

## St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

# THE PARISHSCOPE SEPTEMBER 2019

### SENIOR WARDEN & VESTRY REPORT

Dear Friends,

The big news is coming directly from those doing the big work. So, I simply encourage you to read closely this month's Parishscope. Jennifer Nelson, ably assisted by Kitty Davis, works very hard to get the word out, so the "burden" is on us to read the word. Oh, and let's read God's Word, too!

Let's also all attend the upcoming listening sessions for the Ministry Discernment Team and the cottage meetings sponsored by the Stewardship Committee. The discussions in these meetings will be shaping the direction we move.

The Vestry is continuing to read and discuss a book about church leadership in this age of changing times when people across the country are valuing church differently from how many of us grew up. This book, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*, suggests that because society has changed, church leaders need to learn new ways of leading. The author, Tod Bolsinger, builds a comparison with the Lewis and Clark expeditioners who were prepared to canoe to the Pacific and when they reached the

peak of a mountain, realized that what was ahead was very different from what was behind them, what they expected, and what they were prepared for. If you're interested in reading this book, talk with a Vestry person. We have quite a few copies of the book floating around and would be happy to share.

It's only September, but it's time to look ahead to January, the Annual Meeting, and electing new Vestry members. We'll be posting a description of the responsibilities of Vestry members and convention delegates within the next few weeks, but in the meantime, if you have even a little bit of interest in serving St. Stephen's, please talk with one of us on Vestry.

Every Vestry meeting is open to anyone who would like to sit in, share ideas, or just listen. We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, starting at 6pm. The minutes of the meetings are posted on the bulletin board outside the office.

May we all know God's peace and joy,  
*Mary McGuire, Senior Warden*

## A PRAYER

The Rev. Carole Wageman --- used at our HolyCow! presentations on Sept. 15 and 17, 2019

Holy One, we give thanks, for this time together and for the gift of each other's compassion, and willingness to listen, learn, love, and absorb that which has been presented.

Take this, our story, and help us to faithfully make it better. Show us the gifts and courage we have to tell our story as it has been; to mend and rebuild our story where it needs to be restored; and then to reframe and retell our story in new, genuine, and creative ways.

Open our imaginations to new dreams we have yet to discover and to new ideas that dare us to do things differently.

Guide us. Shape us. Dream with us. Persist with us. Keep us honest with each other.

Remind us that with all our faults and foibles, we are still held in your loving hands and you will not let us fall.

May we remember that we are called to your purpose of love, charity, mercy, kindness, dignity, and respect.

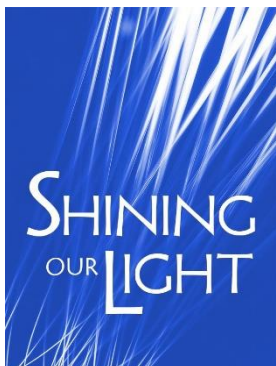
And, as we give thanks for who we are and who we are yet to become, may we take the steps we need to take in order to grow more fully into your purpose along with all those who call themselves part of this congregation of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.



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## SHINING OUR LIGHT

*from the Stewardship Ministry Team*



In this season in which the days grow shorter and darkness descends, the Stewardship Ministry Team is preparing to shine light. Beginning on Sunday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, we'll be lifting up stories, examples, models, and sayings that shine a light on our life as a church community.

Our Stewardship theme for the upcoming fall giving campaign is *Shining Our Light: We are God's Stewards in all that we are and do*. Think about what that means in words I read recently: "...we are meant to make a difference. We are called to be contributors, people of reflection and action...This is our common human task...to be participators in God's continuous creation."

In the weeks ahead, let us join together to shine our light in the darkness and lift up all the ways that we individually and as a community reflect and act for the glory of God.

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

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF BUDGET

submitted by Mike Davis

As we enter the fall/winter season, approaching Advent, you will start to hear a (possibly) new terminology in our conversation about applying our time, talent, and treasure to the work of Saint Stephen's...a **Narrative Budget**. There is a team of parishioners working on this project, in tandem with the Stewardship Ministry Team, Finance Committee, and Vestry, to share this concept with the whole parish and to begin a conversation about not just the numbers, but translating the numbers into our Mission of **Worship, Learning, and Service**. Numerical budgets, although essential to management of an organization, often lack the impact and understanding that a textual outline – a story – can bring. Saint Stephen's has a great story to tell.

The Vestry has authorized this work as an important and ongoing adjunct to our regular budgeting process, in order to '**change the conversation**' about who we are, what our Mission is, and how we resource that Mission both inside and outside our walls. As we refine our Narrative Budget in the next few years, it will help us clarify how our Mission as a parish is supported by the **time, talent, and treasure** we allocate to this purpose. More importantly, as we use this narrative tool to look forward to our hopes and desires for the future, we can articulate how we might bring even more resources to bear on the Missional efforts that we aspire to.

A Narrative Budget is about **understanding, clarity, focus, and aspirations** – better understanding our current and future life as a Parish with a Mission. Stay tuned.

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### Treasurer's Report as of August 31, 2019

2019 Giving goal:	\$218,275
Giving as of 8/31:	\$155,750
Balance Needed to achieve goal:	\$ 62,525
Other Income projected:	\$ 39,305
2019 Church Expense Budget:	\$257,580
Expenses as of 8/31:	\$168,380

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Barbara Stratton, Treasurer ([barbara.stratton@comcast.net](mailto:barbara.stratton@comcast.net))

**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 less 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 search and related transition costs. Any surplus that might occur in this year's budget will support those additional costs in 2020.

## AUTOPAY: A Helpful Tool for Contributing to St. Stephen's

submitted by Carol Haraden

A few years ago, I was attending the August meeting of the St. Stephens Finance Committee. We were reviewing the monthly financial statement and we were quite behind in revenue. We looked into this more deeply and we found that while parishioners give throughout the year, some of us give unevenly. I was one of those people. I gave more at the start of the year and the autumn. Why? I don't really know- it was just when I remembered. My income did not wax and wane, but my giving pattern did. It made me think about my own household budget and how difficult it would be to have monthly financial obligations- food, utilities, taxes- and income that could not be depended upon to meet those monthly obligations. St. Stephen's is in that same position. We have monthly obligations but sporadic revenue. We realize that parishioners who do not receive the same

income regularly may need to give according to when their income is received. Because I travel for work, weekly or monthly giving seemed too difficult, so I changed my giving pattern to three times a year. Meanwhile, I was paying my insurance, taxes and utilities monthly online using autopay. It just never occurred to me to plan my pledge giving this same way. Three months ago, I signed up with autopay for my giving to St. Stephens and the church now receives my pledge monthly. It is easy, it happens when I am traveling and most importantly, my church can depend on a flow of income that helps us meet our monthly obligations. I know that several of you do this already. For those of us for whom this a change, please consider autopay. Every bank offers it and it is so easy to set up. I would be glad to talk with anyone about how to make this work for you and St. Stephens.

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The Adult Education Committee at St. Stephen's Middlebury is pleased to announce

### **BIBLE STUDY: 4 WEDNESDAYS in OCTOBER**



#### **Paul, The Corinthians, And Us: Is There Anything to Learn from Reading Other People's Mail?**

Wednesday, October 2, 9, 16, & 23, 5 pm,  
Upper Meeting Room (*Tea at 4:30, preceding discussion.*)  
by Larry Yarbrough.

#### **Also - Biblical Violence in The Season of Peace,**

Sunday, December 1, at 4 pm,  
by Larry Yarbrough in the Upper Meeting Room

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The Adult Education Committee at St. Stephen's Middlebury is additionally pleased to share that their calendar of offerings through the end of calendar year 2019 is available for viewing online:

<https://www.ststephensmidd.org/fall-2019-calendar-for-adult-education/>

A Reprint of an IMPORTANT Email  
from your Ministry Discernment Team

Date: September 23, 2019

Dear People of St. Stephen's:

As a parish, we have participated in the Holy Cow survey. We have listened to and looked at the results of this mirror we have held up to ourselves and we have done some deep talking about it at parish meetings on September 15th and 17th. The Ministry Discernment Team's (MDT) intention for those meetings was simply to present the results and let people think about them before we held Listening Sessions. Not surprisingly, it was much more than that and there was a lot of good discussion. But we, as a team, would now like to hear more of what you have been thinking, how you are responding to the results and what you would like us all to think about that has not been covered by the survey. The dates for these Listening Sessions are:

Sunday September 29th 1-2:30pm, upper meeting room and church nave

Wednesday October 2nd from 1-2:30pm parish hall

Friday October 4th from 5:30-7:00pm parish hall - with pizza!

Please come to one of them whether or not you participated in the survey. This is the next step of discerning more deeply who we are as God's people and we all need to hear each other. The MDT will be providing some questions for us to start the discussion with. We will also incorporate some stillness into our time together to be sure we are making room for the Holy Spirit to move in and among us.

Thank you for your continued prayers, your wise insights and participation in this important endeavor.

In Christ,

*Ann Cooper, Irving Cummings, Beth Davis, Meg Fitch, Jessie Gallipo, Paul Horn, Steve Sontum,  
Beth Stanway, Alice Van Tuyl, Winky Thomas, Barb Wood*

## Card Ministry

The Card Ministry is a recent addition to the Pastoral Care Team's ministry. A card is sent to a parishioner to celebrate a birthday or anniversary, when someone is ill or when a loved one has passed away. Cards have also been sent to celebrate a retirement or a new home. So far 40 cards have been sent this year. A sign-up sheet is posted on a clipboard in the back of the church in order to gather information about birthday and anniversary dates in order for more cards to be sent.

*Sandy Ketcham  
for the Pastoral Care Team*

## INTERIM MINISTRY TEAM REPORT

Our summer months percolated along with a number of pastoral issues, one funeral, home and hospital visits, Sunday services, and our ongoing efforts to seek all out parishioners as part of our "journey of listening".

We are now officially launched into the fall but we are already giving thought to Advent and Christmas plans, working with young families to support their presence at St. Stephen's, coordinating with and supporting the Stewardship program for this year, participating (as invited) with the MDT and pondering how to learn from the HolyCow! survey that was recently done. Through our nine months together, we have coalesced as a viable team and branched off into areas that draw upon each person's unique skills: pastoral care, liturgical design, music, elders, community outreach (HOPE, MACA-Middlebury Area Clergy Association), formation, administration and organization, etc. As you know, we are also still moving forward on our "Epiphany Journey of Listening" that we all knew would take a goodly amount of time to accomplish given our less than half time status and the amount of other things calling for our leadership attention on a weekly basis.

From time to time, I am asked by parishioners: "So, how is that listening journey going? When can we hear about what you are doing and what the results are? Is anything really happening?" From the beginning, we have tried to emphasize that this effort would take time and it would not be an "instant fix". This is not a business model that has measurable data or outcomes that are easily seen, measured, counted, evaluated, categorized, and filed away as a completed project. This is an approach that takes the development of trust and relationships, careful listening and reflection, tuning in to "teachable moments" and planting seeds. It takes time and it takes patience on everyone's part. In the end, any efforts at reconciliation and healing will be up to all of us to determine. That is the way it is in families.

Winston Churchill once said: "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

*Carole Wageman, Interim Team Leader*



### ***MUSIC* Thursday noon programs during Advent and Lent**

For the eighth consecutive year, St. Stephen's will present Thursday noon programs during Advent and Lent. I have been assured by Jim Gish that construction will be quiet at these times. The Advent dates will be December 5, 12 and 19. The only definite performer at this time is our own Jack des Bois on December 12. We are delighted that Jack will be able to be with us once more.

*submitted by George Matthew Jr.*

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## Foyer Dinner Groups – Friendship and Fun!

It is time to sign up for a new round of Foyers! Foyer groups are small gatherings of about eight to ten people, both singles and couples, who meet informally once a month for a simple meal and fellowship (usually at each other's homes). Your commitment is for a four to five-month cycle, not a whole year with each household taking a turn at their home.

**Please sign up by September 29<sup>th</sup>.** *The sign-up sheet is located on the back table or please email Paul Horn at paulhorn@comcast.net.*

History – After the World War II bombing of Coventry Cathedral, small groups of people began meeting to rebuild their community: a modest meal, conversation. In time, foyer groups began springing up in parishes all over Britain and America. Many Episcopal churches have foyer groups.

### **Q: How does it work?**

A: Those interested sign up. Members then receive a roster of their group's names and contact information. One person is designated to convene the group for its first meeting.

### **Q: I'm a very busy person. Is this for me?**

A: Absolutely. The time commitment is small and the payoff is big. Foyers traditionally last about two hours. You'll have great conversations and much fun getting to know people. Be sure to bring your calendar so that the next meeting can be scheduled.

### **Q: What if my home is too small and/or I don't like to cook?**

A: Foyer is meant to be simple and comfortable. The host provides the meal (such as a casserole or hearty soup) and other participants bring a part of the meal to be shared such as bread and wine, appetizers, salad or dessert. Some people order pizza – the possibilities are endless. Singles often pair up to share the responsibility and college students are everyone's guests. It's up to the group to decide how they want to manage the food part. The main thing is to keep it simple.

### **Q: I have food allergies. How can I be sure that other group members' meals will be suitable for me?**

A: If you have food allergies, dietary restrictions, or strong taste preferences, please simply inform your group of your concerns at the beginning so that everyone understands what they must consider in preparing the menu. It is also okay if you bring your own meal each time and just join in the conversation.



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**Parish Weekend at Rock Point Mark your calendars NOW!** from 4 p.m. on Friday, February 28, 2020, until 11 a.m. on Sunday morning March 1, 2020. Ed McGuire will be calling a planning meeting in October, probably on a Sunday after church. Visit <https://www.ststephensmidd.org/rock-point-parish-weekend-2019/> to view photos and read about all the fun our church family had last year

## Fellowship from Linda Horn

Get out your calendars and save these dates - only be prepared for changes! The fellowship committee is planning an after 10:30 service potluck for September 29 and December 1. On December 1 we will also have some advent activities such as wreath making and maybe some Jesse tree ornaments. December will also see the three kings wind their way through the parish after Christmas bringing us to Epiphany.

We often try to plan an outdoor skating party for January and the weather has gotten in the way the past few years...too snowy or too

warm. We will announce a "pop-up" skating party for any day it looks good!

February will be busy with the start of Lent and a Shrove Tuesday pancake supper on the 25th. That next weekend February 28-March 1 will again bring parish weekend at Rock Point.

April will be Easter and a champagne and chocolate reception for the vigil will again be happening. May brings construction so who knows what will happen! Then it will be time for Peasant Market...how time flies



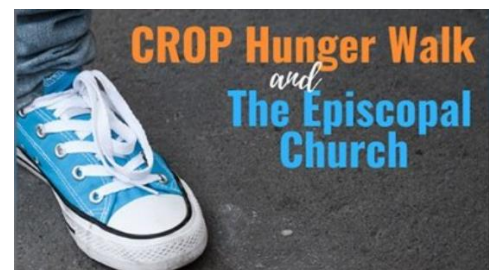
### **Sharing the Story Lab Summit 2019 Experience**

Kitty Davis and Virginia Westbrook attended an all-day conference at Bread Loaf on September 19 on the theme, "Crafting Stories That Challenge the Status Quo." Many of the ideas and techniques talked about at the conference can be applied to activities at St Stephen's, such as a narrative budget or Episcopal evangelism.

On Saturday, October 5, there will be a meeting at Lonnie Fisher's house at 2:00 pm where Kitty will share some of what she learned at the conference. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to [kittychurchstuff@yahoo.com](mailto:kittychurchstuff@yahoo.com), so Kitty can prepare according to the size of the group and those planning to attend.

Additional sharing sessions are likely. Kitty is open to hearing your ideas for times and locations.

**CROP walk is October 6th this year.** Please join us! Envelopes are in the back table of the church, or you can sign up online: <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/middleburyvt> . **We are the St Stephen's Strollers.** In 2018 Addison County walkers raised over \$26,400. It was the highest grossing walk in Vermont. And in the top 10 out of 84 walks in New England.





# AN INTERVIEW with BILL EICHNER

written by Mike Davis

If you're going to go into a surgery and have someone operate on your eyes, you probably prefer someone with a relaxed, intentional demeanor; someone dedicated to his/her profession, grounded in a broad life experience, someone who listens to you intently while discussing such a consequential event as eye surgery. Bill Eichner is that kind of guy...and with a good sense of humor, and interesting life story, to boot!

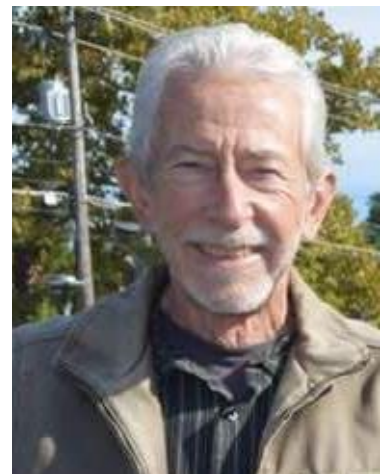
ONE OF THE ADDED ATTRACTIONS OF THE MIDDLEBURY AREA WAS THE PRESENCE OF SAINT STEPHEN'S...A 'GOOD FIT', AS BILL DESCRIBES IT.

Like many of us, Bill came to Addison County from elsewhere...in his case, from near Omaha. He grew up on a 20-cow dairy farm, eventually getting undergrad and medical degrees from University of Nebraska campuses. Here's where Bill's life starts to get a lot more interesting. At that time in the Ophthalmology profession, the next step after medical school was an internship. Bill's was in The Canal Zone of Panama. This was followed by a commission in the Air Force, serving as a Flight Surgeon for three years. That was followed by a 3-year residency in Houston which included time in Guatemala and Colombia. And if that's not enough training in interesting places!!...Bill was fortunate to then be offered a yearlong fellowship at St. John of Jerusalem hospital in Jerusalem. There he was one of a team of 5 professionals who treated dozens of patients every day. When the team was able to treat patients successfully, they were often thanked by being invited to the patients' home for a

meal, so Bill got to know a lot of local people on a very personal level – an outcome which he found very rewarding.

Bill entered his professional field at a time of rapid change. New procedures for detached retinas, cataracts, and so on, made for a 'continuous learning experience' as his practice began. And although Bill describes his move to Vermont as a 'chance' occurrence, it still has a distinctly 'Vermonty' flavor. He and first wife Sonja Olson had returned to the US from Europe, and were driving around New England. They happened to be heading west on 125 out of town, late in the day, and the sunset over the Adirondacks was stunning. Whether they had already decided that Middlebury was a promising place to settle is not known, but in any event the sunset pretty much sealed the deal. As we all know, it can be magical!

Bill had grown up in the Missouri Synod branch of the Lutheran Church...a decidedly conservative denomination that would not naturally lead to an Episcopal affiliation later in life. His connection with the Episcopal Church began during his time in Houston, at a church near the Medical School. It proved to be a lifelong change, and one of the added attractions of the Middlebury area was the presence of Saint Stephen's...a 'good fit', as Bill describes it. His two daughters were raised and confirmed at Saint Stephen's, and Bill and Julia were married there as



well – by Addison Hall. Bill says he has always felt at home at Saint Stephen's, and shared that even his MO Synod parents, upon moving to Middlebury in 1980 from Nebraska, found us welcoming and made the transition quite easily.

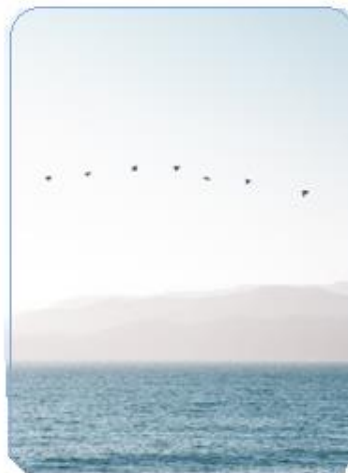
Bill and Julia have been steadily active and involved at Saint Stephen's. Bill has also been active with Charter House, and both have been engaged in various food programs. One of my first encounters with Bill was at a church potluck where he was extolling the virtues of kale, which must be one of his favorite vegetables. Bill's assessment of Saint Stephen's at this time in our history is one of great opportunity; he sees so many

parishioners involved, focused, and committed to the range of in- and out-reach that we pursue together. Like many of us, Bill appreciates good preaching and good liturgy, (note to the MDT!) but clearly has a very broad appreciation of Saint Stephen's, the Episcopal Church, and our role in this (lovely) little corner of the world. If you don't know Bill well and would like to strike up a conversation, ask him how his garden is doing. More broadly, though, I find Bill an able conversationalist on a range of subjects, and together with Julia a couple who make solid contributions to our church, community, and world.

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## PATHWAYS TO CONTEMPLATION by Glenn Fulop

A fish cannot drown in water,  
A bird does not fall in air.  
In the fire of creation,  
God doesn't vanish:  
The fire brightens.  
Each creature God made  
Must live in its own true nature;  
How could I resist my nature,  
That lives for oneness with God?



--Mechthild of Magdeburg, *Meditations from Mechthild of Magdeburg*

### *For God alone my soul in silence waits... Psalm 62*

There are many pathways to enter into contemplative prayer: among others are walking meditation, (which might be on a labyrinth); yoga practice; dance or other movement; chanting Taize; creating a mandala; and, of course, sitting meditation.

Contemplative prayer is more about how you enter the practice, the intention you bring to it, than it is about the practice itself. As in all prayer, the intention is to enter into God's presence.

A practice that brings the mind to focus or centers us in the mind of the heart, that helps us to gently let go of the train of thoughts and feelings that constantly surge through us, that leads us into the silence and openness where God always waits for us – this practice will move us toward contemplation.

I never knew my father to meditate, but he once spoke to me about how meditation could still the mind and quiet the breathing. It seems to me now, after my years of practice, that he was speaking from experience; but I will never know that.

There is a way that he clearly set me on one pathway into contemplative practice and that was birdwatching, a lifelong passion of mine. He taught me that birding is not really a pursuit, but learning stillness and presence. "Then the birds will come to you," he said.

Birding – that stillness and presence -- is, for me, a contemplative practice and it bestows all the gifts of contemplation: grounding me on the earth on which I am standing in that moment; bringing mental concentration and stillness; centering me in the experience of the moment; experiencing the sights and sounds, the smells and feel of my environment; being as in the moment as I can be in a culture that wants me to focus on the outward and material; and feeling deep gratitude in my heart for God's presence through one part of God's creation.

Is there some place in your life where you have a contemplative practice, or a place that could become one with intention? While a daily practice of sitting silent prayer can be deeply, powerfully healing and formative, many gateways can lead us to God's presence.

God is always with us – Emmanuel.



*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.*

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If this reaches you before Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup> please consider that...

The fellowship committee invites you to stay after the 10:30 a.m. service on September 29 for a potluck lunch! A great way to get together, enjoy food and conversation and maybe even meet someone new!



**Editors' note:** Jennifer Nelson was responsible for collecting and curating the content in this issue of the *Parishscope*. Kitty Davis was responsible for organization and layout.