



THE GEORGIAN REPORT



St. George's Church Schenectady, NY

June 2019

ST. GEORGE'S DAY 2019

Bright bagpipe tunes and stirring drumrolls greeted Georgians and the entire Stockade community on St. George's Day, our May 5th Patronal Festival. The Schenectady Pipe Band, St. Andrews Society, and St. George's Lodge/Mason's joined the parish celebration with banners, traditional pipe music, and prayers as we honored our Patron Saint.

After a Bagpipe Prelude in the courtyard, Fr. Matt welcomed our featured guests at the West Doors. Their procession into church, tartans raised, was truly spectacular. Then David Kennison read the Names of the Founders and Rectors of St. George's Church, the list reaching back to before the Revolution and ending with Fr. Matthew Stromberg. We really are a foundation church of this country.

In his homily, guest preacher Rev. Keith Schmidt focused on the legend of St. George and the dragon, how the dragon has become the dominant fact. Because we don't believe literally in dragons we dismiss the story, even though much of popular entertainment now ("The Hobbit," "Game of Thrones") has dragons. This loss of Christian imagination has been harmful because saints, like superheroes, represent a larger truth. St. George slaying the dragon is good triumphing over evil, not just man over dragon.

He is a superhero ideally suited for our age, showing us the simple courage of standing firm in faith.

After the sermon Fr. Matt blessed the tartans

as they were presented at the altar, in the Kirkin' O the Tartans. When the service ended, our procession, tartans and banners aloft, with bagpipes and drums to announce us, led the congregation around the Stockade.

Residents of the community waved and took pictures. We reassembled in front of the church for

our final blessing before converging on the Great Hall for a wonderful meal, organized by Sandee Hughes and Barb Wengrovius.

joan pearson



OUTREACH

St. George's will once again assist Schenectady Inner City Ministry in its annual summer lunch meal program. This will be the 25th year SICM has offered nutritious lunches to children up to age 18 throughout Schenectady and Scotia the 10 weeks of summer. Last year SICM served close to 55,000 meals during the program's run. With additional serving locations added, SICM projects it will well exceed last year's totals. St. George's will be serving at Wallingford Park, 5th and Congress Street, the week of Monday, August 12th to Friday, August 16th. Two volunteers are needed per day. Please consider participating in this worthwhile program.

Another project under consideration for the summer is re-instituting St. George's school supplies collection. Information about ways to contribute and with which organization St. George's will be partnering should be determined soon.

alice polumbo

GARDEN MINISTRY

St. George's is fortunate to have several hardy souls who donate their time and talents in the church gardens. Take a moment to thank these community-spirited helpers, and enjoy the (visual) fruits of their labors all summer long. If you are interested in helping out periodically, speak with Meg Hughes. No special talent is needed to participate in this fun and rewarding ministry.

meg hughes



Jim & Pam Turley ready the south lawn for Mass on the Grass.



Suzy Unger shares her garden know-how and takes no nonsense from weeds.



Rich Unger & Jim Turley trimmed troublesome tree limbs. Safety first!



Debbie Lambeth & Barb Wengrovius aren't shy about their Georgian pride.



Meg Hughes enjoys groundskeeping chores and has the grass stains to prove it!

SALUTING ST. GEORGE'S VOLUNTEERS

Pam and Jim Turley knew they wanted an Episcopal church in the area. Pam was baptized an Episcopalian, although she didn't regularly attend an Episcopal church; Jim was born, raised and schooled as a Catholic. Looking online, St. George's website piqued their interest. They tried us, liked us, didn't look further...they found their "church home"....and have been members since February 2018.

While Jim was elected to the 2019 Vestry, Pam has been quietly making a name for herself as a hard-working volunteer. She and Meg Hughes coordinated the recent church clean-up and took it a step further by cleaning out the rummage rooms. She helped with preparing the church for Easter, and the Easter Egg Hunt and is also a member of Altar Guild and Assisted Living Ministry. Of the latter, she said, "It's very rewarding to bring a little light and sunshine to the people who live at residences like Kingsway, Schenectady Center, Scotia Mansion, and Glen Eddy. Some may not get any visitors except for us."

Because places of worship are most vulnerable to terrorist attacks, Pam and Jim....with law enforcement backgrounds....gave a PowerPoint presentation on Safety after our December 9th Mass that was well attended. NOTE: for 31 years Pam worked her way up through the ranks in her hometown of Elkhart, Indiana performing as a police officer, patrol officer, DARE drug program instructor, detective, sergeant, detective captain, assistant chief, and then chief of police for 7 years. Pam was Indiana's first female police chief of a 2nd class city (classified by population under 600,000) and the first female police chief in Elkhart. Jim, an Albany policeman for 26 years, retired in 2004 as Police Chief and currently is the Law Enforcement Coordinator within the Cyber-Security Division of the NYS Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Pam reconnected with Jim when she moved to Albany as Director of Enforcement for the NYS Liquor Authority. They originally met at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia where they were classmates in a 2-week leadership course for law enforcement executives. Both are also prior graduates of the FBI National Academy. Between



them, they have 5 children and 9 grandchildren. Pam's youngest son, Christopher, is a professional fire fighter; her oldest son, Brian, is in marketing/sales.

Initially feeling right at home at St. George's, Pam explained, "Everyone was so friendly. After a short time we were included in everything. It was very easy to join activities and volunteer." She also liked the variety of programs Fr. Matt had scheduled on the church calendar.

Satisfying the investigator in her psyche, Pam has an unusual hobby: Genealogy. Doing it for herself, her family and friends, she said, "It's not for everybody, but it's very important for me to know where I came from." A hands-on person, Pam proves that you don't have to be an old established Georgian to volunteer for our ministries. New faces and new ideas are always welcome. Thank you, Pam, for your "time" and your "talent."

lynn paska

FROM THE RECTOR'S STUDY.....



As I sit and write these words it is May 31, the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It also happens to be the five year anniversary of my ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons. Six months later, on December 6, I was ordained to the Priesthood. I thought I would use this occasion to reflect a bit about what it means to be a deacon.

A deacon is one of the three fold offices of ordained ministry. In the Episcopal Church we have three kinds of ordained clergy, Bishops, priest, and deacons. At my ordination the Bishop asked me, "My brother, do you believe that you are truly called by God and his Church to the life and work of a deacon?" Throughout my discernment process I was asked over and over again whether I felt that I was truly called by God to do the work of a priest. All along the way, ordination to the priesthood had been my goal. Interestingly enough, I wasn't often questioned about my calling to the diaconate, yet here I was being solemnly questioned by the Bishop. I answered, "I believe I am so called."

In her wisdom, the Church asks that all priests serve as deacons first. What is the reason for this? The office of deacon is a servant ministry, its title comes from the Greek word *diákonos* which means, "one who serves at table." The first deacons were appointed by the early Church to help assist with its charitable work (Acts 6:3-4). At my ordination the bishop instructed me, "In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely." Jesus taught his disciples, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35 NIV). He demonstrated what true servant leadership looks like by stooping to wash his disciples feet. The office of deacon is modeled on the humble servant ministry of our Lord himself. Some men and women are called specifically to the diaconate as "vocational deacons" but all priest must spend some time as "transitional deacon." The reason for this is to emphasize the fact that as a priest or even as bishops, they are first and foremost servants. A priest does not cease to be a deacon when he or she is priested. Even if a priest is later ordained as a Bishop, he or she still does not leave the office of deacon behind. It serves as the foundation for all ordained ministry. I am thankful for this valuable part of my own formation and I continue to value my role as deacon even as I serve you as priest.

The ministry of deacon is an important and sacred role in the life of the Church. Not only do deacons enrich the liturgical life of the church, but they bless a congregation through their teaching, service, leadership, and example. Currently, Saint George's is without any deacons among our ranks. I have often prayed that God might speak to one of you to pursue this sacred vocation. You may be perfectly happy in your career and the idea of going to seminary to earn a Master of Divinity may not seem possible. The priesthood may not be for you, but perhaps the Diaconate is. Deacons are often bi-vocational continuing to work a secular job. While there is some education and training involved in becoming a deacon, it does not require you to uproot your life to go to seminary. Do you feel a call to serve others, particularly the poor? Does the idea of sharing God's word with others excite you? Perhaps God is calling you to be a deacon. I invite you to pray about it.

grace and peace, fr. matthew stromberg

BOOK CLUB LOOKS AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER

All on the Same Page, St. George's book club, doesn't meet during the summer, but members are already anticipating their discussion of *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah. All Georgians are encouraged to read this funny and eye-opening memoir about the author's childhood in apartheid South Africa. The meeting is set for September 8th, after Mass, in the Great Hall. Questions and suggestions are welcomed by Meg Hughes.

meg hughes

MASS ON THE GRASS & ROGATION SUNDAY



Blue skies and warm temperatures prevailed for Mass on the Grass & Rogation Sunday on May 26th. Georgians listened intently to reader Sheila Thomas and a joyful choir led by Dr. Brian (Hank Williams) Taylor, followed by Fr. Matt's blessing of the garden tools.



GREETINGS FROM FORMER STAFF



A reunion in New Orleans this spring brought together former St. George staffers Andrew Krystopolski (back, left) and Gerald Cooper (front, right) with their respective spouses Kevin Grace (front, left) and Penny Cooper (back, right.) They send "best wishes" to all Georgians as well as "wish you were here with us."

LENT/EASTER



Lent and Easter 2019 truly gave Georgians the experience of walking with Christ. Fr. Matt's Lenten series on "The Seven Last Words of Christ" every Sunday evening brought us together for a meal, a guest speaker, and Stations of the Cross. Each speaker: Fr. John Scott, Mother Judith Malioneck, Fr. Scott Garno, Amy Lewis, Rev. Peter J.B. Carman, and Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff, explored one of Jesus' final statements, taking us beyond their superficial meanings

Palm Sunday began in the Great Hall with the distribution of palms and a joyous procession to the church to the words of Psalm 118: "Blest is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." After the congregation took part in reading the Passion from Luke, our thoughts turned to the somber events that would next be experienced by our Lord throughout Holy Week. At Maundy Thursday Mass, Fr. Matt washed the feet of parishioners as Jesus humbly washed the feet of his disciples, and then the altar was stripped. We left church in silence and darkness, the Lady Chapel candelit for the watchers who would wait, in turn, all night and into the next day. Good Friday Mass was stark and beautiful, with an unadorned altar and unaccompanied music. We prayed for Christ on the Cross, sang for his battle with death, and departed in silence.

A wet Holy Saturday saw an exuberant egg hunt in the Great Hall, organized by April Stromberg. About 60 children, accompanied by their parents, happily scrambled through the space searching for treasures. Relighting the Holy Fire on a windy Saturday night was challenging. We all entered the dark church with our glowing candles to hear the Exultet and the great readings of the Old Testament. Then the lights brightened and the bells rang, and we celebrated the First Mass of Easter. In his sermon, Fr. Matt explained how the Resurrection, to Peter, meant that everything Jesus taught was true. After Mass, everyone enjoyed our traditional feast in the Great Hall.

Easter morning brought another joyful Mass. Fr. Matt spoke about Notre Dame in his sermon, the world's shared sorrow at the terrible fire just before Easter. He said this timeless masterpiece is a monument to the majesty of God, an image of His dazzling beauty, and that it must be restored. The ravages of sin on mankind are of even greater magnitude. For this reason God sent his son, to restore our former glory. Jesus came to renew mankind, to restore what was destroyed. The human race is the temple of God's glory; we are living stones in God's temple and Christ is the head. Christ raised from the dead restored the temple to greater splendor than it once had. God is making all things new, restoring all that was destroyed by the power of sin. The congregation left this uplifting service to the glorious sound of Brian Taylor playing Charles-Marie Widor's Toccata. Alleluia! Christ has risen!

joan pearson



Pentecost – what a strange word it is. Yet Pentecost is one of the Principal Feasts of the Church - seven days throughout the church year that take precedence over any other day or observance – more than regular Sundays, more than Holy Days and Days of Special Devotion. So Pentecost must be pretty significant. What makes Pentecost so special? Today, we explore that a bit.

Origins Pentecost – the Greek word means “the 50th day.” In the OT, you will discover that Pentecost was originally a Jewish feast day of the harvest (Feast of Weeks). The Jewish historian Josephus referred to Pentecost as the 50th day after the first day of Passover. In Christianity, Pentecost is the 7th Sunday after Easter.

Coming of the Holy Spirit In the NT, Pentecost refers to the descending of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4: “*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*” Shortly after Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension, Christians understood the meaning of Pentecost as the gift of the Spirit.

The disciples of Jesus “*were all together in one place*”. There is a “*mighty rushing wind*” (a common symbol for the Spirit) and “*tongues as of fire*” appear. The disciples were “*filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance*”. That could be seen as a multitude of languages spoken or as ecstatic speech (i.e., “*God’s language*”). For Christians, this fulfills Jesus’ promise his followers will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

3,000 New Believers As Jesus’ followers gathered together and the Holy Spirit “*filled the whole house where they were sitting*”, “*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them*”. This drew a large crowd, and Peter stood up to speak to them about repentance and the gospel of Christ. By the end of the day, the Church grew by 3,000 people. Peter said that this started an outpouring for all believers from that point on, Jews and Gentiles alike. Not bad for Peter’s first sermon!

Fulfillment of Prophecy Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would be the Helper for his people. [John 14:26] “*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*” This NT event fulfills an OT prophecy in Joel 2:28-29: “*And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.*” God was doing what he had promised through Joel - empowering all people for ministry. Whereas in the OT, the Spirit was poured out on prophets, priests, and kings, in the NT, the Spirit would be given to “*all people*.” All would be empowered to minister, regardless of their gender, age, or social position.



The Holy Spirit descending upon the people is often depicted as a dove. Fresco at the Karlskirche in Vienna, Johann Michael Rottmayr



Western depiction of Pentecost, Jean II Restout, 1732

The Birth of the Church On Pentecost, by the Holy Spirit, new believers were baptized as they joined the group. They shared life together, focusing on teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. They shared their belongings so that no one was hungry or needy. As these first Christians lived out their new faith together, “*the Lord added to their number those who were being saved*”. Thus we speak of Pentecost as the birthday of the church. Typically Pentecost is portrayed by the Virgin Mary seated centrally among the disciples with flames resting on the crowns of their heads. The color of Pentecost is red, signifying the Spirit’s tongues of fire, the blood of martyrs and the flames of faith. People dress in red; churches are decorated in red. Pentecost is also “*especially appropriate*” for baptism (BCP p.312). Baptismal candidates would wear their white

(purity) garments on that day, coining the term White Sunday or Whitsunday.

What happened on the first Pentecost continues to happen to Christians today, though usually not in such a dramatic fashion. We rarely get a heavenly wind and tongues of fire anymore. Nevertheless, God pours out the Spirit upon all who put their faith in Jesus Christ and become his disciples. Pentecost is a time to ask God to fill us afresh with the Spirit so that we might join in the ministry of Christ with gusto. It is a time to renew our commitment to fulfilling our crucial role in the ministry of God’s people in the world.

david kennison

THE ALTAR GUILD



Front row (L-R) Barb Wengrovius, Gerri Moore, Nancy Angus, Anne Kennison, Sandee Hughes; back row (L-R) Carol Gaige, Ralph Polumbo, Debbie Lambeth, Pam Turley.

The Altar Guild is an integral part of every day at church. The vessels and linens used for each Eucharist are prepared and cared for by Altar Guild members and kept in good order for daily use. Before the seasons of Easter and Christmas, the Altar Guild is particularly busy. The silver is polished and the Altars are prepared for worship.

The Altar Guild had become a very small group, until quite recently when several people volunteered to help. With many Georgians to share this important ministry, we have been able to have a schedule that is working well with each person doing a small portion of the work each month. We welcome anyone who would like to join us with this fulfilling and meaningful ministry. If you are interested in being part of The Altar Guild, please contact Nancy Angus or Anne Kennison.

nancy angus

ASSISTED LIVING MINISTRY



Members of St. George's ALM Ministry have recognized a familiar face at recent Kingsway Community Services. Dottie Kennison has been part of the Kingsway Community congregation the last few months and after one of St. George's services agreed to pose with other Georgians present that day.

alice polumbo

- VISITATIONS -



The late 1940's were very important times for the world, our country and of course here at St. George's. In 1947 Father Darwin Kirby arrived and would be a dominant force for forty years. At about the same time the Kennison name was added to the Parish membership. Members of that family would play major roles in our history down to the present day. The matriarch of that family was Dottie Kennison.

Dottie was raised in Watervliet and met Gregory Kennison while he attended RPI. In 1946 after Gregory's discharge from the Navy the two were married; a union that would last until Gregory's death in 1994. After starting married life in Lynn, MA, Gregory's career at General Electric soon brought him to Schenectady. His Episcopalian background led him and Dottie to St. George's. What kept them here was their strong faith that was amplified by that of Father Kirby. Like so many Georgians, they loved and were great supporters of the music program.

In addition to raising two sons, our own David and Peter (Maine), Dottie became involved in organizing Estate Sales. She did it all: appraising the merchandise, arranging the presentation of the items for sale, organizing the actual sale. Doing it all also applied to her activity here at St. George's. She served on the Altar Guild, was head of the ECW (Episcopal Church Women), cooked and served for more dinners and luncheons than could be counted. She loved working on the rummage sales using her appraisal skills to be sure items were priced appropriately. Her experience with estate sales was also evident in the way she arranged articles in St. George's Shop.

Dottie was a fixture at Sunday mass for decades but health issues no longer allow regular attendance. For years son David and his wife Anne provided compassionate care on a daily basis that made it possible for Dottie to remain in her own home. However, recently her medical issues have required a move to the Kingsway Community where your Pastoral Care Committee visits her on a regular basis.

Dottie's strong faith and tradition of service helped make the Kennison name so dominant in the annals of St. George's history in the twentieth century. We are glad that legacy continues now in the twenty first century.

jim wingate



MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

St. George's will be offering its First Annual Choir Camp this summer, August 19th through the 23rd. Open to students who are preparing to go into 3rd, 4th, 5th or 6th grades, the purpose of this camp is to involve young people to the great music of the Church from the classical tradition, teaching them to sing in proper head tone and develop the discipline to offer music within the context of worship.

I will be heading this camp as I have successfully led these type of camps in two previous parishes. The musical activities are balanced with non-musical activities such as arts and crafts, recreation and afternoon field trips.

Part of the purpose of offering this camp is to identify a nucleus of students who will be part of a new boys and girls choir here at St. George's. Such a choir would offer music occasionally at some of our liturgies, particularly in Evensong services.

Volunteer assistance is necessary. Supervision of field trips, preparation of snacks, musical assistants in the room, and other things are needed. Anyone who can give one day or five days, an hour, a half day or a full day, is urged to contact me at music@stgeorgesschenectady.org. This will be a new outreach initiative for our parish, and it has the potential of making new people aware of our unique church.

dr. brian taylor, director of music





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THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

- * To everyone who made a food or drink contribution to our wonderful Easter celebration!
- * To everyone who added food or drink items to our delicious St. George's day luncheon!
- * To the Ewbanks, Sue Hartz, Meg Hughes, Pam Turley, April Stromberg, the Wareh family, Barb Wengrovius and anyone else who volunteered to bring food items to share with coffee on Sunday mornings during the past three months.

Enjoy having a piece of coffee cake, a bowl or fruit or a cookie with your cup of coffee on Sunday mornings? The Hospitality Committee operates without a budget so your involvement is essential. Pick any Sunday and sign up to provide a food item to share. The sign up sheet for June, July and August is available in the Great Hall. Lemonade or iced tea is also a welcome addition to warm summer Sundays.

sandee hughes

A REMINDER: St. George's services are broadcast on television:



Spectrum Schenectady Access Channel now on channel 1301 - or Verizon Fios Channel 36 - Sundays at 4:30PM