



# *The Dragon's Tale*

**OCTOBER 2020**

*"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  
(518) 371 - 6351      [www.stgeorgescp.org](http://www.stgeorgescp.org)*



## Spiritual Balance Sheet

*by Jim Olney*



People who know me know that I like math and finances, and have worked in the financial services industry for over 30 years. I'm not an actuary or a CPA but understand the basic principles. Recently it occurred to me that some of these same financial principles apply to my faith. Let me explain. In my personal finances for years I have tracked a quarterly balance sheet. In simple terms, the balance sheet lists all of your assets (what you own) and all your liabilities (what you owe, also known as debt). The net worth is the difference of total assets minus total liabilities. Ideally your assets are growing faster through prudent savings and investments, while the amount you owe is controlled, decreasing or zero. It is possible to have a negative net worth where you owe more than you own and that was the case for me in my younger years.

Lately you've heard a lot about debt forgiveness. Many people have amassed large amounts of student loan debt and would love to have that debt canceled. And it does happen occasionally. The result of debt forgiveness is an immediate boost to your balance sheet. Your net worth is higher.

So what does this have to do with faith? Recently I started to think about my spiritual balance sheet. I'm not even sure there is such a thing, but bear with me. I asked myself, what does God view as my assets and what are my debts? If God were to judge my life and quantify it to a balance sheet, would it be a positive balance sheet? Let's first start with debt. Clearly sin is a form of debt. There is no way to pay off that debt as the wages of sin are death. This is why Jesus is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. If you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, He forgives your sins and all debt is erased. That's like having your house, car, credit card and student loan debt all paid off! So the spiritual balance sheet should have no liabilities if you keep Jesus in your heart.

That brings me to assets. How does God look at that side of your spiritual balance sheet? Many would point to works as a way to amass spiritual assets. As it says in the letter to James (2:18) "...someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith." The apostle Paul addresses the topic of works in the epistles or letters he wrote to the early churches. Surely works are part of the equation, but I begin with Jesus' two main commandments. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. And the second commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. This assessment is much more challenging. If you are really following these two commandments to the fullest extent, does it show and will others see it in you? Paul says it should show by the fruits of the Spirit. It is pretty easy to love the people that love you, but do you really love all of your neighbors? I know for me, this self-analysis is sobering.

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## Spiritual Balance Sheet, cont'd from p.1

Which brings me to St. George's Church. As the Treasurer I am challenged with managing the church finances. I closely monitor income and expenses and of course, the balance sheet. In April we applied for and were fortunate enough to be granted a PPP loan. That loan provided needed cash to both the church and the school to pay its payroll, pension and other obligations during a time of great financial uncertainty. Today we await the final word on the forgiveness on that loan. My prayer is that the SBA and government will be gracious and forgiving in that decision.

This pandemic has brought and continues to bring uncertainty in our lives. Sometimes it feels like we have lost control, but we can control our own spiritual balance sheet. Keep Jesus in your heart and pray for forgiveness. And strive to work on the first two commandments. Dedicating time and talent to St. George's is a great way to boost the spiritual balance sheet as we fulfill the mission of joyfully reaching out in love to nurture, teach and heal in Jesus' name.

A great deal of uncertainty still exists as the 2021 budget season for St. George's approaches. As with most things, this year's stewardship season is unique. We have no idea how pledge responses will be. We don't know how much our parish has been hit with the financial hardship. As you and your family consider your 2021 pledge to St. George's, I encourage you not only to think about your personal financial balance sheet but your spiritual balance sheet. As Paul said in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, (9:7) "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

My prayer and hope is that we will continue to pull together to survive these difficult times, or as our Sr. Warden, Jean Lauria likes to say, "survive to thrive," being faithful in what God has entrusted to our care for the well-being of his church and people at St. George's.



*In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

Acts 20:35 (ESV)



## A Silver Lining in Our Sorrow

The necessity due to COVID-19 to close the school brought sorrow to MANY people throughout the Clifton Park community. One joy that came out of that sorrow was being able to provide Beaver Cross Ministries with many supplies that they can use in programming. It helped ease the pain about the school to see the excitement on the faces of the Beaver Cross staff who came to pick up the supplies.

## Rooted

Rooted is a regional youth group for grades 6 to 12. Youth of many church backgrounds from across the region attend for games, worship and teaching. Rooted is a program of Beaver Cross Ministries and meets every Thursday 6:45-8:00pm at St. George's. For more information contact Daniel Hyde at [dhyde@ctkcenter](mailto:dhyde@ctkcenter).

**Youth Group**  
6TH-12TH GRADE

ST. GEORGE'S CLIFTON PARK | THURSDAY'S | 6:45-8:00  
ALL ARE WELCOME: ANY CHURCH & ANY BACKGROUND!  
MORE INFORMATION AT BEAVERCROSSMINISTRIES.ORG

## Mother's Musings



The COVID pandemic has and is taking its toll throughout the world as it will be remembered as a dark and challenging time in our history. That being said, God has a way and there are bright spots even as we respond to this tragic virus. BELIEVE ME!!!! The negatives do not NEARLY balance the scale with the positives but there have been a few.

One positive side effect of the COVID pandemic has been the “wake-up” call to rethink what we hold most dear and what really is essential in this life we have been blessed to live. This time has helped me realize how much I value and cherish relationships with my family, friends, extended family, neighbors, and people throughout the church. I have heard numerous stories from many of you having similar feelings and awareness.

Sadly, I know many are struggling with loss of jobs or reduced incomes. On the flip side, I also hear stories of people saving money while living a much less active lifestyle. It will be interesting to see how people reassess their priorities in terms of time, activities, and how and on what they spend their money. I know Fr. Tom and I have had and continue to have discussions on all of the above and what is most important for us now and going forward in a “post COVID-19 world” whenever and whatever that will be.

I pray every day that I will grow in my love for God and my relationship with Jesus as I strive to keep those relationships first in all things. This pandemic has given me a pause to see what that desire looks like when challenged and put to the test asking myself what I am willing to do about it.

Fr. Tom and I had the opportunity to continue receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion and worship together while services were suspended; however, it did not take long to realize how much we value and were missing the opportunity to worship God in community. We committed early on to do whatever we could to resume services at St. George's as soon as possible and have continued in that commitment to do all we can to help keep St. George's a safe place that can and will be open for our common worship. We have been blessed by support from Fr. Bill, Deacon Maureen, our Executive Committee, Vestry, and other leaders at St. George's in this effort. Because of these combined efforts we are able to offer in-person and online worship, Christian formation programming and a

## Mother's Musings, cont'd

virtual, interactive, early Morning Prayer service on Sunday mornings. We are now even able to provide a live worship opportunity for people to watch our Sunday morning service live from their car in the parking lot at the church and receive communion in their vehicles. These accommodations were not even a consideration in the pre-COVID world at St. George's.

Think about the people in your life that you love dearly. Many of us are blessed with a spouse, children, grandchildren, friends, neighbors, and parishioners whom we love dearly. Think about only one of those people for a minute. What do you know about him/her? I'm not talking about facts that many people know like demographics. I mean, do you really understand the person and have a relationship with that person that is unique between the two of you? As years go by, you learn more about the person and the relationship grows. And of course, the relationship becomes more precious to you.

This is what happens when we take our relationship with God seriously. Knowing God involves *knowing* God and not just the facts about God. Truly to *know* God is to be in relationship with him. We develop and nurture a relationship by learning about God and then by spending time in his Word, in prayer, and in worship, that relationship deepens and becomes more personal.

The authors of “Boundaries,” Henry Cloud and John Townsend write about things that are within our personal boundaries. The list they give of things within our boundaries are: feelings, attitudes and beliefs, behaviors, choices, values, limits, resources and gifts, thoughts, desires, and love. They write, “our minds and thoughts are important reflections of the image of God...Establishing boundaries in thinking involves three things: (1) we must own our own thoughts; (2) We must grow in knowledge and expand our minds. One area in which we need to grow is in the knowledge of God and his Word; and (3) we must clarify distorted thinking.

In order to love God more deeply, we need to continue growing in our relationship with God until the day we die. Valuing and prioritizing this relationship is how we come to know him more intimately and are able to deepen our relationship with him. Just as information about those whom we love gives us more insights and appreciation for who they are, the more we know God the more we

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## Mother's Musings Cont'd from p.3

understand who he is in our lives and how that informs our relationship with him.

Life is short. Trying times like this current pandemic help us realize how precious and short this life really is. One day, and only God knows what day, we will all come face to face with our Creator. Regardless of how much money, how many friendships, or how many possessions we have or to how many states or countries we have traveled, how many degrees we have earned, or how many "good" things we have done, the only thing that will matter is our relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ. As hard and maybe even as harsh as it may sound, in the end, nothing else will matter. All of these other things will only end up mattering in terms of how they have helped influence and inform our relationship with God, as they will be tangible witnesses to the priority we have placed on our relationship with God, through what he has entrusted to our care.

St. George's is committed to providing opportunities for all people, to deepen their relationship with God and one another as we continue to "joyfully reach out in love to nurture, teach, and heal in Jesus' name."

*Mother Elizabeth*

## Pastoral Care

*From Arlene Josef*



Although many things are not possible during the pandemic, Pastoral Care at St. George's has been active. Beginning in the middle of August, volunteers from the Community of Hope began a parish wide telephone outreach. It was heartwarming to know most people were doing well and appreciated our checking in with them.

There is a good supply of prayer shawls in the cupboard for anyone who would be comforted by receiving one. A prayer shawl can be obtained from any Community of Hope member.

Community of Hope members meet monthly in a virtual format for prayer and enrichment. In July, Kate Storms presented an inspiring program on her prayer life featuring the acronym ACTS – which stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication. In August, Deacon Maureen presented an interactive program on grief and coping with loss. The September meeting featured a program on Christian Hospitality by Arlene Josef. Members will share their faith journeys, facilitated by Deacon Maureen, during the October meeting.

## Pastoral Care, cont'd

As St. George's strives to be a welcoming, hospitable community, we share some aspects of hospitality from Arlene's program:

**HOSPITALITY IS A CALLING FOR ALL OF US:** There is room for sharing as both hosts and guests. You are either giving or receiving – building up the body of Christ or being built up.

**HOSPITALITY IS THE BENEDICTINE OPTION:** The Rule of Benedict, chapter 53, says hospitality is a form of worship. Benedict wants us to let down the barriers of our hearts and our souls so the God of the unexpected can come in. We are to show our presence and service. Benedictine hospitality is not merely bed and bath – it is home and family. In the middle ages, the monasteries became the Hospice system of Europe. Rich and poor were accepted as equals. Benedictine spirituality is the key to being a genuine support in the lives of others.

**HOSPITALITY REQUIRES UNITY IN THE CHURCH:** It nurtures and grows the family of God. Chronic loneliness should not be the norm in church.

**HOSPITALITY IS GOOD FOR THE GIVER:** It puts our lives and hearts on display. It compels us to open our heart to those around us.

**HOSPITALITY SETS A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

Let us pray for our church and its hospitality ministries, and cast the vision that we are all part of the team to welcome and care for our members and visitors. Even during the time of COVID-19, we can all write notes, send cards and make phone calls to let our church members know we care.

## October Birthdays

Karen Oliver, Scott Kinley,  
MJ Benson Jr., Chase Pellett,  
Maria Adamson,  
Ronald Podschelne, Chesley Wilson,  
Blaine Kaercher, Jim Olney, Millie Bryans,  
Imani Nelson, Doug Wood, Melissa Ehler,  
Addison Quail, Margaret Granger, Sam Granger,  
Yang Chen, Kevin Cain, Jay Millier,  
Ruth Slewinski, Kathy Wood, Cathy Fare,  
Rylee Tighe, Collette Syvertsen, Judy Drake,  
Elizabeth Moore, Cathie Nickerson, Alice Springer



## **A God Moment!**

*From Fran Gordon*

“I got to be DARKNESS!” were the first words out of 7 yr. old Sarah’s mouth when I chatted with her after Church School. “And it wasn’t easy,” she continued seriously. Sarah was referring to her first class in StoryMakers and the role playing that was helping to engage children in understanding the beginning of the Book of Genesis.

St. George’s new curriculum for children ages 7 and up is called StoryMakers. Through active and engaging learning experiences that involve lessons, storytelling, role playing and more, Sarah is being drawn into God’s story and what it means. She is starting on the journey to discover what God’s relationship is to her and to the world.

At the same time that StoryMakers, using verses from Genesis, was helping children explore what God’s love means to us, an adult Christian Formation class was meeting in the church Library and was looking at the same scriptural verses. The adult group was discussing ways we can interpret, and relate to, the same verses from Genesis.

A day or so after we both had participated in our “study” of the verses from Genesis, Sarah pointed out, “When God says ‘Let there be light’ he means let there be God’s light for everybody in the world.” We talked more about that and some of the different ways we can think about God’s light. It helped that I had attended the Adult Bible Study! I have a new appreciation for this type of multigenerational Christian formation experience. The possibilities for all of us to grow in our faith together, whether it’s with family, friends, or fellow parishioners, is truly exciting!

StoryMakers and the coordinating Adult Bible Study (all adults are welcome-not just parents of children in StoryMakers) is offered on Saturdays at 5:30 pm. Children can participate either in person or on-line. If you have a 3 to 7 yr old, ask about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd which is offered at the same time. Everyone is welcome to attend the 4:30 service prior to classes. More information is available on the website or from Fr. Bill Lytle.

### **Please note:**

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

## **Developing Our Partnership with the Capital City Rescue Mission**

*From Carol MacNaughton*

The Capital City Rescue Mission (CCRM) has multiple ways you can help the homeless, addicted, poor, and needy in our area. Last month we highlighted how from your own home you can be part of their educational programs to help men and women in recovery move forward in life.

One of the many impacts of COVID-19 on the Mission is it cannot hold its annual banquet. Instead, there will be an online event - in two parts. The program with speakers will be streamed on October 13th at 7pm. It will be a wonderful opportunity to hear testimonies from men whose lives have been changed through the Mission. The other part is a silent auction with a wide variety of items donated to the Mission to bid. Items include weekend getaways, golf packages, gift baskets, custom jewelry and more. The online auction will take place October 13-16, and the program will be streamed live on October 13th at 7pm. Proceeds will help men and women (and their children) struggling with homelessness & addiction to find freedom and new life. For more information on the banquet and silent auction go this web page: <https://capitalcityrescuemission.org/restoring-hope/>

Another way to help is to continue to donate new and used clothing for "Blessingdale's" - the Mission's clothing giveaway shop. The Mission gives away clean usable clothing free of charge to the less fortunate. The Mission will also take beat up/stained clothing to be baled and sold.



*But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.*

1 Chronicles 29:14 (ESV)

## Mission and Outreach

*From Jo Anne Robbins*



**Jonesville Helping Hands Food Pantry:** They are once again seeking donations of shelf-stable food and non-food items such as paper goods, personal hygiene products and cleaning supplies – basically any item available from a grocery retailer or distributor. It is especially important to help them restock their shelves each week. There is a huge need to support those in our community who are suffering because of job loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next time you go grocery shopping, pick up an extra item or two to drop in one of our donation carts. Our donation carts are located in the front entrance just inside our red front doors and in the side entrance from the parking lot. Donations are picked up weekly and delivered to the food pantry by Pam Sabourin or Susan Mehringer.

Checks to support this ministry are also appreciated. Make your check payable to St. George's Church with S.O.M.E. on the memo line.

**Loaves and Fishes:** We are Jesus' disciples reaching out in love to heal in Jesus' name. One way we do that is by serving as the lead church at the St. Francis Mission in Arbor Hill the fourth Saturday each month. We are always looking for volunteers. Come try it out! We start food preparation at 10:00am and finish around 1:30pm. Volunteers wear masks, gloves and maintain appropriate social distancing during meal preparation. The meal is prepared, packed in "To Go" containers and provided to people who live in food insecure families. Parishioners including teens (accompanied by an adult) are invited to volunteer. Volunteers wishing to participate and to car pool from St. George's should contact Kathryn Pellett at: [kathrynpellett@yahoo.com](mailto:kathrynpellett@yahoo.com) or by text to 518-429-9334.

**Blessings in a Bag Phase II:** St. George's volunteers continue to pick up food weekly from West End Bagels and Friehofers. The bagel donations are picked up on Friday and Saturday afternoon, packed in ziplock bags and delivered every Monday to Captain. The Friehofer donations are taken weekly to St. Francis Mission in Arbor Hill, our Diocesan Mission, to contribute to their food pantry and feeding ministry. We are always looking for volunteers to serve as subs when one of our volunteers has a conflict. To volunteer for this program or for additional information, please contact Jo Anne Robbins at [cliftonparkjosie@gmail.com](mailto:cliftonparkjosie@gmail.com) or 518-698-0548.

## **Mission and Outreach, cont'd**

**Lion's Club International:** Our partnership helps people in need in three areas: vision, hearing and communications. We accept eyeglasses, hearing aids and cell phones. Glasses should be in a protective case and hearing aids in a zipped baggie. Mobile phones may also be donated. Please be sure to remove the SIM card from your donated phone. Donations should be placed in the bright green collection box located on the table as you enter St. George's through our red front doors.

## October Anniversaries

Cindy Hoetzer & Kevin Volk  
Bruce & Heidi Bonacquist  
Tyler & Brandi Carson  
Jeff & Teresa Granger  
Tom & Anne Bena  
John & Lisa O'Brien  
David & Kristina Abramo  
Christopher & Karen Hunt



## 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.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

*From Cindy Hoetzer*

Prayer Shawl Knitting, like other group gatherings, is suspended for the time being. Please keep knitting and crocheting at home. The comfort that these shawls, blessed at the altar, bring is more poignant now than ever considering these difficult times. Stay tuned for updates about when we can gather as a group again.



## St. George's First Responders Outreach

*From Jo Anne Robbins*

*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. (Romans 12:10 ESV)*

St. George's Outreach Committee spent many hours in August creating a plan to honor our Clifton Park and Halfmoon First responders in partnership with West End Bagels. With 9/11 ahead, we wanted to reach out in love and say thank you to these important women and men who provide such valuable service to all of us and who are rarely thanked for their contributions to our community.

Beginning September 7th, members of our committee, accompanied by one of our priests, personally visited troop meetings, where we personally thanked each troop for all they do for our community. As a token of thanks, we provided a ticket for coffee and a bagel to each first responder (about 500 volunteers and employees in all) who make up Clifton Park, Halfmoon-Waterford, Rexford, Vischer Ferry, and Jonesville Fire Departments; Saratoga County sheriffs; New York State Police Troop G; and Clifton Park-Halfmoon Ambulance Corp. Tad Knight, Fr. Bill Lytle, Mtr. Elizabeth, Jo Anne Robbins, Tom Lessard, Fr. Tom and Misty Quail were warmly welcomed and given the opportunity to offer a special prayer for our first responders' continued safety and welfare.

Thanks to generous donations from parishioners and money provided in our budget, we were able to find the funds to cover much of the cost of this outreach. Should you wish to add to these funds, donations may be made on St. George's website using PayPal or by check made payable to St. George's Church with First Responders on the memo line.

Sgt. Burgos, of the NYS Police, sent an email to "thank St. George's for this incredible gesture." He also said that "it is music to our ears to hear and see the support we still have amongst members of our community."

On 9/11, Misty and Fr. Tom had a great visit at West End Bagel, our generous partners in this venture. As they walked in, a supervisor with Clifton Park-Halfmoon EMS pulled up in a marked Suburban and in uniform and presented one of our 'thank you' certificates. Misty told him who we were and he said that they all greatly appreciated the thank you and our gesture.

We recently received this thank you note that puts

## **First Responders, cont'd**

this outreach in perspective.

*Dear Fr. Tom,*

*I wanted to reach out and thank you, Tom and the St. George's Congregation for your thoughtful gift and prayers. Many residents don't know that we are an all-volunteer fire department. There is a significant time commitment for training and responding to calls. Our work is often physically and mentally challenging as well.*

*God blesses us all with different talents and passions, and we take seriously the call to serve our neighbors in this special ministry. Your gesture of kindness and thanks made our day. May God bless you all in your service to God and neighbor.*

*With appreciation,*

*Bob Daly, Clifton Park Halfmoon Fire Shield # 269*



## 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



*In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."* Acts 20:35 (ESV)

**St. George's Episcopal Church**

**912 Route 146**

**Clifton Park, NY 12065**

## 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.