

**Pastor’s Corner:**

This is how we got here, on the brink of an exploration into our future and our particular role in God’s mission in the world.

As we approach Christmas each year, it is our task to lift our heads and breath in a breath of hope. Many years, and I think this one in particular, that seems a daunting task. As we come to the end of our Christian year and began a new one in Advent, we are bid serve “the least of these.” Yet, we find a world that seems dedicated to ignoring the least and often brutally attacking and even annihilating them.

At St. Stephen’s we are moving closer to being a corporate missional presence in God’s work of hope and love. It is counter to the culture we live in, it is our unique call, it represents the future of the church.

How it happened:

We have been called into this kind of ministry by our visionary bishop ever since I arrived in the diocese. My first year he gave all the clergy Diana Hick’s book, *Dignity* to read. She was our convention speaker this year. The next year he gave us a copy of Alan J. Roxburgh’s *The Missional Church*. Each convention of the Diocese of Vermont in some way

**Meet Anne Ditzler, Appreciative Inquiry, and a Particular Outreach Ministry**

“Our Rector, an ad-hoc Task Force, and our Vestry are all pleased that Anne Ditzler has agreed to serve as a consultant for our process of envisioning St. Stephens’s future and for discovering particular mission(s) appropriate to it. Anne was our first choice among many qualified candidates. Anne worked for many years as Senior Program Director at the Episcopal Church Foundation in New York City. For the past five years she has done consulting work for the Public Interest Network in Amherst Massachusetts. Anne works with businesses, professional organizations and churches to help formulate their goals and to pursue the procedures best suited to reach them. She has followed a proven advisory method titled Appreciative Inquiry, which emphasizes discovering the strengths of an institution, then building upon those strengths to guide the institution through transitions. Her recent consulting work with the Church of the Good Shepherd in Barre, applying Appreciative Inquiry methods, has been highly commended by both its rector and the parish. Anne holds a Masters in Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. In our conversations with her we have been deeply impressed by her range of experiences, her clarity, and her ability to pursue important questions.”

John McWilliams writing on behalf of the vestry and the taskforce to research nominees for a consultant to facilitate a visioning process. (taskforce: John McWilliams, May Morris, Paul Nelson, Ann Cooper, Beth Stanway, Susan McGarry (ex officio)
or other encouraged us to reach beyond our doors together to service in God’s mission of reconciliation in the world. Bishop Ely joined many visionaries, particularly serving churches in small communities, in recognizing in a world where churches were closing all the time, where fewer people participated in organized religion, and where more and more of society was based in secular values, that vital churches are the ones that are serving in a corporate way as Christ’s hands and hearts in the community. He encouraged this vitality for every church in the diocese.

St. Stephen’s vestry read Alan Roxburgh’s book as an exploration of a way we too could be radical listeners in our neighborhood and radical servers. At the same time, we were offered the opportunity by the diocese to be one of five Episcopal churches (there were 5 Congregational churches as well) to participate in a program “Strategic Initiative in Sacred Places” (SISP). This was a national initiative that asked congregations to do two things, really understand their communities and their places in them, and to learn to value the congregation’s contribution to the wider community. Usually employed in large metropolitan areas where old historic buildings stress the resources of congregations, SISP was designed to help congregations be able to advertise their corporate value to potential funders beyond the church congregation that could help with costly building maintenance and repair. St. Stephen’s vestry decided to accept the invitation and to use SISP as our way of “listening” to our community. We were more interested in that community introduction than we were in attracting community investors. This was the first time this initiative was tried in a largely rural setting. Many of the other churches had a similar interest to explore their communities.

What we did:

During this two-year study, we learned some techniques for assessing our assets. We used a computer program to analyze our “public” value. (The program was old and very difficult to use, huge thanks goes to Nancy Malcolm for sticking with it.) We looked at our history and got an appreciation of how often our church was in “fragile” situations as there was an ebb and flow in the economy of our community. We also saw how integrated our own history was with the history of Middlebury. In our self-exploration we found two significant things about ourselves and our assets. Through our building use and our volunteer work in serving the community we give about $225,000.00 worth of service to our surrounding community. While that is not extraordinary for a church our size, it is significant for our community. We also found that our building in its unique central setting in the town of Middlebury is underutilized much of the time so our potential, from the perspective of our building alone, for further value to our community is great. We also dreamed a number of particular missions we could serve. (See next month’s Parishscope for a list, one of these or one that hasn’t yet been perceived could become our dedicated outreach ministry)

One particular benefit of the program was the consultancy that was provided by the Vermont Preservation Fund, and its staff person, Scott Newman. It was Scott who advised, then Jr. Warden Ed McGuire about how to approach the town and the state of Vermont to make sure our building would be safeguarded during our railroad construction. Ed also organized representatives of all of the historic buildings who might be affected by the construction. All these buildings are now safeguarded and protected by federal policy.

When it came time to decide our particular exploration into our community and its needs, we diverted from SISP’s usual (for this Vermont group) and concentrated on the particular needs of our community as it faced into the future of several years of intense disruption by the building planned for our bridge replacement and railroad improvement. The SISP team turned its attention to a kind of pastoral care of the community for the coming time as their focus. We created an organization of community groups and the college that took the name Neighbors Together. We used a SISP grant to help us convene four community meetings here at St. Stephen’s. The result of the lively discussions about the values we held dear as a community and the things we might do to safeguard these values, was a continued convening of Neighbors Together to bring some of the ideas to life.

continued on page 4
Sports update: 
Oprah Littlefield, 9, is figure skating this winter. Last winter she learned to play hockey. Her brother Hartley is playing on the Middlebury Jam Mite team, which is a step up from regular Mites. Grandmother Eleanor Littlefield is a regular and stalwart Middlebury College supporter. She has attended seemingly thousands of games when you count college, her kids’ games, and now her grandkids’ games.

Another member is joining the hockey crowd. Jack Simpson, 4, is in the learn to skate program and can’t wait to play hockey. He says he can skate faster than the family’s Prius but not as fast as a race car.

Ryder Whiteman, grandson of Mary and Ed McGuire, reports he has joined a weekend basketball league in Burlington. His first game was last week and he scored 10 points as a center. Congratulations!

Health news:
Ezra Swartzentruber, 6, is missing two teeth. Not to worry, the tooth fairy has them! Or at least one of them. Ezra actually swallowed his first ever loose tooth and he was concerned that the tooth fairy wouldn’t come. Luckily the tooth fairy did come and left $1.

It is hip, hooray for Paul Nelson! He gets his long awaited hip on December 12th. The Nelsons report that the Loaves and Fishes group have been a wonderful help.

More good news... John Hammer is alive and well! John’s building at Wake Robin was the one in which ricin was found.

Wedding Bells: 
Virginia Westbrook successfully launched her son, Benjamin, on his new life with wife, Carolyn Clayton, with a lovely wedding in the Berkshires, in September. They have returned to Massachusetts after three years in Michigan, where Carolyn earned a Masters in Fine Arts and a Museum Certificate. Virginia departs, again, for winter in the west with much regret over missing singing with the choir for the holidays and the participating in the vision quest here at St Stephen’s. She will spend the holidays with her family in California, with an added bonus: she and friend Tom will be there in time to witness the marriage of our former interim minister, Merritt Greenwood to his partner, John Konopka, who devoted himself to the Monday lunch during the time they were here with us.

Lucy Pellegrini reports in that Lorenza Chamberlia and Scott Pellegrini were married in Lucca, Italy in May 2017, in front of 40 friends and family from around the world. Both native Vermonters, they now live in South Burlington.

Travel and visits: 
Will wonders never cease! Laura Chase was in Florida with family for the weekend of Thanksgiving. The big news, though, is that she a smooth trip with no delays! She flew out of Rutland, in a nine passenger Cesna to Boston and then on to Florida and back.

Pier Lafarge, nephew of Ryan Nevius, along with dog Cali will be visiting from the DC area for 4-5 days at Christmas.

Lonnie Fisher had her best Thanksgiving ever this year. Her son, Ollie, flew in from St. Paul as a surprise for the holiday and to celebrate Lonnie’s important, but not to be announced, big birthday. Ollie also arranged the whole dinner for 10. That is a gift! Lonnie had three of her four children and their spouses plus some of her grandchildren in attendance. Lots of laughs were had and stories told.

Professional news: 
Thalia Sparling, daughter of Sansea Sparling, has received her doctorate in public health from the University of Heidelberg, the oldest university in Germany. She has move to London to work on a dietary intervention to prevent stunting. The project will be implemented in Bangladesh. Sadly, Thalia’s apartment in London has no spare bedroom so we can’t stay with her for our next visit.

Christopher McWilliams, a summer organist a while back, and son of vestry member John McWilliams will have his first piano sonata performed in Princeton in April. See John for more details.

Our professional team of boat builders, the St. Stephen’s Boatwrights, will be starting construction of the next Wee Lassie kayak this month. This will become a raffle item for Peasant Market. Contact Ed McGuire about becoming part of the team.

Chloe Clark starred as Dolly in the MUHS musical Hello Dolly! and Suzie Klemmer had a strong supporting actress role.

We welcome Fred and Sharon De-Haven to SS. They have been visiting for several years, more and more, and continued on page 4
Pastor's Corner

The intervening law-suit about environmental impacts of the construction put the construction off for about 18 months. The work of Neighbors Together, with our participation, will commence with the construction.

What was missing from our SISP program was a real evaluation of the regular ongoing needs of the community. In the wake of some congregational discord, the vestry invited our bishop, Tom Ely, to help us solve our conflicts. He hired an objective observer to meet with us. On one Sunday afternoon, this observer met with 95 people in small groups. Many things came out of his evaluation (including the need to work on healthy communication patterns) but one of them pointed us in the direction we are now headed. He indicated that we did not have a concrete sense of vision for the congregation. In working with our vestry, Bishop Ely, encouraged us to continue to explore that vision or mission in the world. We also recognized that as I reach 65 in 2018, I will be retiring.

What we will do:

Working with Anne Ditzler (see lead article) will help us move toward that vision of a particular outreach ministry so essential for congregational vitality in today’s world. In addition, it will give us a chance, once again, to explore what we really value about our faith and our church community. Knowing that 2018 will be a year of clergy transition, this work will also inform St. Stephen’s transition process going forward.

I, as rector, encourage every person in the congregation, whether you have been here for decades, or have just joined to participate in this process. (see lead article) If you feel your presence will be temporary, such as college students, or others who will be sojourning just a short time, your participation is still very important. The wisdom each of us brings to the table will be invaluable.

Some might say, we already do so much mission as individuals in our jobs and in our lives. That is true, yet the corporate missional work we do for God’s mission is vital both for our life and health as a congregation and because of the incredible energy and service we can generate for good, for hope, for the least of these, when we work and commit ourselves together.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan

News From the Pews

contemplating moving. Fred is a very experienced organist. He probably had the premier Episcopal Organist job in Michigan at Christ Church, Grosse Pointe.

Theresa Orvis’s son has also moved to town with his wife. They are Curtis and Lynn Orvis. They also lost the roof off their Florida home in the hurricane. It is in Bonita Springs.

Mary Murphy’s son Rory has recently married Sheila McLaughlin of Breadloaf, so we may see more of him.

We have had recent memorials for both Theresa and Mary.

Megan Clark was in the choir this past Sunday. She’s visiting from near Cluny, France, where she is an au pair to four children for the year.

Mike Davis is proud to announce a handsome addition to his bovine family. Born in Sept, healthy and frisky. Mom and dad both blond, but Highlanders run white to black to all shades of yellow and red. Come out and take a look!
Meet Anne Ditzler continued from page 1

So what is ahead?

1) The call for virtually everyone to be involved in an exploration of both our unique identity at St. Stephen’s and our future in serving a particular outreach ministry. To serve this, the in-house retreats will offer child care and a dedicated program for children during the retreat. It will include phone calls to those who are gone during the season of these retreats. Please mark your calendars now and protect these vital dates. Also consider making it your Lenten discipline to be one of the appreciative listeners introduced in part “c” below.

2) Timeline:

a. **Sunday, December 17, 2017, Ann Ditzler visits us at St. Stephen’s.** She will be the preacher in our worship services and will meet with the vestry in a long session that will both introduce to them the method (Appreciative Inquiry) we will be using for our visioning and train them for initial invite calls. The training will also include ways to do the initial interviews that we will do one-on-one in our workshops. The vestry will be charged to conduct such interviews on the phone with our members who are wintering in warmer places.

b. **Saturday, January 27, 2018, There will be a 5 hour in-church retreat** for everyone that will begin our Appreciative Inquiry process toward our upcoming task of together determining our particular outreach ministry.

c. **Sunday afternoon, January 28, 2018.** Anne will train a group of volunteers to do “appreciative listening” in the community based on the interests expressed on the 27th. This work would be designed to discover what particular need there is in the areas identified, what already exists, where the deficiencies are, what might a congregation do to start small and build into a rich and vibrant ministry. This work by the volunteers would go on throughout Lent.

d. **Saturday, March 17, 2018.** There will be a second or in-church retreat to find, through the ideas of the first retreat, the subsequent research, and the direction of our corporate passion, the work we want to commit to together going forward.

e. **Easter Season (starting April 1) and beyond will be the time to organize for and to begin the implementation of this work.**
Did I write last month how excited I am to be starting this visioning process? Yes, and I’m writing it again - yay… we are beginning! Many people have put in a few years of background work towards this day, and the vestry has spent all year reflecting on where we’ve been and exploring paths for us to understand how to move forward. I am confident that we have contracted with a skilled facilitator, Anne Ditzler, who will lead us to map out our mission in service of God’s message to the world.

Our dates with her are laid out, so at the risk of repeating, here they are again; please get these on your calendar! Dec 17 - she will preach at both services and lead the vestry in some training that afternoon; Jan 27 - in-church retreat for all parishioners; Jan 28 - training for those who want to be “Appreciative Listeners” in the community; March 17 - final in-church retreat for all parishioners. Thank you again to the Visioning Task Force and to all those who for years have been working towards this moment.

Advent… ahhh. A period of waiting and listening. Perfect. I like to think of the bulbs many of us planted this fall in anticipation of the blooms we’ll see in the spring. Advent is similar. We go deep, we rest, we meditate, we listen for God’s child. Of course, many of us will have to remind ourselves to slow down from the natural preparations for celebration with family and friends, and then we will slow down and listen to God speak.

May we all experience God’s love and peace as we welcome the Christ Child into our midst,
Mary

It has been a busy time at St. Stephen’s these past few weeks. Your vestry has been working hard moving forward with our visioning process as well as wrapping up several items with various committees in advance of our upcoming annual meeting. I remain focussed on the facilities, and have some exciting news. Both the vestry and the facilities committee have unanimously voted to proceed with the installation of a beautiful new columbarium to be installed in our chapel along the large north wall. Over the past year we have had many requests for space in our current columbarium, however we are at capacity and unable to honor these requests. The new columbarium will have 156 companion niches, meaning they are two urns deep. This means there are a total of 312 individual spaces to sell. At a proposed cost of $1,000 per niche, this represents a potential income of $312,000 for St. Stephen’s. The cost of this is $36,591 with some additional minor costs to prepare the chapel. Total cost is estimated at around $40,000. As of this writing I have secured private funding totaling $20,000 and we have about $7,400 in the columbarium line item in our budget. We would need to raise an additional $13,000 or so to complete this project. I plan to petition the diocese for a grant this coming January. I am not certain we will get the entire remainder from the grant committee, but I am confident we will get something. Either way, this represents an incredible return on investment. So stay tuned for more information regarding funding as we move forward.

The company we are using is Eickhof Columbaria, based in Minnesota. I have put together a board at the back of the church with some photos of their work, their website and my (crude) drawing of what will be installed in the chapel. Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns. I really do want to hear from you.

Also, I have put together a committee to organize a separate fundraiser for St. Stephen’s. We are constantly doing for others in our community (Peasant Market, Monday lunch, etc.) and I think it’s high time we did something for our beautiful church on the green! Our fundraiser is going to be an auction and we are calling it “Antiques and Better Things”. On the committee right now are myself, Barbara Blodgett, Linda Horn, Ann Cooper, Carol Calhoun and Tom Turley. If you would like to volunteer your time to help this committee along
Diocesan Convention Report
by Eric Davis

St. Stephen’s was well-represented at the 2017 Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, which was held in Ludlow on November 3 and 4. The parish’s delegates were Ben Anderson-Ray, Susan Anderson-Ray, Eric Davis, Susan McGarry, Sharon Tierra, and Larry Yarbrough. Ann Cooper and Amy Hastings also attended, in their roles as members of the Convention Planning Committee and the Diocesan Trustees, respectively. The first day of the convention was devoted to presentations by Donna Hicks of Harvard University on her book *Dignity*, and small-group discussions of Hicks’ book and presentations. After stating that “whenever we honor someone’s dignity, we strengthen our own,” Hicks said that the dignity model fits very well with Jesus’ command of love, for family, friends, neighbors, and also enemies, and that “Jesus could be considered the ultimate dignity agent.” Hicks noted that the dignity model is inherent in our Episcopal baptismal covenant, which calls on us to pledge, among other things, to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”

That afternoon, convention participants attended workshops offered by several organizations in Vermont whose work can be connected with the dignity model. Some of these organizations are advocacy groups that speak up on behalf of those whose dignity is threatened. Others are service-delivery organizations, which provide a wide range of social services to vulnerable populations in Vermont. Among the workshops attended by St. Stephen’s representatives were: **Black Lives Matter**, whose goal is to enlist 10 percent of Vermonters as members, to work to end racism in Vermont. An area of particular focus for BLM is establishing a legal defense fund for persons of color who are stopped or taken into custody by police. A report by researchers at UVM and Cornell, “Driving While Black and Brown in Vermont,” found that there are significant racial disparities, particularly for males, in those stopped, cited, and/or arrested for motor vehicle and other violations in the state. **Vermont Veterans Outreach**, a federally-funded organization that provides social services to more than 6,000 of Vermont’s 45,000 military veterans. The modal category of Vermont veterans now consists of men in their 60s and 70s who served in Vietnam 45 to 50 years ago. Many of these older veterans are disabled, and have multiple and complex needs that do not fit neatly into the jurisdiction of any one agency. **SASH (Support and Services at Home)**, which coordinates the resources of social service agencies, community health providers, and nonprofit housing organizations to support Vermonters who choose to live independently at home. Individualized, on-site support is provided by a Wellness Nurse and a trained SASH Care Coordinator. SASH touches the lives of approximately 5,000 elders across Vermont. **Migrant Justice/Milk with Dignity**, which advocates on behalf of migrant workers who are an essential part of Vermont’s agricultural labor force. Recently, Ben and Jerry’s, one of the largest purchasers of milk from Vermont farms, signed an agreement with Migrant Justice that will establish minimum labor standards for workers on the 70 farms that supply milk to Ben and Jerry’s. Among other things, these workers will be paid the state minimum wage and will be entitled to one day off a week. Ben and Jerry’s will pay a premium price to farms that agree to implement the standards.

The second day of the convention was the business meeting, devoted to reports from various organizations affiliated with the Diocese of Vermont (Rock Point, Rock Point Camp, Rock Point School, and the Brookhaven Treatment and Learning Center), votes on resolutions, and the election of representatives to diocesan, regional, and national councils and committees. The convention approved a balanced diocesan budget that includes approximately a 4% reduction in spending from 2017 to 2018. The Diocesan Council recommended, and the convention approved, a revision to the formula used to apportion diocesan assessments across the parishes. The new formula will mean that St. Stephen’s, and all other parishes with annual budgets over $200,000, will contribute 1% more to the diocesan budget – an assessment increase from 15% to 16%. Ann Cooper was elected an Alternate Lay Deputy from Vermont to the 2018 General Convention that will be held in Austin, Texas, and was re-elected to the board that reviews charges of clergy misconduct for Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Eric Davis was elected as the lay delegate from Vermont to the Provincial I Synod, a gathering of bishops, clergy, and lay representatives from the seven dioceses in New England. Amy Hastings will continue for one more year as a member of the Trustees of the Diocese of Vermont.
Parishioner Profile: Jennifer Nelson
by Mike Davis

Jennifer Nelson

I sometimes describe these interviews as being about ‘the folks we sit next to’ in church. Interviewing Jennifer Nelson was a little different in that she is challenged with health issues that preclude regular attendance, so we don’t see her often in person. ON THE OTHER HAND, every time a new Parishscope is published there is a copy in each pew...so on those days Jennifer is essentially sitting next to each one of us! Maybe more surprising is that she was co-conspirator with Ceil Murdoch in starting the Parishscope newsletter back in the ‘70’s! Other surprises (true or false!!) include...
- she’s a ‘pgk’ – a preachers’ grand kid!
- took 27 years to finish her undergrad degree!
- together with her sister in law, baptized her brother!
- a very early adopter of computers as writing tools
- was a department store model during her college years!

Jennifer was born in the Chicago suburb of Midlothian, and her first editing gig was for her high school newspaper. Her first year of college at University of Chicago was cut short by her mother’s death, and she dropped out to work at the UC library. As it turned out, the degree she started in the late 50’s would not be completed until she was 49 – in 1991. As you might imagine, a lot happened in those intervening years! Meeting and marrying an Iowa farm boy named Paul, raising two children, and by a fairly circuitous path finding The Episcopal Church - and ultimately St. Stephen’s. Let’s start with the faith journey.

Jennifer’s grandfather on her dad’s side was an Episcopalian priest. She says that she always assumed that at some point she would be a practicing Episcopalian, but since her dad didn’t attend church, it took another series of events to get her through the door at SS. It started with husband Paul, a Lutheran (last name Nelson + Iowa = Lutheran), and his love of music – especially choral music. While at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL, Paul was invited to sing in the choir at an Episcopal church. He was taken by the liturgy, music, and other aspects of the church, and ended up becoming an Episcopalian. Since moving to Middlebury in the early 60’s, Jennifer has done almost everything (except Sr. Warden) at Saint Stephen’s. And although she didn’t mention wanting to be a priest herself, the story about baptizing her brother is true; he was hospitalized and apparently quite ill, and Jennifer and her sister in law took it upon themselves to administer the sacrament of baptism...just in case!

Her family life began with her marriage to Paul, and includes children Ted – a professional cellist in Cincinnati, and Margaret – an architect in the St. Louis area. Raising two kids had as much impact as anything on her undergrad career, in fact she finally graduated from a Smith College as an Ada Comstock Scholar in the same year that Meg graduated from Wellesley and Ted from MUHS! Talk about persistent! Her life did intersect with Middlebury College in a couple of ways (in addition to Paul’s employment there); first was her observation that when they were first in Middlebury, the College had little interest in the spouses of faculty...and the faculty were almost all men. On the other hand, she ended up working at the library there, where she was first exposed to PC’s and learned how to use them. That skill came in handy when Parishscope was first hatched.

Jennifer and Paul live a life full of music, books, and caring for each other. During our time together she made a book recommendation (No One Cares About Crazy People, by Ron Powers), and our conversation often veered off into areas of mutual interest or current affairs. Whenever you get a chance, I suggest you sit down for a chat with JGN – Jennifer Nelson, editor-in-chief, Parishscope. And just for the fun of it, get the rest of the story on the baptism!
Pastoral Lay Ministry: What We Can Offer You
And How You Can Help Us
by Jessica Hoagland

Do you need a ride to an appointment? Do you know someone recovering from surgery or an illness who might like a meal provided? Would you like to have the Eucharist brought to you? Do you need a sympathetic ear? These are some of the services provided by the Pastoral Lay Ministry. Some of us are Lay Eucharistic Visitors, licensed by the Diocese. Some of us part of Marge Drexler’s Loaves and Fishes, a food ministry. Once a month, Tom Turley and I conduct a service of Holy Communion at the Helen Porter Health and Rehabilitation Center. There are also Eucharists once a month at both EastView and the Residence, as well as a service of Evening Prayer once a month at Helen Porter. Some of us drive parishioners to appointments, both near and far. If you would like to be a part of this important ministry, please speak with Susan McGarry, our Rector.

These are some of the people who carry on this important work:

Jessica Hoagland, Coordinator
Susan McGarry, Rector
Tom Turley
Steve Sontum
Marge Drexler
Judy and Mark Hamdi

Vestry Nominations:
Time to Step Up!

A nominating committee appointed by the vestry is seeking nominations of candidates for a three year term on the vestry beginning in 2018. Self-nominations are welcome. If you wish to recommend another person, please secure their permission first. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact a nominating committee member, Jessica Hoagland (hoagland.j@comcast.net), Ed McGuire (edmguire1964@gmail.com), John McWilliams (mcwillia@middlebury.edu), Emily Sunderman (emily.sunderman@gmail.com), or Winky Thomas (skm.wkt@gmail.com) if you are interested or want information about the process.

Giving Christmas Flowers Deadline Dec 10th

The deadline for submitting names is Dec. 10th. We are going to try something new this year. Annemarie has offered to sit at a table during coffee hour on Dec. 10th to take names and money for Christmas flowers. Parishioners can still call or email names before Dec. 10th.

From the Junior Warden continued from page 6

and plan an extraordinary event we would love to hear from you. Or if you know of someone who would like to lend their expertise and time please forward their name to us. This event is being planned for the spring of 2019. Yes, a full year and a half from now. We are working with Town Hall Theater to secure a firm date and hold the auction there as a community wide event. The timing of this fundraiser coincides with the most critical portion of the bridge construction, and is also the primary reason for having it as we prepare for potential unexpected expenses related to the construction. It is never too soon to start collecting items for this auction, and your donations can count as a tax credit. We are looking for anything of value, such as jewelry, art pieces, sculptures, furniture, oriental rugs and the like. If you, or someone you know, would like to donate some items, or if you know someone who is downsizing, please let us know. You can email me directly at klemway@gmail.com and I will get back to you promptly.

That’s all for now. Thank you for your continued support. Have a blessed Advent!
First, let me thank all those who have filled out their Giving-Goal Cards (GGC) for next year. There are a lot of you and the campaign is going great! Our In-Gathering Service on November 19 celebrated not only those who had already submitted their GGCs, but also those who committed their intentions to submit theirs as soon as possible. The vestry eagerly awaits their submission so they can set the goals for St. Stephen’s important ministries in the coming year.

So far, the campaign has been moving along beautifully and we will surely see another successful year in the sharing of our “treasure.” This sharing in the past has provided the foundation for our fulfilling a multitude of ministries which you will read about in the next Parishscope. More importantly, our material sharing, along with the sharing of our Time and Talents, will carry us forward in crossing the bridge to our “meaningful future” of providing “many gifts and ministries” (1 Corinthians 12) which will join “together making a unity in the work of service” (Ephesians 4).

Remember, our “audacious goal” of 25% is to be met over the next two years and raised from a combination of both our giving goals and alternative methods of income. Now it’s up to us to discern where our corporate passion lies and how we can best apply our stewardship tools towards meeting it. That’s what stewardship is all about.

Next year’s going to be a banner year and we will come out of it with a strong and vibrant program leading to effective and joyous service as Jesus’ heart and hands in the world.

John Hammer
Chair, 2018 Annual Campaign

THE KINGS ARE COMING, THE KINGS ARE COMING!

Keep the spirit of Christmas throughout the 12 days! Have the three wise men come visit your home for an over night! Just sign up on the back table starting mid-December. (The Kings are small figures in a basket...not people who need dinner and a bed!)

Write your name down on the date you would like to receive the kings. The person from the day before will deliver them to you on your date. When kings are delivered the visits should be short, 15-30 minutes, just time for a cup of coffee and a cookie! You will deliver the kings the next day to the next person on the list. A list with all info needed will be sent out before Christmas if you sign up. Questions? Call Linda Horn 388-2300 or email lindahorn14@gmail.com

Jack DesBois’s Western Star January 6th

Jack DesBois will present his epic poem The Western Star, celebrating the season of Epiphany and the return of the light, at St Stephen’s at sunset on Saturday January 6th. Weaving English and Irish ballad-style songs together with enchanting storytelling and poetic imagery, The Western Star tells the story of the Three Kings and their journey to Bethlehem.
This Advent we will be focusing on our tradition of lighting candles on the Advent Wreath. We will purposefully be involving the children of the congregation so the lighting ceremony will take place at the time of the offertory. The Advent Wreath is not a central liturgical act in the Anglican tradition, it can however be beneficial. This year we are recognizing the circle of the wreath as a circle without end, like God’s world without end. This is more of an act of dedicated hope given our environmental situation and conflict situation in the world.

The Hope, the first theme of the advent wreath, will also be a call to action to be partners in God’s unending world. The evergreens in the wreath symbolize God’s everlasting life and love.

Love is the theme of the second week in Advent, again a call to action in a world so prone to violence and neglect of the least among us.

The third week of Advent will call us for the to celebrate Joy. This theme calls us to remember that even as we are called to act as shepherds of God’s world and reign, we can take simple pleasure and joy in the great gifts God has given us, in the natural world, in relationships, in our families, and in every expectation of new living connections we can anticipate at every stage of our lives.

The last theme of Advent, as represented in the Advent Wreath is Peace. Though the world, affected by humankind, has not know this peace, it remains the eternal promise of our God and savior in Jesus. We must not give into despair that peace is not attainable with the character of humankind we know. The theme of peace reminds us that we can be transformed by God’s love and grace. These extend to all humankind and can be the foundation of our yearning and working for peace.

While we will be using the memorial Advent Wreath near the altar, our ceremony will center on an Advent Wreath created by Cathy Walsh placed at the baptismal font.

Susan

---

From the Outreach Committee: Opportunities for Christmas and Beyond

by Lonnie Fisher

As we approach Advent, and that time of year when we are in giving mode, deluged with envelopes from countless charities asking for a bit of our abundance to be shared with those in need, there is need close to home that is not necessarily sitting on a corner with an empty hand. I am thinking of the children of working parents qualified for free or subsidised school meals who will be home during school vacation and not receiving those school meals. In recent years St. Stephen’s has filled many tote bags with food for these children. Please consider if you might help fill a bag or two, along with all the other generous giving you do. Suitable items are healthy, non spoilable, and easy for youngsters to prepare. Suggested items are dry cereal, juices, canned meats, crackers, granola bars, peanut butter, and similar. They can be delivered to church any time and placed in the reception area, or in the Parish Hall. School vacation begins Dec 22, we will package it all up and deliver during the week before that day.

As we are working on identifying who we are and how we can further be open and useful in our community, out side of St. Stephen’s walls, Outreach Committee is open to any and all who have suggestions, passions, ideas, desires etc. to share with us regarding the use of 2017 Peasant Market funds earmarked for Outreach. We can make a time to invite everyone interested for a meeting and discussion before we decide how to use our bounty. Yes, I know it will not be before Christmas, but sometime in January. Please contact Lonnie at fishmidd@gmail.com or 388 0834. We can also use that time to look beyond this immediate disbursal to discuss future possibilities.

We are offering opportunity to make some kids happy this Christmas by fulfilling their wishes via HOPE’s little cards. See Sandy Ketcham to get a card listing the desire and need of a child, which you can fulfill by finding the needed item and returning it with the card to Sandy or to HOPE. Sandy will want to know that the wishes are met, so if you deliver to HOPE, let her know.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church invites you to join us!

2017 Christmas Service Schedule

Dec. 13   Sankta Lucia Festival at 7:00 p.m.
Dec. 16   A Gentle Christmas for the Community at 12:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. A service for those whom the Christmas Season may be difficult. Communion Service followed by a soup lunch.
Dec. 24   Advent IV Holy Communion at 9:00 a.m.
            Christmas Pageant & Communion Service at 4:00 p.m.
            Everyone welcome. All children are invited and encouraged to come downstairs to the Parish Hall to get a costume and play a part in the Pageant.
Dec. 25   Christmas Eve Holy Communion and Carols at 9:00 p.m.
Dec. 31   Holy Communion Service at 8:00 a.m.
            A Celebration of Christmas in Word and Music at 10:30 a.m.

Growing in God's Love, Serving Christ in All People

3 Main Street on the Green • Middletown, Vermont 05753
802.388.7200 • www.ststephensmidd.org • ststephensmiddbury@gmail.com

Welcome to the 2017 Saint Stephen’s Advent Concert Series

Thursday, November 30
12:15 p.m.
Vocal Recital by Jack DesRosss bass; Ronald Romano, piano; George Matthew Jr., organ, featuring arias from Handel’s Messiah and selections from The Western Star by Jack DesRosss.

Monday, December 4, 2017
7:30 p.m.
Amaryllis, Vermont’s premier Renaissance vocal group featuring a program of Advent and Christmas music. (donations suggested)

Thursday, December 7
12:15 p.m.
The Addison String Quartet, directed by Emily Suckerman performing the Allegro from Beethoven’s Quartet opus 59, no. 1 and Corelli’s Christmas Concerto, with George Matthew Jr., organ.

Wednesday, December 13
7:00 p.m.
The Festival of Sankta Lucia. The story of St. Lucia who brought food to the Christians in the Catacombs of ancient Rome in song and narration. Directed by Mr. Roston Swenson of Orwell.

Thursday, December 14
12:15 p.m.
Recital of French Advent and Christmas music by George Matthew Jr. Works by Balbastre, Dandrieu, Giclman, Jolain, and Eugene Gigout.

Thursday, December 21
12:15 p.m.
Recital of Advent and Christmas music with strings, woodwind, and vocalises, and organ.

The Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m.
Christmas Pageant & Communion Service

Everyone is welcome. All children are invited and encouraged to come downstairs to the Parish Hall to get a costume and join in the Pageant.
Enjoy the carols, scripture, and live animals! 

Children: bring a friend, play a part (shepherd, king, angel, principal character) make the Christmas Story your own.

Costume closet opens at 3:30 p.m.

Growing in God’s Love, Serving Christ in All People

3 Main Street on the Green • Middletown, Vermont 05753
802.388.7200 • www.ststephensmidd.org • ststephensmiddbury@gmail.com