



The First Order

St. Stephen's Parish

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AUGUST 2016

Reflections

Pivot Time.

July and August in the church year feel like a pivot point to me. We've wrapped up the school-year programming, we're on our summer worship schedule, folks are travelling and attendance is lighter. It looks almost like hibernation to the casual observer.

Meanwhile, that couldn't be further from the truth. We are working hard to redesign the church school program, which will roll out in just over 4 weeks. We are thinking through adult education for fall. We are excited about Vacation Bible School during August 15-18. Staff vacations are folded into the schedule to maintain constant coverage for pastoral care and programming. Appetizers are being planned for the Paint&Sip event on Sunday, August 14th (5:30pm)! Worship tweaks, Advent programs, church school teacher support, family programs, PR, communications, and on we go. Staff will meet this month to set the calendar for September through January.

It is an exciting time, a time of dreaming, of choosing, of prayer and laughter, and thinking deeply about what this parish means to each of us, and why and how we can support it. You can support St. Stephen's this summer by joining us, even in your cut-offs and heavy metal t-shirt, even when you find 9am too early or too late, even when you wonder if anyone will notice or miss you if you aren't here. There are visitors to greet and welcome, stories to share, relationships

to begin or refresh. Many people have jokingly told me that "God takes the summer off around here..." ~ well, OK.

Maybe just a reminder, then, that God's love for you does **not** take a holiday, and that wherever you are, and however you feel, that grace and love are with you. Stay safe out there, and stay in touch!

Cricket +

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The Bishop is coming on September 11th!

Save the Date, and be sure to plan to join us that Sunday. If you are interested in Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation, have you let the office or clergy know? Please call in so we can prepare for this Celebratory Sunday!

Did You Know?

- That **Celeste Wheelock** made Dean's List at MCLA for the Spring semester.
- That **Matt Reynolds** earned a spot on the Honor Roll at Lee High School for the 4th quarter.
- That **Tessa Langsdale** earned High Honors at BART for the third trimester and **Cameron Langsdale** earned a spot on the Honor Roll for the same period.
- That **Rob Langsdale**, father of the two students named above, is the one who sets up the First Order once the editor has fed him the info – and he does a superb job!



The Dunkin' Donut Divas celebrate Barbara Smith's birthday at Melbourne Place.

August

Happy Birthday:

- 4 Owen McNeil (13)
- 5 Alex Currie (14), Kaiden Harrington (2)
- 6 Maureen McHugh, Shelby Reynolds (20)
- 7 Logan Kleiner (10), Elizabeth Oakes (a milestone), Evan Rose (11)
- 8 Laura Drummond (94 years young!), Joe White
- 9 Donald Lussier (a milestone), Susan Meckes, Bill Morey, Dylan Stetz (10)
- 10 Amanda Jones, Susan Wojtasik
- 15 Alayna Haviland (2)
- 16 Francis Demary, Chloe Haas (17)
- 17 Genevieve Greene (2), Gary Lamoureux
- 18 Virginia Fletcher, Nathan Gillman (12)
- 19 Noelle Bodenstab (6)
- 20 John Pieloch
- 21 Diana Ethier
- 22 Sara-Louise Oakes (10)
- 23 Mary Cowell (a milestone)
- 24 Jossirah Hanger-Brown (11), Jeanette Roosevelt (97 years young!)
- 28 Jacob DiGrigoli (5)
- 30 Claudia Curry
- 31 Harriet Cuyler, Krista Harrington, Joshua Donovan (16), Conner Stetz (12)

Happy Anniversary:

- 1 Laura Quinn and Richard O'Brien (1985)
- 4 Maureen and John Wilker (1962)
- 6 Diane Forsyth and Bill Frazier (2011)
- 8 Angela and Dan Moon (1992)
- 19 Michele and Peter Rousseau (1997), Doreen and William Sosa (2000)
- 24 Wendy and Mike Coakley (1996)
- 25 Jenny Gregg and Derek Bodenstab (2007)
- 26 Dawn and George Mathes (1978)
- 28 Sara and John Garinther (2004)
- 30 Gerry and John Crane (1958)



from Joseph

And like a flash of lightning, summer is nearly gone!

Now, there is no need to stress about how to make the last moments of summer last or what events need to happen to make it the best summer ever – that stress makes it harder to enjoy what’s left!

That’s easier said than done, especially if the coming Labor Day weekend is a sign that school (either as a student or as a teacher) is also on its way. Even for people who love school, it still entails a change of pace and new challenges in teaching and learning.

Yet we must always hold in mind the context that young people are growing up in. The tragic events of this summer in our nation and world have been challenging and painful, and even young children who aren’t aware of what happened are aware of how the adults in their lives felt.

Ministry with/by young people is so important for this reason, and it is the work of a whole community. Young people need a supportive, loving community that can rejoice and cry with them, encourage them, and nourish them with the wisdom of Christ. They deserve opportunities to try to explore and ask questions of themselves and the world.

As we turn to a new school year, we are also beginning new years in church school and in youth group.

If you are a young person, participate as much as you can. The Church is a place of rest for you, a community that loves you. And don’t be afraid to ask if you need help or want to talk.

If you are an older adult, pray for young people in our parish, in our community, and in our world, and also encourage them in all the things they are doing, both things in their church community and in the world around them.

TO BE PRAYED **BY** YOUNG PEOPLE:

God, you see my life. You see my joys and sadness. You know my heart and my mind. You hear my prayers. You know me, and you love me deeply. Help me in the things I do in school, at home, in church, and in my community. Help me to grow more loving toward myself and others, and help me to be wise. When I stumble or make mistakes, help me to grow from them and to trust that you and others will love me forever no matter what; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TO BE PRAYED **FOR** YOUNG PEOPLE:

God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FaithXchange Church Trips in August!

(meet at each location, 10 minutes before the listed start time)

Sunday, August 14th: South Berkshire Friends Meeting 10:30 AM

280 State Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Saturday, August 20th: Temple Anshe Anumin 10:45 AM

26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Sunday, August 21st: Grace Church in the Berkshires 10:00 AM

Crissy Farm, Great Barrington, MA 01230

St. Stephen's Parish

67 East Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Change Service Requested

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Repeats/Reminders

Paint & Sip at St. Stephen's on August 14th at 5:30 p.m. \$37 includes all your equipment and a gala "appetizer bar." You won't believe how well you will do with some tutelage!

Summer Faith Xchange Field Trips – visit our neighboring congregations throughout the summer – followed by conversations about the intersections between the Episcopal Church and other traditions. This program is especially encouraged for anyone wishing to be confirmed in September – but everyone is welcome!

Craig Reynolds invites anyone interested in an alternative to the 10:00 a.m. service: summer Sunday school called An Illustrated Earth: Celebrating God's Creation - in the Guild Room. The program is designed for pre-K through elementary-age children but all ages are welcome!

Eclectic Book Club

Keep on reading and take note of any books that you would recommend to others – or ones to "avoid." We meet again on September 2nd (Labor Day?) or September 9th. Would Book Club members please let Joan Kurber know your preference on dates – and volunteers for co-hosting. Thanks!

