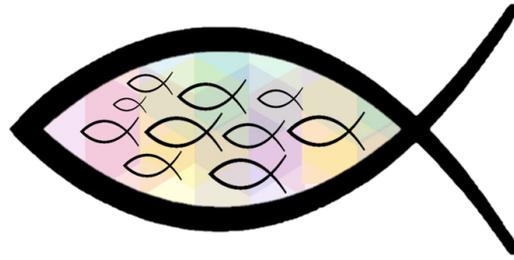


The First Order

St. Stephen's Parish

Ph 413.448.8276 // Fx 413.442.5374 // mail@ststephenspittsfield.org // www.ststephenspittsfield.org

AUGUST 2019



Stronger Together

What an adventure we're on, here at St. Stephen's! Consider just a sample of what we've done *together* since the start of 2019:

- Bid farewell to our Rector of 5+ years with a gala celebration
- Housed the *Berkshire Immigrant Center*, supporting the organization's vital work
- Helped anchor the ecumenical support that sustains *Berkshire Interfaith Organizing*
- Served 2,500+ meals via *St. Stephen's Table*
- Funded and facilitated 100+ loads of laundry via *Laundry Love*
- Hosted 250+ community meetings in our building, supporting the good work of A.A. and N.A.
- Held 75+ worship services at 67 East Street and out in the community

How did these things happen? First, let's consider what St. Stephen's has NOT done:

- No uber-wealthy benefactor
- No direct government support
- No corporate sponsorships
- No detailed business plan vetted by seasoned venture capitalists
- No viral Kickstarter campaign

So we return to the original question: How *did* these things happen?

And of course, the answer is: *you* - you and your fellow parishioners.



Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For indeed that's all who ever have.

– Margaret Mead

Together we provided the time, the treasure, and the talent to make 67 East Street a hub of community service, a vibrant center of worship, and truly the heart and hands of Christ. Please take a moment to recall your personal contribution to these recent efforts. As Jesus assured us in the parable of the widow's mite – every offering, when given with a full heart, makes a difference.

Every offering.

With deep gratitude,
Your Stewardship Team
Valerie Anderson, Chair
Leah Luczynski, Parish Treasurer
Al Symonds
Craig Reynolds

PS Are you saving the dates of Saturday, October 5 and Sunday, October 27? We don't want you to miss our Harvest Dinner (October 5) or the gathering we're planning after church on October 27!

BIO News

Paula Morey

Our 4th Annual House Party was held on June 29th at our "Home in the Berkshires." Please see Dondei Dean's account of this event, along with pictures, in the July BIO Newsletter. A copy is on the bulletin board in the back hall of the church and can be found on BIO's website.

The end of June also marked the end of a four-year reign for organizer, Jeff Lowenstein. Jeff is moving on to work in a management position at BCAC. He will also remain involved with BIO as a BIO Community Leader.

Racial Justice through Education Work

At our Annual convention in February, Superintendent Jason McCandless of the Pittsfield Public Schools, committed to reintroducing Black Studies and Intercultural Studies in the 2019-2020 school year. This effort is happening through the work of BIO leaders, Wed Gadson and Mabel Hamilton, with the support of Mayor Linda Tyer and other community leaders. A meeting with Supt. McCandless will be held on Tuesday, August 13th, at 6:00 p.m., at Price Memorial Church, 163 Linden Street, Pittsfield. Mark your calendars and join the conversation if this issue is of interest to you.

Related to this important work, a Racial Justice Alliance (NAACP, BRIDGE, and BIO) was formed. A Charter, or list of agreements, was presented and approved at the July BIO Executive Council meeting.

3rd Thursday

Check out BIO's table at the next 3rd Thursday event in downtown Pittsfield.

Laundry Love

This worthy endeavor is in need of funds – if you want some place to donate a dollar or two, this might be a good choice! Thanks!

Upcoming...

The 4th Annual BIO Micah Celebration will be held on Sunday, October 27th, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. (doors open at 3:30) - The Stationery Factory, 63 Flansburg Avenue, Dalton. This year's event will honor exceptional leaders in our member groups living up to the call of the Prophet Micah to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." Ad sales have begun, so ... if you have or know of a business who would be interested in purchasing an ad for the Micah program book, please contact Paula Morey, Marcie Nevin or Susan Wojtasik. This is BIO's biggest fundraiser of the year and your opportunity to offer your support. Tickets for the event will go on sale soon. Be sure to reserve yours. More information will be forthcoming.

The Vestry is seeking volunteers for the both the Parish Profile and Priest Search Committees.

Profile Committee – Six to eight persons who will work with The Rev. Dr. Richard Simpson, Canon to the Ordinary, to interpret the Congregational Assessment Tool and offer a variety of parish listening events toward the goal of telling the parish's story. One vestry member will serve as liaison to this group.

Search Committee – Eight to ten persons who will assess the knowledge, ability and skills of the candidates. The vestry is required to give careful consideration to the balance of the committee and is responsible for appointing the committee chair. One vestry member will be appointed to serve as liaison and link between the Search Committee and the Vestry.

Parish members are invited to submit their names and other parishioners' names to the Vestry for consideration. It is important to keep in mind that in accordance with the canons of the church, only the Vestry can issue a call to these committees and then only with the approval of the Bishop.

In the Body of Christ, no one member possesses all the gifts. We need one another. Likewise, no one committee member will have all the desired characteristics, but together we can discern the will of God for the community.

A Send-Off to Remember, and Heartfelt

Thanks!

April 28th may not seem all that recent to any of us, but I have to admit that the first several weeks of "retirement" for me were such a blur that the June newsletter arrived in my mailbox before I had a chance to finish my thank you to you all. As it is, I'll be grateful to get it in the July issue!

My friends.

I can not even **start** to say how deeply touched I was by the goodbye event on my last Sunday, and how fitting it was to wrap up all our time together in that glow of Easter. After having worshipped together in those most tender days of the church year, coming together to celebrate my 30 years of ordained ministry, give thanks for our time together, and say our goodbyes seemed all of a piece.

The outrageously apt choir anthem, "Crexit," was really just a hint of the fun to come. Thank you first, foremost, and beyond words to Chris Plankey, clearly a **party mastermind!** I am certain that he and Nikki worked countless hours conceiving of the facets of the event, lining up participants, selecting music ("Love Shack!" LOL!), gathering photos, decorating, designing table favors and cards, and on and on and on. Nothing is more labor-intensive than making an event seem "effortless." Thank you Chris and Nikki, and thank you to the Vestry who supported such a wonderful celebration.

I am grateful to the many folks who shared memories, stories, and songs... and even a quilted stole. I was as overwhelmed as I've ever been, and I will always treasure your handwritten notes, "advice" cards, and lyrics.

A big thank you goes to Dan Moon and Joan Evans, and the kitchen crew who kept everything flowing. St. Stephen's knows how to feed people, and clearly shared meals are the very heart of what we do best.

I am certain you are enjoying your summer

season, and the great lineup of clergy who are celebrating with you. Tom and I are enjoying Sunday mornings "off" for a little bit, though I'm looking forward to some supply Sundays myself. I am also working in Registration at the Norris Cotton Cancer Center, at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. I am glad to have the opportunity to "give back" a little bit, after having felt so well cared for during my own cancer journey.

I wish for you each and all the feeling I have had in this past month, as I have felt my ministry "at the Table" bubble into the World, weaving the presence of the Divine through relationships and meals, silences and conversations, reminding me that God's love is begging to be shared over, beyond and through all our human boundaries. As one of the anthems on my last Sunday said:

*All our meals and all our living,
Make as sacraments to Thee
That by caring, helping, giving,
We may true disciples be.
Alleluia. Alleluia.*

May the next chapters in our lives find us true.
True to the Spirit of generosity and inclusivity that
is our birthright in Christ.
True to the God whose very nature is Making New.
May God bless and keep you, always.

love,
Cricket

August

Happy Birthday:

- 2 Nora Discoe (10), Erin Sullivan
- 3 Juelz A. J. Dowling-Black (3)
- 4 Maya Kee (11), Owen McNeil (16)
- 5 Alex Currie (17)
- 6 Shelby Reynolds
- 7 Elizabeth Oakes
- 8 Joe White
- 9 Donald Lussier, Susan Meckes,
Bill Morey, Dylan Stetz (13)
- 10 Susan Wojtasik
- 11 Gloria DiGrigoli (2)
- 12 Alex Morin (17), Sarah Morrison
(a milestone!)
- 15 Alayna Haviland (5)
- 16 Francis Demary
- 17 Genevieve Greene (5)
- 18 Virginia Fletcher, Nathan Gillman (15)
- 19 Noelle Carys Bodenstab (9)
- 20 John Pieloch
- 21 Diana Ethier
- 22 Sara-Louise Oakes (13)
- 23 Ralph Nightingale
- 24 Jossiah Malese Hanger-Brown (14),
Jeanette Roosevelt (100 years young!!)
- 27 Robertine Morris (91 years young!)
- 28 Jacob Russell DiGrigoli (8)
- 30 Claudia Austin Curry
- 31 Harriet Cuyler (a milestone!), Joshua
Donovan II (19), Krista Harrington,
Conner Stetz (15)

Happy Anniversary:

- 6 Diane Forsyth and Bill Frazier (2011)
- 8 Angela and Dan Moon (1992)
- 19 Michele and Peter Rousseau (1977)
Doreen and William Sosa (2000)
- 24 Wendy and Mike Coakley (1996)
- 25 Jennifer Gregg and Derek Bodenstab
(2007)
- 26 Dawn and George Mathes (1978)
- 28 Sara and John Garinther (2004)
- 30 Geraldine and John Crane (1958)



*He spoke a message of peace
and taught us to live as
brothers. His message took
form in the vision of our fathers
as they fashioned a nation
where people might live as one.
This message lives on in our midst
as a task for us today and a
promise for tomorrow.*