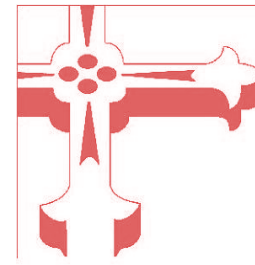


*Saint Stephen's*

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED  
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Volume 5 February 2010 Number 2

*The Prayer That  
Shapes Our Community*  
**For the Community we  
Serve give us generous hearts,  
O Lord...**  
**Let us be that Community of  
Worship and Mission where  
all can become who they are  
in Christ and serve joyfully in  
Christ's Name. Amen**

PLEASE DELIVER ASAP  
February 2010

Dear Friends,

February 14 is the third anniversary of my official start as Priest-in-Charge. At the 17 January meeting, our Vestry unanimously voted to renew our three year agreement for another three years into 2013. I am looking forward to the opportunities that lie before us and to the challenges that great opportunities inevitably bring.



We came together three years ago because this parish, this people, wanted to move forward into a new kind of future. You invited me to bring leadership and development experience to help us move together into that future. I have found you to be ready, willing and able to move forward. St. Stephen's is a dynamic environment, a community of worship and mission that looks forward. Not only do we *look* forward, our people take responsibility for moving forward and we take action to complete those responsibilities.

Week by week, you have prayed that God would "Give us generous hearts..." so that you would be the inviters and includers who would help hungry souls find home. You brought your gifts of time and money and your very selves. You have invested in the mission and God has blessed your investment! Once empty pews are now being filled. Many Sundays, up to a third of worshippers aren't old enough to drive themselves to church.

You have invested in the future for brothers and sisters you hadn't yet met. We have already met the people who have responded to our first efforts. God has blessed your investment and we have gotten to meet the first new brothers and sisters who show us that we are heading in the right direction, whose experience shows us that we've been here for them.

We're not done yet, thank God! The mission of God never ends this side of Heaven, and we want to be part of *all* God has prepared for us. We're not done inviting and including and involving. We're not done offering the strength and hope that comes from "discovering all that we are in Christ" or the life-giving fulfillment that comes from "serving joyfully in Christ's Name."

I'm glad we're moving into this future together. I'm glad we've put aside anxiety about future challenges and taken up urgency about the opportunities to be seized. I'm glad we're not just complacent about where we are but confident in the future our mission calls us to pursue.

Thank you for inviting me to be part of the future we share.

Many Blessings

**Our Mission Demands:**  
Urgency, not Anxiety  
Confidence not Complacency

If you've never been at St. Stephen's when we're all gussied up and ready to shine, you're missing something. Thanks and kudos to Leigh Joner (our flower arranger) and her many elves (helpers) who were kind enough to donate time and talents to dressing up the church. The poinsettias were absolutely beautiful with some unique hybrids in the mix. The candles and flowers gave the church a more than usual feeling of warmth and welcome.

St. Stephen's at Christmas  
by Jan Myers



*Good Tidings*

*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church*

# SouperBowl

The Eagles aren't going, but St. Stephen's can still win for our community.



Twenty years of Souper Bowl!

This is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary observance of the annual Souper Bowl of Caring. It all started with a seminary intern's idea: "Let's use the Super Bowl to mobilize youth in our parish to fight hunger here in the local community." On Super Bowl Sunday, the youth of the parish greeted everyone coming to church holding a large soup kettle. Worshippers were asked to drop in a dollar and a canned good. The second year, it moved across South Carolina. By year four, churches in 36 states were participating. In 2005, former Presidents Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush signed up to be National Advocates. Last year, \$10.3 million in cash and food were raised across the country and contributed to local hunger efforts.

Come prepared on 31 Jan and 7 Feb.

Super Bowl Sunday is 7 February, so our young people will greet you at the doors with their soup kettles. Bring a canned good (or more) and a dollar (or more) to be used to fight hunger in our local community through Loaves and Fishes. We will have an advance opportunity on 31 January for you to bring your contribution if you're going to be away on 7 Feb or don't want to risk forgetting.

## Window-Blessing

### New Windows to be blessed on Sunday, 14 February

Already making a difference

As Russell writes (see separate article) our new windows are installed. They are already making a difference in the attractiveness of our plant and in our energy efficiency. Now it is time to ask God's blessing on the windows and on the mission the windows support. It is this mission, being "a community where all may find who we

are in Christ and serve joyfully in Christ's Name" that gives these windows value far beyond metal and glass!

"In Memory of..." and "In Thanksgiving for..."

We remember people whose influence has motivated us to give. We envision them standing with us around our altar and around that Table before the Heavenly Throne that our altar represents. We remember, we give thanks, and we rejoice that our loved ones' influence continues in the work God has given us to do.

## Bishop's Bash,

### The old *Bishop's Ball* has been updated into an overnight youth event with dancing, swimming, sports, games and.

From Semi-Formal Dance to Major Event.

The traditional *Bishop's Ball* has evolved from a semi-formal dance into a full-spectrum event. To accommodate the improved and enlarged event, it has been moved from the hall of a host church to the Lansdale YMCA with all of the facilities the new venue offers.

Participant list being finalized.

As we go to press, we are finalizing the participant list of young people and adult sponsors who are going off for a night of fun with teens from all over the diocese.

One step closer to building a robust parish youth program.

Parish growth has brought an increasing number of children and younger youth to St. Stephen's. This means we are planning and preparing steps toward having a robust youth program. For now, we are taking our youth to be part of diocesan and national youth events, getting them ready to be the core of that program as it develops. In October, we took two vans of youth and adults to the National Acolyte Festival in Washington D. C. This year's Bishop's Bash is one more experience getting our youth and adults ready to build our own future youth program. The two Night Watch events (See related article) for Sr. High and Junior High/Middle School are additional planned "next steps."

# Night Watch 2010

Philadelphia Cathedral hosts Senior & Junior High events

Explore the Cathedral. -- Explore yourself.

Imagine the Philadelphia Cathedral late at night. Flickering candles cast moving shadows in the darkness. Youth from all over the Diocese will spend the night at the Cathedral. Experience music, fun, conversation, fun, food, fun, and an (indoor) camp out. We will explore all the public and hidden places in this fascinating building and explore what it means to be a youth in today's world. You'll get to meet other youth who have all the curiosity and questions that you do.

Grade 9-12, 5 Feb  
Grade 6-8, 5 Mar  
6 PM Friday thru Sat AM (Time TBA)  
Cost: \$20 for Youth & \$10 for Adult Chaperones  
See Fr. Michael

## Lent Begins, Easter's Coming

Ash Wednesday is 17 Feb

Shrove Tuesday, 16 February

With Ash Wednesday the next day, we will burn last year's Palm Sunday Palm Tuesday Evening as part of our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner.

Dinner will begin at 6:00 with Palm being burned at 7:00. This is a minimal cost, high drama event appropriate for families.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday Mass with Litany of Penitence, and Ashes, no music, 7:00 AM and 7:30 PM

Preschool service, spoken "meditation" (appropriate for preschoolers, and those who love them) and Ashes, 11:10 AM.

Homebound Communion and Ashes will be distributed by appointment throughout the day.

Sundays in Lent

Sunday Masses with Lent readings. We will fast from



the sweet taste of "Alleluia" on our lips.

One of the most misunderstood and misused ideas in the Bible in "Sin." Our Sermon Series for Sundays in Lent is *Temptation, Sin, Repentance, Forgiveness and Victory: human battles Jesus fights at our side.*

[We will be joined by our Girl Scouts on 7 March for *Girl Scout Sunday.*]

Weekdays in Lent

We will have **Mass with Stations of the Cross** on Wednesday evenings in Lent at 7:30.

**Wednesday Dinner Teaching Series** will be from 6:00 to 7:15 on the five Wednesdays following Ash Wednesday and preceding Holy Week (24 Feb-24 Mar). Over a light supper, we will learn about *Five Ways To Pray.*

Lent Quiet Day

For the first time in many years, we will offer a Lenten Quiet Day on Saturday, 13 March from 9-3. More details to follow. Mark your calendars.

### Holy Week

Palm Sunday, 28 March

Blessing of Palms, Procession and Reading of the Passion. At 10:00 the Sunday School will lead the procession and dramatic reading of the Passion.

Maundy Thursday, 1 April

The Maundy Thursday service will be at 7:30 PM. An all night vigil follows in 1 hour shifts.

Good Friday, 2 April

The church will be open for meditation from 12-3PM. The Good Friday service will be at 7:30PM.

Holy Saturday Noonday Prayer, 3 April

This is a quiet meditation on the "Great Sabbath" from which Jesus would rise victorious to bring us victory and hope.

Easter Sunday, 4 April

Services at 8 and 10. Both will begin with elements of the Great Vigil of Easter to help us make the transition as we "proclaim the praises of him who has brought us out of darkness into his most wonderful light."

Sundays of Easter, 11 April-16 May.

Easter is not just one day but a whole season. Easter-tide continues through mid-May. On 11, 18 and 25 April, we will have a series on *A Searching Faith: Why God treasures our questions and our doubts.*

# February 2010

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

6	5	4	3	2	1	
Night Watch at the Cathedral for Senior High Students. See Fr. Michael for info	Night Watch at the Cathedral for Jr High Students. See Fr. Michael for info					
13	12	11	10	9	8	7
						Souper Bowl Sunday 1 can of soup and/or \$1(or more)
20	19	18	17	16	15	14
			ASH WEDNESDAY 7AM Service & 7:30PM Service	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Dinner 6PM Palm Burn 7PM	President's Day	New Window Dedication
27	26	25	24	23	22	21
			Dinner & Teaching 6-7:15PM Mass & Stations 7:30PM			1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent Beginning Easter Candy Collection
	March 5 <sup>th</sup>					28
	Night Watch at the Cathedral for Jr High Students. See Fr. Michael for info					

## Good Tidings

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church



### Something Funny...

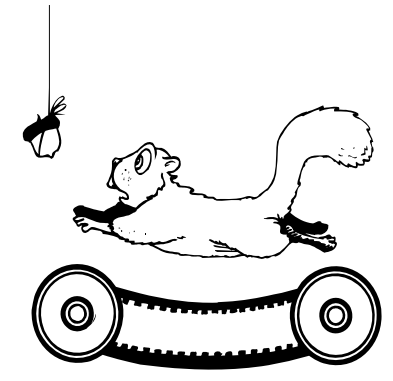
By Jan Myers

I begin at least 5 mornings a week on my treadmill. A wonderful invention that keeps me from having to go outside and commune with nature!! I can run and sweat in private. A joy, a wonder, a miracle... An instrument of TORTURE!!!

I can start out at a not as fast pace and end up at an "I can't believe my legs move that fast" pace! I've been very good about sticking with it. It really does make me feel good, with one exception...

When one is flying along at a clip and for some reason let's go of the hand rails... and begins to fly... towards the ground... and other exercise equipment. I have an attachment on my machine which is attached to me by a magnet and a string. If the magnet let's go it's supposed to instantly stop the treadmill. Guess who's string is TOO LONG? I realized that as I was about half way to the floor.

Thankfully I landed on a well padded part of my anatomy. And surprisingly there was no brain damage!!! OK, so much for exercise being healthy for you!!!



### GIRL SCOUTS' REDEDICATION

The scouts in Brownie Troop 5462 and Junior Troop 57082 started off the New Year by rededicating themselves to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. They held a brief ceremony with family and friends on Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup> in the church hall. The scouts recite the Promise and Law at the start of every scouting event. The ceremony was a way for them to really think about those words they routinely recite.

There are 13 parts to the Promise and Law – we used 13 candles to represent them. Once all the guests were seated, we lit the candles and turned off all the lights. As the girls blew out each candle, we asked what would happen if everyone just stopped doing each of the things we mention in the Promise and Law (e.g. *What would the world be like if we stopped serving God and Country? What would the world be like if we stooped helping people in need? What would the world be like if we were inconsiderate and didn't care about anyone but ourselves? What would the world be like if we chose not to accept responsibility for what we said and did?*). "The world would become a very dark place."

As the 13 candles were relit, the girls pledged to uphold each of the 13 parts of the Promise and Law.

After the ceremony, parents went home and scouts stayed for a sleepover. It was a great way to start off the new year!

#### Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:  
To serve God and my country  
To help people at all times,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

#### Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be:  
Honest and fair  
Friendly and helpful,  
Considerate and caring,  
Courageous and strong, and  
Responsible for what I say and do,  
And to:  
Respect myself and others,  
Respect authority,  
Use resources wisely,  
Make the world a better place,  
And be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Our very musical St. Stephen's Sunday School children presented three songs for this year's Christmas Pageant.

Beginning with **Angels We Have Heard on High** - our Sunday School angels sang as they processed in. **Nate Mango** accompanied us on the organ.



Some children played instruments and others sang the **Friendly Beasts**.

Our finale song was **Away in a Manger** and we played the **bells!** It was a beautiful, musical pageant celebrating the birth of Jesus!



## IT'S COOKIE TIME!!!



Girl Scout cookies will be on sale until the end of February.

The cookie sale is a great way for girls to learn leadership skills as well as helping them earn money to pay for their troop activities. Last year our scouts were able to go to Dutch Wonderland, two weekend camping trips, to nature centers, to the movies, bowling – and earnings from the cookie sale paid for almost every trip in full.

The "Cookies from Home" program is an opportunity to support our troops. You can pay for whole boxes or cases for the troops, or just donate your spare change to help the effort. Last year our Brownie and Junior Troop were able to send hundreds of boxes of cookies to service men and women thanks to the generous donations we received.

Girl Scout cookies freeze well, so stock up while they're available!

*Brownie Troop 5462 at a Glenolden Pathmark cookie booth in 2009.*



## I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW!!!!

For anyone who hasn't been in the parish hall or offices within the month, you are in for a BIIIIIG surprise. The day after Christmas, we had 18 new windows installed. Boy, do they make a huge difference. All I heard was how bigger and brighter the hall looked, especially the kitchen. I had no idea that we would have been able to carry out such a successful capital campaign for the new windows.

If you recall, at the end of September we introduced the window campaign hoping to raise \$10,000. As of today, we have \$10,035 pledged towards the windows, and have already received \$9,500 of the money pledged. UNBELIEVABLE!!! The rest of the pledge money continues to come in as promised.

When Fr. Michael and I sat and discussed this campaign, we weren't sure how successful we would be and if we would even hit our target by the end of 2010. As usual the parishioners and other supporters of St. Stephen's have pulled it off. To think that 95% of the goal would be received within the first four months is mind boggling. The gift of \$5 was just as important as those who pledge a whole window.

I would like to take the opportunity to invite everyone to help build on this successful campaign. We have made capital investments over the last 18 months in heating, cooling and energy efficiency. The purpose of these property investments is to be more effective in mission. I want to invite each of you to participate in a renewed Capital Campaign for Ministry. We did this several years ago to begin a campaign to raise money for the continuing ministries of St. Stephen's.

A pledge of an extra \$5 a week equals the same as a pledge of a half a window. For some of us to think of finding an extra couple of hundred dollars is unheard of. However, put in perspective, an additional \$5 a week, bi-monthly or even monthly is doable for most of us. In addition, I know that when I give to St. Stephen's through my pledge, I do so happily. I know you do too.



## PICK UP YOUR BRASS AND GET TO WORK!!

You just gotta' love my titles!! On Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, we will be having our Annual Spring Cleaning. The date of the 20<sup>th</sup> will allow for us to have our building and grounds in shape for Palm Sunday and Easter. Please, please, please mark your calendar now!! We will start at 9AM, with the anticipation of being done at between 11 and 11:30. During this time, we usually finish raking our fall leaves, clean out our gutters, polish the altar brass for Easter and other general cleaning projects.

I would also like to possibly plant some more perennials (more hosta or other ground covering plants). My goal is to eventually not have to do much, if any, weeding during the Spring and Summer months. If you have any plants you would like to donate, please see me or contact me at 610-623-0910. If you don't have plants, but still want to help by purchasing a couple of plants, that would be great too. Again, please see or contact me.

I have already spoken with two of Girl Scout Troops and they will be out in force as they continue to show their support of St. Stephen's. Hopefully, we can get another troop to join us as well as some Boy Scouts again! Last year, we had a lot of helping hands and it made for quick, but very productive morning. This is an easy way to meet some of our other parishioners and Girls Scouts and put your talents to good use. As long as you can polish a candlestick, bend over a pick up some leaves, or wash a window, then you've got talent!