

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Reports to Annual Meeting
January 31, 2021

Rector's Letter Regarding Annual Meeting 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we begin this new calendar year in hope and the continued joy of celebrating the risen Christ, we are invited once again to share in another tradition in a new way: the annual meeting of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church!

While we normally gather in the Great Hall for an abbreviated coffee hour, packing ourselves around tables with friends, combing through paper reports with our eyes glazing over spreadsheets, this year we must consider a different approach to this august tradition.

We will be gathering over Zoom at our regular worship time, combining our worship with our work. There will be a concurrent live-stream on Facebook and YouTube. For purposes of attendance, those joining us on Facebook and YouTube may count as being present, but due to the limitations of those platforms, those attending that way would be unable to have voice and vote. For this reason, I recommend joining us directly on Zoom.

If you do not have the capability to join us by computer, tablet, or smartphone, you may call into the meeting with a traditional phone. While you would not be able to see our faces, you would be able to join us in real-time!

We will begin with prayer, hearing from scripture, and then we will open our congregational meeting. We will receive the budget passed by the vestry, elect new members to the vestry, and the rector's address. We will then conclude with prayer, blessing, and dismissal. And of course, many of us will stick around for coffee hour.

To log into the annual meeting on Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 10:00 am, follow this link:
<https://tinyurl.com/y4hlfwal>

If you need to log in,

Meeting ID: 817 1691 5519

Passcode: 794978

You may also phone in: +1 (312) 626-6799

There is no question that this will be a different meeting for us and unlike any annual meeting we've had. However, it is not an unheard of practice. The work of the church is frequently wrapped in prayer and originating from it. We don't simply pray before meals and meetings as formality, but so that God's influence might be seen in our words and actions.

Nor must worship be necessarily separated from work; as if the work should ever be so far removed from the prayers we pray.

My hope is that we learn from this crazy, weird year of 2020. And that we are mindful of not **only** what was lost or hoped-for from the year, but where we might now rightly see the work of God in our midst.

Grace and Peace,
The Rev. Andrew Downs
Rector, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Minutes of 2020 Annual Meeting held on January 26, 2020

submitted by Gail Nattkemper

Mission Statement - St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is a community striving to understand God's word, growing in faith, and serving the needs of others while welcoming all to share in joy and fellowship.

Opening Prayer - from the New Zealand Prayer Book was read by all

Report of Nominating Committee - We are to elect 3 people to replace 3 outgoing vestry members and one person to fill the remainder of Theresa Jackson's term.

Nominees: Linda Airhart, John Hegedus, Peter Reed and Martha Layton for the one year term. Election of all nominees was by acclamation. Drew has asked Robin Willis to serve as senior warden.

Reports to the Congregation

From the Vestry: Peggy Allen & Drew Downs
Senior Warden Sandy Bush

Treasurer: Peggy Allen

A brief description of the 2019 budget and proposed budget

Reports from groups and ministries were handed out.

Treasurer's Report for Annual Meeting

submitted by Peggy Allen, Treasurer

2020 – We ended this past year in the black! Barely, but we'll take it! Our pledges, investments, and decreased expenses led the way.

Since Covid provided some technical communication issues for St. Stephen's, Drew applied for a grant from the Center for Congregations. We received \$4700, using it for hardware & subscriptions to the video apps.

We did some building improvements last year, a new kitchen door & new windows on the alley side in the education wing. That money came out of the Historic Building fund.

As the Vestry can attest to, I had a minor panic attack in late spring when, in one month, we spent \$10,000 more than we brought in. I then realized that we were seeing a delay in receiving pledges. I think we were all coming to grips with our new "normal" and that it was going to continue longer than we expected. As we moved into early summer, the bottom line corrected and finances got back to normal. It proved how dependent we are on pledges. Please know that your consistent pledge payments are appreciated!

2021 – The budget for the coming year does not look quite as rosy. The bottom line is a negative \$43,000. As you know from our recent budgets, I tend to lean on the financially conservative side, being honest about our situation & not using extreme "pie in the sky" numbers. In the past, we have almost always ended up in a better spot than predicted. That happens with a lot of work by everyone!

On the revenue side, we decreased pledges due to parishioners that have moved, died or decreased their pledge for 2021. The investment number was kept at 2020 level & we cross our fingers.

On the expense side, a 2.5% cost of living raise was given. Increases are also seen in Insurance & Medical costs. There is a decrease, small as it is, in Trash Removal as we switched providers.

Please know that the Vestry, Drew, Dennis, & I are committed to keeping this budget under control as much as possible. As always, the goal is more revenue, less expense!

Peggy Allen, Treasurer

Acolytes Submitted by The Rev. Drew Downs

Coordinator: Drew

Meeting Time: Church seasonally

What is this ministry and who does it serve?

Acolytes serve in our common liturgies by carrying crosses, torches, banners, the Gospel Book, or thurible in procession, gathering materials for the altar, and guiding our attention to the center of worship.

Acolytes are volunteers of any age who are physically and emotionally up to the challenge! It is a great way to allow children and teens to more directly participate in worship, but its ceremonial and devotional aspects make it a deeply fulfilling vocation for adults and older members as well.

What am I most thankful to GOD for in this ministry for this past year [2020]?

While our servers were not utilized much, their generosity was frequently offered for when we return to regular worship in our building.

How are we serving this year [2021]?

We will continue to be virtual at the beginning of the year, but anticipate the opportunity to serve in new and traditional ways this spring.

If you'd like to become an acolyte, please let your priest or deacon know and we will begin trainings around your schedule!

Adult Formation Submitted by The Rev. Drew Downs

Coordinator: The Rev. Drew Downs

Meeting Time: Online

What is this ministry and who does it serve?

Following in the Way of Jesus is not something we graduate from; it's a life-long pursuit of hope-filled learning. We don't stop learning, though we often stop committing to learn. So this ministry is for everyone.

What am I most thankful to GOD for in this ministry for this past year [2020]?

In 2019, we began working with the Faithful Innovation initiative, which is a diocese-wide project to help us connect with our neighborhoods and engage in active learning. The work we began two years ago helped us as we needed to develop a spirit of adaptation during 2020.

In Lent, we saw Lent Madness overtake the congregation. We also began weekly classes called Faith 15, which intended to introduce different parts of the Christian faith and Episcopal tradition. This project moved online for the remainder of the spring.

Facilitating the move to online worship meant that our formation energies could be served to minimize our obligations, inviting our people to gather online each week, take advantage of the diocesan morning and evening prayer services, and participate in projects of personal piety.

Back-to-School packages were sent to our students and teachers to help encourage during a difficult return to in-person learning.

We also offered an Advent devotional this year, allowing us to engage with the season in a new way.

How are we serving this year [2021]?

- A series of at-your-own-pace workshops began January 6, beginning with prayer. Lent's workshop will be about reading the Bible.
- Lent Madness
- Theology on Tap on Zoom

Lectors and Chalicists Submitted by Curtis A Winkle

Name of ministry: Lectors and Chalicists

Description: Lectors and Chalicists are trained to serve in their ministry as Lector and/or Chalicist for the 8 and/or 10 o'clock service.

How does this ministry contribute to fulfilling St. Stephen's Hopes for the Future as described in the St. Stephen's Brochure? This ministry contributes directly to the liturgical aspects of St. Stephen's.

Who leads or coordinates this ministry: Bill Denton takes the lead in determining, with the Rector, the next cycle of service and the readings. Bill Denton schedules the lectors and chalicists for the 8 o'clock services and Curt Winkle schedules the lectors and chalicists for the 10 o'clock services. The Vergers (Bill Denton and Sandy Bush) periodically conduct a workshop for the lectors/chalicists

Bill Denton can be contacted at 299-9847 or john.denton@indstate.edu

Curt Winkle can be contacted at 242-4854 or curtiswinkle@mac.com

How organized/conduct ministry? Bill Denton sets up the readings for each cycle and coordinates the services of the five individuals that now support the eight o'clock services.

Bill Denton also assigns the lectors and chalcists for the special services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil and the Christmas Eve Services. Curt Winkle coordinates the services of the twenty-three individuals who now serve as lectors and/or chalcists for the ten o'clock services.

How does someone new get involved? Individuals desiring to serve as a lector and/or chalcist may contact the rector or Bill Denton for the 8 o'clock service or Curt Winkle for the 10 o'clock service. During the fall volunteers are encouraged sign up for activities either as a new volunteer or to renew their commitment to the activity.

For 2020, Twenty-seven individuals have faithfully been serving as lectors and/or chalcists for the 8 and 10 o'clock service this past year. Five individuals serve the 8 o'clock service and Twenty-three individuals serve the 10 o'clock service. One of the twenty-three individuals have served both the 8 and 10 'clock services. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Dennis Dieken has sought out volunteer readers for the services in the park and for the online services.

How has the Holy Spirit been evident in the work of this ministry? Direct participation in the worship service is very meaningful.

What do you need for 2021? Volunteers to serve as a lector and/or chalcist are always welcome.

Mabley Garden submitted by John Salamone johnsalamone1963@gmail.com

The Garden was tended this during 2020 by parishioners Linda Airhart, Randy Lambermont, Bill Denton, Bill Hughes, James Willis, Jim Hunter, James Greene, Stephanie Alexander and family, David and Debbie Nearpass.

We only had one big clean up day but it was well attended and the garden looked beautiful afterward. Many of these members came back on their own throughout the summer and Autumn to spruce up the garden. Thank you all for your help and devotion to the garden and our parish.

It was fun to take photos of the garden throughout the year to note it's progression. Those photos appeared on our Facebook page. Thanks to Dennis Dieken for posting them for us.

I met with Hank Metzger, we discussed improvements for the garden including reworking the slate walkways to make them safer, replacing the steel edging which is rusted and dangerous, and a replacement tree for the center of the garden. I will keep the parish and vestry updated on those projects as they begin in the spring.

Christmas tree... In Advent, Jr. Warden Geoff Wayton and others decorated the garden with blue lights and a tree in the center of garden. The tree was lit by floodlights during advent until the Fourth Sunday of Advent when Christmas lights were added to the tree and the blue lights were removed from bushes. The tree was then decorated by parishioners during the week. It was lovely to see the ornaments as they appeared on the tree. This was a great way for the congregation to feel connected during our absence from the building, and was a gorgeous gift to share with the community of Terre Haute. Our garden has always been a bright spot in the community and this was a new and very special way to share our garden. Parishioners are always welcome to stop by and enjoy the peace and beauty of the Garden. If you are interested in helping in the Garden, let me know and I will add your name to the contact list. Thank you!

Manna From Seven Submitted by The Rev. Drew Downs

Coordinator: Susan Seitz

What is this ministry and who does it serve?

Manna From Seven is a nonprofit organization serving the food insecure in Vigo County. Their primary ministry is a weekend food distribution effort that ensures hundreds of people will be fed over the weekend. They also have several supplemental programs, including help with laundry and personal needs.

What am I most thankful to GOD for in this ministry for this past year [2020]?

“Manna,” which started as a food offering out of a van has become a persistent beacon of Christ in the midst of a dark season. The fruit of these efforts has been a dramatic increase in resources and need as the pandemic dragged on. Regularly feeding two or three hundred people each week at the beginning of the year grew to over a thousand by the end.

How are we serving this year [2021]?

As Manna has grown, we have sought to strengthen our relationship to the program and to help them meet this explosive growth.

We expect community need to remain high this year and hope the accompanying resources that have made this work possible will continue to come in. We also anticipate that this year will require more adaptation to conditions, use of our building, and the development of new avenues for serving those with food insecurity in our community.

What can you do to help?

Volunteers are always needed on Fridays for food distribution.

Financial contributions are essential to keeping the ministry going. Please make checks out directly to Manna From Seven.

For more information, visit the Manna Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Manna-from-Seven-1200390406780322> or email manafromseven@gmail.com

Music submitted by Dennis Dieken dennisdieken1953@gmail.com

Thank you to choir singers and instrumentalists who recorded hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs during the long months of the pandemic and for the Christmas service: Andy Miller, Anne Buchanan, Anne Hewner, John Salamone, Dave Thomas, and Curtis Winkle.

Point In Time Count submitted by Deacon Deby Veach dveach53@yahoo.com

The annual Point in Time count of the homeless in our community was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2020. This was our sixth year to participate. We were in charge of the count at Fairbanks Park along the Wabash River. Preceding the count, we collected coats, boots, shoes and sleeping bags in good condition. New stocking caps, insulated gloves and thick socks along with \$5 McDonalds gift cards were donated by our congregation. This year, we added dog and cat food to our distribution. Monetary donations were also accepted to purchase items to ensure sufficient amounts to give away. Manna from Seven was in charge of preparing food for the day for all the sites in Terre Haute for the count. We supplied volunteers who helped make 300 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Volunteers also stuffed 300 bags that contained fruit, chips, a desert cake as well as other small, non-perishable food items. Two members of our congregation are trained interviewers for the count. This past year, more people qualified to be counted than in past years. Our set up crew enclosed the shelter on two sides with plastic sheeting and heat was provided by a kerosene heater. Our volunteers helped participants select coats and footwear, socks, gloves and caps as well as serve hot beverages and hot noodle cups to those who braved the cold along the river to be counted. Many thanks to all who help make this event happen. We could not do it without everyone's help.

Women Dining Out submitted by Deacon Deby Veach dveach53@yahoo.com

The women of St. Stephen's get together the second Wednesday of every month except in December for a potluck dinner and conversation. Each lady is asked to bring a covered dish

and if possible, a cash donation. The donations are then given annually to a ministry that benefits women in our community or spent on items to benefit one of the local women's shelters. In February of 2020, we purchased two bras each for the women residing at Deborah's house. Each resident went to a local department store for a personal fitting. Our last in person gathering was in March due to the pandemic. In June, we started getting together on Zoom on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00PM. While it is not the same as in person meetings, it gives us an opportunity to see one another and talk. If anyone would like to join us, please join our Facebook group: Women Dining Out St. Stephen's Terre Haute, IN. For more information, please contact Deby Veach.

Special Report on Ordination Discernment

Submitted by The Rev. Drew Downs rector@ststephensth.org

Coordinator: Drew

What is this ministry and who does it serve?

As a member of The Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican Communion, we are called to serve both the local community and the wider church. And one of those ways is through the discernment of leadership in the church: what we call Holy Orders.

Discerning the priesthood: Joanna Benskin

Joanna Benskin and her husband, Brian Koczan joined St. Stephen's in 2016 after serving in a variety of ministries at St. John's, Lafayette and I was fortunate to sponsor her aspiration to seek ordination. St. Stephen's supported her through discernment and several members formed her discernment committee.

In 2018, Joanna moved into the next phase of her discernment process: the part where she began her formal training through seminary. She is now beginning her final semester at Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) in California.

In December, Joanna was ordained a transitional deacon, an order she must canonically serve in for at least 6 months before being ordained a priest.

John Salamone wove her stole—a beautiful piece that she can wear now as a deacon and later, God willing, as a priest.

We continue to support her through her journey and pray for her ongoing discernment.

Rector's Report Submitted by The Rev. Drew Downs rector@ststephensth.org

To the people of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, the Terre Haute community, and the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, I give thanks everyday for being with you and serving as your rector. It is a blessing for which I give constant thanks to God.

This year

We gathered to celebrate our principal feasts as directed in the Book of Common Prayer and included for a fourth time, our patronal feast, transferred to December 27th.

We partnered with Manna From Seven to create a permanent home for a vital feeding ministry to our community.

We supported the Wabash Valley Homeless Coalition through the annual Point-in-Time Count and through service on the board.

We joined with United Campus Ministries to share ashes with students and staff on campus.

We observed a Holy Lent through simplicity and daily devotions.

We blessed our pets and all other honored guests who have joined us throughout the year!

We supported a postulant (Joanna Benskin) at seminary at CDSP and witnessed (by livestream) her ordination to the transitional diaconate.

We have celebrated the lives of those who have died and those celebrating new lives in Christ and together as wedded in Christ.

We have given the grace of Jesus to one another and to countless people in Terre Haute and its neighboring communities.

This work continued *and changed* in 2020 as we adapted to a global pandemic.

We continue to live into our calling as beacons of Christ to the Terre Haute community. How we do that when we can't be in the same room together for extended time has been a source of great pain and learning. And yet, we have committed ourselves to serving our community and one another, adapting to the moment. We have sought to not only be with each other virtually, but be of use to our community.

Even though we have not worshipped regularly in our church building for many months, we have made use of weekly worship online, in our homes, and with our families. We have also used our many resources to worship by ourselves, using the Book of Common Prayer, reflections, and applications on our phones.

The Alcoholics Anonymous groups that meet at St. Stephen's have continued (online or in-person) and remain a vital source of safety to our neighbors.

Manna From Seven saw its regular outreach to the community more than double over the course of the pandemic. Their volunteers continue to adapt to the challenge of more people needing food with less contact. It seems as if every week they face a new challenge and make it into a new opportunity to serve our neighbors in need.

While it is safe to say that 2020 was not the year we wanted, it is the year we had. And our commitment to Jesus's Way of Love is undaunted. We have been called to be a beacon of Christ; a guide in a storm. We are blessed with such an honor and remain committed to that illuminating work for many years to come.

May Christ be our light, our guide, our way through the darkness, and may his inspiration guide us in love for and to one another. Amen.

We witnessed the bonding in holy matrimony in 2020

Stephanie Alexander and James Greene

We surrendered to God's care through Christian burial in 2020

Jean Veach

Jil Ida Wilson

Robert Wilson