

# St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Schenectady, N.Y.



The Annual Report for 2014  
Short Form - Financial Details Omitted  
Presented at the Annual Meeting on January 25, 2015

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## Staff

The Rev. Dr. James R. McDonald, Rector,

The Rev. Patricia L. Jones, Deacon,

Miranda Rand, Christian Education Director,

Robert Acosta, Director of Music,

Lisa Zebrowski, Nursery Manager

## The Vestry

Sr. Warden, Carole Merrill-Mazurek

Jr. Warden, Erin Cohen

Clerk, Susan Feyrer

Treasurer, Denise Crates

### **Class of 2014:**

Joe Palko

Stan Jakubowski

### **Class of 2015:**

Jack Feyrer

Bill Frank

Jim Syta

### **Class of 2016:**

Brian Riordon

Travis Reedy

Richey Woodzell

# **Agenda**

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Verification of Quorum

Appointment of Clerk of the Meeting

Minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting

Reports Received by Title or Voice

Acknowledgements

Parish Statistics

Report of the Nominating Committee

Candidates for Vestry & for Delegates to Diocesan Convention

Balloting (if necessary)

Examination of Financial Statements for the year ending 2014

Examination of Budget for 2015

Commissioning of Wardens and Vestry Members

# Minutes: 2014 Annual Meeting

January 26, 2014

The meeting was called to order with prayer at 11:51 AM.

Father James verified a forum.

Susan Feyrer was appointed clerk of the meeting.

Minutes from 2013 meeting reviewed. Motion made by George Woodzell, seconded by Liz Varno to receive minutes as corrected. Motion carried.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to Chris Jones for putting the Annual Report together.

## Reports

Christian Education: Miranda Rand is excited about expanding to two classes this year. She thanked all those involved.

Adult Education: Father James referred us to the report

First Friends: Please see report.

Choir: Bob Acosta stated that there is a standing invitation to all parishioners to become members of the choir.

Youth Group: George Woodzell reminded people to order their Super Bowl subs and urged those with dietary concerns to consider the newly offered virtual sub.

ECW: Carole encouraged all women of the church to attend the monthly meetings. This year the focus is on feeding the hungry.

Altar Guild: Please see report.

Pastoral Care Teams: Richey Woodzell asked any parishioner who is visiting a member, to please let Richey know and he/she could take flowers to the person visited. There are currently 6 members on the team and she thanked them for their dedication.

Community Outreach: Priscilla Sprague announced that the CROP Walk is the first Sunday in May. She also shared how pleased she is with the tremendous amount of outreach that occurs in our parish.

Daughters of the King: Richey Woodzell invited women to join them at their monthly meetings.

Worship Committee: Deacon Pat referred us to her report. Father James thanked the members of this important committee.

Bells: Lisa McDonald thanked the bell ringers and the congregation for their support.

Foyer Groups: Gillian Woodcock invited parishioners to join the Foyer groups.

Warden's Report: Scott Kilbourn referred members to his report.

Building and Grounds: Stan Jakubowski asked our members to let people in the community know that our building is available to outside groups. There are fees charged for outside groups. Parishioners and other church groups, for example SICM, are not charged.

Deacon's Report: Deacon Pat referred members to her report.

Fellowship: Richey Woodzell thanked all those who have run/organized Fellowship activities this past year.

Over-the Hill-Gang: See report. We thanked this group for all they do to keep the church's facilities running smoothly.

SICM: Eunice Chouffi asked for a volunteer to act as a back-up person to Marti Spang and herself. This person would attend the monthly SICM meetings on the first Wednesday of the month. She encouraged all parishioners to look at the information about SICM on the table in the sacristy.

### **Rector's report**

- Father James referred us to the Parish Statistics. Our average Sunday attendance was down, but our fall attendance was up.
- Father James is pleased with our growth over the past year.
- Carol Merrill-Mazurek led a congregational congratulation to Father James for his up-coming 25th anniversary at St. Stephen's (September).
- Father James commended the congregation for the successful Every Member Canvass this year; we did Step-up in Faith.

### **Finance**

Budget:

Father James referred us to the 2013 End-of-Year Financial Report and the Proposed Budget for 2014.

Sid Woodcock is still concerned about our dependence on the Smith Green Fund. He also pointed out that we gave no money to the Diocese for 2013; this is worrisome.

Susan Feyrer suggested consolidation on the Diocesan level. Father James explained why this is difficult to accomplish.

Please see report for additional details.

Capital Fund Drive: Please see report.

### **Acknowledgements**

- Father James offered a special thank you to Deacon Pat. He also thanked Denise Crates for her job as treasurer, Bob Acosta as Director of Music and his ministry, Lisa McDonald for starting and directing the bell choir, Lisa Zebrowski, our nursery school attendant, and Miranda Rand our Christian Education Director.
- Cathy Knauf will be missed as administrative assistant. The Vestry is planning a special coffee hour in her honor. We currently have three volunteers who will be in the office from 9-12: Carole Merrill- Mazurek on Mondays, Jan Lovett on Wednesdays; and Mary Anne Harrington on Fridays. The personnel committee is looking into filling the position.

### **New Business**

Joe Palko would like to see our Rummage Sale grow to the scale of ones previously held at Union Presbyterian Church and asked for a chairperson. No one volunteered at this time.

Father James asked for volunteers to serve as our Diocesan Convention delegates. Peter Nelson volunteered.

Father James encouraged people to pray about it. It is the second weekend in June.

### **Nominating Committee**

- The following people were nominated:  
Junior Warden: Erin Cohen  
3 year Vestry term (Class of 2016): Richey Woodzell, Travis Reedy; Brian Riordon.
- Slate accepted as presented.

Father James commissioned the new Vestry members

George Woodzell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Budd Mazurek. Motion carried.  
Meeting adjourned at 12:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Feyrer  
Clerk

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## **Youth**

As we do every year, the Youth Group began 2014 by making and selling Super Bowl Subs to raise money for our yearly trip to workcamp. Each year we refine this process, adding sandwich options (roast beef on a sub?), becoming more efficient, and yet maintaining our famous high standards.

In July we went to North Carolina, to work with youth groups from churches throughout the country to fix up homes for people who are unable to do the work themselves. We began this year's trip in a very nice way: on our way to North Carolina, we spent one night at Emmanuel Episcopal church, in Staunton, Virginia, where the parish hosted and fed us, and where we had the opportunity to meet and chat with their wonderful new rector, The Reverend Shelby Ochs Owen (a delightful woman who made an immediate hit with the women in our group.)



Workcamp was, as it always is, a week of hard work, meeting and making new friends, and interacting with our "neighbors" (the folks whose homes we work on) in ways that affect us as much as them. We end each day with



what has become a favorite part of workcamp: a discussion period within our group, when we reflect on our experiences that day, share thoughts and concerns that are often deeply personal, and draw closer to each other.

The trip home from workcamp is an emotional time, but we've found ways to ease the withdrawal symptoms: stopping for the night at a church in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, eating a big dinner together, seeing a movie (which isn't always a winner), and enjoying the yummys that the Chambersburg folks lay out for us.

Each year the people of St. Stephen's are generous and supportive of our workcamp trips; thank you very much for your donations, your purchases of submarine sandwiches and workcamp shares, and your interest in our activities.

We end the summer with another long-standing project: providing child care at Congregation Gates of Heaven, as they celebrate the Jewish High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Imagine: we've done this for so many years that the little children we once comforted and played with now come back as teenagers, to say hello and help with the next flock of little ones.

## Liturgical Ministries

### Lectors/Chalice Bearers

Since November 2014 I have been introduced to the scheduling of these volunteers, an excellent group. New voices and hands and spirits can always be added so please consider talking to Fr. James about being a chalice bearer at either service (especially 8:00 o'clock) and Doreen May about lectoring at either service. There is a pronunciation guide at the lectern and Chris Jones publishes the weekly readings during the week prior to Sunday for practice.

Looking forward to hearing from you. Doreen May

### Bell Choir

The handbell choir has been in "full swing"! The 12 dedicated members have filled the sanctuary with melodious ringing. The bells have been part of the weekly 10:15 service, playing the Irish Blessing for a



musical dismissal, ushering in the new week. The ringers have also participated during church services at different points throughout the church year, and were honored to play at a memorial service. Whether they ring just one



bell or five bells, the bell ringers have learned to play complicated rhythms in many keys and meters, and have become skilled at a variety of ringing techniques. While setting up and taking down, practicing, repairing, polishing, and performing, the handbell choir has shown all that can be accomplished through teamwork, working in harmony. St. Stephen's is blessed to have this amazing group share the gift of music.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa McDonald



## The Choir

The vocal choir sings regularly on Sunday morning and rehearses on Thursday evenings from September to June. The Advent Services on Sunday began with an Advent Litany sung and read by the choir in procession. This year the choir also welcomed Abby Cohen as the youngest member.

In addition to the regular schedule, there were several events which saw participation of both choir members and those not in the choir in presentations of note. This September, for Fr. James' anniversary, there was

special music presented, including a duet by Rick and Carolyn Morin as well as a solo by Roseann Caruso. For Christmas Eve, Judy Versocki from the Bell Choir and Richey Woodzell playing the flute combined to accompany the choir in a pre-service choral selection for the 11PM service. Also, Abby Cohen sang Silent Night as a solo at the 4PM Christmas Eve service.

The enthusiasm of those involved in these special events was felt by all and the goal is to continue these opportunities in the coming year.

Bob Acosta

## The Altar Guild

The Altar Guild has eight active members and one retired member. We need more members to be a successful active group for our Church. Some of our responsibilities are to take proper care of the brass, linen, and silver. This means to keep all of these cleaned and polished. To do this takes much time, and work, having the love of your church and members making a strong commitment. Lisa McDonald has been wonderful in spending her time taking care of the linens. We spend much time preparing for services: baptisms, weddings, funerals, and the preparation of the Holy Eucharist. These include ordering of flowers for All Saints Day, Christmas, and Easter.



The Altar Guild meets four times a year for polishing and decorating the church for Easter and Christmas. All interested people are invited to be a member of the Altar Guild. Please Contact any member, June Russell at 372-6992 or Father James.

Everyone is invited to participate through our special envelopes: Christmas Greens, Easter Flowers, and All Saints Day Flowers. Parishioners may also choose a particular Sunday to give flowers, either as a memorial or a thanksgiving. Other memorial gifts could be white linen, or white vestments; such as a new white stole, etc. Please see June Russell at 372-6992.

The Altar Guild wishes to thank all those who helped decorate the church for Christmas. We appreciate all the many contributions and gifts of thanksgiving made to the church.

Members: Mary Alexander, Pauline Northrop (ret.), Charline Hoffmann June Russell, Katharine Lowe, Jean Versocki, Lisa McDonald – (Linen), Gillian Woodcock, Carolyn Morin

Respectfully submitted, June Russell, Directress

## **Worship Committee**

Worship continues to be the central focus of our life as a community. From daily Morning Prayer to the moving liturgies of Holy Week and Easter, we come to give praise and draw strength, to remember and celebrate prophets and kings and a Babe born in a manger.

This year, for the first time, we held one service on summer Sundays instead of the usual 8:00 and 10:15 services, It seemed to be well-received, and it may well become our regular summer schedule.

Have you ever thought about all the people who give of themselves to contribute to our worship? Did you ever consider offering to share in their labors of love? You would certainly be most welcome, and you would have a new circle of friends as well! Here are some suggestions:

- bread bakers--only a few times per year
- altar guild--once a month
- acolytes--adults as well as children
- ushers--a visitor's first impression
- choir--all voices welcome
- lectors and chalicers
- bell choir
- coffee hour--our 8th sacrament!

Our thanks go to every person on this list, and of course to Father James and Bob Acosta, who give so generously of their time and talent.

Deacon Pat, for the Worship Committee

# Christian Education

## Youth Classes

At the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year we successfully created an older elementary class and called it Sunday Friends. We did a little marketing via a MeetUp web page, and we found a downloadable curriculum that uses Bible stories and well-known art work to develop discussion topics and creative crafts. Towards the end of May Priscilla Sprague joined me as co-leader, she continues to help facilitate the Sunday Friends class and together, we make a terrific team! I plan the lessons and develop the theme, and she works to create spontaneous discussion with our students.

I am grateful to Allison de Kanel who led a three week series on world hunger during Lent in keeping with the ECW theme, working from a curriculum developed by the not-for-profit hunger awareness group, Bread for the World; and to Carol Merrill-Mazurek who gifted me a day off on my birthday, leading the first of three sessions on sacred circles. As part of this, on the last of the three



Sundays, the students learned how to meditatively walk the labyrinth with trained facilitator, Ms. Pam Walsh.

Our younger children (Pre-K through Grade 3) continue to work with the Godly Play curriculum developed by an Episcopal priest and children's hospital chaplain, based on core bible stories told in the oral tradition with simple props.

Each week, in addition to the story, we enjoy a game or a craft project. We start our sessions by lighting the Christ candle, and singing/signing the words to the first verse of the hymn: "Be Still and Know that I am God," and end with a prayer circle. There is such fierce competition to blow out the candle that I have had create a rotation to ensure everyone gets a turn.

One Sunday in May Ms. Walsh returned to work with our younger children us, leading the children out from the classroom through the library and around the labyrinth in a joyful procession, the students linked together by lengths of ribbon attached to large plastic curtain rings. I sat in the center to tell the story of the Good Shepherd as the originator and facilitator of the Eucharist. The children brought wooden sheep to the story basket, and received little bottles of bubbles in return.

Our 2014 Christmas pageants were ably researched and facilitated by Allison de Kanel. The Sunday Friends students enjoyed helping to tweak the script and were enthusiastic actors. The Godly Play students love to get dressed up—there was a lot of competition for the angel wings and halos!

As I look back on the 2014 calendar year, I am grateful for all the joy and enthusiasm that the students bring to the

program, and for parents and members of the congregation who step in to assist when needed, often without needing to be asked.

Respectfully submitted,  
Miranda Rand, Christian Education Director

## Adult Education

### Sunday Morning Adult Education

We try to balance the Sunday morning meetings between classes in bible, church history, theology, and ethics (including current events). We began the year exploring the complex region between faith and reason, viewing the thoughtful conversations of some of the world's noted writers and thinkers. The insights that emerge, about the creative process, the importance of myths and stories, and the human condition afforded lively conversations among those who attended. We moved from there to an inter-faith conversation about Genesis. And then an historic look at the Eastern Orthodox Church.

In the winter, we explored two diametrically opposed views of human existence through the lives of Sigmund Freud and C.S. Lewis. Participants agreed that insights into each man's thoughts informed and clarified their own faith.

In the spring, we watched Huston Smith offering a uniquely personal perspective on his own spiritual journey. We ended the school year by exploring the story behind the King James Bible, taking an historical survey of the years preceding 1611 and the political and religious landscape which confronted England at the time of this translation.

In the fall we examined the ideas about Jesus that have been long held by theologians who have attempted to reclaim an ancient and authentic understanding of what it means to be a "Jesus follower." These classes discussed themes critical to the task of reclaiming Jesus for the 21st Century.



### Tuesday Morning Theology Seminar: Philosophy and Religion in the West

This year-long seminar turns to theologians and philosophers for questions such as "What is the ultimate reality?" "What can we know about it—or what should we believe about it?" "How do our questions and thoughts, our hopes and fears, relate us to it?" "Is this ultimate reality a person whom we meet, or an object that we contemplate?" While always informative, many conversations of the seminar participants are provocative but always exciting as we explore the long and rich interplay between faith and reason.

### Lenten Study: Bach's St. Matthew Passion

These classes examined and listened to Bach's St. Matthew Passion - a presentation of the biblical passion story. This study examined both the musical structure through video talks by a noted musicologist and the theological structure through talks by the rector. Discussions were lively, even into the dinner period.

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study: Discovering The Bible

These courses are an introduction to the Bible in three parts (each part is four weeks long and is offered three times a year): bible overview, Hebrew scriptures and new testament. Each class gives a basic framework to acquaint the participants with the bible and is followed by an exploration of the scholarly issues surrounding each part. The videos take account of new research in the field of biblical studies. These classes are presented as a survey, not a theology. Students have found the classes to be a useful introductory-level course for those who are just starting out in bible study.

## The Library

The library is being used in many of the ways that all libraries are used, that is for browsing, for a quiet place of reading and reflection, and for using the computer to find information or just for fun. DVDs and additional readings for the Tuesday morning Philosophy and Religion in the West seminar have been placed by Fr. James in a notebook next to the computer. The room is inviting and filled with light, and St. Stephen's people are going there.



New books for the collection are displayed on the table next to the windows or on the children's reading table. A notebook containing a list of the new books is there also. Recent additions include titles such as:

**After Jesus: The Triumph of Christianity**- which chronicles how the Christian movement survived and grew during the years 30 to 600AD;

**The Best Spiritual Writing - 2013** - part of series of short readings by well-known authors;

**Illuminated Manuscripts** - vivid illustrations taken from collections that range from the Early Middle Ages up to the sixteenth century;

**A Brush With God** and **Another Brush With God** - two beautiful guides to painting Icons and using them in prayer, written by an iconographer and priest who serves in the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; and

**Zealot: The life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth** - currently being read by the members of St. Stephen's book club.

Although the signage in the library says it all, the librarian, will be happy to demonstrate how to find a book and borrow it, and how to browse the on-line catalog for new books. As always, if you find a book that you particularly enjoy, let me know, and I will call it to the attention of others. Jo Adams, Librarian

# Service

## The Book

“The Book” is a long-standing pastoral care tool at St. Stephen’s. Basically, it contains a list of parishioners who have volunteered to help other members of our church who are temporarily in need of meals and/or transportation. If you are in need of this kind of assistance, call the office. The Keeper of The Book for the week will schedule people to help.

During 2014, The Book was used very little, and only sporadically. This doesn’t mean that we aren’t serving our members, but that frequently parishioners provide meals or transportation without going through The Book. However, remember that using The Book pools the resources of many parishioners, so that the same persons aren’t called on all the time.

Please do not hesitate to ask for help. Examples of a time of need are following an operation, recovering from an illness, when a family is blessed with a new member, or when there is a serious family situation. Many of us have had times when knowing that dinner would be provided meant that time and energy could be used for more important tasks. For those who live alone, a ride to the doctor’s or to church could be a great help.

In addition, if you would like to offer your help, either in providing an occasional meal or an occasional ride, please call Richey Woodzell. In this way you will be helping to minister to those of our parish community in need.

Respectfully submitted,  
E. Richey Woodzell

## Pastoral Care Teams

The pastoral care two-person teams serve on a rotating basis to visit the sick, the homebound, and those in nursing homes and hospitals. Most of the time, the team for the week takes the altar flowers to the people they visit. The flowers serve to remind them that they are part of our community and that St. Stephen’s keeps them in prayer. Some visitors are also lay Eucharistic ministers who take communion to those who cannot be in church.

If you or someone you know would like a visit or communion, please call the office or speak with Fr. James or Deacon Pat.

Our current visitors are Marilyn Causey, Allison de Kanel, Kabby Lowe, Peter Nelson, Linda Perregaux, and George & Richey Woodzell. If you would like to be part of a team, please contact Fr. James or Deacon Pat. If you would like to take flowers anytime, tell Richey Woodzell, scheduler.

Thank you to Kathy Hoffmann, who enhances recycled 46-oz juice cans as our flower “vases.” You may leave empty cans on the tables in the nave extension.

## Episcopal Church Women - ECW

The ECW at St Stephen’s had a busy year with special emphasis on reaching out to the needy in our community by raising money and collecting donated goods for the SICM food pantry. There was a special event during Lent that raised a substantial amount of money for SICM, in addition the ECW assisted at the Tag sale that also raised a large amount of money to be donated to SICM. The Christmas giving project was an outreach to senior citizens

who visited the SICM food pantry, parishioners purchased particular items that were not part of the pantry inventory, but were items that enhanced nutrition and assisted with hygiene, well over two hundred pounds of these items were dropped off at the pantry in early January. The ECW is a sisterhood of women at St. Stephen's who work diligently to impact the the lives of the disenfranchised and needy in our community. Part of the outreach this year will be assisting with a workshop for women who are survivors of domestic violence, the program will take place at St. Stephen's under the umbrella of "Healing a Woman's Soul" a program that is supported by the Episcopal Diocese and led by an Episcopal priest, Mother Anne Curtin. We encourage all women to consider joining this amazing group. Please call Carole Merrill-Mazurek or Tracy Ormsbee for further information.

## Comunity Service / Outreach

St. Stephen's Outreach during 2014:

The Pad Project: Mooncatchers Sewing Bee – February  
Sale of empty lunch bags @ \$10 as fundraiser for SICM pantry – Lent

Letter-writing to legislators on hunger issues

CROP Walk for the Hungry – May

"Fill the Crib" with infant formula for SICM pantry – May

Summer Lunch Program – July

AIDS Walk

Tag Sale for SICM - October

Undies Sunday for women in the jail

Christmas cards for jail – December

Christmas outreach to elderly at SICM and to members of U.S. Navy in Afghanistan

Hosting Red Cross blood drives

Ongoing collections in church and nave extension:

Food basket for SICM Emergency Food Pantry, including paper goods, toiletries

Feminine hygiene items for SICM Pantry

Basic household furnishings for Home Furnishings Program

Toiletries for SAFE House

Compiled by Richey Woodzell

## SICM News

What a wonderful year for SICM! The Emergency Food Pantry – Summer Lunch – Harvest for the Pantry Dinner – Giving Tree for the older women who come to the pantry. Your wonderful generosity of time and donations is a marvelous gift to those in need. There is a new bulletin board in the hall where you will find notices of interest that are posted after each Assembly. If there is any interest in or curiosity about what happens at the Assemblies we'll post a notice of the date, time, location and guest speaker in advance. If you have any questions please ask one of us, we're happy to answer or find an answer for you. Amy, Eunice and Marti



# Prayer Ministries

## St. Stephen's Prayer Chain

St. Stephen's Prayer Chain consists of members of the parish who pray daily for anyone who is in need of prayer. When a prayer request is received, it is immediately passed along to the members on the chain via a phone call or E-mail. A copy of the prayer list is updated and sent via E-mail or hard copy to each member of the prayer chain every few weeks. We have 13 parishioners who are members of the prayer chain at this time. Prayers are said for those who are ill, in need of God's help, as a thanksgiving, or for any other reason prayers are needed. The prayer chain can be found on St. Stephen's web site. New prayer chain members are always welcome. All that is required is that you are willing to pray for those who need prayers.

Please contact the following if you have a prayer request or wish to be added to the Prayer Chain membership list.

Louise Peake – 374-0480 or [louispeake@gmail.com](mailto:louispeake@gmail.com)

or

Suzanne Taylor – 393-9035 or [Popage@aol.com](mailto:Popage@aol.com)

St. Stephen's Church Office – 346-6241

## Daughters of the King

This is an order for women in the Episcopal Church, with a ministry of prayer, service and evangelism. The St. Clare Chapter at St. Stephen's meets monthly in the church library on the third Wednesday from 10:30 to noon, for prayer, study and reflection. We maintain a prayer list, send birthday and anniversary cards to members of the parish, and offer aid to serve in the spiritual life of St. Stephen's. Our members are Eunice Chouffi, Marilyn Humphrey, Kabby Lowe, Louise Peake and Richey Woodzell. We welcome guests at our meetings!

# Informational Ministries

## The Communications Committee

The Communications committee meets three or four times each year to consider how information gets passed around, both inside the parish and outside. We brain-storm all the venues we can imagine such as the Messenger, bulletin boards, announcements on Sunday morning, the annual meeting, local newspapers, telephone, the parish directory, the website, e-mail, mailings, and whatever. Communication can always be improved, and that's what we're trying to do. We don't feel the need to meet every month, so we meet occasionally on the third Monday. Current members include Tracy Ormsbee, Jim Syta, Fr. James, and (yours truly) Chris Jones. We welcome anyone who has an interest in communication with or outside of the parish to our meetings. Our next meeting will probably be in February.

## Our Website

We have two principle objectives for our website. First, we want to be a window on the world, so that people who might be looking for a church home can find us. Secondly, our website is a source of information to our members.

To attract new members, we present our very active educational programs, we have a monthly calendar showing



most of what's going on. We have lots of pictures, we even have a page called "What to expect on Sunday mornings" at St. Stephens. We have a map showing where we are and how to get here. If anyone has some ideas of how we can look more attractive, let's talk!

Informational content includes the calendar, the current educational offerings, an on-line picture directory, several years of past Messengers and the current Messenger. You can find out who's on the vestry, and when their terms expire. We have schedules for the lectors and chalciers, the Book, and the counters. And a whole lot more. We've had this website quite a few years now, and it seems to get bigger every year.

Our ISP (Internet Service Provider) is a company called I-Power. The statistics they collect show that we are getting over 700 "unique visitors" to our website every month. I don't know how many are from members and how many are from outside the parish, but this number does seem to indicate that we have the opportunity to be the window to the world that we want to be.

Chris Jones, Website organizer  
<http://www.saintstephenschenectady.org/>

## Fellowship

### Foyer

Foyer is all about fellowship. We all have to eat and it is always an enjoyable experience to have a meal in the company of friends. So please consider joining our Foyer group where you will have the opportunity to get to know other members of the congregation over a "pot luck" meal in small group settings of 6-8 people. We try to change the group each month so everyone meets all the other members of the group and we take turns in hosting the event. Meals can be as simple or elaborate as the host/hostess wishes, from pizza or Chinese take-away to home cooking, be it a dinner, brunch or picnic. Everyone makes a contribution to the meal so that the host is not overwhelmed. The idea is to relax and have fun.

We do hope you will join us even if you are a "snow bird". As long as I know when you will be flying south and returning you can be fitted in. Please contact me for further information at 785-3874 or [swoodcoc@nycap.rr.com](mailto:swoodcoc@nycap.rr.com).

Gillian Woodcock

### Fellowship Activities

We are a Christian community. We have in common our life in Christ, but we also need to share our stories, our aspirations and our burdens. Throughout the year we offer many opportunities to gather, in addition to our worship services, to enjoy time together and to get to know one another.

Because sharing a meal is a basic form of fellowship, these gatherings usually call for food and drink. And that calls for someone to organize and host the gathering. Thank you very much to everyone who stepped forward in the past year to do just that.

During 2014 parishioners participated in:

- Epiphany Potluck Brunch - Jan. 5, hosted by Miranda Rand.
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – Mar. 4, put on by the men of the parish.
- Lenten Soup Suppers – Sundays during Lent, with sign-ups for providing soup and bread.

- Seder Supper – Apr. 16, organized by Marilyn Humphrey and Carole Merrill-Mazurek.
- Reception after Easter Vigil – Apr. 19, hosted by Miranda Rand & George Woodzell.
- Ladies' Luncheon at Turf Tavern – May 4, organized by Sara Palko, Linda Perregaux.
- Church Picnics – Jun. 8, Sep. 7, organized by Erin Cohen.
- Fr. James' 25th Anniversary Brunch, organized by Carole Merrill-Mazurek, Marilyn Humphrey and Marilyn Causey.
- Tag Sale – Oct. 3, organized by Doreen May.
- Coffee Hours – Sundays after both services, with different hosts each week.
- Foyer Groups – monthly Jan. to May, Oct., Nov., organized by Gillian Woodcock, and hosted in members' homes.

Events scheduled so far this year are:

- Youth Group Thank-You Dinner – Jan. 3, organized by Tracy Ormsbee & George Woodzell.
- Epiphany Potluck Lunch - Jan. 4, hosted by Miranda Rand.
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – February 17.
- Lenten Soup Suppers – Sundays during Lent, Feb. 22 – Mar. 22.
- Seder Supper – Apr. 1, Erin Cohen will work with anyone interested in organizing.
- Ladies' Luncheon at Turf Tavern – Apr. 12?
- Volunteer Recognition Picnic – Jun. 7.

Please consider helping to organize or host any of these events. We recommend that each event have two persons in charge: one experienced, and one in training. An easy way to start is by signing up to host a coffee hour with another person. You may take a copy of the instructions from the nave extension; they are also posted in the kitchen.

If you'd like to help organize or work at one of the annual events, or if you have an idea for fellowship, please speak to Fr. James, Erin Cohen or Richey Woodzell.



Two years ago we initiated the practice of keeping records of each event in a folder, to be passed along to the next person in charge. They are available in the office. We ask that each organizer update the folder after the event and return it to the office.

On the kitchen wall is a list of supplies and staples. If you see that we are running short of an item, please mark it on the list so that we can order more.

There is a kitchen folder in the top drawer to the left of the sink. It will contain instructions for making coffee, running the dishwasher, using the stove, cleaning the kitchen worktables, as well as general rules for using the kitchen. For those planning to serve a crowd, there is a Logos cookbook with guidelines for large numbers.

This year we are hoping to make some changes in the nave extension to make it a more comfortable and welcoming area for socializing after each service.

We welcome suggestions and feedback, as well as helping hands! Thank you.

Many thanks also to Ruth Turner, who has been creating the beautiful seasonal centerpieces for the parish hall during the past year and a half.

Respectfully Submitted,  
E. Richey Woodzell, 852-6796, erwoodzell@verizon.net  
Erin Cohen, 346-9377, cohenerine@gmail.com

## Serving and Helping

### Wardens' report

The past year has been a year of stewardship with great emphasis on infra-structure needs of St. Stephen's Church and rectory. Roofs have been fixed, picture rails installed and rails purchased to assist the disabled in navigating our long hallways. Our parish continues to grow with new families and the joyous sounds of children. We continue to feel gratitude for our rector's leadership and the gifts of the staff and parishioners of St. Stephens.

Carole & Erin

### The Shop

Thanks to all of you for your support of The Shop. We gave \$400.00 this year to be used for a work camp scholarship. May you all have many Blessings in 2015.

Beginnig Bal. 1-1-2014 \$715.59  
End Bal. 12-31-2014 \$617.79

Claudia, Louise & Marilyn



# Our Clergy

## Deacon's Report

Another year has flown past: another year of visits to the jail, delivering Bibles, undies, cards, money for commissary and even bus and train tickets to Vermont and North Carolina. But more important than the “stuff” are the relationships that have been fostered by our Sunday visits with the women inmates. I am especially grateful for Mary Frances Hatfield (St. Stephen's) and Mariellen Boomhower (Trinity Presbyterian Church) who have been my Sunday companions at the jail for several years. Mary Frances can no longer go with us, so we are looking for another woman to share this ministry. Please contact me if you want to find out more. I would also appreciate some help in preparing “undies” packages at the church, a relatively simple and occasional process.



I am grateful to all the parishioners and friends who have contributed either money or clothing during the past year for the jail ministry. In addition to helping women in jail, we have also been able to provide transportation, food, clothing, bus passes, and even prescriptions, plus Christmas presents and a small silver Christmas tree (to the delight of the small boy who picked them out and carried them home to the welfare motel where he lives with his mom.) Much love and many thanks to you all!

Deacon Pat

## Rector's Report

This is now the twenty-sixth occasion on which it is my responsibility as your Rector to reflect on the state of this parish. As I do so, I am guardedly optimistic about our congregation. With churches closing or shrinking in membership throughout Schenectady, we have held our own for another year. We have grown very slightly, while most churches, in the city including Episcopal congregations, are shrinking.

One of our major goals over the past quarter century has been growth in membership. And while that still needs to be our goal, this year I want to put things in perspective. And I wish to begin with an analogy from my love of fishing and a quote from Norman MacLean's book *A River Runs Through It*:

“But in reality while the experts know the time and locations to fish, it is God who arranges for the fish to be there or not. All the fisherman can do, is make sure she or he has the nets mended, and be there when the fish are. God arranges for the fish.”

So with the Church. We are called to have our nets mended or our flies tied, so that we can be fishers of people, which usually means sharing our faith with others. But only God arranges for the people.

There are over 80 congregations in Schenectady County. All except perhaps the 12 Roman parishes are fishing for new members. While the pool is full of fish, the fish in Schenectady don't seem to be that hungry. So if St. Stephen's job is to mend our nets and tie the proper flies, I want to review how we've done over the past year.

Few people who are searching for a church are looking for a congregation who only deals with itself, not interested in outreach to the needs of the larger community. When people first come to St. Stephen's they will find a tree full of gifts for senior citizens at SICM's food pantry and another tree full of gifts for our veterans overseas. They will see a basket of food for the food pantry. During announcements Deacon Pat will most likely have something



to say about the women in the jail. If they happen to pick up a copy of our annual report they will see that this congregation gives thousands of dollars to help others, not from our Endowment but from parishioners' own pockets and by congregational fundraisers.

On the other hand, few people who are searching for a church are looking for a congregation who doesn't take care of its own. On the first visit it might not be clear how this congregation provides meals for an ill family, transportation to doctor's visits, furnishings for a new home, greeting cards on birthdays and other anniversaries.

But a new person will see an extensive prayer list and the schedule where we pray for everyone on that list every day of the week. Surely at coffee hour (or even at the sharing of the Peace during the liturgy) a newcomer will get a sense that this is a congregation who really likes and cares for one another.

Have we mended our nets and tied the proper flies? Well, our fore-fathers and mothers built a beautiful church and our current congregation has built a state-of-the-art addition. We have clean bathrooms, a charming nursery, very functional classrooms, an easy-to-use kitchen and an elegant parish hall. All of these are handicap accessible. Our grounds and buildings are well-maintained.

If a young family is searching for a church with good education classes, they will find a program for the youngest members which is on the cutting edge of Christian formation. They will find adult education scheduled for those who are employed during the week, and for those who are retired. They will find inquirers' classes three times a year, a year-long confirmation program, quiet days on the weekends, and candlelight walks on the labyrinth. Any newcomer might think that given all the education classes and spiritual nurturance opportunities offered, we must be a larger congregation than we first appear.

Of course, any visitor will notice our worship. The worship committee works very diligently to provide a dignified and yet innovative liturgy. Our music is traditional and very beautiful, played by an organist who really makes the best use of our organ. Our dedicated choir leads congregational singing and offers us a variety of anthems, and our bell choir makes a joyful sound that any newcomer will remember.

And finally, we have a communication committee which meets regularly. A newcomer probably first heard about our church through our excellent web site or maybe through our page on Facebook. Perhaps they saw our church in the Daily Gazette or the Times Union. Maybe they came because they know (or have) a student in First Friends Nursery, or perhaps they participated in our regular Red Cross blood drives, or one of the many groups that use our church building. And when they first come through the door, they are greeted by a list of what is going on that Sunday and a floor map to know where to go. They will find bulletin boards showing some of the activities of the parish, and a special folder developed for visitors with helpful information, a directory, a copy of the latest Messenger and this Annual Report.

Growth in membership must be a high priority for our congregation, not only to keep our parish healthy, but also because, as Christians, we are called to be fishers of people, which usually means sharing our faith with others. We can do a better job of that, and I am sure we will in this new year. But please don't get discouraged, because we also need to remember that in the end.... only God can arrange for the people to be there or not.

# Parish Statistics

## Parish Statistics

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Active Baptized Memt	251	249	258	243	250	59	345	345	352	121*	128	127	131	
Active Supporters	22									22	21	39	36	
Church School	70	46	61	48	46	58	58	42	29	10	10	14	16	
<b>Population</b>														
Baptisms	5	4	4	9	9	8	10	4	1	2	7	0	1	
Confirmations/Recepti	12	0	0	0	3	0	0	5	7	4	2	0	0	
Transfers In	6	6	12	6	10	0	1	6		1	0	0	8	
Transfers Out	8	10	3	3	6	1	0	3		16	1	0	0	
Deactivations										191	0	0	0	
Reactivations	0	0	0	3	5	1	0	0		0	0	1	0	
Deaths	6	2	5	7	3	5	5	4		2	9	1	2	
<b>Worship Attendance</b>														
Average Sunday	164	157	144	148	142	132	131	118	103	86	80	76	78	
<b>Worship Services</b>														
Holy Communion	213	186	146	169	187	163	159	165	162	162	159	170	151	
Homebound	56	35	35	5	23	21	11	44	49	62	56	37	32	
Marriages	3	5	2	7	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	0	1	
Burials	6	2	6	6	4	6	3	4	2	2	10	2	2	
Daily Offices	55	104	237	227	225	187	206	303	331	334	335	347	333	
<b>Stewardship</b>														
Number of Pledges	142	130	126	113	112	100	105	102	83	66	52	54	61	66
Amount Pledged	\$168,101	\$178,436	\$185,550	\$179,454	\$185,149	\$177,032	\$181,851	\$166,000	\$152,920	\$128,179	\$121,015	\$122,262	\$133,874	\$131,496
<b>Budget Income</b>	\$242,783	\$245,046	\$213,512	\$213,512	\$210,471	\$221,114	\$217,144	\$208,131	\$196,679	\$178,297	\$207,162	\$177,966	\$183,549	
<b>Actual Income</b>	\$226,004	\$223,040	\$198,304	\$222,333	\$213,717	\$206,645	\$242,967	\$220,638	\$182,248	\$182,932	\$222,287	\$176,223	\$198,719	

\* active

## **Congregational Changes**

### **Transfer In**

Alexander Clemens  
Claire Clemens  
Felix Clemens  
Oscar Clemens

### **Baptism**

Claire Estilow

### **Wedding**

Efren Zamora & Rebecca Emaelaf

### **Deaths**

Josefina Nevius  
Scott Moss

## Commissioning of Wardens and Vestry Members

Deacon:

I present to you these persons to be admitted to the ministry of warden and member of the vestry in this congregation.

People:

**The Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity.**

Priest:

I am your servant; grant me understanding;

People:

**That I may know your decrees.**

Priest:

Let us pray. O Eternal God, the foundation of all wisdom and the source of all courage: Enlighten with your grace the wardens and vestry of this congregation, and so rule their minds, and guide their counsels, that in all things they may seek your glory and promote the mission of your Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

In the Name of God and of this congregation, I commission you [N] as warden/vestry member in this parish and I give you this pin as a token of your ministry.