

The Messenger

Saint Stephen's, Schenectady

February 2006

Lenten Living the Questions

People know that at its core, Christianity has something good to offer the human race. At the same time, many have a sense that they are alone in being a "thinking" Christian and that "salvaging" Christianity is a hopeless task. What is needed is a safe environment where people have permission to ask the questions they've always wanted to ask but have been afraid to voice for fear of being thought a heretic.

This Lenten Study includes DVD presentation followed by small group study exploring beyond the traditions and rote theologies in which so many people and local churches seem to be stuck. The purpose of the study is to help participants discover the relevance of Christianity in the 21st Century and what a meaningful faith can look like in today's world.

We will meet on Sunday evenings at 5pm in the parish hall for our study and a simple soup and bread supper, from March 5th to April 9th.

Ash Wednesday Services

Ash Wednesday is March 1st with the Imposition of Ashes and Eucharist as follows:

7:00 a.m.
12:30 noon
7:30 p.m.

Services will be held at various times so that each Christian can observe the beginning of this penitential period which leads us into our celebration on Easter Day. Barring illness, every Christian certainly will be in church on Ash Wednesday to begin his/her disciplined preparation for a meaningful celebration of Easter.

The Jesus Experience

Each culture of the world has created its own expression of Jesus. These experiences sprang from past ages and all over the world. These experiences sprang from ancient Israel, the Roman Empire, the Mediterranean, as well as Russia, Asia, Africa and the Americas. This course is a chronicle of how Christianity came to billions around the globe.

Feb. 5	Jesus in Latin America
Feb. 12	Jesus in North America
Feb. 19	Jesus in Asia
Feb. 26	Jesus in Africa

The course takes place on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am in the Parish Hall.



From the Rector

Dear Friends,

A little before Christmas an officer from the Trust Department at Trustco Bank visited with me in my office and handed me a check for one million dollars made out to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. He told me that it was from the will of Helen Begley, a past member of our congregation and the widow of Sam Begley, past mayor of Schenectady and past state senator. The surprise on my face must have been considerable and then he told me that a check for a similar amount will be coming this summer!

At the Annual meeting I announced this to the congregation. Since that meeting many of you have emailed me about ideas of how we might use this money. I am keeping all ideas in a file and will share them with the vestry at the appropriate time. I encourage you to send me your thoughts about this wonderful gift and how it might be used.

The vestry and finance committee have been working over the past two months on a way to manage our endowment fund. When they complete their work, I will share the outcome with you. Until that time, please keep our vestry and other leaders in your prayers. Though Helen Begley has given a very generous gift, good stewardship of that gift is a great responsibility.

When a church is blessed with wonderful resources, as Saint Stephen's is, teaching good stewardship is a challenge. Many people are not aware that our day-to-day parish programs depend on pledges and the need for giving is often not self-evident to parishioners. As a consequence, those of us at Saint Stephen's must consciously and deliberately learn stewardship, and we are perhaps challenged more than others to introduce our people to the theology of what it is to be a good steward of God's creation.

In my 16 years as rector of Saint Stephen's, this challenge has forced us to discern the difference between four concepts of giving: charity, philanthropy, fund-raising, and stewardship.

Charity was profoundly experienced by those of us at Saint Stephen's during the recent hurricanes in the Gulf Coast. It is a response to a crisis or an immediate need. It sees the victims and their needs and responds with gift giving. The heroic efforts of Episcopal Relief and Development speak volumes about this form of giving. Philanthropy, on the other hand, is like an investment. It is the act of giving money for a specific reason with the intention of improving the welfare of a community or an organization over the long term. The recipient is obliged to show results. It has some of the characteristics of an investment, as if it were a loan from a bank officer. Reports are required on how the money was spent, including periodic progress reports so additional grants might be made.

Fund-raising asks us to give to a project such as a building or a capital investment, but rarely to an annual budget. The average parish is sometimes tempted to teach fund-raising rather than stewardship. It is a necessary procedure for developing hospitals, schools, and the arts. But if it becomes the norm for raising the annual parish budget, it profoundly diminishes the theology of the old liturgical words at the offertory, "All things come of thee O Lord and of thine own have we given thee."

Stewardship in our culture is a radically different way of thinking about giving. Charity, philanthropy, and fund-raising all treat the individual as the owner of the money. Stewardship on the other hand treats God as the owner, and the giver as one who simply returns a portion of what God has given. The Church in its theology offers each of us an opportunity to give out of gratitude. Stewardship is giving with no strings attached. It is related to creation and my place in it. The church says to its people: "God is giving you a chance to give God a gift because you delight in God's very existence and the blessings in your life." The need to give is not a result of the church's need for money. It is rather our need to give. And we call it stewardship!

James+

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

1935 The Plaza
Schenectady, New York 12309

Church Staff

The Rev. Dr. James R. Brooks-McDonald, Rector
The Rev. Patricia L. Jones, Deacon
The Rev. John H. Peatling, Rector Emeritus
Dr. Timothy Olsen, Director of Music
Ms Katherine Miller, Office Manager

Vestry

Warden: Dave Carroll
Warden: Susan Feyrer
Clerk:
Treasurer: Denise Crates
Chancellor: Rosemarie Jaquith

Class of 2006 Marilyn Dare
Budd Mazurek
Keith Nelson

Class of 2007 Dave Caruso
Paul deKanel
Stacy DeBritz

Class of 2008 Ryan Davis
Austin Spang
Sid Woodcock

THE CHURCH OFFICE, located at 1229 Baker Avenue, is open every weekday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

TELEPHONE/FAX: The office telephone number is 518/346-6241 and the office fax number is 518/346- 6242. Please leave a message if no one answers and someone will get back to you as soon as possible. Our email address is ststeph@albany.net. The rector's email is jbrooksm@nycap.rr.com. Our website address is <http://www.albany.net/~ststeph/>

The Messenger is published 10 times a year, September through June.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Don't miss the traditional Pancake Supper on Tuesday; February 28th 5pm-7pm at St. Stephen's marking the last time for festivities before Lent begins, on Wednesday!

Menu includes pancakes, sausages and a beverage. What a deal!! Price is the same as last year.

Families \$13.00
Adults \$4
Children \$3
Under 4 eat free.

Bring your family, your friends and your appetite! Volunteers are needed to help cook, serve and clean up.

BRING YOUR PALMS FROM 2005 PALM SUNDAY TO BE BURNED FOR ASH WEDNESDAY.

HOME COMMUNION

If you or someone you know is unable to attend church on either a long or short-term basis, please call the parish office if you would like to have communion brought to you.



GODSPELL

A Touring Production of the Westminster Choir
from The First Presbyterian Church of Caldwell
New Jersey presents:

GODSPELL

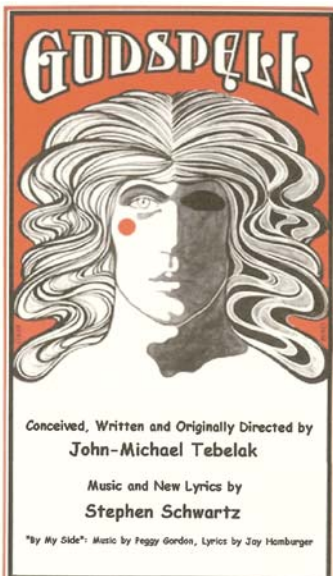
at

Union Presbyterian Church, Schenectady, New
York

1068 Park Avenue
(518) 374-4464

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2006 at 7:00PM

The performance is free.



Sunday School Has BIG Plans

In this time after Epiphany, we have been learning of the Jesus' miracles as he traveled with his Disciples and taught God's word. We have also reviewed and relearned the Christmas story in many different ways, as that is also a miracle that we should never forget. As we have gotten to know Jesus in the past several weeks, we have realized the importance of doing God's work in our world. We have several outreach projects planned for the next few months. First, we are collecting change for Episcopal Relief and Development (please see the following article). Our hope is that each family will take home a Hope Chest and fill it as they can. The Hope

Chest will be presented at the altar during the offering on February 26th.

Secondly, during Lent, we will be learning about Zimbabwe and how we can help that country which has many, many problems. We will then turn our focus to our local community by visiting the SICM food pantry and participating in a food drive using coupons we find in the newspapers.

During Lent the kids will be working on memorizing a prayer or passage from the Bible as a way to add to their spiritual lives. We are planning a Lenten program for children, which will take place on Sunday evenings during Lent. This program will coincide with the adult Lenten study (please see the article "Children's Lenten Study"). We hope that Sunday evenings at church will be filled with members of all different ages as we learn about Christ and our faith.

The preschool and kindergarten class is going to learn the song, "This Little Light of Mine". We will sing our song to the congregation sometime in May. The 1st-3rd graders will be learning a song to sing at Easter.

We are trying a new way to begin our 9:00 Sunday school classes with everyone including 4th-6th graders meeting downstairs in the community room (excepting those who meet in Reid House). This way we can all begin with prayer and then go our separate ways.

Finally, our attendance for Sunday school in all of the groups has been terrific!! There is always room for more. If you are new to our church and have children, consider Sunday school for them. We meet at 9:00 every Sunday downstairs in the community room (for 1st through 6th grades) and at the Reid House next door (for 7th-12th grades). The littlest ones (preschool and kindergarten) meet after the children's sermon during the 10:15 service.

Laura Davis

Hope Chest for Episcopal Relief and Development

The children of St. Stephen's have taken home a Hope Chest Box as an outreach project for the next month. Each family should have one box. The money we raise by putting change into the Hope Chest will go to Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD). This organization provides help to those who need it all through out the world. Our Sunday school goal is to return the boxes on February 26th. We don't have a money amount for a goal, but we hope that each family will participate by putting coins in the Hope Chest, as they are able and by returning the box to church. If you need a box or have any questions, please see Laura Davis, Richey Woodzell or Kabby Lowe.

Children's Lenten Study

This year we are offering a program for children on Sunday evenings during Lent. The program will be held in the community room from 5:00pm to 7:00pm to coincide with the Adult Lenten Study. The adults will have soup and bread upstairs in the parish hall while the children eat together down stairs. We invite all families to come on Sunday evenings to learn and join in fellowship. The children will be learning about our Episcopal faith and about Christ, who gave his life for us. We will have more time together than we do in Sunday school. This way we can relax and explore our faith more fully, and maybe have some fun. Please consider bringing your children on Sundays at 5:00 during Lent and stay to participate in the Adult Lenten Study. We will have a sign up sheet in the parish hall. If you have any questions, please see Laura Davis, Allison deKanel, or Richey Woodzell. See you there!

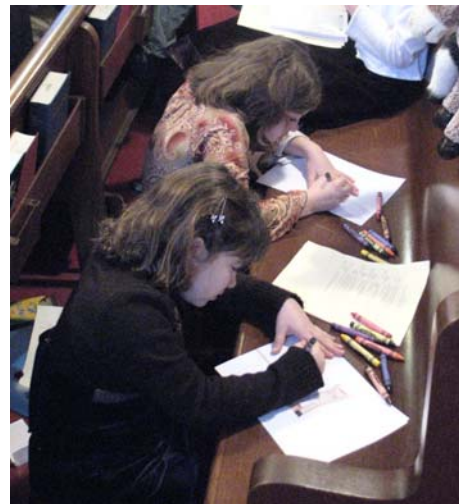
Youth Group Friday Night Movie Marathon – February 10

If you are in 7th-12th grade, join us on February 10th for our Movie Marathon! We will be featuring Academy Award nominated films-and selecting OUR picks for the 78th Annual Academy Awards. The lock-in starts at 6:00 p.m. with dinner and ends at 9:00 a.m. after breakfast.

Friends are welcome to attend. Parents/Guardians must sign permission slips for each participant. At least two adult chaperones are always present and one is awake at all times! With boys and girls attending, we plan to have male and female chaperones at each lock-in.

The next scheduled lock-in is on March 10. The theme has not been chosen yet and Youth and Leaders will be choosing one soon. Bring your ideas to Sunday school or the Lock-In!

If you want more information or to volunteer as a chaperone, talk to George Woodzell (gwwny@verizon.net/ 372-9398) or Dave Crates (dcrates@nycap.rr.com/373-9732).



February Wedding Anniversaries*

Hector & Megan Dominguez	2/6
Paul & Allison deKanel	2/7
J. Keith & Christine Nelson	2/10

February Birthdays*

Charlotte Soule	2/1
William Walker	2/1
Suzanne Davis	2/2
Nicolaus Brooks-McDonald	2/3
Megan Price	2/3
Ryan Davis	2/4
Millard Barber	2/5
Alexxis Gibbs	2/6
Patricia Jones	2/8
Drew Prescott	2/8
Chelsea Trant	2/8
Patrina Marx	2/9
David Goyette	2/10
Grace Strong	2/10
Donald Regula	2/12
Samuel Koch	2/13
Nan Blaufuss	2/14
Marilyn Causey	2/14
Carolyn Manor	2/14
Hugh Campbell	2/15
Olivia Canavan	2/15
Jane Tatge	2/18
Sierra Renken	2/18
Mary Alexander	2/19
Richard Censullo	2/19
Christine Nelson	2/19
Dennis Moss	2/20
Greg Varno	2/21
Shari MacIvor	2/21
Mitchell Rigley	2/23
Pauline Northrop	2/24
Elizabeth Practico	2/28

* If your (or anyone in your family) birthdate or anniversary is missing or incorrect, please contact the office (346-6241).

Chalice and Lectors for Ash Wednesday, March 1st

Chalice: N. Hoffmann

1st lesson: V. Hoshko

2nd lesson: S. Woodcock



FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

	February 5	February 12	February 19	February 26
ACOLYTE				
Crucifier	J. Casale	L. Practico	A. Sombor	T. Versocki
Server	M. Price	A. Versocki	W. Koch	A. DeBritz
Torch	D. Dare	B. Mertz	A. Jones	J. DeBritz
Torch	Z. Price	E. Mertz	L. Marshall	B. Kilbourn
CHALICE BEARERS AND LECTOR				
8:00 Service				
Chalice	C. Jones	T. Miller	B. Frank	G. Woodzell
1st Lesson	S. Ras	B. Stratton	K. Miller	S. Ras
2nd Lesson	B. Frank	K. Miller	C. Jones	L. Stevens
10:15 Service				
Chalice	G. Jaquith	N. Hoffmann	C. M-M	B. Frank
1st Lesson	L. Pratico	D. Carroll	G. Woodzell	N. Hoffmann
2nd Lesson	M. DeBritz	R. Causo	B. Mazurek	C. Trant
USHERS	C. Mertz, A. Lowe	N. Hoffmann & J. Jones	R. Davis & S. Somber	S. Kilbourn & D. Caruso
COUNTERS	D. May, R. May, B. Strangfeld	M. Gittinger, D. Molino, S. Grady	J. Versocki, D. Belardo, B. Voelker	M. Causey, D. Crates, A. Spang
KEEPERS OF "THE BOOK"	R. Jaquith	K. Miller	C. Nelson	P. Northrop
FLOWERS	In honor of the Parish from the Kaczka Family	In loving memory of Naomi Vanda, Given by the Altar Guild	Available	Available
LEM and Care Givers	L. Perregaux & M. Causey	G. & R. Woodzell	C. Mertz & K. & A. Lowe	S. & C. Trant
ALTAR GUILD	2/4-10: Casale, Jones, Lowe	2/11-2/17: Hoffmann, Northrop, Versock, Woodcock	2/18-2/24: Morin, Russell, Wisnom	2/25-3/3: Casale, Jones, Lowe

DRAFT Calendar for FEBRUARY, 2006

Wed	1	7:15 PM Bell Choir (Marylin Dare)
Th	2	10:00 AM Holy communion; Healing 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (Tim Olsen)
Fri	3	
Sat	4	
Sun	5	<u>The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany</u> 8:000 am Holy Communion 9:00 AM Education hour: Sunday School; Nursery Care; Adult Education 10:15 AM Holy Communion 11:30 AM Coffee; Meeting: Issues; kids care downstairs SUPER BOWL SUBS on sale by youth Noon Inquirer's class (Fr. James) 2:00 PM EFM Bible Study (Fr. James) 7:00 PM Holy Communion
Mon	6	7:30 PM Parish council. (Fr. James)
Tue	7	1:00 PM Over-the-hill Gang (George Woodzell) 7:30 PM Kerygma bible study: Gospel of John (Pat)
Wed	8	7:15 PM Bell Choir (Marilyn) 7:30 PM Knitting Group. Reid house (Pat)
Th	9	10:00 AM Holy Communion; Healing 10:45 AM Bible Study (Fr. James) 7:30 PM Choir rehearsal (Tim)
Fri	10	
Sat	11	9:00 AM Daughters of the king (Mary's house) <u>The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany</u>
Sun	12	8:00 AM Holy Communion 9:00 AM Education hour: Sunday School; Nursery Care; Adult Education 10:15 AM Holy Communion 11:30 AM Coffee hour Noon Inquirer's class (Fr. James) 2:00 PM EFM Bible Study (Fr. James) 7:00 PM Evening Prayer
Mon	13	7:30 PM Vestry. Open meeting, as usual. (David Carroll, Sue Feyrer)
Tue	14	1:00 PM Over-the-hill gang (George Woodzell) 7:30 PM Kerygma Course: Gospel of John (Pat)
Wed	15	7:15 PM Bell Choir (Marilyn) 7:30 PM Kerygma Course: Shalom. (Fr. James)
Th	16	10:00 AM Holy Communion; Healing 10:45 AM Bible Study (Fr. James) 7:30 PM Choir rehearsal. (Tim)
Fri	17	Youth Lock-in; Bowling
Sat	18	11:00 AM Knitting Group. Reid House. (Richey)

The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

Sun 19 8:00 AM **Holy Communion**
9:00 AM Education hour: Sunday School; Nursery Care
10:15 AM **Holy Communion**
11:30 AM Coffee hour
7:00 PM **Evening Prayer**

Mon 20

Tue 21 1:00 PM Over-the-hill gang (George)
7:30 PM Kerygma course: Gospel according to John (Pat)

Wed 22 7:15 PM Bell Choir (Marilyn)
7:30 PM Knitting Group. Reid House. (Pat)

Th 23 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal. (Tim)

Fri 24

Sat 25

The Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany

Sun 26 8:00 AM **Holy Communion**
9:00 AM Education hour: Sunday School; Nursery Care
10:15 AM Holy Communion; ERD Hope Chests Presentation
11:30 AM Coffee hour
7:00 PM **Evening Prayer**

Mon 27 7:30 PM Worship Committee. Open meeting, as usual. (Pat)

Tue 28 1:00 PM Over-the-hill gang. (George)

5-7 PM Pancake Supper. (Debbie)

7:30 PM Kerygma Bible study course: Gospel of John

saint stephen's episcopal church

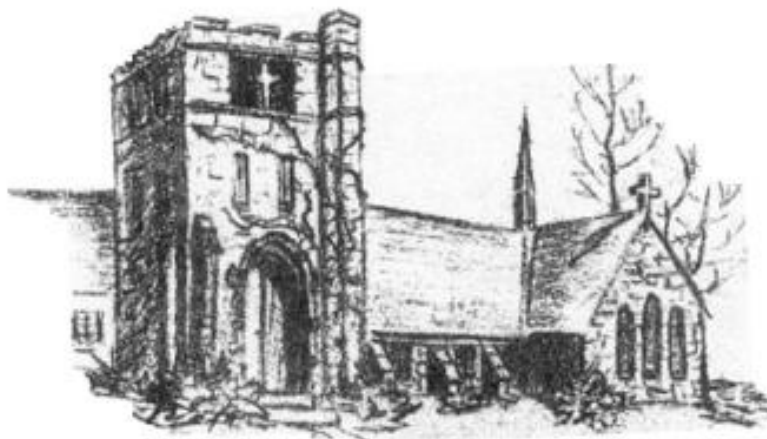
*progressive,
catholic, reformed*

Holy Communion, Sunday 8 am,
10:15 am and 7 pm
Education Hour for all Ages 9 am

1935 The Plaza
Schenectady

www.albany.net/~ststeph

346-6241



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Schenectady, New York 12309

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