



NEWSLETTER

Summer, 2020

MEET OUR NEW PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

On Tuesday, July 7, 2020, with unanimous vestry affirmation, The Reverend Gregory Perez was officially called by Bishop Alan Gates to serve as Priest-in-Charge of St. Stephen's beginning in September.



The Rev. Gregory Gerard Perez, a native Texan, attended college seminary at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in Philosophy from the College of Santa Fe. He has a Master of Divinity degree from St. Meinrad School of Theology, a seminary operated by the Benedictine Monks of St. Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest on July 19, 1986 and worked in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin until December of 1998. Greg was received into the Anglican Communion on November 3, 2000, and moved to New Jersey in the summer of 2003, where he first worked as the Executive Director of the AIDS Resource Center, a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark. On December 15, 2005, The Rt. Reverend John Croneberger received his Holy Orders into the Episcopal Church/Anglican Communion and his first cure as an Episcopal priest was to serve as Assisting Priest of Grace Church Van Vorst in Jersey City.

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On March 1, 2007, Greg was hired as the Director of Staff and Human Resources for the Windmill Alliance, Inc, a non-profit ministry of Trinity Parish in Bergen Point, where he also served as an Associate Priest. In 2009, Greg became Priest in Charge of Trinity and he also assumed the position of President and CEO of the Windmill Alliance, Inc. In November 2011, Rev. Perez became the Rector of Trinity Parish in Bergen Point.

Greg lives with his husband of 21 years, Douglas Flores, and they enjoy the company of their two furry animal-companions, Sweet Pea and Charlie.

WELCOME, REV. GREG!

Our new Priest-in-Charge, The Reverend Gregory Perez, will be arriving in the area from the Diocese of Newark in August with his spouse Douglas and their two dogs to settle their new home. Rev. Greg's first Sunday will be Homecoming Sunday, on September 20, 2020, though he will be in the office the week preceding, getting settled.

VESTRY TO FORM A TRANSITION COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Transition Committee is to work with Rev. Greg to help get him acquainted with the Lynn community and our parish traditions. The committee will be in place for approximately one year, meeting more frequently early in Greg's arrival but will lessen as Greg and his family becomes acclimated to our community. The vestry is seeking individuals from the parish with diverse knowledge of the city as well as from involvement in parish life activities. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please email or call the parish office to let the wardens know.

FROM THE INTERIM PRIEST

Bishop Gayle Harris recently wrote a reflection on John the Baptist. She noted that he was called to a ministry that would, by design, result in John making way and becoming "diminished by the rise of his younger cousin."¹ Not to compare myself to John the Baptist, or the new Priest-in-Charge as Jesus, I understand the role of becoming diminished. As an interim, I have chosen to be temporary; I would not become your settled Rector. Never-the-less, I have built an incredible fondness for you, the people of St. Stephen's. I have been challenged by the dynamism of the parish, the insistence on social justice as well as the complicated realities of being the most diverse parish I have ever had the pleasure of being a part. You have challenged me, and I have had to grow and change.

¹ <https://www.diomass.org/news/reflections/prepare-way-day-june-26-pastoral-reflection-bishop-harris>

In my time at St. Stephen's, I have moved deeper into the heart of Jesus. This has happened in the little events, the one-on-one talks about the most important things in your lives. It has also happened in the big events, no matter how chaotic they may appear. My first week at St. Stephen's included the Harvest Fair. I was introduced to the many different things going on here as well as the invitation to be Christ body in this world.

It is now time for me to get my things in order and say goodbye so you can enthusiastically welcome the Rev. Gregory Perez as your Priest-in-Charge. My last day here will be on Sunday August 16th. (See below about our physically distancing bring your own Picnic, gathering at noon on the 16th.) I will do my best to reach out to as many of you as I can. However, I also invite you to contact me: 978-394-3159 or tbarrington@ststephenslynn.org. I will be available in early September to help orient and support Rev. Greg. Beyond that I will have to remove myself from the day-to-day life of the parish. My plans are to seek out another interim position in Northeastern Massachusetts.

My role at St. Stephen's will diminish but your place in my heart will not. May we rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit that has brought us together as well as in God's continue grace and love as it is lived out at St. Stephen's.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Rev. Tom

THANK YOU, REV. TOM!

Sunday, August 16th will be Rev. Tom's last Sunday with us. Tom came to us in November 2017 to serve with us as our Interim Priest while the parish looked for a permanent priest. Now that we have a Priest-in-Charge arriving in September, it is time for us to thank Tom for being with us for over two and half years. Since we cannot gather for in-person worship yet, after the 10AM Zoom worship service, at noon, if you are healthy and feel safe, we invite you to come to the church side yard, outside the Davidson Open Doorway for **A PHYSICAL DISTANCING PICNIC**. Due to regulations, we cannot share or serve food, so pack your own lunch, bring a blanket or chairs, do remember your face masks, and join us in saying thank you to Tom. We are wishing him Godspeed with the next parish he will serve during their transition process. Should it be raining that day, we will gather in our cars in the parking lot. Face masks must be worn (except while consuming your food) and social distancing must be practiced. If you are unable to come to the picnic, there will be time at the end of Zoom worship to talk with Tom.

REOPENING THE PARISH

Amid Diocesan Guidelines and phased reopening in the Commonwealth, the parish has a Reopening Committee that is carefully reviewing all the regulations and working to address all areas of concern with appropriate protocols. Once the plan is completed, it will need to be submitted to the vestry and then to our diocese for approval. The Reopening Committee is also working with the Communications and Technology Committee to provide interactive worship between those worshipping in church with those worshipping on-line. The parish will be kept informed as plans get developed and approved.

DONATIONS BEING SOUGHT

Among requirements including ventilation and traffic flow in the building, we need to have hand sanitizing stations and disposable face masks on hand to reopen the church building. To help defray these expenses to the parish budget, we are asking for donations of hand sanitizer and unopened packages of disposable face masks. If you can donate, please contact the parish office before dropping them off at the church, as we need to make sure that someone will be there to receive them. Thank you!

PLEDGE STATEMENTS

Pledge statements went out this week to all pledging members reflecting contributions through June 30, 2020. You should have received an email notification that your statement is posted on Realm. For members who have not listed an email address with their Realm accounts, paper statements when out through U.S. Mail. The vestry has been committed to keeping our clergy, staff and non-negotiable bills paid during this closure. As we work to reopen for in-person worship, your pledge can be mailed to the church or paid on-line through Realm. The Vestry thanks you for your support.

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE.

On July 8, 2020, our office manager, Brandi Walker, submitted her resignation to pursue other opportunities. She is grateful for the warm welcome you have given her during nearly the two years she worked with the parish. Brandi will miss all of you and said that she will still be in Lynn and will surely see St. Stephen's folks around town or when she comes to visit. In the meantime, the parish office is unstaffed. The vestry officers are taking care of many of the routine office manager duties. We ask for your patience should you experience a slight delay in a return phone call or response to an email. Our parish email is being checked daily and phone messages are retrieved by Rev. Tom. As always, should there be a pastoral emergency, Rev. Tom can be contacted at the parish office at 781-599-4220 or on his cell phone at 978-394-3159.

FOOD PANTRY NEWS

We are excited that Joyce Wallace and Pam Alleyne have agreed to be co-directors of the Food Pantry. This is also to say that they are going to need everyone to help. The Food Pantry has seen the number of clients we serve rise from about 85 households to over 200 households at the height of the Coronavirus closures. This has been a real strain, yet Pam, Joyce and all the other volunteers have kept the Pantry open so everybody who comes gets a bag of food. Fortunately, the demand had abated to 140-160 households per Friday. Most of the food has come from the Greater Boston Food Bank but we have also appreciated donations from individuals and organizations.

The Pantry could use some new volunteers to help fill and distribute the bags. We have been following strict protocols to keep all our volunteers and clients safe. Masks, hand washing, and physical distancing are mandatory. If you can help, please call the Office at 781-599-4220. We distribute food every Fridays from 2 – 4 PM, except the first Friday of the month. We always need extra help unloading the truck on the second Friday around 11 AM and on the third Thursday around 9:30 AM. We set up and fill the bags on either Thursday or Friday at 11 AM.



Photo by Tom Barrington

VESTRY APPOINTS A TREASURER AND ASSISTANT TREASURER

At its June vestry meeting, the vestry appointed Ms. Virginia Fuller to serve as the parish treasurer until the next Annual Meeting. Ginny is no stranger to parish finances. She has been an active member of the Finance Committee for several years, and served as Treasurer in the early 1990's.

The treasurer is elected each year at the Annual Meeting and has seat, voice, and vote at vestry meetings. Since no one ran for this position, filling the vacancy fell upon the current vestry.

Also, at the same meeting, the vestry also appointed Mrs. Kendra Zimiroski as the Assistant Treasurer. Kendra also has a long tenure working in the treasurer's office counting financial donations and preparing bank deposits. The Assistant Treasurer is a vestry appointed position and has a seat and voice at vestry meetings but no vote.

We thank Heather Collis-Puro for her years of service as Treasurer. We also thank her for all of the help she has been giving the new Treasurer.

SUNDAY WORSHIP, 10:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/86093922921>

Phone in for audio only dial 1-929-205-6099 — Meeting ID: 860 9392 2921



Photo by Ruthanne Switzer

Recording of Our Sunday services can be found on our website <https://www.ststephenslynn.org/> and on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ststephenslynn>