



The WITNESS

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

October 2017

Mother Susan's
Musings



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

S'Mores

One of the big hits during S.O.S. week was (re)introducing the guests to "S'mores," featuring marshmallows roasted over a campfire. On Saturday night it was growing chilly, so a group of adults and kids stood around our fire pit to keep warm. The bright flames were all we had to see each other by, as we were past the reach of the building's window-light.

"Why are they called s'mores?" asked a young enthusiast. I explained the word play: "Because after eating one, you want *some more.*"

Silence.

I tried again. "Some more. Summore. S'more. Get it?"

Finally: "Huh."

Oh well.



All conversation quieted as we gazed into the embers, mesmerized by their pulsating glow. The fire was reaching that point of decision: Do we put on another log? Now, the embers were perfect for toasting marshmallows. A new log would promote flames but char the 'mallows. Leave the embers alone, and the campfire would soon die down for the night.

Sometimes our faith journey is like that campfire, I think: First a bright, exuberant flame that looks exciting! Glowing embers show maturity and warmth. Plus occasional times of decision – is it time to add more fuel?

Our church, like every church, is composed of all those stages, in a renewing life cycle of faith. Bright flames take hold, shoot up, yet eventually mellow into embers. But that's where the dependable heat is, the best kind

for making s'mores. You know – *some more!*

An old Bible-camp song goes:

*It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
And soon all those around can warm up in
its glowing.*

*That's how it is with God's love: Once
you've experienced it*

*You spread His love to ev'ryone, you want
to pass it on.*

("Pass it On" by Kurt Kaiser, 1969)

Passing on the legacy of God's love, sharing your glow, is one of the most rewarding aspects of church participation. Where else can young people both toast marshmallows AND learn what it means to trust Jesus during good times and bad? The adults in the S.O.S. program had stories to share, and so did our volunteers. Holy warmth was generated. Fuel was added in the form of good food, prayers, encouragement. God saw a bright light down here at 5500 N. Adams.

Now that S.O.S. week has passed, don't let the fire go out. We've got *s'more love* to share with God's people. Where do you see shadows in need of light? Where would an invitation to the "campfire" make a difference to a person feeling lonely or afraid of the dark?

We have the embers right here. Pass it on.



Around the Parish

October Lectionary

Oct 1—Pentecost 17

Ez 18: 1-4, 25-32
Psalm 25: 1-8
Phil 2: 1-13
Matt 21: 23-32

Oct 8—Pentecost 18

Is 5: 1-7
Psalm 9: 7-14
Phil 3: 4b-14
Matt 21: 33-46

Oct 15—Pentecost 19

Is 25: 1-9
Psalm 23
Phil 4: 1-9
Matt 22: 1-14

Oct 22—Pentecost 20

Is 45: 1-7
Psalm 96: 1-9, (10-13)
1 Thes 1: 1-10
Matt 22: 15-22

Oct 29—Pentecost 21

Lev 19: 1-2, 15-18
Psalm 1
1 Thes 2: 1-8
Matt 22: 34-46

Family Fun at Upland Hill Farm

Located in Oxford, Upland Hills Farm has a classic hay ride under the harvest moon. We invite you to meet at church on Friday, October 20th at 6:30pm travel to the farm together to enjoy a hayride that is NOT HAUNTED. It's a perfect outing for younger families and for those who prefer a less frightening experience!

After the hayride we will enjoy a bonfire with s'mores and songs – and maybe even a story or two! Please Sign up in the gathering area so we can let the folks at the farm know how many to expect. If you have any questions, please contact Ken Fuhr or Mother Susan.



Advent by Candlelight

The women of St. Stephens are invited to attend our annual Advent by Candlelight Celebration on; Sunday, December 3rd 7:00 pm.

This is a wonderful evening of sharing spirituality and the joy of welcoming Christ into our lives.

The event commences in the Parish Hall, beautifully transformed with tables decorated by each hostess using candle centerpieces, china, crystal, and delicious desserts. Next there is a special service in the church, including music and talks centered on Love, Faith, Hope and Joy.

If you would like to hostess a table for this special event, please look for the signup in the gathering area. We will provide coffee, tea, punch as well as several dapper servers to assist. Once hostesses have graciously offered to help they will receive a complete guild line. The general signup for everyone to share in this evening will follow.

Joyfully,

Alice Moss & Joan Knapp



Adult Faith



Transforming Faith

After several discussions, the Adult Faith committee has determined a need for transforming our faith with unexpected viewpoints. We invite everyone to attend any or all of the sessions that will be presented beginning November 5th at 9:00 A.M. until 9:45 A.M. in the Bishop Emrich Room. We have purposefully scheduled this between the 8 and 10 services to be an opportunity for both to enjoy fellowship and study together. Child-care will be available in the nursery, courtesy of Quinn O'Neill.

A thought-provoking book by Barbara Brown Taylor called *An Altar in the World* is our first selection. It offers an opportunity for the readers to think more deeply about how God transforms our lives in everyday living, meeting us where we are, and encouraging us to step outside our boxes. Meet with others to share Taylor's insights about finding faith in everyday life, in a very unorthodox, light-hearted, and meaningful way.

Get a jump on this short, easy read book; it is available from Amazon in both Kindle and paperback for around \$9.00. Please have your book by 11/5 with at least Chapter 1 read—16 pages, Don't miss Chapter 3, *The Practice of Wearing Skin*, and Chapter 8 *The Practice of Saying No*, but all of the chapters bring you closer to living in the light of Christ. Order your book now and be ready to begin a six week session on November 5 (skipping Thanksgiving week).

Open to everyone, bring a friend, men and women will be interested in the topics of **Transforming Faith**, an unusual and intriguing twist on Adult Study.

See Norma Ross or Kris Fuhr for more information.

Blessing of the Animals

St Francis of Assisi was reported to have conversed with the animals, long before Dr. Doolittle came along. He considered all creatures – even the stars and planets -- as brothers and sisters within God's grace-filled family. Let's celebrate his vision of worldwide harmony by bringing our animal friends to church for a blessing, at **4:30 pm on Saturday October 7** (the Saturday after St Francis' feast day, Oct. 4). All sorts of portable pets are welcome; tell your human friends too! Just please make sure the pets are properly constrained by leash, carrier, etc. so we don't have any mishaps.

Juan



Holy Conversations

Coming soon to a home near you! As part of our congregational planning process (see article by Don Ingersoll), a variety of opportunities will soon be announced for 8-10 parishioners to gather in fellowship and conversation. The topic: St. Stephen's, of course!

Why and when did you first come? What brought you back? What have been our hallmarks over the years? And, where do you see God calling us in the future? Please respond when the invitation reaches you. We want your voice in the conversation!

Juan

"The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw—and knew I saw—all things in God and God in all things."

Mechtild of Magdeburg

Church Notes

Let's Get This Right

A new group is rising! Some familiar names, but a new mixture; and soon their tentacles will spread throughout the congregation. Its first meeting was Oct. 1, so details are still being formulated. You will be hearing more about their mission and plans as they unfold.

Members are Anna Dorsey [Pierce], Pat Wojas, Katy Allen, Helen Giles, me [Don Ingersoll, who was elected chair]. Mother Susan is a de-facto member, and we expect to draw upon many others to help with aspects of our work. In fact, engaging others is critical. To be effective we need everyone's knowledge and ideas so we can have the best plan and a solid commitment for carrying it out.

What is this all about? Growth vs. decline. Making God and each other smile. Feeling better about ourselves and each other. Enhancing our historic brightness as a shining church on a hill [or at least Adams Road].

Here is the background. Church attendance has been declining across the country and across denominations for decades. Reasons people attend or don't attend have changed since most of us were kids. At St. Stephen's membership has been declining at a fairly steady rate since 2008, and revenues since 2012.

Our Diocese has been following this general situation; and so has your Vestry, going back to 2014 when it began having workshops and attending Diocesan Vestry retreats on the subject. The Vestry gained insights, and ideas for making changes popped into their heads.

But looking back, little has really changed in what we do or how we do it; and our membership and revenues continue to decline. Oh, we have cut operating costs--staff and other expenditures, but that doesn't solve the

problem. It just slows the trend which if continued doesn't have a happy ending.

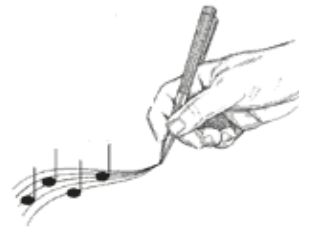
The good news is that the Vestry and the new committee don't think it's too late. Prior efforts to adjust came up short because we tried to jump to quick fixes. We are now planning to take the time necessary to engage everyone so we have the strongest possible knowledge base, and the best thinking available.

We also need to keep everyone informed as plans and actions unfold, so everyone knows what we are trying to do and why. Hopefully this will ensure commitment to the direction and actions being taken.

Please pray for us.

Sincerely,

Don Ingersoll



One Voice

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

Come and join Caleb and the rest of the choir to make some beautiful noise. Rehearsals are Wednesday from 7:30 to 9 pm.



Vestry Notes

Dad's Reflections

As a member of the Vestry we are given a month to write something for the Witness. I have always looked upon this practice as an opportunity to weigh in on some serious issue relevant to our Church. However, in the middle of a huge writers' block, I solicited help from my fellow Vestry members and am thankful for those who responded with ideas.

Mother Susan suggested, "Life Lessons from the Father of a Bride-To-Be." Since the marriage of our daughter Kristin will happen on October 14, coincidentally, I was starting to reflect on this whole process I find myself in. So thanks Mother Susan for the latitude.

While Kristin wants me to walk her down the aisle and I am honored and thrilled she actually wants me to, I am both conflicted and humored by the idea of "giving her away."

From my perspective, I had nothing to do with this. She met and built a life with her wonderful fiancé, Bengt, impressively and totally on her own. After all, the practice of walking your daughter down the aisle hails from the time when I, as an all powerful family head and deal maker, would have arranged her wedding for the most lucrative dowry I could get, since my daughter was my property to transact as I pleased. As a result, some think the practice is sexist and archaic.

In addition, for those of you who don't know Kristin, she is a one-of-a-kind child of God, being created without any mold and a seeming schizophrenia of opposites. She is both affable and powerful, independent and gregarious, smart and sensitive, beautiful but willing to jump in and get her hands dirty, and she has a creative side, but does very well in a job that demands detail and facility with numbers.

The idea that I have any control over this complex child of God and force of nature is really laughable.

Some explain the practice in the context of today's culture as symbolic of my approval of what is happening. While this is ok, another one of the traditions is that I will be giving a toast where I can clearly and emphatically state how much Helen and I love and respect Bengt, rendering an only symbolic act superfluous.

I choose to give up the "giving away" characterization and am approaching it as union not just of a couple, but of the full breadth of our respective families; embracing the future and not an act ending something. There is an important symbolism here also. Walking Kristin down the aisle is symbolic of God's love of her and Bengt along with Helen and my support of their future within a larger united family and community.

Alan Giles

The Giving

Who gives this woman to be wed?
Her mother and I.
We gave her dawn.
We gave her grace.
We stamped our image
On her face.
We gave her books,
And through the years
We calmed her early
Childhood fears.
We gave her faith.
We gave her prayer.
She walked our road.
She climbed our stairs.
And now in solemn troth
We swear,
We cannot give.
We only share.

Max Ellison

one World



**THE HARDEST PART
ABOUT GROWING UP IS
LETTING GO OF WHAT
YOU WERE USED TO,
AND MOVING ON WITH
SOMETHING YOU'RE
NOT.**

KUSHANDWISDOM

Inside the Parish Walls

Rite 13 Celebration

We will celebrate the Womanhood & Manhood of five 13-year-olds on Sunday, November 12th at the 10am service. At that time we will recognize the following youth who are 13 years old or will be turning 13 soon.

- Chase Armstrong
- Audrey Brokenshire
- David Burean
- Kassidy O'Neill
- Lachlan O'Neill

A reception will follow honoring the "Celebrities". Everyone is invited to join them in the Fellowship Hall for cake and congratulations.

These Celebrities and their parents will be gathering on FRIDAY, November 10 at 4:00pm for a meeting, rehearsal, and dinner. This is typically on Saturday night, but due to a scheduling conflict the rehearsal dinner will be on Friday. Parents and Celebrities are urged to invite family and friends to the rehearsal dinner and the Celebration on Sunday.

October 2017						
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

Teachers Aide Step Up

Thank you to all the adults and older youth who have signed up to help as teachers' aides in our 10am Sunday School classrooms. I feel so blessed to have the support of our parish family in many ways, and this is a perfect example. By the end of the second week-end we had the slots filled through January!

If you are an adult or high school youth and would still like to help, please let me know. This is a joyful ministry that everyone can take part in. Please consider signing up to help during the 2nd semester. Our teachers appreciate the help, the kids love the new faces, and the environment in our classrooms is truly enhanced by your presence.

Haunted Lock-In

All youth are invited to attend the Haunted Lock-in on Saturday, October 21st. We will meet at church at 7pm, travel to the Haunted Farm of Terror, and then return for the usual craziness. This is a fun night for all. Admission to the terrifying farm is \$25. Scholarships are always available. See the "Core" for more information.

One Family

Bible Study

Back to the Bible!

Our popular Wednesday Morning Bible Study resumes at 10 a.m. on Sept. 6, after our summer hiatus. All are welcome, always. Our tagline is, "No experience necessary!" Coffee, tea, treats and great conversation flow from our time with the Scriptures. Currently we're about halfway through Matthew's Gospel. Join us in the Emrich Library each Wednesday morning from 10:00-11:30.



Sandy Martin1
 James McQuiston.... 3
 Simon Trask 4
 Sue Stewart 4
 Elizabeth West 8
 Corinne Fragnoli 15
 Courtney Redmer ... 16
 Robeth Thatcher ... 17
 Donna Brokenshire. 19
 Gretchen Waters...20
 Katheryn Thatcher 22
 Dorothy Waun.....23
 Peggy Klempay.....23
 Pat Buller.....25
 Norma Ross.....26
 John Pincura.....27
 Karol Sprague28
 Samuel Parent28

Reaching Out

Speak Up, Show Love

Speak Up Show Love, Saturday, October 14 at St. John's, Royal Oak, from 10 am to 3 pm, is an event designed to give middle and high school students the opportunity to discover and practice ways of showing love and support to those populations being discriminated against, as well as ways to be positive messengers of love in a world that is increasingly showing hate

We are calling our workshops "Praxis." Praxis is the process by which a theory, lesson or skill is enacted, embodied or realized. The Praxis we are offering are: "How to be an Ally," "Taking care of yourself," and "What does it mean to 'Check your Privilege'?"

This FREE event will feature cool music, inspiring speakers, games, Praxis, lunch, and free t-shirts to the first 100 participants

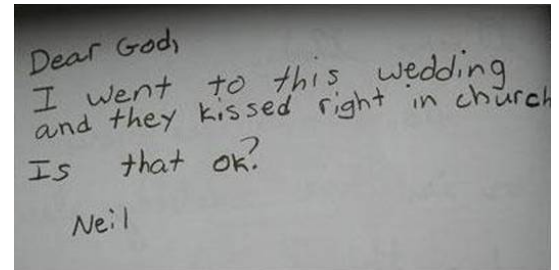
We also welcome parents and other adults to come and experience the day alongside their students. No pre-registration needed, just join us for a day of light, love and encouragement

If you have any questions, please contact Eric Travis, the Missioner for Youth and Young Adults at etravis@edomi.org, or 313-833-4418.



Popcorn Anyone?

The YACYM committee purchased a large popcorn popper for the youth and the entire parish to enjoy. This is a very simple piece of equipment to use, so if you would like to add popcorn to a meeting or gathering, all of the supplies are in the upper cabinet to the right of the stove. Contact Ken Fuhr for more details.



We Ask Your Prayers for...

Prayer Concerns

Ron Converse
Charles Saylor
Zoey Rose
Betsy McLachlan
Kyle J.
Joyce Vance
Thelma DePew
Gary Feighner
Beth L
Charmel Maki
Joe Simler
Greg Thompson
Tristyn Yant
Jerralyn Burrell
Dante Vannelli
Enid Hausding
Mark Hetzel
Kyle Merian
Annie Sharp
Diane Kenefic
Owen Canavan
Betty Feighner
Dave Berube
John Thunder
Betty Sage
Judy Ford
Mary Bandsuch

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
Peter Hughes—nephew of Bruce & Nancy Papet
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

Brendon Church
Kyle Church
Grandsons of Ed and Elaine Church & Nephew of Amy Church
Benjamin Church
Great Nephew of Ed and Elaine Church & Cousin of Amy Church

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.

These Parish Families

10/1 Patrick, Elizabeth & Katherine Roberts
Norma Ross
10/8 Susan Russell
Milton Ryalls
10/15 Lucinda & David Sabino
Cheri Salanty
10/22 Indira Samuel
Nalini, Elijah & Sudhaker Samuel
10/29 Sharon Sands
Angiya & Janet Satyanathan

October Anniversaries

Jim & Judy Lazzarro
McQuiston.....1
Richard & Diane
Kenefic.....9
Jim & Frances
Hammond
Trask.....12
Charles & Vickie
Saylor.....14
Stanley & Laura
Terlecky.....14
Phil & Linda
Pierce.....15
Arch & Kay
Coran.....21
Bruce & Nancy
Papet.....28



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

Ken Fuhr—Director of Christian Formation

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Caleb Sinclair—Music Director

musicdirector@ststephenstroy.org

Jim Trask, Treasurer

Pam Bonkowski—Assistant to the Treasurer

treasurer@ststephenstroy.org

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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 2017