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Newsletter June 2016

Aging and Mortality

This June our Stewardship Ministry Team clearly has hit a cultural chord. Atul Gawande's book Being Mortal is a best seller. PBS's Frontline did a show exploring the relationships doctors have with patients who are near the end of life. Recently, a series of studies have been published making clear that the majority of medical professionals do not discuss end of life possibilities or priorities with their patients even if the patients have life threatening illnesses. And Massachusetts has just launched a commission on "serious illness care."

Every Tuesday in June at 6:30, the SMT is offering a workshop on an aspect of planning for our later years and our death. Programs will focus on medical, legal, financial, residential, and funeral planning with a community specialist providing introductory remarks and materials for the topic. People of all ages are encouraged to attend and to bring family and friends with them to begin these courageous conversations about end of life plans.

No matter how fervently our culture affirms youth and independence as it denies death, we are mortal and we will die. Yet, our own experience as well as recently published surveys suggest that most of us don't talk with our families, friends, clergy, or medical providers about our hopes and fears for our end of life. At our May 22 Lunch & Learn participants identified a host of reasons for shying away from these conversations. *I'm young. I'm healthy. It seems morbid. My kids don't want to think about me dying; it makes them too sad. It seems as though it's tempting fate. I still have a lot to do in this life. Fear. Anxiety. Want to stay positive; don't need negative energy in my life. Too busy. Don't know who would make the decisions, who would take care of me... my family is too far away. Don't want to face reality of death. Whole things feels too overwhelming.*

We all have our own reasons for putting off planning but the result is that most people as well as their loved ones are unhappy with the way the end of life unfolds. In Being Mortal, Gawande writes: *"Medical professionals concentrate on repair of health, not sustenance of the soul. Yet—and this is the painful paradox—we have decided that they should be the ones who largely define how we live in our waning days... Sometimes we can offer a cure, sometimes only a salve, sometimes not even that. But whatever we can offer, our interventions, and the risks and sacrifices they entail, are justified only if they serve the larger aims of a person's life. When we forget that, the suffering we inflict can be barbaric. When we remember it the good we do can be breathtaking.... People with serious illness have priorities besides simply prolonging their lives. Surveys find that their top concerns include avoiding suffering, strengthening relationships with family and friends, being mentally aware, not being a burden on others, and achieving a sense that their life is complete."*

The Stewardship Ministry Team invites all of us to join the courageous and life-affirming conversation about how we want to live and die. It is never too soon to start the conversation with family, friends, clergy, medical providers, and our faith community. Join us every Tuesday evening at 6:30 so that we can form a community of caring conversation.

Jane+

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.

Ephesians 3:20

Dear Friends,

As I write this I'm in North Carolina sitting on a deck that overlooks a small inlet from the ocean. The trees are bright green which pops against the grey overcast sky. Birds and squirrels are chirping away as they go about completing their daily routines. I feel as if I'm sitting in a secluded paradise, totally cut off from the outside world. Time stops and dreams arise.

As I dream while on retreat I remember Bishop Alan's words at a joint meeting of the St. Stephen's and St. Andrew's, Marblehead vestries. Using the above scripture passage Bishop Alan reflected on the very last word: imagine. As he pointed out, imagine is not a word we often hear in the church. Our Christian faith tends to place more emphasis on static ideas that easily fit into our understanding of the world.

And yet Paul's choice of words suggest that God expects us to imagine. God gave us brains with the gift of imagination so that we would use it, not let it lie dormant. We value imagination in children with their ability to imagine new ideas, games, and worlds. As we grow up this gift is ignored by all except artists, inventors and entrepreneurs. So the vast majority of us adapt to a culture that tells us imagination is useless. It can't help us in our careers or even in faith.

So did God make a mistake in giving us an imagination? Absolutely not! We are the ones who make the mistake of not using this gift. Through the gift of imagination we can come closer to the God created us, who imagined us into being. When we imagine, in whatever context we may be, we become co-creators and co-sustainers with God.

It can be easier to accept this reality in our own lives. People who knit, sing, sew, paint, draw, plant, pray—these are all actions that require imagination. Imagination in a church feels more risky. Church communities are built upon traditions and rituals which hold deep meaning as well as connection with the past. Before we can begin to imagine in church we have to loosen our hold on these traditions and rituals. They must form a frame into which we imagine the community's future.

In seminary I took classes that talked about the importance of imagination in worship, Christian education, preaching and it all seemed so easy. Do you want to imagine a new worship service—pick the prayers, find the musicians, print the bulletin. Do you want to imagine a new Christian education series—find the curriculum, set a schedule, advertise in the newsletter. Do you want to imagine a new way of preaching—read this Bible text, practice in front of a mirror, uses props. All easy steps right? You imagine it and then you build it.

Except that in parish ministry the imagining must always happen in community. Imagining isn't the job of the Rector or the Vestry, it's the job of the whole congregation. When we imagine together we find a deeper well of possibilities from which we can draw our hope for the future.

Even when we imagine in community there's still the inherent risk of not knowing where it will lead. This is one of the big reasons many churches avoid God's call to engage the imagination. When we imagine we open ourselves to an endless parade of ideas that may/will contradict those traditions and rituals that define our identity.

Since April a group of Church School parents and teachers have met to imagine a new future for our Church School. Historically this has been one of the stronger programs at St. Stephen's but new cultural realities have decreased attendance and so the sense of community. After our first meeting I feel optimistic that together we will imagine a new Church School program that serves the needs of our children and youth. At the same time I'm anxious that only God knows where our imagination will lead us on this path. And so I hope you join in holding this words close to your hearts: *Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.*

Peace,

Sarah

STEWARDS OF RESOURCES

VESTRY UPDATE. May 15: Reviewed financials; fund raising working group report: discussed fund and fellowship events—will explore service swap, pottery night, on-line donation designations; discussed success of Soul Celebration—program book exceeded budget expectations; discussed needs for Big Money Raffle—Kick Off June 5, Drawing Party July 31; update on kids' summer programs: Kids in Community (KIC) Camp 8:30-2 & Summer Learning 2:30-5:30-- hiring staff now, programs July 11- August 5, both need adult volunteers; update on youth summer programs: Youth Pride June 4 & Underground Railroad Learning Trip August 7-13; discussed collaborative programs with St. Andrew's Marblehead & plans for future leadership events; Chancel Restoration continues—going over budget due to conditions being worse than anticipated, will present proposal for covering overage; Parish Clean Up/ Clear Out Week August 15-18.

PRE-PAY YOUR PLEDGE FOR THE SUMMER! Pledge payments are running close to 100%, which is essential for our operating budget. Rather than falling behind this summer, think about pre-paying your pledge in June. We count on complete pledge payment from everyone. If life has changed and you would like to adjust your pledge up or down, please contact Treasurer Heather Collis Puro.

SOUL CELEBRATION SURPASSES EXPECTATIONS. On Sunday, May 1 the Soul Celebration gathered a crowd for worship and our Soul Food Dinner. The program book brought in over \$7,500 and the dinner an additional \$1,000 exceeding budget projections. While our preacher Althea Smith could not be with us due to a family emergency and our soloist stayed home due to illness, Rev. Jane and soloist Tim Potter functioned in disaster and finished in style. Keynote Kiame Mahaniah, Medical Director Lynn Community Health Center, informed, inspired, and challenged all of us to work together to end racial disparities in healthcare. Our KIC Music drummers performed during lunch to entertain our enthusiastic and noisy crowd. We thank Soul Celebration Coordinator Deborah Potter, DJ Tim Potter, Program Book creator Carolyn Hoy, behind the scenes star Harry Jackson, and all the people who cooked, served, set up, cleaned up, and attended the Soul Food Dinner. We also thank all those who contributed financially through the Soul Celebration Program Book.

BIG MONEY RAFFLE KICK-OFF JUNE 5. On Sunday, June 5, **the Big Money Raffle Comes to Town Again!** Tickets can be sold to individuals or split into as many as 10 shares at \$10 each. Please take a ticket to sell at the office, or to family and friends! Every Sunday, SSMEC vestry members will be offering weekly tickets for you to buy a \$10 share. **Every** year a Sunday ticket has been in the final five winning tickets – so get yourself on one of these tickets and increase your chances for \$5,000. There are 215 tickets available, but last year tickets sold out! Buy your tickets immediately so that you and your family and friends have the chance to win! To encourage parishioners to take tickets to sell on June 5, we will be offering **a homemade cupcake** for every ticket that gets signed out on that Sunday. We have a goal of sending off our graduates **AND 50 raffle tickets** so **please** get in line to take a ticket and get a cupcake! **On Sunday, July 31, we will gather at the Porthole Pub for dinner, dancing, and the Big Money Raffle drawing.** Winners will receive a grand prize of \$5,000, and other cash prizes of \$1,000, \$750, \$500, and \$250. And, of course there will be door prizes. RSVPs are required for the dinner! To get involved (we need folks to call our vendors and VIPs) or to get your tickets, email BMR Leaders Heather Collis Puro and Carolyn Hoy at heather@collispuro.net.

MANY THANKS TO BRUCE BEECROFT AND THE CHOIR AS SUMMER BEGINS. Our last Sunday for Adult Choir led music in worship is June 12. Please thank them for their faithful participation in the choir for Saturday morning rehearsals, Sunday worship, and holy days. While we need our choir to grow, we surely have been blessed by the faithful few who sing week after week. During the summer, choir members and others are invited to provide offertory and communion anthems. If individuals or groups would like to practice and offer an anthem, Bruce Beecroft is eager to work with you. We also plan to experiment with “Gospel Sundays” and “Pick Up Choir Sundays” so keep your eyes open for dates and plan to participate!

NURTURING THE CONGREGATION

The Stewardship Ministry Team Presents:

AGING & MORTALITY

Preparing for Caring & Courageous Conversations about Aging, Illness, & Death

TUESDAYS IN JUNE AT 6:30

Tuesday, June 7: Legal Planning

John Ford, Elder Law Project

Tuesday, June 14: Financial Planning

Christopher L. Dowley, RLP, CLU, ChFC, CFS; Fieldstone Financial Management Group

Tuesday, June 21: Residential Planning

Tuesday, June 28: Funeral Planning

St. Stephen's Clergy & Local Funeral Directors

SUMMER FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES. BIBLE STUDY GETS BOLD: On Wednesdays at 6:30, we are studying the Book of Revelation, which can prove inspiring, confusing, troubling, and transforming. **TEA AND TALK ABOUT FAITH:** On Thursday afternoons at 1:00 we come together to read and discuss reflections from Kathleen Norris's Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith.

HEALING PRAYER & PASTORAL CARE TEAMS MEET THURSDAY, JUNE 2. June 2 at 10:30, the Healing Prayer & Pastoral Care Teams will meet for check-in and discussion.

LIVING WORD WORSHIP ON JUNE 19 WILL FOCUS ON HEALING. Each Sunday at our Memorial Altar, two members of the Healing Prayer Team offer laying on of hands and anointing. We all look for different types of healing at different times in our life: healing from an illness, healing from a sin, healing from a grudge, healing from an injury etc... Jesus spends much of his ministry healing the strangers he encounters on his travels around the Galilee. For this month's *Living Word* Worship we will reflect on the many stories of Jesus' healing powers. Please speak to Rev. Sarah if you have a favorite hymn you would like us to sing that day.

LEMONADE ON THE LAWN. June begins with Sunday celebrations but once we reach June 19, we need weekly hosts to set up, clean up, and bring some light snacks for us to enjoy after worship at 10:00. We also could use volunteers to help with set up and clean up on June 5 and 12. Please talk with the clergy if you can help Sunday hospitality run smoothly this summer.

CARIBBEAN HERITAGE SUNDAY IS JUNE 12. On June 12 in our worship and fellowship following worship, we will celebrate Caribbean Heritage. Our preacher for the morning will be Patrick Lafortune, a life long Haitian Episcopalian and candidate for the Priesthood in the Diocese of Massachusetts. Many members of St. Stephen's came to the United States from the Caribbean in recent or more distant generations. The accents, style of worship, food, and deep faith of Caribbean Islanders continue to enrich the St. Stephen's community. As we organize for the 12th, please be in touch with Pamela Alleyne if you want to help with worship planning, music, altar decoration, or food. Also, please invite your Caribbean Island and other friends to join us on June 12th.

VOLUNTEER AT KIC & SUMMER LEARNING THIS JULY. KIC Camp Needs St. Stephen's Volunteers July 11-15! While we appreciate greatly those who volunteer every day at KIC, we know that most people aren't able to contribute as extravagantly. This summer, we're asking St. Stephen's adult volunteers to come together to make a difference in the first week of Camp, July 11-15. We especially need people in the mornings to: show hospitality on Day 1 setting up, assisting with sign in, and greeting campers and parents; read with children every day in small groups or one-on-one; help prepare snacks; help pack lunches for Thursday field trips; and help clean & organize camp daily. Sign up sheets are available in the Galahad Area and Office. Longtime KIC volunteer, Bonnie Bishop, is our KIC Volunteer Liaison; contact her at bishopbw@gmail.com or 781-599-8963 if you have questions or want to sign up! **St. Stephen's Summer Learning needs volunteers Monday through Thursday afternoons (2:30-5:30) from July 11 to August 4.** Volunteers will support learning centers focused on reading, writing, numbers, and comprehension. Please talk with Micheal Brown if you can help with Summer Learning. **Volunteer orientation for KIC and Summer Learning will be on Sunday, June 26 at 12:00 noon.** Coming to orientation doesn't commit you but we definitely need lots of volunteers.

HOSPITALITY TO CHILDREN, YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

CHURCH SCHOOL WRAPS UP AND GRADUATION CELEBRATION JUNE 5! The last day of Church School classes is Sunday, June 5. During worship we will have an opportunity to thank our teachers and youth leaders for all their hard work this past year. Three of our youth from OASIS and BE YOU will present reflections on the lessons they learned at St. Stephen's as they prepare to attend college in the fall. **If you or someone in your family is completing a degree or certificate program this spring, please call the office or sign up in the Galahad Area.** In addition, we will award St. Stephen's Scholarships for higher education on June 5. (Applications are due in the office by Sunday, May 29.)

KIC MUSIC END OF YEAR CONCERT AND PIZZA PARTY ON JUNE 8 AT 5:30. KIC Music After School participants have been working hard all year as they become percussionists and pianists, and they are excited to show off what they have learned in a concert on Wednesday, June 8, at 5:30 pm in Lawrence Hall. The kids would greatly appreciate support from the St. Stephen's community. They'll be performing a mix of traditional West African, Latin, and North American music, plus nursery rhymes and music inspired by Youtube videos. Families of all ages are invited to join us for a pizza and ice cream supper after the performance. We hope to see you there!

SIGN UP FOR BCH FAMILY CAMP JUNE 15-17! For families with children too young for BCH Summer Camp and who would like a weekend of fun and faith at the Camp, sign up now for Family Camp. St. Stephen's and the Diocese want to make Family Camp affordable for families in the parish. Please talk with the Rector as soon as possible if your family would like to go to Camp.

BCH SUMMER CAMP APPLICATIONS ARE PAST DUE. BCH Camp begins June 26 and runs through July 29; some weeks are already full. The camp offers overnight camp for children and youth grades 4-12. Register is online at: <https://bchcamp.campbrainregistration.com/> Camp costs \$600 with the family paying at least a 1/3 (\$200) of the cost. If this cost is too high please mark the correct box on the online application in order to waive fee. Although the campership deadline has passed, we will still work with you to try to get your child to BCH Camp.

REGISTER NOW FOR KIDS IN COMMUNITY CAMP. Registration forms for KIC Summer Camp are available in the office and Galahad area. Any child who has completed 1st-5th grade is eligible for camp. KIC starts on July 11th, and runs for four weeks, Monday-Friday, from 8:30-2:00. Campers can look forward to days filled with art, music, drama, mad science, games, field trips, and more! Spaces fill on a first come first served basis; don't miss your chance!

REGISTER NOW FOR SUMMER LEARNING AT ST. STEPHEN'S. Summer Learning is a free academic enrichment program in its second year at St. Stephen's. Summer Learning serves students entering first and second grade in the Fall of 2016. The program offers support in reading, writing, and math as well as fun learning activities. The program runs from July 11th to August 4th...Monday through Thursday from 2:30pm-5:30pm. Sign up today!

CONFIRMATION CLASS MEETS FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 6:30-8PM. Last month the confirmands learned about the long history of the church with all of its ups and downs. They also heard the story of the Mudge family and the building of our "memorial" church. In June we will look at how we put our faith into action: *What does God call us to do? Who does Jesus want us to serve? How can the church bring positive change to our world?* On Sunday, June 26 we will put our faith into action by serving at My Brother's Table.

JOIN LYNN YOUTH PRIDE ON SATURDAY JUNE 4. After months of planning, fundraising and publicizing the BE YOU LGBTQ Youth Group is ready for the first ever Lynn Youth Pride Event! Youth Pride will be on Saturday, June 4, 11-3. Come enjoy music, food, art projects, information tables, and a bouncy house, and spoken word performances. It will be great day as we put into practice our remarkable gifts for hospitality and progressive social actions. The Diocese of Massachusetts, the Lynn Human Right Commission, the YMCA, and the Lynn Community Health Center have already signed on as sponsors. If you would like to support this event with your time, talent, or treasure please speak with Rev. Sarah or Jason Cruz.

OASIS MEETS FRIDAYS JUNE 10 & 24 AT 6:30. On Friday, June 10 we will have an outdoor movie night with munchies, drinks and a surprise movie. It will be a great way to relax during the last few hectic weeks of school. Then Friday, June 24 will be our end of the year celebration as we say goodbye to our graduating seniors and welcome new freshmen. We will also spend time preparing for our Summer Learning Trip along the Underground Railroad on August 7-13.

YOUNG ADULTS PLANNING REUNION/ SUMMER KICK-OFF EVENT. As young adults return and leave as summer begins, YAs are planning an end of year/ start of summer celebration. To get connected with the YA group, contact Jason Cruz at iflows@gmail.com or talk to Rev. Jane.

YOUNG ADULT FAITH EXPLORATION WEEKEND JULY 29-31. Young adults (18-40ish) interested in going deeper with God and learning more about the Episcopal Church are invited to join a Faith Exploration Weekend at Emery House July 29-31. Commitments must be firm by June 26 and space is limited. Talk with the clergy to learn more or to sign up!

DEEPENING COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

ST. STEPHEN'S & ST. ANDREW'S MARBLEHEAD BUILDING COMMUNITY. Since fall, the St. Stephen's and St. Andrew's Marblehead Beloved Community Teams have been meeting, talking, and planning together as they engage issues of race, class, and privilege. In addition, last summer and this members of St. Andrew's volunteered for a week at KIC offering hands on time and talent, and financial support. In April, our Vestries met with Bishop Gates to deepen our understanding of the spiritual dimensions of leadership. Relationship building is taking another step in June with the Beloved Community Team of each parish visiting the other parish for Sunday worship and hosting an after church conversation about **opening our eyes to the reality of race**. On June 5, the St. Stephen's Beloved Community Team will travel to St. Andrew's. On June 12, the St. Andrew's Beloved Community Team will join us for worship at 10:00am. After being nourished by Caribbean worship and hospitality, the "Nucleus" (combined St. Stephen's-St. Andrew's BCT) invites everyone to stay for an hour of story telling and conversation about what it would mean for us and our communities if we were to live with our eyes and hearts open to the reality of race. **Please join the St. Stephen's BCT in showing hospitality on June 12.**

ORGANIZING BOOT CAMP WITH PICO JUNE 8-10. June 8-10 ECCO's parent organization PICO will hold an Organizing Boot Camp in the Boston Area to get leaders ready to Get Out the Vote this Fall. In ECCO, we will focus on registering voters, informing voters about the importance of the Essex County Sheriff's election as we work to end mass incarceration, and hosting Sheriff Candidates' Forums. PICO's June 8-10 training will teach us tools we need to get the work done. Please talk with the clergy if you would like to attend.

ECCO TO HOST IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING WITH LYNN POLICE DEPARTMENT. In late April, Lynn Chief of Police and Essex County Sheriff candidate Kevin Coppinger accepted ECCO's invitation that Lynn police join ECCO leaders in Rachel Godsil's, PhD., implicit bias training. In May, Chief Coppinger asked if the entire Lynn Police Department could join in the training with ECCO leaders. This is a huge step forward in strengthening police- community relationships in Lynn and we are grateful to the Chief for his commitment. However, accomodating the training schedule of the police department means that the training needs to be on a week day. **Please join ECCO's implicit bias training on Wednesday, July 13 if you possibly can. The training will serve its intended purpose only if community and police train and talk together.**

EPISCOPAL CITY MISSION ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 14. As ECM welcomes its new Executive Director the Rev. Arrington Chambliss, they invite us to an evening of celebration. Rev. Mariama White-Hammond will preach as we gather for Eucharist, good food, and stories of justice.

MY BROTHER'S TABLE NEEDS YOU JUNE 26. Sunday, June 26 we serve lunch at MBT. Please join our youth Confirmation Class and our MBT regulars from 1:00-4:00 or, if you can't come on Sunday, please bring desserts we can share with those who come to eat.

FOOD, BOOKS, & CLOTHES AT THE PANTRY. On Fridays from 3:00-4:00 (except first Fridays), we host the St. Stephen's Food Pantry. In addition to giving out groceries, we give away books, read aloud, distribute clothes, and offer hospitality to all who come. Join the Pantry Team!

TALK TO NEIL O'DONNELL ABOUT HELPING WITH OUR COMMUNITY GARDEN. Come plant, weed, and water as our Churchyard Gardens return to life. KIC Campers get to help with the gardens in July but we need garden helpers now. Please talk with Neil to volunteer.

June 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
SUNDAY SERVICES 8 & 10am Worship in English 10am Worship in Kiswahili			1 2-6pm KIC Music 6:30pm Bible Study	2 10:30am Pastoral Care & Healing Prayer Teams Meeting Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 6:30-8pm Beloved Community Team Meeting	3 6:30-8pm Confirmation Class	4 10am Choir Rehearsal Diocesan Ordinations 11-3pm Be You Youth Pride Event at St. Stephen's
5 Church School Graduation Celebration of Seniors Scholarship Presentations BMR Kick Off St. Stephen's BCT visits St. Andrew's	6 2-6pm KIC Music 8pm AA	7 3:30-5:30pm Be You 6:30pm Aging & Mortality: Legal Issues 7pm NA 7-9pm DioMass Budget Hearing	8 2-6pm KIC Music 5:30pm KIC Music End of Year Concert and Pizza Party 6:30pm Bible Study Organizing Boot Camp with PICO	9 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk Organizing Boot Camp with PICO	10 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS Organizing Boot Camp with PICO	11 10am Choir Rehearsal
12 Caribbean Heritage Sunday Preacher: Patrick Lafortune 12:15pm Community Conversation about race	13 2-6pm KIC Music 8pm AA	14 3:30-5:30pm Be You 5:30-9pm ECM Night of Celebration at Cathedral 6:30 Aging & Mortality: Financial Planning 7pm NA	15 2-6pm KIC Music 6:30pm Bible Study	16 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 6:30-8pm Beloved Community Team Meeting	17 3-4pm Food Pantry	18
19 Fathers' Day 10am Living Word Worship: Healing	20 8pm AA	21 3:30-5:30pm Be You 6:30pm Aging & Mortality: Residential Planning 7pm NA	22 6:30pm Bible Study	23 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk	24 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS	25
26 11:45am Adult Summer Volunteer Orientation 12:15pm Vestry Meeting 1-4pm My Brother's Table BCH Camp Begins	27 8pm AA	28 6:30pm Aging & Mortality: Funeral Planning 7pm NA	29 6:30pm Bible Study	30 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk	OFFICE HOURS Monday – Friday 8:45am – 2:45pm	