



*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*

Inside this issue:

Rector's Words	1-2
Birthdays & Anniversaries	2
Hey, Bill...	3
Senior Warden	4
What We Are Reading	5
Outreach/Spin Cafe	6-7
EfM	8
Calendar & Contact Information	9

The St. Stephen's Clarion



Words From Our Rector

Wait for it...

As our Thanksgiving holiday nears, we can expect the appearance of images of pilgrims or Puritans. In the U.S. the word pilgrim and Puritan are often used interchangeably. However, the religious meaning of the word is better understood in other countries where pilgrimages are an important and regular religious practice.

While planning my sabbatical in India for the first two months of 2012, little did I know that the time I would spend in this most holy land would take place during the peak season for pilgrimages. My first month was spent in South India, a part of India known for its numerous and spectacular temples and sacred sites. Enormous numbers of pilgrims flock to these sacred sites each and every day, eager to attain a vision of the divine and, through this "seeing" or "darshan," a spiritual transformation. It felt like the whole country was on a spiritual journey.

As we approach the beginning of Advent, pilgrimage is an apt characterization of the journey that we begin as Christians during this season. Our liturgical year is the reenactment of the drama of our salvation. Advent begins our journey toward the feast of Christmas, the mystery of the Incarnation. Traveling through the drama of Lent, Easter, and Pentecost, our journey culminates with the celebration of Christ's ultimate victory on the feast of Christ the King, which marks the end of our liturgical year, this year falling on November 24.

On the first Sunday of Advent, we will set off on a pilgrimage to the fulfillment of God's promises and plans for our salvation. In our liturgy, we will hear from the prophet Isaiah who will use the image of a pilgrimage to describe the great gathering of the future, announcing that all nations will stream toward the mountain of the Lord, the place where God dwells.

Words From Our Rector (Continued)

The pilgrims will be instructed in the ways of God, and their response will be to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise a sword against another, nor shall they train for war anymore. What a timely and hope-filled promise!

Thus we will soon begin our pilgrimage, once again. We embark toward the future foretold by the prophet Isaiah, a vision of universal peace and reconciliation among nations and religious bodies, among ethnic groups and families. Not far down the road (Christmas) the Son of God, Immanuel, will join us. This is a time of great anticipation, urgency, and a time to "get ready." This is what is ahead for us. It is up to us to decide whether or not we will join the pilgrimage. We have special services and events planned for Advent. Come and see.

Peace, Peter



November Birthdays

- 4: Rick Colombo
- 8: Bryan Verble
- 15: The Rev. Mary Green
- 15: Harry Anderson
- 17: Barbara Wihlborg
- 21: Catherine Blair
- 25: Alaine Roseberry
- 28: Ruth Adams
- 30: The Rev. Amy Donohue

November Wedding Anniversaries

- 15: Rick & Crystal Columbo

Ordination Anniversaries

- November 19, 2009: The Rev. Rilla Barrett



Hey, Bill, Tell Us Something Cool!

In a book commended by Kathryn Rickert I found the following story from the Jewish mystical tradition. The book is *Common Prayer on Common Ground* by Alan Jones, 2006 [pages 41-42]. The author of the book calls this “Interlude.” I share it with you in hopes that you will find it as moving as I have.

* * *

In the beginning before there were any beginnings and endings, there was no place that was not already God! And we call this unimaginable openness, *Ain Soph*—Being-without end. Then came the urge to give life to our world and to us. But there was no place that was not already God. So *Ain Soph* breathed in to make room, like a father steps back so his child will walk to him. Into the emptiness *Ain Soph* sets vessels and began to fill them with divine light, as a mother places bowls in which to pour her delicious soup. As the light poured forth a perfect world was being created!

Think of it! A world without greed and cruelty and violence! But then, something happened. The bowls shattered. No one knows why. Perhaps the bowls were too frail? Perhaps the light too intense! Perhaps *Ain Soph* was learning. After all no one makes perfect the first time. And with the shattering of the bowls, divine sparks threw everywhere! Some rushing back to *Ain Soph*, some falling, falling, trapped in the broken shards to become our world, and us.

Though this is hard to believe, the perfect world is all around us, but broken into jagged pieces, like a puzzle thrown to the floor, the picture lost, each piece without meaning, until someone puts them back together again. We are that someone. There is no one else. We are the ones who can find the broken pieces, remember how they fit together and rejoin them. This is the repairing of the world—the mending of creation. In every moment, with every act, we can heal our world and us. We are all holy sparks dulled by separation.

But when we meet, and talk and eat and make love, when we work and play and disagree with holiness in our eyes, seeing *Ain Soph* everywhere, then our brokenness will end, and our bowls will be strong enough to hold the light, and our light will be gentle enough to fill the bowls. As we repair the world together, we will learn that there is no place that is not God!

* * *

In my own preaching, I have urged us, you and me, to believe something along this line. I have used the Hebrew phrase, *tikkun olam*, which I have rendered “repairing the world.” You will understand, then, how much I value this mystical story.

Benedicite!

Senior Warden’s Words—Susan Ho



Have you ever prepared to enter a period of preparation? That has been my plan for many years. Once November begins, I try to figure out how I can finish all my holiday “to-do items”, so that once the first Sunday of Advent rolls around, I can just be calm and contemplative for this amazing season of Advent. However, I never seem to quite make that happen. This year, I have come to a new realization. Some of those items on my list are actually things that bring me joy during Advent. If I accomplished everything in November, would December be anticlimactic? I am thinking that perhaps it would.

Advent is observed in many Christian churches as “a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the Second Coming.” The term “advent” is a version of the Latin word, “adventus”, which means “coming”.

So, this year I have a new plan. Be organized, and take a good look at my to do list. Scratch out those things which are not really important to me, and do not bring me in closer relationship to God; and make time to cherish those things which are meaningful. Look for new ways to “prepare” for Christmas, and take time to breathe. I plan to be intentional about what I do during Advent, as well as what I do leading up to Advent. Today, the sun is shining, and the birds are flocking to our feeders. What a beautiful day to enjoy creation, and be happy in my preparations and expectations.



Can you Help?



I'm collecting used t-shirts ready to be discarded to make braided tug rope toys for the next batch of Summit Assistance Dog's upcoming litters.

Please bring any donated t-shirts to church. I'll put a basket on table in gathering room.

Thank you.
Anni Campbell

St. Stephen's Friends—What We Are Reading

- ◆ “Tim Egan’s *A Pilgrimage to Eternity: From Canterbury to Rome in Search of a Faith*. Egan, a Spokane native now living in Seattle, is a writer for the New York Times and a well-known Pacific Northwest author. Raised a Catholic, he walks an ancient pilgrimage trail with a lot of commentary, personal and historical, along the way.” Mike Moore.
- ◆ “Tara Westover’s current bestselling memoir *Educated* (Random House, 2018) chronicles a page-turning struggle for survival in a fundamentalist, dangerous, and abusive home. Beyond the fact that her formal education only began at age 17, her complete 'education' was in the journey toward the freedom of learning the truth about love, family, faith, the world beyond her home, and most importantly herself.” Mary Green
- ◆ Alaine Roseberry’s review: The American Girl "Addy" series. “It is about a little girl in the Civil War who escapes from slavery. My favorite part was watching the family come back together.”
- ◆ Andrew Roseberry is reading the book *On the Origins of War* by Donald Kagan. It’s an analysis of why the very thing that is supposed to prevent war, doesn’t.
- ◆ Val Roseberry is reading *If I Don't Make It, I Love You: Survivors in the Aftermath of School Shootings* by Amye Archer and Loren Kleinman. “It is a compilation of 60 narratives spanning 50 years of shootings, and it is every bit as devastating as you’d expect. It is also important and poignant and something that I hope every person in our government spends time reading.”
- ◆ Roseberry family read-aloud: *On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness* by Andrew Peterson. “Think Narnia, or LOTR, with some wild creatures like toothy cows and Fangs of Dang. The Wingfeather Family learns who they really are and set off on an adventure that may put things right in the world of Anniera.”
- ◆ “I recently read *Searching for Sunday - Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church* by Rachel Held Evans. I loved her story of her journey through faith. Unfortunately, she died earlier this year.” Sandy Taylor



- ◆ *Into the Deep: An Unlikely Catholic Conversion*, by Abigail Rine Favale (Ph.D.) “is the autobiographical account of Abi’s conversion to Roman Catholicism from conservative evangelicalism, with a radical feminist interlude. Abi, a former student of mine at George Fox University, now heads their honors program. It is fascinating to see how people change and why.” Tom Johnson

Saint Stephen's Reaching Out

One of the biggest, and perhaps, unseen jobs of the Outreach Committee is discernment. We meet together to discern needs in the local community, the Diocese, and the Global community and we discern how we might be being called, as a community of faith, to meet those needs.

For a variety of reasons recently, the Outreach Committee has been specifically invested in discerning what we at St. Stephen's can do to address those of us in the community who are impacted by poverty. We have been meeting frequently, listening to friends and neighbors in the community and interacting with outreach organizations in Oak Harbor to continue the ongoing work of finding ways to meaningfully make an impact.

As you all know an organization in the community that St. Stephen's supports in various ways is SPIN cafe. We continue to believe it is important to support this program, and especially to support the individuals in our community who are served by Spin Cafe and/or impacted by poverty. Our very own, Anni Campbell wrote the following to give people a closer look at some of the misconceptions many of us hold about those who are served at SPIN Cafe, and to help us all to see our neighbors with greater compassion.

"Fact vs Myth"

As a regular volunteer who spends considerable time at Spin Cafe, I would like to share some facts and dispel a few myths.

1--Spin Cafe guests regularly pick up trash around the outside of the cafe even when it's not even their trash. **FACT.** (Staff regularly engage guests to clean up unwanted trash outside.)

2--Most of the cafe guests are between the ages of 45- 60. **FACT.** (The majority of Spin guests are representative of our country's aging population struggling on fixed incomes to make ends meet.)

3--Most Spin guests receive disability benefits due to significant health reasons. **FACT.**

St. Stephen's Reaching Out (continued)

4--Most Spin guests are lazy and don't want to get a job. **MYTH.** (Guests entitled to monthly disability checks will lose that monthly income if they take a job, which might be only temporary or if their health issues flair up they might lose. Without that disability income, they would have no money to pay rent, buy food or maybe enjoy an occasional night out.)

5—Spin guests want to be considered part of the Oak Harbor community. **FACT.** (Humans were created to be in social groups, not isolated or marginalized. Currently, the only place many guests feel truly welcome, safe and not judged is at Spin Cafe.)

6—Spin Cafe benefits the whole community of Oak Harbor. **FACT.** (Serving others and volunteering gives us opportunities to grow spiritually and learn from folks whose lives are different from our own. Compassion and love is always enriching to us all.)



Anni Campbell received a request from Spin Café for some help with some supplies. They are in need of the following items. Anni will collect and take to Spin periodically.

- ◆ Restaurant size coffee filters
- ◆ Hot chocolate
- ◆ Real sugar packets (not big bags)
- ◆ Paper towels
- ◆ Paper plates
- ◆ Dish soap

Beginning **Tuesday, January 7th, 2020**, midday for two and one half hours (time TBD), St. Stephen's will host a seminar group meeting weekly in the classroom downstairs in the main building. We have a certified mentor and eight or nine people completing the registration process. There is room for three or four more people to join our seminar. So far we have five or six participants from St. Stephen's and three from other denominations. Registration will continue through November. The cost of this seminar has variables which include:

- One reduced tuition of \$175.00 for a group of eight.
- Two reduced tuitions of \$175.00 for a group of ten.

Scholarship money (please speak with Rev. Peter Rood)

All are welcome. Please contact Gaylene Reiten if you have questions about this opportunity.

What follows is a brief overview about what this seminar has to offer:

The seminar group is the nucleus of the Education for Ministry program. A group consists of six to twelve participants and a trained mentor who meet weekly over the course of a nine-month academic year. These meetings are usually from two and a half to three hours in length.

Through **study, prayer, and reflection**, EfM groups move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God's kingdom and direction in ways they might choose to serve.

Through discussion and guided reflection, the seminars furnish an opportunity to deepen understanding of the reading materials.

More important is the development of skills in theological reflection. The goal is to learn to think theologically. By examining their own beliefs and their relationship to our culture and the tradition of our Christian faith, participants can learn what it means to be effective ministers in the world. In coming to terms with the notion that everything we do has potential for manifesting the love of Christ, we discover that our ministry is at hand wherever we turn.

The theme for this year's cycle will be: **Volume C Reading and Reflection Guide: Living as Spiritually Mature Christians.**



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
555 SE Regatta Drive
Oak Harbor, Washington
98277

Phone: 360-279-0715

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2754,
Oak Harbor, WA. 98277

E-mail: ststephensfoakharbor@gmail.com

Website: www.ststephensfoakharbor.com

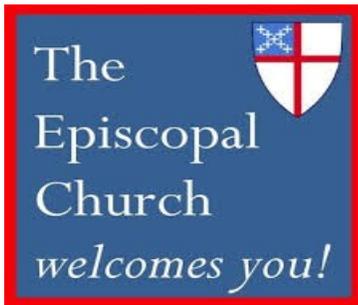
Calendar of Upcoming Events:

- ◆ Sunday Nov. 17 9:30 am Harry Anderson on Legacy Giving
- ◆ Sunday Nov. 24 9:30 am The Rev. Peter Rood on Simplicity
- ◆ Sunday Dec. 1 9:30 am Peter Rood on Meditation
- ◆ Sunday Dec. 8 9:30 am The Rev. Mary Green on Spiritual Formation and Icons

Continuing Events

- ◆ Wednesdays: 8:15 am Morning Prayer
- ◆ 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 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.