



The First Order

St. Stephen's Parish

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MAY 2020

From our Interim Rector

As I write this article it is a snowy day the third week of April. I am in my office at home watching the snow fall gently outside of my window. There is a peaceful quiet and you would hardly know that the world had been brought nearly to a standstill by an invisible to the eye disease. For some this is a humbling time to access the meaning of life even in the midst of suffering; for others it is simply an inconvenience, preventing us from living what has become an unsustainable life style. You can guess which group I fall into from the proceeding comment. But the snow for the moment has brought a soothing to my soul.

It has been an odd time. Holy Week and Easter Day have not been like any I have experienced.

I am thankful to the many people who helped in the production of our worship services online. I am especially thankful to Chris Plankey who was our producer, director, videographer, and all-around support person. Chris puts in countless hours in editing and producing our online offerings.

I am thankful for St. Stephen's Church as we continued to live into our ministry even though we cannot gather for public worship, through feeding the hungry, providing respite space for the homeless and support of others in need through our parish discretionary fund, and I am thankful for Bill Frazier and other's efforts to keep in touch, as well as we can, with those who are isolated. I am thankful for those who continued to pay their pledges or sent in special offering to support our ministry during this time of "social distancing." And I am thankful for all of you who say your prayers and the prayers of the church from your home. You are faithful witnesses to the love of God in numerous ways. Thank you!

The day I wrote this over 37,000 people had already died from the coronavirus in this country; by the time you read this that number may well have doubled. As our Governor and the Governor of New York have reminded us in their news briefing on the virus, those who have died are friends and co-workers, brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents, daughters and sons. They are real people with lives that have touched countless others.

English, poet, priest and scholar John Donne wrote, "No one (man) is an island entire of itself; everyone (man) is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; anyone's (man's) death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." This virus that some had predicted, but few prepared for, has reshaped the lives of millions around the world including our own.

We will not simply get over it and things will move back to how they had been before. The world has suffered a significant trauma, our Nation has discovered the helplessness of being confronted with something that money and power alone cannot fix. This is not a new phenomenon for many countries around the world. We have become the recipients of aid coming to our shores from China and Russia to help us because we have been overwhelmed by this crisis and cannot meet our own needs.

This is an opportunity for the people and leaders of our country to come to the understanding that true greatness is found in humility, not power and wealth. As we have moved through Holy Week and now into Easter again this year, we are reminded that sacrifice and glory are intertwined; that hope lies at the door of an empty tomb; and the son rises even in what appears to be the darkest hour.

We are an Easter people; a people who believe that our calling is to live the will of God in the midst of the times we are living, among the people with whom we live. We make sacrifices for others because we worship a God who loved the world so much that God gave of God's very self for the sake of the world. This is our time to live the faith we profess and to seek God's will in the resetting of our priorities. The meaning of this time will emerge as we allow our suffering and the sufferings of so many others to teach us about what is truly good and holy and right. Stay safe, stay healthy and may God's peace be always with you,
John

Profile Committee Update

Your intrepid Profile Committee continues to work on the development of our search materials despite the unprecedented events of the past several weeks. Here is an update of our progress as of April 10, 2020.

Video Sessions

Prior to the implantation of social distancing measures, a significant amount of video footage was taken, including:

- Interviews with a dozen or so parishioners.
- Commentary from some key community members.
- Filming of a meal prepared for St. Stephen's Table.
- Recording at Laundry Love.

This initial material provides us with a solid foundation, and we expect to continue recording when meeting restrictions are relaxed. So, if you haven't been in front of Chris' camera yet, you haven't missed your chance!

Ministry Portfolio

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our ministry portfolio has not yet been submitted, despite previous reports. The portfolio material is, however, quite close to completion. We do expect to have the full portfolio submitted by the start of May.

Profile Development

The profile's essential structure is taking shape. We'll be working through April on a very rough first draft. The plan is to spend May on the substantial work of editing and refining.

Thank you for your continued patience, support, and prayers.
Craig Reynolds

Angels Among Us

- **Chris Plankey** for his taking videos during a particularly difficult time
- **Bill Frazier** for participating in these videos; Marcie sees this as evidence of Bill's endless dedication to our St. Stephen's community

Keep 'em coming, folks; there are so many angels among us!

A note from your Editor (Joan Kurber)

I have reached the point (urged on by a failed printer and now failing computer – which will be replaced when I can once again go out in public!) where I think it is time to retire from doing the monthly First Order. It has been a pleasure until recently to produce this publication, but I think new blood would be good. Anyone interested in taking on this task? Let me know, please.

May

Happy Birthday:

- 1 Kareen Billetter
- 2 Leila Drury (a milestone!), Michele Rousseau
- 3 Caden Monterosso (16)
- 6 Richard Pruhenski
- 8 Meagan Ellis
- 9 Naoma Sammons (95 years young!), Marjorie Van Dyke (96 years young!), Maureen Wilker (a milestone!)
- 10 Marie Sutton
- 11 Dot Lambert, Judy Lussier (a milestone !), Craig Reynolds
- 12 Kristine Rogers
- 15 Ella LaMalfa (14), Andrew Gillman (18)
- 16 Alexander Gillman, Cole Harrington
- 17 Bill Chandler , Thom Smith
- 20 Hunter Stanton (a milestone!)
- 23 Ann Phipps
- 24 Bill Travis
- 26 Jack Haviland (9)
- 27 Marilyn Barnaby, Melissa Patnode
- 28 Gavyn Carter (17). Lyla-Jean Clapper, Sara Garinther, Tessa Langsdale (21!)
- 30 Connie Bullard, Stephanie Talanian
- 31 Andrew Macfarlane

Happy Anniversary:

- 4 Jean and Myron Gray (1969)
- 7 Janice and Peter Furchinite
- 22 Joan and Mike Evans (1976)
- 23 Linda and William Engle (1981)
- 24 Andrea and Peter Stasiowski (2003)