

The PARISHSCOPE



a publication of
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
On the Green



November, 2020

Senior Warden Report

By Mike Davis

One of the difficulties of recognizing individual contributions to an organization is the unavoidable certainty of missing someone who has done something equally valuable. It's happened before at St. Stephen's, and it will happen again. Still, there are good reasons to heap some praise on someone who does something unique, or unexpected, or dramatic. It can be encouraging to others who might see themselves in the person so recognized; it can also be the motivation that keeps folks glued to a task that requires patience and perseverance. Some folks shun this kind of public recognition, when it's clearly not the source of their satisfaction, and I get that. We're all different.

Still, it feels good to shine some light on someone who has gone above and beyond in support of St. Stephen's. So here are two of our fellow parishioners who have done something we can all aspire to;

- Receiving the award for 'I didn't know we needed that, but we really did!!', a big St. Stephen's huzzah to **Jim Pugh** for the inaugural Hymn Contest. As early risers, we at the Davis house were online waiting for the equally early hymn pairings during the weeks of the contest. It was fun, it showcased many of our parish musicians, and it jump-started our interest and abilities in producing our own music for online consumption. And thanks to Jim's creativity, it will also be featured in the Election Night Vigil presented by the Diocese. Thanks, Jim!

- Another committed parishioner – for decades – is **Barb Wood**. This recognition, the ‘somebody has to do it, so I may as well do it right’ award goes to Barb for her stint – for somewhere north of 20 years – as our Accounts Payable specialist. For this one we have some memorable moments from fellow parishioners who have observed Barb’s diligence – even courage – in faithful service. Cynthia Watters shared the occasional observation of Barb, laying on the floor of the back office to rest her painful back or assorted other joints, dressed in a T-shirt that read ‘body by Bernini’ – her ortho surgeon was Dr. Bernini, and the shirt listed all of her ortho surgeries. This is not a glamorous job, as you might imagine, but Barb has been reliable and diligent according to treasurer Barbara Stratton. Annemarie recounts how the days Barb was in the back office as fun and cheerful, and that – if she needed to step out for an appointment or errand – Barb was always willing to step in and hold the fort. Barb has now stepped down from this role, and we appreciate Sandy Archibald agreeing to take over. Thanks to both!

There are others, and I intend to recognize as many as we can over the next several weeks, so I would like each of you to commend your pick for recognition to me when time allows. Just send your suggestion, and a brief ‘why’ summary, to windmikevt@gmail.com.

An Introduction to Paul Olsson

by Paul Olsson

It’s all getting very real now and the excitement is building for me. Housing arrangements in Middlebury have been settled, I’ve set moving dates with the movers, boxes are getting packed and every week I’m holding final meetings with parish leadership in Morris Plains to hand off ministry responsibilities before my departure. I can’t wait to join all of you in Vermont in a few weeks. My arrival on the scene in Middlebury will be challenged by this pandemic we’re all experiencing. The sensible social distancing practices we are observing these days will mean that traditional ways of getting to know each other will be off the table for a while. I’m a firm believer that a priest first and foremost needs to get to know the people of God he’s serving. Christian community is, as I see it, all about growing in our relationships with each other and with God. We’ll need to find some creative ways to get to know each better as I settle in, a task that I’m sure will be enriching for all of us.

I know that you’ve received some basic information on my academic pedigree and work history, but I thought I’d share with you a little bit more about my faith journey, along with some tidbits that might shine some light on my personality.

I’m one of those rare cradle Episcopalians in today’s church, raised in a South Jersey parish as a fourth-generation member. I can’t remember a time when the church was not a part of my life. Even during my college and grad school days, I continued to seek out the church in Baltimore and New York. Being part of Christian community always had a way of making me feel whole. But for many years I resisted a sense of call to ordained ministry.

After all, I reasoned, “normal people” don’t go into ordained ministry. Gradually I was more and more convinced that this is what God was calling me to do with my life and I took the leap to discern the possibility. Ministry for me has always meant worshipping God and sharing in sacramental life, and in the power of that experience going forth into the world and the week ahead charged to take action to fully live out the faith that is in me. Some of this is done in community, while the rest is necessarily personal. Finding new ways to live out our baptismal promises grounds my preaching and ministry, and I encourage everyone to reflect on and take seriously those promises as the basis of their individual identity. I’m looking forward to seeing what shape and form our ministry together in Middlebury might take. And to provide a little personal information, here are a few tidbits about me:



- I love to cook and bake, but I’m still challenged to properly frost a layer cake. As a young adult I was determined to have the skills needed to eat well and not simply rely on pre-packaged food or frozen dinners. I’ve kept at it ever since, and enjoy the creative process of the kitchen.
- I’m a genealogy fanatic and have travelled far and wide to unearth the stories of my ancestors. They’re a rather colorful bunch.
- I’m an avid coffee drinker. Perhaps that’s something woven into my Scandinavian DNA. You’ll find me with a mug of hot coffee or an iced coffee (even in winter) morning, noon and night.
- I love to sing and music is a constant companion for me when I’m at home alone.
- I’m more of an extrovert, but do need times to retreat from the world to recharge my batteries and reground myself.
- I’ve vacationed in Middlebury every summer for the past decade (with the exception, of course, of 2020). Now I’ll need to find a new vacation spot. Over the years I’ve seen the town evolve, come to know some of its pleasures and found the area to be an enchanting place.
- I’ve attended worship with you every summer on at least one Sunday and met a few of you along the way. Middlebury also has a special place in my heart in one other way. I can say with immense gratitude that I’m alive today because of the swift and wonderful medical care I received there and in Burlington eight years ago when I had a life-threatening heart attack on the first day of one of my summer vacations.

I hope this little bit of sharing shines some light on who I am and what I bring with me to this new ministry in Middlebury. I look forward to hearing your stories and getting to know all of you in the months ahead. See you all at Zoom worship on November 22.

Bring in the Light!

by Paul Olsson

This year as we move forward into the season of Advent, the way we celebrate the coming holidays will be transformed by the continuing pandemic. It's been months and months since we last gathered in our churches for worship, and if you're like me you are missing being present in sacred space together with others for worship and fellowship.

People of faith have marked sites and buildings as sacred spaces for generations. The Hebrew scripture contains plenty of stories where the protagonist experiences a major epiphany and marks the spot where God's presence was felt so strongly. Early Christians built churches at the spots where Jesus performed miracles, taught, suffered and died. They even developed prayer rituals like the Stations of the Cross to walk in the steps of Jesus on his way to Calvary. Celtic Christians in the British Isles noted special "thin places" where the presence of God was powerfully felt, and sacred spaces were marked with large stone wayfarer's crosses or cairns that stand to this day.

Today we're gathering using all the benefits of technology for worship by Zoom. Such a practice challenges our concepts of sacred space, but this Advent I'd like to suggest a new-ish practice for every parish household. I understand that there is an annual tradition at St. Stephen's of crafting Advent wreaths for use at home. This was usually done at an extended coffee hour as Advent approached. This year I'd like to encourage everyone to keep this tradition alive by crafting your own household Advent wreath.



Make it simple. A purchased small wreath or one crafted from any sort of greens gathered from your yard to shape into a circle will do. Four candles of any color will do (traditionally they are purple or blue if you want to make it fancy) and a fifth, more substantial candle for the center of the wreath called the Christ candle will be

needed. Every Sunday as our Advent worship begins, I'll begin worship with a simple prayer to light successive candles in the church's Advent wreath in our church's sacred space. I invite everyone in their homes as this is done to expand our sense of sacred space by lighting your own candles.

An Advent Wreath is a simple way for us to dispel the darkness of winter and spread the light of the One who is coming into the world at Christmas.

If anyone is scrounging for materials we have a few wreath forms and candle sets at the church. Don't know how easy they will be to access, contact mary.c.mcguire10@gmail.com to find out.

Faith-Filled Generosity Fall Campaign

By John Hammer



As we pass into our ninth month of COVID-19 restrictions, it is interesting to note that our St Stephen's parish is still vibrant with lively Zoom meetings and worship services every week. Who would have thought back then when we discussed **Faith-Filled Living**, that we wouldn't be seeing each other face-to-face? And here we are, looking at the close of the church year, talking about **Faith-Filled Generosity** our Annual Fall Giving Goal campaign. By now you will probably have received the letter about it and been called upon to begin your thinking about what giving goal target you might want to set for the coming year. Dedication Sunday (November 15th) is fast approaching when we will spiritually come together to virtually recognize where we want to be in sharing our resources in support of our manifold ministries. There will be no need to publicly declare your goal, just encouragement to prayerfully think about it.

Our big question is what our aspirations for St. Stephen's will be. What will the ministries of the future look like? With a new Priest in Charge, under the model of mutual ministry, how will we carry on with what we have been used to doing? In any time for change it is a time of challenge. Last year's giving goal fall campaign called for us to Shine our Lights, and so we did until COVID-19 hit us. Then it became significantly harder to shine our lights because we found ourselves physically separated. But, we were still not alone through the efforts of many to bring us together with Zoom, telephone calls, emails and cards. We have all practiced love and have been loved through this time.

We carried on with innovative ways to provide support to our less fortunate neighbors. The thirty or so volunteers who have served in the various food ministries have been reduced to twelve in number due to restrictions in the kitchen. Innovative home use became the norm and a sourcing plan was developed with Greg's. Even so, our teams have begun thinking of ways to resolve the challenges when the pandemic restrictions are lifted. Such is the **Faith-Filled Generosity** of our congregation.

Back in the spring we asked what **Faith-Filled Living** meant to you. Here are some of the answers (many more of which can be found at www.Tinyurl.com/Faith-Filled-Book). **Faith-Filled Living** is:

- Characterized by compassion, love and sharing of the great abundance given us by our God.
- All you can do with all you have for all you can.
- Worshipping, learning, serving and giving.

However, through the efforts of many parishioners, we have been able to support our downtown merchant neighbors through the tunneling disruptions with an active group known as Neighbors Together. A dynamic Adult Education program has continued apace and from it, among other things, a vibrant movement has been born to address social injustice in our land. The music committee has been instrumental in providing us with the music that we all miss, Godly Play still engages our young with gospel stories, and so much more albeit in a radically different way. **We are the church; we are its people.**

Over this period of separation, we have continued to support the church financially and we have met our budget goals, for which should feel spiritually fulfilled. The fine work of the Interim Ministry Team and Ministry Discernment Teams, and Vestry have brought us through the tunnel to the new mutual ministry model under Paul Olsson. What Joy!

And so, it is time for us to approach the challenges and happy events of the future with **Faith-Filled Gratitude!** Please consider setting a joyful giving goal to bring us all forward into a new light! [Your Giving Goal Card](#)

GODLY PLAY!

Many thanks to Sandy Ketcham for making this adorable "Noah's Ark" quilt wall hanging for our Godly Play classroom.

We continue to have Godly Play via Zoom every Sunday morning at 9:30 AM. Please contact Beth Davis if you would like to join us!

mbeth.davis@gmail.com





THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN VERMONT
Together in Christ...growing locally, serving globally

Convention Report

By Eric Davis

The 187th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont was held via Zoom on Saturday, October 31. Over 200 parish delegates, clergy, and guests attended. St. Stephen's delegates were Eric Davis, Jim Pugh, and Sharon Tierra.

The Convention opened with Morning Prayer. Following the worship service, members of a Diocesan Visioning Team appointed by Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown reported on some of their work over the past few months. Topics covered include the effects of COVID-19 on the church, the presence of systemic racism and economic inequality, maintaining the relevance of the church in the 21st century; maintaining a sustainable financial future for the Episcopal Church in Vermont at a time when membership and Sunday attendance have been declining; challenges associated with maintaining older buildings; the increasing reliance of congregations on supply and part-time clergy; challenges and opportunities associated with bringing new members into the church; to address these issues requires a mix of mission, stewardship, and evangelism that constitute a new way of "being church," for example, focusing on "average weekly engagement" rather than "average Sunday attendance." Can our present time of "exile" from our buildings help us re-envision the role of the church? The Visioning Team plans to hold online town hall meetings during November to engage in discussion with interested members of the diocese on these and related issues – details will be provided in *The Mountain*.

Mr. Davey Gerhard, the Executive Director of TENS, The Episcopal Stewardship Network, gave a video presentation on a series of monthly webinars on stewardship, broadly defined, that TENS will offer for the Diocese of Vermont starting in January. More information on registering for these webinars will be provided in an upcoming issue of *The Mountain*.

C.J. Spirito, the Head of Rock Point School, and the Rev. Auburn Watersong, priest associate at Christ Church, Montpelier, have been appointed by Bishop Shannon to chair a committee coordinating anti-racism initiatives in the Diocese of Vermont. The committee began its work in September and envisions a three-year program of activities across the diocese. Again, more information on specific programs will be provided in upcoming issues of *The Mountain*.

The afternoon session of the Convention was the annual business meeting of the diocese. Treasurer Gerry Davis presented a financial report. At the end of September, both revenues and expenses were running below expectations, at about 67% of the amounts budgeted for the full year, with revenues exceeding expenses by nearly \$19,000. In addition (and not included in the numbers referred to above), the Diocese received a CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program loan in May of \$91,000 that is expected to be forgiven. Although the

Diocese is in a strong financial position for the current year, the Treasurer and Diocesan Council are concerned that 2021 will be challenging for parishes and their contributions. Resources such as the PPP loan are being conserved against the possibility of a shortfall in parish contributions next year.

The Convention approved a balanced diocesan budget for 2021, with both revenues and expenses set at \$993,450. About 81% of revenues are provided by contributions from parishes; the contribution schedule for parishes is identical to that in effect for the past three years. The Convention also approved a resolution providing for a cost-of-living increase of 1.5% in 2021 salaries for clergy and lay employees, with a minimum total compensation for full-time clergy of \$67,690, of which \$45,826 represents the stipend portion.

Two other resolutions were approved by the Convention. The first encourages “each congregation, and the diocese as a body, to learn the history of our land as a way of understanding and unearthing our complicity in systems that oppress persons of color and afford privilege to white persons in Vermont,” with the results of this research and reflection to be shared at the 2021 Convention.

The last resolution approved asks “diocesan leadership to appoint a task force to offer to the 188th Convention in 2021 a plan to end the use of fossil fuels in each of the parishes and properties of the Episcopal Church in Vermont and to transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030.” The resolution recommends that the diocese should inventory the use of fossil fuels in each of its parishes, and in collaboration with congregations determine the best way for each parish to forego fossil fuels, in consultation with engineers, architects, and preservation experts.

Cantate Domino Canticum Novum

African-American Music Series

by George Matthew

African-American organ music, an expanding and varied field of composers and performers derives from Nigerian, British and American tradition. Thomas King Ekyundayo Phillips (1884 – 1969), considered the patriarch, first attended the Church Missionary Society Grammar School in Lagos: his first organ lessons were from his uncle who was an Anglican priest. From 1902 to 1911 he served as organist of St. Paul’s Anglican Church in Breadfruit, Nigeria. He then attended Trinity College of Music, London, studying piano, organ and violin: he was the first Nigerian to formally study organ. Upon his return to Nigeria, he was appointed organist and director of music of the Anglican Cathedral of Lagos.

Phillips developed a great cathedral choir, concentrating on sight-singing, vocal production and blend and modern techniques of chanting the psalms. He established a musical journal to disseminate information about choral music throughout Nigeria, including its function in

worship and its relation to the culture of the people. In a monumental book Nigerian Music, he described methods by which composers could use Nigerian devices to develop new forms of music.

Phillips founded the Conference of Church Organists, also the Association of Diocesan Organists, and other educational and diocesan organizations, gave many lectures and recitals and in 1923 did a recital tour of England to raise money for a larger cathedral pipe organ.

During this tour the choir performed Mendelssohn's Elijah, Stainer's Daughter of Jairus, and many Yoruba works. Perhaps most important for us, he trained or inspired composers and performers, including Fela Sowande (1905 – 1987), whose careers embraced Nigeria, England and America and directly or indirectly Godwin Sadoh, born in Nigeria, teaching in Louisiana, our own Adolphus Hailstork, born in Albany, NY, teaching in Virginia, and a legion of African-American composers and performers such as William Cooper (organist, St. Martin's Church, NYC), Dionisio Lind (carillonneur, the Riverside Church NYC), Evelyn Simpson-Currenton (director, Washington Performing Arts Society Gospel Chorus) and Noel da Costa (music professor, Rutgers University).

Ekyundayo Phillips directed the music ministry of Lagos Cathedral from Trinity Sunday 1914 to Trinity Sunday 1962, succeeded by his son Charles Olowole Obayom Phillips, who served from Trinity Sunday 1962 to Trinity Sunday 1992. Next month I'll focus on Fela Sowande.

We CAN do something about Climate Change!

by Virginia Westbrook

ICAN, the Interfaith Climate Action Network of Addison County, seeks to bring together people from all denominations and belief systems who want to do more than worry about climate change. This is a new group of interesting folks who want to address the threat of global warming with constructive action in partnership with other local and regional efforts.

Amy Hastings asked me to attend a recent (Zoom) meeting to keep Saint Stephen's "in the loop," since she won't be able to do so after this month. The group is still crafting their mission statement and considering various actions and activities. Some are members of congregations that already have a "Green Team" actively engaged in the mission. I expect that many members of Saint Stephens care about this issue and would welcome a way to contribute.

I am willing to keep in touch with ICAN, for now. If you are interested in participating, please let me know. virginia.westbrook@gmail.com

An Interview with Susanne Peck

By Mike Davis

Susanne Peck and her family did indeed immigrate from Australia to the US in 1963. Her parents had been missionaries to India as American Baptists during Susanne's childhood – ages 3-8. For a variety of reasons that mission ended and her father moved to a position as fellow at Harvard Divinity School. He later became President of the Andover Newton Theological School, now subsumed into Yale Divinity School as Andover Newton Seminary. She grew up in Newton, Mass., and even at this young age was becoming an artist of varied interests. Specifically, she was developing an aptitude for drawing and art, as well as starting to develop as a singer. Both would fully blossom in Susanne as an adult.

Susanne would occasionally be asked to sing the National Anthem for her 5th grade class. In high school she had some leading roles in musical theater. As she says, she fell in love with singing. Somewhat concurrently, she was also enjoying drawing. One of her first art accomplishments was drawing the poster/book cover for 'Gone With the Wind', which was partially a result of fondness for movies and stars like Gable and Leigh. Her first boyfriend was also a musician and artist, and they would 'one up' each other with challenging drawings.

As a young adult she would create a portrait of folks close to her, and in 1991 did her first paid commission for a friend. One memorable story is about her drawings being framed and displayed in the grade school principal's office...a place she visited on occasion for reasons not necessarily in keeping with the image of a bright young girl...

College was more of the same; a bright young woman, musician, artist, free spirit moving out into the big world. She spent two years at Denison on a music scholarship, and then to Salzburg on a scholarship to the Mozarteum Academy of Music (Universität Mozarteum Salzburg). Somehow this led to a BA in German Literature from UMass Boston, followed by the more logical MS in Vocal Performance from UMass Amherst. Her first serious gig was with the Waverly Consort in NY (while living in Philly), followed by 13 years in NYC and environs singing professionally. What happens next might be called 'choral entrepreneurship', as Susanne is involved first in the founding of the Charis Chamber Voices (charisvocals.com) in Westchester County, followed by a similar role with Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble (cerddorion.org) in NYC. Those of you familiar with Amaryllis might see a pattern here...

So then; like all honest New Yorkers, she admitted that she really wanted to live in Vermont, and she and her partner Nancy Gardner moved to Bristol in 2007. Susanne was an avid snowboarder, Nancy a skilled skier, and all was well until Nancy's untimely passing in 2010.

This was a life-changing event, and somewhere in there Susanne started attending St. Stephen's. This was not entirely happenstance; her parents had begun to attend Episcopal churches in the 80's, and Susanne had sung in many of the NYC Episcopal churches, including the Church of the Ascension and St. John the Divine. She eventually approached

Charlie Callahan, then organist here, and offered to sing solos. One thing led to another, and she has been associated with St. Stephen's music ever since.



Susanne has also continued to produce graphic art as a sideline business (and a therapeutic exercise), and has more time now – with no choral music of any kind being sung – to get serious again about drawing. If you would like to discuss a portrait or other drawing project with her, you can connect through her website, susannepeck.com, or call her (she's in the directory). Christmas is coming, you know, and a custom portrait by a skilled artist is a valued gift.

You may have noticed that Susanne is a regular participant in our Sunday Zoom services, and frequent lay reader. For her, St. Stephen's is the people – the parishioners – and she's fond of many of them (us). They (you!) have been there for her when she needed support, and she is grateful.

To close; Susanne has led a varied and deeply interesting life. If we ever get to the point where we are face to face again (and we will!) here's what you can ask Susanne; 'what does Cerrdorion mean, and in what language?? At that point, a great conversation will begin.

Hope In Darkness Retreat

**Join Us for An Advent Meditation Retreat
by Glenn Fulop & Sharon Tierra**

We move, in late autumn toward the darkest time of the year in the northern hemisphere. This can be a challenging time for many of us. This year we also have the pandemic with all its attendant economic hardships for so many. Layered onto this is the social and political upheaval from our reckoning with historic injustice in our nation. It can feel like a heavy and dark time indeed.

Advent itself is about the Light in the darkness. We light candles from week to week to signify our hope as we wait for the Incarnation. Our practice of prayer, in all its forms, is about opening ourselves to the Light that is always present whether in the darkness of the season, the darkness in our national life, or more personally in our daily lives. Prayer is not so much about asking the Light to be with us as it is about opening our hearts to what is already bountifully present. It is about cleansing the lens of our own awareness and perception to see, and receive, this ever-present blessing. "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face..." (1 Corinthians 13:12 – KJV).

On Friday evening and Saturday morning, December 11 and 12, we invite you to participate in a time of silence and prayer led by Brother Aidan from Holy Cross Monastery. Br. Aidan Owen, OHC, is the Guestmaster and Groundskeeper at Holy Cross Monastery, an Episcopal Benedictine community in the Hudson Valley. He regularly writes and leads retreats on

contemplative Christian spirituality, with an emphasis on ecology and craft. This is his second Advent retreat for St. Stephen's; he previously led us for our 2018 Advent Retreat.

Regarding the retreat, he writes:

“As our world seems to get darker and darker, how do we respond with faith and integrity to God’s call to witness to the light? What does hope look like as things around us—politically, economically, socially, and spiritually—fall apart? Where do we find grace, love, and connection?

Vaclav Havel writes that ‘Hope [...] is not the same as joy that things are going well, or

willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but, rather, an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.’ For what goods is God preparing us to work? This retreat will take us deep into our own and the world’s darkness in order to find the hope that only God can give.”



We will meet on Zoom for three sessions, as follows:

Friday, December 11th, 6.30 – 7.30pm

Saturday, December 12th, 9 – 10am

Saturday, December 12th, 10.30am – 12.30pm

Registration and payment for the retreat, a two-step procedure, will be handled directly with Zoom and the monastery:

1. To register for this retreat, please follow this link to Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsfu-hpjwiG9cA2A30of8zMCCHR6FPpAKC>

After registering, you will receive an e-mail from Zoom with the meeting information.

2. The suggested free-will donation is \$50/person, but please know that you are most welcome to join us even if you can't pay. Most important is your participation, so please contribute whatever you are able at www.holycrossmonastery.com/donate, and include “St. Stephen’s Retreat” in the memo box.

If you need help registering or donating, please contact Glenn or Sharon by email at stsmeditation@gmail.com or 802-897-5422. We hope you will join us for this time of quiet and gentle restoration.

Remembering Irv Cummings

by Elizabeth Oettinger

As we recently told you, we gave flowers for Irv's calling hours; a photo is below. Irv's sister Judy wrote the following to the parish: *"I know Irv was loved by all of you and he loved you all as well. My address is Judy Forgette, 258 Cummings Road, Putnam Station, NY 12861. We will have a memorial service for my brother when it is safe to do so. I will look for his gumbo recipe. Please extend my thanks to your congregation for their love and support for me and my brother. Blessings, Judy."* In normal times many of us would be participating in more typical services to mark Irv's passing, and we would almost certainly have a service or portion of a service at St. Stephen's marking our grief and affection. Things being as they are, we felt this is a case where a gift of flowers to Irv's memorial would be the best expression of our corporate feelings toward Irv and his family. The card read, "From Saint Stephen's, where your many friends love and miss you so."

Outdoor Worship on the last Sunday with the Interim Ministry Team October 4, 2020



Hymn Contest

By Jim Pugh

The winner of the hymn contest is *376 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee*. It took 2-1/2 months to determine a winner! Many thanks to those of you who contributed and who participated.

Picturing the Word

by Jennifer Nelson

Rogier van der Weyden, St Luke Drawing the Virgin and Child. 1435-1440.

The 18th of October is the feast of St Luke, the Evangelist. I started working on him by searching for pictures in which he appears. There are lots of them! I settled on the painting you see here by Rogier van der Weyden, an early Netherlandish painter, in which Luke is pictured drawing the Virgin Mary.



How do we know it is St Luke? There are several clues in the painting, but you'll have to take my word for some of them. On the right margin of the painting is a narrow dark strip where appear a table with a book on it, and the head of a cow. These are attributes of St Luke, objects that identify or suggest the identity of the figure.

The book identifies Luke as a writer (The Book of Luke, Acts of the Apostles) and the cow/bull is Luke's symbol (Matthew's is a winged man, Mark's is a lion, and John's is an eagle). Luke was an artist (expressed as one of the main figures, the man drawing), and he is also thought to have been a physician, but that attribute is not shown here. St Luke kneels before the Virgin as he draws her likeness. He

never met Jesus (it is thought) but he became a close confidante of Mary. There is a lot of evidence that he was a follower of St Paul.

Not a lot is known about Rogier van der Weyden, but his works were internationally famous in his lifetime. Along with Robert Campin and Jan van Eyck he is considered one of the three great Early Flemish artists. He may have studied with Robert Campin, and he was certainly influenced by, and had influence on Jan van Eyck. In fact, Rogier is said to have been the most influential painter of the 15th century. It is a gentle painting, expressive and carefully observed. It reminds me of an Annunciation, except that Mary holds a very visible baby Jesus on her lap.

Report from the Treasurer

By Barbara Stratton

Following is a summary of our Budget vs Actual report numbers for the year-to-date through the third quarter ending September 30, 2020:

	Actual to 9/30/202 0	Budget to 9/30/202 0	Budget to end of year	EOY Balance Remaining
Operating Revenues	\$ 239,597	\$ 231,953	\$ 318,330	\$ 78,766
Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 178,656</u>	<u>\$ 225,049</u>	<u>\$ 307,407</u>	<u>\$ 128,751</u>
Net Operating Income	<u>\$ 60,941</u>	<u>\$ 6,904</u>	<u>\$ 10,923</u>	<u>\$ -50,018</u>
Non-Operating Revenues	\$ 79,217			
Non-Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 105,474</u>			
Net Non-Operating Income	<u>\$ -26,257</u>			

As you can see from the numbers above, St. Stephen's is having a good year financially. Annual Giving has continued to exceed our budget (although this may be a matter of how our monthly allocations are calculated). Our Diocesan Unit Trust Interest is higher than budgeted and the value of our investment is only \$5,000 lower than the same period last year, despite the volatility of the financial markets. Other than Annual Giving and the DUT Interest, our other operating income (loose plate, etc) has been almost non-existent. Fortunately, those income categories represent a small percentage of our operating income.

Regarding operating expenses, our Vestry-approved budget assumed that the Interim Ministry Team would finish their work with St. Stephen's by the end of June and a new priest would come on board shortly thereafter, during the second half of the year. The timing didn't play out exactly as budgeted. The IMT continued through the beginning of October, and Paul Olsson, our new priest, will join us in the latter part of November. That means we are experiencing a period of more than a month with no clergy expenses, which is the highest category of our operating expenses. One thing to be aware of is that the monthly IMT expenses were significantly less than the expenses associated with having a full time priest: Not only is there a difference in compensation but there are the additional costs of retirement benefits and medical insurance. I anticipate that the costs of having a full-time priest may be approximately \$50,000 higher than our annualized IMT clergy expenses.

Other operating expenses in aggregate have been lower this year, due to the church being closed and in-person services having been suspended. Please note the negative ~\$50,000 in the End-of-Year Balance Remaining column. That number represents the surplus our

operating budget anticipates for the year. For me, that is a soothing number to contemplate, as it is essentially the same as the increase in clergy expenses we anticipate for the following year. Budgets are not reality – they are a best estimate for a certain period of time, given certain assumptions, but this number points to a hopeful financial near future for St Stephen's as we ride out this pandemic.

You'll notice that non-operating revenues and expenses have no numbers in the budget columns. We budget for church operations, with the Annual Giving Campaign as the primary source of support for these church expenses. As to non-operations, the reason we have not usually budgeted for this category is that our expenses are generally project oriented. Each project needs to have its own source of funding to cover the anticipated expenses before moving forward.

Though this has been a crazy year by almost all measures and will continue to be for who knows how long, it's been a remarkably smooth year financially for St. Stephen's. I consider that an indication of the spiritual glue that binds us together and motivates us to support the ministry we all share.

Barbara Stratton, Treasurer



Our Black Lives Matters sign has arrived!