

May 2019



The St. Stephen's Clarion



A Word from our Rector

*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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At the end of a recent performance of Mozart's Masonic Funeral Music by the Handel and Hayden Society Orchestra of Boston, in the hushed moment that always follows the last note of a composition, the voice of a young boy broke the silence with an exuberant and wonder-filled, "Wow!" Immediately, the audience erupted with laughter and applause. Many of the concert goers and musicians were over-joyed and deeply moved by the simple yet profound expression of wonder.

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about that expression of wonder. Christen and I arrived on Whidbey Island on the first day of Spring. Since our arrival, we have noticed that we've been experiencing frequent wonder-filled moments when all we can say is "Wow," whether it is the breathtaking views of the craggy peaks of the Olympic and Cascade ranges on our way to and from Oak Harbor, or the outbursts of color from the Rhododendron that blanket the landscape and the countless variety of plant life on the island, or awakening to the symphonic sound of birds each morning and more.

We've also been so moved by the generous and warm welcome we've received from the community of St. Stephen's -- the care and kind offers of help as we settle in and call St. Stephen's and Whidbey Island our home. We are also filled with wonder at becoming a part of such a vital and spiritually vibrant community that is committed to making God's love known in Oak Harbor and beyond. Wow!

A Prayer of Thankful Welcome

Peter Rood and Christen Herman

Before we pray, we remember these things:

You came first to Holy Nativity in Los Angeles and then to St. Stephen's, Whidbey Island. Holy Nativity then St. Stephen's. Just like the pattern of the Christian Year. December 25 is Holy Nativity; December 26 is St. Stephen's Day. Holy Nativity then St. Stephen's. Seems only natural.

Further, everyone, remember what Jesus said in Matthew's gospel to Simon, whom he called *Petros*, "You are Peter and on this rock I shall build my church..." [16.18]

Lastly, remember that Christen's voice is a precious gift of God and that her name, Christen, spelt as it is, if said "christen," would be a proper baptismal word.

Mindful of all that,

A Prayer of Thankful Welcome

Gracious God, Lover of Souls, Maker of Darkness and Light:

You have given us Peter and Christen to join the ministry of this household of faith, asking of them their companionship, leadership and inspiration for the years to come. On this occasion, receive our gratitude and true thankfulness for their safe and warm arrival, and the shelter you have provided on this island.

Peter, in his graceful way, will help us to build your Church on this Rock.

Christen, by her presence, will remind us that at the heart of all we do is the water of baptism, the water in the font, the rain that waters the earth and the seawater that surrounds us.

Sustain them in what they do. Give them the continuous nourishment of your Spirit, as nourishing as the bread they make in their own home. Enrich us with the vigor of their voices, that the praise we offer here may be all the more consistent with the melody of your heart.

We are in your care, Dear Lord, along with all those who share the peace of Christ, and we are glad of that.

Remember Christen and Peter, Most Holy God, as you remember us all, in the Name of Jesus, your son and Mary's child.

Amen.

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Hey, Bill, Tell Us Something Cool!

Toward the end of this month, May 2019, on a Tuesday evening, Bishop Rickel will come to visit. What prompts his trip to our neighborhood, you may wonder? On the evening of May 28, we will have a Celebration of Ministry. In our midst, the Bishop will install our new rector, the Rev. Peter H. Rood; he will confirm Stephanie Kingsley Brooks and Suzanne Ostertag; and he will receive into the Episcopal Church, Tim Brooks, Cheryl Coleman, Val and Andrew Roseberry. The evening will be a remarkable event! A Celebration of Ministry for sure!

Because of the richness of the evening, we will be fashioning a new liturgy, one that will accommodate all that we will need to do, Bishop Rickel in particular. Although in some short hand sort of way, some may refer to the evening as the installation of our new rector, that hardly captures the truth of the matter. What about the rector's six liturgical companions?

What we will show to the world on the evening in question is that the ministry of the Church, the ministry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, is to be exercised and is exercised by all the membership of the place, all the baptized and those who join us in praise of God.

To be sure, Peter will have particular responsibilities in the household, but he does so in aid of the ministry of us all. His priestly ministry is rooted where every ministry is rooted, in the waters of Baptism.

Over the course of my ordained ministry, I have preached at 35 ordinations and two installations. I have been asked to preach at my third installation on May 28. In every instance, I have tried to remind everyone within ear shot that all ministry in this church of ours is hydroponic, that is it is rooted, fed and nurtured by water, baptismal water. In addition to Peter, there are six other ordained people in the congregation and their ordained status is simply a particular function assigned by the Church to someone baptized, to be of service to the community of the baptized.

Over recent weeks, Amy and I have had the joyful and fulfilling responsibility of helping the six people who will join Peter in the events of May 28 prepare for their new status within the Body of Christ, within the Episcopal Church. We have read and talked a good deal, about a rich variety of topics. One subject of particular emphasis has been the nature of the Church, as we Episcopalians understand it. We have striven to affirm and reinforce the fact that our structure or organization is ordered but not hierarchical.

That is, in the ordering of the Episcopal Church, there are people called and assigned to particular work, particular and necessary functions, to the benefit of all of us. Using St. Paul's metaphor of the body as a guide, we have talked about the functional distribution of responsibilities among the baptized and the ordained. [I Cor 12.12 and following] This distribution intends the health of the Body and when rightly understood and held in proper balance, the Body expresses itself with strength and vitality. This is just as St. Paul would have hoped and as he imagined and taught. Though not in Paul's vocabulary, one could call the

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

arrangement an ecosystem, interdependent and cooperative.

It is an easy thing to misunderstand the reality of order as I have explained it here. It is an easy thing to take this order and misunderstand it as hierarchy. But St. Paul makes plain that the distribution so necessary to a healthy body cannot tolerate hierarchy. The human body, in Paul's metaphor, cannot tolerate or even survive the accession of one part of the body over another.

Indeed, what we have described is a horizontal organization, not a vertical one. All of us standing on the same piece of ground, the bishop has a particular calling and responsibilities; the rector has a particular calling and responsibilities; the deacon so also; and the same is true for the rest of us. The Baptismal Covenant [BCP 304-305] makes that plain enough.

On May 28, then, we will celebrate the rich and diverse ministry of the Church, focused for us by Peter, Cheryl, Stephanie, Tim, Suzanne, Val, Andrew and Greg. All this amongst the baptized, faithfully assembled.

Benedicite!

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Words From Our Senior Warden—Susan Ho



I do not know about you, but I thought Holy Week and Easter were incredibly beautiful. The church shone in all its glory for each of the services. We had many people at every service. The Agape Meal was lovely and meaningful. We definitely shared in the agony and guilt of Good Friday, and also the joy and glory of Easter. We were reminded of our call to servitude with the Maundy Thursday foot washing, and of the light on Easter morning. A huge thank you to all the many people who were involved in making the week what it was. I have to give out a very special thank you to all those who serve on the Altar Guild. This small, dedicated group has a lot to do during this part of our church year. From making Palm Crosses, to purchasing and arranging flowers, to setting up the altar, and resetting the altar, and resetting the altar...., you get my drift. They work behind the scenes to make our church experience lovely and more meaningful, and they all deserve a pat on the back. If you are interested in being involved in this group, talk with Sandy Taylor or Terry Bible.

Now that we are into this joyous season of Easter, get ready for some more celebration. We will be saying farewell to two key people in the first full week of May. Come out and celebrate their time with us at St. Stephen's, and the gifts they have given us. First, on Sunday, May 5th, come to church and give McKenna, our pianist, a rousing send-off, as she moves to Texas. We will have a special coffee hour that morning, and say our goodbyes. Then on Friday, May 10th, we will have a soup supper to say our goodbyes to Deacon Dennis Taylor, as he embarks on a sabbatical and a time of discerning his next service opportunity. Come to dinner, bring your favorite mug for soup, make a donation to Spin Café in honor of Dennis, and enjoy some fellowship and relaxation

with Dennis and his wife Mary Ann.

And, of course, I cannot fail to mention our Celebration of New Ministry near the end of the month, on May 28th. We will host the Bishop of Olympia, the Right Reverend Greg Rickel, and celebrate the installation of the Reverend Peter Rood as our Rector, and the confirmation and reception of six people from our congregation. They are Andy and Val Roseberry, Stephanie and Tim Brooks, Cheryl Coleman, and Suzanne Ostertag. It will be a very special event, and one that you will not want to miss.

So, stay tuned, be present, and take part in everything going on at St. Stephen's this month, and into the summer.

Deacon's Corner

Sabbatical

Sabbatical is an interesting word and it does not mean an extended vacation. According to Wikipedia "The concept of the sabbatical is based on the Biblical practice of shmita, which is related to agriculture. According to Leviticus 25, Jews in the Land of Israel must take a year-long break from working the fields every seven years. A "sabbatical" has come to mean an extended absence in the career of an individual to fulfill some goal, e.g., writing a book or traveling extensively for research. The dictionary states it is a period of leave granted to a worker for study or travel, traditionally one year for every seven years worked.

I am taking a sabbatical, unpaid and definitely not for a year, but tempting. Mary Ann and I are going to drive across the United States and back. Visiting siblings and friends along the way and working on a couple of bucket list projects. One is to visit every cathedral or diocesan office in the Episcopal Church and the second is to visit every state capital. In between I plan to work on some genealogy mysteries from both families.

Focus time will occur around the Association for Episcopal Deacons Triennial Conference in Providence, RI, The Power of Hope, Transformation through Reconciliation and Relationship and much of the program will center around the The Center for Reconciliation whose mission states

In undertaking the work of racial justice and reconciliation, the Center seeks to be a catalyst, collaborator and convener of churches, schools, nonprofits and other partner organizations within our community.

Our other pilgrimage this summer is to return to Minidoka, the incarceration center for Japanese / Americans during World War 2 as they dedicate the visitors center at the National Historical Site outside of Twin Falls, ID. There is also a portion of the historical site on Bainbridge Island making the departure point of the first Japanese who were rounded up and sent to the camps.

We attended this pilgrimage last year and it was profoundly moving and saddening to confront what humans are capable of out of fear and hate. We expect to be touched again this year.

The final part of this journey has to do with discernment and what is the call that all should be listen to. That answer to the voice the comes to point to what is next. One of the questions that needs to be answered is Saint Stephen's and myself hearing the same charge or is there now a place that I am called to that is different from Saint Stephen's. I do not know and believe that St Stephen's doesn't either. This is to be a time of asking questions and listening.

Finally, I understand that "they" are going to be working on the Bridge through the summer so it is a good time to avoid it. As we keep all of you in our prayers please keep us in your prayers. Looking forward to a reconnect in September.

Dennis

Flowers

Flowers. Let's talk about flowers. Having just come out of the Liturgical Season of Lent, when there is a distinct lack of flowers, flowering plants or anything that resembles those delicate blossoms, buds and florets we celebrated Easter Sunday with a plethora of calla lilies, hydrangeas and cut flowers. The flowers (and other arrangements) that appear on the altar on Sundays are part of the Altar Guild's responsibility--a responsibility that we take very seriously and with great joy. The hydrangea theme this year is one that we borrowed from the time we spent worshipping in the All Saint's Chapel many years ago. Sandy and Bob Taylor and I were previewing the slide show they prepared for the 65th Anniversary Party and rediscovered pictures of an Easter Celebration where we had hydrangeas—a gorgeous substitute for Easter Lilies. We conferred with the rest of the Altar Guild and the decision was made to celebrate with the beautiful hydrangeas you saw on the altar.

As some of you know we do not budget for flowers. The Altar Guild is a very creative and resourceful group; altar flowers are gathered from yards, our own grounds, purchased at the store or acquired in some other fashion. For the big celebrations of Easter and Christmas we purchase flowers and ask for donations to cover the cost. This year we are asking for donations of \$30.00 to cover the cost of each hydrangea and at the end of their time on the altar you are welcome to take a plant home. If you would like to donate them back to the church, we will plant them in the garden

area by the handicap parking lot. Indeed, if you are so inclined, a donation of any amount would be a welcome addition to the flower fund. Special occasion flowers and plants cost around \$1,000.00 for the year, not to mention our regular flowers we have on the altar every Sunday.

A new flower chart is up in Miller Hall, also. You may make a flower dedication/donation any Sunday by writing your name on the chart and filling out an envelope found near the chart. Flower donations are welcome anytime and can be put in the offering plate on Sunday to help build up our flower fund reserves. If you do make a dedication, please let us know at least 2 or 3 weeks in advance. With Spring and Summer come an array of flower possibilities and celebrations—thanksgivings, memorials, birthdays and anniversaries.

Michele Chapman

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

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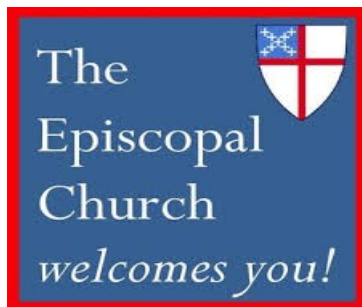
Calendar of Upcoming Events:

- ◆ *May 10: 5:30 pm* *Soup Supper Honoring The Rev. Dennis Taylor*
- ◆ *May 12: 9:30 am* *The Virgin Mary in the New Testament and Early Christianity*
- ◆ *May 19: 9:30 am* *Are the Media Biased Against Religion*
- ◆ *May 26: 9:30 am* *Sharing our Favorite Poems*
- ◆ *May 28: 6:00 pm* *Celebration of Ministry*

Continuing Events

- ◆ *Sundays:* 10:30 am Holy Eucharist &
Sunday School
Nursery Care Available

If you have information or any fun photos you would like included, in the monthly newsletter, please contact Cindy Geibig at



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.