

The First Order

St. Stephen's Parish

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MARCH 2023

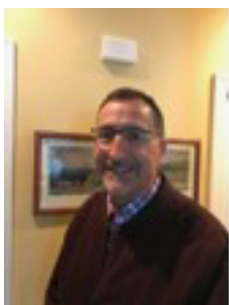
*You give but little when you give
of your possessions. It is when you
give of yourself that you truly give.*

- Kahlil Gibran



New Vestry Member

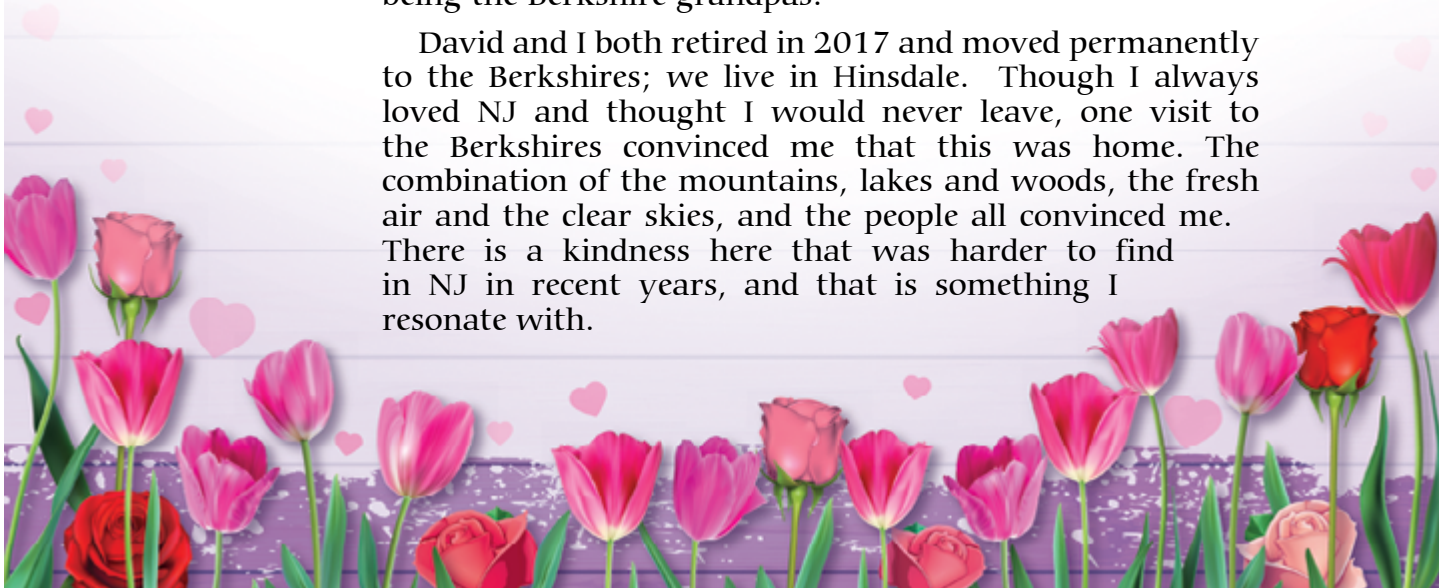
Please welcome James Alden



I am a "cradle Episcopalian". I was baptized at Grace Church in Nutley NJ, and spent my childhood involved in church activities. Later I was an active member of Grace Church in Madison NJ and then also St David's in Kinnelon NJ. This last was the church where my husband David DeSmith was Rector.

I come from a large and loving family with 5 sisters. I am blessed that all of my siblings are close, and we communicate regularly. Most of my sisters still reside in NJ. David and I are blessed with 6 amazing grandchildren, and we love being the Berkshire grandpas.

David and I both retired in 2017 and moved permanently to the Berkshires; we live in Hinsdale. Though I always loved NJ and thought I would never leave, one visit to the Berkshires convinced me that this was home. The combination of the mountains, lakes and woods, the fresh air and the clear skies, and the people all convinced me. There is a kindness here that was harder to find in NJ in recent years, and that is something I resonate with.





Diocese of Western Massachusetts United Thank Offering

*Notice the good things that happen each day.
Give thanks to God for your blessings.
Make an offering for each blessing.
Through UTO, your Blessings become blessings for others.*

Lent 2023

St. Stephen's Church
67 East St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Friends at St. Stephen's Church,

In Gratitude, we are writing to thank you for helping
"Expand the Circle of Thankful People"

And to acknowledge your gift of

\$1,020.00*

Our Diocesan 2022 United Thank Offering was

\$8,019.70

With 15 Churches participating

We are especially grateful for your participation as we emerge from the challenges of the COVID19 Pandemic. The 2022 ingathering was more than double 2021 with double the churches participating. Thank you for your gratitude in support of the United Thank Offering.

Every penny given to the United Thank Offering is given away the following year to support innovative mission and ministry in The Episcopal Church. In 2021 the grant focus was *"Care of Creation: Turning love into action by caring for God's creation to protect the most vulnerable—who will bear the largest burden of pollution and climate change through justice, advocacy, environmental reparations, or the development of formational materials."* \$1,051,154.14 was awarded in 2022. Enclosed with this Thank You is a list of the grants that your offering helped fund and support...all around the world!

In Thanksgiving for all of God's blessings,

Susan Howland, Diocese of Western Massachusetts UTO Missioner

The 2023 Spring United Thank Offering ingathering will be MAIL-IN. The UTO Board suggests a Sunday that is convenient for your parish; the Spring is a time of planting seeds and new growth. Make check to: The Episcopal Diocese of WMA, with UTO in the memo, and mail by June 15, 2023 to: The Episcopal Diocese of WMA, ATTN: Kristina Cincotta, Staff Accountant, 37 Chestnut St., Springfield, MA 01103.

Please bring your UTO offering to the 2023 Diocesan Convention, October 28, 2023 or mail to: The Episcopal Diocese of WMA, ATTN: Kristina Cincotta, Accounting Manager, 37 Chestnut St., Springfield, MA 01103.

*Although St. Stephen's did not have an official UTO collection during COVID, a few members continued to give. Your Convention Delegation was able to present these gifts to the diocese in September of 2022 at the first in-person diocesan convention held since 2019.

You can find UTO resources at: UnitedThankOffering.org and www.episcopalchurch.org/uto

Holy Week and Easter (and beyond) at St. Stephen's

Collaboration with Campus of Downtown Churches:

Cathedral of the Beloved • First United Methodist • First and South Congregational
St. Stephen's • Zion Lutheran

April 2: Palm Sunday - liturgy of the Palms begins on Dunham Mall with Campus of Downtown Churches.

April 6: Maundy Thursday, evening worship

April 7: Good Friday - Procession of the cross, walking the 'stations' in downtown Pittsfield at noon, with Campus of Downtown Churches

April 8: Easter Vigil - with Campus of Downtown Churches, beginning with Fire at First/South; Word at St. Stephen's, Water/baptismal vows at First UMC, and Eucharist at Zion.

April 9: Easter Sunday at 10am, (Youth Group - we're hoping to go Easter Caroling that evening.)

April 16: Begin Season of Eastertide liturgy.

April 23: Bishop's Visitation

Sunday Evening Holy Communion at 5 PM

A simple reminder about this new service at St. Stephen's. See [link](#) for more information.

YPF Service Project: Comfort Care Packs

A simple reminder about this service project from the Young People's Fellowship (YPF). See [link](#) for more information.



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 Billeter, Jacob Billeter, Grant Morin
- 13 Makailey Cookis
- 14 Wavelyn Hine
- 15 Tyarah Dowling-Black, Doreen Sosa
- 16 William Engle, Angela Moon
- 19 Mary Turner
- 20 Gary Curry
- 21 Ian Borosky, Jim Currie, Wendy Goodwin
- 22 Tommie Coles, Jaden Coscia, Patricia Moynahan
- 23 Joan Evans
- 24 Joy Mullen, Debbie Stillman
- 28 Caleb Bodenstab
- 29 Kathryn Jensen
- 31 Geraldine Crane

Happy Anniversary

- 7 Jason & Crystal Hassan

April

Happy Birthday

- 2 John Crane
- 3 Matthew Reynolds
- 4 Craig Smith
- 5 Victoria Shaw, Leslee Brennan
- 7 Mark Trapani, Bella Currie
- 8 Scott Haviland
- 9 Maribeth Barney
- 10 Alexandria Dadak
- 11 Skylar Reynolds, Elizabeth Leonard, Jayne Church III
- 12 Susan Coles, Florence Proulx
- 13 Christopher Sanders, Mary Adams, Rachel DiGrigoli
- 15 Aiden Champagne
- 17 Elizabeth Trapani
- 20 Scott Ellis
- 22 Mary Gillman
- 23 Kieran Coscia, Michael Laurin
- 25 Aaron Cassavant
- 26 Abigail Fenton
- 27 Seth DiGrigoli, Josie Ellis

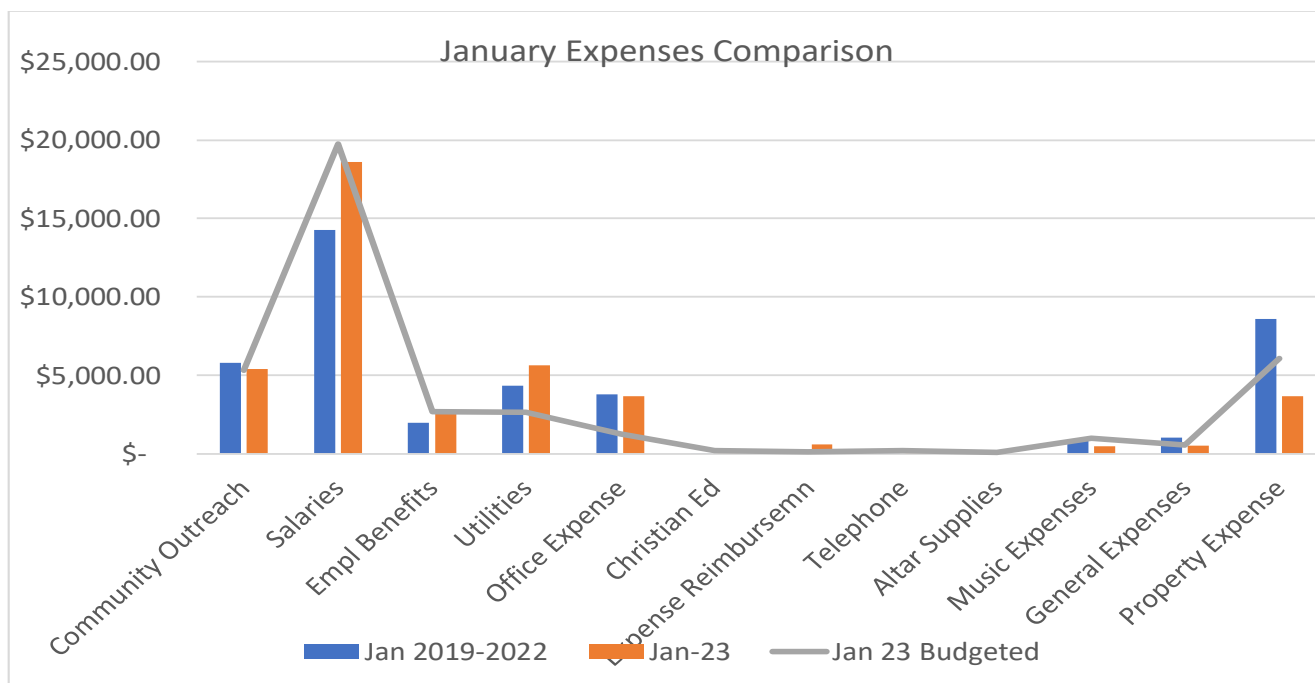
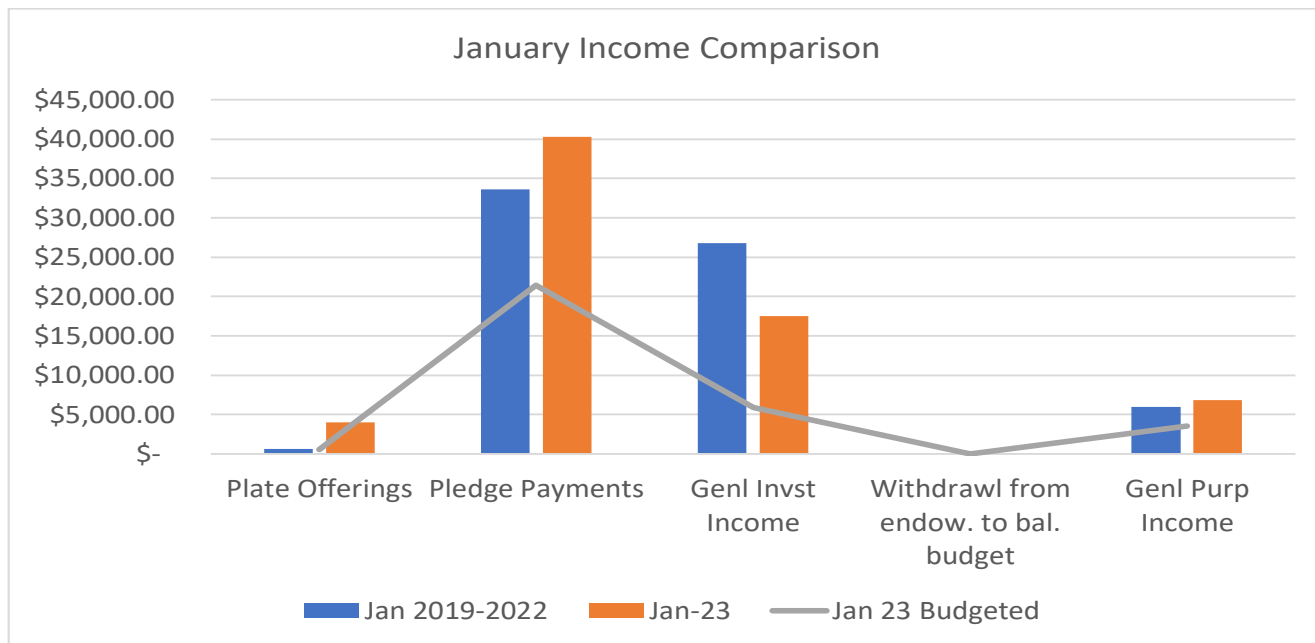
Happy Anniversary

- 8 Daniel & Catherine Doyle
- 28 Mark & Osneyda Miller

Financial Update

submitted by Leah Luczynski, Treasurer

In the month of January 2023, our operating revenues were \$68,666. Our operating expenses totaled \$41,503. This put us under budget for the month by \$27,163. Pledges tend to be higher in the beginning of the year than normal. Investment in Online pledging is on the increase as well. Online giving is an easy way to stay up to date on your pledge. Please contact our administrator Sarah if you need help setting that up. Below are graphs showing the month of January average income and expenses from 2019-2022 as compared to January 2023 and compared to what we budgeted per month.



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 Suzanne White e:smwhite@gmail.com

Compline

on Wednesday Evenings

You're invited to Compline via Zoom Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM.

Please check the weekly parish email for the Zoom link.

Compline is a [simple office](#) including a confession of sins, one or more psalms, a short reading from scripture, versicles and responses, the Lord's Prayer, and collects which ask for God's protection during the night to come. It is descended from the night prayers said before bed at the end of the monastic round of daily prayer.



Beannacht / Blessing

John O'Donohue

On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble,
may the clay dance
to balance you.

And when your eyes
freeze behind
the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets into you,
may a flock of colours,
indigo, red, green
and azure blue,
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life.

from *Echoes of Memory* (Transworld Publishing, 2010)
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Safe Church Practices:

All volunteers who work with children should be active members of the congregation for at least six months prior to serving in a leadership or supervisory role.



Sunday School Dates for March and April

Sunday, March 26, Sunday, April 23
(No Sunday School on Easter, Sunday, April 9)