



# *The Scribe*

## NEWS & NOTES FROM ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

199 W. BALTIMORE AVENUE  
CLIFTON HEIGHTS, PA 19018



**The Rev. Dr. Jill L. McNish,  
Priest-in-Charge**

### Notes from Rev'd Jill

*"To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God for everything He has given us—and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace...." Thomas Merton*

As I thought about what I would like to say to you for this November/December addition of *Scribe* I realized that the time period covered includes several events in the life of the Church, any one of which merits a lot of discussion: Thanksgiving, Stewardship, the Initiation of New Ministry and Christmas. I pondered which event to focus on, then I suddenly realized one central thing that all of these four events have in common. GRATITUDE!

Gratitude is a much overlooked and underrated emotion, an emotion I have been thinking about a great deal lately. The word "gratitude" and the word "grace" come from the same root Latin word which means thanks. Come to think of it, the word "Eucharist" comes from a Greek word meaning "thanksgiving," and thus we sometimes refer to the Eucharist as "The Great Thanksgiving." The Episcopal understanding of the sacraments is that they are "an outward and visible sign of an inward visible grace." Grace to me means the felt presence of the living God, and sure enough, we Episcopalians assert that Christ Jesus is present in the Eucharistic Feast.

As Thomas Merton says in the above quote, every moment of human life is pure gift from God. Those who experience gratitude for the life they have been given are always the happiest people, and tend to be the people who feel closest to God, while those who are always thinking about what they want and DON'T have experience bitterness and depression, even despair. I have met people who have so much and are chronically unhappy, and conversely I have met people who have always led very simple lives, even

those who suffer from ill health and endured terrible disappointments and heartaches, who remain upbeat and yes, grateful.

I love the national holiday of Thanksgiving, because it asks up to focus our attention on all we have to be grateful for.

As we draw close to the time when we will be making commitments of our time, talents and money to St. Stephen's for the year 2012, we should remember that everything we have is pure gift from God. What will we give back to God? How will we pay it forward?

As we celebrate the Initiation of New Ministry, I am grateful for the gift that God has given me in finding a wonderful new community for me to exercise whatever gifts God has given me. I feel very much called to be your new Rector, and I am grateful every day for all of the support you all give to my ministry here. It has taken me a long time to find and settle into a permanent church, and how wonderful it is to have found the right place! I am grateful for the new life I feel emerging here, for the energy, for the increased attendance, for the laughter, for all of the signs along the way that we are on the right track in our common life together.

And of course, there is Christmas, when we give thanks for the wonderful gift of the Incarnation, for God's decision to be present on this earth as one of us, to reconcile the world and human life to Himself. Gratitude, grace, the felt presence of God in our lives and in our common life in community. It doesn't get any better!

Your sister in Christ,  
Rev. Jill+

## **DISCIPLESHIP, DISCIPLESHIP, DISCIPLESHIP!**

*Please plan on attending our Advent/Stewardship Dinner on November 27 at 5:30. On Sunday December 4 we will have our ingathering of pledges of time, talent and money at the 9:30 service. Look for your stewardship pledge card in the mail, prayerfully consider your commitment to St. Stephen's for the year 2012, and bring the completed card to the December 4 service so that we can make up a meaningful budget for the upcoming year*

### **Property** ~ Carl Benner

The following is a summary of the work done in the past year to restore the church buildings and grounds:

**Church Roof and Front Entrance:** A new slate roof has been installed which magnificently duplicates the original. Not many churches have a roof as colorful and handsome as ours. The front entrance steps have been restored with flagstone, which are as beautiful, if not better-looking, than the original. The two railings were reinforced also.

**Church Painting:** The Knave and other areas of the church interior, are being repainted.

**Parish House:** The Parish House chimney has been repaired with a new section of flue liner, but there is still some exterior repainting to be done.

**Tree Trimming and Grounds Clean-up:** Trees which hung over the church roof and along Church Street have been trimmed. The overgrowth at the Rectory has been cleaned up, and a tree removed from the front lawn to make the Rectory saleable.

**Curbing:** The curbing on Church Street has been repaired with the help of a donation from the Pennington's. There is still some work to be done, but the large holes in the macadam have been filled in, making it much safer.

Thanks to all the church members who pitched in to make the grounds of our church so good-looking this summer, and thanks to the Vestry who helped to make all this possible.

### **Beyond 2020** ~ Julie Baker

Our first meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup> included Holy Eucharist, breakfast and a lively discussion of future ideas for St. Stephen's. Those present included Reverend Jill, Joan Durbano, Debbie Werts, Debbie Mulligan, Jonathan Wald, Thomas Scanlon and Julie Baker. Beyond 2020 is open to all those 65 years of age and under. You are invited to come to one, all, or any meetings in between! The next meeting is Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am.

### **Book Club** ~ Debbie Werts

Come join us at the next meeting of the Book Club. It's a fun group...yes, so far it's just us girls, but it's never too late to get a man's perspective on things. We've read some good books and have had lots of interesting discussions. We get sidetracked every so often and the conversation may sometimes get a little....well, I guess you're just going to have to join the group to see what goes on. We meet the last Thursday of the month at 7:00. There's always room around the table for more. See you there! Our next meeting will not be until January 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **Sunday School** ~ Bonnie Prendiville

Sunday school at St. Stephen's has really taken off under the leadership of Rev. Jill. We have grown to 6-9 steady attenders and have 4 teachers. Jeff Benner, Ginny Sharp, and Bonnie Prendiville take turns leading the class and Debbie Mulligan faithfully assists every week. Thank you, Debbie!

We are considering holding a Christmas Pageant this year and look forward to working with the children on that. Things are going so well, that we may have to split into two age groups soon and move our classes to the parish hall.

The target date for our "Favorite Recipe" cook book put together by the Sunday school and pre-school children has been postponed until closer to Mother's Day. Stay tuned for ordering information.

### **Episcopal Church Women** ~ Angela Moore

Our Fall Flea Market, which was scheduled for September 24<sup>th</sup>, but was cancelled and held on the rain date, October 1<sup>st</sup>. It was cool and overcast, but there was a steady stream of people all day. Debbie Werts was in

charge, and did a terrific job—thank you Debbie. Our profit was \$856.08 after expenses, and Dot Pennington gave the church a check for \$600. To all the people who worked in the kitchen or at various tables, helped to set up or clean up—thank you—we couldn't do it without you.

The Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner on Saturday, *October 29<sup>th</sup>* was not as well attended as expected because of bad weather. However, some brave souls ventured out into the rain and snow to have dinner and/or to help. The weather outside may have been frightful, but the company inside was delightful! In spite of all the negative weather, we managed to make a profit of over \$1,100. My heartfelt thanks to all the people who helped make this fund-raiser dinner successful.

Next up is our annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday *November 12<sup>th</sup>* from 9 am to 3 pm; light lunch sold from 11 am to 2 pm. There will be beautifully hand-crafted goods, gently used books, raffle items, attic treasures, homemade baked goods and cookie exchange; and from 10 am to 11 am, a visit from Santa, too! Get some of your Christmas shopping done early.

After that is our Advent/Stewardship dinner on *November 27<sup>th</sup>*. This is a baked ham dinner with covered dishes provided by the congregation. Paper Christmas ornaments are placed on the tree with names of children from St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Chester, as part of an on-going outreach program. All are asked to take one or two names and have the gifts, to the church by *December 17<sup>th</sup>*, with the ornament showing the child's name attached.

Our next ECW meeting is scheduled for Sunday, *November 13<sup>th</sup>*.

### **St. Stephen's Preschool** ~ Kathy Zappasodi

Last month our church administrator, Cindy Houpt made up some wonderful flyers with information about our Sunday school. They were attached to 105 November newsletters that were sent out to our preschool parents. People are always moving into our area, and hopefully our Sunday school will continue to grow—we just need creative ways to get the word out!

Holiday planning at St. Stephen's Preschool has also begun! Our Christmas performances are scheduled for December 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>. If anyone would like to help serve refreshments after our shows, please speak with me. All help is appreciated, and the shows are a lot of fun to watch as well! We will have two shows each day—9:30 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.

Our annual Christmas parties will be held on December 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The Preschool will recess on December 21<sup>st</sup>. and return on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our Preschool staff wishes everyone a happy and healthy holiday season!

### **Blood Drive** ~ Joan Durbano



Our next blood drive is Thursday, December 22nd from 1:00 to 7:00 pm in the Parish House. We realize this is a busy time of year for most people, but this is also a time of great demand for blood. Please make an effort to give at this neediest of times—contact me at (610) 259-2415.



Have a working gas grill you no longer want? Donate it to the church. Call Angela Moore at 610-622-1363 and we'll pick it up.



Altar Flowers by -  
Bonnie's Wonder Gardens  
233 Scottsdale Road  
Lansdowne, PA 19050-2328  
(610) 259-1733

The Scribe is a bi-monthly publication. If you wish to submit an article contact Angela Moore by phone at 610-622-1363, or by email at [angela1185@comcast.net](mailto:angela1185@comcast.net).

Access the Scribe, and lots of other things about the church, on our website at [www.stsec.org](http://www.stsec.org) --updated by Bonnie Prendiville. We're on facebook too, updated by Dave Hash.

# NOVEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>SUNDAY SERVICE</b> 9:30 AM HOLY EUCHARIST W/MUSIC (EVERY SUNDAY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)</p> <p><b>FOOD PANTRY</b> 10:30 – NOON (EVERY SUNDAY)</p>		<p>1</p> <p><b>CRAFT GROUP</b> 10 AM – 2 PM PARISH HOUSE (BRING LUNCH)</p> <p>(MEETS EVERY TUESDAY)</p>	<p>2</p> <p><b>FOOD PANTRY</b> 10 AM – NOON (EVERY WEDNESDAY)</p> <p><b>VESTRY MTG.</b> LOUNGE – 7 PM</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p><b>DIOCESAN CONVENTION</b> <b>PA CONVENTION CTR.</b> 1101 ARCH ST PHILADELPHIA, PA</p>
<p>6</p> <p><b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> LOUNGE – 9:15 AM</p> <p> <b>ALL SAINTS DAY</b> TURN CLOCKS BACK ONE HOUR</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p> <b>CHRISTMAS BAZAAR</b> PARISH HOUSE 9 AM – 3 PM</p>
<p>13</p> <p><b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> LOUNGE – 9:15 AM</p> <p><b>ECW MTG</b> (AFTER COFFEE HOUR)</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p><b>REV. JILL AWAY</b> <b>CONF./SAN FRANCISCO</b> 11/15 11/21</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>20</p> <p><b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> LOUNGE – 9:15 AM</p> <p><b>REV. DEAN EVANS</b> GUEST PREACHER &amp; CELEBRANT</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p><b>THANKSGIVING SERVICE</b> 7:00 PM</p>	<p>24</p> <p><b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b></p> <p></p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27</p> <p><b>FIRST SUNDAY OF Advent</b></p> <p><b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> LOUNGE – 9:15 AM</p> <p><b>ADVENT FAMILY WREATHMAKING</b> (AFTER 9:30 SERVICE)</p> <p><b>STEWARDSHIP/ADVENT DINNER 5:30 PM</b></p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>			

# DECEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>SUNDAY SERVICE</b> 9:30 AM HOLY EUCHARIST W/MUSIC (EVERY SUNDAY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)</p> <p><b>FOOD PANTRY</b> 10:30 – NOON (EVERY SUNDAY)</p>		<p><b>CRAFT GROUP</b> *STARTS AGAIN IN APRIL, CHECK FOR DATE</p>	<p><b>FOOD PANTRY</b> 10 AM – NOON (EVERY WEDNESDAY)</p>	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p><b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> LOUNGE – 9:15 AM</p> <p><b>DISCIPLESHIP SUNDAY</b> (PLEDGE CARDS DUE)</p>			<p><b>VESTRY MTG.</b> LOUNGE – 7 PM</p>			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<p>(No 9:30 SERVICE OR CHURCH SCHOOL)</p>  <p><b>INSTALLATION SERVICE</b> FOR <b>REVEREND JILL</b> 4:00 PM DINNER FOLLOWS</p>						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<p><b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> LOUNGE – 9:15 AM</p> <p><b>REV. DEAN EVANS</b> SUPPLY MINISTER</p>				<p><b>BLOOD DRIVE</b> PARISH HALL 1 – 7 PM CONTACT JOAN DURBANO 610-259-2415</p>		<p><b>TWO SERVICES</b> 5:00PM - FAMILY 10:30PM - CANDLELIGHT</p>
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
 <p><b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> LET US ADORE HIM 9:30 SERVICE</p>	<p><b>REV. JILL AWAY</b> 12/26 – 1/2</p>			<p><b>NO BOOK CLUB</b> RESUMES JANUARY 26, 2012</p>		 <p>AULD LANG SYNE</p>

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**We are a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania.  
We are a loving church family which encourages regular ministry and parish  
activities beyond Sunday worship. We share our time, talent and treasure with  
others in need. We will continue our work to bring God's message more fully to our  
community through increased outreach and evangelism.**

