

[send this](#)[bookmark](#)[print](#)[close](#)

The Parish Paper

OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol.41 No.39

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

08/22/10

ENGLAND 2011

ENGLAND 2011

Next summer July 8th-18th, if the Lord will, the choir will decamp from Savannah to the ancient cathedral city of Wells in Somerset, to be its choir in residence, with responsibility for singing evensong during the week and the services on Sunday morning. Besides family members there will also be an opportunity for other parishioners to accompany the choir on its travels, worship with them in the Cathedral, and explore the beauties of Wells and Somerset (an "English heritage tour"). Parishioners who went with the Choir to Lichfield in 2007 will remember how well organized (by Elaine Barrow) and enjoyable this excursion was, and we anticipate the same for 2011 in Wells. I think for North American Episcopalians it is a valuable opportunity to discover the ancient roots of Anglican Christianity, and to do so in the context of prayer and pubs! So save the date now: the details about cost and payment will be made available later this fall. (If interested, please give your name to the Choirmaster Brian Taylor, btaylor@stjohnssav.org).

For now, let me tell you something about Wells, which I visited as a boy. The first church to be built beside the wells that give the city its name was built by Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, in the year 705 A. D., and dedicated to Saint Andrew the Apostle. Two hundred years later, in 909, it was raised to the status of Cathedral. In 1180 Bishop Reginald ordered work to be begun on a new cathedral, in the new architectural style that we now call "Gothic". Completed sixty years later, it was dedicated in 1239, and is one of the most justly celebrated examples of the style – famous for the "scissor" arches that divide the nave from the crossing and chancel. With its cloisters, chapter house, ancient library, and the picturesque ruins of the Bishop's palace, it is still the most important institution in this small and unspoiled cathedral town. Not far away is the Georgian elegance of Bath (the other see city of the Diocese), the storied ruins of Glastonbury (Arthur's Avalon), the definitive English landscape garden at Stourhead, and the extraordinary Tudor palace-cum-safari park of Longleat House. These are some of the likely destinations for the day trips we are planning for Choir and parishioners.

Wells is also famous for its saintly bishop Thomas Ken (1637-1711, bishop of Bath and Wells 1685-1691), a man of prayer and unflinching principle in the tradition of Caroline high churchmen. He risked the wrath of Charles II by refusing to put up in his house the King's

mistress, Nell Gwynn. He was one of the seven bishops imprisoned by James II in the Tower for his resistance to the latter's Declaration of Indulgence – yet after a coup d'état deprived James of his throne, he suffered deprivation of his bishopric rather than break his oath of allegiance to him.

Today he is chiefly remembered as one of the first English hymn-ographers – whose translation of the doxology, sung to the Genevan psalm tune of Louis Bourgeois, is known to many very justly as The Doxology: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below, praise him above ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (#139). His hymns for Morning and Evening, ("Awake my soul, and with the sun"; and "Glory to thee my God this night"), based on the ancient Latin office hymns for the hours, were originally written for the boys of Winchester school, where he was chaplain. In shortened versions they are found in the 1940 Hymnal (the Morning hymn at #151 & 152, the Evening Hymn at #165). Here's one characteristic stanza from the Morning Hymn:

Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part,
Who all night long unwearied sing
High praise to the eternal King.

The Rev'd Gavin G. Dunbar



[Report Errors](#) | [Comments](#)

Copyright 2003 - 2004 St. John's Episcopal Church in Savannah, GA. All rights reserved.