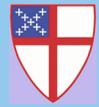




THE GEORGIAN REPORT



St. George's Church Schenectady, NY

March 2017

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING



Sunday, January 22nd following the 9AM Mass was the Annual Parish Meeting of St. George's. After Fr. Matt's opening prayer, Bob Paska was appointed Clerk. Candidates for Vestry were presented and voted into office: Ralph Polumbo, Paul Smigelski and Gregg Thomas were elected to 3 open seats; Rich Unger was elected as Junior Warden with Jon Pearson serving out Rich's Vestry term; Jane Moran was re-elected for a 2nd term; and Chris Henry's tenure as Senior Warden was extended for one year. A State of the Parish report was given by Chris Henry, a gift was presented to outgoing Junior Warden Rick Forshaw (pictured with wife Karen) for 5 years of outstanding service; and, Treasurer Jon Pearson gave his Financial Report. Then came the part of the morning everyone was waiting for: a sumptuous brunch prepared by our in-house chef Kevin Grace.

lynn paska



A group picture taken after Vestry elections at the Annual Parish Meeting: (L-R) Gregg Thomas, Jonathan Pearson, Christopher Henry, Suzanne Hartz, Fr. Matthew Stromberg, Grant Jaquith, Ralph Pumbo, Robert Paska, Paul Smigelski. Missing from Picture: Jane Moran, Jeffrey Wengrovius, Richard Unger.

BELL - RINGING



(L-R) Bob Paska, Nancy Angus, Johnnie Angus.

In the spirit of the holidays, 17 Georgians volunteered for the Salvation Army Bell-Ringing Saturday on December 17th at ViaPort Mall in Rotterdam. They were positioned in front of Encore Shoe Department. Thank you to those hearty souls who braved the weather (it was a cold and snowy day): Lynn & Bob Paska, Nancy & Johnnie Angus, Judy & Gene DeLong, Carol Gaige, Barbara Wengrovius, Dot Dever, Suzy & Rich Unger,

Dusty Ann Ifflander, Alice & Ralph Pumbo, Fr. Matt Stromberg with daughter Helen, and Jon Pearson who chaired this event on behalf of St. George's. And, thank you to Salvation Army's Mike Himes who came around to cheer on the bell ringers.

lynn paska

THANK YOU ...



(L-R) Deacon Smith, Father Stromberg

It's always our pleasure to have Deacon Howard Smith (Christ Church, Schenectady) as Deacon of the Mass on Christmas Eve. Sharing the altar with our rector, Fr. Matt Stromberg, this year....it was Dcn. Howard's 2nd Christmas with us. We hope it won't be his last!

lynn paska

SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

"the family that PRAYS together STAYS together"

The Angus' and the DeLongs have collectively been parishioners for almost as long as there's been a St. George's. Three are "cradle Episcopalians," one is a Methodist convert. Most of their lives have been not just sitting in the pews on Sundays and holidays, but volunteering for ministries like Outreach, Cafe at the Stockade Art Show, The Shop, Rummage Sales, and Salvation Army Bell-Ringing. The DeLongs were married here in February 1957; the Angus' in May 1961.



(L-R) Johnnie Angus, Nancy Angus, Judy DeLong, Gene DeLong

Gene DeLong, a 2nd generation parishioner, was baptized and confirmed at St. George's. A member of the church choir since age 10, he remembers taking the bus to rehearsals; today, he merely drives his car into the parking lot. A Bass with the St. Cecilia Choir, Counter, Painter and Jack-of-All-Trades, he quipped, "If you call me, I'll work!" Years ago, he was an Acolyte and, together with brother-in-law Spence Birt, tutored potential Acolytes in altar duties.

Judy Birt DeLong prefers to volunteer behind-the-scenes (i.e., repairing vestments for Altar Guild) but she's quite visible as Greeter, Member of Book Club, and Worker with Fund-raising and Hospitality (the Lighthouse ministry.) "We have a lot of ties to St. George's," said Judy, adding that St. George's is a welcoming church and all-inclusive "...which is more to my way of thinking." Daughters Terry and Susan were confirmed and granddaughter Catherine was baptized here.

Nancy Birt Angus, confirmed at St. George's at age 11, volunteers for everything from crafts to flower arranging, and today she's Greeter, Member of the Assisted Living Ministry team and Altar Guild, and works parties like Fr. Matt's Installation. Nancy said, "Our church itself is beautiful, the liturgy is lovely, music is always good. I feel at home here." Sons Kevin, Todd and Greg were baptized at St. George's; Kevin was also confirmed here.

Johnnie Angus, the above-mentioned lapsed Methodist, served on Vestry and designed our A/V room in 2001. Johnnie still volunteers for Hospitality, parties, and is on the regular Greeters roster. He likes St. George's because he likes the philosophy of the Episcopal Church....and it has kept his family close. While in the Army, he served as liaison between the White House and Germany under President Eisenhower.

Gene was a construction engineer for NYS who worked on the Northway project; Judy, a registered nurse at St. Clare's and the Visiting Nurse Association; Nancy, Administrative Assistant at Union College; and Johnnie was a pioneer, along with Dr. Rowe, in creating E-TV at SUNYA under Governor Rockefeller's administration. While both families left St. George's for a few years to accommodate their children at schools and churches closer to home, they returned to their religious "roots" and plunged headlong into volunteerism.

lynn paska

FROM THE RECTOR'S STUDY.....



THE EMPTY TOMB

It's that time of year again, we are approaching the Church's celebration of Easter. In the coming weeks Jesus will once again make an appearance on the cover of a magazine or in a new documentary series. Periodically, some historian or archeologist looking for their fifteen minutes of fame will present some new, ground-breaking, research or discovery that promises to uncover new light on Jesus and shake the foundations of the Christian faith. For instance, back in 2007 there was a book published called *The Jesus Family Tomb*. There was also a tie-in documentary film produced by Hollywood director James Cameron. What the book and film claim is that archeologists have uncovered the remains of Jesus resting in a family tomb.

Needless to say, although the book and film made an awful lot of money, they did not change the course of world history. The overwhelming majority of scholars did not find the discovery to be authentic or very significant. The main argument for the tomb's validity rested on the fact that the names on the ossuaries coincide with biblical figures, but Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were all

rather common names at the time. The clincher is that it isn't even entirely certain that the inscription on the tomb even says Jesus!

While the claims of opportunist scholars seem to disappear as quickly as they are made, the proclamation about the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus persists. The resurrection of Jesus is the meaning of the Church's existence, and the empty tomb is the foundation of our faith. Saint Paul writes, "if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Cor 15:14). So how can we be sure that Jesus' grave really was empty and what does it mean for us that it was?

Here are four solid reasons why the story of the empty tomb can be trusted.

First, the earliest reference to the empty tomb was written by Saint Paul less than thirty years after Jesus' death. Paul also claims to be indebted to even earlier sources. He writes, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3).

The Apostles first proclaimed the resurrection in Jerusalem, the very city where Jesus was arrested, put on trial, and crucified. They preached boldly to the very ones who handed Jesus over to be killed. Why didn't their critics simply point people to Jesus' tomb? If Jesus was still in his tomb, the only thing necessary to bring the whole early Christian movement to a grinding halt would be to produce his body. The record and preaching of Jesus' resurrection and the empty tomb were simply too close to the actual events to be effectively fabricated.

Secondly, the earliest critics of Christianity admit that the tomb was indeed empty. There does not appear to be any dispute on this matter. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that the chief priest spread a rumor that Jesus' disciples stole his body. Why would the evangelists risk discrediting themselves by inventing such a rumor if it wasn't true?

Third, all four gospels name the first and primary witnesses of the resurrection as women. Why is this significant? Both the Jewish and Roman culture of the time had a rather low opinion of the reliability of women (they were wrong about this!). The testimony of a female witness was not considered admissible in court. So let me ask you, if you were going to make up a story and try to make it as believable as possible, would you base so much of your testimony on witnesses considered completely unreliable? Probably not! The most obvious explanation why women play such a large role in the account is because that is the way it actually happened!

The fourth reason is that the alternative theories simply don't hold water. One popular theory says that Jesus actually survived his crucifixion and escaped his tomb. This is just plain silly when you consider the manner of his torture and death. The Roman's knew how to execute criminals! Physicians who have examined the Gospel accounts have attested to the fact that conditions surrounding Jesus' death suggest that he suffered from hypovolemic shock. This is a condition produced by extreme blood loss and strain on the heart. One symptom of this condition is a collection of clear fluid around the heart and lungs, known respectively as a pericardial effusion and a pleural effusion. The account of Jesus' death says that "blood and water" poured through his wound when his side was pierced. First century authors would not have been familiar with this condition, but it clearly indicates that Jesus was dead. Besides, even if he did somehow survive, Jesus would have been in very serious condition indeed and hardly likely to be mistaken for a victorious savior!

Some claim that his disciples stole the body and made up the story of the resurrection, but would the Apostles be willing to suffer persecution and martyrdom for a lie? Others claim that a third party took Jesus' body and hid it away, and the Apostles mistakenly concluded that he was raised. If not one of Jesus' disciples, who would this individual or group be? What exactly would be the motive here? I also need not point out that while this may offer an explanation for the empty tomb it does nothing to explain the Apostle's eyewitness testimony of meeting the resurrected Christ.

All of these alternatives are rather weak. As the noted legal scholar Sir Norman Anderson said, "The empty tomb forms a veritable rock on which all rationalistic theories of the resurrection dash themselves in vain."

Grace and Peace, *Fr. Matthew Stromberg+*

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



April Stromberg is working hard to reinstate our Christian Education/ Sunday School to its glory days. Classes are offered during the 9AM Mass from 9:15 to 9:45AM, studying the same passages from the Mass and, when possible, using the *Jesus Storybook Bible*. Nursery services will be provided, as needed.

Rick Forshaw and April Stromberg refurbished the classroom and nursery upstairs in the Great Hall. New ways have been implemented to connect with families, children and the community. April formed the Schenectady Moms Group (<https://www.meetup.com/Schenectady.Moms.Meetup/>) to provide a way to meet and welcome new families to St. George's. She has scheduled playdates and parties, had a Christmas Eve pageant during the new 4PM Mass, and hosted a New Year's Eve Party for children on December 31st with a "countdown until noon." From these pictures, it looks like "fun for all"....including the parents.

april stromberg
lynn paska



CHRISTMAS 2016



What a difference a year makes! In 2016 St. George's celebrated the Christmas season with the gift of Fr. Matthew Stromberg, April, Helen and Isaac, and the joy they bring us. A candlelit Service of Advent Lessons and Carols on December 10 included music by Alfred Fedak and Giovanni da Palestrina, the St. Cecilia Choir singing under the direction of Andrew Krystopolski. The next night we had the Stockade Christmas tree lighting with a lively party in the Great Hall. The neighborhood enjoyed fellowship and good cheer, cookies and punch.

The greening of the church was chaotic as usual: boughs, bows, straw and wreaths strewn everywhere until suddenly the sanctuary was transformed. Lynn Paska snapped pictures while Debbie Lambeth, Meg Hughes, Joan Pearson and Sandee Hughes arranged candles and greenery in the windows, Grant and Colton Jaquith, Johnnie Angus and Chris Henry set up the crèche, and Jon Pearson and Bob Paska hung the garland and wreaths on the balcony and front doors. Shannon Hughes worked miracles with the bows, and Judith Smith and Joan Bessarab made sure everything was straight.

For the first time in many years we had a Family Mass at 4:00 on Christmas Eve with a children's nativity pageant. April Stromberg organized preschoolers to high school students into beautiful angels, adorable sheep, adoring shepherds, noble wise men, and of course the Holy Family. Andrew Krystopolski played favorite Christmas carols on the piano for the many parishioners, parents and neighbors who attended this service, which we hope is the beginning of a new tradition!

Strings, organ, and two Mozart Sonatas began Solemn High Mass at 10:00. Richard Shephard's lovely "Mass of the Nativity," based on Christmas carols, was the musical setting of Midnight Mass. Assisted by the Reverend Mr. Howard Smith, Fr. Matthew Stromberg officiated, and preached on the symbolism of Christ in the manger, that Jesus

offers his body as food, "bread that feeds our souls." Andrew Krystopolski directed the St. Cecilia Choir as well as violinist Sean Jones, violinist and oboist Sarah Becker, and cellist Christina Danley. After the benediction everyone enjoyed a festive reception in the Great Hall, organized by Amy Machold.

Our Christmas Season ended with Epiphany Mass on January 6. Fr. Matt preached on the Zoroastrians and the symbolism of gold for Jesus' royalty and divinity, frankincense for his divinity, and myrrh for the idea that he was born to die. We have much to be thankful for in this New Year, and many opportunities as we look ahead to 2017.

*joan pearson
Suzy Unger*



The Role of Bishops

If you have taken a look through the Catechism (“An Outline of the Faith”) in the BCP, you know that it addresses many things, one of which is The Ministry of the Church. It asks the question: “Who are the ministers of the Church” and answers: “The ministers of the church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.” The Catechism wasn’t always so inclusive. In its 1928 BCP form, it consumed a mere 6 pages and was full of the pithy questions of faith that every confirmand had to learn in case they were quizzed by the bishop. The 17 pages of the 1979 BCP expanded the Catechism into a much broader framework that focuses on many aspects of the Church and the Faith. In this issue we look at the role of Bishops. We’ll get to the role of the clergy and the laity in future issues.



The crozier, one of the symbols of a bishop. The crozier reminds us that a bishop is a shepherd of the people and is responsible for their spiritual life and growth.

Ministry of a Bishop

Again from the Catechism, “The ministry of a bishop is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole church; to proclaim the Word of God; to act in Christ’s name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ’s ministry.” What does this mean and how can one person be expected to do all this? It sounds like a 25 hour/day job, a fact to which our diocesan, Bishop Love, or any bishop would undoubtedly agree.

Bishops from the Time of Jesus

The first bishop was Peter, of whom Jesus said “Upon this rock I will build my church....I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

[Matt 16:18-19] The rock was Peter and from that moment, Peter had Jesus’ authority to build the church. He and the other apostles appointed leaders wherever they went, both presbyters and bishops, “...to tend the flock of God that is your charge...” [1 Peter 5]. The apostles carried this charge to the world and became bishops and shepherds of the people, teaching them and developing their spirituality.



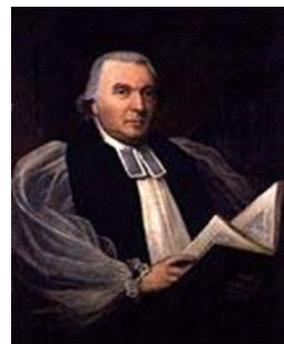
Peter, the apostle and the first bishop, a role that ultimately became the first Pope. Peter Paul Rubens, c.1611

The Episcopal Church

The word Episcopal, derived from the Latin *episcopus* or overseer, literally means governed by bishops. In the opening chapter of Acts, Peter describes the office of Apostle as one of oversight and that is the job of a bishop.

The *Episcopal* Church is an apostolic church. It traces its bishops back to the apostles via holy orders – an unbroken chain from Peter and the original twelve Apostles. We share that apostolic succession with other denominations – the Catholics (Roman and others), the Orthodox (Eastern and others) and the Assyrian Church. The Lutheran and Methodist churches also have bishops but there are varying views of any claim to apostolic succession.

How can the Episcopal Church claim unbroken apostolic succession when its progenitor, the Church of England was formed by breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church? Didn’t that break the chain? No - in England, there were already many active bishops that had been consecrated in Rome. In post-revolution America, when the Episcopal Church was formed, its first bishop, Samuel Seabury was rejected for consecration in England and had to travel to Scotland to be consecrated, thus preserving the succession.



Samuel Seabury, the first American Episcopal bishop, 1789-1792

Bishops Today

It seems as if bishops today have to be all things to all people, all the time. They are required to make pastoral visits to each church in their diocese, they do all the confirmations, ordinations, clergy funerals across the entire diocese. They must be mentor and pastor to all diocesan priests and deacons, attend endless diocesan meetings and support bishops’ conferences throughout country and the world. Not to mention diocesan workshops, and the annual Diocesan Convention. And of course, run a tight staff of clergy and lay persons. It is not a job for the faint of heart or weak of faith!

OUTREACH

WINTER 2017

On a snowy February 12th Sunday morning, St. George's "non-committee outreach committee" met between Masses to assess the status of St. George's outreach efforts and determine the ministry's 2017 direction. It was agreed that with all designated 2016 projects successfully executed, seeking to assist the community remains a ministerial priority for our parish. It was also gratifying that St. George's de-centralized outreach committee approach worked well.

It was felt that all of 2016's outreach projects had merit and the committee renewed them for 2017. These include a Lenten collection of children's socks and underwear in partnership with Schenectady County Schools social worker Laura DeNofio (currently underway), possible placement of a young adult Georgian in SICM's summer intern program, school supplies collection in the summer, participation in SICM's summer lunch program, collection of coats in the fall, providing home-baked hospitality cookies for St. Joseph's Place, Salvation Army holiday bell ringing, and compilation of holiday gift bags for the YWCA. SICM food pantry donations and The Lighthouse meal service are ongoing year-round ministries.

Encouraged by last year's parish support, the committee brainstormed a bit about ways in which St. George's outreach footprint might expand, both with our existing partners and in establishing new relationships. The opportunity may also exist for some dormant projects, successful in previous years, to be resurrected.

Georgians remain generous in their outreach efforts in supporting the vast needs of our community. All are welcome to take part sharing their thoughts and energies in serving those in difficult circumstances.

alice pumbo



Members of St. George's non-committee outreach committee attending the meeting (left side) Lynn Paska, Louisa Carr, Suzy Unger; (right side) Alice Pumbo, Barb Wengrovius, Joan Pearson, Kevin Grace.

- JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -



Well, I am pleased to report there has been little excitement with regard to our building and grounds this winter. We have been in pretty much a “monitor and repair as needed” mode since planting our new front lawn trees in November. Except for a few cold and snowy days, this has been another mild winter (except for our March 14th snowstorm.) This also means we have been able to conserve financial resources to a great extent. We did have to make minor repair to some boiler pipes in late January.

The large projector screen was remounted in the Great Hall for use during the showing of “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,” the movie version of C. S. Lewis’ book of the same name. Members of the church read and discussed the book under Fr. Matt’s direction in January. The screen is currently being used on Sunday evenings for Fr. Matt’s Lenten supper series: “The Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Lively Virtues.”

Also, the St. George’s chimes went silent for a period of time in February, due to a “bug” in the carillon software. We were able to correct the software, at least temporarily, for Lent and Easter. After Holy Week we may still need to send the software out for reprogramming to permanently fix the problems. But there will be bells through Easter.

Finally, as we near springtime in Schenectady. This will include tree trimming, cleaning up garden beds and adding new plants and mulch. We will be looking for gardening volunteers, soon.

rich unger

- TREASURER'S REPORT -



Should I have envelopes for my church giving?

Do you currently have envelopes for your church giving? If you don’t, I encourage you to request them. This can help the church, and it can provide you with a good way to track your giving at income tax time.

When we issue a box of envelopes, they are numbered, and the numbers identify the giver so that the giving can be tracked. An important advantage for you is that if you itemize your tax deductions, your gifts to St. George’s qualify as charitable contributions and can be deducted on your income tax. Having envelopes can also help me, as the parish treasurer, to plan future budgets. I use this historical data to project what income we can expect in the future.

jon pearson

LADIES VALENTINE'S TEA



The community Ladies Valentine’s Tea was rescheduled from February 12th to the 19th due to a severe snowstorm. A Georgian “thank you” to April Stromberg for hosting this social event that included sweets, tea sandwiches, fruit, gluten-free items, and various teas, soda, juice and water.

VISITATIONS

What do Dorothy from THE WIZARD OF OZ, the burial place of our 34th president, and our own beloved Fr. Wampler have in common? The answer is, of course, the state of Kansas. Father was born in Chanute, Kansas on February 2, 1923 so it shouldn't surprise anyone that he attended Kansas State University where he earned a degree in Civil engineering. Upon graduation he joined the Navy where he served until the end of World War II. After the war he came to GE but didn't stay long as he felt a higher calling and entered the Seabury-Western Seminary. Bishop Ball ordained Fr. Wampler to the Priesthood in St. Paul's, Bloomfield NY in December 1953. He served St. Peter's in Hobart and St. Paul's in Bloomfield for seven years. Following that he was assigned to and served the Adirondack

Mission, a group of north country churches, until he joined Fr. Vang here at St. George's. Fr. Dean Delos Wampler became a mainstay at St. George's as he assisted three different rectors. He was the constant presence. Conducting and assisting at Masses, making Pastoral Care visits and officiating at weddings, his gentle demeanor won the hearts of all Georgians. What many do not realize is how important he was during those times when St. George's was between rectors for four of the ten years prior to the arrival of Fr. Matt. While he was not physically able to assume the responsibility for Masses every Sunday, he made himself available for other priestly duties. When a family requested a priest, Fr. Wampler always made himself available. When called, he would say, "Pick me up in 15 minutes," and he would go to private homes or the hospital to administer the Last Rites and provide comfort to the grieving family.

Currently, Fr. Wampler lives at the Home of the Good Shepherd in Saratoga Springs. Aside from the visits made by your Pastoral Care team, Fr. Vang checks on Fr. Wampler when he brings Communion to the facility and Fr. Peter Schofield has kept a close watch on Father's well-being for a number of years. Additionally, his nephew David who lives in Massachusetts visits when he can. He has another nephew Dean who lives in Nebraska.

Fr. Wampler may not have followed a yellow brick road from Kansas to the Adirondacks to Schenectady and now to Saratoga Springs, but his current address certainly does seem most appropriate. For if you visit Fr. Wampler at the Home of the Good Shepherd, you will find it at the corner of....wait for it....Church Street and Kirby Road.

jim wingate



Joan Bessarab helps Fr. Wampler celebrate his 94th birthday.

ALL ON THE SAME PAGE BOOK CLUB

What are you reading?

If you enjoy curling up with a good book, find a copy of "Ordinary Grace" by William Kent Krueger. Susanna Sherwood has recommended it for discussion at St. George's next book club meeting on May 21st. It's a mystery and coming of age story set in rural Minnesota in 1961, and offers more than one unexpected twist.

Questions and reading recommendations are always welcomed by book club members, including Meg Hughes, Sandee Hughes, Alice Polumbo, and Barb Wengrovius. Happy reading!

meg hughes



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SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER



Andrew played.....



Kevin cooked.....

Our St. Cecilia Choir sponsored a delicious pancake supper on February 28th (Shrove Tuesday) in the Great Hall. Chef Kevin Grace slaved in the kitchen....Accordion master Andrew Krystopolski provided music in the dining room.

"tasty fun for all attendees"



A REMINDER: Our Sunday 9AM Mass is videotaped by Rick Forshaw and Mike Thiessen. It is then telecast Sundays at 4:30PM, Thursdays at 10AM and Fridays at 2PM on SACC-16 TV as well as Sundays at 2PM on Channel 18, Albany and Guilderland.