



THE BEACON

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

September, 2011

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Thank You

Dear friends, we want to thank you all for the wonderful welcome baskets and the notes we received last weekend. The supplies will help us as we settle in, and we were especially moved by the thoughtful messages you wrote. We're excited and look forward to meeting you all soon. Thanks again, *Fr. Jesse & Allison*



from the editor's desk

The theme for this month seems to be *community*. Let me explain. Two weeks ago, I was sitting in the doctor's waiting room awaiting outpatient surgery to remove a cancerous growth on my lip. There were about ten other people sitting there also. Before long, we were all discussing either our upcoming surgery or the results thereof. In a short time we learned a fair amount about our lives. The woman sitting next to me had had several surgeries; some, like me, were in for their first. No one was particularly nervous; we seemed to accept our lot. As I sat there, I was reminded of the reason the Lord said that we needed to attend church. We need that sense of being a community; we need the sense of belonging somewhere. Being in a community means we always have a place to go for support or to give support to others.

I thought of those who say they can worship God in other places: the outdoors, playing golf, at the mountains, at the beach. And these can indeed be holy places, but they fail to fulfill the need that we have to be part of a larger community.

And as God would have it, there is much in the rest of this month's *Beacon* that supports this belief. Read Phyl Endicott's "Prayerful Notes." She talks about her annual retreat where she found great support from others attending the same retreat. Listening, sharing, praying, and worshipping together brought them all closer to God. Being in a community brought them closer to God and to each other.

Then look at Tim Moss's thank you for the people who helped on August 14 to get St. Stephen's ready for our new pastor. Again, a

community formed with a common purpose that not only accomplished good works for the church but also created a bond between those who shared in the chores.

Another good example is our Search Committee. This sense of community was abundantly clear when they made their report at the June potluck supper. The enthusiasm showed not only in their report of their findings but also in the joy of working together.

With Fr. Jesse's arrival we are presented an opportunity to become a renewed, revitalized community, working together for God's glory. All we have to do is "Just do it!"

Peace,

frp



Bulletin Board

The next Vestry Meeting will be held on Monday, September 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.

As always, thanks to all who continue to donate to the food pantry. Their 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*.

Just a reminder that both rentals and church events should be cleared with *Fred Philcox* so that time and space is available to all groups, and that the parish facilities are not overbooked. Please talk with *Fred* BEFORE you put any event on the calendar in the office. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

St. Stephen's has joined the *Landstruhl Hospital Care Project*. Similar to the adopted soldiers, but the needs are different. *Landstruhl* is the largest overseas U.S. military hospital. The Care Project is part of the Wounded Warriors Ministry. We have several options to participate. One is special donation of much needed items for the wounded when they are medivac'd to *Landstruhl*. Items will be packaged and shipped to Virginia. There is a list of needed items at:

<http://www.landstuhlhospitalcareproject.org/>

I am hoping to receive more information to share with the congregation. Please contact me for questions, rbeck76@verizon.net (*Ruth Beck*)

Time to Update St. Stephen's family tree.

Apples and silver markers can be found in Fay Hall following the 9am Service. Choose an apple and write all the members in your household on the apple. Thanks to *Les Daniels* for making the apples and shipping them from Florida. Questions contact *Melanie Daniels*.

Thank you to all who contributed to the pounding and those who wrote notes of welcome to the *Abells*. They were delivered Sunday, August 7. *Amelia Brigandi* and *Bev Boyer*

We are really in need of a few more people to serve as readers. If we have a few more then no one will have to read more than once a month! Also, we need crucifers. If

you would be willing to be a crucifer, please contact *Bev Boyer* at 508-366-7320 or see her after church.

Clipping Coupons? Don't forget the young mothers with babies and young children at the Frances Perkins House in Worcester. Include coupons for cleaning products for the home itself. Give any that you have to *Liz Moss* who will get them to the people at Frances Perkins House. Thanks.

September is just around the corner and EFM (Education for Ministry) will be starting again. This program is a four year study of the Bible, old and new Testaments, and the formation the Christian church and theological reflection. The classes are weekly for 34 weeks. We will start in late September or early October. If you have an interest in learning about the Bible and the formation of the Christian church, please contact me @ 508-393-2162 or see me @ church on Sundays. Sign up will be the third week of August. Thank you, *Faith Howarth*.

Applications accepted for Episcopal Church educational scholarships

Applications are now being accepted for more than 60 scholarships available through the Episcopal Church. Earmarked for education and schooling for Episcopalians, the scholarship money is derived from numerous trust funds that have amassed over the years. The list of scholarships, the guidelines, the application form and the instructions for filling out the form are available

at: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/youngAdult/109462_110675_ENG_HTM.htm

Deadline is October 15

Many Thanks for the Hard Work - To all those who were able to join us for the work party clean-up on Sunday, August 14 after worship - thanks so much! You all did a great job with a minimum of

fuss and the results were just what we needed! We have the Spirit! *Tim Moss*

The Men's Group Resumes Saturday, September 10. We're looking forward to a new year of get-togethers. Usually, we meet on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays, but because of the Labor Day weekend we are moving to September 10th. The October meetings will be on October 1st and 15th. We'd welcome new faces - it's informal - only lasts an hour and a half. We provide a light breakfast, worship and pray and get in to the Bible readings of the period using *Forward Day By Day*. We cover every subject under the sun. We also look for worthwhile ways we can help the parish and others. Give us a try! *Tim Moss* 508-366-7202

Prayerful Notes

Once again this summer, I returned to Adelynrood Episcopal Retreat & Conf. Center for my annual retreat. Located on the north shore, in the small town of Byfield, Mass., in close proximity to Plum Island, it truly is "holy ground." It is a 100 year old retreat house, surrounded by acres of lush green lawns and beautiful flower gardens. While the drive from Westboro often proves to be a challenge for me, what with the usual summer road construction and all, it is soon forgotten upon my arrival, as I breathe in the peace and serenity of this holy place.

One of the things that I love most about Adelynrood is that they keep a holy routine there, much like you would find at a monastery. At 7:00 A.M., you hear the sound of the chapel bell ringing, summoning, those who choose, to gather on the large screened in porches, where we pray St. Francis's prayer, the Canticle of the Sun. Following that, we make our way to the chapel for the service of Morning Prayer. In addition, there will be Noonday Intercessions and also the beautiful Service of Compline, before we retire for the evening. Sundays we also have the

celebration of the Holy Eucharist of course.

This particular retreat was entitled "Living In The Presence of God," with its focus being on the different aspects of prayer. We heard presentations by several different speakers and each presentation was followed by small group sharings with 4 or 5 other attendees.

One of the topics that I found most helpful addressed the subject of distractions in prayer. Rev. Pricilla Wood, an Episcopal Chaplain, spoke of the challenges we often encounter and the importance of maintaining a daily spiritual discipline in our personal prayer life. She emphasized the importance of creating a sacred space and time for prayer. As we shared in our small groups, we gleaned helpful insights from each other. We all agreed it needed to be a quiet place, where we would not be disturbed. Scripture tells us that our Lord often went off to a quiet place to pray.

Many of us shared the frustration of trying to pray, while our "to do list" for the day kept intruding into our thoughts. A couple of things which I have found most helpful in focusing is taking my phone off the hook and lighting my vigil candle to focus on. Several of us shared how helpful it was to get into a relaxed state through taking several long, slow breaths.

There are many pathways to prayer. For each person, it is different and we ourselves may take a different path on any given day. Often just reading the scripture for the day, easily found in our *Forward Day by Day* booklet, may lead us into prayer for a particular situation or person in our life.

One woman in my group shared that the tactile experience of praying with her Anglican Prayer Beads helped her to focus. She said that just holding them brought her back into feeling God's presence. I have an Episcopal book entitled *Praying With Beads*, that has specific prayers for each Liturgical season of the Christian calendar year. I used it primarily during the Lenten season but after hearing her, I decided to return to this

prayerful practice. She did not have the book but instead she prayed a prayer for different people on her prayer list, as she touched each bead. What a wonderful new creative way to use prayer beads!

Have you ever just felt depressed, tired and worn out from the day, too tired to even pray? I know I have at times. Our speaker reminded us of when even Moses felt this way. The Israelites were fighting the battle with the Amalekites. As long as Moses held up his hands in prayer the Israelites kept winning, but Moses grew weary so Aaron and Hur pulled up a stone for him to sit on,

they won the battle! You will find this touching story in the book of *Exodus*, chapter 17: 11-13. Here we see the value of living within a faith community. Have you experienced the feeling of being lifted up in prayer by your parish family here at St. Stephen's? I know I sure have and am ever grateful for the gift of prayer, given and received.

Whatever pathway you choose for prayer, they all lead to our loving God.

Blessings Always,
Phyl Endicott

then Aaron held up one of Moses's hands in prayer, while Hur held up his other hand and

