

The Messenger

St. Stephen's Episcopal church
Schenectady, NY

January, 2015

What's in this issue:

Epiphany, p. 1

Household Blessing, p. 1

Fr. James' Letter, p. 2

Thank-You!!! p. 3

Vestry Nominations p. 3

Vestry Requirements p. 3

Be an Usher! p. 4

Home Communion p. 4

New Book: Library News p. 4

Adult Education:

Inquirer's Class p. 5

Living the questions p. 5

Discovering the Bible p. 5

Youth Education: Miranda p. 6

MLK Celebration p. 7

CRT Classes p. 8

January Calendar p. 9

Recipe p. 10

Birthdays p. 11

Masthead p. 12

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 threefold 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 4th at 8:00 am, 10:15 a.m. and 7 pm with Eucharist and renewal of our Baptismal vows.

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.



Please talk to the rector (522-3906) or email at james.ross.mcd@gmail.com if you would like to have your home blessed.

From the Rector

Dear Friends,

One of the great leaders of the Episcopal Church in a past generation, Bishop Stephen Bayne, had some sage words on the month we are now entering: "January, I have long felt, is a month without which life would be greatly improved. Annual reports, final days of reckoning with postponed business, new budgets, clearing out of files...to say nothing of Christmas bills and the like...it is a miserable, harassed, sniveling, crass, overbearing, worldly wretch of a month."



That may be a little harsh, but I think Bishop Bayne has the right idea. Still, at least around the parish, I see some redeeming signs of life in the depths of this winter.

For one thing, the bitter cold and many feet of snow seem to bring out the best in people. Maybe because it's harder to get out, and harder to get together, it seems better when we do. For all the busy ness of this month, and all of the winter chill, I find the being with people on Sunday, and other times, especially rich.

I am heartened, too, in preparing the Annual Report for the Annual Parish Meeting. I am amazed by the amount of energy and activity going on in this place, and by the remarkable generosity of spirit and time with which people give of themselves.

But maybe I value January most of all because it seems like a new beginning, and that's something I can always use. I start into this new year resolved to be doing all that I can to build us into a genuinely supportive family of Christians finding ways for us to be together, challenging us to connect ourselves more deeply to Christ and to each other, exploring together how best to minister to the world in Christ's name.

January permits such resolutions. I guess I'll be glad when the month is over, but I hope that the good things the people, the community, the dreams of the year will carry us on as we make the snowy trek toward spring. Peace,
James+

THANK YOU...THANK YOU...THANK YOU...

...To Miranda Rand, Allison deKanel and all our actors who allowed the Christmas pageant to happen...and to the parents who helped it all come together

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

...To June Russell, the Pratico and Morin families who 'greened' the church

...To Bob Acosta, the Choir members, Lisa McDonald and the Bell Choir members who helped to make Advent and Christmas beautiful

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

...To the ushers and to the offering counters

... To Ruth Turner, who puts those beautiful table decorations up in our parish hall

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

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

Nominating Committee Appointed

The vestry has appointed the class of 2015 members of the vestry Jack Feyrer, Bill Frank, Jim Syta with Erin Cohen as chair. They are securing the nominations for the 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 for the vestry class of 2017
- 1 - Warden – two year term
- 1 – Clerk (Secretary) – One Year Term

Requirements for Vestry Membership

Basically there are only three requirements for vestry membership:

(1) being a baptized member of the parish church.
This can be accomplished through baptism at St. Stephen's or through a transfer from another Episcopal Church.

(2) having been regular in attendance of Sunday Eucharists.

(3) having been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God. This includes giving of Time, Talent, and Treasure.



Ushering Made Easy

GREET all who arrive and provide them with bulletins. Watch for visitors and those who may need assistance.

INVITE two people to carry up bread and wine at the offertory. This should be done early on.

COUNT the congregation, including children and teachers in classes. Write the tally on the yellow slip provided.

COLLECT the offering and present it at the altar along with the gifts of food and the bread and wine.

“RELEASE” the congregation to the altar rail, offering assistance as needed.

OPEN the doors to the nave extension while the final hymn is sung. Tidy worship materials and pews.

These are the basic duties of ushers. A more complete guide is kept on the Ushers' Table at the back of the church. Ask questions. Learn by doing. Enjoy getting to know and serve the members of St. Stephen's.

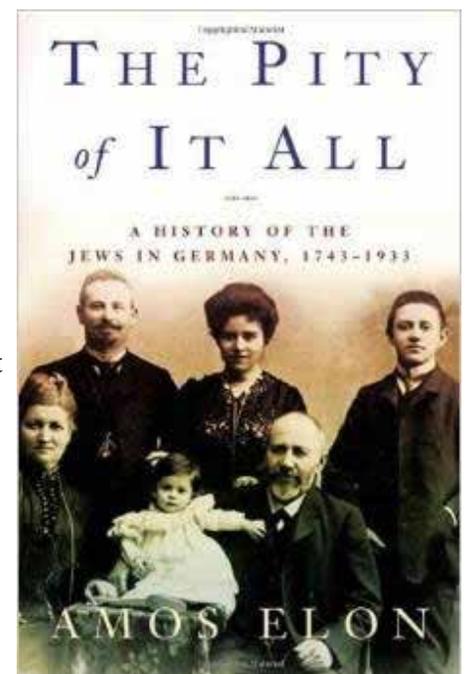
Home Communion

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.

From the Library

In response to a long standing request to anyone in the congregation to suggest books that they have read that they think others may want to read, Jane Tatge and Jo Adams recommend **The Pity of it All: a History of the Jews in Germany, 1743-1933**, by Amos Elon. 2002, New York:Metropolitan Books. 943 Elo in the St. Stephen's Library. The following review is taken from Kirkus Reviews:

A superb account of the sometimes exalted, often tragic relations among Germans and Jews, "two souls within a single body." Jews, writes Israeli novelist and historian Elon (A Blood-Dimmed Tide: Dispatches from the Middle East, 1997, etc.), had lived in Germany since the days of the Roman conquest, though always uneasily. For a 200-year period, however, much of German society opened to them, with institutional barriers and common prejudices falling away. Elon begins with the arrival in Berlin, in 1743, of a shoeless, hunchbacked boy from Dessau, Moses Mendelssohn, who spoke only Hebrew and Yiddish; fewer than 20 years later, Mendelssohn had taught himself several languages and had "become a renowned German philosopher, philologist, stylist, literary critic, and man of letters, one of the first to bridge the social and cultural barrier between Jews and other Germans." Within a few years, other Jews were able to enter the professions, attend university, and engage in business more or less openly; some even received titles of nobility. Over time, their influence on the arts and culture, combining with what otherwise was a golden age for German language and literature, produced a remarkable body of work that has been likened to that of the Re-



naissance and, Elon observes, would be remembered as such had not the end been so tragic. In few other places did Jews so successfully assimilate into the dominant society, so much so that German Jews widely opposed the mass immigration of their brethren from Russia following the pogroms of the late-19th century, with German-Jewish politician Walter Rathenau decrying the arrival of the "Asiatic horde." At the time of WWI, Germany was renowned as a place of religious tolerance, a situation that would soon thereafter change abruptly with the assassination of Rathenau, the collapse of the Weimar Republic, and the rise of Adolf Hitler. Well-written, humane, full of learned asides and character sketches of figures such as Heinrich Heine, Else Lasker-Schüler, and Karl Kraus: a memorable evocation of a disappeared world.

(Kirkus Reviews, September 15, 2002)

Education for Adults

Inquirers Classes

Interested in learning more about the Christian faith from the perspective of the Episcopal Church tradition?



This course is an introduction to the Episcopal Church in the United States. These four classes give an overview of how Episcopalians fit into the complex of protestant and catholic churches. The National Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Albany, the congregation of St. Stephen's and the relationship among all three will be explored. Frank discussions include both the wonderful things

about our Church, and also some not-so-wonderful things. This course is required for all adults who wish to be confirmed or received into the church, but is open to all members of the Parish Family.

Classes will be held on Sunday afternoons at noon during the month of January and February in the rector's office. Please talk to the rector (522-3906) or email at james.ross.mcd@gmail.com if you would like to attend.

Sunday Morning Adult Education: "Living the Questions"

By living the questions — and simply paying attention — we open ourselves to a perspective on life that prepares us to embrace mystery...Isn't that what it's all about? When mystery is embraced, freedom is embraced. Openness is embraced. The journey is embraced. Far from being cast adrift, those who embrace mystery are set on a lifelong path of discovery, growth, and gratitude for the wonder of it all. This course consists of viewing a video featuring thirty acclaimed scholars, theologians and other experts and then having a class discussion about that week's theme. Classes are held at 9-10am Sunday mornings in the Conference Room.



DISCOVERING THE BIBLE: Hebrew Scriptures Overview

This course is a survey of the stories of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), while discussing some of the scholarly issues surrounding each part of the Old Testament (such as the JEDP theory). The videos take account of new research in the field of biblical studies.

These classes are presented as a survey, not a theology. So don't expect it to stand up for any particular theological perspective (you will be

given the tools to do that on your own). It is a useful introductory-level course for students starting out in biblical study.

January 4 – From Abraham through Conquest of Canan

January 11 - From David through The Exile

January 18 – From the Return from Exile through Alexander & Hellenism

January 25 - From The Apocrypha through Maccabees

Classes are held on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:00 in the Conference room. Please talk to the rector (522-3906) or email at james.ross.mcd@gmail.com if you would like to attend.

Christian Education

A new year and a fresh start...but wait, before we get into that, let's pause and give thanks for the old year... at the top of my list is the love and support of the parents, friends, and students of the Christian Education program at St. Stephen's. You have blessed me abundantly. Thank you!

Christmas 2014 programming came together splendidly -- it was, in my opinion, the best ever! The creativity of the Sunday Friends, (Grades 4-5-6) students, and the able leadership of Allison de Kanel made the shepherd skit a work of art. The narrated tableau for the Godly Play students, enhanced by Jim Syta's expressive narration and the theatrical skills of the participants made me proud! Bravo all!

So now, on to 2015...

On Epiphany Sunday, (January 4), we will have a pot-luck luncheon after the 10:15 service, followed by a special visit from the Magi. Classes will be as usual for the two groups – Sunday Friends at 9:00am and Godly Play between the children's message and communion during the 10:15 service.



During Lent we will explore the Gospel texts and discuss the characters in each... deciding how we relate to each of them and how in 21st century circumstances we would react to each situation.

I am also planning to incorporate some special visitors, spend a couple of Sundays focusing on hunger and the disadvantaged, and celebrate World Labyrinth Day with each classroom on the Sunday closest to the 1st Saturday in May with my friend and certified labyrinth facilitator, Ms. Pam Walsh.

The calendar from January 1st until June 14th calls for classes to be held every Sunday except Easter Day and the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend.

Happy New Year! Miranda Rand, Christian Education Director

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

2015 CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18th



Tribute to Rev. Eloise Frazier: MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 1068 Park Ave, Assembly Hall, 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

Capital Region Theological Center Classes

Registration 518-462-2470

<https://crtc.org/>

Preaching Lent Preaching Lent

Instructor - Dr. Rick Carlson

This course will encourage and prepare leaders for their 2015 Lenten preaching and teaching experiences.

Participants will journey together with all four of the Gospel writers, as well as the Epistles and Hebrew Scripture readings, taking them from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday. These texts and their themes will be those found in both the Revised Common Lectionary and the Narrative Lectionary resources.

Course Date: Thursday & Friday, January 8 & 9, 2015, 9am-3pm

Location: Delmar Presbyterian Church, 585 Delaware Avenue, Albany, NY-12054

Course Fees: \$165

Introduction to Preaching

Instructor Rev. Dr. Bill Levering.

Discover how to move from the biblical text and image to an engaging message. Designed for those with little prior instruction or experience in preaching, the course will introduce basic concepts for preparing and delivering a sermon. Participants will explore creative approach, organization, composition, style, and delivery of theological messages.

Time will be spent in lecture, discussion, presentation exercises, shared sermons, and analysis. Access to the internet is required and will be actively used. Small groups will be established based on experience and interest.

Course Dates: Saturdays, January 10, 17, 24, & 31, 9am-2:30pm

Location: First Reformed Church in Schenectady, 8 N. Church Street, Schenectady, NY 12305

Course Fee: \$275;

Christian Education Roundtable: Curriculum Peer Review

Overwhelmed by curriculum options? We invite Christian Educators, teachers, and those interested in Sunday School planning to be a part of a peer review session.

Together we'll analyze and discuss our findings, and enjoy a "Show and Tell" display of classroom setups and bulletin boards.

The World Cafe model offers a simple method to engage in meaningful roundtable discussion where input becomes collaboratively layered. Like a progressive dinner, these table talks build on each other. We harvest all the insights and share the results with the entire group.

Course Date: Saturday, 1/24/15, 9:00am-10:30am

Location: First Reformed Church of Scotia, 224 North Ballston Avenue, Scotia, NY 12302

Event Fees: \$25

Childcare will be available

January, 2015

This calendar is a draft copy. Things will change: stuff will be added, moved, taken out... To REALLY find out what's going on, listen to announcements Sunday mornings, read the Sunday bulletin, look on the web page calendar, and watch for the weekly letter. That said, here is January:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:00 Communion & Healing 7:30 Choir	2 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer	3 9:00 Morning Prayer 6:00 Youth "Thank-You" Dinner
4 Christmas 2 7:30 Morning prayer 8:00 Communion 9:00 <u>Nursery Care</u> 9:00 <u>Education Hour</u> 10:15 Communion&Kid's class 11:30 Epiphany Pot Luck & Magi visit Noon: <u>Inquirer's Class</u>	5 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer 7:30 Parish Council	6 The Epiphany 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:30 Religion and Philosophy	7 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer 7:30 <u>Bible 101</u> 7:30 Handbell Choir	8 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:00 Communion & Healing 7:30 Choir	9 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer	10 9:00 Morning Prayer
11 Epiphany 1 7:30 Morning prayer 8:00 Communion 9:00 <u>Nursery Care</u> 9:00 <u>Education Hour</u> 10:15 Communion&Kid's class Noon: <u>Inquirer's Class</u>	12 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer 7:30 Vestry	13 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:30 Religion and Philosophy 7:00 <u>Book Group</u>	14 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer 7:30 <u>Bible 101</u> 7:30 Handbell Choir	15 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:00 Communion & Healing 7:30 Choir	16 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer	17 9:00 Morning Prayer
18 Epiphany 2 M.L. King 7:30 Morning prayer 8:00 Communion 9:00 <u>Nursery Care</u> 9:00 <u>Education Hour</u> 10:15 Communion&Kid's class Noon: <u>Inquirer's Class</u> 2:30 <u>ML King</u>	19 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer 6:30 <u>Girl Scouts</u>	20 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:30 Religion and Philosophy	21 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:30 <u>DOK</u> 7:30 <u>Bible 101</u> 7:30 Handbell Choir	22 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:00 Communion & Healing 7:30 Choir	23 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer	24 9:00 Morning Prayer
25 Epiphany 3 7:30 Morning prayer 8:00 Communion 9:00 <u>Nursery Care</u> 9:00 <u>Education Hour</u> 10:15 Communion&Kid's class Noon: <u>Inquirer's Class</u> 11:30 <u>Annual Meeting</u>	26 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer 7:30 Worship Committee	27 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:30 Religion and Philosophy	28 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer 7:30 <u>Bible 101</u> 7:30 Handbell Choir	29 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:00 Communion & Healing 7:30 Choir	30 8:30 Osteo Exercise 9:00 Morning Prayer	31 9:00 Morning Prayer

January's Recipe

Gorgonzola Spinach Artichoke Dip

Recipe courtesy of Rachael Ray



Ingredients

- 2 (10-ounce) boxes chopped frozen spinach**
- 1 box frozen artichoke hearts**
- 3 tablespoons butter**
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped**
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- 1 cup chicken stock**
- 1 cup milk**
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- Pinch ground nutmeg, or to taste**
- 1 cup Gorgonzola crumbles**
- 1 1/2 cups shredded (a little larger than grated, available in tubs) Asiago or Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- Thick sesame bread sticks, for dipping**
- Celery hearts, trimmed for dipping**
- Pita crisps with Parmesan and herbs (recommended: Stacy's)**

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Defrost spinach 10 minutes on defrost setting in microwave then drain well by wringing out in dish towel. Defrost artichokes as well, 6 minutes on defrost in microwave then wring out and finely chop.

Heat a sauce pot with butter over medium to medium-high heat. Add garlic to melted butter and stir 1 to 2 minutes, then sprinkle in flour and combine 1 minute more. Whisk in stock and milk and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Thicken 2 minutes then remove from heat and melt in Gorgonzola. Stir in spinach and artichokes and half the shredded cheese then transfer to a small casserole and top with remaining cheese. Brown and bubble in the oven for 10 to 12 minutes. Serve with bread sticks, celery hearts and pita crisps for dipping.

Birthdays

Robert Bailey - 01/07
Emma Koch - 01/07
Barbara Dobbins Stratton - 01/07
David Taylor - 01/09
Laura Pratico - 01/12
Lisa McDonald - 01/13
Laura Fronk - 01/14
Katryn Riordon - 01/16
Andrei Crates - 01/18
Megan Norris-Dominguez - 01/22
K. Scott Kilbourn - 01/26
Carolyn Morin - 01/27
Kirsten Cestaro - 01/30

Anniversaries

Mark Bayer & Galina Bayer - 01/23
Mary & Harvey Alexander - 01/31
Bruce Tatge & Jane Tatge - 01/31



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Church 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

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/SaintStephensSchenectady>

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Please submit articles to our secretary at
StSteph1229@gmail.com by the 25th of the Month before.