

The First Order

St. Stephen's Parish

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September 2017

You Can Trust Yourself

Welcome to fall!

Maybe your summer was refreshing, and maybe it was too short, or maybe it has been a difficult time for you. However the Summer of 2017 played out, it's a snapshot in your photo album now, and it's time to turn the page. Ahead is a new season, a new chapter~ unwritten, unimagined. There is new hope, a new start.

What do you feel when you read that? Anxious? Sad? Excited?

It's all OK. Let yourself feel the feelings.

Be gentle with your fear and your enthusiasm, with your sense of loss and your hope for the future. *You can trust yourself to give you what you need.*

In Matthew (7:9-10), Jesus reminds us that **we know** the right things to do.

Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?

Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

You are in charge of giving yourself what you need.

You are called to give yourself what is good, and healthy, & what will bring you joy.

If we need 10 minutes of quiet, giving ourselves 2 hours of Netflix will not soothe us. If we need to take a short walk after a long day of sitting, a double bourbon will not calm the same places.

If we need to lift our hearts out of anxiety or sadness, turning on the news will not help.

Our lives are filled with choices. Our lives have also been filled with habits. Sure, sometimes zoning out, catching up, or a snack or drink is just what we need. But pause first, and double check. Ask yourself, with love, "What do you need? What can I do for you?"

I find myself often in transit~ from one appointment to another, from one place to the next. I may not have time for that half-hour of meditation or quiet, but I can park at my next destination and listen to a 3-minute meditation from a phone app like Aura, Buddhify, or Headspace. Maybe I just need to close my eyes and take three deep breaths. If you have an hour, or the whole day to yourself (know how rare and blessed a gift this is!), then ask yourself what you need before filling the time with busy-ness. If you have tasks that you need to do~ washing dishes, folding laundry, mowing the lawn~ can you do them without rushing, without resenting them? Can you treat the next dish, the next tshirt, the next swath of lawn, with attention and kindness? Enter into what you are doing, and don't wish the moment away.

Jon Kabat-Zinn has been known to say, "We have only moments to live." This right now is your moment. How will you spend it? What do you need?

You can trust yourself.

Cricket +

Reflections

Musical Notes from Joy Mullen

SING AND RING

As I write this, September is almost here and it is time to get back in the swing of singing and ringing. If you are interested in joining one of St. Stephen's musical ensembles, sign up on Rally Day or contact me personally.

The **Parish Choir** is comprised of adults and teenagers. We rehearse Tuesday evenings from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. and sing for worship at the 10:00 a.m. service during the academic year. Our first rehearsal will be Tuesday, September 12th. Reading music is not a requirement to participate in the choir, but all singers are expected to be able to match a pitch. The choir will begin singing for worship on Sunday, September 10th.

We will try to restart the **Children's Choir** this fall. We are looking for kids in grades 2 and up, who want to develop their singing voices and sing in a group. We need four or more children to sign up in order to make this worthwhile. Rehearsals will be Wednesday afternoons from 4:00 - 4:45 p.m. Contingent on gaining four singers, first practice will be Wednesday, September 20th. Choir members will learn to sing as well as become leaders during worship. We will work on learning to read music and to sing on pitch. One side benefit of participating in a church choir is that we will learn many interesting English vocabulary words. We will study the meaning of the hymn texts, which will help our overall theological understanding. The kids will be expected to behave during rehearsals and services.

The **Handbell Ringers** will practice every Monday evening from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Bell Choir rings a 3-octave set of Whitechapel Handbells and a 3-octave set of Malmark Choir Chimes. Our first rehearsal will be Monday, September 18th. We will play in church about once a month. If you are interested, please speak with me.

Weekly Meditation Hour

begins September 6th

Stop into the sanctuary on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for a once-a-week Silent Meditation hour! (actually, 45 minutes.)

No teaching. No Preaching.
Just time to sit together in silence.
All welcome ~ no experience needed



Youth Group BBQ with Zion Lutheran

At the Rector's house on
Sunday, September 10th, 5 - 7 p.m.

YEAH! This year, join Cricket and Tim for the kind of adventures you'll be telling your great-grandchildren about!

All youths, 6th grade and up, are heartily welcome.
Grilling and lawn games.

Please RSVP by calling the church office,
Or to cricketuvm@gmail.com
(for young people, 6th grade and up)



Fall Book Conversation

a joint event with Zion Lutheran!

Join Tim and Cricket in reading
"A Bigger Table" by John Pavlovitz.
More next month ...



Rally Day

Sunday, September 17th

Blessing of the Backpacks
(*& briefcases, diaper bags, purses, etc.!*)
will also take place on the 17th

**Church School will begin on
Sunday, September 24th**



from Joseph

In July I invited everyone to reflect on the following questions:

1. How do I / we understand God? Jesus Christ? The Holy Spirit? The Trinity?
2. How do I / we pray?
3. How do I / we read the Bible?
4. How do I / we love God?
5. How do I / we love our neighbor?

I love the conversations and reflections I've gotten from them! You'd be surprised how infrequently people talk with their priests about these questions. Some people feel embarrassed by what they don't know or remember, or believe that they should know more.

The Christian life is not about the accumulation or perfection of spiritual knowledge. While it is important to read Scripture and know the basic truths of the Gospel, it's not what we know that gives us life and saves us: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the one who created, sustains, and sanctifies us.

For some people, the intellectual life is a very important way of loving God and neighbor. Reading different theologians, writing down ideas, and talking with others can be deeply fulfilling and joyful for some; it becomes an invitation to wrestle with deep questions and engage in a conversation across space and time with another person about God.

But for every brilliant theologian like Augustine of Hippo, James Cone, or Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, there are countless others who go straight to the simplicity of the Gospel in everyday life. Br Lawrence wrote his book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, to talk about the way he conversed with God in his everyday life, and Therese de Lisieux wrote of her "little way of love" to dedicate the little things of her life to God, each becoming an act of love for God and neighbor.

Cricket and I would love to have conversations or hear your reflections on those questions above. And if you want to go deeper into your faith, whether it be through the life of the mind, the life of service, or the life of prayer (or all three!), we're here for you! (And we're still taking suggestions about fall Christian education programs for adults!)

Peace,
Joseph+

August

Happy Birthday:

- 3 Juelz Dowling-Black (1)
- 4 Owen McNeil (14)
- 5 Alex Currie (15)
- 6 Maureen McHugh (a milestone!), Shelby Reynolds (21!)
- 7 Elizabeth Oakes, Evan Rose (12)
- 8 Laura Drummond (95 years young), Joe White (a milestone!)
- 9 Donald Lussier, Bill Morey (a milestone!), Dylan Stetz (11)
- 10 Susan Wojtasik
- 12 Alex Morin (15)
- 15 Alayna Haviland, Susan Meckes
- 16 Francis Demary (a milestone!)
- 17 Genevieve Greene (3), Gary Lamoureux (a milestone!)
- 18 Virginia Fletcher (a milestone!), Nathan Gillman (13)
- 19 Noelle Bodenstab (7)
- 20 John Pieloch (a milestone!)
- 21 Diana Ethier
- 22 Sara-Louise Oakes (11)
- 23 Ralph Nightingale
- 24 Jossirah Hanger-Brown (12), Jeanette Roosevelt (98 years young!)
- 27 Robertine Morris
- 28 Jacob DiGrigoli (6)
- 30 Claudia Curry
- 31 Harriet Cuyler, Joshua Donovan (17), Krista Harrington, Conner Stetz (13)

Happy Anniversary:

- 6 Diane Forsyth and Bill Frazier (2011)
- 8 Angie and Dan Moon (1992-25 years!)
- 19 Michele and Peter Rousseau (1977-40 years!)
Doreen and William Sosa (2000)
- 24 Wendy and Mike Coakley (1996)
- 25 Jennifer Gregg and Derek Bodenstab (2007)
- 26 Dawn and George Mathes (1978)
- 28 Sara and John Garinther (2004)
- 30 Gerry and John Crane (1958)

We love our Online givers! And...we have heard you.

The hardest part about online pledging (because it is so easy!), is not having something to drop into the plate on a Sunday morning when the ushers come around.

Derek Bodenstab has been well known to the "counters" for designing small dollars that he drops into the plate. With Derek's blessing, we will be offering Bodenstab Bucks for you to use as your "I give Online" offering on Sundays!

Keep your eyes open: BBucks will be in Well Labeled Baskets near the front door entrance and the Chapel door entrance. Just take one with your morning bulletin, and then drop it in the offering basket to show your True Colors as an online giver!

(Want to know more about online giving? Jealous of those using the new BBucks? Call the office for more info!)

Music That Makes Community Monthly "Sing Ins"

Drop in to sing simple, joyful songs from many traditions, in this new monthly song circle.

Not a choir, not a "group." Just a drop-in opportunity for singers and music-lovers alike.

"Last Thursdays" of the month @ 6:00 p.m.

September 28, October 26, and November 30

Bring a drum if you like, or other percussion instruments!



Thoughts for the Day

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."

"The reason birds can fly and we can't is simply that they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings." -James M. Barrie

September

Happy Birthday:

- 2 Maria Zuckerman (a milestone!),
Nicholas Trapani (14)
- 3 Susan Cahill (a milestone!)
- 5 Rob Langsdale, Julia Pringle-Wallace
- 6 Alex Demary (6), Jean Gray
- 7 B.K.R. Brouker, Janice Furcinite
- 8 Beth-Anne Hamling (a milestone!)
- 9 Pru Dyer (98 years young!),
Ev Heiss (91 years young!)
- 10 Virginia Donovan
- 11 Louis Senecal (a milestone!)
- 13 Donna Chandler (a milestone!),
Audrey Harrington (13),
Mary Wheelock
- 14 Daniel Doyle
- 17 Magdalena Plumb (6),
William Plumb (6)
- 18 Steven Wheelock
- 19 Jezzmyne Dowling-Black (11)
- 20 Charles Rockwood (a milestone!)
- 22 Kasey Turner
- 24 Aloha Winchester
- 25 George Church III
- 26 Jamie Bannon, Christopher Fenton
- 29 David Adams, Helene Robillard (a
milestone!), Susan Smith
- 30 Katie Haviland

Happy Anniversary:

- 1 Sarah and Glenn Novak (1980)
- 3 Leila and Tom Drury (1972 –
45 years!)
- 7 Marjorie and Ed Van Dyke (1945 –
72 years!)
- 12 Jayne and George Church (1980)
- 14 Amanda and Joel Brunelle (2013)
- 15 Suzanne and Joe White (1984)
- 19 Virginia and Craig Smith (1987 –
30 years!)
- 23 Lois and Al Symonds (1967 –
50 years!)
- 25 Diana and William Macfarlane
(1993)

Pulpit Swap: The New Normal?

Sunday, September 24th: Welcome Pastor Tim Weisman!

The Rector will preach at Zion Lutheran that morning.

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**What Would It Look Like if ...**

## FIVE Downtown Churches worshipped together on a Sunday??

Find out on **October 29<sup>th</sup>**, when Zion Lutheran, First Church UCC, First United Methodist, and South Church UCC will join us for Reformation Sunday!

500 years after the Protestant Reformation, we are FINALLY all getting together! St. Stephen's will host, at 10:00 a.m.

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Eclectic Book Club

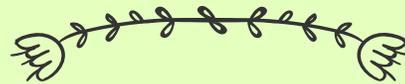
Have you read lots of good books this summer? We are all eager to hear about them at our first meeting of the fall on **Friday, September 8th**. Our co-hostesses are Dot Lambert and Charlene DiCicco.



News from Zion Lutheran

Jazz Vespers

The next Jazz Vespers is **Thursday, September 7** at 6:00pm at Zion Lutheran Church. Jazz Vespers brings together Marisa Massery, voice; Katharine Wiencke, flute; Andy Wrba, bass; Sturgis Cunningham, drums; and Ben Kohn, piano; for an evening service filled with jazz, song, and community. A hearty reception precedes Jazz Vespers starting at 5:30pm.

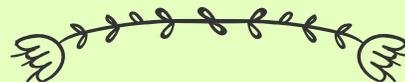


Taste of Germany Dinner

Zion Lutheran Church will host its annual Taste of Germany Dinner on **Friday, September 29**, 5-7pm. The dinner will take place in the newly-renovated Common Room at Zion Lutheran Church, 74 First St, Pittsfield, surrounded by beautiful stained glass windows and historic hardwood finishes.

The menu will include beef Rouladen with egg noodles, red cabbage, and green beans with carrots. Dessert is our famous Black Forest Cake. Take out is available. Beer from Wandering Star Brewery and various wines will be available for purchase.

Tickets are \$12 per person, \$6 for kids 12 and under, and can be purchased at the door or in advance by going to www.zionlutheranpittsfield.org and clicking on Tickets. The venue is handicap accessible and all are invited.



Save the date

A festive rededication of the sanctuary of Zion Lutheran Church will be held on **Saturday, October 28** at 1:00pm. The Rev. James Hazelwood, bishop of the New England Synod, will preside, and participants will include community leaders and area clergy.

St. Stephen's Parish

67 East Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

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Change Service Requested

a note of thanks

The Rev. Canon Robert D. Edmunds, Middle East Partnership Officer of the Presiding Bishop's Staff, wrote:

"Thank you for your parish's generous response to the Presiding Bishop's call for support of the Good Friday offering. On behalf of all those whose lives are improved throughout the Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, please accept my profound and sincere appreciation."

and another thank-you...

Here I am – recovering once more from surgery (the eye this time) – and my church family has stepped in, without my asking, with the most delicious food, with rides to appointments, with offers to shop or do whatever needs doing. There truly are bright rays of sunshine in an otherwise oft-gloomy day! I am so thankful for my St. Stephen's family – the Thankful Box will be full to overflowing next ingathering!

Your Editor, Joan