

St. Stephen's Herald

✦ *St. Stephen's Episcopal Church serves Christ as an inclusive, progressive community where peace, social justice and faith converge in our worship and urban ministries.* ✦

September 2017

Sunday Worship 10 AM – Communion with Music

Labor Day Holiday

The church office will be closed on Monday, Sept. 4th in observance of the Holiday.

There will be no Mindful Meditation on Labor Day Tuesday, Sept. 5th.

Fall Beginnings

Sunday School will begin on Sunday Sept 17th. Registration is required each year. Please pick up a form on the Resource Table.

Choir Rehearsals resume on Wed Sept 13th at 7:30 pm. The first anthem will be on Sunday Sept 17th.

Partners in Faith Farm Stand Thursdays 4 pm to 7 pm

All summer long, Foodlink's *Urban Farm Stand* project holds a mini farm market at St. Stephen's every Thursday, 4-7 pm, July - Sept.



Everyone is welcome to come, visit with neighbors and shop for fresh, local fruit and veggies. This program is made possible through a partnership with Foodlink and SWEM Community Services, Inc. Local produce (some from our own community garden beds) will be available at the lowest possible prices.

Grow your Money too! Use your SNAP benefits card, and for every \$5 spent, you'll get a coupon for \$2 more in farm stand products! Spend it that day or save it for another week!

Volunteers ARE needed, so see Georgia Carney! Plan to come at 3:30 pm for set-up.

Who's Up... in September

The Ministry Schedule is on the website, or refer to the copy that was in the mail.

St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene Invites Us to their 200th Anniversary!

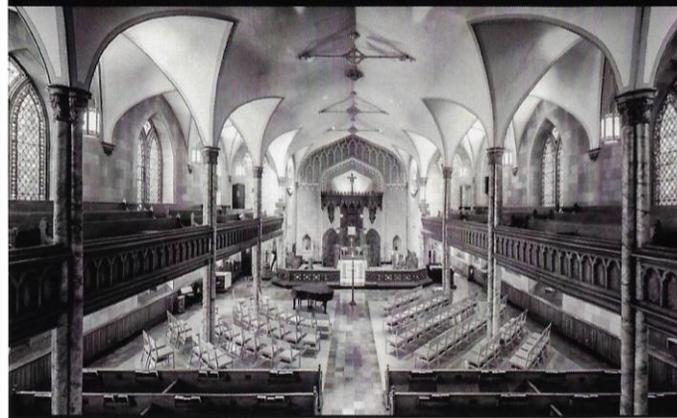
The Wardens and Vestry of
The Episcopal Church of St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene
Invite You to Celebrate

The Two Hundredth Anniversary
of the Organization of the Parish
(1817-2017)
and

Welcome Back to Church Sunday
Festal Eucharist

Sunday, September 10, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.
17 South Fitzhugh Street, Rochester, New York
Reception to Follow

Please RSVP to office@twosaints.org or (585) 510-7130
Parking available in lot behind church



Sunday Supper

Looking ahead to the Holidays, we will be giving out personal care items for SSSS Christmas gifts this year. We are looking for donations of full size items: soap, body wash, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo and facial tissue.

We continue to need juice boxes for the kids bags (they haven't been available through Foodlink lately).

And always -- Recycle your plastic shopping bags with us!

Remaining schedule for 2017 SSSS:

September	17th and 24th
October	15th, 22nd and 29th
November	19th and 26th
December	17th (Christmas Party) and 24th**

** NOTE: Christmas Eve meal will be from 12-1PM

There will NOT be a meal on Dec. 31st

REGULARLY SCHEDULED PARISH ACTIVITIES

Holy Eucharist: Sundays @ SS	10:00 AM
Mindful Meditation: Tuesdays @ SS	7:00 PM
Weekday Eucharist: Tues. & Thurs. @ TS	12:05 PM
The Sewing Work Shop: Saturdays @ SS	10 AM-2 PM
St. Stephen's Sunday Supper @ SS	1:00-2 PM
3 rd , 4 th , & 5 th Sunday	

Prayers for Our Parish Neighborhood and Community

Please keep these people in your daily prayers:

Jim Fallesen, Shelia Morse, Jim Ahearn and family, Jason Mills, Joan Gardner, Lynne & Brian McNulty, Kathy Robinson, Doris Schrader, Dennis Price, Maelee Bowman, The Sullivan family, Tom Bohrer, Kathy Clarke, Karen Witkowicz, Debbie Bonomo, Rachael Bisson, Karen Prave, Elizabeth Robinson, Michelle Flowers; Amber Worthington, Beverly Kluge, Virginia Rockwell, Joe and Jessie & family, Mary Cleary, Jesse Alston, and Kristen Kinsella Virginia Rockwell, Joe and Jessie & family, Mary Cleary, Jesse Alston, and Kristen Kinsella.

Those serving in our armed forces: Joseph Scheidt, Jason Brown, & Jeff Fallesen.

Those Celebrating Birthdays Heather Ahern (9/1), Katherine Glendenning (9/10), Josie Sullivan (9/13), Queenie Newman (9/16), Linda Dronsfield & Mathias Nickoloff (9/21), Te'vanni Davidson (9/24), Patience Ibezim (9/26), Debbie Burrows 9/27, Sarah Zettek (9/30),

and those celebrating Anniversaries, Chuck Dye Jr. & Bonnie Hallman-Dye (9/25).

Readings for Sunday, September 3

Pentecost 13 / Proper 17

1: Jeremiah 15:15-21 Psalm 26:1-8

2: Romans 12:9-21 G: Matthew 16:21-28

Readings for Sunday, September 10

Pentecost 14 / Proper 18

1: Ezekiel 33:7-11 Psalm 119:33-40
2: Romans 13:8-14 G: Matthew 18:15-20

Readings for Sunday, September 17

Pentecost 15 / Proper 19

1: Genesis 50:15-21 Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13
2: Romans 14:1-12 G: Matthew 18:21-35

Readings for Sunday, September 24

Pentecost 16 / Proper 20

1: Jonah 3:10-4:11 Psalm 145:1-8
2: Philippians 1:21-30 G: Matthew 20:1-16

What's Your Job Description?

Priest-centered congregations break my heart. Not only because it means more work for the priest - which is sometimes me! More so, because if the priest is seen as the sole minister within a community, it too often means that a good majority of the rest of the parish is missing out on the deep joy of our shared ordination as a "priesthood of all believers."

500 years ago, Martin Luther initiated the Reformation in Germany - soon to be followed by Hank the 8th in England. When asked what led him to do so, people usually point to his emphasis on "finding a gracious God," or, "justification by faith and not by works," or "he was just a rebel." All good things, and all central to the Good News of freedom that the Church is called to proclaim.

But, I think the church has, maybe predictably, also avoided the other aspect of Luther's revolution, which was not merely about freedom, but also, about shared responsibility. Luther and the other Reformers were champions of the biblical notion of the priesthood of all believers - the idea that while certain individuals are necessarily ordained for particular sacramental roles in particular instances, the joys and struggles of discipleship were meant

for all baptized Christians - not just a handful of celibate men.

For example, one reason the Book of Common Prayer includes an order of Morning and Evening Prayer is to bring the monastic practice of praying the hours into the daily lives of every Christian household. While Henry VIII decided the Reformation was an invitation to share the monastery's immense wealth - mostly with his own royal household! - the Reformation sought to liberate the treasures of spiritual practice for all believers.

And yet, for the last few centuries priests and people have collaborated in keeping these gifts from being shared. Whether it's a controlling cleric, or a congregation happy to cede its power to said cleric, we've lost touch again and again with the joy of being priests. All of us.

Two weeks ago, I was helping at St Stephen's Thursday night farm stand. There were half a dozen of us there, and we were enjoying the pleasant evening, spots of conversation with passers-by, and being together. A neighbor approached us, full of excitement, to share with us that, after a long road of struggle and recovery, she had been hired at a local hospital. She was ecstatic at the hope of turning her life around, and helping others to do the same. Almost to the point of tears. One volunteer commented, "wow, this has been over a year in the making."

She then came to me, the (sacramental) priest who happened to be present, and asked for a blessing. She wondered how she might keep her journey going. She wanted a prayer of gratitude and celebration. I gladly obliged. It was an incredible gift to share this moment together as a little community who had collaborated in shepherding this woman out of harm and into health.

And yet. I wonder why I did not invite another present to offer the blessing. To say a prayer. To embrace her with hope. I easily stepped into my

ordained role, and the lay volunteers readily surrendered it. Thankfully, it was all celebration and all joy. And we should by no means tarnish such a beautiful moment. One of the chief functions of a priest is to walk with people in their valleys and celebrate with them on their mountains. Titles and circumstances aside, they'd already been priests all along.

When you write your job description as a Christian, as part of St Stephens, as an individual, do you include the title "priest?" Try it another way: do you regularly pray and study the scripture? Do you regularly practice as the Apostles and ancestors of faith have taught us? Do you stand up for justice and for the dignity of others? Do you proclaim the Good News in all that you do? Do you persevere in resisting evil?

These are, of course, our Baptismal vows. But perhaps it's even more concrete: do you sit with a suffering friend or stranger, listen to their stories, offer a comforting arm, a cup of coffee? When someone comes in bursting with energy and excitement because they have something to celebrate, do you join the dance with them, lift them up, and celebrate with them? Do you share stories with others, about your successes and failures, and receive them too? Do you stand up for what is right, and try your best to stand against what is wrong?

If so, you are already living into your vocation as a priest. I would that all of St Stephens would continue to grow in our awareness that while there is one sacramental priest, we are all invited, blessed, and called to share in the beautiful, heart-breaking, heart-filling work of being a member of the order of the priesthood of all believers.

- Matthew