

# The First Order

## St. Stephen's Parish

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

MARCH 2022

## "For God alone my soul in silence waits..."



Lent is our quieting time, that time when we gather ourselves, step out of the rush and chaos and change our focus. We often assume that Lent is all about our sinfulness and need to repent. It's harder than that. Lent is our time to reflect on the areas of our lives that need tending, prayer, reflection, healing, and confession. To pay attention to our lives. To not let the rush of the day to day keep us from truly living our lives. This is the season we intentionally focus on discernment – the capacity to choose well.

Of course, everyday of our lives we are faced with choices. Every day we chart our course, by making choices, and not making choices (still a choice), and by the way we respond to circumstances beyond our control. Discernment is an invitation to live mindfully. We need to slow down enough to be aware of all that occurs within the course of our day. To grow 'eyes to see and ears to hear.' Beginning to pay attention to our lives, by listening and seeing what is unfolding every day in the present can be a new experience. It's counter cultural, when our culture has us so focused on forward looking that we often miss the gift of being alive in the here and now.

There may be moments along the way when an obvious but difficult choice requires much reflection, prayer, and guidance. It's also true that on a daily basis, little decisions and small actions form our souls. We create habits when we make those daily choices. If we choose to act impulsively, without due reflection, we may discover that we have become someone we never intended to be. Lent is our opportunity to pay attention to who we are becoming, to 'reset' if that's what we need, to refocus ourselves on intentional living.

Our Lenten discernment begins by listening. Becoming aware of our lives. And to do that, we need to quiet ourselves and spend some time in the silence. This Lent I invite you to spend some time daily in reflection and prayer, or even just sitting in the silence, open to the conversation. Just show up and be present to God for 15 minutes a day.

### *Psalm 62: 1-2*

For God alone my soul in silence waits; \*  
from him comes my salvation.

He alone is my rock and my salvation, \*  
my stronghold, so that I shall not be greatly shaken.

from the Rector

# Property Updates @ St. Stephen's

March 2022 - First Order

*Craig Reynolds, Co-Warden*

Managing a large, historic, aging physical plant is always a challenge – just ask any current or previous member of our Property Committee! But there are times when more than one major project erupts at the same time. This is one of those demanding times. In fact, we're making progress on three major property-related efforts right now.

## 1. Heating System

### Heating System Woes: Part 1

At the heart of our aging heating system are two gas-fired boilers that are 20+ years old.

Late last year it became apparent that one of the boilers had a major leak in its main chamber. Al Symonds made multiple calls to multiple contractors in multiple states but was unable to find a contractor willing/available to take on this major repair. Fortunately, our entire physical plant can be heated by just one of the boilers, as long as temperatures don't fall to extremes and demand for heat isn't excessive. But this is the definition of "limping along until a permanent solution is found."

### Heating System Woes: Part 2

Then, early in 2022 portions of the system's ancient steam piping failed. In turn, heat failed in the newer section of the Parish House. Pipes froze. Extraordinary measures by John Garinther and Don Phipps, working with several contractors, eventually restored heat to this part of the building. Replacement parts were ordered but because the needed parts weren't available immediately, the "fix" was only partial and temporary. And there was no way to regulate the heat in the newer section of the Parish House.

As a result, temperatures soared inside. To 80+ degrees. Sarah and Bert – recently relocated to temporary quarters in the Sears Room due to the office renovation (see below) – resorted to open windows and banks of fans even on days when outdoor temperatures hovered in the single digits. Nina worked from home whenever she could to avoid overcrowding. And parish work continued!

### The Need for A Long Term Plan

It's now clear that the entire heating system needs to be evaluated along with the overall HVAC/climate control needs of our physical plant. Patching problems small and large as they arise has become physically and financially unsustainable. The Vestry has asked the Property Committee to study the issue and provide recommendations. The Finance Committee has been advised about the situation as well. Major action will likely be needed within the year. Stay tuned!

## 2. Our Historic Stained Glass Windows

Our beautiful stained glass windows have faced various structural issues for some time now. Of particular concern are the "clerestory" windows, also known as the "Bishops' Windows" found near the roofline of the church sanctuary. The exterior wood frames of these windows have deteriorated badly over the years and need careful attention to preserve their structural integrity. In addition, one of the street-level windows in the chapel has a noticeable bow in it. Other windows need various levels of attention. And protection for the windows has long been a concern.

### Grant Availability?

In 2020, then Co-Warden Erin Sullivan mentioned to parish leaders that grants available from the City of Pittsfield's Community Preservation Act (CPA) could potentially provide significant funding for the repair/restoration of the church's stained glass windows. (A few years ago, this program provided our friends at Zion Lutheran with substantial funding for their very large, very challenging roof replacement project.)

Later last year, Erin completed an initial CPA grant application for this project. It passed the initial screening process in November 2021! Around the same time, John Garinther and Don Phipps contacted two stained glass artisans for consults and estimates. We received two detailed proposals in response. These proposals supplied vital

*continued on page 3*

## *Property Updates from page two*

information for the final CPA application, which Erin submitted earlier this month. Meanwhile, the Property Committee is reviewing the proposals with the gratis assistance of an expert glass craftsman, the same artisan who restored the windows at the turn of the century. The Committee expects to issue its recommendations soon.

Completing this work will require a significant investment on the part of the parish, even if we receive funds from the city. And timely completion of the project is critical.

## **3. Office Renovation**

The seed of the idea for an office update was planted early in 2021 when a generous parishioner offered to donate funds to the project as a welcome gift to our new Rector. The office was last painted more than a decade ago and the carpet had grown noticeably worn particularly in the outer or “main” office.

### **The Renovation Begins**

Parish Treasurer Leah Luczynski, a professional interior designer, volunteered her services for the project. There were initial delays due to COVID, contractor availability, and other factors. Eventually, plans started to gel late last year. Carpeting was ordered and arrived. A painting contractor was hired. An amazing team descended on the office one Friday in early January and in two short hours cleared out the entire office space. Earlier in that week, Sarah, Bert, Joan Evans, and others had established temporary office space in the Sears Room for Sarah, Bert, and Nina. The project was progressing nicely.

### **A Bump in the Road**

Before removing the old carpet, the flooring contractor examined the tiles underneath. He was concerned that this old material might contain asbestos and recommended we have it tested. The test did find asbestos above the regulated threshold, so abatement is required. Leah has scheduled a local contractor to complete the abatement starting the week of February 28. The project should take no more than two days. Meanwhile, the painting is essentially finished, and the flooring contractor will lay the carpet ASAP once the asbestos abatement is complete. Then we'll have to move everything - and everyone - back in. One step at a time!

## **4. Gratitude!**

Many, many thanks to everyone involved in each of these projects! Special thanks to the Property Committee, especially John and Don, to Sarah and Bert, to Erin, and to Leah for their vital contributions. Stay tuned!

# **March**

### **Happy Birthday:**

- 1 Sadie Watford
- 2 Henry Morris
- 3 Christopher Harrington, Nicole Marcil, Andrea Stasiowski, Brooke Thomas, Mia Thomas
- 5 Joshua Reynolds, Jim Sayers
- 6 Rev. Nina Pooley, Laura Szczepaniak
- 7 George Mathes
- 8 Elizabeth Harrington
- 11 Christine Reynolds
- 12 Brayden Billetter, Jacob Billetter, Grant Morin
- 13 Makailey Cookis
- 14 Wavelyn Hine
- 15 Tyarah Dowling-Black, Doreen Sosa
- 16 William Engle, Angela Moon
- 17 Grady Pedersen
- 19 Mary Turner
- 20 Gary Curry
- 21 Ian Borosky, Jim Currie, Wendy Goodwin
- 22 Tommie Coles, Jaden Coscia, Patricia Moynahan
- 23 Joan Evans, Megan Pedersen
- 24 Joy Mullen, Debbie Stillman
- 28 Caleb Bodenstab
- 29 Kathryn Jensen
- 30 Marianne Rud
- 31 Geraldine Crane

### **Happy Anniversary:**

- 13 Jason & Crystal Hassan
- 25 John & Noreen Reynolds 50th!!!!

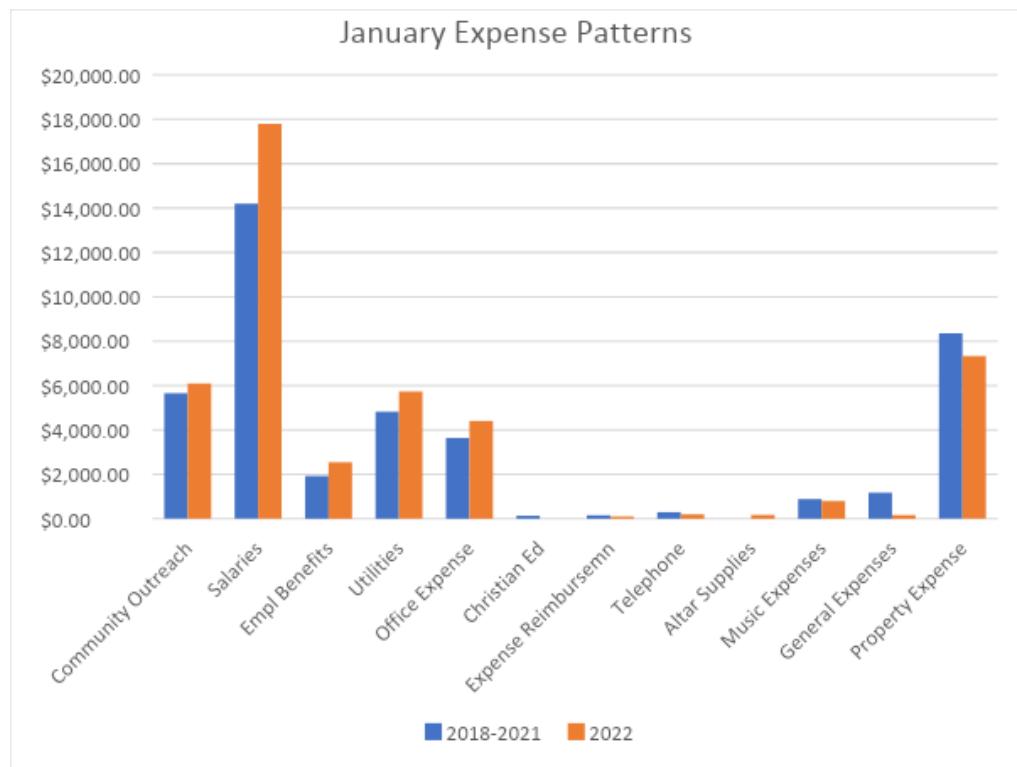
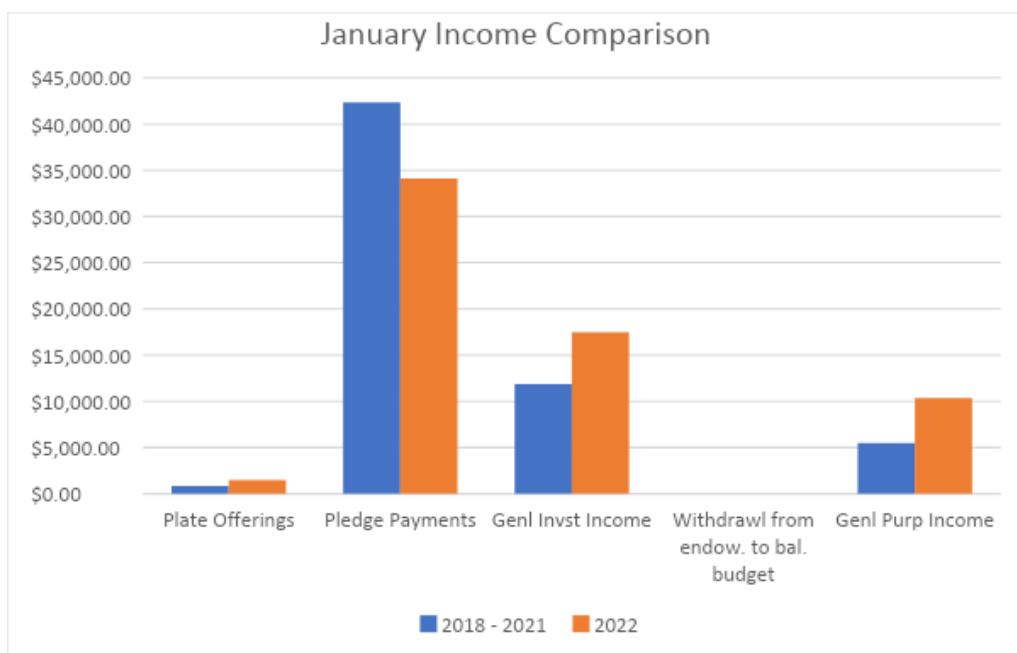


# Financial Update

submitted by Leah Luczynski, Treasurer

In the month of January our operating revenues were \$63,437. Our operating expenses totaled \$45,335. This put us underbudgeted for the month by \$18,102. As I've mentioned in previous years, we typically begin the year underbudget because some pledges are paid in full for the year in January. This tends to even out by the end of the first quarter. We did receive the 2021 4th quarter investment income distribution (which comes in at the end of January and therefore is counted in January 2022) totaling \$17,495.

Below are graphs showing the average January income and expense patterns from 2018-2021 as compared to 2022.



If you would like to see a full itemized report of the income, expenses, savings accounts, and the balance sheet, please feel free to contact Leah Luczynski directly e: leah@leahinteriors.com or ph: 413.464.9333



**Jessica takes a break from her work at Jiminy Peak.**

## **Through Her Job and Outreach Staff, Jessica Enjoys Work and Trying New Activities**

Jessica likes to work hard at everything she does. At her current job at Jiminy Peak, she's called efficient and diligent. Her crewmates and job coach know she will come through on her assignments. In her modern dance performances, and musicals such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, she leaves no stone unturned while preparing. At her pre-COVID job at Taconic High School's kitchen, her work ethic earned her a call-back when the school re-opened. Too late, she found her new niche at Jiminy.

"I like that I can control the pace with my work at Jiminy," Jessica said, thoughtfully. "The people I work with now are similar in age, and we get along well." She also knows a well-done job leads to tips.

Outside Employment Services, as part of BCArc's Family Advocacy programs, Jessica likes to go with her outreach worker to the Clark Museum, a movie, or a chat session over yogurt or coffee.

"I joined a lot of the Zoom events when we couldn't go out much," she said. This past winter she starred as Mrs. Santa Clause in the BCArc theater production "Mrs. Santa Claus Drives the Sleigh."

"Basically," Jessica said, "Santa hurt himself and couldn't deliver presents. So Mrs. Claus drove the sleigh to deliver the presents. We practiced almost every day."

As part of a large family, she tries to gain social exposure beyond relatives. This includes volunteering at St. Stephen's Table, a food pantry, Thursdays and Fridays for the past three years, right through COVID.

"I like to do pretty much anything," she said. "So I try everything."

*This story originally appeared in  
BCArc February 2022 newsletter.*



I wish to thank you for the wonderful recognition I received last Sunday. I have had the privilege of serving as Pastoral Care Leader for over 19 years. The journey began when the Rev. Jim Dannals suggested that I undertake this journey and Bishop Scruton approved the license from the diocese. I did a year of chaplaincy training at Albany Medical Center in order to better understand hospital protocol. Through the years, members of St. Stephen's have been most welcoming and supportive. Many members have served in pastoral care, from Eucharistic Visitors to the Pastoral Care Team at BMC. We as a team were blessed to receive training from The Rev. Bob Anderson. I am especially grateful to all of our priests who have provided guidance and encouragement through the years.

Thank you for this opportunity for this ministry. The Thank You cards with your messages, the certificate of appreciation and the wonderful poster are all wonderful reminders of how fortunate I was to be allowed to do this ministry.

I look forward to working as an advisor with the new Pastoral Care committee and Nina as the journey continues. Please speak with Nina if you feel called to help provide this vital service.

Bill Frazier



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

Stay safe and take care,  
Connie Bullard, Editor of *The First Order*