



THE BEACON

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

October, 2009

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH
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Every Sunday

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

Father Bill's Message

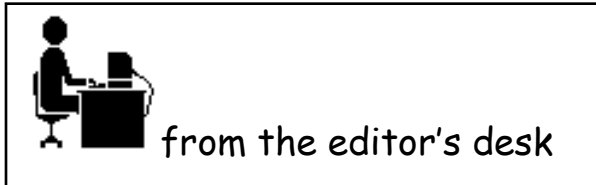
Stephen Bauman in his book "Simple Truths: On Values, Civility and Our Common Sense" tells the story of a father waiting with his ten year old son for a New York City bus. As they were waiting, his son began to share with him how he (the son) and his friends scammed bus drivers to get free rides. For instance, they used expired passes, passed a single card from student to student so that it was used many times, and acted out in order to distract the bus driver. Money wasn't an issue, so the horrified father asked his son why they did such things. The son shrugged and replied, "Why should we pay when we can get on the bus for free?" The boy's dad explained to him that in order for the city to have buses in the first place, all citizens had to share the burden of the cost. The son again shrugged, and replied, "Yeah, I know, but still, if I can get away with it, why shouldn't I?"

It's an interesting question that the son poses, is it not? It's a real moral dilemma, not only for ten year olds, but for many adults as well. Have we learned a good answer? This is the season of stewardship, that time of year when we're invited to share our time, talents, and treasure to support the work of ministry here at St. Stephen's. I wonder how many people who have worshipped in this parish over the last century have given nothing of themselves because "they could get away with it"? How many have felt no compulsion to return to the Lord a portion of what they have been given? Why? Can it be that they have never felt the power of God at work in their lives? How sad that must be. Most of us, I imagine, can choose at least one event in life for which we're especially grateful to God. Can we not

show it in our lives and in our hearts?

Gail and I are committing a share of our treasure to St. Stephen's as a way of showing our gratitude for the blessings that we have received in life. I plead with you to do likewise.

Fr. Bill



What has God done in my life? It's hard to know where to start. I was brought up in a Baptist church in Worcester, and was a fairly regular attendant, more out of habit than anything else. That's what you did on Sunday; you went to church. The youth group provided much of my social life. I remember avoiding the sermon some Sundays by going to a nearby spa. Of course, this made things difficult when I was asked, "How did you like the sermon?"

When I was in Denver, Colorado – courtesy of the US Air Force – I was invited to go to church with some of the other guys in my outfit. I asked what church and they said the Baptist church. And this was my introduction to the Southern Baptist style of religion. There were altar calls every Sunday, a lot of emotionalism in the service; something I had never experienced, but as I look back, I realize that that's where I started to look at God differently. He was more real, more intense, someone I could turn to when I needed help.

Segue to 1976-7 Sharyn and I started going to the Church of the Nativity in Northborough,

There we found a warm, friendly and committed community. We found warmth, acceptance, and a vicar who obviously believed and preached the word of God. My spiritual growth took root and a lot of what I had learned in past years began to make even more sense.

Then the good lord led us to St. Stephen's where we've been for 20 or so years. And during those 20 years, my growth as a Christian has been immeasurable. I still have a long way to go, but I'm getting there. I'm very much like Paul who said "I don't know why I do the things I shouldn't and don't do the things I should." I'm sure many of you can relate to this.

But St. Stephen's has become the base for my faith; it's the place I turn to for fellowship and guidance. It has become my spiritual home, the place I go to worship.

Over the years I've learned a lot about stewardship. As a child, I gave part of my allowance to the church, but I didn't understand the thought behind it. Now I have a clearer picture of what tithing means and look at it as a way of thanking God for all he's done in my life. I mean, he gives us everything and only asks for 10% back, Sharyn and I have experienced many times over the years where God's beneficence has been showered upon us.

I've grown to love St. Stephen's and I look forward to many more years of worshipping and serving God in his house.

Peace,

frp

Lay Witness Series begins

Sunday, September 20th marked the

beginning of a new series of Lay Witness offerings at the two Sunday Services. Speaking at 8:00 am *Rhonda Russian* spoke movingly about her family and upbringing in the Armenian Christian Church. In concluding, she told the congregation that we all should remember that we call on the church when we need it and to remember to respond when our church needs us.

At 10:00 am our Lay Witness was *Mike Cassata*. His words are printed here:

There is a simple prayer said each Sunday during our service for which I have a special feeling. "It is Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us, Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, Grant us thy peace.

Peace was a word of different meaning to me before I had to face two serious diseases: prostate cancer surgery and an open heart surgery for a valve repair to be done after. The mental turmoil within me was painful, fear of the uncertain future was hard to overcome and worry for my family was a constant. The decidedly helpful prayers of my friends in our then Parish, Trinity Church of Northport, N.Y., gave me the support I needed to help control the fear. With all this behind us and when I say this prayer I fully know what God grants us: dispelling my mental turmoil and granting me peace within myself.

After trying to repeat the comforting feeling of being part of a parish in neighboring towns we returned again to St. Stephen's after Father Bill Martin became Pastor. Father Bill and Gail became the key to our feeling welcome again. The members of St, Stephen's have been gracious in accepting and including my wife Marie, and I into your Parish activities.

For that, you all have our grateful thanks.

Mike Cassata



Announcing

The next Vestry Meeting will be held on Monday, October 19, at 7:00pm. 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.

- ★ For those interested, this year's **CROP Walk** will be held on **Sunday, October 18th**. Please call the town clerk's office for more information.
- ★ **Celebration Dinner Friday Oct. 23 (Note Date Change)** Because of a conflict with the Diocesan Convention, we must change the date of the Celebration Dinner to the Friday night of Commitment Week. The dinner will be a fun time for the whole family, so please make it a date and mark it on your calendar so you won't forget. *Tim Moss* EMC Chair

* This year's **Diocesan Convention** will be a one day affair. It will be held on **Saturday, October 24th** from 8:30 AM to about 5 PM at the Sheraton Hotel in Springfield. Our lay delegates are *Jim* and *Lynne Urso* and *Nancy De Wolfe*.

* The diocese has contacted *St. Stephen's* to let us know that they are giving us all of the Lawton Chapel items from Bement. We will soon be organizing a work party to take trucks to Bement to pick up these items. Please let us know if you would like to help.

* **A tisket, A tasket, We need your themed basket....**

for the church fair which will be held on **Saturday, October 17....**

Create a themed basket which will be raffled off during the fair. The theme might be sports, children, babies, spa, leisure, romance, Halloween, chocolate—the ideas are unlimited. Get together with a friend and create a basket. Donate the “innards” and we'll put the basket together for you...

There are many ways in which you can contribute to this year's fair. Check out the sign up in Fay Hall to see which committees still need a head...

Come to the **craft meetings** on October 7 and 14 to lend a hand putting crafts together...

If you are working on crafts at home or quilting, etc, many thanks.

We need items for the yard sale and the jewelry table. We will be collecting these items within the next few weeks so look around home to see what you can donate as you do your fall cleaning.

And we'll need folks to help out on fair day....

So there's lots to do in the short time left. Any and all help is greatly appreciated.

For questions, call *Sharyn Philcox* at 508-393-6858.

* For almost forty years, **Thanksgiving Dinner** has been served to more than 100 of **Westborough's seniors** at the Knights of Columbus Hall.

The Westborough Interfaith Clergy Association sponsors the dinner, and each year a different church or temple provides the coordination. This year, *St. Stephen's* is coordinating the dinner with help from the Unitarian Church. The dinner will be held on **Thursday, November 26th** from 11:30 to 1:30 at the K of C on Willow Street.

The dinner is a great activity for family involvement. Help is needed for baking desserts, joining the seniors at the dinner as a host family, delivering meals to those that are home-bound and the always popular clean up!

Please save the date; check the bulletin for further information and sign up to volunteer on the sign up sheet in Fay Hall.

Questions? Call *George Barrette* at (508)898-2513

* Fall is fast approaching and we will be resuming our **Women of Faith Bible Study** Groups again in October.

As in previous years, we will offer both a morning group and an evening group, in an effort to accommodate most people's schedules. Our morning group will meet at the home of *Phyl Endicott* 15 Oak St. Westborough. Our evening group will meet at the home of *Jean McPherson*, 7 Irving St. Westborough.

We look forward to coming together again to share our faith and learn more about the scriptures and how they apply to our life today. Last year, we were blessed to have several new members join us and we hope to welcome more this year as well. These are very comfortable small groups. All that is required is a love of God and a desire to grow in your faith.

Each group meets twice a month. While we follow a format, it is not essential that you attend every meeting. If this is

something you have been thinking about, why not come and give us a try. The dates of our meetings are as follows :

Tuesday, October 6 at 7:15 P.M. at *Jean's*
Wednesday, October 7 at 9:00A.M. at *Phyl's*

We meet for approximately 2 hours and each meeting is preceded by coffee and a snack. For directions or more information contact *Phyl* at 508-366-9227 or *Jean* at 508-355-2022.

- * The **chapel is still open** during normal office hours throughout the week for a little longer. You can enter through the outside chapel door which is to the right of the main church door. Should you need a place to pray or meditate or just think in a quiet peaceful setting, feel free to use the chapel.
- * For your information the Sunday Bulletin is posted on our website each week on the Services Page at www.ststeph.com/services in a downloadable PDF format. This includes the weekly readings, prayers, and announcements.

Altar Guild is in need of a few good people!!! Altar Guild finds itself short some worker bees due to some of our more experienced members moving on to other things. This leaves some holes in each team...holes that need to be filled. If anyone is interested in this valuable ministry please contact me, either at church or by phone (508-898-2513). This ministry involves one weekend a month...Saturday morning for an hour or so to do cleaning and prepare for the Sunday services, then on Sunday to clean up from the services. There are plenty of experienced workers who will be happy to help you learn the ropes. Please give this some consideration so that we may start the fall season with full teams. Thanks so much. *Diane Barrette*, Altar Guild Directress

Prayerful Notes

While Westborough has been my home for 32 years now and I love my parish family here, I continue to receive the newsletter from my former parish, Calvary Episcopal Church in Danvers, MA. It is a small, family like parish, much like St. Stephen's. It was there that I was baptized, confirmed and married.

About a year ago, I read that they had built a Columbarium, in their chapel. For those unfamiliar with this term, it is a structure composed of drawers for the ashes of those who are cremated.

Since I began my spiritual journey at Calvary, I liked the idea of returning home there, at the end of my earthly pilgrimage. I made the arrangements and recently went down to actually see it.

As I pulled up to the church, I had a sense of how deep my spiritual roots were there.

Next door to the church is the large 4 story, Victorian style, former rectory. It even has a steeple atop it. Due to the failing economy, it is no longer used as a rectory. As a rental property, it now serves as a source of income for the church.

I just sat for a few minutes looking at it, as memories washed over me. I remembered the large "church parlor", where so many meetings and festivities had been held. I could visualize the big old fashion kitchen, where the junior choir would gather on Sunday mornings. How they managed this remains a mystery to me but between the two services, Rev. Clark and his wife would make pancakes for us kids. It was through this beloved couple, that I came to know a loving God, that I knew I could always turn to.

Once inside the church, I was met by a very pleasant young woman, who is the current rector.

More memories surfaced, as we passed the wall with the pictures of all the former rectors. While each had brought their special gifts to that parish, two in particular had played a significant role in my journey.

Passing through the Sacristy, I paused to

reflect on my adolescent years, when I had served on the Junior Altar Guild. I had attended classes held by our Directresses, Mrs. Gunn and Mrs. Nichols, who taught us the sacred procedures for preparing the altar for the Eucharist. Another one of our duties was delivering the altar flowers to shut-ins. As a direct result of that, I have been a life long nursing home volunteer and I still deliver our altar flowers to those unable to attend our services.

By now, we had reached the chapel, which when I was growing up was the main sanctuary. I looked with reverence and awe at the beautiful stained glass windows and the original altar, where I had first received the Eucharist.

I looked at the pews and remembered how proud I had felt sitting in them, vested in my junior choir robes.

I remembered walking down the aisle as a nervous angel in the Christmas pageant.

I thought of my wonderful Sunday School teachers, who had made the Bible stories come alive for me.

I had such a feeling of peace and knew I had made the right decision in choosing to return here. I am so grateful for my Christian upbringing, for my parents and all who were a part of it.

I look at the young families at St. Stephens and think of the precious memories being formed here.

Our lives are so busy today and our kids have so many outside influences on their lives. Perhaps as you are reading this, you've been away for a while. Sunday School has just started up again. Why not bring the kids and come home to St. Stephen's.

Proverbs 22 : 6 Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is, old he will not turn away.

Blessings Always,

Phyl Endicott

Don Shapleigh asked me to run this last month but I neglected to do so. My sincere apologies. [ed.]

On behalf of the Westborough Food Pantry, thanks to all of you who have continued to provide support through your weekly donations. Their needs are continuing to increase. I was recently told that they are now serving over twice the number of families from a year ago. This requires them to purchase items that in the past were fully available through donations. All extra donations will be greatly appreciated.

In addition to the usual basic food items, they have a need for crackers, cookies and cake mixes. They also need personal care items such as soap, deodorant, toothpaste, etc.

For those of you who reside in other communities and prefer to support your local food pantry, I'm sure that their needs have also increased. If you don't care to donate to the Westborough Food Pantry please consider donating to the one in your town.

Thanks

Don Shapleigh

Connections V

I saw a bumper sticker recently: When the power of love overcomes the love of power, we will have peace.

What does "the love of power" mean? Does it include equal justice? Does it imply tolerance? Does it cover nurturing or compassion? I think not. I think it is control. Last week I took a long sail in a small cat boat - oh, what fun. Sailing gives me perspective on command vs. control. Control is motor boats. While you may be in command of a sail boat if the balance is right, the wind is strong, the waves and tide are in sync, OK, but not control: any thing can happen in a moment and if you watch and plan to react, you may still be in

command, but never control. Motor boats do not need to watch the tide, the currents, the puff of wind; they just charge ahead.....that is control.

We all know both kinds of people: those in control and those in command. It is a lot easier working with people in command. They allow free discussion, input from others, new ideas and new concepts. They encourage cooperation. And one is happy to give deference to the commander. There is satisfaction and pleasure.

The control freak does not listen. He does not want new ideas and makes you feel unimportant.

If we act out Jesus' commandment to love one another as we love ourselves, we cannot be in a position of control. Because control does not respect others, never mind love them. So, what does peace mean?

I recently read *The Peace Finder*, by Joan McWilliams. She is a lawyer/mediator finding peaceful solutions to problems. She wrote this book for her grandsons. Riley did not understand why humans fail to demand standards that will bring about peace and freedom. (p. 19) He asks if there is a way to turn things around so kindness and love can freely abound. (p.21) Riley travels the world to meet people who could change things, but their egos and politics get in the way. (p.25) He realized that he needed "a hero with

wisdom sublime, Who could rescue the world with a new paradigm." (p.32)

A young girl appears and says: "I know the way to bring peace to the earth and hold evil at bay. We must think with our minds and our souls and our hearts And communicate

thoughts of good will as a start" (p. 37) Riley doubts her, but she points out that "people have skills they are yet to perceive." (p. 39) She talks of infinite power to bring about change. She tells him to send love from his heart and violence will cease. (p. 41) She continues to say one should leave hate and distrust behind, then give your thoughts wings. (p. 42)

Riley tried her suggestions and found confidence and trust replaced his fears. He knew he needed more people to join him, to create a critical mass. (p. 44) He then turns to you and me to change the world.

The book goes on to explain "Eight Steps to World Peace", a handbook for Peace Finders (that's you!) (p.53) Change the script, Shift the paradigm.

So, if we are all connected, and we all focus on peace and non-violence, we can change the paradigm.

The Peace Finder, Joan McWilliams, 2006, Balue Fox Publisher, Denver.

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1. The best vitamin for a Christian is B1.
 2. Under same management for over 2,000 years.
 3. Soul food served here.
 4. Tithe if you love Jesus! Anyone can honk.
 5. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.



