

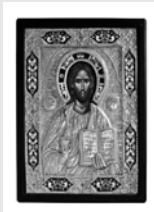


The Grapevine

November 2006

NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, LONGVIEW, WA
1428 - 22nd Avenue, Longview, WA 360-423-5600 www.sslv.org

Contemplative Prayer Retreat



Take some sabbath time to enter into the quiet before the holiday rush.

Open hearts filled with thanksgiving are more able to be present to family and friends in the spirit of Christ.

There will be time for some instruction, for several meditation sessions, and times of extended silence.

Friday, November 17
7-9pm
in the church

Saturday, November 18
8:30-3pm
in parish hall

Bring a sack lunch for Saturday.

Vestry Views

by Ann Mottet, Rector's Warden

Over the past couple of years, the Vestry has consciously created a new way of accomplishing our business. This past year especially our meetings have had a new tenor, a spirit of discernment, a conscious commitment to seek the lead from God as we go about doing his business in his church. We try to remain vigilant to “process” so our meetings will be, from start to finish, a prayer of discernment and worship. We’ve moved a long way toward this end, but still have a ways to go!

Vestry persons serve three-year terms. There are nine members of Vestry and three retire as three new members are added each year. In the near future, we will be seeking three persons to replace the three out-going members. If you think you may be interested in this ministry, please talk to Father Richard or anyone currently on Vestry and find out more about this opportunity to serve. Some of you may be approached by out-going Vestry members over the next month or two and asked to serve.

In addition to our monthly meetings, we have several retreats each year – one for an entire weekend early in the year at St. Andrew’s House on Hood Canal (for community-building and goal-setting) and one for part of a weekend locally to engage in budget formation. A time or two each year, each of us takes turn being responsible to make sure the entire church is locked up after Sunday services.

I’ve found it interesting and rewarding to serve on Vestry. It’s an opportunity to vision the St. Stephen’s of the future and to help create that vision. In addition, my three years of Vestry service have been a wonderful way to get to know and work with some really great people! I encourage you to consider this ministry as a possibility for you – either now or sometime in the future.



St. Stephen's Mission Statement

St. Stephen's is a Christian Community, empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring others to Christ and to celebrate God's love through worship, fellowship, education, and service

The Staff

The Rev. Richard Green	Rector
The Rev. Kathleen Patton	Associate Rector
The Rev. John Ackermann	Deacon
Angela Warning	Parish Administrator
Ann Long	Pianist, Treasurer
Howard Meharg	Music Minister, Webmaster
Katie Lewis	Organist
Annie New	Children's Ministry Assistant

The Vestry

Ann Mottet	Rector's Warden
Dick Woods	People's Warden
Jill Johanson	Lloyd Solon
Peggy Norman	John Edmiston
Bill Norvell	Sara Hamilton
Chad Olsen	

Budget Booster Shot

From Ann Long, Treasurer

As you can see, smell, and hear, our parish hall is steamrolling along towards its completion. It is exciting to see the daily transformations taking place. And to celebrate, it looks like we are having a party! Remember what it feels like to **PARTY**? No? Well, I suggest you get reacquainted with the feeling. There are plans in the making for a Jeopardy party on November 18th.

Now in order to present a balanced budget for 2006, the Vestry included a line for **Fundraiser Income**. As of the end of September, we had a sizable deficit, and, of course, no place for a party. Now, thankfully, our beautiful new gathering place is close to completion, and hopefully, many of you will want to be there for the gala event. A good turnout could help to offset some of the deficit. But more importantly, we have so much to be thankful for, so much to celebrate. What better way than to come together in fellowship with grateful and happy hearts?

Truth is the trump card!

by Howard Meharg

I keep hoping you wonderful St. Stephen's folks don't mind my writing about subject matter outside of my role as your Director of Music. As you have discovered, I like to offer an opinion and express some views in this journey we seem to be sharing.

The diocese of Olympia met in convention at the end of October. By the time you read this, their votes will have been taken. Some items are house-keeping, some have ramifications that go beyond the house, giving our neighbors real insight into the church.

As an alternate delegate to the convention I've read the resolutions that will be considered. Resolutions 5 and 6 are both related to possible discrimination related to the hiring of individuals in all areas of life of the Episcopal Church. A strong voiced element in the church, "in the interest of unity," will oppose both of these resolutions. Specifically they will oppose the affirmation to allow "full inclusion in all areas. . . of our brother and sister Christians who happen to be non-celibate gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered persons..." Article #6 simply asks that the church comply with state law prohibiting the inclusion of sexual orientation when it comes to hiring individuals.

To me, the issue is not unity, it is truth. Truth is the trump card.

The truth is that being gay is not a choice. I didn't wake up one morning at the age of twelve and decide I would be heterosexual. Plain and simple, it was no more of a choice for those who are gay, than it was for me.

The truth is that the Bible does seem to condemn homosexuality.

(continued on page 3)

Friends of the Library



Annual Booksale
November 3- 6

Bayne Cottage is available!

Some fall and winter weekends are available for reservations at the Bayne Cottage. The Canal is beautiful this time of year. come see for yourself!

Email
jeff@saintandrewshouse.org

500 Christmas cookies needed!

Sign-up on the board
outside the office
to bake for the annual
CASA Christmas party for
foster children and their
families



Truth is the trump card!

The truth is we're pretty selective when it comes to deciding whether we'll accept the Bible as the final decision on many issues.

Just for fun, let's take a look at one man's list as he tries to deal with his adherence to Biblical statements. He puts them in the form of questions...presumably to his priest:

1. I've had a lot of trouble with a rebellious daughter. The Bible says I can sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?
2. I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. A passage from Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?
3. I know from Leviticus 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?
4. My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev. 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? (Lev. 24:10-16). Based on Leviticus 20:14, couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws?

The truth is that God's revelation of himself must not be limited to the wisdom of an ancient and sometimes primitive people. We are no less his creatures today. We are no less capable of hearing his voice.

The truth is that if we distill the message of Jesus, we hear him clearly say that he came so that all his people might have abundant life.

The truth is that we must base our ethical decisions on what will most likely allow abundant living for all of God's people. Witch burning, slavery, and the withholding of leadership positions to women...all notions once defended vigorously in such "conventions" of yesteryear have all fallen to enlightened thinking. I'd like to think that they fell, too, because of further revelation from God.

Latest news: Saturday, October 28

I'm delighted to report that the convention voted in favor of the resolution noted above. The debate was exactly as I expected, but, in my opinion truth did in fact step forward. I was very proud of the civility shown and that the Diocese of Olympia has taken still one more step toward abundant living for all its members.

Rector's Letter



Dear Ones,

This time of year is rather amazing in this part of the world. I grew up in a place where the leaves just turned brown and fell off. But here the trees are on fire with a spectacular display of color – and they perform this glorious artistic act in their death. This is a time of endings, but also preparation for new beginnings. It is a time when we seem to be more aware of the load of loss and grief we bear, and of those we miss and mourn.

Last year we had the first Service of Remembrance at St. Stephen's. It was a community event that was well attended by both parishioners and community members. The music was wonderful, the setting was beautiful, and the words of our funeral rite, modified for the occasion, touched hearts in ways for which I had only hoped. There was a tenderness and vulnerability that was contained and protected by our worship space which gave the participants the freedom to experience grief and loss, and honor those who have gone before.

It is also important to hear the Good News in that context, and let it touch us in that deep place exposed by our sense of loss. It seems to me that this is the sort of thing that should become a tradition. It is a need we all share. I commend it to you this November 1st at 7pm.

Sursum corda (lift up your hearts)

Richard

And now for something completely different

Cowlitz County Superior Court is seeking people interested in becoming bailiffs. The function of the bailiff is to take charge of the jury during civil and criminal trials. All training necessary will be provided by the court.

This is a part-time and somewhat intermittent position. The number of hours worked would be based on the desires of the individuals involved and the frequency of jury trials, which is quite variable. The bailiff's responsibilities often run past regular working hours. The position is paid \$9.23 per hour.

If you are interested, please contact Nancy Williamson, Superior Court Administrator at (360) 577-3085.

Deacon's Corner

Our country was founded on Christian principles and freedoms. Freedoms. November 7th is Election Day. There are some important initiatives, Congressional and State Legislative offices to be decided. I always like to take the Voters Pamphlet and read it as I fill out my ballot. A lot of our friends and relatives have given their lives so that we could have the opportunity and freedom to vote. I like to think of these, mail in ballots, as an open book test. I get to look up the answer as I fill out the ballot. I also can take the time to research the right vote. I don't have someone waiting on me to use the voting booth. Please don't forget to make out your ballot and mail it in. Please Vote!!!!
Deacon John

'Keeping Kids Safe' class scheduled

All folks who work with children and teens as teachers, group, or event leaders are required to receive training to help keep kids safe and set a loving and appropriate tone in all church activities. Families, vestry members, and all congregation members are also encouraged to participate.

The Church Insurance Company has developed an excellent program that will be presented Sunday, December 3 after church.

The first hour will address keeping children safe from sexual misconduct and is appropriate for all church members. The second hour will be focused on children's ministry workers in particular.

Child care and food will be provided. Please RSVP to the church office 423-5600 or to me at: kpatton48@adelphia.net

If you are a volunteer who works with kids and are unable to attend either session, contact me as soon as possible so we can schedule additional training.

Mo. Kathleen+

Children's ministry news

Welcome "New" Staff Members for Children's Ministry

Annie New brings her rich background in teaching and social work, and her loving spirit to her new job as Children's Ministry Assistant. On Sundays, she will supervise the nursery staff, teach the youngest Sunday School class at 9:00, and oversee our grade 2-4 children in worship and prayer during the 10:00 service.

Beth Eubanks and **Janet Valencia** will be caring for young children in the nursery. Both women are young mothers who are excited about serving our families, and creating a warm and safe environment for our children.

Nursery Schedule

We welcome all children to the nursery at 8:15 on Sundays, so parents can enjoy choir, and prepare for other ministries as needed. Childcare continues after 9:00 for toddlers and infants, while all other children are invited to enjoy Sunday School. During the 10:00 service, Beth and Janet will oversee children under age eight, and bring them to the communion rail.

After the 10:00 service, all parents are responsible for their own children, unless specific arrangements are made with Beth and Janet. Please pick up your child from the nursery, and supervise your child at coffee hour. **All children should be in sight of a supervising adult at all times.** Always know where your children are, and which adults are supervising them. After-church childcare will be arranged as needed for meetings.

Mo. Kathleen+

St. Andrew's House Winter Curried Squash Soup

makes 7 servings

- 1 onion chopped
- 3 cloves crushed garlic
- olive oil
- 1 1/2 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 8 cups vegetable stock
- 1/4 cup dry lentils
- 1 (28 ounce) can diced tomatoes with juice
- 1/4 cup uncooked white rice
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1 small spaghetti squash - cut in half



Preheat oven to 350 degrees F

Place cut side of the squash down in a lightly oiled baking pan. Bake for 30 minutes or until a sharp knife can be inserted with only a little resistance. Remove squash from oven and set aside to cool enough to be easily handled. Shred squash with a fork.

In a large soup pot, saute onions and garlic in olive oil. Add curry powder, cumin, and turmeric. When onions are transparent, add stock and lentils and bring to a boil. Reduce to simmer and add chopped tomatoes and juice.

Enjoy!

St. Andrew's House cookbook will soon be available for purchase.
We'll keep you posted!

Longview Public Library Youth Services

On Tuesday, November 21 from 6:30 - 10 pm there will be a showing of two films: An Inconvenient Truth: The "Al Gore movie on global warming" and Nobility: interviews with 9 Nobel prize-winners, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Both films are powerful and thought-provoking, and we could use some adult volunteers to be present at this "Teen Tuesday" program.

Contact Jan Hanson, Youth Services Librarian at:442.5323 or jan.hanson@ci.longview.wa.us

Save the date: Celtic Spirituality retreat

Diocese of Olympia April 20-22, 2007 at Dumas Bay, Federal Way.

The diocesan Team for Spiritual Formation (T4SF) is bringing J. Philip Newell to the diocese to lead a retreat focusing on Celtic spirituality.

This retreat requires significant advanced preparation and, with Newell as guide, participants will deeply reflect on the Celtic tradition as a spiritual resource for today.

A brochure with registration form can be downloaded at www.dsomat.org. Early registration is advised as space is limited.



Road trip . . .

I'm organizing a trip to the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Pacific Science Center on Saturday, December 9th.

At this preliminary stage, I would like to know how many people would like to go, and if they would like transportation.

The group rate is:

Adults: \$15.75,
Juniors (3-12): \$ 9.00,
Seniors (65+): \$13.00

These prices are about \$5.00 off the normal rates. I'm also organizing transportation.

We need to have 15 people to go to qualify for these rates, and I think there are already 10 interested in going.

Please contact me A.S.A.P. if you are interested, and let me know if you would be interested in a ride.

Jan E.V.W. Hanson
janevw@adelphia@adelphia.net
360-578-5707

Nudge, Nudge

Ingathering Sunday for our pledge indications was Oct 22. We are still somewhat short of the anticipated number of cards.

If you never received the initial mailing or need another card, please call the office and we will quickly respond.

Your commitment is important so the budget for 2007 can be realistic.

Thank you, Greg Lopic

Kids in Church

They wiggle. They giggle. They forget to stand, to sit, to kneel, to walk. And they bring their own needs, interests, and developmental awareness to the table we all share in Christ's presence. They invite us to open-hearted hospitality.



Have you noticed the grade 2-4 children sitting in the front pews in church with teacher Annie New? They're learning to worship. In year's past we have offered children's chapel at 10:00. This year we are trying something new: After our 9:00 Sunday School hour, grade 2-4 children worship with the adults in their own front pew until the sermon, when they slip out for reflection and prayer time, returning at the peace.

It isn't easy, but we all need to work to make it joyful. Please put on your patience caps and your kindest attitude as they discover church, and learn to be part of the larger worshipping community. We are finding that if they are not warmly welcomed, and given a good chance to learn about how to be in church at this age, it is harder to get them to enter at a later age. Now is the time to make them full members of our congregation.

Please resist every temptation to scowl and correct – Annie and I will take the guidance role. Additional correction only makes everyone feel more uncomfortable. Instead, I encourage you to smile, shake hands with enthusiasm at the peace, and use your body language to communicate that our youngest members are valued. We would welcome anyone with an interest in kids to join our pew, with the intention of being a positive and friendly partner in worship with us. The children are helped by adults who assist them in finding their place in the service with gentleness and humor.

Annie and I will teach them about our traditions, and encourage them to respect other's need for quiet in prayer. As the year goes on, they will begin to understand the rhythms of worship, and fall into the patterns with more grace. But please remember they are young and active, and will always take up more "space" than our older and larger members.

Faithfully,

Mo. Kathleen +

CELEBRATE OUR REMODEL PROJECT NOVEMBER 5th

As we near the end of this major project, we are holding our breath(s) that we will be ready to move back in to our parish hall very soon. There will be festivities on Sunday, November 5th, after each service (7:30 and 10:00). Please come and see, take a tour, have a glass of bubbly, and participate in the "bring a friend to church" fun.

Enter through the new glass door

Admire the glass walls and windows and our expanded space

Peruse the books on our library wall

Walk on the new floor (oak in the main room, slate in the entry)

Sit at a new table

Enjoy the brand new courtyard and water feature

Stroll up one of the new ramps

Observe modern bathrooms in the education wing



The entire congregation has been involved with our transformation through pledges, prayers, or personal commitments to assisting with the work. Almost everyone has been disrupted in some way, but there has been a total absence of grumbling or malcontent. I am grateful to each and everyone one of you for your patience and participation. ~Margaret

Thanks be to God.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

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