

The Messenger

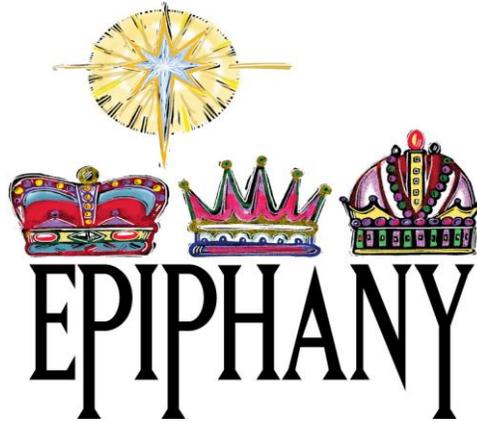
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St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
January 2013  
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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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The Epiphany of Our Lord



The name "Epiphany" is derived from a Greek word meaning "manifestation" or "appearing." It is also called "The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles." This phrase is a reference to the story of the Wise Men from the East.

A Christian observance on January 6 is found as early as the end of the second century in Egypt. The feast combined commemorations of the visit of the Magi, led by the star of Bethlehem; the Baptism of Jesus in the waters of the River Jordan; and Jesus' first recorded miracle, the changing of water into wine at the marriage of Cana of Galilee all thought of as manifestations of the incarnate Lord.

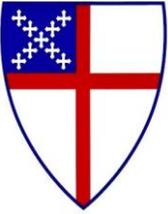
The Epiphany is still the primary Feast of the Incarnation in Eastern Churches, and the three-fold emphasis is still prominent. In the West, however, including the Episcopal Church, the story of the Wise Men has tended to overshadow the other two events. Modern lectionary reform, reflected in the Book of Common Prayer, has recovered the primitive trilogy, by setting the event of the Baptism as the theme of the First Sunday after January 6th.

Our celebration of Epiphany at St. Stephen's will take place on Sunday, January 6th at 8:00am and 10:15 a.m. with Eucharist.

With a Potluck Lunch to follow the 10:15am service.

Greetings from Father James!

Dear Friends,



This Christmas season finds us in so many different places and conditions. Many I have talked with in passing conversation mention their worry over job security as the Christmas bills begin to arrive. Others are still on their holiday trip visiting family and friends. Some struggle with how to make ends meet on a fixed income, while others are beginning college savings plans with the birth of a new child. This season also finds more and more of our church members involved in ministries who try to help people for whom Christmas is bleak.

One of my favorite Christmas carols is "In the Bleak Midwinter" and every year I ponder the question asked: "What can I give him, poor as I am...If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part..."

As I look back over the year 2012 I am proud of what our small congregation has done for Schenectady and for our own church members. We are very involved in the many outreach programs of Schenectady Inner City Ministry and our members are involved in most every community agency I know: from tutoring young students to serving meals to the homeless. Our youth groups, increasingly have been involved in service projects and have great plans for 2013!

In addition, the folks who are attending to the needs of our own church have done their part. Thanks to generous financial giving we are one of the few churches I know who are able to close our books in the black as well as to do such things as fixing roofs and keeping up on general maintenance.

Yes, St. Stephen's struggles with what it means to "do our part" and as community needs and congregational needs increase I suspect so will our struggle. We all stand together in the bleak midwinter, trusting that by grace, we may at best give Him our heart.

James+

Household Blessing for Epiphany

A custom from Eastern Europe that is presently being recovered in North America is the practice of blessing homes on Epiphany. Members of the household go from room to room expressing thanks to God for each room and asking God to bless the room and its intended use. Some small symbol of the blessing may be carried to leave in each room: a candle, a cross, "gifts" of the Magi.

The procession ends outside the front door where the door's lintel is marked in chalk with the year and the initials C,M,B; each separated by a cross recalling the traditional names of the Magi: Casper, Melchior and Balthasar. The members of the household are then invited to add their own initials. Also, at this time it is appropriate to pledge volunteer time or other gifts for Bethesda House or some local homeless shelter as signs of our thankfulness to God. The ritual ends with a celebration of the Eucharist.

Talk to the rector if you would like to have your home blessed.

Youth Education at St. Stephen's

Winter 2013



Train a child in the way he should go.
When he is old, he will not turn away from it.
~~Proverbs 22:6 (NIRV)

Godly Play **(Grades Pre-K-6) -**

Miranda Rand

(This group leaves with their teachers after the Rector's children's message, and return to participate in the sacrament with their families.)

December's learning included instruction on the 4 Sundays in Advent, a special story-teller (Eunice Chouffi), who brought books and illustrations about Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Zipporah Harris with an interactive Hanukah program, and a revival of the *Christmas Pageant*.

January 6 celebrates Epiphany with another special visitor – Megan Dominguez, education staff and planetarium manager at Schenectady MiSci, and mother of Rebecca and Madison, who will bring information about the stars the Magi followed when they travelled to Bethlehem. In celebration of the Magi's journey, a pot-luck luncheon will follow worship.

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Epiphany marks the official end of the church's celebration of Christmas, so until Lent we will concentrate on Jesus' enigmatic stories about the power of authentic spirituality. The Parable of the Mustard Seed, the Leaven, the Great Pearl, the Shepherd and his Sheep, and the parable of the Lost Coin will follow, one after the other, until the season of Lent begins and we return to the liturgical color purple and stories about Jesus' life.

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### **Youth Group** **(Grades 7-12 @ 9:00am) -** **George Woodzell & Peter Nelson**

George Woodzell continues to lead the youth in healthy and challenging discussions about everything from the massacre of the Sandy Hook Elementary School children, to what constitutes authenticity. The group alternates between their 9:00 discussion forums and their 10:15 teen worship every other Sunday. George sends out an email alert to youth group members the Friday before the Sunday they are to meet, mentioning the discussion topic or quoting from an article he has read, and alerting them to the time of their meeting.

# Adult Education

## Sunday Morning Adult Education:

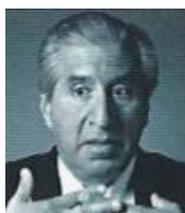
### Faith & Reason

In this series of classes participants will watch videos in which Bill Moyers explores the complex region between faith and reason, engaging in thoughtful conversations with 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 will afford a lively conversation and inquiry with those who attend.



January 6 - Colin McGinn is a British philosopher whose work focuses on philosophy of mind, ethics, and philosophical logic. He currently teaches at the University of Miami. McGinn is perhaps best known as a philosopher for championing the New Mysterianism, a theory that human consciousness can never be explained because the mind is fundamentally incapable of comprehending itself fully. McGinn argues that humans can still take solace in this inexplicable mystery because, by acknowledging our limitations, we are then free to explore other areas of human intelligence that are open to our understanding.

January 13 - Author Mary Gordon is widely regarded as one of the leading chroniclers of contemporary Catholic life in America. Her literary oeuvre - novels, short stories, essays, and personal memoirs - paints a rich picture of the complexities of faith, morals, politics, and religious and cultural heritage in the modern world. Born in New York to a Catholic mother and a father who converted to Catholicism from Judaism, Gordon was raised in a strict religious environment and at one time considered becoming a nun. In 1996 Gordon turned her attention to her own family, examining the mysterious and complicated life of her father, a Jewish convert to Catholicism who died when she was 7, leaving behind a web of lies and half-truths about his past.



January 20 - Richard Rodriguez-the author of *Hunger for Memory* and *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father*-has expressed provocative views on diversity and its relationship to identity. Bill Moyers speaks with Rodriguez about spirituality, mortality, and growing up in a Catholic family and community that were often at odds with Protestant-dominated America.

January 27 - Sir John Houghton. An atmospheric physicist and a leading expert on global warming, Sir John Houghton speaks as a scientist and evangelical Christian. The author of *Does God Play Dice? A Look At The Story of the Universe and The Search for God: Can Science Help?* explains his belief that science and religion can both work towards improving the human condition.

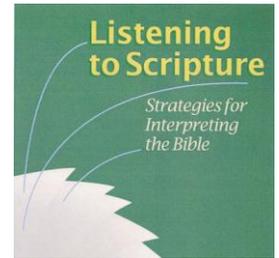


**All classes are held on Sunday mornings between 9:00am and 10:00am in the Vestry Room.  
The rector will be the discussion leader.**

# Continued Adult Education

## Thursday Morning Community of Friends

### Listening to Scripture: Strategies for Interpreting the Bible



The series of strategies that this course asks participants to undertake is carefully designed to enhance our ability to listen to the Bible on its own terms. We want to listen to what it once said to the audiences that read it first. Yet at the same time we shall keep front and center the very reason we bother to read the Bible at all: to understand what it means for us now.

January 9 & 10 - Introduction

January 16 & 17 - Scripture in the Life of the Community of Faith

January 23 & 24 - Exploring the Historical Setting

January 30 & 31- Discovering the Literary Context and Audience

**All classes are held on Thursday mornings between 10:45 and noon and again on Wednesday evenings between 7:30 and 9:00 in the Vestry Room. The rector will be the discussion leader.**

## Between Athens.....and Jerusalem



A Seminar of Theological Reflection on the  
**Great Ideas of the Western World**

*Tuesday Mornings 10:30-Noon*



- January 8     **Hippocrates and the Science of Life**  
*Hippocratic medicine did much to demystify the human condition and the natural factors that affect it.*
- January 15    **Aristotle on the Knowable**  
*Smith knows that a particular triangle contains 180 degrees because he has measured it, while Jones knows it by definition. But do they know the same thing?*
- January 22    **Aristotle on Friendship**  
*If true friendship is possible only between equals, how equal must they be—and with respect to what?*
- January 29    **Aristotle on the Perfect Life**  
*What sort of life is right for humankind, and what is it about us that makes this so?*

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Father James,  
Rector

# Annual Parish Meeting – January 20th

Our annual meeting will be held on  
Sunday January 20, 2013 at 11:30am in the Parish Hall.  
Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.  
Childcare will be provided.

Candidates for Vestry are encouraged to come forward.

## **What Is The 'Vestry'?**

The vestry is a group of eleven lay representatives from the parish who are charged with the temporal affairs of the congregation. They meet monthly with the rector presiding. The vestry spends considerable time on income and expenses and on writing the annual budget. They set the salary scales and are responsible for raising the money to meet expenses. The vestry also has the important job of finding a new rector whenever a vacancy occurs. Three representatives are elected at the annual parish meeting for a term of three years. In addition, a Warden (vestry officer) is elected for a term of two years.

## **Nominating Committee Appointed**

In an attempt to be as inclusive as possible in nominating parishioners for elective offices, the vestry has appointed the class of 2014 of the vestry as a nominating committee. They are securing the nominations for the five positions vacant for next year. In addition, nominations will continue to be made from the floor of the Annual Meeting of the parish. The elected offices are:

- 3 - three year terms
- 2 – two year terms
- 1 - Warden - two year term

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR VESTRY MEMBERSHIP**

Basically there are only three requirements for vestry membership:

- (1) be a confirmed member of the parish church. This can be accomplished through confirmation or reception by a bishop or through a transfer from another Episcopal Church.
  - (2) have been regular in attendance of Sunday Eucharists
  - (3) have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.
- This includes giving of Time Talent and Treasure

# When to Call Your Clergy

Many people have the idea that the only time they should call their priest or deacon is when someone is critically ill or when there is a death in the family, and some don't even do that. Here are ten occasions when you should have no hesitation in picking up the phone to call James or Pat:

1. Before going to the hospital. It makes no difference whether you are going to the hospital for major surgery or for a routine checkup - call before you go.
2. When alcohol or drugs become a problem for you or for someone you love. The alcoholic or drug dependent person is not a hopeless sinner - he or she is a person with a disease who needs treatment. There are no easy answers to chemical dependency, but the clergy can help you to understand these problems or to assist families and individuals in locating help.
3. Before you engage a lawyer. This does not mean before you get an attorney for any purpose, but before engaging one when a husband and wife are considering separation. If you take the Christian view of marriage seriously, you will wish to talk through your situation with clergy or other pastoral counselor before matters proceed to the point of seeking legal counsel.
4. When a baby is born. When a new member of our family is born, James or Pat would like to call while the mother is still in the hospital. This is a good opportunity to rejoice with the family and to ask God's blessing upon the child.
5. When you would like to talk or pray about a difficult decision. The big decisions in life are so important that they should be "talked out and prayed through". Your work, perhaps getting married, a change in jobs - are all included.
6. When you know someone in need of spiritual help. It is part of our Christian responsibility to be alert to the needs of others. If you know of someone who needs help, do not hesitate to call. Together, we may be able to find a way to minister to those in need.
7. When there is a death in the family. No matter what the hour of day or night the clergy should be called at once. Their task is to bring you to strong consolation offered by our Christian faith and to counsel with you concerning arrangements for the funeral.
8. When you are spiritually depressed. Remember, help is available! The finest Christians have all gone through their dark night of the soul. Don't try to fight it through alone. If God seems far off and religion has lost its reality, you are not the first person to feel that way. Don't struggle with spiritual depression by yourself.
9. Before anyone enters the armed forces or leaves for college. Not only will the clergy want to know their address away from home, but would like to opportunity to make a personal visit to assure them of the concern of their home parish while they are away.
10. When you want to share a thanksgiving. When a parishioner wants to share a thanksgiving for all God's gracious gifts, the clergy will be delighted to share this with you.

Parish office - 346-6241  
Fr. James - 370-3573  
Deacon Pat - 372-5836

# Getting to Know St. Stephen's Members

## Featuring – Peter Nelson

### Peter Nelson

I was born in England near London and moved to the USA in 1979 when I was nearly six with my parents and my brother. I grew up in Niskayuna, NY and survived brain and spinal cancers at the age of 12. I went to college at SUNY Oswego where I completed a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education, but was unable to find a job as a teacher when I got out of school. I worked as a nursing assistant in Saratoga, a patient support associate and a residence habilitation counselor in Albany, and as a seafood clerk at Price Chopper in Latham.

Eventually, I became tired of these "dead end jobs" which didn't seem to have much of a future, and I decided to go back to school. I attended Mohawk Valley Community College and completed an associates of applied science degree in health information management. With that, I worked as a medical records coder in Pittsfield, MA and as a health information technician at Bellevue Womens Hospital in Niskayuna. I took a national exam and gained the credential, RHIT (registered health information technician) after leaving Bellevue. Even with a national credential, I could not find further employment in the field despite sending out hundreds of resumes and going to dozens of interviews, and ended up working for Price Chopper again as a deli clerk in Colonie!

After a short period of unemployment, I managed to find a career agency who helped me to get a contract position with the NY state archives. I worked there for three years and eventually I was able to get a state job with the department of motor vehicles in Albany where I have worked for almost five years. I very recently got a promotion from the 18th interview I had this year!

I have been a member of St. Stephen's for over thirty years now. I was as an acolyte when I was younger, taught the 4th through 6th grade Sunday school class with Allison de Kanel for nine years, and served as the clerk of the Vestry.

I presently usher the 8:00 service on Sundays, teach the youth group with George Woodzell, and have been a Vestry member for five years.

I bought my first house last year, am an adult leader for a local boy scout troop, and enjoy reading, photography, art, hobbies, the outdoors, and spending time with my cat, who I rescued as a stray last year.



# Thank You's and Recognition

## **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT THANK YOU**

Thank you to George and Richey Woodzell for their help with the potluck following the Christmas Pageant, to Fr. James for prompting and encouraging the children, to June Russell for playing and helping choose the music, to Allison de Kanel for helping with the script and narrating, to all the parents who so enthusiastically encouraged the restoration of the Christmas Pageant as an event in the Advent life of the parish, and to the children who participated – we all had fun – and it came together beautifully. We will do it again, bigger and better, with a more contemporary script, and at a different time. Until December, 2013, may blessings abound on everyone, young and old, who participated or offered encouragement and support!



Youth Workcamp group says Thank you with a Dinner

**THANK YOU.....**

**THANK YOU.....**

**THANK YOU.....**

...to Miranda Rand who organized and to June Russell who accompanied the Christmas pageant and the congregation carol-sing

...to Claudia Jakubowski and the ECW who organized the SICM Assembly

...to all those who organized the potluck after the Christmas pageant

...to the Alter Guild and to brass polishers par excellence who polished all the brass in the church, and made Christmas beautiful

...to all who took time on a busy Christmas eve of the Eve to help 'green' the church

...To Bob Acosta and the Choir members who helped to make Advent and Christmas beautiful

...To the lectors, chalice bearers and acolytes who made our worship possible

...To Erin Cohen and Susan Feyrer who decorated the nursery room

and all those who helped in the nursery

...To the ushers and to the offering counters

...To our Office Manager, Cathy, who worked so hard to prepare bulletins and make other arrangements

...To Donna and Joe, our sextons who made the church shine and kept the sidewalks clear

...to all of you who do quiet things in quiet ways and help this parish to work.



# Ministry Updates

## **ECW Update**

On Wednesday, December 5th, 2012  
St. Stephen's hosted SICM's annual potluck dinner.

It was a great evening of fun and fellowship.  
It was also gave St. Stephen's an opportunity to show  
off its beautiful new building and great members.

Around eighty guests attended the event and a  
variety of foods were brought to be shared by all  
as well as desserts and beverages supplied by the  
ECW and the parish.

Also, St. Stephen's very own Chris Jones  
received an award for his work on SICM's website.



## **SICM NEWS**

### EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY Q AND A



How many people go to the pantry?

Currently there are 18,496 individuals listed.  
This is 12 percent of the county population.

Can anyone go to the pantry?

Registration is required and there are income regulations.

How often can people go to the pantry?

Last year visits were increased from 4 per year to 6 per year. In 2012 visits increased to once a month.  
These visits do not include the "mass distribution" the last Thursday of the month.

How is this paid for?

The annual budget is over \$1,000,000. The in-kind value of donated food and the NYS HPNAP grant provides 80 percent of the income. Individuals and congregations provide 12 percent.

Are volunteers needed?

YES! Volunteers put in a total of over 14,000 hours during last year. There are currently 154 active volunteers, and more are needed. The pantry is open M, W, T & F from 9:00am to 11:30am. Will you consider volunteering? Help is needed for any morning or even part of the morning, once a week, or once a month.

| ~ January 2013 ~                                                                                                                       |                                                           |                                                                                                             |                                                                             |                                                                          |     |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Sun                                                                                                                                    | Mon                                                       | Tue                                                                                                         | Wed                                                                         | Thu                                                                      | Fri | Sat |
|                                                                                                                                        |                                                           | 1                                                                                                           | 2                                                                           | 3                                                                        | 4   | 5   |
| <b>6 Epiphany</b><br>9:00 Sunday School<br>9:00 Adult Education<br>Nursery Care<br>Epiphany Potluck Lunch<br>to follow 10:15am service | 7                                                         | 8<br>10:30am-12:00pm<br>Theological Seminar<br>Conference Room<br><br>Book Club – 7:00pm<br>Conference Room | 9<br><br><br>7:30pm-9:00pm<br>Community of<br>Friends                       | 10<br>10:45-12:00<br>Community of<br>Friends<br><br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal | 11  | 12  |
| <b>13 1 Epiphany</b><br>9:00 Sunday School<br><br>9:00 Adult Education<br>Nursery Care                                                 | 14<br>7:30 Vestry Meeting -<br>Conference Room            | 15<br>10:30am-12:00pm<br>Theological Seminar<br>Conference Room                                             | 16<br><br><br>7:30pm-9:00pm<br>Community of<br>Friends                      | 17<br>10:45-12:00<br>Community of<br>Friends<br><br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal | 18  | 19  |
| <b>20 2 Epiphany</b><br>9:00 Sunday School<br><br>9:00 Adult Education<br>Nursery Care<br><br>Annual Parish Meeting<br>11:30am         | 21<br>7:30 Parish Council<br>Meeting - Conference Room    | 22<br>10:30am-12:00pm<br>Theological Seminar<br>Conference Room<br><br>7:00 ECW Meets<br>Parish Hall        | 23<br>10:00 DOK Meeting<br><br><br>7:30pm-9:00pm<br>Community of<br>Friends | 24<br>10:45-12:00<br>Community of<br>Friends<br><br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal | 25  | 26  |
| <b>27 3 Epiphany</b><br>9:00 Sunday School<br><br>9:00 Adult Education<br>Nursery Care                                                 | 28<br>7:30 Worship Committee<br>Meeting – Conference Room | 29<br>10:30am-12:00pm<br>Theological Seminar<br>Conference Room                                             | 30<br><br><br>7:30pm-9:00pm<br>Community of<br>Friends                      | 31<br>10:45-12:00<br>Community of<br>Friends<br><br>7:30 Choir Rehearsal |     |     |

## January Anniversaries



## January Anniversaries

### Birthdays:

**Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>**                      Jacob Price  
**Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>**                        Sam Boese  
**Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>**                        Robert Bailey  
                                       Emma Koch  
                                       Barbara Dobbins Stratton  
**Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>**                        David Taylor  
**Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>**                      Laura Pratico  
**Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>**                      Lisa McDonald  
**Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>**                      Kate Riordon  
**Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>**                      Andrei Crates

Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>

Marshall Cohen  
Megan Norris-Dominguez

Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>

Scott Kilbourn

Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>

Carolyn Morin

Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>

Adam Boese  
Chloe Martin  
Stella Martin

Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>

Cathleen Knauf

### Weddings:

Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>

Mark & Galina Bayer

Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>

Bruce & Jane Tatge

# St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

**1935 The Plaza, Schenectady, New York 12309**

## Church Staff

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## The Vestry

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## **The Church Office**

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The telephone number is (518) 346-6241

If we are unable to answer your call, please leave a message.

We will call you back as soon as possible.

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Please submit articles to Cathleen Knauf, 346-6241,

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**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
**1935 The Plaza**  
**Schenectady, New York 12309**

*Saint Stephen's  
Episcopal Church*

*progressive,  
catholic, reformed*

**Holy Communion**  
**Sunday 8:00 am and 10:15 am**  
**Education Hour for all Ages – 9am**

**1935 The Plaza**  
**Schenectady**  
**[www.saintstephenscheneactady.org](http://www.saintstephenscheneactady.org)**  
**346-6241**

