

The Messenger

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

May 2014

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SO MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR

Thank you.....

Thank you.....

Thank you.....for a Holy Lent and Easter

...To the men of the parish and all the others who helped us prepare for Lent with wonderful pancakes and sausages on Shrove Tuesday.

...To all cooks who cooked and baked our suppers before the Sunday Lenten studies.

...To the Alter Guild and to brass polishers par excellence who polished all the brass in the church, and made Easter Day beautiful with flower arrangements.

...To Bob Acosta and the Choir members who helped to make Palm Sunday beautiful, and Easter Day joyous. And to the Bell Choir for exceptional music at the later Easter service.

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

...To Lisa and all those who helped in the nursery room.

...To the ushers and to the offering counters.

...To our administrative assistant volunteers, Carole, Jan and Mary Ann who worked so hard to answer phones, prepare bulletins and make other arrangements in the office.

...To the Episcopal Church Women for their incredible community service.

...To Allison, who revived our acolyte program; and to Paul who does so much behind the scenes to make everything run smoothly.

...To Marilyn and her team who prepared a wonderful Seder supper.

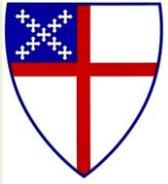
...To Richey who organized coffee hours and so many other things we'll never know.

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

...To the women who made our palm crosses.

...and the list goes on and on and on.

Greetings from Father James!



Dear Friends,

As we head into the seven Sundays of the Easter season I would like to share with you several things I have on my mind.

Music in the church: We have a long tradition of having our own members sing and play instruments during the 10:15am Eucharist. I would like to expand that for the summer months when our choir takes its break. I am asking members of the church to dust off the instruments you have played earlier in your life and offer that gift to the larger congregation. You could play by yourself or with another instrument for the Offertory during July and August. Also, we have simple arrangements for an ensemble to play Christmas carols. Such a group could be organized and begin practicing this autumn for December. I, personally, would want to be in such a group and I would like to know if members also would be interested. Please let me know.

Outreach through Schenectady Inner City Ministry: I would like to thank the Episcopal Church Women for their well-organized and very successful hunger project they undertook for Lent. The group not only held events to raise money to support SICM, but also educated parishioners on the struggles of families living with food insecurity. "Bread for Lent" raised over \$1000!

Planning for next year: The parish council is making plans for new programs for the 2014-2015 school year. They would like all of our members to provide comments and ideas as they plan. What kind of fellowship activities would you like to see us repeat next year and what new ideas do you have? What adult education topics would you like to see us offer? Have you been involved in service projects in other organizations that you think would fit into the life of our parish? Do you have ideas about worship? Your input is extremely important to us.

Finally, I cannot help but wonder: do we realize, do we ever **really** realize the gift of this congregation to us? Look through the directory - at all the names of all who have joined our membership - and remember that most congregations around us struggle to show a lessened decline each year. Especially, I am overwhelmed at the children in our congregation who have crowded into our church during the last ten months.

Do we ever really realize what an incredible, lively, remarkable gift this church is to each and every one of us? I give thanks to God for the gifts of such a congregation.

James+

Youth Education at St. Stephen's

Spring 2014

Building Faith with Fun



Miranda Rand, Education Director

Contact Information:

Miranda Rand: mirandarand411@gmail.com

George Woodzell: gwwny@verizon.net

Peter Nelson: pnelson245@yahoo.com

Godly Play

(Grades Pre-K-3rd) -

Miranda Rand

We celebrated Lent with a progressive set of stories about Jesus' life and ministry, *The Faces of Easter*, and on Good Friday, talked about the last few days of Jesus' life on earth and decorated crosses.

For the month of May we will concentrate on post-resurrection stories, including Jesus' appearances to Thomas and to the disciples by the sea, and end with a special labyrinth event with Ms. Pam Walsh.



Youth Group

(Grades 7-12) -

George Woodzell
& Peter Nelson



Youth are starting to organize their funding sources for Work Camp 2014, when youth from St. Stephens and the recently dissolved Union Presbyterian Church join together for one week this summer to rehab homes in Appalachia. Soon they will be selling shares (\$25.00 and up), and working a cake walk at the annual picnic in June. Please support them generously when they ask.

Sunday Friends

(Grades 4th-6th) -

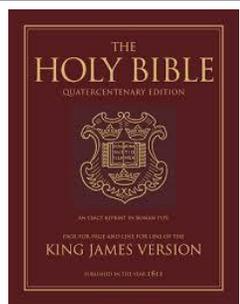


One Sunday in April we studied forgiveness through the lens of the Jesus' Lost Son parable and a poem called *The Cookie Thief*. We then baked and decorated "forgiveness cookies;" and wrote cards to a family members asking forgiveness.

Starting on April 27 and continuing into the first two Sundays in May, we will discuss the concept of sacred circles.

- Ms. Pam Walsh, a trained labyrinth facilitator, will lead students on a prayer walk and discuss the origins and purpose of the labyrinth. Our theme: loving and following God.
- Carole Merrill-Mazurek will lead the class as a birthday gift to me. Through a variety of scripture texts she will discuss relationships with the students, then using a mandala divided into quadrants, each will create a circle of their own lives.
- I will lead the students in a wrap-up session. After a discussion on types of sacred circles, I will introduce them to an art form that is sweeping the country, *Zentangles*. Using a compass and special pens, students will embellish their circles with geometric designs.

Adult Education



Sunday Adult Education

The Way Things Are

King James Bible: The Book That Changed the World is a "celebration" of the Authorized Version which will take the participants through the tumultuous times which led up to the publication of the KJB in 1611. This course explores the story behind the King James taking a historical survey of the years preceding 1611 and the political and religious landscape which confronted the new King. The course follows James I from his birth to his ultimate ascension to the English throne. Particular focus is placed on the role the King James Bible would play in James' strategy to unify the landscape, politically and religiously.

Classes are held on Sunday mornings
May 11th – June 4th
from 9am to 10am in the Conference Room.

To Contact Father James:
Office: 346-6241
Cell: 522-3906
Email: james.ross.mcd@gmail.com

Seminar of Theological Reflection on the Great Ideas of the Western Between Athens.....and Jerusalem

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

May 6th - **Justice and Just Wars** - *Theories of the just war, beginning with St. Augustine and including St. Thomas Aquinas, Francisco de Vittoria, and Francisco Suarez, set forth principles by which engaging in and conducting war are justified.*

May 13th - **Aesthetics—Beauty Without Observers** - *The subject of beauty is among the oldest in philosophy, treated at length in several of the dialogues of Plato and in his Symposium, and redefined through history. What is beauty? Is there anything rational about it?*

May 20th - **God – Really?** - *We consider various theological arguments for and against belief in God, including those of Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Reid, and William James.*

Classes are held on Tuesday mornings from 10:30am to noon in the Conference Room.
Advanced handouts are available in the Nave Extension.

Adult Education Continued

Wednesday Evening Bible Study:

Intro. to the New Testament:

Drawing upon historical evidence that has created a revolution in New Testament scholarship, this course challenges familiar assumptions and conventional notions about Christian origins. Archaeological finds have yielded new understandings of Jesus' class and social status; fresh interpretations have transformed earlier ideas about the identity of the early Christians and their communities. Through engaging, on-camera interviews with twelve scholars-New Testament theologians, archaeologists, and historians-the series presents their contributions to this intellectual revolution. Together they represent a range of viewpoints, a diversity of faiths, and a shared commitment to bring new ways of thinking about Christianity.

Classes are held on Wednesday evenings from 7:30-8:30, May 4th to June 10th in the Conference Room. Please inform the rector (james.ross.mcd@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending.

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.

Discussions are candid and open.

All classes take place in the rector's study from May 4th - 25th
on Sunday afternoons from noon – 1:00pm.

Please see or contact the rector via email, james.ross.mcd@gmail.com or by phone 522-3906, with any questions.

Reviving Those Enjoyable Book Reviews

A tradition in the "Messenger" a few years back was a monthly review of a book by a member of the parish. We would like to begin again, and are asking for your help.

What is the most enjoyable book you have read in the last several months? Fiction would be most welcomed, non-fiction has infinite possibilities, and it could be a children's book (by a child?) Please consider this offering to the congregation and contact the parish office with your literary proposal.

This could be fun!

ROXBURY FARM CSA



Are you interested in fresh, local produce delivered weekly this summer and fall?

Roxbury Farm CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) still has openings for members. You may obtain information and enrollment forms on the farm's website, <http://www.roxburyfarm.com>, as well as from Richey Woodzell.

All of the vegetables are grown at Roxbury Farm in Kinderhook, NY, using organic and sustainable practices. The produce includes lettuces and other greens, tomatoes, corn, green beans, snap peas, summer and winter squash, potatoes and herbs, to name just a few.

A full share provides 15-20 pounds of vegetables per week for 23 weeks, enough for 2-4 adults on a vegetable-based diet. The cost is \$587, which can be paid in installments. There is also a 3-hour work requirement per share. For an additional \$125, you may sign up for the winter share, which is three 30-lb. boxes of root crops, winter squash and cabbage, delivered in December, January and February. CSA members may also purchase pastured pork and grass-fed lamb and beef raised on the farm. The meat products are certified Animal Welfare Approved for humane animal husbandry.

Sign up for the Schenectady or Glenville delivery site.

Pick-ups are on Tuesdays, June 10 – November 4, plus November 18.

Schenectady: 4:30 – 6:30 PM at Mt. Olivet Church, 1068 Park Avenue

Glenville: 4:00 – 6:30 PM at Immaculate Conception Church, Route 50

If a whole share is too much, consider a half-share – find someone to split a share with you!

Or buy a full share and donate the other half to the SICM pantry!

Roxbury farm has a commitment to the hungry in the communities they serve. They pack an extra 10% in their weekly deliveries for local food pantries, and any leftover produce goes to the pantries as well. Last year the SICM food pantry received over 4400 pounds of Roxbury Farm produce from the Schenectady and Glenville delivery sites.

Questions? Ask Richey Woodzell, 372-9398. We've been members for 12 years, and eagerly anticipate the beginning of each new season.

Mentors Needed for a Reading Readiness Program in the City of Schenectady

The Reading is Fun Program “Where Every Child is Everyone’s Child”

Did you know that of the 775 newly enrolled kindergartners tested for reading readiness skills in the Schenectady City School District at the start of the 2013 school year, only 23 (2.79%) could identify all 54 letters (upper and lower-case letters plus two more letters for another way to identify upper and lower case g.) and 54 (6.79%) could not identify a single letter among the total 54 letters. Of the 775 students tested, 272 (35%) could not identify a single letter sound, and only one student could identify all 33 letter sounds?

To remedy this situation a retired SUNYA professor, Alvin Magid, Ph.D., has started a community program *Reading is Fun*, which will center on four-year-olds, and mobilize a large corpus of trained volunteer instructors to teach the parents or other principal caregivers of as many of the children enrolling in the city school district’s kindergarten as may be attracted.

The program has partnership agreements with the Schenectady City School District and the Schenectady City School District Education Foundation, Inc., a 501c3 tax-exempt organization. The volunteer mentors will be trained by school district personnel during the months of July and August.

From September through June the four-year-olds’ parents or other principal caregivers will be taught reading-readiness skills by program volunteers in meetings that occur at least twice monthly for a minimum of 30 minutes.

To volunteer, for more information on the Reading is Fun program, or to make a donation of money or in-kind services (one way to help is to purchase age-appropriate books at garage sales or library book sales for the program – especially books with brightly colored illustrations); contact Dr. Alvin Magid via email, at magid2@juno.com.

Many of the children do not know the front of a book from the back, and most have never held a book or visited a library.

During the course of this past school year, I have been involved in a mentoring program with 7th grade girls in the city school district through the League of Women Voters. I received information on the Reading is Fun program from a friend who knew of my involvement with the girls and my work with the children and youth of St. Stephen’s and thought I might be interested. I gave the program serious thought, since I have been an avid reader and a lover of books from a very early age. I declined on the basis that I already had enough to do. I did, however, volunteer to make the information known to members of the congregation. If anyone decides to become a mentor, please let me know. I’d love to get a “bird’s eye view!”

Miranda Rand

Ministry Updates

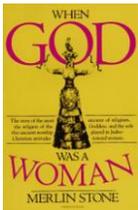
ECW Update

The Episcopal Church Women held their last official meeting April 22. The group will hold one more service project and May “Thank You” potluck for the congregation before going on Summer hiatus.

Here is what was discussed -- and upcoming:

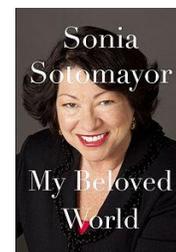
- Final May “Stuff the Crib” project, during which we will stuff the crib in the church narthex with a baby food of some sort, likely formula. TBD.
- The group will use its last meeting of the season, 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 27, to hold a “Thank you” potluck for the congregation for the wonderful show of love during the Bread for Lent effort. More than \$1,000 was raised for the SICM Emergency Food Pantry. The potluck will take place in the Parish Hall. Look for a sign-up sheet at the back of the church for the potluck.
- The summer church picnic is planned for Sunday June 8, immediately following the 10:15 service in the Parish Hall. The church will provide fried chicken and is asking the congregation to provide sides, salads and desserts. Look for sign-up sheets at the back of the church for food you plan to bring and volunteer jobs to help the event run smoothly.

St. Stephen's Book Club!



May: When God Was a Woman
By Merlin Stone

June: My Beloved World
By Sonia Sotomayor



**We meet at 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of the Month
In the Teen Lounge
Next meeting is Tuesday, May 13th**

~ May 2014 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7:30am Morning Prayer Sundays	9:00am Morning Prayer – Mon-Sats			1 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	2 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	3
4 3rd Sunday of Easter 8:00&10:15 Sunday Eucharists 9:00 Sunday School/ Adult Education	5 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30 Parish Council Meeting	6 10:30am Seminar of Theological Reflection 7:00pm Book Club	7 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Handbell Practice 7:30 Bible Study	8 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	9 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	10
11 4th Sunday of Easter 8:00&10:15 Sunday Eucharists 9:00 Sunday School/ Adult Education	12 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Vestry Meeting	13 10:30am Seminar of Theological Reflection	14 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Handbell Practice 7:30 Bible Study	15 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	16 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	17
18 5th Sunday of Easter 8:00&10:15 Festive Eucharists 9:00 Sunday School/ Adult Education	19 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Communications Committee Meeting	20 10:30am Seminar of Theological Reflection	21 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 10:00 DOK 7:30pm Handbell Practice 7:30pm Bible Study	22 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	23 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	24
25 6th Sunday of Easter 8:00&10:15 Sunday Eucharists 9:00 Sunday School/ Adult Education	26 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Worship Committee Meeting	27 10:30am Seminar of Theological Reflection	28 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group 7:30pm Handbell Practice 7:30pm Bible Study	29 10:00am Eurcharist 7:30 Choir Practice	30 8:30am Osteo Exercise Group	31

May Birthdays



Birthdays:

May 2 nd	Jennifer Kirby
May 4 th	Miranda Rand Bruce Tatge
May 5 th	Belachew Emaelaf
May 12 th	Ayodele Jones
May 15 th	Charline Hoffmann
May 17 th	Maggie McDougall
May 24 th	Cheryl Syta
May 25 th	Claudia Jakubowski
May 26 th	Phyllis Chapman

May Wedding Anniversaries

May 26th

Allison de Kanel
Emmy Grub
Marilyn Humphrey
William Schlansker

May 31st

Dawn Kaler
Julie McDonald

Weddings:

May 23rd

Dave & Denise Crates
Brian & Katryn Riordon

May 28th

George & Richey Woodzell

May 30th

Robert & Phyllis Chapman

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

1935 The Plaza, Schenectady, New York 12309

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The Church Office

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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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Our website is <http://www.saintstephenscheneectady.org/>
Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaintStephensSchenectady>

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Please submit articles to Cathleen Knauf -
sssec.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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