



# THE GEORGIAN REPORT



St. George's Church Schenectady, NY

March 2019

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING



St. George's Annual Parish Meeting was held on Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup> after the 10AM Mass. After distribution of hard copies of the agenda, Fr. Matt Stromberg gave an opening prayer and his State of the Parish Address, which was followed by Jeff Wengrovius' Treasurer's Report. Vestry nominations were voted into office. Upon conclusion of the business meeting, lunch was provided (April Stromberg's carrot and ginger soup, a variety of submarine sandwiches and salads, fruits, and pastries.) Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and the food in the Great Hall, as well as the Raffle chaired again by Alice Polumbo with an assist from Johnnie Angus.

*lynn paska*

## RAFFLE WRAP-UP

\$250 was collected for St. George's general fund in Annual Meeting raffle ticket sales.

Winners and prizes were: Pam Turley - *"Eat it up, dessert"* - 2-pound box of candy. Jeff Wengrovius - *"Grow up"* - flower pot, gardener's gloves, small box of MiracleGro, The Gin & Tonic Gardener (book), a very tiny sip of gin. Bob Lemmerman - *"Drink up, 1"* - 6 wine glasses and a bottle of red wine. Anne Kennison - *"Eat up"* - shopping tote, St. George's cookbook, \$25 Price Chopper gift card. Judy DeLong - *"Light up"* - night light, flashlight, scented candle. Joan Pearson - *"Drink up, 2"* - St. George's mug filled with candy, pound of coffee, box of tea, box of Swiss Miss hot chocolate.

A handful of parishioners suggested the donation of raffle prizes, which weren't necessary at this time. However, given the ease in setting up the raffle, the willingness of parishioners to donate prizes, and the enthusiasm for the event....our Vestry agreed to schedule other raffles during the year at (for example) a social activity or Back to Church Sunday.

Remember: when a raffle is offered in 2019....support St. George's! Buy tickets! Be a winner!

*alice pumbo*



*Jeff Wengrovius buys a winning ticket from Johnnie Angus & Alice Pumbo.*



*St. George's Vestry 2019*

A group picture was taken after Vestry elections at the Annual Parish Meeting. Front row (L-R) Marilyn (Lynn) Paska, Richard Unger, Fr. Matthew Stromberg, Sandra Hughes, James Turley. Back row (L-R) Jeffrey Wengrovius, Margaret Hughes, Suzanne Hartz, Christopher Henry, Gregory Thomas. Missing from picture: Ralph Pumbo, Paul Smigelski.



# SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

Rosemary Pannone is a mother, grandmother, registered nurse (retired, but still works part-time), and gardener. She came to St. George's twenty years ago when granddaughters (Courtenay, Jennafer and Erin) wanted to sing in our St. Nicholas Children's Choir. She became one of the parent chaperones until it disbanded. It's hard to imagine a ministry without Rosemary, i.e., she cooked for Bethesda House potlucks; participated in the Prayer Shawl Ministry; served two Vestry terms; with her son Michael Thiessen, helped build our first four floats for the Downtown Schenectady Thanksgiving Parade; always takes a night shift (3-4AM) on Maundy Thursday....all alone, by herself...because "I'm always at peace there, I'm calmer, it's a soft place to land."

She attended SUNY Cobleskill for landscape design, is a Master Gardener with Cornell Cooperative Extension, and put that knowledge to good use on St. George's grounds - working on the rain garden on the north side of the church; restoring our historic Glastonbury thorn tree with roots that go back to the 1700's (pun intended!); garnering the nickname Rosie the Rhododendron Killer (garden joke!); and teaching S.E.E.D.L.I.N.G.S (St. George's Environmental Education Developing Lifelong Interest in Gardening Studies) classes for a children's gardening group.

And who could forget her White Dragon Sale, our annual garage sales held in the Great Hall for six years? In its heyday, St. George's realized net profits of up to \$2,713 (2011.) It brought the best of all worlds together: parishioners, volunteers, community. "Then things changed," Rosemary said. "It was decided to offer it as a tag sale in rooms upstairs on a more regular basis."

Rosemary talks fondly about her church family: Rick Forshaw, her "other brother." Bob Moran, "the

best clean-up guy in the world." Rosemary Van der Hoof, her "mentor."

She remembers introducing Dottie Kennison to chicken wings. About her days on Vestry, she praises then-Senior Warden David Kennison, who "held us together when we were

rectors. We would have fallen apart without him." She laughs when thinking about how then-Treasurer Jon Pearson would groan whenever someone talked about spending money. "We were friends. Friends lead. Everybody pulled together."

Discussing present-day church, she feels Fr. Matt is growing as our rector, citing his outgoing demeanor and enthusiasm. Also, we need more Outreach to bring more people onto our campus.

"Burn out" is not unusual, especially with someone who has been volunteering at St. George's for two decades, yet Rosemary Pannone continues to play an active part in the life of our church. As a Greeter, her cheery personality helps oldies and newbies alike feel welcome when they attend Mass on Sunday.

*lynn paska*



## CLERGY APPRECIATION

**Fr. John Scott** is a retired priest from the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, former rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in Burnt Hills, and friend of St. George's who was co-celebrant at our Mass on Christmas Eve and presided over Judy and Gene DeLong's renewal of their wedding vows on Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you, Fr. Scott, for being with us on these very special occasions.

*lynn paska*



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



If you really want to get a group of Episcopalians riled up, raise the question of whether the unbaptized should be admitted to Holy Communion. It has become one of the most hotly debated topics in the church today. At the risk of kicking the hornet's nest, I want to address this topic with you all here in this space.

Although it is becoming the practice in several parishes to invite everyone, baptized and unbaptized alike, to receive Holy Communion, it is not the official policy of the Episcopal Church. Our canons are clear on the matter, "No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church" (Canon 1.17.7). To some this seems harsh, demanding, exclusive, and unhospitable. Wouldn't Jesus welcome all people to his table? Isn't it legalistic to deny certain people access?

To be sure, Jesus showed hospitality indiscriminately to all types of people. He was criticized for eating with, "Tax collectors and Sinners." We absolutely want our church to be a place where all people, regardless of where they are on their spiritual journey, feel welcome. Does that, however, mean sharing the Eucharist with them?

It seems like we have a visceral reaction to anything that seems even mildly demanding or exclusive. Such language is immediately identified with the Pharisees. I can identify somewhat with the sentiment. I am definitely a more type B kind of guy, but I also feel such snap judgements challenged when I read the Gospel. Here is the thing, sometimes Jesus himself strikes me as too harsh, exclusive, and demanding. What about this one:

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

Yikes! That certainly seems a lot harsher than asking someone to be baptized before communion. Was Jesus just being mean? I don't think so. I don't rush to that kind of judgement even when I don't completely understand. I give him the benefit of the doubt. I try to understand why what he says might be true.

If the whole baptism before communion thing is hard for you, I suggest that you do likewise. Try to understand it before you condemn it. It has been the practice of the church in all times and places. Maybe there is a good reason for it!

We live in a culture that demands instant gratification. Having to wait and go through the proper process is considered hateful and judgmental to some. In my opinion, that is an absurd exaggeration. Here at St. George's all baptized Christians, regardless of this denominational background, are free to receive the Eucharist. We also invite everyone else to come forward to receive a blessing.

We proclaim God's love to all, we bless them, and we invite them to become disciples of Jesus in baptism. Jesus died for all, and so all are invited to the waters of baptism. Baptism is the first Sacrament. Holy Communion follows.

It seems to me that inviting the un-baptized to Holy Communion makes Baptism superfluous. When Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission, he commanded them to make disciples of all people and to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Notice what he did not do. He did not institute the Holy Eucharist as the means through which we make disciples or reach out to the world. On the contrary, he celebrated this meal in a private ceremony with his disciples in the upper room. He told them to do this in remembrance of him.

Baptism is initiation. In baptism we are brought into the fellowship of the Holy Trinity. In baptism we share in

Christ's death and resurrection. In baptism we are led out of bondage. In baptism we are cleansed of our sins and clothed with righteousness. In Baptism we receive God's covenant and become disciples of Christ.

Holy Communion is not initiation. It is formation. Having been welcomed into his divine life we become ongoing participants in his divine nature. Having shared in his death and resurrection, we die daily, remembering again and again his death until he comes again.

Do you see the sequence? The logic of the sacraments? To use a tired expression, we can't put the cart before the horse.

Is this unfair and harsh? I don't think so. Asking people to wait, explaining to them why we do things the way we do, is not the same as scolding and shaming them. That, of course, is not what we are about. There is no condemnation in Christ. If an un-baptized person feels called to communion, we invite them to be baptized. Baptism is the way we welcome a person into communion and fellowship with us in the mystical body and blood of Christ.

*grace and peace, fr. matthew stromberg +*

## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



*Our Children's Mass/Christmas Pageant took place at 3PM on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to April Stromberg for coordinating this event....and to the boys, girls, and parents who took an active part in this beautiful reenactment of the Birth of the Baby Jesus.*



# CHRISTMAS 2018

I love Christmas at St. George's. Through Advent we prepared: Sunday mornings we heard contemplative music and sermons about Mary and the mystery of God as man. Sunday movie nights we ate popcorn and watched "The Bells of St. Mary's," "The Shop on the Corner," and "A Christmas in Connecticut." And this year Kingsway Nursing Home invited us to host a Christmas hymn sing for their residents on Dec. 15, a fun parish outreach.

Helpers produced even more bedlam than usual during the greening of the church. Colton Jaquith set off a search for the manger scene, our focal point for Christmas! Johnnie Angus put the spotlights on it. Sam Wengrovius, his sister Erin and her husband Alex Baker hung garland and wreath from the choir loft. Meg Hughes and Jamie Taft decorated the west doors with wreaths and garland. Fr. Matt, Judy DeLong, JJ Moran, and Steve Hartz arranged Christmas flowers, trees and lights on the altar. Nancy Angus and Debbie Lambeth set up the altar in the Lady Chapel. Grant Jaquith swept the floor and picked up stray straw after the manger scene was set up. Shannon Hughes was both decorating and planning her wedding at St. George's later this year. Sandee Hughes was everywhere, organizing and directing. Barb Wengrovius, David Kennison, and Anne Kennison did a variety of jobs while Lynn Paska photographed the action and the choir rehearsed, giving a festive tone to the day.

The children's 3:00 service on Christmas Eve was well-attended by about 60 adults and children, music provided by pianist Bruce Jordan. Many took part in an outstanding Christmas pageant with costumed angels and shepherds, Helen Stromberg as Mary and Jonah Thiessen as Joseph. What could be more joyful?

Midnight Mass at 10:00, celebrated by Fr. Matt, assisted by The Reverend Father John Scott, glorified Christ's birth with our most exuberant carols and the voices of the St. Cecilia Choir. Fr. Matt's sermon spoke of the contrast between Caesar Augustus, who proclaimed himself Savior but was "a bit player" in Luke's gospel, and Jesus,

the real good news whose birth was long awaited. The mystery of Christmas is "heaven came to earth, God united to humanity forever." Eventually every king is a footnote in history, but this child, this king, is remembered forever.

Following Mass, everyone enjoyed a festive reception in the Great Hall. After Christmas Day the celebration of Jesus' birth continued with Lessons and Carols on Dec. 30, led by David Kennison and Jeff Wengrovius, a game-filled Twelfth Night celebration on Jan. 5, and Epiphany on Jan. 6, when the congregation heard the Epiphany Proclamation and received blessed chalk with which to write 20+C+M+B+19 over our doors. And now we are ready to face 2019. Happy New Year!

*joan pearson*



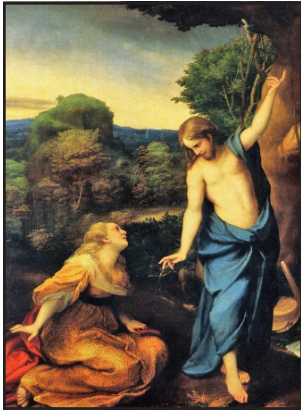






*Last time, we examined mystery of the Incarnation of Christ. As Lent begins and Easter approaches, we now examine Jesus' resurrection. After all, without the Resurrection, there is no foundation of our faith. There is no incontrovertible proof that Jesus really was the Son of God.*

"She turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabboni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"



From a cruel death upon the cross to His glorious resurrection, Jesus' resurrection is the central doctrine of our Christian faith. After being crucified by the Romans authorities and buried by Joseph of Arimathea, Jesus was raised from the dead by God and appeared to witnesses before ascending into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. The Nicene Creed tells us "On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures".



*Christ crucified by Giotto circa*

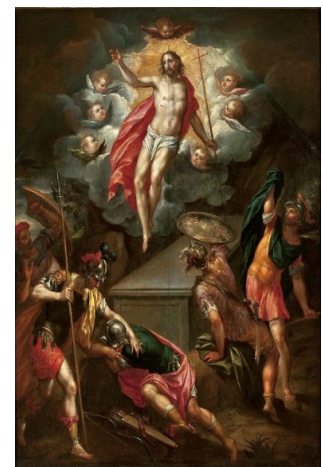
The resurrection proves to us that Jesus was who He claimed to be, the Son of God and Messiah. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die" [John 11:25]. In that statement, Jesus also claimed to be the source of both. Apart from Christ, there is no resurrection. Apart from Christ, there is no eternal life. Jesus' power does more than give life, He is life, and that's why death has no dominion over Him. In the resurrection from the grave, God reminds us of His absolute sovereignty over life and death.

Paul the Apostle declared that "Christ died for our sins" and that belief in both Jesus' death and resurrection forms Christian faith: "Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins."

There were witnesses. Paul writes, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep." [1 Cor 15:3-6] The apostles bore witness to Christ's work and claims by being witnesses of His resurrection. The resurrection gave credibility to Jesus' life – it verified that He was who He said He was.

Jesus resurrection was not just spiritual, it was also a bodily resurrection. The stone that sealed the tomb was rolled away not so He could get out, but so others could get in and see the empty tomb. If the tomb had not been empty, claims of the resurrection would have vanished. Paul emphasized in 1 Cor 15 that the resurrection of Christ was bodily resurrection. The bodily resurrection provides indisputable evidence that Jesus is who He claimed to be – the Son of God.

Jesus' resurrection was an indication of what was to come in our resurrection. Paul tells us, "But Christ had indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all would be made alive" [1 Cor 15:20-22]. The power that was used by God to raise up Jesus is the same power that will be used in our resurrection.



*Resurrection of Christ by Hans Rottenhammer, 16<sup>th</sup> century*

*david kennison*



## A VERY SPECIAL SUNDAY



*Judy and Gene DeLong, celebrating their 62nd anniversary, renewed their wedding vows on February 24th at our 10AM Mass at St. George's. The Reverend John L. Scott, guest celebrant and longtime friend of the DeLongs, presided over the occasion. Judy looked beautiful, Gene was the "dapper" groom....and everyone's love and best wishes were with the happy couple.*

## CLEANING OF THE CHURCH



*Jean Greenspan*



*Meg Hughes*



*Pam Turley, Debbie Lambeth*

*Parishioners Meg Hughes and Pam Turley coerced an ad hoc crew of 12 Georgians to give our church (altar, loft, sacristy and Lady Chapel) a good spring cleaning on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> with a follow-up on Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>. This included vacuuming cushions, wiping down pews and mopping the sanctuary floor. A good job and a good time was had by all workers who gave of their "time" and "talent" and, in some cases, their vacuums!*

## - JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT-

January and February have been fraught with heating repairs. Burst pipes in the Great Hall Library, leaks in the Cranmer House boiler, endless circulation problems to St. George's House and, finally, a plumbing leak in St. George's House only hours before the arrival of its new resident.

Once the snow and ice begin to melt, it will be time for us to seriously begin to reevaluate and assess our aging heating systems and consider cost-effective alternatives.



*best, chris*

## - TREASURER'S REPORT-

As reported at our annual meeting in January, St. George's Church completed 2018 with a budget surplus of \$14,200 versus a projected budget deficit of \$34,000. The operating fund portion of last year's surplus has already been spent on a new boiler for St. George's House and on energy efficient LED lights for the church. Our "Slay the Dragon" initiative to reduce costs was the key reason for our positive financial performance in 2018. These savings will continue to have a favorable impact on 2019 finances.

Our budget for 2019 also has a funding deficit, projected to be \$11,000. Although we are off to a good start in regards to giving, we have experienced unexpected costs related to the maintenance of our many buildings. If these expenses continue, our 2019 budget will be seriously stressed. Please continue to keep your pledge up-to-date during Lent and beyond.



*blessings, jeff*

## OUTREACH

During the month of February, ALM (Assisted Living Ministry) worshipped with 39 residents at 3 locations (The Schenectady Center service was cancelled due to snow.) Fr. Matt celebrated at The Glen Eddy offering a homily about the midwinter nature of Candlemas and Jesus' presentation in the temple. With Fr. Matt away, Alice Pumbo officiated at Scotia Mansion and Kingsway Community, giving a short reflection about the relationship between giving and receiving. Hymns were "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "The Old Rugged Cross."

ALM resumed its March schedule on the 12<sup>th</sup> at The Schenectady Center, followed by The Glen Eddy on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Scotia Mansion on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and finished up the month at Kingsway on the 21<sup>st</sup>. All service times are 2PM. Fr. Matt is scheduled to officiate, with Joan Pearson and Debbie Lambeth co-officiants in his absence.

Anyone seeking more information regarding ALM should contact Fr. Matt Stromberg, Alice Pumbo, or any ALM member: Pauline Holmes, Meg Hughes, Suzy Unger, Jean Greenspan, Joan Pearson, Debbie Lambeth, Barb Wengrovius, Pam Turley. New members are always welcome to join in this very important ministry.

*alice pumbo*



**CHURCH CHUCKLES:** "Working for God on earth does not pay much....but His retirement plan is out of this world."



## ST. GEORGE'S NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR

Over forty years' experience as a church organist is an impressive start to Dr. Brian J. Taylor's assuming the bench in front of St. George's Moeller Organ and working with a volunteer choir of dedicated voices. Moving from Savannah GA is not a culture shock to Brian, it's more like coming home again as he grew up in Michigan and is happy to return to the north after thirty-eight years away. "I'm ready to come back....to ski....for the autumn colors....for the milder summers....and I like the city of Schenectady and the Stockade Area. It's a good move for me," he offered. On Brian's first week in residence, for example, he walked to a restaurant (Mexican Radio) on State Street for dinner.

He finds our choir "....very enthusiastic, ready to work and learn. They're willing to do anything I ask them, which is a good start. They're a strong corps and they're also strong at chanting." Brian hopes in time to encourage new members to join our St. Cecilia Choir.

As a child, Brian was fascinated by watching the organist of his church from the balcony. "I thought it was like an airplane cockpit with all the dials and knobs," he joked, adding, "I've matured a bit from that." Both a social person and a loner, he's a voracious reader who was drawn to the built-in bookshelves in his new home on our church campus.

Although it's still too early to initiate many changes, Brian is looking into additional events not just Sunday mornings but venues like Evensong and more organ recitals. He would like to start up another children's choir, inviting youth from other Episcopal churches that don't have an age-appropriate group together. On his current agenda: teaching piano (allegro music) at a church in Malta, and offering private piano lessons to Georgians and interested persons from the community.

With a PhD. under his belt, plus four decades of being a church organist for six different religions in eight different states, Brian is an Anglican at heart; a member of the Episcopal church; and hopes to become involved in other aspects of parish life at St. George's.

A warm Georgian welcome to our new Music Director....Brian Taylor!

lynn paska



## ALL ON THE SAME PAGE ST. GEORGE'S BOOK CLUB

The current reading selection for St. George's book club is *Dispatches from Pluto: Lost and Found in the Mississippi Delta*. Author Richard Grant is a British journalist who moved to the American South and immersed himself in a small rural community. His observations are humorous but insightful, and reveal a culture that is mired in poverty and racial tension, yet not without hope.

Discussion will take place on May 19<sup>th</sup> in the Great Hall following the 10 AM Mass. Club membership is open to any interested Georgian. Direct questions and suggestions to Meg Hughes (518) 604-1550. Favorite book and author recommendations are always welcome.

Happy reading!

meg hughes



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Christopher Henry Jr. Warden  
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## LENTEN SERIES

Sunday evenings during Lent, there is a potluck supper in our Great Hall. This is followed by a talk/meditation in the Lady Chapel, and concludes with the Stations of the Cross. Topic for this seven-week series is: "The Seven Last Words of Christ." Scheduled guest speakers are:

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>** - Fr. Brad Jones, rector, Christ Church, Schenectady.

**March 10<sup>th</sup>** - Fr. John Scott, retired, former rector of Calvary Episcopal Church, Burnt Hills.

**March 17<sup>th</sup>** - Mother Judith Malioneck, curate, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Albany.

**March 24<sup>th</sup>** - Fr. Scott Garno, rector, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Delmar.

**March 31<sup>st</sup>** - Amy Lewis, Diocesan deaconate candidate, member of Oaks of Righteousness, Troy.

**April 7<sup>th</sup>** - Rev. Peter J.B. Carman, pastor, Emmanuel-Friedens Church, Schenectady.

**April 14<sup>th</sup>** - Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff, interim campus protestant minister, Union College, Schenectady.

The weekly talks will cover the Bible, from Luke 23 through Luke 46. All are welcome. Dishes to share are appreciated.

**A REMINDER:** St. George's services are broadcast on television:



Spectrum Schenectady Access Channel now on channel 1301 - or Verizon Fios Channel 36 - Sundays at 4:30PM