

The Witness

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

August / September 2019

A Message from the Pulpit



Dear Family,

As I was driving to work this morning, I admit that my mind was on more things than simply being an alert driver. At my home it was a beautiful morning from the very beginning...birds were singing, the sun was warm, the squirrels were providing their best entertainment, a rabbit was eating my neighbor's flowers, and the coffee was hot as I sat on my deck surveying my little kingdom (or is it queendom? Sometimes it's very difficult to be politically correct.)



It's mornings like this that remind me so vividly that God created this majestic beauty for all creatures to enjoy and that God's power and creativity are truly indescribable. The beauty of nature is awesome whether we are standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon or laying on a blanket on the grass watching an army of ants build a new colony. No matter where we look, we can see the incredible handiwork of God...the amazing coming-together of life. It's also a humbling experience when we realize where and how we fit into God's plan. Surprise!...it's not all about us!

God has given us the wonder of nature to refresh our temperaments when we are "out of sorts" and need peace and tranquility; when we are in distress and need to be

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Senior Warden Message

Hello Family!!

WOW, what a beautiful summer God has given us! I hope we are all taking time out of our otherwise busy lives to enjoy the summer months and the blessings God has shared with us



You are such a great blessing to me. Our St. Stephen's family brings me such joy, love, and understanding. I am truly blessed. The activities of our Church Family astonishes me! Outreach, Hospitality, Adult Faith, Youth Education and programs, Choir, Lay Ministers, Lay Visitors, Pastoral Care, Acolytes, Finance Committee, Alter Guild, SOS, Crafting Kindness, Greeters, Ushers, Vestry, Buildings & Grounds, Witness, Strategic Planning, Stewardship, Endowment, Ladies Lunch Bunch, Ole Guys, GEM Dinners, Coffee Hour, and so much more... I bet some of you didn't even realize how much we have going on and the opportunities to get involved!!

So I ask, as we enjoy the summer blessings and begin to look to our annual Welcome Back Sunday Celebration on September 8th – yep September 8th, we all take some time to pray and consider where the Holy Spirit is moving us to get involved in the many opportunities available at St. Stephen's. You may even have a calling to something new that we as a church family can rally around and support.

The amazing thing to me, as with all families and households, is there is never a lack of projects or activities to be involved with and as you know many hands make for quicker work!!

For now I'm going to count my blessings as I clean the bathroom.

Much Love,

Scott, Sr. Warden

A View from the Pew

My first memories of St. Stephens are helping my mom (Mary Alice Heaton) set up the Altar in the gym at Eastover Elementary school. (I was 4). I thought that it looked like a tea party. She told me it was more like a dinner shared with Jesus, and we were guests at His table.

I learned that wafers were not tea cakes and that the Altar Guild were the people that set this table with care and with love. This is a way to serve God and to share in the Eucharist with fellow parishioners.

Sitting in the pew I can look at the Altar (and all around the church) and see items given with love or in the memory of someone, all in God's name. Items we use and enjoy the beauty of. Stained glass that casts its beautiful light, The organ's wonderful sounds. The chalices, the linens, the eternal light- to remind of God's light in the world.

It is a very wonderful place to sit and to think of so many people, past and present, that share Jesus's love. And sometimes in the prayerful silence I can hear my father singing in the choir.

I am both humbled and proud to serve at His table with you.

Alice Moss



Whit

Mary Alice

Lucinda

Alice

Getting It

People can be categorized in many ways – political affiliations, religion, race, gender, interests, hobbies, age or when they were born (Boomer, Millennial etc). The categories are endless.

I like to categorize people in a different way– do they get it or not. The “it” is, do they know why they are here and are they doing what they are supposed to be doing. There are so many people who don't get it. They are causing harm to themselves or to others, or they're just wrapped up in a world that is all about themselves.

But when I see people who are doing God's work, I always smile and say to myself – they get it. Some of those people you read about in this and other issues of *The Witness*. One of my favorites is about a friend I met during my days at GM. We both went different paths. Mine was a corporate path and his entailed getting 4 degrees including his PHD, and leading a local charter school for African-American kids. He is one of the most positive people I know, and he lives and breathes love for the people he meets and he cares for at his school.

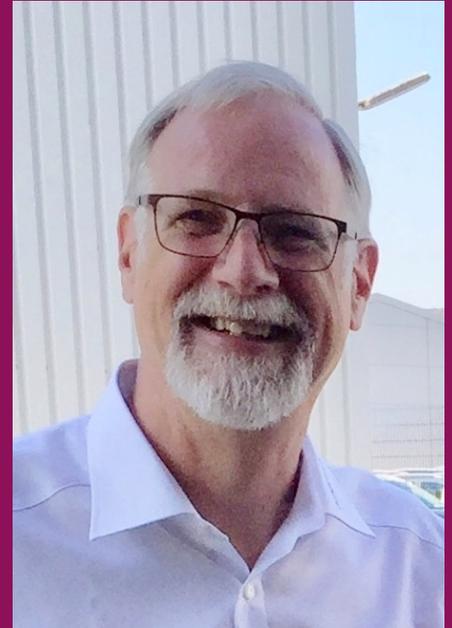
But "getting it" doesn't have to be a career decision. It can be a gesture, donation, helping hand, or doing something kind for someone you've never met. When the St. Stephen's community hosts SOS at the end of September, it's incredible to see so many people who put their own personal time aside in order to help others. They "get it".

Rob Redmer

An Opportunity for Discipleship

If I look around me and reflect on this year, I am truly humbled by the vibrancy of this church. Yes, truly humbled. I see busy hands working on our facilities – the place we share our love for God and each other. I see many hands sharing their skills to hospitality, singing and simply caring. We are in deep conversations about our future and how to re-invent ourselves to insure the relevance of our ministries to not only continue to meet the needs of our current family, but to be available and accessible to others seeking a relationship with Jesus.

I've heard a lot said about how we are in a period of uncertainty and transition. I understand and agree with the context of that statement. But – I also think about my personal journey of faith. If “transition” means a passage from one state to another, or evolution from one form to another, then I pray that I am in a perpetual state of transition! For me, it is in this spirit that I embrace our tag line “You are Welcome Here.” I believe with my whole being this is the best expression of what I think of when I think of our faith community, our Household of God. Even though I might struggle at times to welcome and accept, I know you are all at my side to remind me through example and to teach me when I need it.



I want to let you in on a little secret. I cannot, no matter how much I give, come close to returning what you at St. Stephen's have given me. I know Jill feels the same way. I'll bet those of you reading this who have made the effort to get involved feel the same. It is tempting during times of change to sit back and wait to see where it

all shakes out. For those of you who are observing or watching to see how things go, it is time to stop waiting and get involved. Find something you can get emotionally attached to and go for it. If we're not doing what really gets you going, start it here. This is YOUR household, it needs you to help sustain and grow. Jesus needs all of us working together as part of HIS Household.

We are beginning to think about next year and we need four new Vestry members who are ready to roll up their sleeves and share in the work of moving us forward – closer to God and closer to our community. I love being part of your Vestry – always have. Will you join me and the other Vestry members on our journey of faithful leadership? Are you willing to embrace a state of “transition” in the expression of your faith and love of St. Stephens?

If you would like to talk about being on the Vestry, please reach out to me, or any of the other Vestry members. To steal from an old Army advertisement – “St. Stephen's needs YOU!”

Peace!
Dave Stein

South Oakland Shelter

Dear St. Stephen's Parish Family,

We will host our guests from SOS the week of September 22nd – 29th. The sign-up sheets have been filling up and your participation is greatly appreciated. We are trying to prepare as much as we can over the summer so when September is here, we will be in great shape to make our week a success.

There are many ways you can volunteer, share your love and talents with those who are in need of love and support to get them through a difficult time in their lives. Please take a look at the sign-up sheets located in the Gathering Area or in the Fellowship Hall and see where you can lend a hand.

Donations of new or gently used towels, twin sheet sets, or light blankets are always in need.

We will have more information and opportunities to get involved as we get closer to September. In the meantime, mark your calendar and see how you can help in our long-standing outreach tradition with the community.

If you have questions, please feel free to call Corinne Fragnoli at (248) 515-2651 or Miranda Spates at (248) 842-6073.

Thank you, thank you, and thank you!

Love to all,

Corinne Fragnoli and Miranda Spates



Roy & Gretchen Waters

Outreach Spotlight

Roy and Gretchen have been at St. Stephen's for about 35 years. They were attracted to our parish because Nancy McGrath, then the minister, was a good role model for their two daughters. They stayed once they got involved with the parish, made friends with other members, and their kids were happy here. Gretchen says "a church is its people".



Both Roy and Gretchen have been committed, involved members of St. Stephen's. Gretchen worked in the office for about ten years after retiring from Detroit Public Schools as a high school teacher. She has taught Sunday School and was the school superintendent, worked at Vacation Bible School and the Christmas pageant, participated in the bell choir, and worked with greyhound rescue dogs. She has been an Outreach Committee member and chair, and she collects and distributes Thanksgiving bags, works with Lighthouse, SOS, the Judson center, and Catholic Community Resource Team (CCRT).

Roy is the delivery person for Outreach. He also works with Buildings and Grounds, and has served three and one third terms on the Vestry. He is the Lay Eucharistic Minister scheduler, co-chairs the ushers. He attends most every church service. He is the President of the Beverly Hills Lions Club (along with several other men from St. Stephen's who are members), and works at their annual fun run each Memorial Day. He is an integral part of the CCRT Movers and Shakers, working each week to collect and distribute furniture, bedding, dishes, cleaning supplies, and whatever else is needed to families in Pontiac.

We ask Your Prayers for the Following People

Linda Dolan	Colin Davis
Jenny Dolan	Emily Thompson
Jim Whitaker	Greg Thompson
Linda Lou Vance	Lon
Shawna Collins	Robin Cameron
Judy Ford	Deputy David Hack
Harold Ford	Amy Ambrey
Alice Brandon	Carol Mikols
Mary Bandsuch	Dorothy Langridge
Zoey Rose	Emy Pheil
Kay Novak	John Thunder
Jennifer Penokie	Kenny Nelson
Cynthia Tischer	Ron Goetzke
Mayme Oliver	Bob Mayer
Paige Emery	Vickie Saylor
Melissa Stein	Dodie Waun
Sue Sprague	Ron Lee
Rick Lowery	Roger Dalton
Theresa Martin	Brian Alesi
Bob White	

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

These Parish Families

8/ 4 Justin Wojas
Pat and Inge Wojas

8/11 Jim and Barb Whitaker
William Wolfe

8/18 Margie Armstrong
Scott Armstrong

8/25 Georgiana Badalow
Cindy Bailey

9/1 Bob & Alicia Baker, Penelope and Quinn
Lee & Ginny Bennett, Josephine

9/8 Dennis & Mary Bishop
Tom & Marilyn Borowski

9/15 Alice Brandon
Steve & Margaret Brandon, Bobby

9/22 Nikki Braidwood & Bill Perod, Tyler,
Nico and Gio
Mike & Erin Brokenshire, Meghan,
Adrian, Audrey, Kate

Church Bulletin Bloopers

The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: "Break Forth Into Joy."

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24th in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Birthdays

August

Name	Date
Robert Brokenshire	2
Bruce Papet	2
Liz Sinkovich	3
Olivia DeCiantis	4
Sharon Sands	7
Paul McClendon	8
Geoffrey Walter	9
Jan Hopper	11
Linda Lambert	11
Melissa Duggan	13
Joseph Hopper	14
Emmett Duggan	16
Helen Giles	21
Richard Kenefic II	21
Quinn O'Neill	21
Byron Converse	22
Joan Knapp	25
Ami O'Neill	26
Kathryn Hassel	27
Robert Westbury	29
Jonathan Burrell	30
Betty Mirzoian	30
Benjamin Buller	31



September

Name	Date
Marilyn Elwarner	6
Amy Boldt	8
Lachlan O'Neill	9
Dom Piantedosi	10
Phil Pierce	10
Alan Giles	11
Nancy Fischer	11
Bonnie Gross	15
Debbie Pincura	22
Scott Armstrong	22
Barbara Whitaker	22
Savannah Rich	22
Colton Oswald	22
Jane Wellman	24
Ethan Sobolewski	29
Lori Podsiadlik	29

Message from the Pulpit

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uplifted; when we need a quiet, holy place to explore our innermost thoughts. I am truly blown away when I encounter people who deny the existence of God in creation...or even in our daily lives. Looking at the awesomeness of all that surrounds us, how can one not believe that our world was conceived by the mighty power of a higher authority?

As summer is about to wind down for another year, let's slow down and take the time to fully appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds us and acknowledge that we are but a small part of the universe formed by our Creator. With grateful hearts let's enjoy this earthly home God has given us and treasure every moment of God's goodness!

Peace and blessings,

Mother Sharon

Anniversaries

August

Name	Date
Kathy and Bob Thatcher	2
Erinma & Alex Ezeugwa	3
Helen & Alan Giles	24
Cheryl & Geoff Walter	25
Martha & Jim Maxwell	28
Cathy & Bob Hoffman	31

September

Name	Date
Kathy and Ed Deciantis	6
Bonnie & Adrian Gross	23
Shanker & Sara Sundareson	10



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.

We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty of earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers; for the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers. We praise you for these good gifts, and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation, to the honor and glory of your Name, now and for ever. Amen.

-Book of Common Prayer, p. 840

St. Stephen's Happenings

Welcome Back Sunday - September 8

I hope everyone has had a great summer so far and will enjoy the last few weeks before school begins again. We will have a table out front to register the kids for Sunday School on Welcome Back Sunday. Classes will begin that day. Nursery-up to 4 years old, PK(4 yr)-2nd grade class and the 3rd-5th class will begin at 10am coming in to church during the Peace. The Middle and High School classes will begin right after Communion until noon. Please remember to also fill out a permission slip if your child is in Middle or High School.

Pilgrimage / Mission Trip

The weekend after the high schoolers finished school, they boarded a van with the Hardys, for a week in Kentucky and Tennessee. This Mission trip began with visits to various churches to discover how they helped the homeless in their area. One of the coolest thing they did, their words, was to visit a Christian radio station in Bowling Green, KY. They all took turns doing public service announcements. Along the way, they visited the Nashville Episcopal Cathedral, stayed in a wonderful cabin in the Smokey Mountains and ended the week with a white water rafting adventure. Thanks to the Hardys for shepherding our youth on this trip and thanks to everyone who made the trip possible by supported the youth auction.

Jackie Ingersoll



Welcome to Ami O'Neill / Farewell to Jacki Mudrich

St. Stephens says goodbye to Jacki Mudrich as she and her husband move on to a new and bright opportunity. We are forever grateful for all of the support, hard work and dedication Jacki provided, especially during our time of transition. We wish her and her family all of the best.

We are very blessed and excited to welcome Ami O'Neill as our new Parish Administrator. Ami has experience as a church office manager, having performed a similar role for nine years at St. James Catholic Church in Ferndale. She recently worked for the Troy School District at Leonard Elementary. Ami and her family have been very active members at St. Stephen's for over fifteen years.



Two Important Words

Thank You notes are the one of the best connections we make with a person or group who received our crafts. Crafting Kindness projects are provided to individuals from our neighborhood to the backlands of Haiti. While we don't always know who has received these gifts or how then have affected the recipients, we know God is blessing and caring for our recipients.

Our members and supporters also know we are doing God's work by the notes we receive from the recipients. Each item we donate has a tag attached to the craft which has a Bible verse and sent by Crafting Kindness, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Troy, MI. The tags also have handwritten signatures from our crafters. There are many thanks, both verbal and written, lettings us know the gift was received and appreciated. Most, but not all the written notes, come from people who have never heard of Crafting Kindness or St. Stephens.

*** "You don't even know me and you have touched my heart. My pillow was such a surprise, and one of kindness. Oh, how I wish I could spread your kindness all over our world." (a lady receiving a breast cancer pillow)

*** "Thank you so much for your donation of walker bags and fidget aprons. These handmade items were obviously made with much love and consideration. We appreciate being the recipient of such thoughtfulness." (a local nursing home)

*** "Thank you so much. It was obviously by people who knew and loved Larry because so much of his life was represented there, gardening and travel." (a St. Stephen's family member receiving a fidget quilt)

Please take a few minutes to read the Thank You Notes on the board above our Crafting Kindness tubs. You are also being thanked for supporting this group.

If you knit, crochet, or sew please consider taking a kit from one of the tubs. You will be thanked by someone who needed to know you care enough even though you do not know that person.

I also thank all of you who have crafted and supported this wonderful group who Craft a lot of Kindness.

THANK YOU

Crafting Kindness

Crochet 101



Time to learn something new or
polish up your stitch
With Crafting Kindness

Saturday, September 14th -
10 am Parish Hall

Workshop will include the
opportunity to learn to crochet a
scarf and a flower.

You will need a crochet hook
size "G" or "H" - Yarn is supplied

The signup sheet near the
Crafting Kindness tubs.

Your friends are welcome.

For more information, please
contact Barb Whitaker
Barbwhitaker137@gmail.com

248-373-9392

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!



How to Contact Us

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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 Ami O'Neill
witness@ststephenstroy.org
office@ststephenstroy.org

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

Who's Missing?

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



CHRISTIAN SYMBOL

SEAL — A seal is the mark of God's promises to the believer and of the believer's consecration to God. Old Testament priests wore a piece of gold against their forehead, as a seal, engraved with the words "Holy to the Lord." For Christians, the sign of the cross serves as a seal of salvation. Paul declares, "He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Corinthians 1:21-22, NIV).



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5500 North Adams Road
Troy, MI 48098

Please remember St. Stephen's in your will.

