

# THE GEORGIAN REPORT



St. George's Church Schenectady, NY

March 2018

## ST. GEORGE'S WELCOMES MUSIC DIRECTOR

"The Lord inspired me in ways I don't think I'll ever know," said Brandon Dumas. Born and raised an Episcopalian in Colonie, he was introduced to sacred music at the Cathedral of All Saints where his parents are still active parishioners. At age 7 he started singing in the choir (eventually alongside his father and two younger brothers) and by mid-teens was interim choir director. Captivated by the transcendent nature of church music, he offered, "I knew I was part of something much larger than myself, something musical but spiritual as well. Plus, I was very moved by the powerful sound of the pipe organ."

Brandon was 15 and a relatively new study to the organ when, without any warning, he ended up shepherding the choir through the season which includes Holy Week and Easter. "I'll never forget that Maundy Thursday. I looked up at the choir and thought to myself, *Oh, my God, I have never conducted anything before....how do I get them started?* We somehow made it through that service and from that moment, I doubled down and focused on this as a vocation."

Brandon brings to his new position as Director of Music Ministry at St. George's myriad experiences. He has made a name for himself in both Episcopal circles here and Anglican ones in the UK. While studying in London, he had the honor of performing for the Royal Family by virtue of being a student at such institutions as Royal Holloway College of the University of London and The Royal Academy of Music, starting out as an undergraduate at Westminster Choir College in Princeton NJ, a unique college of 300-400 students. Brandon holds 2 master degrees including one in choral conducting. He has been featured on radio and television, and held positions at Episcopal cathedrals on Long Island and in Chicago IL, and large parishes in Memphis TN and Richmond VA (a church boasting 4500 members.) "I grew up as a liturgical musician. It's important that my musical expression takes place



in proximity to holiest of holies and the sacraments."

Considering St. George's present-day choir "a fine group," he is nonetheless frustrated that the entire group isn't rehearsing together with all members present every week. "I'm working with them to determine what better time there might be for us to meet every week so that we can sing with greater cohesion and ensemble." He takes parochial pride in St. George's because "no one in the diocese offers the kind of liturgy we do. We owe it to ourselves to make the community aware of our strengths."

Fr. Matt and Brandon have developed a terrific rapport, liturgically as well as personally. Brandon hopes to initiate a girls' choir, which he will use as an outreach into the community to raise our profile. According to Brandon, "Going outside the confines of the church will be an opportunity to recruit and market St. George's in positive ways."

WELCOME, Brandon!

lynn paska

# ANNUAL PARISH MEETING



St. George's Annual Parish Meeting was held on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> after the 10AM Mass. Meg Hughes was appointed Clerk. After Fr. Matt's opening prayer, candidates to Vestry were voted into office: Suzanne Hartz, Senior Warden; Jonathan Pearson, Meg Hughes and Sandee Hughes, Vestry members; and Sue Hartz, Rich Unger, Bob Paska, Jeff Wengrovius and Jon Pearson were elected delegates to the Diocesan Convention in June. Treasurer Jon Pearson gave his Financial Report. Sue was given "keys to the church" by outgoing Senior Warden Chris Henry. Following the business meeting, a buffet (pork loin, red cabbage, potato pancakes) prepared by Administrative Assistant Bob McCloskey, plus an assortment of "potluck" desserts. A successful raffle, chaired by Alice Polumbo, was the *icing on the cake*. *lynn paska*

# SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

Many families of St. George's show vested interests in our church by actively volunteering. A prime example: the Wareh family, Georgians since 2014, who give of themselves in different ways.

Tarik, former Professor of Ancient Greek for 8 years at Union College, has taken a more unorthodox career path as he juggles being a stay-at-home dad and volunteers at both St. Joseph's Place (where the emphasis is of a more social nature) and the Schenectady County Jail (which combines social with a religious service that includes communion and readings from the previous Sunday.) As a volunteer at St. George's, he is a member of the choir....works at parish events....and heads the Shapenote Singing that meets every Wednesday in the Great Hall from 6-8PM. Ongoing since November 1<sup>st</sup>, this is for those who want to experience the old harmonies of the sacred Harp tunebook. Participants range from seasoned singers to those who don't sing or even know how to read music.



Pattie, a Professor of English Literature at Union College, volunteers at events like our cafe during the Stockade Art Show, and is a member of All on the Same Page Book Club. She praises our music program and finds a welcoming congregation that keeps her involved.

Faiz, a 7th grader at Van Antwerp Middle School, sings in the choir and took organ lessons from Andrew Krystopolski, surprising everyone one Sunday morning by being our "guest organist."

Cora, a 5th grader at Craig Elementary School, sings in the choir and recently began serving God and St. George's as an acolyte.

Together, the family has attended "Theology on Tap" that is held monthly at the Van Dyck Restaurant.

Recently back from a sabbatical to York, England for 9 and 1/2 months, the Warehs are now firmly entrenched in the St. George's community. Tarik's path to our church was not a normal one: he began attending Morning Prayer and daily services, which he considers a great potential for those who are not church goers. Valuing the tradition and opportunity to learn more about the mystery of the church and our beautiful ancient prayer services, eventually he brought Pattie, Faiz and Cora to Sunday Mass which they now attend faithfully at 10AM. Their entry into St. George's is not unlikely as Pattie was raised Episcopalian; she and Tarik were married in an Episcopal church; and Tarik owns a copy of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. As to our future and potential, he said, "I believe 'the living faith of the dead' is alive at St. George's Church."

A big *THANK YOU* to the Wareh family for the "time and talent" they devote to volunteering at our various ministries and events.

*lynn paska*

<b><u>IN MEMORIAM</u></b>			
<b>"Rest in Peace"</b>			
<b>You are missed by your church family.</b>			
			
<b>Marjorie Deubel</b> 1925-2017	<b>Gloria Ericson</b> 1925-2017	<b>Carol Coppola</b> 1930-2017	<b>Christina Danley</b> 1959-2017

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



In our Lenten discussion series we have been discussing the meaning of Christian hope. In particular we have looked at what Christians believe about life after death. As Christians we confidently assert the resurrection of the dead. We believe that although our lives here are mortal, God in his mercy can raise us again to share in the joys of the world to come. A common pastoral question that arises however is, “What about my beloved pet—my cat or my dog—is there any hope for them beyond death? Will we be reunited in the world to come?”

C.S. Lewis warns that to even ask the question puts one at risk of being dismissed as an “old maid” who is overly preoccupied with her pets. Lewis, however, believes animal immortality to be a legitimate question for theological investigation. He is not alone. Joseph Hamilton wrote, “Some of the ablest apologists for the Christian religion, have in many instances mooted, and in others confidently advocated, the future life of animals.” In his book, *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis devotes an entire chapter to exploring the problem of animal pain and the question of whether there is life beyond death for the beast.

The difficulty, for Lewis, in conceiving of a continued existence for animals on the other side of death is connected with his contention that animals, while sentient, do not have consciousness or a sense of self—a soul—in the way that human beings do. What is it that would persist in the resurrection? If what many scientists today are saying is true, that animals do most likely have consciousness, than there is less difficulty than Lewis supposes. Lewis’ proposal, however, remains compelling. He suggests that just as human beings are understood in their relation to God—being ‘in Christ’—so also animals may be understood in relation to human beings, being somehow ‘in’ their human masters. The tame animal is the animal most occupying its purpose in God’s creation, Animals were created to find their sense of self, the fulfillment of their identity, in human beings. Lewis writes,

“If a good sheepdog seems ‘almost human’ that is because a good shepherd has made it so,” He continues, “And in this way it seems to me possible that certain animals may have an immortality, not in themselves, but in the immortality of their masters. And the difficulty about personal identity in a creature barely personal disappears when the creature is thus kept in its proper context.”

What Lewis admits is a rather qualified vision of animal immortality in which individual animals find continued existence in and through their relationship to human beings, but this is not the only sense in which Lewis imagines animal life in the age to come. There may be a sense in which the beasts have a kind of corporate immortality in which the essence of “lionness”, for instance, continues in a perfected form. After all doesn’t the bible say that in the age to come the lion will lay down with the lamb?

The scriptures suggest that our final redemption will include the redemption of all of creation, which presumably will include animals.

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.” (Romans 8:20-24)

*grace and peace, fr. matthew stromberg+*

## A VERY SPECIAL SUNDAY



A day to remember in the life of St. George's: Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. We were blessed with a visitation from Bishop William Love, who presided over our Mass and adult confirmations (Stephen Hartz, Tarik Wareh, and Paul Smigelski.) In a moving sermon pertinent to the season of Lent, Bishop Love said, *"The message of the cross is not foolish,"* a profound statement that resulted in deep thought about those words. Mass was followed by a "sweet" reception in our Great Hall with a delicious Canoli Cake and coffee/tea reception. We congratulate Steve, Tarik and Paul, and we thank Bishop Love for participating in this memorable day.

*lynn paska*



## CHRISTMAS 2017



How do we celebrate Christmas? With carols, holiday movies, glittering decorations, gifts, feasts, and worship, of course. Between Advent and Epiphany there was no lack of Christmas joy and celebration at St. George's.

Using hymns and carols as the bases for his sermons throughout Advent and Christmas, Fr. Matt led us through the history and meaning of both familiar and less familiar music. From "Veni Emmanuel," with its ancient test and tone, to "We Three Kings," we learned the background and theology of the words we sing.

An especially popular activity this Advent was Sunday movie night, with snacks, drinks, and classic Christmas films: "Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street," "It's a Wonderful Life," and "White Christmas." In the best spirit of giving, many parishioners took gift bags for the YMCA and filled them with necessities for the girls and boys who needed them.

Greening the church on December 17<sup>th</sup> attracted many helpers and therefore more activity. Nancy Angus, Debbie Lambeth, Meg Hughes and Anne Kennison polished silver and cleaned glass globes. Sue Hartz and Joan Pearson helped unwrap Christmas items that had been in storage for the year. Jean Greenspan organized the pointsettias. Dusty Ifflander and Sandee Hughes took charge of the window arrangements. Chris Henry, Grant Jaquith and Bob Moran set up the creche. Johnnie Angus, Jon Pearson, Bob Paska and Jeff Wengrovius hung garland and wreaths. Most exciting was the movement of David Kennison, Steve Hartz, and Jamie Taft around the sanctuary with the 30' ladder, changing light bulbs. And nothing broke. As usual, Lynn Paska took pictures of all the activity for our website, newsletter, and posterity.

Advent Lessons and Carols this year replaced the 10AM Mass on December 24<sup>th</sup> with the choir's last glorious response, "Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord, he will be with you." Later Christmas Eve day offered the 4PM Children's Mass with the Christmas Pageant, as coordinated by April Stromberg, and enacted by an ensemble of all ages from our church and community, including an infant Baby Jesus. At 10PM the congregants heard Roseanne Hargrave sing "Oh Holy Night" before the start of a Mass rich with hymns and carols,

celebrated by Fr. Matt Stromberg, assisted by The Reverend Mr. Howard Smith. Richard Shephard's joyous "Mass of the Nativity," directed by Andrew Krystopolski, is based on French and Italian Christmas carols. In his sermon, Fr. Matt focused on the hymn "In the Bleak Midwinter," noting that the Lord comes when we are most desolate. The greatest gifts are simple and heartfelt, such as devotion, gratitude, and adoration to God. After Mass everyone enjoyed a midnight feast in the Great Hall.

At Epiphany, Fr. Matt preached on the Kings/Magi/Wise Men. He explained why there is no agreement about their number or their designation or when they arrived. As for the famous carol, it's American, unlike any of the others in our hymnal, and it was written specifically for a pageant, with the Kings' verses set for specific voices. At the end of his sermon Fr. Matt blessed chalk with instructions to use it to write  $20+C+M=B+18$  over our front doors to bring God's blessing on our homes in 2018. We pray for continued blessings on St. George's as together we face the New Year and new challenges.

*joan pearson*



### The Holy Trinity

We make the sign of the cross "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost". At baptism, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". After a while, it just rolls off our tongue, maybe without much thought. We say it because we've always said it. The Holy Trinity - it is utterly impossible to summarize here a concept that people have tried to describe for millennia, but this is a beginning.

**Mystery** Perhaps the deepest, the most profound of all mysteries is the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The Church teaches us that although there is only one God, yet, somehow, there are three Persons in God. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, yet we do not speak of three Gods, but only one God. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit and the Father is not the Holy Spirit, yet together they are all one God. They have the same nature, substance, and being. They are co-equal and co-eternal. The word Trinity isn't in the bible but we don't disregard it simply because we don't see the word. The word may be missing but the concept is real.

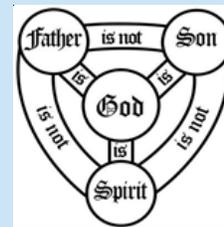


In the famous Russian icon of Andrey Rublev, c.1408, the Trinity is illustrated as the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Manre (Genesis 18). Jesus is the center, with the Father on the left and the Spirit on the right.

neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance". Article I of the Articles of Religion affirms that in the unity of God "there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost".

The third person of the Trinity. In the OT, "spirit" was primarily used to express God's power in the world. In the NT, Jesus is called the Christ because he is the one anointed by the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit to Jesus' disciples after the crucifixion is associated with the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus in John 20:19-23 and with the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The Catechism states that the church is holy "because the Holy Spirit dwells in it, consecrates its members, and guides them to do God's will". The Council of Constantinople stated that the Holy Spirit is as truly God as the Son, both being of "one substance" with the Father. The Nicene Creed states belief "in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets".

The doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation are the foundation of Christian life and worship. By becoming man, God the Son offered us a share in the inner life of the Trinity. By grace, we are brought into the perfect communion of life and love which is God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This sharing in the life of the Trinity is meant to culminate in heaven, where we will see the three Persons face to face, united to them in unspeakable love.



The "Shield of the Trinity" illustrates the co-equality and distinctness of the threefold unity of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We came to know this immense mystery because Christ revealed it to us. Just before ascending he told his disciples: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). We know that these three are not just different ways of looking at one person, for at the Last Supper, Jesus told us: "... I came from the Father." So he is different from the Father. But he also promised: "If I go, I will send him [the Holy Spirit] to you. . . . He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:28, 7, 13). So the Holy Spirit is also different.

### The Bible - the Creeds - the BCP

As you might imagine, the early church struggled mightily over this doctrine. The NT attributes equality with God to the Word of God who became incarnate in Jesus (John 1:1-18, Colossians 1:15-20). The Spirit of God was also included in the divine life (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). The Church took several centuries to work out an acceptable way to express the complex relation of Father, Son, and Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity announced at Constantinople in 381 held that God is one Being in three equal and consubstantial persons: the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated but begotten, the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. The Athanasian Creed states that "we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity,



The Adoration of the Trinity by Albrecht Durer, 1511, depicts Jesus on the cross with The Father behind him while the Holy Spirit is a dove over all.

David Kennison

## FAREWELL BREAKFAST & FAURE REQUIEM



Sad smiles, happy tears and long hugs were the norm at the goodbye breakfast for Andrew Krystopolski, Kevin Grace, and Judith Smith on February 19<sup>th</sup>. In his usual way Kevin prepared a delicious meal of pancakes, eggs, pastries, bacon, and sausages for the entire family of Graces, Georgians, and friends who came to say farewell and good luck. Fr. Matt spoke about the richness Andrew, Kevin, and Judith have added to the life of St. George's. No-one wants this to be a final goodbye!

It may be the end of 7 & 1/2 years of Krystopolski/Grace energy at St. George's, but it is also the start of Kevin's new job doing what he loves, in Miami, where this family will make new discoveries. The choir's farewell for Andrew and Judith therefore had a Florida theme, with flashy sunglasses for all and gifts for the three honorees.

February was not only a time for endings, but time to prepare the Faure Requiem, sung on February 25<sup>th</sup> by the St. Cecilia Choir plus many of the friends Andrew has made during his years in NY. Under Andrew's direction and with Brandon Dumas accompanying, the Requiem was Andrew's final offering at St. George's. The service of scripture and music, with the voices of Christopher Trombley, baritone soloist, and Kali Rose Moran, soprano soloist, also featured Karlinda Caldicott, harpist, and Ann Marie Baker-Schwartz, violinist. Fr. Matt was officiant and David Kennison was lector; this Requiem service was a stunning finish to Andrew's tenure at St. George's. At a light reception afterward, Andrew and Judith mingled with the many friends who came to wish them well.

Andrew, Kevin and Judith: Go with God. Come back and visit. And expect visitors.

*joan pearson*



## - SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -

This is my first report as Senior Warden, and I want to thank all of you well wishers. I will be helping Fr. Matt as much as I am able. We are currently planning a tour and volunteer opportunity at City Mission. Details will be announced.

Fr. Matt has a full schedule for spring. Please sit down and think over the things you plan to participate in to broaden your worship at St. George's.

As I write this, I reflect on our welcoming Bishop Love to St. George's on March 4<sup>th</sup> and three of our members being confirmed to the Episcopal Church. I hope we will have many more visits and confirmands in the coming years.

*suzanne hartz*

## - JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -



In 2018 we intend to focus on electrical repair needs that will include electrical circuit safety upgrades and repairs in the church and Great Hall. We hope to install programmable thermostats in the Great Hall to save energy and facilitate use of the second floor rooms for Sunday school classes, homeschool use and other anticipated group activities. We have been trying to repair the Great Hall hot water heater, but it continues to quit working. We may need to actually replace the hot water tank this spring. The current 80 gallon tank is old and is larger than we need (it only heats hot water for washing dishes) so we may be able to get by with a smaller 50 gallon tank. Additionally, there have been challenges to our plumbing system that have needed attention during the last couple of months in the Great Hall restrooms and kitchen, and the old shower and sink fixtures in the Sexton apartment.

With the departure of Andrew, St. George's House will be needed some routine property maintenance, repairs and painting to ready it for our new Music Director, Brandon Dumas. We still hope to make repairs to the south side dormer windows, woodwork and doors of Cranmer House, as well as the steps to Cranmer House office entry and the south entrance. The doors and windows of Cranmer House need improvement to correct safety concerns and repair serious water damage. The extent of repairs we can make will be, in part, dependent upon the eventual costs of the electrical, heating and plumbing repairs.

And once again, as we near spring, our efforts will turn to preparing church grounds for summer. Easter is early this year, but we will see if anything can be done before then to get ready for the children's Easter egg hunt in the south garden area. During April and May we will again begin tree and plant trimming, weeding and cleaning up garden beds, and maybe adding new plants and mulch. Meg Hughes has been one of the instrumental volunteers making the church property look great the last two years. Now, as a new Vestry member, Meg will be taking charge of the Garden Ministry for St. George's. And, though we now have Jeremiah as a Sexton who enjoys helping in the garden and keeping the grounds looking good, I am sure Meg will be looking for more volunteers this spring and summer.

*richard unger*



## ANNUAL MEETING RAFFLE

Ticket sales for the annual meeting raffle totaled \$220 which was applied to St. George's general operating fund. Congratulations to Jeff Wengrovius, Suzy Unger, Joan Pearson, Jean Greenspan, Steve Hartz and Rosemary Pannone, winners of the raffle's fabulous prizes and thanks to all who participated.

*alice polumbo*

# PHOTO ALBUM



*CHRISTMAS PAGEANT - April Stromberg coordinated a 'live' reenactment at the Children's Mass on December 24<sup>th</sup>.*



*ASSISTED LIVING MINISTRY - a full complement of services in February, included Ash Wednesday at Scotia Mansion. Millie & Andrew played their final duet.*



*ADULT BAPTISM - Tarik Wareh was baptized in an informal ceremony on February 25<sup>th</sup>.*



*St. George's Vestry 2018*

*(Front row, L-R) Jeffrey Wengrovius, Richard Unger, Fr. Matthew Stromberg, Sandra Hughes, Suzanne Hartz; (Back row, L-R) Gregory Thomas, Jonathan Pearson, Paul Smigelski, Margaret Hughes, Robert Paska. Missing from picture: Jane Moran, Ralph Polumbo.*



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- Jean Greenspan
- Sue Hartz
- Meg Hughes
- Sandee Hughes
- David Kennison
- Joan Pearson
- Jonathan Pearson
- Alice Pumbo
- Fr. Matt Stromberg+
- Richard Unger

*The Vestry*

- Suzanne Hartz, Sr. Warden
- Margaret Hughes, Clerk
- Sandra Hughes
- Jane Moran
- Robert Paska
- Jonathan Pearson, Treasurer
- Ralph Pumbo
- Paul Smigelski
- Gregory Thomas
- Richard Unger, Jr. Warden
- Jeffrey Wengrovius

*Office Staff*

- Bob McCloskey  
 Parish Administrator  
 Financial Secretary
- Brandon Dumas  
 Music Director
- Jeremy & Sondra Kravetz  
 Sextons

## BOOK CLUB BEHOLD THE DREAMERS

Why do people read fiction? Sure, it can be fun, helps us learn, and allows us to escape into another world. Interestingly, scientists also say that literary fiction can boost our capacity for empathy.

*“Behold the Dreamers,”* by Imbolo Imbue, introduces readers to Jende and Neni Jonga, a young African couple struggling to compete in fast-paced New York City. This eventful tale is based very loosely on the author’s own experiences, but it is more than a simple retelling of the Jonga family’s troubles. We also get a glimpse into the woes of “one percenters” Clark and Cindy Edwards, who are battling a very different set of challenges as the financial collapse of 2008 threatens to upend their lives.

St. George’s book club will discuss this remarkable novel in the Great Hall following the 10AM Mass on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Alice Pumbo will lead the discussion. All are welcome to attend.

*meg hughes*

## FAURE REQUIEM



*A “photo op” in recognition of the many talented participants in our beautiful Faure Requiem service on February 25<sup>th</sup>.*



**REMINDER:** St. George’s Masses are broadcast on Spectrum Schenectady Access Channel 1301 - Sundays 4:30-6:00 PM and Thursdays 1:00-2:00 PM. Albany broadcast - Channel 18 for Albany, Saratoga, Glens Falls, Guilderland & Amsterdam - Sundays 2:00 PM.