



The WITNESS

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

November 2017

Mother Susan's
Musings

Family Times



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

I recently returned from a three-day workshop for clergy, on a subject called "Family Emotional Process." The theory of Family Systems, first developed by psychiatrist Dr. Murray Bowen (1913-1990), asserts that we learn how to relate to others based on the family we grew up with. Not such a new idea, right? Except here's the kicker: Patterns of adult-adult and adult-child and sibling-sibling interactions get repeated from generation to generation. We will repeat them in some fashion -- until we notice and learn. Then we can work at becoming our own person, regulating emotions and making decisions freely.

A few of you have already expressed an interest in what this "Family systems theory" has to offer; so now I can recommend a couple of books and articles, just ask. You can start by looking up "Bowen Theory" online. I always discuss family patterns with pre-marital couples, and have them draw their family tree as we consider the multi-generational trends.

The primary subject in this class, however, is **ourselves**. The result will be better leaders for our churches. Why is that? Our society seems to run on anxiety. Calm voices are lost in the media fray. Religious people of all types, lay and ordained, are under stress. *But some things really make you crazy, right? And why does X situation make you nuts, but it's Y that gets to me?*

When we can recognize what situations make us anxious, Bowen's theory says we can get answers from looking at our family patterns. All of us students were given holiday homework: to research the hidden stories of our family tree, the addictions or abuses, the closet-skeletons and "black sheep," the times that some family members sided against others, or cut off contact altogether. When we discover places that need healing, we are to start that process too. Healing can take years -- as any of you with these family patterns already know.

Yet the task is not to *blame* our family for shortcomings; after all, whose is perfect?? Instead, we are to take the simple (or not so simple) opportunity to talk with family members *non-anxiously* -- and this will begin to make things better. Asking mom or dad, aunt or uncle, for advice -- "I'm facing this; how did you handle it when..." -- is an example of how to grow in relating and understanding.

I think that's the primary reason we read the Bible and teach it to our children: When things were getting tough, how did our ancestors in faith handle them? Granted, some tough situations -- like massive floods or pagan invasions -- aren't so likely anymore. *Or are they? Hmmm.*



Family Times continued on page 2



Around the Parish

November Lectionary

Nov 5—All Saints

Jos 3: 7-17
Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37
1 Thes 2: 9-13
Matt 23: 1-12

Nov 12—Pentecost 23

Jos 24: 1-3A, 14-25
Psalm 78: 1-9
1 Thes 4: 13-18
Matt 25: 13-18

Nov 19—Pentecost 24

Judges 4: 1-7
Psalm 123
1 Thes 5: 1-11
Matt 25: 14-30

Nov 26—Pentecost 25

Ezek 34: 11-16
Psalm 100
Eph 1: 15-23
Matt 25: 31-46

Family Times—Continued

Not all leaders in the Bible handled their stress well. Noah got drunk and Samson destroyed everything he could pull down. Jesus is the prime example of a *Non-Anxious Leader*, ready to continue his mission of preaching, teaching and healing -- even when the anxieties of others tried to derail him.

I don't anticipate being as successful as Jesus in avoiding bad reactions to new stressors. But we all can get better, one family member at a time. I hope you also can find ways to engage with gratitude the families who shaped your life, taught you a great deal, and probably messed you up a bit. It's a good thing grace and mercy are readily available to us all, both to give and to receive.

Thankfully your pastor,

Joan



Advent by Candlelight

The women of St. Stephens are invited to attend our annual Advent by Candlelight Celebration on; Sunday, December 3rd 6:00 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 with The Grace Notes, and talks centered on Love, Faith, Hope and Joy.

If you would like to hostess a table for this special event, please sign up 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 helpful how to list.

Everyone that would like to attend (but not hostess a table) Please sign up and we will help find a table.

Joyfully,
Joan Knapp

Alice Moss

(248) 840-3631



Thanks Be to God for All of You!

November brings Thanksgiving Day when more than ever we thank God for our many blessings. High on our list of blessings as usual are our wonderful family, good friends, our health and the great country we live in.

This year Don and I have new reason to be thankful; this summer our granddaughter Jocelyn, came out to family and friends as being transgender. This was an acknowledgment that while his body is female, his brain tells him he is male.

We had previously attended a seminar on this topic. We learned from some U of M professors that while the historic notion has been that gender is binary – one is either male or female – that is not correct. Fetuses develop male or female physical attributes before the brain does; thus, mismatches can and do occur. This is not something people chose, it just happens in the womb. No one knows why.

Because this is uncommon, some challenges will arise as people learn about and come to accept it. We aren't thankful that Greyson will have to face these challenges, but we are thankful that he had the courage to come out so he doesn't have to face this situation alone or continue to hide the truth. Most of all, we are grateful that our family and friends are being so accepting and loving.

This includes those of our church family who already know. The J2A youth group was immediately supportive when told during its Chicago Urban Adventure. Most of the older youth are aware and have embraced Greyson.

So, what can you do as part of our church family? The most important thing is to do nothing new. As Greyson said during announcements last week while thanking folks

for supporting his school's pizza fundraiser, he loves being part of St. Stephen's and values the unconditional support he has received from you over the years.

Next is the hard part. Begin calling him Greyson, and try to use the masculine pronouns. Greyson knows that 14-year-old habits are hard to break, so if you make mistakes like I often do, don't worry about it. It will get easier over time. Greyson is very understanding. What he mainly needs is our continued love and support which you have given him since he was a toddler.

Greyson entered Waterford Kettering High School this fall. He is continuing to play the cello in the orchestra and will be working on the fall play. He will also continue being a vital part of his J2A class.

Mother Susan suggested having a naming ceremony and Greyson has agreed. We hope to have it in November. But again, the most important thing you can do is be supportive, accepting, caring and loving. That shouldn't be too difficult because that is what St. Stephen's parishioners do, not just in hard times, but all the time.

The date for the naming liturgy has been set for November 12, at the 10 am service.

Jackie Ingersoll

As the editor of the Witness, I have never made a commentary on an article, but I wanted this time to say thank you to Jackie and Grayson for sharing this. I had the pleasure of teaching Greyson in Rite 13, and I am thankful that I know him, and applaud his courage. I'm glad that he's part of my family!

Liz

"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

Book Study

The book study of "An Altar in the World" starts November 5th at 9 am and continues through December, between the Sunday services, one chapter at a time. Contact Kris Fuhr for more information

Church Notes

Transforming Youth

Beginning this month our youth program design will move into a two-group system. High school age youth will meet together in one of the groups and middle school age youth in a second group. The high school group will include college age students as well.

The middle school group will be for youth in 5th grade through 8th grade. Just as with the previous design, when those students are close to 13 years of age we will have a Rite 13 Celebration as we have in the past. There will also be an outdoor adventure every two years for this group and the focus will remain on building a loving, caring community of trusted friends.

The high school groups will continue to do a Pilgrimage/Mission trip every other year. The next youth Pilgrimage/Mission trip will be in the summer of 2019. This year, those in the high school who have not been confirmed will also have confirmation class in the spring and be confirmed in May by Bishop Gibbs.

This change was made to maintain each group's size at a level that is comfortable for discussion and activities that take place throughout the year. The key elements of the Journey program will be maintained as well, but this change will help make class on Sunday and the activities throughout the year more effective.

Ken Fisher



Sunday School Help

We have had a wonderful response on the call for teachers' aides to help with our 10:00 Sunday school classes. Thanks to all of you who have signed up. We are set through January.

We still need more help though, so if you are willing to spend one or two Sundays being an extra set of hands in the classes, please sign up. You don't have to prepare a lesson or have any previous experience. Just be there to help at 10.

The signup sheet for this is in the Gathering Area.

Thanks,

Ken Fisher

Special Service

Please join me and fellow saints
of St Stephen's Church
for a special worship service:

Saturday, November 4 at 4:30 pm
Holy Eucharist for All Saints

with a Reception to follow, celebrating all
our remarkable saints age 90+ !
Reflect with me on the Christian life,
your joys and challenges and hopes.

Bring family and friends to join our party.
Please let us know you'll be coming.
Faithfully yours,

Susan Williams, Rector
RSVP 248-641-8080



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.



Inside the Parish Walls

Rite 13 Celebration

This year, 5 youth will be celebrated on Sunday, November 12th as we recognize the amazing gift of womanhood and manhood God has given them. Chase Armstrong, Audrey Brokenshire, David Burean, Cassidy O'Neill, and Lachlan O'Neill will be our Celebrities at the 10 a.m. service that Sunday with a special reception to follow.

The Celebrities and their parents will also meet Friday, November 10th at 6:00 p.m. for dinner, followed by a rehearsal. At that time they will practice for Sunday as well as gather to discuss the purpose of the celebration and the reason they are so special in God's eyes and in ours.

Please plan to be at the 10 a.m. service that Sunday to show your support of these young people. Older youth are also reminded that they will be sitting at the front of the church as well to serve as support for their younger brothers and sisters.

Ken Fisher

November 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		

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

Thanksgiving Service

"Come, ye thankful people, come!" It's St Stephen's turn to host the Troy churches' Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service, held annually on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving.

Join us at **7 pm on Tuesday, November 21** for hymns, prayers and a massed choir drawn from a variety of congregations. We will provide fellowship in the form of a Pie Reception after the service. *Everybody loves pie!* Bring a favorite, we'd love to have a variety to share on this special occasion. A sign-up page will be in the gathering area. Thanks!

Susan



Pageant News!

Once again the team of Peter and Greyson will stage a spectacular pageant that will be the perfect entre to the Christmas season. The pageant will be held on Saturday, December 16th at 4:30pm. This will include a short Eucharistic Service with dinner to follow. More details will come, but mark your calendars now so you won't miss this fun evening.

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.



November Birthdays

Melissa Hardy	1
Elaine Church	2
Bill Langridge	4
Shanker Sundareson	5
Amy Redmer	5
Kachi Ezeugwa.....	7
Ed Church.....	9
Pat Przeslawski	12
Karen Morley.....	14
Shannon Weigant ...	19
Ardy Dostert	21
Lani Nolan	21
Brent Fragnoli.....	21
Margaret Fielder ...	22
Gio Perod.....	22
Paula Somerville	24
Joan Thunder.....	25
Jacques Ndione	25
Claire Grutta.....	28
Val Thompson.....	29
John Lynch III.....	29
Kate Pincura	29
Tom Borowski.....	29

Reaching Out

Christmas Walk

It's back! Mark your calendars for Saturday December 2 starting at 6:00 pm for our annual Christmas Walk. This is a great way to start the holiday season and see some homes decorated for Christmas.

We'll be starting the evening at Linda and Phil Pierce's home, moving on to Jackie and Don Ingersoll's, and ending up at Amy and Rob Redmer's home for dessert.

Tickets are \$15 each with all proceeds being donated to the Baldwin Center. Tickets will be available during fellowship hour following the 10 o'clock service beginning in early November. You can also pay the night of the walk. Please contact Amy or Rob Redmer with any questions.



Amy & Rob Redmer

Books, Books, Books

I belong to two Friends of the Library groups and organize their used book sales. If you have books you no longer need, I would be more than happy to take them off your hands. If you have a large quantity, I can pick them up from your home. We take all kinds of books as long as they are in good shape. Please call me at 248-703-3476 or email me at jackie@doningersoll.com.

Thanks,
Jackie Ingersoll

Big Thanks

A big thank you to Steve Fragnoli for being our weed killer in residence. I have really appreciated his help in this area over the past few years. It's one of those jobs that goes unseen around St. Stephen's but is really important. Thank you, thank you, thank you Steve.

Jackie Ingersoll

Website Reminders

The home page of the website looks great and is the portal to all the useful information on the site. Front and center is the link to the Calendar. Be sure to check that periodically to see what's coming up. On the top tool bar are drop down menus that navigate to the other pages. Under "About" you will find the "Information" page with schedules, forms, the bulletin, and many other helpful links. Be sure to familiarize yourself with this so you have easy access to current information about our parish at any time.

Ken Fuchs

Holy Conversations

Have you signed up to attend a Holy conversation gathering? We need your voice to be heard! Call the office or sign up in the Gathering Area this weekend!



We Ask Your Prayers for...

Prayer Concerns

Linda Lou Jarvis	Pamela Waleke
Jeralyn Burrell	Jim Whitaker
Nancy Johnston Pilloried	Janet Satyanathan
Betty Sage	
Judy Ford	
Laura Hayden	
Zoey Rose	
Edith Richardson	
Jim Sherman	
Ron Gural	
Betty Feighner	
Katie Yant	
Tristyn Yant	
Michelle L'Hommedieu	
Kelly Damphousse	
Diane Clary	
Charles Saylor	
Charmel Maki	
Joe Simler	
Greg Thompson	
Kyle Merian	
Beth LeClair	
Sally Granger	
Jane Young	
Michelle Baricivic	
J.R. Polson	
Paul Quigley	
Suzanne Ross	

Those in the Armed Services

Nathan Cremeans—grandson of Barb Whitaker
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

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

These Parish Families

11/5	Vicki & Charles Saylor Sheryl Schmidt
11/12	Kathy & Gerald Sebrowski Liz Sinkovich, Amy & Emma Boldt
11/19	Helen Slater Michael, Katherine, Ethan & Caleb Sobolewski
11/26	Paula Somerville Miranda Spates

The Departed

Patrick Caulfield

Father of Cathy Hoffman

November Anniversaries

Richard & Donna	
Vance	10
Michael & Martha	
Szott	11
David & Lucinda	
Sabino	28

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.



How to Contact Us

Church Office: (Open 9:30-1:30 weekdays)

Tel: 248-641-8080 Fax: 248-641-8067

Jacki Mudrich, Parish Administrator

office@ststephenstroy.org

The Rev. Susan Anslow Williams—Rector

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

Home: 248-732-7955

rector@ststephenstroy.org

Ken Fuhr—Director of Christian Formation

formation@ststephenstroy.org

Caleb Sinclair—Music Director

musicdirector@ststephenstroy.org

Jim Trask, Treasurer

Pam Bonkowski—Assistant to the Treasurer

treasurer@ststephenstroy.org

Church Website: Ken Fuhr, Webmaster

www.ststephenstroy.org (password: coffeehour)

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

NOVEMBER 2017