



ST. STEPHEN'S SPIRIT

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

SEPTEMBER 2021

Have you ever listened to someone's story, and it changed your perspective? The obvious story that has changed all of us at St. Stephen's is the story of Jesus of Nazareth. And it's interesting how Jesus' story encourages us to listen to the stories of others. Time and time again in the gospels, Jesus stops and listens to people's stories, and after listening intently, he responds. I was challenged yesterday by the epistle reading from James that said, "Be quick to listen." So often I assume that I already know what someone is going to say, so instead of listening, I barge in with my perspective. But Jesus tells me that for real change to happen at all, I must listen well, as he did. That certainly is a challenge for me, but I know it is truth.

Being the mom of five very different children, I have had to learn the hard way the importance of listening. You don't want to know all the gory details of my failure to listen, but I would like to say that at those rare and precious moments when I did listen, my children changed me, and I am grateful.

The Beloved Community Initiative (BCI) in our diocese encourages us to follow in Jesus' footsteps, to follow the truth of his story by coming together and listening to each other's stories. Jesus listened to those who were different from him: the lepers, the Roman soldiers, the Samaritans, the Syrophoenicians. BCI seeks to help bring us together as we listen to the stories of those different from us, especially those on the margins of society. In the 90 Day Challenge, some of us are reading these stories, praying the stories will change us, praying that we will be quick to listen. If you are interested in joining us, let me know, and I can give you the readings. If you'd like to do it on your own, that's great too. Let me know if you have any questions, melaniesprenkel@gmail.com

Beloved Community seeks to bring people together in Christ's name; it has as its vision, a diverse community united as one body, the Body of Christ. I am our church's liaison with this initiative, so if you have ideas or questions, please feel free to email me or give me a call 412-725-1174. A book that will be recommended for members of the diocese is Isabel Wilkerson's "Caste." If this is something you are interested in reading with a discussion group, let me know! There will be more programming upcoming, and I will let you know through "The Spirit" and email blasts.

At our last BCI meeting, Eric McIntosh and Shahnaz Alam-Denlinger shared that we all have our own biases -none of us knows everything - we need each other and each other's perspectives. To me, that is the power of the Body of Christ. St. Stephen's is the Body in this way, a diverse group that encourages and supports its members. I'm hoping we can be quick to listen to God's voice, to pray how we can continue to stretch and grow as the Body of Christ. The Beloved Community Initiative tells us that we can do this by reaching out to all of God's people, to see what we have to learn from them and they from us. It's the old, old story, of Jesus and his love.

-Melanie Sprengel, Parish Ministry Coordinator and BCI liaison

**Mission of the Month:
Episcopal Relief Fund**

Episcopal Relief and Development works in collaboration with church partners and other local organizations to help communities that struggle with hunger, poverty, disaster and disease. Their three priorities are women, children and the climate. If you'd like to donate, you can write a check to the organization and put it in the offering plate, and we will send it for you, or you can donate online at www.episcopalrelief.org/

**CONSIDER SERVING AS BACKUP FOR
THE FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR**

For several years, the Vestry has discussed the need to train people to understand the financial system of our church. Some of you may remember that it took us almost a year to get our books in order, after Lee Muffit died suddenly. We would like to avoid this in the future. I am therefore looking for people who would be willing to learn the financial procedures. This does not mean you would take over the position, should we find ourselves in the need of a Financial Administrator. However, you would be able to assist the person, selected for the job, to be able to prepare a "Profit/Loss" statement, as well as other reports. It is my thought we will hold training sessions in August or September. These would be scheduled, based on your availability. If you think this would be a way to serve your church, please let me know. Talk with me any Sunday or give me a call or send an email. Gerry Dalton
galton1364@gmail.com

PITTSBURGH RECOVERY WALK

The sixth annual recovery walk will be held in downtown Pittsburgh on September 11. All are welcome. The walk's aim is to dispel negative stigma and recognize recovery as a positive force in our community. The event is free. For more information, check out their website.

Pghrecoverywalk.org

Let's pray Psalm 46 for our country, for those who are suffering because of natural disasters and for the health of our earth.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge

Please pray for those dealing with the raging forest fires and those caught in storm Ida, and for the healing of our earth.



FOOD OF THE MONTH

Peanut Butter and Jelly



BIRTHDAYS

Sept. 3 - Dave Stefanik, Sept. 10 - Trish Schauf,
Sept. 27 - John Sprengel

ANNIVERSARIES

Sept. 2 - Joann and Bill Rau
Cathie and Kevin Sunderman
Sept. 15 - Tim and Elise Morris

A PRAYER FOR HAITI by The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry

Eternal God, send forth your Spirit to encourage and strengthen the people of Haiti in these difficult times. We pray especially for those impacted by the recent earthquake. Encourage and strengthen those who help and support others. In your mercy, receive the souls of those who have died; comfort their families and loved ones. Surround with your presence the sick and suffering. Aid the work of those who still search and rescue. Empower the medical and aid workers and all who labor to heal.

Likewise, inspire and empower the resolve of the nations and peoples of the world to be your instruments of help and healing. Stir up the might of your love and compassion among the nations to rally resources and stay the course until the humanitarian job is accomplished.

Lastly, enfold and uphold the people of Haiti—from the youngest newly born to the oldest among us—in the arms of your love and the strength of your might. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

September 10 - St. Stephen's on the lawn. September 12 - Kick-off Sunday

Bible Study

Let us know if you are interested in joining our bible study this fall. We meet Thursdays from 12-2 p.m. in the library.

ST STEPHEN'S ON THE LAWN PICNIC, FELLOWSHIP, AND JAZZ

Join us Friday, September 10 at 6 p.m. to kick off the fall and celebrate our St. Stephen's Family. We will meet on the lawn behind the church to eat, socialize and listen to the jazzy melodies of Pam and Tony. Hope to see you there!

Wilkinsburg is LOVING the blessing box!

We always need more donations for this beautiful ministry. The supplies listed below have been the most popular. Thank you!

Pancake mix and syrup

Small boxes of cereal

Mac-n-cheese

Coffee and tea

Boxed pasta and pasta sauce

Toiletries and paper products

Dish and hand soap

Cookies and crackers

Dry Soup Mixes

Cans of food or milk with pop tops

Instant oatmeal

Brownie mix

Peanut butter and jam

Contact Us

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Sunday Worship 8AM & 10:30AM

Office Hours: Mon - Thurs 10:00-1:00 (and by appointment.)

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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

Dave Stefanik, Caretaker

Elise Morris, Archivist & Historian

Please join us in praying for the members and committees of St. Stephen's. Green prayer cycle booklets are in the back and front of the sanctuary.