... 213  
 Other Collects and Prayers, the Grace .....17-20  
 HYMN #453 *Jesus All My Gladness*.....Jesus, All My Gladness  
*Children up to Grade Four may exit following the Cross for Junior Choir*  
 THE SERMON .....Fr. Dunbar

**OFFERING**

Sentences

Anthem: *God of Love, Forgive and Bless Us* (from *Cantata 79*)Johann Sebastian Bach

Presentation of Alms: Doxology #139, and Hymn #141 (verse 4)

Prayer and Blessing

HYMN #396 *The Church’s One Foundation* ..... Aurelia

ORGAN: *Fugue in C*..... Dietrich Buxtehude

*Everyone is invited to attend the Coffee Hour in 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 (Chapel)** - Collect, Epistle, Gospel as at 8 a.m.