

**Stewardship & the Narrative Budget:
resourcing the future we want, together**

The parish meeting on November 10 introduced approximately 60 parishioners to the challenges of our 2020 budget and the value of a Narrative Budget (NB) in bringing a novel perspective to those challenges. The Narrative Budget Team presented their first NB by explaining the concept, the value of NB as a tool for understanding our mission and our aspirations, and reviewing the actual breakout of expenses by Mission Area, as allocated by the Team. Current members of this team are Mary McGuire, Lonnie Fisher, Virginia Westbrook, and myself – all from Vestry – Amy Hastings and John Hammer from Stewardship, Barbara Stratton, Treasurer, and Carole Wageman from the IMT.

Although the NB was originally proposed as a working goal for the Vestry, this first iteration was produced specifically with the Stewardship campaign in mind, and the joint presentation was viewed as an opportunity to demonstrate practical application of the result. Initial responses from those present was positive, and the hoped-for synergy was evident.

What the Narrative Budget is NOT:

- it's not a substitute for the regular numerical, detailed budget from the Treasurer.
- it's not objectively accurate – much of the allocation process was by trial and error, along with estimates of folks directly involved in the Mission Areas being served. It's close, though.

- it's not a one-and-done...we hope to refine it ahead of the Annual Meeting, and to work on it through the next year in preparation for a 2020 version.

What the Narrative Budget IS:

- an estimate of the use of operating funds within the Mission Areas defined in the document, for the current budget year.
- a way to move away from line item conversations and toward discussions of what we want Saint Stephen's to do and be, and how to resource those efforts in the future.
- an expression, through stories, of the kind of Missional church we are, and want to be.

The future:

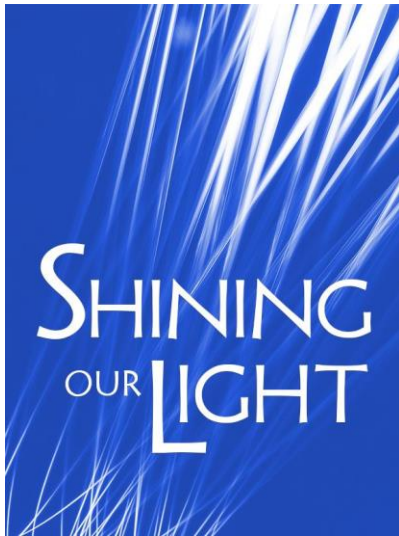
- we are hoping to find a few more parishioners to join the team in preparation for the work leading into 2020.
- we intend to add several features in the next iteration: estimates of volunteer hours; recognition of non-operating cash flows that directly feed our Mission; more emphasis on how we hope to grow in the Missional Areas, either by reallocating among existing expense items or by generating growth in operating cash to fund new work.

For now, we hope this new approach to understanding how our giving funds our Mission resonates with you and informs the need to give generously to current and future needs. If you did not get a copy of the Narrative Budget, there are extras at church, or if you cannot get there, we will get one to you upon request. – submitted by Mike Davis



ALL PARISH MEETING - STEWARDSHIP from the Stewardship Ministry Team

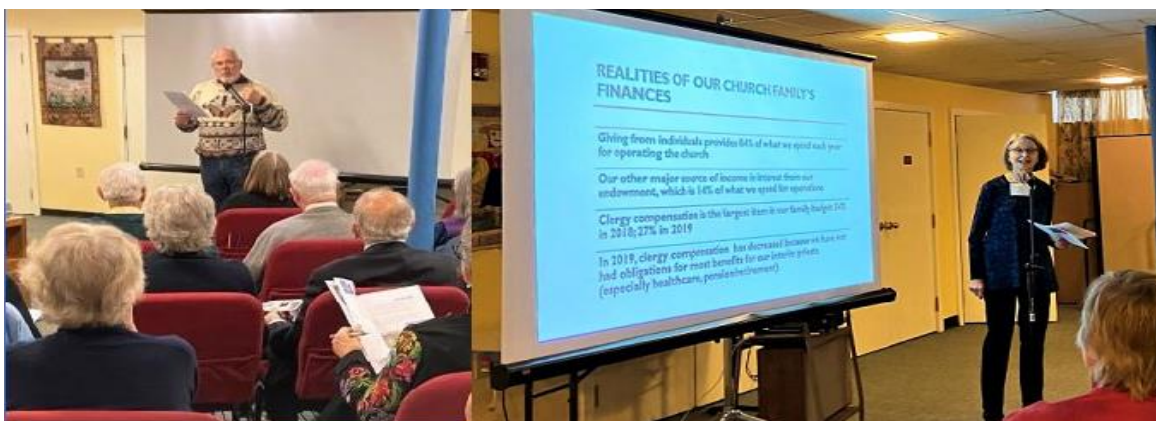
The second part of Sunday's presentation was titled, **St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Our Story, Our Aspirations, and Some Realities: A Closer Look.** We gave ourselves a closer look when 139 of us completed the *Holy Cow!* survey last spring. The majority of us who completed this survey (82%) identified as frequent attenders, thus indicating a high level of interest in our church. However, in total, surprisingly 49% of us said we were "on the fence" about how satisfied we are!



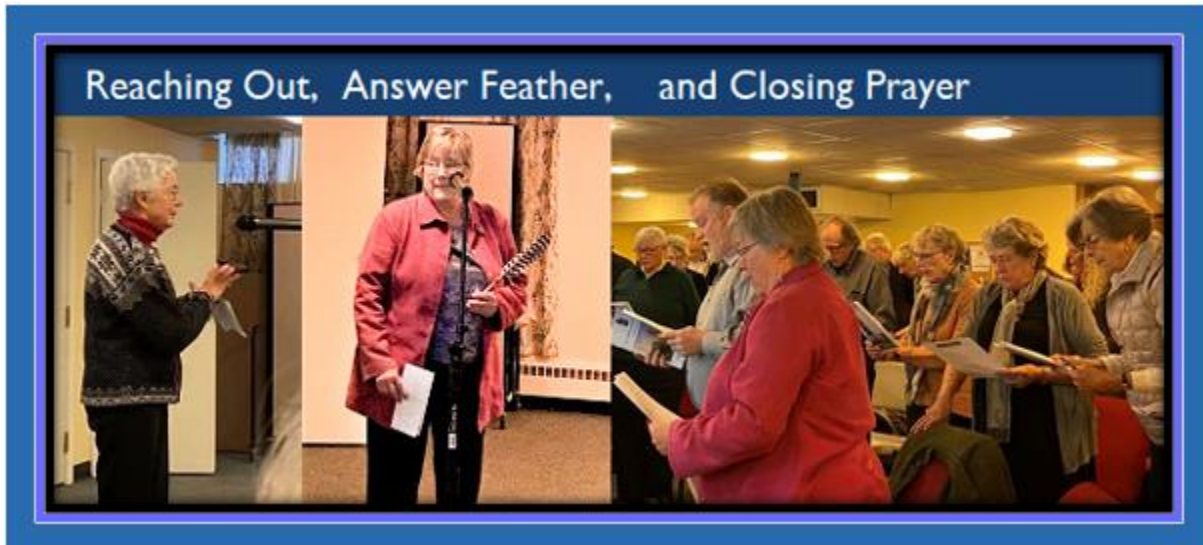
We were clear about how we answered a key question: How can we expand or improve our ministries? 1) Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth; 2) Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the church; 3) Work as an advocate for social and institutional change so that society might better reflect the values of the kingdom of God. So how do we get there?

In addition to providing some data about the realities of our church family's finances, especially about giving to our church (see Some Interesting Facts About Giving at St. Stephen's in this issue), this presentation concentrated on the financial realities related to the calling of a new clergy partner-leader. This is important because one logical response to answering that key question (above) is to complete the discernment process and call a new clergyperson - *if we can summon the resources to do that successfully.*

Total compensation (salary+benefits) for a full-time priest is the most significant part of our annual church budget (34%) and the details are revealing as we realize the significant financial obligation that is involved. To offer competitive compensation for our next priest will likely increase our total operations budget to well above \$300,000.



Our meeting concluded with our theme: ***By Sharing Our Story We Create Our Future.*** The future is ours to create as we continue to share our story, our longings for this church family, for growing in our faith and shining God's light in the needy world around us. It's not just about giving our treasure; it's most importantly about the spiritual offering of our lives.



Some Interesting Facts About Giving at St. Stephen's

We give to St. Stephen's in so many important ways, what we call *Time, Talent, and Treasure* – they are ALL vital to sustaining a vibrant spiritual church family. Here are some interesting facts about our Giving as *Treasure*.

- Our giving as individuals provides 84% of what we spend each year to operate the church.
- Another 14% of what we spend to pay our bills comes from our Endowment, which is another way individuals have given to our church over time. The oldest endowment fund was given in 1882; the most recent just this year through the bequests of Henry and Joan Baker and Ethel Killingbeck, all long-time members of our church.
- Over the past 2 years, 133 households have made gifts to our church. The average gift was \$1,657.
- This year 2019, 91 households set a *Giving Goal* at the beginning of the year. The average *Giving Goal* is \$2,345. *Giving Goals* range from \$100 to \$15,000. The total of all *Giving Goals* set for 2019 is \$213,400.
- We often seek financial gifts for special purposes, such as our 10-year campaign for the windows in the Nave and above the Altar and last year to purchase energy-efficient heat pumps, etc. These gifts are in addition to the funds we need to operate the church.
- There are numerous Ways to Give to support our church. Most of us give by cash or check; some give stock and several use their bank's autopay service. More information about Ways to Give can be found on our web site: www.ststephensmidd.org/Giving.
- The Vestry supported by the Finance and Stewardship Committees must assess both our *Giving Goals* and our overall record of giving in order to establish each year's operating budget.
- Our church needs all of us to support what we do. As we say each Sunday, "All things come from you, O Lord. And of your own have we given you."

A Sampling of Attendee Responses to the Parish Meeting presentations November 10, 2019

After the presentations, we honored a First Peoples tradition of passing around the “Answer Feather” and offered each person an opportunity to respond to something they’d heard. Here’s a sampling.

- Sunday prayers prepare me for the week ahead.
- I’m thinking about increasing my pledge.
- I find it worrisome that a priest’s salary is so much higher than what many people earn.
- I am convinced that we WILL meet our goals.
- I wonder how open to change the people in this room really are.
- I wonder how to move forward to bring the whole congregation together.
- I am thankful for the team that put this together and to the IMT for the spirit, love and excitement they have brought. WOW!
- What are we each individually willing to do to make necessary changes?
- Many organizations rely on bequests. We could do more to cultivate bequests by publicizing the gifts.
- Are we willing to take some risks to do this?
- This occasion has helped me envision a program for youth.
- I will pray for an indication of what I can do to make this happen.



Treasurer’s Report as of October 31, 2019

2019 Giving goal	\$218,275
Giving as of 9/30	\$188,783
Balance Needed to achieve goal	\$ 29,492
Other Income projected:	\$ 39,305
2019 Church Expense Budget	\$257,580
Expenses as of 10/31	\$212,044

Thanks to all for continued support of our church. If you have any questions, please contact me.
Barbara Stratton, Treasurer

A Note from the Finance Committee: We can all give thanks that our giving in this year of interim ministry is strong. Thanks to everyone for your continued financial support of our church. It is important that we keep in mind that our expenses are lower this year because our interim clergy are part-time and do not require either healthcare or retirement benefits. This will change, of course, as we budget for a new Rector. Additionally, next year’s budget will include expenses for the Rector search and related transition costs. Any surplus that might occur in this year’s budget will support those additional costs in 2020.

November 2019 Senior Warden and Vestry Report

I'm thankful for our growing energy to work together as seen in the following list:

- ✓ parish-wide meetings to discuss issues (the homeless and transient population) and ideas (narrative budget and stewardship campaign) our parish faces
- ✓ a group forming to gather more information about the homeless and transient situation in our area and consider options for St. Stephen's as our response to needs.
- ✓ our team of gifted and faithful clergy who pray for all of us and work hard to respond to a wide variety of pastoral and liturgical needs
- ✓ the Outreach Committee reaching out to seek grant applications to distribute the Peasant Market funds
- ✓ the Personnel Committee meeting with staff to clarify job descriptions
- ✓ the Liturgy Committee and music staff collaborating with clergy to design and support meaningful worship services
- ✓ the Pastoral Care Committee visiting and sending cards to those facing health challenges
- ✓ the number of parishioners expressing interest in running to serve on the Vestry
- ✓ the Adult Education Committee continuing to plan with care many outstanding opportunities for us to share and develop our lives as Christians
- ✓ the Meditation Group planning the upcoming Advent Silent Retreat, a gathering designed to help us quiet our hearts in preparation for the joy of Christmas.
- ✓ the many years of service from Jennifer Nelson to plan, assemble, and produce the Parishscope and the energetic willingness of Kitty Davis and Mike Davis to try to fill her shoes.
- ✓ the Ministry Discernment Team's dedication to take the time necessary to gather information and discern our needs for clergy leadership

What's ahead? More terrific opportunities to be responsive in our call to serve Jesus Christ!

- The deadline for budget requests is Nov 30. Committees which have not yet given budget requests to me or Barb Stratton should do so asap.
- Consider running to serve on the Vestry in either a 1- or 3-year term **or** as a delegate to the 2020 convention.
- The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Jan 26. Save this date, please, to ensure that you can come and be a part of the important decision-making our parish faces.
- Next Vestry Meeting is after church on Dec 8, a work-session focused primarily on the 2020 budget.
- If you have not yet delivered your Giving Goal, please do so as soon as you can with your prayerful consideration so that the Vestry can responsibly build our budget with an eye to our aspirations.

The danger, as we all know, in making a list is forgetting a vital person or activity. Please forgive me. I continue to praise God for the faith of our parish as we gather and pray, as we listen and learn from God and each other. God's peace, *Mary McGuire, Senior Warden*

**Advent Quiet Day Saturday, December 7th, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
at Winky Thomas's home 7 Gorham Lane, Middlebury, VT**



Doesn't a day without talking sound marvelous? Let yourself imagine the quiet and the peace that gently enters into your heart. That's what this short time of silence offers. We will be led by The Rev. Matthew Wright, <http://awakingheart.com/>, an Episcopal priest who lives with his wife Yannik in the gatehouse of Holy Cross Monastery. He's part-time priest-in-partnership of St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in Woodstock, NY and a teacher and leader for Northeast Wisdom and The Contemplative Society. He'll be giving 3 short meditations on Mary, The God-bearer as an inspiration for our own heart-journeys. Each of his talks will be followed by a

period of silent prayer or meditation and free silent time.

That's what renews, being together in a deep silence, arriving in silence, eating together in silence, and just rubbing together throughout the day. It is gentle, quiet, and restorative. Do give some serious thought to joining us. There are sign-up sheets in the back of the church, it's a pot-luck lunch and we'd love to have you with us. Any questions just ask Sharon or Glenn, Winky, Dee, Diane, Tom T, or Cathy W, to name a few of our regulars.

Feel free to bring your knitting, coloring pencils & or journals to play with during our quiet times. You can walk outside, munch on snacks & drink coffee, tea or whatever, but we do suggest you not bring any books as this is a time for listening inside your own self.

Advent Wreath Making and Newcomer Potluck

Dec 1 is Advent 1 and the occasion for a joyful potluck to welcome our recent newcomers and make an Advent Wreath. We invite all parishioners to stay for potluck lunch after the 10:30am service on Dec 1. Advent Wreath and Christmas card making supplies will be available. If you haven't experienced a St. Stephen's potluck yet, you have missed a lot of good food - please come! If you're running out of time to cook, come empty-handed - we always have plenty! All ages are welcome.



FROM THE ORGAN BENCH: ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS MUSIC AT SAINT STEPHENS

As in recent Advent seasons, St. Stephen's will present three Thursday noontime concerts, all open to the public:

- Dec. 5 will be an organ recital by organist George Matthew;
- Dec. 12 The Addison String Quartet;
- Dec. 19 A Solo Recital by Jack Desbois

During Advent Sunday services, we celebrate the coming of Christ and his birth with beautiful music and hymns. During Advent our services will include some unique musical/liturgical presentations in addition to congregational singing of traditional hymns;

- first, singing simplified chants of the psalms;
- at the end of communion, Taizé chants, e.g. *Prepare the way of the Lord, Wait for the Lord, and the Magnificat.*

Special Advent Services:

- The Christmas Eve Pageant at 4 P.M. on Christmas Eve will include familiar Christmas Carols and brass
 - Festival Holy Eucharist at 9 P.M. with choir
 - Christmas Day at 10 A.M. with organ and Christmas Hymns
 - Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols on Dec. 29 at 10 A.M.
- Jan. 5, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany at the regular Sunday services



Advent and Christmas mark the beginning of our Nativity Cycle with joy, love, and hope

Join us for all these wonderful events!

Thinking Ahead... Christmas Pageant and Communion Service at 4:00pm, Dec 24



Photo Credit Oliver Parini

St. Stephen's celebrates Christ's birth by welcoming all to our pageant of joy and spontaneity. All children are warmly invited to come to the Parish Hall at 3:30 to choose a costume - animals, angels, wise people, and shepherds - and then participate in our very simply re-enactment of the Nativity. This year we already have a Baby Jesus; Cathy Walsh's grandson, Alden, will be playing this role this year, and Opreah Littlefield will be making an encore as Mary. Still open - the role with a line, the Innkeeper, should be filled by a young person ready to sound a little bit mean - "No Room!" Being comfortable walking alongside a miniature horse is a handy trait for Joseph. The service lasts about an hour and includes a short homily and communion open to all. Be ready for real, live animals as well. This service is a joyful blend of traditional carols, the Nativity story, and our children. If you have any questions, please call the church office: 388-7200. Help with animal, angel, and shepherd dressing is always welcome!

Episcopal Short Shots



on 12/8, 12/15, & 1/5 from 11:30 - 12:30

The Interim Ministry Team will be holding a three session “Episcopal Short Shots” for those who wish to learn more about joining St. Stephen’s and the Episcopal Church. Please join us for three one-hour sessions after church on 12/8, 12/15, and 1/5.

All questions are welcome and we have some “fun factoids” to share as well. Come away with some answers to questions like:

- “What is the “three-legged stool” and why is it important?”
- Why is the Episcopal Church considered a “hybrid”?
- Are the Episcopal Church in Vermont, The Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Communion the same thing?
- What is the BCP?
- How can I become a member of St. Stephen’s?

This will be an important orientation for anyone interested in joining the Episcopal Church, in receiving baptism for themselves or their children, and for those wishing to be formally received into the Episcopal Church or desiring to re-affirm their baptismal vows during our upcoming visitation by **Bishop Shannon** on **January 12, 2020**.

Please speak with one of the Interim Ministry Team if you would like more information about this “short shot” program.

Annual Diocesan Convention by Eric Davis

The annual convention of the Episcopal Church in Vermont was held at the Hilton Hotel in Burlington on Saturday, October 26. St. Stephen’s was well-represented, with all four clergy on the Interim Ministry Team and five lay representatives – delegates Ben Anderson-Ray, Amy Hastings, and Elizabeth Oettinger, and alternates Susan Anderson-Ray and Eric Davis - attending.

Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown presided at the convention, and led Morning Prayer to open the day and celebrated the Eucharist in the afternoon. Morning Prayer included a prayer of dedication to the Abenaki and Vermont Native People. In her Eucharist sermon, Bishop

Shannon reflected on ways in which the Church in Vermont could move forward, building on its traditions and recent history, on topics such as “evangelism, formation, welcoming and engaging liturgy, social justice, creation care, and contextual and regional models of ministry.”

Several resolutions were adopted during the business meeting portion of the Convention. Resolutions of most interest to parishes include: Approval of a level-funded diocesan budget for 2020. Parish contributions to the 2020 diocesan budget will remain at the same percentages used in 2019: 16% of the average of the previous three years’ operating income for parishes such

as St. Stephen's with operating income of more than \$200,000.

A compensation resolution endorsing an increase in monetary compensation for 2020 of at least 2.8% for clergy and lay employees throughout the Episcopal Church in Vermont.

An amendment to the compensation resolution endorsing remuneration of \$25 a month for all

deacons serving in parishes, in order for those deacons to be eligible for certain benefits and services offered by the Church Pension Fund.

Also, at the business meeting, Ben Anderson-Ray was elected to serve on the Trustees of the Diocese, and Ann Cooper was elected to serve on the Maine-New Hampshire-Vermont Title IV Disciplinary Board.



*Benjamin
Anderson-Ray*



Ann Cooper

The portraits & captions above were taken from The Episcopal Church in Vermont 2019 Nominations Guide

This photo of the 11th Bishop of Vermont, The Rt. Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown was taken from the web page below where you can learn even more about the 187th Annual Diocesan Convention

<https://diovermont.org/2019/11/13/recap-of-the-2019-diocesan-convention/>



What to look forward to in the December 2019 issue of The Parishscope:

- Annual Meeting preview from Senior Warden Mary McGuire
- Mary's report to include the current list of candidates for offices
- Ministry Discernment Teams' work updates
- All the regular good stuff. Maybe a new interview from the Editor?

Deadline: All copy should be submitted by **Friday, December 13th**
? – How firm is the Associate Editor about deadlines? – FIRM –
That is the only way that time sensitive material will reach **you** the
reader when you need it. It is also important for our
Parish Administrator, Annemarie, in mapping out her work schedule.



You should have the December 2019 Parishscope on your screens,
or in your hands, no later than December 20th God willing

Beyond Your Usual 9 a.m. on Sunday Adult Formation Classes

Adult Education at St. Stephen's asks you to mark your calendars for Sunday, December 1, at the special time of 4 p.m.: "**Biblical Violence in the Season of Peace**" by Larry Yarbrough, Pardon Tillinghast Professor Emeritus of Religion, Middlebury College.

Larry writes: In Advent, we long for the coming of the Prince of Peace. Yet all around there is violence. To the discomfort of many, the Bible condones violence in the name of God, claiming at times that God is the source of violence. How can this be? We take a hard look at this question by examining some of the more troublesome examples.

While we are discussing "new and different" times for Adult Ed programming, did you catch the Wednesday Afternoons in October Bible Study series by Larry, "**Paul, the Corinthians, and Us: Is There Anything To Learn From Reading Other People's Mail?**" - ?? We hope you did. However, if you missed any or all of the five sessions (Larry added a bonus week) it is with great pleasure that we announce that audio recordings are available at:

<https://www.ststephensmidd.org/announcement/listen-to-audio-of-bible-study/>

The recordings are thanks to the talents and dedication of An Duclos and Michael Simpson. Of these classes Larry wrote: The traces of a long correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians found in 1 and 2 Corinthians tell us a lot about the founding of this very early Christian community, and about many growing pains that led to conflicts with Paul and among the members.



Outreach looks forward to 2020 grants

Next grant cycle begins

Ads for Grant applications will be in the Notifications section of the Addison Independent for the next 6 weeks, thanks to the free ads donated by parishioners. We will be reviewing the Outreach Task Force recommendations in the coming weeks and preparing to read grant applications as they arrive. Deadline to submit is February 1, 2020. Selections should be complete by March 31 or sooner. If you know of a potential grantee who might not be aware of our program, please direct them to the Addy Indy ads or to Lonnie Fisher, fishmidd@gmail.com.

Committee connects to grant recipients

This year committee members engaged with some grantees as liaisons. For example, this fall Barb Wood, Jane Reilly, and Lonnie Fisher visited Four Hills Farm with the Open Door Clinic team to observe the services they deliver to farm workers. Flu shots and other inoculations were administered along with general wellness checkups.

Other liaisons gave reports at a Fall meeting about the programs they were following.

In other news...

Middlebury student Sophie Swallow came to a meeting and spoke about a nonprofit she has been working with in Guatemala. It serves a very poor population of youth in Guatemala City, offering counseling to teen age mothers regarding sex education and birth control, among other offerings. Sophie has already submitted a grant application to Outreach!

Grantees show their appreciation through letters!

10/16 from Open Door Clinic ... I hope (visit to farm)... was informative and affirming in terms of the support you've (St. Stephen's) provided over the years... one of your former grants supported professionalizing these (print) materials.... We're proud of them, striving to make them more accessible, user friendly, and helpful. ...best Heidi (Sulis)

10/4 from Cecilia Robison at Addison County Teen Center... The grant most certainly has helped the Teen Center in a variety of ways. We've been able to get Friday Night off the ground here in Middlebury and while it's been a slow start, it's beginning to pick up speed and I've been hearing from teens and families that they are grateful we continue to offer the program. I've also been able to maintain the presence of one of our student workers (who's starting her fourth year with us!) in order to maintain our LGBTQ+ programming during drop in hours....

8/1 from Otter Creek Child Center... Our sincere gratitude for the generous grant you gave us this Spring. We purchased a Large Sand and Water Table for our toddler classroom.... the kids enjoyed exploring many different types of sensory items in the table on a daily basis.



*Dear Friends of St. Stephen's,
News from the Pews really needed a
snooze,
So, the Editor and his Associate bring
you this short Foyer Report:*




Beth Stanway and Tom Klemmer hosted St Stephen's first-ever daytime foyer at their home earlier this month. Others attending included Lynn Sluiter, Catherine Nichols and Robert Borden, and Kitty and Eric Davis. We are looking forward to gathering for lunches at the homes of the other members of the foyer group in the months ahead.



A 'first Foyer of the season' was held at Mike and Beth Davis' home on November 3. Guests included Steve and Cathy Sontum, Irv Cummings, Ann Cooper, and Ellen Fenn. The 'picnic theme' included cheese burgers on the grill (imagine that...beef at the Davises...) hors d'oeuvres, some great picnic sides and desserts, and assorted beverages. Most importantly, conversation was engaging and insightful, both on church topics (mandatory!) and other. Looking forward to our next gathering soon, and thanks again to Paul Horn for organizing!

Do you have something to report from your Foyer Group? Kitty Davis (kittychurchstuff@yahoo.com) would be pleased to receive and share your photos and tasteful tales.

A member of  **St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**
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