

The Parish Paper

OF

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol. 53 No. 52

Sunday Next Before Advent

Nov. 20, 2022

THIS SUNDAY AT ST. JOHN'S

8 A.M. – HOLY COMMUNION, Church

Introit: Psalm 85, BCP p. 446; The Collect, BCP p. 225

The Lessons: Jeremiah 23:5-8 & St. John 6:5-14, BCP p. 225–226

A light breakfast is available in Cranmer Hall following this service.

9 A.M. – FAMILY MORNING PRAYER, Church

The nursery will be available for this service.

A light breakfast is available in Cranmer Hall following this service.

10 A.M. – ADULT & YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

A full list of Sunday classes and room assignments is available online at StJohnsSav.org/grow/adults/

11 A.M. – HOLY COMMUNION, Church & Online

The nursery will be available for this service.

Music for this Sunday:

Anthem: *O Saviour Sweet*, J. S. Bach

#137 *Come, Ye Thankful People Come*, St George's Windsor

#285 *The God of Abraham Praise*, Leoni

#462 *Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee*, Windsor

Motet: *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* (Cantata 147), J. S. Bach,

Arr. W. Gillies Whittaker

#357 *Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus*, In Babilone

Final Voluntary: *Postlude in D*, Healey Willan

12:15 P.M. – COFFEE HOUR, Green-Meldrim House

5 P.M. – YOUTH GROUP, Cranmer Hall

Let us know if you plan to attend by signing up at StJohnsSav.org/Youth

THE ADVENT SEASON AT ST. JOHN'S (Begins Nov. 27th)

Several new events are planned in addition to annual favorites. For a full list of events and dates, visit StJohnsSav.org/Advent. A few highlights include:

- **Sunday, 11/27;** 10–11 a.m., Advent Wreath Making for All Parishioners
- **New! Thursdays, 12/1, 12/8 & 12/15;** 6:15–7 p.m., The Art of Advent
- **Saturday, 12/10;** 10 a.m.–noon, Breakfast & Pictures with Santa
- **Sunday, 12/11;** 4:30 p.m., Tree Trimming (pageant rehearsal, 3:30 p.m.)
- **Sunday, 12/18;** 11 a.m., Lessons & Carols (Eggnog at Coffee Hour)

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THE SACRIFICE OF GRATITUDE

There is a restaurant in Los Angeles called Café Gratitude, and at this restaurant – unlike a New Jersey diner where one might be accosted by a seasoned waitress with a “whatcha want?” – the patron is greeted with a “question of the day,” something along the lines of “What are you thankful for?” Though I prefer not tell a perfect stranger that I’m grateful that my child recently learned to use the bathroom independently before ordering a \$17 black bean burger, I guess in some strange way it *might* disorient one’s perpetual self-focus by an acknowledgement of something outside of oneself – even if it is silly and (less than) half-hearted. And that I can, reluctantly, applaud. Yet the manner of ordering returns – in a no less awkward way than the “question of the day” – to the cultural norm of “self-affirmation.” The menu items: Sharing (nachos), Enchanting (warm broccolini), Humble (curry bowl), for example, are ordered by saying “*I am Humble*” or “*I am Enchanting*.” And missing no chance for awkward pseudo-positivity, the dishes are delivered by the server with an affirmation: “*You are Sharing*” (aka, “Here’s your nachos”).

While it’s always tempting simply to poke fun at cultural silliness from one’s theological high horse, it would be unfair to the truly positive effects that many have experienced from a “practice of gratitude.” While I feel comfortable denouncing the trappings of Café Gratitude – if not their food – as pure self-indulgent fluff, what might a Christian make of the more serious, if secular, practices of “cultivating gratitude” in one’s life? What might differentiate a truly Christian approach from the general cultural practice?

Psychology Today defines gratitude as follows: “Gratitude is the expression of appreciation for what one has. It is a recognition of value independent of monetary worth. *Spontaneously generated from within*, it is an affirmation of goodness and warmth.”¹

Considering this definition, I want to suggest that there two ways that distinguish a Christian understanding of gratitude from our current cultural understanding: *the source and the end*.

UPCOMING WORSHIP

Monday–Wednesday, Nov. 21–23rd

8:15 a.m. *Morning Prayer*, Online

In addition, on Monday

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

Tuesday & Wednesday

8:30 a.m. *Morning Prayer*, Chapel
(with *Holy Communion* on Tuesday)

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

In addition, on Wednesday

12 p.m. *Holy Communion*, Church
No Compline this week.

In addition, on Thanksgiving Day

11 a.m. *Holy Communion*,
Church/Online

No other services today or Friday.
Church office closed today & Friday.

Sunday, Nov. 27th,

First Sunday in Advent

8 a.m. *Holy Communion*, Church

9 a.m. *Family Holy Communion*, Chapel

10 a.m. *Advent Wreath Making*,

Fellowship Hall

Bishop Lambert's & Fr. Dunbar classes will meet. All other classes will meet in Fellowship Hall.

11 a.m. *Choral Mattins*, Church/Online

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

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Verger..... Mr. B. Ray Summerell

Senior Warden..... Mrs. James S. McClellan, Jr. (Holly)
Junior Warden..... Mr. Mark D. Stevens
Clerk of Vestry..... Mrs. Gary M. Schubert (Elizabeth)
Treasurer..... Mr. Robert L. Sparks
Assistant Treasurer..... Mrs. Stuart C. Clifford (Susan)
Chancellor..... Dolly Chisholm

The Vestry: Mrs. Benjamin W. Baxter (Cathy), Mr. John G. Bradshaw, Jr., Mr. Charles B. Compton, Jr. (Chip), Mrs. R. Scott Howard (Betsy), Mrs. Richard C. E. Jennings (Stacy), Mrs. Thomas C. McCay (Connie), Mrs. James S. McClellan, Jr. (Holly), Mrs. Paul M. Pressly (Jane), Mr. Joseph Ross (Rusty), Mrs. Gary M. Schubert (Elizabeth), Mr. Robert L. Sparks, & Mr. Mark D. Stevens

Vestry Emeriti: Mr. George Fawcett, Mr. J. Earl Gilbreath, Jr., and Mr. James E. Hungerpillar, Mr. Edwin H. Culver

Chancellor Emeritus & Vestryman Emeritus: Mr. M. Tyus Butler, Jr., Esq.

President, Women of St. John's..... Mrs. Paula W. Walker
President, Chancel Society..... Mrs. Roland S. Summers
President, Men of St. John's..... Mr. Sean F. Finnegan

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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.

Please remember St. John's in your will.

VESTRY OFFERING CHAIR

8 a.m. Mr. Arthur D. Weed

11 a.m. Mrs. Paul M. Pressly (Jane)

USHER CHAIR

Mr. Charles B. Compton, Jr. (Chip)

CHANCEL SOCIETY

Mrs. Jayne G. Holland, Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr. (Barbara), Mrs. Richard C.E. Jennings (Stacy), Mrs. Timothy E. Coy (Dorothea) Ms. Linda H. Pounds, Mrs. W. Lee Belford, Sr. (Cathy), and Dr. Linda Ann McCall

COFFEE HOUR CHAIR

Mrs. David A. Young (Pam)

FLOWERS

The flowers in the Church this Sunday are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Kippy Adams on her birthday from Dicky, Caroline, Ted, Reid, Katharine and Mary Porcher.

And in honor of the wedding anniversary of Amanda and Tom Heath, who were married on November 2, 2002 at St. John's Church by Dorothy and Susan Kingery.

And in loving memory of Dr. and Mrs. Jules Victor, Jr. by Mr. and Mrs. Neil H. Victor.

And in loving memory and in honor of the birthday of our sweet mother and grandmother, JoAnn Clark Troxler by her family.

And in thanksgiving for, and on the occasion of the birthday of William Reese Cooper by Mrs. Patti Cooper.

And in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Henry King McCormick by Mr. and Mrs. R. Gilbert Wells.

And in honor of Mrs. Roland S. Summers (Sylvia) for her many years of devoted service to the Chancel Society and her love of St. John's by the clergy and the Chancel Society.

The flowers on the altar on Thanksgiving Day are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. Albert Sidney Newton by Dr. and Mrs. Roland S. Summers.

To offer flowers for the Altar, call the Church office at 912-232-1251. After Sunday, the flowers are delivered to the sick, sorrowing, and shut-in.

First, *the source*. The above definition imagines that we don't simply cultivate a "practice of gratitude" but that we "generate it from within." It imagines that we are the primary agents, that we are *creating* something: "a feeling of goodness and warmth." While the definition admits that there is something already existing – "what one has" – that we can be reflective about, it suggests that the serious work is one that the individual agent manifests.

A Christian view pushes back the needle to the primary agent of creation: *the Creator*. Whatever we have, a Christian affirms, is a gift from God, through whom all things exist, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). We cannot spontaneously generate anything from within ourselves, as we are creatures. We begin not even as those who are merely reflective upon some pre-existent goodness, but ultimately as those who are primarily *receptive*. And from that posture of receptivity, we recognize the distinction between the Creator and his creatures.

Secondly, we must address *the end* of gratitude. Culturally, the end (or we might say purpose or destination) of gratitude is, as noted above, "affirmation." In one sense, this is not wholly wrong. In recognizing the condescension of God's love, as expressed by his giving us life, and sustenance, and community, and even a share of agency, we are surely "affirmed" as the apple of his eye. Our life is not meaningless, just "one damned thing after another." Most profoundly, Christians believe that God not only affirms us, but that he took on human nature. He not only tells us distantly that he loves us, but he gives us his very self in his Son, Jesus. And because of this unbelievable gift, the gift to us not simply of some benign "goodness and warmth," but of life in him, we must respond.

But a Christian response, is not primarily a matter of individual agency: instead

it is a corporate offering, in the liturgy we offer to God, in response to his gift of our very lives, "ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice." We offer him a "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." Gratitude for a Christian is a recognition that *God is both the source and end of our lives*. In our birth he gave us life, and in our death we will entrust ourselves to him. Every time that we gather to worship it is an opportunity to stand back from the business of our lives and to recognize the endless gifts bestowed upon us by the God who loves us and gave himself for us.

In this week where the whole nation is giving thanks, let us offer back to God what he has given us: our very lives, in a sacrifice of gratitude.

– JIJ

EYCS SCHOLARSHIP DRIVE

We'll have a special collection this **Sunday, Nov. 20th** for the Episcopal Youth and Children's Services scholarship drive. You may place cash or checks in the collection plate (made out to EYCS; St. John's in memo); visit StJohnsSav.org/give (Choose "special collection" with EYCS in memo), or mail to the church office.

THANKSGIVING DAY

Plan to give thanks to the Lord for his many blessing during our 11 a.m. **Thursday, Nov. 24th** Holy Communion in the church. This service will be livestreamed as well. There will be no other services that day or Friday, and the church office will be closed on Nov. 24th and Nov. 25th.

NEW! THE ART OF ADVENT

We will offer a new three-week series exploring the theology of Christ through works of art (including an art exhibition in the colonnade by a Ukrainian iconographer). We will meet Thursdays, Dec. 1, 8 & 15 from 6:15–7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend! Plan to stay for light refreshments at the end of the sessions.

¹ www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/gratitude