

## GRATITUDE!

Thank you to everyone who has offered their Giving Goal card thus far. The response has been generous and inspiring. Here are some of the highlights:

Giving Goal cards received as of 12/9: **81**

Giving Goals in \$: **\$235,356**

# of Giving Goals with increase over 2019 Goal: **40 (49%)**

# of NEW Goals (i.e., no Goal received for 2019): **14**

Average Goal: **\$2,906**

**ALL Giving Goals matter and make a difference!**

For comparison, at the end of December last year we had received 91 Giving Goal cards for a total of \$213,400, for an average goal of \$2,345.

We give thanks for the encouraging progress we have collectively made to support our church in 2020. Our aspirations are high as we look to the prospect of calling a new priest in the year to come. Our church family's budget will increase accordingly and the support we offer through our Giving Goals helps our Vestry and Church leaders to plan for what lies ahead.

Giving Goal cards are available at the Church or on our web site:

<https://www.ststephensmidd.org/giving/> if you haven't yet completed yours.

**We are your stewards, O God.**

**Guide us with your grace.**

On behalf of the Stewardship Ministry Team,

*Amy Hastings, chair;*

*Irv Cummings, John Hammer, Elizabeth Oettinger, Barb Stratton, Winky Thomas;*

*Mary McGuire, Diane Nancekivell, Larry Yarbrough (Interim Team representatives)*

### SHINING OUR LIGHT EPISTLES

Over 6 Sundays earlier this fall, we heard from 6 church members who wrote and shared Epistles or letters with the congregation. They're available on the St. Stephen's web site so if you missed any of these or would like to be reminded of what was offered, please visit:

[www.ststephensmidd.org/stewardship-fall-2018-shining-our-light/](http://www.ststephensmidd.org/stewardship-fall-2018-shining-our-light/).

## Treasurer's Report as of November 30, 2019

2019 Giving goal	\$218,275
Giving as of 11/30	\$203,960
Balance needed to achieve goal	\$ 14,315
Other Income projected:	\$ 39,305
2019 Church Expense Budget	\$257,580
Expenses as of 11/30	\$228,802

If you have any questions, please contact me.

*Barbara Stratton, Treasurer*

**A Note from the Finance Committee:** We can all be thankful that our giving in this year of interim ministry is strong. As 2019 draws to a close, a major focus is to produce a meaningful budget for 2020 that reflects a couple of what-if scenarios. A draft operating budget presented to the Finance Committee and the Vestry is based on having a full-time priest for the entirety of 2020 – which won't likely happen, but it is a good benchmark for comparison to our Annual Campaign results. For a working operating budget, we will model a 'most likely' proportion of Interim to full-time ministry compensation expenses for 2020.

The value in preparing a full year/full time budget is the reality check of seeing how that expense compares to our level of giving this year. In addition, our operating expenses in 2020 will include the cost of search and (potentially) relocation, so the possibility of a surplus in 2019 can be thought of as a cushion against those as-yet-unknown costs.



### **December 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a. m. Lessons and Carols A Celebration of Christmas in Word and Music**

Lessons and Carols has become a familiar Christmas-themed service at St. Stephens in the past few years. We think of it as “a taste of Christmas,” with popular carols and with readings from a range of Advent texts, including the Christmas story. But we mix in readings from a range of religious writers, theologians, and poets, including T. S. Eliot’s “Magi.” This service was originally put together by the Liturgy Committee, and it has evolved over recent years. Jay Parini will lead this service, which takes place at ten a.m. – a single service – the week after Christmas. It’s a service that has no Eucharist, the only service of the year that fits this description. All are welcome to come and sing and remember the season.





# St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

invites you to join us!

## Christmas Service 2019 Schedule

- Dec. 15 **Santa Lucia Festival** at 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 21 **A Gentle Christmas for the Community** at 11:00 a.m.  
A service for those whom the Christmas Season may be difficult.  
Communion Service followed by a soup lunch.
- Dec. 22 **Advent IV Holy Communion** at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
- Dec. 24 **Christmas Pageant & Communion Service** at 4:00 p.m.  
Everyone welcome. All children are warmly invited to come  
downstairs to the Parish Hall at 3:30 p.m. to choose a  
costume and play a part in the Pageant.
- Christmas Eve Holy Communion** at 9:00 p.m.
- Dec. 25 **Christmas Communion Service** at 10:00 a.m.  
Procession of the Three Kings begins
- Dec. 29 **Lessons and Carols—A Celebration of Christmas in  
Word and Music** at 10:00 a.m.

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

3 Main Street on the Green • Middlebury, Vermont 05753  
802.388.7200 • [www.ststephensmidd.org](http://www.ststephensmidd.org) • [ststephensmiddlebury@gmail.com](mailto:ststephensmiddlebury@gmail.com)





**News from the Pews    Thanksgiving Notes**  
*compiled by special reporter Linda Horn*

**Winky Thomas** visited family in Norwich, VT. **Rebecca Mitchell** and her husband **Andrew Demshuk** and son **Archibald** all headed to Buffalo, NY. **Suzanne Peck** visited friends (including four dogs and three cats) on the top of a mountain in Lincoln for the holiday. **Dorothy Hayes** went to Bar Harbor, ME to see her daughter, **Patty Doyle**. **Steve** and **Cathy Sontum** traveled to Underhill, VT to spend Thanksgiving with their son, **Matt** and his family.

The **Dempewolff** clan was all together at home in East Middlebury. **Harry Wendt** came from Portland, OR, **David Wendt** and his wife **Naomi** and son **Fineas** came from Duxbury, VT, **Austin** Dempewolff came from Washington, DC with his wife **Yana**, and **Kendra Dempewolff** came from Portland, ME. Also, at home was **Lonnie Fisher** and her daughter **Cassie Polemus**. **Debbie Marks** and her sister **Penny Saulnier** celebrated in Middlebury on Gorham Lane with Debbie's son, daughter-in-law, and four children.

While the **Watters** clan also assembled in Middlebury the focus was on **Chris'** 80th birthday. Happy Birthday, **Chris!** (Welcome home, **Alex**, **David**, and **Martin** and their families!)

Of course, once Thanksgiving is over, it is time to think about Christmas. An elf reported seeing **Jack Simpson** and **Declan** and **Kieran Gallipo** sitting on Santa's lap at the Middlebury Inn one



Saturday. (**Ada** decided she didn't need to visit Santa this year!)

Speaking of children, **Devon Jersild** and **Jay Parini** will again become grandparents in April. Son **Oliver** and wife **Elsie** will be having a sibling for big sister **Ida!**

Well done goes to **Dee** and **Barney Hodges's** son **Barney**. As reported in the Addison Independent, young **Barney** is the new manager of the Rikert Nordic Ski Center in Ripton.



Another well done to **Susan Anderson-Ray**, creator of a carpenter star pattern quilt wall hanging for Sunday School. Godly Play teachers **Beth Davis**, **Barb Wood**, and **Ann Cooper** teach about the church seasons and colors so the quilt is done in blues for Advent.

Finally done is **Linda Horn** and her cast. It came off December 13th. However, it is **Paul Horn** who reports a real feeling of liberation. (Paul has been caring for and driving around **Linda** for 12 weeks.)

Finally done is **Linda Horn** and her cast. It came off December 13th. However, it is **Paul Horn** who reports a real feeling of liberation. (Paul has been caring for and driving around **Linda** for 12 weeks.)

Last but not least, **John Hammer** has been off having fun again. **John** and his daughter **Erica** recently spent time in France. They saw nine museums, seven chateaus, Versailles, and saw a four-and-a-half-hour opera!



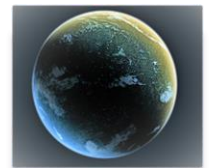


# From the Organ Bench: Christmas Blessings

by George Matthew Jr.

“Count your blessings one by one”. That’s an old Baptist hymn. Here is a collection of Christmas thoughts that I am often reminded of this time of year, a “baker’s dozen” in a random order:

1. I have a Belgian “Winterhorn”, a wooden horn about five feet long. It may only be sounded in Advent and Epiphany after sundown. None of my Belgian or Dutch friends know what calls you must sound on it. Speaking of calls,
  2. The great chorus, “Christians be Joyful” of Bach’s Christmas Oratorio incorporates a French cavalry charge! (Did Bach know that? Did he care? Did anyone?)
  3. Handel often added an organ/string concerto to Messiah performances. Ever wonder why so much of Handel sounds “Christmasy”?
4. In Australia, December 25<sup>th</sup> is, well, hot! Anyone who will wear a Santa Claus suit on that day is considered *my macho!*
5. In Corner Brook, Newfoundland is a painting of Santa Claus jumping into the sea, painted by a local resident who lived in Australia for a while.
6. Speaking of Corner Brook, in a valley beautiful with lights on a summer night, I remarked to my B&B host that if I were a millionaire, I’d give everyone in the town money for Christmas lights. He replied, “that’s already been done.”
7. For decades, “Tuba Christmas” has been celebrated at the skating rink at Rockefeller Center, NYC... 1,500 tubas typically. Now I played the tuba in college and lived in Stamford, CT for 37 years (45 minutes on the train to NYC). I never participated in it. (No excuse sir!) In 2007 Burlington, VT held a Tuba Christmas. I brought my instrument but my valves froze and I couldn’t play a note! 😞
8. Then there’s the annual Christmas Train. (ask Irv Cummings for details)
9. In 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century France, churches had services at different times on Christmas Eve (with lots of music) and people went “from church to church” to enjoy it all. There are French and English carols about going from church to church. Maybe we could do that in Middlebury?
10. Then there’s the light of Lucia, traditionally December 13<sup>th</sup>, which on the Julian calendar was the darkest day of the year.
11. But watch out! There’s a Lucia song about gnomes who sneak in and eat up all the Christmas goodies while the family is sleeping!
12. Time for a commercial. I try to play the carillon every day in December and balance worldwide carols, familiar songs, the Nutcracker, secular, etc., etc. Of necessity the time varies a lot.
13. One of the profoundest experiences in my life was seeing our astronauts read from Genesis from lunar orbit at Christmas 1968. Perhaps Christmas is not limited to our little blue planet?



## Leadership Positions to be Elected at January 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

We're excited about this year's slate of nominees for Vestry positions as follows: one one-year position which Tom Klemmer is running to fill, and offering to serve in the three three-year positions are Carol Milkuhn, Mary Jane Simpson, and Rebecca Mitchell and Andrew Demshuk. Rebecca and Andrew are running to share a seat; given their combined academic and parenting schedules, the Vestry is delighted to welcome their engagement in this creative way. Should they win, they will alternate their attendance at meetings and share one vote.

We are also pleased to announce a full slate of candidates for St. Stephen's delegates and alternates to the 2020 Diocesan Convention.

Candidates for delegates are Ben Anderson-Ray, Eric Davis, and Sharon Tierra. Candidates for alternates are Susan Anderson-Ray, Glenn Fulop, and Cathy Walsh. Thanks to all for agreeing to serve in this way.

These elections will take place at the Annual Meeting on January 26 which will be held between the services. We have so much to celebrate this year and many big decisions, so we very much hope that you have this date set in your calendar. Any questions? Talk with any Vestry member.

Many thanks, *Mary*

## Candidates for January Election

### Tom Klemmer - candidate for One-Year Term on Vestry

Hello everyone,

My name is Tom Klemmer and I am running for the one-year position that is available on Vestry this January. I have had the pleasure of serving Vestry these past three years and as your Junior Warden for all of it. I am asking for your support as I run for this position in the hope of continuing in my role as your Junior Warden for one more year.



My reasons for this are simple. There are several projects that I have started that I would like to see through to their completion in 2020. Namely the bell tower repair, our actual bell repair, the installation of the locking gate in the east alcove, the completion of railroad construction project and a few other small projects. I have had a very productive three years as your Junior Warden. I

saw to the installation of our columbarium in our chapel and the installation of our new heat pump for the offices and meeting room. I was able to raise all the funds necessary for those projects with zero impact to our budget. I assisted Peter with the installation of our new tile floor in the narthex and the new cherry floor in the chapel. I organized an antique auction that raised over \$15,000 to be used for the preservation of our facilities. I would very much like to continue in this position, but can only do so if re-elected to the vestry for one additional year. If you have been pleased with my performance on vestry and as your Junior Warden, please support me during the January election.

Thank you very much.

Respectfully submitted, *Tom Klemmer*

## Andrew Demshuk and Rebecca Mitchell - candidates for one Three-Year Term on Vestry

Andrew Demshuk and Rebecca Mitchell met in the midst of their doctoral studies at the University of Illinois in February 2007, were best friends by April, and in love by November (and ever since). They were married in 2009. In 2016, they moved to Middlebury, where Rebecca Mitchell started in January as assistant professor of Russian history. That same year, Andrew Demshuk moved from the University of Alabama at Birmingham to American University in Washington, DC, where he is a professor of Central European history. Rebecca was raised in the United Church of Canada (where her mother, Rev. Karen Mitchell is a minister), and Andrew is Roman Catholic. In search of a common spiritual home, they have attended services at Episcopal churches in their various places of residence in Urbana, Illinois, Oxford, Ohio, Oberlin, Ohio, Birmingham, Alabama, and now Middlebury, Vermont. They



have also regularly attended services at the National Cathedral in Washington. Rebecca became a member of the Episcopal Church at St. Stephens in 2017, with Marjorie Lamberti serving as her church sponsor. A key moment in their relationship with the parish came with the baptism of Archie Ray at St. Stephens (presided

over by Fr. Larry, with Rebecca's mother's participation) in October 2018. The welcoming environment, traditional liturgy, and classical musical tradition have all attracted Andrew and Rebecca to St. Stephens, and of particular importance to them are well researched and thoughtful homiletics. By sharing a position on the Vestry, they hope to help support the community in this period of transition, helping it to continue to develop as an open and questing spiritual community that balances thoughtful intellectual inquiry with community outreach.

---

## Carol Milkuhn - candidate for Three-Year Term on Vestry

Dear Parishioners:

You know me as the driver of “the contingent,” the group from the Residence who attend Sunday services at St. Stephens. But my experience with our church begins earlier; it’s been four years since I first entered our doors, a stranger to both The Residence and Middlebury.

You welcomed me and so I stayed. And, as my connection with our church deepened, so did my relationships with the Episcopalians at The Residence. Eventually we decided to attend church together, finding the experience rewarding for many reasons. Yes, we all enjoy the



music, the pageantry, and the liturgy that enhance our Sunday services—yes, we all are uplifted by the beauty of our church—and yes, we all find spiritual inspiration in the sermons. But we have found an unexpected blessing in going to church together; our Sunday “experience” binds us to each other and to the larger community of St. Stephens.

And fostering connection with the larger community is important. Because people often need comfort but find asking for comfort difficult, I asked Sandy Ketchum for help in beginning a “pocket prayer shawl” ministry. The ministry has been successful;



Sandy and I are now knitting more shawls to refill the emptied baskets in our sanctuary.

Being a member of St. Stephens has brought me many blessings. I have found a religious sanctuary within the walls of this church, a place where I can think and pray. I have found an opportunity to use my knitting skills, hoping that crafting will foster healing. And I have made

friends, both with my neighbors at The Residence and with members of our larger congregation. If elected to the Vestry, I will be focused on deepening these relationships, fostering the ties that bind us to a larger community, that of the congregation of St. Stephens and the town of Middlebury.

Peace and Blessings, *Carol Milkubn*

---

## Mary Jane Simpson - candidate for Three-Year Term on Vestry

### ***1. Describe your history with the Church and specifically with St. Stephen's.***

My history with the Church starts with my late grandmother: our faith connected us deeply. For as long as I can remember, my grandmother brought me to the United Methodist Church of Orlando with her. I did practically everything at that church from tagging along on my grandmother's Stephen Ministry visits as a child to leading the youth services as teenager.

I kept attending the Methodist church during college. Michael and I were married at Trinity United Methodist Church in our college town. At that church, we sang in the choir and helped lead the youth group.

After graduation, we moved to North Carolina for graduate school. We couldn't find a Methodist Church that suited us in North Carolina, but we found an American Baptist Church that we absolutely loved: Watts Street Baptist Church. Watts Street had a vibrant young adult community that worked, fellowshiped, and studied the Bible together. We hosted Bible study for the last couple of years. Our young adult group had a long-term service project in collaboration with a local Black sister church where we helped children with their homework and taught adults basic computer skills before the Wednesday night church service.



After graduate school, we moved to Tennessee for my two-year post-doctoral training. In highly conservative eastern Tennessee, we struggled to find a church. We visited many Baptist churches but none of them suited us. Around that time, the Methodist church was debating gay inclusivity and voted against it, so we decided we

would absolutely not consider joining a Methodist church. Seeking an inclusive church and preferring the high church style, we started visiting Episcopal churches. After attending the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in West Knoxville for a year, we took a confirmation class, were confirmed, and had our son Jack baptized. While at the Church of the Ascension, we helped the church work through a highly controversial decision that finally resulted in the blessing of the marriage of two gay parishioners.

After my post-doc, we moved to Middlebury in 2016, and there was no question about what church we would attend: we were going to join St. Stephen's. I work with the fellowship committee and regularly host coffee hour. I also help plan parish weekends. Now that my children are getting older, I am ready to take on more responsibilities at St. Stephen's, and I am eager to join the Vestry.

### ***2. What skills and interests do you bring to serving on the Vestry?***



I believe the words of Romans 14:11, "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.'" I am interested in serving on Vestry to ensure that when the people in our community need a Church, that the Church is here for them. This is not to say that I am interested in Vestry for the self-preservation of our church, but rather, I am interested in expanding our church to meet the changing needs of our community. In the future, I see our church as the spiritual heart of Middlebury, where all kinds of people come to worship and learn, where their needs are met, where there is true Christian community. I especially want to reach out to college students to

allow them to maintain their connection with the Church despite the many changes in their lives.

If elected, I would bring to the Vestry my highly organized and task-oriented personality. I will help the Vestry to have efficient and productive meetings, which will be important given the many items coming up on the agenda in the next year. I am also agreeable and willing to compromise on group decisions. I hope to learn from the Vestry how the church is run, both locally and regionally. I am also interested in helping our future priest get established and oriented when he or she arrives.

---

### **Ben Anderson-Ray - candidate for convention delegate**

Ben Anderson-Ray has served in many capacities at St. Stephen's, including as a member of the Vestry, as Senior Warden (2012-13), as a member of the Facilities Committee, and as chair of the committee to plan and raise funds for our new Altar Window.

Ben has been one of St. Stephen's delegates to the Diocesan



Convention annually since 2016. He has also served as a member of the Diocesan Grants and Loans Committee. At the October 2019 convention, Ben was elected as a member of the Trustees of the Diocese.

In the wider church, Ben has been a member of the Board of the Episcopal Church Foundation since 2013, and has served as chair of that board since 2018.

---

### **Eric Davis - candidate for convention delegate**

I have been a member of St Stephen's since 2013. I have served on the Vestry (2017-2018), as a member of the SISP (Strategic Initiatives for Sacred Places) Steering Committee (2014-2016), and have been a frequent presenter for Adult Education for the past six years. I also serve as a lector for Sunday Eucharists, and as a lay leader for Noonday Prayer on two or three Wednesdays per month, and at the monthly fourth Sunday service of



Evening Prayer at Helen Porter Nursing and Rehabilitation.

I have served as a delegate or alternate to the Diocesan Conventions since 2017. I served as a member of the Bishop Discernment and Nominating Committee (2018-2019), and am currently serving on the Commission on Ministry (2019-2022). I am

also Vermont's lay delegate to the Province I Synod (2017-2020). I have served as an outside member of a Parish Discernment Committee on Ministry at St. Paul's, Wells, and am currently serving as an "Evangelism Catalyst" (local liaison with the diocesan-wide Green Mountain Witness Team).

I have enjoyed attending the conventions, working on diocesan matters, and serving on several diocesan committees over the past several years. I believe one of the advantages of this work for the local parish is that it enables me to share with St Stephen's examples of "best practices" from other parishes in the diocese.

Respectfully submitted, *Eric Davi*

---

### Sharon Tierra - candidate for convention delegate

Sharon Tierra has been part of the St Stephen's community since 2005. She has been active in several ministries over the years. She currently is a member of the choir, the outreach committee and the Thursday meditation group. Sharon coordinates teams of parishioners who donate food for the bag lunches and who deliver canned goods to the food pantries. Sharon was a



Convention delegate in 2018 and was thrilled to have the opportunity to sing at the consecration of Bishop Shannon MacVean - Brown this year. Sharon would like to serve as a Convention delegate in order to listen, learn, make connections with people in other parishes, and then come back to share what she has learned with the parish.

---

**St. Lucia and Her Attendants Singing as they are Recessing -- St. Stephen's Dec. 15, 2019**



## Ministry Model Team Update – Paul Horn chair

Over the past eight months, the Ministry Model Team (Alice Van Tuyl, Ann Cooper, Beth Davis, Paul Horn, Winky Thomas, and Barb Wood) has been evaluating the different models of ordained ministry in Vermont that might meet the needs of our parish. We have discussed the models with clergy and Vestry of three comparable size churches that have a rector or priest-in-partnership model, the St. Stephen's Interim Ministry Team, and Lynn Bates, Canon to the Ordinary and Transition Minister for the Diocese of Vermont. There are three main ministry models in place in Vermont – Rector, Priest in Partnership, and Team Ministry. The Team Ministry model fits smaller parishes with a part-time or non-stipendiary minister. **Our focus has been on the Rector and Priest in Partnership.** The Priest-in-Partnership model is Vermont's version of the Priest-in-Charge model described by Canon. Bishop Shannon has indicated that the current model in place is appropriate and no changes are planned at this time.

**The main differences** between the Rector and Priest in Partnership models are: (1) the Rector is a tenured position while the Priest in Partnership is initially a three year period (after which the Priest may be called as Rector, or the agreement extended or terminated) and (2) the recruiting/vetting/calling process is different for each model.

### Here are some further clarifications:

What is the same between the two models?

**Both models confer all the authority** of the Rector/Priest-in-Charge as defined in the Canons of the Episcopal Church, whether full or part time.

Specific and mutual expectations of the priest and congregation are identified in a **Letter of Agreement** for both.

**In both models, the parish prepares a portfolio** and there is a meeting between the MDT, the Bishop, and Lynn Bates to discuss the portfolio and the needs of St. Stephen's. The Diocesan Transition Office also does the recruiting and initial background checks of candidates.

Lynn Bates has stated that **the pool for full time priest candidates (either model) would be very similar.** The pool for a part time position (either model) would be smaller and may present recruitment challenges. Whether full-time or part-time, Rector or Priest-in-Partnership, the number of clergy available is very limited. In the Fall 2019 meeting of the Episcopal Transition Ministers with Dioceses east of the Mississippi River, there were 374 positions needed (64 full time and 310 part time).

Both the Rector and Priest-in-Partnership Agreements include **regular mutual ministry reviews** (every six months). These are not evaluations of the priest, but rather a way for both the clergy leader and parish leadership (sometimes the whole congregation) to review and discuss the mutual ministry of the congregation.

How is the recruiting/vetting/calling process different?

- **In the traditional Rector model,** the MDT works with the Diocesan Transition Office to identify final candidates. The MDT does more in depth vetting (visitations, interviews) of all the final candidates and presents candidates to the Vestry in accordance with the Vestry Charge to the Ministry Discernment Team. The Vestry elects the Rector with Bishop approval.



- **For a Priest-in-Partnership**, the Bishop presents her nominee for the position after reviewing the Portfolio prepared by the congregation. The Bishop is assured by the nominee that they are “95%” certain that if the position is offered, they will accept. If the Vestry says no to the nominee, the Bishop asks why and uses that information to put forward another nominee. Once that happens, that candidate is out of the mix.

At one of the recent Listening Sessions, a question was raised whether the parish could advertise for a priest, or based on any other information, source candidates. Yes, the Parish, working with the Diocese, can suggest names and place ads for the position.

### **The Ministry Model Team is planning a parish meeting on**

**Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am in the Parish Hall**

to discuss the models as well as to continue our conversation of who we are and what is God calling us to do. We hope that you can attend!

## **“Wondering as we Wander” by the Rev. Carole Wageman**

“I Wonder As I Wander” is a haunting folk tune that we occasionally hear sung as a Christmas Carol. It was put together by American folklorist and singer, John Jacob Niles.<sup>1</sup> The opening lyrics go like this:

I wonder as I wander out under the sky  
 How Jesus my Saviour did come for to die  
 For poor on'ry people like you and like I  
 I wonder as I wander out under the sky

Wandering and wondering is a poignant way to spend meditative time during this season of Advent-imagining. In some ways, St. Stephen’s is also “wondering while we wander” as the search process for our next clergy continues to move forward. I am not suggesting that our process is wandering all over the map without a destination in mind. On the contrary, we are “wandering” exactly where we need to roam---learning the subtle ways in which our path unfolds in seasons of waiting for a future that is unknown—like tenacious Mary; paying attention to the quiet whisper of the holy spirit---like faithful and resourceful Joseph; standing in awe of a mighty message that arrives when we least expect it---like the astonished shepherds keeping watch in a lonely field; allowing ourselves the aspiration to follow a dream that beckons us to follow—like the remarkable Magi. Yes, others have been here before with their own stories of grace and wonder at the mystery of God as they wondered and wandered. May we, like them, take the gamble to be bold in our wandering. May we, like them, pause from time to time to ponder the wonder of it all.

### **Prayer**

“As we wait this Advent, grant Holy One that ours be an active, risk-full, leaning-in kind of waiting. Amen”<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I\\_Wonder\\_as\\_I\\_Wander](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Wonder_as_I_Wander) accessed December 2019

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ucc.org/devotionals\\_by\\_tony\\_robinson](https://www.ucc.org/devotionals_by_tony_robinson) **Lean In** Dec 05, 2019

## 1 Corinthians—and beyond

Our mid-week adult ed study of 1 Corinthians in October generated some wonderful, insightful, energetic discussions. The written responses to the experiment (regarding both time and content) were very helpful in charting a course for the future. So, we are considering topics and times for the spring. Bible study was at the top of the list for most everyone, but responses also included questions about early Christian belief and practice, how the Bible relates to our own times, and a variety of topics related to Episcopal history, traditions, and practice.



Many welcomed the opportunity to explore aspects of our faith in a small group, noting that common exploration allowed for deeper understanding of the topics and a growing sense of trust among the participants as they shared their questions and reflections. Almost everyone enjoyed tea-time as a gathering ritual!

So be on the lookout for other sessions in the new year. If you were not able to attend but might be interested in participating in future, let me or members of the Adult Ed committee know what you would like to explore.

*Larry+*

---

## From your Senior Warden:

**Setting:** Coffee Hour at St. Stephen's, Parish Hall

**Date:** a Sunday in early December

**Who:** Relative New-comer (RN-C) and Relative "Old-Timer" (RO-T)

**Overheard by:** Yours truly

(RN-C): Wow, January sounds like a really exciting month here at St. Stephen's!

(RO-T): Uh, are you referring to the likely January thaw and then ice?

(RN-C): Not at all, though I found my mini-spikes to attach to my boots for that ice. I was actually noticing all the parish-wide events you have scheduled - three parish-wide meetings AND a skating party! Lots of energy for play and work here, I think! I'd like to know more about them. Can you help me get a picture of all this activity?

RO-T): Sure, I'll do my best. The easy one is the one we haven't actually scheduled. When the ice on Mary's Pond is good, lots of folks head over to the McGuires' for skating and a bonfire. So, we all just keep an eye on the weather, and they let us know when the ice is thick and fairly smooth. Mike Davis has been known to bring his snowblower if the snow is super deep, but usually a few of us just show up with skates AND shovels (hint-hint).

(RN-C): Sounds fun!

*continues on page 14*

((RO-T): Jan 12 is exciting because it's our new bishop's first visit. Bishop Shannon was consecrated this past September, so most of us haven't met her yet. She'll celebrate and preach, and I'm looking forward to the hour or so the whole parish will have with her after church. I hear they're going to set up the chairs in a giant circle down here for a Q and A time with her after a Festive Coffee hour.

The meeting on Jan 19 will be led by the Ministry Discernment Team. Those folks have been meeting for the past nine months, God bless 'em, and I figure it's just good to show up for them, let 'em know we're all really thankful for all their time and devotion. Discerning God's guidance for our next clergy leadership is so important, and I want to support that process.

But Jan 26th? It's just the Annual Meeting. Happens every year, no big deal. I stopped going a few years ago. They don't really need me.

(RN-C): But isn't it a little like voting in the elections? You know, "your vote is your voice". And I heard someone else say that it's a chance for folks to talk about what's on their minds about church. Can people really bring up issues and ideas?

(RO-T): Yeah, I guess that happens sometimes.

(RN-C): And this past year has been pretty full, right? I read a couple of the recent Parishscopes, and it sure sounds like --

(RO-T): Wait, you read Parishscopes?! No one does that!

(RN-C): Oh gee, you don't know what you're missing, then - it's good stuff in there! News, good-hearted gossip in that News from the Pews section, interviews, even some inspirational stuff. But anyway, you folks at St. Stephen's are busy, and the Annual Meeting sounds like a time to celebrate and reflect, a bit.

(RO-T): Huh, yeah, I guess so. That Holy Cow survey reported that a bunch of us haven't felt like the leadership has been as open and representative as we'd like. I guess it doesn't help if we don't go - can't complain if I don't show up! And this year's Stewardship Campaign is pretty inspiring, like we're really going to have the money to do some of the things a few of us have been dreaming about, reaching out to the community and learning to "do church" in some new ways.

(RN-C): Yes, I heard those personal epistles - people here are fired up! They love this church; that passion for the church is what is so appealing to me and my family, the reason we've been coming here.

(RO-T): Right again - there ARE a lot of people here who inspire me, too. God's spirit IS moving among us. Thanks for helping me recognize it. I guess I WILL go to the Annual Meeting this year - Jan 26, here I come. Praise the Lord!



---

## Junior Warden's Report

I know it has been a while since I submitted a report from your Junior Warden. Over the past few months I have been busy dealing with many projects. Here is a short summary of some of them:

I have asked several contractors to give us an estimate to repair the damage to our bell tower. This is a very tricky repair given the limited access to the tower and the extent of the repairs needed. We received a detailed estimate from Silver Maple Construction and are waiting for a second estimate from Breadloaf



Construction. Silver Maple came in at around \$65,000 for the repair and I suspect that Breadloaf's will not be much different. This is about what we were expecting given the damage. It is difficult to see just how much damage there is from the street level. One must really climb up there and poke around in places that aren't the most inviting to know what's going on up there. That said, we do need to address this. I have applied for a grant from the Vermont Historic Preservation Society. I am asking for their maximum award of \$20,000. We will hear from them sometime in January with their decision. I am not stopping there, however. I will also be applying for a grant from the diocese as well. With a little luck and a lot of prayer I am hoping to reduce our expenditure for this repair significantly.

Now on to the bell itself. Our Paul Revere bell is also in need of repair as it has shifted in its yoke and not sitting level anymore. We received a quote from Verdin Bell Company to repair our bell for nearly \$22,000. We on the facilities committee feel this is quite excessive. Especially as it would require the removal of the bell via crane to be shipped to their repair facility in Pennsylvania. We do not want our bell removed and feel that the repair could be made on site. We are searching for other options.

The columbarium has been on my to-do list all year. There have been numerous distractions that have kept me from completely finishing the surround. I have made some significant progress in the past month, and have several pieces completed in my shop at home. I will need to put several finish coats on these particular pieces prior to installation given that these surfaces will be exposed to repeated use. I am still hopeful to get these installed prior to Christmas, but we will have to see how things unfold with the holidays



and the usual visits from relatives. Rest assured, this project is nearing completion, and it is number one in my shop queue. I thank you all for your patience.

Finally, let's talk about the locking gate to be installed at the back of the church. A couple of months ago, Ben and Susan Anderson-Ray and I met with the town board and police chief Tom Hanley. We discussed the homeless population and our concerns regarding their use of our little alcove as their personal latrine. We really learned a great deal from that meeting. As a result, we were granted unanimous approval to construct an 8' section of fencing with a locking gate to restrict access to that alcove only to those who are authorized to go in there. This protects not only St. Stephen's personnel, but also the general public. The homelessness issue seems to be the latest hot topic. There have been numerous letters to the editor at the Addy Indy from some individuals that have not had very nice things to say about St. Stephen's. I have been tempted to write a response, but many of their comments were also points that we brought up in our meeting with the town. We simply did not understand the full scope of the problem and that our proposed solutions would only make things worse. At present, the small barrier is the best solution to this recurring problem. We have contracted with John Baker of Wildflower Ironworks to create a custom iron fence that will complement the church beautifully in both form and function. We had wanted to get this project finished before the winter but the cold weather descended upon us quicker than anticipated, so this project will be pushed to the spring.

That's about all for this edition of Parishscope. As always, if any of you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me anytime.

Thank you. *Tom*

## The Parishescope Interview: **Nancy Malcolm** by your editor, Mike Davis.

Native Vermonter. Woodworker. (Unsuccessful) deer hunter. Fund raiser. College barber (ask her). Community organizer. 8 o'clocker...and a very 'together' neighbor.

Every town should be so fortunate as to have a Nancy Malcolm in their midst. For a lot of reasons, of course...she's a lively conversationalist and storyteller; she can see what needs to happen and runs toward the action to lend a hand; and more often than not is the leader who can get projects over the finish line. Like the rest of us, however, there's more to her story.



Nancy grew up in Burlington, with her only lengthy excursion outside the state being her time at St. Lawrence for her undergrad degree. Nancy is fit, and likes to be outdoors. She describes being an avid alpine and Nordic skier, with that thought followed by 'before Title IX, there were few options for female athletes. I remember standing over my daughters' bassinets and saying "someday they will cheer for you! It would have been fun to be born later to enjoy the benefits of Title IX". If you only know her from recent association, you might also be surprised to learn that she was shy as a youngster. She can actually point to an event in her life – her years attending a girls' YWCA camp – that helped her overcome her shyness. We can be glad that happened; I suspect the not-shy Nancy has accomplished much more than the shy one would have.

As for her connection to The Episcopal Church, she always attended St. Paul's Cathedral (the old one) growing up, and furthermore claims an uncle who was dean and provost of the National Cathedral at the time of its completion - which allowed her to sit IN THE FRONT ROW during the consecration of the finished edifice. Our denomination is used to 'compromise couples'...those who come from different faith traditions who settle on The Episcopal Church as 'middle ground'...and Nancy is no different, as husband Chip is a Quaker. The list of her involvement related to St. Stephen's includes Neighbors Together, SISP, Tuesday School, to name a few. Outside St. Stephen's, she mentioned the construction of the current High School, the first car seat program in Vermont, co-chair of the building of the first KidSpace playground next to the grade school, Porter Auxiliary, Guardian ad Litem, and so on. We often talk about 'inreach' and 'outreach' – Nancy does both, and very well.

She is quick to point out, however, that she has come and gone (and come back again) to/from Saint Stephen's over time, almost always an 8 o'clocker. She is among those of our parish who value the personal 'time of replenishment' that comes with our liturgy, and finds that restorative element of primary importance to her. She also points out, however, that it isn't a 'Rite one' thing. (note to others...she wouldn't mind a little variety...) One question I always ask interviewees is what advice they might offer to the parish in general, given the issues and opportunities we face. Nancy's comments focus on our current preoccupation with 'outreach'...whether we're doing enough, or maybe too much, or not the right emphasis, or – whatever. Her advice is to be realistic about what we can do, be honest in accounting for all the 'non-cash' outreach we provide, and don't forget the need to fully fund our basic mission as a parish – to be here as a healthy parish for whoever needs us. Wise advice from what we might call a 'committed

out-reacher'. A last thought on religion that Nancy shared; she took several religion classes in college, and was particularly struck by the common threads that run through all major religions. Love, peace, giving...an insight that she continues to see in the world around her, and this has been confirmed by lessons taught through travel. 'It's not a competition', she says.

The day I interviewed Nancy was her and Chip's 45th wedding anniversary. They still live in the house they bought 44 years ago upon moving to Middlebury. All three children and five grandchildren live close by. You might think that she was happy that day for a reason (I'm sure she was) but also have to say that I've rarely seen her with anything other than a smile on her face. If you find yourself grumpy because of too many negative people in your orbit, I suggest you track down Nancy Malcolm. Guaranteed she will cheer you up. If you want to hear some of the same stories I heard, ask her about 'buy a brick'; or being a stay-at-home mom with three kids and an OB/GYN husband who was on call 24/7 and for several years the ONLY delivery option in town; or maybe how she has always been comfortable 'speaking truth to power'. Thanks, Nancy, for being one of us.

---

## **Lazarus Task Force, led by *Diane Nancekivell***

**Participants:** *Becca Holbrook, Mary & Ed McGuire, Ryan Nevius, Sophie Swallow, John McWilliams*

### **Initial Meeting to establish Tasks:**

**Gather data** from local agencies dealing with homeless issues in our region by asking these questions: -  
What services does your agency provide? -How well do they serve the needs of this population? -What needs are not being met?

**Create a report with recommendations to the vestry and parish** for possible actions &/or projects to be presented to/embraced by St. Stephen's.

**List of Agencies** we are visiting: John Graham Homeless Shelter, Charter House, HOPE, CVOEO, Police of Middlebury, Town of Middlebury, Parent Child Center of Addison County, and the United Way.



**Visits and fact finding are in process.** One thing we've discovered is that both the guests at John Graham and Charter House lack facilities to do laundry. We've also learned that the despoilers of our property were "bad actors" and not any of the regulars who are searching for housing and stabilized lives.

**The John Graham Fundraiser SLEEP OUT** December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 began at 4:30 p.m. with a candlelight vigil on the Green and was followed by **soup, sandwich, and cookies supper in our Parish Hall hosted by The Lazarus Task Force** folks under the leadership of Ryan Nevius. We served over 80 suppers and a record amount of money was raised.

We will complete our fact finding and prepare a report for the Parish's consideration at the Annual Meeting. **Please hold our work in your prayers.**



## Advent Retreat 2019 – Diane Nancekivell

For about 10 years now the Meditation Group has been hosting an Advent Retreat to help settle us all into the spirit of Advent and Christmas. Most years we've been able to invite a well-known spiritual leader from Holy Cross Monastery, West Point, New York or nearby New England. Each day has been provocative, inspiring and renewing to those who have attended. This year's quiet day was no exception. In fact, it was "mind blowing", or transformative in the deepest sense of those words. The Rev. Matthew Wright, truly did blow our hearts wide open.

Before each of the three times we meditated, Matthew led us in a simple chant designed to help us drop out of our intellects and into our heart-mind where he urged us to center. He encouraged us to imagine our energies emanating from the area surrounding our hearts reaching down to our diaphragms. Just a few breaths coming from that center slows down the monkey-mind and quiets and opens the heart.

His talks focused on Mary. He led us from the Old Testament Wisdom or Sophia ( Proverbs 3:19-20, 8: 1-11, Wisdom of Solomon 6: 12-14, 15 -16, 7: 24 – 26 and 29 – 8:1) and followed the path of this feminine aspect of God as presented in Hebrew Scripture through

to the Blessed Virgin Mary of the New Testament. He uncovered Mary from the overlays of centuries of oppression and set her free in ways that not only brought masculine/feminine wholeness and unity to the triune God but also brought healing to us women who have searched endlessly for a feminine face of God that would reflect our own sacredness.

Matthew stressed that the one-sided masculinity of the traditional God cheated male identity almost as much as female identity because we are, all of us, a combination of both energies. He reminded us of the radical nature of The Magnificat, Mary's song at the Annunciation. In fact, it was believed to be so dangerous that from time to time it has been outlawed for fear of its potential to incite political revolutions! Most recently, during the time of Latin American Liberation Theology in Central and South America the Magnificat was banned from church liturgies.

I know many are daunted by the idea of spending a day without talking, being with others, eating with others and not saying a word. And of course, at first it is strange, but the quiet, and gentleness and peace soon relax the strangeness and touch us with renewed vision of possibility. Remember next year, you'd be welcomed.

### Song of Mary

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Luke 1:46-55

## Picturing the Word by Jennifer Nelson



**Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1566) Census at Bethlehem (65" x 45") (1566)**

Advent images are hard to find. It is a season of anticipation and waiting, and doesn't present a lot of picturesque subjects. One that I did find is illustrated here. It shows (among many other things) Mary riding on a donkey being led by Joseph heading into Bethlehem for the census ("so all the world should be taxed"). But it is typical of Bruegel's religious paintings in that he places the central subject in an unobtrusive place in a mundane landscape (Bethlehem is shown as contemporary Flanders), among many other people doing many different things, all over the canvas. It's a bit like a "Where's Waldo?" puzzle. (It's hard to find this image in this small reproduction—it's almost at the center of the lower figures. Mary rides a donkey and Joseph leads the donkey and also an ox). There is no idolatry here. Bruegel casts the principal religious figures as ordinary people in a mass of ordinary people. His work is illustrative rather than worshipful, and this is typical of the Northern Renaissance in this time of the Reformation.

*Having given up editing the Parishscope, I'm now undertaking to write a monthly column in which we look at a picture and think about it. I don't claim to be a Biblical scholar, nor an art historian, either, but I hope you think it's some fun. — Jennifer*



*The next Parishscope will be a January/February 2020 edition*  
*Submit article ideas to Editor Mike Davis, [windmikevt@gmail.com](mailto:windmikevt@gmail.com) or 802.989.9820*

*The copy deadline is Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>*  
*Send copy to Kitty Davis, [kittychurchstuff@yahoo.com](mailto:kittychurchstuff@yahoo.com)*

*Submit News from the Pews to Linda Horn, [lindahorn14@gmail.com](mailto:lindahorn14@gmail.com) or 802.388.2300*

Planned content: Report of Bishop's visit, Annual Meeting Summary, Pre-Lenten look ahead, follow up on active projects including Lazarus Team, MDT, and All Parish Meetings



### **Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown to Visit St. Stephen's on January 12, 2020**



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Shannon MacVean-Brown will make her first visitation to St. Stephen's on Sunday, January 12, the First Sunday after the Epiphany. **There will be one service that day, at 9:00 am.** Bishop Shannon will celebrate the Eucharist, and will hold an open Q&A session with the parish after a festive coffee hour. Later, she will have a meeting with the Vestry, Ministry Discernment Team, Interim Ministry Team, and committee chairs. More information will be provided as the date of her visit comes closer.

photo from <https://diovermont.org/bishops-page/>

## **St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**

*A member of*

The Episcopal Church in Vermont



**(802) 388-7200**

3 Main St., Middlebury, VT 05753

[ststephensmiddlebury@gmail.com](mailto:ststephensmiddlebury@gmail.com)