

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

Newsletter December, 2019

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas

From the Interim Priest

Advent is a season to prepare as we anticipate the arrival of the Christ child, the baby Jesus born in a manger. This year, at St. Stephen's we are also getting close to the calling of a new rector.

This month the Search Committee will be inviting the three finalists to visit and to have face to face interviews. They will then be making a recommendation to the Vestry. Upon approval by the vestry and the details of their contract are worked out, the candidate will be presented to the parish. Their identities will remain confidential until that time. However, just as we are preparing for Christmas, we can begin to prepare to welcome the new Rector.

The Vestry will be appointing a Transition Committee who be taking the lead in the logistics of welcoming the Rector. These duties include helping them find a place to live and getting settled in, planning events so your rector can get to know the people and programs of the parish. They will also help organize the Celebration of New Ministry, as service at which the Bishop officially installs the Rector. Besides these "official" tasks, the members of the Transition Committee can serve as a sounding board for the priest and a supporter of her or his programs. If you know of anyone who might want to help with this, please contact the wardens.

As for me, the next few months will be a time for wrapping up my ministry here, preparing to hand-off my duties and saying goodbye. It has been an incredible honor to serve as your interim priest. St. Stephen's remains the most dynamic church I have ever served. I am excited for your future. I anticipate that I will serve as an interim somewhere else.

Meanwhile, we continue to prepare to celebrate the incarnation of our Lord and Savior. May the power of God's love continually shine in your hearts as we look forward to what God will be doing with and through us in the coming year.

Peace,

Handwritten signature of Tom Barrington

The Rev. Tom Barrington

Advent and Christmas Services Schedule

Tuesday, December 17

6:30pm Blue Christmas

Tuesday, December 24—Christmas Eve

5:00pm Family Service, Building Crèche & Eucharist

10:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Eucharist

Wednesday, December 25—Christmas

10:00 am Christmas Eucharist with Carols



STEWARDS OF RESOURCES

As part of our Stewardship Drive, we had various members of the congregation speak to the congregation at the 10 AM service. Below is the address given by Jamine Ruffen on December 1st. She was asked to speak on giving thanks as she looks towards the future.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" Jeremiah 29:11

Good morning,

My name is Jasmine Ruffen and I currently a senior at St. Mary's in Lynn and I am also a member of the Diocesan Youth Council.

The Diocesan Youth Council is a council for young adults to give a voice to the young adults of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. We plan retreats for middle schoolers and high schoolers. At these retreats we teach them to love God, themselves, and others.

Every month we meet with each other and plan retreats, bond, and talk about life and God. Last year, my mom made me join after hearing about the youth council from Reverend Tom. When she told me to join I did not want to do it at all and tried everything to miss the deadline. But, I'm glad that my mom made me join, because it was one of the best decisions I've ever made.

This year our retreat theme is Our World; Our Future. For this theme we are encouraging them to make a change not only in their church, but the world. We encourage them to attend church more and think of how both their church and school community help them on their journey of faith, shape who they are, and help them in hard times of their lives.

During our retreats, we encourage the retreatants to step out of their comfort zones, meeting new people and talking amongst their small groups. This month was the middle school retreat and it was the best one yet. Retreatants were way more engaged in their small group activities and talking about their church life and school life. As DYC'ers we loved seeing this and felt so proud of ourselves that we led such a wonderful retreat, especially since two months ago we had no idea who most of the people in our council were.

So far, we have done amazing things, made life-long friends, and can't wait for what else the year has to offer. Joining DYC helped become more confident in myself and easier for me to speak my mind. Made me realize I do have a voice and as a young adult I can use that voice to make a difference. That's why this year our theme is very important to me.

Next year, I will be attending college and can't wait to take such a huge step into my life. I am going to be an English Major with a minor in Creative Writing and will be an author in the future. I've applied to many colleges and will know which colleges I've been accepted to by end of January and will have made my decision. No matter where life takes me, I will forever hold onto the Bible verse on the back of my middle school retreat shirt. "'For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" Jeremiah 29:11.

Thank you.

NURTURING THE CONGREGATION

2019 HARVEST FAIR A GREAT SUCCESS! This year we had the largest number of people attend the fair than we have had in a long time. The final dollar amount will not be known until after the raffles are pulled so please continue to sell tickets for our great raffles-the multi-prize with a value of over \$1000.00 with a weekend in Salem as first prize, three \$100. Gift Cards as second and a Kindle Fire HD 10 as the third. Our quilt raffle is for a hand/machine made quilt, 60" by 60" in civil war pattern/colors. Both raffles are \$2./ticket, 6 for \$10. Tickets are available in the Galahad area.

Thank you to all who worked to make the fair such a success. Besides weeks of preparation work, it took a lot of people to set it up the two days beforehand and man the tables and café all Fair day and also break it down. Thanks to all who baked and made items, donated items, gift cards, and money. A special thanks to Lucinda McClain bringing in all the items in the first prize of the multi-prize raffle as well as many other gift cards, the base of our same day raffles. People who put up signs and fliers are very important as well. Getting out the word is so necessary. It is all worth it when everyone enjoys themselves and are anxious to come again next year. There will be a wrap-up meeting on Sunday, January 6 after the 10 am service for all who worked on the fair. It will be in the Graham Suite. Bring your thoughts for next year and any improvements that might be made.

Again thanks to all for making the fair so successful. It takes a parish!
Marilyn Cloran and Sally Gosselin, Co-Chairs of the 2019 Fair

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, 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.

ANNUAL MEETING! As we move forward to 2020 the Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 23, 2020. Additional information will be available shortly.

BIBLE STUDY: This Advent we will be looking at the stories of Jesus' birth in Matthew Chapters 1 & 2, Luke Chapters 1 & 2, as well as John's proclamation of the incarnation in John Chapter 1. We invite all to join us on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. Please note that will not be having Bible Study on December 25th or January 1st.

POINSETTIAS GIVE TWICE! By Sunday, December 15th, please complete the enclosed form to contribute to our Christmas decorating fund by offering a memorial or thanksgiving donation. We need volunteers with a little time and a lot of Christmas spirit to deliver poinsettias following the week of Christmas. It's a blessing to spread St. Stephen's Christmas Cheer.

DECK THE HALLS ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22nd AFTER SERVICE! 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.

BLUE CHRISTMAS! Tuesday, December 17th at 6:30pm at St. Stephens. Let the healing begin, in a season of sometimes forced good cheer, this is a refuge for all those for whom memories of loss, grief and trauma are brought to the fore by the holidays.

SPANISH CLASSES – St. Stephen’s is offering Spanish classes for adults beginning in January. As our parish continues to reach out to our neighbors we have been limited by not knowing Spanish. The classes will be one evening a week for an 8-10 week session. We plan to offer three sessions. If you are helping with Kids in Community, the Food Pantry or just would like to know some Spanish, please consider joining us. Specific information will be forthcoming. If you have any questions please speak to Bonnie Bishop or Rev. Tom.

HOSPITALITY TO CHILDREN, YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

Kids in Community Music & Art After-School Program (KIC/MAP) is now OPEN!!

We have officially been licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and will register up to forty children (grades 1-6) each school year. We will ensure a safe, nurturing environment where children can learn and explore in creative ways. We promote the importance of art and music education along with daily crafts, games, and homework assistance. At this time, we offer drumming and keyboarding, poetry, and hope to continue adding more specialists as our program continues to grow.

We are still accepting applications, but we insist you contact us quickly!

Hours: Monday through Thursday (closed on Fridays) from 2-6pm.

Also, anyone interested in volunteering their time, please contact program Director (*a back ground check will have to be conducted if planning to volunteer on a regular basis*). **For more information, call Shannon Morrissey, Program Director 781-599-4220 or email smorrissey@ststephenslynn.org.**

ELF GIFT DISTRIBUTION ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22nd! 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 on **Sunday, December 22nd** after the 10:00am service.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS PROJECT FOR KIDS 2019 NEEDS YOU! Each year St. Stephen’s youth and adults raise money to provide Lynn youth with Christmas gifts. Lastly year, CPPK gave gifts to 183 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 Brandi Walker @ ststephens@ststephenslynn.org how might share in the joy of giving during the holiday season:

- **Fridays, December 6th, 13th, 3:00-6:00pm:** Sign-ups downstairs in basement.
- **Saturday, December 14, 9:30am-1pm:** Purchasing gifts at Walmart (last year we filled 7 shopping carts) with a free lunch afterwards.
- **Sunday, December 15, after church service:** Sort and organize gifts into bags for distribution.
- **Thursday, December 19, 3:00-6:00pm:** Distribute gifts with cocoa, cookies, carols & Santa!

REGISTER NOW FOR THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT IN FEBRUARY! Registration is now open for the High School Retreat, Friday-Sunday, Feb. 7-9, at the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center in Greenfield, N.H. The retreat’s theme is “Our World, Our Future.” Led by the Diocesan Youth Council (DYC), the weekend features workshops, indoor and outdoor games, worship,

lively music and much-needed time away from everyday routines in order to pay more attention to the Spirit of God. Scholarship support is available, as is bus transportation. Registration closes when capacity is reached, or on Jan. 31. More information can be found at www.diomassyouth.org/events.

EPISCOPAL YOUTH EVENT 2020. July 7-11, 2020 in Washington, DC Calling all Youth Participants and Adult chaperones: Apply Now!

Every three years, The Episcopal Church young people from across the denomination come together for an international gathering of worship, workshops, exploration, and fun. The 2020 Episcopal Youth Event (EYE20) will be held in partnership with the Washington National Cathedral and the Episcopal Diocese of Washington July 7-11, 2020.

The deadline to register as part of the Diocese of Massachusetts delegation is February 10th, 2020 and more information can be found at <https://www.diomassyouth.org/events>.

DEEPENING COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

MANY THANKS TO THE WITTRUPS FOR ANOTHER FABULOUS SPAGHETTI SUPPER! Once again, the Wittrup's rescued us from turkey leftovers and commercial Christmas-hype by hosting the Annual CPPK Spaghetti Supper Fundraiser on Saturday, November 30. We wrapped up ordinary time with a flourish as crowded tables, plentiful food, and lots of laughter filled the Wittrup's 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 and clothes, most weeks. Extra hands and generous hearts are always appreciated. Thank you!

MY BROTHER'S TABLE (MBT)! The North Shore's largest soup kitchen, is in need of **NEW** sweatshirts and sweaters to distribute to its guest on Christmas day. Men's and women's adult large and XL sweaters/sweatshirts are needed the most. MBT is also seeking new gloves, mittens, socks and thermal underwear. Unwrapped items can be dropped off at My Brother's Table, 98 Willow Street, Lynn during office hours Monday- Friday 9:00-5:30pm. Please try to drop items off by December 19th to allow time for sorting/wrapping. For more information, please call My Brother's Table at 781.595.3224.

AMAZING PEACE: A CHRISTMAS POEM
BY MAYA ANGELOU

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes
And lightning rattles the eaves of our houses.
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to avalanche
Over unprotected villages.
The sky slips low and grey and threatening.

We question ourselves.
What have we done to so affront nature?
We worry God.
Are you there? Are you there really?
Does the covenant you made with us still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension, Christmas enters,
Streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope
And singing carols of forgiveness high up in the bright air.
The world is encouraged to come away from rancor,
Come the way of friendship.

It is the Glad Season.
Thunder ebbs to silence and lightning sleeps quietly in the corner.
Flood waters recede into memory.
Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid us
As we make our way to higher ground.

Hope is born again in the faces of children
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk into their sunsets.
Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all things,
Even hate which crouches breeding in dark corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper.
At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.
We listen carefully as it gathers strength.
We hear a sweetness.
The word is Peace.
It is loud now. It is louder.
Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its presence.
It is what we have hungered for.
Not just the absence of war. But, true Peace.
A harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies.
Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace of Christmas.
We beckon this good season to wait a while with us.
We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and Muslim, say come.
Peace.

Come and fill us and our world with your majesty.
We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and the Confucian,
Implore you, to stay a while with us.
So we may learn by your shimmering light
How to look beyond complexion and see community.

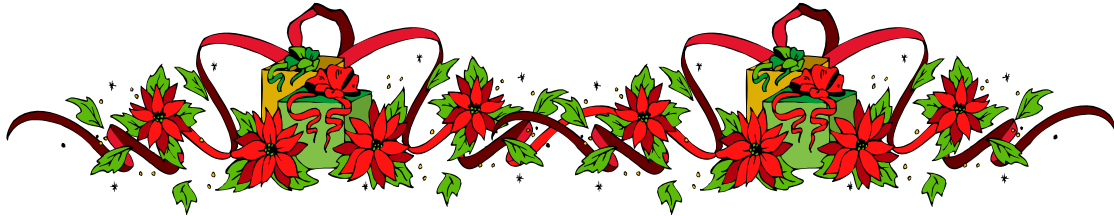
It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.

On this platform of peace, we can create a language
To translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ
Into the great religions of the world.
We jubilate the precious advent of trust.
We shout with glorious tongues at the coming of hope.
All the earth's tribes loosen their voices
To celebrate the promise of Peace.

We, Angels and Mortals, Believers and Non-Believers,
Look heavenward and speak the word aloud.
Peace. We look at our world and speak the word aloud.
Peace. We look at each other, then into ourselves
And we say without shyness or apology or hesitation.

Peace, My Brother.
Peace, My Sister.
Peace, My Soul.



**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 15th.

DO NOT DETACH

In memory of _____

Given by: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

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 following the week of Christmas. 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.

St. Stephen's Events

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 First Sunday in Advent 8:00 am Holy Eucharist 10:00 am Holy Eucharist - English 11:00 am Worship - Kenyan Congregation 11:30 am Search Committee	2 6:30 pm Search Committee Meeting 8:00 pm AA	3 4:00 pm SSJE 6:00 pm North Shore Deanery Meeting 7:00 pm NA	4 4:00 pm ECCO Meeting 6:30 pm Bible Study	5 9:00 am Lynn Public School-Food Pantry Set-up 10:30 am Healing Prayer & Pastoral Care Team Meeting 12:00 pm Eucharist & Healing Prayers	6 3:00 pm CPPK SIGN UP 3:00 pm Food Pantry Meeting	7 7:00 am Mobile Market 9:00 am Mobile Market 10:00 am Choir Rehearsal
8 Second Sunday in Advent 8:00 am Holy Eucharist 10:00 am Holy Eucharist - English 11:00 am Worship - Kenyan Congregation 12:00 pm Women's Group Meeting	9 6:30 pm Search Committee Meeting 8:00 pm AA	10 Submit Payroll! 5:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting 7:00 pm NA	11 6:30 pm Bible Study	12 9:00 am Lynn Public School-Food Pantry Set-up 12:00 pm Eucharist & Healing Prayers	13 8:30 am Scott Energy tune-up 3:00 pm Food Pantry 3:00 pm CPPK SIGN UP 4:00pm Food Pantry Meeting	14 9:30 am CPPK SHOPPING 10:00 am Choir Rehearsal
15 Third Sunday in Advent Poinsettias deadline Mini-Fair drawings 8:00 am Holy Eucharist 10:00 am Holy Eucharist - English 11:00 am Worship - Kenyan Congregation 11:30 am Vestry Meeting 7:30 pm ECCO Annual Meeting	16 6:30 pm Search Committee Meeting 8:00 pm AA	17 2:30 pm Communion at the Towers 6:30 pm Blue Christmas 7:00 pm NA 7:00 pm Stewardship Ministry Team	18 5:30pm KIC Christmas Concert 6:30 pm Bible Study	19 9:00 am Lynn Public School-Food Pantry Set-up 12:00 pm Eucharist & Healing Prayers 3:00 pm CPPK GIFT DISTRIBUTION 6:45 pm BCT Yankee Swap & Pot luck	20 3:00 pm Food Pantry	21 10:00 am Choir Rehearsal
22 Fourth Sunday in Advent 11-3pm Deck the Halls 8:00 am Holy Eucharist 10:00 am Holy Eucharist - English 11:00 am Worship - Kenyan Congregation	23 6:30 pm Search Committee Meeting 8:00 pm AA Newsletter Deadline	24 Christmas Eve 5:00pm Christmas Pageant with Eucharist 7:00 pm NA 10:00pm Candlelight Eucharist	25 Merry Christmas! 10:00am Christmas Communion 	26 9:00 am Lynn Public School-Food Pantry Set-up 12:00 pm Eucharist & Healing Prayers	27 3:00 pm Food Pantry	28 10:00 am Choir Rehearsal
29 First Sunday after Christmas 8:00 am Holy Eucharist 10:00 am Christmas Lesson & Carols 11:00 am Worship - Kenyan Congregation	30 6:30 pm Search Committee Meeting 8:00 pm AA	31 New Year's Eve 7:00 pm NA				