



MAY 2020

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

212 N. Tulane Avenue

Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Tel: 865.483.8497

www.ststephensnor.org

The Rev. Bailey Norman

PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Damos

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Simon Ballintoy

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

choir@ststephensnor.org

Caroline Wood

YOUTH MINISTER

youthminister@ststephensnor.org

Cameron Ellis

TREASURER

treasurer@ststephensnor.org

Elizabeth Pack

PARISH SECRETARY

secretary@ststephensnor.org

Nancy Anderson

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

cecoord@ststephensnor.org

Caroline Wood, Craig Brent,

Mary Petersen

EPISCOPAL YOUTH

FELLOWSHIP (EYF)

eyf@ststephensnor.org

Jim Ball

WEBMASTER

webmaster@ststephensnor.org

Sharon Thomas

NURSERY SUPERVISOR

Brent Sigmon

SENIOR WARDEN

seniorwarden@ststephensnor.org

Judith Delaney

JUNIOR WARDEN

juniorwarden@ststephensnor.org



The Evangel



THE ESSENCE OF WHO WE ARE

My friend Roger Johnson recently shared with me a quote from noted author, priest, and monk Richard Rohr regarding our time living in the reality of COVID-19:

"A few years ago, I wrote, somewhat facetiously, that the Church should close all programs for a year and simply teach people to pray. It seems to me we may unintentionally have just such an opportunity right now – although I sincerely hope it won't last a year!" ~Richard Rohr

I have found myself being drawn back to that statement over and over again these last few days. For the Normans, quarantine and isolation is NOT a slow time: we have completed the sale of our house in Mobile, are now under contract as of this writing for a house here in Oak Ridge, we are helping my mother in the process of moving her to Oak Ridge next month, making sure James Henry is actively engaged in his new school (which he has attended almost exclusively virtually since we've arrived), and trying to complete all the tasks of relocating (getting TN drivers license and car tags, getting into new doctors and vets, etc) while said offices are on reduced manpower and/or hours. Life at the church, while very different, is no less busy. Our Communications Team and our faithful worship leaders have worked very hard in providing accessible and high-quality videos for you EVERY single day; your amazing staff members continue in their work, albeit mostly from home now; new pastoral care strategies are being developed; the Vestry and Buildings & Grounds Committee are busily working on improvements on the property, particularly in the nave, during our time of physical exile; a number of our small groups, including EYF, continue to meet regularly via Zoom; and I remain in weekly contact with varying groups across the diocese for support, information, and instruction.

And I'm tired from simply writing all of this! Yet in spite of the busyness, two common traits have emerged from all of this work – the **building up of prayer and of community**. With the notable exception of getting government-issued IDs, all of the work – personal and ecclesiastical – has greatly enriched my sense of belonging to one another. Even through the process of selling and buying a home, I have drawn closer to our realtor, bankers, insurance agents, and all the people who have played a role in this process. I've observed that the people who work for large banks and insurance companies – places that normally are more bureaucratic and less community-driven in their interactions these days – are willing to go that extra mile to help and make a human connection during these times.

continued on page 2...

...continued from page 1...

Through all the busy work we've done at the church, every item I listed above has brought the people involved closer together and given us not only a sense of existent community but also one of growing and evolving community. All of these activities have led me into a deeper sense of prayer – often times the prayer in which I feel overwhelmed and ask God simply to guide me. This prayer has been answered by realizing the breadth and scope of the community here at St. Stephen's and beyond, AND it has been answered by realizing the activity and energy of the Holy Spirit that is moving among us.

I imagine some of you may be as busy as ever, while others are staring at the four walls of your apartment or home on a far too regular basis. Yet I hope you will hold these words of Richard Rohr in mind as well. If busyness remains your lot in life, what is the busyness for? Is it for simply occupying yourself in a time of change and anxiety, or is it for living out our identity for who we are as the children of God and to be those with whom God seeks to be present and enjoy? On the other hand, if you find an abundance of time on your hands, I'm sure you've found yourself reading new books, watching TV shows or movies, talking on the phone more, and simply having more time for your mind to wander. Perhaps the silence is an invitation to dwell on things – things that are uncomfortable, things that are changing, things that are being made new – and live out the reality that God is the constant and abiding presence in the midst of those thoughts about ourselves and our place in things. As much as you may want to gather and be with friends and family, perhaps this opportunity is a way in which God is gathering us for something new.

Gathering Anew

What will that gathering look like? Literally speaking, Bishop Cole has begun to discuss with diocesan clergy ideas for what our physical regathering will look like. In everything I am about to share with you, please note 1) timelines are subject to change; and 2) I'll stress it again, but we are NOT talking about returning to church-as-before anytime soon. For now, here are a few notes to keep in mind:

- Virtual services will continue for the month of **May**.
- **Youth Sunday** will be held as per our tradition on **May 10, 2020**, but it will be virtual.
- We will have a special Evensong on the **Feast of the Ascension, Thursday May 21, 2020** that will be livestreamed to recognize and celebrate an often forgotten but highly important festival day in our church calendar.
- **Pentecost Sunday on May 31, 2020** will be our next celebration of Holy Eucharist. Communion bread will be delivered to those who request it.
- Eucharistic Visitors will NOT visit for the month of May, BUT, they will continue to exercise their important ministry of calling and connecting with people.
- Pastoral care phone trees continue to be expanded and developed to keep folks connected.
- **The Bishop** (and not state and/or local officials) will be our guideline for reopening services and gatherings.
- The Bishop is exploring options of gathering small groups of **10-15** for Sunday and other worship services beginning in June
- While restrictions of social distancing will not be relaxed in the foreseeable future, the numbers that are permitted to gather may increase *as long as social distancing guidelines remain in effect and people are wearing masks.*

- The exact manner of who and how these gatherings will take place is still being worked out, but other dioceses are also looking at good “middle way” solutions to begin gatherings that utilize safe and proven practices.
- **Virtual services and streaming are here to stay at St. Stephen's:** We want to keep them so that, when we start gathering again, people who are at-risk or more cautious to meet still have access to the worship services and studies at St. Stephen's.
- The Communications Committee is beginning to look at long-term strategies for equipment needs, manpower needs, and overall vision for what our streaming/videos, website, and core parish communications need to look like.

The vision that undergirds all of this is how this work accentuates our individual prayers and our corporate prayer and fellowship. I hope you can see that this work is not being done to be busy but to continue to discern the ways in which we can be St. Stephen's. I have not even mentioned our robust outreach. I am having some conversations this week about how we can continue to serve on a couple of outreach fronts during this time of quarantine and remain true to our vision of a church that is active and serving the greater community.

I hope you will find in what we are offering insights and teachings that will help you grow in your prayer life. Please send me suggestions of things that might be helpful to you. Please let me know if there are people who are not feeling connected to St. Stephen's (remember, I'm still learning everyone again and meeting new people!). Please let me know if there is someone in need in the parish, and I will be discreet in approaching them.

As life is stripped down to the grain of the wood right now, take time to rub your hand on that very grain – the needs of our souls, the burdens we carry, and the hopes and joys for which we are grateful. It is time to look at the essence of who we are and to whom we belong before we worry about the tasks of how to decorate it again and make it shiny. As uncomfortable as it is, live into the rawness of our existence right now. We are all discerning the essence of what it means to be the church now as well. Let us not worry about getting back to what once was and instead focus on how we may grow as individuals and as the Body of Christ into what God calls us to be.

I am deeply grateful to be here with all of you.

Christ's Peace,

Bailey

BEING PREPARED

We are a parish family, and occasionally we are asked to reach out to extended family in very specific and confidential circumstances, i.e. a parishioner is in the hospital and needs to get in contact with a family member that is not part of our church.

Some parishioners have provided us with a name, phone number and/or email of a close relative, so that we may contact them on their behalf, in case of an emergency. If you would like to provide us with an emergency contact, rest assured that we would keep that information for internal-use only.

If you are interested in providing an emergency contact, please email the Parish Secretary at secretary@ststephensor.org, with a name, phone number, email and relationship to you. Thank you!

FEEDING OUR NEIGHBORS

For more than 25 years, Grace Lutheran Church has provided a weekly food pantry to residents of Anderson, Roane, and Morgan Counties. The Pantry is entirely funded by donations and grants. Many clients are working and not eligible for the federal Supplemental Nutritional Aid Program (SNAP). Many are disabled or raising grandchildren. All require help feeding their families, whether for a couple of months between jobs or for longer periods of time.

The Pantry stocks its shelves with groceries from Second Harvest. The USDA also provides some food - things like canned vegetables and fruits, cheese, peanut butter and eggs. Faithful supporters, including several local churches and Boy Scout troops collect and contribute non-perishables. One church used to bring fresh vegetables from their garden in the summer.

But the Pantry still has to buy some items from local stores; most of these are not covered by SNAP. They include toilet paper, diapers, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo, soap, and all personal hygiene products. Donations of these items are always welcome.

Right now, the Pantry is having difficulty stocking macaroni and cheese. If you have a few boxes that you could spare, please consider donating them. Cash contributions are also welcome. Dollars stretch farther at Second Harvest than at Kroger. The Pantry would also welcome volunteers, especially after the danger of COVID-19 is past. For more information or to arrange a drop-off, contact Grace: office@graceor.org or 483-3787 (Mon-Thurs, 9-2).

OPPORTUNITY FOR OUTREACH

The Ecumenical Storehouse has a new Operating Schedule for our Churches during 2020. St. Stephen's will now be combined with The First Christian Church, located on the Oak Ridge Turnpike at Gum Hollow Road. Nancy Denton is the Storehouse Director of First Christian Church. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and The First Christian Church will share operating duties at the Ecumenical Storehouse during the month of July 2020.

The Outreach Committee at St. Stephen's is **seeking a volunteer** who would consider being the Director from St. Stephen's and serve on the Board of Directors for the Ecumenical Storehouse. Jim Kring has enjoyed serving as the Director from St. Stephen's for 15+ years, and will be stepping down.

We invite anyone to consider serving as the St. Stephen's Director and Jim is offering to give them all the assistance he can. The [Ecumenical Storehouse website](#) is a great place to get an introduction on the overall operation.

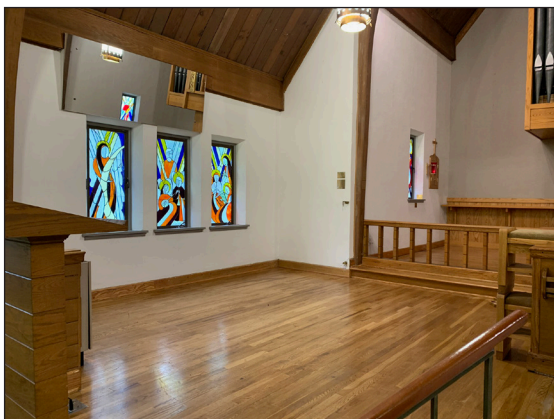
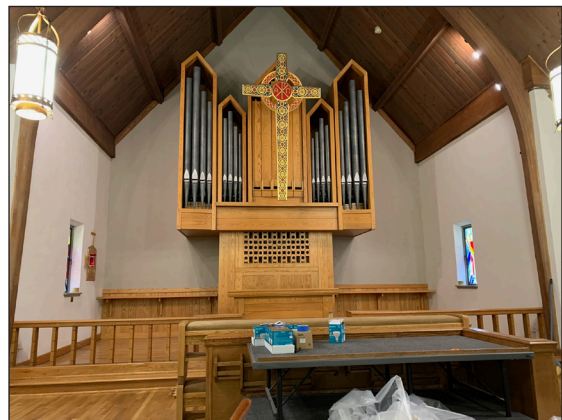
John Murphy (murphy5698@bellsouth.net) is the present Chair of the Outreach Committee. Please contact him directly if you would like to volunteer for the Director position. You can also contact Jim Kring at jbk4ut@gmail.com for any additional information. We have a good group of past volunteers from St. Stephen's that have graciously served over the past years, and there are many handouts that would be helpful. Jim is offering to assist a new Director at the Storehouse during July to help with a smooth transition.

SNEAK PEEKS!

While we've been away, the Nave has been getting a bit of a facelift with some new paint! Special thanks to Nancy Carow, Susan Meredith, and Sara Norman, along with our Buildings & Grounds chair, Lew Felton, for their work in getting fresh and vibrant colors to the Nave and Narthex walls!

We also replaced the pedalboard on our pipe organ. This was a needed repair approved some time ago, but it was finally completed this past week. It has added a warmer and richer sound to our lovely organ! Our organist Simon Ballintoy is very pleased!

Work will continue in the Nave as we prepare to wax and buff the wood floors in the chancel and sanctuary. Before all the chancel furniture is moved back, we want to clean and polish these floors to give them a new shine as well!



May Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

5/1 Gary Grubb
Tucker Reed
5/2 Kay Brookshire
Kathy Chippendale
Carolyn Singer
5/4 Bob Bardorf
Peggy Babineau
5/6 Cyril Meredith, III
5/8 Teddy Dantzler
5/9 Mary Helsley
Cameron Ellis
5/11 Asher Berven
5/12 Robert Giuliano
Delaney Thurston
5/15 Ada LaRose
5/18 Tailen DiGregorio
5/19 Lisa Plante
Robbie Cordani
Joy Mull

5/20 Lilly Cooper
Jeff Thurston
5/21 Scott Chippendale
5/22 Lou Volk
Shari Carter
5/25 Dan Tuxbury
Jonathan Kruzic
Cecilia Moore
5/26 Peggy DeVan
Vivian Cooper
Liam LaRose
5/27 Roger Johnson
5/28 Emma Sanchez-Ihli
Emma Ellis
5/29 Elizabeth Pack
5/31 Autumn Ihli

ANNIVERSARIES

5/8 Mary & Wayne Roades
5/11 Nancy & David Caldwell
Olivia & John Cox
5/14 Jenny & Cyril Meredith, III
5/16 Gay Marie Logsdon & Jamie Burnham
5/18 Fay & Martin Murray
5/22 Happy & Ed Johnson
Diane & Donny Sams
5/29 Mary Ellen & Eph Klots



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

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church 212 N. Tulane Avenue Oak Ridge, TN 37830

865.483.8497 Tel • 865.483.9926 Fax • www.ststephensor.org