

# The First Order

## St. Stephen's Parish

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OCTOBER 2021

### Beloved Community of St. Stephen's,



The fall is upon us, as the school year is underway and families scramble to adjust to their new schedules and patterns. Even now, when so much is still COVID restricted, we begin our "program year" at St. Stephen's. There's a lot going on, as we continue to plan and make our way forward - and adjust as we must. I appreciate your patience and understanding, and your willingness to jump in as you are able. Please pay close attention to the weekly e-Blast and other bulletins - as we walk this balance of planning our life together while keeping one another safe.

#### Worship:

Unfortunately, as I write this our level of COVID risk is still considered 'high' in Berkshire County, and many of the surrounding counties are considered to be at even higher risk levels. Thankfully, by maintaining our COVID precautions, we've been able to continue worshipping in-person. Unfortunately, given the increased safety concerns currently, we are not offering additional in-person worship services.

It's been great to see so many of you as we've begun worshipping at 10am. While we aren't having choir yet, we're enjoying musical offerings from a variety of talented parishioners. We've been celebrating Creation season and will soon move into our next themed 'season', in the last days of 'normal' time. (The many weeks following Pentecost and leading to Advent.) I appreciate your liturgical hospitality as we begin to get accustomed to using seasonal booklets and weekly inserts, and wrestling with specific theological themes.

The live streaming of the Sunday service is improving in quality, as we continue to address the adjustments needed. Some are easier than others, and some involve integrating with our built-in sound system. Thank you for your

feedback and patience as we find our way to online streaming accessibility for the long-term.

#### Visioning:

Our Visioning Team (Craig Reynolds, David Nevin, Chris Plankey, Cathy Carchedi, Josie Ellis and Susan LeBourdais) is working hard - meeting twice a month to get this process underway. It's a process of discernment, something that involves possibilities and a sense of deep identity and call to mission and ministry. Which means it can be a little amorphous and difficult to predict or control, and that's a good, if sometimes frustrating experience. In this current phase of the process, we've been mapping the parish assets and considering the needs of the greater community. We'll be sharing a lot more as things begin to take shape.

#### A Reflection from a recent Compline for the Climate, our theme - LEARN:

Climate Change can be overwhelming - the ways in which we are affecting the created world, and one another are many, interwoven, and the results feel catastrophic... making it that much more daunting to engage. Yet, we are called to learn, to understand, to do our best to be informed, and to make changes in our lives accordingly.

Of course, this isn't an intellectual problem, not really. Regardless of how we approach addressing climate change, what's required of us is a life-long shift in life-style and behavior. And that's a shift in being, a shift that begins with our heart.

*Proverbs 3:19-22*

"Focus on Wisdom and do not be distracted. Watch the patterns of creation, and you will awaken to grace and tranquility."

*How will we receive wisdom from creation?  
How do we learn with our hearts? Allow our hearts to lead the way?*

from the Rector



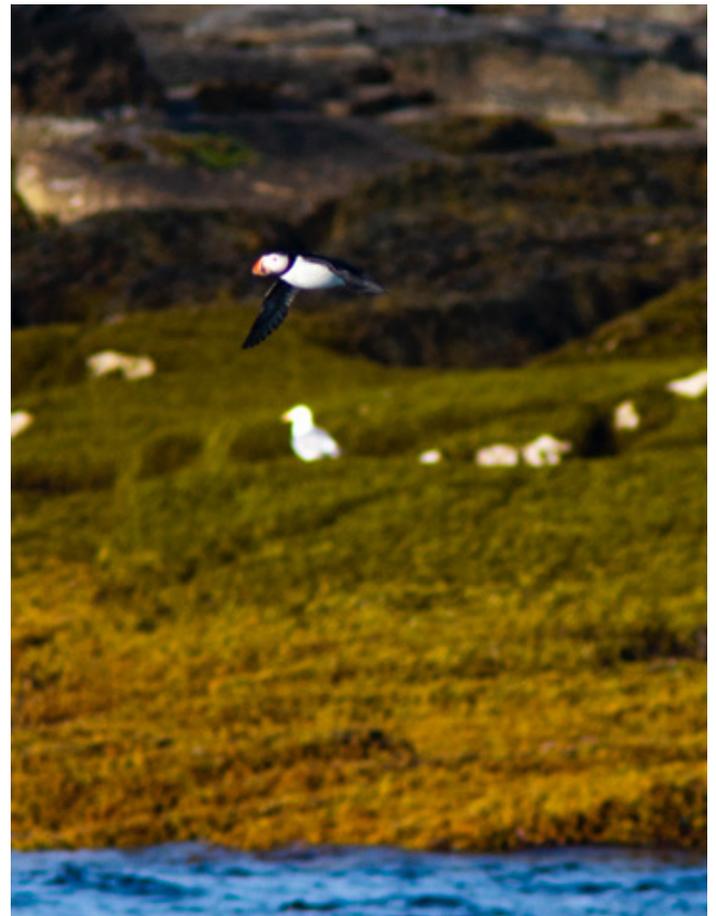
### **A story of sorts from a few years ago:**

After seeing so many puffin images and artwork in the homes of parishioners who summered on islands off the coast, I decided I should learn more about the resurrection of the puffin colonies on the coastal islands just north of us.

I did my online research for information, and stumbled upon a website called: Explore.org where there were live streamed webcams showing the colony on Eastern Egg Rock Island, and began to watch. At first, I would check in once or twice a week, then the drama grew. The burrow camera gave us a front row seat as the mated pair of puffins made the burrow ready for their egg to hatch and took turns keeping it warm. Once their hatchling emerged, the real fun began, as each parent took turns going off to find fish to feed their fuzzy puffball with a beak and tiny clear eyes.

The drama continued as people from around the globe watched and fretted over the scant number of fish, how long the parent would be gone between feedings (indicating how far off they had to venture to find waters cool enough to have fish for the baby), and what kinds of fish they were able to find. If the baby didn't gain enough weight to fledge and live on its own for the next 2 years, it wouldn't survive. The puffin cam became a daily check in, including holding our breath when both parents would leave to find food - and our puffling was on its own, fending off other encroaching puffins looking for a good burrow - it's not easy being a puffin.

Once the baby began to leave the burrow, we worried about her being able to fend off predators like the big gulls that circled and watched for an easy snack. When the caretakers of the island came around once a month to count hatchlings, they weighed and measured our puffling - posting their data so all of us could fuss and



worry together - vicarious puffling parents.

Finally, there was the fledge watch - as night after night we watched to see if our little one would step out onto the rocks and fly off to the ocean. Because of the predators, pufflings fledged at night, and they get one shot

at it. No practice runs - their very first flight is their attempt to make it to the open waters - where they swim for the first time, fish for the first time, and live out on the open water for up to two years, alone, before returning to the island to find a burrow and mate of their own.

Our hearts were all in, and that year Ken took me on a puffin cruise, so I could go and see the island in person, at least from a safe distance in the boat. We were lucky enough to be joined by the director of the project, Dr. Stephen Kress, whose work began the rescue and re-establishing of the puffin colonies off the coast of Maine. He explained the details of the project, the issues facing the puffins, particularly those caused by climate change and other human-created challenges to their survival.

I learned so much - with my head and heart - about how interconnected we are, all of us living together on this planet. The lives of this one species of bird - illustrating just how remarkable the struggle for survival is for so many of the creatures with whom we share this planet.

*How will we receive wisdom from creation?*

*How do we learn with our hearts? Allow our hearts to lead the way?*

“Focus on Wisdom and do not be distracted.

Watch the patterns of creation,

and you will awaken to grace and tranquility.” *Proverbs 3:19-22*

Be well, and know that you are God’s Beloved,  
Nina+



## Not Joshin' Around!

Two parishioners enjoyed success at the 45th Josh Billings Runaround on September 19. **Charley Sawyer** was a paddler for the Sawyer/Porter team, which finished third in the Family Division, and **Patrick LeBourdais** was the runner for Third Wheelin', which finished fourth in the All Berkshire Division. Congratulations to them and all who participated!

# October

## Happy Birthday:

- 1 J.D. Hebert
- 2 Jeff Pringle, Peter Rousseau
- 3 Dennis Carney, Jennifer Gregg
- 6 Isiaha Hartman-Caesar, Ed Wilder
- 7 Claire O'Connor
- 8 Matthew Oakes, Rory Shea
- 10 Jeannette Ward
- 13 Theodore Caesar, Scott Luczynski, Michael LaMalfa
- 15 Michela Laurin
- 18 Dion Bianco, Anthony Trapani
- 19 Sabrina Reynolds, Carol Wilson
- 22 Brian Cooper, Keith Cooper
- 23 Martie Ekstrom, Colin Behnke
- 24 Barbara McShane, Dona Senecal
- 25 Quinton Cookis, William Sosa
- 26 Robert Talanian
- 28 Sue Jenkins, Calvin Luczynski
- 29 Jeffrey Hine
- 30 Crystal Hassan
- 31 Catherine Doyle, Jordan Hamilton

## Happy Anniversary:

- 3 Everett & Ann Heiss
- 6 Michael & Jennifer Laurin
- 11 Craig & Christine Reynolds
- 12 Marc Britt & Frances Hills
- 12 David & Aloha Winchester
- 13 Scott & Leah Luczynski
- 23 Joseph & Cathy Carchedi
- 25 Gerald & Claire O'Connor
- 27 Roy & Marie Sutton
- 29 Bill & Donna Chandler
- 30 Philip and Lynne Blanchard

# Financial Update

*submitted by Leah Luczynski, Treasurer*

In the month of August, we were overbudget just under \$14,000 for the month and are over budget \$36,000 year to date. We budgeted to have a deficit of just over \$107,000 so to be almost three-quarters of the way through the year and only have a deficit of \$36,000 at this point is good. To date we have not taken any money from the endowment to offset this deficit. In fact, we have not taken any money from our endowment in over 18 months.

