



Counting Our Blessings

Giving in a Time of COVID

NARRATIVE BUDGET 2021

We Have Learned a Lot

*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you,
I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

-Isaiah 41:10

We have learned a lot during Covid-19. More importantly, we have been reminded of core truths that our faith has always sought to teach us.

We have learned that we don't and can't live just for ourselves.

That the health of one of us is connected to the health of all of us.

That although our collective physical health has been the dominant conversation now for many months, we need now, more than ever, to be attentive to how we are also feeding our souls, connecting emotionally with others, and expressing our care and love and compassion for one another in new ways.

That the church isn't the building. It's us. And also, even when the world turns upside down, our church's physical presence at 83 Church Street is a hub of prayer and nourishment for people far and wide.

We have learned to count our blessings. We have learned that we are, in fact, richly blessed, and that we have a holy responsibility to make sure that our blessings are being shared as generously and faithfully as possible.

As the world went into lockdown, St. George's didn't miss even one day of serving breakfast to those who need a meal. Our STEP Centre adapted its programming so that counsel and sanctuary could continue to be offered to at-risk youth in our city. We were able to sustain our life of prayer and worship by continuing and expanding our livestream offerings, by moving our study groups online, by mobilizing our Dialing Disciples networks, and by prayerfully engaging with community partners in providing care for those who need it most.

As so many organizations and institutions face serious questions about their future, and as our human family looks forward to 2021 with so many questions and uncertainties, we can see the life, ministry, offering and future of St. George's becoming more clear, more vital, and more alive than ever. We know that, whatever this next year brings, we will be continuing to creatively offer our ministries of feeding and compassion and prayer and praise far and wide. And we know that God is calling us in some exciting new directions in response to the needs we now more clearly see—in ourselves, and in the world around us.

We invite you to join with us in what we are learning and how we are growing. This Narrative Budget, **Counting our Blessings**, gives more detail about the ministry that has taken place in 2020, even in such tumultuous circumstances as this year has brought. It also looks forward with hope to the new directions we discern God is calling us.

We have learned a lot this year: about who we are, what is really important, and how greatly God continues to bless us. By the grace of God, and through the generosity of this whole community, we now look forward.

Yours in Christ,

Reverend Martha.



Lockdown and an Inspiring Generosity



“Our steps are made firm by the LORD, who delights in us.” (Psalm 37:23)

Year after year, our Narrative Budget has been filled with stories of how our ministry at St. George’s has been growing, new people have been connecting, and new dreams are on the horizon for our work together.

2020 has not gone the way any of us expected. On Sunday March 15th lockdown in our churches went into effect. We met for worship in an empty sanctuary with the livestream camera as the sudden lifeline of our community’s fellowship and prayer. As we look forward to 2021, so much remains in question about how this pandemic will play out and what it will mean for our ability to physically be together in the life of our church.

We have called this year’s Narrative Budget Counting Our Blessings. Amazingly, even with such unprecedented interruptions to the fabric of our lives, we have seen ministries develop and expand in our church, and we have seen generosity flourish in inspiring and hope-filled ways. We have so much that we don’t know. But as God’s goodness continues to be revealed to us, we feel confident in faithfully embracing the work God has for us.

-St. George’s Joyful Giving Committee



Teach the faith to your children, when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 11:9)

Children and Youth

We have been blessed for many years now in seeing our children and youth programs growing. Through the faithfulness and creativity of Tanya and her team, Youth Group has been able to continue, now meeting on a weekly basis rather than monthly. Sunday School lessons and Vacation Bible School have been offered online. We have discovered that our young people love their church and value their friendships very much. Like all of us, they hope that 2021 will allow for them to gather in person again.

Growing in Faith: Inclusion & Participation

Most of us have had the luxury of living in a time and place when we have been able to blissfully take for granted the freedom to practice religion as we choose.

As it suddenly became unsafe to gather for worship, participate in sermon series, join in Bible studies, and share reflections on our walk of faith with others in St. George's variety of study opportunities, "take for granted" is an attitude that no longer seems possible. While our online worship has taken off, reached new people, and provided a backbone of connection for many of us, we also know that there are many in our community who face barriers in being able to access computers and reliable wi-fi. While we have been able to continue to meet, pray, deliberate and learn in our online offerings, we are also keenly aware of how much we miss in not being able to be together in person.

If we know how much our faith means to us *then*:

- our online offerings need to be continued and strengthened, because for many, this allows them to access and participate in church when they otherwise might not be able.
- we need to be willing to consider how people of all ages, stages, abilities and backgrounds can connect too.

A group in our church has now formed around the work of INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION. In a time when all of us have had barriers to being able to participate in the way we would like, surely now we are being called to be more intentional about removing barriers so ALL can participate.

"Today some ladies from the prayer shawl ministry at St George's dropped off one of the most beautiful shawls I've ever seen. This beautiful gift warmed my heart and made my day. This is what Church is all about-- lending a hand to anyone who might need it. I'm truly proud to be a part of St George's and the church family we have there."



Sharing the Faith that is In Us

We were able to continue to come in to the church sanctuary to offer our livestream worship because the nurture of religious faith was deemed an Essential Service. For so many of us, it is in having our ability to gather and to worship taken away that makes us realize just how much our faith means to us. Even more importantly, it is in having our lives so dramatically altered that we turn our eyes again to God, looking for God's goodness, mercy and guidance to bless and lead us.

Even in lockdown, we have found important ways of making sure that what is essential for us gets shared with others.

-Sharing our faith must always include the "corporal acts of mercy." We have been able to continue, without interruption, the ministry of our Breakfast Program and STEP Centre, and we have been able to expand our feeding programs during this difficult time to include regular take-out supper offerings.

-Our livestream services found and reached a wide audience, with a number of people expressing the reality that this online offering has allowed them a way back to the faith of the church.



"Since the passing of my wife, I find it very difficult to effectively take care of my old, four-legged best buddy and manage to get to the Sunday service for 10 AM. In a sense, Covid-19 has been a blessing in that I can now fully participate in the two live-streamed services each week - Sunday at 9 AM and Wednesday at 7 PM. I have come to enjoy this immensely!"

-Robert, reflecting on reconnecting through Livestream

A New Song

Sing a new song unto the Lord! – Psalm 96

Music plays a huge role in how we love and pray to God. We have seen tremendous change in our Music Program at St. George's this year, not just because of the departure of our beloved leaders John Butler and Mari Shantz, but also because congregational singing has had to be suspended in public worship because of COVID-19!

We are so grateful for John's almost three decades of service as Choir Master and Organist. And we have been so blessed by the development of our Youth Music program and Advent Café musical roster under Mari's leadership.

Our plan, going forward under the leadership of Brad Barnham, is to build on this solid foundation, and to develop:

- a strong relationship between our Senior Choir and our George Express Youth Choir
- to invite new people into participating in our music, and to see St. George's reputation for musical excellence flourish
- to continue to explore new and creative ways of expressing our faith through music, even if we can't sing our favourite hymns together until the threat of Covid has passed.



A Teaching Parish

*Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
the breaking of bread and the prayers?
-Baptismal Covenant*

Our leadership has a strong sense of being called to become a Teaching Parish of the Diocese. St. George's has a long tradition of equipping new priests for ministry, and we believe we have a lot to offer in returning to this tradition. With the right financial resources in place, we believe that we can offer 2-3 year placements for newly ordained leaders, and that having them learn with us at St. George's will not just be a blessing to us, but will also be an essential offering to the future of the whole church.



TO THE GLORY OF
THANKS FOR
RITA AND BOB WELCH

GOD WITH GRATEFUL
MANY BLESSINGS,
AND FAMILY 1971.

Developing Diaconal Ministry

*We are pilgrims on a journey, fellow travelers on the road;
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.
-Sister, Let Me Be Your Servant*

St. George's is well known in the heart of downtown St. Catharines for our ministry to the vulnerable. We have a long and well-established history of care to the community, and it is one of the central reasons we were voted St. Catharines' Favourite Place of Worship in 2019, as well as one of the consistent reasons I hear newcomers name in what brings them to St. George's. Our Outreach is core to who we are!

Now we are discerning how we might lift up that servant ministry in a new way. Anita, MJ and Lorenzo are three people in St. George's discerning a diaconal calling in the church. The ministry of the deacon is to lift up, make visible, and empower the church's ministry of service in and to the world, especially with those who are most vulnerable. Lorenzo is already ordained a deacon and is discerning how he might be now called to serve with us at St. George's. Anita and MJ have blessed St. George's with their ministry of compassion and service now for a number of years. We look forward to how God is at work through these three people; we look forward to how the outreach and compassion of our whole community will be strengthened and equipped through the development of their ministry.



The Home for Hope Building Fund

“Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord!”

-Psalm 134



We know, now more than ever, that the church is not a building.

However, we also know very clearly that *our* building, located in the heart of our city, has been a big part of how we receive and share God's love.

Like all buildings, ours needs ongoing maintenance to remain safe, serviceable and beautiful. We continue to ask people to consider a gift to our longer-term financial support of our big upcoming maintenance projects:

- The painting of all exterior woodwork (2021-22) at an expected cost of approximately \$75,000 (cost includes scaffolding for the project).
- The replacing of the eavestroughs on the church building (2021-22) at an expected cost of \$75-\$100,000.
- The removal and replacement of all nine heating and cooling units throughout the church buildings (2023 – 2024) at an expected cost of approximately \$150,000.

Please prayerfully consider making an *additional* pledge this year to the Building Fund. If all church families would pledge the equivalent of **one** year's offerings over the next **five** years to this fund, we would be able to arrange the structural work that is needed to preserve our Home for Hope. One-time over-and-above gifts are also most welcome!



A Legacy Gift: Looking to the Future

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. (1 Timothy 6:18-19)

It feels like things have been so uncertain for so long, and yet we are extraordinarily heartened by the generosity of this time that makes it so clear that we are committed to the present AND the future of our church.

Our Finance Committee has identified Four Pillars for St. George's future: Leadership, Outreach, Music and Community and has estimated the need to add approximately \$2.5 million to our endowments for coming years. This will provide for our future generations, for the maintenance and care of this building, which is such an exquisite and welcoming venue for worship, teaching, healing, nourishing and sheltering, and for St. George's vital ministry in the heart of St. Catharines. We are so grateful to report that almost \$600,000 has already been received toward these pillars.

Please prayerfully consider the Legacy Giving booklet for more details. (Available through our office and online). You can then make an appointment through our office to discuss how you can plan to make your gift for our church's future.

Counting our Blessings (& Making a Plan to Share Them!)

“Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed!” (Proverbs 11:25)

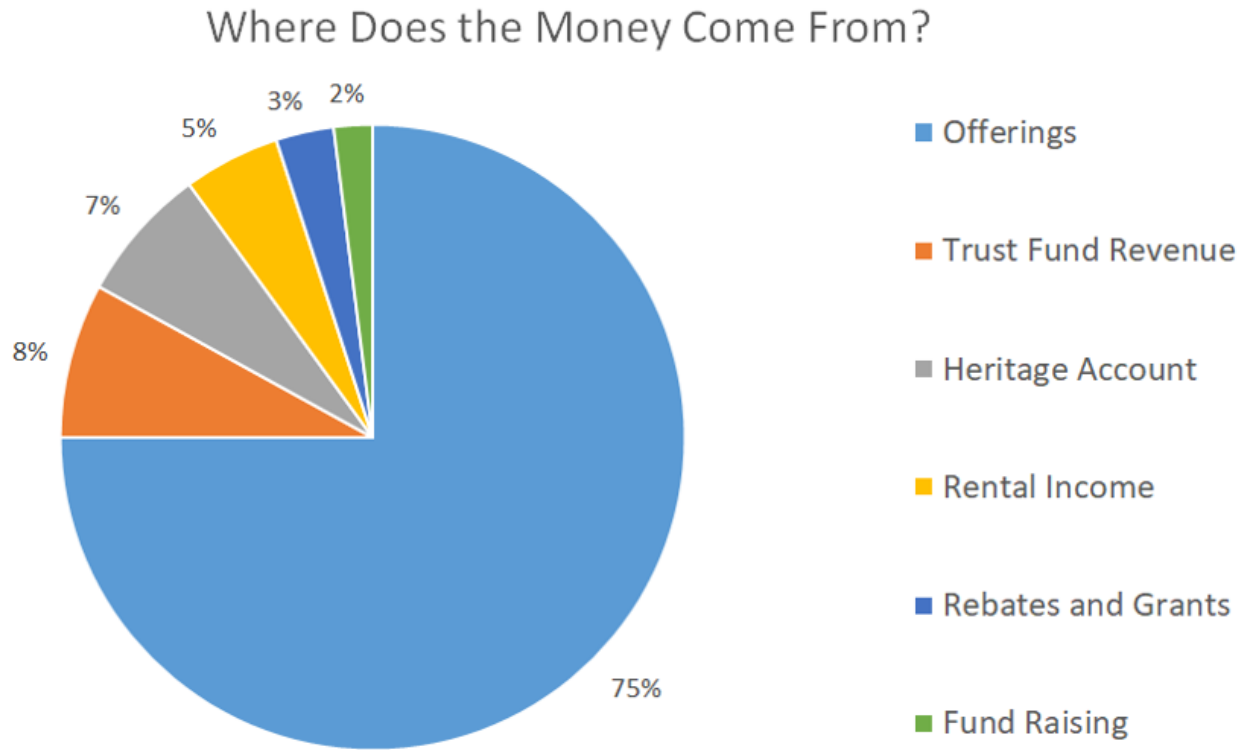
Your financial picture may have changed in the last year. We understand and appreciate the uncertain times in which we live. But we also know in a new way how important it is for us to take stock of what we have so that everyone might have what they need.

Every household is asked to:

- Assess their annual income.
- Decide what percentage of that income God is asking them to give to the church and its ministries.
- The Biblical tithe is 10%; many households find that giving 5% of their money to the life of the church is a realistic goal.
- Whatever percentage you choose, be faithful in giving. Our pre-authorized giving program allows your gift to come out of your bank account automatically once a month.
- St. George's and all who are blessed by its ministries are glad for your generosity and pray that your offering brings you joy!



Where Does the Money Come From?



At St. George's, we are blessed with sources of income that complement our regular offerings. However, our endowments have restrictions on how they may be used and would be depleted rapidly if we relied upon them to support our current ministry.

We as a church family must provide hope for today and for future generations by being faithful in supporting our ministry through our own financial gifts.

Explanation of Terms

St. George's is blessed with several different funds which help to finance our ministry. Occasionally, this creates some confusion, as parishioners question which money may be accessed for certain purposes. The guide below explains our primary giving streams:

Foundation Fund – Established in 2008, the principal held in this trust fund cannot be spent. Income generated by this principal is intended to fund new ministry initiatives which develop and expand the faith offering of St. George's.

Endowment Fund – These are the legacy gifts with which former generations of St. George's parishioners have blessed us. Please see the Legacy Giving booklet included in the Relay Package for information on planning your own perpetual gift.

Heritage Fund – This money is used for two main purposes:

As a line of credit to St. George's, covering expenses when income is reduced and being replenished when income is abundant. It is our goal as a congregation to reduce our use of the Heritage Fund for regular operations, as this is not a sustainable long-term practice.

As part of our annual operational budget to pay for building maintenance projects.

Offerings – This is the most important portion of the St. George's budget, and is the direct reflection of the priorities, health and commitment of our congregation. Regular, proportional gifts, given either through pre-authorized payments or in offering envelopes, sustain our church community.

Fundraising – Activities such as the Christmas Bazaar, Golf Day, Trivia Night and the Spring Frolic, which generate additional revenue for the church.

A Glimpse into This Year's Joyful Giving Package

Joyful Giving Relay

The Instructions

***Please leave this sheet in the package**

1. Remove the envelope with your name and read the contents.
(A Narrative Budget is provided for your review. Please leave it in the package for the next household)
2. Complete the enclose Intention Form
3. Place the completed Intention Form into the return envelope and seal it
4. Place the sealed envelope back into the package OR place it on the collection plate before **November 19th**
5. Deliver the package to the next household on the list
 - a. Make sure to hand the package directly to the home owner (Do not leave in mailbox!)
 - b. If you are unable to contact the next household within 24 hours, move to the next name on the list
 - c. Once the package has been handed off, **inform your Route Manager**
6. If you are unable to deliver the package yourself, inform your Route Manager so they can move it forward
7. If you are the final household, let your Route Manager know so they can pick up the package
8. If you have questions, call your Route Manager:
 - a. Name: _____
 - b. Number: _____

St. George's Stewardship Intention – Time & Talent

Name(s): _____ Telephone: (H) _____
 E-Mail: _____ (mobile) _____

YES, in the name of Jesus Christ and to the Glory of God, We intend to support the ministries and programs of St. George's Church in 2018:

Groups, Time & Talent: ☐ No Change (from last year)

If you are interested in reaching information about or currently involved in any of the following areas, please insert your name in the appropriate column and the coordinator will contact you. For more information see the Directory of the Diocese on the back.

Some of the areas may require some training and in addition some areas may require a police check.

Groups & Activities	Currently Serving	Wish Information	Worship Opportunities	Currently Serving	Wish Information
Advent Devotion			Liturgy Minister		
Adult Forum			Server		
Altar Guild			Communications/Christian Music		
Prayer Board			Scripture Reader		
Graves Light			Intercessor		
Choir			Greeter		
Altar W. Devotion			Advent Catechism - Hospitality		
Advent Vigil			Advent Catechism - Rosary		
Stewardship			Advent Catechism - Music		
Prayers Group			Advent Catechism - Gospel Linker		
Prayers Vigil			Advent Catechism - Proclamation		
Practical Faith			During the year		
Social Service			After school		
College Hour			Evening Youth		
Community Outreach			Adolescents		
Parish Bookstore			Spiritual Care		
Community Stewardship Program			Home on Services Group		
Prayers in Mass			Advent Christmas Carol		
Parishhood 1990			Young Adults		
Book Discussion			Adult Education		
Singing Praise			Parish Bible Study		
Gifts of Service - Community Care					
Prayers in Mass - Rosary					
Confirmation			Children & Youth Activities		
Choir Help			Prayer Service		
Confirmation			Orange Express Group		
Choir Help			Children's Activities		
Book Study Group			Prayer Service		
Stewardship Committee			Prayer Service		

Is there an additional group or activity which would interest you? _____

You may return your Stewardship Intention Form in the sealed envelope by placing it in the package, returning it by mail, or placing it in the offering plate at worship by November 19, 2018.

St. George's Stewardship Intention

Name(s): _____ Telephone: (h) _____
Address: _____ (mobile) _____

Postal Code: _____
E-mail: _____

My/Our Gift of Money: I/we intend to financially support the ministries and programs of St. George's Church in 2019. My/our Gift for 2019 will be \$ _____ ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Yearly
I/we will pledge an additional \$ _____ over _____ years to the Building Fund.

☐ Continue with Preauthorized Giving (PAG) ☐ Start Preauthorized Giving (PAG) (recommended)
☐ Continue with envelopes ☐ Would like envelopes

Coming Soon to Your Mailbox!

- Please read and follow the instruction sheet.
- Prayerfully consider your gifts of Time and Talent.
- Prayerfully consider your financial gifts.
- Return your completed forms to the church either by mailing it back to the church in the envelope provided or by placing it on the offering plate.

NEW 





"I have never been in the midst of people who serve God in the most generous, genuine loving way of those here in the St. George's parish. You are all an absolute inspiration to me and are the reason that I have a life-long vision to be right here at home within this most blessed church.

Thank you all so much for being a part of my life and for showing me through your faithfulness and service how to be the best representation of Jesus' love that I can be."

-Anita

