

July, 2020

Senior Warden Update

As we enter the fourth month of 'New Normal', St. Stephen's Vestry is actively engaged in all the 'new normal' aspects of Parish leadership. Did you know that many of our Vestry members are also active in one or more other aspects of church life? A list; Alice is also Vestry liaison to the MDT; Mary Jane is co-chair of the Re-opening Team, and Michael serves on that team as well; Jim is chair of the Personnel Committee and has been busy lately with job descriptions and a survey; Steve Sontum helped us find our website contractor; new member Carol Milkuhn is working with the Lay Pastoral Care Committee; Tom is on the Vestry AND busy with Junior Warden stuff like rebuilding the bell tower; Rebecca recently volunteered to help shape our music ministry into the COVID era and beyond. Like the old saying, 'if you want something done, ask someone who's already busy.'

Regarding music, we have long held that our music ministry – all of the musical things we do in worship, in special events, and so on – is a strength of the Parish...and indeed it is. There is a feeling too, however, that we have not reached our potential, and that there may be more that can be done to focus our musical offerings on our Mission, in a more intentional way. There may also be musical efforts as yet unexplored that would strengthen our outreach and be an entry point for new or returning members. Finally, it has become obvious that choral or congregational singing will be among the last of our worship traditions to be reinstated – so our musical ministry now needs to recognize the ‘new normal reality’ we’re in, and look for ways to share music in spite of COVID. You will hear more about this in the very near future.

Hopefully the majority of you have received calls from a Vestry member, an IMT clergy person, or maybe Ed or Mary McGuire, checking in on you and offering to assist with any challenges you’re having as a result of COVID. This idea developed several weeks ago, and although not everybody feels like chatting with one of us, it has been interesting for all of us to get to know many of you better. If you have any thoughts about how we might change or improve this effort, let me know.

Finally, we can be assured by the things that are going relatively well. Our income vs expenses is positive. We are making repairs to the church at a time when worship isn’t ‘getting in the way’. Our Zoom services of all kinds are proving successful, while changing and adapting for continual improvement. Parishioners are staying in touch with one another to provide social stimulus and to reassure. Much will change over the next few months, but our commitment to our fellowship and our faith will not.
Peace, Mike

A Culture of Hope

By the Rev. Carole Wageman

In a recent article distributed by Bishop Shannon, [“8 Questions Your Church Needs to Ask Before Reopening” [<https://sojo.net/articles/8-questions-your-church-needs-ask-reopening>], there were eight questions suggested for consideration by groups planning to re-open the churches.

I was particularly intrigued by the second question in the article:
“Do we understand how church life is inherently different than other expressions of civic life?”

While any of the businesses that have stayed open, or are being authorized to reopen, are inherently transactional, what happens in church is inherently social and relational. We eat together; we sing together; we embrace one another; we care for one another's children. These familiar patterns have been ingrained in us through years of meeting together, and will be challenging for many to shake even when we know the risk and have a plan in place.

Think about it...even if we have to sit in alternate pews and only two people to a pew. Even if we have to wait in line while people are signed in (contract tracing), have someone take our temperature, make a 'reservation' to go to church, have no prayer book or hymnal in the pew rack...even if we wear a mask and use sanitizer and line up to be seated and leave immediately at the end of the service so the building can be re-sanitized for the next service without gathering, hugging, smiling, laughing together, or singing...even with all that, wouldn't you just want to grab hold of someone (or many someones) you have not seen in a while and give them a big hug to let them know how glad you are to see them? Wouldn't you just want to smile and talk and laugh and catch up on life...and maybe share a few tears together to realize how much we have missed each other and how much we need each other? I know I do and it would be very difficult to not do those things that to me, are part of what a church fellowship is and does. What a sad choice: to follow the rules that keep us healthy or to fulfill our yearning for social connection.

I never fully realized how thoroughly the church IS a social and relational organization. Connecting and caring is what we do as part of our culture in the church and that culture **IS** very different from other "expressions of civic life." I don't get excited and go see my dentist and give him a hug to tell him how much I have missed him. I don't walk into a restaurant and expect someone to come over to my table, sit down, and say: "How have you been doing through all this?" I don't walk into the bank, post office, insurance agent, etc. expecting anyone will want to know my story or care to cry with me about our mutual loss.

But, Church? That is a different story. I expect to be greeted warmly and I expect I will greet friend and stranger equally warmly and wholeheartedly. I expect people to ask about my well-being and I expect others to tell me about their well-being. I expect to wander around coffee hour catching up here and there and learning new tidbits that people share with me. It is part of our culture in church and to have to engage with each other in less than those sociable ways feels like I'm wrapping an odd, stiff, smelly old canvas tarp around me that doesn't fit at all and is unfamiliar garb, and I want my comfortable ways back. I want to do what I know how to do so well: greet others, welcome friend and stranger, reach out to

those with burdens. But, as we have unfortunately observed in other recent “too-soon” gatherings around the country, unless people really commit to new and unfamiliar practices even when everything “FEELS” normal, there is a silent stalker called COVID-19 just waiting for a customer.

So, that feels disappointing and makes me sad. We have always been a culture of hospitality, faith, relationship, physical embraces, singing, laughter, feeding and being fed...all relational things. We are drawn together with a faith in something beyond ourselves that we call God in which we place great trust; but I try to remember something else: we are also a unique culture of hope. Churches are places of hospitality and welcome, yes, but when it comes down to it, we are essentially a gathering of faith, hope, and love that sometimes have to adjust to circumstances “on the ground.”

Faith looks toward new beginnings, ingenuity, vision, and resourcefulness. Hope is our cultural and social “DNA” inviting us to live with optimism in the midst of this peculiar path that we call “the new normal.” Love for each other is not limited to only being able to meet in person in worship or coffee hour. Perhaps loving each other and maintaining caring and connection is best tested while we are apart. Hang in there. We are all children of God on this journey together. Things might not be perfect, but with time, patience, persistence, compassion, and resolve we will get to a new day. While things might look a bit different than they do now, God is with us now and will be with us then...just as God has always been traveling with all of humankind throughout generations of the world. We will still be the Church...even if it is in a new way. “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God” (wisdom from Corrie Ten Boom).

Re-opening



The St. Stephen's Reopening Planning Team has begun developing plans for phase 2 reopening, which will allow use of the building by clergy, staff, and wardens. Team members include Susan Anderson-Ray, Peter Dempewolff, Carol Haraden, Joe McVeigh, Micheal Reeves, Mary Jane Simpson and Carole Wageman. Susan and Mary Jane are serving as co-chairs. Regular updates from the team will forthcoming as we proceed with our work.

Lay Pastoral Team Plans

The Lay Pastoral Care Team has been rather quiet lately, but that does not mean it has not been making some progress. Jessica Hoagland, Carol Milkuhn, and the Rev. Carole Wageman formed a small Steering Team and have been meeting since January (in person and now via Zoom) to help define this ministry and the pastoral needs of the congregation that can be met by lay leaders. Of course, that now has the additional challenge of COVID-19 restrictions; nonetheless we are not daunted and are pleased to announce that Jessica and Carol M. have decided to be Co-Chairs of this ministry.

A fuller group meeting of the Lay Pastoral Care Committee will be taking place soon so we will have more info to share with you at a later date.

Blast from the Past!

Hear former parishioner John McCardle, Vice Chancellor and President of University of the South, retirement remarks at: <https://new.sewanee.edu/news/leave-taking-livestream/>



Black Lives Matter Vigil

by Amy Hastings

Black Lives Matter, Say Their Names, End Police Brutality, Silence=Complicity — sayings hastily scribbled on cardboard and held up all over the world, and in Middlebury on Sunday, June 7th: to protest the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, to lift up the names and memories of others who died wrongly at the hands of law enforcement, to proclaim and affirm that Black Lives Matter, and that we – White people – commit ourselves to making that statement mean something.

St. Stephen's members gathered on the College Green that Sunday afternoon, in brilliant, breezy sunshine, joining several hundred others in our community. For most of us, it was the first time to see one another beyond the Zoom screen, and that provided some joy to the occasion. Yet our feelings were still raw and aching from the tragic events we were gathered to protest and honor, and from the realization that we must make this time, in the aftermath of the horrific murder of an innocent Black life that we all witnessed, different.

Many of us walked toward and across the Cross Street Bridge, others stood silently lining the streets, holding signs, talking quietly, occasionally waving to the cars that honked in solidarity with our Vigil. All of us were moved by the magnitude of our small part in a worldwide unfolding of events. The hard work is before us, individually, in communities, and in the institutions and systems that define our lives. None of them is untouched by racism.

May God give us the courage to face that reality and not delay to do what has to be done.





Adult Education

The Adult Ed Team decided to spring for an in-person, socially distanced, and outdoor meeting. It took us many tries to get our calendars in synch. After all the planning, 3 out of 4 of us were able to meet in-person and one of us had to use an umbrella against the rain drops which slipped through a big shade tree.

Ta-da! Here's what we have so far for Adult Ed programs: This summer, Larry Yarbrough has generously offered to lead Bible studies as it relates to our current issues surrounding racial justice. Those times and dates will be announced.

Beginning in September, we'll be hosting sessions on Racial Reconciliation which the Episcopal Diocese has made available. Again, stay tuned for details.

In addition and always, if any of you have topics you'd like to present or ones you'd like to learn more about, please contact one of us. We welcome your ideas.

An Duclos, Sarah Horton

Devon Jersild

Meg Fitch

Congratulations to these 2020 Graduates!

Holly Fisher, granddaughter of Lonnie Fisher, graduated from St. Lawrence U. Her plans are on hold because of the virus. Hoping to go for Masters at SLU while working in their stables.

Nora Bannon, granddaughter of Jean Bergesen, graduated from Wellesley High school.

Emily Clarkson Ray, granddaughter of Alice Van Tuyl, has just graduated (remotely) from Middlebury College. Her major was Geography/Environmental Studies. She is now in Bellingham, WA, having traveled there in her car, and has a job picking vegetables on a large organic farm until October. No other plans for the future right now!



Jacob Klemmer, son of Beth Stanway and Tom Klemmer, graduated from McGill University, Montreal Quebec with a Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Studies.



Sophie Hodges, granddaughter of Barney and Dee Hodges, graduated from Middlebury College and is working at The Addison Independent.

Rebecca Holbrook (Wife of Miles Holbrook, mother of Adler Holbrook, daughter of Mike and Beth Davis, aunt of Oona and Asa Davis, sister of Craig and Colin Davis, granddaughter of Thelma Gifford) graduated from Northern Vermont University with a BS in Early Childhood Education. She is a teacher at the Parent Child Center.



Malia Hodges, granddaughter of Barney and Dee Hodges, graduated from Middlebury Union High School and is heading off to UVM.



Nicholas Beaupré, son of Dan & Amy Beaupré, graduated from Montgomery Blair High School, Silver Spring, MD. He will be entering University of Vermont in the Fall.

Taylor Underwood, granddaughter of Agnes Underwood, just graduated from 3rd grade at Beauvoir School, the National Cathedral Elementary School, and will be going to St. Stephen's St. Agnes School, another Episcopal school in Alexandria, VA.

Ann Cooper has a few graduations in her family! "My grandson **Noah Cooper** graduated from University High School in Carmel, IN, and will attend—in theory—the University of Indianapolis in the fall. My granddaughter **Emma Williams** will graduate (or will have graduated) from the University of Edinburgh with both a BA and an MA in Linguistics. She has received a 2-year fellowship to work with disadvantaged children and will receive an MA in social work. She is excited at the prospect and feeling doubly lucky, since many of her friends have not found work at all."

Carol Calhoun's granddaughter **Lindsay Pius** (Essex VT) just virtually graduated Summa Cum Laude from Tufts. She trained with the Tufts Boston Marathon team, representing Tufts at the postponed, then cancelled Boston Marathon. She was accepted into Harvard Dental School's class of only 35 students, which, alas, will begin virtually this fall as did her final semester of her senior year! Lindsay's older sister Alexa graduated from Tufts magna cum laude three years ago and ran the Boston Marathon on the Tufts team. She is virtually at UVM Medical School, still unable to start her clinical rounds!

End of Life Planning

For many of us, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a reminder of life's uncertainties. Thinking about our life's end is usually the last thing any of us want to think about, but ensuring that we have taken care of important end-of-life decisions is a gift we can give ourselves and our loved ones before we face critical illness and death.

Our St. Stephen's Church website now gives us access to several excellent resources to help with end-of-life planning, including preparing a Medical Directive, planning for one's Funeral and Burial, and basics for preparing to write a will. In addition, there is a link to a webinar presented by an expert from the Episcopal Church Foundation that deals with these topics.

We encourage everyone to take time to review these valuable resources: <https://www.ststephensmidd.org/weddings-baptisms-funerals/>

The Endowment Committee: Carol Haraden, Amy Hastings, Rex Stratton

To Zoom or Not To Zoom

By Diane Nancekivill

If anyone had suggested we'd be worshipping by Zoom and finding it meaningful about this time last year we would have thought something was wrong with them don't you think? And yet here we are, doing just that.

Of course we all wish we could be able to get back to church, see one another in person, have Eucharist and pass the peace by hugging or a handshake. But we can't and are almost certainly a long way from that possibility at this time. So Zoom it is! And we miss many of you, we aren't seeing your lovely faces and that's one of the really special things about Zoom, all through the service of Morning Prayer, we can see each other's faces. When I'm not the officiant I find myself checking you out, how do you look? Are you inside or outside? What's your hair looking like these days?! I really enjoy holding you with my eyes and in my heart. Won't you consider joining us Sunday mornings at 10? We can help you get it set up if you want. Your vestry person or one of the IMT can quite easily do that. Just call or email one of us and we'll help you get going.

Alice VanTuyl told me, "if I can do it anyone can, it's really not hard or frightening. I find a certain joy in being able to see my fellow parishioners and hear them talk!"

And Steve Snider added, "I've enjoyed the services and find them both meaningful and beneficial, and it's really nice to see all the others who are participating. We've really enjoyed the virtual coffee hours, it's so good to catch up with people!"

Won't YOU consider coming to church too, we miss you and would love to see you soon.

Blessings to you all,

Diane +

P.S. Free online classes by Zoom can be found at: <https://zoom.us/events>

Faith Affirmed in Silent Prayer

By Tom Turley

St. Paul is God-enthused, he urges us to pray always. He directs us to give thanks to God the Father, through Jesus, with the aid of the Spirit. This is the Spirit of inclusion, we are not orphans, we are sons and daughters. We are a new creation and we are encouraged to pray intimately to God as Abba, Father.

In addition the Spirit teaches us to pray and searches the very heart of God, and with sighs too deep for words aids us as we pray.

This is possible because the rupture in the relationship of humanity to God brought on by Adam's sin has been healed through the saving acts of Jesus and his return to the Father. So humanity is in a dynamic relation to God. God is love and we are drawn to Him and we respond to that invitation in prayer.

There are many different kinds of prayer. Here we are considering contemplative prayer, also known as centering prayer, or meditation. Psalm 62 tells us that "For God alone my soul in silence waits," and the psalmist answers because He is my hope and salvation.

We embrace the silence and enter into it where we focus our attention on being present and simply ourselves before the One who is the creator of all and is present within us all. This is a path of opening the heart and emptying the intellect. Here we are alert, here we listen and practice patience and expectation. This is a practice, a repeated action to teach ourselves to be constant and remind us to show up and to commit ourselves to learn to be receptive and humble before the Mystery that is God, the source of all Being.

As a child we are presenting our innermost being to the Father who loves us and has created us as we are. This is a free and simple act of thanksgiving and love to the source of love. The results of meditating are not necessarily observable or quantifiable, its fruits will appear, we will change, but how will be known to God and perhaps in time to us.

We may experience "authentic faith" which, to quote Abraham Joshua Heschel in *Man Is Not Alone*, "...is more than an echo of a tradition. It is a creative situation, an event. For God is not always silent, and man is not always blind. In every man's life there are moments when there is a lifting of the veil at the horizon of the known, opening a sight of the eternal." This is not magic nor are the results inevitable, but it involves a deep act of faith and trust in tuning oneself and turning oneself to respond to the One who is always faithful. This is the good news of life in Christ, God has drawn near to us. This is available to all through baptism and put into practice in daily prayer.

There are many good guides to beginning a practice of meditation. Like any other practice we learn from doing and being faithful.

The St. Stephen's Meditation meets twice weekly via Zoom (St. Stephen's at 4) at 4 PM Monday and Thursday. Join us!

Greetings from your Junior Warden

I would like to take this opportunity to keep you all abreast of what's going on at St. Stephen's. Even though we are not yet allowed back in the building for

services, many things are progressing while we are temporarily shut down. Silver Maple Construction is making their final push to finish our bell tower restoration by July 13th, when the railroad construction is planning on closing main street. The restoration is progressing very nicely, and still on budget. I am hopeful that they will finish on or very close to budget. Following the bell tower project I will be consulting with Lou Nop to see if he can reposition our Paul Revere bell in its cradle so we can once again ring our bell proudly for all to hear.

On the exterior, John Baker, of Wildflower Ironworks, is currently constructing our custom locking gate for the alcove on the north side of the church. The gate will feature a keypad lock. We are excited to get this project finished and installed. Your facilities committee has also been working very hard addressing many worn areas of the church as well as consulting with an interior designer to help us come up with an overall color palette for all areas of the building as we gradually update different sections. We feel that this temporary shut down gives us the perfect opportunity to complete some of these updates and spruce up the church in anticipation of our new rector. For now, most of our attention is focussed on paint colors and carpet replacement. Once we agree on the palette we will present it to the vestry for approval and inform the parish.

That's about all for now. As you pass by the church, stop and take a look at the newly refreshed bell tower. I sincerely hope that we can all see each other again soon in the pews, at a safe distance, for Sunday services. Until then, please stay healthy, and don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Thank you and God bless.

Tom Klemmer

Interim Ministry Team Banner

Why were we, the Interim Ministry Team, moved to produce a banner?

By Catherine Nichols

In the weeks during the COVID-19 lock-down some of us were sad that our beautiful church looked so inactive, when actually LOTS was going on: Zoom worship services on Sundays and Wednesdays, Meditation twice weekly, Adult Education classes,

food contributions to the hungry, and phone calls to all parishioners to check in on them.

With the church's location on the beautiful village green, and next to the construction work — right smack in the middle of town!—

our parish church is visible to all passersby, ALL THE TIME. And she looks so very quiet, so very inactive.

We, the members of your Interim Ministry Team, began to discuss in our weekly Zoom staff meetings, what sort of message might we shine upon the activity in the middle of our village. Everyone agreed at once that a banner was a good idea. But just what to say on it?

We worked on the three lines, agreeing that the first, **TRUST IN GOD**, felt just right. We were unsure of the second line. And having heard of another banner on a church in Gloucester, MA on which the bottom line stated, **PRAY WITHOUT CEASING**, we decided that was also just right.

Then occurred the death of George Floyd. As the enormous response grew, here in Addison County, across our nation, and around the world, one of us suggested the middle line might be **WORK FOR JUSTICE**.

Our banner was complete. The good folks at The Little Pressroom helped us design the banner, and — bless his heart — Peter Dempewolff, our creative and talented sexton designed a way of hanging it safely on the wall facing the center of town and the construction site.

So there it hangs, for all to see that we, The People of St. Stephen's, a community of faith, decry injustice and brutality, and challenge all to...

TRUST IN GOD

WORK FOR JUSTICE

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.



Music Survey

by Jim Pugh

In the interest of looking beyond the Covid-19 lull and health concerns, the IMT and the Liturgy Committee have distributed a survey about the music ministry of St. Stephen's to the entire congregation. Everyone who is interested in performing or listening to music in worship services and concerts is invited to participate.

The link to the survey is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/>

[Music at St Stephens](#)

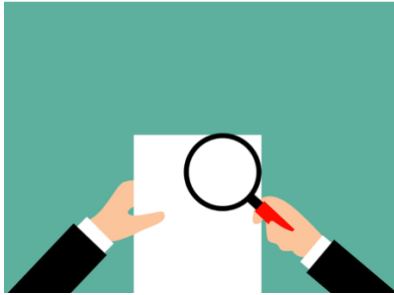
The deadline for participation is Tuesday, July 21. A summary of the results will be shared with the parish.

Bonus. As a way of engaging people in our music during the summer, this survey asks people to nominate a non-Christmas, non-Easter hymn (or hymns) for a "Favorite Hymn Contest". This will be conducted along the lines of Lent Madness. Stay tuned for more information about this contest in the next issue of Parishescope.

Three Question Quiz

Three Question Quiz: Finance Version (Kids Version Below)

By Carol Haraden



1. The DUT stands for...
 - a. Diocesan Unit Trust
 - b. Dogs United Together
 - c. Do Unto Them
2. Each year the audit is conducted because....
 - a. We don't trust anyone
 - b. It is required by the diocese
 - c. People love to do it
3. What is our Gift Acceptance Policy.....
 - a. It decides which priest or warden gets a bonus
 - b. It gives guidance on what kind of gifts and under what provision St. Stephen's will accept
 - c. It gives guidelines for Christmas, birthday, and other holidays.

Answers: 1 – a; 2 – b; 3 – b

(Kids Version)

Three Question Quiz for Kids

By Beth Davis

1. The Good Shepherd....
 - a. Knows each one of his sheep by name.
 - b. Lets the sheep wander anywhere they want to go.
 - c. Is a German herding dog.
2. When a person asked Jesus what the most important thing in life is, he told them the parable of ...
 - a. The Tortoise and the Hare.
 - b. The Good Samaritan.
 - c. The Little Engine That Could.

3. The liturgical color purple is used because....
- a. Grapes are purple.
 - b. It was Jesus's favorite color.
 - c. It is the color of royalty.

Answers: 1 – a; 2 – b; 3 – c

Picture the Word

By Jennifer Nelson

The Visitation (from The Life of John The Baptist)

Fresco, 1614

By Lorenzo and Jacopo Salimbeni

July doesn't have a lot of religious festivals. I scrambled around and found about seven big Saints' Days and two "festivals" or feast days including The Visitation on July 2. It is a good "picture op" since it is an event often chosen as a subject for paintings. It is one of the cycle of narrative scenes from the life of John the Baptist.

In the Renaissance scenes from the cycles of lives of Mary, Jesus, and John the Baptist were often featured in churches. Sometimes scenes were separate and sometimes they were melded together since certain events and scenes are shared. The Nativity, for instance, is an incident in Mary's life as well as Jesus's. Sometimes they were frescoes around the walls, with scenes painted in rectangular painted frames and strung together rather like a comic strip. The life cycles were also featured in Books of Hours and produced in many other media. The scenes in the Lives became fairly formulaic, although some sequences contain different scenes or the same scenes in slightly different order. Jesus's life can start with The Nativity and go on from there, or it can be melded into Mary's cycle and begin with The Annunciation.



Lorenzo e Jacopo Salimbeni, The Life of John the Baptist, 1416: The Visitation

The picture we are looking at this time is a Visitation, a scene from Mary's life when she goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth when they are both pregnant, Mary with Jesus and Elizabeth with John the Baptist. This Visitation by the Salimbeni brothers is a continuous narrative, that is, two distinct but connected moments. On the right Mary is welcomed by Elizabeth's husband Zechariah who kneels before her. On the left Mary and Elizabeth embrace. Mary can be identified by her blue mantle which she is almost always shown wearing. Three handmaidens attend Mary, and the same three are seen in both halves of the painting, standing behind Mary and Elizabeth.

There very little biographical information available about Lorenzo and Jacopo Salimbeni. The frescos, of which this scene is a part, are in the chapel of St. John the Baptist in Urbino. It is said to be in the Late Gothic style, which lies in the cusp between the Medieval and Renaissance periods. I'm not going to analyze it for you. I'm just going to mention the things I love about it.

First I love the muted colors which are soft and mostly pastel, except for Mary's emphatic blue cloak and the sky. I love the graceful drape of Mary's cloak in particular, and how it is echoed in both scenes. But what I love best, I think, are the square halos shown on Elizabeth and Zehariah! These are fairly rare, and they usually denote a person of piety and importance, but not yet a saint. We don't have many visitations in our lives at this strange time. Enjoy this one.
Jennifer