



Thanksgiving 2026

St. George's Anglican Church

News from the Pews

From the Rector

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

A few years ago I came across a collection of journal entries by the Episcopal priest Barbara Brown Taylor. In one of her entries she describes a summer she spent on a barrier island where loggerhead turtles were laying their eggs.

"One night while the tide was out, I watched a huge female heave herself up on the beach to dig her nest and empty her eggs into it. Afraid of disturbing her, I left before she had finished.

The next morning I returned to see if I could find the spot where her eggs lay hidden in the sand. What I found were her tracks leading in the wrong direction. Instead of heading back out to sea, she had wandered into the dunes, which were already as hot as asphalt in the morning sun.

A little ways inland I found her: Exhausted, all but baked, her head and flippers caked with dried sand. After pouring water on her and covering her with sea oats, I fetched a park ranger who returned with a jeep to rescue her. He flipped her on her back, wrapped tire chains around her front legs, and hooked the chains to a trailer hitch on his jeep. Then I watched horrified as he took off, yanking her body forward so that her mouth filled with sand and her neck bent so far back I thought it would break.

The ranger hauled her over the dunes and down onto the beach. At the ocean's edge, he unhooked her and turned her right side up. She lay motionless in the surf as the water lapped at her body, washing the sand from her eyes and making her skin shine again. A wave broke over her; she lifted her head slightly, moving her back legs. Other waves brought her further back to life until one of them made her light enough to find a foothold and push off, back into the ocean.

Watching her swim slowly away and remembering her nightmare ride through the dunes, I reflected that it is sometimes hard to tell, whether you are being killed or saved by the hands that turn your life upside down."

This seems like a pretty apt description for the past six months where life at church has been turned rather dramatically upside down. We certainly did not expect to be worshipping in Mitchell Hall. We did not expect an engineering report to tell us that the roof trusses in our beautiful nave were compromised. We did not expect to close the doors to the place where generations of people have worshipped, prayed, married, baptized their children, buried those they love, and encountered God.

Continued...

And I know there is grief in that. I feel it too. Our nave is more than timber and stone. It carries our memories. And with the repairs and restoration soon underway, we do not expect to return to it until January. That is not what any of us wanted.

But perhaps Thanksgiving is not really about giving thanks because everything has gone the way we wanted it to go. Perhaps Thanksgiving is about learning to recognize grace even when it hasn't. Because something rather wonderful has happened at St. George's over these past few months. The nave closed, but the Church did not.

We moved into Mitchell Hall. We rearranged chairs and figured out where things belonged. We adapted our worship. And then we did what Christians have been doing for two thousand years. We gathered and prayed and sang. We heard the scriptures and we broke bread together. And Christ was there.

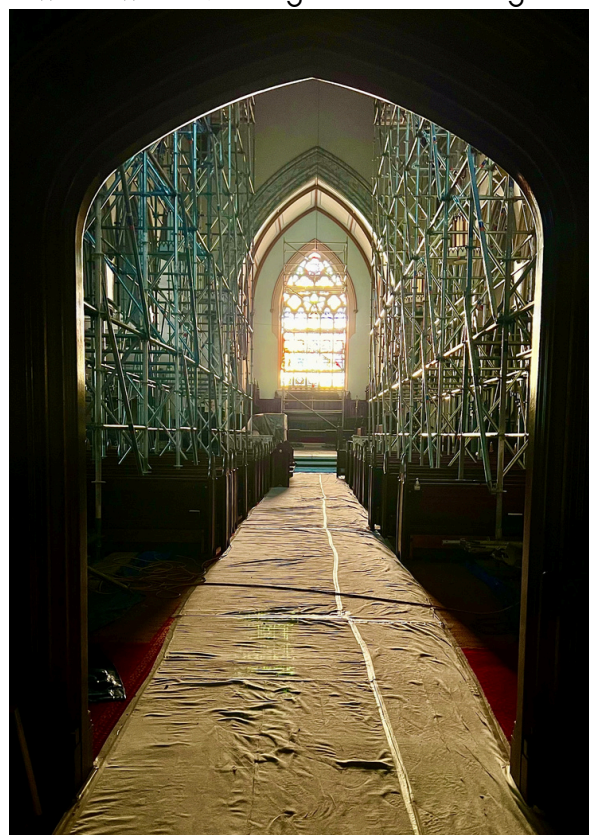
Not because we were inside a beautiful Victorian stone and slate nave surrounded by stained glass, but because Christ promised to be present among his people. And far from slowing down, our parish continues to be extraordinarily alive.

This autumn we are reinstating Evensong. Our Tuesday afternoon concerts are returning. Ten members of our parish will be confirmed at the Cathedral next month. Our ministries continue. Our people continue to serve. Our doors remain open. And week after week, the people of St. George's continue to gather together in faith. And I think there is something wonderfully stubborn about that.

Perhaps that is one of the unexpected gifts hidden within this strange upside down season. We are being reminded of something that Christians can occasionally forget when we have magnificent buildings. The Church is and always has been the people.

Yes, we love our building. We cherish it. We will repair it and restore it, and when that glorious day finally comes that we walk back into the nave together, I suspect many of us will have tears in our eyes. But St. George's is not a building. St. George's is you.

It is the person sitting beside you at worship. It is the person who makes coffee, sings in the choir, serves at the altar, welcomes a stranger, visits someone who is lonely, teaches a child, serves on a committee, rings the bells, offers a prayer, writes a cheque, brings food, moves another chair in Mitchell Hall, or simply shows up on Sunday morning because this community matters to them.



And this Thanksgiving, I find myself profoundly grateful for all of it. I am grateful for the beautiful church building entrusted to our care, even when it requires rather more care than we might have wished. I am grateful for the engineers, contractors, wardens, parish council members, staff, volunteers, and everyone working to bring us safely home. But most of all, I am grateful for you.

Because in a season when something familiar and precious has been taken away from us temporarily, you have reminded me again what the Church actually is. And so perhaps Barbara Brown Taylor's turtle has something to teach us after all.

Sometimes life turns us upside down. Sometimes we find ourselves being dragged somewhere we never intended to go. Sometimes we cannot immediately tell what God might possibly be doing in the midst of it. And then, eventually, the water touches us again. We find our footing. And we discover that grace was there all along.

This Thanksgiving, may we have eyes to recognize that grace, not only in the things that have gone right, but in the strange, difficult, beautiful, messy whole of our lives together. And may God continue to bless St. George's as we worship, serve, laugh, pray, and occasionally move furniture together, until the day we finally walk back into our beloved nave.

With gratitude and affection,
The Rev. Victor Kischak
Pastor, Priest, & Rector

From Rev. Bradley Markus

Dear friends of St. George,

Julia and I want to thank you for the months we have shared with you. You welcomed us, walked with us through some of the most important moments of our lives and of my ministry, and made us feel at home in the faith we hold together. No ordinary community could have done so with such overwhelming goodness. Truly, God is at work in our midst.

The kindness you showed us on our last weekend with you in September has stayed with us. The words you shared, and your many kindnesses, remain a source of strength and encouragement as we set out.

We do not yet know where the next chapter of life and ministry will lead, but please know that you will remain in our prayers, in our thoughts, and, please God, in our lives. As Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." That is our hope for you, and our prayer for you this Thanksgiving, and always.

...to love and serve the Lord,

Bradley and Julia

From the Wardens

Dear Friends,

As we approach Thanksgiving, it seems particularly fitting to pause and reflect on all that we have to be grateful for at St. George's.

This has been an unusual season for our parish. The closure of our nave has required patience, flexibility and a willingness to do things a little differently. Yet, through it all, one thing has remained remarkably constant: you have continued to show up.

You have shown up for worship, even when it has meant gathering in a different space. You have shown up for coffee and conversation, for meetings and ministries, for fundraisers and community events. You have shown up to support one another, to welcome newcomers, to lend a hand when something needed doing, and simply to be part of this community.

For that, we are profoundly grateful.

A church is, of course, more than our beautiful buildings. Our building is precious, and we have a responsibility to care for it so that they can continue to serve generations to come. But what makes St. George's a church is the people who gather here — people who worship together, care for one another, serve our wider community and continue to make Jesus Christ known. This season has been a wonderful reminder of that.

We also want to express our deep gratitude to our clergy team. Victor and David, thank you for your tireless leadership, pastoral care, energy and commitment to our parish. You have continued to guide us through a season of change while keeping our focus firmly on our ministry and mission. And we are especially grateful to Bradley for all that he contributed during his time with us. His presence, ministry and willingness to pitch in wherever needed have been a real gift to St. George's.

We are also thankful for the many people whose contributions often happen quietly and behind the scenes — those who prepare worship, make coffee, move chairs, run technology, care for our building, organize events, send emails, make phone calls, visit those who need support, and take on the countless little tasks that allow parish life to continue. Every contribution matters.

Thanksgiving invites us not only to count our blessings, but to recognize the people through whom those blessings come. This year, we are especially thankful for you — for your faithfulness, your generosity, your good humour, your patience and your commitment to this parish.

Continued...

The nave will reopen in due course, and we look forward to worshipping in that beautiful space once again. But when we do, I hope we will remember what this season has taught us: the heart of St. George's was never closed. It has continued to beat strongly in the people who have gathered, served, worshipped and cared for one another throughout these months.

May this Thanksgiving be a time to celebrate all that we have, to give thanks for those who walk alongside us, and to look forward with hope to all that lies ahead.

With gratitude and every blessing,
Paul Deacon, Laura Keller, Jim Squires, and Grace Gomashie



Ways That You Can Support St. George's Church

St. George's depends on the generosity of visitors and parishioners. There are a number of ways that you can support our mission and ministries.



The simplest way to give regularly is to sign up for PAG – pre-authorized giving. Your gifts will automatically come to the church leaving you with one less thing to worry about! Simply send an email to our bookkeeper to set up PAG.



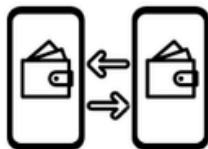
Planned Giving is one way in which St. George's Church maintains financial stability now and into the future. Speak to a Warden, our Treasurer or the Rector about remembering St. George's in your will.



If you prefer the old-school method of giving, rather than leaving cash in the offering plate, order giving envelopes. This way you'll receive a tax receipt at the end of the year. Order envelopes by sending an email to our bookkeeper as well!



The gift of your time supports the church in so many ways. From helping on Sunday mornings as a Greeter or Reader to joining a group or helping at an event, when we give our time and talents, our whole community benefits. It's also a great way to meet new people! There's always something to do – take a look at the bulletin board for events and groups that might interest you!



We accept e-transfers! Simply send your gift to bookkeeper@saintgeorge.ca.



“50 Gifts” – Rev. David Shumaker

Several years ago I learned of a gratitude exercise called “50 Gifts.” The idea is simple. Take a blank sheet of paper, number it 1-50, and write down everything you are most thankful for.

There are only two rules: keep the list to 50, and be as specific as possible. Sure, you can list your mom as one of your gifts. But the practice becomes more powerful when you get granular. My mom is on my list, but what I wrote was a memory: that Thanksgiving in my childhood when my mom was at the dinner table with her five sisters and laughed so hard that coffee came out of her nose. That snapshot captures what I love about her: she has an infectious laugh and is not afraid to look ridiculous. At her best, she has an inspiring freedom. The point of the exercise is to notice that our lives are punctuated with gifts: moments we did not fully create, but were given. St. Paul asks, “What do you have that you have not been given?” When we dwell on what has been given, our hearts move toward the “givers” who surround us, and then, almost inevitably, toward the Giver.

Every few years, I redo the list. The gifts keep coming, and I don’t want to forget. On the list this time is my ordination to the priesthood on a cold and rainy day this past May. I am kneeling before the bishop as the gathered priests, vested in red, lay their hands on me. I feel the weight of their touch, not as a heaviness, but as a hopefulness. They trust me to live out the vocation God is calling me to live. Behind me in the cathedral is my St. George’s family, many of whom travelled by yellow school bus to celebrate the day, and others who sent me with their prayers, and all who still travel with me on this path of shared ministry. My family is there too, reminding me every day to take my calling seriously, but never myself too seriously. You can’t see my face, but tears of joy roll down my cheeks. What a gift.

Now, it’s your turn. What’s on your list?

Save the Date

Parish Christmas Dinner – **Wednesday, December 2** at 6:00 pm. Tickets go on sale November 8.

St. George’s Christmas Market – **Saturday, November 28**, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Music at St. George’s – **Starting October 13**. Tuesdays at 4:30

Treasurer's Report

Identified giving's is down from August of 2025, year to date Identified Givers is down about \$9.5K but overall is good considering the circumstances with the services being moved to Mitchel Hall. We are very fortunate that attendance has not fallen off with the Nave being closed. Open collections for August is up a bit from August 2025 with the year-to-date amount being about the same. There is \$30K of Special Givings and without Special Givings the Total Offerings are down \$10K from August 2025. Parking revenue and fundraising are both up.

Although there is \$3.2K shown in fundraising and that is from the rummage sale and could be moved to other uses. With the fundraising left in and the special gift removed year-to-date total revenue is about the same as 2025.

On the expense side, as of the end of August Music is up about \$3.5K as Choir Scholars is at its budget and Organ and Piano Maintenance is over budget. Total Maintenance is up \$11.5K from August 2025 with Repairs up \$8K to \$35.6K which is \$11.6K over budget. Other users is down and will stay that way for the rest of the year as our ability to rent out space is now very limited. Office and Accounting is about the same as last year.

Our Expenses over Revenue are higher than last year by about \$76K which we anticipated by taking on a second full-time clergy member.

	Actual Jan-Aug 2026	Actual Jan-Aug 2025	Budget 2026
Total Revenue	\$275,875	\$255,767	\$505,500
Total Expenses	\$455,986	\$389,989	\$570,230
Net Revenue	-\$180,111	-\$134,222	\$-64,730

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