



The Grapevine

The monthly newsletter of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church,
Longview, WA
December 2017



Journey to Christmas

It was Christmas Eve, 1970, and I was a 21 year old GI stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Snow was on the ground and it was bitterly cold as was so often the case in that part of Missouri. War was raging in Southeast Asia, and the nation was deeply

divided over that war, issues of race, and a host of cultural hot buttons. I was one of the last given leave for the holiday, and was unable to depart until the afternoon Greyhound for Houston.

Travel by bus was, as it still is, a working class and poor person's mode of travel. Due to the holiday, the bus was packed with travelers doing mostly what I was, going Home for Christmas. We rumbled through the small towns and countryside of southwest Missouri, Arkansas, and into Oklahoma. Given the Season, the passengers were unusually quiet, even somber as we rolled along. There was little, if any, interaction until early evening when a small group of young African American men could be heard quietly talking and chuckling among themselves. Soon, the gentle murmur began to spread forward in the bus accompanied by a small bottle of "Christmas cheer" provided by the young men. Then a matronly woman asked if anyone was hungry since she had a large quantity of fried chicken she had made for the trip. At that, someone else broke out a large box of homemade cookies, and our silent night was turning into a Christmas party. Stories were being told, lives were being shared, and those who had been strangers just minutes before were warming to one another in remarkable ways.

We continued our little celebration well into the night, and as passengers disembarked at their destinations they were sent off with holiday best wishes. As new passengers joined us, they were quickly incorporated into our mobile community. Food and drink was often left behind for us to continue to enjoy. Upon our arrival in Houston, I, along with other passengers and the driver left a rather tired entourage to meet family and friends. As we left, our driver said that he had been scheduled to have vacation for the holiday, but at the last minute was forced to fill in for a sick colleague. His sullen resentment, quite apparent when we boarded, had been transformed by the warmth and generosity of his passengers. None of us really wanted to be on that bus, including him, but by opening up to our common humanity, we had found the presence of something much deeper than the usual holiday experience. We had discovered in our midst a quiet joy that seemed to come from within rather than outside of us. It carried us across all manner of social "barriers" to a place of union in a time of tremendous upheaval.

Maybe that is something to remember in this tumultuous year. The one whom we celebrate offered us a path through the superficial, conflictual, self centered way of the World to something much more satisfying, and, if you will, Holy. He has tried to show us that we have come equipped with all that we need to become fully human and live in harmony with God, each other, and God's creation. This must surely be the source of that angelic blessing, "Joy to the World".

Blessings and peace be with you,

Fr. Richard Green



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

*Deep Roots,
Prayerful Hearts,
Open Arms*

THE STAFF

The Rev. Richard Green	Interim priest
The Rev. Michael Wright	Interim priest
The Rev. Bob Sipe	Priest, Associate
Rebecca Edmiston	Parish Administrator
Alison Askeland	Music Director
Katie Lewis Phillips	Organist
Jean Watson	Bell Choir Director
Riki Davis	Pianist
Rachel McKee	Child Care Provider
Ellie Woodard	Child Care Provider
Gabby Willams	Child Care Provider
Gretchen Moore	Family Ministry

THE VESTRY

Greg Lopic, Rector's Warden	
Ann Mottet, Rector's Warden	
Barb Dunlap, People's Warden	
David Hanson	Cathy Cochrane
Curt Copenhagen	Sandra King
Joe White	Patrick McCoy

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

Columbian Choral Ensemble
Columbia River Handbells
Jean Watson, Fabric Artist

SUNDAY SERVICES

8:00 am Eucharist in All Saint's Chapel on the first and third Sunday of the month
10:30 am Eucharist in Sanctuary
2:30 pm Second Sunday Worship Gathering at Caterbury Park

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday 10 am - 4 pm

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

1428 - 22nd Avenue

Longview, WA 98632

360/423-5600 admin@sslv.org www.sslv.org

You are invited to Second Sunday Worship Gathering

At Canterbury Park

December 10, 2:30 pm

In the President's room

Our service will include scripture readings, a brief sermon, prayers and communion



All are welcomed!

Yoga

Community yoga meets in the parish hall Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7:00 am and Monday and Wednesday at 8:30 am.

Red Rogers

Red Rodgers passed away on Sunday, December 3rd. Please keep Karen and the family in your prayers. A memorial service will be held at St. Stephen's on Saturday, December 30. The time is to be determined. A reception will follow.

Leaves Away!

Thanks to the energetic help of **Dave Hanson, Greg Lopic, Mike Reuter, Lloyd Solon, Rob Yoggerst, and Juice Quiroz** a very large quantity of leaves were removed from the roof and gutters of the two church properties. Well done!





Profile Team Progress

Your Parish Profile Committee has been faithfully drafting the document that will soon be forwarded to the Vestry and then on to the Diocese. We were given an exemption to responsibility for a congregational assessment because of the Appreciative Inquiry process we recently completed. That has allowed us to move forward fairly quickly.

Most sections of the Profile have been written. Pictures that “tell a story” will enhance the completed document. During the remaining weeks of December, the last two sections are being created and the draft document will undergo an editing process. Early in January, the team meets again to review the edited version and do the work required to complete the final document. We hope to complete the Profile by the end of January at the very latest.

**Margaret Lopic Ann Mottet Dave Williams
Lauren Henricksen Nathanael Light**

Wellness Reflection

We are moving into that season of the year in which our thoughts are focused on gifts, both giving and receiving. In part, our economy is fueled by this practice of gift giving. In fact, businesses are counting on us to spend portions of our income on a variety of items that will be given to a friend or family member as tangible evidence of our care and concern for them. Yet, perhaps the most valuable and meaningful gifts we can give are not wrapped in paper and tied with ribbon. The gift of our time, our talents, our skills, our presence may bring far more joy and happiness into the life of another than anything we might offer in a box. I am reminded of these inspired words recorded in the New Testament: “Each one should use whatever gift he [she] has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10) What I find hopeful in reading this verse, is in recognizing and affirming that the use of our “gifts” – skills, talents, time - in service to others is closely aligned to being in partnership with God’s grace. I encourage you to give the gift of yourself this season to those you love and care about. It is a gift of grace!

Fr. Michael Wright +

Children and Families Ministry

Godly Play – All children ages 4-10 years are invited to join us in room 4 at 10:00 am each Sunday to join us for a story, art time and a very small feast. We are currently on a journey to Bethlehem along with the Prophets, the Holy Family, the Shepherds and the Angels and the Magi following the star. Please join us for this wonderful time of preparation during Advent. All children return to the sanctuary at 11:15 so that they may join in the Holy Eucharist with their families.

Nursery- We have caring staff available in the Nursery from 9:00 am -11:15 every Sunday for newborns to age 4. Drop by for a visit and meet our wonderful staff!

There will be no Godly Play or Nursery Staff available on December 24 and December 31, so that our staff may enjoy time with their families. Thank you!

We would like to thank everyone who donated socks and toiletry items for our November Messy Church. The children and adults filled a large basket with these needed items that have been passed out through Radical Love. The filled socks have been received with so much appreciation and gratitude that we will re-visit this activity in January.

Wishing you all Peace and Blessings this Holy season,
Gretchen Moore

Candlelight Christmas Eve

*There will be three services on Sunday,
December 24*

A simple Eucharist at 10:30 am

*The Family service will begin at 4:00 pm.
Plan to arrive early to join the caroling at
3:30 pm*

*The doors will open again at 9:30 pm with
carols and choral music.*

*The service will start at
10:00 pm.*





New Refrigerator!

Special thanks to **Mike and Lucy Claxton** for their generous contribution of the shiny new refrigerator in our kitchen!

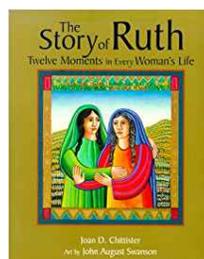
With Herculean effort and engineering skill the old commercial refrigerator in the kitchen was removed and the new one put in place. Thanks to **Cary Bellows, Dave Hanson, Greg Lopic, Joel Rupley, Gary Swanson, Robert Sudar** and **Joe White** for their efforts on one or both ends of the operation.

Thanks also to **Margaret Lopic** (who facilitated the complications of shipping) and **Janice Stixrud** for door monitoring and putting the shelves in the new refrigerator. There were others also who contributed to help defray associated expenses. We look forward to many years of service from this attractive piece of equipment.



Adult Faith Formation

It's not too late....to come to the Wednesday morning Study Group. We are beginning with a book on Ruth that discusses twelve moments in any person's life. Books can be ordered by calling the office. Join the discussion with **Fr. Michael Wright** and group members. Meetings begin at 10:15 am until about 11:30. We will meet December 6th and December 13th and resume weekly meetings on January 3rd. Come join us for this weekly fellowship.



Many Thanksgivings

You will soon receive pledge card in the mail asking that you seriously and prayerfully make a commitment to giving a percentage of your available funds to support the ongoing ministry at St. Stephen's.

You already know why you come to church yourself. It may be to be spiritually uplifted or challenged; perhaps you value your larger church family or you love the musical opportunities; or it is where you have found a "home." Consider, though, the other ministries of St. Stephen's your pledge will help to support.

Did you know that more than 25 different community groups use our building for meetings and activities? There are numerous support groups, classes, daily yoga, opportunities for seniors, and a variety of celebrations. Meals are prepared here by Radical Love and distributed to the homeless in our community. This particular program is very well regarded in our area.

Children are nourished in our church, too: in Godly Play, at Messy Church, and in the nursery. Big Leaf Montessori School uses our education wing and adjacent areas daily.

We have an amazing organ, a full set of hand bells, and many talented musicians who regularly bless us with their gifts. Acoustics in both the sanctuary and the parish hall are excellent. Throughout the year, we enjoy many beautiful performances. Non parishioners who attend musical presentations often consider this their "church home."

This is where we come for baptisms, for weddings, for prayers and petitions, and, at the end, for celebrations of life. We even have a columbarium.

We also have a native garden, which is a national wildlife refuge, and a chapel for intimate services and small celebrations.

Baird House, the building next door, offers a communication room so that we can have video connection with the Diocese, and provides additional meeting space as well as the center of operations for FISH.

At St. Stephen's we are proud of the ministries within our building and the many ways we provide outreach to the community. It is important that there are adequate funds to continue to be a thriving parish that welcomes and nourishes all who come.

from the Vestry



Financial Summary

by Wayne Amondson

St. Stephens Episcopal Church - Longview, WA 98632

Treasurer's Report for: January thru: **October 2017**

10/31/2017

FUND SUMMARY

	January 1st Beginning Balance	INCOME Month	INCOME Y-T-D	TRANSFERS Y-T-D	EXPENSE Month	EXPENSE Y-T-D	Yr-to-Date Ending Balance *
OPERATING FUND (BUDGET)	2,286.16	18,936.86	214,931.94	0.00	34,499.91	242,827.39	(25,609.29)
OTHER MINISTRIES & FUNDS							
FISH OFFERINGS	3,183.77	829.00	6,897.50	0.00	0.00	6,100.00	3,981.27
OUTREACH PROGRAM	7,730.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,695.00	2,035.15
ALTAR GUILD FUND	1,064.08	0.00	305.00	0.00	10.00	408.68	960.40
PROPERTY FUND	27,180.47	367.96	8,597.99	0.00	3,993.20	15,132.04	20,646.42
OTHER DESIGNATED FUNDS	17,467.99	2,665.87	17,126.32	140.62	4,406.37	19,732.33	15,002.60
ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE FUNDS							
CCE Music Fund Balance	376.40	0.00	486.00	0.00	193.49	499.99	362.41
Col. River Bells Fund Balance	446.47	0.00	152.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	599.30
SW Chamber Music Balance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Columbia Regional Fund Balance	537.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	537.49
LIABILITIES (seasonal accruals)	(33.24)	(5.50)	(242.91)	0.00	(30.97)	(369.73)	93.58
TOTALS	60,239.74	22,794.19	248,254.67	140.62	43,072.00	290,025.70	18,609.33

“October Giving improved over September but is still down 8%. Our TOTAL GIVING NEED remains 22% short of meeting our Challenge Goal for the Year, which is: To Reduce and Eliminate the need for Withdrawals from the Rector’s Chair Fund. This month Quarterly Expenses occur, but the big expenses involve the finalization of salary, accrued vacation and pension for Mother Kathleen as she departs. These create a large one-time expense, which pushes our the Ending Bal. of our Operating Fund to: \$ -25,609.29. Another withdrawal from the Rector’s Chair Fund has been initiated, and hopefully year-end giving will be as generous as prior years. Thank you for your sustained support during our time of transition, helping St. Stephens to continue it’s ministry to the Community!”

Treasurer: Wayne Amondson
Wayne Amondson

Don't forget that you can now give electronically at SSLV.org.

or scan our QR code to go to our mobile giving page



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Address Service Requested