



# THE GEORGIAN REPORT



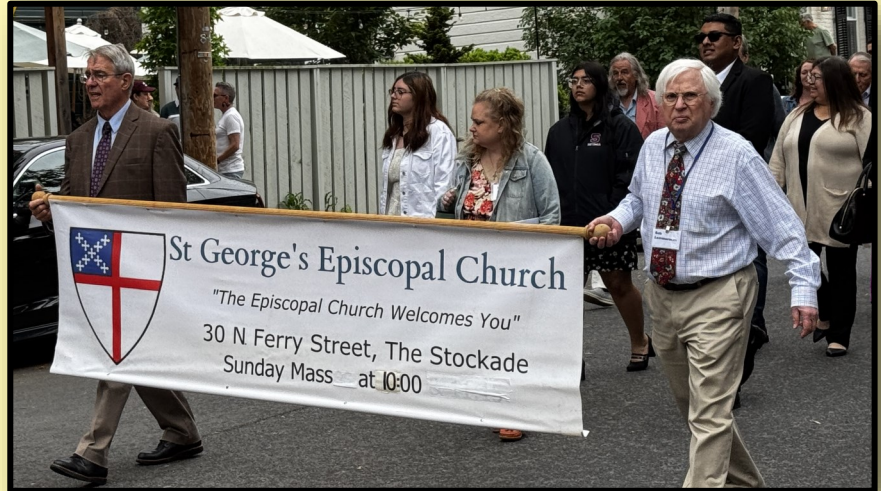
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St. George's Episcopal Church Schenectady NY

June 2025

## ST. GEORGE'S DAY

Some clouds and drops of rain only sweetened the mood at St. George's Patronal Festival on May 18. Worshipers arrived hearing the music of the Schenectady Pipe Band, and a few minutes later Fr. Pettigrew formally welcomed the St. Andrew's Society, whose tartans represented the Scottish heritage of St. George's. Our English roots are solid: David Kennison read out the names of the Founders and Rectors of St. George's, the first Rector dating back to 1771.



In his sermon, Fr. Tom spoke about the 290 years of ministry, prayer, worship that has taken place here, the baptisms, weddings, funerals, the smiles, joy, tears, sadness. St. George's has gone through some difficult times, being used as barracks during the Revolution, and enduring periodic crises in membership. This is our history, rebirth but never stagnation. The calendar sets St. George's Day as April 23, always during the Easter season. This is the message of Easter, the source of hope, that challenges precede new life. We can trust that as long as God has use of this place, it will go on.



The St. Andrew's Society presented tartans to be blessed, the tartans then carried aloft during our cheerful procession around the Stockade at the conclusion of Mass. The world – at least the neighborhood – stopped and smiled at our progress around Union Street and back to Front Street for a celebration lunch in the Great Hall, open to our Stockade neighbors, the last gathering there until after construction is completed. Many thanks to Bob Falco and Carol Gaike for moving this inside at the last minute.

Much of the fun of the day was from the voices of children. We are blessed to have these sounds of the future again in church!

joan pearson

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## SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS



Daniel Miess first attended St. George's in December 2023. He was born in Rochester NY and raised in New Jersey and has subsequently lived in Southern California, Maine, New Hampshire, and Arizona before returning to his native state. Daniel works from home as a customer service representative for Charter Communications in Rotterdam.

The road to the Episcopal Church began as a young child. He grew up in a Pentecostal/Charismatic Church, where his father was an ordained minister. Daniel's father, Reverend Philip Kenneth Miess, who died in 2016, was a Pentecostal minister. "I appreciated his level of devotion to his faith," said Daniel. "He prayed every day, read scripture, and after he retired from the ministry, often would teach Sunday school."

For a few years, in his early 20's, Daniel attended a United Methodist Church, where he became quite comfortable with liturgical churches. For a time later, he walked away from the Christian faith, only to reconsider its role in his life after the death of his father.

In 2016, he started attending the Episcopal Church. He began attending St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Concord, New Hampshire and since then, has attended Episcopal Churches in Southern California, Arizona, and Maine before ending up at Saint George's Episcopal Church. He has found St. George's to be "a warm, welcoming parish. The people genuinely care about you. Developed friendships are genuine."

He has this to say about Schenectady, "I like the Italian bakeries, the pizzas and kosher delis are good, and it's a fairly multi-cultural area." He also appreciates the colonial architecture. However, he feels that the city could advertise itself better.

While he has few negative things to say about Saint George's, he would like to see the greater Episcopal Church advertise itself better and for the local parish find ways to engage with local colleges and Universities, as well as with local Guyanese and other West Indian communities.

A voracious reader, Daniel enjoys books on religion and theology. "It broadens your mind and perspective." Creative writing and drawing are other interests. Daniel and his late husband, Kelly, who had been married for 10 ½ years, liked traveling, especially to Natural Parks: Arcadia, Bryce Canon, Zion, Casa Verde, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Sequoia, you name it...they were there.

Daniel is an acolyte most Sundays and assists frequently on Thursdays during Healing Mass. He has this to say about serving on the altar, "Serving on the altar gives you a new prospective about the Mass. You're not just a member of the congregation, you're part of the whole experience."

*lynn paska*



## FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK.....



**Dear Georgians & Friends,**

It's been a busy season here at St. George's. Over the last few months, and thanks to the hard work of a great number of folks, we have entered into a lease agreement with the YWCA. The YWCA will be using our Parish Hall second floor as an Early Childhood Learning Center and Day-care. We'll have shared space, which we both will have access to use on the first floor. This arrangement is a benefit to both St. George's and the YWCA and I hope that you are as excited about our common future as I am!

Renovation work will take place throughout the remainder of the Summer, with the YWCA moving in their daycare program in September. A reminder that during the renovation period it is important that no one enter the building without an escort from the construction company.

If you need to access the building please call the Parish Office to make arrangements through me. Once renovation is completed, and programs start, there will be certain restrictions on our ability to enter the building during their hours of operation. Some of these details will need to be worked out between St. George's and the YWCA. I'll pass along more information in the future as we work out those details.

In other exciting news, I am really happy to report that Bishop Williamson has assigned our parish a deacon! The Reverend Deacon Abby Bee will join our staff beginning in July. Deacon Abby was ordained as a vocational Deacon in June 2023. (Vocational Deacon means that she is not seeking ordination as a priest, but feels that God has called her to the work and ministry of the Diaconate.) Deacons have a special vocation to minister to the poor, the sick, the weak, and the lonely. Their chief work is to "bring the needs, concerns, and hopes of the community to the attention of the congregation and to encourage people to help meet those needs." This is manifested in a variety of ways, and each deacon's work is shaped uniquely to what God has called them.

Deacon Abby's and I will work out the details of how she will integrate her diaconal ministry into the life of the parish. One of the most visible ways you'll see her is during the liturgy on Sunday mornings. She will read the Gospel, bid the confession, prepare the Altar at the offertory, do the ablutions after Communion, and give the dismissal. This are the liturgical "prerogative" of the deacon. She'll also be in the rotation to preach on a regular basis.

I look forward to the wonderful blessings and new perspectives and ideas that Deacon Abby will bring to our parish and I hope you will join me in giving her a warm Georgian welcome!

*Faithfully, Thomas+*



# SUNDAY SCHOOL

## *Sunday School for first to sixth grade students began in September.*

We are still working out some logistics but what we do have is a wonderful, albeit small, group of children, an enthusiastic, veteran Sunday School teacher (Sharon Trant), and an amazing older student (Arianna) who assists. We were joined in April by a fun-loving co-teacher who is able to bring music as well as knowledge to the classroom (Bob Lemmerman).

Our curriculum is the Episcopal Children's Curriculum that was developed by the Virginia Theological Seminary. It is a curriculum that Sharon used when she taught her children many years ago at St. Paul's in Salem, Virginia. It is a three year program with topics that include Bible stories, Sacraments and what the curriculum refers to as historical events in the Episcopal Church. We are using Year 1, the Shell Year. Ask any of the students and they will tell you the shell is a symbol for Baptism.



We began the year reading about some of God's chosen people. In addition to using our booklet and worksheets, we started learning how to find the stories in the Bible. Hopefully, you got to check out our "Guess Who" bulletin board this past Fall. Advent brought our study of the Advent wreath and Advent calendar. We had a recess around Christmas and picked up in Epiphany with our study of Baptism. Perhaps you saw our papers on the Bulletin Board. We learned about Jesus being baptized, and studied the promises made in Baptism. During Lent we are focusing on how we think about our Baptismal promises during Lent. We toured the exquisite Stations of the Cross, completed a Lenten booklet and studied HolyWeek day by day.

After Easter, we will be starting to learn about our Rite 1 Liturgy. Just think how nicely this will tie into Father Tom's forums on the liturgy!

We are still trying to find the best place to meet, the most convenient time to meet, where to keep our supplies, and how to showcase what we have learned. As you have noticed, we started in the Shaw Lounge meeting every week during coffee hour and showcasing our work on a bulletin board in the Great Hall. Now we are meeting twice a month at 9 am in the Acolyte vesting area. At Easter, we will decide where and when works best for the students or if we want to try a third option.

Many of you have been wondering why we aren't meeting in the upstairs classrooms. The answer is two-fold. First, the vestry is looking at using the upstairs area for other purposes and the rooms are currently being cleaned out. Prior to April, the main reason we were meeting in an open area within view of other parish activity was because we did not have a second adult assisting in the classroom. Now, that we have two adult instructors, we are preparing to move into a classroom in Cranmer Hall. Of course, that will take time. Furniture, books and oh so many things need to be packed and moved and spaces need to be reallocated. Church school along with all of the parish is being patient.

We are hoping to make sure we nurture all our young people. Parents with younger toddlers and pre-schoolers, please let Fr. Tom or Sharon know if you would be interested in a once a month Sunday School during half of the service for your children 18 months- kindergarten. A time to give you a peaceful time to worship and a time for your children to play, hear a Bible story, and do a simple craft.

Sunday School is such an important ministry. We hear it in our Baptismal Covenant as we promise to "continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers." To quote the ECC manual, "We are called to follow Jesus, the Son of God, who lived among us as teacher, preacher, and healer. Through his powerful example, Christians have come to understand that the act of teaching is fundamental to our faith."

Sharon Trant



# EASTER 2025

Chatting, excited worshipers packed St. George's Great Hall on Palm Sunday, eager for the start of Holy Week. Our cheerful, untidy procession marched to church; exuberant opening hymns started the Mass, which became somber as the ministers and choir sang the Passion.

The Reverend Canon Keith Schmidt, guest preacher, was candid in his assessment of Palm Sunday: It starts "happy clappy" and then turns dark. The people of Jerusalem who were so welcoming on Sunday had "buyer's remorse" by Thursday. They expected Jesus to "send Rome packing" with his message of love. On the other hand, Rome expected crucifixion to end Jesus, but he confounded them when he lived on.

Maundy Thursday, remembering Jesus' last meal and his abandonment, stripped the altar, and darkened the church, the Lady Chapel lit with candles for those who stayed to pray and watch. The Good Friday Liturgy continued in bleakness: an unadorned altar, no organ, music led by the choir, and communion in one kind. The Passion was again sung by the ministers and choir, Rev. Schmidt in his sermon reminding us that there is no Easter without Good Friday. The cross that once was a symbol of failure now represents salvation.

The Great Vigil of Easter on Saturday evening saw the new fire lit, the Paschal Candle blessed, lights shared, and the great stories read. As if planned, the skies opened as Daniel Miess read about The Flood and a tremendous downpour fell on the Stockade. Rev. Schmidt preached that Holy Week reminds us how badly things can go wrong. The Vigil began with one candle, its flame shared, a symbol of the resurrected Christ to bring light and hope, a path out of darkness. After the service we enjoyed a wonderful feast in the Great Hall, organized by Carol Gaige with the help of dedicated Georgians like Jon Ewbank.

On a glorious Easter Day we sang our favorite hymns and heard endless Alleluias. Fr. Tom focused on Mary Magdalene in his sermon, a woman who was there to grieve and maybe assumed someone had taken his body. She didn't recognize him until he called her name. Jesus calls all our names; he gives us all hope and peace. Brian Taylor sent us off with the joyous sound of the spectacular Toccata by Charles-Marie Widor.

Visitors to St. George's see and hear these beautiful services and I hope they all feel closer to God as a result. Many, many hours of work behind the scenes went into preparing for all the aspects of Holy Week. We all give thanks for the time and talents of our dedicated Georgians.

***Alleluia! Christ is Risen! !!***

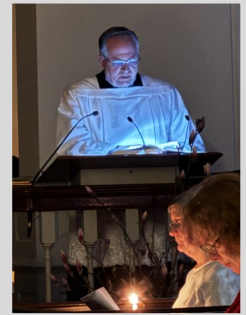
*joan pearson*







*Holy Week Readers*







## HOSPITALITY SPRING 2025



Members of the Hospitality Committee (with the help of many parishioners) completed the task of sorting, packing and storing the items that lived in the Great Hall and kitchen. Items no longer useful were donated or trashed. The space is now ready for whatever work is planned by the Y.

The spring we have had “elevated” coffee hours for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. We are officially out of the Great Hall until September. The first coffee hour/reception held in Cranmer House was hosted by Kevin Decker and the Society of Mary. Thanks to all the work she has done getting that space ready. We will continue to hold coffee hour there until we move outside for the summer.

This year the St. George’ Day luncheon an edit. With the Great Hall kitchen empty and our festival day later than usual Father Tom suggested a picnic. Sandwiches and salads on the lawn was the goal. Unfortunately, weather in upstate NY is fickle and a last minute \*plain B\* had to be implemented. Luckily no construction had started so we were able to move into the Great Hall one last time. Thank you to everyone who helped make that change in plans happen.

sandee hughes



## BOOK CLUB MEETING JULY 20th



You don’t have to be a cat lover to appreciate the Japanese bestseller *We’ll Prescribe You a Cat* . . . but it can’t hurt. Curious? Pick up a copy and join the book club discussion on July 20 during coffee hour.

Author Syou Ishida has woven together a series of five loosely related fictional tales about people seeking solace at an unusual clinic. They go in expecting advice or medical care and walk out holding a cat carrier. The patients are puzzled at first but quickly learn about the power of the human-animal bond. It’s a fun book and offers a peek into modern Japanese society.

The book was recommended by Lea Crow. Speak with her or Meg Hughes if you’re interested to learn more.

meg hughes



## - MUSIC NOTES -



As we come to the end of the choir season I once again thank the St. Cecilia Choir for their work. They have maintained a regular schedule of singing at each Sunday Mass as well as holy days, Evensongs and this year two opportunities to sing at our diocesan cathedral. Although they will be on summer hiatus until September the choir will come out once this summer to sing the Mass for St. Mary the Virgin Day, known to some as Assumption Day, on Friday evening, August 15th.



dr. brian j. taylor



# PHOTO ALBUM



Visiting Jamie Taft



## - SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -

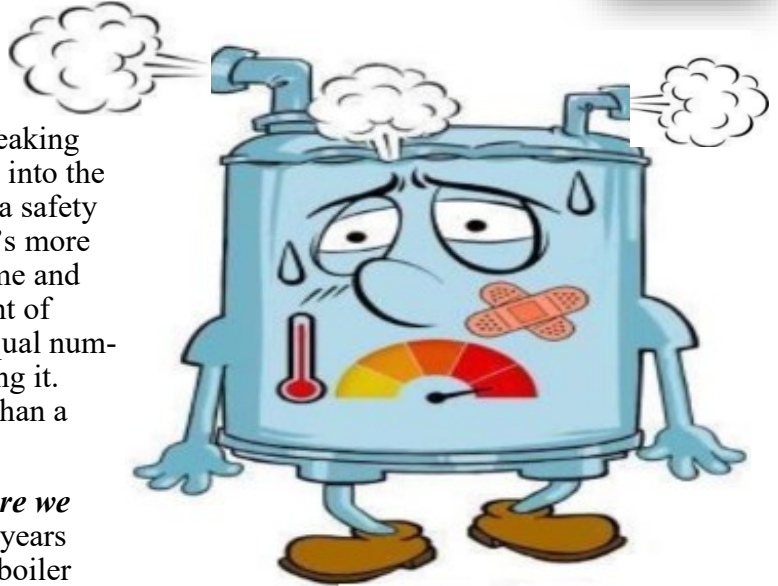
### **The LAST Boiler Campaign, Revisited**

I know you may be tired of hearing about our boiler campaign, but this may be a good time to answer some questions.

This past winter was the end of the line for the boiler in Cramer House. We babied it and patched it and even sprinkled it with Holy Water, just to get it through the winter. It has served us well for almost 40 years but its time has come and it's ready to be recycled into something else.



***What's wrong with the Cranmer boiler and why can't it just be fixed?*** There are a lot of problems. It has severe internal corrosion, it is leaking rusty water onto the floor, all the bolts are rusted into the cast iron and snap off, the pressure relief plates (a safety function) are blown out and ready to fail. There's more certainly, but you get the idea. Given enough time and money, everything is fixable, but with the amount of problems that we can see, we know there's an equal number that we cannot see until we start disassembling it. That's huge labor and parts cost, possibly more than a new boiler, with no guarantee of success.



***Didn't we just buy a boiler 2 years ago? Why are we doing it again?*** We did indeed replace a boiler 2 years ago – but that was for the Church. That Church boiler and this Cranmer boiler are virtual twins, originally installed at the same time and serviced identically. Two years ago, the Church boiler exhibited the exact same problems. When we raised the money to replace that and opened it up during removal, we encountered all the problems we hadn't seen from the outside. This is how we know what we're dealing with this time. Back then, our boiler contractor strongly recommended that we replace both boilers at the same time but we didn't have the money and it was mid-winter. So, we've struggled along for 2 more years, knowing the Cranmer boiler would soon die. And, here we are.

***I've heard that the Church and Cranmer boilers are interconnected so one boiler can heat both buildings, so why can't we use the new Church boiler we already have and not replace the Cranmer boiler at all?*** Yes, the Church and Cranmer boilers are indeed interconnected. It's a beautifully designed system. If one fails, with some turning of huge valves, one boiler can heat both buildings in an emergency. This means a very limited time until repairs can be made. Neither boiler is large enough to do this on a continual basis. It'd be like running your car's engine at full speed, gas pedal to the floor, 24 hrs a day. Your car's engine wouldn't last long and neither would the boiler. We'd then have 2 failed boilers to replace.

***Aren't there any cheaper alternatives that we can use?*** We explored a number of options when we replaced the Church boiler, all of which apply also to Cranmer. We evaluated solar cells, heat pumps, electric radiant panels, geothermal, high-efficiency condensing boilers. All of them had major installation costs for a facility that was originally designed for steam, with piping and radiators in place. A new steam boiler was the cheapest, fastest and easiest.

***We're retired and on a fixed income, which in this economy is looking a little shaky right now. How can we commit to giving more money?*** That's certainly true for many of us. We're not asking anyone to give more than you can afford, but we are asking everyone to take a piece of this effort so that we are working together as a church family. It's all about stewardship of St George's. St. Luke 12:48 wrote, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required." Some can afford more, some less, but we'll only succeed if we have efforts from everyone.

*With great affection, david*



# TONI CILBERTI: HER LIFE AS A CENTENARIAN

## Happy 100th Birthday Toni !!!!!



- ★ Born on Easter Sunday, April 12, 1925.
- ★ Became engaged to Nicholas in 1946.
- ★ Married Nicholas on October 5, 1947 at St. George's with Fr. Kirby officiating.
- ★ Started attending St. George's with her future in-laws.
- Fondly remembers her years at St. George's (a) making plum pudding in the kitchen with Rosemary van der Hoof
- ★ (b) working on rummage sales, in the church store, and at the art show, church dinners with other Georgians
- Raising two daughters, Deborah Ann and Laurie Carla.
- ★ Lived all through the Fr. Kirby era, "he was out of this world and hard to describe".
- Has been bowling every year since she was 17, also enjoys square dancing, ballroom dancing, tennis; received a
- ★ gold medal for shuffleboard and bowling last year in Cortland NY; has participated in the Senior Olympics every year except for COVID and/or broken bones.
- ★ 2017 received the Schenectady County lifetime achievement award for volunteerism, and carried the torch for the opening ceremonies of the NYS Olympics.
- 2021 given the DeWitt-Clinton Masonic Award for community services presented to non-masonic person .credits
- ★ Bob McClosky, a member of St. George's Masonic Lodge #6 with sponsoring her trip to the World War 2 Museum in New Orleans where she dedicated her wedding gown that was made from her husband's wartime nylon parachute.
- Watching her husband's church volunteerism....among them (a) silver-plating the 2 tall candlesticks on the
- ★ altar, (b) made and mounted the cross over the pulpit, (c) put together 2 broken stands to hold the tall paschal candle, (d) took apart the ceiling candelabras of over 200 pieces, silver-plated and lacquered each piece, and put it all back together.

lynn paska



GEORGIANS HELPED TONI CELEBRATE 100 YEARS WITH A BIRTHDAY CAKE IN THE GREAT HALL AFTER SUNDAY MASS.





*St. George's Episcopal Church*

*30 North Ferry Street*

*Schenectady, New York 12305*

*Telephone (518) 374-3163*

*[email: office@stgeorgesschenectady.org](mailto:office@stgeorgesschenectady.org)*

*[www.stgeorgesschenectady.org](http://www.stgeorgesschenectady.org)*

*Editor: Lynn Paska*

*Layout: Bob Paska*

*Contributors*

Meg Hughes  
Sandee Hughes  
David Kennison  
Lynn Paska  
Joan Pearson  
Fr. Thomas Pettigrew  
Dr. Brian Taylor  
Sharon Trant

*The Vestry*

David Kennison, Sr. Warden  
Paul Smigelski, Jr. Warden  
Kevin Decker  
Alyssa DePaula  
Carol Gaige  
Gloria Kishton  
Robert Paska  
Kim Polner  
Michael Todt  
Jerry Trant  
Jeffrey Wengrovius

*Rector*

Fr. Thomas J. Pettigrew

*Administrative*

Brian Taylor, Assistant  
Carol Gaige, Volunteer

*Financial Secretary*

Jonathan Ewbank

*Director Music Ministry*  
Dr. Brian Taylor

## ROY SMITH FAMILY PLANTS MEMORIAL SHRUB

The now far-flung survivors of former parishioners Roy and Edith Smith convened at St. George's on May 10 to memorialize their parents by planting a beautiful lilac bush at the northwest corner of the church.

The Smith family attended during Fr. Kirby's era and had not been in Schenectady for decades. They toured the church, agreeing on the location of "their" pew (pulpit side, facing south) and shared fond memories of first communions and confirmations. The eldest (christened Roy III but also known as Clint) recalled getting in trouble for skipping out of Sunday School. He claims he had an excuse.

Father Tom offered a benediction and oversaw the installation of the shrub, with horticultural support by Meg Hughes. The Smith family were touched and appreciative and made a generous monetary donation to the maintenance of St. George's gardens.

*meg hughes*

**Clint helps Meg with some finishing touches. He drove from Hackettstown, NJ with wife Wanda and daughter Hayden to fulfill one of his late father's wishes. Sarah ("Sally") Smith Pasley of Knoxville, TN is rapt during the brief ceremony. Seated at right is Douglas Smith, accompanied by his wife Laura, of Greentown, PA.**

