



ST. STEPHEN'S SPIRIT

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

APRIL 2024

Recently on PBS I watched a fascinating, creative non-fiction documentary on the pivotal epic poem *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri. I had read it in college, but I had not known the back story about his personal life and the political violence and division in Florence leading up to the completion of this spiritual and intellectual project Dante saw as a calling from God. I recommend finding this brief, thought-provoking series as a part of your spiritual reading in this Easter season. Dante began writing this magnificent work of literature after having been exiled – with a death sentence of being “burned at the stake if he ever returned” – from the city of Florence where he was born and raised and where all his family, friends and support were. He was declared an outcast by the ruling faction in Florence that was being torn apart with power plays and division, at a time when the city was prosperous and could have been a place where all could enjoy peace if not for the sin of human greed.

Dante creates a story of a spiritual journey into the afterlife from the “Inferno” to “Paradiso.” What is taught to him is that we have all eternity to live with how we have responded to God’s call for us to love and care for one another. Dante writes it, not in Latin, as the language in which all written texts at the time were expected to be published, but rather in the common Italian of his day; Dante composes the first work of literature that women and those not admitted to formal studies in Latin could read. Dante’s beautiful, faith-inspired prophetic story is still relevant for all Christians seeking peace.

-Father Chuck Esposito+

Morning Prayer happens the first Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m. See you on April 3.

PRAYER FOR APRIL

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

April 9-Judy Wooten,

April 25-Aliya Sunderman,

April 29-Gerry Dalton and Charlie Sprenkel,

April 30-Darlene Malone

Mission of the Month

BROTHER'S BROTHER

For nearly 65 years, Brother's Brother Foundation has stepped in to help people around the world ravaged by war, disease or environmental catastrophes. Focusing on creating sustainability, the North Side-based branch of this global organization offers those in need essential resources and education so they can eventually thrive independently.

Dr. Robert Hingson, a pioneer in public health who held various positions at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and local hospitals, founded the nonprofit in 1958 by providing vaccinations and inoculations to underserved communities worldwide. According to Ozzy Samad, foundation president, BBF continues Hingson's mission through relief shipments and programmatic work.

"Brother's Brother works in four areas: **health care, infrastructure, disaster response and education,**" Samad says. "That spells out H.I.D.E. — so my running joke is that you can run from BBF, but you can't hide."

"Our mission statement talks about bridging the gap," Samad says. "The idea is for us, when we send medical equipment and supplies, is to send what is needed now, but our ultimate goal is for them to become self-sufficient so they can purchase whatever it is that they need" (*Pittsburgh Magazine*, October 18, 2022, Sarah Demchak).

How to donate:

Brother's Brother Foundation, 1200 Galveston Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15233

OR brothersbrother.org

"I have given of my life to receive it back again more abundantly."

-Dr. Robert Hingson

Upcoming Building Drive

The vestry has agreed to a building drive so watch for an announcement and pray about how you might help pay for the needed repairs to our beloved St. Stephen's which serves as a safe and nurturing place not only for our church family, but for two other church communities, youth and adult programs for the Wilkinsburg community, NA and AA groups and many other groups in Pittsburgh. St. Stephen's is getting a reputation as a welcoming place, not just for a few, but for all. By maintaining our church's physical plant we are fulfilling Jesus' command to love others.



WATCH FATHER CHUCK'S PAST SERMONS

Access our website, "Ststephenswilkinsburg.org;" click "Worship," and then click on "Livestreaming our worship service."

FOOD OF THE MONTH

TUNA AND OTHER CANNED MEATS



HEINZ CHAPEL CHOIR PERFORMANCE AT ST. STEPHEN'S

APRIL 14 at 7:30 p.m.

The Heinz Chapel Choir is singing their 85th anniversary program "Sing and Make Music" for the first time at St. Stephen's.

The concert is free and open to the public. Bring your friends and family to hear the gorgeous sounds of this University of Pittsburgh internationally recognized choir.

Dr. Susan Rice, the choir director, has asked guests to bring a donation for our blessing box.

See the link below.

<https://www.heinzchapelchoir.com/events>

SO MUCH TO CELEBRATE!

Soon's 29th birthday

Thanks for the music and love!



Lenten Series Dinner

Thanks to Gerry Dalton and his crew!



SACRED GROUND is a film based dialogue about faith and race consisting of eight week sessions that meet once a week. There are sessions at Calvary and other churches that are held at different times and during different months. If you'd like to attend one, please contact the office or find it on the diocesan website.

Episcopalpgh.org

"We are here in a world struggling to find its soul, but the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not, cannot, and will not overcome it. Jesus lives. He has been raised from the dead. That is the message of Easter, and that is the good news of great tidings."

-Bishop Michael Curry

Sunday Worship 8AM & 10:30AM

Contact Us

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Parish Staff

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Soon Choi, Dir. of Music Ministry
Melanie Sprenkel, Parish Ministry Coordinator
Gerry Dalton, Financial Admin.
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Tim Brucker, Caretaker

