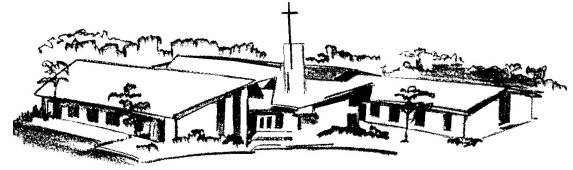


The Witness

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Troy, MI 48098

June/ July 2019

A Message from the Pulpit



Dear Family,

What an incredibly warm and wonderful welcome you have given me! It's difficult to find words that can properly express my appreciation and gratitude for the lovely reception given in my honor on June 2. It was fantastic and I thank you!

Little did I expect when I first supplied here last summer that I would eventually become your priest. As some of you know, my son and daughter-in-law married here in 1996 and my oldest granddaughter was baptized here in 1999, so walking into this church last summer did put me in familiar surroundings.

As your priest, I'm looking to the future and seeing a church filled with vitality and love. We all have our special gifts from God and those gifts will empower us to move into the future with confidence and determination while we are guided by the Holy Spirit. Working together in harmony, we can accomplish many good things and ensure our legacy. I believe our time together will be exciting and rewarding as we move forward into new chapters in the life of St. Stephen's.



My office door is always open so please feel free to stop in and say "hi." I welcome the opportunity to visit with my new family!

Blessings to all!

Mother Sharon

Senior Warden Message

Hello Family!!

Is it Summer yet? Usually by now I have some resemblance of a tan going on so as not to blind people from the glare of my legs when wearing shorts!

As I write this contribution to the Witness, the church is buzzing with activity. Hospitality is putting the final touches on the Parish Picnic while YACYM puts the final touches on the Youth Sunday Service and upcoming mission trip. Buildings and Grounds is getting the summer spruce up done, SOS is already at work preparing for our September 22nd hosting, Strategic Planning has completed the last of the Holy Conversations, the office is transitioning to summer hours and Oh YES – Rev. Sharon is settling into her new role as Priest.

How blessed are we!! The Holy Spirit is definitely at work at St. Stephen's and one can easily see God has plans for our Church Family.

Many are looking forward to working in the yard, going on vacation, or just relaxing a little more while reading a good book in the cool summer breeze. We will be engulfed in the hustle and bustle of summer activities --- Graduations, Weddings, Bridal or Baby Showers, celebrating Independence Day, completing those long put off summer projects or just enjoying a relaxing round of golf. Yet let us remember... to make time... to come together as a family... to worship and thank God for all the many blessings we enjoy as we continue to love and support one and another.

I'll get working on that tan.

Blessings & Much Love

Scott, Sr. Warden

An Interview with Rev. Sharon Voelker

On June 4th we welcomed the Rev. Sharon Voelker as our Priest-in-Residence to St. Stephens. Sharon and I talked this week about her journey to the priesthood and the decision to postpone full-time retirement a little longer to join us. Lucky us!



When Sharon and her late husband Ray lived in Phoenix, they spoke about moving back to Michigan to retire with their children nearby. After Ray passed away Sharon made the move, and while driving across the country, she and the Holy Spirit had a conversation. The Holy Spirit thought Sharon should become a priest and Sharon thought the idea was preposterous. Moving into her new home, reconnecting with friends and frequently seeing her grandchildren was what she planned. But it is difficult to deny the voice. She spoke to her priest. In Saginaw. He answered "I'm not surprised."

A few months later she found herself in an intense three-year program instituted by the Diocese of Eastern Michigan in conjunction with the Seminary of the Southwest. Our program was the Coppage Gordon School for Ministry, the forerunner of the present Academy for Vocational Leadership, led by the

dioceses of Eastern Michigan, Michigan, and Western Michigan.

Her first placement as a Transitional Deacon was with St. John's, Saginaw. She was ordained priest at St. Albans on April 20, 2012 by the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. She remained there until she retired in 2017.

Michigan always felt like home base. Her son and his family live in Shelby Township and her daughter and her family are in Hemlock, west of Saginaw. She has six beautiful grandchildren who live nearby. When asked to help at St. Stephens as a supply priest it felt comfortable. "My son and daughter-in-law were married at St. Stephens. My granddaughter was baptized here. There was a familiarity to St. Stephens. Good memories." She also said, "There is a good vibe. The people, the love, the feeling of family. It is a very strong vibe." She kept an open mind when approached about being Priest-in-Residence and the Holy Spirit said "Take it."

I asked Sharon what is the greatest reward in being a priest and she said pastoral care, being able to help when someone needs it. "Holding someone's hand, listening to someone's troubles. "I can't fix anything. But I can listen and often that's what is needed."

Sharon hopes her presence here will develop a good strong foundation and a positive direction as we go forward. She urges us to take our time with the process. It is God's process. She closed the interview by saying she is pleased to be with us. We are very pleased to have her.

Karol Sprague

Holy Conversations

We are off to a great start, having held 5 well-attended sessions with over 60 attendees. The purpose of the Conversations was to find out how folks feel about St. Stephen's, what might make us even better, and how we might attract more younger members.

Attendees were a good cross-section of our core membership. Through very candid conversations we heard that St. Stephen's is a vital part of your lives. You strongly desire to reverse our downward membership trend; you know doing so will not be easy and will require some significant changes. You are creative as evidenced by the many ideas generated, and you are willing to help us change for the better as God asks of us.

We are now digesting your input, and assessing who to speak with next in order to get the broadest input. We will be doing some one-on-one or small group sessions to fill gaps in our coverage, and explore some ideas a bit deeper. Targeted will be young adults, kids, Rev. Sharon, homebound, and perhaps some folks that left the church. Also, folks that couldn't make it to a Conversation that wish to share their thoughts should let us know so we can talk. And, if you attended a session and have new ideas, let us know. It will never be too late for good ideas. [Us = Dave Stein, Pat Wojas and Don Ingersoll]

Several suggested improvements were offered that could be done now. We will be passing these through the Vestry to those who can evaluate and address them. Some opportunities are in the areas of communication, pastoral care, improving the sound in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, managing the duration of "The Peace," and increasing social activities.

These will improve our Church lives, but won't change the membership trend. For that we will need set up teams to further explore potentially major lines of effort. Ideas were raised in several broad areas: better tailoring activities to young

Continued on page 4

Crafting Kindness

In addition to the larger projects Crafting Kindness creates, there are several items we have available for individuals from our "St. Stephen's Stash". The Stash includes prayer shawls, lap quilts, baby blankets, baby hats, breast cancer pillows and a few other things for individuals. Last year we delivered about 25 items from the stash. Folks receiving from the "Stash" may be grieving a loss, working thru a stressful time, celebrating a new baby or dealing with a medical issue to mention a few ways to let people know we care about them. The person receiving this gift does not need to be a member of St. Stephen's.

YOU can help us share these gifts. Please let us know of someone who could find some comfort in receiving this unexpected gift and knowing we care about them. In addition, suggestions for Stash items are welcome.

Our group of crafters enjoys sharing their gifts with our next door neighbors, our church family, and both nationally and internationally.

SATURDAY, JULY 29th is our next Crafting Day 10am – 2pm. Something for everyone. Please join us for fun, fellowship, and crafting.

Barb Whitaker

Barbwhitaker137@gmail.com

248-373-9392



Keeping Up the Building & Grounds

Buildings and Grounds is back in action again for the summer season. The Clydesdales have recovered from last year's projects.

During the winter, the dishwasher was repaired. The roof was repaired, but not to our satisfaction, and 20% of the money was not paid. So that is still on the list. The alarm system had its yearly checkup.

There were new locks installed on the 3 doors, with lock boxes for access to the building. We had over 95 keys out with the old system, and only about 50 were returned. 45 keys lost in cyberspace did not sit very well with many people. We have 11 keys out now and are monitored by the Key Czar (yours truly). No more keys will be given out. Only a code to the lock box.

And on the doors, all the latches and rods were cleaned and repaired, so the doors open and close like they are supposed to.

The furnace filters were changed and all the preventive maintenance on the 8 furnaces were done also. One is in real bad shape, and will need replacing in the near future. A heat vent was added to the Narthex area, will help some to keep it warmer. And in the parish hall, we have 9 out of 12 vent defuses installed on the main heat trunk line. It has made a HUGE difference for that room. The other 3 will be installed in the next week.

Sharon got moved into her office, the desk was moved for her, 2 bookcases were removed and 5-7 pictures were hung on the walls. She is happy now.

Jackie and Don did some major cleanup around the front sign and attended to the plants and shrubs.

And the good news, Phil Pierce, aka. "Phil the Magnificent", along with Pat Wojas, got our church insurance revamped. We will be saving almost 50% in premiums with more coverage by changing companies. Sure wish someone thought of this about 10 years ago. That is why we are the Clydesdales of St. Stephens.

We are reviewing everything and saving where we can. Your next report will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Justin Wojas: Chairman of the Board.

Pat Wojas: Clydesdale # 1.

Dave Eldon: Clydesdale # 2. Buildings and Grounds



Holy Conversations (Continued from page 3)

adults, attracting kids/enrich kids' programs, modifying our Worship offerings [perhaps adding a contemporary service], and overhauling our communication processes and content

[website, Facebook, phone chain, bulletins, etc.].

In addition, we will be updating the parish profile and Bishop regarding what we are doing strategically, and how it affects what we are looking for in a priest-in-charge. This will help us get the right priest. We also need to be mindful that implementing good ideas often requires more treasure at a time when our reserves are going down.

We will keep regrouping as we go along. We don't end with A PLAN. We end when we have changed for the better, and that "better" is bending our trends upward. Then, with God's and your help, we repeat the process. *Don Ingersoll*

We ask Your Prayers for the Following People

Joe Simler	Paige Emery
Jenny Dolan	Melissa Stein
Linda Dolan	Sue Sprague
Linda Lou Vance	Rick Lowery
Jim Whitaker	Theresa Martin
Shawna Collins	Bob White
Judy Ford	Colin Davis
Harold Ford	Greg Thompson
Jeralyn Burrell	Lon
Mary Bandsuch	Robin Cameron
Betty Feighner	Deputy David Hack
Zoey Rose	Amy Ambrey
Jennifer Penokie	Stephan Fragnoli
Kay Novak	Carol Mikols
Cynthia Tischer	Dorothy Langridge
Mayme Oliver	Richard Creameans
	Emy Pheil

These Parish Families

4/28 *Sathi Satyanathan*
Vickie Saylor

5/1 *Sheryl Schmidt*
Liz Sinkovich

5/8 *Helen Slater*
Mike, Katie, Ethan and Caleb Sobolewski

5/15 *Paula Somerville*
Miranda and John Spates

5/22 *Rick and Barb Spina*
Dave and Jill Stein

5/29 *Dan and Sue Stewart*
Shanker & Sara Sundareson

Those in the Armed Services

Nathan Cremeans—grandson of Barb Whitaker
Ian L’Hommedieu— godson of Linda Pierce
Stephen L’Hommedieu—godson of Linda Pierce
Kyle Rogowski—nephew of Ken & Kris Fuhr
Jim Sands—grandson of Sharon Sands
Brendon Church —Grandsons of Ed and Elaine Church, Nephew of Amy Church
Gordon Bagley - friend of Vida family
Capt. John Zimmer - friend of Vida family
Capt. Scott Wright - friend of Ann Williams



St. Stephen's Kids Appreciate the Adults

Speaking for all the kids: Thanks to all you adults.

You make our lives better in many ways.

You support our fundraisers.

You support us when we try new things.

You treat us like we are real people who matter.

In other words, you show us how God wants us to treat others.

Now we want to thank you personally. [Kids dispersed and shook the adults' hands.]

[Not everyone was in church on Youth Sunday to hear this important message delivered by Lachlan O'Neill on behalf of the Youth!]

Birthdays

June

Name	Date
Robert Baker	3
Brady Dengler	5
Mary Jane Kerr	7
Pauleen Ottenhoff	7
Kay Coran	8
Evan DeCiantis	9
Hannah DeCiantis	9
Brendan Gerard	9
John Morley	12
Cynthia Tischer	12
Emma Boldt	13
Catherine O'Brien	15
Bruce Dostert	16
Rachel Rich	16
Keegan Dengler	17
Kamsi Ezeugwa	18
Judy McClendon	25
Connie Jose	26
Connor Duggan	27
Liz Golding	27
Nathan Buller	29
Garret Fragnoli	30



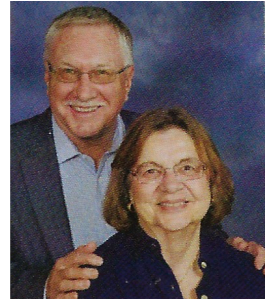
July

Name	Date
Erinma Ezeugwa	3
Norah O'Neill	5
Madeleine Duggan	9
Darrel Middlewood	9
Kathy DeCiantis	10
Adrian Brokenshire	11
Rob Redmer	13
Kathryn Buller	16
James McQuiston	17
Peter Oswald	18
Josephine West	18
Kathy Davis	19
Alex Ezeugwa	20
Jeremy Taylor	20
Brian Ingersoll	22
Daniel Gerard	26
Chloe Ingersoll	26
Pema O'Neill	26
Audrey Brokenshire	29
Kay Novak	30
Justin Wojas	31

Pat Wojas

Outreach Spotlight

Pat and Inge Wojas joined St. Stephen's in 1984, after they moved from Redford to Troy, and Bob and Carol O'Neal



invited them. Carol and Inge worked together. Pat started the Hernia Club for SOS Week and has also been an overnighter and driver for SOS.

Pat currently volunteers at the Open Pantry at St. John's Episcopal Church in Royal Oak. He works there with several other St. Stephen's members and finds it worthwhile. But his service to our parish does not stop there. He also co-chairs the ushers and counters, is a liason to Holy Conversations and Stewardship, works on the buildings and Grounds Committee, and serves on the Vestry. Pat also is the Vice President for Membership of the Beverly Hills Lions Club, conducts eye testing for children at the Birmingham library, and delivers Meals on Wheels with Inge. He participates in White Cane and Candy Cane fundraising at Market Fresh in Beverly Hills.

He thinks St. Stephen's will last another 50 years, and even though he and Inge now live in Farmington Hills, they "can't move away from family". We are so fortunate to have Pat as part of our parish family.

Anniversaries

June

Name	Date
Katherine & Michael Sobolewski	2
Kathy & Colin Davis	11
Kristina Grubb	12
Donna & Bob Brokenshire	18
Margaret & George Klempay	19
Melissa & Daniel Duggan	19
Melissa & Paul Hardy	24
Alicia & Robert Baker	27
Jill & David Stein	30

July

Name	Date
Daryllyn & Peter Oswald	4
Erin & Mike Brokenshire	8
Renee & Jeff Parent	10
Donna & Rod Johnson	11
Connie & Sandy Jose	12
Barb & Rick Spina	15
Patricia & Joseph Przeslawski	21
Corinne & Steve Fragnoli	21



Grant them your blessing, O God, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep their promises and vows; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

June / July 2019: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 5500 N. Adams Rd., Troy, MI 48098

Youth Auction was a Tremendous Success

Just in case we missed thanking you personally, a giant THANK YOU to everyone who helped make the Youth Auction a roaring success on all levels. A special thanks to the generous donors of the treasures we auctioned; Ami O'Neill and her girls for preparing the fabulous Mexican dinner; Corinne Fragnoli for researching the value of items donated and helping with the setup; Ken Fuhr for serving as our auctioneer; Alan and Helen Giles for providing and manning the "beverage station"; Tony and Kim Burean for preparing the program, the PowerPoint presentation and being the cashiers; the kids for decorating, food preparation, ticket selling, and table setting; and of course all of you who attended and bid.



About 70 folks had a great evening of food, fun and comradery with interesting parishioners and guests. Some folks picked up treasures at a great bargain, and some overbid the "book value" to show extra support for our youngest generation of parishioners.

Over \$6,400 was raised for youth trips and programs; but perhaps as important was the visible evidence our kids saw of the love and support the congregation has for them. As usual, the kids saw Christ's love and teachings personified right in our Fellowship Hall.

The high school youth group is off on a pilgrimage/mission trip adventure to Kentucky and Tennessee for a week as you read this.

Don and Jackie Ingersoll



Current Revenues

Treasurer's Notes:

<u>St. Stephen's Church</u>	<u>thru 05/31/19</u>
Planned Revenues	\$ 125,000
<u>Actual Revenues</u>	<u>\$ 116,089</u>
Revenue Shortfall	\$ (8,911)

Overall revenues are short of our 2019 plan by **(7.1)%**. Expense control, for example the delayed hiring of our full-time Rector, has offset this shortfall, but the effect is only temporary. Together we can extinguish this shortfall and end the year in the green! The Vestry is managing expenses and as a Parish Family we can commit to maintain our pledge commitments, especially through the summer months.

Blessings,

Phil Pierce, Treasurer and your Vestry

Youth Sunday



How to Contact Us

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Fax: 248-641-8067

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office@ststephenstroy.org

Scott Armstrong, Senior Warden
248-860-0408; scottiemio6@icloud.com

Dave Stein, Junior Warden
248-346-4126; dcs53td@gmail.com

Sue Gore—Choir and Music Director
248-852-1379

Phil Pierce, Treasurer
treasurer@ststephenstroy.org

Pam Bonkowski—Assistant to the Treasurer
bookkeeper@ststephenstroy.org

The Witness: Rob Redmer and Jacki Mudrich
witness@ststephenstroy.org
office@ststephenstroy.org

E-mail, bring to church or fax your articles to
248-641-8067

Weekly Services

Sat. 4:30 p.m. Informal Service

Sun., 8 a.m. Early Eucharist

Sun, 10 a.m. Eucharist with Music

If you have e-mail, you can receive our newsletter faster!
Please send your e-mail address to
office@ststephenstroy.org. Thank you in advance for
helping us with our continued effort to.....THINK
GREEN!



Who's Missing?

If someone you usually see in church hasn't been there in a while, please give them a call.

A Parking Spot

Paddy was driving down the street in Chicago sweating because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place.

Looking up to heaven he said, "Lord take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life and give up me Irish Whiskey!"

Miraculously, a parking place appeared at Deloitte and N Clark.

Paddy looked up again and said, "Never mind, I found one."



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

5500 North Adams Road
Troy, MI 48098

Please remember St. Stephen's in your will.

