



74 South Common St., Lynn, MA 01902 T: (781)599-4220 ♦ F: (781)586-0156 ♦ www.StStephensLynn.org

May 14, 2020

Word from the Interim Priest

Grace and peace to everyone connected to St. Stephen's Church,

As we enter the ninth week of the Coronavirus stay at home and social distancing protocols, I am glad to report that St. Stephen's Church continues on. Our Sunday services on Zoom has a growing attendance. It is nice to see each other and worship together. The services are also posted on website, <https://www.ststephenslynn.org/> and on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ststephenslynn/>. Even while I greatly miss being able to celebrate the Eucharist with all of you, it has been nice to rediscover the service of Morning Prayer.

RE-OPENING: On May 12th we received a directive from our Bishops stating: **Current restrictions on in-person public worship and gatherings in our churches are now extended until July 1, 2020.** ... *Essential office and maintenance functions and life-sustaining neighborhood ministries may continue, provided these are carried out while maintaining recommended physical distancing and cleaning and hygiene protocols, and respecting the maximum number of people allowable under the orders of Governor Baker. ...*

We are profoundly grateful for the dedication and creativity with which congregations are responding to provide alternative, virtual opportunities for worship and fellowship, as well as continued ministry to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Last Friday the church calendar commemorated Julian of Norwich, who is perhaps most widely remembered for the assurance given the mystic by Jesus: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." May we, too, know the assurance of Christ's nurturing and sustaining love, spoken to us in our troubled time.

Faithfully, in Christ,

*The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates
The Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris*

SCHOLARSHIPS: Sunday, June 14th is Scholarship Sunday when we will be awarding scholarships for students in post-secondary school programs. Applications may be downloaded from the website. Special thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the scholarship fund as well as the past parishioners who created endowed funds to the parish for scholarships.

FOOD PANTRY: The Food Pantry continues to give out record amounts of food on Friday afternoons, except the first Friday of the month. We have had a wonderful team of volunteers from both within and outside of the Parish. The expanded distribution hours are 2 – 4 PM. It is open to all. If you or somebody you know is in need of food, please let them know when we are open. We are especially grateful to the Greater Boston Food Bank for providing us virtually all of the food we are giving out. If you would like to volunteer please contact the office at ststephen@ststephenslynn.org. We are trying to be careful to not have too many volunteers at one time so we can keep practicing social distancing protocols and keep everyone safe.

PRIEST-IN-CHARGE SEARCH: The Rev. Canon Martha Hubbard, has let us know that the Bishop's office has received several applications for the PIC position at St. Stephen's. She and the Bishop have been screening the candidates. In the next few weeks, they will decide on which candidate to submit for the Vestry to consider. Martha also thanks the people of St. Stephen's for your patience.

KIDS IN COMMUNITY: Although Kids in Community Music and Arts Program after-school has been closed since March 12, the Advisory Board, along with Rev. Tom and Shannon Morrissey, our Program Director, has stayed in regular communication. We are about to take steps to be in touch with the children, first through a mailing to let them know we miss them and are thinking about them. We'll enclose a stamped envelope so they can reply with news of their own. We also want to find out if they have internet access at home so we can offer some online activities for them. Summer camp is, of course, up in the air. Nevertheless, fundraising efforts continue and Shannon has contacted teen mentors from last summer, many of whom are eager to return if possible. Governor Baker plans to give updates on May 18. If camps get a green light, we will start planning for what modifications we would need to make to offer a safe and appropriate program.

PLEDGES AND DONATION: A huge thank you goes out to all those who have been able to keep up with the pledges and those who have made special donations during this time of shutdown. While we have cut back spending every way we can think of, we still have to pay our staff, building costs and other bills. Checks can be mailed to the church. Donations can also be made through our web site.

DIOCESAN RESOURCES: Bishop Alan Gates has sent out a thoughtful reflection titled *Sacramental Hunger and Eucharistic Practices*. It can be found on the Diocesan web site, along with other resources. <https://www.diomass.org/covid-19-updates-resources>

CONTACTING US FOR PASTORAL EMERGENCIES OR JUST OT CHECK –IN

Rev. Tom Barrington, can be reached through his cell phone: 978-394-3159 or by e-mail; tbarrington@ststephenslynn.org.

Brandi Walker, our Parish Administrator is also monitoring the church phone: 781-599-4220 and the office e-mail; ststephens@ststephenslynn.org.

Please feel free to contact us with prayer requests, special needs, sharing information and letting us know of those who would appreciate a call.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Barrington".

The Rev. Tom Barrington

POEM FOR THE MONTH

*A prayer about waiting
by Sharlande Sledge*

Look upon us gently, Lord,
for waiting is not our forte.
So many other things are...
Things like moving ahead,
fixing what's wrong,
planning for what's next,
diagnosing the problem,
cramming more into a day
than one person can possibly do
before the sun goes down.

But waiting...
when we are waiting for the light to shine
when we are waiting for the Word,
when we are waiting for a wound to heal,
nothing in all the world is harder than waiting.
So, in your mercy, Lord,
wait with us.

Be our very present help in waiting.
Heal our frenzy.
Calm our fears.

Comfort those who at this very minute
are with every anxious break and thought
waiting for they know-not-what.
Transform our in-the-meantime
into your time,
while we wait with each other,
sit with each other,
pray each other into hope,
surrounded by your presence,
even in the darkness.
Especially in the darkness.
Amen.

If anyone would like to offer a Poem for the Month for future newsletter please send it to ststephens@ststephenslynn.org or speak to Rev. Tom