



The WITNESS

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

January 2018

Mother Susan's
Musings

Looking Forward to a New Year



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's 2018 already – how did that happen?? On January 28 we will look back at 2017 and forward to what God has in store for us, at a particularly important Annual Parish Meeting. Please plan to join us. This year, we will start the meeting proper at 11:15 in the parish hall, rather than in the church. This is in order to facilitate discussions about what decisions and opportunities most inspire YOU “to love and serve the Lord.”

Trying to summarize a year of parish life is never easy! I won't deny that 2017 was particularly challenging for me as your rector, and I will say more about that at the meeting. Conflicting visions and steps for action are part of any organization, and your Vestry and I have been working through leadership and relationship issues in the past year-plus. It has been difficult but rewarding work.

I've appreciated the prayers and support of many parishioners, family friends, and diocesan colleagues; and I've invested time and money into learning more about myself, my skills and my needs. I've tried to put healthier practices into place. So have members of the Vestry. This concerted study-effort will continue in the new year; the learning and practicing never stop.

I wrote in November about **Family Systems** as a framework for recognizing and responding to issues that always seem to “push our buttons.” Another helpful teaching comes from **Appreciative Inquiry**, which is: *The things we focus on, will affect (and limit) our range of responses.* In other words, if we only look backward, either at “glory days” or old decisions we didn't like, we can't imagine a different future that fits different times.

I'm excited by results from 2017's “Holy Conversations” that show we are ready, willing and able to do just that – to trust one another and to trust God, for making visible the Kingdom of Heaven in Troy, MI.

Be here on January 28 when we will look backward at 2017 and forward to our future. Read on, for details about the Strategic Planning process that is continuing in 2018; for ways you can be involved in its development; and for immediate openings in God's mission for St Stephen's. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Faithfully yours,





Around the Parish

January Lectionary

Jan 7—Epiphany 1

Gen 1: 1-15
Psalm 29
Acts 19: 107
Mark 1: 4-11

Jan 14—Epiphany 2

1 Sam 3: 1-10 (11-20)
Psalm 139 1-5, 12-17
1 Cor 6: 12-20
John 1:43-51

Jan 21—Epiphany 3

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10
Psalm 62: 6-14
1 Cor 7: 29/31
Mark 1: 14-20

Jan 28—Epiphany 4

Deut 18: 15-20
Psalm 111
1 Cor 8: 1-13
Mark 1: 21-28



Proposed By-Law Change

As the Vestry put out the call for new leaders to replace those whose terms end at the Annual Meeting {Alice Moss, Norma Ross, Paula Somerville, Jackie Ingersoll}, they encountered the usual difficulties of getting four persons to sign on for three-year terms. This is an annual dilemma, as everyone's schedule seems to get more and more loaded with evening meetings and family events.

Reading through the Episcopal Church's canons and our own by-laws, the Vestry is proposing some changes to Vestry membership for your consideration at the Annual Meeting. In summary, we would like the parish's permission to reduce the number of elected Vestry-persons from 14 (12 adults and two youth) to nine adults.

The previous (2001) edition of our by-laws stipulates that four adults be elected annually for three-year terms, and two young people age 16-21 shall be elected for a one-year term. The Vestry quickly discovered that students don't have the time or interest to attend a Vestry meeting every month. Soon, no Youth could be convinced to run!

Instead, we plan to invite our young people more frequently to provide input on decisions most affecting them, such as, currently, our Strategic Plan. And if nine motivated adults serve on the Vestry, with its particular type of oversight, other parishioners will be freed for involvement in committees and events that truly interest them. Many Episcopal churches have already reduced their Vestry size from 12 to 9, including Mo. Susan's previous church in New York. The 3-year term is a canonical rule and a practical one, for continuity of the work and just "learning the ropes."

The proposed process is this: Three new Vestry join eight continuing Vestry for a mem-

bership of 11 in 2018; four go off and three come on in 2019 for 10 members; and in 2020 we reach nine total. Please prayerfully consider voting in favor of the revision, passed by the Vestry at their meeting on January 9. The old version will be printed for comparison, at the Annual Meeting on January 28.

Section 2. Vestry Members

Paragraph One: "The Vestry shall consist of nine (9) members elected from the membership of the parish. Beginning with the Annual Parish Meeting of January 2018 and at subsequent Annual Meetings, three rather than four persons shall be elected to serve, until nine is the normal Vestry membership."

Paragraph Two: "Each Vestry member shall be elected for one term of three (3) years or until a successor is elected. No adult Vestry member may be reelected to his/her position for a minimum of one year following expiration of the term."

[Paragraph Three, on how to elect Youth Members, would be deleted completely.]

Contact any member of the Vestry if you have questions about this proposal.

Inside the Parish Walls



Transforming Faith 2.0

If you think you missed out on joining the Transforming Faith group this fall, don't worry, you haven't. The design of this adult faith formation group is to do several different formats (book, movies, lectures, etc.) to challenge each of us to grow deeper in our own spirituality with a little help from our friends.

Our first study was a book, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith* by Barbara Brown Taylor (An Episcopal priest and college professor from Georgia), which challenged us to step outside of the church building to find the church around us.

Our next session will help us to explore the topic of grace (you know that gift from God freely given) from the perspective of Philip Yancey (a well-known, award-winning author and editor of *Christianity Today*) who will challenge us to find grace in ourselves and our churches.

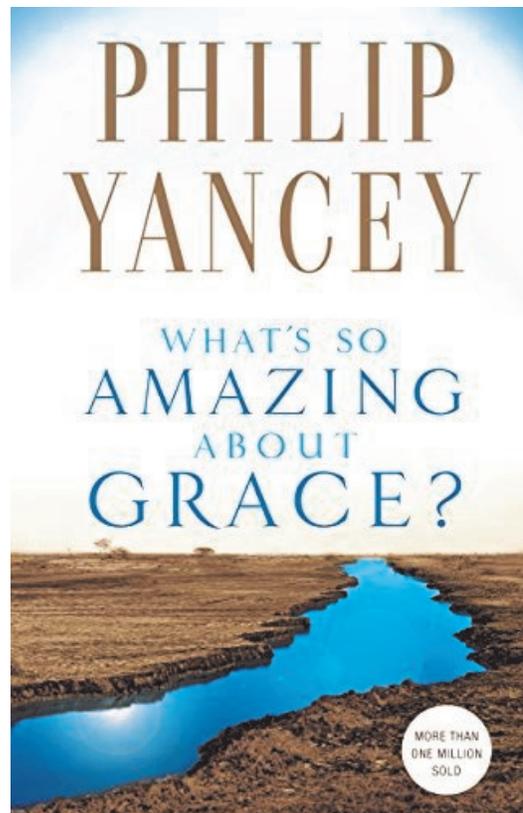
The Transforming Faith group invites you to join in a ten session study of *What's So Amazing about Grace* (DVD series with workbook). We will begin on January 14th, 2018 at 9 a.m. in the Bishop Emrich Room.

The sessions last about 40 minutes, including a 15-minute video section of Philip Yancey's insights, followed by discussion and activity. You do not need to have read his book, although it certainly is designed to enhance what is presented in the book. The DVD series can stand alone, and each 15-minute session

covers a different aspect of a beautiful word, and powerful concept.

Come for all sessions or one session; you will be challenged and supported in your faith by a group of wandering pilgrims like yourself. Dates are January 14, 21 (no 28 due to annual meeting), February 3, 11, 18, 25 and March 4, 11, 18, and 25. We hope you will find that Grace is a wonderful topic for Epiphany and Lent.

Kris Fuhr



Church Notes

SPOC Invites Additional Input

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee (SPOC) has decided that it's time to move into other data-gathering modes, rather than scheduling additional "Holy Conversations." As Don Ingersoll reports in his article, the comments from those meetings have been very helpful as we go forward.

Those who didn't have a chance to attend a Conversation (or who would like to tell us more!) are invited to contact members of the Committee by email or phone. The discussion areas from the Holy Conversations follow.

Thank you for helping us to recall our strengths and envision the future! More on the progress of our Strategic Planning will be presented at the Annual Meeting, January 28.

Contact any member of the SPOC via email or cell phone, to add to the Conversation collection.

Katy Allen, allenkaty@hotmail.com - (978) 944-3225

Anna Dorsey Pierce, dorsey92@gmail.com

Helen Giles, hgiles12@gmail.com - (248) 953-9478

Don Ingersoll, don@doningersoll.com - (248) 515-9646

Pat Wojas, pmwojas@gmail.com - (248) 633-4606

Mo. Susan Williams, rector@ststephenstroy.org - (716) 397-0997



Questions – choose some or all! We did not cover all of these at every Holy Conversation.

1. What first brought you to St Stephen's?
2. What are the things about attending worship and being a part of the St. Stephens congregations that make you feel the best?
3. What events or activities are most enjoyable to you? What makes them enjoyable? What would make them better? What detracts from their enjoyability?
4. What are things that don't provide value to you, or seem problematic? What could be done to improve those areas / lessen their negative impact?
5. In what ways do our building and our grounds enhance or detract from your enjoyment of membership at St Stephen's?
6. What are your feelings about our music during worship? What are attributes that enhance your enjoyment?
7. What are your opinions on involvement of kids at St Stephen's?
8. Do you participate in Fellowship Hour? What's most enjoyable? How could they be improved?
9. Have you always been an Episcopalian? If not, what is your background? How smooth was your transition? What could we do to improve on that in the future?
10. Are you currently involved in any mission areas of our church?
11. What else would you like to tell us?



Parish News

Check the Pics!

This past month we had some fun children and youth activities that are highlighted in the slideshow at the top of the "Children and Youth" page on our website. Be sure to check those out. On the "Photo Gallery" page you will see images of some of the events earlier in 2017 and before.

Visit the gallery and check out all the fun we had last year and some pictures from the wonderful Twelfth Night Dinner getting our new year started. Then, please make it a special point in 2018 to send pictures you take of our St. Stephen's community working, praying, laughing, playing, and being who we are that can be added to the website gallery. Just email them to:

webmaster@ststephenstroy.org right from your phone after you take the picture.

Thanks!
Ken Fuhr

January 2018						
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

Crafting Kindness

For all of you who craft, and even those who don't, Saturday, January 27th is the next crafting kindness gathering. We will meet from 10 am to 2 pm.

Katy Allen



Annual Meeting

The St. Stephen's annual meeting will be held in the parish hall on Sunday, January 28th after the 10 am service. Please make sure to save the date.

Lunch will follow!

Thanks,
Alice Moss

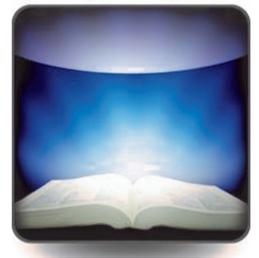
Susan

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.



Just So You Know...

Your Strategic Planning Oversight Committee would like to thank everyone that participated in a **Holy Conversation**, the first step of our long-range planning process.

We held 8 Holy Conversations, including 2 with Sunday School classes. Almost 60 adults and 15 students attended at least one session.

Some folks who couldn't attend provided written input. Others requested an additional session so that they could participate. We will try to arrange one in the new year.

Feedback about the conversations has been very positive. Participants said they were pleased to have been involved, and they got to know one another better [even people they thought they already knew well]. We had very open conversations about what we liked about St. Stephen's, and ideas for making it even better.

Over the Holidays our committee was digesting the input. In the new year we will dig deeper, and continue the process; keeping everyone informed along the way. Thanks for your help so far, and we look forward to your continued support as we seek ways to get even better together.

Don Ingersoll
Committee Chair

Called to Care

The ministry of pastoral care is vital to the spiritual well-being of all Christians, both giving and receiving as circumstances arise. Do you feel called to be a giver of care, such as visiting shut-ins or hospitalized parishioners? Or to the special ministry of Eucharistic Visitor — perhaps you'd be interested in joining one of our current EVs on a call some Sunday after church?

If either of these is the case, please get in touch with Norma Ross (rossmail@comcast.net) or Mo. Susan. We'd love to tell you about ways to reach out with caring compassion, to our growing number of parishioners who would love to get a visit.

Norma Ross



Joann Morelli.....	3
Marilyn Borowski.....	3
Jim Trask.....	3
Gordon McMullen.....	3
Alice Moss.....	5
Dorothy Langridge...	6
Nancy Papet.....	8
Winifred Lowery.....	8
Marilyn Gilbert.....	8
Gloria Christiansen..	11
Dave Stein.....	12
Michael Giles.....	12
Kate Roberts.....	12
Kristin Herderich...	12
Rod Johnson.....	14
John Podsiadlik.....	18
Charles Saylor.....	19
Donna Johnson.....	21
Sathi Satyanathan..	21
Margaret Williams..	21
Diane Kenefic.....	22
Susan Russell.....	22
Jill Stein.....	23
Jill West.....	23
Molly Grubb.....	24
Eric Williams.....	24
Cindy Vida.....	24
Jim Maxwell.....	25
Inge Wojas.....	26
Greyson Ingersoll...	27
Chris Herfurth.....	28
Jen Trask.....	30
Jim Whitaker.....	30

"The greatest thing this generation can do is lay a few stepping stones for the next generation."
-Charles F. Kettering

We Ask Your Prayers for...

Prayer Concerns

Linda Lou Jarvis	Pamela Waleke
Jeralyn Burrell	Jim Whitaker
Nancy Johnston Pilloried	Janet Satyanathan
Betty Sage	Molly Neumann
Judy Ford	Rick Lowery
Laura Hayden	Sonia Nihem
Zoey Rose	Harold Ford
Edith Richardson	Jackie Jakubowski
Jim Sherman	Stacey Wesley
Ron Gural	Tim Stanley
Betty Feighner	
Katie Yant	
Tristyn Yant	
Michelle L'Hommedieu	
Kelly Damphousse	
Diane Clary	
Charles Saylor	
Charmel Maki	
Joe Simler	
Greg Thompson	
Kyle Merian	
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

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

1/7	John & Joan Thunde4r Cynthia Tischer
1/14	Jim, Frances, Simon & Jen Trask Thomas & Cynthia Vida
1/21	Geoff & Cheryl Walter Kevin & Carolyn Ward
1/28	Roy & Gretchen Waters William & Dorothy Waun

The Departed

George Howell

Maxine McIntyre Dickie

James McKenzie



January Anniversaries

Roy & Gretchen
Waters.....7

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

Sue Gore—Choir and Music Director

248-852-1379

Jim Trask, Treasurer

Pam Bonkowski—Assistant to the Treasurer

treasurer@ststephenstroy.org

Church Website: Ken Fuhr, Webmaster

www.ststephenstroy.org (password: coffeefhour)

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

JANUARY 2018