



ST. STEPHEN'S SPIRIT

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

JANUARY 2021

Dear St. Stephen's Family,

Let's be eager to welcome 2021 as a community of faith here at St. Stephen's. Many people do not have a regular spiritual practice, or they've let their practice fall by the wayside. I encourage us to let Christ enliven our spiritual practice for 2021.

The specifics of your spiritual practices are important to explore. Sunday worship in church, in person or via our live stream, daily meditation, and Bible study can be enhanced by exploring a yoga class, exercise routine or other growth and wellness initiatives that work for you. Then work on continuing it. It doesn't have to be hard or extensive. You don't need to make a radical change in order to be more open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life, but with an intention to be disciplined spiritually you can benefit greatly, not just with physical relaxation, emotional stability, and mental serenity, but with an invigorated life as a disciple of Christ.

For those of you who have a regular spiritual practice, make it a resolution this year to go deeper, whatever that means for you. I don't mean meditate more necessarily. I mean find places within yourself that you haven't explored or find additional spiritual resources and increase the network of people to support you in this holy endeavor.

It's normal to feel tempted to explore only areas that are comfortable and to avoid challenging ourselves to be more kind and faith-oriented with people closer in the circle where God has placed us. Many of us are comfortable with concepts or other intellectual pursuits, but hesitate to engage with the spiritual path when we need to confront our selfishness or pride, for example. With humility in our intention to seek and find God's mercy and grace we can, as Paul says, do all things in Christ.

We've come quite far in the face of great challenges here at St. Stephen's. We also know that we can't just "quit" because we're bored, frustrated, disappointed, or even if we've been hurt. We know that God is expecting great things from us as a faith community. Let's pray for the wisdom to explore where God is guiding us and to accept our responsibility to make a return to God for our lives and our blessings with a heart filled with gratitude and an intention to bring new ambition for holiness into 2021 so that we can be the blessing to St. Stephen's and to the world God needs us to be. May this new year be filled with new opportunities we take advantage of so that we shine as a family of faith.

Fr. Chuck

A NOTE REGARDING THE ANNUAL MEETING: This year we will not gather for the annual meeting due to Covid 19 restrictions. Instead we will mail the annual report to our parishioners during the last week of January. Let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Mission of the Month:

Bethlehem Haven Women's Shelter

Bethlehem Haven's mission is to provide care for homeless individuals that leads toward self-sufficiency. For thirty-nine years they have provided nearly 13,000 nights of shelter. Each year they provide nearly 60,000 meals, see about 600 people in the health clinic, fill countless emotional and physical needs and provide employment training. If you are interested in donating, you can send a check to the Church with "Bethlehem Haven" in the memo line or donate on their website:
bethlehemhaven.org

Starting January 18 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day), The Episcopal Church launches "From Many, One: Conversations Across Difference," a campaign urging Episcopalians and our neighbors to engage in the spiritual practice of listening and honest conversation across the many differences that separate us, starting with four simple questions:

1. What do you love?
2. What have you lost?
3. Where does it hurt?
4. What do you dream?

Inspired by the Latin phrase on the U.S. seal – E Pluribus ("from many") Unum ("one") – the campaign is designed to offer a faithful perspective and time-tested practice for knitting deeply divided communities into a diverse, more perfect union. In a cultural moment shadowed by pandemic, fractious politics, and deep division within families, communities, and nations, Episcopalians can partner in simple ways to celebrate difference, listen with deep curiosity, and promote healing.



STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Thank you to everyone who has made a commitment to support St. Stephens in 2021. Following is a summary of our Stewardship campaign for the next year.

Did not respond this year	5 people	\$(4,010)
Deceased	2 people	(2,448)
Moved out of town	1 person	(1,820)
Lowered their pledge	2 people	(760)
Pledge is the same	10 people	-0-
Increased their pledge	11 people	+13,948

Change in the amount pledged + \$4,910

The 2021 Envelopes will be found in the back of the sanctuary after December 27th. Due to the expense, I will not be mailing the envelopes. You may mail your checks to the St. Stephen's office and mark to the attention of Gerry Dalton. I will see that they are credited to your account. Should you wish envelopes, please let me know and I will mail you one for each month and the special envelopes. Thank you for your understanding in this very unusual time.

-Gerry Dalton, Financial Administrator

FOOD OF THE
MONTH

TEA BAGS AND
COFFEE



**Please remember to
bring your pledge up to
date if possible**



DECEMBER

Birthdays

Jan. 3 Maria Sprenkel

Jan. 24 Beth Hardie

How do we as Episcopalians live out our faith as Christians? Join our Zoom meeting!

Thursday Discipleship 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Contact Father Chuck or Melanie Sprenkel with questions

*Prayer for the search and discernment process for a new
bishop*

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a bishop for this Diocese and those who offer themselves as candidates, that we may receive a faithful pastor who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

**January 1 - New Year's Day. January 6 - Epiphany. January 18 -
Martin Luther King birthday**

Pittsburgh Snow Angels

Do you need help shoveling snow in the winter or can you help an elderly or disabled person by shoveling their walk this winter? Call Snow Angels at 412-255-0846 or visit pittsburghpa.gov/snowangels



*A special thanks and farewell to Tim
Brucker*

Tim has maintained our building and grounds for almost five years and now he is leaving to live closer to his mother. We are thankful for his consistent service and care for St. Stephen's. We will miss him. Thank you, Tim! We welcome our new custodian, Dave Stefanik, who will live in the apartment and care for St. Stephen's building and grounds.



Contact Us

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Sunday Worship 8AM & 10:30AM
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Parish Staff

Rev. Chuck Esposito Priest in charge
Soon Choi, Dir of Music Ministry
Melanie Sprengel, Parish Ministry
Coordinator
Gerry Dalton, Financial Admin
Tim Brucker, Sexton
Gary Glasser, Archivist & Historian

Thanks to Cathy Wilkie for creating the 2020-21 prayer cycle books. Please join us in praying for the members and committees of St. Stephens. You can pick up a copy of the 2020-2021 book at the main door and chapel door.

