



# The First Order

## St. Stephen's Parish

Ph 413.448.8276 // Fx 413.442.5374 // [mail@ststephenspittsfield.org](mailto:mail@ststephenspittsfield.org) // [www.ststephenspittsfield.org](http://www.ststephenspittsfield.org)

FEBRUARY 2016

## Welcome to the Winter Lent Program!

5 Wednesday evenings

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 with desserts and tea/coffee

As the clergy staff recently sat together to suggest themes for our Lent program this year, we tossed around all the ideas that appealed to us. With Lent so early, we know how hard it is to gather people after dark, in the winter, when our bodies long for hearth and home...

We also referred back to our Adult Ed survey results, which showed a strong preference for simpler evening formats, and not for midweek potlucks, after a busy day. But dessert and coffee/tea nights – two thumbs up!

Taking this into account, we also read between the lines of where our longings are for these months ahead. What are we clergy longing for in the parish, and what longings have we heard from you?

### Community

Pure and simple, we long to connect, in new ways and in old ways. In worship, in play, in study – we long to know that God is near to our hearts, and that we are connected to the people around us.

So, this Lent, we are designing a “buffet” of Wednesday evenings for you! Community is the theme, but each evening will bring a new twist on that. While the specifics are still being ironed out, here are some of our thoughts:

- An evening of playful music-making and song
- A story-telling evening
- A communal coloring event
- A game night

These evenings will be intergenerational, playful, and will help us, in this season, draw closer to one another. Our Sunday morning 9:00 a.m. format will continue with new material and focus on western Christian mysticism. Plus, Joseph will offer a smattering of single-meeting classes, where you can enjoy one class on a topic without committing to a series.

Join us Wednesday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 with coffee/tea and desserts: Feb. 17, 24, March 2, 9, and 16 (not Ash Wednesday and not Holy Week).

Reflections



**February 9th  
starting at 5:30**

Yes, it's that time again, already! Let's get in the Spirit for Lent by having a blow-out party the night before~ this year, we are doing Mardi Gras (instead of pancakes) for dinner!

**WE will provide**

- ❖ JAMBALAYA (both traditional and vegetarian versions!)
- ❖ beverages
- ❖ Cajun music
- ❖ & a game or two

**YOU bring anything at all** to add to the fun:

- ❖ side dishes, breads, decadent desserts
- ❖ yourself!

The evening will end with the annual burning of the palm branches for our Ash Wednesday services.

*Laissez les Bon Temps Rouler! (that's French for: Come to church and have a blast!!!)*

## **TWO Ash Wednesday Services!**

Join us at noon on Ash Wednesday at St. Stephen's, for the traditional Prayer Book service and the imposition of ashes.

Join with the Ecumenical Community at 7:00 p.m. at Zion Lutheran church, for their Jazz worship, which also includes the option of receiving ashes for Ash Wednesday.

**12 noon: St. Stephen's**

**7:00 p.m.: Zion Lutheran**

## **From Joseph**

In a short while we will be entering the holy season of Lent! Are you excited? I am! (Yes, I know that sounds strange).

The season of Lent is an opportunity to commit to our spiritual development and growth in different ways. It doesn't get a lot of talk these days, but one time-tested way is fasting. Fasting is not simply about giving up food and saying "We're not worthy" a la Wayne's World (Am I dating myself by giving that reference?). Fasting gets us in touch with our bodies on a fundamental level.

How often do we listen to our bodies? How many times do we think we're actually hungry, when instead we're craving those salty potato chips or that sweet chocolate? An experience of giving up food for significant periods of time can get us in touch with our bodies and, this is incredibly important, remind us that we are not "brains operating bodies as if they were robots" but that we are "bodies with souls and minds."

Fasting by itself, though, is not enough. Our fasting should be tied to helping the other; St. Augustine of Hippo described fasting and almsgiving as the two wings of prayer in his commentary on Psalm 43. Consuming less lets us give away more! Fasting reminds us that we don't need as much to survive as we think (not just food, but clothes, other things), and giving stuff (not just money, but food, a listening ear, and more) reminds us that we are part of a world that needs healing, hope, and love. We're also reminded that we, too, stand in need of healing, hope, and love.

And as you plan Lent, start to give attention to Easter. Lent is 40 days, Easter is 50! In old traditions, Easter was a time for "mystagogy" (i.e. explaining the holy mysteries of Baptism and Communion). Maybe pick a book you'll read in Easter that will complement the spiritual disciplines you take on for Lent.

If you want some guidance, don't hesitate to take time to meet with your priests! We might have some good recommendations or counsel to help you in your spiritual growth.

God's mercy is everlasting; come, let us adore him!  
Peace,  
Joseph+

# Winterlight 2015

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.;"(Jer. 29:11)*

During the week of December 26<sup>th</sup>- January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, nine youth from Pittsfield area high schools explored this passage during Winterlight 40. Winterlight, a youth retreat for high school students, has taken place for the last 40 years at Kanuga's Camp and Conference Center in Hendersonville, NC. Each year has a different theme. This year's theme was "Hope and a Future." Traveling to Kanuga early in the morning of December 26<sup>th</sup>, seven members from St. Stephen's and one from South Congregational along with several other diocesan youth boarded the plane for Kanuga. For seven of our youth, this was their second time participating. Below, our youth share their experience of Winterlight 40.

## Dear St. Stephen's

Thank you so much for the amazing opportunity to go to Kanuga for a second time to enjoy myself at Winterlight 40. It is my favorite place I get to go to during Christmas break.

The theme of the week was Hope and a Future. For day one, we got to hang out and get to know the people that we came with. On day two, or day zero on our schedule, we went to see Star Wars because it was 70 degrees and there wasn't any snow for us to tube on. Once the week was in high gear we were involved in many opportunities to help us learn what Hope and a Future were in our daily lives. When we talked about the themes Hope and a Future it was in small groups. These groups were made up of six participants and two staff members. We each had to draw or write on a piece of card stock and say what we saw giving us Hope and a Future each day for about four days. Each afternoon we went to a workshop. Some were just to have fun and some were on what we could do to help out in the church to make it a safe place for all.

Again, thank you so much to my St. Stephen's family for this amazing opportunity to let me go to Winterlight 40 at this amazing place called Kanuga!

With Gratitude,  
Zack Senecal

## February

### Happy Birthday:

- 2 Alyssa Montgomery (17), Sarah Moon
- 4 Jayce Bert (4), Derek Bodenstab
- 5 Edward Hughes
- 6 Angelina Pierce (9)
- 7 Hannah Smith
- 8 Kevin Coakley (18), Anna Hassan (11)
- 10 Aaron MacArthur
- 11 Jane Hand
- 12 David Ekstrom
- 13 Judy Culver, Anne Marcure
- 14 Landon Wilson (8)
- 16 Clara-Ann Cazavelan (15)
- 17 Henry Biegel (a milestone!)
- 18 Carmine Duchaine (4), Mackenzie Ellis (17), Roy Stillman
- 19 Sophia Wilson (6)
- 21 Madeline Harrington (8), Lance Schroder (8), Tucker Schroder (8)
- 22 Robert Reynolds
- 23 Maureen Corcoran, Peter Croce, Diane Forsyth
- 25 Nichole Colon, Doug Demary (a milestone!)
- 27 Veronica Fenton, Dawn Mathes
- 28 Colin Connors (16), Lois Symonds (a milestone!)

### Happy Anniversary:

- 3 Danielle and Patrick Shaw (2007)
- 5 Constance and Henry Biegel (1966 – 50 Years!)
- 21 Lyla-Jean and Thomas Clapper (1981)

# St. Stephen's Parish

67 East Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

*Change Service Requested*

Non-Profit Org. U.S.  
POSTAGE P A I D  
Permit No. 62  
Pittsfield, Ma. 01201

## A few Reminders

- there is always a need for non-perishable food in the basket by the Font
- there is also always a need for personal items in the box in the back hall
- that it is helpful for the group who count money on Mondays if you write your name on the outside of your envelope – and on the outside of your Rector's Fund envelope, especially if you fill them with cash as opposed to a check (which carries your name) – thank you!

## Did You Know?

- that **Grady Pedersen** made second team, All-Central County Boys Soccer Team in the Berkshire Courier
- that I missed **Cameron Langsdale** who made the BART Honor Roll for the first trimester
- that **Donna and William Chandler** were recognized for 20 years – Volunteer Service in Berkshire County 4-H

## The Eclectic Book Club

This group will meet on Friday, February 5th at 6:00 p.m., in the Sears Room. Joan McFalls and Joan Kurber will co-host the event, offering wine and goodies prior to a delicious potluck supper. We will then discuss the book, *The Men Who United the States* by Simon Winchester. Please join us for a perfect gathering of good food, good company and lively discussion.

