

ST. STEPHEN'S WITNESS

ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

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ALIVE IN CHRIST 1881 - 2013

AUGUST 2013



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Parish Weekend 2013

*Registration begins Sunday, August 11th
Don't miss it! It's lots of fun.*

Date: October 4-5-6

Place: Airfield 4-H Center, Wakefield

*Theme: The Holy Spirit,
Up Close and Personal*



Jeffrey's Journal

This Spring and Summer, I have enjoyed our “clergy conversations” as Mary Swann and I met in neighborhood groups with the congregation. Our nine meetings stretched from April 23 to July 10. We conceived this idea because we wanted to know what was on people’s minds. We wanted to have some conversations that were deeper and more extended than the ones we have in the greeting line after worship, or in coffee hour. It has been a fulfilling time. Both Mary and I resolved to mostly listen. There were times, however, when an answer or an explanation was called for. We invited everyone in our directory, and 84 people accepted our invitation. Each invitation posed the question, “What are you thinking and feeling about our life together at St. Stephen’s?” People came ready to talk.

I found our neighborhood meetings to be positive, healthy and encouraging. Our people love this congregation. There were many affirming stories about how people came to St. Stephen’s, and why they choose this to be their place to worship and serve the Lord. We found that people miss the opportunity to all work together on a project, which was afforded by the festivals we used to have at the beginning and end of Summer. One person summarized what she loves about St. Stephen’s as: our love for God and for each other; our Biblical preaching and teaching; and our devotion to prayer.

Five areas of discussion came up over and over:

- Communication – People who are not able to be in worship every Sunday need to know what is going on. We need to publicize more about our various classes, Bible Studies and Home Groups. We need more publicity in the newspaper. We have already taken some actions in response to comments: mailing the newsletter to everyone and posting highlights of the vestry meetings on the bulletin board and in the newsletter. Other suggestions include an information table on

Sunday, a St. Stephen’s Handbook, and a ministry fair to publicize ministry opportunities.

- Worship – People like our worship. They praise the preaching, Sunday Bible Study, and the choir. They like the music. There is a definite trend toward introducing more good contemporary music. All agree that the Holy Spirit should be evident in our worship, although there are different opinions about how this should be manifested. Some logistical issues in our current worship space were discussed, and helpful suggestions were made, some of which we have already implemented. Other suggestions have been: singing praise songs before worship, and a public outdoor festival of praise.
- Coffee Hour – There is widespread agreement that coffee hour is highly important to our Sunday morning experience. Sign ups to host coffee hour are not forthcoming. It seems that is because people are unsure how to set up coffee hour in the new space, and are put off by some of the challenges of doing everything in the same room, where noise is disruptive. We have already implemented the suggestion to go back to two round tables of food, around which people can congregate.
- Building Plans – People are excited about having a new church, and are eager to have our own space. Some are frustrated that we aren’t moving faster. Some would like more regular reports on progress. A few are worried about finances.
- Church Growth – Almost everyone favors bringing in new members. Most would like to see us attract families with children. Suggestions were offered on how to attract new members.

Thank you for your candor, your commitment to St. Stephen’s, and your love of Jesus, which was evident in the conversations we had in these meetings. God is continuing to do a good work in us.

Yours in Christ,
Jeffrey



Senior Warden Report

Remember in the past when you looked forward to a summer schedule slowdown, a time to take in a deep breath and relax for a while? Well, Sunday July 28th will be a good time to enjoy an afternoon in Shirley Smith's beautiful backyard on the Potomac River during the annual church picnic. We even get to attend services this Sunday in our picnic outfits!

Bill Andrulot, Harrison Williams and Todd Lewis recently mowed the new church property. Weeds do grow fast in this warm and wet weather. Many thanks to each of you.

We received a building plan update from David Norden, the architect, this week. He provided the following information:

- The well and septic plans have been filed with the Northumberland Health Department. This approval is necessary to do almost all other work.
- VDOT has approved our entranceway and we will not be required to construct deceleration or turning lanes. This decision means significant cost avoidance.
- The mechanical engineering plan for the building is 95% completed. The current delay is in the structural engineering, and David is focused on getting it completed as soon as possible.

The old Blackwell House was removed during the past month and Mr. Ben Hayden, Callao, did a great job of removing the building and small trees without damage to the large trees we wanted to save. Even the sugar maple in the front is in good shape and has been reinserted into the plans. The machine operators even saved Betty Dillingham's "ditch" lilies so we can replant them next year. As the house was being torn down, Ben Hayden raised his hand to stop the excavator operator, stepped forward, and pulled a color print of Jesus from the mud dated 1942. A sign? It sure felt like one!

Many Northumberland residents who stopped by to watch the machines work on the house shared their stories. We heard about "...the good times we had in

that old house when we were kids. Those Blackwell's were good folks." The stories will live long after we finish the church building.

I know you sometimes feel the new church planning and construction will take forever but we are moving forward, I promise.

In Christ,
George



The last Sunday in June, Fr. Jeff led the adult Sunday school while Fr. Tad was off in Nigeria teaching missionaries. Jeff's topic was *Joy*, what is it, where does it come from, and how do you get it. It was a great lesson and then we went on to the worship service while I was ruminating on something learned 65 years ago in Vacation Bible School. It was a little slogan about finding joy by putting Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last. Get it? JOY. Oh well.

The Epistle for the day included Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the spirit. As Fr. Jeff preached I began to see a very beautiful aspect to the order of listing for the fruit. First of all, joy was located right between love and peace, so that clarified where one can find joy. Secondly, the nine items in the list were ordered perfectly to reflect their place in our relationships with Jesus, others, and ourselves. Look at the table that popped into my mind:

Jesus first	-- Love, Joy, Peace
Others second	-- Forbearance, Goodness, Kindness
Yourself last	-- Faithfulness, Godliness, Self-control

Jesus is the source and provider of the first three of the fruit, while the second set instructs us in our relationship with others. The final three deal with our own character and the face we will present to the world. Whenever we are faithful, godly, and in self-control we present the face of Jesus, a joyful face indeed.

Stan Raspberry



Women of St. Stephen's

A Report From the President

Dear Ladies,

In mid-July in the peaceful, wooded surrounds of Stratford Hall, twenty-nine women gathered for our fifth annual St. Stephen's Women's Retreat, "*Communicating the Presence of God in How I Listen and How I Speak.*" It was a wonderful experience for us all as our speaker, Jill Kamp Melton, led us through new and different avenues of communication in our relationships. Jill lives in the DC area and has run a theatre company, and founded a communications company that has worked for the Congressional Quarterly, the Capitol.net, many government departments and agencies as well as the admirals of the Coast Guard and several pharmaceutical companies. A fervent "follower of Jesus," Jill was born a Jew and became a Christian in 1980.

Under Jill's tutelage, we felt ourselves embracing God in a new way, as we opened our hearts to discovering what He had to reveal to us. Jill coached us in techniques of discovering that putting Him first in every aspect of life could dramatically influence our conversations and communications with others. She led us through several self assessments which made us think about who we are and why we respond to people in the way we do. Most of us purchased Jill's book, ***The Power of the Zip in a Heavenly Light***, as we realized that we needed to put into practice what we were learning from her and to have a tool for continued review of the techniques she was teaching us. Getting God's Word into our mouths leads us to be still and quiet before Him, to listen more attentively to others, and to respond in loving ways that can lead to eradicating the gap between what we say, and what we really mean. It is clear that the Lord wants our "conversation to be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that we may know how to answer everyone." Colossians 4:6

Our worship leader, Connie Lindsley from The Falls Church, inspired us to glorify our heavenly Father by lifting our voices to Him in praise and thanksgiving. She is truly a talented musician and prayer warrior and we were blessed by her gifts and presence throughout the weekend.

In July the Thrift Shop made \$7,378.91, bringing our account balance to \$19,851.72. After paying \$4,100.00 for July expenses we had \$10,000.00 available for disbursement. Our faithful Thrift Shop treasurer, Pam Smith, wrote a check to the church for \$2,500.00 and a check to our women's account for \$7,500.00. Consequently, we were able to pay half of our budgeted outreach monies to the following local agencies:

- Gleamers & Blenders - \$750.00
- Hospice Support Services - \$500.00
- Northern Neck Food Bank - \$250.00
- The Link - \$75.00
- Northern Neck Free Health Clinic - \$500.00
- Northumberland YMCA - \$200.00
- The Haven - \$125.00
- Salvation Army - \$100.00
- Callao Fire Department - \$250.00
- Mid-County Rescue - \$250.00
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes - \$125.00
- Northumberland Red Cross - \$125.00

We are so grateful for the continued success of the Thrift Shop which enables us to support so many needs in our local community. Next January we pray that God will again provide the funds with which we may complete the 2013 Outreach Budget so please keep this operation in your prayers. So many of you lovingly contribute your time in volunteer hours, and your gracious hospitality to the public in that place has made an impact on the community. Our prayer box is being used regularly and upon receipt the requests are sent out to a team of forty or so intercessors.

And so, as we are in mid-summer as I write this, I pray that you are able to enjoy what remains of this season and spend rich moments of love with family and friends.

In the Precious Name of Jesus,

Donna

The Eyeglasses

(A not so significant problem solved on a not so significant day.)

That morning it was such a hot day dawning and the dew was still on the grass so I put off mowing until after four in the afternoon. That didn't help much with the heat but served to give the dew a chance to evaporate and save clogging up the mower. Our property is bounded by heavy woods with protruding branches and brush and we have crepe myrtle trees and bushes planted strategically throughout the yard. This gives lots of opportunities for the slap and sting of the growth against my face. About half way through the mowing task, I realized that my eyesight had become a little blurry because my eyeglasses were not in their customary place on my head. I had just passed through some of those troublesome branches of a crepe myrtle bush which had grabbed at my sun hat and slapped at my face. Going back along the recent mowing path, I searched frantically for my eyeglasses for which I have no backups. They were not to be found. I looked low under the bushes and high in the branches in case they were hanging there. No luck. I almost expected to find shattered pieces of them, strewn about by the mower blades. Uttering a silent prayer, I asked for help finding them and almost immediately thought "Why should I trouble the Lord with such a trivial matter?" I have often heard over the years that we shouldn't treat the Lord as a "vending machine" where we can request some temporary relief or favor. This thought process continued as I searched and finally gave up searching until the next day.

Going back again the next morning, I decided to duplicate my tracks with the mower through the crepe myrtle tree. And again, I petitioned for help from above. The branches slapped and stung my face when suddenly something flashed past my blurred vision and I heard a "plop" on the floor board of the mower. There were my glasses, fresh from above!

Now what could I glean from all this? The Lord answers prayers? Not really although it is certainly true. My problem is solved and I can go

on without worry? There's more to it than that! That first night after losing my glasses and recalling the possible misuse of God's attention, I began to think of my son and how I treasure his phone calls. He often calls for help regarding his computer. Having only recently reconciled with him, these calls are especially important to me as we are now actually developing a father-son relationship. Isn't that also true for our relationship with our Heavenly Father? He must be joyful when we take the time during our busy day and ask him for assistance or just say "Hello Father, I was thinking about you and wanted to say hello."

"I once was blind but now I see." *Amazing Grace* - John Newton.

Morris (Mo) Dillingham



Highlights from the July 2013 Vestry Meeting

Building Project:

- The house has been razed and a special picture was found in the rubble.
- The well has been found. It is a dry well and it has been secured and will be filled with rocks and concrete.
- The property will be bush-hogged soon.
- We have not changed our target date for completion - April 2014.

The Rector and Deacon met with nine neighborhood groups with 84 attendees:

- Overall the meetings were positive and encouraging.
- Themes were: communication, coffee time, worship, church growth, miss festivals and working together.

The church picnic is scheduled for July 28.

Plans are proceeding for a class on the scope and coherent message of scripture, and a 2-3 hour class called, "Abortion 101" taught by Terry Beatley to provide important information on this spiritual issue which confronts our nation.

Coming In September

A TRUE AND REASONABLE FAITH FOR A SKEPTICAL WORLD

Almost from the very beginning of history, the fundamental tension between the knowledge of good and evil has shaped the fate of this planet. Like kudzu, the strangling ideology of evil has permeated our culture. The overwhelming effects are obvious everywhere you look.

Hopeless? No. This contemporary muddle of humanistic destruction has not caught God by surprise. Even when it appears that civilization and society are spinning out of control, God has provided solutions.

Our creator God has not abandoned his beloveds. God's people, however, are increasingly called to confront and to deconstruct this knowledge of evil, or false doctrines, with the knowledge of truth or good.

We are constantly being challenged to defend the foundations of our faith with winsome certainty. When was the last time you were asked to answer any of the following questions:

- Why do Christians seem narrow-minded and intolerant?
- How could you possibly not believe in evolution?
- Why are you so confident there is a God at all, much less one who cares?
- How could you base your faith on the Bible? Isn't it an ancient book of myths and quaint stories?
- Why do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?
- What is so special about Christianity anyway and why is it so exclusive?
- How can a good God allow evil in the world?
- Why are Christians so out of touch with the "real" world?

This course – **A True and Reasonable Faith for a Skeptical World** - has been developed to accurately examine Biblical Christian faith and to equip the believer with well-grounded, in-depth evidence and compassionate, practical reflection. Created by the Apologetics Study Group at St Stephen's, headed by Jan Beckett, this is more than a religious, creationist or denominational doctrine.

The first series takes a close look at Darwinism and Neo-Darwinism. The eight-week interactive program is being offered to the Christian community initially and consists of narrative text, prayers, discussions, lectures and/or videos, workbook and assigned reading from two of today's most respected authorities on Apologetics. We meet for an hour and a half, once a week. The time, date and place have not been decided upon as yet. Stay tuned for further information.

Please join us. Please contact Priscilla Williams for more information.



Marie had many requests for her Baked Vidalia Onion Dip which was served during the Women's Retreat. Here it is as requested....

BAKED VIDALIA ONION DIP

3 large Vidalia onions, coarsely chopped
2 cups (8 oz) shredded Swiss cheese
½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
2 cups mayonnaise
1 (8 oz) can sliced water chestnuts, drained and chopped
¼ cup dry white wine (something like Chardonnay)
1 garlic clove, minced
½ tsp. hot sauce or less (optional)
¼ tsp. lemon juice

Stir together cheeses and next 6 ingredients; stir in onion until well blended.

Spoon mixture into a lightly greased 2-qt. baking dish. *I do not grease the baking dish.* (This can be done a day in advance and refrigerated – just let it sit out for about 15 minutes before baking.)

Bake at 375 degrees for 25 minutes or until golden brown and thoroughly heated.

Let stand 10 minutes. Serve with tortilla chips, crackers, or baguette slices.

Enjoy! Marie Carstensen

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

Ushers

Aug. 4	Lynn and Howard York
Aug. 11	Charlaine and Bill Andrulot
Aug. 18	Anna and Pat Brennan
Aug. 25	Bill Tracey, John Powers
Sept. 1	Bobby Edmonds, Colston Newton

Acolytes

Aug. 4	Caitlyn Cralle
Aug. 11	Jennifer Radcliffe
Aug. 18	Sarah Saunders
Aug. 25	Chris Cralle
Sept. 1	Marley Kimmitt

Lesson Readers

Aug. 4	Tony Blackstone (L) Joan Blackstone (P)
Aug. 11	Jim Conley (L) Lyn Conley (P)
Aug. 18	Ruth Franck (L) Betty Dillingham (P)
Aug. 25	Jeanne Hickey (L) Irene Haley (P)
Sept. 1	Ward LeHardy (L) Judy LeHardy (P)

Eucharistic Ministers

Aug. 4	Tony Blackstone, Charlie Franck
Aug. 11	Irene Haley, Ward LeHardy
Aug. 18	Lucy Logan, Frank McCarthy
Aug. 25	Constance McDearmon, Suzy Norman
Sept. 1	Elaine Price, Phyllis TeStrake

Altar Guild

August	Pauline and Bobby Edmonds, Margaret Radcliffe
September	Eleanor Semerjian, Judy LeHardy

Coffee Hour

Aug. 4
Aug. 11
Aug. 18
Aug. 25
Sept. 1



Aug. 5	Walter Eichacker
Aug. 10	Jane Kimball, Jim Logan
Aug. 11	Bill Henson, Laura Woodard
Aug. 15	Janet Steelman, Aislinn Lewis
Aug. 16	Steve Radcliffe
Aug. 18	Dixie Goertemiller, Bertie Strange, Dana Bloom
Aug. 20	Jane Wrightson, Tony Blackstone, Barbara Townshend
Aug. 24	Charlotte Hundley
Aug. 31	Anna Brennan, Charles Franck



Aug. 22	Dana and Bill Bloom
Aug. 23	Sue and Allen Joslyn
Aug. 24	Connie and Tad de Bordenave
Aug. 27	Lyn & Art Neira

O God, grant that the wills of this man and this woman may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their lives. Amen.

CHANGE IN REVELATION STUDIES SCHEDULE

Due to summer scheduling conflicts and the time constraints of such an all-encompassing topic we have decided to change the scheduling and format of the Revelation study currently held at the Lewis' house, "Wellspring", in Reedville. The new study will be on Wednesdays from 3:00-5:00 at "Wellspring" beginning the first Wednesday after Labor Day. The study will be limited to 7 weeks covering seven key topic areas of Revelation. Each will be a stand-alone discussion if you can't make all of them. Call Todd Lewis if you have questions or need directions.

2013



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Bless God, America!