

*At St. Stephen's,  
our Mission is to  
worship, love and  
serve Our Lord  
Jesus Christ,  
welcoming  
everyone,  
deepening our  
faith, helping our  
neighbors and  
caring for creation*

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# The St. Stephen's Clarion



## Words from our Rector

### Let Us Pray

"I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me."  
-C. S. Lewis

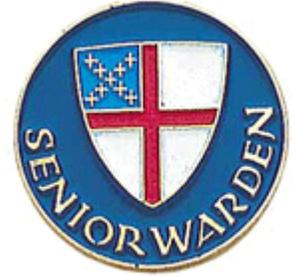
More and more in my life and ministry I have come to view prayer as not so much something that I do at specific times, but as relationship with God in all aspects of my life. To be a person of prayer means living a life of being close to God, of being drawn into intimate union with God. The challenge, of course, is to take the closeness to God that I experience in prayer and worship and live my whole life in this reality. Even though I start my day in quietness and prayer, life intervenes. I'm met by an aggressive, tail-gating driver on my way to work. There are pressing deadlines to meet, or a challenging pastoral concern to address. It's not easy staying close to God! While my morning begins with peace and quietness, it doesn't take long for it all to disappear.

But what I find most helpful in maintaining my being ever conscious of God in my life is the practice of meditation or centering prayer. This form of prayer is the exploration of the still center within each of us, the place of being in God's presence, in wordless waiting, and of experiencing the peace that passes all understanding. It is this daily practice that changes me, guards, and guides me through the challenges and changes of life.

Beginning on October 9, we will begin offering a Contemplative Morning Prayer service on Wednesdays at 8:15 AM in the chapel. It is our hope that these Wednesday morning gatherings will provide an opportunity to pause from our activity and busyness and reground our hearts in God. I look forward to seeing you. Come and be changed.

Peter

Senior Warden—Susan Ho



By the time you read this, Labor Day will probably be in the past, and we will truly be into the fall season. We see lots of back-to-school sales, warmer clothes in the stores, and the lazy days of summer getting shorter. I always find this sad on one hand, as I enjoy the more relaxed feel to summer. It is as if we all get a break from “real life”. However, there is something invigorating about crisp mornings, structured time, schedules, and “starting over” for a new year. In many ways, this has seemed as if it should be the time of year to make resolutions, instead of when the calendar turns over.

At St. Stephen's we have seen some breaks over the summer. Our education programs, both for children and adults, have taken a break. We can look with anticipation to the very interesting and informative mornings that will await us if we get up early enough to make it to church before 9:30. The Christian Education committee has been hard at work and has come up with great ideas. The children will also be back in classes. The Godly Play Program and the Godly Journey Program will provide great Christian Education for all our kiddos, from age 5 on up. And for those younger, there is a well-equipped, fully staffed nursery every week.

There is lots happening at St. Stephen's now, and into the last part of 2019. So, keep your ears open, and your enthusiasm ready to get involved at St. Stephen's. And if you have questions, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to talk with our Rector, Peter, with myself, or with anyone on vestry. We are all part of this community, and we are always looking for new ways to serve others.



Birthdays & Anniversaries



September Birthdays

September Anniversaries

- Sep 10: Linda Schrock
- Sep 12: Jody Heiken

- Sep 3: The Rev. Mary and Robert Green
- Sep 5: Tom Hines & Lee Potter
- Sep 25: Michael Moore & Linda Schrock

## Hey, Bill, Tell Us Something Cool!

In the most recent editions of this August column, I have discussed various aspects of our Holy Eucharist, particularly structure and patterns. In this third column on the subject, I want to add two more matters to our list of concerns.

I have noted that the Holy Eucharist as set out in the Book of Common Prayer is composed of two part, each necessary to the other. The first part is named "The Word of God" and the second, "The Holy Communion." In the world of liturgical studies, these two are called "The Liturgy of the Word" and "The Liturgy of the Table." By which ever name, these two part of the Sunday liturgy focus respectively on the Bible and on bread and wine, the ambo and the altar/table.

This two-part structure underlies several other rites in our collection beyond the Holy Eucharist itself. The rites of Holy Baptism. Holy Matrimony, Christian Burial and all the Ordination rites share this same structure. In these instances, each of these serves as the Liturgy of the Word for the occasion in question, finding further expression in the Liturgy of the Table.

These rites, as printed in the Prayer Book, each expect and anticipate Holy Communion. Readers, no doubt, will have participated in some if not all of the rites and will certainly recognize the pattern. For example, once the actions of water and oil in Baptism have been accomplished, the Exchange of the Peace follows and leads directly to the Table. So it is also with the Ordination rites. Once the laying-on of hands has been done in any ordination, the Peace is exchanged and the altar/table prepared.

Whatever the central ritual action in these rites, washing and anointing, exchanging promises, laying-on of hands or commendation of the dead to God—in each instance, these actions are accompanied and supported by the reading and proclamation of Scripture and the offering of intercessory prayer, exactly the same content as the Sunday liturgy. This being so, these additional rites are quite recognizable, though perhaps not entirely familiar.

Turning now to a second aspect of our consideration of Holy Eucharist, as a life-long Episcopalian, I can remember when it was necessary to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church in order to be welcome at the altar/table. In my case, that was at age 15. Baptism shortly after birth and confirmation in teen years, that was the pattern.

### Hey, Bill, Tell Us Something Cool! (continued)

It was also true in those days that it was increasingly common for visiting adult Christians to be invited to receive communion, be they Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans or whomever, so long as they were baptized.

This welcoming spirit, however, created an anomaly as regards our own children. They were baptized, just as the visiting adults were, but were not welcome to receive bread and wine.

Happily, this oddity invited and received proper attention and led to the revision of our baptismal rites and the theological assumptions that support them. Now, on the page that introduces Holy Baptism [BCP 298], we read, “Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble.”

This testimony makes it quite clear that Baptism, in and of itself, grants access to the altar/table. Nothing else is required to “complete” what is already complete. Hence, and for a long time now, baptized children of whatever age have been welcome to receive Communion.

This theological position testifies to the fact that one does not need to know anything in particular in order to join the sacramental meal. It is certainly true that there is lots to learn to aid in the practice of the Christian life, but none of this learning is necessary or pre-requisite to having a place at the Table.

There’s more to say here, about “membership at the Table” but that will need to wait until next month.

*Benedicite!*

Upcoming Events & Educational Opportunities

Sunday, September 15, 2019—3:00 pm

**WHIDBEY PFLAG** a support group for friends, family and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities. **PFLAG** chapters provide support, education, and advocacy.



The Workshop presentation will be “Hearts Open to Real Lives: The Science of Gender”. Hosted by **Whidbey PFLAG** and facilitated by the **Skagit PFLAG** Speakers Bureau featuring Linden Jordan, Randi Breuer and Kathy Reim.

\*If you can't make the St. Stephen's presentation you can attend a presentation at Langley United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall at on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm.



Adult Formation Classes

**September 15** - The Vestry presents its goals for St. Stephen's for 2019-2020.

**September 22** - The Outreach Committee presents: "Helping Our Neighbors:" a program by Rev. Carol Rodin, Christ Episcopal Church and Iris Carias, council member from Mount Vernon.

**September 29** - Val Roseberry leads a presentation and discussion of "Worship and People with Disabilities."

**October 6** - Mel Watson, Senior Day Care



**Adult  
Education**

### Spiritual Direction via EfM

Discerning “spiritual direction” for ministry inside and outside our parish is an important objective of Education for Ministry. The “education” aspect is an opportunity to look in scholarly detail at the Bible of Jesus, the Hebrew Bible, the Bible about Jesus...the New Testament, and also to study how Christianity has continued to evolve throughout history and in patterns of thought and practice.

Many have discovered that connecting with a vibrant study group can develop closeness and connection within a congregation (as well as others from other denominations) through careful listening to what each group member is finding in their individual reading and reflection. EfM is a seminar peer group with a mentor who facilitates the group so that there is equal opportunity for sharing. We meet for a couple hours each week for 36 weeks out of the year to share insights and encouragement for ministry inside and outside the parish. EfM teaches a variety of creative processes to reflect theologically and use what the group discovers to enhance our individual and corporate lives.

People who have expressed some interest in the new EfM materials are invited to come to the first meeting of our combined Oak Harbor/Anacortes group when we resume in September. We will have this meeting on September 11, 12:30-2:45 at Christ Church in Anacortes. Anyone who hasn't received a copy of this material can let me know and I will give you a printed copy.

I have hopes that St Stephen's will have an EfM meeting sponsored by our congregation in January 2020. We have three people committed to registering and need at least three more to commit by November 2019.

Please talk to Gaylene Reiten or contact me via email: [gaylenereiten@gmail.com](mailto:gaylenereiten@gmail.com)

cell phone: 360-720-6280





### Showing Up--Outreach Committee Musings

*“I would like to encourage you to stop thinking of what you're doing as ministry. Start realizing that your ministry is how much of a tip you leave when you eat in a restaurant; when you leave a hotel room whether you leave it all messed up or not; whether you flush your own toilet or not. Your ministry is the way that you love people. And you love people when you write something that is encouraging to them, something challenging. You love people when you call your wife and say, 'I'm going to be late for dinner,' instead of letting her burn the meal. You love people when maybe you cook a meal for your wife sometime, because you know she's really tired. Loving people - being respectful toward them - is much more important than writing or doing music.”*

– **Rich Mullins**

Rich Mullins, a prolific Christian songwriter and singer who was popular in the 1990s, was one of those people whose words help me keep my head on straight. I think the first time I ran across this quote was in High School. Back then I had some high-falutin ideas of what it meant to “minister” to people. The moment I read the idea broken down into something as simple as leaving a tip, or not messing up a hotel room, or calling home to say I’d be late, something shifted inside me.

One of the things that struck my family when we began attending St. Stephens was that our church is “Small but Mighty.” This small congregation gets things done by showing up. No, there aren’t as many people in our congregation as there are in some (though we are growing!). But, those who attend SHOW UP! They show up by being a presence each Sunday, and then going further to find ways to be involved and get things done. Time and talents and money are given generously. People bring coffee and paper towels without anyone knowing about it. That coffee gets made (looking at you, Bob!) without anyone prompting it to happen. When someone announces a need, or even a dream, people show up to make it happen. This Showing Up is so much a part of St. Stephen’s that people don’t even think about the fact that they are doing it!

One of the “Small but Mighty” ways that St. Stephen’s shows up is in its commitment to Outreach. Do you know that St. Stephen's has historically been committed to tithing 10% of it’s income to outreach? Even more impressive, during times when money was lean... and even people were lean, that 10% tithe always happened! Outreach is something St. Stephens is serious about!!

## Showing Up: Outreach Committee—Val Roseberry (continued)

When the Outreach Committee began meeting this year, we knew that we were doing so at a unique time. Peter had just arrived and there was a buzz in the air. Things were changing and we believed new things could happen. The Outreach Committee started looking at how we could be part of continuing to be committed to Outreach and maybe even harnessing new energy to find new ways for this community to Show Up.

That, however, led us to another realization: The people in our church *are* showing up already-- in incredible ways and in a myriad of places! And even the Outreach Committee doesn't know what all those ways are! We thought to ourselves, imagine if we did know, and instead of reinventing the wheel to do new things we were able to come alongside people who are already reaching out in our community to join them in that outreach! We know that folks at St. Stephens are already hard at work with many organizations in the community from Spin Cafe to Habitat for Humanity and beyond. We asked ourselves... how could we find out more of the places St Stephens folks are already Showing Up and being the body of Christ for people through their work, their volunteer hours, and their support. Maybe those ways are BIG ways like starting a new program or organizing outreach events or serving on the board of a non-profit. But maybe those ways are smaller... "Leaving tips," kinds of ways: sharing a meal, knitting things for people in need, writing encouragement to those in need, writing a check, making coffee...

In the future, The Outreach Committee may invite you to share with us some of the ways you are reaching out and Showing Up already. For now, we just want to invite you to pay attention to the little things... the every day, "Leaving Tips," kinds of ways that we as individuals and as the community of St. Stephen's are already Showing Up, or perhaps the ways we could begin to.



## Reflections

### Parishoner Reflection

*\*\* Editor's note: This personal reflection was inadvertently left out of a previous issue. Although slightly dated, the information is still valid and worth sharing.*

#### **Lessons from Lainey**

As a mother and especially as a mother who homeschools, I am supposed to be teaching my kids. Most of the time, though, I find that I am the one who is learning from them. During this time of Transition at St. Stephen's my daughter, Alaine, has been teaching me about love, letting go, friendship, and looking forward with hope, courage, and joy.

## Parishoner Reflection (continued)

When we found out that Reverend Rilla was leaving all of us were sad, but Alaine seemed to take it especially hard. She would tear up at different times and say, “But I don’t want Reverend Rilla to go.” On Sundays as the time drew near for Rilla to close her time with us, Alaine would sneak over to her during Fellowship time with increasing frequency. Sometimes she was teary, other times happy, and each time she was earnest.

The night before Rev. Rilla’s last Sunday with us I was bracing myself for “Big Feelings.” Sure enough, when we were talking about going to church the next day, Alaine started to cry. “I don’t want Reverend Rilla to leave, Mommy! We’ll never see her again!” she cried.

I pulled her into my lap and explained that Reverend Rilla was our Priest and pastor, yes. Then I told her she was also our friend. I told her friendships can survive a lot. I let her know that our relationship with Rev. Rilla would change, because we would have someone else who now had the role of priest and pastor in our lives, but that I felt certain that we would still be friends with Rev. Rilla. And even better, we got to start a new friendship with Rev. Peter! Alaine thought on that a moment, and to my surprise, her tears stopped. The next day she wrote Rev. Rilla a card about her friendship.

After that, I expected Alaine to mope. During the “liminal space” that Rev. Bill warned us about, \*I\* felt unmoored and weepy. There was a loss to observe, after all. I expected and was ready to embrace the big feelings of my girl.

This is where Alaine really started teaching me. She woke up the very next morning and said, “When is Rev. Peter coming, Mama? Is it today?” I told her there would be a couple of weeks before he’d be here and we would be able to meet him. But, if there is one thing Alaine is tenacious about, it’s excitement. She couldn’t wait for “Peter Guy” to get here!

Nearly every day from that point on she asked when Rev. Peter would arrive and when we would get to meet him. She had been sad, and she made space for her sadness. Then she gave herself permission to let go of some of the sadness to make room for hope and even joy at the new season coming to us all. Alaine was excited about a new friend, a new teacher, and a the sense of excitement and newness sweeping over our church home.

I wasn’t able to be here for Peter’s first Sunday with us, but in the car on the ride home after our time at church the second Sunday, Alaine asked me eagerly, “Did you like Peter, Mama?” I told her I most certainly did... and that, like her, I felt a buoyant sense of hope and joy about what will unfold now that he’s here with us.

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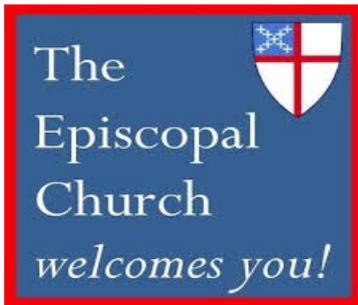
Calendar of Upcoming Events:

- ◆ Sunday September 15 3:00pm PFLAG Presentation  
Hearts Open To Real Lives:  
The Science of Gender
- ◆ Sunday September 15 9:30am Stewardship Kick-Off  
Goals for 2019-2020
- ◆ Sunday September 22 9:30am Outreach Committee:  
Helping Our Neighbors
- ◆ Sunday September 29 9:30am Val Roseberry: Worship and  
People with Disabilities

Continuing Events

- ◆ Sundays: 10:30 am Holy Eucharist  
Nursery Care Available

If you have information or any fun photos you would like included in the monthly newsletter, please contact Cindy Geibig at [cindynkilo@yahoo.com](mailto:cindynkilo@yahoo.com).



Wherever you are in your life with God -- whether a hesitant searcher or a regular churchgoer -- we invite you to worship with us and to think of St. Stephen's as your spiritual home.

We meet in the Main Sanctuary for Eucharist at 10:30 AM each Sunday, followed by fellowship in Miller Hall. Our office is in the A-frame building with All Saints Chapel.