

Saint Stephen's SPEAKS

The Newsletter of Saint Stephen's Church, Millburn, New Jersey
Serving Springfield, Millburn, and the surrounding towns.

www.ststephensmillburn.org

September & October, 2008

From the Rector's Desk

WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY SUMMER'S SABBATICAL

At a district meeting now so long ago -- I can't remember much else about it -- I heard a churchwarden complain about his rector who recently returned from sabbatical. "We sent him off expecting that he would come back charged up with new ideas and energy ready to whip this place into shape," the warden said. "All we got was a big disappointment." Let me prepare you now for a similar disappointment.

When we are caught up in an idolatry of production, thinking that everything depends on us and our energetic doing, we make times of rest and reflection and spiritual growth into necessary evils that somehow serve the great god of doing. We fall into exhausted sleep for a few hours each night; we take an occasional day off, and armed with our cell phone, Blackberry and laptop we may even go off on a vacation from time to time. But make no mistake about it, when we are living our lives in the service of worldly gods, such times off have no value in themselves. They are only important if we wake refreshed, ready to come back on Monday morning to shake things up, or if we have used our vacation to figure out ways to make more, do more, get more attention, move the earth.

What we are likely to discover if our time away from production really restores our SOUL is that we come back to work from our times of rest serving a different god: one somewhat closer to the God of Christianity who gave us souls in the first place. At least that is what has happened to me in the three-month sabbatical during which I have been away from St. Stephen's. In my time away, I have become much more aware of having a soul to care for, more grateful to God for being alive, and more confident that my purpose for being on this earth is to be a loving child of God.

For St. Stephen's that awareness doesn't translate into new and vigorous programs. Instead it translates into a deeper awareness of the importance of the soul's health. I think less of the church community as a place of frenetic activity than as a place for the soul's refreshment. It is for me more a place in our busy lives in which we can find peace, calm, prayer and space in which to sense God's presence. Specifically, for me, my new sabbatical-shaped awareness bears fruit in some personal resolutions to take better care of my soul. These resolutions have daily, weekly and long-term components.

Daily, I need to get a good night's rest. I need to reflect and be physically and spiritually healthy. Thirty years ago in seminary I heard an expert in clergy self-care talk about the tendency of clergy to feel that they should be doing something for the church all day long. This is a natural consequence of societal pressure to have the church be a business that keeps regular hours and at the same time to meet with committees and individuals in the evenings. To counter these pressures, the expert suggested that clergy divide their days into three segments: morning, afternoon, and evening, and do church work only in any two out of the three on any given day. I have resolved to keep this old advice for the first time in my life and not to show up at the office or for home visits until early afternoon on days in which I have evening commitments.

Weekly, my soul needs time for contemplation. I know it is widely thought that clergy do nothing else, but we all know that isn't really true. I need a sabbath day in my week, since the Christian Sabbath (Sunday) is quintessentially a workday for me. I have also resolved to take a day in addition to my day-off to do spiritual reading, prayer, and reflection for the weekly sermon.

Finally, I have resolved to take my full complement of vacation days each year. There is a tendency to skip time off because I'm just too important to the running of things to miss any meetings or important events. I've come to understand this as the worst sort of idolatry: making myself the essential element of church life. This is simply outrageous and ignores the talents and abilities of all of you who share with me in the responsibility for church life. So when the calendar says it is time for vacation, I intend to be gone.

That's it. That's what sabbath time this summer has taught me. To have had such prayerful insights and to do nothing about them would be a sin. What does St. Stephen's get out of it? Hopefully you get a healthy example. Go thou and do likewise, my friends.

—CORK

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Ask the Rector

Q: What is the Lambeth Conference and Why Should I Care About It?

A: Briefly the Lambeth Conference is a gathering of all the bishops in the Anglican Communion which meets in England every ten years at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. However, Gentle Reader, to understand the significance of the conference and to measure the degree to which it affects you as a member of an Episcopal Church, there is a lot you need to know about the history of the Episcopal Church and the other churches in the Anglican Communion. So bear with me. This gets technical.

In a really important sense, the Anglican Communion was born with the formation of the Episcopal Church in 1789 as a church separate from the Church of England. People who wanted to be loyal to the new United States of America and still worship in the style and form of the Church of England had to invent a new church because the old one was a national church the head of which was (and is) the English monarch.

So after the Revolutionary War, people who wanted to continue to worship with a prayer book and be governed by bishops in the style of the Church of England formed their own church: the Episcopal Church. The new Episcopalians wrote their own Book of Common Prayer, modeled on the worship book of the English church. While the new book embodied the theology of the Church of England, it was distinctively American.

Likewise, the new Episcopalians decided to be organized into dioceses under the leadership of bishops in a way similar to the Church of England, but with a distinctly American twist. Instead of being governed by an Archbishop appointed by the head of state (the practice in England), the new church decided to govern itself by a representative assembly called "The General Convention." That assembly is bicameral like the United States Congress. It has an "upper house" consisting of all the bishops in charge of all its dioceses, and a "lower house" consisting of elected representatives from each diocese. In a sense, the "upper house" the House of Bishops, is elected also because instead of the English method of having the monarch appoint bishops, each Episcopal diocese elects its bishop at a local convention made up of representatives from each church in the diocese. While each Episcopal bishop has a great deal of authority, the only body that can make decisions for the whole Episcopal Church is General Convention.

I said that the creation of this church is in an important sense the birth of the Anglican Communion because the Anglican Communion is simply our name for the group of national churches which sprang up around the British Empire and beyond on the same general lines as the Church of England (i.e. with bishops and a national Book of Common Prayer). This "Communion" is not a church. It doesn't have a governing body and no group makes decisions for it. It is just a family of churches who have a common history (all are in some way descended from the Church of England) and a similar form of worship.

NOW: the Lambeth Conference. In 1867, the leaders of the Church of England noted that the British Empire was changing: Canada and the Anglican Church there were slowly moving toward independence and the Empire was opening up new areas of Africa and Anglicans were planting new churches there. Already there were squabbles about jurisdiction and how doctrinal disputes were to be settled. To deal with these issues, the Archbishop of Canterbury invited all the bishops in the Anglican (Church of England) tradition to a meeting at his archepiscopal residence: Lambeth Palace in London.

There were only 76 bishops present, but the meeting was immensely helpful in determining which churches would send missionaries to which parts of the world. The conference was so successful that the attendees and the archbishop agreed to do it again in 1878. Since then, the conference has met approximately every ten years with one long gap

between 1930 and 1948 due to World War II. It eventually grew too big for the Archbishop's residence and now meets at the University of Kent in Cambridge, England. There were over 600 bishops present at the latest conference this past summer.

What does it all mean for us today? Especially what does it mean for the Episcopal Church? It may mean less for us than it may mean for more hierarchical churches in the communion. In some jurisdictions in the Anglican Communion, an Archbishop has almost complete authority over the selection of clergy (including bishops), the worship and theology of the provincial church. Thus the Archbishop of Uganda in Africa has total and complete authority to appoint bishops and determine the worship and doctrine of that church.

Not so in the Episcopal Church. We have a head bishop called the Presiding Bishop who has great spiritual authority and a lot of managerial authority in the Episcopal Church, but it is General Convention and the elected leaders of the church, both lay and ordained, who determine who will get ordained and what will be taught. Given this legal structure, the Episcopal bishops who meet at Lambeth are in a different position from many of their counterparts throughout the world. If the Archbishop of Uganda agrees at Lambeth to adhere to a particular practice, his word is binding on his church. In other parts of the world, like the United States, bishops at Lambeth may commit themselves to an agreement or an understanding, but this can't bind our churches because they are governed by representative assemblies.

SO, the latest Lambeth Conference called for the voluntary cooperation of the attending bishops to avoid actions that have divided its members lately: the ordination of openly gay clergy (including bishops) and the appointment of "missionary bishops" to serve in the territories of existing churches (as recently happened when the Archbishop of Uganda ordained a Washington, D.C., priest to serve as an anti-gay, anti-women bishop.)

Will that affect us here at St. Stephen's? Time will tell, but it needn't. The bishop of our Diocese has continued to ordain homosexual priests and our diocese supports the openly gay bishop of New Hampshire and the propriety of the people of New Hampshire or any other Diocese to elect a gay bishop. Our bishop has given priests of the diocese the authority to bless civil unions using the rites of the Church. Many of the American bishops at Lambeth declared to the conference their intention to continue the very actions which the majority at Lambeth wished to prohibit. While such behavior will certainly be vexatious to many, ultimately Lambeth has no governmental control.

What about the unity of the Anglican Communion? The Lambeth Conference has also voted to continue some efforts to create a world-wide Anglican Church including the creation of a covenant to which member churches would be asked to subscribe. The notion is that someday we may be governed by mutual agreements and perhaps a central governing body. While the case of Ugandan archbishops appointing and consecrating bishops to act on American soil suggests there may be some value in a world-wide church government, that day is a long way in the future.

At present, the Anglican Communion is not a church. It is not even a conference of church leaders. The Anglican Communion is just an international group of churches with a common history. Clearly we do not all share the same beliefs or the same way of making decisions. We do not all even respect each other's decisions and ways of acting out our faith. The titular head (Primate) of the Episcopal Church, our Presiding Bishop, Katherine Jefferts Schori would not even be allowed to function as a priest in Uganda because she is a woman. Given this fact, the churches of the Anglican Communion are barely "in communion" with each other in the sense that we share a common priesthood and that all worshippers from one church are welcome in the other churches.

The unity of the Anglican Communion is clearly a fond hope and dream of some of the bishops who attended the Lambeth Conference, but time will tell whether the members of the Episcopal Church are willing to pay the price it may cost to be members of a unified communion. That cost may well be to subscribe to beliefs and practices which the Episcopal Church does not share and may well consider immoral.

Remember, Gentle Reader, you can and should be part of making that decision. Make your voice heard at St. Stephen's. Accept a leadership role. Teach a class, chair a committee, or run for the Vestry. Agree to represent St. Stephen's at the Diocesan level. In this country, YOU are the church and your voice must be heard.

The Word From the Wardens – Marvin Walker

Running a church in the absence of the Rector is kind of like being on the back lot of Hollywood; you get to either direct, or witness all of the moving parts and parties that (if executed correctly) make for a good picture. The Vestry, although in downshift mode, has had the pleasure of taking the reins during the Rector's sabbatical, and have pretty much tried to keep things on a predictable course. Summer has been an advantageous time for both reflection and introspection regarding St. Stephen's, although it seems as if just last week Cork was providing contact information on interim clergy, and packing his bags for the scenic shores of Hoboken. And, in short order, looking forward, we'll soon be making plans for the Welcome Back Breakfast. Seems as though just last week, I was helping **Owen Moore** set up tables for the Parish Picnic.

Operational issues that have arisen in the absence of the Rector include the clearing of the church and cemetery grounds in early June after the storms that swept through the area; resolving safety/occupational issues depicted during the Millburn Fire Department's annual inspection (you'll notice the new door knob on the Narthex Door, if you haven't already) and the re-initiation of eviction proceedings against the raccoon family in the bell tower (they haven't returned their pledge card). Small issues, but nonetheless important within the context of keeping the church running. Owing to much hard work, from **Sheelagh Clarke, Jeff Majtyka, and Don Stanford, Dominic Balzano** was selected as the bookkeeper for both the church and the pre-school. He is in the process of acquiring/adopting the necessary software to bring our accounting up to a user-friendly standard. The fact that such dedicated people as vestry members continually rise to the occasion, every time, without public commendation, should be of great comfort to the St. Stephen's congregation.

The Rev. David Gable, who was the primary celebrant of our summer eucharists imparted a different, and welcome flavor to our summer worship. His penchant for song, as opposed to the spoken word, coaxed some of us (more vocally challenged) congregants to accept his challenge, while his extemporaneous style of speaking illuminated the Gospel readings. As summer winds down, and we re-connect with the rhythms of fall, I ask everyone to consider opportunities for service on the vestry. Lastly, the unsung heroes award goes to **Sheelagh Clarke, and Chaille Gibson**, pre-school director and parish administrator, their corporate knowledge of St. Stephen's "back office" operations made serving as warden a pleasure.

What's Going on Around the Parish

Mark Your Calendar! Back to Church Breakfast September 14, 9 a.m. – Deryck Rugbeer

The Welcome Back to Church breakfast is a tradition at St Stephen's to signify end of summer, the beginning of the fall season, the start of the school year and the welcoming back many of our parish families after their summer vacation. This is the first day of Church school and parents are invited to enroll their children at this time. Parishioners are also invited to bring their favorite breakfast dish to share in addition to the breakfast provided by the church.

Back to Church School Too – Alexandra Shuss and Linda Soughan

St Stephen's Church School Session kicks off with the Back-to-School breakfast on Sunday, Sept. 14th at 9 a.m. **Sara Ruth Dorn** has once again agreed to serve as coordinator. Here's our line-up of teachers:

Pre K and K: **Linda Soughan**

1st and 2nd Grade: **Susan Dinan & Carole Francis**

3rd & 4th Grade: **Claas Ehlers & Eugene Foley**

5th and up: **Alexandra Shuss**

Please stop by the Church School table and sign up your kids for Sunday School! Curriculum information and samples will be available.

From the Music Director -- Kim Williams

- Many thanks to our summer musicians for providing beautiful and uplifting offertory and communion selections: **Vivienne Longstreet Joseph, Ellen Pluta, Sarah Riffel, Dan Ortalani, Dick Cole, Mario Konrad, Peter Wick, Kira Hanson, Iris Priddy, Devon Francis, Zoey Peterson, and Denise Fauconier.**
- Welcome Back Sunday, Sept. 14 is the day to register your children for **Junior Choir** (Grades 3–8) and **Little Saints Choir** (Grades K–2). Both of these groups rehearse after church on Sundays, beginning Sept. 21.
- On Sept. 14 at 11:30 a.m., there will be a meeting in the choir room of all **Junior Choir parents** to discuss plans for this year's program. Please plan to attend and bring your ideas and suggestions.
- **St. Stephen's Senior Choir** (adults and high school students) welcomes new members!!! The first rehearsal of the Senior Choir will be Thursday evening, Sept. 11 at 7:30 p.m. We will also have a shortened rehearsal at 8:30 a.m. on Sept. 14 before the Welcome Back breakfast. Regular Sunday morning rehearsals will resume on Sept. 21 at 8:30 a.m. If you are interested in joining the choir, please contact Kim Williams at 973-334-9794, or kkawe@optonline.net. Come and join us!

Youth Group -- Francina deShong

Calling all youth, we will be holding a youth group meeting on September 14 after the 10am Service. Bring your ideas for fundraising, our first fundraiser will be a car wash on September 28.

Help Feed the Hungry -- Felder Dorn

Gas prices and the general economic turn-down have accentuated the need for contributions to food barrels all across our diocese. St. Stephen's has maintained a good summer record, filling the barrel every month. Let's keep that momentum going this fall! Our food barrel is located in the Narthex by the rear door to the Church, ready to be packed with nonperishable items such as: canned meat, canned beef stew, canned tuna, peanut butter, jelly, canned fruit, plain rice, dried beans, 100% fruit juice, canned vegetables, powdered milk, Parmalat, cold and hot cereal, canned soup, macaroni and cheese, canned or instant potatoes, coffee, tea.

Grave Encounters

They probably didn't expect a lively time, but parishioners that attended the Preview of St. Stephen's Cemetery Walking Tour last May really had a lot of fun.

There were interesting sidebars – how did Hartshorn's rollershade work? questions left unanswered – what's the origin of mausoleum? introductions - how much do you know about the Bishop of Grand Central?

Some of Millburn's most interesting denizens can be found on that 8-acre rise above Millburn Avenue known as St. Stephen's Cemetery. Names like Whittingham, Hartshorn or Carrington are familiar because they are attached to streets, schools, or buildings, but how much do you know about their personal stories?

If you missed the preview last spring, make sure you attend the Fall Walking Tour on October 19 (rain date October 26). Tours will be offered at 20 minute intervals beginning at 2 PM. The last group will depart at 3:40 PM. People will gather at the main entrance at 451 Millburn Avenue. Groups of 10-12 people will have a guide to help them navigate the one hour walk. At each designated stop, a parishioner will present highlights of the individual's life.

For more information about the Cemetery tour, speak to **Felder Dorn, Kathy Mullins** or **Herb Tinning**.

Spotters Needed – Kathy Mullins

St. Stephen's Cemetery was originally designed for family plots. Families that purchased an area for future needs sometimes erected a border or planted shrubs to define their space. Family members tended the plots. Later as new areas were opened, single grave sites were offered. In the past few years there have been changes in the way St. Stephen's handles the maintenance of the cemetery property. It was common in years past for parishioners to descend on the cemetery en masse to clean up the weeds, leaves, branches, and debris, as well as prune shrubs that adorn some of the family plots.

Today St. Stephen's members have less time. For several years a single caretaker tried to keep up with the physical needs of the cemetery. With severe storm damage and aging trees and shrubs, this proved a difficult task. Last year the church hired a landscape company to tend both church and cemetery property. As with any site, there is routine maintenance and special needs.

This year the Property Committee plans to address those special needs with the landscape company, but we need the help of any willing parishioners. No physical labor is involved, simply your power of observation and willingness to walk around one area of the cemetery.

Here's the plan:

- Property Committee will announce several dates when volunteers are needed at the cemetery.
- We will divide the cemetery into a grid and assign each volunteer one area.
- Volunteers will walk around the assigned area and highlight plots or grave sites needing attention. Comments about specific needs will be noted on a cover sheet. Volunteers will also note trees in need of pruning, dead bushes, toppled gravestones and other problems.
- The Property Committee will review these notations and prioritize work with the landscape company. An attempt will be made to contact representatives if items planted by the family need to be removed to see if they want to replace them.

Willing to help? Send an email to kcmullins2@yahoo.com and tell us the best way to contact you and whether you prefer to help on weekday evenings, Saturday mornings, or Sunday afternoons. There will also be sign-up sheets at coffee hour in mid-September.

Mark Your Calendars: National IHN Gathering October 17-19, 2008 – Alex Cole

An exciting opportunity to meet IHN volunteers from around the country, increase our understanding, hear wonderful speakers and attend interesting workshops is available to us at the Family Promise 9th National Conference on October 17-19 in nearby Morristown at the Hyatt. Family Promise, the national name for IHN, is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

Governor Jon Corzine, a long time supporter of Family Promise, is expected to give the address at the opening dinner on Friday night. The Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr, Senior Minister Emeritus of The Riverside Church, known as the preacher's preacher, will be speaking at 9:00 am Saturday. He is excellent. At lunch that day, we will hear from Jonathan Kozol, educator and author of *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America*. Our own **Tina Kelley** will be one of the workshop leaders. **Ellen Pluta** and **Dana Longstreet** have been planning the religious service for Sunday. Set aside those dates and plan to go. As a result we will be renewed and gain new insights into hosting homeless families at St. Stephen's.

For more information about the conference, talk with **Claas Ehlers** or go to <http://www.familypromise.org/FamilyPromise9thNationalConference.htm>. There are special one-day plans also; see Claas for details.

Blessing of the Animals

In celebration of Saint Francis, St. Stephen's will hold its annual Blessing of the Animals ceremony on Sunday October 5 at 1 p.m. All pets – dogs, cats, guinea pigs, parakeets, salamanders, lizards, snakes, frogs, hedgehogs – are welcome, but please bring the big ones on a leash!

The Altar Guild Needs You! – Alex Cole

We NEED a few new members! Please consider serving. The commitment requires about one hour once a month on Saturday morning and on that Sunday putting things away after the service you regularly attend. We work together. There are written instructions and plenty of help in learning the various aspects. Many find a peace from our busy worlds as we work in the church. We work behind the scenes to insure services go smoothly. Cork is very understanding and easy to work with. We enjoy getting to know each other with an opportunity to serve the church. Male or female, all are welcome! Ask us about it. We are all very familiar with the set up.

Current members include **Karen Bonacorda, Nancy Sieffert, Libby Flowers, Marvin Walker, Carole Francis, Alex Cole** (Directress) and **Kathy Mullins**.

A Thank You From Deacon Herb Tinning

I want to thank you all, my St. Stephen's Family, for the overwhelming support you gave me after my sweetheart Adeline died.

St. Stephen's is indeed a family even though it is separated by two hours on Sundays. Many of you came and stood with me at the Funeral Home. Others have sent the most beautiful cards and notes indicating your support in prayers and concern. Still others have talked to me on Sundays. **Sara Ruth** prepared a brunch for 20 members of the family that rivaled any five star menu at the finest restaurants. **Pam**, not even unpacked from 7 weeks in Maine, prepared and delivered a munificent dinner. The flowers you sent were magnificent. **Cork** interrupted his Sabbatical to come to the funeral home to provide two consecutive services.

Everything you have done has helped to sustain me in this, my darkest hour. May God bless you all and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

In the Diocese and Beyond

The Divided We Fall Campaign

Pluralism Project Affiliate Valarie Kaur's award-winning documentary film "Divided We Fall" tells the story of hate violence in the aftermath of 9/11 and explores the question: who counts as American? The story's power has inspired the Divided We Fall Campaign: a grassroots movement to screen the film in every state across the nation during this September 11th anniversary. You are invited to join the Divided We Fall Campaign and host the film and discussion in your community on or near September 15th, the anniversary of the first post-9/11 hate murder of Sikh American Balbir Sodhi. In doing so, you will be joining schools, universities, museums, libraries, houses of worship, government officials, and community centers in deep dialogue about racism, religion, reconciliation and healing in America. Join the campaign. Contact tour director Jodi Elliott for details: jodi@dwf-film.com. Visit the film's website at <http://www.dwf-film.com> for trailers, news, and reviews.

Calendar

September 9 – Vestry meeting, 7:30 p.m.

September 11 – Senior Choir rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

September 14– Senior Choir rehearsal (shortened), 8:30 a.m.

 Welcome Back Breakfast, 9:00 a.m.

 Meeting of Junior Choir Parents, 11:30 a.m.

September 21– Senior Choir rehearsal, 8:30 a.m.

 First Little Saints rehearsal, 11:30 a.m.

 First Junior Choir rehearsal, 11:45 a.m.

October 5 – Blessing of the Animals, 1:00 p.m.

October 14 – Vestry meeting, 7:30 p.m.

October 19 – Family Promise 20th Anniversary Conference Interfaith Service, 8:30 a.m., Morristown Hyatt.

Schedule of Those Serving

September 7

Lectors: Nichol, Dinan, B. Riedel
Chalicers: Fortunato, Best
Acolyte/torchbearers: Thomas Alexander/
Abin Alexander and Nick Steelman
Ushers: Priddy, Rossiter
Altar Guild: Sieffert, Bonacorda

September 14

Lectors: A. Walker, Ehlers, Steelman, Hildago
Chalicers: Longstreet, Clarke
Acolyte/torchbearers: Vivienne Joseph/
Georgia Joseph and Rami Rugbeer
Ushers: Ehlers, Pluta
Altar Guild: Francis, Cole

September 21

Lectors: Cimo, McBride, Dorn, James
Chalicers: Kepler, Rosselot
Acolyte/torchbearers: Eilis Price/
Ben Majtyka and Zoey Peterson
Ushers: J & T Scharff
Altar Guild: Flowers, Mullins

September 28

Lectors: M. Walker, Conway, Young, Steelman
Chalicers: R. Riedel, Cole
Acolyte/torchbearers: Emily Young/
Jadyn and Kayla Herry
Ushers: Boegershausen, Debevoise
Altar Guild: Walker, Bonacorda

October 5

Lectors: TBA
Chalicers: TBA
Acolyte/torchbearers: Emily Chech/
Genevieve Nelson and Nick Steelman
Ushers: Bonacorda, Chech
Altar Guild: TBA

October 12

Lectors: TBA
Chalicers: TBA
Acolyte/torchbearers: Vivienne Joseph/
Georgia Joseph and Rami Rugbeer
Ushers: J&M Majtyka
Altar Guild: TBA

October 19

Lectors: TBA
Chalicers: TBA
Acolyte/torchbearers: Eilis Price/
Zoey Peterson and Ben Majtyka
Ushers: Mulgrew, Rossiter
Altar Guild: TBA

October 26

Lectors: TBA
Chalicers: TBA
Acolyte/torchbearers: Emily Young/
Jadyn and Kayla Herry
Ushers: O & P Moore