



# The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

December 2012



## *Advent Into Christmas*

Do you find it easy to practice Advent?

The themes of Advent are waiting and watching, in expectant hope for God's fulfillment. Maintaining that contemplative stance "is never easy with our mad rush toward Christmas, with a growing frenzy of shopping and partying," to quote Erskine Clarke. Some of us are caught up in that during these weeks.

I always wonder if the frenzy of shopping and partying is a cover up. Isn't fear just under the surface? Isn't that especially true this year? The Republicans and Democrats just finished a campaign during which they tried their best to make us fearful of what might happen if the other guy would win. We've gone straight from that to the fear of the "fiscal cliff." That's on top of the continuing state of emergency since the attacks of 9/11/01. That's on top of dire forecasts of warming global temperatures causing rising sea levels causing flooding in cities like New Orleans and New York. That's on top of the cumulative stress of a poor economy, with so many unemployed or underemployed, with houses and financial portfolios that are not worth what they once were. And so, to quote Clarke again, there is "a deepening gloom because we can't shop or party like we think we ought."

We are moving into Advent. The themes of Advent speak good news directly into such deepening gloom.

In fact, the Kingdom of God has come, with the resurrection of Jesus the Christ! This is good news that we are able to receive when our cover up breaks down, when we are honest enough to admit that no matter who is president, or what financial policy is in place, or what anti-terrorism safeguards are put in place, fulfillment will not come from any of these things. Indeed (and you know this) fulfillment will not come even when our houses are again worth what they used to be and our financial portfolios grow to be larger than ever and our economy is once again generating jobs. There are

lots of people who have lots of stuff who are very unhappy. This may shock you: fulfillment will not come even if there's a pile of presents under the Christmas tree!

In fact, only God can fulfill the hopes and dreams of all the years. Advent is a time of waiting and watching for signs of the Kingdom that is already breaking in, expectantly hoping for God's fulfillment. Where do you see that happening?

Blessings on your journey through these next few weeks, through Advent into Christmas.

**Pastor Andy Ballentine**



## *Advent Activities and Christmas Celebrations*

**An Advent Celebration will happen Sunday, December 2**

- At **4:00 PM** there will be craft opportunities for all ages.
- At **5:30 PM** we will share a spaghetti dinner.

### **Pause for Prayer Each Wednesday Night During Advent**

- We will gather for the singing and silence, the prayer and incense of Holden Evening Prayer, at **7:00 PM** on **December 5, 12, and 19**.

### **Gather with Other Brothers and Sisters to Share Your Advent Journey Each Sunday Morning**

- Pastor Ballentine will gather with those using the *Book of Faith* Advent Reflections guide at **10:00 AM** on **December 9, 16, and 23**.

### Share your Ministry of Presence and Joy With Those Who Are Ill or Homebound

- We will gather at **4:00 PM Sunday, December 16** to go out Christmas Caroling!
- We will return to the Fellowship Hall to share a meal. Bring chili and/or cornbread to share.

### Worship and Fellowship on Christmas Eve

- **5:00 PM** – Holy Communion service featuring the youth and children of the congregation
- **6:30 PM** – Pot luck dinner in the Fellowship Hall
- **7:30 PM** – Holy Communion service featuring choir and sermon.
- **10:00 PM** – Holy Communion service featuring choir and sermon.

### Christmas Day Worship

- **10:00 AM** at St. Martin's Episcopal Church on Jamestown Road (just past Rt. 199 toward Jamestown)

### Service of Lessons and Carols Sunday, December 30

- **Worship at 8:30 and 11:00**

### *Pipe Peeps*



With the season of Advent we begin anew, and the Church gives us an opportunity for spiritual renewal. We prepare for the coming of the Lord as we reflect upon appropriate scripture readings, sing hymns which evoke the themes of the scriptures, and receive the Lord in Holy Communion. To add to the depth of our Advent preparation, we have the wonderful opportunity to spend a few moments in quiet and meditation with the celebration of the Holden Evening Prayer on Wednesday evenings in Advent. As we get caught up in the rush of holiday preparation, I count these precious few moments of quiet a gift from God. I hope you will join with us as we enjoy the Holden Evening Prayer, and may your Advent be one of meaningful renewal.

Of course, the culmination of Advent is the proclamation of Christ incarnate, and I am looking forward to

sharing some very meaningful music at our Christmas celebrations. A tradition going back to the early days of the Church is to celebrate the Eve of a great Feast day with a solemn Eucharist beginning at midnight. There were several feast days in the early Church that were celebrated in this fashion; and in modern times, we retain the practice for Christmas and Easter. Fortunately, we are a bit more relaxed with the actual time of "midnight," so the celebrations have the spirit, but not the difficult hour, of yesteryear. I hope you will raise your voices to their fullest in joy.

On **Sunday, January 27**, I will be performing a concert at St. Stephen, and I am pleased to announce that I will be joined by two excellent musicians. Sarah Glosson is a magnificent cellist in our area, and she has agreed to perform with me. In addition, we will have the joy of hearing our own **Amanda Dell** give us some excellence on the clarinet. Please mark your calendars for this exciting opportunity to hear some great music.

Your Brother in Christ,

**Michael Monaco**

### *Ten Best Practices for Health and Wellness*



As faithful Lutherans, we understand the value and the importance of rules that guide us. Living in a way that is healthy and whole is essential in making the most of the life we were given. Here are some suggestions for being intentional about your health and wellness.

1. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
2. Love your neighbor as you love yourself — be an example of self-care as well as caring for others.
3. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy — be intentional about time for rest and renewal within your week, church year and life in ministry.
4. Honor your body as a gift from God and temple of the Holy Spirit. Feed it healthy foods and build your physical and emotional endurance with regular physical activity.
5. Honor your mother, father, siblings, spouse, and/or children with your love, respect, and time.

6. Reflect your faith and use your gifts in your vocation.
7. Develop healthy habits to keep your wholeness wheel in balance and to be fit for a ministry of service.
8. Equip yourself to use your gifts effectively to proclaim and live out the Gospel in the world.
9. Practice and seek forgiveness.  
Pray daily.  
From [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)



## Social Ministry Notes

### Our Advent Focus

Each year, our Social Ministry Committee invites all of us to contribute a special gift to a national or international group that provides aid to improve peoples' lives, and to an agency here in our area. This year, the committee invites us to respond to these needs:

### Lutheran Disaster Response

Hurricane Sandy, the massive storm that brought destruction to the Caribbean islands, and then swept up the East Coast to cause enormous damage to parts of New York and New Jersey (and inland), has become a major focus for our friends at Lutheran Disaster Response. They are working hand-in-hand with affected synods and ministry organizations that are responding in these communities.

As the work goes on, there may be opportunities for groups of volunteers to help in these areas of damage. But, right now, the best way for all of us to help is to make a donation – designated for Hurricane Sandy relief – and these funds will be used entirely (100%) to help families whose lives and livelihoods have been impacted by this disaster.

Please make your check payable to *St. Stephen Lutheran Church* and note "ELCA Disaster Relief" on the memo line.

For more information and updates on the LDR activities, check out the website: [www.ldr.org/2012/hurricane-sandy](http://www.ldr.org/2012/hurricane-sandy) and Facebook page: Lutheran Disaster Response.

### Our Local Homeless Ministries

Folks here at St. Stephen have been serving in the local Motel Ministry for two years – preparing hot meals and snacks – including meals for young children and babies. Currently our two teams are serving meals at two local motels – Family Inn and Motel 6 –

about once a month. The folks living at these motels are not able to afford "regular" housing, often because their income is not enough to cover deposits for an apartment, or they have lost a job recently, and have also lost their home. Many of these people are working in the local economy, but some have seasonal jobs, in this area of tourist attractions.

The new Community of Faith Mission is providing overnight shelter, and hot meals, to more homeless people during the winter season (using the PORT model in Newport News). This church-based shelter program was developed by our friends at St. Bede Catholic Church; it began serving on November 10 and will continue through the week of March 9-16. Currently, there are 12 local churches serving as shelter sites, and several other church groups who are serving as partner churches, working with colleagues at a shelter site.

Our St. Stephen volunteers – serving as a partner group – will work with our friends at the Williamsburg United Methodist Church during the week of **January 19-26, 2013**. The host churches plan for 25 overnight guests at each shelter site, for one week at a time. This program is an important step – in our local area – to address the needs of the hundreds of homeless individuals and families, right here in the Williamsburg area.

Your gift to our homeless ministries will be used to help purchase the needed supplies for our volunteers (packaging, paper supplies, cases of water and beverages, cleaning supplies, etc.). You can be part of this wonderful ministry, with your financial contribution!

Please make your check payable to "St. Stephen Lutheran Church" and mark "homeless ministries" on the memo line.

For more information on our local motel ministry, please contact:

**Randy Punchard:** (870-8410) [Randy4Golf@aol.com](mailto:Randy4Golf@aol.com)

And for information about the new Community of Faith Mission, contact:

**Jo Hanny:** (229-5080) [rbrt.hann@gmail.com](mailto:rbrt.hann@gmail.com)

**David Allen:** (645-8220) [jda136@cox.net](mailto:jda136@cox.net)

From our dozens of volunteers, Thank You! - and God bless you!





## ***St. Stephen responds to PORT Again!!***

The PORT program (People Offering Resources Together) continues to offer shelter to the homeless people from late October through end of March in the Newport News area.

On **Friday, November 1 through Saturday morning November 2**, members of St. Stephen collectively helped to feed and staff a homeless shelter located at Parkview United Methodist Church in Newport News. The number of clients we helped to feed and provide shelter for this night was 50. The many hands that helped to make this ministry a success again this year were the following: **Pat and Arnie Janot and daughter Liz, Sandy Peterkin, Ginny Hilbinger, Veronica Ferris and Easton, Chris and Pam Groman, Carol Harman, Ward Bourn, Anne and Harlan Schone, Bob and Jo Hanny, Bob and Sherry Phipps, Soni York, Ursula Murden, David Allen, Mary Gerbec, Karen Schlicht, Bobbie Streeter, Karen Shoberg, Nancy Rivolta, Mary Jamerson, Ned and Sue Neidlinger, Carla Javier, Janice Svendsen and Randy Punchard.**

A very big thanks goes to **Pat Janot** who coordinated the food preparation again this year. As in prior years, our beef stew and breakfast muffins were a hit with the shelter clients!

I wish to thank our congregational members who supported this ministry directly, but also to others who supported us through prayer. We look forward to continuing our homeless ministry in the Newport News and Williamsburg communities.

With God's blessings to all,

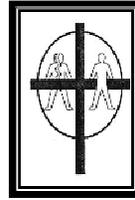
**Randy Punchard PORT Coordinator**



## ***Quilting News***

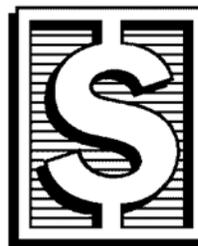
There will be no quilting on **December 17**. Quilting will resume on **January 21, 2013**.

**Ginny Hilbinger**



## ***My Journey With (and without) Stephen Ministry***

Christmas approaches, with all its glittery promotion, music and shopping. Families are together once again. Sometimes we even remember why we celebrate---that little baby Jesus who was the beginning of a new covenant with God. We remember his birth, death and resurrection. And we remember those loved ones we lost during the year, often forgetting the tiny baby who should bring us the hope of the resurrection. My brother and I often exchanged small gifts. I remember one year he visited and we all got tie-dyed socks. We sat together on the floor and had a picture made of all our feet lined up. These became my "lucky" socks, along with the frog he gave me that year, which sits on my desk. I'll see something I think he'd like and then remember he's not there. I will see fresh cut flowers at the grocery and think how Mom would have liked them—but I don't need to buy them anymore. Christmas is often a time of depression and loneliness for those who have lost a loved one and also for people who are alone over the holidays. As Stephen Ministers we are especially vigilant and sensitive to our care receivers to help them cope with the season. We need ask God to fill them with his presence and so fill that lonely place in their heart with joy and thankfulness. "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20



## ***Back to the Future***

As the St. Stephen Lutheran Church Endowment Fund Committee (EFC) continues their planning efforts, we wanted to remind you again to consider St. Stephen in your estate planning. One of the ways you can do this is through a bequest. What is a bequest?

A bequest is a gift of cash, securities, real estate or property of any description that may be bequeathed to St. Stephen Lutheran Church by a clause in the donor's will or by a codicil added to the will. The donor using this method retains full control and use of the

property during her/his lifetime and may alter or revoke the bequest at any time.

At the time of the donor's death, the bequest qualifies as a charitable deduction for estate tax purposes. The bequest does not, however, provide the donor with any tax advantage during her/his lifetime.

If you need assistance in finding basic answers to your estate planning questions, you may contact any member of the Endowment Fund Committee or Ward Bourn, a former committee member. Lastly, your financial advisor is the best source when making estate plans.

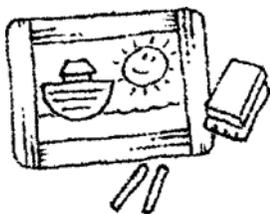
Your EFC Committee: **Jan MacQueston**, chair; **Ingrid Brown**, recording secretary; **Lou Rossiter**, financial secretary; **Gerri Bass** and **Gary Krull**.



## Dining with Friends

There will be no December gathering of "Dining with Friends" – have a wonderful Christmas and join us in January!

The January meeting will be on **Sunday, January 13 at 1:00 PM** at the Candlelight Restaurant (past the Pottery where the old Candle Factory was). Please mark the blue sheet, or let **Ray or Shirley Basley (566-8023)** [basley8357@widomaker.com](mailto:basley8357@widomaker.com) know by January 6, 2013.



## Preschool News

December is always a busy time at our Preschool. First and foremost the children are involved in learning about the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Second is their learning about Christmas traditions and the children become involved in lots of craft activities. This year, they will be making gifts for their families including the gift bags.

Singing Christmas carols is also important. The 4-year-old Ducks and Bunnies will join the PreK 5-year-old Frog class in singing carols at the Great Wolf Lodge on **Wednesday, December 12 at 6:00 PM**. All are welcome to attend and enjoy the music in a manner that can only be presented by children.

Christmas is also a time of giving to others and so the children are collecting food which will be presented to the St. Olaf Food Pantry prior to Christmas.

Our Christmas parties will be held **on Monday, December 17** for the 4-year-old Ducks and Bunnies and the PreK 5-year olds, and on **Tuesday, December 18** for the 3-year-old Bunny and Little Bear classes. The children have been very good this year and hope to get a special visit from Santa!

And also in line with the Christmas tradition of giving to others, St. Stephen Lutheran Preschool maintains a "Scholarship Fund" as an aid to offset tuition expenses so that other children also may benefit from the wonderful preschool education program presented here. To help maintain the fund we are asking those who wish to donate to contact the Church Office or **Lauren McQuain**, the Preschool Director.

Our Preschool will be closed for Christmas break from **Wednesday, December 19 until Wednesday, January 2, 2013**. The staff and students at St. Stephen Preschool wish you all a wonderful and blessed Christmas and New Year!

**For the Preschool, Rudy Stegmann**

## The Church Mouse Hears . . . . .



Check page 10 of the December *Williamsburg's Next Door Neighbors* magazine for a nice article about **Karen Schlicht** and her role in leading the singing in the lighting of the Community tree the day before Christmas at Market Square. . . . The College of William & Mary received a Grand Challenges Explorations grant through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to research using sonic nets to keep pest birds out of crops. The research project, led by John Swaddle, professor of biology, and **Mark Hinders**, professor of applied science, was one of more than 80 Grand Challenges Round 9 grants announced recently. Grand Challenges Explorations (GCE) funds individuals taking innovative approaches to the world's toughest and most persistent health and development challenges.



## New email Address

**Art & Helen Nelsen**—[ahnelsen@cox.net](mailto:ahnelsen@cox.net)

## Men's Breakfast



Men of the congregation have been joining for breakfast the first Thursday of each month, for conversation and friendship-deepening. This month, the first Thursday is **December 6!** Join with other men at **8:00 AM Thursday**, at the Colonial Pancake House, at the corner of Page Street and Penniman Road.

The agenda is: "How are you doing?" with discussion!



## December Birthdays

1 Abigail Cummings	
2 Gisela Fashing	Peter Geier
3 Glenn Carlson, Jr.	
4 Andy Ballentine	Mitchell Stauffer
Sarah Toler	Dorothy Wright
6 Chandler Reubush	
7 Glenn Carlson	
8 Kristin Cosby	
11 John Allen	
12 Jean Gulesian	Joey Pierce
13 Birdie Burton	Pamela Franck
Marge Gottschalk-Trone	Lori Harms
14 Cindy Gibbs	Hannalore Herion
15 Carla Javier	
16 Katherine Hyland	Ursula Murden
18 Gretchen Williams	
20 Kathryn Ogborn	Tom Peterkin
21 June Henderson	Casey Toler
Robert Voigt	
23 Jessica Finch Kasprzyk	
24 Jan MacQueston	
26 Amy Bergh	Carolee Bush
27 Otis Childress	
30 Rosalie Frey	Dorothy Reeves
31 Betty Shaughnessy	

Is your name missing? Is your date wrong? Please let us know immediately!

Rev. November 20, 2012



## Please Pray For

We give thanks to God for the birth of **Bradley Matthew**, born to **Doug** and **Stacey Cummings!**

Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for **Gerri Bass, Art Dorsey, Linda Laity Hite, Paul Kristiansen, Bob Newman, Sam Trapani, Linda Vonderheide, and baby Danielle Walker.**

Pray God's protection for **Matt Bosworth**, who has just been deployed to Afghanistan.

Pray the comfort and joy of Easter for **Carla Javier** and her family on the death of her mother, to **Randy Punchard** and his family on the death of his father, to **Steve Friedrich** and his family on the death of his father and to **Karen Einarsen** on the death of her cousin.

Pray for these who are physically unable to get to worship: **Bill Dickerson, Elsa Englert, Ruth Ennis, Bernice Fahncke, Elsie Hall, Willetta Heising, Anna Lou Hobday, Helen Lenox, Jo Schumacher, John Warner, Barbara Weekes, Dot Wright, Lois Wysong**

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: **Donna Alt, Millie Andrews-Young, Laurie Berger, Cathy Bierd, Mary Breeden, Gilbert Burton, Bob Canny, Joanne Carlson, Nancy and Lee Carlson, Bob Casey, Donna Cherel, Jeris DeKievit, Lucy Eyler, Inge Feilbier, Nick and Ann Finley, Bruce and Kay Flatin, Mary Funkhouser, Godette Family, Nancy Gottschalk, Mary Hallman, Theodore Harms, Janis Hepburn, Mary Jo Hill, Carol Horton, Jane Kent, Fran Kibler, Katherine Layton, John Lester, Sheena McCabe, Laura McDonald, Kristin McGraw, Russ Meermans, Flip Miller, Roxanne Morris, the Nasra family, Sara Marie Nelson, Mary Noyes, Arthur Pate, Donald Peters, Sarah Pettifer, George Pollin, Ann Rathkamp, Lisa Rivolta, Clarice Rohling, Don Romig, Mark Salsman, Cathy Schappell, Roland Scheiding, Deb Schilling, Bernadine Schlicht, Brant Smith, Ron Smith, Linda Souck, Helen Soutoukis, Nancy Spaniol, Connie Testerman, Edwin White, Shirley White, William White, Bitsy Whitten, Anna Zabdyr**

*Happy Happenings at St. Stephen and may the peace and joy of Christmas be with you all*



**Ben Henry who designed and crafted the meditation garden cross**



**A very rainy dedication of our lovely meditation garden**



**Working at FISH**



**Motel Ministry preparations**

