

The Parish Paper

OF

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol. 57 No. 25

Ascension Sunday

May 17, 2026

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS

This Sunday falls between Ascension Day and Whitsunday – between the ascent of Christ to the Father's right hand, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon his disciples; between his commissioning of them to bear witness unto the ends of the earth, and his empowering of them for that mission. And how did the disciples spend those intervening days of expectant waiting? St Luke tells us that they returned to Jerusalem, to the upper room they had use of, where "these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14), waiting upon the promised gift of the Father.

That upper room is one of the great images of the Church. The apostles have received their commission, but they do not yet rush into it. They wait. They pray. They seek from God what they do not possess in themselves. The Church does not begin in self-confidence, organization, or technique, but in dependence upon God. Before there is action, there is prayer; before there is mission, there is waiting upon the Holy Ghost.

No doubt the disciples felt utterly inadequate to the task before them. They had fresh in their memories their own failure to stand by Jesus in his passion. And yet they had also seen him risen from the dead, and had themselves been restored and reinstated by his mercy. They already knew that though it was not in them to follow Christ faithfully, or to bear witness to him before the world, it was his gift that they should do so. And therefore they prayed earnestly for that gift.

Indeed prayer itself depends upon these two things: radical humility and supreme confidence. We must know that we are insufficient in ourselves; but we must also trust entirely in the promise of Christ. That is why the Prayer Book teaches us so insistently to acknowledge our sins: not to leave us in despair, but to drive us out of all self-reliance, that we may rely wholly upon him.

St Luke names the eleven surviving apostles, the symbolic patriarchs of God's new Israel, who form a

core of leadership within the company of disciples. But he also makes clear that they belong to a much larger body of believers – about one hundred and twenty gathered together in prayer. And among them he singles out two groups for special attention: "the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren." The women disciples occupy a remarkably prominent place in the Gospel narratives, and especially in St Luke. He tells us of those women who accompanied Jesus and ministered unto him (Luke 8:1–3); and it is these women who remain faithful witnesses at the cross, the burial, and the empty tomb, even when many of the apostles falter in fear. Their presence in the upper room anticipates the great promise of Pentecost itself: "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy... and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit" (Acts 2:17–18). The apostolic ministry remains distinct, yet the gift of the Spirit is poured out upon the whole people of God. The praise of God and the witness to Christ are not reserved to a spiritual elite. Again and again in the history of the Church, the faithful witness of Christian women has proved indispensable to the life of Christ's body and even to the ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons themselves. Even or especially here at St. John's!

Luke also draws attention to "Mary the mother of Jesus", alongside his "brethren". Yet the distinction between them is important. The brothers of Jesus had once regarded him with misunderstanding and unbelief; but now they are numbered among the disciples because they too have come to faith in him. Even the natural family of Jesus must enter the kingdom by faith and by the Spirit. Flesh alone cannot generate the new creation.

But Mary stands in a unique place among them. For she alone already knows by experience what it is to receive the Holy Ghost for the coming forth of Christ into the world. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow

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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
Verger Mr. B. Ray Summerell
Verger Mr. James E. Morris
Acolyte Dir./Master of Ceremonies Mr. Carter C. Hubbard

Sr. Warden: Mrs. James F. Holtzclaw (Sherry); Jr. Warden:
Mr. Douglas P. McManamy; Treasurer: Mr. Floyd
Whittington, Jr; Assistant Treasurer: Mrs. Stuart C.
Clifford (Susan); Clerk of Vestry: Mrs. Elizabeth H. Schu-
bert; Chancellor: Dolly Chisholm

The Vestry: Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr. (Barbara),
Mrs. L. Allan Reynolds, Jr. (Beverley), Mr. Charles B.
Compton, Jr. (Chip), Mrs. Jonathan D. Sprague (Mary),
Mr. Patrick Worsham, Dr. Janet S. Morris, Mr. R. Scott
Howard, Mr. Wiley A. Wasden III, Mr. Charles J. Ezelle,
Mr. Graham P. Sadler, and Mrs. Duncan Pindar (Terry);
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: Mrs. Clarkson C. Logan
(Meta), Chancel Society: Mrs. Jeanne H. McMillan and
Mrs. Linda H. Pounds; President, Men of St. John's:
Mr. Benjamin W. Baxter

ST. JOHN'S SUMMER SCHEDULE

Begins Memorial Day Weekend, Sunday, May 24

8 a.m. Said Holy Communion, Church

Light breakfast in Cranmer Hall after 8 a.m. service.

9:15 a.m. Nursery, Cranmer Hall

Newborns to four-year-olds until after 10:30 a.m. service.

9:30 a.m. Fr. Dunbar's Class, St. Mary's Chapel

*Bishop Lambert's, Fr. Jameson's, and children/youth Sunday
school classes on a break during the summer.*

10:15 a.m. Prelude (on May 24th & May 31st)

*Plan to join us for an extended prelude to celebrate
the solemnity of Whitsunday and Trinity Sunday.*

10:30 a.m. Principal Worship, Church

(Alternates Holy Communion & Morning Prayer)

*A children's activity in the chapel during the sermon and
a short children's talk on Morning Prayer Sundays.*

Regular worship and class schedule resumes Sept. 13.

UPCOMING WORSHIP Week of Ascension Sunday

Online Morning Prayer

8:15 a.m. Monday to Friday

Monday, May 18

No services today.

Tuesday, May 19

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

Wednesday, May 20

Noon *Holy Communion*, Church

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

9 p.m. *Compline*, Church

Thursday, May 21

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*

with Holy Communion, Chapel

Friday, May 22

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

**Sunday, May 24: Pentecost Sunday
(Commonly called Whitsunday)**

SUMMER SCHEDULE BEGINS

8 a.m. *Holy Communion*, Church

9:30 a.m. *Fr. Dunbar's Class*, Chapel

10:15 a.m. *Extended Prelude*, Church/Online

10:30 a.m. *Solemn Eucharist*, Church/Online

11:30 a.m. *Coffee Hour*, Green-Meldrim

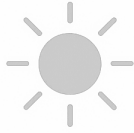
Plan to read
The Last Battle
by C. S. Lewis
for June's Faith + Fiction

All are welcome!

June 3 | 5:30 p.m.
Green-Meldrim House

FAITH
& Fiction

HELP FRESH AIR HOME GET READY FOR SUMMER CAMP



Purchase much-needed supplies from our
AMAZON WISH LIST
CAMPERS ARRIVE BEGINNING JUNE 1

An organization proudly supported by
the Men of St. John's.



St. John's Volunteers at P.A.C.K. This Year



Met 18 times



6,000 bags filled



Averaged 6 parishioners
along with 12 St. Vincent's
Academy students

Thank you for a successful year
caring for local children
experiencing food insecurity.

Call for Coffee Hour Volunteers

Looking to connect with current parishioners?
We need volunteers to help coffee hour run
smoothly. To become a coffee hour volunteer,
contact the church office at 912-232-1251.

DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP AT **HOPE HAVEN** SAVANNAH RESPITE

Just show up!

Cranmer Hall of St. John's Church:
27 West Charlton Street, 3rd Floor
Facilitated by Jill Costello of the
Edel Caregiver Institute



10:45 a.m. Tuesday, May 19



MUSIC ON MADISON SQUARE The North Carolina Baroque Orchestra: Les Éléments: Celebrating Spring Sunday, May 24, at 5 p.m., St. John's Church

Enjoy music by Georg Telemann, Wolfgang
Mozart, and others! This ensemble returns to
perform for the second time with a larger group of
performers and more period instruments.

Tickets: stjohnssav.org/mms

TRINITY SUNDAY, MAY 31ST

Extended Prelude at 10:15 a.m.

Plan to join us for an extended prelude
to celebrate Trinity Sunday.

Choral Mattins at 10:30 a.m.

Plan to join us for an uplifting Choral Mattins
to celebrate Trinity Sunday.

Parish Picnic

All parishioners are invited to join us for good food and
fellowship following the 10:30 a.m. service in the beautiful
Garden Mall and Green-Meldrim House.

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 27, BCP pp. 371–372

The Collects, BCP pp. 179, 177

The Epistle and Gospel, BCP pp. 179–180

9 a.m. Family Morning Prayer, Church

10 a.m. All Ages Sunday School,
St. Mary's Chapel & Cranmer Hall

11 a.m. Sung Eucharist, Church & Online

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Vestry Offering Chair

8 a.m. Mr. B. Ray Summerell

11 a.m. Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr. (Barbara)

Ushers

Mr. Mark D. Stevens

Mr. Robert B. Turner (Bart)

Choir

11 a.m. Schola Choir

Chancel Society

Mrs. Timothy E. Coy (Dorothea)

Mrs. Jayne G. Holland

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

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

Mrs. John G. Bradshaw (Sally)

Mrs. Jeanne Howell McMillan

Ms. Linda H. Pounds

Ms. Susan Hungerpiller

FLOWERS FOR SUNDAY

The flowers this Sunday are given to the glory of God, and in loving memory of Alice Lee Johnson by Joseph Oliver Mercer.

And in loving memory of Phyllis Lorraine Dunbar, mother of Fr. Gavin Dunbar.

thee" (Luke 1:35). At Nazareth, the Spirit formed Christ within Mary's body; at Pentecost, the same Spirit will form Christ within his mystical body, the Church. And perhaps this too explains Mary's presence in the upper room. The woman who answered the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word," becomes an image of the praying Church herself: waiting in humility, receptivity, obedience, and hope for the promised gift of God.

What the disciples did in those days between Ascension and Pentecost, the Church continues to do throughout the ages. For we also live between Christ's ascension and his final appearing; we also have been entrusted with a mission beyond our strength; and we also wait continually upon the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. For our prayers in this time of expectant waiting we might make use of this translation by Austin Farrer of the ancient hymn for the coming of the Holy Ghost, *Veni Creator Spiritus*:

Come down, Creator Spirit, find
A harbour in thy people's mind:
With grace celestial consecrate
The heart of clay thou didst create.

Thy very name is Comforter,
The highest gift the skies confer,
The flow of life, the fire, the love,
The unction poured from God above.

Thou finger stretched from heaven's throne,
Whose touch is sevenfold benison:
Thou promise of the Father, rich
In sudden dower of golden speech.

Infuse our soul with kind desire,
Our senses light with shining fire:
Confirm with lasting hardihood
The cowardice of flesh and blood.

Bring peaceful hours, and banish far
All enmities that augur war.
With such a guide to go before
No hurtful thing can harm us more.

Make through thyself the Father known,
Reveal the person of the Son,
And grant a constant faith, to see
Their Spirit equally in thee.
Amen.