



# 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)

FEBRUARY 2021

Dear Friends,

It takes a lot of supports to keep a bridge up in the air. As I wind down my time here as your Bridge Pastor, my heart is overflowing with gratitude for your supports of love, grace and vigilance. What more support could a bridge need!

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone - the wardens, vestry, staff and parish members, the Berkshire clergy, the bishop and diocesan staff, and many other new friends I've met during these past four months. I always felt so blessed being in your presence. God is using you mightily. My prayer is that you will continue to be open and courageous in following Jesus wherever he may lead you.

Together with God during these heartbreaking and chaotic times, we did what we've always done - praised God, said our prayers, looked out for each other (even if it was by remote control) and helped those in need. We might have wobbled at times, but God never did. The Holy Spirit is alive and well here and she has brought us to this glorious time of welcoming The Rev Dr Nina Pooley and her family.

I'll be returning to my hibernation of full retirement in Hinsdale (Nina and I will be neighbors)! Please continue to be safe. I'll continue to pray for you, our nation and world.

Keep calm and be the Good News of God in Christ.  
David

### Share Your Voice

Please feel free to send us any news, photos, thoughts, poems, or jokes to help us all keep in touch. This forum is yours and we'd love to hear from you. Please send them to [mail@ststephenspittsfield.org](mailto:mail@ststephenspittsfield.org).

Got any tips on how you're getting through this time? Got some good news or an upcoming event to share? Consider this your First Order Blog.

I wish all of you peace and the hope that we will be together again safely and in good time.

Connie Bullard, Editor of *The First Order*.

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! We hope your holidays were full of love and joy! Our celebrations were smaller than normal, but this was to be expected to keep us all healthy.

In our exuberance to announce Reverend Nina and thank all those involved, we inadvertently left out a key member and supporter - to our regret. Reverend Frances Hills has been a blessing through this process and so many of our transitions over the past three years.

When Cricket left, Francie volunteered to be Vestry's spiritual guide and supporter. She brought some processes and intentionality into our work, that we believe, made the Vestry cohesive and strong. During the search process, she had a similar role that helped the search committee keep God at the center of the work, so they were able to hear the calling of Nina.

Whether she was at the table, on a Zoom call, or holding us in prayer, we could not be more grateful for Francie. Through all of our ups and downs over the past years, Francie has literally held us together. We so appreciate her love and guidance.

As we have reflected over our time together as your Wardens, we can see and feel the pull of the Holy Spirit. We have encountered great challenges, and we have felt deep love. We know this is in no small part because of Francie's commitment and devotion to us all.

Many thanks, Francie.  
Peace and Blessings,  
Erin and Tom

Dear All at St. Stephen's:

Thank you for the poinsettia that appeared mysteriously after Christmas. It reminded me of all the Christmases I participated in, those special times come alive again.

I am looking forward to the arrival of our Rector and give thanks for David's loving service that has brought us through these final months.

Sincerely,  
Iwan Sean

## Revenues and Expenses

through December 31, 2020

### Revenues

**Actual Income** (budgeted and unbudgeted) through December 31, 2020 - \$423,251\*+

**Budgeted Income** through December 31, 2020 - \$428,905  
(Underbudget by \$5,654 or approx. 1.3%)

#### Pledge Income

Actual Pledges (Plate Offerings and Pledge Payments) Received through December 31, 2020 - \$245,700

Budgeted Pledges (Plate Offerings and Pledge Payments) through December 31, 2020 - \$273,760

\*The Diocese gave us assistance due to COVID-19 for a total of \$30,981.76. This is accounted for in the above income total.

+ Does not include the year end investment income earnings. The diocese won't provide these numbers until 1/31/21 (after this writing).

### Expenses

**Actual Expenses** (budgeted and unbudgeted) through December 31, 2020 - \$358,729

**Budgeted Expenses** through December 31, 2020 - \$428,905  
(Underbudget by \$70,176 or approx. 19.5%)

As of December 31, 2020 - net positive \$64,523

# February

## Happy Birthday:

- 1 Joy Davis
- 2 Sarah Moon
- 4 Derek Bodenstab
- 5 Edward Hughes
- 6 Angelina Pierce
- 12 David Ekstrom
- 13 Judith Culver
- 13 Ann Marcure
- 14 Landon Wilson
- 15 Maxwell Plankey
- 17 Henry Biegel
- 18 Mackenzie Ellis
- 19 Sophia Wilson
- 21 Madeline Harrington
- 21 Lance Schroder
- 21 Tucker Schroder
- 22 Robert Reynolds
- 23 Diane Forsyth
- 25 Douglas Demary
- 25 Terry LeClair
- 27 Veronica Fenton
- 27 Dawn Mathes
- 28 Lois Symonds

## Happy Anniversary:

- 3 Danielle & Patrick Shaw
- 5 Constance & Henry Biegel
- 21 Lyla-Jean & Thomas Clapper  
(40th Anniversary!)