

The WITNESS

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Troy, Michigan 48098

January 2010

The Rambling Rector



Economic recovery is on everyone's mind these days, especially here in Michigan. For Christians, recovery is a process that pre-dates our present crises by more than 2000 years. At St. Stephen's we seek to support one another in recovering from recession, depression, division, denial, disenchantment, and all other manifestations of sin and death. We do this by singing out, laughing often, crying together, reaching out beyond our own walls, and learning what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in our own time and place. Join us in celebrating "tradition with humanity and humor."

Merry & Mystical

I know many of you have attended jolly Christmas parties over the past few weeks, because I have seen you at the same events I myself attended. I also suspect you have done your part to revive the economy by spending money at the malls... but you are not likely to have seen me there. As my family will attest, I prefer to revive the economy in stores where they call me "Rev" and ask if I want "the usual."

Merriment is a state of mind that goes right along with Christmas. One doesn't hear people say, "Merry Easter," or (even less), "Merry Lent." Why is that? What is so "merry" about a refugee family's having to make a manger into a birthing-room? Or having to travel across country just so some government official could count them in the father's home town?



Herein lies the Mystery: There is a deep merriment that prevails throughout the universe and beyond. Defying every version of doom and gloom, it emerges with "tidings of comfort and joy" behind the backs of paranoid tyrants. Mary and Joseph are its prophets and protectors. Angels, shepherds, and even passing comets are drawn to it. So are we, despite our anxieties, cynicism, and world-weariness. In the Gospel of John we read, "When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her

child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world."

So merriment merges with mystery, and the world will never be the same.



On behalf of the entire Irely/Sams household and clan, let me extend to you our hope for much merriment, increased wisdom, optimal health, and abundant blessings in the coming year.

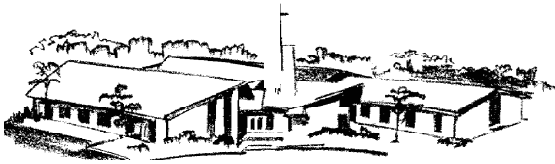
Peace be with you,
Jonathan+, Nancy & family

"So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." John 16:22

John 1:5



The light
shines in the darkness,
but the darkness
has not understood it.



Around the Parish

January Lectionary

Jan 3 - Christmas 2

Jer 31: 7-14
Psalm 84 or 84: 1-8
Eph 1: 3-6, 15-19a
Matt 2: 13-15, 19-23 or
Luke 2: 41-52 or
Matt 2: 1-12

Jan 10 - Epiphany 1

Isaiah 43: 1-7
Psalm 29
Acts 8: 14-17
Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

Jan 17 - Epiphany 2

Isaiah 62: 1-5
Psalm 36: 5-10
Acts 8: 14-17
Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

Jan 24 - Epiphany 3

Neh 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Cor 12: 12-31a
Luke 4: 14-21

Jan 31 - Epiphany 4

Jer 1: 4-10
Psalm 71: 1-6
1 Cor 13: 1-13
Luke 4: 21-30



South Oakland Shelter, the Ministry to those who are homeless, presents a mentoring program. Mentoring is volunteer based and we need some **dedicated** and **admirable** mentors who would be interested in making a difference in an at-risk child's life. Youth mentors assist children in setting up their goals and ambitions, resolving their personal problems, and making appropriate decisions and choices in life. Simple and easy activities are enough for a child who is more that eager to be guided and to feel a sense of security.

The program can provide complimentary tickets to places such as Pistons games and the Detroit Zoo. Also, we can provide free dinner coupons. At the very least we will provide reduced prices for mentoring activities.

The goal would be to make a **one-year commitment** of meeting with the child at least **once every other week**. I am reaching out to this congregation in hopes that you can share the idea with your members and see if there are any **interested mentors**.

We will be trying to find mentors and mentees that fit each other, so there doesn't have to be any fear that they will be placed with a child they can't relate with. Also, I will be doing all that I can to make sure the relationships are successful and both the mentor and mentee are comfortable with their match.

If you are interested, contact Austin Kralisz, Congregation Liaison for South Oakland Shelter, 248.546.6566 (office) | austin@oaklandshelter.org

Pastor Marisha



New Year, New Look

You might have noticed a new type style in the Witness. It changed over the last year, hopefully, making it more reader friendly. Now, with the new year, the Witness is undergoing another change. It won't change in content or features, but what will change is the way we put it together. St. Stephen's is going to have an outside company, Liturgical Publications, print each edition.

What does this mean to you? Actually, not much. You will still be able to access the Witness on the St. Stephen's web site. You will still be able to get your printed edition. And you'll still be able to get the same information as you always have.

The biggest change will be the deadline to submit your articles and information. The deadlines will be earlier in the month; instead of the 15th, the deadline will be closer to the 7th. Because this is an outside company, we will not have the flexibility of making last minute changes and additions that we have now.

Who pays for the printing? The good news is by using an outside printer, we will save St. Stephen's the cost of copying, and the time of our devoted office staff (over \$1,000). Instead, small ads from our local business community placed in the inside back page will cover the cost of publication.

We will start using Liturgical Publications in April. In the coming months, we'll post the new deadlines dates on the website calendar, and in the Witness.

Liz Sinkovich
Editor



2010: A Faith Odyssey

Journey through your baptismal vows in Epiphany

VOW 1: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

We are asked to continue to learn about our faith, gather with one another in fellowship, enjoy Eucharist and pray!

What is this program about?

When you were baptized, God visited the world and marked you as His own! God made promises to you, and you got to make vows to God (read them in the Book of Common Prayer, page 302-303). Today, because of the craziness of life, we often forget what our vows are, and it makes living the best life possible a little harder.

In 2010, we are offering a series of classes that will help you learn and live out your five baptismal vows. Every year, during baptisms and other times during worship, you renew these vows. Every time you walk out of the church doors, God wants you to fulfill these vows. Gather with your church family to find out and celebrate what God wants to accomplish through you!



COME SING WITH US!
Adult Choir
Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m



We ended up sending 14 scarves to Christmas at Sea through the National Church in NY. 23 scarves to St. Paul's Christmas for the Homeless (they decided they only wanted "manly" colors at the last minute) and 32 scarves to Bound Together for the children's Xmas Shop. WOW!! We were super knitters! We are going to do this again next year so anyone who is still working on scarves, please continue. We will gather them in again in November 2010.

It is a joyful thing to know that, if asked, our St. Stephen's people step up to the task, no matter what it is! I am so proud of everyone who assisted in these projects.

Deacon Liz

Longing to Belong

Learning to Relate as the Body of Christ



Longing to Belong

Sundays, Jan 10-Feb 14 at 9a.m.-9:45 a.m.
For 6 weeks, explore the importance of community in the Christian faith through this engaging study.

At the heart of being a Christian is being with others. Watch a 20 minute DVD presentation by Dr. Rob Weber, Senior Pastor and founder of Grace

Community United Methodist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, worshipping about 1200. Then, enjoy the lively discussion that follows!

SUNDAY FORUM

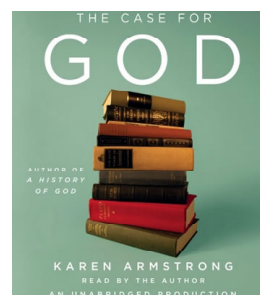
A Case for God

Monday Nights, Jan 4, 11, 18 at 7-8:30 p.m.

In a world with atheists and fundamentalists, how do you make a case for a good God?

For many of us, it seems as if our faith is under attack from militant atheism on one hand, and misrepresented by aggressive fundamentalists on the other. Karen Armstrong is a noted religion scholar who offers a measured intelligent voice "in defense of God."

In 3 Monday night sessions, this group will listen to portions of a NPR interview with this engaging author and speaker, and discuss them in connection with our own experiences, doubts and personal faith. Led by Father Jonathan Sams.





Liz Sinkovich is the Storyteller. Call, write or email her with your stories:

story@ststephenstroy.org

Stories are the vehicles that God uses to tell of His work in our community. It is how we connect and know one another.

Sometimes, a parable can inform us. Sometimes, the gifts God gives are not what we expect - it all depends on how you look at them. This parable comes from Mike O'Neill, who has chosen to look at his life as one full of God's gifts - in a most unexpected way.

What we do matters!



Storytellers: story@ststephenstroy.org

THREE GIFTS The Best Christmas Ever

My child, you spent half a century, fifty years, using your legs to play tag with me. You would hear my call and drift closer only to turn away when the cost of discipleship came clear. You encountered my words and they were attractive and touched your heart like messages written on a chalkboard across the back of your mind. Better if it was an old fashioned black background with the writing in crisp, thick, white chalk.

So, now those knees of yours have begun to slow you down a bit; the first of my gifts to you. It's my invitation to move with more purpose in the balance of your life. Take my gift of troubled gait and use it to be sure you miss nothing of the treasures I've given you in Ami and the girls.

And don't be so quick to veer away from your own "Great Amen." Think about Mary's. When I called her she never veered. She never made to turn away in the face of her fear.

And a couple of years ago, while you were in China holding hands with your last adopted daughter, I gave you another of my gifts for Christmas. You thought at first that your glasses had some sort of film over one lens. You cleaned and cleaned. The lenses looked clean, but the film thickened.

Back home after lots of tests you accepted that the vision in that eye was gone, though you can still see some shadows. I might have said it is like seeing, "Through a glass darkly," but Paul already used that one.

Finally, this Fall, do you remember when you thought you had a cold in your ear? Over a few weeks, when the home remedies didn't work, you realized that the hearing was gone on one side.

Well, there you have the whole package. Three gifts to make the best Christmas ever: bum knees, one eye, and one ear working. Those are gifts? Sort of. The great one was

when in the deepest dark moments of your night I was near you, and you became aware, and it dropped you to those troublesome knees. And at that place inside you, where heart and soul are often confused in your language, I gave you to grasp the meaning of the gifts. I said:

Move slower now. Be aware of every step. Be alert to the smallest irregularities in your path. They will surely bring you down if attention wavers. Move at a pace that suits your youngest daughter. The same pace will match that of your oldest friends. Pause often. Miss nothing.

Use the years you have remaining to see with your inner eye. It is the eye of your soul that shows you truth and beauty. Focus on the wonder of Ami; your partner, spouse, lover, friend and mother of the six. Study the uniqueness of the girls. Use that good eye to record the thousand thousand memories that you cannot replace or repeat.

Value my creation and give me thanks. You see, it is not just what I've done, it is that I have gifted you with the capacity to appreciate it.

And listen. Listen deeply, actively. It is more than hearing and you can do it as well with one ear as with two. Set value on times to just listen with all your being. Find the magic in the wonder of the choir and the equal wonder of the girls singing the clean up song as they sort through yet another chaos of toys, books, and stuffed whatever's.

Listen to the many songs of my creation. Let music embrace you. You will hear me there in special ways. Treasure the sharing of others. Listen to them with your whole heart. Miss nothing. And reserve time for silence. I'll be there for you. Listen.



Three gifts for the Christmas of your life, my beloved son. Know that I am always with you.

Mike O'Neill

Under the Dogwood

Thanksgiving

Dear People of St. Stephen's:

We are writing to thank you for your commitment to St. Stephen's and your continued generosity in sharing the gifts God has bestowed upon us.

We give thanks that 6 households opened their doors to host SWAT Parties, and that 86 people attended one or another of them... We give thanks that, on Gratitude Sunday, a large congregation was present to experience a provocative stewardship skit, to offer 91 Completed Pledge Cards for the support of our mission in 2010, and to enjoy an abundant celebration feast prepared by Chef Steve Fragnoli and others...

We give thanks that A Sunrise Prayer Vigil was held on September 20 to seek God's blessing upon our mission, stewardship, and parish leadership in the coming year...

We give thanks for the "Temple Talks" presented by Penny Piantedosi and Mark Pierce.

We have a huge amount to be thankful for, and, as we sing or say at every Eucharist, "it is right to give God thanks and praise."

We need not remind you that 2010 will see many challenges facing our Michigan economy, our parish households, and our church. The need for our ministry and mission has never been greater, and there has never been a better time to give. Whether you have pledged or not, your giving is appreciated and necessary for the flourishing of our life of faith.

Let us continue to encourage one another with "humanity and humor", trusting the love

we have known and the future that welcomes as well as challenges us.

The St. Stephen's SWAT Team (Stewardship/Wisdom/Action/Teaching) will do all in our power to proclaim what we believe and have experienced regarding the lavish generosity of God. As the familiar hymn puts it ~

Blessings abound where-e'er he reigns:
The prisoners leap to lose their chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all who suffer want are blest."
Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Sincerely,
*Sandy Jose, David Williams, Jonathan Sams+
Bob Bagnall, Helen Giles, Karol Sprague*

A New Beginning

Beloved of God,

After four years of a weekly Wednesday morning Bible study, we have decided that it was time to end the No Experience Necessary Bible study. I will miss the amazing conversations and the holy work we did on the Scripture together. It has been food for my life.

Bless all of you who came and shared your insight, wisdom and questions with this group. I will look forward to sharing our journey together in the Adult Faith program **2010: A Faith Odyssey**, where we will explore our baptismal vows together.

Your sister,
Pastor Manisha

Blue Ribbon

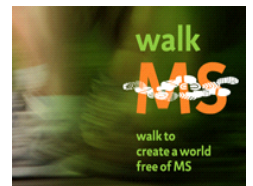
Dear All

I have been remiss in not reporting to you that our publication won another award at Diocesan Convention in October. Sharon's piece about the tree falling in the forest won a blue ribbon for "Special Interest Story."

Jonathan+

Job Leads

Please notify the church office with new employment opportunities for interested parishioners.
office@ststephenstroy.org
Or call 248-641-8080.



Team St. Stephen's placed in the Top 100 Teams for fund raising for National Multiple Sclerosis Society - Michigan Chapter! In fact we placed number 75 with \$4,243 in donations for Walk MS. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Nancy Papet
Diane Kenefic

January 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Please check the website for the most up-to-date calendar of events
www.ststephenstroy.org

January Birthdays

Jennifer Bick	2
Joann Morelli	3
Marilyn Borowski	3
James Trask	3
Reece Betts	3
Krista Malinich	4
John Glover	4
Alice Moss	5
Alex Erikson	5
Dorothy Langridge	6
Larry Nunn	7
Paul Mann	7
Elizabeth Papet	7
Winifred Lowery	8
Nancy Papet	8
Rhonda Allen	10
Rebecca Goodwin	10
Christine Bailey	10
Gloria Christiansen	11
David Stein	12
Christopher Beal	12
Michael Giles	12
Katherine Roberts	12
Rod Johnson	13
Pauline Woodin	15
Mark Williams	16
Jenny Miller	17
Kendall Spina	17
John Podsiadlik	18
Charles Saylor	19
Richard Bialowas	19
Chikezie Okeagu	19
McGill Prouty	19
Angiya Satyanathan	21
Donna Johnson	21
Michael Abitheira	21
Susan Russell	22
Diane Kenefic	22
Jill Stein	23
Sean McCoy	24
James Maxwell	25
Valerie Wilson	25
Inge Wojas	26
Peter Lord	26
Lori Maxwell	26
Brian Dunn	27
Chris Herfurth	28
Mary Ehlers	30
Will Trask	30

Reaching Out

4th Annual J2A Live Auction & Potluck Dinner February 6, 2009

On Saturday evening, February 6, 2010 the 4th Annual Live Auction will be held supporting the activities of the J2A youth. This has become a tradition at St. Stephens and is the primary fundraising activity for the group. Each year has seen an increase in attendance and the evening gets rave reviews from those who attend. Plus, attendance FREE! Your only cost is for the items you choose to bid on to help support the J2A.



The evening starts at 6PM with a pot luck dinner. Beverages will be provided throughout the evening and there will also be entertainment presented by the J2A youth. The LIVE AUCTION

will follow, while throughout the evening a SILENT AUCTION will take place, allowing bidders to vie for a multitude of wonderful items at a wide range of prices.

The Live Auction will feature items such as vacations, sports tickets, entertainment event tickets, fishing and boating excursions, delicious foods, and wonderful services. Whether you need a baby sitter, a massage, or just want to pig out on pizza, it's all available! And if you just want to watch as the bidding strategies unfold, that's fine too. The Auctioneer and the J2A assistants will keep things moving and entertaining.

The Silent Auction offers an array of useful, decorative, and edible items, many made by the loving hands of our parishioners. From toys to trinkets and pies to paintings, the selection is always fun and the competition for some items is "spirited". At the end of the night high bidders win their items to take home and anything left is available for bid at Fellowship Hour on Sunday.

This is not only a singularly enjoyable event, but is also critical to the J2A Youth

program. Without this financial support, the Pilgrimage that occurs every 2 years would not be possible. This trip culminates the J2A program and is a key element, serving as a spiritual finale to a four year experience that has a significant impact on the lives of our young adults at St. Stephens.

So please, help out this important project in two ways:

1. Come to the Auction and enjoy the evening
2. Please contribute items or services for bid

To make a donation contact Ken Fuhr (kfuhrs3@comcast.net) or Corinne Fragnoli (cfragnoli@att.net). Simply describe your contribution, estimate its current value, and take it to them at church.

So mark your calendar now for February 6th and let everyone know you're GOING, GOING, GONE! To the J2A Live Auction.

Ken

Twelfth Night

You Are Invited to Join in the Fun and Festivities of A Twelfth Night Celebration

January 9, 2010

Partake in a wonderful evening of fun, fine dining and song.

The dinner will be prepared in a collaborative effort between

Chefs Mike Wellman and Steve Fragnoli

with assistance from the Hospitality Committee.

Your dinner will be served by the youth groups of St.

Stephen's.

We Ask Your Prayers for...

Members

Mary Lou Bryson	Jim McQuiston
Seung Cho	Albertine Mosier
Harold Golding	Jack & Judy Mulcahy
Steve Kirby	Nancy Sams
Barbara Lehti	Charles Saylor
Pat Look	Taylor Ward

Family & Friends

Bill Batty	Carter Ketner
Timothy Bennett	Lucille Makarov
Gloria Bober	Patty McKibbon
Jake Boldt	Jeri Merton
Sherry & Jack Brocklebank	
Michael Carroll	MJ Ogden
Larry Coggins	Marueen Pelachyk
Aaron Cremeans	Anne Poppe
Nancy Dickens	Don Saylor
Jack Dillon	Carol Schmid
Cathlynn Duncan	Meg Schwendler
Betty Feighner	Chris Slezak
John Good	John Spates
Dillon Heybour	Irene Spokes
Grace Huising	Nick Taylor
Robert James	Laura & Jared
Cynthia Johnston	
Steve Johnston	

Those in the Armed Services

Steven Armstrong - Nephew of Linda Pierce
 Rachel Barton - Granddaughter of Jane & Harry Frank
 Jason DeMattia - Known to the Davis'
 Andrew Fielder - Grandson of David Fielder
 Kyle Hoffman - Known to Joe & Jan Hopper
 Ryan Kasky - Grandson of Larry & Lynn Nunn
 Stephan L'Hommedieu - Godson of Phil & Linda Pierce
 Nathan Madak - Cousin of Diane Kenefic & David Eldon
 David Mentier - Cousin of Diane Kenefic & David Eldon
 Brian Papet - Son of Bruce & Nancy Papet
 Joshua Spates - Son of John & Miranda Spates

These Parish Families

1/3	James, Anne & Jenny Miller Kevin, Carolyn, Lindsey & Lauren Miller
1/10	Marilyn Miller Sharon Miller
1/17	Lou & Karen Mirzoian Joe & Karen Mollahan
1/24	Joann Morilli Dave, Betsy, Amanda, Alaina & Zach Morello
1/31	Joan, Elizabeth & Robert Morgan John, Karen, Alex & T.J. Morley
2/7	Anne, Sarah & Kristopher Mortensen Albertine Mosier

The Departed

Lodie Fay
Sister of Joy James Williams

Jack Harrison
Friend of Father Jonathan's

Gina Van Buren
Daughter of Dick & Rosa Van Buren

Guy Barnes
Former member of St. Stephen's

Rober Gallup
Father in Law of the Very Rev. Gordon Weller

Annie Loua
Wife of the Rev. Alfred Loua

December Aniversaries

Ken & Barbara Shipman	4
Roy & Gretchen Waters	4
Dan & Lori Maxwell	15
Kevin & Trish Collins	21
Ryan & Krista Malinich	22
Dan & Harriot DeLong	29

How to Contact Us

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sexton@ststephenstroy.org

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(password: coffeehour)

The Witness, Liz Sinkovich, Editor

witness@ststephenstroy.org

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Weekly Services:

Sat. 4:30 p.m.

Eucharist for All Ages

Sun., 8 a.m.

Early Eucharist

.....
Sun, 10 a.m.

Eucharist, with music, Nursery

If you have e-mail, you can receive our newsletter faster! Please send your e-mail address to office@ststephenstroy.org. Thank you in advance for helping us with our continued effort to.....THINK GREEN!

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

5500 North Adams Road

Troy, MI 48098

Please remember St. Stephen's in your will

Change Service Requested

Dated Material

JANUARY 2010