



THE GEORGIAN REPORT



Volume 15 Number 1

St. George's Episcopal Church Schenectady NY

March 2023

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2023



Our Annual Meeting took place immediately following the 10AM Mass on January 23rd. It was unclear whether to meet or eat first, but since the food was tantalizingly displayed by Sandee Hughes and Barb Wengrovius, parishioners took the initiative and dug right in. After filling ourselves with quiches, salad, meat, bread, condiments, a plethora of pastries and beverages from volunteer Georgians....Senior Warden, David Kennison, called the meeting to order with a Parish Prayer.



Meg Hughes, Clerk of the Vestry, was appointed to head the Elections with Jon Pearson and Bob Paska as ballot counters. Nominees' names were read with a brief synopsis of their qualifications; Mother Lisa Schoonmaker chose to speak on her own behalf. The agenda included mentioning parishioners and former parishioners who died in 2022; introduction of the Vestry; acknowledging Brian Taylor (music director), Bob McCloskey (financial secretary), and Dean Marshall Vang (our 16th rector who currently is our semi-regular supply clergy); an overview of St. George's. Jeff Wengrovius, starting his 6th year as Treasurer, spoke briefly on finances. Then it was time for election results. Jon Ewbank was elected for his 2nd term as Junior Warden; Carol Gaige re-elected for a 2nd Vestry term; and Gloria Kishton elected for her 1st term. There was a tie between present Vestry member, Sean Albert, and nominee Tarik Wareh; another vote taken, and Sean was reinstated for a 2nd term.



The meeting concluded when David Kennison thanked his wife Anne for "putting up with me and my church schedule." They hugged, and toasted, and there wasn't a dry eye in The Great Hall. Thank you, David. Thank you, Anne, Thank you, Georgians.

lynn paska

WINTER OUTREACH



During the cold winter months, the warm hearts of Georgians were much in evidence. Before Christmas on December 10th, Georgians could be heard “ringing the bell” in support of the Salvation Army’s annual holiday campaign at the Eastern Parkway Price Chopper. Among those Georgians taking part were Louisa Carr, son James and husband Paul Smigelski, as pictured. Our kettle collected \$508 for the day.

St George’s topped the 2,000 pound mark in SiCM food pantry donations for 2022. Not pausing a minute, 2023 has begun robustly with 345 pounds delivered to the pantry through February.

Another donation to the YWCA of new pillows and gently used/new bedding for women seeking emergency shelter took place Monday, March 13th.



At the beautiful February 12th Evensong at St. George’s, a brief address was given by Amber Bradbury, a representative of Things of my Very Own (www.thingsofmyveryown.org). Amber shared that *Things of My Very Own, Inc.* is a non-profit organization that provides crisis intervention services to children who are impacted by extensive abuse and/or neglect or are at risk of a Child Protective Services intervention. The organization’s goal is to keep children together with non-abusive family members and out of the foster care system whenever possible. From that special Mass, we collected \$275 to further this dedicated ministry.

Things of my Very Own was founded by Rayn Boncie in 2008 from her home. Georgians may recall the handsomely outfitted back-to-school backpacks provided to Things of my Very Own in its initial stages.

alice polumbo

St. George's Vestry 2023

 David Kennison Senior Warden	 Jonathan Ewbank Junior Warden	 Jeffrey Wengrovius Treasurer	 Margaret Hughes Clerk of the Vestry	 Sean Albert	
 Carol Gaige	 Sandra Hughes	 Gloria Kishton	 Lynn Paska	 Paul Smigelski	 Richard Unger



SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

Gloria Kishton is a 'seasoned gardener' and proves that point by citing the organic vegetable and flower gardens in her backyard. She brought this expertise to St. George's when joining our Garden Ministry two years ago. "We did a lot of weeding, mulching, and cleaning up areas that needed TLC," she said, adding that the group of 7 women (chairperson Meg Hughes, Suzy Unger, Barb Wengrovius, Jean Greenspan, Joyce Cockerham, and Mother Lisa Schoonmaker) are renovating the garden on the south side of the sanctuary. Gloria admits to success in recruiting people to this Ministry, i.e., Kevin Decker whose donation financed part of it (which Gloria will match). "The area was totally clogged with ferns, so we had it rototilled. The next step is to keep the ferns out, or, at least more manageable." Also on this year's agenda: planting a tree in the renovated garden, focusing on low-maintenance plants, and keeping ahead of the weeds with lots of mulch!

While she and husband Bob Lemmerman are faithful Georgians (pun intended!), they attend services once a month at the First Reformed Church in the Stockade, where Bob plays banjo in their Folk Band. "We've lived in the Stockade since 1973, bought our house in 1978, and our children (son Dmitri is a computer scientist; daughter Theresa is a music therapist) used to play in the church yard," Gloria offered. "Every morning I wake up and look out our window at St. George's steeple."



Her father sang in St. George's Choir in the '50's and '60's, before the family started attending St. Nicholas, an Eastern Orthodox Church in Troy, at that time.

A self-employed graphic designer, among Gloria's impressive list of clients are government agencies, the NYS Museum, non-profit organizations, and the Stockade Spy (neighborhood newsletter). Volunteerism includes the Stockade Association and chairperson of the countywide Schenectady Heritage Foundation for 15 years (give or take a year or two.) She introduced our Senior Warden, David Kennison, to Sacred Sites, a grant program of the NY Landmarks Conservancy, which resulted in the fruition of our steeple project.

Gloria enjoys crafts including jewelry making, sewing, and fine arts. Plus, "Bob and I have a large extended family who are also faith-based, and we derive a lot of comfort from that."

Positive about her feelings for St. George's historic presence, spiritual style and music, Gloria was recently elected to our Vestry, where she encourages "thinking outside the box" and hopes to bring a unique perspective to the table. Her goal is to work together to grow the parish. "That's our future," she said, ending with, "We need to be smart about taking care of business while attracting more parishioners."

lynn paska

ACKNOWLEDGING GUEST CLERGY



THE REVEREND JOHN WENGROVIUS (L), brother of Jeff, was our celebrant on Sunday, December 18th. A resident in the Diocese of Colorado, he retired after 45 years in the priesthood, including serving 3 years in the Diocese of Southern Malawi in Africa.

THE REVEREND PETER SCHELLHASE (R) was the celebrant for our 9AM Mass on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd that included the Imposition of Ashes. He is rector of St. Michael's in Colonie and also serves as Priest in Charge at St. Boniface in Guilderland.



HOSPITALITY

A round of applause for those “unsung heroes” who prepare for and clean up after our Georgian feasts: Sandee Hughes, chair person, and Barb Wengrovius, her co-chair; also Meredith and Jon Ewbank, Carol Gage, Meg Hughes, Wendy Madelone, Suzy Unger, Gerri Moore, Mother Lisa Schoonmaker, Sean Albert, Anne and David Kennison. And, a standing ovation for Brian Taylor, who sets up the coffee each Sunday before we walk from the church to the Great Hall. *Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!*



The Great Hall: after the cooking....before the clean-up.

lynn paska



Shirley Kerr
1935-2022

IN MEMORIAM

Rest in Peace

You are missed by your church family

CHORAL EVENSONG



This year, an inspiring talk by Amber Bradbury of Things of My Very Own added to our Choral Evensong afternoon service.

What a wonderful service is Choral Evensong. We hear glorious music and hear prayers and readings that sing praise to God and ask for His grace. St. George's Choral Evensong for Epiphany on Feb. 12 offered all these elements, with the additional theme of Love.

For the opening voluntary, Dr. Brian Taylor chose haunting and beautiful *Prelude, Fugue and Variation* by Cesar Franck. The St. Cecilia Choir offered William Smith's responses composed in the 17th century, and John Blow's Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis composed in that same period.

Amber Bradbury, a representative from Things of my Very Own, spoke eloquently about the work of this charity, located just a few steps away on Green Street. She recalled her start there in October 2022 as a volunteer and that she has stayed because she believes in the importance of their mission, to keep children safe. ToMVO fills in the gap between what other services provide and what children need and want. They work with 58 different service providers.

The organization was founded in 2008 and started small, but over the years it has grown until now it serves 4,000+ children. They accept gently used clothing and shoes in all sizes, but money is best as they receive no state, city, or federal funding. Of course, they always need volunteers.

In keeping with Amber's remarks, the choir sang John Ireland's *Greater Love* for their anthem, with solos from soprano Julie Decker and baritone Jon Ewbank. After the lovely evening hymn "The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended!" Brian treated us to the closing voluntary *Prelude and Fugue in F# minor* by Dietrich Buxtehude.

Future Evensongs will continue to focus on community organizations in Schenectady.

joan pearson



St. George's Book Club met after the March 19 Mass

Discussion of the mystery novels of Anthony Horowitz. At the suggestion of Alice Polumbo, we shared our thoughts about *The Word is Murder*, *The Sentence is Death*, *A Line to Kill*, or *The Twist of a Knife*. If you didn't draw straws at the January book club meeting, you picked one or more to read! In addition to these four adult mystery novels, Horowitz is the author of many books for young people, including working on such shows as *Magpie Murders*, *Midsomer Murders*, and *Foyle's War*. In May, the book club will meet after the service on the 21st to discuss *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams, suggested by Lea Crow. The novel is a delightful exploration of the suffrage movement, the development of the Oxford English Dictionary, and the words and stories that run the risk of being overlooked.

pattie wareh

CHRISTMAS HIGHLIGHTS 2022

QUESTION: How many Georgians did it take for the annual Greening of the Church on Sunday, December 18th

ANSWER: Approximately 29....give or take a few parishioners unaccounted for by the writer.

The law of averages says that someone (or several someones) will inadvertently be left off the volunteer list, and his/her contribution unacknowledged....and you know we couldn't have accomplished all that we did without YOU. So, if you didn't see your name below, accept my apology and everyone's undying gratitude for your "pitching in."

Kevin Decker donated Christmas trees that adorned each side of the altar. Gloria Kishton and Lea Crow were assigned to window decorations. JJ Moran, Louisa Carr, Paul and James Smigelski, and Crystal Lockwood assembled the inside creche. The outside creche was "built" by Jon Ewbank, Rich Unger, Bob Lemmerman, and Paul Smigelski. Chris Henry unfolded tree lights. Jeff Wengrovius unraveled the trees and played holiday hymns on the organ; his brother, Fr. John Wengrovius, sprawled on the floor under the trees to secure them upright. David Kennison was here, there, everywhere....from placing candles to everything else in-between. Meg Hughes and Barb Wengrovius hung wreaths. Scurrying around like church mice: Sue Hartz, Meredith Ewbank, Suzy Unger, Joyce Cockerham, Mother Lisa Schoonmaker, Brian Taylor, Tarek Wareh, Anne Kennison, and Sean Albert. Bob Paska assisted....working on the outside creche, sweeping/vacuuming the church floor, taking over as photographer so I could record the day with words instead of pictures. Hospitality Chair, Sandee Hughes, coordinated a light lunch in The Great Hall for workers, and provided clean-up afterwards.

Christmas Eve started early: carols at 7:30PM, Mass at 8PM. Dean Marshall Vang celebrated with an inspiring sermon and humorous story. To quote Carol Gaige, It was "*a Mass to Remember*" when the smoke alarm went off as Thurifers, Chris Henry and Kevin Decker, produced too much incense; the altar a virtual haze until doors were opened to the outdoors and cleared the smoke screen before Mass ended. Afterwards, a light reception in The Great Hall with finger foods, beverages, and desserts. (Thanks, again, Sandee.)

Brian Taylor's St. Cecelia Choir was "music to our ears." 35 voices could not project as richly as our 7 (Julie Decker, Joyce Cockerham, Suzy Unger, Louisa Carr, Jeff Wengrovius, Bob Paska, and Gene Delong.) They followed Brian's recital of 3 pieces by Anthony St. Pierre, a member of our 1960's Mens & Boys choir.

Christmas Day Mass, at 11AM....Dean Marshall Vang again presiding, his trusty MC David Kennison by his side, and acolyte Anne Kennison. Cantor, Joyce Cockerham, sang "A Christmas Carol," an early 1950's piece by late American composer Ned Rorem.

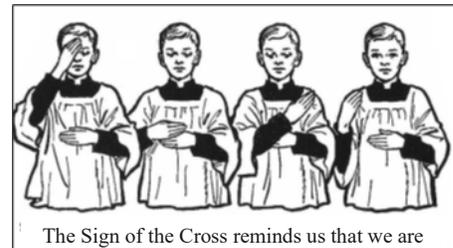
The Un-Greening or De-Greening of the church took place on Friday, January 14th with Meg Hughes getting an early start at 9AM and everyone else there by 11AM....David Kennison, Anne Kennison, Gloria Kishton, Bob Lemmerman, Bob Paska, Lynn Paska; Jon Pearson arriving at Noon to help dismantle the outside creche; and Fred Ledger to clean the church for Mass on Sunday.

lynn paska



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Most of us do it, don't we? – make the Sign of the Cross, that is. It's not required, but it is very common in Catholic, Anglo-Catholic and Orthodox parishes. But do we know why we do it? Do we know what it signifies? Here are a few answers.



The Sign of the Cross reminds us that we are Christians

We make the Sign of the Cross all the time! We do it before meals, at bedtime prayers, in the car, at a game, to ask for blessing, to give thanks, at grace before a meal, to say a little prayer. We want to entrust ourselves completely to God.

When we come to church for Mass - the real presence of God on earth in the Body and Blood - nothing is said at the altar until the Mass begins with Preparatory Prayers, said by the Celebrant and other Ministers. Those prayers always start with the Sign of the Cross, which thus begins the Mass; *"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen"*. We gather in his name and he is with us.



What exactly are we doing? When we make the Sign of the Cross, we take 3 fingers (signifying the Holy Trinity) and make a ritual blessing that dates to early Christianity. We trace the points of Jesus's upright cross across our own body, often with spoken or silent recitation *"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."* The Western Church (Catholic, Anglican, some Protestant) does this motion left-to-right: head-breast, left shoulder-right shoulder, while the Orthodox Church does it right-to-left.

There are several interpretations. The forehead symbolizes Heaven; the breast, the earth; the shoulders, the place and sign of power. It also recalls both the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation. Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) explained: *"The sign of the cross is made with three fingers, because the signing is done together with the invocation of the Trinity. This is how it is done: from above to below, and from the right to the left, because Christ descended from the heavens to the earth..."*



Portrayals of Jesus often show his hand held in much the same way, although he was not making the Sign of the Cross, but was illustrating the Trinity –Father, Son, Holy Ghost

The action of doing it and also the words a way of calling upon God. When we call upon God, Father, Son & Holy Ghost, he is truly present with us.

Why we do it The act of making the Sign of the Cross is not merely a pious gesture, it is very powerful, often seen as a prayer in itself. When we make that sign, we are reminding ourselves of several things:

- **The Creed.** The Sign of the Cross is a profession of faith, serving as an abbreviated form of the Apostles' Creed. We declare our belief in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. We are announcing our faith in what God has done - the creation of all things, the redemption of humanity from sin and death, and the establishment of the Church, which offers new life to all.
- **Our Baptism.** First-century Christians began making the Sign of the Cross as a reminder and renewal of what happened to them when they were baptized. It still works the same way for us. We declare that in baptism we died sacramentally with Christ on the cross and rose to a new life with Him.
- **Discipleship.** At our baptism the Lord claimed us as his own by marking us with the Sign of the Cross. Now, when we sign ourselves, we are affirming our loyalty to him. By tracing the cross on our bodies, we are denying that we belong to ourselves and declaring that we belong to him alone.

Sometimes, we make the Sign of the Cross casually - just a nice gesture for beginning and ending our prayers. But when we learn to take this act seriously, signing ourselves frequently with faith and reverence, remarkable results can take place. We move from a menial world of problems and headaches out there to a very special time, a very special place in the Mass, a sanctuary in time where you can focus on what's really important. You can ask God to help you address the problems in your life. We find ourselves doing better in our Christian life: praying with more passion, having strength to resist our temptations, loving our neighbor more deeply.

With great affection, david

PHOTO ALBUM



Treasurer Jeff Wengrovius discussed his coin collection at a very informative Stewardship Meeting in December.



The St. Stephen's choir joined our St. George's choir for a very special Candlemas service on February 2nd.



Food and personal hygiene products are collected every Sunday for SICM (Schenectady Inner City Mission.)



(L-R) Alice Polumbo, Wendy Madelone, Meg Hughes and Sandee Hughes enjoyed a farewell breakfast at the Blue Ribbon Diner. Alice and her husband Ralph are relocating to their home state of Pennsylvania.



Music Director Brian Taylor presided over a Holiday Sing after Mass in December....and Georgians put their best voices forward!

- SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT -

It's time for a detailed update on our rector search.



Our Rector Search For each of our five candidates, the Vestry has reviewed written materials (CV curriculum vitae, Personal Profile & Spiritual Autobiography) and details of personal phone interviews with great interest and with much thought and prayer. Some candidates were clearly aligned with the rector criteria that were set down by the people of St. George's in last year's Parish Survey. That is, St. George's is seeking a rector with a unique set of skills and experience that is rooted in the great traditions of Anglo-Catholicism and sacred choral music, building upon our rich colonial history, and with pastoral care and a social conscience for today's world.

The three candidates that seemed to be best aligned with this goal are proceeding in our search process. For the two candidates that were not selected to proceed, a letter was prepared and sent, explaining, carefully and gently, exactly why they were not chosen. While each of them possessed clear gifts for ministry in the Church, they fell short of the mark, either in their position on social issues or in not having proven skills in building and leading a church in today's world.

The next step is to personally visit each candidate in their home parish. At such visitations, we will see how they celebrate a Mass, how they preach, their relationship with their parishioners, how active their parish is and what they have accomplished in the time at their parish. The Vestry has formed 3 teams for these visitations, each team going to evaluate a different candidate. A written report will be generated for each visit. This will all be accomplished in March. After Easter, the Vestry will meet to discuss the three visitations and to discern who will proceed. We anticipate that three candidates will shrink to two, those becoming our finalists.

At this point, an Oxford Background Check will be performed for each finalist, arranged through the diocesan Transition Minister. This background check investigates a candidate's employment and personal history, ensuring that all is as they said and nothing untoward is uncovered. If a candidate is already canonically resident in the Diocese of Albany, such background check is not required as it has already been done as a prerequisite for becoming canonically resident. Such background checks are required for candidates from outside the diocese.

Assuming the background checks are passed, the two remaining candidates will be invited to come to St. George's for a personal visit. They will celebrate a Mass and preach (to the Vestry, not the congregation), tour the church campus, examine the rectory, review the church records and finances, and have more in-depth discussions with the Vestry. They are evaluating us as much as we are evaluating them. They will also have a private meeting with the bishop (or in the absence of a bishop, the Diocesan Standing Committee). It's possible they won't like what they see or they might not feel God's call to come to St. George's, or the bishop may not agree. What is certain is that when both candidates have visited, we will know a lot more about them and they about us. At that point, the Vestry must discern "do either of these candidates exhibit God's call?"

If so, the Vestry will advise the bishop (Standing Committee) of our decision and ask for approval. With approval, the Vestry can issue a call to the selected candidate and if the candidate agrees, we can proceed with negotiations. , asking approval of the bishop (or at present in the Diocese of Albany, the Diocesan Standing Committee). If approval is given, the candidate is notified and hopefully will accept the call. In which case, plans are made, the candidate must give notice at their current parish and we must jointly set a date for arrival. It is possible this could all happen by the end of June, or it might take a bit longer. We'll have more certainty as we get closer.

All of this is undergirded by a foundation of prayer - both individually and jointly by the Vestry in each of our meetings. It's so easy to think this is our church, our decision and our call. But in truth, St. George's is God's church and the decision of a rector is God's. That is the purpose of prayer. We must discern, through prayer, who God is calling. We are given, by God, the mind and hopefully the wisdom to do exactly that.

With great affection, david

- MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT -



MUSIC NOTES



From time to time on certain great feast days the choir will sing a choral setting of the Ordinary of the Mass - Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei. Easter Day will be one of those days this year as the choir sings the Communion Service in F Major by English composer Herbert Sumsion. The choir is also beginning to dig deeper into the Renaissance Latin tradition. We have several choral pieces scheduled for Holy Week and Easter Day that will be sung in Latin. Don't worry, translations will be provided so everyone will understand what is being sung, but these pieces sound best in the original Latin. The Latin pieces from the Renaissance era were designed to open a window to heaven.

Lest you think all the music is about the choir, throughout Holy Week and Easter will be multiple opportunities to sing many of the favorite hymns of this special time of year. One hymn that is making a "comeback" on Easter Day is Hail Thee, Festival Day which will be sung in solemn procession at the beginning of the Easter Day liturgy. The women will sing the odd numbered stanzas and men the even numbered stanzas. All will join together in the refrain. We hope all of the music - organ, choral and congregational - touches your heart as we celebrate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

peace, dr. brian j. taylor

CORNISH CREAM TEA



Leave it to our Music Director, Brian Taylor, to treat us to a very unusual Coffee Hour on Sunday, March 5th after the 10AM Mass. In honor of the feast day of St. Piran, the patron saint of Cornwall on the southwest coast of England....we enjoyed an authentic Cornish Cream Tea with tea (of course!), and scones, clotted cream (from Great Britain, for some of us our first taste of clotted cream) and strawberry jam. It was a feast to end all feasts, with grateful Georgians filling their plates to the brim with this delicious custom from Brian's family history to Cornwall.

sande e hughes & lynn paska



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The Vestry

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Sean Albert
Carol Gaige
Margaret Hughes, *Clerk*
Sandra Hughes
Gloria Kishton
Marilyn (Lynn) Paska
Paul Smigelski
Richard Unger
Jeffrey Wengrovius, *Treasurer*

Administrative Assistant

Financial Secretary

Robert McCloskey

Directory of Music Ministry

Brian Taylor



PANCAKE SUNDAY



Mmmmm, pancakes! We had our own version of a Shrove Tuesday celebration before the beginning of Lent after morning prayer on Feb. 19, with pancakes, maple syrup, sausages, fruit, and breakfast liquids courtesy of Sandee Hughes, Barb Wengrovius, and Meg Hughes. No one had to ask twice for members of the congregation to grab a plate of goodness and sit with friends to eat and chat.

We know Georgians love good food. A pancake breakfast sets us up for covered dish Sunday evening suppers through Lent until we reach our Easter Feast. Thank you to the cooks and clean-up crew!

joan pearson



Church Chuckles

After preparing a sermon one night, Reverend Mary Brown must have looked tired and worn out. Her husband came into the den to cheer her up with this riddle: "What do you call a woman minister when she gets older?"

Answer: "Pastor Prime."