

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Reports to Annual Meeting
January 23, 2022

Rector's Letter Regarding Annual Meeting 2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is with great joy that I write to you in anticipation of the annual meeting of the congregation! While the last year brought us new challenges and opportunities, we are coming together at a time of new hope.

Of course, this hope may feel tempered by the Omicron variant of the coronavirus that has caused so much disruption. But let us consider that we not only feel *more* secure of our ability to gather than we felt a year ago, but also that this might be the opportunity to adjust our own expectations for the moment we're in.

This year's gathering will be *hybrid*, which is the word we're using for the both/and approach of meeting in-person and online at the same time. Now, because we don't have the infrastructure *newer* buildings have to run these meetings seamlessly, we will have to make some basic modifications to the meeting itself to serve the needs of those meeting in-person and those meeting virtually.

- We will meet in the worship space after communion: so those who are joining us by livestream will be able to join the proceedings on Facebook — without doing anything different. If you join us this way, please make your presence known in the comments and if you have any questions, please offer those in the comments as well. Someone will be monitoring the Facebook feed.
- We also encourage you to join the Zoom room that will open when the meeting begins. This will be monitored by Rev. Deby. Because we anticipate sound being a problem for those Zooming in, Deby will do her best to help you keep up with the work going on in the room via **chat**. And we ask that your questions and comments come in that way.
- Our agenda will be simplified and streamlined. Reports will all come in print or digital form.
- Like our meeting last year, we will be operating with the consensus rules offered by Robert's Rules of Order. This means that the chair will offer up the matter

upon which we are to vote which *does not require a motion or second*. He will pause and give the people the opportunity to offer an objection. A single objection will lead us to begin the traditional process of voting. Hearing no objection, we will treat the motion as passing. This prevents the logistics from getting in the way of simple business.

- To prepare for the meeting, you are encouraged to attend a first presentation of the budget on **Saturday, January 22 at 10 am on Zoom**. You may join us at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8pks7m>. This will allow us to go into far greater detail and be prepared for the meeting itself.

To log into the annual meeting on Sunday, January 23, 2021 at approximately 10:45 am, follow this link: <https://tinyurl.com/h29f3jvd>

If you need to log in,

Meeting ID: 867 1622 7490

Passcode: 382288

You may also phone in: +1 (646) 876 9923

This information will also be available on the website.

If we have learned anything during the pandemic, it is the need for *adaptation*. A skill that is founded on the openness to take in new information, the willingness to learn from experience, and the creativity to build something new from it.

We are living at a time of great opportunity. Let us continue to be guided into it by faith!

Grace and Peace,

The Rev. Andrew Downs

Rector, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Minutes of 2021 Annual Meeting

held on Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube on January 31, 2021

submitted by Dennis Dieken

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

Report of Nominating Committee - We are to elect 3 people to replace 3 outgoing vestry members.

Nominees: William Denton, Andrew Miller, Michelle Moulton. Election of all nominees was by acclamation. Drew has asked Linda Airhart to serve as senior warden.

Reports to the Congregation

From the Vestry: Peggy Allen & Drew Downs
Senior Warden Robin Willis

Treasurer: Peggy Allen

A brief description of the 2020 budget and proposed 2021 budget

Reports from groups and ministries were available online and by email prior to the meeting.

Senior Warden's Report Submitted by Linda Airhart

On March 10, 2020 we were in Brunswick, Georgia for the birth of our granddaughter. The first COVID case showed up at the hospital where she was born. My son suggested that we stay with them until COVID "calmed" down. To say the least we are all learning to navigate the world in a different way than before COVID.

I am proud of St Stephens and the way we, as a parish, have learned to adapt and cope with all the changes. Change is not always bad, I personally have learned just how much sitting in the church pew and seeing my church family means to me when it was not safe for us to be together.

Even in these times of struggle there are a lot of things that St Stephen's members can be proud of as a Church. We have provided a location for the distribution of food to the needy through Manna. We "hosted" the Warming Center for the homeless for almost two weeks last winter. We were able to provide a warm, safe, and caring environment for the homeless in our community. The positive feedback that we received from the temporary residents and the community reaffirm that we are on the right track.

And when things did get better and we were able to reconvene together, many parishioners with their masks showed up to prepare the Church for our return.

I love my church family and I am so grateful that we can be together and worship and continue to share our love of each other and Jesus's teachings. Peace be with you.

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 [2021]?

Our return to the building for Pentecost brought with it the flood of emotions we felt in anticipation of gathering in-person. Being able to return to our gathering some of the formal aspects of worship was a delight.

How are we serving this year [2022]?

The pandemic and graduation has depleted our acolyte team considerably. The recent graduation of Hudson Bryan to crucifer has been a source of genuine excitement.

If you'd like to become an acolyte, please let your priest or deacon know and we will begin training 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 [2021]?

Our continued separation at the beginning of the year and then limited in-person gathering time put a lot of pressure on our efforts to encourage widespread participation in ongoing formation projects.

The Rector led a series of workshops on prayer and scripture online, a newcomers' class, and a regular Bible Study, experimenting with both synchronous (people joining on a video call at the same time) and asynchronous (making videos to watch on your own) events.

How are we serving this year [2022]?

- A twice/month Scripture Conversation
- Lent Madness
- Theological Happy Hour on Zoom
- New projects as generated by the participants

Christian Formation for Kids Submitted by Anne Buchanan and Bill Allen

After being on hold most of 2021 because of Covid, we geared up in late summer. After a meeting with parents in August we reinstated our practice of weekly KIDSWorship services during the 10am service (leaving after collect and returning with the peace) and monthly Sunday Fun Days (meeting after 10am service for lunch and an activity). During the fall we held KIDSWorship outside in the garden but moved inside to the chapel (with masks) when the weather turned cold.

KIDSWorship involves a simplified liturgy that includes all elements of “big church”—scripture, an object-centered "sermon," prayers, offertory (“God Can”), and passing the peace. It is open to any kid or anyone who is “young at heart,” including adults! (Kids under four should be accompanied by a parent.) During prayer time we ask for specific concerns and add them to our prayer liturgy. Filling the Blessing Box outside is a popular part of the offertory time. Kids love carrying out food to put in the box. For our Sunday Fun Days so far we have made “what is God like” collages, put together Advent chains, and decorated gingerbread “individuals” (some turned out to be superheroes!)

We began the fall with 11 kids enrolled in our program. On a typical Sunday we may have anything from 0 to 10 kids at KIDSWorship or Sunday Fun Day activities. We have tried to be flexible and follow general church policy in our programming in response to fluctuating Covid levels.

Bill Allen and Anne Buchanan continue to direct this program with help from a number of parishioners. Opportunities for leadership involve anything from being a timekeeper (fetching us when it's time to return to “big church”) to serving as a guest leader. We encourage parents to supply kids with an offering for the God Can or food for the Blessing Box.

Lectors and Chalicists – Activities for 2021

Submitted by Wm. Denton and Sandy Bush

From January to late Summer there were no 8 am services. From January to March the 10 am services were on Zoom with readers assisting on a volunteer basis. On Easter Day the 10 am services moved to an outdoor shelter in Deming Park. The bread was administered by the Priest and volunteer readers were secured by Dennis Dieken. In late May the 10 am services returned to the Church. In late summer in-person 8 am services resumed. Sandy Bush (who replaced Curt Winkle as coordinator at the 10 am services) and Bill Denton (coordinator at 8am and other services) resumed assigning previously trained Lectors for the services.

Approximately fourteen (14) lectors are presently involved in the Lector ministry. In the near future when the Church is fully opened and in-person participation is restored, Sandy and Bill plan to schedule Lector and Chalicist Workshops to train parishioners who have an interest in either or both of those ministries and to review procedures for the previously trained Lectors and Chalicists.

Bill Denton can be contacted at 812.870.0650 or john.denton@indstate.edu

Sandy Bush can be contacted at 812.236.0129 or sanben10@aol.com

Mabley Garden 2021 submitted by John Salamone

johnsalamone1963@gmail.com

A few and dedicated members of the parish met on different dates to help maintain the garden. We had more milk weed plants this year to help support monarch butterflies and we are planning for a few different varieties next year. Thanks all who helped this year I will publish announcements for work calls next year. All are welcome and appreciated!!!

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 [2021]?

“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 has grown to over fourteen hundred on a regular basis.

How are we serving this year [2022]?

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 or Saturday for driving. 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 mannafromseven@gmail.com

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

Because of the pandemic, the annual Point In Time count of the homeless in our area changed to protect the volunteers as well as the homeless living in our area. We did not set up a shelter along the river in 2021. We did however, continue to collect items during the year such as coats, hats, gloves etc to give to those in need. Thank you for your continued support of this ministry.

SACRISTY/ALTAR GUILD submitted by William Denton

Sacristans play an important role in the worship life of St. Stephen's. Our responsibilities include setting up the altar area for Sunday and weekday Eucharists and for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, making preparations associated with the seasons of the Church year, caring for altar linens, and cleaning the silver and brass in the church and chapel. We believe our ministry enhances our appreciation of the Eucharist as an expression of our corporate worship, thereby deepening our faith.

Sacristans' work in 2021 was especially challenging. Services were held in several different venues (on-line, outdoors, and in-person in the church), creating situations requiring patience, flexibility, and imagination. Because of several factors, sacristan participation and involvement decreased during that year. There are presently only five parish members who are actively involved in the work of the sacristy (one new member has joined us during 2021). Bill Denton is responsible for the training of sacristans and the overall coordination of the sacristy. If you are interested in becoming a sacristan, contact him.

Contact information:

Email john.denton@indstate.edu

Cell phone: 812.870.0650

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. Because of the pandemic, we continued to meet on Zoom during cold weather but in May, felt safe enough to meet in the garden with each lady bringing her own meal. With cold weather upon us, we are meeting again on Zoom. 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.

Ordained to 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: formal training through seminary. She attended Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) in California. In December, 2020, Joanna was ordained a transitional deacon, and this past spring she was ordained a priest.

She is currently serving as the final Pathways Priest of the Diocese, serving as a curate to both St. Paul's in Evansville and St. Stephen's in New Harmony.

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 past year

We gathered to celebrate our principal feasts as directed in the Book of Common Prayer and including our patronal feast, December 26th.

We partnered with the Farrington Grove Chorale to resume our annual lessons and carols.

We strengthened our partnership with our neighbor churches through Holypalooza, High Point Youth Group, and developing ministries of service.

We used our building and technology in innovative ways to gather as the body of Christ.

We continued our partnership with Manna From Seven, offering a permanent home for a vital feeding ministry to our community.

We supported the Wabash Valley Homeless Coalition through its cold-weather emergency shelter, the annual Point-in-Time Count and through service on the board.

We offered Ashes-to-Go and take-home packets.

We observed a Holy Lent through simplicity and daily devotions.

We supported a postulant (Joanna Benskin) at seminary at CDSP and witnessed her ordination to the priesthood.

We have celebrated the lives of those who have died and those celebrating new lives 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 2021 as we continued to adapt to a global pandemic.

We continue to live into our calling as beacons of Christ to the Terre Haute community. The question of how we maintain church during the pandemic has dominated our thinking. But it is our call to serve that keeps pulling us together...and in new directions.

Even as we resumed worship in our building on Pentecost, we did so with a *new* commitment to both/and: that we would need to keep our commitment to those who could not be with us in-person. We also continue to offer a printed weekly worship reflection for those without internet access and a recorded devotion for those who do. We joined the diocesan Church Buildings for Collaborative Partnerships initiative to help us better understand and utilize our church building as a resource that has real value to our community.

And we are investing in new protections for our stained glass windows, hoping to not only protect them for *our* appreciation, but for their value in visually communicating the gospel to our community.

As we enter 2022 with a mixture of hope and fear, I am once again reminded of a gospel that preaches hope, *not* fear. Trust in God, not in money. Love, not certainty.

We may be living in the most uncertain of times. But our faith is not *about* certainty. It doesn't indulge our fear. In fact, it commands us to stymie that fear! To trust when trust seems stupid!

God will manifest in our neighborhood with or without us. We can trust in that. So our work is to join in that work with new vigor and hope and love for this community.

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 welcomed into the faith through baptism in 2021

Stephanie Alexander
Lucy Bayles
Matthew Floyd
Stella Wayton

We welcomed the mature affirmation of faith through confirmation in 2021

James Greene
Andrew Miller
Keegan Parkhurst
Megan Price

We witnessed the renewal of faith in 2021

Lisa O'Donnell
Jonnee Western

We witnessed the bonding in holy matrimony in 2020

Steven Turner and Elizabeth Wagley

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

Barbara Burns

Paul Campbell

David Fuller

Joe Sanders

Ross Matthew Woodburn

Final Report of the History Group

Submitted by Karen Rutherford to Vestry on October 20, 2021

About three years ago a group of people gathered together at the Country Club of Terre Haute at Barbara Vogel's invitation. It was suggested that we have lunch there and discuss the possibility of creating an active group who would tackle the many storage areas in the church. It was then we created our Mission Statement:

Celebrate the History, Families and Legacies of St. Stephens Episcopal Church.

Rev. Chip Chillington gave the group a tour of about 7-8 areas in the church where papers and artifacts were stored. It became very clear that the goal of this group would be to store like things together and to do so as safely as possible.

Although it was suggested that a committee be formed, a committee means structure: a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and it was thought that wouldn't work in this case. It was a group of people who were very interested in preserving and organizing the very important history of the Church, it being the oldest continuing congregation in the city. They came when they could, and worked diligently to create order. We kept in mind the year 2040 when the Church would celebrate their 200th Anniversary. I can't say enough positive words about their knowledge, diligence, and deep interest in doing their best for the Church. It was also fun! The Covid pandemic certainly took its toll on our effort.

Here are people from St. Stephens who donated their time and treasures. It is not my intention to leave anyone out, so please inform me if I did.

With deep and sincere thanks to the following:

Barbara Vogel, Ruth Itamura, Mary Ruth and David Mier, Gail Nattkemper, Pat Armstrong, Anne Murphy, Dennis Dieken, Chip Chillington, Gene England, Pat Minnis, Martha and Don Layton, Debbie and David Nearpass, Joan Bonner, Bill Denton, Drew Downs,

And to Jane Connor, Carolyn Steinbaugh, Bill and Peggy Allen for donations of file cabinets for storage of church papers,

And to Randy Lambermont, Tim Ghogle, and Austin Willis for carrying and placing the file cabinets in the library,

And to the Vestry for monies for materials for archival storage of church documents and photos.

And for their professional help: Christy Brinkman-Robertson, Curator at Rose Hulman Institute of Technology, Dr, Roslyn Walker, former Director of the Smithsonian and currently holding an endowed chair at the Dallas Art Museum, Dr. Jennifer Hain, Professor of Art History and Archival Studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Mike McCormick, Terre Haute Historian and newspaper columnist.

We began by bringing to the library the objects, photos, papers, and books from the storage areas, creating piles of like things together. Then we started to organize by subject matter and date, if possible. All the archival boxes were used for books, photos and newspaper clippings. All the interleaving papers were used for the storage of photos, newspaper articles, books, and anything that needed to be separated. The clear polyester enclosures were used for photos and anything that was very old. The archival file folders were used for historic papers. More recent papers were left in their original files. These files can be found in the Library. In a closet in the Rector's office, the oldest and most fragile pieces were stored. That is because that side of the second floor is air conditioned. Considering that it gets very hot in the summer on the second floor, we thought it would be the best storage area for those pieces. Historic newspaper articles were copied at The Vigo County Public Library Archives and stored in folders in the library.

The many portraits of the Bishops of the Indianapolis Diocese were identified by Ruth Itamura and their names are written on the back of their portrait.

We did not attempt to clean and organize the objects in the room near the Chapel. In this room is the office of the Treasurer, flat storage for blue prints of the building, and recent Vestry and Treasurers minutes. There is a shelving unit where bound copies of church bulletins were placed and it is suggested that others found in the library could be placed there, also.

An inventory of the safe located in the building and the safe deposit box located at Old National Bank was done by Bill Denton and myself. These inventories were given to the Rector for safe keeping.

A copy of the original drawing by Juliette Peddle of the original church with a brief history was framed. We also had framed seven historic photos of the altar with two 2021 photos by David Nearpass of the chapel and altar. The oldest photo is of the altar before 1907 – which was when the stained glass windows were installed. It should be noted that only one of the seven historic photos had a date on the back. With the help of many people, we tried our best to give approximate decades when they were created.

Future?

- The files can be fine-tuned, the Guild information in a file cabinet can be sorted and organized, keeping information up-to-date - and realizing that the maintenance is ongoing, never ending!
- Ewing Miller, the architect responsible for the renovation of the nave, suggested that the rood screen be placed on the blank wall in the chapel.
- Find the photograph of Sarah Hemingway. Share with Rose Hulman.
- Work with the Vigo County Library with their history project of Vigo County. Possible contacts for this are: Rev. John Gedrick, Barbara Vogel, the Bonner Family, Rev. Dennis Latta, Ruth Itamura, Curt Winkle, Dennis Dieken, the Veach/Roundtree family, the Nasser family.
- Contact the Vigo County Historical Society and show them photos, articles and objects that we have.
- Do NOT store anything on a CD disc. They are not archival. Consider iCloud storage.