



THE GEORGIAN REPORT



Volume 17 Number 2

St. George's Episcopal Church Schenectady NY

June 2024

ST. GEORGE'S DAY

Georgians honored literally centuries of history on April 28! St. George's Day brought together the legend of St. George, our patron saint, with our rich parish story. The St. Andrew's Society joined our celebration as our roots come from both the Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church, thus the "Kirkin' O' the Tartans" before the offertory. While the list of Rectors of St. George's began with Fr. William Andrews in 1771, priests had been ministering to Anglicans in and around Schenectady as early as 1708: we can hardly imagine the effort it took for these faithful to plan and build our church.

In his sermon, Fr. Tom focused on the 289 years of St. George's, and the generosity of early benefactors like the Johnson family who made this building possible. Most important is the worship that has taken place here, the baptisms, weddings, funerals, the millions of prayers of hope, praise, thanksgiving. At its core the church is God's love, healing power, and grace. These give us encouragement that in our 290th year St. George's is still called to be here by God.



Our procession through the Stockade was glorious and needed only St. George on his steed to be complete. With the Schenectady Pipe Band calling Stockade residents out to watch, we moved through sunlit streets and back to the front lawn for a final blessing before a grand lunch in the Great Hall. Barb Wengrovius had set up beforehand; Chris Henry with Carol Gaige and her son arranged to freeze food from the Institution for this event. More food was provided by Meg Hughes, Wendy Madelone,

Carol Gaige, Suzy Unger, Sharon Trant, Sue Hartz, Lea Crow, Bonnie Daggett, Sandee Hughes, Joan Pearson, Mike Todt, Jon and Meredith Ewbank, David and Anne Kennison and Louisa Carr. Brian Taylor kept the coffee flowing. Carol Gaige, Meg Hughes, Sue Hartz, and Sandee Hughes worked in the kitchen, and Bill and Bonnie Daggett, Lea Crow, and Wendy Madelone jumped in for cleanup. Many hands got the work done.



"... we gather to celebrate, we take stock of our long history, and we seek to discern together the future to which God is calling us." -Fr. Tom

joan pearson

ST. GEORGE'S DAY





SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

James Smigelski is the youngest Georgian to offer his time and talent as a volunteer at St. George's. As a Boat Boy in our special Masses for the past year, and under the guidance of Thurifer Chris Henry, James has proven himself to be conscientious and knowledgeable in the job he is given.

The seven-year old is in the 1st grade at Sacandaga Elementary School and, like his Boat Boy duties, he takes learning very seriously. His favorite subject is math, and he says he hopes to be a scientist when he grows up.

Kicking the soccer ball around the backyard with his older brother Matthew is one of his favorite things to do, but he also admits to like playing with his Hot Wheels cars and Hess trucks.



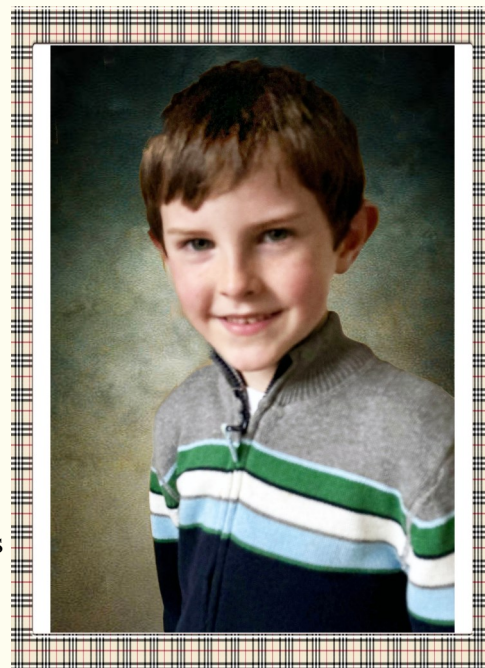
What does he like best about going to church at St. George's?

"Mommy (Louisa Carr) singing in the choir and marching out with her"to communion and at the end of Mass. He also likes sitting in the pew with his father, Paul Smigelski, and his other older brother Ryan.

What does he like best about being a Boat Boy? He didn't hesitate for a second. "Carrying the Boat, and Mr. Henry," he said.

St. George's is proud to have a young man like James as (a) parishioner and (b) volunteer. Proof positive that you're never too young be involved with your family's church.

lynn paska



BAPTISMS ON EASTER EVE



(L) Eric Bassant stands beaming with his newly baptised family (daughter) Arianna, (wife) Natasha, (son) Aiden, and (daughter) Chelsea.

(R) Ashton Busse is held by his parents Edward and Alexis Busse, and surrounded by his proud family.

Jim Wingate



FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK.....



I am sitting down to write my column for the Georgian Report on the Tuesday after Diocesan Convention Weekend and Corpus Christi Sunday. I know David Kennison in his contribution will talk more about the Convention as a deputy, so I will limit myself to just a few comments.

First, I thought this year's convention was a truly wonderful, peace-filled, event. During our time without a bishop, there were some contentious debates and divisive votes. This division was over removing the Diocesan Canons (local diocesan laws/rules) which prohibited same-sex marriage and prohibited clergy from attending them. At the time, it seemed like bringing resolutions to remove these canons, which conflicted with Episcopal Church policy, was the right thing to do. In the end, with 20/20 hindsight, it caused more strife, more anger, more conflict, than simply leaving the unenforceable language on the books.

In considering the business for this year's convention, Bishop Williamson wanted to focus on unity and deepening our relationships with one another before we considered any tough legislation. In the official call to convention, the Bishop asked that no resolutions pertaining to changing the Constitution or Canons of the Diocese be put forward. The Bishop can't stop any cleric or lay delegate from submitting resolutions, but in a spirit of goodwill, there were no amendment resolutions brought forward.

Deep, meaningful relationships are the heart of community, which is both a wonderful blessing and a challenge to maintain. The Church, whether at the diocesan level, or in the local parish, is an intentional community of a great diversity of people. Or, as the prayer book puts it "all sorts and conditions." It is only within authentic, meaningful community that tough conversations can be had. It is only because of deep, authentic community, that at the end of the day we can agree or disagree with one another and still love one another.

For the Convention theme this year the Bishop chose "Dwelling together in the heart of God." To dwell together is to live intentionally in community with one another across our differences. The Hebrew word translated "tabernacle" implies the idea of dwelling or living in. In the Old Testament, God "tabernacled" in the midst of his people, literally, dwelt in the Tent of Meeting at the center of the Israelite camp. Now, by the Holy Spirit, God tabernacles in our hearts, and calls us to dwell together with him and one another.

To focus now on dwelling together, rather than taking up the tough issues that lay ahead of us, gives us the time and space to grow in love and gratitude for our neighbor. C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), the great Anglican theologian and apologist, once wrote "Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses." In our prayer book, when we renew our Baptismal Covenant, we promise, with God's help, to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being." (BCP '79, pg. 304-5) We human beings are masters at pointing out differences, we do it almost naturally. But we find it harder to point out similarities as something to be celebrated and lifted up. The reality is that we often have more in common with one another despite our diversity, starting from the very concept that we are human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, beloved by God, and made part of his family through our Baptism into the death and resurrection of our Lord.

Our bishop wants us to focus on dwelling together in the heart of God and to realize that what we share in common unites us in stronger bonds than the issues that seek to divide us. As we seek to dwell together in the heart of God, we seek to grow in love, respect, and gratitude for one another because we recognize that we have been brought together by God, as the Body of Christ, for the building up of his Kingdom, to the Glory of our Heavenly Father. Lord, give us the grace!

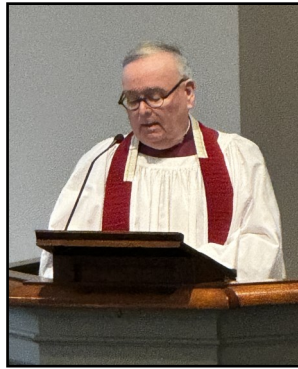
My second comment is to point out that St. George's is proudly back working together to support the work of our Bishop and the Diocese. At Convention, Bishop Williamson appointed our very own Dr. Brian Taylor as a member of the Commission on Ministry. The Commission, colloquially called "The COM" by those of us who suffered, endured, and were passed through it, is the Diocesan body responsible for the many steps involved in the ordination process for deacons and priests. The COM handles the task of helping those who feel a call to Holy Orders (ordination) work through their discernment, education, and the necessary consents from the Bishop and Standing Committee.

I am also humbled to report that I was elected to serve as a member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese. The Standing Committee serves primarily as the Bishop's Council of Advice. Additionally, it recommends persons for ordination, consents to the disposition of property, and gives the bishop advice and consent on the judicial sentence, among other canonical responsibilities. I'm honored to be elected and look forward to working with Bishop Jeremiah.

As we come now to the Summertime, I know many folks will be headed to camps and vacation spots. I pray you have a great time, but do please remember us here in your prayers. Pray for God's continued blessing and support for the work which we seek to do in his name and to his glory!

*Faithfully in Christ,
Thomas +*

Fr. Tom's Institution



March 15th was a gloomy, dismal day. But by late afternoon it was Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve and the Fourth of July all rolled into one....as we celebrated the Institution and Induction of Fr. Thomas John Pettigrew as our 20th rector, in a two-hour Mass followed by a wonderful reception for 120 people in the Shaw Lounge and tasty buffet dinner in The Great Hall. Jeremiah Williamson, the newly elected 10th Bishop of the Diocese of Albany, presided over the event.

We cannot identify every person who helped make the night successful without inadvertently omitting the name of someone who organized or worked hard in the task he/she was given. So, we won't. Instead, we'll dish out a plateful of THANKS to EVERYONE who made this "a night to remember." You know who you are, and you know that you contributed to this historic evening.... whether it was behind the scenes or up front. It didn't take a mountain, just a group of Georgians working together.

A standing ovation for the Hospitality Committee who toiled in the kitchen before, during and long after the reception and dinner were just a pleasant memory. And, a round of applause for our new rector, Fr. Tom. We speak for everyone: you were worth waiting for!

*gloria kishton
lynn paska*

EASTER 2024

A kind of holiday whiplash touched Lent and Easter this year, after our warm, rainy Christmas transitioned to the conundrum of Ash Wednesday on Valentine's Day. Then a Lenten Quiet Day on March 2, led by Brynna Carpenter Nardone, eased our brains from those unavoidable daily concerns to a focus on our spiritual health. An unadorned and beautiful Choral Evensong closed Quiet Day.

The massive preparations for Fr. Tom's Institution on March 15th blended right into Holy Week, but no one was ready for snow on Palm Sunday. After our green Christmas that was something of a holiday weather mashup, but the snowblower started, Tommy cleared the sidewalks, and we carefully paraded with our palms from the Great Hall into the church. The sacred ministers sang The Passion, ending with Christ in His tomb and a guard at the stone. Our guest preacher, The Very Reverend William W. Willoughby, said of Holy Week, that "... all week we are receiving active grace, we just need to walk into it."

Maundy Thursday began one liturgy across three days in slow motion, in Fr. Willoughby's explanation. The Blessed Sacrament was venerated, the servers removed their vestments, and the altar was stripped to the stark words of Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In the darkened sanctuary this powerful symbolism of Jesus' abandonment was lifted by the glow of candles in the Lady Chapel, asking for worshipers to "Stay here and watch with me." St. George's watch ended at midnight.

The Good Friday Liturgy began at noon, the sanctuary quiet, opening devotions in silence. Close your eyes and you could have been in a medieval church with a cappella singing and solemn prayers. We heard the Passion chanted again by the ministers, ending with Jesus' death. We venerated the cross to The Reproaches of Tomás Luis de Victoria, took Communion with reserved wafers, and left in silence to await the Great Vigil and the New Fire.

At the Saturday Vigil it's always exciting to watch the new fire being kindled outside, and from it to see the Pascal Candle lit and then our own candles. This year Fr. Tom introduced a three-taper candle into the ceremony, which led the procession to the altar. We heard the great stories from the Old Testament and, as has been the ancient tradition, celebrated the sacrament of baptism for these five celebrants from infant to adult: Ashton Theodore Busse, the infant son of Edward and Alexis Busse; and four members of the Bassant family, Natasha Bassant and her three children, Arianna Alyssa, Chelsea Alesia, and Aiden Ashton, while their father, Eric, looked on. In his sermon, Fr. Willoughby said that there is nothing more beautiful in the life of the church than baptism, as it is our primary witness to God's love. After the service we enjoyed a reception in the Great Hall thanks to the work of Carol Gage, Jon Ewbank, Gloria Kishton, Barb Wengrovius and Brian Taylor.

Alleluias dominated on Easter Sunday, in the prayers, hymns, anthems, and propers. They emphasized what Fr. Tom repeated in his sermon, that we came rejoicing in God's victory over death. God's love conquered death. We sang much-loved Easter hymns and concluded with the joyous sounds of Brian Taylor playing Widor's Toccata.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

joan pearson





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Thank you to the Reverend William W. Willoughby who celebrated Easter Week with us this year.



THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION was observed on Monday evening, April 8th, with a Mass at the Cathedral of All Saints for which Fr. Tom Pettigrew preached and Brian Taylor was organist. The Georgians attending were Wendy Madelone, Daniel Miess, Anne and David Kennison.

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING held a parish Quiet Day on March 2nd that began with Mass and ended with Evensong. On May 21st, they offered a “come and see tea” in the Great Hall for parish women. Meredith Ewbank, Lea Crow and Gerri Moore are among the members; they are looking for more women to discern. **THE SOCIETY OF MARY** meets the 3rd Sunday of the month at 9:15AM in the Lady Chapel for the recitation of the rosary. Fr. Tom Pettigrew is Ward Superior; Wendy Madelone is Ward Secretary. Current members are Lea Crow, Anne and David Kennison, Meg Hughes, Daniel Miess, Chris Henry, Kevin Decker, Suzy Unger, Mother Lisa Schoonmaker, and Brian Taylor. New members are welcome; extra books are available. **OUTREACH** reminds you that our Little Red Wagon/SICM collection of non-perishable food donations will be distributed to the food pantry as well as personal hygiene items for the YWCA emergency shelter. Your generosity is very much appreciated! The first **AFTER-CHURCH FORUM** took place on May 5th with Fr. Tom Pettigrew presiding over a Healing Forum which centered on the meaning of the sacramental act of laying on of hands and anointing for healing, and when it is appropriate to receive this sacrament.



IN MEMORIAM

1935-2024

Rest in Peace

Eugene (Gene) DeLong

You are missed by your church family and choir





PHOTO ALBUM



The last snowfall of the season brought out our shovelers Fr. Tom Pettigrew and Senior Warden David Kennison.



More Trees arborists planted a serviceberry tree in front of St. George's House, as donated by Gloria Kishton and Bob Lemmerman.



Jamie Taft gave a presentation on birds on May 29th. His high school friend assisted, helping with the computer to show images and generated songs of birds.



Jeff Wengrovius, Brian Taylor and Joan Pearson performing music at Fr Tom's institution.



Parishioners enjoyed a soup-and-bread lunch as part of our March 2nd Quiet Day, as sponsored by the Daughters of the King.



Parishioners Bill and Bonnie Daggett enjoy a Georgian reception in the Great Hall.

- SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT - CONVENTION 2024 -

Fresh from the 156th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Albany, I'd like to bring you up to speed on things. Together, with Fr. Tom's report elsewhere in this newsletter, I trust we'll have hit the high points.

This was the first convention in 3 years at which we had a bishop – The Right Reverend Jeremiah Williamson, the 10th Bishop of Albany, who was consecrated on February 28th of this year. Bp. Jeremiah's presence was a big draw for everyone and he wowed us all with his caring and compassionate leadership style.

Convention always opens on Friday evening with the Bishop's Address, although this time it was preceded by a status report on the Cathedral of All Saints from Dean Leander Harding. The cathedral is the seat of the bishop and the liturgical center of the diocese – our cathedral is our church. Cathedral attendance is not yet back to pre-Covid levels but there is a positive trend especially at major feast days. An aging building infrastructure and slim finances make a perilous combination - a condition felt by most parishes in the diocese.



Convention was held at Silver Bay YMCA, Lake George.

Bp. Jeremiah's address began with chanting the Great Litany, something we at St George's know so well, but a first for some delegates. We moved to a time of group prayer – for the diocese, for our parishes and for our individual ministries; we sang hymns together. Clearly, this bishop bases his vision and his leadership in prayer. His message was one of unity amongst all people and across the Church. Just as the apostle Paul wrote [1 Cor 12,21-27], *"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."*, each of us in the diocese needs each other and the Episcopal Church needs Albany. Bp. Jeremiah said *"Love is the most powerful force in the universe"* and expressed his deep love for all. He said that *"being with you in this diocese is better than I ever could have imagined"*. Our parishes and our diocese can and will grow by our presence and by our love for each other. Visitors to our churches will see that, feel it and want to be part of it.



St. George's delegate team: Fr. Tom Pettigrew, Anne Kennison, Bob Paska, David Kennison.

Saturday began with the Convention Eucharist, enhanced by a warm-up from the Pakistani congregation of St Paul's Albany. Everyone joined in their enthusiastic worship style, even if we didn't understand all the Urdu words. The auditorium was rocking and rolling!

A number of elections and appointments included Fr Tom's election to the Standing Committee and as a delegate to General Convention and Brian Taylor's appointment to the Commission on Ministry.

Reports were given on Diocesan Youth Ministries, centered at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center. Beaver Cross attendance grows each year (over 600 in 2023 and 443 so far in 2024). CtK continues operations but has not yet reached break-even financially, losing \$42K in 2023 and projected loss of \$97K in 2024.

The DoA 2025 budgeted income is \$1.829M, higher than 2023 and slightly below 2024 (\$1.117M). In 2024, there is a projected budget deficit of \$106K. The 2023 loss was \$151K. 2025 projects a \$16K loss.

The Clergy Stipend Schedule (cash salary) is being raised by 4% for 2025. The diocese will now endeavor to enforce the clergy stipend schedule and the Parish Diocesan Assessment, a move that will affect a number of parishes in the diocese.

With great affection, david

- TREASURER'S REPORT -

St. George's finances are a concern. While our giving and other sources of income are relatively flat, the church's expenses are increasing steadily. This is driven by inflation, the necessary cost of having a full time Rector, and the needs of our 5 buildings. Unfortunately, the bottom line is that we will likely withdraw \$100,000 to \$150,000 from our RBC endowment fund principal in 2024 to pay our bills. This is unsustainable in the long term and represents a significant risk to the future of our church.



Recognizing this threat, our Finance Committee is meeting on a regular basis to find short term solutions to reduce spending and, most importantly, to reverse the long term trends to ensure our future. Note that the Finance Committee members are Jeff Wengrovius (treasurer), David Kennison (Senior Warden), Jon Ewbank (Junior Warden), Jon Pearson (manager of our endowments), Jerry Trant (Vestry), and Father Tom (advisor). Our Financial Secretary, Bob McCloskey, provides cash flow analyses. During a recent meeting, we suggested some improvements to slow spending. These reductions were presented to the Vestry at the end of May. There may be some pain associated with these suggestions. For example, we spent \$1,150 to have the grand procession on St. George's Day. We only received a \$10 contribution specified to cover this event. Thus, one of our proposals would end this procession. We agreed that it is more important to heat our church than to pay for bagpipers, sad but reality. Please also note that the Vestry is exploring opportunities to increase rents to outside groups in our unused spaces.

Focusing on the long term trends of flat giving and rising expenses, the Finance Committee is reviewing how we invest our endowment at RBC. We currently have a 60/40 stock/bond allocation. This was designed to grow the size of our endowment with stocks, while generating cash from bonds to pay bills. However, we really need more cash and our endowment's growth is being eroded by having to take principal payments. We are performing analyses on RBC's performance and will likely ask them to change the allocation to a 40/60 stock/bond ratio. We are also looking at which investment company can best serve our church.

These are difficult financial times for St. George's. We want to do so much more with our ministries, but are handcuffed due to lack of money. In the meantime, as we struggle to close our money gap, we ask everyone to carefully consider their giving. PLEASE keep your pledge commitments up to date as we continue to address these issues.

respectfully submitted dr. jeffrey wengrovius



- MUSIC NOTES -



I would like to thank all those who attended my organ concert on June 9th. I was pleased to have the opportunity to offer this concert to the parish and the wider community.

The organ at St. George's Church was built and installed by the Moeller Organ Co., formerly of Hagerstown, Maryland, in 1982. It was refurbished in 2014 by the Kerner & Merchant Co. of Syracuse, New York in 2014 which still services the organ. Ben Merchant personally comes to tend to the organ at least twice a year.



The organ has three 61 note manuals (keyboards). By comparison, a piano has only 88 keys so organ manuals are shorter but there are more of them. There is also a 32 note pedalboard which allows the organist to play with both hands and feet. The organ has 45 ranks, or sets of pipes. The total number of pipes is 2493. Provision has been made on the organ console for one additional stop that has never been installed.

While it is enjoyable to play organ recitals and concerts, the main purpose of the organ is to accompany music for the worship service of our church, a task this particular instrument performs admirably.

peace, dr. brian j. taylor



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BOOK CLUB

Upcoming Book Discussions

On July 14, the All on the Same Page Book Club will meet after Mass to discuss *Holmes, Marple, Poe*, by Brian Sitts and James Patterson. Recommended by Wendy Madelone, it is a suspenseful and engaging detective novel starring three glamorous private investigators working as a team in New York City.

Looking beyond that, on September 15, the book up for discussion will be *Nickel Boys*, by Colson Whitehead. It is a sobering novel based on facts about a reform school in Florida. Pattie Wareh recommends it.

On November 17 the group will address *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, written by Anthony Doerr and recommended by Louisa Carr. This inventive scientific fiction novel pulls together three seemingly unrelated settings several centuries apart.

Meg Hughes or Pattie Wareh can be contacted with questions. All are welcome at the meetings, which are held in the Howe Library in the Great Hall.

meg hughes

pattie wareh

CROWNING CEREMONY FOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

This most beautiful event, the Crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary, took place on Sunday, May 12th at the end of the 10AM Mass. Introduction to the ceremony included these words, "As we acclaim Mary, the Mother of God, as our queen and as the Mother of the Church, let us imitate her example and be attentive to the word of God." Fr. Tom placed the magnificent crown of flowers on the image of Mary, the Blessed Mother, to the anthem of "Ave Maria."

lynn paska

