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Newsletter May 2015

Beware of God's Fire

In the New Testament, there are 82 references to fire. While some reference metal refining fires or cooking fires or warming fires, the overwhelming majority speak of judgment and destruction.

"Unquenchable fire," "hell of fire," "cut down and thrown into the fire," "fire to come down from heaven and consume them," "cast fire on the earth," "flaming fire inflicting vengeance," "fury of fire," "power of fire," "consuming fire," "set on fire by hell," "eat your flesh like fire," "punishment of eternal fire," "fire, mixed with blood," "fire pours from their mouth," "tormented with fire," "devour her flesh and burn her up with fire," "scorch people with fire," "lake of fire." The images are enough to send most Christians fleeing from the Bible and from God, who along with the heavenly hosts, seems to command the fire.

Despite all of these rather terrifying images of consuming, killing flames, Eastertide and Pentecost remind us that Jesus came to *"baptize us with the Holy Spirit and with fire."* On the Road to Emmaus, the disciples did not recognize Jesus as he walked and talked with them. But as he broke bread with them, their eyes were opened and: *"They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"* (Luke 24:30-32) And, as the fifty days of Easter come to a close at Pentecost, the Acts of the Apostles describes, *"They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."* (Acts 2:3-4)

God's holy fire burns and destroys; it refines and cleanses; and it inspires and transforms. But, make no mistake, God's fire burns, and it never is safe and easy. Moses is watching Jethro's flocks at Horeb and *"There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed."* And God said to Moses, *'The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'* But Moses said to God, *'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'* While the fire of God did not consume the bush, Moses' life was transformed in ways for which he felt unprepared and inadequate. Moses had confidence neither in his ability to lead the people of Israel nor in his capacity to confront Pharaoh.

The hearts of the disciples burned within them, the tongues of fire rested upon them filling them with God's Spirit, and they spoke in a multitude of languages so that all could learn of the mighty works of God in Jesus. As with Moses, God's holy fire did not consume the followers of Jesus; yet, it did transform them and set them on a missionary path in which they confronted the powers of this world and led people to freedom.

We, who live as if being Christian is a minimal or marginal commitment, need to open our eyes and hearts. God's holy fire will consume us or it will transform us-- but it will not leave us unchanged. This Pentecost let God set you on fire even if you feel unprepared or unworthy. The world is waiting, and God will be with you every step of the way.

Jane⁺

Dear Friends,

Have you ever noticed that on most Sundays we use the same pages in our Book of Common Prayer? For the celebration of Holy Eucharist the majority of the service stays within pages 355-365, except for the Prayers of the People and three of the four Eucharistic Prayers. If the BCP has 1001 pages it's obvious we use only a small portion of this unique book.

Looking through the BCP's Table Contents, you'll see a wide variety of prayers, services, as well as historical documents, special directions and time tables. Whether it's a service for ordination or the Solemn Collects for Good Friday or a Prayer for Rain, it's all included within the 1001 pages. One of my favorite sections to explore is An Outline of the Faith (Catechism) that begins on page 845. In the form of question and answer this section defines and/or explains the tenets of our faith as Episcopalians. The bible, the trinity, and the creeds are just some of the topics included in this section.

The topic that jumped out at me as I looked at our May calendar was the subsection on sacraments. The BCP defines sacrament as: ***outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.*** So sacraments are inner and external signs or symbols that serve as proof that God loves us unconditionally and without restraint. To paraphrase one of my favorite prayers, there is nothing we can do that will separate us from the love of God. Even though we may know this in our mind, the sacraments act as reminders for our heart. They are especially important during those times when life gets really hard or even feels impossible. These are often the times we begin to believe God is withholding his/her love from us because of what we have done or because of what we have left undone. The sacraments prove to us that God is incapable of withholding love.

During the month of May we have the opportunity to celebrate three of the seven sacraments: Confirmation, Holy Eucharist and Baptism. On Saturday, May 9, three youth and one adult from St. Stephen's will be confirmed by Bishop Alan Gates and Bishop Barbara Harris. Through special prayers and the laying on of hands these four individuals will re-affirm their faith in Jesus Christ. On Sunday, May 17, students in grades 1-3 will make their First Communion. Although all are always welcome to take communion, the students will come to their First Communion with a better understanding of this sacrament of bread and wine. Lastly on Sunday, May 24, we will baptize and welcome our newest members on the feast of Pentecost. Through the blessed water God will claim the newly baptized as his/her own children and give them a new life through the Holy Spirit.

As the Outline of Faith suggests, we believe that these are more than just rites of passage or place markers in our lives. They are not graduations or celebrations of our achievements. Rather they are distinct, multi-layered moments when God's love and grace is made abundantly visible in the world.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah".

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

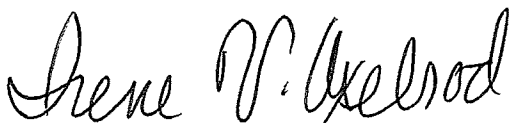
Prayer

What is prayer? One of the best definitions I have seen is “Prayer is talking to God out loud or in your thoughts.” We know that there are different kinds of prayers, depending on the situation. We might say a prayer of praise to God, confess sins, ask for something we need or pray for the needs of others. These might be prayers we learned as children or a prayer without words in times of trouble. We might ask another person to pray with us or for us. We come together on Sunday to unite in prayer and to worship as a community.

Recently, as many of you know, I received word that my nine year old grandson, Levi Whitcomb, was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. Surgery was done and 95% of the tumor was successfully removed after sixteen hours on the operating table. As I write, he is in intensive care at Children’s Hospital in Boston. We don’t know if he will be able to speak after the breathing tube is removed. A tracheotomy is scheduled. His name is in the bulletin and this is my personal request for prayers to continue, as we know only that this will be a long hard road to travel. We have felt the power of prayer as people from all over the United States have prayed for Levi.

We hope that he will make a full recovery- “pray for a miracle” is the phrase being used now. We are thankful beyond words for all the prayers and good wishes that have been expressed in the last few days. We have been asked to send cards to decorate the ICU space where Levi is. If you would like to send a card, the address is below, or you can give me a card and I will see that he gets it. Thank you.

Love and Peace



Contact information for Levi:

Levi Whitcomb
c/o Boston Children's Hospital,
300 Longwood Ave
7 South MSICU Bed Space 11
Boston, MA 02115

BEING GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR RESOURCES

ST. STEPHEN'S HEADS TO ST. ANNE'S LOWELL FOR CONFIRMATION ON MAY 9.

On Saturday, May 9 at 10:30am Bishop Alan Gates and Bishop Barbara Harris will confirm and receive new Episcopalians. Please join us in Lowell and keep our Confirmands-- Arden Collis-Puro, Paula Mione, Michaela Olabisi, and Kati Whitcomb-- in your prayers. On Sunday, May 3, we will present our Confirmands to the congregation. On Sunday, May 17, we will celebrate our sacramental life as Episcopalians, as we rejoice with our Confirmands and First Communion participants.

NORTH SHORE DEANERY MEETS MAY 19. On May 19 at 6:30 our Deanery Assembly will gather for a Potluck Supper, electing of Deanery leadership, and voting of Deanery grants.

APRIL 12 VESTRY SUMMARY. Treasurer Heather Collis Puro walked the Vestry through the budget explaining how we record and communicate income and expense. She also noted areas of current strength and struggle. Not surprisingly, pledge income is behind given our snowy winter, and snow plowing is almost 500% over budget. While the Vestry trusts that members will catch up on pledges, we discussed where we might cut the budget to find the \$8,000 needed to pay for plowing. The Vestry voted a 2-month (July- August) leave for Youth Minister Jason Cruz as RAW Art blesses him with a mini-sabbatical. April was busy in the building as we received a new copier, installed a new alarm system, and upgraded our electrical system. Vestry members discussed plans for the upcoming Soul Celebration and offered their support in a variety of ways.

1st QUARTER PLEDGE STATEMENTS COMING. All people who have pledged financial support for 2015 will receive pledge statements shortly. If you notice a discrepancy or want to increase or decrease your pledge, please call the parish office so that the treasurer's office can be in touch with you. And, if you have fallen behind, please catch up as soon as possible. Our budget depends on 100% pledge payment.

MANY THANKS TO OUR SOUL CELEBRATION TEAM. Many thanks to Soul Celebration Coordinator Deborah Potter, who persevered in leadership despite seven eye surgeries this winter. And great gratitude to everyone who cooked, served, cleaned, sang, and otherwise contributed to a fabulous Soul Celebration. Special thanks to Carolyn Hoy who designed and produced the Program Book. The event definitely provided Soul Food for body, mind, and spirit as we sang, prayed, ate, and heard words of inspiration and challenge from Rep. Byron Rushing. Please thank the individuals and patronize the businesses that supported our 2015 Soul Celebration. Many thanks to: Irene Axelrod, Beacon Communities, LLC, Barbara & Leo Boucher, Christ Church, Quincy, Clark Brothers Fuel, Marilyn & Rick Cloran, Rep. Brendan Crighton, Cuffe McGinn Funeral Home, Dan Stevens Electric, Bob Dixon, Joanne Droppers (St. Stephen's Fargo, ND), ECCO, Episcopal City Mission, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, EPOCA, Goodrich Funeral Home, Sally Gosselin, The Gould Family, Grant Haley, Klein Hornig, LLP, Lancelot Janitorial & Paper Products, Lynn Community Health Center, Lynn Home for Women, Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development, Dr. Stem Mahlatini, Lucinda McClain, MCAN, Mr. Specs Opticians, Peter Munkenbeck, Nadworny Funeral Home, Parker Funeral Home, Don & Beverly Phillips, Alexandra Pineros Shields, Tim & Debbie Potter, Vicky & Mark Provost, Pudgy's Towing, Rickenbacker Resources, Solimine Funeral Home, Con Squires & Bonnie Bishop, St. Stephen's KIC Percussion Ensemble, St. Stephen's Towers, St. Stephen's Vestry, Paul Stonkus, Ruthanne & Steve Switzer, Richard Vitali, PC, and Joyce Wallace.

WELCOME CHARLIE KNUTH BACK TO ST. STEPHEN'S ON MAY 10. While some may think that former Diocesan Intern Charlie Knuth is returning to help the Teens and YAs with the Mother's Day Breakfast, he's actually coming to St. Stephen's to bring us the Word of God, and to celebrate the end of his 2nd year at Yale Divinity School. This summer, Charlie returns to Utah to help his Diocese prepare to host the Episcopal General Convention. Charlie anticipates ordination in June 2016 and he wants to thank us for the part we played in his formation.

CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH—PENTECOST, MAY 24. On Pentecost we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and Christ's commissioning his followers empowered by the Spirit to spread the good news. We celebrate with **COMBINED WORSHIP IN KISWAHILI & ENGLISH; BAPTISMS**—Baptism Preparation Class held Monday, May 18 at 6:30pm; **BIRTHDAY GIFTS FOR THE CHURCH**—take a gift idea flame or dove from the post in the Galahad Area; **PEACE IN A MULTITUDE OF LANGUAGES**—let Rev. Jane or Rev. Sarah know if you can say "Peace be with you" in a language other than English; and **WEAR RED!**

NURTURING THE CONGREGATION

MOTHERS' DAY BRUNCH- MAY 10 8:45-9:45

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE MOTHERS!

At St. Stephen's we know,

It takes a village—and a whole lot of mothers—to raise a child

BRING YOUR MOM, YOUR NANA, OR SOMEONE WHO MOTHERS YOU

There's no charge but please sign up so that we have enough food!

Teens and friends just want a chance to show their gratitude!

REGISTER FOR BAPTISM NOW! On May 24 at 10:00am as we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, we will welcome new members into the household of God. If you are interested in baptism on May 24, talk with the clergy, complete a registration form, and join us for Baptism Preparation on Monday, May 18 at 6:30.

ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN! Many thanks to everyone who contributed visible and invisible hands and hearts to our observance of Holy Week and celebration of Easter. While life and liturgies did not always happen exactly as we planned, God surely was in the midst of all we did. So to those who cleaned and decorated, sang, read, and acolyted, prepared and printed bulletins and inserts, provided a place of welcome, and gathered for worship—**THANK YOU!**

BIBLE STUDY WALKS WITH JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK. Wednesday Evening Bible Study is reading the Gospel of Mark and it's never too late to join the laughter, learning, and enlightenment. Written about 65ce, or 30 years after the resurrection, Mark provides the first written narrative of Jesus' life and teaching. Join us every Wednesday at 6:30 or as often as you can.

BELOVED COMMUNITY TEAM WANTS TO HEAR YOUR STORIES! After months of training with the Leadership Development Initiative the Beloved Community Team is ready to hear your stories about how differences, such as race and class, have affected your life. Sharing these stories is the first step to deepening our relationships as members of the St. Stephen's community. The BCT will be reaching out to all parishioners to set up 1:1 meetings but please feel free to reach out to Liz Fortes or Rev. Sarah to schedule a time!

KISWAHILI DESK. This year the St. Stephen's Kiswahili congregation is hosting the Annual Anglican music festivals and competitions that will take place at Lynn Classical High School on Sunday June 28. The festivities begin at 3:00pm. We invite all St. Stephen's members to come and share in the celebration with the Kiswahili congregation as we compete with other five Anglican churches from the New England region. There is no admission charge at the door and traditional Kenyan food will be served. There will be several music categories to compete in the Festival including traditional African songs and dances as well as church songs. One category is a dance competition for the youth brigade ranging from 12 years up to 21 years of age. Their traditional dance will use an English song. We invite all St. Stephen young people to join us for intensive rehearsals every Sunday afternoon in Lawrence Hall. We will welcome the best dancing talent and skills; your contribution will be highly regarded. For all questions regarding the Festival, please call Emily Njuguna 7816326616 or Rev. Joseph.

TEND TO YOUR SPIRIT AT THE SSJE MONASTERY. On Tuesday, May 5 at 4:15 cars will leave St. Stephen's to join the SSJE monks for worship and supper. All are welcome to come with the group or meet us at 980 Memorial Drive in Cambridge. In addition, the monks invite us to participate in a workshop on Saturday, May 30 led by Br. Curtis Almquist on "Living Listening." Cars will leave the church at 7:45 and return about 1:30. Please sign up for both events.

HEALING PRAYER AND PASTORAL CARE TEAMS MEET MAY 7 AT 10:30. We'll be deciding on a new book to read, and discussing how praying for healing shapes our lives. We'll also be getting ourselves organized for renewed altar flower delivery now that Lent has passed.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP ROCKS THE RAFTERS ON 3RD SUNDAYS AT 6:30. Last month in Contemporary Worship we reflected on the unexpected ways God meets us in life. Isaac Everett of *The Crossing* shared a creative meditation on the story from Acts of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Isaac then invited us to have paired conversations on a time when we've encountered someone different from ourselves and found we needed to change our assumptions about that person. Afterwards we circled up for prayer and Rev. Jane sprinkled us with holy water as we recalled how God graciously accepted a stranger in the waters of baptism so long ago and God's continuing embrace of all people, no matter who they are, today. Of course we also got to raise our voices in praise as we were led in worship by Juliana and her Berklee band. Following the service, folks hung around to enjoy some tasty homemade food and good conversation. **Mark your calendars for our next service on Sunday, May 17th, at 6:30! Hazel Johnson will join us to share a message of hope and courage.**

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE MAY 24. May 24 may be Pentecost but it's also Memorial Day Weekend. In prayer, we'll remember those service men and women who died while serving in the armed forces. Our 10:00am worship will conclude in the Garth with a special tribute to Lt. Col. Charles Redington Mudge who died at the Battle of Gettysburg. Please check the list posted in the Galahad Area to make sure it includes all those who died while serving in the military. On Sunday, November 8, we will remember and give thanks for all veterans.

HOSPITALITY TO CHILDREN, YOUTH, & YOUNG ADULTS

CHURCH SCHOOL CONTINUES. As we continue to celebrate the joy of Easter, it's a great time to re-engage or engage church school. **Church School Teachers will meet on May 31 at 9 am to review this past year and begin to think about next year.** Kendra Zimiroski offers loving care to

our youngest members in the Nursery on Sunday mornings. Keri Whitcomb continues to teach our Pre-K-K class. 1st-3rd graders will meet with Charlotte Breckenridge for Communion instruction through First Communion on Sunday, May 17th. 4th-7th graders will enjoy the leadership of Paul Whitcomb and Dan Bell. The Confirmation Class will continue with Irene Axelrod after Confirmation as they listen to church members tell their faith stories. And Neil O'Donnell will engage deep questions of faith and life with our high schoolers. **On June 7 at 10:00am, our graduating Seniors will preach as we celebrate our Church School staff and students, honor our Seniors, and award scholarships for Higher Education.**

FIRST COMMUNION ON MAY 17TH. While the Episcopal Church welcomes all at the Lord's Table, First Communion celebrates the inclusion of children in the sacrament and provides them with Communion instruction. First Communion preparation is underway with Charlotte Breckenridge exploring the "Holy Mysteries" with our 1st-3rd graders; older children are welcome to attend if they have not yet made their First Communion. Classes will meet each Sunday in May at 10:00am as well as on Saturday, May 2 from 9:00 to noon. The Sacramental Retreat on May 2 will provide our First Communion participants a chance to learn, bake, and play with our teen Confirmation Class as they all gain a deeper understanding of the sacramental life of the Episcopal Church. When we celebrate First Communion on May 17, we also will celebrate our May 9 confirmands.

KIC (KIDS IN COMMUNITY) IS COMING!

COME TO KIC. Registration forms for KIC Summer Camp will be available in the office and Galahad area starting May 1. Any child who has completed 1st-5th grade is eligible for camp. KIC starts on July 6th, and runs for four weeks, Monday-Friday, from 8:30-2:00. Campers can look forward to days filled with art, music, games, field trips, and more!

WORK AT KIC. Applications for new and returning KIC mentors are due May 1st, but late applications *may* be considered if they are submitted by mid-May. Applicants must currently be in 9th grade or above. Successful mentors are usually responsible, caring, energetic youth who are interested in working with children. Applications are still available in the office and Galahad areas. Both new and returning prospective mentors should plan to fill out an application and complete an interview. Please contact Audrey Gutfreund, KIC Director, at 617-435-3325 with questions.

VOLUNTEER AT KIC. Camp cannot run without a dedicated group of adult volunteers. Please consider helping out by reading with children, assisting with gardening, or doing something behind the scenes like organizing supplies or packing lunches. Please get in touch with Audrey Gutfreund, KIC Director, at 617-4353325 or audrey.gutfreund@gmail.com if you have questions or you're interested in volunteering.

BCH IS FILLING FAST AND REGISTRATION FORMS ARE OVERDUE! BCH Camp Director Alessia Doss was with us on Sunday, April 19 to collect all Camp registration forms. While some weeks are almost full, there is still time to get registered and go to Camp. Forms are available at church and online. Camp for 4th-10th graders costs \$600 per week; and there are some exciting 2-week sessions this year. The Camp asks each family to pay what you can BUT scholarships are available. 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 the \$200, a letter explaining "why" needs to accompany the clergy signed camp scholarship form. Camp transforms the lives of young people and St. Stephen's and the BCH leadership remain committed to making Camp accessible to all children. If you have questions, speak with Rev. Jane or Rev. Sarah.

KIDS' CHOIR IS GAINING MEMBERS AND MOMENTUM. Don't wait until next year to join the St. Stephen's Kids' Choir. Come to the Kids' Choir Rehearsal and Pizza Party on Saturday, May 2 from noon to 2:00. Children in 1st through 8th grades are encouraged to learn a lot about music and God as they sing with the St. Stephen's Kids' Choir. Come to the Pizza Party on May 2 at noon and then stay for rehearsal on May 16 at noon and singing in worship at 10:00am on May 17. For more information, contact Juliana Davis at 617-834-5367.

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD AT MAY FAMILY DINNER! Come enjoy the spring weather at Family Dinner on Sunday, May 17th, from 4:30-6:30 pm, when we will plant mini-vegetable gardens and produce Food Sculptures for supper. We'll also have some time to relax and play outside. As always, all ages are welcome, especially those with children. We hope you can join us!

COME HEAR KIC AFTER SCHOOL MUSIC PERFORM! The KIC After School Music participants have been working hard on drumming and singing techniques, and they are excited to show off their hard work in a concert on Sunday, June 7 at 3:30 pm in Lawrence Hall. Come see them make music with everything from their voices to conga drums, from their feet to boxes of tic tacs. The performance will be followed by an ice cream social.

ACOLYTE TRAINING AND CELEBRATION. Current and new acolytes are expected to attend a training refresher after 10:00am worship on May 17. This will be our last training with long-time captains Zach Zimiroski and Erik Whitcomb. On Sunday, May 31, we will celebrate the end of the school year with a trip to Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire. Youth who will be in 6th to 12th grades next year are encouraged to come to the May 17 training to begin to learn about serving as an acolyte. Any high school acolytes who are interested in attending the National Acolyte Festival in October need to stay involved through the summer because only active acolytes are eligible for our triennial trips to DC and the National Cathedral.

YOUNGER TEENS LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE. On Sunday, May 24 our Middle School Group will help prepare and serve lunch at *My Brother's Table*. And, of course, 9th and 10th graders should be thinking about signing up for the Diocesan Youth Leadership Academy, which launches in July for 2015-2016.

OASIS UPDATE. OASIS continues to gather on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month (May 8 & 22). May 8 teens will be making cool stuff and prepping for the Mothers' Day Breakfast on May 10. On May 22, don't miss Paulina Cruz's introduction to the Oasis Film Institute. In the months ahead, teens will be learning skills, building relationships, and raising money to support the Oasis Film Institute and Martha's Vineyard Youth Adventure this August.

OASIS FILM INSTITUTE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. The OASIS FILM INSTITUTE is a week-long program that provides high school students the opportunity to create a short film that showcases their own stories and experiences. This year the program will run August 3-7, 9am-4:30pm, plus half-day trainings on June 12 and July 26. Participants will have the opportunity to write powerful public narratives as well as to receive hands on coaching in film making. **On Friday, May 22 6:30-9, Paulina Cruz (OFI Director) will offer a short presentation for those interested in learning more about the program.** Applications will be available in mid May and are due Sunday, June 7th. A small stipend is paid to participants and admission is selective. Please see Rev. Sarah with any questions.

ST. STEPHEN'S SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 31. Thanks to the generosity of past and present parishioners, each year St. Stephen's awards about \$3,000 in scholarships for higher education. 2015 applications are now available from the church and on-line. Students may receive St. Stephen's scholarships up to four times but must apply each year. Recipients are expected to be present on Church School Graduation Sunday on June 7 when scholarship awards will be made.

BE YOU OFF AND RUNNING. On April 14th, teens and adults enjoyed freshly made pizza provided by Shanel Anderson and talked about their hopes for BE YOU. The students described their experience in Lynn's high schools-- when they've felt supported or attacked as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Adult mentors offered words of encouragement and expressed their conviction that God loves and welcomes all. **BE YOU meets on Tuesdays, 3:30-5:30.** *All high schoolers, regardless of sexual and/or gender identity, are welcome to join!* And, mark your calendars: BE YOU is going to the 21st Massachusetts Youth Pride Festival on May 16th at Boston City Hall Plaza!

YOUNG ADULT (YA) HAPPENINGS. On April 14, YAs enjoyed each other's company as they made and ate breakfast burritos. After checking in, they discussed the power of names, labels, and stereotypes. On the 16th, a carful headed into Boston to join *The Crossing* community for worship. In addition to experiencing emergent Episcopal worship, they got to hear Dan Bell reflect on what it means to bear witness to the Resurrection in our lives. After worship, they stuck around for a screening and discussion of *American Denial*, a PBS documentary exploring the unconscious political and moral landscape informing contemporary racism in America. **Our next YA event is May 12th at 6:30 when we will join the ECCO community in claiming our power to make a positive difference in our community! And mark your calendars for our start-of-summer/ Dan send-off cookout on June 16th!**

DEEPENING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

LOTS OF WAYS TO HELP FIGHT HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITY. Project Bread's Walk for Hunger is Sunday, May 3—write a check to support the Walk. The Mail Carriers' Food Drive is Saturday, May 9—put out non-perishables for your mail carrier and let Harry Jackson or Neil O'Donnell know if you can help pick up food at Lynn Ladder on Saturday or sort food during the week. Tuesday, May 12 at 9:30am, St. Stephen's will host the Lynn Hunger Network monthly meeting; St. Stephen's people are encouraged to come to learn about the need in our community and the resources available. On Sunday, May 24, we serve lunch at 1pm at My Brother's Table. Even if you can't help us serve, please contribute desserts we can share with the guests. And finally, don't forget our Friday Food Pantry! We need people to provide hospitality and support our new literacy program as well as to pack and distribute bags of groceries. For information, talk with Sally Gosselin.

ECCO'S ON THE MOVE. Our Soul Celebration prepared us perfectly for ECCO's Building Beloved Community gathering on April 27. In worship, we commissioned our St. Stephen's Beloved Community Team. At the Soul Food Dinner, Rep. Byron Rushing and Cassandra Bensahih from EPOCA spoke about our need to create jobs not jails. EPOCA worked with legislators to craft the Justice Reinvestment Act and Rep. Rushing is a co-sponsor of the bill. Monday evening at the ECCO Building Beloved Community event, we committed ourselves to gathering stories, collecting data, and connecting with potential partners to work for creating jobs not jails and strengthening our community police partnership. To get involved or to learn more, talk with the Clergy or St. Stephen's Beloved Community and ECCO leaders. **And join us on Tuesday, May 12 at 7:00 for the ECCO Issues Assembly. God has work for us to do!**

May 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
8&10am Worship in English 10am Worship in Kiswahili	Office Hours Monday – Friday 9am – 3pm				1	2 9am-noon First Communion & Confirmation Retreat 10am Choir Rehearsal Noon-2pm Kids' Choir Rehearsal & Pizza Party
3 Walk for Hunger Presentation of Confirmation Candidates	4 2:00-6:00pm KIC Afterschool Music Program 6:30-8pm Beloved Community Team Meeting 8pm AA	5 3:30-5:30pm Be You 4:15pm Tuesday with the Monks 7pm NA	6 6:30pm Bible Study	7 10:30am Healing Prayer & Pastoral Care Teams Mtg. Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk	8 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS	9 Mail Carriers' Food Drive 10am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Confirmation @ St. Anne's, Lowell with Bishop Gates
10 8&10am Charlie Knuth, Guest Preacher 8:45-9:45am Mother's Day Brunch	11 2:00-6:00pm KIC Afterschool Music Program 8pm AA	12 3:30-5:30pm Be You 6:30pm YA Dinner 7pm NA 7pm ECCO Issues Assembly	13 6:30pm Bible Study	14 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk	15 3-4pm Food Pantry	16 10am Choir Rehearsal 11am Boston Youth Pride Day Noon-2pm Kids' Choir Rehearsal
17 First Communion and Confirmation Celebration Noon - Acolyte Training Refresher 12:30pm Vestry Meeting 4:30pm Family Dinner 6:30pm Contemporary Worship	18 2:00-6:00pm KIC Afterschool Music Program 6:30-8pm Baptism Preparation Class 8pm AA	19 3:30-5:30pm Be You 6pm NS Deanery Assembly 7pm NA	20 6:30pm Bible Study	21 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk	22 3-4pm Food Pantry 6:30-9pm OASIS: OFI Presentation by Paulina Cruz	23 10am Choir Rehearsal
24 PENTECOST 10am Combined English-Kiswahili Worship with Baptism Post 10am Mudge Memorial Service 1-4pm My Brother's Table	25 2:00-6:00pm KIC Afterschool Music Program 8pm AA	26 2pm Service of Remembrance, St. Stephen's Towers 7pm NA	27 6:30pm Bible Study	28 Noon Eucharist & Healing Prayers 1pm Tea & Talk 7-9pm LDI @ Grace Church, Salem	29 3-4pm Food Pantry	30 8am-1pm "Living Listening", Workshop with Br. Curtis Almquist, SSJE at Monastery
31 Noon-8pm Acolyte Celebration @ Canobie Lake Scholarship Applications Due						