



SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT  
(SEXAGESIMA)

Sunday, February 12, 2023

11 a.m. Morning Prayer



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH  

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SAVANNAH

*The Truth of the Bible  
In the Beauty of the Anglican Tradition.  
Believe. Worship. Love. Serve.*

## WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S

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**Mission.** St. John's Church is building a community in Christ that is grounded in historic faith and reverent worship and is committed to sharing the life-transforming truth of the Gospel.

**Worship Schedule.** Our non-holiday Sunday schedule is: 8 a.m. Holy Communion in the church; **Please note that starting in February our 9 a.m. Family Worship Service will have a new schedule** (Morning Prayer in the church on the first, third, and fifth Sundays of the month and Holy Communion in the chapel on the second and fourth Sundays); and 11 a.m. Holy Communion in the church on the first, third, and fifth Sundays of the month with Morning Prayer on the second and fourth Sundays. The 11 a.m. is also livestreamed. Morning Prayer is online each weekday at 8:15 a.m. **Please visit [StJohnsSav.org](http://StJohnsSav.org) for this week's services.**

**Children's Nursery.** This nursery is available in Cranmer Hall from 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

**For Guests and Visitors.** We extend a warm welcome to guests and visitors worshipping with us today and look forward to getting to know you! We encourage you to join us for coffee hour after the service.

**Interactive Worship.** The congregation participates actively in worship, and this booklet is a guide to taking part in it. It is based on the **1940 Hymnal**, and the smaller **1928 Prayer Book**.

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**Ways to Give:** To support the ministries at St. John's Church, you may choose to give in several ways.

- **Collection Plate** – You may give in the offering, perhaps using an offering envelope.
- **Text** – Simply text 1928BCP to 73256 and receive a link where you can donate online.
- **Online** – Visit our website at [StJohnsSav.org](http://StJohnsSav.org) and click GIVE (top right of menu)
- **Automated** – Give automatically by setting up bill pay through your checking account.
- **Mail** – Send your check to St. John's Church, 1 West Macon Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401.

## HOW WE WORSHIP AND WHY – OFFERINGS AND OBLATIONS

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God gives us all things – give everything to God. That's axiomatic to spiritual life. If we are turned in on ourselves, in anxious, greedy self-gratification, we are far from God, and on the way that leads to spiritual death; but the more we are turned to God, the more closely we follow him, and are made like him, in the way of spiritual life, so much the more we will give all things for God's sake's, in God-glorifying gratitude. Since the whole work of Christ is to rescue us from spiritual death and set us on the way of spiritual life, a Christ-centered liturgy like the Prayer Book sets forth both the great gift of God to us in his Son, and the gifts that we make in return. That's why the ministry of the Word (Scripture, Creed, Sermon), in which faith hears and receives the Gospel, is followed immediately by the Offertory in which our faith is exercised in good works, and especially in the offering of "alms and oblations" – money given generously, sacrificially, in proportion to our means – for the relief of the needy ("alms") and the support of the ministry ("oblations"). When we put our money to use not in gratifying our own needs but in grateful service of God and neighbour, we are taking a big step from a life centered on self to a life centered on God. In this material action we acknowledge and anticipate the "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" that we render God for the gift of his Son: nothing less than "ourselves, our souls and bodies" – all that we have, and all that we are.

THE ORDER FOR  
MORNING PRAYER.

*(At the sound of the bell all kneel)*

HYMN (*All stand*) #415 *Jesus Lover of My Soul* .....Aberystwyth

**PREPARING IN PENITENCE**

**H**e that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.  
*Proverbs 28:13*

*¶ Then the Minister shall say,*

**Sentences and Exhortation** .....Prayer Book, Page 3-6

Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us . . .

**A General Confession** (*Said by all, kneeling*)

**A**LMIGHTY and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*

*(Continue kneeling as priest stands to pronounce the Absolution)*

**The Declaration of Absolution, or Remission of Sins** ..... Prayer Book, page 7

**Lord's Prayer** (*said by all, kneeling*) ..... Prayer Book, page 7

**O**UR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

**Opening Versicles & Responses** ..... Prayer Book, page 7

*Minister:* O Lord, open thou our lips.

*Answer:* **And our mouth shall show forth thy praise. (*All stand*)**

*Minister:* O God, make speed to save us.

*Answer:* **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Minister:* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

*Answer:* **As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. *Amen.***

*Minister:* Praise ye the Lord.

*Answer:* **The Lord's Name be praised.**

## PRAISE OF GOD'S GLORY

Psalm 95. *Venite, exultemus.* (*all stand*).....Hymnal #610 (Rimbault)

Psalm 44. *Deus, auribus.* ..... Prayer Book, page 394-396

The Old Testament Lesson (*All sit*) Genesis 6:5-end. *God's promise to Noah.*

**I**N those days: God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup>And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. <sup>8</sup>But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. <sup>10</sup>And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. <sup>11</sup>The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. <sup>13</sup>And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. <sup>14</sup>Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. <sup>15</sup>And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. <sup>16</sup>A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

<sup>17</sup>And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. <sup>18</sup>But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. <sup>19</sup>And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. <sup>20</sup>Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. <sup>21</sup>And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

<sup>22</sup>Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

CANTICLE (*All stand.*) *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini*.....Joseph Barnby



**O** all ye Works of the Lord, / bless · ye the / Lord:  
praise him and magnify / him for / ever.

2. O ye Angels of the Lord, / bless · ye the / Lord:  
praise him and magnify / him for / ever.

3. O ye Heavens, / bless · ye the / Lord:  
O ye Waters that be above the / firma · ment / bless · ye the / Lord:

4. O all ye Powers of the Lord, O ye / Sun and Moon,  
O ye Stars of / heaven, / bless · ye the / Lord:
5. O ye Showers and Dew, O ye / Winds of / God,  
O ye Fire and / **Heat**, / bless · ye the / Lord:
6. O ye Winter and Summer, O ye / Frost and Cold,  
O ye Ice and / **Snow**, / bless · ye the / Lord:
7. O ye Nights and Days, / bless · ye the / Lord:  
O ye Light and / Darkness, / bless · ye the / Lord:
8. O ye Lightnings and Clouds, / bless · ye the / Lord:  
praise him and magnify / him for /**ever**
9. O let the Earth / bless the / Lord:  
yea! let it praise him and magnify / him for /**ever**.
10. O ye Mountains and Hills, O all ye Green Things up-/on the / earth,  
O ye Wells, O ye Seas and / **Floods**, / bless · ye the / Lord.
11. O ye Whales and all that move in the waters, / bless · ye the / Lord:  
O all ye Fowls of the air, O all ye Beasts and / Cattle, / bless · ye the / Lord:
12. O ye Children of Men, / bless · ye the / Lord:  
praise him and magnify / him for / **ever**.
13. O let Israel / bless the / Lord:  
praise him and magnify / him for /**ever**.
14. O ye priests of the Lord, O ye Servants / of the / Lord,  
O ye Spirits and Souls of the / Righteous, / bless · ye the / Lord:
15. O ye holy and humble Men of heart, / bless · ye the / Lord:  
praise him and magnify / him for / **ever**.
16. Let us bless the Father and the Son and the / Holy / Ghost:  
praise him and magnify him for /**ever**. /**A** /men.

**The New Testament Lessons: (*All sit*)**

2 Corinthians 11:19-31 [11:32 -12:9 SM] & St. Luke 8:4-15 .....Prayer Book, pages 120-122

CANTICLE *Benedictus* (*All stand*) St. Luke 1:68.....Hymnal #634 (Turtle)

**PRAYERS FOR GOD’S GRACE**

The Apostles’ Creed (*Said by all, standing*).....Prayer Book, page 15

**I** Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost: The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints: The Forgiveness of sins: The Resurrection of the body: And the Life everlasting. *Amen*.

Versicles and Responses.....Prayer Book, page 16

*Minister:* The Lord be with you. *Answer:* **And with thy spirit.**

*Minister:* Let us pray. (*All kneeling*)

*Minister:* Lord, have mercy upon us. *Answer:* **Christ, have mercy upon us.**

*Minister:* Lord, have mercy upon us.

**The Lord's Prayer** (*Said by all*)

**O**UR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. **Amen.**

¶ *The priest alone standing up shall say, and the choir sings the responses*

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us.

*Answer:* **And grant us thy salvation.**

O Lord, save the state.

*Answer:* **And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.**

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.

*Answer:* **And make thy chosen people joyful.**

O Lord, save thy people.

*Answer:* **And bless thine inheritance.**

Give peace in our time, O Lord,

*Answer:* **For it is thou, Lord, only, that makest us dwell in safety.**

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

*Answer:* **And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.**

The Collect of the Day.....Prayer Book, page 120

The Collects for Peace and for Grace, Other Prayers.....Prayer Book, pages 17-20

**For the Faithful Departed**

*Minister:* Of your charity, I bid your prayers for the repose of the souls of the faithful departed:

*Minister:* Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord;

*Answer:* **and let light perpetual shine upon them.**

*Minister:* May they rest in peace. **Amen.**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom & the Grace.....Prayer Book, page 20

**Notices** (*All sit*)

HYMN (*All stand*) #564 *How Firm a Foundation*..... Lyons

**The Address** (*All sit*)

**THE OFFERING**

**Sentences** (*All stand*)

**C**harge them who are rich in this world, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life. 1 *Tim. vi.*

ANTHEM (*All sit*) *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes* (Op. 16, No. 1)..... Ernest Walker  
(Text from Psalm 121 found in the Prayer Book, page 502)

**At the Presentation of Alms and Oblations (*All stand*)**

#732 *All Things Are Thine* (Hymnal, page 787) .....Gardiner

All things are thine; no gift have we, Lord of all gifts, to offer thee;  
And hence with grateful hearts today Thine own before thy feet we lay. **Amen.**

*At the offering:* All things come of thee, O Lord

*Answer:* **and of thine own have we given thee.**

*Minister:* The Lord be with you.

*Answer:* **And with thy spirit.**

*Minister:* Let us pray. (*All kneel*)

**A General Thanksgiving (*May be said by all*)** .....Prayer Book, page 19

**A**LMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men; We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

**The Aaronic Blessing (*Remain kneeling*)**

HYMN (*All stand*) *All My Hope in God is Founded* (music on the following page) ..... St. Michael

FINAL VOLUNTARY *Solemn Processional*.....Robert A. Harris



12:15 P.M. COFFEE HOUR TODAY, GREEN-MELDRIM HOUSE.

**ASSISTING IN WORSHIP**

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**VESTRY OFFERING CHAIR**

8 a.m. Mr. Arthur D. Weed

11 a.m. Dr. J. David Carson

**USHER CHAIR**

Mr. Charles Ezelle

**CHANCEL SOCIETY**

Mrs. Jayne G. Holland, Mr. & Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr. (Barbara), Mrs. Timothy E. Coy (Dorothea), Mrs. B. Ray Summerell (Melanie), Mrs. John G. Bradshaw (Sally), Mrs. W. Lee Belford, Sr. (Cathy), Mrs. I. David Futrell, Jr. (Penny), and Mr. & Mrs. Strickland (Bill & Barbara)

**ASSISTING IN WORSHIP**

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**JUNIOR CHANCEL SOCIETY**

Mrs. Joseph R. Ross (Coren), Mrs. Derrick Futrell (Amanda), and Miss Stella Futrell

**COFFEE HOUR CHAIR**

Mrs. William T. Moore, Jr. (Jane)

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

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The flowers in the Church this Sunday are given to the glory of God and in honor of the sixth anniversary of the Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America by the Rev. Gavin G. Dunbar.

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



1 All my hope on God is founded;  
he doth still my trust renew,  
me through change and chance he guideth,  
only good and only true.  
God unknown,  
he alone  
calls my heart to be his own.

3 God's great goodness aye endureth,  
deep his wisdom, passing thought:  
splendor, light and life attend him,  
beauty springeth out of naught.  
Evermore  
from his store  
newborn worlds rise and adore.

2 Pride of man and earthly glory,  
sword and crown betray his trust;  
what with care and toil he buildeth,  
tower and temple fall to dust.  
But God's power,  
hour by hour,  
is my temple and my tower.

4 Daily doth the almighty Giver  
bounteous gifts on us bestow;  
his desire our soul delighteth,  
pleasure leads us where we go.  
Love doth stand  
at his hand;  
joy doth wait on his command.

5 Still from man to God eternal  
sacrifice of praise be done,  
high above all praises praising  
for the gift of Christ, his Son.  
Christ doth call  
one and all:  
ye who follow shall not fall.



## NEW & NOTEWORTHY

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### ALL AGES SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school classes will meet at 10 a.m. in Cranmer Hall (or in the chapel for Fr. Dunbar's class). A full list of all our Sunday classes and room assignments is available online at [StJohnsSav.org/grow](http://StJohnsSav.org/grow).

### JUNIOR CHANCEL SOCIETY BEGINS

This is the first Sunday that the flowers on the chapel altar were arranged by the young women in our newly formed Junior Chancel Society. With guidance from St. John's Chancel Society, they will arrange the flowers in the chapel for the Family Holy Communion on the second and fourth Sundays.

If you are a St. John's member who is a young lady in grades 4-12 interested in the Junior Chancel Society, email Coren Ross at [mom4travel@aol.com](mailto:mom4travel@aol.com).

### JOIN US FOR P.A.C.K. THIS WEEK

Volunteers from St. John's will pack bags **Wednesday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>** from 4:30-6 p.m. All are welcome to join our intergenerational group of volunteers who pack bags every first and third Wednesdays of the month. All children must be accompanied by at least one parent. Email [emilinebaxter@gmail.com](mailto:emilinebaxter@gmail.com) with questions.

### HELP THE KIDS' BOUTIQUE AT P.A.C.K.

In addition to packing bags at P.A.C.K., St. John's also sponsors the six-year-old girls' cubby in the Kids' Boutique at P.A.C.K.. We encourage parishioners to help keep our church-sponsored cubby stocked with six-year-old girl outfits and shoes. Donations of new 6T clothes and shoes may be brought to P.A.C.K. (4 Mall Terrace) on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month during our regular P.A.C.K. schedule (4:30-6 p.m.). Please make sure all donations still have the tags on them.

For more information or to sign up to help with this Kids' Boutique project, please contact Elaine Barrow at [ehbarrow@aol.com](mailto:ehbarrow@aol.com) or 912-856-1774.

### THE MARYLAND STATE BOYCHOIR CONCERT

The Young Men's Chorus will be live in concert on **Friday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>** starting at 7:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church (1707 Bull St). This concert is free, and St. John's parishioners are encouraged to attend. Visit [MarylandStateBoychoir.org](http://MarylandStateBoychoir.org)

### YOUTH GROUP + PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

Our next Youth Group is next **Sunday, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>** from 5-7 p.m. in Cranmer Hall. Students are studying spiritual beings: God, angels, Satan, and ourselves as embodied souls. If your child is not old enough for youth group, we have nursery available. Please sign-up at [StJohnsSav.org/youth](http://StJohnsSav.org/youth) and bring \$20/family.

### DONATE BOXES OF MAC & CHEESE

Help St. John's Church donate 1,000 boxes of macaroni & cheese to restock the P.A.C.K. pantry! Bring boxes to Cranmer Hall each Sunday through the month of February, or purchase via St. John's Outreach Amazon link at [StJohnsSav.org/outreach](http://StJohnsSav.org/outreach) to have boxes shipped directly to the Finnegans who are overseeing this collection.

### ASH WEDNESDAY, FEB. 22<sup>ND</sup>

Imposition of Ashes & Holy Communion: will be offered at 7 a.m. (Chapel); noon and 5:30 p.m. in the Church. (Our 5:30 p.m. service includes the choir and childcare in Cranmer Hall.)

### FASTING DURING LENT'S FORTY DAYS

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting and prayer for all — except as required by reason of age, health, demanding physical labour, or work. A light lunch and no flesh meat may be kept in the evening. The rest of Lent's forty days (Sundays excluded) are kept as days of abstinence (reduction in quality of food) traditionally from flesh meat (fish permitted).

## NEW & NOTEWORTHY

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### THE WORD AT WORK

Thank you to everyone who attended our third session this past Thursday. The next session of our eight-part lunch series on how different parts of the Bible fit together is **Thursday, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>** at 12:15 p.m. in Cranmer Hall. You may sign up for any session at [StJohnsSav.org/Word](http://StJohnsSav.org/Word). The remaining sessions are Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>; March 9<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>; and April 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>. Registration is required: \$25 per session, which includes lunch catered by The Dive Savannah.

### A RENAISSANCE CHORAL CONCERT

*Thursday, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 5:30 p.m. at St. John's Church*

Ralston College is hosting an evening of Renaissance music led by Fr. Robert Mehlhart, OP, the Director of Music and Organist at the Theatine Church in Munich, where he leads the Vokalkapelle, founded in 1482 as the choir to the Bavarian Royal Court. The repertoire features major works by the great Roman Renaissance composers Gregorio Allegri ("Miserere mei, Deus") and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina ("Missa Emendemus"), as well as the plainchant from which these works sprung. Admission is free. Please visit [Ralston.ac](http://Ralston.ac) for more details.

### UPCOMING SECOND SUNDAY SUPPERS

*Sunday, March 12 & May 21<sup>st</sup>*

Are you looking to connect with fellow parishioners in a more intimate setting? Sign-up for the next supper on **Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup>**, which is being co-hosted by Mrs. Cathy Jarman and Mr. Rick Wright in the Midtown/ 31406 area. We won't hold a supper in April due to Easter and May's supper — hosted by Coren & Rusty Ross — is moving to **May 21<sup>st</sup>** (the third Sunday) due to Mother's Day falling on the Second Sunday. If you are interested in attending either supper, please call the Church Office at (912) 232-1251. If you are Interested in hosting or co-hosting a supper, please call Coren Ross (912)398-6884 to reserve the date of your preference.

### ANNUAL CHEFS & CHOCOLATES

Urban Hope will hold its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Chefs & Chocolates on **Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup>**, 7-10 p.m. at Kehoe Ironworks. This fun-filled evening features live music with tastings of appetizers and desserts from Savannah's finest chefs.

There are several ways to support St. John's outreach partner: volunteer, attend, donate, sponsor, and bid. Visit [UrbanHopeSavannah.org](http://UrbanHopeSavannah.org).

### SAVANNAH ANTIQUES & ARCHITECTURE WEEK-END (SAAW) *March 9-11, 2023*

The seventh annual Savannah Antiques & Architecture Weekend presents: *Home Is Where the Art Is*. Celebrate the influence of Savannah's antiques and architecture on great works of art, while helping to preserve the Green-Meldrim House and the Andrew Low House Museum. To learn more, purchase tickets, or become a patron, visit [SavAntiquesWeekend.com](http://SavAntiquesWeekend.com).

#### SAVE THESE DATES IN MARCH:

- **3/1: PACK**, 4:30-6 p.m., 4 Mall Terrace
- **3/1: Faith + Fiction**, 5:30 p.m., Green-Meldrim House
- **3/4: 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday @ Starland Yard**, 4:30 p.m.
- **3/5: Solemn Choral Evensong for Lent**, 5:05 p.m., Church
- **3/6: Women of St. John's Board Meeting**, 10 a.m., Green-Meldrim House
- **3/9: Word at Work, Session #5**, 12:15-1:15 p.m., Cranmer Hall
- **3/10: Movie Night: Simon of the Desert**, 6 p.m., Cranmer Hall
- **3/12: Second Sunday Supper**, Midtown / 31406 area
- **3/15: PACK**, 4:30-6 p.m., 4 Mall Terrace

### COUNT DOWN TO THE CROSS

Last Sunday was Septuagesima, this Sunday is Sexagesima, and next we have Quinquagesima. These picturesque old Latin names mean, respectively, “seventieth”, “sixtieth”, and “fiftieth”. Obviously, we are on a countdown, in which the next number is “Quadragesima” – an old name for the forty days of Lent. Lent, of course, is the six-week season of preparation for Easter, but the effort involved in the Lenten preparation itself requires preparation, and that is what these three Sundays are for. As the Eastern Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann said, “Long before the actual beginning of Lent, the Church announces its approach and invites us to enter into a period of pre-Lenten preparation.... the Church knows our inability to change rapidly, to go abruptly from one spiritual or mental state into another. Thus, long before the actual effort of Lent is to begin, the Church calls our attention to its seriousness and invites us to meditate on its significance. Before we can *practice* Lent we are given it *meaning*.”

So what is the meaning of our Lenten practice? Recall the meaning of the season just past. In Epiphany (“manifestation”) the church celebrates the manifestation of God’s glory in Christ – manifested to us, on successive Sundays, as wisdom, power, goodness, love, that he may be manifested in us, as we are transformed by him. But now we move on to the next stage in the unfolding of the Church’s year, to the disciplined effort necessary for transformation by the gospel. That’s why, on Septuagesima we hear of the labourers in the vineyard, and the athletes in competition; on Sexagesima the labours of the apostle and the patience that receives and keeps the seed to fruitful harvest; on Quinquagesima the journey up to Jerusalem, from blindness to vision; and the inward pilgrimage of growing up into the spiritual maturity of faith, hope, and charity. The images vary, but the theme is one – the transformation, the conversion of our minds, hearts and lives, does not just happen. It requires effort, exertion, purposeful discipline.

Where works are involved, however, mistaken ideas of merit – of what we may think God owes us – are not far

away. This issue is addressed right away, in the lessons for Septuagesima. On the one hand, the disciplined effort of self-denial is required, as St Paul says, “lest, when I have proclaimed [the gospel] to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor 9:27). We all know the stories of Christians who put their calling into jeopardy by reckless self-indulgence and lack of self-control. If we are going to run the race to the end, we need the self-control that comes through self-denial. On the other hand, in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (St. Matthew 20:1-16), the Lord pays a full day’s wages to all his workers, even to those who came late. And he rebukes the envy of the early-comers, who grumble at such generosity (“is thine eye evil, because I am good?”). God rewards his servants according to his free sovereign and unmerited grace: whether we come to the labor early or late, our works do not put him under obligation to us. The necessity of effort in the Christian life does not overthrow the truth that we are justified freely by grace alone, through faith, apart from works. Works are not the *cause* of God’s grace toward us, but its *effect*, and the evidence that we have received it, and been transformed by it.

Our disciplined effort and labour are done not to earn God’s favor, or to put him under some imagined obligation to us, but to bring our hearts and minds into alignment with the grace we have received. The Biblical “works worthy of repentance” are fasting, prayer, and almsgiving (Matthew 6), through which we die more fully to self, that we may live more fully unto God. We practice fasting, abstinence, and self-denial, “keeping the body under”, because if we can’t say “no” to our bodily appetites, we can’t say “yes” to God. We practice prayer, because saying “yes” to God means aligning our wills with his, in accord with his word. And we practice the giving of alms, because his will for us is charity, love of neighbour. And so through disciplined effort, we live out our baptism into Christ, dying to sin, and rising again to righteousness (Romans 6), that we may come prepared to keep the feast of his death and resurrection.

– GGD

# ST. JOHN'S CHURCH - SAVANNAH

## *Worship in the Anglican Tradition*

*Parish Chartered in 1841 Church Consecrated in 1853*

325 Bull Street On Madison Square OFFICE: One West Macon Street 31401

***Our Mission: Saint John's Church is building a community in Christ  
That is grounded in historic faith and reverent worship  
And is committed to sharing the life-transforming truth of the Gospel.***

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