

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH

SCHENECTADY, NY EST. 1735



Annual Meeting

January 26, 2020



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30 North Ferry Street, Schenectady, New York 12305

Parish Telephone: 518-374-3163

Email: office@stgeorgesschenectady.org

AGENDA

-Opening Prayer

-Appointment of Clerk

-Introductory Remarks

Candidates Are Presented

Voting

-State of the Parish Report

-Financial Report

-Election Results

-Questions and suggestions from parishioners

-Blessing & Adjournment

-Lunch

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jeff Wengrovius—Treasurer and Vestry Member

Our parish finished 2019 with a healthy financial condition. Highlights including the following:

- o Ended year with a balanced budget and a surplus – no principal withdraws were taken from the endowments
- o Ended year with all 2019 bills paid – including Christmas expenses
- o Ended year with ~\$38,000 unspent income at RBC and ~\$20,000 cash at TrustCo bank
- o 2019 was the year that our “Slay the Dragon” savings was fully realized
- o Endowment principle up ~14.33% in 2019 with a total value of \$2,647,000

Looking forward to 2020, our budget has been approved by the Vestry. The Stewardship campaign for this year is complete. The total amount pledged and the total number of pledges are up slightly versus 2019.

THANK YOU to Jon Pearson for his continued support managing our endowments. THANKS to Bob McCloskey for his dedication to slay the dragon. And finally, THANK YOU to all Georgians for your generous giving of time, talent, and treasurer.

I welcome all questions, comments, and suggestions regarding our finances.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Jeff Wengrovius

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Suzanne Hartz—Senior Warden

No written report submitted

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Jon Ewbank—Junior Warden

Thank you for putting up with my learning curve, as I move into this position. I have previously been the Junior Warden of a parish in North Central Arkansas (with a physical plant of one 15-year-old building). St. George's, with its large campus and historic (old!) buildings presents me some different (and interesting) challenges.

I'd first want to acknowledge the fine job done by my predecessor, Chris Henry! He left rather large shoes for me to fill! I would also like to praise Sondra and Jer Kravitz for their hard work as our Sextons.

That being said, I apologize for the fairly general nature of this report. I only came into the job in August, and so I am extrapolating information from budget reports, as opposed to having first-hand knowledge.

The Facilities Budget is second in size only to the Administrative budget, and was allotted just under \$90,000 for 2019. We over spent that by \$5,000, with the major budget overruns being occasioned by \$13,000 in emergency boiler service requirements and unavoidable equipment repair/replacement expenses. These unplanned expenses were somewhat ameliorated by reduced annual costs for snow clearance, Sexton salaries, and security services, and cutbacks to planned expenditures in Grounds/Property enhancements and building repairs.

For 2020, the adopted Facilities budget is equal to what we actually spent in 2019 (\$96,000) and includes funding to replace the dishwasher in the kitchen and to update salary and benefits expenses for the Sexton. Additionally, we are aware of the need to address a leak in the guest bathroom in the rectory; possibly replace the garbage disposal in the kitchen; and a long postponed requirement for an inspection of the church building roof.

With a little bit of luck in terms of moderate weather, a cessation of equipment issues, and good stewardship of our resources, I hope to see us able to turn our attention, efforts, and monies to the preventative measures of the budgeted maintenance of this wonderful, historic place, as opposed to dealing with expensive emergency corrective needs.

Your assistance, guidance, recommendations and suggestions for improving our church home are humbly solicited, and will be gratefully received.

Jon Ewbank

MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

Brian J. Taylor-Director of Music Ministry

I would like to say that I am very pleased that Fr. Stromberg appointed me to be Organist and Director of Music for St. George's Church. It is an honor to serve in this historic parish, and I leave church happy every Sunday.

The essence of my work is to provide organ music for the Sunday Mass and other services offered at St. George's Church. In addition, I conduct the choir in rehearsals and services, accompany the hymn singing at ALM services, assist the Rector with liturgical planning and bulletin preparation and do other things around the church - both musical and non-musical - as needed.

It appears that the choir and congregation are happy with my work. Members of the choir are faithful in their attendance at rehearsals (Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.) and services, and the ensemble seems to enjoy the music I select for the group to sing. I have balanced challenging pieces with easier pieces all of which fit the spirit of worship here at St. George's. We have begun offering occasional choral services. We had choral evensong services in the spring and the fall as well as a choral mass on Christmas Eve. This coming year we will have two additional choral evensongs and three choral masses. One of the highlights of this past year was asking the

choir and congregation of St. Stephen's Church to join us for an Ascension Day service. The two choirs enjoyed singing together.

The greatest disappointment this year was not getting sufficient children to register for choir camp. I had publicized this event in the same way I had done so in previous places but I had underestimated how few children go to church in this part of the country. Therefore reaching out to churches was not effective. I do believe we should try this again in 2020 with a different approach to publicity. I am developing relationships with musicians in the city, and the Cathedral of All Saints in Albany has offered to share with me the contact lists they use in recruiting boys for their men and boys choir. I still believe that establishing a choral program for children and youth is an important component of the renewal of this parish.

I am aware of the budget constraints of this parish at this time, and I would like to do what I can to help the Rector and the Vestry address this. Additional opportunities for people to make contributions at events such as Choral Evensong is one way to enhance revenue.

The Rector and I continue to discuss some new program initiatives that will serve current members of the parish as well as attract new people to our church. At the heart of our parish life, however, is the Sunday Mass done in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. I am committed to assisting the Rector make this the finest Mass possible to the glory of God and for the edification of God's people.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian J. Taylor, D.S.M., A.A.G.O.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT

April Stromberg—Volunteer Director of Children's Ministry

2019 included a number of opportunities to grow in our faith, and to support one another as a community where children and youth are welcomed and cherished. Our Sunday school class started the year studying the gospel readings throughout the season of Epiphany, and learning more about who Jesus was while on Earth.

Throughout Lent, we talked about ways that we could grow in awareness of those around us, and practiced spiritual disciplines like collecting spare change to give to the poor. On Good Friday, we used a more child-friendly liturgy for Stations of the Cross. The service was very meaningful.

On April 20, we hosted a community Easter Egg Hunt and party. This event was well attended, with close to 80 people hunting for eggs and then doing crafts and enjoying snacks together. This was a strong turnout in the rainy weather that day. We had a number of opportunities to connect with members of the community, and had a strong turnout of St. George's volunteers who were able to connect with the community. We also celebrated the season of Easter together with a number of special lessons about Christ's resurrection.

We brought our seedlings to the Rogation Sunday "Mass on the Grass," and had our garden tools blessed. In August, we hosted a mini Vacation Bible School for children and youth connected to the

church. We had dinner together, and then studied the Bible in small groups focusing on the Book of Exodus and the prophets Moses and Myriam. It was a really great bonding time for our young people.

In the Fall, we learned about various saints in the weeks leading up to All Saints' Day. The children were especially encouraged by the study of St. Francis and were excited to attend the animal blessing.

At the start of Advent, children and families were given an Advent Bible study resource. We used materials developed by Illustrated Children's Ministry in the weeks leading up to Christmas. We also sponsored another Christmas pageant at our 3pm Christmas Eve service. The children and youth were blessed to help to lead the congregation in worship, and were excited to see increased attendance at this mass. The children (and adult helpers) learned and grew this year, with new opportunities to welcome guests, and to seek to grow in faith.

ST. GEORGE'S WEEKLY WEDNESDAY SACRED HARP SINGING

Tarik Wareh—Volunteer

St George's weekly shapenote singing gathered on all but a couple of Wednesday evenings in 2019. We welcomed many singers, including parishioners and brand new singers. Joyful hymns were sung, our parish's welcome was shown, and money was raised for the church through singers' generous contributions.

OUTREACH REPORT

Ralph Polumbo—Vestry

Service to the community was an integral part of St George's 2019 parish life. Donations to the City Mission food pantry were ongoing. Support of Bethesda House's Lighthouse location continued for the 11th year in the form of occasional weekend meal offerings by Jim Wingate, Amy Machold and Alice Polumbo.

St George's once again fulfilled a one-week commitment at Wallingford Park serving lunches in SICM's annual summer lunch program during the week of August 13th. Prior to school's start and in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Schenectady, Georgians filled 41 lunch sized brown bags with school supplies.

Three outreach projects were on the fall calendar. Georgians donated gently used outer garments for distribution by The City Mission. On Saturday, December 14th, the "bell was rung" at the Glenville Market Square to assist The Salvation Army in their annual holiday drive. Partnering once more with The Boys and Girls Club of Schenectady, 39 holiday themed zip lock bags filled with a variety of items with hats and mittens at the core, were delivered in time for Christmas distribution.

Ways in which St George's can serve the community, large or small, are welcome for consideration.

ASSISTED LIVING MINISTRY REPORT

Alice Polumbo—Volunteer

Members of St George's ALM ministry conducted thirty-three services in 2019 worshipping with 740 congregants at four locations. Father Matt officiated 29 times, the remaining services were lay led. In addition, on December 8th, St George's ALM members conducted a holiday carol sing along at Kingsway Community that was well attended.

Attendance at The Schenectady Center, The Glen Eddy and Kingsway Community remained stable throughout the year where our ministry is well supported by location staff. Unfortunately, lack of administrative support and dwindling service attendance led to suspending services at Scotia Mansion.

At each location the liturgy is presented digitally making it much easier for those attending to follow along.

Members of ALM met in fellowship on two occasions in 2019, May and December. During the May meeting, a thorough review of our ministry was done to determine ways in which our services could be adjusted to improve engagement as well as keeping our format fresh for those who faithfully attend.

Georgians taking part in ALM and keeping it a priority are Father Matt Stromberg, Brian Taylor, Joan Pearson, Meg Hughes, Pam Turley, Jean Greenspan, Pauline Holmes, Debbie Lambeth, David and Ann Kennison and Alice Polumbo.

PASTORAL CARE REPORT

Jim Wingate—Volunteer

While the visitation list stayed unusually static for 2019, there was a big change for the committee. Shortly after the passing of our beloved Joan Bessarab, Ann Duff joined our visitation team. Ann and her family have been actively involved with St. George's for decades so she brings a wealth of knowledge about our Parish Family to our committee. It has been a joy to visit with Ann as her warm smile and charm light up the faces and rooms of those we visit. It is so evident that she really cares. What a blessing she is for our Pastoral Care Mission.

Each year we try to give a bit of information that we hope helps the Parish members understand more about what we do. So where do we visit? Well, we try to go where there is need. For a number of years when we were without a Rector we did a lot of hospital visitations but now Father Matt gets these requests and has often already visited before we know someone is hospitalized. Currently our regular monthly visits include 6 people in Schenectady and three in Guilderland. Additionally we have made trips as far north as Queensbury on three occasions last year. And while we try to schedule our visits with phone calls before we go, given NY State privacy laws that is not always possible in nursing facilities. So sometimes we arrive and the person we want to visit is "out of the facility"-the phrase used because they can not tell us if it is a doctor's appointment, group shopping trip or excursion with a family member. Thus we often have to make a return visit at a later date.

Last year we reported that the number visited went from 4 at the start of the year to 8 by the end. In 2019 we were pretty constant with about 8 visits per month. The exception was

in November when I was recovering from hip surgery. However by December we were back making visits and as usual delivered poinsettias to everyone on our list. The increased number of Communion was a direct result of the greater number of visits. The Card Ministry also saw an increase for a variety of reasons.

Our committee thanks all those who have notified us of people who might need our services. Without your help we can not fulfill our mission. So please keep up the good work.

STATISTICS FOR 2019

Visitations (private homes, hospitals, nursing facilities)	84
Communion	76
Telephone Calls	52
Cards sent (birthday, anniversary, Easter, cheer, get well, Thanksgiving, Christmas)	355

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Wingate

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT

Fr. Matt Stromberg—Rector

In the past year St. George's Church continued to be a place of ongoing education in the Christian faith. During Lent we had a series of Sunday night pot lucks and a guest speakers on, "The Seven Last Words of Christ." Each of these sessions was followed by praying the Stations of the Cross together. Sessions included: 3/10- Luke 23:43: "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise," with Father John Scott, retired priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, and former rector of Calvary Episcopal Church, Burnt Hills. 3/17-John 19:26-27: "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother," with Mother Judith Malioneck, curate at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Albany and now rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Troy. 3/24- Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" with Father Scott Garno, rector of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church Delmar. 3/31- John 19:28: "I thirst," with Amy Lewis, a deaconate candidate in Episcopal Diocese of Albany, and member of Oaks of Righteousness in Troy. 4/7- John 19:30: "It is finished," with Rev. Peter J. B. Carman, pastor of Emmanuel-Friedens Church Schenectady. Finally, we finished on 4/14 looking at Luke 23:46: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," with the Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff, Interim Campus Protestant Minister at Union College. I think most would agree that it was a wonderful time of fellowship both with members of our parish and also our guests. Each speaker brought their own unique perspective and personality to bear on the gospel accounts of our Lord's suffering and death.

On Sunday, April 9th David Kennison at a forum held during coffee hour gave a brief overview of the liturgies of Holy Week and Dr. Brian Taylor familiarized us with a few of the featured hymns.

In addition our other regular Christian Education offerings continued. Our Sunday morning Bible study continues to be a modest size, but those who attend seem to really appreciate it.

Throughout this year we have been moving slowly through the Book of Exodus which is the account of Moses, Israel's deliverance out of the slavery in Egypt, the giving of the Law, and the people's sojourning through the wilderness. All our welcome to join us.

Theology on Tap also met several times throughout the year at the Van Dyck Restaurant and Lounge here in the Stockade. Topics discussed included, "Praying with Icons," "Why is the Church described as catholic?," "Is the Devil a real person?," "Understanding the spiritual gifts," "Ecumenism: why does Christian unity matter?," "Christianity: living with joy or major buzz kill?," and just this month, "Evangelism and the Episcopal Church."

Our Theology Breakfast also gathered a number of times throughout the year. Participants read and discussed a diverse array of books including: *On the Incarnation* by Saint Athanasius, *Liturgy of the Ordinary* by Tish Warren, *The Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* by Clark Pinnock, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary* by Brant Pitre, *The Anglican Spirit* by Michael Ramsey, and *The Life of the World to Come: Near Death Experience and Christian Hope* by Carol Zaleski. Currently we are reading *The Lord's Prayer: A Guide to Praying to Our Father* by Wesley Hill.

A new Christian Education initiative was spearheaded by vestry member Meg Hughes who proposed a series of classes called, "Yoga for Christians." Instructor Colleen Hassett lead participants through an introduction to basic Yoga and prayerful meditation. In all, there were about three classes with plans to do more in the future.

On Sunday May 19, 2019 - two Georgians, Pam Turley and Audrey Pagan were confirmed and vestry member Jim Turley was received into the Episcopal Church at a group confirmation program at St. Peter's Church in Albany. They were each given a copy of the book, "Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs & Practices" by Scott Gunn & Melody Wilson Shobe which is a valuable introduction to life and worship in the Episcopal Church.

On June 9th we celebrated the Baptism of Ciera Williams who is an adult convert to the Episcopal Church. She too was given a copy of "Walk in Love" which she discussed with myself throughout a number of catechetical sessions prior to her baptism.

Several pre-marital counseling sessions were held with Scott and Shannon Hartz who were married at St. George's on December 7th of 2019.

Baptism instruction was also held for Michael and Michelle Thiessen who's son Ian was baptized of January 5th 2020.

In the year 2020 we plant to continue our program of Christian Education for young and old alike.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Lynn Paska-Vestry Chair

This is our 12th year of publishing The Georgian Report, 4 x a year: March, June, September and December. Our objective is to show that our church is a lively parish with varied ministries that includes religious and social, “something for everyone.” It started out as 10 pages, evolved to 12 pages within a couple of year. First sent out via “snail mail,” it then evolved to electronically only, with hard-copies in the Narthex for those who do not have a computer or who prefer a hard copy. It is posted on our website and sent to the Episcopal Diocese of Albany as well as a list of interested churches and people in the community.

We have a “staff” of parishioners who regularly write articles and submit pictures. Many thanks to David Kennison (proof-reader extraordinaire), Jon Ewbank, Joan Pearson, Meg Hughes, Sandee Hughes, Alice Polumbo, Jim Wingate, Jeff Wengrovius, Brian Taylor, Rich Unger, Nancy and Johnnie Angus, Chris Henry, and our rector, Fr. Matt Stromberg and his wife April. My responsibility is editing, writing and some photography; Bob Paska is responsible for layout and photography. Ideas for articles and pictures are always welcome. A big “thank you,” too, to Jon Pearson for posting all website submissions quickly, including The Georgian Report.

This year, Communications assumed another task: our Parish Directory was sorely in need of updating. The existing one had originally been published in 2010 with a few additions or deletions throughout the years. The finished product was distributed at the end of December. 95% of the work (photography, layout, implementation) was the creativity of Bob, with limited assistance from Lynn.

We appreciate your support and encouragement of all our Communications projects.

GARDENS REPORT

Meg Hughes-Vestry Representative

If Heaven is a Garden . . .

. . . several Georgians will find work there, helping to tend the grounds!

As you walk from your car or home to the portal of St. George’s each Sunday, consider the plant life framing our venerable sanctuary. Some of your fellow parishioners worked hard to make the setting peaceful, welcoming, and neat.

Special kudos for good garden deeds performed in 2019 go to:

Sondra Kravetz, who helped clear dead vegetation from the grounds as soon as the snow disappeared.

Debbie Lambeth, who worked intensively in early spring to root out invasive ground cover encroaching on the butterfly garden adjacent to the Great Hall.

Pam and Jim Turley, Rich and Suzy Unger, Debbie Lambeth, and Barb Wengrovius, for an energetic morning of garden cleanup and pruning of shrubs and trees, in preparation for Mass on the Grass.

Suzy also obtained a large quantity of annual plants through a city program, which **Debbie** and I planted to bring spots of color across the church premises.

Suzy, Barb, and I rehabilitated the area next to the parking lot, each of us contributing shade-loving perennials from our home gardens.

Sondra and Jeremy Kravetz endeavored to keep the grounds tidy throughout the heat of summer. Most weeks I donated a few hours of garden maintenance, frequently with the support of **Pam and Suzy.**

All this work pays off when church-goers and visitors delight in the greenery and the gem-colored butterflies flitting about the scene. If you are interested in working miracles with sunshine and dirt, please see me. No special tools or skills required.

--Meg Hughes

ALL ON THE SAME PAGE REPORT

Meg Hughes-Vestry Representative

Book Club Brings Georgians Together

All on the Same Page, St. George's Book Club, generally meets after church on the second Sunday of every other month. In 2019 we enjoyed a broad range of fiction and nonfiction:

- *Educated* by Tara Westover
- *Dispatches from Pluto* by Richard Grant
- *Unsheltered* by Barbara Kingsolver
- *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah
- *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
- *The Good Neighbor* by Maxwell King

--Meg Hughes.

HOSPITALITY REPORT

Sandee Hughes—Vestry Chair

St. George's Hospitality Committee provided opportunity for fellowship every Sunday after Mass. Parishioners have generously contributed food items that were enjoyed with coffee and conversation most Sundays this past year.

We also organized "Sweet and Savory" receptions held after Christmas Eve and Easter Saturday/Sunday Masses. A luncheon for both the congregation and community guests was held after Mass on St. George's Day.

New for this year: we are absorbing the purchasing of the paper/plastic/coffee items needed for coffee hour.

Sign-up sheets continue to be available for the 2020 coffee hour treats. Easter receptions and St. George's Day luncheon will also need volunteers. Thank you to all who have helped, you are appreciated!

Sandra Hughes.

