



Alleluia

Christ is Risen!

Newsletter April 2015

Holy Week Brings All of Life to Easter

As a child, I went to church on Palm Sunday and then returned a week later to celebrate Easter. My life moved from palm crosses to Easter baskets and bunnies with no thought of betrayal, arrest, abandonment, suffering, and death. Our Junior Choir Easter anthems were joyful as we sang, “there stood three Marys by the tomb on Easter morning early.” Somewhere between the palms and the jelly beans, the Last Supper and the crucifixion happened but we didn’t stop and take notice.

Thinking now about this practice of my youth that mirrors the experience of so many, I realize that it reflects our cultural discomfort with injustice, pain, loss, and death. While we may make passing references to the hard passages of life, we expect ourselves and others to get up and get on. We are expected to rise above our problems, to put the past behind us, and to get over our grief. Somehow we are supposed to move quickly to healing, reconciliation, and new life.

Our lives are full of significant and passing experiences of abandonment and betrayal; we all have wounds we carry that need to be acknowledged and brought into the light of Christ. Whether we name it or not, most of us know well the injustice of living under the oppressive systems of the empire; we know the institutional barriers that limit opportunities for people of color, poor people, women, GLBT folks, mentally ill people, addicts, those who have done time... the list goes on and on. And we all live with loss—relationships with family and friends become strained and estranged; we age and lose our capacity to engage life fully; people we love die.

Holy Week reminds us that all of life is sacred and that we bring our whole selves to God—the wounded and the well. Our worship between Palm Sunday and Easter gives us the time and space to reflect deeply on who we are and who we are called to be as followers of Jesus Christ.

On the website of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, the Brothers explain: “The liturgies of the so-called Triduum (from the Latin meaning ‘three days’) are in actuality one liturgy beginning with the Maundy Thursday Eucharist and foot washing, continuing on Good Friday with the veneration of the cross and communion from bread and wine consecrated on Thursday, and culminating with the renewal of our baptismal vows and the first Eucharist of the resurrection at the Great Vigil of Easter. Once we commence with worship on Maundy Thursday, we are not formally dismissed until Easter Day.”

April begins with the Great Three Days; join us throughout Holy Week trusting that God desires all our messy bits-- and not just our Easter finery. And then in Eastertide, give yourself fully to the new life of freedom and joy that is God’s gift in the resurrection. Together we can resist the empire of dysfunction, discrimination, and death “seeking transformation of our lives and our community through Christ’s Gospel of love, compassion, and justice.” Alleluia! Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Janet

I've been living to see you. Dying to see you, but it shouldn't be like this. This was unexpected, what do I do now? Could we start again please? I've been very hopeful, so far. Now for the first time, I think we're going wrong. Hurry up and tell me, this is just a dream. Oh could we start again please?

Dear Friends,

During Lent and especially during Holy Week I listen to the soundtrack of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, a rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Weber and Tim Rice. It originally appeared on stage in 1971 so the music is somewhat dated (definitely a 70's vibe) but the lyrics and characters add a different dimension to the stories of Jesus. Granted, the writers aren't always true to the Gospels. For instance they chose to not portray Jesus' resurrection. Despite this blaring omission my heart hurts from the power of the music and lyrics.

The quotation above comes from the song "Could We Start Again Please?" which is a duet between Mary Magdalene and Peter. It's one of the last songs and marks the point when Mary and Peter realize that Jesus, who is on trial in Jerusalem, is in real trouble. Terrified of the possibilities Mary and Peter wonder, "could we start again?" They want to go back to safer times when Jesus traveled freely sharing the Good News to any who would listen. They want to turn back the clock not only to have more time with their friend, but also to bring their new awareness of the potential danger. They want to be able to warn Jesus and perhaps prevent what is about to take place.

What makes this idea so powerful is that we all know that desire to go back in time and change our current situation. Whether it was five or fifty years we long to return and somehow alter the past in order to correct where we are now. Even though our mind tells us it's impossible, our heart still hopes. Like Mary and Peter I often wish I could go back in time and be with Jesus. I would warn him that his life was in danger and convince him to not enter Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. If I had to I would drag him away with every ounce of my strength.

But even if I did have a time machine I know my efforts would be in vain. Jesus has to go to Jerusalem, be put on trial, and die on the cross. Not because God wants Jesus to die, that's the last thing God wants, but because it makes the Resurrection possible. It opens the door for God's grace to overcome death. So in this way Mary, Peter and all of us are able to start again with the risen Jesus and the invitation to let go of the past so that we may find God in the present.

This Easter season leave the past where it belongs. Jesus' Resurrection is proof that what has happened no longer has power over us, unless we allow it to have power. Let us affirm this on Easter Sunday as we shout "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!"

Peace,

Sarah

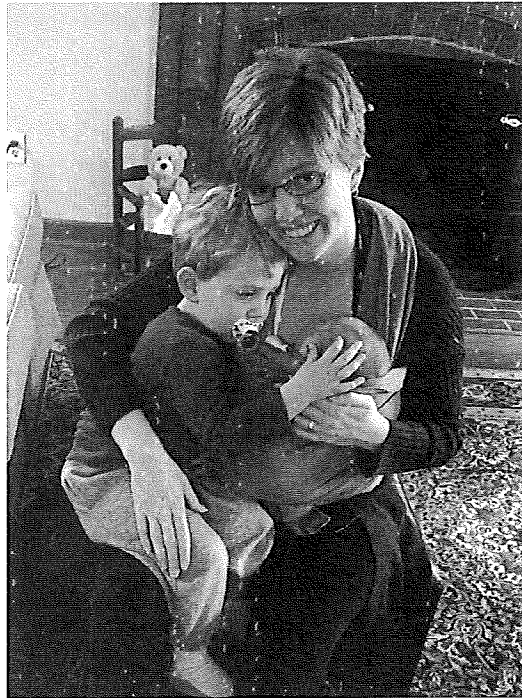
LEADERSHIP REFLECTION FROM AMY INEZ

This is my second year as a member of the Pastoral Care Team. I was invited to become a member of this great group after I survived a major illness that almost took my life. During my recovery I myself received vital pastoral care, so I have been on both ends, receiving and giving. Also, a few weeks ago I lost my mother, and learned that she had received many pastoral care visits from her parish in New Hampshire during her last weeks, days and final hours. It was comforting to know she was cared for by the church she loved so dearly.

Pastoral care is where my heart is and is a ministry that helps give my life more meaning. Members of the pastoral care team usually go out in pairs to visit our sick or homebound parishioners. This year Irene Axelrod and I are doing visits together. Our visits may or may not include sharing the Eucharist, but always include prayers or readings, whatever we feel the person would like. On one of our visits before Christmas we were treated to a house tour of magnificent decorations instead of the usual prayers.

I think that the visit that really touched both of us was spending time with Linda Serven just days before she passed last fall. Linda didn't recognize us, but when we mentioned St. Stephen's, there was a slight response. As I placed my hand on her arm, I read prayers and we recited the 23rd psalm to her, I was so moved. It becomes a holy place for me. I know I am there representing St. Stephen's as God's messenger. The people we visit look to us to bring a piece of St. Stephen's to them, to assure them that they are still a part of our church community and always remembered.

**Courtney, Adam, and Malcolm are proud to announce the birth of
HELEN AUBREY SHOEMAKER
Born on February 10, 2015**



**Baby Aubrey came into the world at home with the help of an EMT;
She is a new Birthday Buddy for Rev. Sarah and Marilyn Cloran.**

JOIN US FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK—MARCH 31

11:00am Blessings of Oils & Reaffirmation of Ordination Vows at Emmanuel, Boston

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK—APRIL 1

7:45pm Holy Eucharist in the Chapel

MAUNDY THURSDAY—APRIL 2

Noon Commemoration of the Last Supper

7:00pm Foot Washing and Commemoration of the Last Supper

GOOD FRIDAY—APRIL 3

Noon-3:00pm Ecumenical Last Words of Christ at Washington Street, Baptist

7:00pm Solemn Collects, Veneration of the Cross, and Communion from Reserve

HOLY SATURDAY—APRIL 4

9:00am Prayers for Holy Saturday followed by decorating the Church

7:30pm First Fire lit on Lynn Common with St. Mary's/Sacred Heart

8:00pm Story of Salvation, Baptism, and Festive Eucharist

SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION—APRIL 5

8:00 and 10:00am Festival Eucharist with Choir

BEING GOOD STEWARDS OF RESOURCES

VESTRY UPDATE. During March, Vestry members attended Saturday workshops on building relationships for mission, encountering God in prayer, congregational business practices, or non-profit management.

WINTER BUDGET WOES. Winter has put us in a deep financial hole. Income is down as ceaseless snow and cold kept people from church. In addition, our heating bills have been high and our snow plowing budget is over by more than 300%. And, of course, ice dams caused extensive damage to the Sacristy ambulatory roof, hall, and floor as well as one of our gutters in the Garth. In addition to your Easter Offering, please make a **Thank God Winter is Over Offering** to help us meet our extraordinary winter expenses. Also, please catch up on your pledge now because it is challenging to catch up in December.

NURTURING THE CONGREGATION

RITE OF RECONCILIATION OFFERED BY APPOINTMENT. If you would like to prepare for Easter by making your confession, please call or email Rev. Jane or Rev. Sarah to schedule a time. This sacramental act is about getting right with God, yourself, and the world. For the penitent, the end result of confession should be freedom not guilt or regret. We have copies of Curtis Almquist's booklet *Reconciliation* as well as Martin Smith's book *Reconciliation* for those who would like to learn more. Good Friday is a traditional time for undertaking the Rite of Reconciliation.

FLOWER MEMORIALS AND THANKSGIVINGS FOR EASTER. No joke-- get your memorial and thanksgiving requests to Linda in the Office (email ststephens@ststephenslynn.org or call 781-599-4220) by **noon on Wednesday, April 1**, and you can honor someone you love as you help fund our altar decorations for Easter. After worship on Easter or during Easter Week, please help us deliver lilies to hospitalized and homebound members of the congregation. A lily and a cheerful "Alleluia! Christ is risen" can really brighten someone's day.

HELP GET THE CHURCH READY FOR EASTER. On Saturday, April 4th starting at 9:00am, the Altar Guild invites you to offer prayers for Holy Saturday, and then clean and decorate the church for our Easter services. Coffee, tea and breakfast goodies will be available. We will work through the day until we are done. Come for a couple of hours or stay for the whole time, but know that any amount of time volunteered is very much appreciated.

EASTER COMMUNIONS. Please call the office if you would like to receive Communion at home this Eastertide. The clergy will begin visiting homebound parishioners for Easter Communion beginning the week of April 5th.

BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES ON APRIL 8 AT 6:30. As the days get warmer and longer, follow the practice of the early church gathering to hear the stories of Jesus and opening themselves to their lives being transformed. While people are free to step in and out of our study, community and learning are both stronger when we journey together week by week.

MONTHLY FAMILY DINNERS CONTINUE ON APRIL 19. The next Family Dinner will be Sunday, April 19th, from 4:30 to 6:30pm. We'll be eating empanadas, dancing, and having a grand time. All ages and family members are welcome. Please join us!

13th ANNUAL SOUL CELEBRATION APRIL 26. Our Soul Celebration truly is our Easter Feast at St. Stephen's. Our guest speaker and preacher will be the Hon. Byron Rushing. A longtime member of the Massachusetts State House and Episcopal General Convention, Byron currently holds leadership positions in both arenas as a Majority Whip on Beacon Hill and Vice President of the House of Deputies for the Episcopal Church. His talk will focus on "*Justice Reinvestment: Creating Jobs not Jails.*" Last year's Soul Celebration raised over \$12,000 and Debbie Potter & her team are hoping to be even more successful this year. To reach our fundraising goal, we all need to buy and sell ads for the Soul Celebration Program Book. **Covers start at \$500; full-page ads cost \$150, half page \$75, and quarter page/ business card \$50; and supporter listings cost only \$20.** While good preaching and an inspiring keynote address will feed our minds and spirits, the Soul Food Dinner promises to feed your body in decidedly non-Lenten ways! Come enjoy fried chicken, mac & cheese, collard greens, corn bread, chocolate & coconut cakes, and a host of other soulful treats. Let Pauline Leslie know if you can help with cooking or serving. **And, Buy & sell tickets: \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12!**

CONFIRMATION WITH BISHOP ALAN GATES AT ST. ANNE'S IN LOWELL ON MAY 9. Saturday, May 9 at 10:30 Bishop Gates will confirm and receive teens and adults into the Episcopal Church. Irene Axelrod has been working with our teen Confirmation crew. Adults interested in Confirmation or reception should talk with Rev. Jane or Rev. Sarah as soon as possible and plan to attend our Adult Confirmation Retreat-- Saturday, April 25, 9:00 to noon.

FORMING CHILDREN, YOUTH, & YOUNG ADULTS

GOOD FRIDAY BRUNCH FOR TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS. On Good Friday (April 3rd), teens and young adults are invited to brunch at 10:00am. Our time together will include discussion, music, and creativity as we reflect on how and where God meets us in our daily life. We'll also learn more about the rhythm and grace of Holy Week and Easter.

YOUNG ADULT DINNER APRIL 14. A big crowd attended March's YA dinner and we were excited to welcome back Guelmi, who was on spring break from Bucknell! We had fun with our quesadilla creation night and even more fun as we hung out and played "telephone pictionary!" Apart from just being hilarious, the point was to show how life often gives us the unexpected burden or blessing. YAs then got the opportunity to write down their thoughts about their own "aha" moments- you can find some of them in our God Blog! **Our next YA dinner is happening on April 14th, 6:30 to 9pm!** Anyone 18-25 years old is welcome!

OASIS CELEBRATES SPRING. As the weather continues to warm our OASIS Community Youth Group will complete art and service projects as we continue to explore issues around identity, race, and education. **OASIS gathers on April 10 and 24 from 6:30-9:00 for support, formation, and conversation about issues that matter.**

"BE YOU" GATHERS ON APRIL 14. High school students face pressures and challenges of all kinds- in school, in relationships, with friends and family. Teens who identify as LGBTQ, or find themselves questioning their gender or sexual identity, are especially vulnerable during this time in their lives. They are often made to feel like outsiders, unwelcomed and misunderstood. The goal of St. Stephen's new high school group BE YOU is to provide a safe, supportive, and fun space for LGBTQ teens, and their straight peers, to hang out, talk about important stuff, and dream of ways to make a difference in an often hostile world. There will be a **GATHERING EVENT on Tuesday, APRIL 14th, 3:30-5:30.** All high schoolers are welcome! Please see Dan Bell, Jason Cruz, or Rev. Sarah if you have any questions.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GATHERING APRIL 19. Our Middle School Group meets monthly after church for food and art with Jason Cruz. In April the group will gather on Sunday, April 19 noon to 2:00 to kick-off School Vacation Week and plan for a spring service project.

REGISTER FOR FIRST COMMUNION; FAMILY MEETING APRIL 12. Communion Classes will be offered April 19 & 26 and May 3 & 10 at 10:00am in preparation for First Communion on May 17 at 10:00am. In addition, there will be a retreat on Saturday, May 16 from 9:00 until noon. Although all are welcome to receive communion at any age at St. Stephen's, communion instruction for children is important so that they understand the sacrament better. Following 10:00am worship on April 12, there will be a meeting for all Communion Class participants and their parents/ guardians; please register today! See Rev. Sarah with any questions.

KIC AFTER-SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM IS UNDERWAY. If you stopped by the church on a Monday afternoon this past month, you might have heard Conga drums, maracas, or Nigerian folk songs drifting down from Lawrence Hall. The sounds were our brand new KIC Music After School participants, learning their pieces for percussion ensemble and choir. KIC after school has enrolled 10 children, who come each Monday for snack, homework help, KIC games, and nearly two hours of music instruction. Registration is still open; talk with Audrey Gutfreund.

BCH CAMP FORMS ARE AVAILABLE NOW! Registration forms for Barbara C. Harris Summer Camp (for Family Camp and Summer Camp for grades 4-12) are available! **Camp Registration Sunday (when all registration forms need to be in) will be April 19. Camp Director Alessia Doss will be with us to answer any questions and collect forms.** Camp costs \$600 per week. The Camp asks each family to pay what you can BUT scholarships are available and no child will be deprived a week at Camp because of inability to pay. Diocesan scholarships look to the family, the church and the Diocese each paying 1/3 of the cost. This means that the requested minimum family share is \$200. If a family cannot pay \$200, a letter explaining why you can't pay needs to accompany the regular Camp Scholarship Form, which St. Stephen's clergy must sign unless you pay the full \$600. Health Forms must be signed by your child's physician. Camp transforms the lives of young people; St. Stephen's and the BCH leadership remain committed to making Camp accessible to all children. Bring your Camp questions to Rev. Jane or Rev. Sarah. Rev. Sarah will be Camp Chaplain June 28-July 4.

KIDS' CHOIR PREPPING FOR APRIL 19 & SOUL CELEBRATION—PIZZA MAY 2. Our Kids' Choir will rehearse on Saturdays April 4 and 18, Noon-2:00. On May 2, the Kids' Choir invites all current, past, and possible choir members to join us for pizza, music, and games from noon to 2:00. All 1st-12th graders are encouraged to join the Choir Community. For more information, email Juliana at julianadavismusic@gmail.com or call her at 617-834-5367.

TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS INVITED TO APPLY TO BE KIC MENTORS THIS SUMMER. Applications for KIC teen mentor positions are currently being accepted! Applicants must currently be in 9th grade or above. Successful mentors are usually responsible, caring, energetic youth who are interested in working with children. If this sounds like you or someone you know, pick up an application in the office or Galahad area. Both new and returning prospective mentors should plan to fill out an application and complete an interview. In addition, we ask that applicants register with the NS Career Center on Union Street as soon as possible. The final deadline to submit an application is Friday, May 1. Please contact Audrey Gutfreund, KIC Director, at 617-435-3325 with questions.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP ON APRIL 19 AT 6:30. On Sunday, March 15th, folks gathered to sing, pray, and listen to Rev. Sarah bring a message about redemption and healing in a world filled with sin and brokenness. **MARK YOUR CALENDARS** for upcoming contemporary worship services! **April 19th, we welcome Isaac Everett of The Crossing, an emergent Episcopal worshipping community in Boston,** as our guest speaker. And on May 17th, Hazel Johnson joins us to reflect on what it means to have courage.

DEEPENING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

THERE'S NO KEEPING A GOOD DONKEY DOWN! Word has it Esmeralda plans to join us **on April 12.** She thinks there will be lots of good-hearted, justice-minded people in church who will fill her wagon with Lenten Offering Boxes, Lenten quarter cards, loose change, and large bills and checks to support the work of Episcopal Relief and Development. So bring the money you didn't spend on whatever you gave up for Lent; Essie wants it on the 12th.

ECCO ORGANIZING TRAINING APRIL 21, 6:30-8:30. ECCO will host Organizing 101 for new and emerging leaders in our Building Beloved Community and Immigrant Rights Campaigns. St. Stephen's hopes to send a group of new leaders eager to be seekers of justice in our city.

April 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>8 & 10am Worship in English 10am Worship in Kiswahili</p>	<p>Office Hours Monday – Friday 9am – 3pm</p>		<p>1 6pm Soup Supper 6:45pm Lenten Bible Study & Confirmation Journey 7:45pm Eucharist</p>	<p>2 MAUNDY THURSDAY 10:30am Healing Prayer & Pastoral Care Teams Meeting Noon Commemoration of the Last Supper 7pm Foot Washing & Commemoration of the Last Supper Silent Vigil until 11pm</p>	<p>3 GOOD FRIDAY Noon – 3pm Last Words @ Washington Street Baptist Church 7pm Veneration of the Cross w/ Communion</p>	<p>4 HOLY SATURDAY 9am Prayers for Holy Saturday 9:30-3pm Decorate the church for Easter 10am Choir Rehearsal Noon-2pm Kids' Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm Lighting of the First Fire of Easter on Common 8pm Easter Vigil w/ Baptism</p>
<p>5 EASTER SUNDAY 8 & 10am Festival Holy Communion</p>	<p>6 2:00-6:00pm KIC Afterschool Music Program 8pm AA</p>	<p>7 4:15pm Tuesday with the Monks 7pm NA</p>	<p>8 6:30pm Bible Study</p>	<p>9 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk</p>	<p>10 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS</p>	<p>11 10am Choir Rehearsal</p>
<p>12 12:30pm Vestry Meeting 4:30-6:30pm Family Dinner</p>	<p>13 2:00-6:00pm KIC Afterschool Music Program 6:30-8pm LDI team Meeting 8pm AA</p>	<p>14 3:30-5:30pm Be You 6:30pm YA Dinner 7pm NA</p>	<p>15 6:30pm Bible Study</p>	<p>16 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk</p>	<p>17 3-4pm Food Pantry</p>	<p>18 Noon-2pm Kids' Choir Rehearsal and Pizza Party</p>
<p>19 Camp Commitment Sunday Post 10am Noon-2pm Middle School Event 6:30pm Contemporary Worship</p>	<p>20 2:00-6:00pm KIC Afterschool Music Program 8pm AA</p>	<p>21 6:30-8:30pm ECCO Organizing/ Training 7pm NA</p>	<p>22 2pm Communion at St. Stephen's Towers 6:30pm Bible Study</p>	<p>23 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 6-9pm LDI Meeting @ Grace Church, Salem</p>	<p>24 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS</p>	<p>25 9am-Noon Adult Confirmation Retreat 10am Choir Rehearsal</p>
<p>26 SOUL CELEBRATION 10am The Hon. Byron Rushing, Preacher Noon SF Dinner 1-4pm My Brother's Table</p>	<p>27 2:00-6:00pm KIC Afterschool Music Program 8pm AA</p>	<p>28 7pm NA</p>	<p>29 6:30pm Bible Study</p>	<p>30 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk</p>		