



The First Order

St. Stephen's Parish

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October 2017

Begin Again. And Again.

Just before I moved to the Berkshires, I was privileged to be allowed to spend more than a week as an "in house" guest at Gampo Abbey, a Buddhist monastery on the coast of Cape Breton island, Nova Scotia. Once a year, meditators may apply for this opportunity to live in the midst of a monastic community, best known for being the home of Pema Chodron, a prolific writer, speaker, and inspirational leader.

Rising long before dawn, keeping silence for 20 hours/day, sitting in a meditation room hanging over the Gulf of St. Lawrence~ the experience continues to unfold inside of me, even many years later. The one moment that stays with me almost daily is the luncheon conversation I had one day with an elderly Buddhist nun. Over our meal, she was talking about how she stays balanced and oriented in her prayer life. "Well," she smiled conspiratorially, "my secret is: Every now and then I pick a day to die!"

She clearly enjoyed the confusion that passed through my eyes, as she smiled and sipped her tea. Then she continued. "It's like this~ we live a life of simplicity here. But even here, I find that little things pile up inside me and around me. So, every six months or so, I imagine what it would be like if I were to die in my sleep that very night. Then I go through my cell, and collect up all the things that *someone else* would have to deal with if I were dead. That library book that I didn't return. The snack I squirreled away in my

nightstand. A half-written letter to a distant friend, that perhaps I wouldn't want others to read. I put everything back, or throw it away, until there are only the items I need and use in my daily life. Everything else must go."

"Then, I sort through my insides and do the same. That apology I've been too proud to give. The gratitude I've been too shy to share. That assistance I've been too awkward to offer. What opportunities for healing~ for others and for myself~ have built up inside me, that would never happen if I died tonight? I make a list, and I do every single one that very day."

These words echo inside of me every day. Where can I simplify? What needs to be let go of? What opportunities am I missing? What do I need to take care of, right now? And, with so much loss in this past month, from hurricanes and earthquakes, how can my life and my abundance bless and heal others?

This month, we will kick off our Stewardship campaign: Paying it Forward with Love.

Please join us in the weeks ahead, as we devote some of our time and energy to rebalancing, even if in a small way, our abundance and others' loss. "Not all of us can do great things," said Mother Theresa. "but we can do small things with great love."

Together, we can strengthen St. Stephen's, and our neighbors, through small things and great love.

Reflections

Jazz Vespers @ Zion

Thursday, October 5th!

All Welcome!

Calling in all Knockers

October 8th Blessing!

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, and so we will gather up any and all Knockers that have been knit since May, and bless them on October 8th, at the 10 am service.

These soft breast prostheses will then be sent to the national Knitted Knockers offices for sending along to gals who have requested them.

Bless so many of you for knitting or donating money for yarn, or just for keeping this project in your prayers. Stayed tuned for the next charity knit-a-long!

Zion/St. Stephen's Movie Night

October 11th

Join us over at Zion on Wednesday, Oct. 11 at 7pm, for a screening of the PBS special: **Martin Luther-The Idea That Changed the World.**

Love a good churchy drama? Have you watched all the Brother Cadfael series? Well, hold onto your "scholars' caps"~ here comes the unbelievable true story that **changed Everything.**

There will be Popcorn, too!

Conversations Among Friends

Zion and St. Stephen's Occasional Book Group

Occasionally, we would like to read a book and talk about it together. Not an ongoing "Group," and not several meetings per book. Just read the book if you wish, and come chat with others about it, if you wish.

Our fall book will be published on Oct. 6th, John Pavlovitz's "A Bigger Table." If you like, find it, read it, and we'll announce a time in early November when we can gather and talk about it!

Stewardship Season 2017:

Paying it Forward in Love!

Details soon to be revealed!

Hope and Healing in Berkshire County

Churches Offer Prayers and Support for Addiction Crisis

Sunday, Oct 22nd at noon and at 2pm

The faith community of Berkshire County is coming together to stand in solidarity with all who suffer from opioid addiction and their families and loved ones. On Sunday, October 22, churches throughout the county will be holding interfaith prayer services in communities from North Adams to Great Barrington. By praying together across the county, the faith community wants to recognize that addiction is present in all our communities and that this is a crisis we must address together.

This pilgrimage of prayer is supported by the Massachusetts Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Deanery of Berkshire County, the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, the Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations, as well as individual faith communities from the Jewish, Congregational, Lutheran, and Methodist traditions.

All services will be held at 12:00 pm join us on Park Square on October 22 with a final rally and prayer opportunity at 2:00 pm at St Joseph's Catholic Church in Pittsfield.

Let us CELEBRATE the

Rededication of Zion Lutheran Church

Saturday, October 28th, at 1 pm

We walked with them, we talked with them.

Now, it's time to PARTY with them! Bishop Hazelwood will preach. A reception follows.

Yes, this is the same day as our Diocesan Convention~ if you are not a delegate to Convention, please join us at Zion.

Reformation Sunday!

One Service only on October 29th

We will welcome guests from our neighboring downtown churches, to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of this historic event.

One celebratory service at 10 am.



from Joseph

“It is not good for the human to be alone.” So says God in the second chapter of Genesis. We are fundamentally social creatures, and we seek meaningful human relationships. Even the strongest introvert might find fellowship through a good book, engaging in a mental conversation of ideas and stories with the writer. We find our life enriched with the goodness of other people; that is why it is so tragic and heartbreaking to see the many ways people are hurt by a lack of good, holy social connection. When people are isolated and lonely or when people are hurt by others’ callousness or even outright hatred, we grieve in our hearts. God made us to be an inclusive human community. To quote former Presiding Bishop Edmond Lee Browning (may he rest in peace), “There will be no outcasts.”

But real, meaningful human connection is hard. Some are scared that others will judge them if their deeper selves are known. Some judge first, in order to avoid being judged themselves. Some run at the first sign that others are imperfect, and some run when their own imperfections become clearer. And life in community is no easier! When we commit to being part of a Christian community, we commit ourselves to helping each other grow in love and grace and the knowledge of God; and where else do we practice love but with other people? Even family life is challenging. The healthiest family will still have disagreements and friction as people grow and change over the years.

But it’s worth the effort.

Do you believe it? To be in community with others, people who lift spirits and who also disappoint; to commit to loving people not just when they’re lovable but when they positively annoy us; to seeing Christ in others and letting Christ be seen in you.

It really is worth the effort. Church life is worth it. We come together to worship the Triune God, to celebrate our redemption in Christ, and to be strengthened for the beautifully hard work of being formed and re-formed by the Spirit. And it is our work together, every hand on deck, doing whatever each of us can, that makes the love of God known not just to the community around us, but to each other.

As we enter stewardship season, bring to mind your hopes for the community and for others in church. We journey together, one Body in Christ, that none is outcast, that none is alone, so that goodness may abound.

Peace,
Joseph+

October

Happy Birthday:

- 2 Jeff Pringle (a milestone!), Peter Rousseau
- 3 Dennis Carney, Jennifer Gregg (a milestone!)
- 6 Isiaha Hartman-Caesar (17), Ed Wilder
- 7 Claire O’Connor
- 8 Lexie Corcoran (12), Curran Doyle, Mathew Oakes (9), Rory Shea (7)
- 9 Ed Van Dyke (97 years young!)
- 10 Sydney Corcoran (15), Jeannette Ward (a milestone!), Zachary Wheelock (4)
- 13 Theodore Caesar, Michael La Malfa (a milestone!), Scott Luczynski
- 15 Michela Laurin (18)
- 18 Dion Bianco (13), Anthony Trapani (12)
- 19 David Harrington, Sabrina Reynolds (14), Michael Wheelock, Carol Wilson (a milestone!)
- 23 Colin Behnke (8), Martie Ekstrom
- 24 Barbara McShane, Dona Senecal
- 25 Sean Coakley (18), Quinton Cookis, William Sosa
- 26 Jennifer Duchaine, Bob Talanian
- 28 Sue Jenkins, Calvin Luczynski (1)
- 29 Jeffrey Hine (a milestone!)
- 30 Crystal Hassan
- 31 Jasean Davis (12), Cathy Doyle (a milestone!), Jordan Hamilton (16)

Happy Anniversary:

- 3 Ann and Ev Heiss (1954-63 years!)
- 4 Teddy and Bill Carter (1970)
- 6 Jennifer and Michael Laurin (1995)
- 11 Christine and Craig Reynolds (1986)
- 12 Aloha and David Winchester (1963)
- 13 Leah and Scott Luczynski (2006)
- 23 Cathy and Joseph Carchedi (1982)
- 25 Claire and Rory O’Connor (1952-65 Years!)
- 27 Marie and Roy Sutton (1978)
- 29 Donna and Bill Chandler (1977-40 years)
- 30 Lynne and Philip Blanchard (2010)

Eclectic Book Club

Our initial meeting of the fall offered, as promised, delicious food and congenial discussion of the books read over the summer. Many excellent titles were suggested. We decided on *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly for October 6th, when our co-hostesses will be Lois Neumann and Susan Wojtasik. For November 3rd, we will read *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. Co-hostesses will be determined later (but we do thank Charlene and Dot for their beautiful centerpiece and gracious co-hosting for the first meeting!). All are welcome at the Book Club, whether you have read the selection or not. It's a great group!

Did You Know?

That St. Stephen's was well represented in the Josh Billings Race: **Charlie Sawyer**, along with son **Jonathan**, daughter **Lizbie** and her husband Philip Porter were 2nd in the Family (4-person team); **Matt**, **Sharon** and **Christie Billetter** were 5th in the same category; **Dan Moon**, riding the bicycle leg, came in 1st place with his team in the Recreational (3-4 person team); and **Andy Breslin** with son **Luke** were 6th in the 2-person Male group. Congratulations to all – and apologies if I missed anyone!

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER: (*I can publish the Honor Rolls only after the Eagle has published them*)

That **Tessa Langsdale** and **Cameron Langsdale** both made the High Honors Roll at BART for the third trimester.

That **Mackenzie Ellis**, **Rebecca Hughes**, **Heather Macfarlane**, **Grady Pedersen**, **Makailey Cookis** and **Meagan Ellis** made the High Honor Roll at Pittsfield High for the 4th quarter; and **Zachary Senecal** made the Honor Roll.

That **Brody Kaley** earned a place on the High Honor Roll at Herberg Middle School for the 4th quarter.

Congratulations one and all – and apologies if I missed anyone!

United Thank Offering Ingathering

Included with this issue of *The First Order* is an envelope for the U.T.O. Ingathering at all services on the weekend of October 14th and 15th. The U.T. O. is a personal and family devotional program of the Episcopal Church, founded by women in 1889. It serves to expand the mission and ministry of the church to meet compelling human needs – for men, women and children throughout the world – by gathering small amounts deposited in your “blue box” each time you have something, large or small, for which you are thankful, i.e. a new baby, a promotion, a passing grade, a victory for your favorite team, getting through another day without pain, a phone call from a long-lost friend, a cheery word from a stranger on the street, healing, completion of a task you set for yourself, etc.

“GRACIOUS GOD, source of all creation, all love, all true joy: accept, we pray, these outward signs of our profound and continuing thankfulness for all of life. Keep each of us ever thankful for all the blessings of joy and challenge that come our way. Bless those who will benefit from these gifts through the outreach of The United Thank Offering. This we ask through Him who is the greatest gift and blessing of all, Jesus Christ. AMEN”

Food for Thought

“All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent.”

- Thomas Jefferson



Warm Heads

Warm Hearts

This new season begins with a good supply of hats and scarves to start, but we are in need of gloves, sweaters, and jackets for the cold weather to come.

It's time once again to ask for help supporting the Warm Heads, Warm Hearts program, now in our tenth year!

These gifts are given to our guests at St. Stephen's Table and The Cathedral of the Beloved. We continue to need items for adult men and women only. Any children's items will be gratefully given to the Redfield House.

Handmade and gently used hats and scarves are always welcome. We have the supplies you need. If you have the skill but lack the materials, please contact me.

In addition, I would like to ask for additional help in organizing our collection this year. If you are interested, please contact me at (413) 443-9243.

Help us support St. Stephen's mission statement, "...to be the hearts and hands of Christ, nourishing people, transforming lives."



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St. Stephen's Parish

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Change Service Requested

All Saints' Day Celebration

Sunday, November 5th

Please bring your photos of loved ones who have passed away to the Parish Office by November 1.

This year: **Pet Memorial Table for your beloved pets.**

