



Newsletter February 2017

## Called to Holy Orders

January 22, I attended Evensong at The Parish of the Epiphany in Winchester celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of Jeanne Sproat who was ordained there on January 15, 1977. Although General Convention 1976 approved the ordination of women, the Sisters of St. Anne told Sr. Mary Bride that she needed to leave the Community if she wanted to become a priest. And so the nun took off her habit and became Assistant to the Rector in Winchester and the first woman priest ordained in the Diocese of Massachusetts.

On February 11, we will mark the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris as the first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion. In the service remembering the ordination of Jeanne Sproat, Bishop Barbara reflected on the opposition to her election, confirmation, and consecration as our Bishop Suffragan. And, she commented that the challenges did not stop once 64 bishops laid hands upon her making her a bishop. She said that just as Jeanne Sproat ignored the flack and dedicated herself to serving first the people of Winchester and then the whole Diocese as Canon Pastor of the Cathedral, she had committed herself to serving the Diocese as best she could.

While those we now prepare and present for ordination may not be "firsts" in the ways of Rev. Jeanne and Bishop Barbara, their lives still get turned upside down as they say yes to God's call. Few friends and family members expect those they love to become priests even if the sense of call seems utterly appropriate.

Right now, St. Stephen's has people in every stage of the ordination process. Patrick Lafortune is completing coursework and awaiting word on when he might be ordained. Dan Bell is doing an internship at St. Paul's Malden and working as Protestant Chaplain at Tufts University; he has just applied to be a candidate for holy orders. Hazel Johnson is a postulant for holy orders and a first year MDiv student at Boston University; she continues to work parttime at St. Paul's Brookline. On February 4, I will join Gordon College senior Kevin Neil in attending the annual Diocesan Discernment Day as he begins his journey to priesthood. And Beatrice Mbattude returns from Uganda on the 4<sup>th</sup> wondering whether God really might be calling her to be a priest.

As I reflect on the journeys of these five plus Charlie Knuth at whose ordination in Folsom, California I preached on January 25, I am conscious that God asks a lot of those whom God calls to ordained ministry. There are and will be manifold blessings in manifesting the love and light of Christ as priests-- but many sacrifices are required. Please keep our current crop and all those we have sponsored and formed in years past in your prayers.

At the close of her sermon at Jeanne Sproat's ordination, the Rev. Carol Anderson, ordained days before in New York, charged: *"It is truly a great faith:/ Rejoice in it, grow in it, share in it./ It is truly a great church:/ Forgive it, reform it, love it./ It is truly a great ministry: Offer yourself to it, celebrate it and be diligent./ It is truly a great crowd of witnesses:/ Serve us, challenge us, care for us."* Amen! Alleluia! JSG+  
Rev. Jane<sup>+</sup>

*On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."*

*After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." (Eucharistic Prayer A, BCP 362-3)*

Dear Friends,

When we celebrate the Holy Eucharist we remember and commemorate Jesus' last meal with the disciples. At that meal, what we call the Last Supper, Jesus gives the disciples specific instructions on how to hold similar meals in the future. Often when we think of the 12 disciples we think of a motley crew of men who left behind families, homes and jobs to follow Jesus in his wanderings around Palestine.

But if we understand the disciples only as followers we miss their true role in the Jesus story. Our word "disciple" comes from the Greek word, *mathétés*, which is more accurately defined as "learner" or "student." The difference between a follower and a student seems negligent and yet essential for understanding our own roles as disciples. To be a follower is to take no action, to simply walk in the footsteps of another person or persons. To be a student, on the other hand, is to take action by listening, studying, practicing and then using the knowledge to affect change in the world.

The original 12 disciples were not always the best students. In the Gospels we read that they misunderstood Jesus, that they had insufficient faith, and that they were ineffective healers. And yet Jesus understands their struggles to learn their lessons, with minimal frustration. The last lesson is captured in the above quoted section from Eucharistic Prayer A. Like any good teacher, Jesus left the most important lesson for the end of the semester.

With the words, "do this for the remembrance of me," Jesus asks his students to eat bread and drink wine but also to preach, heal, organize and all the other skills he taught them. Some 2,000 years later we are students of the same teacher, trying to master the same skills. Unfortunately, we don't have the physical presence of Jesus to push us when the lessons seem too difficult or even impossible. It is easy to sit in the back of the class pretending that we are learning when we're distracted by technology or our own imaginations.

If we are not constantly learning from Jesus and putting these learnings into action then we are passive followers. St. Stephen's, indeed the whole world, needs more disciples, more students of Jesus, who are willing and able to accept leadership roles that bring to life the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Are you a disciple? Are you a follower?

Peace,

*Rev. Sarah*

Sarah

## Senior Warden Report

As I complete my time as Senior Warden I have been thinking about this article and what I would write. There are two important topics for our Parish.

First is the Vestry. The Vestry administers matters that are spiritual and secular pertaining to Parish. The Vestry consists of the Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, Clerk, Rector, and eight members making a total of thirteen. This Vestry is responsible for implementing ministry and mission goals, preservation of the building, calling a Rector, and managing the parish finances.

The nominating committee is now working to engage new members for the Board. As Parish members were approached I heard comments like: "It is the same people all the time", "It is a clique and I am not wanted" "Meetings are too long" and others. This really made me feel uncomfortable and a bit surprised.

No, it is not the same people all the time. The by-laws state there must be at least a year before a person can run again. People have served before as I did many years ago. No, it is *not* a clique: you are needed. The meetings have an agenda which is built on time needed for each item based on two hours. The Senior Warden or another member has been the time keeper to move the agenda along. Materials are sent to members ahead of time for reading and preparation.

The Vestry responsibilities go beyond the monthly meetings to assist when needed with activities in the Parish.

Each person who serves on the Vestry comes with different skills and ideas. You have skills and ideas and are needed to serve. Please pray and think about serving St Stephens as a member of the Vestry.

Second is the Annual Meeting: Article V of the By-Laws states "the annual meeting is held on a Sunday in February and twenty five percent of the average Sunday attendance is required." At this meeting the Parish hears various reports and the 2017 budget. The Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasure, Clerk and members of the Vestry are elected for 2017. It is your chance to use your voice. Ask questions, contribute your opinion and run from the floor (if needed) and vote for new members. Come, talk with friends, enjoy a meal and participate in this important meeting.

You are the Parish, you are St Stephens. I thank you for electing me to serve on the Vestry and as Senior Warden.

Blessings,



Virginia Fuller

**COME TO THE ANNUAL MEETING  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2017 AT NOON**

***Why should you come?***

**To enjoy food and fellowship with our church community**

**To hear about the year past and the year to come**

**To review parish finances**

**To set up on-line pledge payment**

**To elect leaders for the Parish, Deanery and Diocese**

**To fulfill your responsibility as a member**

***Please let us know what you plan to contribute to our Potluck Feast!***

**2016 ANNUAL REPORTS AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 5.** Our Annual Report tells the story of an amazing year in the life of St. Stephen's. Many thanks to all who did the ministry and all who pulled together the reports included in our summary of 2016. Pick up the Annual Report at the church or download it from our website, and check out the ministry reports, 2016 financials, and 2017 budget. If you would like a hard copy of the Annual Report, please send a check for \$5.00 black & white/ \$10.00 color and your name and address, and we would be happy to mail one to you.

**STEWARDS OF RESOURCES**

**ARE YOU CALLED TO SERVE?** Nominating Committee members **Carolyn Hoy, Pauline Leslie, Neil O'Donnell, and Steve Switzer** are working hard to provide us with a full slate of candidates for the Annual Meeting at noon on February 12. *Do you care enough about the life and ministry of St. Stephen's to offer yourself in leadership?* In the Episcopal Church, the Vestry makes decisions about priorities and budgets; we need those decisions made by a diverse and committed community of leaders. *Might you be called to serve?* We will elect to one-year-terms Senior Warden (no incumbent; current Junior Warden running), Junior Warden (no incumbent), Treasurer (incumbent running), and Clerk (no incumbent—previous clerk reached 6 year term limit). We also will elect 5 Vestry members (three 3-year terms, one 2-year term, and one 1-year term) as well as Deanery (5 delegates) and Diocesan Convention (2 delegates & 2 alternates) representatives.

**VESTRY SUMMARY: JANUARY 15.** The Vestry reviewed end-of-year financials, and discussed and approved the proposed 2017 budget. While giving thanks that we surpassed the Vestry's pledge goal of \$131,000, the Vestry discussed how Vestry and SMT might work together to address the problem of members who pledge regularly and consistently fail to fulfill their financial commitment to the parish. We discussed the Episcopal Church-DioMass Latino Ministry Grant of \$100,000 a year for two years, which we hope will allow us to launch our Latino Outreach Ministry in June. In addition to discussing recruiting candidates for Vestry, Deanery, and Diocesan Convention, we offered words of gratitude for leadership of out-going Vestry members: Senior Warden Virginia Fuller, and Clerk Carolyn Hoy as well as Pauline Leslie, Neil O'Donnell, and Steve Switzer.

**FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE.** January is a very busy month for the Treasurer's Office as final financials for 2016 needed to be prepared as well as a Vestry approved budget for 2017. 2016 donation statements were mailed in mid-January. If you did not receive your statement or it does not agree with your records, please call the Office and one of our volunteers who make up the Treasurer's Office Team will follow up with you. And, even though 2016 is over, we still welcome payment of 2016 pledges. And, even though the 2017 budget is prepared, we still welcome 2017 pledges.

**PALMS NEEDED TO MAKE ASHES.** At funerals we say "dust to dust, ashes to ashes." At our Mardi Gras celebration on February 26 we take our Palm Sunday palms and burn them into the ashes that will mark our foreheads on Ash Wednesday. The mark of our mortality connects us directly to our Lord's Passion. Remember to bring your palms on February 19!

## **NURTURING THE CONGREGATION**

**COMING TO THE CLOSE OF GENESIS.** During February, Wednesday evening Bible Study (6:30-8:00) will explore the final chapters of Genesis. In Lent, beginning March 8, will explore sin and evil before exploring resurrection and redemption in Eastertide. Come to Bible Study every week or as often as you can. It's a wonderful way to deepen your relationship with God and those who worship with you Sunday by Sunday.

**LIVE INTENTIONALLY; CRAFT A RULE OF LIFE.** February 2 is your last chance to commit to our Epiphany Rule of Life Group. The group will meet on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 (come at 6:00 for socializing and settling) through March 2. Our goal is to support one another in crafting personal rules of life, which emerge out of each person's priorities, challenges, and dreams. Participants are asked to commit to all sessions as much as life, health, and snow permit.

**HEALING PRAYER & PASTORAL CARE TEAMS MEET FEBRUARY 2.** HPT and PCT meet Thursday, February 2 to organize visits, check in, and discuss chapters 7-9 (pages 103-156) of Becca Steven's [Snake Oil: The Art of Healing and Truth-Telling](#).

**LIVING WORD ON FEBRUARY 5: DISCIPLESHIP.** In the gospels we read that Jesus had 12 disciples or students whom he prepared to continue his earthly ministry. Jesus taught them to evangelize, heal, preach and to remember him in sharing the bread and wine. The growth of the early church came out of their desire to put their lessons into practice, accepting the successes as well as the failures. We too are students of Jesus and so we too must put our lessons into practice by serving on the Vestry, visiting the sick or shut-in, working with ECCO and the Sanctuary Movement, teaching our youth etc... On February 5 the Scripture readings and sermon will push each of us to discern how we are called to live as disciples.

**AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION FEBRUARY 19.** In honor of African American History Month, our worship on February 19 will include prayer and music that celebrates the depth and wisdom of African American culture. As a diverse faith community it's essential that this rich diversity is woven into our worship.

**CELEBRATE CANDLEMAS/ FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION FEBRUARY 2 AT NOON.** Join us on Candlemas at noon for a time of healing prayers and blessings as we remember the presentation of Jesus at the temple.

**WOMEN'S GROUP MEETS FOR LUNCH ON FEBRUARY 5 AT 12:30.** All women are invited to share in an afternoon of food, fellowship and fun. This month's meeting will be led by Helen Patmon and Joyce Wallace with the theme of African American Heritage month. Please see Emily Shelton or the clergy for more information.

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 7 AT THE MONASTERY.** Join the SSJE Brothers for worship and supper at the Monastery on the first Tuesday of the month. Cars leave St. Stephen's at 4:15 and return about 8:00. Sign up is requested.

**VALENTINE'S DAY COMMUNION AT THE TOWERS.** All are welcome at our Community Communion at St. Stephen's Tower Apartments (25 Pleasant Street) on Tuesday, February 14 at 2:00. It's a great way to see an important outreach ministry of the church and meet some of the elders who live in the building.

**"THE GIFT OF HOPE" WORKSHOP AT THE MONASTERY FEBRUARY 18.** For many in our congregation and community these are difficult days but our faith calls us to hope rather than despair. Explore how we both see and understand the world as it is and hold on to hope. Join the monks on Saturday, February 18 for a workshop on hope. Sign up is required; cars leave at 8:00am and return at 1:00.

**BELOVED COMMUNITY TEAM MEETS FEBRUARY 16 AT 7:30.** In January the BCT gathered to watch the documentary film, *13<sup>th</sup>*, which highlighted the direct correlation between the abolition of slavery and the beginnings of mass incarceration. As we discussed the film the topic of white privilege was voiced several times. The BCT recognizes that white privilege is vastly misunderstood by people of all races and classes and so will be reading and reflecting on Peggy McIntosh's article, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." As we all work toward building God's Beloved Community it's essential that we deal with oppression AND privilege. Please speak with Rev. Sarah if you need a hard copy of the article.

**HELP MAKE GUMBO AFTER CHURCH ON SUNDAY 26.** Neil's gumbo ingredient list is ready, all he needs is for each of us to volunteer to bring a bit. Also, join him in the kitchen if you want to help make the gumbo!

**JOIN US FOR MARDI GRAS ON FEBRUARY 26 AT 4:30.** This year we welcome folks from St. James' Church, Cambridge for a joint celebration of Mardi Gras! There will be delicious food from across the Anglican Communion: gumbo, Caribbean treats, pancakes etc...plus time for conversation, music and games. Please join the decorating crew at 3:00pm so that the Graham Suite can be ready when our guests arrive at 4:30pm. At 6:30pm we will gather in the parking lot for prayer and palm burning as both congregations prepare for Ash Wednesday.

## **HOSPITALITY TO CHILDREN, YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL GROUP MEETS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 12-2.** Join Jason Cruz and Emily Shelton for lunch, music and activities. The group is open to all youth in grades 6-8. Come and bring a friend!

**HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT AT BCH CAMP FEBRUARY 3-5.** Join young people (grades 9-12) and adults from across the diocese for a weekend of games, song, discovery, and inspiration. Organized and led by the Diocesan Youth Council, the retreat is designed to give high school students a chance to get off the treadmill and get in touch with themselves, their peers, and their Loving Creator. The cost of the retreat is \$125, which means that the Diocese hopes for a minimum family contribution of \$40 but they and we are committed to every teen who wants to attend being able to attend. So, don't let the money get in the way. The retreat fills up quickly so please see Rev. Sarah ASAP!

**OASIS: FRIDAYS, FEBRUARY 10 & 24 6:30-9.** In February OASIS will continue conversations that began with youth from across our diocese at the Sr. High Retreat. We will also explore ways in which OASIS can support the Lynn Youth Pride Event. There is also some interest in a summer mission trip so bring your ideas! See Jason or Rev. Sarah with questions.

**BE YOU LGBTQ GROUP MEETS TUESDAYS 3:30-5:30.** The BE YOU team has begun planning for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lynn Youth Pride Event which will be held on June Saturday, June 3. We want to ensure that this year's event reaches out to more youth and more community organizations as we offer a safe space for the LGBTQ community. If you donated money or time last year and/or if you would like to donate this year please see Jason, Shanel Anderson or Rev. Sarah. June is only 5 months away!

**CHURCH SCHOOL STUDENTS PREPARE RULES OF LIFE IN FEBRUARY.** As adults create their Rules of Life on Thursday evenings, the children and youth will also create Rules of Life. Using curricula from Society of St. John the Evangelist and the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio students will learn how to deepen their relationships with self, God, others and the world. On Sunday, March 4 these Rules of Life will be presented to the congregation during worship. If you want to be part of this exciting month-long program please see Rev. Sarah.

**TRAVELING JESUS STILL ON THE MOVE.** The St. Stephen's Traveling Jesus continues to visit with parish families for a week of exciting adventures. Traveling Jesus will be ready for weekly visits until Palm Sunday so that he can be with the congregation during Holy Week. If you would like to spend a week with Jesus in your home please sign up in the Galahad Area or speak with Rev. Sarah.

**YOUNG ADULTS GATHER ON FEBRUARY 14.** YAs will gather for their monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 14 for a "Pal-Valentine" celebration.

**JOIN US ON ASH WEDNESDAY—MARCH 1**  
**EUCCHARIST AND THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES**  
**7:30AM NOON 7:00PM**  
**MAKE A RIGHT BEGINNING ON THE SEASON OF LENT**  
**PICK UP A TOKEN TO CARRY WITH YOU THROUGH LENT**

**LOOKING TOWARD LENT.** Again this year, we hope to offer by email, on our website, and on paper daily Lenten Reflections written by members of the parish. The clergy and other eager editors will encourage, collect, edit, scribe... whatever it takes to encourage you to offer a 100 word story of how God helps you meet a challenge, endure hard times, or overcome fear.

**DEEPENING COMMUNITY COMMITMENT**

**KIC MUSIC CONTINUES THROUGH THE SNOW AND RAIN.** KIC Music continues to chug along, despite the January slump that sometimes happens in school or after school programs for kids (and adults!). After a month of wet weather, colds & coughs, and no days off school, our kids are ready for the new things that February and March hold. They're looking forward to our first field trip of the year, musical guests, and their next mini-concert at the March family dinner. Students are learning how to play chords on the piano, and have begun to master 2- and 3-part pieces in drum ensemble. Stay tuned for your chance to hear them show off their skills in the months to come!

**KEEP OUR PANTRY SHELVES FULL.** In recent weeks the lines have been long at our Pantry. All contributions are welcome but canned tuna and chicken, beef stew, and spaghetti sauce with meat are always good choices. Also, we can always use volunteers on Friday afternoons to hand out food, share a book, give away clothes, or just show hospitality.

**JOIN THE TEAM AT MY BROTHER'S TABLE ON FEBRUARY 26.** St. Stephen's Table Team did a bang up job again in January. Whether prepping food, serving guests, or washing dishes, we work side by side resting on the hope that we are doing what Christ would have us do: love one another as Christ loves us. Join us February 26—or bring a dessert to share on the Last Sunday before Lent!

**ECCO IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE.** ECCO gathered more than 100 people at our Beloved Community meeting on January 8 and almost 150 at our Immigration training on January 19. People want to work together to make a difference and St. Stephen's is at the center of the action. Whether your concern is policing and violence in Lynn, policies and procedures at the Essex County House of Correction in Middleton, or criminal justice reform, your time and talent are needed. If you want to be part of creating "sanctuary churches" or organizing to establish Lynn as a "sanctuary city", lots of people are needed. If you are wondering how to get involved, talk with the clergy or the ECCO organizers or go to the ECCO website (ECCOaction).



	February 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<b>SUNDAYS</b> <b>8 &amp; 10am Worship in English</b> <b>10am Worship in Kiswahili</b>			<b>1</b> 6:30pm Bible Study	<b>2</b> 10:30am Pastoral Care & Healing Prayer Teams Noon Candlemas Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 6:00-8pm Rule of Life	<b>3</b> Senior High Retreat at BCH	<b>4</b> 8:30-2:30 DioMass Discernment Day Senior High Retreat at BCH	
<b>5</b> 10am Living Word Worship: Discipleship 12:30pm Women's Group Senior High Retreat at BCH	<b>6</b> 8pm AA	<b>7</b> 3:30-5:30pm Be You 4:15pm Tuesday with the Monks 6:30pm Knitters' Club 7pm NA	<b>8</b> 6:30pm Bible Study	<b>9</b> Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 6:00-8pm Rule of Life	<b>10</b> 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS	<b>11</b> 10am Choir Rehearsal	
<b>12</b> 11:45 Potluck Lunch <b>12:30pm Annual Meeting</b>	<b>13</b> 8pm AA	<b>14</b> 2pm Towers Communion 3:30-5:30pm Be You 6:30pm Knitters' Club 6:30-9pm YA Dinner 7pm NA	<b>15</b> 6:30pm Bible Study	<b>16</b> Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 6:00-8pm Rule of Life 7:30pm Beloved Community Team	<b>17</b> 3-4pm Food Pantry	<b>18</b> 8-1pm SSJE Workshop: <i>The Gift of Hope</i>	
<b>19</b> 10am African American Heritage Worship Service 12-2pm Middle School Group	<b>20</b> <b>PRESIDENTS DAY</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 8pm AA	<b>21</b> 3:30-5:30pm Be You 6:30pm Knitters' Club 7pm NA	<b>22</b> 6:30pm Bible Study	<b>23</b> Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 6:00-8pm Rule of Life	<b>24</b> 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS	<b>25</b> 10am Choir Rehearsal	
<b>26</b> 12:30pm Vestry Meeting 1-4pm My Brother's Table 4:30pm Mardi Gras celebration with St. James', Cambridge 6:30pm Burning of Palms	<b>27</b> 8pm AA	<b>28</b> <b>SHROVE TUESDAY</b> 3:30-5:30pm Be You 6:30pm Knitter's Club	<b>March 1</b> <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b> Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes: 7:30am, Noon, 7:00pm		<b>KIC Music</b> <b>Monday-Thursday</b> <b>2-6pm</b>	<b>OFFICE HOURS</b> <b>Monday – Friday</b> <b>9:00am – 3:00pm</b> 	