



THE GEORGIAN REPORT



Volume 15 Number 4

St. George's Episcopal Church Schenectady NY

December 2023

CHORAL EVENSONG FOR THANKSGIVING

What more beautiful way to give thanks to God for our continuing ministry than a Choral Evensong? The combined voices of St. George's and St. Stephen's choirs filled the sanctuary on Nov. 12 for an uplifting twilight service of praise, thanksgiving, and giving, Fr. Pettigrew's first Evensong with us.

Organists Brian Taylor and Susan Lohnas opened with a prelude of J.S. Bach and Johannes Brahms, and then the choir entered with the wonderful hymn, "Come, ye thankful people, come." After opening prayers were the traditional call and answer of Officiant Fr. Pettigrew and Choir during William Smith's *Preces and Responses*. With the Bible lessons the choir sang the *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* by John Blow, intricate and joyous.



St. George's invited Kim Siciliano, Executive Director of the YWCA North-eastern New York, to address the congregation. Kim spoke eloquently of the work this organization has done since 1888, helping women who have been victims of domestic violence, women who are homeless, and providing childcare since the 1920's. In 1929, twelve women raised \$1 million to build their current building; the YWCA also has a separate shelter for domestic violence victims, offices in the police department, and rents the top floor of Pallet (on State Street) where they help women get their GED and other training. They currently provide counseling as well as housing for 55 women, with 3-6 month waiting lists for childcare and counseling. They have a \$5 million budget; monetary donations cover needs not covered by grants. Half of the offering from Evensong was donated to the YWCA. They always welcome donations of cat/dog food, coloring books and puzzles for small children, bedding, towels, and furniture.

Evensong continued with Ralph Vaughan Williams' *The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune*, a rousing doxology of thanks. Prayers of thanksgiving, a final hymn of thanksgiving, and the postlude *March Triomphale* on *Now thank we all our God* concluded the service.

We had a wonderful reception in Brian Taylor's home afterward, thankful for the service, the presence of St. Stephen's choir and parishioners, and the work of Kim Siciliano and the YWCA.

joan pearson

THE SOCIETY OF MARY



Wendy Madelone and Kevin Decker are representatives of The Society of Mary for St. George's Church, one of several devotional societies existing around the entire Anglican Communion. Its objective is to foster devotion to Mary, who is also known as Our Lady of Walsingham. Immediately following our 10AM Mass on Sunday, October 15th, Wendy and Kevin hosted a light luncheon in our parish hall to acquaint parishioners with the Society and its objectives. They spoke to each table, and handed out informative Manuals about the organization and application forms for those interested in joining.

lynn paska



ALL ON THE SAME PAGE BOOK CLUB

The Book Club will meet after the Sunday service on January 21 to discuss Mrs. Plansky's Revenge by Spencer Quinn. This novel tells the rollicking tale of a grandmother who is scammed and goes on a journey to get justice. Future book club dates for 2024 are March 17, May 19, July 21, September 15, and November 17. We will discuss book selections for those dates at our January meeting; feel free to email Pattie Wareh (pwareh@gmail.com) with suggestions as well. All are welcome.

pattie wareh



HOSPITALITY

"Many hands make light work." The Greening of the Church on Sunday, December 17th subscribed to that theory and, as always, it worked! Once the Greening was completed, lunch was served in the Great Hall. Pictures of fellowship and food will be highlighted in the March newsletter.

sandee hughes



Charles Frederick Stamm, MD

1929—2023

IN MEMORIAM

Rest in Peace

You are missed by your church family



Carol Rose

1951—2023



SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

Long-ago Georgians remember The Adams Family fondly. No, no, not the cartoon/TV/movie/theatre family but OUR Adams Family (ONE “d” not TWO): Les, a member of the Mens and Boys Choir with sons Paul and Michael; and Wendy in the St. Cecilia Choir. Her parents also headed the Dragon’s Den clothing drive ministry that sorted clothing donations and helped people find clothes for job interviews.

“St. George’s was a big part of our lives,” reminisced Wendy, who was confirmed at St. George’s, married Tom Madelone 52 years ago, raised their daughter Erika (married to Noel Pelletier) at St. George’s, and spent the first part of her life at St. George’s...involved in choir, Altar Guild, bible study, lector (to name a few.) “Tom and I left after Fr. Paul resigned. We had been through the search process with Fr. McSwain and didn’t want to go through another.” Attending St. Kateri Tekakwitha, a Roman Catholic Church for two years, they strayed from church altogether, then started watching St. George’s on TV during the pandemic. “Alice Pumbo asked me to a Choral Evensong last year. Parishioners were so welcoming, it was like coming home again!”

“God works in mysterious way,” she continued. “I did my own spiritual practice at home but I think that was just preparing me to return to church.” Today, she’s a lector, Altar Guild member, and helps with Hospitality clean-up. Along with Kevin Decker, Wendy is a member of the Society of Mary in the USA, which remains strongly affiliated with the Society in the United Kingdom. Together, they’ve co-hosted receptions in our Great Hall after Mass for this ministry.



One of many ‘original’ Wendy Madelone oil paintings.

Because of chronic sinusitis which inhibits projecting her voice, Wendy is no longer a choir member, but as someone who sits in front of her at Mass, I can attest to the fact that she’s still a lovely soprano with a wonderful range of vocal motion.

With many outside interests....oil painting (a member of the Guilderland Senior Art League for 8 years); Yoga; Qigong (a form of movement similar to Tai Chi); walking; exercising on the treadmill; reading; and photography....she’s back as a Georgian and like everything she does, Wendy volunteers with heart, soul, gusto....and, love!

lynn paska

FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK.....



The heart of any parish is the resurrected and living Lord dwelling in our midst, enlivening us with his life, and sending us out into the world to give that life away. There is a great truth about the Christian life to which we are called, and that is that we receive our life when we offer it to others as a gift. When we are giving ourselves to others, sacrificially in love and charity, we are truly living into to our baptismal covenant of dying to self and rising to new life in Christ. It is when we allow Christ's life to dwell in us through self-giving love for one another that we find the fullness of our humanity.

The great tradition of Christmas is, of course, gift giving. We give gifts to children, to friends, to family, to charitable organizations, to churches. To children, we give presents and fill with joy as they themselves are filled with joy and happiness at receiving the gift. To our friends and family, giving of gifts are really something more. Gifts may be expensive or not, they may be meaning-

ful, or humorous. But they are signs or symbols of something beyond themselves, full of meaning, that represent to the other our love and care for them. They are tokens of our relationship.

Of course, all of this gift giving is, in reality, both a response and an imitation of God's gift to us of Christ's incarnation, the greatest of gifts ever given or received. In so many ways, the Gift of Christ to us from the Father is much like our own Christmas gift giving. St. Luke tells us that there is great rejoicing in heaven when one of us turns to God, and accepts that wonderful Gift of Christ. (Luke 15.10). God rejoices when we receive that gift of life brought by his Son. The great Bishop, St. Irenaeus of Lyon said, "The glory of God is man fully alive, and the life of man is the vision of God." In receiving the incarnate Lord, in seeing God, we find our life, and in being made alive in Christ, God rejoices.

God's gift to us of our Lord is, like our own gift giving, a token. But more than merely a token of love, it is Love, made flesh, dwelling in our midst, coming to us in the meekness of a child, and as he promised, with us always, risen and glorified, until the close of the age. One of my favorite Christmas hymns (and I have many), is "Love came down at Christmas." Sung to John Rutter's beautiful composition, Christina Rossetti's words express these thoughts of mine more wonderfully than I ever could.

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine;
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea, and gift, and sign.

As you give and receive your gifts this year, as you experience and appreciate the joy and love of friends and family, do take a moment to pause and reflect on that greatest of all gifts we have been given. It is the gift of life in and through the incarnate and risen Lord, God's greatest gift, his love, for you and for me, that draws us ever closer to him, eternally.

Blessings, Tom+

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Sunday, October 8th was a beautiful Fall day with many dogs, 2 rabbits, and their owners gathered at the west doors of St. George's for the annual pet blessing in honor of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), an Italian deacon and monk, who had a great love of animals.

Three Georgians showed up early – Geri Moore with Strudel (Mini-dachshund); Rich and Suzy Unger with (Golden Doodle) Cody; and Crystal Longwood with Trixie Rose and Petera (rabbits.). Dave and Ann with Corduroy (Cairn Terrier) who made his 13th appearance at our pet blessing; another yearly friend, Tina, with Bo Jack (rescue Akita) and L'il Man (Jack Russell mix); Elizabeth with (Yorkie) Charley; Ken Walsh and (Maltese) Cooper; Lisa with two beautiful, well-behaved Rat Terriers.

Fr. Tom Pettigrew was assisted by Mother Lisa Schoonmaker and music director, Brian Taylor, with a meaningful service and blessing on the pampered pets and their people!

lynn paska



ALL SOULS AND ALL SAINTS 2023



St. George's recognized the feasts of All Souls and All Saints with special masses and guest preachers. Time is precious in our world. Prayers for the dead are usually limited to funerals. Taking extra time out of our lives to remember and pray for people we love and miss is almost an indulgence. The All Souls Requiem on Nov. 2 was, in chant and prayer, an affirmation of our belief that our loved ones are at peace and with God.

Arriving congregants saw a black-draped bier at the altar, surrounded by candles. The Sacred Ministers and servers entered as the choir chanted William Croft's haunting and beautiful Burial Sentences. This Requiem Mass setting was plainsong, evoking candlelit requiems of past centuries with its alternations of men's and women's voices, cantors with choir.



In his homily, guest priest Rev. Paul Hunter from St. Christopher's, Cobleskill, spoke of his favorite kind of music, jazz, because it's impossible to be sad when listening to jazz. Fr. Hunter explained that this music started as funeral music in Dixieland, when a jazz band played a slow, dirge-like march from the church to the cemetery. After the casket was settled, their tune would turn joyful, like "The Saints Go Marching In." This contrast perfectly expresses the Christian theology of death: "Death is at the same time tragedy and triumph."



Fr. Hunter went on to discuss how the three days of Halloween to All Souls' Day mirror the time of Good Friday to Easter. Halloween

is the day for remembering sin, the devil, death. All Saints' is the day to celebrate Christ's victory over death, the Church triumphant. All Souls' Day represents the tension and paradox of Christ's resurrection and our waiting for his return. Christ showed us that the only way to life is through the cross.

After the homily came the Necrology, when Kevin Decker read names of the departed, and family and friends lit candles in their memory. With each lit candle that soul came alive again in a warm moment of their memory. "The Souls of the Righteous" by Geraint Lewis, the Communion anthem, affirmed: "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God..."



We ended our remembrance for the dead with a time of living fellowship in Brian Taylor's home after Mass: snacks, drinks, and as always, good conversations.

On Sunday, Nov. 5, we celebrated The Solemnity of All Saints with its reminder of our own baptisms and of the humanity of the saints whom we honored. Guest preacher Rev. Landon Moore from the Diocese of Long Island spoke of saints demonstrating

the love God has for us. We are all called to be saints despite our flaws. Saints are not perfect: every saint has a past; every sinner has a future. Saints have trusted in God's plan in the face of adversity. Brian Taylor's closing voluntary, Louis Vierne's "Westminster Carillon," sent us out with energy and joy.

The saints give us all hope as we face life's challenges.

joan pearson

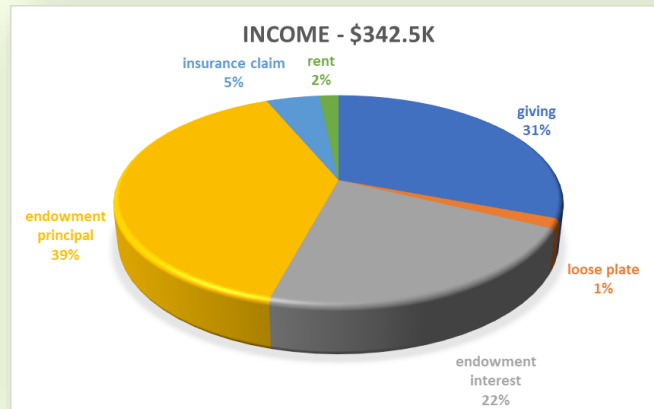


- TREASURER'S REPORT DECEMBER 2023 -

Dear Georgian's,

I am to report on the status of St. George's finances for 2023. As of the end of November we are pleased to have a good financial year, albeit with some challenges. I would like to present two pie charts that show our income and expenses YTD.

Let's start with the income. Please see the pie chart below which shows a breakdown of our income so far in 2023.

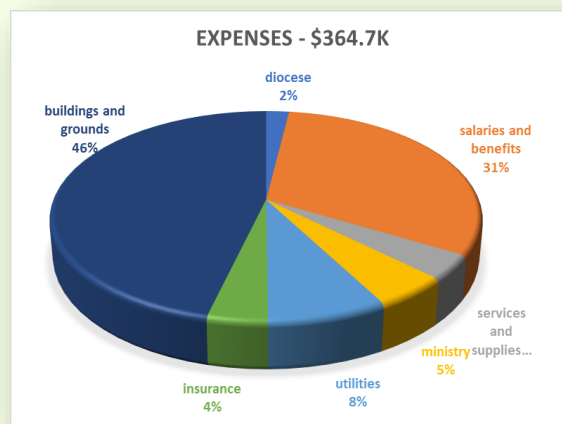


Our income to date is \$342.5K. Highlights:

- Our giving has been strong (31%) – above our budgeted amounts
- Our endowment interest income has also met budget

On the negative side, we have had to take about \$135K from our endowment principal to pay for building maintenance and repairs. These monies were put to good use per the wishes of our past parishioners. We paid for a new boiler for our beloved church, new electrical wiring to resolve a safety issue, repair to the church roof, updates to our Rectory for Father Tom, and other needed maintenance. Our Vestry has done a fabulous job in taking care of our buildings and welcoming our new Rector to St. George's.

Turning to our expenses to date, please see the next pie chart.



Our expenses so far this year are \$364.7K. You will see some of the challenges we faced. Our buildings and grounds require about ½ of our annual expenditures. Maintaining 5 buildings is very costly. We also have 4 employees, so salaries and benefits are a necessary part of our Georgian needs. In addition, we struggle with rising utility costs.

Looking forward, we are finalizing our 2024 budget. We foresee good potentials, but continuing challenges. However, I wish to stress that our financial condition is healthy. PLEASE consider prayerfully your pledge and other giving in 2024. This will help sustain our church as we all work with Father Tom to realize the necessary growth to continue the ongoing success of St. George's Church.

respectfully submitted jeffrey wengrovius

PHOTO ALBUM



Choir & spouses picnic at the Thomas' cottage on Caroga Lake.



Brian Taylor's informal chanting rehearsal with parishioners.



David Kennison inspects the choir loft with painters Jim Hope & Dave Palumbo.



Gloria photographed her co-workers Fred Ledger & Rich Unger "buttoning up" the Great Hall for winter.



The Great Litany in Procession on Sunday, December 3rd.



A Foyer's dinner in October at the home of Bob and Lynn Paska.

- SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -

Yes, we finally have reliable heat in the church! Our new church boiler was installed and brought on-line in October and is working beautifully, with great thanks to everyone who contributed generously to our emergency boiler campaign. This was a huge cost to the parish, over \$150,000 when we got done, as we kept finding more and more ancillary bits that were rotten and needed to be replaced. The boiler we finally installed is both a superior model to the old one and also higher efficiency, so we are hoping to use less natural gas this winter and in the future.



I thought you'd like to see a few photos of the installation and finished system.



The old boiler was crumbling, leaking and at the end of its life.



It was broken up and removed, leaving a giant mess.



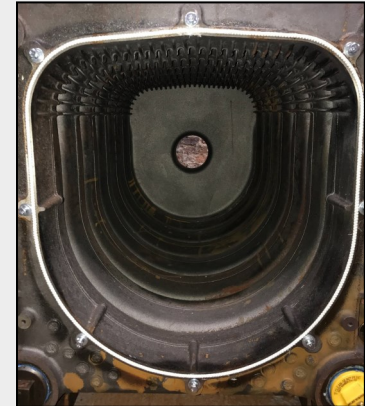
The concrete pad was repaired and painted in preparation.



With strong backs and lots of muscle, 8000lbs of boiler are lowered into the basement



Assembly begins! Eight sections are bolted together and sealed.



When operating, this firebox is full of white-hot flame!



A new condensate and feed water tank was installed, serving both the Church & Cranmer boilers.

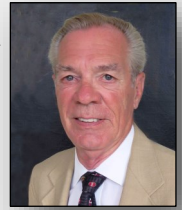


The completed installation, good for many years of service. Your warm pews all come from here!

With great affection, david

- JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -

In the past month we completed the installation of the new boiler for the sanctuary (and it appears to be working quite well); bids have been received for the repairing and painting of the sanctuary ceiling; the 3-phase electrical line to the organ has been replaced; and the last of the Insurance company's required corrective action items have been satisfied.



The Asset Management Committee, less the Junior Warden (i.e., Sean Albert, Gloria Kishton, and Rich Unger) held a marathon 3-hour meeting in which they discussed the committee's recommendations for the 2024 Maintenance and Repair Budget line items. Additionally, they developed recommendations for future short, medium and long range corrective and preventative actions to adequately steward our parish assets. Chief among those recommendations is the establishment of an action committee to pursue funding assistance through available governmental and private church preservation and historic site grants, and the initiation of the process of establishing a Capital Fund Campaign to kick off in 2025 to provide funding for those needs not satisfied via grants.

respectfully submitted, jon ewbank



MUSIC NOTES



The St. Cecilia Choir was busy preparing music for our principal Christmas Eve service. The Christ-Mass at 9:30 p.m. highlights both choir carols and congregational carols. At 10:00 p.m. The Christ-Mass offers more congregational carols and a choral setting of the ordinary, Missa Brevis no. 4, "Corde natus" by Canadian composer Healey Willan. This setting of the Mass is based on the Divinum Mysterium tune which is used for the hymn, Of the Father's Love Begotten. Our principal motet this night is O magnum mysterium, a Latin Renaissance piece by Spanish composer, Tomas Luis de Victoria.



Those attending our 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass for children and families enjoy a number of Christmas hymns and carols in this simpler form of the Mass as will those attending the Christmas Day Mass at 11:00 a.m.

Whatever Mass you choose on Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day, there is/was ample opportunity to raise your voice and give glory to the new-born king.

peace, dr. brian j. taylor

OUTREACH

So far this year, St. George's has donated two thousand nine hundred and seventy-four pounds of food to the hungry through its Little Red Wagon Sunday/SICM Collection. We have also been donating to the YWCA emergency shelter, which supports women and children who have escaped from an unsafe environment and arrive with nothing. Personal hygiene items are desperately needed. Thanks to Georgians for their generosity and to Carol Gaike for delivering these essential items to SICM and the YWCA.

paul smigelski

GARDEN MINISTRY



Brian Taylor hosted a luncheon (November 17) for Garden Ministry members who volunteer two mornings a week during nice weather, keeping church grounds tidy, including St. George's House. (L-R) Fr Pettigrew, Suzy Unger, Barb Wengrovius, Meg Hughes. Unable to attend: Joyce Cockerham, Jean Greenspan, Gloria Kishton.

meg hughes



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- Pattie Wareh
- Jeff Wengrovius

The Vestry

- David Kennison, *Sr. Warden*
- Jonathan Ewbank, *Jr. Warden*
- Sean Albert
- Carol Gaige
- Margaret Hughes, *Clerk*
- Sandra Hughes
- Gloria Kishton
- Marilyn (Lynn) Paska
- Paul Smigelski
- Richard Unger
- Jeffrey Wengrovius, *Treasurer*

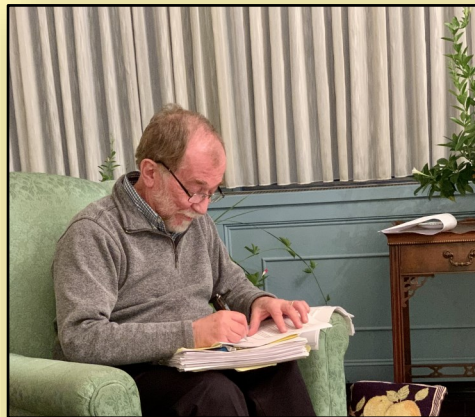
Administrative Assistant
Financial Secretary

Robert McCloskey

Director Music Ministry

Brian Taylor

HISTORIC MOMENT AT VESTRY THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023



Our 20th rector, Fr. Thomas J. Pettigrew, officially signed his contract with St. George's Church from Senior Warden, David Kennison, in this historic moment at the monthly Vestry meeting in October. A silent "round of applause" went up for the Search Committee who worked so hard for so long to see this arduous project to a happy conclusion.

Welcome, Fr. Tom!

lynn paska

