



ST. GEORGE'S DAY 2021



It's happening again – the music from St. George's Day still running through my head days later: “When a knight won his spurs...,” “In our day of thanksgiving...,” the bagpipes. On April 25 the St. Andrew's Society and St. George's Lodge No. 6 joined us with tartans and banners to honor St. George the Martyr. Not only does our church have deep historical roots in Schenectady and the Mohawk Valley, but our Patron Saint is widely regarded and highly acclaimed around the world.

This day oozed tradition, as the bagpipes played in the churchyard before Mass, as Fr. Matt greeted the Society and the Lodge at the West Doors, as the Tartans and banners processed down the aisle to be displayed at the front. Hearing David Kennison read the names of the founders and rectors of St. George's Church reminded us of the living people who made this church and who worked to keep it alive through the years.

In his sermon Fr. Matt said St. George the man was a Martyr and a wonderworker, as a saint he is an international superstar and superhero. He was beatified by Pope Gelasius for “actions known only to God.” Almost no facts about him have survived the nearly two millennia since he was a Tribune early in the 4th century. St. George has become an icon of Christ; his white horse is a symbol of purity. The dragon represents the devil, the serpent from the Garden of Eden. George conquers evil by the power of the cross. The dragon was not added to his story until 700 years after his death.

After the sermon Fr. Matt pronounced the Kirkin' O the Tartans, the blessing of the tartans, a lovely



prayer of blessing on those of Scots ancestry. And at the conclusion of Mass, the tartans and banners paraded around the sanctuary with bagpipe accompaniment before exiting and lining the sidewalk in a beautiful display of Scottish heritage.

St. George's Church always welcomes the St. Andrew's Society and St. George's Lodge, our companions in honoring St. George, and the heritage and pageantry they bring to our Patronal Celebration.

joan pearson



IN MEMORIAM

"Rest in Peace"

You are missed by your church family

Johnnie Angus

1934 – 2021

SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

Hail to the chief...Webmaster: Jon Pearson! When son Jonathan was still in high school, he was originally recruited to take on the website ministry. "It didn't last three months," Jon laughed. "He got bored with it, and I took over." Jon is still our webmaster twenty-five years later. A new website was recently installed by Groupiehead. With it, there was/is a learning curve "I didn't have a problem with that," he explained. "The new software allows me to access it from my pc, desktop, laptop and ipad." That means he can do anything, anywhere, and he can do it at his convenience.

For the past five years, Jon has also been responsible for scheduling...first counters, then greeters, and finally lectors were added to the mix. It takes a few hours every three months as he works around thirteen volunteers who give him their availability. Names and dates go onto a spreadsheet, then he emails it to the participants.

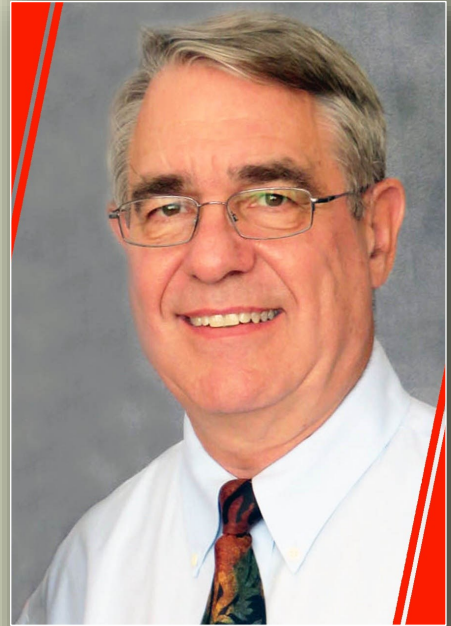
From 1995-2019, Jon was the Treasurer for St. George's. After twenty-four years, which included attending monthly Vestry meetings, it was time for someone else to take over the position.

Retired from RBC Wealth Management since 2015, Jon doesn't let grass grow under his feet! He and wife Joan have a camp at Sacandaga Lake in the town of Lake Pleasant....their weekend getaway. In summer, he's in a Thursday golf league there. Closer to home, on Mondays he goes Kayaking with a local group....recently to Pebbles Island, Kayaderosseras Creek, and Saratoga Lake. In winter, he skies twice a week, goes snowmobiling and, since 1966, has been a member of a Curling Club (currently inactive due to the pandemic.)

No stranger to volunteering, he prepares income taxes for AARP for lower-income seniors; is a long-time Board Member of the Salvation Army; and recently joined Mohawk Opportunities, a non-profit that was seeking a finance person for its Board of Directors.

Because Jon's maternal grandmother lived on Front Street near St. George's, it was a natural place for her to worship. His parents were Georgians, he was baptized and his and Joan's sons grew up at St. George's. Jonathan and wife Sara live in Brooklyn, while Christopher and wife Fei, parents of Wren and MaryAnne, are in Seattle.

A Georgian through-and-through, Jon enjoys the people, the continuity, and the choir, but says we need a stronger corps of volunteers. "Some parishioners do a lot; others do virtually nothing." And, of course, the age-old question of: how can we grow our church? "Referrals," was Jon's answer. It takes an effort to cultivate newcomers. "If someone visits St. George's, we should call them. We need to be friendly and welcoming." We should also call former parishioners who, for whatever reason, are missing from their place in the pews. Spoken like a true Georgian who loves his church....and proves it by volunteering time and talent where his expertise is invaluable. THANK YOU, JON!



lynn paska

FROM THE RECTOR'S STUDY



Once again summer is upon us and with it comes the bloom of the marvelous rhododendron plant just outside of the Church. It appears for just a little while in all its majesty and then eventually fades away. Such it is with life! Everything changes, seasons come and go, and not just with the climate or in our gardens, but in the circumstances of life together as well.

It is important to remember when we are going through a difficult time that this too will pass. Things will not always be the way that they are in that particular moment. Likewise, we should take time to appreciate the good things in life while we have them, because these things too are subject to the seasons.

I recently did two funerals, one for a woman who was mostly a stranger to me and another for a man whom I considered a friend. At both funerals the family chose the text from Ecclesiastes 3 that begins, “For everything there is a season.” A funeral is a poignant time to recall the fact that there is, “A time to be born and a time to die.” People come and go from our lives and new people enter in. There will be times in which we will grieve the loss of those we love and others in which we will welcome some new born soul with joy.

It seems that one lesson we have learned from the Covid-19 pandemic is that we must not take our lives for granted, even our ordinary routines, because it all can be uprooted. As most of us have been vaccinated, social distancing restrictions are cautiously lifted, and life begins to return to some sense of normality, we should return with a new sense of appreciation for those simple joys. Perhaps no joy is more precious than our relationships, those friends and loved ones that we were separated from. This of course was necessary for a season, but nevertheless, difficult. The author of Ecclesiastes writes that there is, “a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.” Now, Lord willing, is a time for embracing!

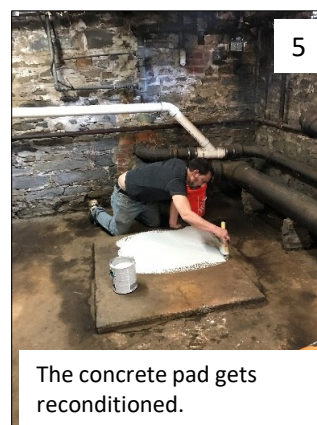
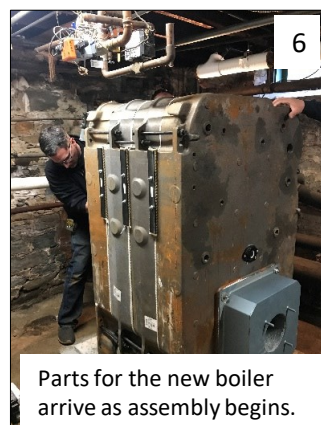
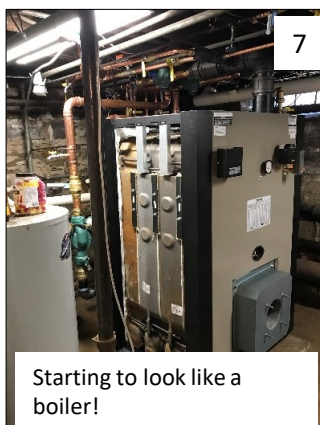
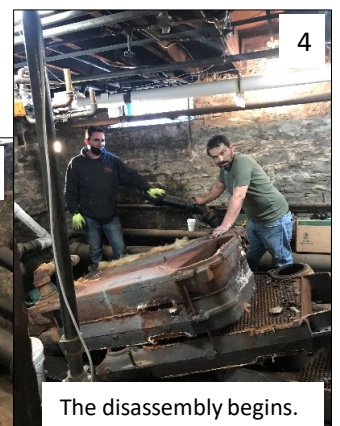
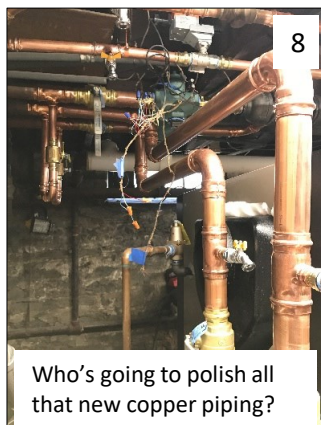
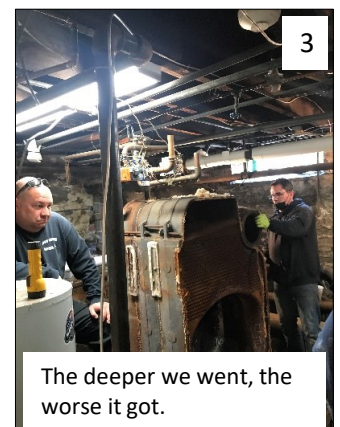
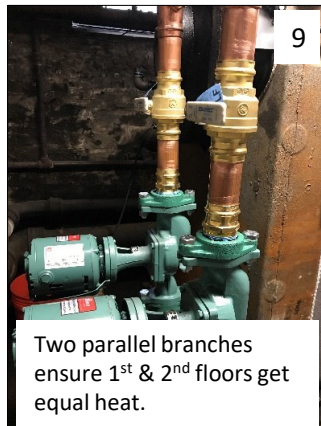
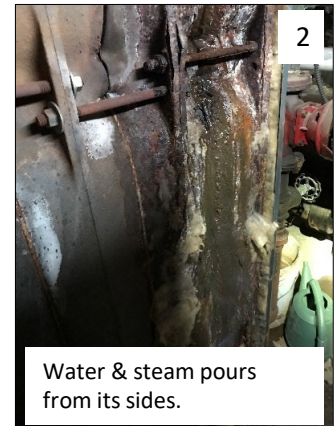
We are emerging from a great ordeal, one that none of us were quite expecting. Now is a time to heal, a time to build up, a time to laugh, a time for dancing, a time to sew, and a time to gather stones together. For some it is a time to mourn. There has been real loss and there must be real comfort too. This is a time to embrace those who have suffered.

We have persevered together and now it is a time to try, as we are able, not only to return to normal, but to arrive at someplace new and stronger in our life together. The new place we arrive at together must be one that incorporates the difficult lessons we have learned during our shared ordeal. It will be a new season for us all.

grace and peace, fr. matthew stromberg

The Great Hall Gets a New Boiler

On December 22, 2020, the hot water boiler that heats the Great Hall died. It served us well for almost 50 years but it was leaking water everywhere and had shut down for the last time. Repairs were impossible since the internal cast iron sections were leaking. And so began a long process of troubleshooting, quotations and replacement. This cost a lot of money but the new boiler is higher efficiency, more reliable and quieter. Here's a photographic jaunt through the process...



Thanks to Jack Guarneri and his team at Indoor Weather Control for a super job!! david kennison

EASTER 2021

Darkness into light, death into life: In this second pandemic year the weeks of Lent and Easter really mirrored our lives. With streamed services opening to live Masses, ill parishioners and staff recovering from the virus and the gradual vaccination of the community, dark days steadily gave way to better times. Fr. Matt referenced this in his Ash Wednesday homily, when he noted that we remember mortality with every Covid reminder. Death is both a foe and a pathway to a greater life – mortality is part of the original creation that God declared “good.”

Throughout Lent Fr. Matt preached on Old Testament lessons, the Commandments, Moses and the Israelites, God’s Covenant with the Israelites. The Sunday evening Zoom Lenten studies focused on *The Way of Julian of Norwich: A Prayer Journey Through Lent* by Shelia Upjohn. Most Friday evenings Fr. Matt led Stations of the Cross outside in front of the church. Covid forced a re-imagining of our traditional activities but could not cancel them.

On Palm Sunday we had no procession from the Great Hall, and so Holy Week began in the sanctuary. We heard the Passion According to Mark with its powerful portrayal of Jesus’ trial and death. When we returned to church for Maundy Thursday there could be no foot washing but we shared communion as Jesus did, a last supper before the altar was stripped and worshipers could watch for one hour in the candlelit Lady Chapel. There was no overnight vigil.

Good Friday, the service of mourning, began with a somber bell struck over and over. Fr. Matt spoke about crosses we bear in our lives. The world fashions our crosses and God suffers with us. Abraham was spared the sacrifice of Isaac. In sacrificing Jesus, God finished what Isaac was spared. Saturday night at the Great Easter Vigil, the fire was re-lit, the great lessons read, the bells rung, and Lent ended. Best of all, sexton George Soltysiak was baptized. In the early days of the Church, according to Fr. Matt, new Christians would be baptized at this service after staying up all night to prepare. George was happily spared that, as well as stripping down and a full body dunking.

On Easter Sunday we worshiped together with hymns and glorious organ music. Fr. Matt acknowledged that we have reason to hope, rejoice, and celebrate the Risen Christ. On the first Easter, women

despite their grief went to anoint the body of Christ and thus found the empty tomb and Christ seated nearby. They showed that when we are in stress, the risen Christ is with us. There is a legend that Mary Magdalene carried a basket of boiled eggs to the tomb. Once there she found that the eggs had turned bright shades of color. They represent the transformation Christ makes in us. As we left the church to the stirring notes of Charles-Marie Widor’s *Toccata*, Fr. Matt gave out colorful candy-filled eggs, a sweet Easter gift.

Last year our Easter celebration had to be virtual. This year many of us could worship at church. Next year, God willing, we all will be together to sing,

Hallelujah, Christ is Risen!

joan pearson





GARDEN MINISTRY



Meg Hughes is seen here tending some new euonymus bushes planted at the back of the Great Hall along Green Street, along with her garden “crew” of Suzy Unger, Debbie Lambeth and Barb Wengrovius. This has been a long neglected space and Garden Ministry is working hard to make it more presentable.

meg hughes

A BLESSED EVENING IN THE GARDEN



St. George’s Church observed Rogation Sunday on May 9 at an outdoor evening service. Attendees were treated to Celtic music and a Mass with a sermon on St. Hilda of Whitby. That portion of the event was driven indoors by a passing shower, but parishioners returned to the Memorial Garden afterward for a traditional blessing of garden tools. The celebration continued briefly at the doorstep of St. George’s House where Dr. Taylor served refreshments.

meg hughes

Left to right: Debbie Lambeth, Jeff Wengrovius, Barbara Wengrovius, Father Matt Stromberg, Brian Taylor, Meg Hughes, Suzy Unger, Rich Unger.

David Kennison’s column, Episcopal Education, will be back in September.

BAPTISM



ADULT— George Soltysiak, surrounded by Fr. Matt and Tommy Sartchioto, was baptized at the Easter Vigil.



BABY —Piper, daughter of Nathan Weisenburn and Angela Marion, was baptized on the Day of Pentecost.

LEARN ABOUT ‘THE FATHER OF ENVIRONMENTALISM’

St. George's book club will next meet on August 15 to discuss *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World*. It is a nonfiction book by the historian Andrea Wulf about a Prussian scientist born in 1769. Dr. Jeffrey Wengrovius recommended the read.

Alexander von Humboldt left a life of privilege to study the natural world first-hand, exploring Russian tundra and South American rainforests and volcanoes. Humboldt was ahead of his era and influenced many famous contemporaries, including Henry David Thoreau, Charles Darwin, and Thomas Jefferson. Subsequently known as "The Father of Environmentalism," he was the first scientist to document the disastrous effects of human abuse of the natural world, **forever changing the way science viewed nature.**

meg hughes

HIGHLIGHTS FROM SIX CELTIC MASSES



Singer/neighbor Sylvie Briber accompanied on the keyboard by Brian Taylor.



Fr. Matt Stromberg leads an outdoor Celtic Mass on our campus grounds.



Parishioners Jon and Meredith Ewbank, dressed in identical outfits, participate in the Mass.

- SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -

Growing up, a father instructs his son how to take responsibility and take care of his family. A mother instructs her daughter how to care for her family. This is what we do when we want our family to continue and to thrive. It is deeply rooted in our being as a person and as a parent.

Is it any different for us as members of God's church? Are we any less a family? We may not all share the same DNA but we do all share our love of God and God's love of us through baptism. We do all share the love of our church.



When we love someone, we watch out for them. We keep them safe. We do it for our children and we must do it for our church. It falls to us, here and now, to make sure St George's is healthy and thrives. Why am I writing this now, you may ask? It's not yet time for our annual stewardship campaign. Maybe not, but stewardship has no season. We don't turn it on and off at our convenience. This church is alive 365 days a year and so we need to support it 365 days a year.

Some facts: St George's budgeted Expenses for 2021 is \$243,000. It's a lot of money, but we have cut and scrimped for years trying to keep that as low as possible. A large campus and historic buildings need attention and care. Our budgeted Income, from your pledges and loose plate cash, is \$112,000. So where does the extra money, \$131,000, come from? \$95,000 of it is income from our endowment – money that has been left to St George's by committed parishioners who gave sacrificially, understanding what it means to care for their church. Most of them never saw the effect of their money while they were alive, but they made that commitment knowing that it would preserve their church for future generations. That's real stewardship. That's real love.

I know you all have sharp eyes and so you'll see that things don't add up. Our expenses are still \$36,000 higher than our income. Most of this shortfall also has to come from our endowment – some from restricted income but also some from principal. Using the endowment income is normal since it keeps our principal untouched and the principal is what generates the income. It's just like interest on your bank account – if you keep dipping into it, it will soon be gone.

So, I have laid out for you our ongoing money woes. Issues like this consume Vestry meetings. Not a single Vestry member takes this lightly. We understand the implications of withdrawing endowment principal (such as the recent \$49,000 for the new Great Hall boiler). But sometimes, there is no choice.

Are we really any different than other churches? How do they cover their expenses? There are 5 Episcopal churches in the Schenectady area and I will tell you that at least one of them does it differently. This parish has annual expenses of about the same as St George's. Their number of members is about the same. They have old buildings that need frequent attention. But they have no endowment and never have had one. Every year, the giving matches the expenses. Sacrifice and commitment. It is what God asks of us.

Maybe an endowment is a curse, not a blessing. Just maybe, we have become so divorced from the actual level of need that it doesn't seem real. It's so easy to think "our endowment has always saved us before, so why not now?" Maybe I am as guilty of this as anyone and maybe I need to have a good hard look in the mirror. I will do it and I hope each of you will join me.

With great affection, david kennison

- JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -

The boiler replacement for the Great Hall is now complete. We will be implementing a preventative maintenance program (including documentation) on all five of our boilers to ensure we extend their lives to the fullest.

Also in the Great Hall, the plumbing leak in the 2nd floor boy's bathroom has been repaired, and we will be installing the newly purchased dishwasher in the kitchen in preparation for resuming Coffee Hour.

The city has removed one dead tree from verge between our parking lot and Green Street, and we are investigating how to rehabilitate the sidewalk between our property and Green Street. This sidewalk is extremely disrupted by tree roots, and poses a serious hazard to foot and bicycle traffic.

With an eye toward determining costs, we are seeking bids on repainting the sanctuary ceiling; re-grading and surfacing the parking lot; and replacing the garage door opener on the Rectory.

respectfully, jon ewbank



- TREASURER'S REPORT -

I am pleased to report that our church's finances are in a relatively good position. The following highlights reflect the current situation with our money:



- Pledge giving has been strong, driven by annual donations from members of our parish. Note that I sincerely encourage that everyone keep up to date on their pledge commitments as we head into the season when giving typically stagnates.
- Although we have taken almost all of the accumulated income from our endowment, as budgeted, we have so far resisted taking principle. Our endowment investments have grown in line with current stock and bond values. However, please note that we did take about \$50,000 of cash from our general endowment principle fund to pay for the new boiler for the Great Hall (GH).
- We continue to carefully monitor our expenses.
 - At the beginning of the year, we were hit by some costly unbudgeted surprises, including failure of the GH boiler and serious plumbing issues in the boy's and girl's bathrooms in the upstairs of the GH. These repairs have been completed and the bills paid. Please keep your fingers crossed that we have no more major issues in 2021.
 - All other expenses are in line with our budget with a couple of exceptions. Our utilities are running a bit high due in large part by the continued presence of the Kravetzs living in the upstairs of St. George's House and by the necessary funding for video / audio equipment during the pandemic to allow streaming of our Masses.
- To conclude my report, although I remain optimistic, I feel obligated to remind the parish that 55-60% of our income comes from our endowment. Any major downturn in the equity markets, or more unexpected expenses, will necessitate taking money out of the principle of our endowment to meet payroll. In fact, we will likely have to dip into the principle later in 2021 as income declines and winter expenses increase.

PLEASE contact me with any comments, questions, or concerns. If anyone wants to see a more detailed financial report, please request and I'll be happy to provide. *respectfully submitted Dr. jeffrey wengrovius*



MUSIC AT ST. GEORGE'S



Fall planning is already underway at St. George's with the hope that we will return to something close to our normal church life. The Parish Choir plans to resume its regular rehearsals on Tuesday evenings beginning September 7th and plans to sing its first Sunday Mass on September 12th. I would like to cordially invite all who have sung with this group, either in the recent past or the distant past, to consider returning to our group as we clothe the Mass with music. We also invite those who have not sung with us to consider joining our group. We not only prepare an anthem for each service but also the hymns, chants and Psalms. Talk to me after Mass if you are interested in participating or would like to learn more about our choir.



brian j. taylor



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Deborah Lambert
Marilyn (Lynn) Paska
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Richard Unger
Jeffrey Wengrovius, Treasurer

Administrative Assistant
Financial Secretary
Robert McCloskey

Directory of Music Ministry
Brian Taylor



ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

Georgians were forward-thinking, thanks to Chris Henry who, after the pandemic started, initiated a Sunday-at-12-noon *ZOOM* coffee hour (some were more creative and sipped an “adult” beverage instead.) In-person parishioners had enough time to drive home and participate with those who “live” streamed the Mass. Whether it pertained to our parish, family, friends, neighbors, hobbies, interests, or news of the day, it was always lively conversations. And we got to know each other a little better because of it.

lynn paska

HOSPITALITY

As of May, the Diocese of Albany has updated their COVID-19 procedures allowing churches to have coffee hour type gatherings again. There are some guidelines in place but we can now socialize after church service. Brian Taylor and Fr. Stromberg have graciously agreed to take over the coffee hour for the summer. Join us outside on Sunday mornings for fellowship and light refreshments.

sandee hughes