

## I BRING GOOD NEWS TO YOU-WONDERFUL, JOYOUS NEWS FOR ALL PEOPLE - Luke 2:10

**Newsletter December 2017**

From the Interim,

Thank you for the warm welcome to St. Stephen's. November was an eventful month. The joyous celebrations of Rev. Jane Gould's seventeen years as your Priest and Rector were a fitting tribute for what she had meant to St. Stephen's. As sad as it might have been, a good goodbye is a critical gift to her so she may begin the next part of her ministry knowing that she has been loved and cherished. It also a critical gift to yourselves so you may enter into this time of transition ready to discover what is ahead. I hope that as your Interim Priest, I will be able to hold and guide you through these times.

I come to you having just served at as the Bridge Priest and Interim at Bristol Trinity Church in Easton, MA. Before that I was a supervisor at a homeless shelter in Lowell for 3 ½ years. This was a break from 23 years of parish ministry. I was Rector of All Saints' Church, Chelmsford for 12 years. For the 11 years before that I was in Syracuse, New York: four years at the downtown Cathedral and the rest at two small part time parishes, Emmanuel Church, East Syracuse and Church of the Good Shepherd among the Onondaga on the Onondaga Nation.

I live with my wife, Linda, in Chelmsford, MA, outside of Lowell. It is not too bad of a commute. We have two grown children, Douglas lives in Baltimore with his wife and our two grandchildren, ages 4 and 1. Our daughter Jennifer is a student at UMass-Lowell.

I plan on being in the office Tuesdays through Fridays. Feel free to drop in but if you absolutely want to meet with me it is best to make an appointment. My cell phone number is 978-394-3159. Email is [tbarrington@ststevenslynn.org](mailto:tbarrington@ststevenslynn.org).

As I am trying to get to know everyone I have been asking three questions.

- What has been one of your most meaningful experiences at St Stephen's?
- What are the important traditions of this place?
- What is a new thing you would like to try?

I hope to hear everyone's answers as together we explore the mighty works of God in store for us.

Blessings,

Rev. Tom

## **We Gather Together**

November has been a month of gathering together. From regular Sunday services at 8:00 and 10:00 am, to Sunday School classes, Middle School Retreat, Healing Service, Tea and Talk, regularly scheduled meetings, our annual Harvest Fair, and of course the farewell gatherings to honor Rev. Jane and John Gould and to wish them Godspeed, it has been a busy month with lots of changes for our church family.

Most of us enter this holiday season with mixed emotions every year. I suspect this year finds many of us with stronger feelings than ever, whether they are positive, negative, or probably what is most true; with mixed feelings. The holiday season presents challenges for many of us, whether in concrete areas such as finances, or emotional areas of loss and regret. For those like myself, with December birthdays, there is sometimes an extra area of stress in the midst of celebration of the holidays!

This year, we enter a new era in the story of St. Stephen's Memorial Episcopal Church. After seventeen years of the ministry of Rev. Jane Gould, we enter an interim time, as we welcome Rev. Tom Barrington, who will be with us until a new Rector is selected. This will be a new process for many of us and an opportunity for new learning. I can't help thinking of Mary and Joseph as they must have wondered what lay ahead of them as they awaited the birth of Jesus. Like us, they faced a time of uncertainty with lots of questions. But like us also, they had people around them to offer support, a listening ear, and comfort when it was need most.

As we gather together, let's pray for each other, for our church family, old and new, both present and far away.

Love and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Irene N. Axelrod". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Irene Axelrod

## STEWARDS OF RESOURCES

**STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM PLANS PLEDGE FOLLOW UP.** As we reach toward our pledge goal of \$120,000, the Stewardship Ministry Team and Vestry will make pledge follow up phone calls in December to encourage previous pledgers to return their 2018 pledge commitment cards and to inspire new people to join the ranks of pledging members. Already we have pledged \$83,608. Please pledge so that we can continue to let God's light shine in and through St. Stephen's.

**FAIR PROVIDES FUN & FUND RAISING.** Deep gratitude to the scores of you who contributed to the Fair through your donations of time, talent, and treasure. Special thanks to the Fair leadership Team of Marilyn Cloran, Sally Gosselin, Carolyn Hoy, Lucinda McClain, Josephine Russo, and Ruthanne & Steve Switzer. While we don't yet have a Fair total yet, our Fair weekend deposit was over \$4,000. Also there was a Children's Fair in the Community Room this year. There was plenty of energy throughout the 3 rooms filled for the fair. The Children's Fair was full of happy young people, staffed by Sandy Wittrup, Charlotte Breckenridge, Robin Washington, and Carolyn Hoy. As Fair season continues, **help us meet our Fair fundraising goal by buying & selling raffle tickets and spending generously at the Mini-Fair on Sunday, December 10.** Fair season ends on the 10<sup>th</sup> when the Mini-Fair will offer Same Day Raffles and Bargain Buys, and we will draw the Multi-Prize and Super Sports Raffles.

### **BUY YOUR MULTI-PRIZE RAFFLE TICKETS**

**FIRST PRIZE: FIVE \$100 VISA GIFT CARDS (VALUE \$500)**

**SECOND PRIZE: SALEM WATERFRONT HOTEL**  
Overnight Getaway Deluxe Suite for Two

**THIRD PRIZE: FOUR \$25 GIFT CARDS**  
Stop & Shop, Panera, Amazon & Marshalls/TJMaxx/Home Goods

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### **BUY YOUR SUPER SPORTS RAFFLE TICKETS**

**TWO PATRIOTS TICKETS (VALUE \$210)**  
December 31, 2017 at 1:00pm: Patriots vs. New York Jets

**TWO BRUINS TICKETS (VALUE \$184)**  
January 15, 2018 at 1pm: Bruins vs. Dallas Stars at the Garden

**Tickets cost: \$2.00 or 6 for \$10**  
**Drawing on December 10 at the Mini-Fair**

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE BUSINESSES & INSTITUTIONS THAT GAVE TO THE FAIR.**

AAA Southern New England	Adriatic Restaurant & Bar	Andy's Breakfast & Lunch
Anya's Nails	April's Pub & Grill	Atlantic Toyota/Scion
Bayside Resort	Barnes & Noble	Beacon Communities
Bennett St. Tire & Glass	Bent Water Brewing	Bertucci's
Big Lots	Black Friday	BJ's Wholesale Club
BLT (Breakfast	Lunch	& Takeout)
Blue Ox Restaurant	Brotherhood Credit Union	Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar
C&C Lobster	C & L Package Store	Caffe Paolina
California Nails	Capitol Diner	Charlie's Seafood
Cheesecake Factory	Christopher's Café & Catering	Craft Beer Cellar
Cuffe McGinn Funeral Home	Digs Jewelry	District 45 Restaurant
Donham & Sweeney	ECCO	Edible Arrangements
Elite Design & Consign	EM Nails & Spa	Episcopal Diocese of MA
Episcopal City Mission	Ernie's Harvest Time	Essex River Cruises & Charters
Fantasy Island	Farquar & Black Insurance Agency	Fauci's Pizza
Five Guys	Flowers by Lorraine	Goodrich Funeral Home
Ginger's Closet	Consignment & Resale Shop	Green Tea
Harrington Trophy	Hawthorne Hotel	HMA Car Care
Home Depot	House of Seven Gables	Huntington Theatre
Infinity Boutique	Jack & Jill Hair Salon	John's Oil
John's Roast Beef & Seafood	Kappy's Fine Wine & Spirits	Kohl's
Lancelot Janitorial & Paper Products	Laser Quest	Lazy Dog Sports Bar
Linda's Jewelry	Loomos Brothers	Lynn Community Health Ctr.
Lynn Housing & Neighborhood Development	Lynn Museum	Market Basket
MCAN	Meineke	Middleton Golf Course
Nadworny Funeral Home	New You Oriental Therapy	North Shore Cycle
North Shore Dance Academy	North Shore Music Theatre	North Shore Navigators
P.F. Chang's China Bistro	Paul Stonkus	Panera Bread
Parker Funeral Home	Peabody Essex Museum	Pearl Beauty Supply
Pennyworth's inc	Perfect Dental	Periwinkle's Food Shop
Pet Express	Planet Fitness	Porthole Pub
Reading Children's Learning Center	REAL! (Real Educational Assistance Learning)	Rossetti Restaurant
Robert's Cleaners	Rolly's Tavern on the Square in Lynn	Salem Waterfront Hotel
Seaport Salon & Day Spa at Seaport Landing	Shaw's	Shuttle Song
Sky Zone Danvers	Solimine	Landergan & Richardson
South Peabody Liquor Store	Speedway	Spud's Restaurant & Pub Corporate Office
Staples	Staples	Stop & Shop
St. Stephen's Towers	Starbucks	Stoneham Theatre
Su Chang's	Tavern in the Square	Salem
The House of Seven Gables	The Cheese Shop of Salem	Therese Kay Photography
Thread & Shape	Tides Restaurant	TJMaxx
Marshalls	HomeGoods	Toomey's Cleaners
Tony the Florist	Trader Joe's	Treadwell's Ice Cream
Tri City Sales	Trio's Mexican Grill	True Value Hardware (Wyoma Square)
Turner's Seafood	Uno Pizzeria & Grill	Vesuvius
Walgreens	Wash Depot	Westin Waterfront Hotel
Zimman's		

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE IS LOOKING FOR LEADERS.** Our Parish, Deanery, and Diocese need leaders and the good news is that the leaders we need are sitting in our pews. Please think, pray, and talk to Nominating Committee members Carolyn Hoy, Pauline Leslie, Neil O'Donnell, and Steve Switzer, as you reflect on whether God might be calling you to serve.

## NURTURING THE CONGREGATION

**ARE YOU READY FOR ADVENT?** Every year we celebrate the first Sunday of Advent shortly after Thanksgiving, so Advent can feel like a train that speeds by us before we realize that we are even at the train station. So we rush into preparing lists, decorating the house and shopping for gifts. The four weeks of Advent remind us to be present and patient in our anticipation of the birth of Jesus. Our worship changes as colors go to purple; Sunday mornings begin in solemn darkness; and we sing the liturgy. Advent calendars, books of daily readings, and family resource packets are available in the Galahad area for individuals and families so that we can intentionally count down the days to Christmas.

**ADVENT STUDY & REFLECTION OPPORTUNITIES.** Take time in the midst of the busy-ness to prepare for Jesus being born in you

- **Wednesday evenings at 6:30**, Bible Study will explore Old Testament Advent readings from Isaiah. \*We will not meet on Wednesday, December 27.
- **On Thursdays at 1:00**, following our noon worship with healing prayers, Tea and Talk about Faith will read and discuss a series of Advent reflections.

### JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

6:30 BLUE CHRISTMAS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24—CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00PM CHRISTMAS PAGEANT WITH CAROLS & COMMUNION

8:30PM CHRISTMAS CAROL SING

9:00PM CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

**\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THE NEW TIMES FOR CHRISTMAS EVE!\*\*\***

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25—CHRISTMAS

10:00AM CHRISTMAS COMMUNION WITH CAROLS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

8:00AM HOLY COMMUNION WITH SERMON

10:00AM CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS WITH COMMUNION

**WORSHIP AT THE MONASTERY.** A group will not be going for the month of December due to lack of drivers. We will be going on January 2. Please contact Rev. Tom if you can help with driving.

**HEALING PRAYER AND PASTORAL CARE TEAMS MEET DECEMBER 7.** The Healing Prayer and Pastoral Care Teams will meet at 10:30 on Thursday, December 7th. We will check in and discuss day 1 of *The Book of Joy* by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu

**BELOVED COMMUNITY TEAM MEETS DECEMBER 14 AT 7:00.** Those who participated in ECCO's race retreat as well as those who want to engage the work of bridging racial divisions are invited to the Beloved Community Team gathering on Thursday, December 14 at 7:00 at St. Stephen's. We will talk about learnings, challenges, and awakenings from the race retreat and plan for 2018.

**POINSETTIAS GIVE TWICE.** By Sunday, December 17, please complete the enclosed form to contribute to our Christmas decorating fund by offering a memorial or thanksgiving donation. On December 31 following Christmas Lessons & Carols, please help us deliver poinsettias to our homebound members. It's a blessing to spread St. Stephen's Christmas cheer.

**BLUE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION ON DECEMBER 19 AT 6:30.** We all know that the holidays can be difficult when pain and loss make life hard. In our Blue Christmas service, we offer a chance to offer to God the pain, disappointment and loss of our lives as we recognize the reality that "the light came into the world and the darkness did not overcome it." We light candles in the darkness; we hear words of comfort and strength; we offer prayers for healing and wholeness; and we gather at God's table to be fed. As Christians, we believe that

nothing can overcome the light of Christ in our lives and in the world but this does not mean that we must pretend that our lives are all that God and we would want them to be. Join us for Blue Christmas and bring with you those for whom you suspect this holiday season may be hard.

**DECK THE HALLS ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23 FROM 11:00 TO 3:00.** On December 23 get into the Christmas spirit smelling greens and wood polish, unwrapping and arranging poinsettias, and arranging figures from our crèche around the church. We'll enjoy Christmas music, hot cider, and snacks as we work to clean and beautify the church for Christmas.

## **HOSPITALITY TO CHILDREN, YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS**

**TIME TO GET READY FOR THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT.** This year St. Stephen's young people will present a Christmas pageant at 4:00 on Christmas Eve. The pageant has roles for babies and bigger-- parts for readers, speakers, dancers, and sheep! During the pageant the cast and congregation will sing parts of several Christmas carols! Rehearsals are Sundays after 10am worship. Sign up today to become part of the Pageant. We also need adults to organize costumes, provide snacks, and lead craft projects!

**TRUE COLORS PERFORMANCE DECEMBER 8 AT 6:30.** The Theater Offensive (an award winning LGBTQ youth and allies theater troupe from Boston) will be in Lawrence Hall on December 8th at 6:30pm to perform a show about being LGBTQ young people, mental illness, and self care. There will be pizza before the show starts! All middle school, high school, and college students are encouraged to attend. Adults are also welcome!

**YOUTH HOLIDAY CELEBRATION DECEMBER 22.** Our Middle School and OASIS Youth Groups will gather together for a joint Holiday Celebration 6:30-9 on Friday, December 22. Join us to celebrate the season and the success of the Christmas Presents Project for Kids. We will meet downstairs for yummy treats, holiday art, music and more! Please see Jason Cruz or Jamie Shore for more information.

**CHRISTMAS PRESENTS PROJECT FOR KIDS 2017 NEEDS YOU!** Each year St. Stephen's youth and adult mentors raise money to provide Lynn youth with Christmas gifts. Over the years this project has given gifts to almost 1000 children and teens. In order to be successful CPPK needs help and time from teens and adults with sign-ups, shopping, organizing, and distributing. Please tell Bonnie Bishop or Jamie Shore how you can share in the joy of giving during the holiday season:

- **Fridays, December 1, 8, 15, 3:30-5:30pm:** Sign-ups downstairs in basement.
- **Saturday, December 16, 9am-1pm:** Purchasing gifts at Walmart (last year we filled 7 shopping carts) with a free lunch afterwards.
- **Sunday, December 17, 12-2pm:** Sort and organize gifts into bags for distribution.
- **Thursday, December 21, 3:30-5:30pm:** Distribute gifts with cocoa, cookies, carols & Santa!

**ELF GIFT DISTRIBUTION ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18.** The people of Trinity Church in Topsfield and St. Andrew's Church in Marblehead are eagerly shopping for Elf gifts for our St. Stephen's children and youth. If you signed up your child/children for Elf gifts please pick them up after the 10am service on Sunday, December 17.

**REGISTER NOW FOR BCH IN FEBRUARY.** The annual Senior High Retreat at BCH will be Friday, February 2 through Sunday, February 4. It is a fun filled weekend away from school and work. Please speak with Jamie Shore for more info. BCH has broadened the Winter Camp program to now include grades 4-11. Winter camp will be Monday-Saturday, February 19-24 (Massachusetts' public school vacation week). For fun-filled faith or faithful fun, tweens and teens are invited to register now for time at BCH in February. You can register online at [bchcenter.org](http://bchcenter.org) or see Jamie Shore. Scholarships are available but spaces fill up fast!

**KIC MUSIC WINTER CONCERT DECEMBER 19 AT 5:30.** If you would like to see and hear KIC kids for yourself, one and all are invited to come to our winter concert on Thursday, December 19, at 5:30 in the dining room. All three drum ensembles will show off the rhythms they've been learning, and everyone will perform Christmas music on the piano. The concert will be fun, informal, and good for kids. There will be some other family activities, as well, followed by a community dinner. Please join us!

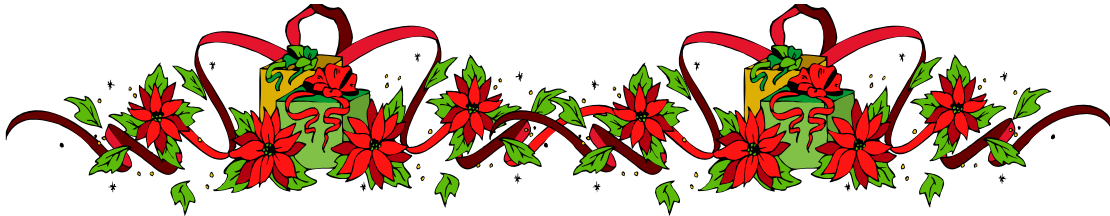
## **DEEPENING COMMUNITY COMMITMENT**

**MANY THANKS TO THE WITTRUPS FOR ANOTHER FABULOUS SPAGHETTI SUPPER.** Once again, the Wittrups rescued us from turkey leftovers and commercial Christmas-hype by hosting the Annual CPPK Spaghetti Supper Fundraiser on Saturday, November 26. We wrapped up ordinary time with a flourish as crowded tables, plentiful food, and lots of laughter filled the Wittrups home and helped the teens raise money to buy toys for children in the community. Thank you Sandy, Kent, and Family for spoiling us and helping a good cause!

**LEND A HELPING HAND. Fridays, 3:00-4:00 help our Food Pantry give out groceries.** We also give away books, clothes, and knit items most weeks. Extra hands and generous hearts are always appreciated. Many thanks to all those who donated turkeys and supported the Church School Can Drive in November. We were able to respond to the need of all those who came to us asking for help at Thanksgiving. November 16 certainly was a glorious Gratitude Sunday! For those who forgot to bring in UTO boxes on the 16<sup>th</sup>, we will keep collecting donations in December to support the work of the United Thank Offering.

	December 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<b>SUNDAYS</b> <b>8 &amp; 10am Worship in English</b> <b>10am Worship in Kiswahili</b>	<b>Office Hours:</b> <b>Mon-Wed, 9-12am,</b> <b>Th, 9-1, F, 9-2</b>  <b>KIC Music:</b> <b>Mon-Thurs, 2-6pm</b>				<b>1</b> 3:30-5:30pm CPPK sign-up	<b>2</b>	
<b>3</b> <b>First Sunday in Advent</b> Post-10am Pageant Rehearsal Noon Sewing Group 3-6:30pm Kiswahili Evening Prayers & Fellowship	<b>4</b> 8pm AA	<b>5</b> 4:15pm Tuesday with the Monks  6pm Deanery Assembly, Swampscott 6:30pm Knitters' Club 7pm NA	<b>6</b> 6:30pm Bible Study	<b>7</b> 10:30am Healing Prayer & Pastoral Care Teams Meeting Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 7pm St. Stephen's Towers Board	<b>8</b> 3-4pm Food Pantry 3:30-5:30pm CPPK sign-up 6:30-9pm True Colors Performance	<b>9</b> 10am Choir Rehearsal	
<b>10</b> <b>Second Sunday in Advent</b> Post-10am Pageant Rehearsal & Mini-Fair Noon Raffle Drawings Noon Sewing Group 12:30 Women's Group	<b>11</b> 8pm AA	<b>12</b> 6pm Finance Committee 6:30pm Knitters' Club 7pm NA	<b>13</b> 6:30pm Bible Study	<b>14</b> Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 7pm Beloved Community Team	<b>15</b> 3-4pm Food Pantry 3:30-5:30pm CPPK sign-up	<b>16</b> 9am CPPK Shopping Day	
<b>17</b> <b>Third Sunday in Advent</b> <b>Poinsettia Deadline</b> 8am and 10am Service of Light Post-10am -Pageant Rehearsal -Elf Gift distribution 12:15pm Vestry Meeting	<b>18</b> <b>Newsletter Deadline</b> 8pm AA	<b>19</b> 2pm Christmas Communion at St. Stephen's Tower 6:30pm Blue Christmas 5:30pm KIC Dinner & Community Concert 7pm NA	<b>20</b> 6:30pm Bible Study	<b>21</b> Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 3:30-5:30pm CPPK Gift Distribution	<b>22</b> 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS	<b>23</b> <b>11-3pm Deck the            Halls</b>	
<b>24</b> <b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> 2:30pm Pageant Rehearsal 4:00pm Christmas Pageant with Communion 8:30pm Christmas Carol Sing 9:00pm Candlelit Communion with Choir	<b>25</b> 10am Christmas Communion <b>MERRY            CHRISTMAS!</b> 	<b>26</b> <b>St. Stephen's Day</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 7pm NA	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk	<b>29</b> 3-4pm Food Pantry	<b>30</b>	
<b>31</b> <b>First Sunday after Christmas</b> 10am Christmas Lessons & Carols							





**POINSETTIAS  
IN MEMORY OF THOSE YOU LOVE**

It is time once again to remember your loved ones with a contribution to our Christmas Memorial Flowers. Please use this form to list the name(s) to be printed in our memorial booklet. Please print clearly! We ask for a contribution of \$25.00 so that we can purchase poinsettias and greens to decorate the church for Christmas. Your names must be submitted no later than Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**DO NOT DETACH**

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In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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The poinsettias donated by members of the parish decorate the altar gloriously for our Christmas celebrations. After Christmas, we give them to our homebound members. We need volunteers with a little time and a lot of Christmas spirit to deliver poinsettias during the week of Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>. Flower delivery isn't hard and won't take too long but it will make a real difference in another person's life.

All you have to do is take a plant and an addressed card, and then deliver the poinsettia to your fellow parishioner. Receiving their poinsettias and a brief visit from you will make their day! Please call the church office if you can help. 781-599-4220.