

OCTOBER
2020

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

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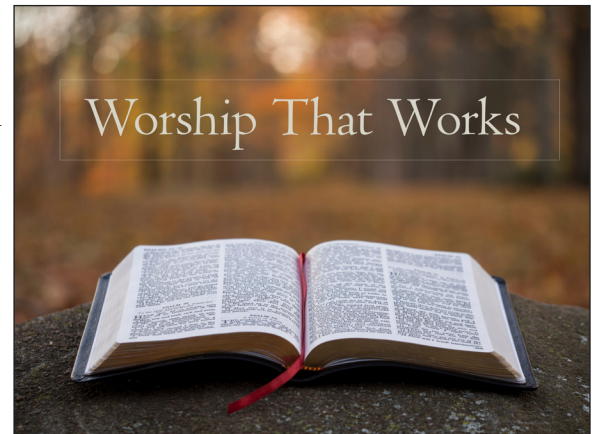
The Evangel

WORSHIP THAT WORKS

With the Annual Meeting, there is so much soon to be said – and included in this edition of the Evangel – about some of the tremendous work going on in many quarters of the parish as we labor through COVID-19. I strongly encourage you to read in this publication and in the reports that were sent to you about the plethora of Spirit-led ministries happening right now at St. Stephen's.

My focus here is on worship. Some of you have asked me how I managed to pick worship times that seem to work one way or the other for a lot of people. The truth is, my motto these days is "Worship that Works". What works now may not work in a few weeks. Our in-person worship has gradually increased in attendance each of the three weeks we've held it, and our virtual attendance is starting to come back up after understandably dropping after outdoor worship began. But come November, we have to account for the fact that it will be cold outside. Do we try to move worship indoors? Do we perhaps flip-flop our worship times (livestream early, in-person later when it warms up?). I want to be very clear how instrumental your Vestry and other parish leadership has been in working together to make these decisions with me. Your input in the survey we sent out a few months was also immensely helpful. While we engage in intentional conversation about what the congregation wants and where we want to go, I feel like right now we are just going with our gut, since we have never been through anything like this before - at EVERY conceivable level.

What has stood out for me is the fact that everyone has *missed* this place so much. I see the excited faces at our outdoor worship. I think we are just excited to see each other's faces! But there is more to it. The ability to see and hear each other, the ability to actually interact with your new priest, and the gorgeous setting of being outdoors as we listen to the familiar words of our Prayer Book remind me of the myriad of ways in which God moves through this activity of prayer and praise that is called worship. On the virtual side, in spite of our internet signal crashing to zero on our first Sunday doing it, our new streaming equipment in the church has turned out so much better than I could imagine. I heard people telling me what a joy it was to see the church but also to really SEE what is going on through the close-ups, the wider shots, and the clear audio that makes you feel like you are almost there in person. I continue to be in awe of Adam Ballintoy and our Communications team for the quantity AND quality of the work they have done.



OPPORTUNITY & INVITATION

As I have been reminded many times recently by our bishop and canon, our goal post-COVID is not necessarily to return to the way things were. This time is an opportunity and invitation for us to consider why worship is meaningful; what ways it draws us closer to God; and how we may structure our services going forward in ways that enhance our encounter with the living God and raise up the gifts of more and more people to make our worship truly a shared experience.

I say this because several of you have mentioned to me that, “Well, I guess that 10:30 is when the big service will be going forward”, or “Since you picked 9 for in-person worship, does that mean Newsong is coming back?” No. The honest truth is that, I picked these times because they are what work – for now. I haven’t been here long enough in “normal” times (whatever that is) to really formulate a long-term vision for times and formats for worship. One of the biggest challenges your Vestry and Interim Rectors undertook before my arrival was this new reality that, until St. Stephen’s budget can increase to afford an assistant again, we are a one-priest parish. As such, the decision was made to scale down from three services to two. Unfortunately Newsong was the service that was eliminated, and I know it was a hard outcome for a good number of people. I fondly remember this service from my previous time with you and enjoyed the music, the informality, and the intimacy of that setting.

ANNUAL MEETING

What I will be asking in the Annual Meeting and following is input from all of you, likely in the form of another survey at some point soon that gives me a chance to hear your worship preferences. I want to be clear on the front end that the purpose of this survey is NOT about going along with whatever the majority opinion is, whether that is in relation to service times or the style of service. What I want to know is what makes worship meaningful to you. I love the simplicity and solemnity of Rite I, I love the majesty and beauty of choral Eucharists, and I deeply connect with more contemporary and less formal styles of worship. But as we look forward beyond the current phase of “Worship that Works”, I do not simply want to hear preferences but where and in what ways you connect with God. I also want to know how we can shape our worship going forward that invites new people, that offers ways for people both inside and outside our current circle to more deeply connect, and that discerns and acts upon the ways in which God is moving among us.

In the meantime, even before a survey is sent out, please share your thoughts with me. Email me, call me, make an appointment to come see me (especially if we haven’t met yet!). Our corporate prayer life is the heart of what makes us Episcopalians. It is the most precious thing among many precious things that we share. I invite and challenge you to look beyond what is familiar or what is preferable. Within the broad and diverse span of our Prayer Book, hymnals, and our supplemental liturgical resources, think of ways in which we may innovate and imagine worship that is transformative, powerful, and mission-minded. Envision worship that sends our people into the world truly rejoicing in the power of the Spirit and ready to share what they have experienced here with the world beyond our doors. St. Stephen’s is a unique place that offers a great amount of tradition and possesses a dynamic that is open to new ways of doing things (although almost every one of us dreads change when it starts!). Take this opportunity to visualize the future of worship at St. Stephen’s. From this we will decide when, what, and where our worship will eventually settle.

THE BEST PLACE TO DREAM

For now, the best place to dream and imagine is to be an active participant in worship. Whether in-person or on-line, each week you are present is another week the prayers, the Scriptures, the sermon, the music, and the receiving of communion (when we can do it) shape you a little more each week into the person God made you to be. Be present and be transformed so that we can be God’s transforming love and power with each other and with the world.

~ Fr. Bailey



Photo by Sharon Mccutcheon on Unsplash

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Church Women United in the Oak Ridge Area thanks St. Stephen’s for \$300 in donations to the 2020 Blankets+ Drive. The fund will help displaced persons here and abroad during this time of continued calamity.

~ Gay Marie Logsdon

CHRISTIAN ED - PANDEMIC-STYLE

As our church's alternative service plans continue and indoor formation for our children remains on hold, our plans include at least monthly family events through December. Our parish families recently gathered outside with the children playing organized games in the grove while the adults were safely spaced on the labyrinth to discuss past, present, and future formation offerings for our youngest parishioners. Plans are in the works for two outdoor family events in October; details to follow soon.

Our virtual Sunday Children's Chapel continues with appealing and well-paced demonstration lessons taken from the lectionary. Students have received Catechesis-based home activity boxes as well. Committee members and Fr Bailey are currently strategizing a return to indoor Sunday instruction for our Catechesis-aged children in 2021.

In-person Middle/High School level Sunday school classes are in progress with health precautions in place, addressing the goal of growing deeper in faith and finding balance between school, life, and our faith. Their current studies include "Finding Sabbath," "You Can Do Hard Things," and "What does it mean to be Episcopalian?"

Fr Bailey has completed the "Just Mercy" book study concerning those on the margins of society and their interactions with the justice system, and is now offering the "Book of Acts" study on YouTube, providing history, context, and maps to illuminate and expand our knowledge of this story.

~ Nancy Anderson, Christian Education

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

The Blessing of the Animals is back at St. Stephen's! Please feel free to join us on **Saturday, October 10 at 10 AM** in the Grove. Masks and social distancing are required for humans, but bring your beloved furry, scaly, or feathered friends! Please make sure all animals are leashed or caged at all times. There will be a very short liturgy, a prayer said for each animal, and a certificate of blessing given to each owner. Also we will offer a chance to remember pets who have passed away. Please send photos of your beloved pet to Elizabeth at secretary@ststephensorg.org, and they will be displayed.



WOMEN'S INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Women's Interfaith Dialogue will host a virtual presentation detailing the plans for the Anderson County Family Justice Center. Melissa Miller, Site Coordinator for the future center, and Detective Wendy Zolkowski of the Oak Ridge Police Department are the guest speakers. The center will house agencies that will work together to offer free, confidential, comprehensive aid to victims of domestic violence, elder abuse and sexual assault, as well as to victims of child abuse. The presentation will start promptly at **11 a.m. on Monday, October 5, 2020**. To receive a link for the session, send a request to Gay Marie Logsdon (wid.logsdon@gmail.com) by **5 p.m. on Sunday, October 4, 2020**.

~ Gay Marie Logsdon

HALLOWEEN HYMNA-THON!

Halloween is coming, and we'll be celebrating with a special Halloween Hymna-Thon! **October 31, 2020.**

Bring a blanket, camping chairs, perhaps even a picnic! Enjoy the grounds around our sanctuary (socially distanced, of course!)

Come organists Simon Ballintoy, Cathy Whitten and Karl Jacob as they play their way through all 720 hymns of the 1982 Hymnal. Windows will be flung open to let the lofty sounds of the organ be heard far and wide! You can also listen via livestream.

Sponsor a hymn in memory of a loved one, or simply choose your favorite.

~ Simon Ballintoy, Director of Music



Photo by David Menidrey on Unsplash

Dear Reading Camp staff,

How did your summer go? I know there were limited activities, but did you all still enjoy your summer? I enjoyed mine. Oh, guess what! I got my drivers license! I have been driving alot lately! I don't get out much, but when we do, I go. Maddie and I are doing distance learning. We think it would be better if we virtually learn

because our family has health issues. My mamaw, my aunt, and my great-grandmother has diabetes. We just found out that my mamaw might have heart disease. Oh, and my mom is doing good. My mom's neighbor's cat had kittens and they gave them away because they couldn't keep them. So, we took a girl kitten. She is fluffy. She has an orange, black, and white coat of fur. I will try to send a picture. We named her Callie. One of our horses had a colt. It is solid black. I think it's a girl. I am a junior in highschool, this year. My classes are Tennessee U.S. history, Spanish 1, Pre-calculus, and English comp 1 which is Dual Enrollment and I am taking it through Roane State Community College.

In case you might not know what Dual Enrollment is, it is where qualifying high school Juniors + seniors can take college classes while still in highschool taking highschool classes as well. Anyway, this is what's happened to me this summer. I hope we can have another Reading camp soon. I miss all of you! I also wanted to say Thank you all so much for giving us the Activity Bags! You all did not have too! Thank you for everything! God bless you all! My mamaw has to go to the heart doctor in September. Please Pray that we get good news if you all don't cure too! Look on BACK → We are hoping for good news. Thank you all for everything! We miss every one! Be safe!

Sincerely,

Adriene King
Adriene King



P.S. I got straight A's again this year (last school year)

THANK YOU!
STAY SAFE!

October Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

10/1	Briley Miller	10/16	Thelma McGrory
	Haydin Miller	10/17	Harper Neal
	Jamey Kennedy	10/19	Eph Klots
10/2	Jim Ball	10/20	Karen LeSieur
	Melissa Madgett	10/22	Rebecca Cavender
10/3	Virginia Hall		Blair Thurston
10/4	Ed Stickle	10/24	Frances Hodges
	Amy Pennoyer		Karen Yearwood
10/6	Jenny Meredith	10/25	Brian Bovee
	Charles Higdon		Jay Webber, III
10/7	Jerry Hanna	10/26	Doreen Graf
10/8	Katie Kendall	10/28	Lew Felton
10/10	Mike Boyd		Susan Nalls
	Cyril Meredith, Jr.	10/29	Patricia Hartman
10/12	Rachel Kirk	10/30	Mary Fell
10/13	Jamie LaRose		Brennon Rosario
10/15	Matt Bailey		

ANNIVERSARIES

10/7	Nancy Carow & Brent Sigmon
10/15	Mary & Bill Petersen
10/17	Nancy & Jim Anderson
	Elizabeth & James Pack
	Beth & James Reed
10/19	Heather & Cleon Hartman, II
10/21	Nancy & Charles Higdon
10/23	Carole & Ross Mol



Where God is seen, love is felt, lives are changed!

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