

The Parish Paper

OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

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The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

September 6, 2026

THE LAST OLD BOOK

Years ago, in my final year at seminary, I was in the library when another seminarian returned a book of assigned readings. It was Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, a monument of English prose and Anglican theology. He slapped it down on the counter and announced in an aggrieved tone of voice, "That's the last old book I'll ever have to read." It was a strange thing for a seminarian to say. I will grant you that reading Richard Hooker has its challenges. But he was preparing for a vocation in which one particular old book—the Bible—was supposed to occupy him for the rest of his life.

Perhaps, however, he was simply ahead of his time. For much of the last century, the dominant tendency in communication has been toward immediacy: simplicity, brevity, accessibility, the lowering of every possible barrier to instant comprehension. Journalism led the way with short sentences, and Bible translation was not far behind. Aiming at ease of comprehension, they broke up long sentence structures or moved toward paraphrase. Liturgical revision followed the same path. The stately rhythmic sentences of the older Prayer Books gave way to bleached prose organized with the linear efficiency of an office memo to the Almighty.

Don't get me wrong. Clarity is a virtue. Needless obscurity is not. The problem came when *immediate comprehension* became the only standard by which language was judged. Anything that required us to stop, reread, remember what had gone before, puzzle over an unfamiliar word, or hold several thoughts together until their relationship became apparent was taken to be a defect in the writing.

But what if the difficulty was doing us good? That's the question that is being asked with increasing urgency of late. For the revolution in communication did not stop with simpler prose. The internet flooded us with information, the smartphone put it in our pockets, and social media transformed it into an endless flicker of headlines, photos, short videos, and notifications—all designed not simply to communicate something clearly, but to capture our attention for a few seconds before something else took it place. The goal is no longer intellectual clarity, but releasing a surge of dopamine.

In this climate, education has struggled to keep pace. Students now encounter books through excerpts rather than by reading them whole. Publishers demand prose that moves fast and makes few demands upon the reader. And we are beginning to discover the cost. Students at prestigious colleges find it difficult to follow an argument sustained over many pages, or to understand a book as a whole rather than as a collection of detachable points. This is not simply the loss of an antiquated cultural accomplishment called "reading books." Something more fundamental is at stake. To follow a complicated sentence, an extended argument, or a sustained narrative, is to exercise attention, memory, patience, inference, and judgment. We must hold one thought in mind while another is introduced; recognize qualifications and contrasts; remember what was said fifty pages earlier; resist premature conclusions; and sometimes live with uncertainty until the meaning of the whole emerges. Those are not merely reading skills. They are powers of the mind we need to live well. *For reality does not disclose its meaning on demand*, but only to who are

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

Men of St. John's Annual Meeting

Featuring a presentation by Chuck Watson,
geophysicist and Director of Research
Development at Enki Research.



September 23, 2026
5:30 pm
Green-Meldrim House

UPCOMING WORSHIP

Week of Trinity 14

Online Morning Prayer

8:15 a.m. Monday to Friday

Monday, September 7: Labor Day

Church office closed. No services scheduled for today

Tuesday, September 8: Nativity of BVM

9 a.m. *Morning Prayer*, Chapel

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

Wednesday, September 9

9 a.m. *Morning Prayer*, Chapel

Noon *Holy Communion*, Church

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

9 p.m. *Compline*, Church

Thursday, September 10

9 a.m. *Morning Prayer*, Chapel

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*
with Holy Communion, Chapel

Friday, September 11

Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Saturday, September 12

11 a.m. *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Sunday, September 13: Trinity 15

8 a.m. *Said Holy Communion*, Church

8:45 a.m. *Nursery*, 1st Floor, Cranmer Hall

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

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

11 a.m. *Morning Prayer*, Church/Online

12:30 p.m. *Coffee Hour*, Green-Meldrim

4 p.m. *Choral Evensong*, Church/Online

5 p.m. *Reception*, Green-Meldrim

5 p.m. *Youth Group*, 2nd Fl, Cranmer Hall

5:30 p.m. *The Anglican Future*, Green-Meldrim

St. John's P.A.C.K. Volunteers

Wednesday, Sept. 16, from 4–6 p.m.

The next packing session is on Wednesday, Sept. 16, followed by the next packing on Oct. 7. They will then resume their regular schedule, meeting on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 4–6 p.m. There are roles for all ages and abilities!

KICKOFF SUNDAY | September 13

Join us as we launch a new program year with a full day of worship, faith formation, and music!

Whether you are returning after the summer or visiting for the first time, Kickoff Sunday is the perfect opportunity to reconnect and grow in faith. Join us to celebrate the beginning of a new season in the life of our parish.

Schedule for the Day:

8 a.m. Holy Communion, Church
9 a.m. Family Holy Communion, Church
10 a.m. Faith Formation for All Ages
11 a.m. Morning Prayer, Church
12:30 p.m. Coffee Hour, Green-Meldrim
4 p.m. Choral Evensong, Church
5 p.m. Reception, Green-Meldrim House
5 p.m. Youth Group, 2nd Fl, Cranmer Hall
5:30 p.m. *The Anglican Future* (Session One: *Memory*), Green-Meldrim House

Choral Evensong

The Choirs of St. John's will sing Choral Evensong, followed by a reception in the Green-Meldrim House.

September 13, 2026 | 4PM

325 Bull St. Savannah, Georgia



The Anglican Future:

Memory, Identity, Mission

(Three-part series: Sept. 13, Oct. 25 & Nov. 15)

We live in a time when old religious patterns are breaking down—and new possibilities for Christian renewal are opening up. Anglicanism faces real challenges, yet possesses remarkable resources for the future. Whether you are just discovering the Anglican tradition or have inhabited it all your life, this **three-part series explores its memory, identity, and mission:** where we have come from, who we are, and what we are for.

Each session will take the form of a moderated conversation with clergy and special guests, **from 5–7 p.m. in the Green-Meldrim House**, beginning with refreshments. Youth Group meets at the same time and childcare will be provided for younger children.

Join us for the first session with guest Dr. Bradford Littlejohn on **September 13th**.

St. John's Youth Group Night Returns | 5–7 p.m. 2nd Floor, Cranmer Hall

Join us September 13th. We want every young person to *know* Jesus and *love* Him with their *whole life*.

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Vestry Offering Chair

8 a.m. Mr. Austin O. Kennedy
10:30 a.m. Mr. Douglas P. McManamy

Ushers

Mr. Frank Somoskey
Mr. John Bradshaw

Choir

Choir of Adults

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. Susie H. Fawcett
Mrs. Jeanne H. McMillan
Ms. Linda H. Pounds
Mrs. Paul M Pressly (Jane)

THIS SUNDAY AT ST. JOHN'S

Last Sunday of Summer Schedule

The nursery (infants to five-year-olds) is available on the 1st floor of Cranmer Hall from 9:15 a.m. until after the 10:30 a.m. service.

8 a.m. Said Holy Communion, Church breakfast in Cranmer Hall after 8 a.m. service

Introit: Psalm 84, BCP pp. 445–446

The Collect, BCP p. 209

The Epistle and Gospel, BCP pp. 209–210

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

The Book of Common Prayer and Holy Communion

10:30 a.m. Sung Eucharist, Church/Online

with a children's activity in the chapel during the sermon

FLOWERS FOR SUNDAY

The flowers this Sunday are given to the glory of God, and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Radford, by the John Roller family.

And in loving memory of Frank Perdue Lee, his family.

And in memory of our daughter, Virginia Summerell McMullen, and for our parents Mr. and Mrs. Billy Sunday Summerell, and Mr. and Mrs. William Dudley Fawcett, by Mr. and Mrs. B. Ray Summerell.

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

Parish Provisions

This small group fellowship opportunity meets once a month in the kitchen of Cranmer Hall to prepare goodies to be sold during the Holly Days Bazaar.

**Tuesday
Sept. 15
5:30 p.m.**

**Cranmer
Hall
Kitchen**

equipped with powers of the mind needed to receive it.

And now comes artificial intelligence. Just when our powers of sustained attention have been weakened, we have acquired a technology that can relieve us of still more of the burden of thought. Why wrestle with a difficult book when AI can summarize it? Why follow the argument when it can extract the main points? Why struggle to find the right words when it can compose them for us? The danger is not simply that AI may sometimes get things wrong—it is that we may surrender to it abilities we ought to be exercising ourselves.

All of which gives me another reason to be grateful for the “old books” at the center of our life at St. John's. We hear and read the King James Bible and the historic Prayer Book for many reasons. Their language is noble: it bears the weight of conviction; they connect us with generations of Christians who prayed and heard the Scriptures in these words; their theological insight is often profound.

But there is another virtue we might easily overlook: *they make demands upon us*. They do not always yield their meaning at first glance. Their vocabulary may require explanation; their sentences, to pay attention. A sentence of St. Paul may unfold through clause after clause before finally arriving at its destination. A Prayer Book collect gathers several thoughts into a single carefully ordered movement. We have to remember where the sentence began in order to understand where it ends. *This is not a glitch, it is a feature.*

In an age of instant gratification, patience; in an age of fragments, coherence; in an age of reaction, reflection; and in an age increasingly tempted to outsource the work of thinking, they require us to exercise the powers of mind God has given us. Reality does not disclose its meaning on demand. These “old books” not only disclose the truth, but make us capable of receiving it.

— GGD