

The Messenger

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
January 2014

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.

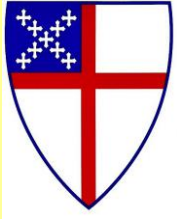
The Epiphany is still the primary Feast of the Incarnation in Eastern Churches, and the three-fold emphasis is still prominent. In the West, however, including the Episcopal Church, the story of the Wise Men has tended to overshadow the other two events. Modern lectionary reform, reflected in the Book 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 5th @ 8:00AM and 10:15AM services.

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

Greetings from Father James!

Dear Friends in Christ,



Just before Christmas, our Office Manager, Cathy Knauf, informed me that she cannot continue to work at St. Stephen's beginning in 2014. Actually, this was a part of our agreement when she took the full-time position with the Schenectady school district: that she would do both jobs until she and I could evaluate how it was going. Well, her health will not allow both and, in fact, when she told me this she was suffering from bronchitis. Cathy was gracious in offering to edit the Messenger for the foreseeable future.

I have informed the vestry and the Personnel Committee of the situation. For now my plan is to divide some of Cathy's tasks among our members until a new person can be hired. Beginning in 2014 I would like five volunteers each to take a weekday morning to be present in the office. Sometimes there might be simple work to do, but mostly this would allow a presence in the office and to the phone to be answered. Jan Lovett has already volunteered for Wednesday mornings, so now we need four more.

I was in the best position to gather together the information for the weekly bulletin during the interim between office managers before Cathy was hired, so I will be doing that once again. Please email any announcements for the bulletin to me (james.ross.mcd@gmail.com) by Wednesdays at noon for the following Sunday.

Finally, I want to thank Cathy for the wonderful work she has done at St. Stephen's during the last 3½ years. Not only has she performed the routine tasks of the office in an efficient manner, but she has been cheerful and courteous to visitors and to telephone callers. She has had a good sense of what is most important, and only involved me with day-to-day work when it is appropriate. I will miss her very much!

A new year brings new situations. As a congregation we are getting healthier with new families joining and new ideas surfacing. I am excited about the year ahead!

James+

Household Blessing for Epiphany

A custom from Eastern Europe that is presently being recovered in North America is the practice of blessing homes during the days after the 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 2014

Building Faith with Fun



Contact Information:

Miranda Rand: mirandarand411@gmail.com

George Woodzell: gwwny@verizon.net

Peter Nelson: pnelson245@yahoo.com

On January 5, our first Sunday back after the Christmas break, Ms. Meg Dominguez, Planetarium Director at MiSci will visit both classrooms with a special program on what the Magi saw when they followed the star to Bethlehem.



The Sunday Friends class will gather the usual time of 9:00am; Godly Play students should come directly to the classroom when they come into the building – we will have an extended session, starting promptly at 10:15 and ending in time for students to participate in the Eucharist with their families.

Following the Eucharist there will be a pot-luck luncheon and a special visit by our very own magi. Please bring a dish to share.

A big round of applause and my deep appreciation to everyone who participated in, or helped with, the pageant on December 22: despite the fact that Thanksgiving recess and bad weather cut our rehearsal time in half, our students came off like pros, and I was incredibly proud!



Adult Education

Sunday Morning Adult Education:

Genesis: A Living Conversation with Bill Moyers

Moyers gathers the voices of numerous thinkers and writers: novelists Mary Gordon and John Barth; theologians Elaine Pagels and Phyllis Trible; biblical critics Robert Alter (whose own translation of Genesis are published by Norton) and Walter Breuggeman; and cultural critics like Karen Armstrong and Carol Gilligan, among others, into a fascinating, often tendentious, conversation about the living character of stories that address everything from the creation of the world and the temptations of the first couple to the internecine struggles of Jacob's family and the slavery of Joseph.

Classes will be held on Sunday Mornings from 9:00-10:00AM in the Conference room.

Jan. 5 - Call and Promise: When God chooses Abraham to found a dynasty, how does Abraham react? What does divine sanction mean, both for the chosen and for the "non-chosen"? *Participants: Scholar Robert Alter; law professor Azizah Y. al-Hibri; novelist Bharati Mukherjee; community activist Eugene Rivers III; theologians Lewis B. Smedes and Burton L. Visotzky; and playwright-composer Elizabeth Swados.*

Jan. 12 - A Family Affair: Seeking a descendant, Abraham takes Hagar as a wife, who conceives Ishmael engendering jealousy, division, and pain for everyone involved. *Participants: Scholar Robert Alter; law professor Azizah Y. al-Hibri; novelist Bharati Mukherjee; community activist Eugene Rivers III; theologians Lewis B. Smedes and Burton L. Visotzky; and playwright-composer Elizabeth Swados.*

Jan. 19 - The Test: God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac raises profoundly disturbing questions. What kind of God would make such a demand? And what kind of parent would consider obeying it? *Participants: Theologians Dianne Bergant, Norman J. Cohen, Francisco O. Garcia-Treto, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Phyllis Trible, and Burton L. Visotzky and journalist P.K. McCaiy.*

Jan. 26 – **Blessed Deception:** By engineering Isaac's blessing on Jacob, does Rebecca become the heroine of the story, or simply a schemer? And what of Esau, her passed-over son? *Participants: Biochemist Leon R. Kass; writer Stephen Mitchell; theologians Elaine H. Pagels, Jean-Pierre M. Ruiz, Marianne Meye Thompson, and Robin Darling Young; and psychotherapist Naomi H. Rosenblatt.*
dominated America.

**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



Between Athens.....and Jerusalem

A Seminar of Theological Reflection on the

Great Ideas of the Western World

Tuesday Mornings 10:30-Noon



Based on “The Great Ideas of Philosophy” by Professor Daniel N. Robinson

- January 7 **Darwin and Nature’s Purposes**
From social Darwinism to sociobiology, the evolutionary science of the late 18th and 19th centuries dominates social thought and political initiatives
- January 14 **Marxism—Dead But Not Forgotten**
After years of influence, the Marxist critique of society is now more a subtext than a guiding bible of reform
- January 21 **The Freudian World**
Marx, Darwin, and Freud are the chief 19th-century architects of modern thought about society and self each was nominally scientific in approach and believed their theories to be grounded in the realm of observable facts
- January 28 **The Radical William James**
Mortally opposed to all block universes of certainty and theoretical hubris, James offered a quintessentially home-grown psychology of experience

To Contact Father James:

Office: 346-6241

Cell: 522-3906

Email: james.ross.mcd@gmail.com



Father James,
Rector

Inquirers’ classes

Inquirers’ classes are intended to give prospective members an overview of how Episcopalians fit into the complex of protestant and catholic churches. Discussion topics include the world-wide Anglican Church, the National Episcopal Church, our own Diocese of Albany, our own parish of St. Stephen’s and the relationship among all four. Discussion are candid and open.

This course is required of all adults who wish to be confirmed or received into the church, but is open to all members of the Parish Family. Confirmation will take place in late spring.

All classes take place in the rector’s study from February 2nd 23rd on Sunday afternoons from noon – 1. Please see or contact (522-3906, james.ross.mcd@gmail.com) the rector if you are interested in attending.

2014 March & Program
honoring
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
SUNDAY, JANUARY 19th



***The March:* ASSEMBLE AT VETERAN'S PARK, SCHENECTADY - 2:00 P.M.**

***The Program:* FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 603 STATE STREET,
APPROXIMATELY 2:30 P.M.**

***The Choir:* FEATURING SINGERS FROM THROUGHOUT SCHENECTADY
COUNTY**

Sponsored by The Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition of the Schenectady County Human Rights
Commission

Ministry Updates

The 2013/2014 St. Stephen's Book Club!

Jan: *The Warmth of Other Suns:
The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*
by Isabel Wilkerson

Feb: *Sandcastle Girls*
by Chris Bohjalian

March 11: *Half Broke Horses: A True Life Novel*
by Jeanette Walls.

This will also be a game night!

**We meet at 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of the month
in the Teen Lounge.**

Next meeting is this Tuesday, January 14th @ 4:00pm.

SICM NEWS

We want to begin the new year with a resounding thank you for your generosity to SICM during 2013. Your donations to the food pantry, time spent assembling and handing out lunches to the children in July, attendance at the Harvest For the Pantry dinner and the cards you purchased are all significant gifts to further the work SICM does throughout the year.

Amy, Eunice and Marti



Annual Parish Meeting – January 26th

Our annual meeting will be held on
Sunday January 26, 2014 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.

. The purposes of the meeting are to elect representatives to the vestry, to review finances of the parish for the past year and to examine the budget of the current year, to hear brief reports from parish leaders and the clergy, and to discuss other issues which affect the congregation.

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 members of the vestry as a nominating committee: Carole Merrill-Mazurek, Joe Palko and Stan Jakubowski. They are securing the nominations for 3 – three-year terms and 1 - Warden – two-year term for next year. In addition, nominations will continue to be made from the floor of the Annual Meeting of the parish.

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 Fr. James or Deacon Pat:

1. **Before going to the hospital.** It makes no difference whether you are going to the hospital for major surgery or for a simple procedure - 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 - 522-3906
Deacon Pat - 372-5836

~ January 2014 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7:30am Morning Prayer Sundays 9:00 Nursery Care every Sunday	9:00am Morning Prayer – Mon-Sat		1	2 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	3 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	4
5 Epiphany 8:00&10:15 Sunday Eucharists 9:00 Sunday School/Adult Education 11:30 Epiphany Pot Luck	6 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Parish Council Meeting	7 10:30am Seminar of Theological Reflection	8 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Handbell Practice	9 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	10 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	11
12 1 Epiphany 8:00&10:15 Sunday Eucharists 9:00 Sunday School/Adult Education	13 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Vestry Meeting	14 10:30am Seminar of Theological Reflection 4:00pm Book Club	15 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 10:30am DOK 7:30pm Handbell Practice	16 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	17 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	18
19 2 Epiphany 8:00&10:15 Sunday Eucharists 9:00 Sunday School/Adult Education	20 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 6:30 Girl Scout Community Meeting	21 10:30am Seminar of Theological Reflection	22 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Handbell Practice	23 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	24 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group Red Cross Blood Drive 1:00-6:00pm	25
26 3 Epiphany 8:00&10:15 Sunday Eucharists 9:00 Sunday School/Adult Education 10:15 Baptism-reception to follow coffee hour 11:30pm Annual Meeting	27 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Worship Committee Meeting	28 10:30am Seminar of Theological Reflection	29 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Handbell Practice	30 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	31 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	

January Anniversaries



Birthdays:

Jan. 5 th	Sam Boese
Jan. 7 th	Robert Bailey Emma Koch Barbara Dobbins Stratton
Jan. 9 th	David Taylor
Jan. 12 th	Laura Pratico
Jan. 13 th	Lisa McDonald
Jan. 16 th	Kate Riordon
Jan. 18 th	Andrei Crates

January Anniversaries

Jan. 22nd

Marshall Cohen
Megan Norris-Dominguez

Jan. 26th

Scott Kilbourn

Jan. 27th

Carolyn Morin

Jan. 29th

Adam Boese

Jan. 30th

Kirsten Cestaro
Cathleen Knauf

Weddings:

Jan. 23rd

Mark & Galina Bayer

Jan. 31st

Bruce & Jane Tatge

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

1935 The Plaza, Schenectady, New York 12309

Church Staff

The Rev. Dr. James R. McDonald, Rector,
370-3573, james.ross.mcd@gmail.com

The Rev. Patricia L. Jones, Deacon,
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Robert Acosta, Director of Music,
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Cathleen Knauf, Administrative Assistant,
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The Vestry

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Jr. Warden, Carole Merrill-Mazurek, 346-8959, merrill9@nycap.rr.com

Class of 2013:

Erin Cohen, 346-9377, cohenerine@gmail.com
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Peter Nelson, 374-0382, pnelson245@yahoo.com
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Bill Frank, 466-3111, aircprez@aol.com
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The Church Office

Our office is located at 1229 Baker Avenue.
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.

The Rector's email is: james.ross.mcd@gmail.com

Our website is <http://www.saintstephenschenelectady.org/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaintStephenschenelectady>

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Please submit articles to Cathleen Knauf -
ssec.cathleen@gmail.com by the 22nd of the Month before.

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

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Schenectady
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