

Newsletter November 2014

Grounded in Gratitude

November focuses our minds and hearts on gratitude. Here at St. Stephen's the month begins with Pledge Commitment Sunday on November 2. The theology behind pledging comes from the assurance that all we have comes from God, and we give back to God in gratitude. In First Chronicles we hear, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to make this freewill offering? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."

On November 23, we begin a week of Gratitude Celebrations. Our Sunday morning worship will offer preaching, prayers, and music expressing gratitude; our Church School kids will present the cans, bags, and boxes of their Food Drive; and our altar will be decorated with the fruits of the harvest. Sunday evening at 7:00, we'll gather at Bethel AME for the Lynn Community Thanksgiving Celebration. And then, on Wednesday, November 26, St. Stephen's encourages everyone to join us for the Great Thanksgiving; we will celebrate the Eucharist at 7:00pm on Thanksgiving Eve as we express our gratitude to God for the blessings of our lives.

Anticipating all of these events, activities, and celebrations grounded in gratitude, I began thinking about what it means to be grateful when life might not be all we want it to be. How are we grateful when we are having trouble paying our bills? How are we grateful when key relationships in our lives have been lost to disagreement or death? How are we grateful when our dreams seem to have been blocked by boulders and barriers? How are we grateful when we keep getting asked to give when we already feel wrung dry? How are we grateful when those we love continue to suffer and struggle?

If we ground our gratitude in the world of success, health, and wealth, we will struggle to meet God. Brother David Vryhof of the Society of St. John the Evangelist writes: "Opening our hearts brings gratitude into our lives. A closed heart sees no reason to be grateful; it is aware only of its own unmet desires, its own sufferings and disappointments. But an open heart is full of gratitude for all that is. It sees goodness and beauty in ourselves, the world and others; it senses hope and possibility."

Opening our hearts is not easy work and takes practice every day. We begin by opening our hearts to God in prayer confessing all of our unmet desires, sufferings, and disappointments, and asking God to fill us with goodness and beauty, hope and possibility. And then--in all our spheres of work, home, family, community, school, and church-- we open our hearts to those we meet. Rather than offering criticism or critique, we show compassion, encouragement, and love. We invite others into community.

Being grounded in gratitude opens us to hope and possibility even when our lives are not all we would have them be. Join us in November. Open your heart to healing. JSG+

"The little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.' And he laid his hands on them and went on his way."

Matthew 19:13-15

Dear Friends,

Growing up in my family Sunday was always church day. Every week my mother accomplished the nearly impossible tasks of cleaning, dressing and feeding three children all in time for the 10 am service. Of course my siblings and I didn't make it any easier for her. My brother complained about the baths, my sister complained about the hair brushing and I always complained about the itchy, white tights I was forced to wear.

Despite all the uncomfortable preparation I loved going to St. John's Episcopal Church. Many of my favorite childhood memories revolve around church activities and events: receiving my First Communion, mission trips to South Carolina with the youth group, my first Sunday serving as acolyte, the Christmas Eve services packed in the pews like sardines and so many, many more. In all of these memories are countless, committed adults who made all of this possible. They gave of their time and energy to create a strong, faithful community in which I felt fully accepted and cherished. I may not have known the names of every adult, but I knew they were there for me as I grew from a child to a young adult.

Without these adults my family probably would have stayed home on Sunday mornings. I would have grown up without church, without experiencing the benefits of developing my identity and my faith in a community. Just imagining my childhood without church breaks my heart.

As we enter into a season of thanksgiving and gratitude I invite you to reflect on those adults, either in or out of church, who showed you the importance of community. In your reflection I hope you will pray about how God might need YOU to be that kind of adult for the young people of St. Stephen's. As you pray, keep in mind all the different areas of our youth ministry:

- Church school
- Youth Groups for Middle and High School
- Acolytes
- Young Adults
- KIC
- Community Dinners

I hope you will join me in ensuring that all children, teens and young adults know they belong to a loving faith community that will support them in their successes and in their failures.

P	eace	
	Cacc.	

Sarah

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION: A VIEW BEYOND THE PEWS

Sometimes we just don't know how St. Stephens affects people.

Last month the church was a busy place. Computers were being installed and the construction workers were out on the handicapped walkway replacing the stonework. Harry and I went to the handicapped door to see how the work was going. Harry asked the gentleman to look at the loose tiles on the floor at the back of the church. I remembered a tile was loose in the floor design at the entrance to the main aisle. I took the tile out and under the tile was a note. The note was folded, crumpled, damp, dirty and a bit smudged.

This is what we found the note said.

"I have learned so much here and I can't begin to call myself a Christian at this time. May whatever God you pray to bless you."

There you are-- community of St. Stephens visiting, praying, teaching, organizing, feeding and much more-- affecting many people.

Will we continue to affect people? YES

Are we always going to know how we affect people? NO

Do we work to grow and move St. Stephens forward? YES

Should the doors be open for all? YES

I think about Rev. Matt Stewart's words to us in his sermon. He said: "Keep going St Stephens having fun moving on."

Yes, the tiles are still loose (need a special repair) but no more notes. We will continue to affect people.

Remember pledge Sunday is November 2nd.

Ginny Fuller, Junior Warden

STEWARDS OF RESOURCES

PLEDGE COMMITMENT SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 2. On Sunday, November 2, when we gather to celebrate the saints by reading the necrology and by welcoming new members into the household of God through baptism, we all are encouraged to join the company of saints as we process to the altar with our 2015 Pledge Commitment Cards. During October Joyce Wallace, Stem Mahlatini, Sandy Wittrup, and Steve Switzer spoke about why they pledge to St. Stephen's. They talked about making sure St. Stephen's is here for their children and grandchildren; about following the model of the faithful widow who gave sacrificially trusting God's abundance; about making a difference in people's lives through the ministry of this place; and about being part of a community. On October 26, we all had a chance to talk during our sermon time about a moment in our lives when we felt invited or challenged to move in a new direction and we said, "Here I am, Lord." The invitation now comes to you—what will you pledge to make sure that the people of St. Stephen's can continue to do God's work in the world? Every pledge matters! Please bring or mail your pledge so that you can be part of our November 2 Pledge Commitment Procession of the Saints. Don't forget to change your clocks; on November 2 we fall back gaining an extra hour of sleep!

VESTRY SUMMARY. October 19 the Vestry continued work on Mission Imperative Implementation. Vestry signed Pledge Letter 1 & organized to make Pledge Commitment Sunday calls. September financials are strong except pledge payments continue to lag. The Vestry discussed 2015 budget priorities and arenas for possible additional spending. The Fair-- Saturday, October 25: Fair Team has worked well; solicited lots of donations; need more ads; and need Vestry help on the day. Convention Committee is recruiting volunteers—need all hands on deck. Received Microsoft Grant for software for new computers and Congregational Development Grant for ministry with families and young people; did not receive Amelia Peabody Grant to fund youth work.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8 ST. STEPHEN'S HOSTS DIOCESAN CONVENTION. Friday, November 7, we need people to clean, polish, carry, and haul inside and out so that we are ready to greet 700 Episcopalians at 7:00am on November 8. This will be Bishop Alan Gates' first Diocesan Convention and we want him to remember it as his best. Saturday, we need people to greet (6:45-8:30am), serve lunch (11:30am-1:30pm), and clean up (3:30-6:00pm). And, Convention isn't just for adults-- we need young people to acolyte, welcome delegates, collect money with Esmerelda, raise funds for CPPK, and so much more! Convention matters to St. Stephen's because we receive a \$30,000 credit for our Diocesan Assessment in 2015. More significantly, we receive close to \$100,000 in grants from DioMass each year (including funding for Rev. Sarah) and we need everyone to believe that they are investing Diocesan resources well when they support the mission and ministry of St. Stephen's. Please let Ginny Fuller or Rev. Sarah know how and when you can help.

TREASURER'S REPORT. As we think and pray about our pledges for 2015, please do not lose focus on your 2014 pledge. Our budget assumes 100% pledge payment and we currently stand at 85%. Help us end 2014 in the black; fulfill the commitment you made to St. Stephen's and catch up on your pledge if you have fallen behind. Pledge Pay Up Sunday-- when we will post where all pledgers stand-- will be Sunday, December 7. If you need to adjust your pledge or need information, call the church and the Treasurer's Office will call you back.

BUY YOUR MULTI-PRIZE & SUPER SPORTS RAFFLES

GRAND PRIZE: 2 NIGHTS AT THE TRAPP FAMILY LODGE

Thursday, June 25- Saturday, June 27 in Trapp Guest House, Stowe, VT; sleeps 6

SECOND PRIZES:

Garmin GPS Nuvi42 w/ touch screen OR Keurig K45 Elite Home Brewing System

THIRD PRIZES: \$50 GIFT CARDS

\$50 VISA Pre-paid OR \$50 Panera OR \$50 Marshall's/TJMaxx/Home Goods

2 TICKETS PATRIOTS VS. MIAMI DOLPHINS December 14 at 1:00 OR
2 TICKETS BRUINS VS. NEW JERSEY DEVILS January 8 at 7:00

Tickets cost: \$2.00 or 6 for \$10; Drawing at Mini-Fair on November 23

HARVEST FAIR PROVIDES FUN & FUND RAISING. Many thanks to the Fair Leadership Team of Irene Axelrod, Marilyn Cloran, Sally Gosselin, Carolyn Hoy, Lucinda McClain, Neil O'Donnell, Josephine Russo, and Steve Switzer who guided us into and through an awesome Fair Day. Deep gratitude to the scores of you who contributed to the Fair through your donations of time, talent, and treasure. While we don't yet have a Fair total, our Fair Day deposit was well over \$3,000. As Fair season continues, help us meet our Harvest Fair fundraising goal by ordering pies, buying and selling raffle tickets, and coming to the Mini-Fair Harvest Party. The Mini-Fair Harvest Party with food and fun for all ages is Sunday, November 23 at noon. Come prove yourself in Intergenerational Minute-to-Win-It games. We'll have new gifts for sale as well as Same Day Raffles and the drawing of the Multi-Prize & Super Sports Raffles.

SUPPORT AND THANK OUR COMMUNITY FAIR DONORS. When you see community friends and business owners who supported our Fair, please thank them and patronize their businesses. Without their support, we would not have a Harvest Fair. AAA, Adriatic Restaurant & Bar, American Door, Window & Insulation, Antique Table, Art Supply Wholesale, Bayside Resort, Beacon Communities, Bernie's Place, Bertucci's, Beverly Coop Bank, Big Lots, Barbara Boucher, Brother's Deli & Restaurant, Brotherhood Credit Union, Buffalo Wild Wings, Mary Campagnolo, Century 21 Hughes Realty, Charlie's Seafood, Cheeburger Cheeburger, Christopher's Café & Catering, Clarke Brothers Heating Oil, Desi's Hair Design, In Memory of Dorothy Robinson, Edible Arrangements, Elite Consignment, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Essex River Cruises & Charters, Fauci's Pizza, Five Guys, Four Winds Pub & Grill, Ginger's Closet, Goodrich Funeral Home, Hawthorne Hotel, HMA Car Care, House of Seven Gables, Huntington Theatre, John's Roast Beef & Seafood, Kelley Greens, Koto Japanese Grill, Lancelot Janitorial, Laser Quest, Lazy Dog Sports Bar, Lynn Community Health Center, Lynn Housing & Neighborhood Development, Lynn Museum, Lynn YMCA, Lynnway Liquors, MCAN (Massachusetts Communities Action Network), Middleton Golf Course, Naumkeag Food & Drink, Olive Garden, Panera Bread, Paul Stonkus Exit Elite Realty, Peabody Essex

Museum, Pennyworth's, Porthole Pub, Primo Pizza & Roast Beef, Rickenbacker Resources, Rockafellas, Rossetti's Restaurant, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Fargo, ND, St. Stephen's Tower, Senator Tom McGee, Shaw's Market, Solimine Funeral Home, Spud's Restaurant & Pub, Starbucks, Stoneham Theatre, Stop & Shop, Sylvan Street Grille, Tides Restaurant, and Turner's Seafood.

ARE YOU CALLED TO LEADERSHIP? Are you called to serve St. Stephen's at a parish, Deanery, or Diocesan level? Challenges are many in the parish as we seek sufficient resources to restore our buildings and do the work God has given us to do, and in the Diocese as we create a North Shore Mission Hub. Talk with the Nominating Committee (Irene Axelrod, Joanne Droppers, Jeff McAvoy, & Chris Trahan), as you consider how God might be calling you.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR BISHOP SHAW. Our Bishop M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE died at home at Emery House on Friday, October 17. On Friday, October 31 from 4:00 until 9:00 the Community of the Society of St. John the Evangelist invites people to the Cambridge Monastery for visitation with the Burial Office being offered at 6:00pm and Compline at 8:30pm. On All Saints Day, Saturday, November 1, everyone is invited to a Celebration of Bishop Tom's life at 2:00pm at Trinity Church, Boston.

NURTURING THE CONGREGATION

NOVEMBER FORMATION & FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES. KNIT CLUB: All levels of knitters, crocheters, and sewers are encouraged to join the spirited fellowship of the Knit Club on Tuesday evenings at 6:30. BIBLE STUDY continues on Wednesdays at 6:30 as we learn about the early church through the letters of Paul. TEA AND TALK ABOUT FAITH meets on Thursday afternoons at 1:00 as we read and discuss short, spiritual reflections. ADULT CHOIR gathers Saturday mornings at 10:00 to learn new music and prepare Sunday anthems.

PRAYERS FOR VETERANS. On Sunday, November 9th we will give thanks for all those connected with the St. Stephen's family who have served or are serving in the US Armed Forces. Please check the list in the Galahad Area to ensure that the names of those you would have us remember are accurately listed.

TUESDAYS AT THE MONASTERY. Call the Office to sign up for our trip to the Society of St. John the Evangelist on Tuesday, November 4. We will join the Brothers for worship and supper. We will leave St. Stephen's at 4:15 and return about 8:00. Drivers are needed.

SSJE WORKSHOP ON PLAY SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15. Jesus often told his followers to be like children. Play stimulates creative discovery and delight in children. If you're feeling constrained and distant by life's adult responsibilities, come relax and reconnect with God through reflective play. We will use hands-on, colorful, and imaginative exercises to rekindle childlike discovery, wonder, and trust. Please see Rev. Sarah if you are interested in attending. We plan to leave St. Stephen's at 8:00am and return about 1:00.

HEALING PRAYER & PASTORAL CARE TEAMS MEETS NOVEMBER 6. The Pastoral Care Team will gather at 10:00am on Thursday, November 6 to check-in and organize visits for November. At 10:30 the Healing Prayer and Pastoral Care Teams will meet together. Copies of <u>The Shack</u> are available from Rev. Jane.

GRATITUDE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 23. After a busy fall we will celebrate all the ways in which we participated in doing God's work in the world. To help us celebrate, Rev. Laura Biddle and some of her music making friends will join us. Our altar will be decorated with fruits of the harvest. Church School students are invited to participate in Gratitude Sunday by bringing in a canned good to be donated to the food pantry. UTO boxes will be collected.

COME YE THANKFUL PEOPLE COME

GOD HAS BLESSED EACH OF US WITH ABUNDANCE

TAKE TIME FROM YOUR FOOD AND FOOTBALL TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD

JOIN US AT THE LORD'S TABLE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26 AT 7:00

ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO LIFT OUR VOICES IN SONG AND PRAYER

COME BE FED AT THE LORD'S TABLE

LYNN COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION. Sunday, November 23 at 7:00 people of faith from all congregations in Lynn gather at Bethel AME Church for a Celebration of Thanksgiving. Let's show support for those who are carrying on the tradition of gathering the people of Lynn as a community of prayer and thanksgiving.

HOSPITALITY TO CHILDREN, YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

KIDS' CHOIR SINGS AGAIN. Kids' Choir will sing at Diocesan Convention on November 8 and at worship on November 16. For music education and for performance preparation, young people need to attend Choir Practice Saturday, November 1 and 8 at 9:00am. The Convention Eucharist to which all are invited will be at 11:30am. The Kids' Choir will also rehearse on Saturday, November 15 to get ready for Sunday, November 16. All young people in 2nd grade and higher are encouraged to join the Choir. We also need parent helpers. Please call the parish office or talk to Juliana Davis for more information.

MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT AT BCH. The Diocesan Middle School Retreat is November 21-23 (Friday evening to Sunday at noon). 6th-8th graders are encouraged to sign up for this weekend of music, worship, and fellowship. It's a great time to catch up with camp friends and meet new friends. Please see Sarah by Sunday, November 2 if your youth would like to attend!

CHURCH SCHOOL CAN DRIVE IN NOVEMBER. The Church School will observe a season of gratitude and thanksgiving during November as they learn about the spiritual practice of stewardship. Each Sunday will involve a different activity focusing on the importance of giving back from what God has already given us. All month, they will collect canned food for our Food Pantry. A box will be in the ambulatory if you have food to drop off; we especially need spaghetti sauce, canned vegetable (not carrots), and canned chicken and tuna. Food donation will be presented as part of our Gratitude Celebration on Sunday, November 23.

COMMUNITY FAMILY DINNER NOVEMBER 16 AT 4:30. If you are a family with children, these dinners are designed for just for you! On Sunday, November 16, from 4:30 to 6:30pm, join with other parish families and families from KIC for supper, fellowship, and activities that are fun for kids and adults alike. Each dinner has a theme, and in November, the event will be all about music (don't worry, no experience required). Children can create their own instruments, sing, and everyone will get to enjoy the music of others. The new Contemporary Worship service will follow for those who would like to participate. Volunteers are also needed to help set up and cook or bring food. For more information, contact Audrey Gutfreund, KIC Director, in the church office or at 617-435-3325.

ELF PROJECT: CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR ST. STEPHEN'S KIDS. The parishioners of Trinity Church, Topsfield, are continuing their tradition of providing Christmas presents for the children and teens (18 years old and under) of our parish. Elf Forms are available and must be returned no later than Sunday, November 16. This will ensure that Trinity folks have time to shop, and we can distribute the gifts on Sunday, December 21.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS PROJECT FOR KIDS 2014 HAS ARRIVED! "You better watch, I'm telling you why..." CPPK 2014 is here! For over a decade now, OASIS community youth group has organized a Christmas toy drive for underserved children in Lynn. During a time of year when society is so focused on getting stuff, it's an awesome opportunity for St. Stephen's teens to experience the value of giving back. Names will be collected on 11/14, 11/21, and 12/5 from 4:30 to 6pm. To support CPPK, OASIS will create handmade art after the 10am service on Sundays as well as during Youth Group on Friday, November 14 at 6:30. They'll also get the chance to storm diocesan offices in Boston ("Operation 138") on December 3rd--- leaving church at 2:30 and returning by 6:30pm. Shopping Day is scheduled for 12/13 (9am-2pm) and Distribution Day is happening on 12/18 (3-6pm). Please consider buying OASIS art pieces or donating what you can (cash or gifts for children) to make CPPK 2014 a jolly success!

YOUNG ADULTS GATHER FOR DINNER & CONVERSATION ON NOVEMBER 11. In October, we had a packed table of YAs as we gathered for dinner and conversation. Paulina Villarroel and Jason Cruz made a tasty meal and Bonnie Bishop provided a delicious cake for dessert. We chatted about how work and school are going, and talked a bit about the importance of going to vote and supporting earned sick time. It was great to see new and old faces alike, and we're looking forward to our next dinner on November 11th!

ST. STEPHEN'S FIRST CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP A SUCCESS! On October 19th, roughly fifty people from St. Stephen's English-speaking and Kiswahili congregations-- including youth, young adults ("YAs"), and those beyond "YA" age-- turned out for our first contemporary worship service! We gathered in Lawrence Hall to worship through music provided by Juliana Davis and her talented band from Berklee School of Music. We heard God's Word in scripture and in the form of a Letter to God composed by our Youth Minister, Jason Cruz. Then Jason invited us to respond to his message by completing the sentence, "All are welcome, but I'm scared that..." and "All are welcome, and my hope is..." Jason took photos of folks holding their signs, which will be on display at Convention. Following this, we circled up around the room, held hands, and joined in a time of prayer led by Rev. Jane. We had the chance to munch on snacks afterwards, meet new people, and greet old friends. Overall, it was an awesome opportunity to praise God in new ways and continue to weave together God's community. Our next contemporary service is coming up on Sunday, November 16 at 6:30, so mark your calendars and spread the word!

DEEPENING COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

HELP THE HUNGRY IN OUR COMMUNITY. Please support the Church School Can Drive. Also, we can use your help Friday afternoons from 3:00-4:00 at the Pantry. To sign up, talk with Sally Gosselin. Also, we need people to join the Table Team serving lunch at MBT from 1:00-4:00 on Sunday, November 23. If you can't help us serve, feel encouraged to make cookies, brownies, or cupcakes we can share.

CALLING ALL TURKEYS (FROZEN ONES THAT IS)! Our Food Pantry will give out Thanksgiving turkeys again this year. If you can donate a frozen turkey and/or fixings, we would be greatly appreciative. We expect to give out over 100 turkeys. Due to freezer storage issues, please bring turkeys to the church on Tuesday, November 25 from 9:30 to 2:30. If you can help with turkey distribution on November 25 from 3:00 to 4:00 or with turkey pick up from the Food Bank, speak with Neil O'Donnell or Harry Jackson.

COATS IN GOOD CONDITION NEEDED FOR THE TABLE. Scripture tells us to give our coat and shirt to the needy. While we don't want you to donate your only coat, we are collecting coats in good condition for children and adults to give to folks at My Brother's Table.

UNITED THANK OFFERING IN-GATHERING NOVEMBER 23. The UTO supports relief and development work around the world. Please bring in your UTO box or just add your offering to our collection on Sunday, November 23 so that we can join Anglicans around the world in supporting this amazing work. In years past, St. Stephen's received a UTO grant to support the creation of the E-Team Machinists' Training Program.

ST. STEPHEN'S HOSTS AWESOME ECCO CANDIDATES' FORUM. Sunday, October 26, St. Stephen's welcomed over 150 North Shore voters for an evening with the candidates for member of Congress from the Massachusetts 6th District. Unfortunately, Richard Tisei cancelled at 4:30pm due to illness but candidates Seth Moulton and Chris Stockwell offered support for ECCO and ECCO faith-based commitments to job training/job creation, immigration reform, foreclosure protection, and addressing racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Check out the article in the Monday, October 27 Boston Globe. Many thanks to all who showed hospitality and helped with the Forum at the end of the long Fair weekend.

GET OUT THE VOTE NOVEMBER 4 & VOTE "YES" ON EARNED SICK TIME! For the past several months, St. Stephen's has joined other ECCO congregations in the "Yes on Four" campaign. Voting "Yes" on Question 4 on Election Day will provide one million workers with earned sick time (unpaid in businesses with 10 or fewer employees & paid with 11 or more). This is a critical issue for families, as Debbie Potter, St. Stephen's ECCO team captain, knows first hand. Debbie's struggle with Crohn's disease meant that she was forced to resign from several jobs that did not provide sick time while she was raising her daughter. Eventually, she was able to find a job with sick days, and she wants to make sure others receive this vital benefit as well. While doing door-to-door canvassing in Lynn, Debbie has been grateful to find that most people have been supportive of earned sick time and willing to voter sign commitment cards. She's also been happy to work with folks from other area congregations and groups who join us working hard to promote "Yes on 4." So far, St. Stephen's has knocked on nearly 500 doors in Lynn and ECCO's grand total is over 1,500! But time is short and we want to knock on 250 more doors before Election Day! If door knocking is not for you, sign up for the ECCO phone bank. Call or come by the church to complete your GOTV (Get Out The Vote) volunteer form. And don't forget to VOTE "YES" ON FOUR ON NOVEMBER 4!

VOTE ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4

IT'S A RIGHT & A RESPONSIBILITY

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\$7.00 each	
Email:	
th	Email: the Mini-Fair Party & Raffle Drawing November 23 Noon-2