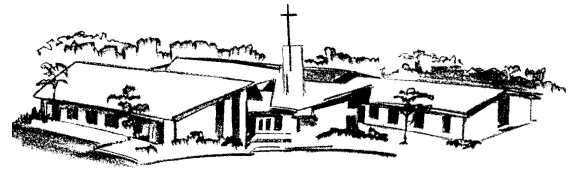


The Witness

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

February/March 2019

A Message from our Senior Warden



We have put 2018 in the books. A year that began with discourse, conflict, mistrust and general lack of transparency – a house divided. A path this church had been on the past few years, with no end in sight – a cycle repeating. The St. Stephen's – the family, I had come to love was fading away. I and the Vestry were left with two choices – Continue on the path and risk the future of this parish family or make a change.

Change – the most difficult choice we had ever faced came with such a deafening silence you could hear a pin drop. But you did not elect and put your trust – your time – your talents – your financial support into a Vestry able to make the easy choices – NO – you charged this body to safeguard this family – this parish – with an expectation we would make the right choices for this parish family – to preserve our traditions, preserve our parish, preserve our family!

You've heard me talk a lot about family this past year. Families come together when the chips

are down. Families support one another – without judgment – through love. I think for a short while we forgot to be a family – because we forgot - our strength lies not in the individual but in the whole. St. Stephen's is special because we are Family. We care for each other, take care



of each other, and raise up one another. We once again fill our halls with laughter, admiration, and love – unconditionally.

God has truly blessed this family. I see it in the way our house has been refurbished with the steadfast hands of our Buildings and Grounds Folks. I see it through the amazing events the Hospitality committee so

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CHOCOLATE!!

It's Time for a Girls Night Out!

So let's make a night to remember

CHOCOLATE WITH THE CHURCH LADIES

Friday, March 22nd

6:00-8:00 pm

Birmingham Chocolate



We will have the opportunity to learn about chocolate, taste LOTS of chocolate, make our own chocolate bar, and bring home a box of chocolate...what could be better?

Birmingham Chocolate is located at 1728 W. Maple Rd.

We need a minimum of 15 participants and a maximum of 30

The cost is \$35 per person

We can bring in our own appetizers and wine to make it a real fun evening

A sign up sheet will be coming soon...

In the meantime, contact Corinne Fragnoli at (248) 515-2651 or cfragnoli@att.net

A View from the Pew

Hope

What is hope? Desmond Tutu said, “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness.” It whispers, “You’ll overcome this hardship” It reassures our minds by reminding us that most things will improve. The trait of resiliency helps one endure many hardships and setbacks smoother.

Life is often filled with great joy, but there is no denying that our lives are often unpredictable and pain and loss are symptoms of just being human. Yet, we can overcome many of these hardships with hope. Hope softens the feelings of despair and provides us the strength to deal with misfortune, perhaps the loss of a job, the ending of a marriage; the loss of a loved one. My mother died earlier this year, and if I did not believe that I would see her again, the loss would be even deeper.

Hope helps us to ignore the suffering of the present. When we stay positive about our future, we increase the likelihood of that possibility. Hope gives a positive mind power. It generates an aura around you which protects you from the negatives. This is why: hope will always be an essence of life.

Imagine if you had no hope, life would be so much harder to endure. The opposite of hope is despair, and who has not felt that? Hope helps us see light at the end of the tunnel. It can help us endure until we see other options. It can lead us to see that a shift in our perspective can lead us forward, allow us to change our mindset and maybe, just maybe find a solution or a way to achieve something better, even if it’s just a change in attitude.

My husband was diagnosed with cancer two and a half years ago. Our heads were swirling with worst case scenario and fear. I will always recall when I looked up at my husband and said you have to get better, you just have to! He looked at me and said “God has my back he always has. I will be all right no matter what happens” “God promised to be with me always, no matter what and I trust that! God never said this was our home forever; but that he would be with us forever.” His trust, his hope in God, helped calm my fears a great deal that day. Our trust in God allowed us both to hope beyond what today may show us. We both don’t believe that at the end of this life there is nothingness, nonexistence. That perspective is too dark for me to find comfort in. (By the way, my husband has been cancer free for over two years now, and we are most grateful for that).

Each of us have our own stories in our lives where we have suffered loss and lost our way for a while; but when we trust God, we have true hope! This belief that we are not alone on this journey can brighten a dark day. Advent is about hope and the coming birth of Christ. A baby is the very essence of hope for a brighter day. This Christmas, may you choose the gift of the Christmas babe; hope is a priceless gift that helps us see things in a different perspective, and just changing our perspective is often one of the best gifts we can give ourselves and others.



Jill Stein

Oh What a Twelfth Night!!

Oh what a night we had on January 5th as we celebrated Twelfth Night as only St. Stephen's congregation can. Over 80 people attended and enjoyed a fabulous feast. The feast included:

Assortment of appetizers donated by parishioners

A great assortment of wine and beer

Smoked Salmon donated by Steve Fragnoli

Homemade cheese Ravioli

Salad bar with greens, toppings and homemade dressings

French green beans

Oven roasted potatoes - Red Skin, Yukon Gold, and Sweet Potatoes

Chicken Scaloppini

Gourmet Dessert Buffet by Ami O'Neill

Musical entertainment was provided by Dave Stein, Phil Pierce, Ken Fuhr, and John Morley.

Special thanks go out to the following for making this a wonderful evening: The Fragnoli family, Deciantis family, O'Neill family, Inge and Justin Wojas, Scott Armstrong, Greyson and Chloe Ingersoll, Rachel Rich, Dave and Jill Stein, and Joe Hopper.



Crafting Kindness

A NEW YEAR – NEW PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN

-Crafting Kindness is starting the year with projects for children. Sewers will be working on dresses and sleeping mats; knitters are creating preemie and baby blankets

If you were not able to join us for Winter Craft Day, kits are available for all the projects in our "GRAB 'N STITCH" tub located in the Outreach Area.

Dresses – Kits contain material and directions for 2 dresses. Sewing should take about 1-1/2 hours for each dress.

Sleeping Mats – Kits contain enough 6" squares to create a quilt top 5 squares wide and 9 rows long. Instructions are included for the top along with directions for the receiving the batting and backing to complete the mat.

Preemie Blankets – Kits contain yarn and instructions. You can also make your own pattern for these 12"-14" squares. Any solid pattern will work; no "holes" where a baby's finger could be caught. Either knit or crochet can be used.

Baby Blankets – Kits with yarn and general instructions are available. You may also find many patterns on the internet for these blankets. They can be knit or crochet.

Upcoming Meetings:

Thursday, February 28th 1 pm

Thursday, March 28th 1 pm



Senior Warden (continued)

lovingly put together. I see it through the caring and loving way our Pastoral Care folks visited our sick and shut-ins. I see it through the joyful music our choir echoed through the rafters. I see it in the way our Alter Guild carefully and faithfully sets the table we share each week. I see it through Outreach, Crafting Kindness, the smiles and care-free attitude of our youth and the love our teachers have for them. I see it in the way we all come together to celebrate the lives of those loved ones who passed – remembering how they enriched our lives while you embraced and comforted those they left behind. You see – I see God's blessings through you!!

God sent us three truly wonderful spirit filled supply ministers in Sharon, Chris, and Darren – who far exceeded the expectations of the job description and because of you – felt the love and passion of this parish and joyfully became one of the family!! God sent us Paul to raise up our youth and lovingly returned Phil to us to safeguard our finances. How blessed are we to have them?



So, where do we go from here? Forward – forward in selecting a new spiritual leader.

Forward in healing this parish family. Forward with Strategic Planning. Forward with growing our family. Forward – learning from the past but not dwelling on the past! Forward – not to restore what we were but forward discovering with God's help, who we are now and who we intend to be - moving ever and deliberately – Forward!!

If 2018 has taught us anything, it taught us the church – the true church – is not a Rector, is not a building – a true church is US – Family – a family God brought together to laugh and cry – care and be cared for – lift up and support through faith with love.

What can I do you may ask? Spread the word. Call our family home. Open the doors, your arms and hearts to new family members. Get involved – lend a hand where you can – find something you are passionate about within the church and make a difference – through action – with love. You can continue your financial support and increase it when you are able – because your dollars matter!! They matter to Outreach, Youth Programs, and this house our family comes to gather each week - lovingly and faithfully together - to inspire each other and worship God. We are family, and never again will we start a year with discourse, conflict, mistrust, a lack of transparency – or be a house divided. We will start each year with hope, understanding, forgiveness, faith, and love – looking forward and knowing Good Things Come – remembering God's promise and Christ's teachings!!

May God bless you and St. Stephen's – and may he hold you ever more in the palm of his hand.

Scott, Sr. Warden

We ask Your Prayers for the Following People

Michelle L'Hommedieu
The Dorsey & Shuker
Families
Lisa Hicks
Joe Simler
Jenny Dolan
Linda Dolan
Sue Sprague
Ginny Bennett
Linda Lou Vance
Jim Whitaker
Richard Creameans
Shawna Collins
Judy Ford
Harold Ford
Annabelle Grace
Jeralyn Burrell

Alice Brandon
Mary Bandsuch
Dorothy Langridge
Betty Feighner
Jim Sherman
Mardi Maxwell
Meghann Armstrong
Joyce Vance
Paula Vance
Tim Sterling
Elaine Major
Jennifer Penokie
Molly Neumann
Jo Kwasny
Chris S.
Michelle DeCiantis
Joyce

These Parish Families

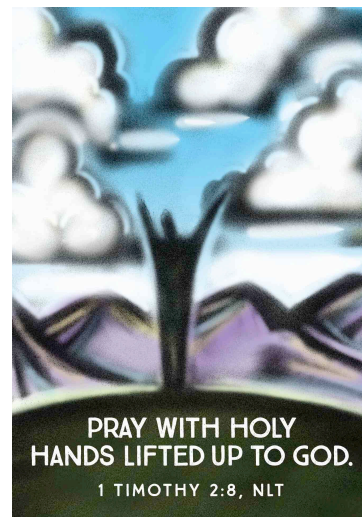
1/13 Joann Morelli, Joan Morgan
1/13 John and Karen Morley, Alice Moss
1/19 Jacques Ndione, Katy Allen, Anais and Paulina
Jerry and Lani Nolan
1/27 Kay Novak, Elizabeth Nunn
2/3 Cathy O'Brien
Ami, Quinn, Margaret, Pema, Norah, Lachlan and Cassidy
O'Neill
2/10 Peter, Daryllyn, Colton and Jack Oswald
Jean and Erasmus Otoo

Those in the Armed Services

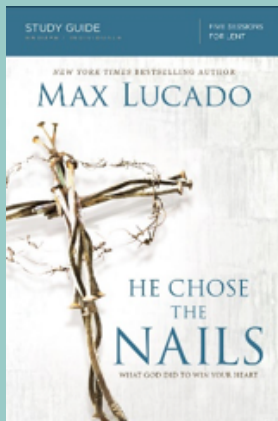
Nathan Cremeans—grandson of Barb Whitaker
Ian L'Hommedieu—godson of Linda Pierce
Stephen L'Hommedieu—godson of Linda Pierce
Kyle Rogowski—nephew of Ken & Kris Fuhr
Jim Sands—grandson of Sharon Sands
Brendon Church / Kyle Church—Grandsons of Ed and Elaine Church, Nephew of Amy Church

Welcome New Vestry Members

Kathy Deciantis
Ken Fuhr
Miranda Spates
Dave Stein



Transforming Faith Adult Study Group



Transforming Faith Adult Study Group presents Max Lucado's *He Chose the Nails: What God Did to Win Your Heart* for Lent beginning Sunday mornings at 8:45 (right after the 8 AM service) on March 10th. We meet in the Bishop Emerich Room for approximately 50 minutes. This is a continuation of Lucado's *Because of Bethlehem* Advent Study that the group did during Advent. However, you do not need to have attended those sessions to understand this one. You do not need to have read his book. There will be a few study guides available to purchase from Kris (10) or you may purchase your own from Amazon or any other book dealer; be sure to get the STUDY GUIDE for groups and individuals, not the book.

Lucado is a wonderful teacher and presenter (via DVD). Each session can stand alone, but together they take you on a powerful walk to Calvary with Jesus. Come experience a great Lenten study with great discussion and reflection and walk with us during Lent. See Kris Fuhr for more details.

Birthdays

February

Name	Date
Steve Fragnoli	1
Frances Hammond	3
Megan Vida	3
William Waun	4
Katelyn Gerard	4
Jacquelyn Parent	8
Evan Vida	9
Amy Church	10
Tristan Thiel	11
Jan Eldon	13
Meghan Brokenshire	16
Kassidy O'Neill	16
Helen Slater	17
Sheryl Schmidt	17
Colin Davis	19
Tom Vida	20
Mackenzie Hardy	23
Katie Sobolewski	24
Jeralyn Burrell	25
John Spates	25
Mary Lou Bryson	28
Andrew Gerard	28



March

Name	Date
Patrick Roberts	5
Dan Stewart	5
Elizabeth Roberts	6
Richard Lowery	8
Anais Ndione	8
David Burean	8
Margaret Brandon	9
Judy McQuiston	9
Elijah Samuel	11
Paulina Ndione	11
Patrick Wojas	14
Mary Boldt	18
Ed DeCiantis	18
William Wolf	19
Jane Frank	19
Georgiana Badalow	20
Gillian Grubb	20
Alice Brandon	21
Alicia Baker	22
Jack Oswald	22
Jerry Nolan	24
Mary Bishop	27
Gwen Kirby	27
Gabriel Valdez	28
Jackie Ingersoll	29
Martha Szott	31

Greet/ Eat/ Meet

Like good food & meeting interesting people?

Most of us do, so St. Stephen's has a program to make it happen -- GEM (Greet, Eat & Meet). Be part of the fun! Make new friends or strengthen old bonds. Joining and participating is "a piece of cake" [and an appetizer, salad and entrée too!]



GEM is a social gathering where you share a meal and fellowship with 6 or 8 others. Participants are assigned to groups of 3 pairs, and the host may invite two others to fill out the group to 8 for each dining experience [more if the host has room and the inclination]. Most do dinners, but there is no rule against lunch or breakfast. Each pair hosts once during the year.

It's open to all couples and singles. You might know some folks in your group; some perhaps only by sight. In any event, you will get to know them better, and trust us, our congregation is filled with amazing, fun and interesting people.

Each group will get together 3 times during the year as it suits their calendars. The host provides the main course, and each of the other pairs brings an appetizer, salad or dessert. It's not a cooking contest. The main course can be anything from hot dogs in the microwave to your family specialty. The food is the pretext for getting folks together in a friendly setting. Not a cook? Pick up 2 rotisserie chickens at Kroger and we'll call it good.

Singles have a GEM group, but why deprive yourselves? Join both. Experience shows that everyone is interesting and enjoys socializing regardless of their household status.

Life is about memories and connecting with people who care. Build both through GEM. If you have any questions, call us. Sign up in the Gathering Area, or let us know.

Bon Appetit,

Jackie and Don Ingersoll (248 879 0948)

Anniversaries

February

Name	Date
Miranda & John Spates	3
Jackie & Don Ingersoll	3
Sue & Dan Stewart	14
Anne Hiemstra & John Lynch	19
Judy & Paul McClendon	21

March

Name	Date
Lani & Jerry Nolan	2
Jan & Joe Hopper	9
Karen & John Morley	21
Katy Allen & Jacques Ndione	21
Marilyn & Tom Borowski	30
Debbie & John Pincura	31

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

Dave Stein, Junior Warden
248-346-4126; dcs53td@gmail.com

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

Phil Pierce, 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

Who's Missing?

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

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

5500 North Adams Road
Troy, MI 48098

Please remember St. Stephen's in your will.

Church Bloopers

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet
Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

The pastor will preach his farewell message,
after which the choir will sing, "Break Forth Into Joy.

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's
new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: "I
Upped My Pledge - Up Yours."

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!

