



# THE GEORGIAN REPORT



St. George's Church Schenectady, NY

September 2009

## GETTING READY FOR FR. PAUL & MAGGIE



David Kennison



Mike Todt



Chris Henry



Mike Thiessen



Gerald Cooper



Rick Forshaw

### *The Busy Men of St. George's*

*.... at the rectory  
.... at the rector's office*

*volunteering their "muscle" in much needed  
clean-up projects.*



Ralph Fusco

# OUTREACH



The first week of August (3-7) was the week designated for St. George's to work at the SICM (Schenectady Inner City Mission) Summer Lunch Program. We were assigned to assist at the MacGathan Townhouse Community Center where lunch was served from 11:45AM to 1:00PM. The site provided an average lunch to approximately 30 children per day whose ages ranged from 6 months to 17 years.

It was a good week, the kids were well behaved, and the weather actually cooperated! Many thanks to those Georgians who helped St. George's meet this volunteer commitment: Forest Byrd, Rick Forshaw, Amy Machold, Bob Moran, JJ Moran and Aileen Smith-Carusio; and to Alice Polumbo, Outreach Chairman, who coordinated our participation with SICM again this year.

Outreach Chairman Alice Polumbo delivered 25 backpacks to the Schenectady County Foster Children's Things Of My Very Own project - each outfitted with a ruler, colored pencils, #2 pencils, ballpoint pens, tissues, calculator, eraser, gluestick, highlighters, spiral bound or 5-subject notebooks, folders, composition book, snack, and one unique "something extra." All supplies and 19 backpacks were donated; St. George's purchased 6 backpacks to make our commitment.

Thank you to the donators including the Forshaws, Macholds, Otterys, Pannones, Paskas, Ruotas, Susanna Sherwood, Aileen Smith-Carusio, Barbara Todt, Jim Wingate, and several equally generous anonymous donations. Also to Ib Bartlett for donating two children's car seats.



St. George's donated 19 (count 'em!) varieties of beans to SICM's *A Hill of Beans* project: butter beans, pork & beans, bean soup mix, red beans, lentils/lentil soup mix, lima beans, cannellini, green pigeon beans, pea beans, pinto beans, great northern beans, French style green beans, kidney beans, black beans, cut green beans, yellow wax beans, Roman beans, black eyes beans and garbanzos.

Our Annual Coat Drive is underway through Thanksgiving. Gently used coats will be collected for Conifer Park, a substance abuse rehabilitation facility in Glenville.

St. George's will sponsor a table at the Salvation Army's bell ringer kick-off breakfast at the Glen Sanders Mansion on Wednesday, November 11th.

During Advent, Georgians will again collect Christmas cards and 1st class postage stamps for St.

Stephen's deacon, Pat Jones, for use in her Schenectady County Jail women's ministry.

A Toys for Tots box will again be placed in the narthex for Christmas toy donations.

We are providing once-a-month weekend meal service (dinner and breakfast suitable for ten people) to The Lighthouse, a group home operated by Bethesda House. Georgian volunteers are needed for this ministry. St. George's and St. Stephen's will partner to assist in a Bethesda House *Pot Luck Dinner* in January.

Also ongoing, the SICM food pantry and the YWCA old cell phones ministries.

Other local outreach projects are in the planning stages. Your ideas and talents are always welcome. Contact Outreach Chairman Alice Polumbo, and become involved.

## RECTORY WORK DAYS

When Georgians party, they party....hearty. And when they're called to volunteer for work, they report to duty and toil....laboriously. Armed with Swifsters, Squeegies and Pressure Washers; equipped with elbow grease and stamina they never knew they possessed, they worked nonstop.

They rubbed and they scrubbed. They polished and they shined. They cleaned and they waxed. They huffed, they puffed, they buffed. And when they returned to their respective homes that night - dirty beyond recognition, exhausted beyond belief, and (for those on pressure washing duty) soaked to the gills - it was with the knowledge that it was not over yet, and there would be additional rectory work days.

A round of applause for Rick Forshaw, Ralph Fusco, Chris Henry, David Kennison, Mike Thiessen and Mike Todt for their intensive interior labor; kudos also to Erin Thiessen, and to Bob Moran for his hard work in the backyard. One thing can be said for this crew....*when it comes to work, they never shirk*. Rectory windows now sparkle and shine, and

we have a rectory basement that glistens and gleams with clean.

Gene DeLong (with truck) stopped by to pick up old paint cans for recycling. Between all the various buildings on our church campus, there were over 80 cans of old paint for disposal.

Subsequent work days were scheduled. Rick Forshaw and Aileen Smith-Caruso painted the stairwell, the wall behind the washer-dryer, the steam pipes on the floor, and gave the basement floor two coats of paint. Ralph Fusco completed some electrical work in the basement and repaired the floor in a bedroom closet. Big thanks also to Gerald Cooper, Joyce Kapusta, Rosemary Pannone, Joan Pearson, Jon Pearson (with trailer) and Jeff Wengrovius who spent one afternoon carting away remaining brush from the yard and emptying the basement; to Rosemary Fusco and Chris Pearson for their cleaning expertise; and to the rector's office planners/workers Joan Bessarab, Rick Forshaw, Chris Henry, Aileen-Smith Caruso and Barbara Wengrovius.

A job well done....ladies and gentlemen!

## HOUSEWARMING BRUNCH



*(L-R) Rosemary Pannone and Alice Polumbo, who coordinated this event with Barbara Wengrovius, assemble the housewarming gifts for display.*

As soon as it became clear that the Blanches would join us, every Georgian had the same thought: *They'll need stuff, mainly electronics large and small, since none of theirs will operate on the US system.* Moving is difficult enough, overseas moving even more so, and we could best help them by replacing as many everyday and electronic items as we could.

Alice Polumbo, Rosemary Pannone and Barbara Wengrovius developed an extensive list, from cordless kettle and cleaning supplies to a vacuum cleaner and gift cards, so that there would be minimal duplication. Mike Thiessen, Chris Henry and Amy Machold organized food, and after church on June 7th we celebrated our new rector's arrival with a festive brunch and house shower - but without the rector and Maggie. Only in our dreams did immigration authorities move quickly; we'll just have to celebrate again once they're here.

The Blanches expected to buy their own small appliances and, according to David Kennison, didn't encourage us to pitch in. We Georgians, on the other hand, want to make them welcome, and we don't want them to begin their time with us replacing items that had to be left behind. We know Fr. Paul and Maggie will give generously of their time and hearts once they move to Schenectady. In this way we can help to give them a home.

joan pearson

## GEORGIAN FRIENDSHIPS



*Just like the Energizer bunny, Georgian friendships keep going, and going, and going - and even extend to other Episcopalians. (L-R) Rita Michalec (Christ Church), Stella Schultz, Nancy Angus and Helen Peterson (St. George's) enjoy a social afternoon together at The Eddy, where Rita and Helen are residents.*

# SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

With the departure of long-time music director Brian Hoffman and his paid choir, Sunday services did not seem the same without the rich, traditional, classical sacred music that had become an important part of the fabric of St. George's. Enter: *The Music Meisters* - who reinstated the music program and reorganized a volunteer choir, once again filling St. George's with joyous sounds and heartfelt hymns.

**Jeff Wengrovius** travels worldwide for his job but when he's back home in Schenectady, Jeff puts his vocation aside and gives 200% to his avocation, music. Unparalleled on the organ, he also transformed a newly formed choir of volunteers into a group of talented voices that fill St. George's with beautiful music on Sunday mornings.



**Aniko Szokody** is a world renowned concert pianist throughout Europe and the United States, wife, and mother of two young sons. She does not have time to spare, but as a parishioner of St. George's, she realized the importance that music played in our Sunday masses. Aniko stepped up to the keyboard and helped to resurrect our treasured music program.



**Ildiko Szokody** from Hungary - visiting her sister Aniko for a year - was a valuable contributor to the start-up of our music program. Although Ildiko spoke little English, music is a universal language so her communication skills on the organ translated to a happy congregation that appreciated her talents.

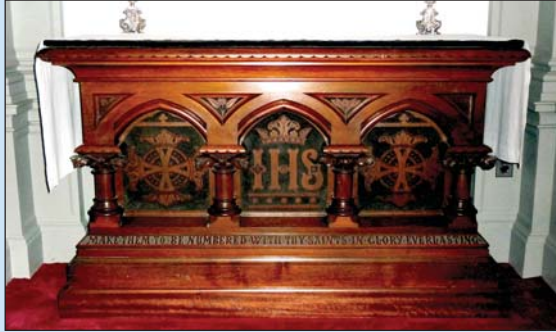


**Don Ingram**, retired organist from St. Paul's in Troy, took over our mighty M.P. Moller, Opus 11589, in the absence of Jeff and Aniko this summer. Don received a standing ovation from Georgians who stayed after his first Sunday service and were treated to an extra concert du jour. Don will continue to be part of our music program.



# EPISCOPAL EDUCATION

**IHS.** Those three little letters. You see them everywhere. You probably see them so often, you don't give it a second thought anymore. Here are a few places you'll see them around St. George's:



The beautifully carved altar in the All Soul's Chapel has **IHS** prominent in the middle.

IHS is one of a number of symbols known as Christograms, which in various forms are used as an abbreviation for Jesus Christ. IHS is of particularly ancient origins, stemming to the first century.

So what does it mean? - IHS is simply the first three letters of Jesus' name in Greek. In Greek, this would have been written as *Iota-Eta-Sigma*, or  $\text{IH}\Sigma$ .

Our modern IHS form is based on the Latin, which was transliterated from the original Greek.

As there is no letter *J* in Greek, it was common to transliterate to an *I*. Even in Latin, these two letters were commonly interchanged originally. The Greek letter *eta* was transliterated as the letter *H* in the Latin-speaking West (Greek *eta* and Latin-alphabet *H* had the same visual appearance and shared a common historical origin).



The High Altar Chalice



Yes - there it is!



Processional Cross



Old Brass Cross

The Greek letter *sigma* " $\Sigma$ " was either transliterated as the Latin letter *C* (due to the visually similar form of the sigma), or as Latin *S* (since these letters of the two alphabets have the same sound). So, you will often see IHS and IHC used interchangeably, and they are.

IHS is sometimes given other meanings that were not originally intended, trying to fit seemingly appropriate words to the IHS symbol. You may hear someone say *Jesus Hominum Salvator* (“Jesus, Savior of men”). In English, it is not unknown for IHS to be taken to mean “I Have Suffered” or “In His Service,” but while these sound good they are modern colloquial uses and have lost the original meaning and are not correct.



*Sometimes visitors ask why there are \$ signs on the headstones!*

*Gravestones in St. George's churchyard*



It is common to also see the letters **I-H-S** stacked on top of each other, making a more complex symbol, but not changing the meaning. This is often mistaken for a modern dollar sign. Nothing could be further from the truth!

*David Kennison*

## GEORGIAN HISTORY



St. George's is a treasure trove of memorabilia some of which, thanks to the foresight of our church caretakers, has been maintained. Did you ever wonder about the portrait of the Reverend Darwin Kirby, our 15th rector? This was a gift from the congregation at our neighboring First Presby-

terian Church and its pastor Dr. Herbert Mekeel.

Longtime Georgian Dottie Kennison remembers the background on this possession. Fr. Kirby and Dr. Mekeel became good friends during their tenures (1947-1987 and 1937-1979, respectively.) Their bonding included a controversy with the Presbytery of Albany and its parent United Presbyterian Church who wanted to take over the First Presbyterian's ministry and include women pastors, a step that both Fr. Kirby and Dr. Mekeel were adamantly against. Fr. Kirby

wrote many letters in support of Dr. Mekeel's ministry at the church. Although the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Main Presbytery, the Union Street church ultimately aligned with the more conservative Presbyterian Church in America and continued under Dr. Mekeel's ministry.

In 1952, St. George's was given use of the First Presbyterian facilities during our most recent major restoration. In appreciation of this gesture and as a lasting tribute to the friendship, Fr. Kirby commissioned a portrait of Dr. Mekeel to be presented to the congregation of First Presbyterian Church in honor of their 40th anniversary. Later, wishing to reciprocate as well as commemorate the friendship between the two churches, Dr. Mekeel and the congregation at First Presbyterian commissioned the portrait of Fr. Kirby on the 25th anniversary of his ministry at St. George's that has a place of honor in the Shaw Lounge today.



# RECTORY OUTDOOR WORKDAY

## MANPOWER



## WOMANPOWER



## CHILD LABOR



## "SUPERVISOR"



# SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

*It's been almost two full years. Lately, I find myself reflecting on this quite a bit. What a long time for a parish to be without a rector. I've also been re-reading some of our history, both in the seminal work by Willis Hanson and the later work from Dr. Harold Martin. I have learned that St. George's has not had such a long time between rectors since the turn of the 19th century.*

*The Reverend Robert C. Wetmore left in 1801 and it was not until 1804 that The Reverend Cyrus Stebbins was called and being a "Methodist preacher," was forced by the Bishop of New York to undergo a three-year period of probation and training before he was allowed to receive Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. For two years, "the Vestry continued to press the Bishop to ordain the man they had chosen so that he might perform the essential rites of the church. Without full orders, they argued, he could not be expected to win back to the church those who, in the years of a vacant pulpit, had left it." The Bishop demurred until the probationary period was satisfied. Between 1801 and 1804, the church "fell into a parlous state." Only the "doggedness of its founder, John Brown, and a few others had kept it from dissolving entirely." Prospects at the end of the 18th century must have looked grim.*

*What a long time ago! Some parishes fall apart in the interim, as St. George's almost did over 200 years ago. Some go into a period of suspended animation and just wait. But what are they really waiting for? Do they wait for a new rector to arrive and tell them what to do? Do they wait for a new rector to do it for them?*

*Things could not be more different now. We have not fallen apart, but pulled together. With enormous gratitude to the clergy that have supported us, the word of God has been preached; the pulpit has not been vacant. No, we did not decide to wait, but boldly charged ahead and rebuilt our church, both physically and in spirit.*

*You can see the parallels from our past in our efforts to settle the matter and extend the call to The Reverend Paul Blanch to be the 18th Rector. The glacial slowness in securing a visa for Fr. Paul and Maggie to emigrate from England has not deterred us from our mission. We worship together, we work together, we relax together, we strive to be a witness to the power of Almighty God and a blessing to our community. We are the people of St. George's. **We Are The Church!***

*It won't be long now. As I write this, Fr. Paul will be amongst us in a scant three weeks and a new chapter begins. Many thanks to each of you for everything you have done to hold us together, for you have all had a part. God the Holy Spirit is at work here. God bless you.*

*With great affection,  
David*

# VISITATIONS

If the meek indeed inherit the earth, then Clark Willsey will be a major landowner. Clark is a gentleman in every sense of the word; always grateful for any kindness, a joy to be around. He is soft-spoken but with a twinkle in his eye that suggests his keen sense of humor.



Clark and his late wife Kitty were Sunday school teachers and ushers at St. George's, where they raised two children - Joan (Colonie) and Paul (Syracuse.) Both were especially fond of the music program and what it added to the Mass. The devoted couple loved to travel, with Italy and England being their favorite destinations. When Kitty's health required her to move to Kingsway, visitors found Clark by her side every day. Today it is Clark who resides at Kingsway, where he actively participates in the programs provided.

When asked what Pastoral Care meant most to him, he replied, "Receiving communion," adding that it was so nice to receive communion in a dignified manner, unhurried and solemn. He appreciates each and every visit and his last words are always, "Thank you for coming and making time to visit me." Believe us, Clark, it is our pleasure.

*jim wingate*

## UPHOLSTERY PROJECT



Hats off to Upholsterers Extraordinaire (L-R) Jennafer Thiessen and Chris Henry - who wove their magic in the Shaw Lounge on several couches and chairs.



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*The Georgian Report*

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**2010 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN**

In the 22 months without a rector, Georgians found out something about themselves: when the going gets tough, we unite. We pray together, work together, socialize together, and stay together. We've done what few churches could do, thanks to parish leadership and - most importantly - parishioner *commitment*.

Now that much of the work is done, and our new rector is almost here, this is not the time for complacency. It is the time to reflect on our individual and personal commitments to St. George's. Cost for the upkeep of our church properties is significant; we do not want to squander what we have accomplished.

God has blessed us with St. George's; it is time to honor Him by our commitment to our beloved church home. We have already proven our gifts of "time and talent," now it is our "treasure" that is needed to continue maintaining and upgrading our house of worship.

Each parishioner holds the key to the success of the upcoming **2010 Stewardship Campaign**. Think of what St. George's means to you. If the past two years are any indication, the answer is "*everything*."

We can only go forward if you think generously and raise your pledge accordingly.