

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

THE PARISHSCOPE OCTOBER 2019

Senior Warden & Vestry Report

Joys:

The **parish-wide meeting** on Sunday, October 13 was such a gift of active, respectful, and productive communication. Thanks to Tom Klemmer and his committee for raising the issue and agreeing that a full parish conversation was a good way to explain the need for the response to the vagrants just outside our back door. Thanks to Mike Davis for presenting that need clearly at the meeting. Thanks to the Rev. Carole Wageman for facilitating it so that everyone could be heard, share our knowledge, and still get out in an hour. As the Rev. Larry Yarbrough said at the closing, talking together like that has helped us see that we can discuss issues safely. It brought our collective minds and hearts together, and from that we will continue to find humane, effective, and Christian responses to this, and future, challenges.

Save-the-Date: Another parish-wide meeting will be held on Nov 10, this time between the services so that attendance will be easier for those who prefer the early service. The focus then will be on our finances and aspirations. The **narrative budget** is taking shape. Committees have been contributing their budget requests as well as stories and photos to highlight their ministries. I'll be assembling this into a document to present at the parish-wide meeting on Nov 10. Since this will be our first "go" with this work, I'm certain that we will learn how to improve both the product and the process, but - so far, so good.

The **Stewardship Committee** designed a meaningful campaign for this fall. We walk in to see posters of our broad reach of ministries, reminding us of what we are doing inside and outside our doors. I especially love the St. Stephen's Epistles. Under Amy Hastings' leadership, this group of experienced and passionate parishioners are bringing the value of our parish to our eyes, and I believe that it will inspire more of us to raise our giving for 2020.

The **consecration of our new Bishop** was thrilling, and Bishop Shannon brings fresh perspective and ideas to our diocese. Several St. Stephen's members played important roles in the entire process, from discernment to planning the service to serving as Bishop Ely's chaplain and many others were in supporting roles, as well. The Vestry voted for St. Stephen's to give her a Danforth oil lamp to welcome her to Vermont. We will also take up a special offering for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund on Sunday, October 27.

We currently have **four potential nominees** for the three 3-year positions on Vestry, and the nominating committee continues to invite parishioners to express their interest in running for one of the openings on the Vestry. We are also seeking people to serve as convention delegates and alternates - three of each. Job descriptions are on the back table. We voted to waive the one year waiting period to allow Tom Klemmer to run for the one-year position since he is willing to serve

one more year as Junior Warden and see three big building projects through to their conclusion in 2020. The Vestry has discussed holding open elections or presenting a slate of 3 people for 3-year positions and 1 person for the 1-year opening. Our inclination is to hold open elections in order to make this process as transparent as possible, so we hope to have twice as many interested persons as we have openings. We know that this is not everyone's preference; some people would rather approve a slate that the nominating committee sets. Please contact us if you have concerns about this issue. The Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, January 26th, 2020.

The **clergy members of the Interim Ministry Team** have been actively visiting us, both for pastoral needs as well as those in the parish who have struggled to feel welcome,

listened to, and at home at St. Stephen's. They aren't counting their hours, but it's adding up. Their grasp of how we're feeling is well-rounded, and they are serving us with grace and wisdom.

Challenges:

Hmm... none come to mind. 😊 Oh wait... All of these would be insurmountable challenges were it not for God's spirit growing and moving among us. Everything we're working into requires new skills and a willingness to try new approaches. Praise God that we don't have to try to do this without God's love, grace, and guidance.

In God's peace and joy,

Mary McGuire

STEWARDSHIP REPORT: Have you noticed the "Shining Our Light" posters around the church building recently? What would you like to shine a light on at St. Stephen's? What ministry or person or experience touches you spiritually, making your light to shine? How do you go forth each week to love and serve the Lord? Isn't that what truly makes our lights shine in the world?

Our worship includes "Ministry Moment Epistles" during this Stewardship season. Two recent epistles included the following testimonies to the light shining among us:



God has given us a great gift by inviting us into fellowship with him. Can you imagine it? The creator of the universe finds that we – as tiny and as insignificant as we sometime feel – are worthy of his love and trust. How amazing!

And,

On this day as we begin a season of "Shining Our Light", I choose to shine light on you, my sisters and brothers on the journey of faith. What richness I find in our worship and study, our celebrations and sadnesses, and our work and service together.

In November, the Stewardship Team and members of the Vestry will be sharing details about the financial needs of our church as we look ahead to the coming year. At an all-Parish Meeting on Sunday, November 10, at 9am, we'll have a chance to come together and talk about our financial realities, stories of how our resources are put to God's purposes, and what we want to aspire to as we call a new priest to our church. Then on Sunday, November 17, we will gather in a Dedication service, offering our lives and our commitments to support our church and its manifold ministries. Please plan to be present and shine your light!

On behalf of the Stewardship Ministry Team,

Amy Hastings, chair, Irv Cummings, John Hammer, Elizabeth Oettinger, Barb Stratton, Winky Thomas; Mary McGuire, Diane Nancekivell, Larry Yarbrough (Interim Team representatives)

Treasurer's Report as of September 30, 2019

2019 Giving goal	\$218,275
Giving as of 9/30	\$171,823
Balance Needed to achieve goal	\$ 46,452
Other Income projected:	\$ 39,305

2019 Church Expense Budget	\$257,580
Expenses as of 9/30	\$184,065

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.

“Proclaiming the Way of Love Through Policy Advocacy”

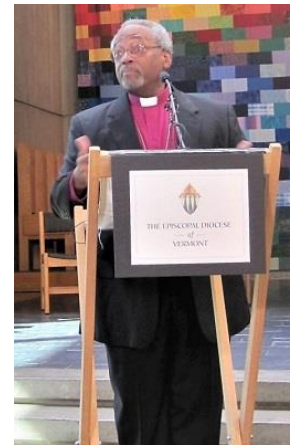
By Eric Davis

The wider Episcopal Church acts in many ways to bring the Gospel message of Jesus and the Way of Love to the attention of policymakers and the public at large.

When Presiding Bishop Curry was in Vermont last month, he said at a press conference that “if a cause reflects God’s intent of love, aligning ourselves with God makes us larger than ourselves.” Becoming involved with The Episcopal Church’s policy advocacy work provides an opportunity for evangelism – to put the Way of Love into action by proclaiming the message of Jesus in the Gospels to a larger community in the context of critical current issues.

If you are interested in learning more about The Episcopal Church’s activities and advocacy on these issues, please visit the following sites:

- Office of Government Relations <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/office-government-relations>
- Episcopal Public Policy Network - A grassroots network of Episcopalians across the country dedicated to carrying out the Baptismal Covenant call to "strive for justice and peace" through the active ministry of public policy advocacy. <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/OGR/eppn-sign-up>
- Partners in Welcome - an online network and learning community dedicated to welcoming newcomers, empowering advocates, and supporting local ministries. Offers Webinars and book discussions, and a weekly curated list of news and opinion articles on issues related to immigration, refugees, and migration. <https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/partnersinwelcome>



LEARNING TO DIE

submitted by Julia Alvarez

I was going through a period of grieving when a friend in my St. Stephens' family told me about a centering prayer/meditation group that met Thursday afternoons at the church. I had never heard the term "centering prayer," but I had tried meditation any number of times. "I'm no good at that," I explained, but her quiet kindness was persuasive. Hey, maybe there was something in it for me, too. I thought I'd give it a try.

As I attended more sessions and read more and more about centering prayer, I realized that my initial reaction revealed what was impeding growth. Being good at something, succeeding at it, was how the hard-working, achievement-oriented me had (mis)understood this spiritual practice. That hardy, eager little self--going also by the name of ego--had served me well to get to where I had gotten, but it was often a handicap in the territory I was beginning (cautiously) to enter with my Thursday afternoon group.

I recall at one point complaining--as little selves are wont to do--that I felt like a too-large Alice crammed into a small box when I meditated. I was right. My robust ego with whom I was overly identified would never make it through the narrow meditation door and into the beautiful garden. No wonder I had been baffled by phrases like "blessed are the poor in spirit." Really? Wouldn't Jesus want us to stock up on spirit? Poverty empties us for the hugeness of God.

At one point our convener and guide, Diane Nancekivell, asked us each to share why we were here. When my turn came, I blurted out that I had come to learn to die. I thought Diane would sigh and single me out as a soul in need of some serious work--she wouldn't have been far off the mark there. Nevertheless, what she said was, "Excellent! We're all here to learn how to die."

I know, it sounds unappealing. I'm sure we've all got better things to do on Thursdays at 4 pm. But that's only if we forget the second part of the story: resurrection, new life. Unfortunately, the way there leads through Golgotha, no shortcuts.

It's not an easy task: the continual putting aside of that eager ego/self and returning to a prayer phrase (hundreds of little deaths in the half hour). Feelings, thoughts, prize-worthy lines of poetry, amazing insights, thorough to-do lists blow in like weather. We sit quietly until that front blows through, knowing that inevitably, another front follows. (Did I say hundreds? Make that thousands!) Doing so is a lesson in humility, in letting go, in not succeeding, dying to perfection. Letting go, letting God, the popular phrase goes.

A poem by Czeslaw Milosz, "Love," summarizes what I've experienced on this journey.

Love means to learn to look at yourself
the way one looks at distant things
for you are only one thing among many.
And whoever sees this way heals his heart,
without knowing it, from various ills--
A bird and a tree say to him: Friend.



"Inspiration" by the late Dominican artist, Belkis Ramirez, a dear friend of Julia's

Then he wants to use himself and things
so that they stand in the glow of ripeness.
It doesn't matter whether he knows what he serves:
Who serves best doesn't always understand.

The work is not really done by us. Transformation happens without our knowing or controlling it, even without our understanding it. But, friend, the good news is that the healing happens, the door opens a crack, we catch a glimpse of the garden.

The meditation group gathers every Thursday at 4:00 in the upper room. All are welcome and no experience is necessary. The annual Advent retreat will be Saturday, December 7 from 9 to 3. More information will follow later this fall.



A ST. STEPHEN'S WHO'S WHO OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONSECRATION OF THE 11TH BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VERMONT

On the platform as Chaplain to the Bishop of Vermont, *The Rev. Carole Wageman*

Ushers: *Ann Cooper, Ed & Mary McGuire, Steve Sontum*

Banner Bearer: *John Hammer*

Crucifer: *Meg Fitch*

Processing with The Bishop's Discernment and Nominating Committee: *Eric Davis*

Organist and Regional Choir Director: *Frederic DeHaven*

Choir:

sopranos - *Amy Hastings, Gaen Murphree, Sharon Tierra, Catherine Walsh, Virginia Westbrook*

altos - *Kitty Davis, Dorothy Hayes, Holly Stabler*

tenors - *Catherine Nichols, Cathy Sontum*

basses - *Jack DesBois, Larry Yarbrough*

Administering Communion to the Choir: *The Rev. Catherine Nichols, The Rev. Larry Yarbrough*



“The Church at the Center of the Village”: a Reflection by Sarah Horton

“God is the ‘beyond’ in the midst of our life.” So wrote the twentieth century theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. And he went on: “The Church stands not where human powers give out, on the borders, but in the center of the village.”

Well, it does, doesn’t it? St Stephen’s stands literally in the center of the village—or at least it seems about to move there. You may have seen the conceptual rendition, the artist’s view of the town of Middlebury after the completion of the Bridge and Rail Project in 2021. It pictures an attractive green park, Triangle Park, with trees, benches, pathways back and forth to the Green, towards the shops on Main Street, a walkway across the street to the new Lazarus Park, with its intriguing labyrinth. And, at the center of it all, St Stephen’s church.

The church, just as Bonhoeffer wrote, is at the center of the village.



Image credit: Lincoln Brown Illustration - A rendering showing St. Stephen's from the new Lazarus Park and including the St. Stephen's-funded labyrinth at the bottom of the park.

But what did he mean? And what might his thoughts suggest to us at St Stephen’s, as we look towards a new season in the town and in the parish?

Writing from prison in the months before he was executed by the Nazis for his work with the German Confessing Church, active in opposition to Hitler, Bonhoeffer pondered the state of the Christian church in the middle of the twentieth century. The world, he claimed, has now “come of age”. Scientific and cultural developments have pushed out the spheres of human knowledge and competence. People can get along very well without God, or the hypothesis of God. We don’t need God any more to fall back on as an all-powerful *deus ex machina*, ready to rescue us, to answer ultimate questions, to resolve ambiguities.

In this grown-up “world come of age” Christians have responded, he believed, by engaging in a kind of rearguard action, determined—less and less persuasively—to find a place for religion at the edges of life. Retreating from its former power as central to the human endeavor, the Church has tried to squeeze some space for Christianity, to make room for God in the nooks and crannies of anxiety, discomfort with uncertainty and ambiguity, fear of death.

But Bonhoeffer looks at this loss of Christendom, the ceding of Christian hegemony to a predominantly secular world view, not as the diminishment of faith but as restorative change. The “world come of age” has given opportunity for “a clearing of decks for the God of the Bible.” Now perhaps, he claims, we can recover a more authentic and biblical sense of God as at the

center of human life in all its manifestations. And this calls for dissolving the illusion of the separation of “secular” and “religious” as binary states. “Jesus” he says, “does not call [us] to a new religion, but to life.” He was convinced that we must embrace the Christ event in all its wholeness, and thus recover our own wholeness of being.

And so, Bonhoeffer holds that the transforming self-giving love of God permeates the creation. The Church is only a part of that rich, holy, and gifted world. But that “only” is a weighty contribution to God’s Kingdom purpose of love. We in the Church have a unique part to play.

For many Christian centuries churches and cathedrals were built at the center of towns and cities because they were the recognized focus of cultural and social life. That era of Christendom is past. We are no longer that kind of center, nor should we try to be so. The Church’s centrality is of a different character. Our witness is essentially a kenotic witness—that is, humble, non-rivalrous, self-dispossessing.

Imagining the landscape after the completion of the Bridge and Rail Project, I picture the present Green, the Triangle park, the Lazarus park: it’s a busy scene as people come and go, happy or harried, grieving or light-hearted. Dogs are walked; children ride scooters, bikes; on the benches, the young check their social media feed, the old rest; the homeless hang out in the gazebo; squirrels’ bustle about beneath chestnut and maple trees shedding leaves and, before long, blossoming again. And the church is literally at the center of it all.

The Church is the still hub of the turning wheel.

“God” says Archbishop Rowan Williams, “God is the Reality to whom all reality is present.” And our gift and calling is to witness to that loving Reality.

So how do we do this? How to we endeavor to reconnect the world with the source of its deepest possibilities, its fullest life, in God? How do we engage this calling without co-opting human desire and action to serve our self-preservation, or in order to boost our sense of worldly importance?

Perhaps some of the pointers are traditional ones, in which we should have confidence, as many people pondering our

situation as the twenty-first century Church, have suggested.

Primarily we are a people of prayer. Prayer is at the heart of our vocation-- as one theologian described it: “The release and transmission of spiritual energy”. The Church is sourced in silence: we arise and move towards the generative silence of God.

We are a people of thanksgiving. We recognize and celebrate the astonishing gift of life, and we make an offering, giving God’s gifts back to God in thanksgiving and praise.

We are attentive to the actualities of the world presenting themselves to us as holy and precious, from the child crying for its parent in border detention, to a single autumn leaf fallen in beauty.

We are pain-bearers, not fearing lamentation, endeavoring to watch with Christ in Gethsemane.

We are people who “behold”: offering hospitality to God in our distracted world through listening, watching, waiting.

We live by hope, trusting the loving purpose of God and, with the example of Martin Luther King Jr. and so many others, we try to live from this promised wholeness even when our hope seems distant or naïve.

These —sketchy as they are-- are not new or radical ideas. (Writer and priest, Sarah Bachelard, among others, invokes these qualities.) And perhaps you are thinking: “of course”. “All this goes without saying.”

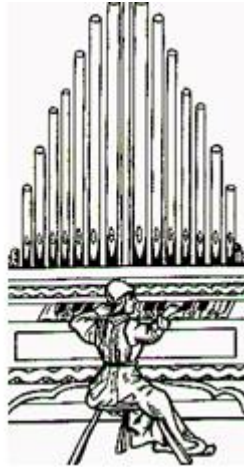
But I think it’s useful to say it, just because so often we forget or take for granted the most fundamental power and beauty of who and what we love. Acknowledged or not by the world, *God is*, and the Church is called to embody that revolutionary dynamic of love. But the Church holds that power, as Christ holds that power, in a way that is often hidden, forgoing the competitive shiny distractions that clamor in the world’s marketplace for attention.

We might find ourselves mulling over specific ways St Stephen’s can manifest itself as “the center of the village” in Bonhoeffer’s sense.

And in these thought experiments, we should keep in mind the old prayer that reminds the Church not to be anxious, because *[God has] taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength*

Notes from the Organ Bench

This year our organist George Matthew Jr. played four carillon recitals on the world's largest carillon at Riverside Church, NYC and several others in PA, MA and CT. He also made a recording of a suite written for the carillon of First Presbyterian Church (the "Fish Church" of Stamford, CT) by Swiss composer Roger Vuataz and assisted in the production of a booklet thereon. George was carillonneur of that church 1968 to 1998.



On October 4, he played an interfaith carillon recital for peace on the Mead Chapel carillon featuring "St. Francis' Trial", a work by Belgian composer Jo Coenan, while it was simultaneously played by many carillons in Europe. This effort was inspired by Franciscans4Peace.

On November 14, George will play a carillon recital at Mead, featuring a piece, "The Sacredness of Trees" by Norwegian composer Ellen Lindquist '93 Middlebury. It will be performed simultaneously by all the carillons in Norway

The Seating of the 11th Bishop of Vermont September 29 at The Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington, VT

Mike Kieran wrote that he and Barbara attended this ceremonial service where the Rev. Dr. Shannon MacVean-Brown was welcomed and seated as the Eleventh Bishop of Vermont. Mike described that our new Bishop knocked loudly three times on the wooden doors and entered. Bishop Shannon was then escorted in a large procession to the Bishop's chair on the Altar. Here are some photos submitted by the Kierans:



I had a wake-up call at Bishop MacVean-Brown's consecration service. I attended as a member of the Diocesan Choir, to sing with Episcopal choristers from around the state, but during the pre-service rehearsal I began to feel woozy. My eyes wouldn't focus properly. Words failed to fit themselves into proper sentences when I opened my mouth to speak. My movements grew jittery, my neck jerking about on my shoulders. Breathing became shallow and pangs of anxiety shot through my brain.

I knew exactly what was happening to me, and the small, rational part of my mind gave a weary sigh of recognition as it watched the rest of me fall to pieces. I was experiencing debilitating physical symptoms from a chemical exposure - probably to the perfumes, colognes, hair products and deodorants of the smartly dressed and powdered Episcopalians around me. I bumped into the Bishop-Elect's procession as I hightailed it out the chapel door for a breath of fresh air and a new seat in the overflow seating venue.

My experience at Ira Allen Chapel reminded me that St Stephen's is right now in the process of exploring ways to actively welcome all seekers of Christ. I think about my family and my experience of being "homechurched" as a child partly due to my mother's environmental illness. I wonder how many people out there would come join in community worship if they could trust that the community wouldn't make them physically ill. St Stephen's is more fragrance-conscious than many meeting-places, but I think I am not alone in carefully choosing my pew seat based on the chemicals around me. Offering our sanctuary as a fragrance-free haven for all Christ-seekers would be a wonderfully welcoming gesture - if we could make good on our offer.

Chemical sensitivity (also known as "environmental illness") is a poorly understood medical condition, though some alternative

medical paradigms are making progress in illuminating this insidious cluster of ailments. Each person's symptoms may vary, and it is important to remember that it is not the smell that brings on illness; it is the interaction between fragrance chemicals and the sensitive person's brain and body chemistry that causes physical distress. The Environmental Illness Resource, <https://www.ei-resource.org/>, is a good place to find more information, as is the Chemical Sensitivity Foundation, www.chemicalsensitivityfoundation.org. Chemical triggers are nearly ubiquitous in all sorts of personal products, including laundry detergents, dryer sheets, hand lotions and shampoos. Essential oils, though natural, are unnaturally concentrated chemicals and can cause adverse reactions. Avoiding harmful chemicals can be very complicated!



I have been praying since my wake-up call, and through God's grace I have found courage to share my chemical sensitivity experiences with folks at St. Stephen's. As I've begun to share myself more openly, a curious thing has started happening: folks at St. Stephen's have begun to share their chemical sensitivity experiences with me. I've realized that this is a much larger issue than myself, and I've realized that the cultural taboo around air-quality issues is but a thin bubble. Many folks want change. Perhaps all we need to do to become that change is to start sharing - or, as Jesus tells us, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Halloween, Past and Present

Guy Fawkes Day too!

collected and reported by Linda Horn

Adler Holbrook, 3, is planning to be a dinosaur. **Ryder Whiteman** is planning to be DJ Marshmallow (Google it!) **Jack** and **Ada Simpson** are looking forward to being firefighters. Their mom, **Mary Jane**, writes *"they are wearing the same costumes as last year. And for the record, Jack chose to dress up like a firefighter, and Ada chose to dress up like Jack. Important detail."*



Robert Borden remembers his costume in 1939. He was Mickey Mouse (who was totally hot that year). While dressed as our favorite mouse he and his mother visited a department store and went up an escalator. His tail got stuck in it as he reached the top so his mother screamed and he cried and then the tail fell off!

Fred DeHaven was once dressed as a cowboy to honor his favorite wrangler, Gene Autry.

Carole Wageman still has the red kimono that her father brought back from Japan after WWII. She and other family members wore it many years, rain or shine. She was lucky because it fit over her jacket

on cold nights.

Sandy Ketcham still dresses up in her witch's hat as she answers the door on Halloween.



Catherine Nichols had a bat costume one year that her mother made. It included curtain rods as part of the wings. Unfortunately, to her mother's dismay, she did not win the top prize for costumes that year.

Peter Dempewolff also made his own costume one year. He was creating a "Creature of the Black Lagoon" type look by pouring wax all over his head. He did remember to put straws in his nose for breathing holes. (Remember, he was young!) He wore Rayban sunglasses to complete the look. The only problem was that as he wore it the wax started to melt and run over his eyes effectively blinding him. Of course, he still went out! **Peter** and **Mary Kay's** son, **Austin**, also had trouble one year when dressed as a jet airplane. The jet's wings were too wide to approach many doors!

Melting was also a problem for **Ben and Susan Anderson-Ray**. They were invited one year to a costume dinner party and went as clowns in full face make-up complete with red noses. As the dinner progressed their faces started to slide off!

Paul Horn, way back in the 70s when it was extremely cool, dressed as a Conehead. Coneheads were part of the Saturday Night Live extraterrestrial family re-occurring skit. Land shark, anyone?

With mixed memories, **Michael Reeves** remembers the year his mother dressed him as a female gypsy. He was five. It was all the rage!

Our English friends, **Jean Bergesen** and **Sarah Horton**, didn't get to celebrate Halloween as children, though people in that country now do celebrate as we do. Sara fondly remembers Guy Fawkes Day, though, on November 5th. It involved playing "Knocky, Knocky Nine Doors" where children knock on doors, run away, and peek back to see if anyone answers. There was a bonfire at night where bangers and potatoes were cooked. She says they seemingly were always then eaten in the rain which also spoiled the fireworks that were in everyone's back pocket



News from the Pews

collected and reported by Linda Horn

We often share travel news in this column but here is a travel opportunity. **Diane Nancekivell** is heading to Jerusalem January 14-22 as part of her work with Kids for Peace. She has some friends and her granddaughter going with her but invites anyone with interest to join her. She says details are still being worked out but she is sure the trip will cost no more than \$3500 all inclusive.

Speaking of travel, **Jean Bergesen's** daughter, **Jeannie**, and son, **Jeffrey**, spent a week at a golf resort in Portugal this summer. They stayed at the Hotel Palacio where the James Bond movie "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" was filmed. In October, Jeannie was in Japan following the Rugby World Cup. Fortunately, she made it back to the UK safely after changing her flight city owing to the typhoon.

Congratulations to **Carole Wageman**! She has had two book reviews published in the *Anglican Theological Review*. This second review is of the book W.H.Auden, the Psalms, and Me by J. Chester Johnson.

Congratulations also goes to **Thelma Gifford** as she happily reports her house in Illinois has sold! Now she is looking for a car.

As we know, **Meg Fitch** is a writer and now she is working as a writing tutor at Castleton University two days a week. Another two days a week she works at Vermont Country Store in the shipping department.

Chree Perkins and her husband have also been working hard, having spent the past 2 weeks in Calais, VT doing their annual logging on their preservation land. It was kind of wet and *sloggy*, but worth the effort, she reports.

Our own **Marge Drexler** has been recognized by the Middlebury Garden Club with a Roadside Attraction Award. The award is given annually to outstanding gardens grown by non-garden club members. Way to go, Marge!



“Dignity, Listening, Respect”
SUPPORT A MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY BY BECOMING A REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE.

submitted by Dee Hodges and the Outreach Committee

We have learned from Housing Solutions, one of the agencies St. Stephen’s supports with Peasant Market funds, that Representative Payees are desperately needed.

A representative payee manages benefit payments for beneficiaries who are incapable of managing their Social Security or Supplemental Security Income payments. We see this as an opportunity for St. Stephens to work in concert with an existing program and build relationships with those outside our doors.

Ingrid Pixley, Director of Community Rehabilitation & Treatment at CSAC explained that a volunteer could become an official payee for someone who is perhaps mentally challenged or consistently overspends his or her budget, then work with the person to set up a bank account with automatic withdrawals for rent, electricity and other monthly bills. Sometimes there is an opportunity to spend time with the person and help them with budgeting. Others do not wish to engage but appreciate the help.

Once you are matched with a beneficiary, you are invited by the beneficiaries’ case manager to attend a team meeting at CSAC. You and the beneficiary work together to fill out the forms required by the Social Security

Administration (SSA) and begin building a trusting relationship. Once approved, SSA will send you a check that you take to the bank and set up a checking account in the name of the beneficiary and you as payee. Careful record keeping is important. Bonding is not required but SSA will do a background check.

We spoke to someone recently who has been a Representative Payee for a long time. He said one of the reasons he does it is because it can help prevent people losing their housing. If you are interested in using your skills and supporting a member of our community by becoming a Representative Payee, contact Dee Hodge or Lonnie Fisher.

“Loving our neighbor translates into social service...and the recognition of the dignity of every human being”
Ann Cooper-Parishscope May 2019

There are handouts on the back table with more information, or use the link below for the Social Security Administration website: <https://www.ssa.gov/payee/>

St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church
A member of
[The Episcopal Church in Vermont](#), [The Episcopal Church](#), and [the Worldwide Anglican Communion](#)
(802) 388-7200 3 Main St., Middlebury, VT 05753 ststephensmiddlebury@gmail.com