

SAINT GEORGE'S CHURCH



Annual Meeting & Election

January 21, 2024



30 NORTH FERRY STREET, SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK 12305

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The Reverend Thomas J. Pettigrew, B.A., M.Div., Rector

Mr. David Kennison & Mr. Jonathan Ewbank, Wardens

Dr. Brian J. Taylor, AAGO, Director of Music

A PRAYER FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Grant, O Lord, that thy Holy Spirit may preside over us now in all our concerns and deliberations for the welfare of this parish. We thank thee for all the blessings of the past year, and pray that we may go together from strength to strength in the year before us. Help us all to dedicate ourselves to thee, and to be ready to make sacrifice of time and money for the extension of thy kingdom.

Guide us, we beseech thee, in the choice of our Wardens and Vestry members that they may discharge their duties faithfully.

We praise thee for those thy servants who labored and worshipped here before us, and especially for those who have departed this life since we last met together.

Grant to them ✠ eternal rest, O Lord, and let thy light perpetual shine upon them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH

Thanks be to Thee, O God, Who hast given us
minds that think
hearts that love
and hands that welcome.

Inspire us to work with Thee
that we may be responsible for Thy gifts.

We praise Thee for our homes,
our friends and our Holy Church.

Bless St. George's in this
Two Hundred and Eighty-Eighth year
and in all Her endeavors for
the propagation of the Faith
and for the salvation of souls,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and our King.
Amen.

THE AGENDA OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

- The Opening Prayer
- Appointment of Clerk
- Appointment of Tellers for the Election
- Nominating Committee Report
- Nominations from the Floor
- Ballots Distributed
- Voting opens and remains open for one hour.

- Luncheon is Served.

Reports to the Annual Meeting:

- The Rector, Fr. Thomas Pettigrew
- Senior Warden, David Kennison
- Junior Warden, Jon Ewbank
- Financial Report, Jeffrey Wengrovius, Treasurer
- Questions and suggestions from parishioners

- Announcement of Election Results, Meg Hughes, Vestry Clerk
- The Blessing & Adjournment



The Rector's Address to the 288th Annual Meeting of St George's Church

It is a joy and a blessing to me to be able to give to St George's my first report as Rector. It is of course hard to report on a whole year when I was only here for one-third of that time. What strikes, me however, in my short time, in what I hope will be a long and happy ministry here, is the dedication of our parishioners to our Georgian family. Our parish is filled with a lot of wonderful, dedicated, and talented people, eager to share their time, talent, and treasures for the building up this little corner of Christ's kingdom. In my first report, I want to touch with you some of the things we have done, and my hopes for this coming year.

First, though, I'll give you the numbers. I took a public speaking class in college and the professor, who was from Poland, said, in my country we have a saying, "there are lies, bigger lies, and statistics." Numbers tell us some information, but they don't tell the story. And it is the story, of God and his people, growing closer to one another, and reaching out in love for others which is truly important.

This past year, there were seven funerals conducted from St George's. Those buried from this parish, or by its clergy were:

Dorothy Dever
Homer Kerr
Aileen Caruso
Charles Stamm
Betty Lee Scott
Patricia A. Petel
Carol A. Rose

There were no Weddings.

There was one baptism: Sasha Eckert Hartz, daughter of Shannon and Scott Hartz, which we squeezed in just under the wire on December 31st.

Our Easter attendance was 112. At Christmas, 92 attended.

Our average Sunday attendance was level from last year at ~44. (43.52, but I'm not sure who the half person might have been, maybe a bishop showed up in the congregation on Sunday, so I'm happy to round up.) Breaking that down a little, for the first two-thirds of the year the average was 38.1. For the final third, however, the average was 54.3. This was of course helped by an afternoon evensong and Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday. Of course some of that also could be in part the bump that curiosity at a new priest brings. Whatever the cause, I'm happy to claim it as a little win that our numbers have bumped up in the final half of the year.

This year also brought not only a new Rector but a new Bishop of Albany. Father Jeremiah Williamson, formerly of Grace & St Stephens Church in the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado was elected on September 9, 2023, just six short days after my first Sunday. Fr Williamson will be consecrated and installed as Bishop on February 24, 2024 at the Cathedral of All Saints'. He will make his first visit here to St. George's on March 15, 2024 to Officiate my Institution as the 20th Rector of St George's and to celebrate Mass.

As we look to the next year, I look forward new endeavors and projects. I look forward to working with the vestry to accomplish important work across the many dimensions of our parish life. Somethings will be exciting, like finding ways to continue to reach out into our community in loving service to the least, the last,

and the lost, whom Christ came to serve; increasing opportunities to come together to learn and grow in the knowledge and love of God; and opportunities to grow in love and fellowship with one another. Other things will be more mundane, and less interesting but no less important such as finding ways to be better stewards of our resources like our buildings and working on administrative tasks like an updated membership list.

In the reports that follow, you'll find that there is much going on already at St George's. There are lots of people sacrificially putting in their time, talent, and treasures. I hope as you consider your own life in Christ and membership at St George's you'll consider how you might join with those who are giving for the building up of the Kingdom. Do you have an idea for outreach? Do you have a program you think we should be involved in? Do you have a gift or skill which you think might be useful? Don't hesitate to offer it up to God.

The Story of St George's Church is 288 years old. Some of you have been a part of that story for a long time. I've been here for just four months. That story has seen its up and downs through the years. But I am truly convinced that God has been in control of that story the whole time, and it has been his will working itself out, through the good times and the tough. As we look forward to the next year and beyond, no matter what it brings, we put our trust in him, who is the one who gave himself for us, and calls us to live in the love of his heavenly Father.

Faithfully,

(The Rev'd) Thomas J. Pettigrew, Rector



Senior Warden's Report

David Kennison - Senior Warden

Looking Backward, Looking Forward

Those who remember high school mythology might well recall the god **Janus** – a Roman god, most often depicted as having two faces or heads, facing in opposite directions. Janus was the god of gates and doors, beginnings and endings. Legend says that Saturn bestowed upon him the gift to see both future and past in reward for hospitality received. January bears his name, thus beginning each new year.

We are now at the cusp of a new calendar year and yet still early in the cure (pastoral oversight) of our new Rector, Fr. Thomas Pettigrew. While we eagerly look forward, we also need to look backward to see where we have been and reflect on how we accounted for our efforts.

Our most recent interregnum (a time between rectors) was filled with activity in the church. Our journey lasted almost 2 years - longer than we'd hoped, but quite typical nowadays. Overlaid upon our rector search were the many, many aspects of keeping a parish running smoothly and vibrantly.

We fulfilled our canonical responsibility to offer Divine Service each Sunday. When we could secure clergy, we offered a Mass; when no clergy were available, we offered choral Matins. Not a single Sunday was missed. We kept Holy Days as best we could and added a Liturgy of the Word service twice a week as a placeholder for a weekly Mass when a rector arrived. Yes, we had weddings (well, one), several baptisms and sadly, more funerals. We kept to our mission as a church of God.

We replaced the crumbling church boiler, upgraded the church electrical system, repaired more roof leaks than we'd care to admit, cleaned out years of detritus from the classrooms, rehabilitated the Great Hall kitchen, and cleaned, repaired and repainted much in the Great Hall and the church. We did extensive cleaning, repair and yard work in the rectory in preparation for a new Rector.

We maintained parish communication with a beautiful and professional parish newsletter, augmented by weekly email blasts to the congregation and friends of the parish. Our web site was kept fresh and up-to-date with photos, news, announcements and weekly service bulletins. All of our Sunday services and some others were live-streamed, open and accessible to everyone. Our Pastoral Care team made frequent visits to each all our shut-ins and those in need, offering Holy Communion to all.

We grew our Outreach ministry to new heights, added choral Evensongs to benefit local charities, had our finances professionally audited for the first time in many years, resolved personnel issues, and even found time to tend and expand our beautiful gardens! We opened our doors for community events, gave tours to various groups and reconnected with our diocese. The list goes on and on and is well-treated by the other reports submitted for this 2024 Annual Meeting.

We prayed together, sang together, worked together, agreed and disagreed, loved each other, endured each other and did it all for our beloved church in the name of Almighty God. Resurrecting our motto from a few years back, we did it because "We Are the Church". To paraphrase an extraordinary theologian, Dom Gregory Dix, "Was ever a command so obeyed?" This is what successful churches do. This is the St. George's of today. Who would not want to be here and be part of it?

God has now forged a new beginning in calling a new rector - a priest, a leader, a teacher, a counselor and a

friend. Fr. Pettigrew quickly proved that he is up to the task of leading this historic parish of liturgical customs, traditions, quirks and personalities. We celebrate an orthodox yet forward-thinking priest, a skilled preacher, a warm and affable person, a tireless worker for the building of God's church. I hope that he finds us to be equally compelling.

Can we now kick back and relax? Absolutely not! There is much work still to be done and we, the people of St. George's must do it. Our parish continues to need rebuilding in congregation, in finances, and in our ministry to the community and beyond. Fr. Tom leads us onward, but the road ahead is shared. Rector and people together - the future of St. George's is in our hands and in God's hands.

We don't have to erase our history, our traditions or our liturgy. These are gifts left to us and it falls to us to use them wisely, embracing our uniqueness while not being encumbered by it. Are you thinking, "*If we build it, they will come*"? Sorry - we've tried that and *it doesn't work*. There has never been a time in history quite like this time. People are seeking and searching...they desperately want something to *believe* in. In a world where many people have no church and don't have a clue about Jesus Christ, in a world where people run away from churches that are more concerned about looking inwards and gathering in their cloistered members - holy clubs that don't reach out to unconnected people...*I dream of a church where that does not happen*.

Welcome visitors warmly. Spread the good news of Christ and this church. Bring a person or a family to St. George's. Help them feel comfortable. Introduce them to others, take them to coffee. Show them how this living community of faith worships together, works together, laughs together and endures together. This new year, let's enjoy the gift of hope, which God gives to each of us.

In almost 300 years of history within these walls - spanning 4 centuries - much has happened. It has ALL been done because the people took ownership of their church. This is our time, our brief shining moment in history to make a difference. Grab it with gusto and make your stewardship - Time Talent & Treasure - with joy in your heart.

A society grows great when old men plant trees, the shade of which they know they shall never sit.

Old Greek proverb

Be well, my friends, and thank you for being an important part of my life and the life of St. George's.

With great affection for you all,
Respectfully submitted,
David Kennison

Junior Warden's Report

John Ewbank, Junior Warden

Five words adequately summarize our physical plant maintenance and repair efforts in 2023.

Boiler - We started January with a sanctuary boiler that was heavily bandaged and on crutches, but limping along. A power outage induced power surge in March fried the circuit board controlling the sanctuary boiler feed water pump. Luckily, no serious damage was done, and once the circuit was restored, the boiler continued gamely limping along. In August, the final parts for the new boiler were received, and in November the new boiler was up and running.

Insurance – Our insurance company arrived in March to perform a routine inspection of our property and left us with a list of items that had to be addressed. These included among others missing exit signs, missing handrails, parking lot repair issues, and roof repairs. Everything but the roof repairs were satisfied prior the insurance company's deadline.

Roof – A major hole discovered in the roof of St. Georges house at the end of 2022 was only the beginning of the saga of the roofs. The insurance inspection highlighted issues with both the roof of St. George's House and the roof and ceiling of the sanctuary. Contractors were found, bids were let, and repairs made to both roofs, and a contract to repaint the sanctuary ceiling was let. However, as 2023 ended, more leaks had developed in the sanctuary roof, a loose membrane is attributed for a leak in the roof of the Rectory, and another major leak has been discovered in St. George's house. As the saying goes, "when it rains ... !"

Electric – In the fall, it was discovered that the 3-phase electrical line supplying power to the organ had been incorrectly installed. The deficiencies included wrong wire gage, wire not adequately insulated for its location, and the line not being isolated through the main breaker panel. The necessary repairs were completed in November, and the organ is now adequately, properly and safely powered.

Cosmetics – As we started 2023, we were convinced that we would be welcoming a new Rector by summer, so a massive clean-up, fix up, paint up campaign was undertaken. The lawn and garden were spruced up, the front doors to the sanctuary were refurbished, the Great Hall classrooms and library were de-cluttered, and ten years of wear and tear to the Rectory were addressed in anticipation of it's new occupant.

Altogether, slightly less than half of our church expenses for 2023 were directly or indirectly related to the maintenance or repair of our physical assets. In the coming year, I and the Asset Management Committee will direct our efforts to developing a stronger preventative maintenance program for our assets, in hopes of reducing unplanned (and therefore more costly) corrective maintenance requirements.

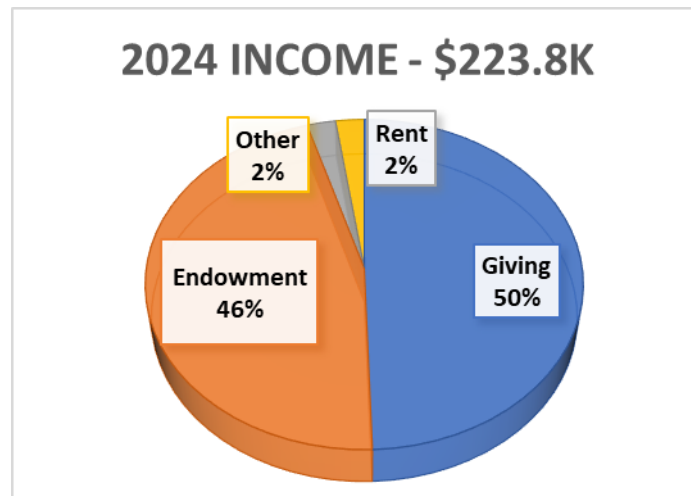
Treasurer's Report

2023:

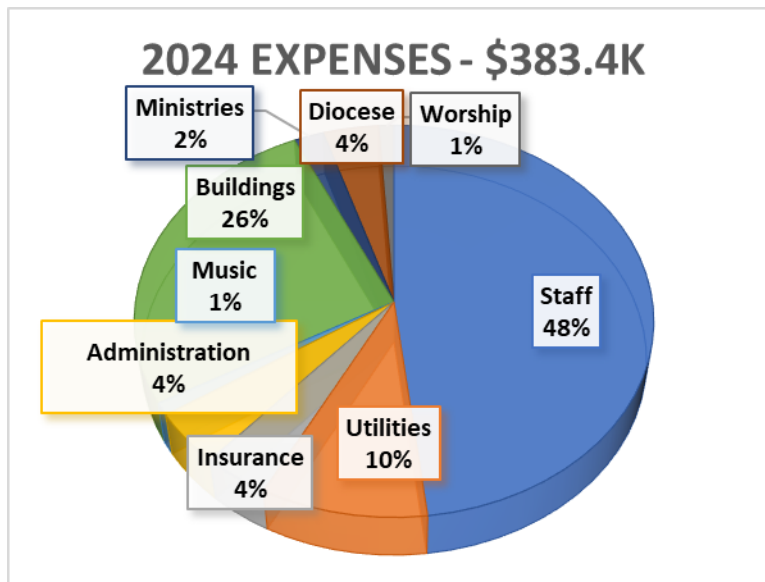
- Books closed for 2023 – hit the budgeted numbers very closely.
- \$135K taken from endowment principal.
- See more details in the December Georgian Journal.

2024:

- 2024 budget approved by the Finance Committee and the Vestry.
- Budgeted **income** for 2024 - \$223.8K



- Budgeted **expenses** for 2024 - \$383.4K:



- \$159K deficit anticipated – to be paid from endowment principal.
- Finance Committee and the Vestry will work to reduce the deficit.

Ministry Reports for 2023

Communications

Lynn Paska – Vestry Chair

Bob and I are starting our 16th year publishing The Georgian Report 4x a year (March, June, September and December.) It is in full color and quickly grew from 10 to 12 pages after the first few issues.

Throughout these years, we have had Georgian help in writing articles and submitting pictures. Our current list of contributors include Sean Albert, Ann Duff, Meredith Ewbank, Jon Ewbank, Meg Hughes, Sandee Hughes, David Kennison, Gloria Kishton, Wendy Madelone, Joan Pearson, Jon Pearson, Alice Polumbo, Paul Smigelski, Brian Taylor, Rich Unger, Suzy Unger, Pattie Wareh, Jeff Wengrovius, and Jim Wingate. Our newest regular contributor is Fr. Tom Pettigrew.

With gratitude to David Kennison for (a) discussing the idea of a newsletter all those years ago with Bob, a professional photographer, and Lynn, a professional writer, (b) asking us to head the ministry, and (c) continuing to support this collaborative effort as our proof-reader.

Another facet of Communications is St. George's website, with Jon Pearson and Paul Smigleski posting the pictures and captions.

Everyone mentioned here is an integral part of The Georgian Report, but I can't forget names from years past (some are still contributors): Johnnie Angus, Nancy Angus, Joan Bessarab, Gene DeLong, Judy DeLong, Rick Forshaw, Ralph Fusco, Dottie Kennison, JJ Moran, Rosemary Pannone, Stella Schultz, Martha Smith, Michael Thiessen, Barbara Todt, Michael Todt, Tarek Wareh, and Barb Wengrovius who assisted St. George's newsletter regularly in the beginning years.

Also, a big "thank you" to our readers who are extremely complementary after each issue comes "hot off the press"....or, should I say, "hot off the copier"?

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Paska

Garden Ministry

Meg Hughes—Vestry Chair

Garden Ministry members (Meg Hughes, Barb Wengrovius, Suzy Unger, Gloria Kishton, Joyce Cockerham, and Jean Greenspan) worked on the church grounds just about every Tuesday and Friday morning from April through October in 2023. Accomplishments included:

- Regular cultivation of the butterfly garden, perimeter of church, “step” garden (adjacent to parking lot), Green Street border, Ferry Street border, and St. Francis garden.
- Reclamation of the badly neglected Rectory backyard (with a big assist from several men of the parish, including Halsey Brown, David Kennison, Paul Smigelski, Jon Pearson, Bob Paska, and Sean Albert, and Rich Unger).
- Special efforts to tidy the property for the Stockade Art and Nature Garden Tour on July 22.
- Routine maintenance of dog waste station and Little Library.

Weed control using environmentally safe practices on all walkways surrounding the church, Great Hall, Cranmer, and Rectory.

The goals of Garden Ministry are:

- 1.) to foster camaraderie; and
- 2.) to keep St. George’s grounds well maintained (in that order).

New members are always welcome! Regular attendance and garden expertise are not required. You will learn what a weed is and what to do about it. Contact Meg Hughes at 518-694-1550 if interested.

Director of Music Report

Dr. Brian J. Taylor, Director of Music

St. George's Church has had a long standing tradition of having Sunday services filled with music and ordinarily led by a choir. This tradition continued through this past year. The choir remained at a consistent number of eight members with guest singers occasionally joining us for special choral services. Most of the singers also serve as cantors for the proper chants that are part of our Sung Mass.

This past year the St. Cecilia Choir offered several full choral services. Choral Mass was offered on Candlemas Day, Easter Day and Christmas Eve. Choral Evensong was offered for Epiphany (Winter), Ascension (Spring) and Thanksgiving (Autumn). The Parish Choir of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Schenectady, joined our choir for the Candlemas Choral Mass and the Thanksgiving Choral Evensong. Our choir is looking forward to going to St. Stephen's in the near future to do a musical event there. The choir also offered a chanted Requiem Mass on All Souls Day.

Music is not confined to Sundays and major holy days. Our Tuesday Morning Prayer service and our Wednesday and Friday Low Masses all include chanting in them even when few attend.

The organ continues to be maintained by the Kerner and Merchant Co. from Syracuse, New York. This is the firm that refurbished the organ in 2014. One stop ceased operating altogether because the wind chest on which it sits began splitting. The vestry has made provision in the 2024 budget for the repair of this stop.

I am extremely grateful to the members of the choir for their dedicated service to this ensemble as we seek to glorify God and give worshipers a glimpse of heaven. I am also very grateful to the Rector, Wardens, Vestry and the entire congregation for their continued support of the music ministry of St. George's Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian J. Taylor

Outreach Ministries

Paul Smigelski – Vestry Chair

“What is Faith without Works?”

Once again St George’s vigorously embraced its Christian mission throughout 2023. At end of 2022 I hosted a forum encouraging Georgians to take up the challenge of giving back to the community with their time and talent. The message I hoped everyone came away with was that no one person can or should lead this alone, rather each of us should look to find ways we could use the gifts God gave combined with our passions. The marriage of these two leads to joyous and long-term success. Therefore, I am happy to report that we came through in a big way in 2023! As you read the synopsis below, please note all the individuals who stepped forward to take the lead in an outreach activity in 2023.

A year-long emphasis on donations to the SICM food pantry located at 839 Albany St yielded 3,249 pounds of food and personal care items (over a ton and a half!) were contributed. Compared to the 2,073 pounds contributed in 2022 this was a tremendous increase in giving and shattered our goal of 2,500 lbs. Thanks to all who contributed to this mission, especially Carol Gaige who graciously transported our donations each month.

St. George’s continued the new service opportunity started in 2022 in support of the YWCA’s emergency shelter program for women and children by providing always needed pillows and bedding. Regular quarterly deliveries of bedding and personal care items continue to meet their great and ongoing need. A special thanks to Gloria Kishton for helping with this ministry.

Georgians were once again “ringing the bell” in support of the Salvation Army’s annual campaign at the Eastern Parkway Market 32 on Saturday, December 9th. Many thanks to all the participants in this St. George’s tradition led by Jon Pearson.

Once again, St. George’s assisted SICM in its annual summer lunch program. Georgians helped prepare, distribute and interact with those seeking breakfast and lunch at Faith Tabernacle Church. This was a new location for us this year as Wallingford Park was no longer in the SICM rotation. Although the turnout at this location was sparse Georgian’s delighted in serving the local need and especially in sharing time with Ester the site coordinator who was a joyous and uplifting spirit.

New this year Fr. Thomas led the “Loaves & Fishes” outreach, a Diocesan supported feeding ministry housed at St Francis Mission, the old Grace and Holy Innocents Church on Clinton Ave. In 2023 they expected to serve 15,000 meals of which Georgian’s eagerly participated. This is an opportunity for hands on ministry to the most vulnerable in our midst, including children.

In partnership with our Music Ministry led by Brian Taylor our Choral Evensongs have become another opportunity to show our support for our community. Speakers Amber Bradbury from Things Of My Very Own, Mike Saccocio from SICM, and Kim Siciliano from YWCA spoke at the events in February, May, and November respectively. Donations from each event were shared with their organizations.

Many thanks and a Blessed New Year to all who participated in the Outreach Ministry in 2023. As I look forward to 2024, I look forward to all the great works and ideas of the St. George’s community.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Smigelski

Pastoral Care

Mr. Jim Wingate

Like all of our parish family, the Pastoral Care Committee is excited to welcome Father Pettigrew to St. George's. Our committee looks forward to having a leader who can accomplish things that a committee of lay persons simply can not. We want to learn from Father's experiences and have him share with us his vision for what Pastoral Care can become in the future and how we can help make that vision become reality.

Our committee saw the continuation of some dominant trends. We once again experienced the passing of long time parish members. One we had been visiting for close to 20 years. All are greatly missed. There are others who no longer attend Mass in person that for various reasons do not wish to be added to our visitation list. We are hopeful Father Pettigrew can help us with our efforts in these cases.

And we are very grateful to all the Georgians who have helped keep us abreast of situations where we can be of service.

The Card Ministry has been the one aspect of Pastoral Care that has remain fairly consistent. Over 300 birthday, anniversary, get well, thinking of you, sympathy Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas cards were sent last year. Many parishioners have been collecting and donating cards which is very much appreciated.

Finally I would be remiss if I didn't express my gratitude to Ann Duff who most graciously offers to accompany me on our visits. She adds so much to the time we spend with each Georgian. They and I are grateful for her service to this ministry.

The Numbers:

Visitations: 30
Communions Administered: 15
Phone calls: 15
Cards Sent: 330

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Duff
Jim Wingate

Our Lady of the Snows Ward
The Society of Mary in the USA

Our Lady of the Snows Ward is being revived! The Society of Mary is dedicated to the Glory of God, and was founded as an Anglican society, with the object of loving and honoring Mary, spreading devotion to her, and taking her as a model, in purity, personal relationships and family life.

Members of the Society have a rule of life, which includes special devotions, such as the Angeles, the Rosary, and Marian anthems.

We share in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist on the principal feasts of Our Lady, and engage in pastoral work.

Last year we had several special celebrations honoring Our Lady. On May 14th, we had the Crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary.; on August 15th, we celebrated the Feast of the Assumption with Mass and a festive reception in the Shaw lounge, and on October 15th, we had a wonderful celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham, with a simple luncheon after mass.

This year, Our Lady of the Snows Ward met after the Epiphany Mass on January 6th, at the home of Kevin Decker and were welcomed with a lovely brunch! Father Pettigrew opened our first official meeting with prayers, followed by lively conversation.

We will plan on celebrating the Eucharist at the Principal Feasts of Our Lady.

We also discussed recitation of the Rosary on one Friday a month at 3 PM. We have all agreed that our pastoral work would be taking on the relationship with the YWCA women's shelter, providing blankets, pillows, personal hygiene, items, hats, coat, scarves, and gloves as needed throughout the year.

We welcome all to join us in these celebrations and are always available to answer any questions regarding the Society.

Wendy Madelone
Ward Secretary

Acolytes

Acolyte [from the Greek "acolytos" and Latin "acolythus"- companion, attendant, helper] – it's not a word that easily trips off the tongue, is it? Yet, the dedication of St George's acolyte corps is crucial to the beauty of our liturgy. Our acolytes show daily commitment, enthusiasm and love of God that inspires us all.

Why acolytes? – The *Book of Common Prayer*, pg 322 says: *At all celebrations of the Liturgy, it is fitting that the principal celebrant, whether bishop or priest, be assisted by other priests and by deacons and lay persons.* But is this what stirs people to offer themselves for acolyte service? No, it is the deep desire to serve God at His altar, for that short time suppressing their self to worship and to God's glory.

Acolytes have an important ministry, which they approach with dignity, humility and care. In all things, our acolytes are aware that the purpose of their labor is "that God may be glorified". Acolytes are trained in liturgy, sacred vessels and vestments, decorum and prayer. In their duties, they are not sloppy, careless or stiff, but act in the simplest way possible so as to not distract the congregation. Theirs is a proud and honorable ministry, unique in that it involves our youth and adults, working side by side.

Acolytes hold St Vincent, deacon and martyr as their patron saint. Living in the 3rd century, St Vincent is remembered for his love, faithfulness and loyalty to God, his bishop and his Church. We who serve at the altar embrace these virtues as we seek to perfect our offering and to be as steadfast as Blessed Vincent. St Vincent's Guild, a worldwide organization of acolytes and lay ministers, has as their motto - ***Amori Christi et Ecclesiae*** (for the love of Christ and His Church).

Our acolyte team consists of altar servers, crucifers, torch bearers, banner bearers, thurifers and MCs. Serving God on the altar is a very special as you feel so close to God. New acolyte candidates are welcome and cherished so if you would like to have fun, learn, enjoy a new sense of closeness with God and enjoy the camaraderie of our acolyte team, see David Kennison.

Altar Guild

At St George's, the Altar Guild is named in honor of St Martha & St Mary. You'll remember in Luke 10:38-42 that when Jesus visited Martha's house, Martha became consumed with the work of preparations to serve Jesus, while Mary sat quietly at Jesus' feet to listen and learn, angering Martha in the process. In truth, both working and learning are virtues that Altar Guild members espouse.

The dedicated group of our Altar Guild, men and women, makes sure the altar area is clean, linens are washed and ironed and all sacred vessels are properly set up for the Mass and washed and properly stored after Mass. A talent for sewing is an asset, as there are always things that need to be mended. Several times a year, there are work days for polishing all silver items, washing chandelier chimneys and other tasks. The busiest time is prior to Christmas, Holy Week and Easter.

As written so beautifully by Josephine Smith Wood in her Altar Guild Manual, 1915, *"Before entering upon work about the Altar, kneel a few moments at the Chancel rail, and, offering your work to God, ask Him to accept and bless it, and enable you to do it worthily as unto Him. It is a great honor and privilege to be allowed to care for the holy things in God's house, and a devout spirit and reverent demeanor should characterize those who are thus engaged."*

If you would like to explore being a member of the Altar Guild, you'll be welcomed with open arms; see Anne Kennison.

Sacristans

To be sure, there is some overlap between Sacristan and Altar Guild. Up until the late 1800s, there was no concept of an Altar Guild, their present tasks being done by clergy and later by the Sacristan of the parish. When Altar Guilds came into being, they were first formed for men and only later were women allowed. It is not surprising therefore that the duties of a Sacristan and those of an Altar Guild do not have a hard dividing line.

At St George's, we enjoy the contributions of a Sacristan team, who normally set up the church for Mass on the Saturday prior. This includes preparing the chalices, cruets, altar frontal, books and vestments.

For special services, such as baptism, additional items and setup are required. All this requires a deeper knowledge of liturgical seasons and requirements of the church year as well as knowing what the Rector has planned for each service. Holy Week is an especially busy time.

Sacristans also manage the sacristies, ensuring there are adequate supplies of everything needed for Mass and other services, also keeping things neat and tidy, including repair and cleaning of vestments.

We're always looking for willing volunteers, who will be trained and scheduled into the Sacristan rota; see David Kennison

Book Club

Meg Hughes—Vestry Liaison

Pattie Wareh, Coordinator

The Book Club meets regularly throughout the year to read and discuss various types of books.

The book club had a great year. We met to discuss a variety of novels, including a murder mystery, historical fiction, a contemporary ghost story, and an adaptation of David Copperhead. We also read the non-fiction *Metrofix*, about the history of Schenectady, and had a visit with the author, William Patrick. Next up is a discussion of the novel *Mrs. Plansky's Revenge* on February 11 after the service.

New members are always welcome to join and we are still planning our books for 2024, so feel free to send suggestions to Pattie Wareh!

The Order of the Daughters of the King

The Order of the Daughters of the King (DOK) is an order for women who are communicants of the Episcopal Church, churches in communion with it, or churches in the historic episcopate but not in communion with it. Our membership currently includes women in the Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), and Roman Catholic churches.

Reaffirming the promises made at Baptism and Confirmation, a Daughter pledges herself to a life-long program of prayer, service and evangelism. She receives support in this commitment from a worldwide community of like-minded women.

In solidarity with one another, all Daughters everywhere make the same promises upon their admission to The Order:

- To obey the two Rules of The Order: the Rule of Prayer and the Rule of Service.
- To offer at all times loyal aid to our clergy and parish to spread Christ's kingdom.
- To wear faithfully the cross of The Order.

To work for the purposes of The Order as God may give us the opportunity.

Currently, there are four DOK members at St. George's who are in the process of reactivating our Chapter which used to be active. Activities that are planned for 2024 include a Lenten Quiet Day in March, another "Come and See" tea for women of the parish, and a Service of Admission to the order on the Feast of Christ the King (Sunday, November 24) for any who have requested admission to the Order.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Ewbank

Hospitality

Sandee Hughes—Vestry Liaison

“The friendly and generous reception of guests, visitors, or strangers”

A small but energetic group of parishioners are responsible for:

- setting up, cleaning up and arranging for food for coffee hour each Sunday after Mass.
- organizing brunch/lunch for the Annual Meeting, Lenten pancake breakfast, St. George’s Day, and the Greening of the Church for Christmas.
- facilitate the food and beverages for the receptions after Easter Eve and Christmas Eve Mass and many other “elevated” coffee hours and small receptions.

We have a small budget and rely on parishioner’s contributions for much of the food that is served. We are fortunate to have a kitchen with a working dishwasher.

This past year much of the “silver” trays, teapots, creamers, sugar bowls and other more formal coffee hour items were cleaned and cleared of all tarnish. These items were wrapped tightly in plastic wrap to keep further tarnishing at bay. The goal for this year is to bring together a group of volunteers to sort and clean our sets of dishes and cutlery. Over the years the shelves have become disorganized.

Thank you to committee members Barb Wengrovius and Carol Gaige. Thank you to all who volunteer to contribute food, set and clear tables and man the dishwasher. Thank you to Brian Taylor for brewing the coffee each Sunday. Always willing to help are Anne Kennison, David Kennison, Meg Hughes, Gerri Moore, Wendy Madelone, Kevin Decker, Chris Henry, Suzy Unger, Meredith and Jon Ewbank, Rosemary and Grant Jaquith, Lea Crow, Jean Greenspan and everyone who picks up dishes and deposits them by the dishwasher. It truly is a group effort each and every time.

Sandee Hughes

Community Liaison Report

Richard Unger – Vestry Liason

The purpose of the Community Liaison ministry is to strengthen St. George's position as a religious institution within the Historic Stockade Neighborhood. This year has been a continuation of past years' objectives.

These included:

- Remaining involved as a member of the Stockade Association;
- Placing regular St. George's advertisements/ service schedules in the Stockade Spy (free);
- Offering complementary meeting space for Stockade Association Board and/or committee meetings;
- Improving the visual appearance of the church property (thank you Garden Ministry and Asset Management Committees);
- Welcoming/introducing guests at church services and offering them a permanent place of worship if they are new residents of the area;
- Participating in the Annual Art Show and Stockade Garden Tour, by providing food to art providers and visitors to the art show and presenting organ music by our organists;
- Participating in the Stockade Christmas Tree Lighting celebration at the Stockade Circle near the Church; and
- Inviting neighborhood residents to participate in the St. George's Day Parade and brunch.

Once again, we have succeeded in meeting our objectives.

The church continues to offer the Great Hall for the Stockade Association bi-monthly General Meetings and special events when needed, and in exchange, the Stockade Association Board of Directors continues to provide St. George's Church free advertising space in the Association's publication, "the Stockade Spy." The Spy is published nine times per year. The cost of ad space is would normally be \$250 per year.

1. However, once again fewer General Meetings were held in the Great Hall as wi-fi internet is not available and the Stockade often needs wi-fi for meeting presentations. St George's Church, Brian Taylor, Gloria Kishton, Bob Lemmerman, and Rich and Suzy Unger are members of the Association. In addition, Suzy Unger served as President of the Stockade Board of Directors through early 2023, but her tenure on the board expired after serving for 6 years. Suzy was replaced by Colleen McCauley, who was elected to fill Suzy's place as President.
2. The Vestry has continued the program of specifically welcoming church service visitors and providing guest welcome packets in the pews for our guests.
3. This year's St. George's Day parade and the following brunch was a success, as in the past.
4. The Vestry would like to thank everyone from St. George's who did yeoman's work to get our gardens ready for the 2023 Stockade Garden Tours held July 22, when several Stockade homes were opened to the public for house tours. St George's opened the church for viewing. Members of the church and volunteers from the Stockade neighborhood worked to prepare the church gardens. We will be looking for volunteers again, come spring, to continue maintenance and improvements to the church gardens. This will include weeding, seeding, shrub and tree trimming, and other potential improvements.
5. We should all be proud of our continued success in support of the Annual Stockade Art Show and mum sale,

held this past September 9. We owe many thanks to the St. Georgians who helped provide the Art Show “Outdoor Café” on our front lawn for Art Show participants and visitors. Not only was the food service a great fund raiser for St. George’s, but it was also a tremendous showing of support for our Stockade Neighborhood. A special thanks needs to go to Brian Taylor for organizing and directing the group fund-raising effort.

6. For both the Stockade Garden Tours and the Stockade Art Show, Dr. Brian Taylor, Joan Pearson and Dr. Jeffrey Wengrovius conducted organ concerts for the visitors.

Finally, St George’s opened the Great Hall to the neighborhood and church members for a gathering after the Stockade Tree Lighting Ceremony, December 3. Over 50 people attended the reception and enjoyed refreshments and Christmas season cheer. In 2023 it was St George’s honor that Father Tom provided the Blessing of the Tree.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard Unger

