

The Parish Paper

OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol. 57 No. 3

The Third Sunday in Advent

December 14, 2025

THE CREED OF NICEA (II)

The Nicene Creed begins with the confession of Israel's faith in "one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible". Pagan religions confused the natural with the divine, the many with the one: the scriptures of Israel made a sharp distinction between creature and Creator, the many and the one. The faith of Nicea is grounded on this distinction. The one God is utterly "other" than the manifold creature – but also intimately involved and (as the "all-ruling" Almighty) ultimately responsible for them. That is to say, despite appearances to the contrary, the world is not a chaos of warring principles. In all of reality (both visible and invisible, both matter and spirit) we meet one all-creating all-ruling principle of fatherly goodness. "This is my Father's world".

But if God is Father, then he has a Son. Metaphorically, God is known as Father in creation (which is other in nature); and much more in his election of a people to be his own (a creature brought near in grace): "Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Exodus 4:22). But sonship *by nature* is found neither in the creature nor in the chosen people. God's promise conferred sonship on the heir of David's throne, and the Messiah Jesus was confessed as "the only-begotten Son" (John 1:18). But was this sonship in the fullest sense, a sharing in the divine nature? The Arians who sought to preserve the oneness of God by denying true Sonship, parsed the word "begotten" as a metaphor for "created": in relation to the Father, Christ was merely a creature, even if he were "God" to other creatures. It is this Arian reading of "begotten" that the Creed is designed to exclude.

It begins with the biblical language: "one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God", and then begins applying pressure. He is "begotten of the Father before all worlds" – contrary to the Arians, there was not a "time" when he was not. He is "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God". He is as inseparable from the Father as the sun is inseparable from its radiance, for to be the sun is to give light. And thus the Son is "of the Father" in a way that all

creatures are not: "begotten not made", a direct denial of the Arian conflation of these terms. He is not a creature, made at the Father's will and in essence, therefore, other than God; he is a Son "of one substance with the Father", sharing the same immaterial and indivisible divine nature with him. This is the famous 'homoousios', the word whose meaning the Arians could not bend. Identity in substance means there is no difference or division in nature between Father and Son. As Athanasius said, "whatever is true of the Father is true of the Son, except 'Father'". They are distinguished not (one might say) by *what* they are – the same indivisible and immaterial divine substance – but only by *who* they are in relation to one another, as Father and as Son. And because they are one substance, as the Creed acknowledges the Father as the

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**MUSIC ON
MADISON
SQUARE**

Presents

**The Choirs of St. John's Church
and
Members of the Savannah Philharmonic**

*performing Saint-Saëns Christmas Oratorio and other
Christmas choral favorites.*

Sunday, December 14th at 5PM!

St. John's Church, Savannah • 325 Bull Street • 31401

Purchase your tickets here:



Church Office: 1 West Macon St, 31401(912) 232-1251

Bishop of GA.....The Rt. Rev. Frank Logue

Rector The Rev. Gavin G. Dunbar

Associate Rector The Rev. Jonathan Jameson

The Rt. Rev. Paul E. Lambert [Retired].....(931) 327-5489

Hon. Assisting Priest Rev. J. Patrick Hunt

Hon. Assisting Priest Rev. David Thurlow

Organist and Choirmaster.....Mr. William Douglas

VergerMr. B. Ray Summerell

VergerMr. James E. Morris

Acolyte Director/Master of Ceremonies...Mr. Carter C. Hubbard

Sr. Warden: Mr. Graham P. Sadler; Jr. Warden: Mrs. Duncan Pindar (Terry); Treasurer: Mr. Floyd Whittington, Jr; Assistant Treasurer: Mrs. Stuart C. Clifford (Susan); Clerk of Vestry: Mrs. Elizabeth H. Schubert; Chancellor: Dolly Chisholm

The Vestry: Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr. (Barbara), Mrs. L. Allan Reynolds, Jr. (Beverley), Mr. Douglas P. McManamy, Mrs. Jonathan D. Sprague (Mary), Mrs. Patrick Worsham (Jane), Mr. Charles J. Ezelle, Mr. Stephen D. Ezelle, Mr. R. Scott Howard, Mr. Richard Wright (Rick), and Mrs. James F. Holtzclaw (Sherry); Chancellor Emeritus & Vestryman Emeritus: M. Tyus Butler, Jr., Esq.; Vestry Emeriti: Mr. George Fawcett, Mr. Edwin H. Culver, Mr. J. Earl Gilbreath, Jr.

President, Women of St. John's: Melanie Finnegan; Co-Presidents, Chancel Society: Mrs. Jeanne H. McMillan and Mrs. Linda H. Pounds; President, Men of St. John's: Mr. Benjamin Baxter



Men of St. John's
Annual Oyster Roast & BBQ

SATURDAY, FEB. 7 11AM – 3PM
Camp Villa Marie, Savannah

Mark your calendars now and check back for more details in January with a link to purchase tickets to this popular annual event.

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2026

For those who use offering envelopes, they are now available for pick-up in the Narthex of the Church this Sunday. Please take your box from the table. Thank you!

2026 ANNUAL PLEDGES

If you haven't submitted your annual pledge for 2026, please submit it before the end of December. Pledge card are available at the back of the church or you may go online at StJohnsSav.org/pledge to submit it electronically.

UPCOMING WORSHIP

WEEK OF ADVENT 3

Monday to Friday:

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

Monday, December 15

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Tuesday, December 16

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

Wednesday, December 17: Ember Day

Noon *Holy Communion*, Church

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

9 p.m. *Sung Compline*, Chapel

Thursday, December 18

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*

with Holy Communion, Chapel

Friday, December 19: Ember Day

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Saturday, December 20: Ember Day

11 a.m. *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Sunday, December 21

Fourth Sunday in Advent

8 a.m. *Holy Communion*, Church

8:45 a.m. *Nursery*, Cranmer Hall
open until 12:15 p.m.

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

10 a.m. *All Ages Sunday School*,
Cranmer Hall & Chapel

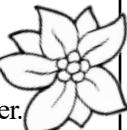
11 a.m. *Lessons & Carols*, Church/Online

12:15 p.m. *Special Coffee Hour*, Green-Meldrim
Sponsored by the Men of St. John's, featuring
Myrtice Lewis's famous eggnog

12:15 p.m. *Children's Christmas Pageant Rehearsal*,
Cranmer Hall, 1st Floor (Fellowship Hall)

Christmas Decorations

If you'd like to contribute to the decoration of the Church during Christmas, forms are available in the back of the Church. Submit forms/checks (payable: *St. John's Chancel Society*) to the church office for the giving of a poinsettia (\$45), wreath (\$80), or garland (\$80) for the Church. Donations and dedications received by Dec. 14 will be published in the Dec. 28th Parish Paper. After Dec. 14, donations and dedications will be published in the Jan. 4th Parish Paper.



THE ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SEASON AT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

- **Breakfast with Santa** – The Children's School at St. John's holds their annual fundraiser, 9:30 a.m. in the Green-Meldrim Mall. Tickets: StJohnsPreschool.org.
- **Angel Tree Collection Concludes** – Plan to drop off or ship your gifts by Monday, Dec. 15.
- **Music on Madison Square** – At 5 p.m., The Choirs of St. John's perform *Christmas Oratorio*. Tickets at StJohnsSav.org/mms or at the door.

SUNDAY, DEC. 21: ADVENT IV

- **Lessons & Carols and Eggnog Coffee Hour** – At 11 a.m., join us in the church for a beautiful liturgy followed by a special reception in the Green-Meldrim House featuring Mrs. Lewis's eggnog.
- **Christmas Pageant Rehearsal** – At 12:15 p.m., the youth and children meet in Cranmer Hall to dress and practice for the Christmas Eve pageant.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24: CHRISTMAS EVE

- 5 p.m. Children's Christmas Pageant & Family Eucharist (Church & livestreamed) *Nursery and childcare are available in Cranmer Hall.*
- 11 p.m. Midnight Christmas Mass – Solemn Sung Eucharist (Church & livestreamed)

THURSDAY, DEC. 25: CHRISTMAS DAY

- 11 a.m. Solemn Eucharist (Church & livestreamed)

SATURDAY, DEC. 27: FEAST OF ST. JOHN'S

- 5:15 p.m. Meet in Cranmer Hall to celebrate the third day of Christmas with refreshments then proceed to the parking lot to board trolleys at 6 p.m. for carol singing around Savannah. Space is limited, so please RSVP online to reserve your spot.

THURSDAY, JAN. 1: NEW YEAR'S DAY

- 12 p.m. Holy Communion in the church



WOMEN OF ST. JOHN'S New Officers & Bazaar Update

Congratulations to the 2026-2027 officers: Meta Logan as President and Chambliss Stevens as Vice President. We are grateful for the service of the outgoing board members and look forward to working with the new board members! All parishioners are invited to the Jan. 7, 10 a.m. Communion and Officer Installation in the Chapel and the meeting in Cranmer Hall following the service.

Additionally, the WSJ was presented with a check for the 2025 Holly Days Bazaar proceeds – \$42,000! These funds are used to continue the mission of the Women of St. John's, which includes parish ministry and community support. Thank you to everyone who gave their time, talents, and treasures to this beloved annual fundraiser!

**Save the date for the 2026 Bazaar
November 12 & 13**

**DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!
HELP US REACH
THE CRITZ FAMILY'S
\$15,000 MATCH
CHALLENGE**



HOPE HAVEN

Help Hope Haven continue making a difference for families living with brain changes like dementia. Every gift is DOUBLED through Dec. 31. Thanks to our early supporters, we've raised \$7,760! Every gift makes a difference.

SAVANNAHRESPITE.COM/DONATE

FLOWERS THIS SUNDAY

The flowers in church this Sunday are given to the glory of God, and in loving memory of Marshall F. Campbell, Jr. and their grandson, Alexander Mueller Archie by Dr. and Mrs. H. Emerson Thomas, Jr.

And in memory of loved ones by Mrs. William E. Hutchinson, Jr.

And in joyful celebration of the birthday of Rencie Schmidt by her loving husband, Peter Schmidt.

And in celebration of the marriage of Lauren Taylor Kiley to John Powell Sheahan on November 22, 2025, by Mr. & Mrs. J. Pride Sheahan.

To offer flowers for the altar, please call the Church office. After Sunday, the flowers are delivered to the sick, sorrowing, and shut-ins.

THIS SUNDAY AT ST. JOHN'S

The nursery (infants to four-year-olds) is available from 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on the 2nd floor of Cranmer Hall.

8 A.M. HOLY COMMUNION, Church

Breakfast is available in Cranmer Hall following the 8 & 9 a.m. services this Sunday.

Introit: Psalm 85, BCP p. 446

The Collects, BCP pp. 93, 90

The Epistle and Gospel, BCP p. 94

9 A.M. FAMILY HOLY COMMUNION, Church

10 A.M. ALL AGES SUNDAY SCHOOL

Cranmer Hall & St. Mary's Chapel

11 A.M. MORNING PRAYER & BAPTISM,

Church & Online

5 P.M. MUSIC ON MADISON SQUARE: *THE*

CHOIRS OF ST. JOHN'S CHRISTMAS ORATORIO,
Church, (Tickets available online and at the door.)

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

VESTRY OFFERING CHAIR

8 a.m. Mr. Arthur D. Weed

11 a.m. Mrs. Graham P. Sadler (Dolly)

USHERS

Mr. Frank Somoskey

Mr. Patrick Worsham

CHOIR

Schola Choir

CHANCEL SOCIETY

Mrs. Timothy E. Coy (Dorothea)

Mrs. Jayne G. Holland

Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr. (Barbara)

Mrs. John G. Bradshaw (Sally)

Mrs. Martin R. Sullivan (Martha)

Mrs. Nohl A. Braun, Jr. (Alyce)

Ms. Linda H. Pounds

Mrs. I. David Futrell, Jr. (Penny)

Miss Stella Futrell

Mrs. John C. Wally

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"Maker of heaven and earth", so also that the Son is the one "by whom all things were made".

Why does his deity matter? Because if it is not God himself who comes to us in Jesus, then he is not in truth the Savior of the world – for it is axiomatic that only the Creator of the world can be its Savior (Isaiah 43:11). If it was not in truth the Son of God who became in the Son of Man, then the sons of men cannot possibly become the Sons of God by the grace that is his. This logic works both ways: it also demands that Christ be true Man as well as true God; for only as God and Man can he be the Mediator of God and men.

And therefore after confessing his deity the creed turns to his humanity. It is "for us men and for our salvation" that the Son of God "came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary". The Nicene faith corrects the error of Arius, who denied Christ's divinity; but it also corrects the (equal but opposite) error of Apollinaris, who affirmed the divinity but denied the full humanity. (He had taught that the Word took the place of the mind and soul in the humanity of Christ.) For what is not assumed (taken on) is not redeemed, yet Christ accomplished the redemption not only of our entire humanity in body and soul. It was in the full humanity he took upon himself in the womb of Mary that the Son of God accomplished our redemption, whose primary moments of humiliation and exaltation, the Creed sketches: death, burial, resurrection, ascension, session at the Father's right hand (in the place of co-equal authority, as the one Mediator of salvation), his final return in glory to judge the world.

One element only receives special attention: that he was "crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate". "Crucified" means he bore the curse and condemnation of sin; "for us" (cf 1 Cor. 15:3) means that he suffered in our place and on our behalf, to win for us the blessing and righteousness that he alone deserves. "Under Pontius Pilate" secures his death as an event in history (not a myth), never to be repeated, and by implication, "once for all".

The Gospel is not the story of the man who became God, but of the God whom became man. In the person of the Son, God himself has entered into the world he made, the Creator taking upon himself the existence of a creature. God shares in the life of men, in order that men might share in the life of God. This is the faith we celebrate at Christmas. Unless it is the true God who enters the world, unless it is true humanity that he makes his own – there is no Christmas. – GGD