



# THE GEORGIAN REPORT



St. George's Church Schenectady, NY

December 2018

## GEORGIANS RING THE BELLS FOR THE SALVATION ARMY



**T**he Spirit of Christmas was alive on Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup> when 19 Georgians volunteered as “bell ringers” for the Salvation Army’s kettle drive. Those participating in the one-hour shifts from 9AM to 6PM: Suzy & Rich Unger; Lynn & Bob Paska; Fr. Matt, April, Helen & Isaac Stromberg; Gene & Judy DeLong; Dusty Ann Ifflander; Toni Cilberti & Jon Pearson; Alice & Ralph Pumbo; Nancy & Johnnie Angus; and Tarik Wareh with daughter Cora.

Jon Pearson is St. George’s chairperson for this annual holiday Outreach that brought joy, cheer and noise to the Price Chopper/Market 34 in Glenville....and a kettleful of “cold cash” (\$924) for the Salvation Army. As volunteers, we saw *first-hand* the generosity of grocery shoppers opening their wallets. Whether the clink of coins or the crunch of bills, everyone who dropped a donation into the kettle received a heartfelt “thank you” as volunteers and givers alike joined together in the true meaning of the season. We exchanged greetings and small talk, and it made the time go by that much quicker. Hopefully, this good feeling will linger long after the holidays are just a pleasant memory.



lynn paska

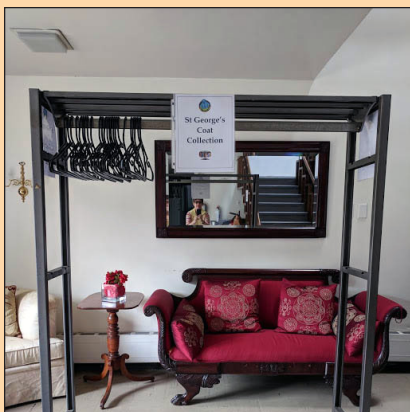
# OUTREACH

## FALL OUTREACH

St. George's Annual Coat Collection began in early October and concluded on Sunday, November 25<sup>th</sup> with the accumulated garments being donated to City Mission. From an empty coat rack to 11 "gently used" winter outerwear items, generous Georgians went through their closets and gave from their hearts.

Our on-going weekly Food Collection continues to help feed the hungry in our community. Again, Georgians filled the basket in back of the church with a variety of canned, boxed and jarred items that are distributed to City Mission.

*alice pumbo*



## KINGSWAY HYMN SING

What a large group of Georgians went to their happy place on September 23<sup>rd</sup>! Yes, Kingsway Nursing Home, where we sang and visited with residents in the Jameson dining room.

After a recent ALM (Assisted Living Ministry) visit, Alice Pumbo was approached by the activities director. Their music therapist had just left for another position and residents would miss their weekly hymn sings. St. George's services were the best with music. Would we please come on a Sunday afternoon and sing with the residents? How could we refuse?

Fr. Matt emceed and Joan Pearson and Jeff Wengrovius accompanied, the selection of songs including old favorites like "How Great Thou Art" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" to the contemporary "On Eagles Wings."

One resident requested a Hebrew song from the Kingsway song packet and another an old favorite from her own childhood. Jeff covered them from the piano with gusto. We ended the afternoon with "My Country 'Tis of Thee" in honor of all veterans and members of the armed services.

We greeted several familiar faces from our ALM services plus met many new ones. And they all loved to sing! Music again brought joy to their afternoon.

*joan pearson*





# SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

Anne Kennison's journey to becoming a Georgian is unique. Over 20 years ago when Anne and David married, Anne said, "It would be nice for us to return to church as a couple." Anne, a Roman Catholic, and David already a Georgian, having both taken a "church break," returned to church to worship at St. George's. They worshipped together for a couple of weeks then Anne took another "church break" and David continued to worship weekly at St. George's. After a couple of years, Anne returned to St. George's for the first week of Lent. A week later, Rosemary Vanderhoff, a longtime Georgian, remarked to Anne, "I see you returned for the second week." Anne agreed and promised to continue coming to church through the end of Lent....and she did. Anne attended the Good Friday service which she said was an emotional and moving service and for the first time she felt connected to God and her faith. Anne and David have been worshipping together at St. George's ever since.

For years, Anne and David were advisors to St. George's youth group, Chi Rho. They had fun participating in and planning activities for our youth. Today, Anne is on a rotating schedule as a greeter, counter of weekly pledges, and has volunteered with Nancy Angus to head the Altar Guild whose members include: Nancy Angus, Gerri Moore, Ralph Polumbo, Sandee Hughes, Carol Gaige, Debbie Lambeth, Pam Turley, Barb Wengrovius, Sue Jenner, Anne Dillenbeck. Nancy has taken on the weekly scheduling while Anne will be in the process of organizing training sessions for everyone. Some of the Altar Guild responsibilities include clearing the altar after mass, washing vessels used during mass, washing and ironing of altar linens, and polishing silver for events like Christmas and Easter. Anne will be organizing an Altar Guild work schedule in preparation for Christmas.

Anne and David have participated in the Lenten Series held by Fr. Matt, in the Breakfast Symposium, and Theology on Tap (to name a few. "I always learn something new to bring me closer to my faith," she offered.

As a former Roman Catholic, she likes Rite I because "...it's the Mass that I grew up with. If I go to a Roman Catholic or even another Episcopal church today, it doesn't feel like I've been to church." Enjoying her association with our parishioners and the friendships that have developed, she said, "Georgians are nice, outgoing and friendly. We're a family." She also likes our music and the hymns, and can relate to Fr. Matt's sermons as he explains the weekly Gospel in a manner that's understandable. "These components bring us closer together."

Having spent 44 years in the work force, Anne retired from the Capital Region BOCES after 30 years....and looks forward to traveling. Anne and David, along with her brother and sister-in-law, recently returned from a ten day tour of Sicily. "We had a wonderful time. The food was great, and I enjoyed learning about the history of my roots. There are three islands off Sicily. My father came from the 2<sup>nd</sup> island which is named Salina. I'd like to take a trip there to see if any family members are still on the island." She'd also like to tour France, Germany, Switzerland, China, Alaska, Hawaii...."My bucket list is quite extensive and continues to grow."

But while wanderlust hasn't taken *complete* control yet, Anne Kennison has no qualms about how to spend her downtime: as a St. George's volunteer!

lynn paska



## FROM THE RECTOR'S STUDY....



Much has already been written about how the holiday season seems to creep further and further back each year to the point where it seems the Christmas trees are going up before we have even thrown out our Jack-O-lanterns. You are probably tired of hearing about it. For me, one of the most frustrating things about this cultural trend is that we are already burned out on Christmas before the season properly begins!

In the Church, the Christmas Season does not officially begin until the evening of December 24 and lasts twelve days from December 25 until January 5. The following day, January 6 is the Feast of the Epiphany and the beginning of another season in the church. In some older customs “Christmastide” lasts beyond the Twelve Days of Christmas and lasts until February 2 which is “Candlemas” or the Feast of the Presentation.

The Twelve Days of Christmas have all but been forgotten in the United States except of course for a strange song that nobody seems to understand. Here is a rundown of some celebrations during the Twelve Days and some suggestions for how to keep the Christmas Season both holy and fun.

Traditionally the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord begins the evening before, December 24. At Saint George’s we have a 3pm Rite II mass and children’s pageant on Christmas Eve as well as our “midnight mass” at 10pm followed by a festive reception in the Great Hall. On Christmas morning, December 25, many families exchange presents together. At 11pm Christmas Day you are invited to continue the worship with us in our chapel with a short mass.

There follows a number of Feast Days both major and minor during the twelve days. Why not make a commitment to pray the Daily Office on those days with the prescribed collects and propers, maybe even sing a carol or hymn?

December 26 is the Feast of Saint Stephen, the first Christian Martyr. You can read about Saint Stephen in Acts chapters 6-7. The song Good King Wenceslas is a great song for this day.

December 27 is the Feast of Saint John the Apostle and author of the fourth Gospel, the Epistles of John, and probably Revelation as well. It is a custom to bless wine on this day and drink a toast to the love of God and Saint John, his beloved disciple. Kids can substitute with some sparkling apple cider or something else. Sing the Hymn, Praise God for John the Evangelist, number 245 in your hymnal.

December 28 is the Feast of Holy Innocents which commemorates the rather horrible event of Herod’s massacre of the children of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16-18). The Coventry Carol is great song to sing or listen to this day. On a lighter note the feast is sometimes called Childermas. The parents say a prayer of blessing for their children and the kids have the chance to lead prayers and set the agenda for the day.

December 29 is a minor feast commemorating Saint Thomas Beckett, the Archbishop of Canterbury and martyr killed on this day. Check out T.S. Eliot’s account in his play *Murder in the Cathedral* and in particular Beckett’s sermon in the interlude.

January 1 is not only New Year’s Day but the Feast of the Holy Name which commemorates the day on which Jesus received the name the angel Gabriel gave to his mother. Some have observed this day by visiting their godparents or mailing them a letter.

January 5 is the Twelfth Day of Christmas. The Twelfth Night is often marked with a feast and plenty of desserts. This is a great excuse for a dinner party!

January 6 is not part of the Twelve Days of Christmas. It is the Feast of the Epiphany commemorating the visit of the Magi to the Christ child. This year the Epiphany falls on a Sunday and will be observed at our regular mass. ***Merry Christmas to you all!***

*grace and peace, fr. matthew stromberg+*

# STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



*The grand finale of our Stewardship Campaign was a Stewardship Luncheon provided by members of the Vestry on Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup> after our 10 o'clock Mass. Good food, good fellowship, a good ending to an ambitious pledge campaign as organized by our treasurer, Jeff Wengrovius.*

## BOOK CLUB PICKS FOR 2019

All On the Same Page," St. George's book club, will next meet on Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> in the Great Hall following the 10 o'clock Mass. "*Educated: A Memoir*," by Tara Westover, will be discussed. Named Best Book of the Year by Amazon.com Inc. book editors, it recounts Ms. Westover's upbringing in a survivalist family in Idaho and eventual PhD education at Cambridge University. Pauline Holmes will lead the discussion.

Looking ahead to March 10<sup>th</sup>, the club will discuss "*Unsheltered*" by Barbara Kingsolver. This novel is set in modern-day New Jersey where a middle-class family struggles to keep a roof over their heads during an economic downturn. Interspersed is another story that occurs in the same setting but 150 years earlier, as a different family teeters between prosperity and poverty, facing a period of radical change. Meg Hughes will lead the discussion.

Get your favorite book on the club's radar by contacting Meg Hughes at (518) 604-1550.

*meg hughes*

## CALENDAR: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

**BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS** -parishioners and neighbors brought their pets to St. George's on Sunday, October 7<sup>th</sup> at 3PM for this annual event..

**VISITATIONS** - Jim Wingate recorded 7 visits to those unable to attend Mass at St. George's.

**BIBLE STUDY** - meets Sundays at 9AM in the Shaw Lounge.

**BREAKFAST SYMPOSIUM** - meets monthly with breakfast and lively discussions.

**THEOLOGY ON TAP** - takes place monthly at the Van Dyck Restaurant .

**CHRISTMAS EVE** - after our 10PM Mass, there will be a great reception in the Great Hall with "Sweets and Savories" and fellowship to celebrate the joy of this Christmas season.

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** - Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, following our 10AM Mass.



# CARIBBEAN NIGHT

St. George's fundraiser: an authentic Caribbean Dinner took place in our Great Hall on Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, from 6 to 8 PM. "Mock" mojitas flowed like water (which was also available, as was hot tea and coffee) while some 70 Georgians, friends and family filled their plates with Carved Caribbean Pork; Jambalaya Jerk Chicken; Island Vegi Pasta; Calypso Rice and Beans; Yams and Kale; Salad, Fruit and Dessert Stations. Kudos to Chef David Long and his kitchen staff, and double kudos to the incredible One Man Steel Band who kept things lively with his "sound of (Caribbean) music." Keeping in with the theme of the evening, many attendees even dressed up in Caribbean clothing. Although this was a FUNdraiser, Georgian Meg Hughes was overheard saying that it was more like a FUNraiser.

*lynn paska*









♪ “Away in a manger, No crib for His bed, The little Lord Jesus, Lay down His sweet head...” ♪ Christmas is here and we’re all humming these songs as we prepare. Aside from the catchy carols, the idyllic scenes and the commercial pressures, what does The Incarnation mean? How can the Son of God possibly arrive as a human?

**The Mystery of The Incarnation**

Yes, a mystery. There are many mysteries in Christianity, things we cannot possibly explain scientifically. We are called to accept them by faith as part of our beliefs. Incarnation (from the Latin *caro*, “flesh”) is a central Christian doctrine that God became flesh, that God assumed a human nature and became a man in the form of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity. Christ was truly God and truly man. The divine and human natures of Jesus do not exist beside one another in an unconnected way but rather are joined in him in a personal unity, a term referred to as the hypostatic union. The union of the two natures has not diminished either one, rather the identity of each is equal yet distinct.



“Birth of Jesus,” painted by Benedictine monks in the late 1800s



Icon of the Nativity. Andrei Rublev, 1405

The essence of Incarnation is that the Word of God has been embodied in the man Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is presented in John’s Gospel as being in close personal union with the Father. Jesus is speaking God’s Word when he preaches the gospel. Belief in the preexistence of Christ is indicated in various letters of the New Testament but particularly in the Letter of Paul to the Philippians,[Phil 2:7-8] in which the Incarnation is presented as the emptying of Christ Jesus, who was by nature God and equal to God the Father but who took on the nature of a slave and was later glorified by God.

**The Controversies**

The early Church wrangled with these concepts until they were ultimately refined and resolved at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) where it was determined that Christ was “begotten, not made” and that He was therefore not creature but Creator. The basis for this claim was the doctrine that He was “of the same substance as the Father.” It was further defined at the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), when it was declared that Jesus was perfect in

deity and in humanity and that the identity of each nature was preserved in the person of Jesus Christ. The affirmation of the oneness of Christ with God and with humanity was made while maintaining the oneness of his person.

**Divinity and Humanity**

The Incarnation proves three things: The Divinity of Jesus Christ, the Humanity of Jesus Christ and the hypostatic union of the Human with the Divine in Jesus Christ. Without diminishing His divinity, He added to it all that is involved in being human. Christ was subject to all the bodily weaknesses that we are, such are hunger (Matt.4:2), thirst (John 19:28), fatigue (John 4:6), pain, and death. They were the natural results of his human nature.

The Apostle Paul said, “Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: *He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.* [1 Tim 3:16].

*et Verbum caro factum est*” - “*And the Word was made flesh*” and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. [John 1:14 KJV]



The “Heavenly Trinity” joined to the “Earthly Trinity” through the incarnation of the Son, by Murillo, c. 1677.

david kennison



# SAFETY PRESENTATION



Pam and Jim Turley, both with past careers in law enforcement, held an informative PowerPoint Presentation on Safety in our Great Hall after the 10 o'clock Mass on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. With places of worship being among the most vulnerable venues for attack (movie theatres, concerts, sporting events and malls are also prime targets), they gave Georgians invaluable tips on awareness and survival. "Action beats Reaction" was their recurring theme as they cited three responses to active shooter and other similar emergencies: Run. Hide. Fight. We received handouts from the Turleys, who are well-trained in Safeguarding procedures. Yes, it can happen even in a small community in the Stockade Area of Schenectady. Yes, even a historic church like St. George's can find itself in a terrorist situation. We appreciate the insight the Turleys shared with us.

*lynn paska*



## IN MEMORIAM

**Joan Bessarab**  
1930- 2018

**"Queen of the Stockade Area"**  
**Rest in Peace**  
**You are missed by your church family**



# - JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT-



As this year is about to come to a close, it is a good time to assess the activities and accomplishments of 2018 with respect to maintenance of St. George's buildings and grounds. Most importantly, assessing the past year will help us prepare for the needs of the coming year. We began 2018 with a number of targeted improvements and a commensurate budget to address those improvements. We were able to address some of the improvements on our list, but, for various reasons, did not accomplish all that we had hoped.

First, for the major improvements that we were able to address:

- Electrical safety and lighting upgrades in the church were completed. We no longer need to use breaker switches to operate the sanctuary lights. All are now on light switches and the chandeliers and recessed ceiling lights are now dimmable. The new lights are all LED lights use substantially less electricity than incandescent lights and should last for years.
- Programmable thermostats were installed throughout the great hall. This was essential for our new Sunday school program and home school use (a room rental, income producer). It will also make it easier to rent out more rooms on the second floor of the great hall to other not-for-profit organizations.
- The 22 year old great hall kitchen hot water heater was replaced.
- St. George's House (Music Director's apartment) was completely repainted and new carpet installed. The carpet was paid for by Charles Dumas and Charles also did much of the painting, along with Jer Kravetz, then Sexton.
- We completed and documented a thorough inventory of maintenance and repair needs of all church buildings. All improvements were rated as:
  - **Major Maintenance** – repair efforts needed within one year to prevent serious structural damage and/or more costly repairs;
  - **Minor Maintenance** – repair efforts needed within the next 2-5 years to prevent the need for more costly repairs;
  - **Aesthetic Maintenance** – painting or repairs of areas visible to the visitors and public, but for no structural purpose (at this time), some of which could be scheduled for and completed by the Sexton or church volunteers;
  - **Other Maintenance** – other routine painting or maintenance, most to be scheduled for and completed by the Sexton.

The inventory manual was prepared to be used for future budgeting and capital improvements programming.

Emergency and unanticipated facility repairs, defined as occurring after the annual budget was adopted, prevented the major budgeted facility improvement from occurring. Due to the failure of the kitchen hot water heater, three clogged sewer line events, plumbing breakdowns in the sexton apartment, and costs incurred refurbishing the Music Director's apartment (paint and costs for cleaning and painting) we were unable to initiate needed repairs to the south side of Cranmer House (office). These repairs were to be to the south side dormer windows, outdoor woodwork and doors of Cranmer House, as well as the steps to the Cranmer House office entry and the south entrance. These improvement needs are significant and considered "Major." In attempting to remain within budget, we did not initiate this project. We have also just incurred the failure of the St. George's House boiler, forcing replacement this last week.

From a personnel standpoint, we also received the resignation of Jer Kravetz as Sexton. To address this situation we have cut the hours of the Sexton from 32 to 20 hours a week and left all responsibilities to Sondra Kravetz, except lawn care and sidewalk snow removal. We have contracted with a professional service company, ProScape, for lawn care and sidewalk snow removal.

All in all, it has been a challenging year, but we accomplished quite a lot given the circumstances. Next year will, I am sure, will bring additional challenges. However, with God's blessings and the continued support of our wonderful congregation, Vestry, Rector and staff, St. George's Church will continue to be a jewel of Schenectady and the Stockade and the Mother Church of the Mohawk.

*rich unger*





## - RETIRED TREASURER'S REPORT-

### “Give to St. George’s with pre-Tax Money.”

Many of us are still grappling with the new tax laws. With the new limitations on deducting state and local taxes, and with a much higher standard deduction, many of us are going to find it more difficult to take a tax deduction for our charitable contributions. However, there are a couple of ways to work around this.

Normally when you take money out of your IRA the withdrawal adds to your taxable income. If the taxpayer can itemize their deductions, a charitable donation might offset the tax on the IRA income. However, if you don’t itemize your deductions, you don’t get the offsetting tax break. How can you get around this?

Included in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is a provision allowing Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) in which you can arrange to make charitable gifts directly from your IRA if you are over 70 ½ years old. Making a QCD from your IRA to a charity can allow you to benefit from charitable giving even if you don’t itemize your deductions. The QCD amount is not part of your income and the gift to charity does not need to be “deducted” on your taxes. The QCD amount also counts toward your Required Minimum Distribution.

That is the easiest way to get a tax break if you aren’t going to be itemizing your deductions under the new tax provision.

There is a second, more involved approach that has nothing to do with IRA accounts. Make a charitable gift to a Donor Advised Fund (DAF). This is typically done in large dollar amounts, e.g. \$25,000 - \$50,000, with the assistance of your tax adviser and/or financial advisor. The DAF is a charity, so one large contribution to the DAF will permit you to itemize your deductions in the year of that contribution. Subsequently, the donor (you) instructs the DAF each year to make smaller distributions to charities that you want to support (they must be legal charities). Legally the DAF is a charity and can make transfers to other charities. Your contribution is no longer your money, but they will take instructions from you about making future transfers. The idea is that you get a large deduction once every few years while using the DAF as a conduit to forward contributions to the charities you support.

Tax breaks don’t drive the decision to give, but it is human nature to find the approach with the most benefit to all concerned.

*jon pearson*

## ADVENT WORKSHOP



*Making Advent Centerpieces for the home was a fun arts ‘n crafts project for Georgians after the December 2<sup>nd</sup> 10AM Mass on Sunday. A big THANK YOU to April Stromberg for coordinating this event that brought all ages together for some holiday creativity.*





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## CAROLING AT KINGSWAY

By special request, a Carol Sing-Along was scheduled at the Kingsway Nursing Home on Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. Many Georgians came from many different places: the warmth of their homes, shopping for last-minute gifts at the malls, or quickly exiting from other activities (i.e., the Salvation Army kettle drive) to keep this commitment. Joan Pearson volunteered to be the pianist and led everyone in over 20 traditional Carols. There were sopranos, altos, basses and tenors belting out much-loved songs of the season. If anyone was off-key, it didn't matter....every voice was beautiful.

Georgian singers included: Gene Greenspan, Pauline Holmes, Tarik Wareh, Alice Pumbo, Judy DeLong, Gene DeLong, Fr. Matt Stromberg, Anne Kennison, David Kennison, Pam Turley, Stella Schultz, Jane Moran, and Bob Moran. A festive time was had by all, residents and Georgians alike. 'Tis the season to be jolly....and, they were....each and every one of them!

*alice pumbo  
lynn paska*



**A REMINDER:** Our Sunday 10AM Mass is videotaped by Rick Forshaw. It is then telecast Sundays at 2PM on Channel 18, Albany and Guilderland.