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Marla Farrow  
*Organist/Choir Director*  
Fred Philcox  
*Beacon Editor*  
Dick Cerasuolo  
*Sexton*

***Every Sunday***

8:00a Holy Eucharist  
9:15a Church School  
9:30a Service w/ Eucharist  
and music

# ***THE BEACON***

*THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH*  
**March, 2011**

## ***Father George's Message***

Dear Friends,

We are now coming to the conclusion of this year's Confirmation Classes. These Classes covered an historical perspective on our Christian Faith, the Holy Bible; the Book of Common Prayer; the Governing Structure of the Episcopal Church; Jesus and the Creeds; the Catechism; an overnight meeting with the Bishop; and a Mission Project in Boston. We are looking forward to the day of Confirmation and Reception with Bishop Scruton on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

As Lent is now approaching we have a very interesting and informative schedule in store. The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will be on Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, in Fay Hall. Ash Wednesday services will be at 12:00 noon and 7:00 PM with full choir and Holy Eucharist at the evening observance. Ashes may be received at the conclusion of each service. During the Wednesday evenings between Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, St. Stephen's will be having our traditional Soup and Bread suppers with a presentation at each meal. These presentations will include three evenings of topics revolving around "Life During Ages 50 - 100+". Also, one evening will be on "Our Search for a New Rector" and lastly: "Who or What is God?" These special times together should be thought provoking, informative, and good fellowship for the parish.

After a meditative and prayerful Lent, we shall be ready for a meaningful Holy Week and Joyful Easter. The Holy Week and Easter schedule will be announced in forthcoming bulletins and the April Beacon.

So looking forward to springtime!  
Faithfully yours in Christ,

The Rev. George H. Warren



### from the editor's desk

Just got an e-mail that included the following: "Inside every old person there's a young person wondering, 'what happened?'" I can identify with that.

I recently wrote about singing at a memorial service on a Saturday, and witnessing a baptism the next day. I concluded that those two events summed up life in a nutshell. Someone dies; someone is born.

That got me thinking about life and its stages, especially after you're married. I remember raising our kids, hoping that they would grow up to be good people. Life was good; some hassles but definitely worthwhile. Sharyn and I were busy; sometimes looking forward to being "empty nesters."

The kids graduated from high school; went on to college; got married, and are well on their way in their own lives. Sharyn and I are enjoying these years, doing things we like to do: traveling, camping, visiting the kids, enjoying friends. But now we – at least I – have entered a stage of life that I'm not sure we're ready for. The people that we have called friends are either dying or moving away.

A friend died last week; another friend came our house on Saturday and announced that he and his wife had put their house on the market and were moving to Florida. So what was happening? Did this mean I was getting older? Of course! Was I ready for all this evidence of it? I'm not sure.

I mean, there was a lot of other evidence: the struggle to keep blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol under control, cataract surgery; things that seemed to go along with getting older. (I was going to say "old age" but...)

But this is all part of the cycle of life; all foreordained by God who knows all and loves us anyhow. I've used this quote before, but I think it bears repeating. It's the last verses of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Psalm as it appears in *The Message Bible*: "If you'll hold on to me for dear life," says God, "I'll get you out of any trouble....I'll give you a long life, give you a long drink of salvation."

I find this comforting; I read it frequently; I try to take it to heart. Somehow it gives me encouragement. So life changes; that's what life's about. Look to the Lord for he is God.

Peace,

*frp*



### Announcing

**The next Vestry Meeting** will be held on Monday, March 21. All vestry meetings are open to the entire parish. Parishioners wishing to include items on the agenda are asked to contact one of the wardens or the rector no later than two (2) weeks before the meeting. Vestry meeting agendas and minutes will be regularly posted on the bulletin board between Fay Hall and the narthex.

**The Peace and Social Justice committee** had a very successful fundraiser and many Valentine cards were sent to the troops, overseas. We made \$100.00 plus. *Linda Johnson's* chicken pies were the highlight of the day. Thank you to the many people who donated....also, *Peter* and *Jeff* who made the coffee for us. Thank you, *Ruth Beck*

**Shrove Tuesday Mardi Gras Pancake Supper** put on by the Men's Group will be held on **Tuesday evening, March 8th**, from **5 PM to 7 PM** (or until the food runs out!). The

fee is \$5 per person and \$15 maximum for a family. St. Stephen's parishioners don't have to pay the fee, but free will donations will be accepted and appreciated. The monies collected will go to assist the youth with their mission trips including providing needed items to the homeless at City Reach on March 25th-26th. Our goal is to provide care packages to 30 individuals. Tickets may be picked up following the 8:00 AM and 9:30 AM services. Why not take a few extra tickets to sell to your friends and co-workers. This is a great opportunity to extend an invitation to others and support a great mission at the same time.

**As always**, thanks to all who continue to donate to the food pantry. The needs are still high, with specific needs for breakfast cereal, cake and brownie mixes, snack food for children, canned vegetables, and personal care items. Please, NO SOUP as they still have much more than they need. When bringing an item, please be sure to check the expiration date. The food pantry cannot, by regulation, give out any food that is past its expiration date. They must discard any expired items. If you have questions about what is needed, please see *Don Shapleigh*.

The **Youth Confirmation Retreat** will be held at *St. Francis Church*, Holden, MA from 7:00 AM on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup> until 3:00 PM on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. The registration deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup> and the cost is \$25 per person. More information will be coming soon.

**Michele Mongeon now handles all aspects of the altar flowers.** Please record your information on the flower chart on the bulletin board in the narthex. Then put the envelope with the date you have chosen, the dedication, and your check for the flowers in *Michele's* inbox which is just outside the church office. Please make sure *Nancy Harris* also has the information including the correct spelling of the names to go in the Sunday bulletin. If you have questions about the flowers, please call *Michele* at 508-366-3985.

**Valentine Care Packages** Many, many thanks to the parish family for the support and donations for the Valentine care packages. Thank you for the candy, delicious homemade cookies and breads, warm fuzzy notes and prayers; to the children and youth for their beautiful handmade cards; to all who helped assemble the packages and to those who delivered them. We know the packages are much appreciated by all who receive them. Bless you all.

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### Prayerful Notes

Well, this winter is certainly one we will not soon forget. I like to think I am a pretty upbeat person but must admit, I was really feeling down, when I awoke to see yet another snow storm in process. I think it was storm number 5 or 6. It meant more canceled plans and more concerns over my flat garage roof.

It was not yet daybreak, as I settled into my "prayer chair," enjoying the warmth on my hands, from my mug of hot coffee. I tried to settle myself in prayer but I had a hard time focusing. Then a verse of scripture came into my mind, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. I *Thess. 4 : 18*.

One of the aspects of my devotional time is a written thank you note to God for the blessings of my day. That morning, I decided to use the snow storm, as my focal point of thanksgiving.

I began by thanking Him for the warmth and safety of my home and the beautiful view outside of my picture window. The snow covered the trees like frosting and it really looked like a winter wonderland!

Next, I gave thanks for the gift of retirement. I did not have to drive on the slippery roads.

I thanked Him for Brian, the honest, dependable man, who plows my driveway.

I gave thanks for the blessing of good health and a strong back. Perhaps it's my Nova Scotia roots, I don't know but I really enjoy shoveling snow and the exercise has been good for me.

One thing I was especially grateful for was my extended, unhurried time with the Lord, plenty of time for prayer and Bible study.

I gave thanks for a full refrigerator and fully stocked shelves. No need to go out for anything.

I knew my daughter had the day off from work and was thankful that she was safe at home, not trying to negotiate the icy road conditions on Rt. 128, her usual route to work.

While icicles hung from my roof like stalactites, I thanked God that I had no ice dams and no water leaking in.

As my list continued to grow, my mood changed dramatically. While often times we cannot change the circumstances of our lives, through prayer and God's grace, we can change the way we react to them.

Now with the daylight hours getting longer and the anticipation of spring, with its new life, I give thanks again to our loving God, who sustains us through all the seasons of our lives.

Blessings always,

*Phyl Endicott*



## *In memoriam*

**Peter J. Macek**, former parishioner, passed into his eternal rest after a long illness. Peter is survived by his wife Lois and daughters Kristin, Kara and Jenna.

Many of you will remember Peter's involvement with several ministries at St. Stephen's: Crucifer, Vestryman, Chair of the Adult Education Committee and Chair of one of the Faith Alive Weekends we held here.

Peter was deeply committed to bible study, the Men's Group and various renewal activities including at the parish level including weekend conferences on the "Holy Spirit" and "The Personhood of Jesus Christ" and a quiet day chaired By Bishop Andrew Wisseman. Peter also acted as Visiting Team Leader for several weekends held under the auspices of Western Mass Episcopal Cursillo. He was also a Faith Alive Team Chairperson and led other activities in the Diocese. Peter chaired the Diocesan Annual Conference one year at Mont Marie and shepherded a large number of us to the weekend for a magnificent Episcopal Weekend with the Three Alphas as Conference keynoters. Peter was also a key figure in the planning and construction of the Lawton Chapel at Camp Bement.

We offer our deepest sympathies to Lois and her daughters and wider family in their loss.

