

The Witness

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

December 2018 / January 2019

A Message from our Senior Warden

Happy Advent Family!!

As we are all enjoying this most hallowed season, I cannot help but consider how blessed we are to have each other! I look around the church from my pew on Sunday mornings and see each of you in "your" pew just as family sits around the dining table at home and I find comfort. I see our youth so comfortably engaging in their various Sunday routines and I find Joy. I come to Jesus's table with you and I find strength and renewal.

As I trust we have all come to realize this year, St. Stephen's is more than just a place of worship – more than just an obligation – St. Stephen's is OUR home. The place we gather as a family to comfort, encourage, laugh, cry, celebrate, eat, drink, learn, teach, and most important LOVE one and other.

St. Stephen's is a unique place because of us and through this crazy year we have come together and once again made the church "us" and where "we" are ... together ... is the church. How amazing is it each week of the year to come together and celebrate our faith and while we are together celebrate each other by comforting, arguing,

agreeing, supporting, and ultimately, LOVING one and other!! Isn't this by definition FAMILY?!!

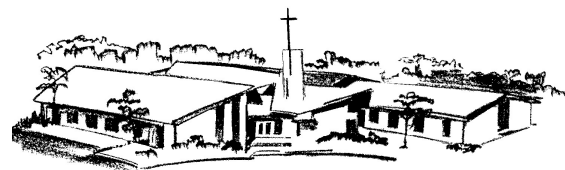
As we continue on our path of transition, let this family look to the coming year with hope and anticipation much as we look to the celebration of Jesus's birth. Let us fill the rafters with laughter and joy versus worry and strife. I take comfort in the knowledge God brought us together and as any family we are far stronger together than apart!

This is the season for giving and as we carefully select gifts for our children, parents, siblings, or even friends ... let us never forget to select the gift we can share with one and other and our parish home ...

Love. God gave the world the first Christmas present, the greatest gift of all, wrapped up in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. As we prepare to celebrate his birth I am overwhelmed with the knowledge that God gave me you as well to celebrate this hallowed moment and I am comforted and humbled.

With much Love and many Blessings

Scott, Sr. Warden



Message from the editor...

This is the first Witness publication since the Summer issue. It will look different than what you're accustomed to, but I hope you enjoy it. I don't know how often it will come out - monthly is desired, but bi-monthly is more realistic in the beginning. I welcome your articles, photos, and suggestions. A View from the Pew is a new section where I or anyone of you will write something that is thought-provoking or inspiring.

Setting the Table

St. Stephen's Altar Guild sets the table for everyone to share in Communion with Christ. We need your help in making it possible. Men and Women are welcome to serve, no experience needed we all help each other.

Help make our Church glorious by giving flower donations in Memorial or Thanks at Christmas time, special occasions, and all year long. There is a new flower sign-up (above drinking fountain) Or please contact the office.

Thank you and Blessings of the season,

-Alice Moss



A View from the Pew

We Are Family

Scott Armstrong likes to talk about the St. Stephen's Family. As a member of St. Stephen's for over 25 years, I understand what he means. Having attended the recent funerals for Bill Martin and Janet Satyanathan, I looked around and I saw family saying good-bye to family. Family is an interesting term. Obviously, we have the families we are born into. We have the families we create when we marry and/or have children. These families grow as our kids marry and have children of their own.

We have other "families" in the form of where we work. For many of us, we will spend more time at work with this family than we will with our own. But the family that we have at church is a special one. It is here we've developed special relationships and deep friendships with people we worship together with.

At St. Stephens, I've experienced the most special kind of family. The highs are too many to count: the laughs, parties, food, potlucks, 12th Nights, concerts, Christmas walks, choir, golf outings, bowling leagues, baptisms, confirmations and J2A auctions to name a few. But true family is with those who are there during your darkest hours: loss of a loved one, an illness or loss of a job. We've also come together to support others less fortunate: SOS, Habitat for Humanity, Baldwin Center, Food Pantry and countless other outreach activities.

As time goes on many members will move, seek another church or as is often the case, will drift away after their children graduate from high school (still trying to figure that one out). Which makes me wonder how strong of a bond our parish family had with them. I've come to realize that our parish family means something different for each member. Like many things in life, you get out of it what you put into it. The same goes with the relationships you've developed while attending church. If you attend a service and don't get involved it will be a challenge to feel part of the family. But if you take the time to get involved and participate you will have the opportunity to develop life-long friendships. I know I have.

Rob Redmer

Twelfth Night Celebration - Tickets Available

Please join your fellow parishioners on Saturday, January 5th for our annual Twelfth Night celebration. We will enjoy an evening of fellowship, fine dining, music, merriment, and perhaps some mischief.

Dinner will be prepared by the Fragnoli's with assistance of Joe Hopper, Scott Armstrong and the Hospitality Committee. The meal will be served by the amazing youth of St. Stephen's. Tickets are \$20 each and complimentary for new members. Wine will be provided but feel free to bring your favorite wine to be shared at your table.



In order to plan properly, please reserve your seating soon if you are planning on attending. Childcare will be provided so everyone can celebrate together.

To purchase tickets, please see either Stephen or Corinne Fragnoli at the 10:00 am service on Sunday's. If you would like to reserve your tickets, you may email Stephen Fragnoli at: stephen.fragnoli@ccnetwork.com or contact us at; Stephen (248) 640-1362 or Corinne (248) 515-2651.

Merry Christmas,

Stephen, Corinne, and the Hospitality Committee

Sunday School: Where Kids Become God's Children

St. Stephen's is a household of God, and the Sunday school kids are an important and integral part of it. So, it seems logical that we help our kids understand how all of us have come together as a church family under God. Fittingly, this year's Sunday school theme is "A Celebration of Family."

St. Stephen's youth are so lucky to have such a caring congregation to support them. You praise them as youth readers and acolytes, buy fundraising cookies and popcorn from them, support their auction and programs, and have even stood up for one of our transgender youth through his renaming ceremony. That's family, and the older kids are always expressing their appreciation.

The Young Adult Children and Youth Ministry Committee [YACYM] is excited about this year's Sunday school program. We have about 15 kids enrolled in our middle and high school classes. Most of them participated in a canoe and camping trip in August. They paddled down the Au Sable River and then camped out overnight. A good time was had by all, although there were a few sore arm muscles. A big thanks to Brent and Steve Fragnoli, Megan Vandenhemel, and Ken Fuhr for organizing this outing, setting up camp and being chaperones. These classes also participated in a couple of fall activities, a trip to a cider mill for the Middle school kids and the Haunted House/

lock-in for the older kids

The elementary class (PK-2nd grade) is in the building stages. We have several new little ones joining us this year to go along with our returning students. It's been lots of fun sharing some Old Testament "family" stories with them.

There was a need for a 3-5 grade class this year. A big thank you to Rob Redmer for stepping in and taking over this class. Rob was a Youth Teacher for many years before taking a well-deserved sabbatical. We are glad to have someone with his experience back teaching our children.

Paul Hardy has been hired as the interim lay Youth Leader. Paul has had lots of experience in past years teaching our youth and is very involved with the Scouting program. As the title implies, the position is part time and for this year only. Once we have a new priest, he or she would have input on the permanent structure and staffing of our youth program.

We are off to a good start but we could use more help. If you feel called to help with the teaching we would welcome it. Some of our classes have only one regular teacher and we would prefer to have 2 per class. You would not have to plan the lessons, only assist the lead teacher. And you would not have to commit to every Sunday. Part time is fine. Please let Paul know if you are interested.

Jackie Ingersoll

Crafting Kindness

10 things you may not know about Crafting Kindness

--We are completing our 5th year of crafting

--Our group knits, crochets, sews, quilts, cuts, ties, and is always looking for a new way to craft

--About half of our crafters are members of St. Stephens; the others are those who like to craft for charity. There is one woman who lives in Florida who sends blankets annually.

--Nearly 600 crafts will be donated by Crafting Kindness in 2018

--Our recipients range from preemie babies to the elderly and live locally and as far away as Haiti



--A local group in Rochester, RHEMA International, is now shipping our Haiti gifts for us free of charge

--Saturday Craft Days are scheduled for the last Saturdays of January, April, July, and October for everyone. There is always something you can do. Youth are also welcome.

--Meetings are the last Thursdays of February, March, May, June, August, and September.

--Prayer shawls, chemo caps, and lap quilts are available throughout the year. If you know someone who is in need, please let us know and we will deliver.

--And most important for Crafting Kindness is YOUR SUPPORT of our group. Without you, we could not do what we do. THANK YOU ...

Keeping Up the Building & Grounds

Building and grounds has been extremely busy this year. The Clydesdales' of the work performed was by Pat Wojas and myself. There were about 19 windows replaced in the gathering area that had bad seals. The microwave was replaced in the kitchen. The dishwasher was serviced and repaired also for the first time in years. The ceiling in one of the bathrooms was repaired due to a leak. All emergency route exits are posted now throughout the church.



A smoke detector was replaced and all emergency lighting was replaced with new batteries or completely replaced. The electrical problem in the gathering area was repaired. Lights were repaired, door handles adjusted, gutters cleaned and roof drains are working properly now. Outside lights were repaired and are all working now. . All the floors were stripped and re-waxed and all carpets were cleaned.

All furnace filters are on a schedule now and maintenance of the furnaces/air conditioners are on a schedule. All thermostats are updated to control the heat and air conditioner bills more efficiently. There is a Building and Grounds soft copy file that lists all work schedules and approved contractors list.

The main closet was cleaned and organized (Justin and Alice Moss), the media room closet was organized (Corinne Fragnoli) as was the cold storage area with the roof gaps repaired.

The old play garden area was filled, another big job finished. Some outside sprinklers were repaired and set for summer and also winterized. The snow blower was repaired and operational for winter. The lawn

mowing contract was reviewed and new contractors came in at a lower price, as was the snow plowing contract redone.

We have a new cleaning service for the church, replacing the previous people that were no longer doing a very satisfactory job. The roof leaks were addressed and repaired. That took over 3-4 months to complete. The sidewalk toward the rear entrance was replaced.

And the HUGE job for the year was the refinishing of the pews. This was a 10 week project and we had a few headaches along the way. Pat and I were there every week covering pews with tarps, moving books, trying to keep the dust down and maintaining quality control over the project.

Money was provided for these projects from the Maintenance budget, Capital Fund and the Endowment Fund. And a special thanks to all coffee hour personnel who made us plates of food during this time! We hope next year will be slightly less work on us.

*Dave Eldon—Building and Grounds Liaison/
Clydesdales' #2*

*Pat Wojas-The Admiral, the General and
Clydesdales' #1*

Justin Wojas-Chairman of the board



We ask Your Prayers for:

Michelle L'Hommedieu	Rodney White
The Dorsey & Shuker Families	Judy Ford
Lisa Hicks	Harold Ford
Joe Simler	Annabelle Grace
Jenny Dolan	Jeralyn Burrell
Linda Dolan	Alice Brandon
Charles Saylor	Mary Bandsuch
Sue Sprague	Dorothy Langridge
GINNY BENNETT	Betty Feighner
Linda Lou Vance	Jim Sherman
Jim Whitaker	Mardi Maxwell
Richard Creameans	Meghann Armstrong
Shawna Collins	Joyce Vance
Mike Szott	Paula Vance

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 / Kyle Church—Grandsons of Ed and Elaine Church, Nephew of Amy Church

Who's Missing?

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

These Parish Families

12/3 Sandy Martin

12/9 Scott, Leslie, Teddy, George and Edy Mayotte
Paul and Judy McClendon

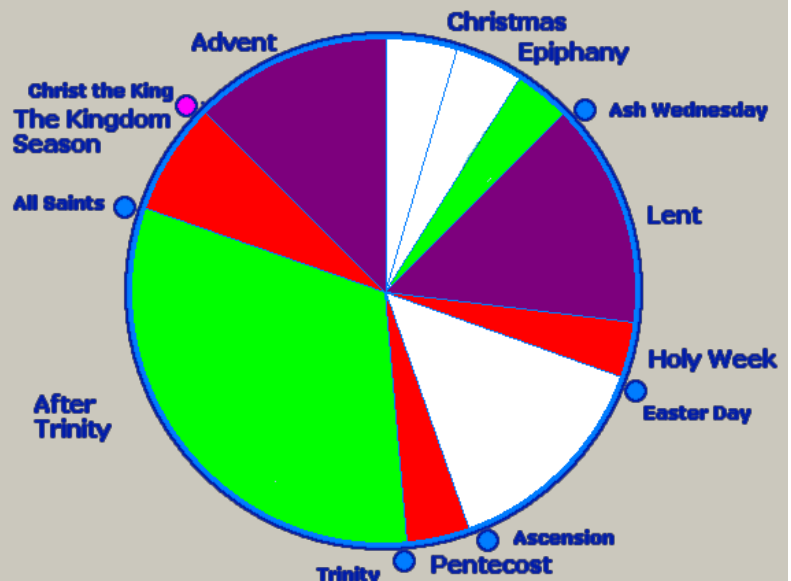
12/16 Gordon McMullen
Jim, Judy, Michael & James McQuiston

12/23 Darrel Middlewood
Marilyn Miller



The Color-coded Church Year

As an Episcopalian, you should not have much difficulty remembering what season of the church year you are in at any moment. Take one look at the altar and its colors will provide you with all the information you need. Green represents the ordinary days. Purple means lent. Purple or blue equals advent. Red is Pentecost and Holy Week. White symbolizes birth and death: Christmas, Easter, baptisms, weddings, and funerals.



December Birthdays

Name	Date
Kris Fuhr	3
Steve Brandon	6
Jerred Rich	6
Joan Morgan	7
Miranda Spates	11
Sudhakar Samuel	11
Indira Samuel	12
Kristin Giles	13
Mardi Maxwell	14
Penelope Baker	19
Anna Dorsey	22
Linda Pierce	23
Rick Spina	23
Michael Szott	25
Sharon Miller	26
Agnes Carpenter	30



December Anniversaries

Name	Date
Ruth & James Luzod	4
Inge & Pat Wojas	15
Elizabeth & Pat Roberts	18
Jane & Mike Wellman	26
Mary & Dennis Bishop	27

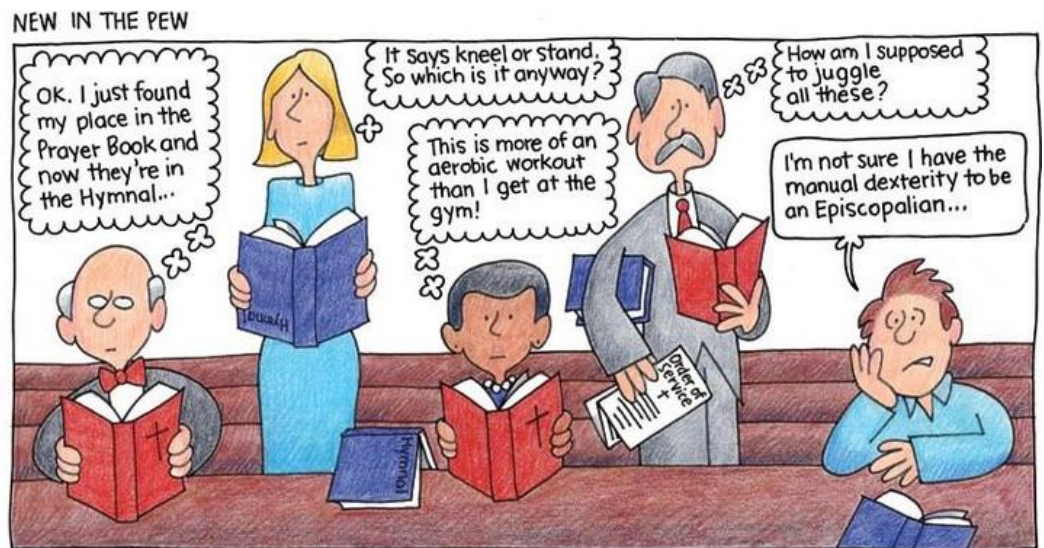
January Anniversaries

Name	Date
Gretchen & Roy Waters	7

January Birthdays

Name	Date
Joan 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
Rod Johnson	14
John Podsiadilk	18
Charles Saylor	19
Donna Johnson	21
Sathi Satyanathan	21
Diane Kenefic II	22
Sue Russell	22
Jill Stein	23
Jill West	23
Molly Grubb	24
Cindy Vida	24
Jim Maxwell	25
Inge Wojas	26
Greyson Ingersoll	27
Chris Herfurth	28
Jen Trask	30

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.



How to Contact Us

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

Jacki Mudrich, Parish Administrator
office@ststephenstroy.org

Scott Armstrong, Senior Warden
248-860-0408; scottiemi06@icloud.com

Justin Wojas, Junior Warden
248-641-1499; jpwojas@gmail.com

Sue Gore—Choir and Music Director
248-852-1379

Jim Trask, Treasurer
treasurer@ststephenstroy.org

Pam Bonkowski—Assistant to the Treasurer
bookkeeper@ststephenstroy.org

The Witness: Rob Redmer and Jacki Mudrich
witness@ststephenstroy.org
office@ststephenstroy.org

E-mail, bring to church or fax your articles to
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

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.

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



"You're doing a good job as an usher,
but its called an offering, not a sin tax."