

ST. STEPHEN'S SPIRIT

The Newsletter of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wilkinsburg PA

March 2019

This week I had the opportunity to listen to an interview on WESA's "The Confluence" program with Lisa Schroeder, the newly elected president of the Pittsburgh Foundation. She discussed how happy she was to return to Pittsburgh from Baltimore. Not long ago she had been president and CEO of Riverlife for 13 years. During her interview about her return to Pittsburgh as the first woman to lead one of the region's largest foundations, Lisa emphasized the importance of listening as a skill she values in her refined sense of what matters most in leading.

In many places—actual and virtual—people speak with currently trending filler words and political code words that seem to give whoever is speaking a "hyper-relevance" for the audience, seemingly designed to intimidate and quiet anyone who is not familiar with this "spin" on our language. Furthermore, people seem to speak and post messages in a rapid-fire succession, revealing that their only objective is to blurt out their personal opinion; they aren't engaged in a real conversation and they haven't taken even a moment to hear any other experience.

One of the most important differences among people in the Gospel stories, what enables Jesus to be a blessing among them or not, is whether they are listening as if to hear him. Jesus is ridiculed and disregarded, he is disrespected and condemned by those who wanted a different type of Messiah. The people who listen to Jesus are not necessarily convinced right away, but they don't let their initial hesitation lead them to a hasty end to their engagement with him.

Maybe we can find new disciples of Jesus and renew our own commitment to the Christian faith we share by reflecting on what we want most from life. Most of the people with whom I've prayed during times of suffering in their lives have spoken of how much comfort they receive from the people who love them. When I've asked them to talk more about what they experience in that love, one of the first things they name is that they feel respected by these people they say believe love them.

I'm going to ask us to pray for an increase in listening. I believe that if we are engaged in a real conversation where God's grace will abound we will be doing at least as much listening as we are talking. I hope to hear many important things and I hope I am heard. But I know that many people are wounded by having been disrespected and that this might make it difficult for them to have the courage to speak or the trust to listen. Maybe we can heal wounds and open lines of communication in this contemporary world of loud voices clamoring to put their own message ahead of everyone else's. What can we do to be a blessing with our presence to one another? Where do we need to change our approach to be a part of the solution to the pain in our world? Let's ask for holy wisdom so that we can be a blessing.

Father Chuck +

**"Lent is about
becoming,
doing,
changing,
whatever it is
that is blocking
the fullness of life
in us right now."**

~ Sister Joan Chittister

In This Issue

- Mission of the month
- Food of the month
- Upcoming Events

Food of the Month:

CANNED FRUIT

All items donated will be given to the food pantry run by Wilkinsburg Community Ministry. Please give generously,

COFFEE HOUR

There is a new sign up sheet for Coffee Hour on the office door. It covers the weeks through Easter. Please sign up ASAP, this is such an important part of our fellowship time here at St. Stephen's!

Sunday School Schedule

2.24 NO Sunday School
3.03 Family Church
3.10 Sunday School
3.17 Lesson & Communion
3.24 Sunday School
3.31 Bishop's Visitation

SAVE THE DATE!

Seeing the Face of God in Each Other:
The Anti-Racism Training
of the Episcopal Church

April 5-6, 2019
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Oakmont PA

Details to come!



Mission of the Month:



For 16 years, Love146 has been helping grow the movement to end child trafficking while providing effective and thoughtful solutions.

- Survivor Care
- Prevention Education
- Professional Training
- Empowering Movement

In 2012 it was estimated that 20.2 million people were held in modern day slavery and/or being trafficked around the world. **LOVE146** is on the front lines of working to end this epidemic.

For the months of March and April we will be raising money to support **LOVE146**. Please feel free to write a check with LOVE146 in the memo BUT also don't hesitate to get creative! As spring approaches, let the kids have a lemonade stand or commit to buying one less coffee or meal out a week and giving that to this cause.

Let's put our love into
ACTION and make a
difference all over the world!

Rector's Discretionary Fund

Help support the
Rector's Discretionary Fund!

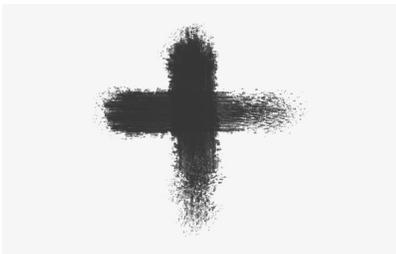
Every **first Sunday** of the month the loose offering is directed to the Rector's Discretionary Fund.

This fund enables us to offer assistance to address community and individual needs. It is a real blessing to others.



Ash Wednesday Service

March 6 @ 7PM



The Family Room

News and happenings of our Church Family

MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



BIRTHDAYS

- 3.01 Steven Akers
- 3.01 Laura Block
- 3.06 Julie Smith
- 3.10 Jack Ruzanic
- 3.12 Malia Nelson
- 3.17 Soon Choi
- 3.19 Gloria Condron
- 3.25 Lucy Ruzanic
- 3.27 Carole Reed
- 3.31 Walter Scott

Bishop McConnell will be visiting St. Stephen's on March 31, 2019!

He will preach at both services and lead a discussion in between them.

As is customary at this annual event, there will be an opportunity for special events that are a part of the Episcopal tradition including the Rite of Reception and the Sacrament of Baptism.

Anyone who is contemplating taking such a step in their spiritual journey is encouraged to speak with Father Chuck as soon as possible.



ART & TALENT SHOW FOR PEACE

Saturday, March 9, 2019

1:00-4:00 pm

LOCATION: COMMUNITY FORGE, 1256 Franklin Ave., Wilkinsburg 15221

Grades 6 - 12

For youth who live, study, work or worship in Wilkinsburg or Homewood

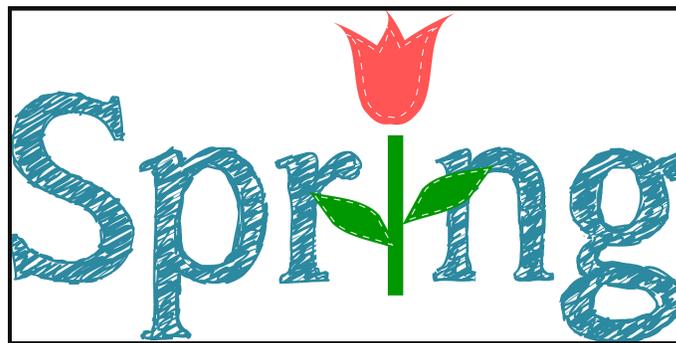
\$50 AWARD FOR EACH ACT OR ART PROJECT

Limited slots. Registration is Required.

Registration: March 2, 2019, 1-4 pm Location: Community Forge

Sponsored by: The Wilkinsburg Sanctuary Project

For information, contact Pastor Nancy Chalfant—Walker nanojon@gmail.com/412-242-3269



**GOOD
NEWS
WITHIN
REACH**

Register Now!

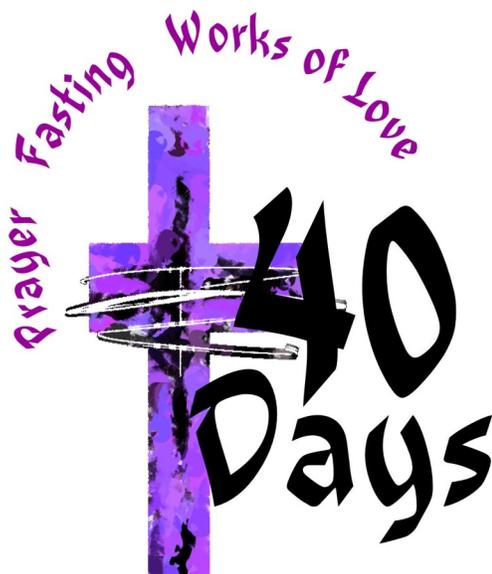
Lenten Learning Day 2019

Mark your calendar for Lenten Learning Day 2019, Saturday, March 23, at St. Brendan's Episcopal Church in Franklin Park. This will be a special day of learning, worshipping, and building relationships with others across our diocese and communities. Plus, hear from our special guest speaker, the Reverend Paul Abernathy, pastor of St. Moses Orthodox Christian Mission in Pittsburgh's Hill District and director of FOCUS Pittsburgh. Register online at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSexg1n2J9Lwohi1qT7stRrNILfvqHVxAy27RF98HLHF7mn8-Q/viewform>

2019 Lent and Easter at St. Stephen's

- ◇ 3.06 – Ash Wednesday Service 7PM
- ◇ Tuesday evenings – Lenten Preaching Series
- ◇ 4.14 – Palm Sunday 8AM & 10:30AM
- ◇ 4.18 – Maundy Thursday Service 7PM
- ◇ 4.19 – Good Friday Service 12NOON
- ◇ 4.21 – Easter Sunday 8AM & 10:30AM

Please join us as we participate in this season of reflection and celebration.



Contact Us

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Sunday Worship 8AM & 10:30AM
Office Hours: Mon - Thurs 9:00-1:00
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Parish Staff

The Rev. Charles Esposito, Priest in Charge
The Rev. Julie Smith, Missionary Assoc.
The Rev. Natalie Hall, Missionary Assoc.
Soon Choi, Director of Music Ministry
Beth Ruzanic, Parish Administrator
Gerry Dalton, Financial Admin
Tim Brucker, Sexton
Gary Glasser, Archivist & Historian

Neighborhood Youth Outreach Program
600 Pitt Street
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Anthony Jackson, Director