

St. George's Anglican Church

News from the Pews

Thanksgiving 2023



From the Rector

Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore" (Ps. 113:2)

As I sat down to write this letter, I found myself thinking about what it is that I'm thankful for. Because I believe we're called, especially on Thanksgiving, to offer thanks to God for the whole of our lives, for both the good and the bad, which is not always an easy thing to do.

Sure there are those moments when there is joy and celebration, and there is this overwhelming sense that life is good. But then there are other times when our hearts are breaking, and we're stuck dealing with grief and sorrow and loss.

Three thousand years ago the Israelite people formulated blessings for every circumstance of their lives. If it was good news, then blessed be God who is good and does good. And if it was bad news, then blessed be the judge of truth. Because as far as they were concerned, we have a duty to pronounce a blessing on the bad things of life, as well as the good, because all of life comes from God.

So I think our challenge every Thanksgiving is to learn how to give thanks for the messiness of life; thanks for the things we welcome, as well as the things we would do absolutely anything to avoid. And I think the answer to this lies in an action that we at St. George's take every time when we stand together, we raise our hands, and we ask for God's blessing on something.

Because by asking for God's blessing, you start to think about what's all involved. For example, you start to wonder whether your blessing makes something holy, or recognizes its holiness. You also think about which things do you agree to bless, and which things do you decline to bless, and on what grounds do you decide which is which. Like a couple years ago I was asked to bless a Toronto Maple Leafs jersey, and I tell you as a life-long Montreal Canadiens fan that felt like Sophie's Choice.

Continued...

Now we Christians bless things all the time. We bless bread, wine, water, oil, babies, marriages, the sick, and the dearly departed. But as Anglicans, we're extra lucky because we will even bless houses, church furniture, wall hangings, candles, books, bells, dogs, cats, cars, vestments, embroidered kneeling cushions, religious jewelry, and silverware. However, my favourite blessing of all is the one we offer for backpacks.

Just a few weeks ago our young people gathered together at the chancel steps with their backpacks to be blessed. When I asked how many were excited to be going back to school, a few hands were raised. (Don't think I didn't see all the parents sitting in the pews raise their hands). When I asked how many were nervous or scared to go back to school, a few more hands were raised.

Then we laughed, talked about the reasons why they go to school, and then with everyone standing, backpacks raised up into the air, we asked for the following blessing: "Gracious God, bless these backpacks and all the children who will use them. Give them courage as they start a new school year. Be with them as they learn and grow. Show them how to serve you, and help them to teach us all about your love. We also ask your blessing on all teachers, parents and mentors who will work with and support them in their education. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Barbara Brown Taylor, an Episcopal priest and professor of religion, offers a few words of wisdom to those pronouncing blessings. She writes, "you say a blessing when you break a bone, the same as you do when you win the lottery. After all, the two events may be more alike than you know. Live with either of them for very long and you may discover that neither of them is as bad or as good as you first thought it would be."

But more importantly I think, she suggests that the more we offer blessings, the closer we draw to God. Again, she writes, "by pronouncing a blessing, you learn to look upon someone else with compassion. You look past their terrifying demeanour to see the brokenness within. You open your arms to what is, instead of waiting until it is what it should be. You sacrifice control, to extend love and grace. And when you do this, you occupy God's own heart."

Every single occurrence in our lives, good or bad, is to be understood as an invitation to draw closer to God. So ultimately our challenge is to embrace all that God has given us and offer thanks, thereby recognizing our lives as living sacraments, as outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace.

It is with this spirit of gratitude that we come together here at St. George's to celebrate Thanksgiving Sunday on October 8th at both our 8:30 am and 10:30 am services. As always, your support of St. George's and our many ministries is deeply appreciated. Later this autumn on Sunday, October 29th we will celebrate All Saints' Day. Then, on Sunday, November 5th we will observe Remembrance Sunday at both our 8:30 am and 10:30 am services.

As well, you will be able to see from the announcements in our newsletter that we have a lot of additional ministries going on right now, and lots of opportunities for you to get involved. I invite you, as you are able, to join us at St. George's this autumn as we gather to be the Church. May God continue to bless you and your family this Thanksgiving season, and may you always experience His peace, comfort, and joy.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Victor Kischak
Pastor, Priest & Rector

From the Wardens

As we move into the fall, we will welcome our new Director of Music, Jeff Enns on Oct 1. We want to extend a big thank-you to Matthias Schmidt for being our Interim Director of Music and keeping the musical part of our worship truly amazing. Music has always been a big part of St George's, and Matthias stepped up to carry on this important part of our liturgies during our time of transition. We can't wait to see what Jeff and Matthias have in store for us.

As we continue to move forward, we are starting to see some of our groups getting back together to resume the good work, and to provide the services they used to give prior to Covid. They are also looking for new members so that they can do more. Please take some time to give some thought and prayer as to how you might be able to get involved. Perhaps it could be by being a greeter or a reader, helping with the Chancel Guild, the Saturday Night suppers, or the coffee hours after Sunday services. These are just a few of the groups in our church community that could use your skills and time so that they can continue their good work. Please explore the many ways to get involved to help us with our mission of "Making Christ Known."

Take the time to talk to Victor, a Warden or our parish office to find out how to get in contact with the group(s) that you may be interested in and we will gladly assist you in your endeavour.

We always need people to carry out the work of the church, but we also need financial support to keep our doors open. All of us have increasing demands on our resources, but we encourage you to prayerfully consider whether you can assist us to meet our financial needs at this time.

From Your Wardens - Giesela Goetz, Bruce Carrick, Laura Keller, Paul Deacon, Laura McDonald, Rani Varkey

Upcoming Events

St. George's Historical Society - Next meeting **November 8**.

Crafters' Guild - Meets the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Next meeting **October 11**.

Hospice Wellington - A Sanctuary of Music - Friday, **October 6**, 11:00 am

Thanksgiving Sunday - **October 8**

All Saints' Day - **October 29**

Remembrance Sunday - **November 5**

Saturday Night Suppers - **November 11**

Bishop Bell Town Hall - **November 22**, 5:30 pm

St. George's Christmas Market - **December 3**, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Order of Niagara Nomination - Deborah Marchment



Deborah carries on the long tradition of her family - her parents, grandparents, and great grandparents - being members of St. George's. Deborah was baptized, confirmed and married in St. George's.

As a child, she attended Church School on a regular basis and was a camper at Camp Canterbury Hills. Deborah went on to teach Church School and after assisting the Church School coordinator for a couple of years, she took on the role as the coordinator for a two-year term.

When St. George's had an active JA Group, Deborah became an assistant leader for two years to "learn the ropes" and then became the leader. Under her leadership, the JA group at St. George's thrived and was one of the last two JA groups in Canada - the other one being in Newfoundland. Deborah recruited numerous assistants to work with her and the young girls enjoyed the group so much they brought in their friends from the wider community. She took the group to rallies in Hamilton and other locations in the diocese and also hosted a diocesan rally at St. George's for all the JA groups in this diocese. She involved the girls and their parents in the annual Christmas bazaar where they sold Christmas decorations which they had made. She also organized an annual banquet, with the support of the C Branch of the ACW, for the girls and their parents. When the various JA badges which the girls could earn were no longer available, Deborah handmade the badges as the girls were still keen on achieving them. Deborah was the devoted leader of St. George's JA for seventeen years!

Deborah has also been involved in many other aspects of the life of St. George's. She continues to be a reliable member of the Chancel Guild - for many years, as a group leader who trained new members to the guild and as President of the executive of the guild on more than one occasion. She has been serving as a chalice bearer since the 1980's, and is a reader and a greeter on regular basis. In the past, she was a member of the Christian Education Committee as the representative of the Church School. For countless years, she has been involved in the annual Christmas bazaar where she has not only coordinated the kitchen several times, but has also been the coordinator of the whole bazaar on more than one occasion. At the present time, Deborah is a member of our Parish Council where she represents the various groups that are active in St. George's and she coordinates our Children and Youth Ministry Committee.

St. George's continues to be blessed with Deborah's faithful, reliable and quiet leadership in so many aspects of our parish life! Please join Deborah on October 29th at 4:00 pm at Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton for the presentation.

Buildings & Grounds Update

Inspired by Elizabeth Adams, the church school room has been painted and decorated. Thanks, Elizabeth. All it needs now is a renovated door, in one piece not two, and the room will be complete.

Andrew Wilson has been hired as an Assistant Sexton. You will see him around on the occasional Sunday and during the week when the building is rented to others. He has helped clear the brush in the area north of Mitchell Hall so that there are no hiding places for "visitors." With Paul Deacon's help, the north wall will be painted where local "artists" have made use of the wall as a canvas. Angular stone will be placed along the building to make it more difficult to walk in the area.

Continued...

If you enter the church when the alarm is on, disengage the alarm, and then remember to open the door between the narthex and the cloister. This is a sign that you are in the building. If the door is already open, please make yourself known to the person who has preceded you so that you can coordinate exit times and setting of the alarm. False alarms can be avoided that way.

The door to the parking lot is unlocked from about 20 minutes before the Sunday services until about ten minutes after the services start. During those times there is no access to Palmer Hall or to Mitchell Hall. This is for security reasons.

With the Guelph Storm season starting imminently, we will be renting parking spaces as we have in the past few years. Ten loonies and you are welcome to rest your car while the Storm blows away the competition. Thanks to Rani Varkey and her clan for organizing and operating this fund raiser.

Harry Oussoren
Facilities Manager

Children and Youth Working Group Update

Our main focus for the summer was the completion of the church school room "refresh" to greet the children on Sunday, September 10. In preparation for the Church School refresh, we removed some items and disposed of the unwanted ones. Walls were painted yellow with clouds, woodwork and radiators were painted white, the carpet was cleaned, and the room was reorganized for the children to use.

Thank you to Elizabeth Adams, Hannah Keller, Harry Oussoren and Toni Atieh for their hard work to make our start up a success and on time. We look forward to another successful Church School Year.

Prayer blankets were given to Avery Sukhdeo and Sam Patrick, our first-year college and university students, as a reminder of our ongoing prayers and thoughts for a successful academic year. Please let us know if we accidentally missed any students who have begun their studies at college or university this September.

If you are looking for an opportunity to help with planning for our youth - both young and older - please email Debbie Marchment at marchmentm92@yahoo.com.

Deborah Marchment



Sam Patrick and Avery Sukhdeo receiving their blankets

Introducing St. George's New Music Director

We are delighted to announce that Jeff Enns has been hired for the position of Organist and Director of Music. He will begin his music ministry at St. George's on Sunday, October 1.

Jeff has been a church organist and music director for 25 years in the Waterloo-Wellington area, and has participated in church music for over 35 years. He comes to us after several years at Church of the Holy Saviour, Waterloo. In addition, he is currently the Head of Music at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener. Jeff is a professional singer with the Elora Singers and the Elora Festival Choir. He is a well-known choral composer; our choir has had the pleasure of singing his Litany for Ukraine, written last year in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Jeff has a love of Anglican Church music, which includes a variety of church music styles spanning 600 years: from early chant, to Choral Eucharist and Evensong, and through to contemporary repertoire, jazz and improvisation.

Jeff notes, "I am very excited to start this new position at St. George's. I still remember thinking about this job when I was 19 years old. I guess that good things come to those who wait."

Interim Music Director, Matthias Schmidt, will continue in his role until the end of September, and will then resume his former position as Assistant Director of Music. We will have an opportunity to formally thank Matthias for his leadership during the interim time at a later date.

Thank you to the members of the Music Search Committee for their valuable contributions throughout the search process: Victor Kischak, Giesela Goetz, EllenAnderson, Avery Sukhdeo, and Gerry Neufeld. We would also like to thank all those who participated in the very successful and helpful Visioning Sessions.

Please join us in welcoming Jeff to St. George's on October 1.



Treasurer's Report

The amount received in August from Identified Givers is up significantly from August last year. Year-to-date givings are \$27K higher than last year, continuing the trend we have seen. Total income is also up over \$33K Year-to-Date (YTD) from last year, mainly due to parking revenue. However, we are 66.7% through the year but have received only 55.8% of the budgeted income.

On the expense side, we are going to have to get control over the Maintenance costs as many of these are already overbudget. The gas costs are well over budget without even starting the fall heating season. Expenses for Office & Accounting are on par with last year. Building Recovery Costs - Other Users (shown in our budget as a negative expense rather than as income) is up from last year; however, we are well short of the \$30K goal for this line at only 35.2% 8 months into the year. Overall total expenses are up \$28K from last year and at 76.5% of the total budget for the year.

Our Expenses over Revenue are on par with last year at -126K, which, due to an increase in revenue, is \$5K lower than last year.

How can you help?

The best thing you can do for St. George's is to make regular, generous offerings to the church. You might consider Pre-Authorized Giving if you haven't already. Simply fill out the form (download it from our website or contact the office for one) and your gift will come directly out of your bank account. No more having to remember an envelope every Sunday!

Other ways to donate include:

- Mail a cheque to the church
- Drop off cash or a cheque at the church during business hours (call ahead)
- By e-transfer to bookkeeper@saintgeorge.ca
- On our website using a credit card

	Actual Jan - Aug/23	Actual Jan - Aug/22	Budget 2023
Total Revenue	\$213,772	\$180,411	\$382,850
Total Expenses	\$339,829	\$311,513	\$444,109
Net Revenue	-\$126,057	-\$131,102	-\$61,259



St. George's Church

Christmas Market

Sunday, December 3rd, 2023

11:00am - 2:00pm

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