



# The First Order

## St. Stephen's Parish

Ph 413.448.8276 // Fx 413.442.5374 // [mail@ststephenspittsfield.org](mailto:mail@ststephenspittsfield.org) // [www.ststephenspittsfield.org](http://www.ststephenspittsfield.org)

AUGUST 2020

From our Interim Rector

St. Stephen's will begin in-person worship on the week-end of August 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> on a controlled basis. Below I am detailing the protocol that has been approved by the Diocese for "in-person" worship to begin again.

On Sunday, March 8, 2020 we held our last service in the sanctuary before suspending in-person services as a result of the coronavirus. We made the decision to not hold services on the weekend of March 14/15 following the lead of other Episcopal Churches in the Berkshires. At this point it was not a Diocesan directive. We began our pre-recorded services Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Suspending in-person services became a Diocesan directive the following week.

This has been a learning experience for most of us including the church at large. We have not done everything perfectly and we appreciate the feedback we have gotten from members of the congregation and others. When this began we thought suspension of services and other activities would be for a relatively short duration, but reality has demonstrated otherwise. As we begin again in-person worship, we will also continue our on-line services. Based on feedback we have received, we will be working on improving our communication among each other, so that the spiritual connections can be kept alive even when the physical connections cannot.

First and foremost, it is very important that all of those who are medically compromised or do not feel comfortable being part of larger groups stay at home. These are strange times in which we are living and there is no script to draw upon, so please use the same criteria as you do when making other decision as to what you do beyond home. We are trying to be both safe and sensitive to meeting people's needs. We are not all in the same place and we want to honor that.

- We will gather no more than 50 people at each service at this time. We will hold three in-person services, 5:00 PM Saturday, 8:00 AM

and 10:00 AM Sunday. All services will be in the large church. We will maintain social distancing through roping off pews that cannot be sat in for a particular service. We will alternate pews that are used for each service.

- We are asking people to preregister to attend services through the event function on Realm System which is part of our database and accounting software this will also make contact tracing easier. We will allow people to call the office to sign-up if they do not have internet access. Please, call by Thursday at 4:00 pm before the Sunday you will be attending.

- Social distancing will be practiced at all times; upon arrival, during the service and when departing. The floor and the walks outside will be marked to help with this effort. At this time we cannot have "lemonade and cookies" on the lawn. Households of course can sit together.

- Masks will be required! Please, bring your own, but if you forget we will have some available. Remember, wearing a mask is about the other person. Because you are asymptomatic does not mean you cannot transmit the virus. Scientifically masks have been proven to control the spread, so please, let's make it an act of loving our neighbor and not an act of political position.

- We will have hand sanitizers available at the entrances. Other hand sanitizer is also available throughout the building. Three single occupant restrooms will be available on the main floor. We ask that you use them sparingly. When we served in South Dakota over twenty of the churches we visited had no indoor plumbing. We managed....

- We will be training greeters to assist when people arrive and depart. You will be asked how you are feeling and we will take contact tracing information from you, if we do not already have it from your preregistration.

- Contact surface disinfecting will be done between services. We have been told that floor

*continued on page 2*

## Reflections from page one

fans cannot be used, but we will be using an exhaust fan to help move air through the church. The church and parish hall will be thoroughly cleaned each week following services.

• What to expect at worship: as of this writing we are not able to offer personal communion. We are still working out the details of worship design. The entire service will be in a 'single use' service bulletin. We ask that you take it with you when you leave. All books have been removed from the pews. "The Peace" will not be passed. We are not allowed to have hymn singing; however Joy Mullen will offer music at the 10:00 AM Sunday Service. The same person will read the scripture lesson, lead the psalm and offer the Prayers of the People at a given service. We will design the services to be about 40 minutes or less. Offering plates will be placed at the entrances, but will not be passed. There will be no acolytes, altar servers or choir assisting in worship. This all is going to feel a bit strange, but these are strange times in which we are living.

Following these guidelines will enable us to worship together once again, but this is an organic process and adjustments and changes will need to be made along the way.

Some additional notes: the parish office is reopening on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. We have not been open to the public since mid-March, although Sarah and/or I have been available to answer the phone most week days. St. Stephen's Table continues to offer a "grab & go" meal Thursday and Friday evenings and fourth Saturday of each month. We will not have indoor seating in the near future. The Cathedral of the Beloved's drop-in center concluded use of St. Stephen's July 23<sup>rd</sup>. They are still using our kitchen for a Sunday afternoon meals. The Berkshire Immigrant Center is resuming its in-office ministry. Finally, we are still working on how to safely allow 12 step programs to meet in our building. This is all a work-in-progress.

As you know, everything is influx and we do not know what tomorrow may bring. Please, be patient, continue in your prayers and know, "that God working through us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine."

## July Birthdays Held Over

Note from the Editor: Mea Culpa. In my maiden voyage for The First Order, I neglected to notice that there were two full pages of birthdays, not one, so I left half of the list from the July issue. Below please find those missing dates, with my heartfelt apologies. For myself, I always believe in celebrating until the day before the next one, but whatever you decide, just keep celebrating, as we do for having you with us.

Samantha Reynolds	July 3	Heather MacFarlane	July 20
Felyce Stetz	July 5	Joan Morrow	July 20
Arysa Maloney	July 6	Joan Kurber	July 22
Karen Wallace	July 7	Leah Luczynski	July 26
Janous Sloski	July 9	Jennifer Laurin	July 28
Paula Morey	July 11	Molly McNeil	July 30
Randy Thomas	July 17	Edith Mingalone	July 30
Horace Harris	July 18		

## August

### Happy Birthday:

- 2 Erin Sullivan
- 3 Juelz Dowling-Black
- 4 Owen McNeil
- 5 Alex Currie
- 6 Shelby Reynolds
- 7 Elizabeth Oakes, Evan Rose
- 8 Joe White
- 9 Donald Lussier, Susan Meckes, William Morey, Dylan Stetz
- 10 Susan Wojtasik
- 11 Gloria DiGrigoli
- 12 Alex Morin, Sarah Morrison
- 15 Alayna Haviland
- 16 Francis Demary
- 17 Genevieve Greene
- 18 Virginia Fletcher, Nathan Gillman
- 19 Noelle Bodenstab
- 20 John Pieloch
- 21 Diana Ethier
- 22 Sara-Louise Oakes
- 23 Ralph Nightingale
- 24 Jossirah Hanger-Brown
- 27 Robertine Morris
- 28 Jacob DiGrigoli
- 30 Claudia Curry
- 31 Harriet Cuyler, Joshua Donovan, Krista Harrington, Conner Stetz

### Happy Anniversary:

- 6 Diane Forsyth & William Frazier
- 8 Angela & Daniel Moon
- 19 Michele & Peter Rousseau
- 19 Doreen & William Sosa (20th)
- 24 Wendy & Mike Coakley
- 25 Jennifer Gregg & Derek Bodenstab
- 26 Dawn & George Mathes
- 28 Sara & John Garinther
- 30 Leslee & James Brennan
- 30 Geraldine & John Crane

# A Conversation with....

I spoke with Bill, on June 16, 2020, at his home as we safe-distanced on the patio. Bill is a long-time member and has been the head of Pastoral Care since 2002.

**When did you start coming to St. Stephen's?**  
1986

**What keeps you coming?**

I love the liturgy and the consistency of worship. I love the choir and have been a member since 1986. The fellowship at St. Stephen's is real. I feel it. Nice people, a variety of people.

**Do you feel it has kept pace with the changing times?**

I'm not sure that that we're able to address youth in the same way as the times past, but I think that is a societal change, not necessarily a St. Stephen's change, and I fear they are one and the same. Even some of our adults, who were faithful every Sunday members, just stopped! So, our society has changed a great deal. I think our values have changed a great deal. People are not willing to do the "oughts" of life that we used to do. I was raised in a family that if your parents said, "Go to church," you went to church. You didn't question. You went to church, and that was true across the board. Whatever they said to do, you did. That's no longer true.

**C:** I agree. Young people seem to do what they want to do.

**Bill:** Well, much more so, they have a lot more freedom. Hopefully, they have a lot more responsibility. But I think St. Stephen's is still trying to be of service and open to all. That is most evident in our feeding program.

**C:** One of the things I love about St. Stephen's is the Mission Statement, "To be the hearts and hands of Christ." I'd never heard a Mission Statement stated that clearly before. What do you think could be done more than what we're doing now?

**Bill:** Well in the first place, we're not allowed to do anything (during the pandemic). Once we reopen, I really think that we need to offer at least one more contemporary service.

**C:** Like a folk mass, or...?

**Bill:** Well, different music. I know several people at church who appreciate the choir, but they want to hear different music.

**C:** OK, but there's no leaning as to what type? It would probably have to be studied.

**Bill:** I agree. I hear the word "folk music," but I'm not sure that's what people want. One of the things we could do is an online survey, where everyone could respond, and we could save mailings. For parishioners without access, we could mail the survey. A survey of "What would you want? What would bring you back to a live service? And I think that what could come out of it, is that we might see a call for a Zoom-like service, more contemporary maybe, and more interactive.

**C:** Speaking for myself, I watch, First Church's Zoom Sunday service (where I work) and one of the things they also do is a Coffee & Conversation. Cara Davis, the Acting Rector, starts it, and everyone's pictures are on the screen. She talks for about ten minutes and then just hands it over. Everyone can talk to each other, while the host is doing the connections to make sure that everyone can see each other. But it's just a way for everyone to touch base and that's THE only way they can do it safely now.

**Bill:** Trinity is doing that, also. I think it's an effective way to do a church service for this interim period. If you want to do something longer lasting, it would need to be a more interactive type of service.

**C:** And it wouldn't necessarily have to be the Service. Just so they could communicate.

**Bill:** Or it could be a contemporary service with coffee and conversation afterwards.

**C:** I like that.

**Bill:** Diane and I have become very comfortable with the 10 o'clock service at the kitchen table. It doesn't take long, does it?

**C:** No, it doesn't.

**Bill:** So, that's one possible thing we could do. But if we're going to do the 5 o'clock Service and the 10 o'clock Service, I think one of them should be different.

**C:** Yes, probably the 5 o'clock.

**Bill:** I would think so, but, of course, I'm very traditional. It's lovely at the 10 o'clock, with the music. But...

**C:** You're talking 5 o'clock Saturday? Yes, I would think that could be more contemporary. It's also very difficult to do music on Zoom. That's another site to bring in.

**Bill:** You need a good technician and good singers

*continued on page 4*

continued from page 3

who can sing from home, by remote and on key, alone.

**C:** Details. Well, they can do it on Broadway, why can't we? Good point. What other programs are going on at church that you are interested in?

**Bill:** Well, I'm still heading up the Pastoral Care. We will revise our hospital visits when we're given permission both by the Bishop, and by the hospital and nursing homes. Again, also, when we're allowed Healing Prayers to resume in the Chapel. It would be different because there would have to be social distancing. I'm still very interested in that.

**C:** I know we need to revitalize the church, and my impression of John is just wonderful for all of us. He's so down-to-earth.

**Bill:** John is, I think, the best thing that has happened to St. Stephen's in this period. But with this Covid-19, there will be changes. It is necessary to get the people revitalized, eager to step in and to utilize new technology. Given the circumstances, I think John has done a remarkable job. His weekly service on Facebook has been excellent, including the drive-thru communion. Probably the one thing to focus on is reuniting in worship, not in virtual worship, but in physical worship. We are awaiting approval of our reopening plan by the Bishop.

**C:** I realize that we have a smaller congregation now, but I'm thinking that with social distancing, when we're spread out, it will look like a houseful. I don't see any harm in that. We'll make the best of it.

**Bill:** I know we will.

**C:** Thank you, Bill, for talking with me.

**Bill:** My pleasure.

## Pre-Registering for St. Stephen's In-person Worship Services

### PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Pre-registration for one of the 3 available services each weekend ensures that no more than 50 of your fellow parishioners will be in the pews at one time and facilitates contact tracing should that be necessary.

### 2 Ways to Pre-register

1. Use the Realm system's link: every week, any member of St. Stephen's with an email in our database will receive an invitation to attend a service. The link will be included in the weekly email and posted on the website.
2. Call the office, 413-448-8276 by 4 pm on Thursday. Sarah will take your information and add it to the on-line system so we keep an accurate registrant count.

### Interacting with Realm

Your email link will look like this: <https://onrealm.org/SaintStephensCh/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=ZDUzMTQzZTUtMTM5ZS00Nzg2LWJiYTgtYWJmZTAxMDQyMzA4>

It will take you to a page titled: In Person Worship. There's a list of the services and, on the upper right the word "Register." That's where you add your name and the names of anyone else who will be coming with you.

Click the NEXT button and you will be asked to select a service. If 50 people have already signed up, you will be asked to select a different service.

Click NEXT again and you're done. You will receive a confirmation email and St. Stephen's will be notified that you're planning to attend.

## Revenues and Expenses

### Revenues

**Actual Income** (budgeted and unbudgeted) through June 30, 2020 - \$243,963.61\*

**Budgeted Income** through June 30, 2020 - \$214,452.50  
(Overbudget by \$29,511.11 or 12%)

#### Pledge Income

Actual Pledges (Plate and Pledge Payments) Received through June 30, 2020 - \$137,362.31

Budgeted Pledges through June 30, 2020 - \$136,880.00  
(Overbudget by \$482.31)

*\*The Diocese has given us assistance due to COVID-19 of \$30,981.76 as of 6/30/2020. This is accounted for in the above Actual Income total.*

### Expenses

**Actual Expenses** (budgeted and unbudgeted) through June 30, 2020 - \$191,585.38

**Budgeted Expenses** through June 30, 2020 - \$214,452.50  
(Underbudget by \$22,867.12 or 10.6%)

As of June 30, 2020 - net positive \$52,378.23