



ST STEPHEN'S SIGNPOST

ST STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
HEATHSVILLE, VIRGINIA



A welcoming family united in Christian love, worship, and
service

ststephensheathsville.org

THE RECTOR'S COLUMN

Dear parish family,

Seeing our participation in the broader church has been fun this month! When we worshiped with the continuing Episcopalians at The Falls Church on January 11th, we enjoyed getting to know that joyful and energetic congregation. President of the House of Deputies Bonnie Anderson's sermon on the importance of the ministry of all the baptized, made me appreciate even more the strong lay leadership here at St. Stephen's.

We have received enthusiastic and heartwarming responses to our letter of support and encouragement to the continuing Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Fort Worth, as they reorganize after the departure of Bishop Jack Iker and his followers. Several of those congregations have added us to their prayer lists. We recently sent them three gifts: coffee for the hard work ahead of them, wine for their communion with the wider Church, and champagne for celebrations of new beginnings.

On a national scale, Episcopal leaders were prominent from start to finish of the inaugural celebrations for our new president. President Obama chose Bishop of New Hampshire Gene Robinson to give the opening invocation at the beginning of the four days of the inaugural festivities. (That invocation will be printed in next month's newsletter). Inaugural events concluded with an interfaith National Prayer Service at the Episcopal Washington National Cathedral, at which Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts-Schori gave the closing benediction.

Closer to home, I wish you all could have been present at Diocesan Annual Council, where Bishop Johnston told the crowd of nearly 1000 people that one of his two favorite activities during 2008 was "working closely with our inspiring 'continuing congregations'." Anna Lou Flynn, outgoing ECW President, mentioned the Sacristy in a Box gifts to us as one of the highlights of the ECW's year too. Although painful cuts in the diocesan budget were made because some parishes do not do their share financially, St. Stephen's does contribute its share, and we were awarded a certificate of appreciation. Russ Palmore, in his clear explanation of the litigation, mentioned each of the continuing churches by name, and said, "The members and leaders of those churches have shown enormous initiative, courage, perseverance, and dedication to continuing the mission of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese. They are more than relevant--they are valued and critical parts of our Church and our Diocese." Immediately the whole assembly responded with an outpouring of applause for us.

I myself so often feel like applauding this parish family's determined courage, steadfast hope, faithful ministry, welcoming hospitality, and joyful celebration!



Lucia+

VESTRY MEETING NOTES

The vestry met at 5:00 pm on Thursday, January 9, 2009. Lucia called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. All vestry members plus Rick Skelton, vestry nominee were present. Lucia led the vestry in the Lord's prayer. The December minutes were approved with some changes and corrections.

Ellen Kirby summarized the 2008 Treasurer's year end report. Actual total income was very close to budget. Pledge receipts were down slightly but plate collections and unrestricted gifts compensated.

Expenses were slightly above budget due to increased administration & facilities costs.

For 2009 25 pledges have been received to date for a total of \$48,000. Others are expected. In comparison, in 2008 24 pledges were received for \$55,000. The total budgeted income for 2009 is \$81,000.

April's vestry meeting is scheduled for April 16th, the third Thursday!

Outgoing Senior Warden's parting thoughts: Sandy Kirkpatrick feels very strongly that one of St. Stephen's essential needs left undone at this point is finding a suitable worship space of our own that will help St. Stephen's Episcopal maintain its identity in the community and provide adequate program space and room to grow. We need our own place!

Outgoing Vestryman George Freeman's parting thoughts centered on the continuing litigation. He feels strongly that we need to be patient and leave our physical plant options open until the Virginia Supreme Court hears our case.

Vestry meeting summaries in the newsletter will provide a general overview of vestry activities; the complete vestry minutes are posted to the "login" portion of the St. Stephen's website for members to access.

Dawn and George Mahaffey extend their thanks to everyone at St. Stephen's for their 10-year wedding anniversary. Special thanks to Ellen Kirby for planning this event! Dawn is willing to continue to keep up the membership roster after she rotates off vestry.

The Outreach Committee will meet soon to decide if St. Stephen's wants to use a portion of the Mustard Seed monies to repair Northumberland wells with either chemical or bacterial problems.

Joel will schedule a leaf raking party when the weather permits. Rocco is doing an Epiphany art project with the children.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Eager, Register

NEW PRAYER LIST APPROACH

In order to have a closer connection to the people on our prayer list, we're making a few changes to the way the prayer list is kept.

So that we know how the names on our list are connected to our parish family, we'll mention, in parentheses, who put the person on the prayer list. For example: Sue Smith (Marshall Lloyd's aunt), Tom Doe (Sandy Kirkpatrick's friend).

Also, to keep the prayer list up-to-date, we'll normally keep each person on the prayer list for two months. If you want someone to stay on the list longer than that, please contact the church office and ask that the person's name be retained for another two months. You can repeat this process as many times as you would like to.

If you currently have someone listed, and you would like that person to remain on the prayer list, please call the church office to let us know that you would like that person to remain on the prayer list.

We hope that this approach will give us a stronger spiritual connection to the people we pray for. If you have questions or concerns, please let Lucia know.

SHRINE MONT SUMMER CAMPS

If you know of a child or teenager who would enjoy one of the summer camp programs at ShrineMont, we now have brochures available in the parish office that give information about the wide variety of camps and other programs being offered.

There is also information about "family conference" the Shrine Mont summer camp for grown-ups, with or without children.

Grandchildren can combine a visit to grandparents in Heathsville with a break to attend camp at Shrine Mont. Think about it!

SENIOR WARDEN REMARKS

Dear Folks,

This is my first newsletter column as St. Stephen's Senior Warden.

I have an impossible act to follow. Sandy Kirkpatrick has been the ever-present face of St. Stephen's and our most persistent and effective cheerleader. She, more than any other person, is responsible for leading us where we are today: a vibrant and growing family united in Christian love, worship and service! I know Sandy will continue to provide leadership from wherever she is, and for that I'm grateful.

I feel good about where we are on our journey, and I know you do too! It is evident in our growing attendance and new memberships. It is also evident in the "time and talent" that has been committed for the coming year. We are a small band, but we do make some pretty nice music together.

The Vestry has identified several focus areas for our attention in 2009 that are outlined elsewhere in the newsletter, and I, for one, am excited about tackling them. We will no doubt be calling on you for advice and leadership in these ministries and activities.

2008 was remarkable. It started with the transformation of Chilton House into a true parish home. In very short order followed the establishment of the parish office and the hiring of a part time office manger (Alice Hershiser, followed by Amy Jones); kick off of an active local water ministry; and a memorable Bluegrass & BBQ Event attended by close to 500 people from the community.

After a successful Plant Sale in August, We welcomed and installed our new priest, Lucia and said good bye to Hal and Sally White with two elegant community receptions. Lucia introduced what we hope will be a new tradition, The Blessing of the Animals in October; and we closed the year with our Second Annual Christmas Oyster Roast at Roanoke Farm. 2008 also marked both joyful and sorrowful passages. We said goodbye to Jane Vogt and Leslie Kilduff. We welcomed Alice Hershiser to the Episcopal Church at her confirmation in June; and celebrated Dawn and George Mahaffey's 10th Anniversary at a joyful reception at Chilton House. We'd come full circle!



While we were busy in 2008, most of us have also been chafing at the bit to get on with our journey, end our long period of limbo, and seek a place of our own for worship. Court decisions have not been favorable, and uncertainty seems interminable. It is sometimes an uncomfortable place to be, and it is likely to continue that way for a while longer.

The entire Vestry agrees that it would be preferable to have our "own" space for worship. How best to accomplish this is complicated by many issues including money, suitability of space, and the length of pending litigation. The Vestry will continue to look for potential solutions and is very much open to hearing your ideas.

Whenever I get discouraged about having completed only 18 miles of this "marathon" with more than 8 miles to go, I remind myself of Sue Eaves' exhortation at Lucia's Installation. I can clearly hear her now:

"God has already provided you with everything you need so light the fire and get out there! You can worship in a garden, in a house, in a tent, in a borrowed building, but whatever the location or the circumstance, you are proclaiming to the world : "We are the church without walls. We are a people who died and have risen. We are set free. We are on fire with God's love. Come see. There are no barriers, no walls, for we are the living body of God's love in his place, in this community, in this world. Come, receive God's love. Do not be conformed to this world. Be transformed."

2009 will also be remarkable and transforming. Of that, there is no doubt!

Faithfully,

Bill

P.S. Bluegrass and Barbecue is June 6!

Snow Policy

If church events need to be cancelled because of unsafe weather conditions, the cancellations will be posted on the parish Web site by 9:00 a.m.

If Sunday morning worship is cancelled, we encourage you to enjoy Morning Prayer, which begins on page 75 of the Prayer Book, from the comfort of your home .

REPORT ON THE 214TH ANNUAL COUNCIL

“THE CHURCH’S ONE FOUNDATION”

The opening session, after the introduction of new clergy, special guests, and Senior Seminarians began with a meditation from The Most Rev. Dr. Barry Morgan, Primate of Wales. He is a straight talker, has fine principles, and emphasizes useful conversation. He stressed the importance of the Anglican Communion staying together and working together despite our current problems. During Council he gave three talks, each praising us for our steadfast work and **how** we work together.

The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee, Bishop of Virginia, was next on the agenda. Bishop Lee went straight to his news: He will retire on October 1, 1009. He is leaving to save the money of his salary because of the stark reality of our financial situation. He spoke about his confidence in our Diocesan leadership and his conviction that we can weather the current difficult economy. He spoke of the work and relationships that he had enjoyed for 25 years. Highlights of his address follow:

1. Council’s theme, “The Church’s One Foundation” comes from a hymn by Samuel Stone. (*See excerpt from Bishop Lee’s address following this report*). Stone’s broadly based theology has led us through many years and much change. It has been used as a source for many writings, solving solutions to disagreements, and continually bringing people in the Anglican Communion together. This was the base for the first Lambeth Conference in 1867 and its message was reinforced for our Bishops at the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury in discussions with other Bishops.
2. Bishop Lee spoke of the emphasis on worldwide outreach, mentioning that many of our congregations have partnerships with dioceses and parishes all across the world. Currently the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem is having severe difficulties maintaining its Hospital. Later we had a collection to send to this hospital.
3. Bishop Lee then discussed Diocesan growth, through schools, education, conferences, Shrine Mont, and Roslyn.
4. He addressed our current legal situation, saying that, while saddened, he can honor the consciences of those who disagree with us, but

does not believe that it is right or proper for them to take property that belongs to the church they seek to leave. Specifically, he said “We have not prevailed in the Fairfax Circuit Court but we are currently preparing an appeal to the Supreme Court of Virginia. We believe this is an act of stewardship not only for generations of Episcopalians to come but also for other connectional and hierarchical churches as we seek to protect our right to govern ourselves according to our canons and traditions.

5. With all the monies and effort that the Diocese is devoting to the legal issues to get our churches back, Bishop Lee generously thanked the churches for helping the Diocese keep their property.

Holy Eucharist followed with The Most Rev. Dr. Barry Morgan giving the sermon. He was positive, with just enough humor, and conveyed a strong belief that we in the Anglican Communion will work together and prevail.

Following lunch we celebrated Meade Memorial Church in Alexandria as it moved out of mission status. About 60 parishioners paraded through the room.

Bishop Lee introduced the afternoon session by announcing his appointment of Beblon Parks as the new President of the ECW. He also announced the election of the Rev. Torrence Harmon of St. Mary’s Whitechapel—Region 2’s own—to the Standing Committee.

Reports followed beginning with the Rt. Rev. Shannon S. Johnston’s report as the Bishop Coadjutor. He echoed the praise for Bishop Lee’s magnanimous decision to retire early, but pointed to the loss the Diocese will bear when he leaves.

The budget report came next. The initial budget was based on requests was \$739,020.00, but the budget adopted by the Executive Board was cut to \$684,800.00. Suggestions to not exceed and perhaps become more elastic were made. Another suggestion was that parishioners tithe or come as close as possible to tithing. Another is that we pare our expenses, but that is not likely given the already thorough scrutiny by the Executive Board.

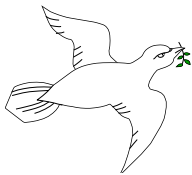
The new Roslyn Chapel, which will be financed through donations, will be dedicated to Bishop Lee for his many years of loyal and devoted service. There was a long standing ovation. We saw pictures, and the chapel will be quite beautiful.

The Courtesy Resolutions, recommended for adoption as a group, passed. Praise for Patrick Getlein's service to the Diocese one of the resolutions. Many of us came to know him and love him during our reconstitution period. He deserved our title of "St. Patrick".

There were nine Resolutions. I went to the discussion of the one on Comprehensive Marriage Ministries. It was held in a large room with possibly 200 or 300 people. The issue was acceptance in the Church for gays and lesbians at the same level as the rest of us. I spoke for one minute to the issue of dignity of any person, feeling that our current situation denies them this situation and removes their ability to receive benefits that others can receive.

The outcome of the Resolutions Committee's work (including the full text of all the recommendations) is available at the diocesan website—www.thediocese.net. I recommend that you make yourself familiar with the recommendations, as much of the debate is ongoing.

SUSAN STUBBS
Your Delegate to the Diocese



Excerpt from Bishop Lee's pastoral address to the 214th Council:

"The historical context of [Samuel Stone's] hymn is explicitly Anglican and controversial. Anglicans worldwide in the 1850s and 60s paid attention to the Bishop of Natal in South Africa, the Rt. Rev. John William Colenso. This former English school teacher, on arriving in South Africa, began to challenge traditional practice and teaching. He upset many of his fellow missionaries when he refused to require polygamist converts to Christianity to divorce all but one of their wives at baptism, a liberal and welcoming gesture that took the rest of the church nearly 150 years to tolerate.

Colenso also wrote essays critical of traditional Biblical interpretation, triggering such opposition that he was deposed by the Archbishop of Capetown in 1863. Colenso appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in

London, who upheld his right to his See. The Archbishop nonetheless excommunicated him in 1866 and the controversy spread across the world.

First Canadians, and then Americans, asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to assemble a conference of bishops to address issues of common belief and practice. The first Lambeth Conference in 1867 was the result. So when Samuel Stone's hymn talks of the Church, "By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed," he has in mind differences within the Anglican family.

His focus is correct, then and now: the church's one foundation is indeed Jesus Christ her Lord. The Risen Christ is both the focus and the source of our unity and our mission, whatever differences might occur in different generations and cultures.

That was reinforced for your three bishops this past summer, when we attended the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury and experienced a common allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord, in our worship, in our Bible studies, in our discussions with other bishops....

As I enter these last months of our active ministry together, I am increasingly aware of what is unfinished.... But that human desire to finish exposes the distance between what we want and what our faith requires. ...

We place at the center of our lives the cross. It is a dramatic sign of interruption, of unfinished business, unfinished from a human perspective, at least, and Christianity commands us to follow that cross along the paths of our own lives. That means that tidy endings and finished business are not to be ours—not ever.

By placing the cross in the midst of life, Christian faith says that God is met in wholeness and in love just at the places we experience brokenness, incompleteness and alienation. ...[F]urther... unless we walk along paths that take us through these valleys of the shadow, we cannot learn that the way of the cross is the way of life.

Our desire for neat and tidy endings can trap us in a past that becomes illusion and that same desire can blind us to a future that could become a promise.

So the final months of our ministry together will not be a time of tidy endings. But they can be a time of reaffirmation of where we stand, on the rock, on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ."

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL VESTRY RETREAT

At our Retreat on January 19, the Vestry articulated several focus areas for 2009.

GROWTH

Growth continues to be an important priority for St. Stephen's. We think it is important to reach out to all in our community who are seeking a spiritual home that is both open and inclusive. To this end a Newcomers Ministry will be formed to both recommend ways to accomplish this outreach, and be a focal point for hospitality for those who visit our church.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

We think people are attracted to St. Stephen's because of the people and by what the congregation does. Communicating about who we are and what we do, then, is important. We communicate externally in different ways including newspaper advertisements and articles, our newsletter, community events, and the website. A priority for 2009 is to reexamine how we communicate, and how to improve it.

WORSHIP

Worship is the most important thing we do as a congregation. Our goals include growing the choir and making music a more important part of our worship, expanding the Altar Guild, increasing the number of Eucharistic Ministers, and providing training for worship leaders and readers.

FACILITIES

The increased use of Chilton House over the last year has made maintenance and housekeeping more challenging. Our goals for 2009 include forming a building and grounds committee to regularize the maintenance, grounds, and housekeeping chores and schedule. Another goal is to facilitate and simplify our outdoor service set-up.

INREACH

A number of good ideas for the parish Inreach Program emerged last year. Our goal this year is to do a better job implementing these ideas, with a special emphasis on visitation.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

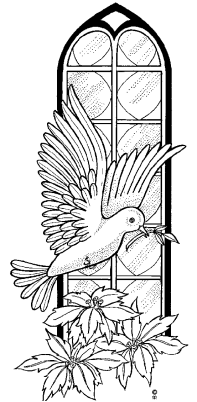
A special goal of our Education ministry in 2009 is to increase the number of opportunities for educational programs focused on spiritual growth.

GOVERNANCE

A review of St. Stephen's By-Laws will be undertaken.

The Vestry is in the process of fleshing out some of the specifics of these goals and making assignments for leading them. If anyone has ideas or a willingness to provide

leadership or to work in any of these areas, please let us know!



VISIT TO THE FALLS CHURCH

The following excerpts from an Episcopal News Service (ENS) account of President of the House of Deputies, Bonnie Anderson, visit to the Falls Church (Episcopal) accurately describe what St. Stephen's eight person contingent (Lucia, Sandy, Rocco, Rick Skelton and the Scott family) experienced when we visited on Sunday, January 11th.

Matt Rhodes, a lifelong Episcopalian, said his family came to worship at Falls Church expecting to find a group of people focused on what had happened to them and anxious about the future.

"That's not at all what we saw," he said. "There was a tremendous sense of fellowship" and "this overwhelming sense of vitality."

Parish members gathering after the split realized that coming together to worship was a crucial first step. When parishes facing similar splits ask how to get over their sense of defeat, Michael Pipkin, Priest-in-Charge, tells them "the answer is: 'you worship'." ...

Such a stance attracts others, he added. "There's a lot to be joyous about," Pipkin said.

In her sermon Anderson said. "In the midst of turmoil and strife in our church in the last few years, instead of falling into depressed defeat when some ... chose to leave, instead of quietly walking away, Episcopalians in dioceses and congregations are bearing witness to Christ wherever they may be... They are taking their place in the life, worship and

governance of the church....Make no mistake about it; the Holy Spirit is at work."

Anderson told ENS that the "huge recognition of lay ministry" among the continuing Falls Church members could benefit the entire church.

Noting a strong sense of community, commitment and excitement, The congregation, she said, is living into the understanding that everyone brings different gifts to ministry. "God's doing a new thing with these people," she added.

While many of the [120] members are "still praying, thinking about and hoping" for a return to the parish's property, Pipkin said, "what replaced it was a sense of mission and wonder that we were able to put this together again."

The only thing missing from the few hours we spent there listening, talking, praying, and eating was talk about 'Litigation'. How refreshing !!!

Outreach and New Members seem to be the 'Success Keywords' !

Rocco Tricarico

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMS

Feb. 5 Taize Service

Feb. 12 Third session on the Holy Eucharist. *Session 1 got us to the peace; session 2 through the consecration. Session 3 will begin with the Lord's Prayer, and then go as far as we can. One topic will be the differences between the four Eucharistic prayers. It will be a lively discussion; please come.*

Feb. 19 ? Session 4, if needed, otherwise a discussion of who, what, where, why, and when came the Anglican Communion. (See Bishop Lee's address for the starting point of this discussion.)

SAVE THE DATE

Lenten shift to Tuesday nights!

We have been invited to plan a joint Lenten series with Wicomico Church. The three week series will alternate locations and hostess duties. Program plans are ongoing, but the schedule is as follows:

Feb. 24 Shrove Tuesday—pancake supper (just St. Stephen's at the parish house)

March 3 6:00 at Wicomico Church

March 10 6:00 at St. Stephen's

March 17 6:00 at Wicomico Church

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

Ushers:

Feb. 1 Herb Cox & D. Kirkpatrick
Feb 8 David Kirkpatrick
Feb. 15 David Kirkpatrick
Feb. 22 David Kirkpatrick
March 1 Herb Cox & Dick Eager
March 8 Dick Eager



Altar Guild

Lesson Readers

Feb. 1 S. Kirkpatrick (L), D. Kirkpatrick (P)
Feb 8 George Freeman (L), Anne Freeman (P)
Feb. 15 Susan Stubbs (L), Evie Cox (P)
Feb. 22 Tal Day (L), Nancy Gates (P)
March 1 Elen Kirby (L), Bill Kirby (P)
March 8 Mimi Stoner (L), Dolly Rabelais (P)

Eucharistic Ministers

Feb. 1 Lea Tilbury
Feb 8 Nancy Gates
Feb. 15 Rocco Tricarico
Feb. 22 Ellen Kirby
March 1 Lea Tilbury
March 8 David Kirkpatrick

Coffee Hour Hosts

Feb. 1 Lynn & Ted Hower
Feb 8 Susan & Joel Stubbs
Feb. 15 Sunday School Class
Feb. 22 George & Dawn Mahaffey
March 1 Anne & George Freeman
March 8 Nancy & Phil Gates

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Feb. 3 Bob Reamy Merle & Margaret Horsmon
Feb. 5 Dave & Pauline Brashears
Feb. 8 Ellen Kirby
Feb. 13 Lynn Hower
Feb. 21 Dawn Mahaffey
Feb. 24 Tal & Barbara Day
Feb. 27 Fenton Crowther

