



# ***The Dragon's Tale***

JANUARY 2021

***"St. George's is a community of disciples joyfully reaching out in love to nurture, teach, and heal in Jesus' name"***

***St. George's Episcopal Church  
912 Route 146 · Clifton Park, NY 12065  
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## **St. George's Welcomes Fr. Darius Mojallali, Praise Band Leader**

I was asked to share a bit about myself and my family, and I want to begin by saying how excited we are about becoming part of the Saint George's community. I have served for about a month now as the Praise Band Leader at the Saturday service, and am delighted to be serving with a talented and faithful group of musicians. We look forward to working together to learn music, get to know each other, and to lead God's people in worship. We also will pray - the most important thing - asking God to give us the grace we need for the ministry he has called us to. As I serve, I am excited to have the opportunity to share in ministry with your priests, Fr. Tom and Mother Elizabeth.

Some of you know that I have been leading contemporary Christian music for many years, often at Diocesan Conventions and other diocesan and parish events and conferences. I play guitar, violin, mandolin and a little ukulele and enjoy singing. In my ministry as a priest, I have served parishes in the Albany Diocese since 1983, most recently Delhi and Hobart. I retired in 2019 with the hope that I would be able to serve as a minister of music for worship, and now I am privileged to serve in that capacity at Saint George's.

I have been married to Stephanie since 1999, and we have four children, three grown (Daniel, Anna, and Danielle), a son who's a home-schooled high school senior, Matthias, and four grandchildren. My highest priority in retirement is spending quality time with my family, being present to them as we enjoy praying, learning and playing together. One of the great joys Stephanie and I share is making music together, and Stephanie is excited to be a part of the Praise Band.

Stephanie, Matthias and I look forward to getting to know the people of Saint George's, and I hope to see some of you at the Saturday service as we offer praise and glory to God with music. Please keep us in prayer in the days ahead!



**Stephanie, Fr. Darius,  
and Matthias**

## **Bright Spots**

*From Fran Gordon*



Most of the year 2020 has been challenging to say the least! There have been physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges that have caused us all to make significant changes in the way we think and the way we live our lives. We certainly can't deny the sadness and loss that we, as a church community, have experienced. From the suspension of ministries like St. George's School, to the inability to gather for hospitality, to changes in the way we worship, we are striving to adapt as the dark cloud of the pandemic impacts our lives.

However, through this continued adaptation, and through a continued commitment to our mission at St. George's, there have been many "bright spots" that have emerged throughout this pandemic year. Bright spots are worth looking for. They give us hope and can show us successful efforts that are worth emulating. Bright spots help us to recognize what is working so we can ask ourselves, "How can we do more of this?" In times of change, it is important to look at the bright spots and use them as a positive tool for embracing the future. Bright spots can be like beacons pointing us in a direction we may want to go—even when the pandemic is long past.

Our mission statement guides us on our faith journey. It reads: ***St George's is a community of disciples joyfully reaching out in love to nurture, teach and heal in Jesus' name.*** Here are just a few examples of bright spots from this past year as we have continued our journey, living more fully into our mission and striving to be the people God has created us to be:

- Community of Hope has engaged in pastoral outreach calls to parishioners, checking on their welfare, multiple times in multiple ways. They have found COVID safe ways to help parishioners in need by shopping for groceries, and by bringing them prayer shawls, meals, birthday cakes and cards. At Christmas, volunteers baked about 25 dozen cookies that Fr. Tom and Deacon Maureen delivered to shut-ins during their home visits. Throughout all of this, parishioners thanked COHI for sending encouraging prayers and words of hope.
- Adult Christian Formation programs have shown a steady, strong, and growing commitment from parishioners. Programs like the Sunday TRs, Women's Bible Study, EfM, Men's On-line Bible Study, Saturday Evening Adult Bible Study, and Boundaries, to name just a few, are bright spots, enabling us to dig deeper into the meaning of

## **Bright Spots, cont'd**

scripture and its relevance in our lives today. We are successfully offering these programs both virtually and in person.

- Bright spots among our Christian Formation offerings are our programs for children and youth. We continue to offer Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, and our new youth Christian formation program, Storymakers, is being offered as a virtual and in-person experience. These programs are being offered on Saturday, after the 4:30 service, with all safety precautions in place.
- St. George's is blessed to have the technology to offer many programs and worship services to parishioners and visitors in the safety of their own home as well as on-site. Teams of parishioners are now trained to work the power point slides used during worship. Others are working to prepare and edit slides for various liturgies and liturgical seasons, as well as for the music chosen for each service. During these challenging times, technology has enabled more people to stay connected to St. George's when being on-site is not possible. Recognizing this bright spot, we see limitless possibilities for continuing to incorporate technology as we look to the future.
- Office tasks, such as the preparation of bulletins for the on-line 7:30 service, producing the Dragon's Tale, ordering supplies, bill paying, and financial record-keeping, have continued seamlessly, as volunteers devised safe and effective ways to meet the needs of the parish at this time.
- Reflections on the Gospel are offered daily each weekday. This is an on-line offering that can keep the Word of God present in our lives each day during these difficult times.
- School classrooms in Randles wing are being repurposed and have provided needed space and technology for meetings and classes with safe social distancing.
- The use of Randles wing as a school has been a bright spot in St. George's history. We will move forward with reimagining the future of this space, discerning needs and opportunities, and will stay open to God's plan for us.
- NYS regulations are very strict and specific about

**Cont'd on p. 3**

## Bright, cont'd from p. 2

criterion that must be met in order for churches to offer in-person worship during the pandemic. It is a testament to the leadership of our parish that, as soon as it became apparent that we needed both short term and long-term plans for everyone's safety, those needs were addressed. We continue to adapt, modify and change as safety requirements and needs change for worship, cleaning, and disinfecting. Parishioners have stepped up to help and have been very cooperative, showing flexibility and respect for others, throughout these changes. That is a true bright spot!

- Throughout this pandemic year, conversations have continued on issues that face St. George's, the Albany Diocese, or the Episcopal Church at the national level. We have continued to use our covenants and norms to create a "safe space" where conversations can happen in thoughtful and respectful ways among those with differing opinions. These are true bright spots, as we learn ways to create a healthy, diverse, church environment where we learn how to love one another as God loves us.
- This year's Christmas pageant (dubbed the "Pandemic Pageant") was a bright spot for all! The shadow puppet portrayal of the Nativity story, supported by technology, allowed us to create ways for children to share their story in a unique, safe and socially distanced way. This bright spot in our youth program opens the door to future creative ways to approach learning and support our children on their faith journey.
- Mission and Outreach continues to support God's work in the wider community despite the challenges COVID restrictions pose. A partnership with West End Bagels to provide thank you gift cards to emergency care workers in our community, and the 70 plus Christmas bags collected for HAWS (Healing A Woman's Soul) shelters are just two examples of this.
- We have continued our ministries in the wider community with donations of new and used clothing to the Capital City Rescue Mission.
- Our ongoing collection of non-perishable food items for S.O.M.E. (So Others May Eat) is helping to meet the huge need generated by the impact of the pandemic on many families.
- We continue to glorify God through our music!

## Bright, cont'd

Music offerings have been adapted, out of necessity, to be a safe experience for all, but continue to be a bright spot at the 4:30 pm service on Saturday and the 9:00 am service on Sunday thanks to the creativity, inspiration, and commitment of many.

It would be impossible in this space to highlight all the bright spots throughout this past year! Certainly, many able parishioners have stepped up and worked tirelessly, enabling us to move forward with our mission as a community of disciples. They serve by completing office and administrative tasks, cleaning, repairing, and maintaining the facility (inside and out), wiring and technology installations, leadership in Christian formation programs for youth and adults, supporting music and worship, serving in ministries such as altar guild, as ushers and readers, or in ministering to those who are isolated or who need the help of prayer – the list goes on! These "bright spots" show where we have grown in our understanding of God's love, his expectations, and what that means to us as a Christian community. We can look to the future knowing our strengths and we can ask ourselves, "What is God calling us to do next?" Rest assured, St. George's will answer!

### Prayer Shawl Ministry

*From Cindy Hoetzer*

After months of knitting at home, the Prayer Shawl Ministry has decided to resume monthly meetings in the church library.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 12, 2021, from 1-3 PM in the church library.

Thank you to all who have continued knitting during these strange times. Thanks to you, the prayer shawl cabinet has not gone empty, but we continue to distribute shawls and have a continuous need for more. These shawls continue to bring comfort to all who receive them. If you plan to join us in January, please enter through the red door at the top of the ramp in back of the church. Also, please let Arlene or me know if you plan to attend so we can be sure to have enough space to social distance. Wearing masks will also be required.

Please see the sign out book in the Prayer Shawl cabinet to sign one out for a person in need.

*Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield.*

*Psalms 33:20 (NRSV)*





## **Mission and Outreach HAWS Project**

*From Jo Anne Robbins*

*“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV)

Many thanks to St. George’s parishioners who donated over 70 filled holiday gift bags for women and their children who suffer from domestic abuse. Your generosity during this difficult time for all of us was amazing! The bags were blessed during our Healing Service on December 16th. The Executive Director of HAWS (Healing a Woman’s Soul), Maggie Hasslacher, and Board Chair, Gretchen Coyner, attended our service and we helped them fill their van with the bright red gift bags. The bags were delivered before Christmas to area shelters in the Albany Episcopal Diocese being served by HAWS.

**Healing a Woman’s Soul, Inc. (HAWS)**, is a Christian Ministry that helps heal women who are victims of domestic violence. It is dedicated to fighting domestic violence – one person and one parish at a time. They believe that no wounding is beyond God’s power to heal. Their job (and ours) is to help make God’s healing power available to all who hurt.

### **Did you know?**

- Domestic Violence happens every 15 seconds in the United States.
- One in four women are victims of domestic violence in their lifetime.
- Domestic violence is the single major cause of injury to women.
- Only about 48% of all violent acts are reported to the police.
- Domestic violence leads to children becoming abusers or victims themselves.

Is it about physical violence? Not always. It’s about control in one or all of these ways: spiritual, physical, emotional, financial, sexual, isolation, intimidation and child abuse. Everyone should know about it and know how to get help. If you are in danger or need assistance, there is help available.

### **How to get help:**

Call 911 or 24-hour crisis line  
(800) 799-SAFE (7233)  
TTY (800) 787-3224

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*  
Philippians 4:13 (NRSV)



**Gretchen Coyner, Maggie Hasslacher, and Jo Anne Robbins with filled holiday gift bags ready for HAWS**



**Holiday gift bags ready for HAWS**

### **January Birthdays**

Kash Quintero, Sarah Cain,  
John Halvorsen,  
Randall Demler,  
Stacy Golden, Susan DiGrigoli, Dave Watson,  
Carol MacNaughton, Anne Bogdan,  
Ryan Prendergast, Janet Carroll, Diane Widenor,  
Lawrence DeGrigoli, Nicole Cain, Michael Josef,  
Randy Gray, Arthur Forrest, Heidi Brewer,  
Elizabeth Hook, Charles Day, Alexander Bailey,  
Emmett Heim, Anita Knorowski



### **January Anniversaries**

James & Kathryn Pellett  
Steve & Carole Hickey





## Evangelism

*From Tom Lessard*

What is Evangelism?

Steve Brown described evangelism as **“one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.”** He is a radio host (Key Life) and a former Professor of Theology at a seminary in Orlando. It is important to be ready to share **the hope that is in you** because you have a relationship with God and by sharing or demonstrating this trust in God, you are telling another sinner where they can find the bread of life. How is your faith timeline coming? (see Evangelism article on page 7 of the December Dragon’s Tale) One of the things that helped me with my faith timeline was to practice looking for what God was doing in my everyday life. As I got better at listening for that still small voice of the Holy Spirit, I remembered experiences I had. Don’t get discouraged. It can take some time. Try to find a friend or group you can practice with.



**Volunteers working on power point slides for our services**



**Christmas Altar**



**Some of the cookies baked by Community of Hope members and given to parish members by Father Tom and Deacon Maureen during clergy visits**



**Fran Gordon sanitizing the church**

## Transitioning...

*From Carol MacNaughton*

St. George's has been set up to have email accounts that use our Internet domain name - "StGeorgesCP.org". We will be slowly transitioning our various email accounts away from accounts such as "[stgeorgescp.announcements@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgescp.announcements@gmail.com)" to "[announcements@stgeorgescp.org](mailto:announcements@stgeorgescp.org)".

This change will provide more consistency in the naming of accounts associated with our church. Once the transition is complete it will be much more obvious what emails are coming from an account directly associated with the church.

We have tools to help ensure email are not lost in the transition. As the transition of an email account occurs we will update the congregation through a note in the announcements.





**View from St. George's at beginning of the pre-Christmas storm**



**View from St. George's at end of the pre-Christmas storm**



**View from the rectory**

## **Women's Bible Study**

*From Cindy Hoetzer*



**Beth Moore**

Beth Moore has released a brand new Bible study, called "Now That Faith Has Come: A Study of Galatians". Beth and her daughter Melissa have teamed up once again to co-write this one. Join us for a Women's Bible Study in this 6-week exploration of Paul's letter to the Galatians. It promises to be interesting and relevant to our present world. We will meet in a hybrid format (in person and on ZOOM) on Monday evenings beginning February 8th from 7:00 to 9:00 PM.

There is a Workbook which accompanies this study. The cost is \$20 and includes a bonus podcast with Beth Moore and her daughter Melissa. If you have the means and internet access, please purchase your copy on-line at:

<https://www.lproof.org/galatians>. Financial assistance is available by contacting Mtr.

Elizabeth. **To register, contact Cindy Hoetzer at [choetzer78@gmail.com](mailto:choetzer78@gmail.com).**

**Please indicate if you will be participating in person or via ZOOM and/or if you are in need of a workbook.**



*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 15:13 (NRSV)

## **Donating to St. George's**

As with many organizations, churches have been impacted financially by the COVID-19 pandemic. There are a several options for donating financially to St. George's including cash, check, credit card, debit card, or directly from your checking account. Checks can be mailed to St. George's Church. You may go to our website at [www.stgeorgescp.org](http://www.stgeorgescp.org) and click on the Info Center, then Donating to St. George's. You will find 2 tabs, Multiple Ways to Donate and Online Giving, where you will find options with directions for use. If you are attending one of our live worship services, you are welcome to place your donation in the offering plate. See page 8 for listings of in-person and virtual worship services.

## From the Rector

Advent is a season when we talk about the already and the “not yet.” The already we celebrated at Christmas with the birth of Jesus. The not yet is the Second Coming of Jesus. As we went through this past Advent, some interesting questions were raised (especially during our Sunday morning TR’s) about “the Second Coming of Jesus” and “Why it matters?” While these are fundamental questions, if comfortable and definitive answers were available, Jesus would not have said just before his Ascension,

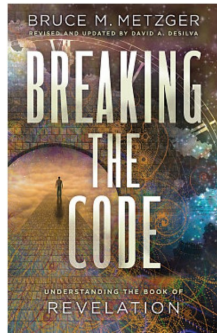
“It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. . . .” (Acts 1:7-11)

To help us search for answers to these types of questions, we have the Book of Revelation. *Revelation* is the last book in the New Testament, often referred to as the Apocalypse of John. The book provides what are believed to be the prophetic visions that Jesus gave to the Apostle John while he was in exile on the island of Patmos (a small Greek island in the Aegean Sea—off the western coast of what is now modern-day Turkey).

As anyone familiar with this book knows, The Book of Revelation can be quite challenging with its vivid imagery and “code” language. Fortunately, we have resources from people with Biblical authority like Bruce Metzger to provide helpful insights for the modern reader and provide some insight into the end times or the Second Coming of Jesus.

To follow-up on these questions, I invite you to discuss the revised and updated edition of the book: **BREAKING THE CODE: UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION** by Bruce Metzger and updated by David A. deSilva. The author of the revised edition offers the following that I believe captures an essential part of why this book is a vital resource to understand Jesus and the Christian faith as much today as it ever has been.

“When John sent [the Book of Revelation] to his congregations in first-century Roman Asia, it was his hope that Revelation would illumine the world, would help them see its landscape and its challenges more clearly in the light of the whole witness of Scripture and in the light of God’s unique and fundamental claim upon the allegiance and



## Rector, cont’d

obedience of all who live and move and have being. Revelation is not meant to be a book that obscures the spiritual significance of—and the spiritual dangers in—the choices that we make and the entanglements we must navigate on a daily basis.”

The class will meet for at least 6 Saturdays, from 5:30 p.m. just after our 4:30 Saturday service to 6:15 p.m. Classes will begin Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, and meet in the library. The class will be offered both for those who would like to attend in person and for those who would like to participate via a virtual zoom meeting. Details for the zoom link can be found on the church website.

This program offers to be beneficial for people with little or no Biblical knowledge and those with extensive experience as each will help enrich the conversation.

I will be facilitating the class utilizing the book *Breaking the Code*, the *Breaking the Code Study Guide*, and sharing some video clips of short presentations by the author. The book may be purchased from various online booksellers should you wish to read along with the class and for further study.

I hope to see you on Saturday afternoon.

Peace, Tom+



Studio and stage for children’s Christmas pageant

## **In Person Worship Services**

### **Sunday:**

**9:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II** with Organ, with COVID-19 precautions

### **Wednesday:**

**12:15 pm Weekly Healing Service with Eucharist**, with COVID-19 precautions

### **Saturday:**

**4:30 pm Holy Eucharist Rite II**, with Praise Band and with COVID-19 precautions

*Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord.* Psalm 31:24 (NRSV)

### **Please note:**

**Deadline** for weekly announcements is **Wednesday morning at 9 AM**. Send to [stgeorgescp.announcements@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgescp.announcements@gmail.com)

## **Weekly Virtual Worship Schedule**

### **Sunday:**

**7:30 am Morning Prayer Rite II** virtually through Zoom. Request room access via [stgeorgeofc@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgeofc@gmail.com) if you would like to join.

**9:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II** virtually. Access via [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqGV25ahrgM9i8RQEoBjJmo2Fro8yRj\\_x](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqGV25ahrgM9i8RQEoBjJmo2Fro8yRj_x)

**10:30 am Theological Reflection (TRs)** on the Gospel reading for that day virtually through Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87182104399?>

### **Weekdays:**

**Reflection on the Gospel** reading from the Daily Office lectionary via <https://www.facebook.com/StGeorgesCP/>

See the St. George's Online web page at [https://stgeorgescp.org/st\\_georges\\_online](https://stgeorgescp.org/st_georges_online) for up to date information for online worship services and classes.

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