



The WITNESS

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

October 2016

Mother Susan's
Musings

Grace & Gratitude



Life is all about change and growth. People come and people go. Life changes, our jobs change, our families change, our children grow, but what always remains the same is that all of us are part of God's family.

Here is where we journey together and know one another. Here is where we laugh and cry together. Here is where we celebrate and mourn together. *Here is where we are known by the One who "created us and through whom we have our being."* Here is where we are always welcome.



Chinese symbol for love

It was another inspiring SOS week: So many "hands on deck," lots of smiles from the guests and the volunteers, hundreds of hours logged into the daily record of time given by St Stephen's members and over \$2,000 donated by our parishioners. Ironically, our wrap-up Sunday's Gospel included a parable from Jesus that concluded:

"When you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

(Luke 17:10)

Ouch! Come on Jesus, give us a little credit here. We just did a lot. Are we a bunch of worthless slaves? This kind of talk from you makes it pretty hard to recruit volunteers!

I didn't give much time to unpacking that sentence in my sermons on Oct. 2 - it would have taken an extra sermon to do that. But how much is really expected of us? - that does need some explanation. Are we worthless slaves who can't expect a rest, or are we saintly do-gooders who deserve a round of applause? *What's the expectation that comes with following Jesus?*

First let me explain that Jesus is not promoting slavery here. Indentured servanthood was a common situation back then: you'd physically work off your debts, then you were free of them. *Hmm... How many hours' work do you owe your credit card company? Maybe that should be in the disclaimers of the next gimmicky ad for a new Visa or Master-*

card!

The point of the parable is that if Jesus' listeners owed someone wealthier x hours of work in return for a loan of land, food, seed-corn, etc; how much more do they (we) owe to God? Can we ever say we are done repaying God, and now God ought to serve us instead? The question is rhetorical, since the answer to "What do you owe God?" is incalculable. And yet emotionally, we often do harbor a feeling, especially after a week like "SOS Week," that we've done our part for God and we can coast for a while.

One trip outside to dine, shop or enjoy a show, quickly abuses us of the idea that we're done with righting inequities. Jesus Christ taught that the first response to the Creator's divine generosity is to keep our eyes and hearts open. In God's economic plan, servanthood begins with gratitude - with no company loopholes or write-offs for time served. So, before you read any further in this issue, take a moment to visualize and thank God for the blessings you enjoy.

That would be now. 1, take a few breaths. 2, glance around for some ideas. 3, close your eyes and pray some thank-you's.

Feel a difference? We are so blessed to be among the world's most fortunate citizens. Reminding ourselves of that fact is always a good practice. But knowing must lead to doing. Keep reading, for inspiring ideas that flow from gratitude.



Around the Parish

October Lectionary

Oct 2—Pentecost 20

Hab 1:1-4, 2:1-4
Psalm 37: 1-10
2 Tim 1: 1-14
Luke 17: 5-10

Oct 9—Pentecost 21

Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c
Psalm 111
2 Tim 2: 8-15
Luke 17: 11-19

Oct 16—Pentecost 22

Gen 32: 22-31
Psalm 121
2 Tim 3: 14-4:5
Luke 18: 1-8

Oct 23—Pentecost 23

Sirach 35: 12-17 or
Jer 14: 7-10, 19-22
Psalm 84: 1-6
2 Tim 4: 6-8, 16-18
Luke 18: 9-14

Oct 30—Pentecost 24

Is 1: 10-18
Psalm 32: 1-8
2 Thes 1: 1-4, 11-12
Luke 19: 1-10



Freedom! Freedom!

On Saturday, October 8, we will go on the Underground Railroad Tour! This is an unforgettable experience for the whole family. The group rate for admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for youth and seniors. **The tour does involve many steps and uneven terrain.** Sign up in the gathering area to car-pool to the historic First Congregational Church of Detroit, 33 Forest Ave., Detroit 48201

Connected Through Faithfulness

Don't miss the bright green mailing that will be coming to your home soon! Thank you for carefully and prayerfully considering its contents. The strength of the connections we share at St. Stephen's depend on your response, this year especially!

New Book Group

Mother Susan is beginning a new book group, focusing on "Practical Christianity." Our first session will be on Wednesday October 19 at 7:00 pm, as we discuss the first three chapters of "Next Door as it is in Heaven" by Lance Ford and Brad Brisco. We'll conclude the book for our second discussion. Call or email Mo. Susan for more information.

Acolyte News

Children and youth volunteers are needed for the acolyte teams for both the 5pm and the 10pm services. Let Mr. Carnegie know as soon as possible if you are available. There will be a training class after church on October 9th for new team members and as a refresher for newer members.

There is a FULL TEAM TRAINING on October 16. The schedule of assignments through Christmas 2016 is available on the "information" page of the website.



Five Women, Five Journeys

The Adult Faith Program is excited to present faith traditions from five women. Wednesday, October 26, from 7 to 9 pm, women from the Jewish, Hindu, Baha'i, Sikh, and Muslim faith traditions share their childhood experiences of faith, common misconceptions about their religions, and how they have handled stereotypes and prejudice. They take questions from the audience at the end. This is a wonderful and much-needed learning experience for all of us living in a diverse community.

The program will take place in the Fellowship Hall and is a perfect event to share with friends. Men and women of all ages will find this to be an enlightening evening that is not to be missed.

Church Notes

Special Sunday

Be sure to join us on October 23, when we celebrate Holy Baptism at the 10:00 service. Lend your support to our newest church member, and be blessed by the worship song that our Church School children have been working on this fall.

Music for all ages of St. Stephen's parishioners will be celebrated that day.

Senior Moments

But First...

I just remembered. The deadline for an item for *The Witness* is today!

But first,

Have a cup of coffee to get started;

But first,

Brush my teeth so I can taste the coffee;

But first,

Take out the trash before the truck arrives.

But first,

Need to gather trash from the waste baskets;

But first,

Sort through this stack of papers on my desk.

But first,

Might as well make a few phone calls or check on email.

But first,

Will just go back to bed for a few minutes to try to remember what I need to do today.

ZZZZZZZZ

Six Steps to a Stronger Memory

Lifelong Learning - Recent research confirms that we can continue to learn throughout life and that exercising the brain helps to strengthen memory. Take a class. Try a crossword puzzle, a word game, or reading a book. Reading a book to a child increases the value immeasurably.

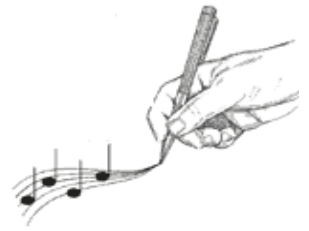
Walk With Friends -- Get a cardio-vascular workout, let go of stress with each step, and engage in some conversation to stimulate your brain.

Sleep at Least Six Hours a Night – Anything less than six hours increases the risk of stroke said the research presented at the 2012 Associated Professional Sleep Societies Meeting.

Fill Half of Your Plate with Green Vegetables – Also dish up fish, nuts, and olive oil. *Minimize* refined carbs that include all sugars and starches, EXCEPT those in a natural whole food like fruit, Lima bean, or a sweet potato.

Challenge Your Memory – Practice memorizing three names of folks you admire each a day. Repeat five items on your grocery list. Sing the items you need to a nursery rhyme tune.

Meditate – Reduce anxiety. For a quick calming exercise inhale for a count of seven, hold for a count of seven, exhale for a count of seven. Repeat seven times.



One Voice

Please join a remarkable group—the St. Stephen's Choir.

Come meet our Director of Music, John Pavik, and find out in person about his ideas and plans!



From the Back Pew

Actually, From the Front Pew!

Sorry, this is my least favorite topic, but it is important for people to know. If you were in Church the past few weeks you heard that the Vestry has deferred non-essential [discretionary] spending, and that it will be focusing on finances at its next meeting. Déjà vu. We generally return from summer with a deficit, we let you know, spending picks up in November and December, and we end the year breaking even or coming close. This year the deficit is a bit larger than normal as revenues are down. In fact, our revenues have been trending down for at least the past 5 years and our reserves are running low.

Is the sky falling? No, but prudence dictates that we defer discretionary spending to ensure that we have the best balance between quality programming and financial stability, both this year and as we set ourselves up and plan for next year.

Will deferring nonessential spending solve the problem? No, but it will help. We have been making cuts and improving efficiencies for the past few years, so only a small part of the budget is discretionary, and most of the year is behind us. In a nutshell, we are receiving reasonable time and talent, but the treasure part is short. If you are behind in your giving, please try to catch up if you can. If you are able to give a little extra, praise the Lord, it will help us remain a vibrant Household of God.

The BIG PICTURE: No one comes to St. Stephen's because we have a balanced budget, and I'm pretty sure no one has ever said the joy of giving comes from balancing the budget. We give to thank God for his many blessings, and to support our Household of God which provides each of us a place to worship and connect with other caring people. We have quality worship services and

many vibrant programs. We enjoy worshipping, socializing and doing God's work together. We give to support programs that help us instill Christian values in our kids and grandkids. We give to support and enable our collective efforts to do God's work in the community—to serve our neighbors as we are called to do. We give to support our adult faith-building programs.

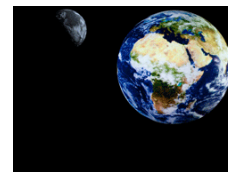
The budget is just a tool the Vestry uses to help it direct funds to their best use. What is the best use? That's always a difficult question. Two prongs are always considered when budgeting in times like these: generating more revenue from giving and other sources such as rentals, and cutting operating and program costs. It seems likely that we will not have significantly more dollars to work with next year. The point of debate will boil down to whether we can change enough of our methods so as to remain reasonably vibrant which helps us attract and keep members; or whether we will have to make cuts that affect our capacity and vibrancy. If efficiencies and new methods are not enough, which cuts will have the least effect on our long-term ability to remain vibrant?

When we are engaged in these discussions it is common for me to feel that my faith is the size of a very small mustard seed. [Folks who heard the sermon on Oct. 2 know what I mean.] We want to believe and trust that God will provide, but...

As we budget we try not to discourage our mission teams from dreaming of what might be. Of course we don't know, but it seems likely that God can see ways we could be doing even more. As with all human endeavors, improvement is always possible. But realistic limits need to be set. If realistic funding limits

Actually—continued on page 5

one World



An Alzheimers Caregivers Group meets at Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Novi. The group meets on the second Saturday of each month at 10 am in the parish hall. It offers support and open discussion for all those dealing with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.

Inside the Parish Walls

Actually—continued

mean we can't do things the way we use to, we have to explore changes. Perhaps we can find ways to use more time and talent rather than money. All these things will be discussed as the Vestry wraps up this year and plans for 2017. Our recent call for everyone to let us know their talents, passions and connections with community and other organizations is the first step in helping us and the mission teams reevaluate how we carry out our various missions and reach out to serve others.

The Vestry is diverse in gender and length of time as parishioners. We have liaisons or provide leadership to all the major mission and operating areas. We strive to be open to the voices of individual parishioners. We ask God for his guidance before we start each meeting. As we undertake this important process the Vestry needs your prayers and input. The process is stressful and makes our heads hurt. None of us gets any worldly reward from the challenges inherent in making these decisions. We can only hope that we act wisely in the eyes of God. We belong to a wonderful Household of God, and with your support and prayers we can become even better.

Don Ingersoll
Senior Warden

October 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Please check the website for the most up-to-date calendar of events
www.ststephenstroy.org

Safeguarding Training

Adults who supervise children and youth offsite are required by our diocese to attend the Safeguarding God's Children class, not simply complete the online version.

If you are a youth leader and travel as a leader with kids, even locally, you will need to take this class unless you have already done so. We are fortunate to be hosting one of these on Saturday, October 15th this year, so if you currently work with our youth or plan to do so in the future, you may want to take advantage of this convenient opportunity.



One Family

Bible Study

For all who are interested in weekly Bible Study, the "no experience necessary" bible study is held in the Bishop Emrich lounge, each Wednesday at 10 am. Newcomers are always welcome! Join Mother Susan each week and explore!





Sometimes, when we are generous in small, barely detectable ways, it can change someone else's life forever

Margaret Cho

Under the Dogwood

My Mountain, My Call

Through out scripture, elevated land masses, which I will casually call mountains, are important characters in the plot of redemption and our spiritual journey. There are 3 very important mountains in my spiritual walk: Mount Sinai, Calvary and Popocateptl.

Yes, I know it sounds like a rather eclectic bunch of mountains, but each has a very special meaning for me.

Mount Sinai, is a main character in Chapter 1 - it is here that Moses receives the 10 commandments directly from God! Moses does not come back of that mountain the same person he was when he headed up the mountain. Being so close to God, changed him. Mount Sinai also represents and reminds me of my Jewish roots and the impact that background has had on who I am.

Calvary a main character in Chapter 2 - it represents redemption. I can't look at painting or read about Calvary without John 3: 16 jumping into my mind: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life". You can't look go up Calvary and come down untouched. It is a firm reminder of my Christian upbringing.

And that takes us to Chapter 3, where Popocateptl is a main character. This is the place where I went with my youth group after intense physical and spiritual training. The night before we headed up, while staying at "base camp" we had a long service of prayer and worship. At the end, each one of us were called by name.

When our name was called, we got up and responded, as Samuel responded: "Speak, for your servant is listening" and we walked to the other side o the room, until we were all there. The next day, we headed up that magnificent mountain.

God's presence was palpable. Hiking has such a great parallel to our spiritual journey! You can't go up that mountain and come back

unchanged. That trip, that prayer, that commitment have stayed with me since. That was not just Samuel's call, that was My Call. Still is. Many, many times I pray; "Speak, for your servant is listening". Listening is very important in any relationship, including my relationship with God.

Reflecting on my own spiritual journey, I realized how important my youth experiences in faith, with my youth leaders, my parents and my teachers were. We are so blessed at St. Stephen's with the youth programs, leaders, and role models we have here for our children. The impact these experiences have on our little ones is everlasting and I pray that they too are eager to listen and climb their own mountain.

Silvia Karlsson



Picture Credit: Popocatepetl Volcano - Alejandro Linares Garcia. Popocatepetl is 17,802 ft tall and is located 43 miles SE of Mexico City - it name is in Nahuatl and it means "Smoking Mountain".

Sandy Martin 3
 Jim McQuiston 3
 Simon Trask 4
 Carolyn Moss 8
 Kathy Raczkowski .. 14
 Corinne Fragnoli 15
 Courtney Redmer ... 16
 Clayton Anderson... 16
 Katie Elder..... 18
 Donna Brokenshire. 19
 Gretchen Waters...20
 Liz Elder22
 Dorothy Waun.....23
 Peggy Kelpay.....23
 Mark Szott23
 Pat Buller.....25
 Norma Ross.....26
 Benjamin Gratsch...26
 Aubrey DeMay26
 John Pincura.....27
 Karol Sprague28
 Robert Morgan28
 Samuel Parent28
 Brendon Church.....29
 Sue Mason.....30
 Meredith DeMay30

Outreach

SOS

Dear loving family of St. Stephen's, Miranda Spates and I want to thank every member of this most giving parish. I was so blessed to be in a position to witness the generosity of time, talent and treasure from so many giving hands and hearts.

I am certain our guests felt the love and support only a place like St. Stephen's can offer. On more than one occasion I was approached by a guest who said they could tell we really cared about them, and that they felt the love extended to them was generous and real.

Whether you gave a monetary donation, spent time visiting clients, matching drivers with client destinations, rolling up your sleeves cooking, cleaning, mopping, or doing laundry - your part was most appreciated.

To the drivers of SOS, the patience and compassion you demonstrated to our clients was a gift. Not only did you drive them to and from their destination, you also took that time in your vehicle to strike up a conversation and made our clients feel that they mattered; an invaluable gift.

I also appreciated your patience and willingness to adjust your schedule as circumstances arose and were explained by the volunteers at the intake table.

The people of St. Stephen's are a treasure, and this is a special place to feel God's loving arms wrap around all who walk through our doors. I am proud to call this my church home and to have all of you as a part of my life and my spiritual family.

My sincerest thanks,
Corinne Fragnoli
 SOS Co-chair

Brownie Sticks with Cheerios Crust

Folks who were lucky enough to try these at the fellowship hour on September 18 know how yummy they are! Kathy Thatcher made them and she is happy to share the recipe.

Ingredients for Crust:

- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 3 cups Honey Nut Cheerios™ finely crushed

Ingredients for Brownies:

- 1 box 18.4 oz. Betty Crocker™ original Supreme Brownie Mix
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 egg

Preparation

- Preheat oven to 350° F. in a medium-size bowl. Mix brown sugar, butter and Cheerios until everything is well-incorporated.
- Grease an 8X8 baking pan or spray with non-stick spray. Add Cheerios mixture and press into a flat, even layer.
- In a medium bowl, combine brownie mix, water, oil, egg, and the included pouch of chocolate syrup. Mix thoroughly, then spread the brownie batter over the Cheerios crust.
- Bake for 35-40 minutes or until inserted toothpick comes out dry.

Cool, then cut into rectangles.
 They will disappear quickly!



We Ask Your Prayers for...

Prayer Concerns

Georgiana Badalow
Tyler Cotton
Betty Feighner
Derek Jarvis
Lou Mirzoian
Blair Morrison
Larry Nunn
Petty Padilla
Penny Piantedosi
Charles Saylor
Kathy Sebrowski
Cynthia Tischer
Jane Young

These Parish Families

10/2 Bob, Alicia, Penelope & Quinn Baker
Catherine Ballettie
10/9 Geoff & Kristen Benes
Dennis & Mary Bishop
10/16 Mary Boldt
Tom & Marilyn Borowski
10/23 Nicole, William, Tyler & Dominic
Braidwood– Perod
Alice Brandon
10/31 Steve, Margaret & Bobby Brandon
Mike, Erin, Kate, Meghan, Adrian &
Audrey Brokenshire

The Departed

Carol Lowrie
Mother of Kathy Sebrowski
Arlene Davidson
Mother of John Davidson
(former Parishioner)
Patricia Thomason
Martha Warbington
Sister of Joann Morelli

Those in the Armed Services

Stephen Armstrong—Nephew of Linda Pierce
Rachel Barton—Granddaughter of Jane Frank
Nathan Cremeans—Grandson of Barb Whitaker
Tom Fydrych— known to Rob Redmer
Stephanie Herderich—member of St. Stephen's
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
Clayton Ulrich—Nephew of Jeralyn Burrell

We constantly review and renew the lists for prayers. Please call the church office, or e-mail us at office@ststephenstroy.org, to ask that a relative or friend be added to those in need of our church's prayers.

October Anniversaries

Jim & Judy Lazzarro
McQuiston.....1
Richard & Diane
Kenefic.....11
Jim Trask & Frances
Hammond12
Charles & Vickie
Saylor13
Stan & Laura
Terlecky14
Phil & Linda
Pierce.....15
Arch & Kay
Coran.....21
Bruce & Nancy
Papet28



How to Contact Us

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The Rev. Susan Anslow Williams—Rector

Cell: 716-397-0997 (voice or text)

Home: 248-732-7955

rector@ststephenstroy.org

The Rev. Jim Maxwell, Retired Priest in Residence

jimmardi@wowway.com

John Pavik—Music Director

musicdirector@ststephenstroy.org

Ken Fuhr—Director of Christian Formation

formation@ststephenstroy.org

Jim Trask, Treasurer

Cathy Hoffman, Assistant to the Treasurer

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www.ststephenstroy.org (password: coffeeshour)

The Witness, Liz Sinkovich, Editor

witness@ststephenstroy.org

E-mail, bring to church or fax: 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, Nursery and Sunday School

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!

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

5500 North Adams Road

Troy, MI 48098

Please remember St. Stephen's in your will

Change Service Requested

Dated Material

OCTOBER 2016