



The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

February 2013



The Journey of Faith, The Journey into Transformation

The statistics are dramatic: every Christian denomination and tradition in the United States has lost members in recent decades. (The only exception might be the Roman Catholic Church, which has been receiving immigrants into their parishes.)

At the same time, pay attention to this: polls and surveys find, consistently, that great majorities of Americans declare that they are spiritual seekers.

So, how can it be: that at the same time that there is great hunger for God in our culture and there are fewer people are worshipping in church congregations? Why is there a great sense of spiritual seeking, but few “seekers” who are drawn to seek God in the community of a congregation?

Could it be that too few of us attract those who are seeking? Could it be that too few of us demonstrate, in our words and actions, that the Holy Spirit is transforming our lives?

Those of us who are effective missionaries in our culture show ourselves to be very different from our culture’s values of self-centeredness and materialism. Effective missionaries don’t try to force anything. Instead, we attract interest by our strange counter-cultural hopefulness and joyfulness and non-judgmental compassion. We attract interest from “seekers” because the Holy Spirit has transformed us!

Here is an especially troubling statistic: Among those who are 18-30 years of age, less than 10% worship regularly in a congregation! Rich Melheim is a Lutheran who creates curricula for faith formation. He states the reality in these forceful words:

“Young people today are not looking for history. They are searching for mystery. They are

not hungry for another extracurricular activity. They are starving for meaning.

“In *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* Kendra Creasy Dean writes: ‘We are doing an exceedingly good job of teaching youth what we really believe: namely, that Christianity is not a big deal, that God requires little, and that the church is a helpful social institution filled with nice people focused primarily on “folks like us” – which, of course, begs the question of whether we are really the church at all. Teenagers tend to approach religious participation, like music and sports, as an extracurricular activity: a good, well-rounded thing to do, but unnecessary for an integrated life. What we have been less able to convey to young people is faith.’

“We haven’t conveyed faith? Whoa! Isn’t that at least a part of why we were here? Why we put all the energy and effort into children, youth and family programs over the last fifty years? Why we built the education wing, hired the youth staff, set up all the slick programs?

“Thirty-five years ago, a brilliant and prophetic John H. Westerhoff, III hit the nail on its head in his groundbreaking, unheeded, classic, *Will Our Children Have Faith?*: ‘The challenge facing the church is in the bland, unconverted, ignorant lives of its members. Until adults in the church are knowledgeable in their faith, have experienced the transforming power of the Gospel, live radical lives characteristic of the disciples of Jesus Christ, no new curriculum, no new teacher-training programs, and no new educational technology will save.’

“We wonder why the kids don’t come back?

“The Bride of Christ has lost both interest in and passion for her husband. And the children don’t want to come home to such a sad and

sorry empty house. They won't. They can't.

"We saw to it. They saw through it. And it's time to undo it. Now."

Wow.

Could Melheim be right? If so, the "solution" is to live according to the promises of baptism. That means taking those promises seriously, as our purpose for each day of our lives. (So there is no false dichotomy between "sacred" and "secular.") That takes discipline (we see the same root in the word, "disciple"), in engaging in the daily practices of the faith. But it is such a joyful way to live! God the Holy Spirit uses the practices of the faith to transform us: worship, prayer, study, conversation with others who are on the journey of faith.

The journey of faith is the journey into transformation.

The season of Lent gives special emphasis to the practices of faith. I invite you into what we're doing at St. Stephen – on Sunday mornings and Monday evenings and Wednesday evenings. (Who might be called to lead afternoon faith practice groups – of Bible study or prayer?) I invite you into what we're doing to serve those who are poor.

In the process you'll find that baptismal transformation and mission becomes the center of your life!

Pastor Andy Ballentine



Lenten

Worship

and Fellowship

Tuesday, February 12 – Shrove Tuesday

6:00 PM – Pancake Supper cooked by Congregation Council Members

7:00 PM – Burning of old palms to create the next evening's ashes.

Wednesday, February 13 – Ash Wednesday

7:00 AM – worship at St. Martin's Episcopal Church

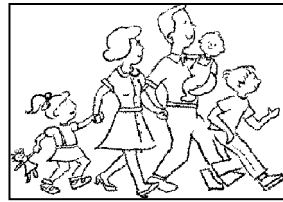
Noon – worship at St. Martin's Episcopal Church

7:00 PM – worship here at St. Stephen (**No potluck dinner prior to Worship**)

Wednesdays in Lent, February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20

6:00 PM – Soup Supper

7:00 PM – Holden Evening Prayer



The Example of John the Baptist

Counter-cultural. Going against the prevalent culture. We as Christians, despite liv-

ing in a majority Christian nation, whose leaders are constantly being litmus tested by various religious groups to see that they measure up, are called by Jesus to be very different than everybody else in our lives. How different can be startling. Of the people in the New Testament, I am fascinated by the character, John the Baptist. I use the word "character" in the sense that he is, shall we say, different than many of the people that we are used to interacting with on a daily basis.

We recently celebrated the Baptism of our Lord, when Jesus is baptized by the wild man, John the Baptist. Wearing a coat of camel's hair, eating locust and wild honey, John was not a well-mannered, eloquent speaker with refined tastes. He was an "in your face," fire and brimstone kind of preacher living in the wilderness (calling the Pharisees and Sadducees a "brood of vipers" is one example.) Not the kind of guy you would willingly pick up off the street and invite to dinner. And this was the man God called to baptize his son.

How do we compare? I know that I am a mere shadow of the personality that was John the Baptist. If I tried something like that in Williamsburg, I would be shuffled off to the nearest law enforcement facility to discuss my hygiene issues and my standards of appropriate behavior. As average Joe walking my family through Colonial Williamsburg, I would go out of my way to avoid a wild looking man haranguing me about my sins. And I have done just that! Is that the kind of counter-cultural ideal that I am supposed to live up to?

We don't know a huge amount about John; he is a bit of a mystery. Yet the brief and vivid descriptions of him are enough to make you wonder about him. This was a messenger from God, and yet he is not the most appealing of people. Are we to spread the word of God by dressing in hideously uncomfortable clothing, ignoring what we now understand to be the basics of hygiene, and harass people about repenting our sins before God? Or, are we to find other ways of living our lives, being witnesses of God's love in our actions rather than our attire and words.

How do you live your life sharing God's love? What do you do that shows you are a loving Christian? How do we reconcile our need to follow the example of Jesus, an itinerate preacher, with our settled lives of work, play and interaction with those around us? There are no easy answers (if they were easy, everybody would

be doing it!), but being counter-cultural is what we are called to do as Christians. Lutherans are not known for sitting in the front pew, so how are we to go forth and boldly proclaim the message of God's love? I don't have a good answer, but maybe you do. If so, share it with the world! Living up to the legacy of John the Baptist is a complicated and uncomfortable process. How do you do it?

Douglas Cummings
Ministry Associate

Pipe Peeps



One of the most interesting facts about our faith experience is that it is a perpetual journey. Just when we seem to get comfortable, the Holy Spirit prompts us to the next level. We are wanderers in the faith. We come from God, and then in our earthly ministry, we deal with that internal spark of the Spirit we received in Baptism, prompting us to return to God. Many theologians have described this journey as a circle. God is at the top, our souls descend to earth, and then we return to God at the top. Well, here we are entering the journey phase of Lent as we experience the inward pulling towards Easter. From the earliest days of the Church, the idea of journey, or pilgrimage, was something that was very much a part of that worship experience.

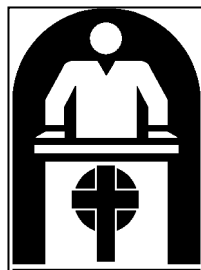
As we celebrate the Lenten liturgies this year, consider how you are being called forth on your journey. Consider what you can do to enter into a deeper experience with the Lord. We are rehearsing Easter music and I invite you to pray about joining one of our choirs just for Easter. In particular, we are in need of a few more members in our 8:30 choir, and you would be welcomed with open arms. Then after Easter, you are free to return to your regular seat in the congregation, and we only ask that you lift us up in prayer. Perhaps you would like to offer your instrumental skills during the celebration of the Holden Evening Prayer on Wednesdays during Lent. Do you play guitar? We are in need of some guitarists who would be willing to play once a month at the 8:30 Service.

Whatever musical gift you may wish to offer, I am ready to assist you in any way that I can. I thank God for the wonderful folks who are giving so much to the Music Ministry, but there is room for you.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Monaco

Can you please help!

We are in need of someone who would be willing to help rejuvenate our children's music program. Willingness and creativity is more important than musical ability. Please contact **Michael Monaco** if you can help with this important service.



Theologian in Residence weekend - April 2013

The Theologian in Residence committee is pleased to announce that **Professor Hans Tiefel** will lead our Theologian in Residence weekend activity for 2013. Dr. Tiefel is recently retired from the Religion Department at William and Mary, and a member of our congregation. We are delighted that he has agreed to lead this event, **April 26-28**. Dr. Tiefel's topic is "God, Politics and Citizenship, - a Christian Ethical Perspective." This will be an interesting, timely, and thought-provoking weekend for us all. Please mark your calendars for the last weekend in April for this event and plan to join us then.

Cliff Henderson, chairman



Remember Soup Suppers Wednesdays in Lent before Holden Evening Prayer!

Health Ministry The Wholeness Wheel, Part 2



The Wholeness Wheel, Part 2 continues explaining the guide (introduced in the January Quill) to balancing all aspects of health and depicts the interconnectedness of the individual aspects of wellness. It is the picture of a process — dynamic, centered, in balance, contained, inter-related, vital, and colorful.

The wheel reminds us that being truly healthy and whole is about being in balance and intentionally nurturing all aspects of health surrounded and supported by spiritual health.

Social well-being

We were created to be social persons by God with instructions to help and love each other. We are nourished by the love and intimacy of our family and friends. Isolation is a significant risk for depression and premature death. Whether we are introverted or extroverted, regular social contact is essential for health. Being healthy means having healthy relationships with family, friends, co-workers and others. Studies have shown that volunteering in service to others actually lengthens life.

Intellectual well-being

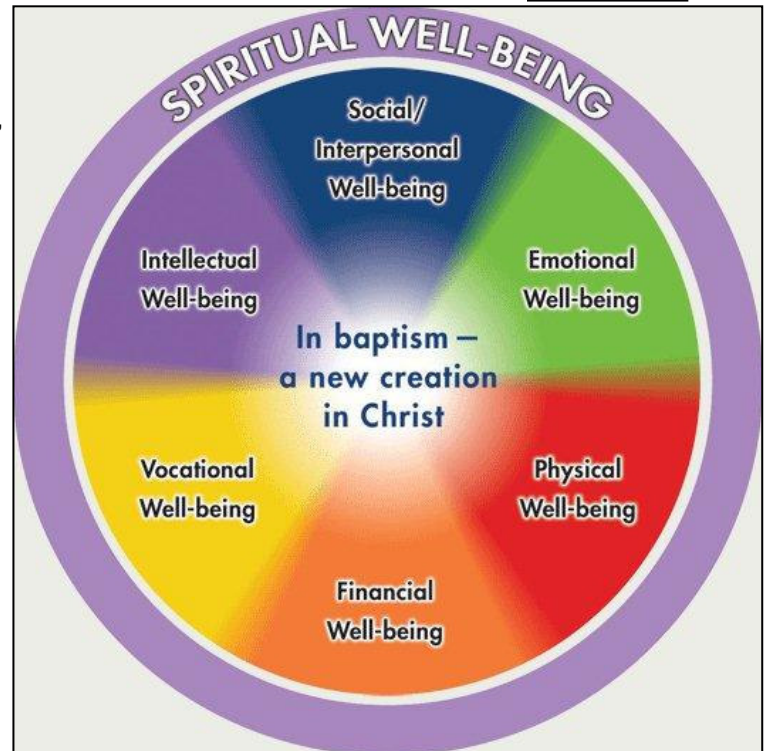
Alzheimer's disease or dementia is feared by all who have seen or heard about the personal frustration or social disruption it causes. While we cannot be certain that we will never experience dementia or something similar, using our minds keeps them alert and active. Use it or lose it! Satisfy curiosity by seeking answers. We can stretch our minds by experiencing new things — music, art, hobbies, or travel. Pushing ourselves at work by seeking out new responsibilities and pursuing lifelong learning keeps us healthy and growing.

Vocational well-being

Having a sense of purpose is important in living a healthy life. We all want to feel that we are using the gifts God has given us to make this world a better place. We need to be aware of what those gifts are and make good use of education and training to hone our skills. We need to always be seeking for opportunities to make a difference. If not through our occupation, then perhaps through volunteering in the community, nurturing our family, or actively participating in church.

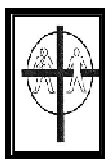
Spiritual well-being

Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength impacts everything we do and everything we are. Starting first with your spiritual health makes balancing the wheel much easier because we know whose we are. Nurturing your relationship with God through daily prayer or devotion is the first step. Knowing that God is always present and has given us the gift of grace through the death of Jesus Christ allows us to stumble along the way and keeps us from getting lost.



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My Journey With (and without) Stephen Ministry



Stephen Ministry training started January 8 for five members of our congregation. By this printing they will have been about a month into training. They are finding out the basics of Stephen Ministry and enjoying the rich diversity of leaders who are teaching the classes. They will become comfortable with camaraderie of the others taking the class from across the area. Most importantly, they will find that the confidentiality that is the most important aspect of Stephen Ministry is also extended to the classroom, helping them to learn about providing that "safe place" of self-expression. Mid-February will bring them to ***Speaking the Truth in Love (How to Become an Assertive Christian.)*** Warning to spouses—we often will try these things out on you. My husband was most supportive at the time, but has confessed in later years that I spoke perhaps too much truth in love when I got home Tuesday nights. I pray encouragement for all who are involved "and let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds". Hebrews 10:24

Cindy Gibbs

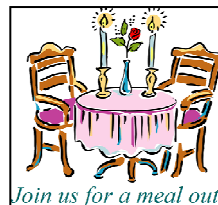
St. Stephen Motel Ministry serves more people



During the month of December 2012, our two teams combined forces to feed 80 homeless clients at two motels in Williamsburg. On Friday, January 11, 2013, Motel Ministry Team #1 fed 49 people at one local motel in town. According to our records, that was the largest number for one motel to date that we have served. As we continue into 2013, we anticipate our numbers will possibly increase due to more job losses or just various aspects of our economy we cannot predict. We are very fortunate to have two very dedicated teams at St. Stephen that have been taking turns at feeding the homeless over the last two years. However, this year we will be combining our teams more frequently due to the schedule that has the two motels receiving meals on the same night. If any other members of our congregation, would like to join us in this wonderful ministry, you can contact **Randy Punched (home) 757-603-8461 (cell) 757-870-8410**, or **Michael Javier (757-812-8386)**, or **Sandy Peterkin** at the church office.

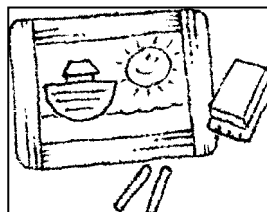
With God's Blessings,

Randy Punched
From His Hands (Motel Ministry)
Coordinator



Dining with friends

Come join the St. Stephen group **February 9 at 12:00 Noon** at the Waypoint Grill hosted by **Art and Anita Dorsey**. RSVP via blue sheet or call them **(564-0209)** by February 4.



St. Stephen Preschool News

We all know that this month is focused on love - **February 14** (don't forget **your** loved ones). The children are all busy making their valentines for their families and friends. Then they become "Mail Carriers" and deliver their valentines to each other's mail boxes on Valentine's Day.

Also February is Dental Health Month and a local dentist, Dr. Morrison, will visit the school to talk to the children about good dental hygiene and the importance of proper brushing.

Please note that the Preschool will be closed in celebration of **President's Day, Monday February 18**.

The Preschool staff requested that we report that the recent Open House went very well and that enrollment for the coming school year is AWESOME!! We have many returning families and new families as well. Should you be aware of anyone with children, who has an interest in attending a great preschool let them know about us. Registration forms are always available in the church office!

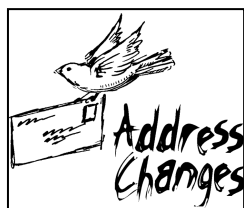
And on the fun side of learning, Dr. Gerre Johnson, a retired geologist from the College of William and Mary will visit the Extended Day Program and teach them about fossils, and he will bring along sufficient artifacts to touch and marvel over.

And of course, all of the regular activities go along with the above items - singing, learning of Jesus, exercises, snacks and offering a prayer prior to the snacks.

For the Preschool, **Rudy Stegmann**

New Addresses

Ray and Shirley Basley
3800 Treyburn Drive, Apt. A121
Williamsburg VA 23185
585-7618



Joel and Kara Gillespie
2003 Sierra Drive
Fredericksburg VA 22405

Toby and Jill Lucy
Rachel, Caitlyn, Allison
6350 Vineland Road #309
Orlando FL 32819
Toby: toby.lucy@ymail.com; 407-267-6221
Jill: jillgosteelers@gmail.com; 321-236-7237

Doug and Jeane Moore
903-4969

Jean Shivel
Plaza Tirant lo Blanc
6, 1-2 088805
Barcelona, Spain
Son Gary's email:
gshivel@yahoo.es



The Church Mouse Says

The mouse really enjoyed the new banner used during the Advent season this year crafted by **Jane Gingerich, Janice Mayfield and Susan Neidlinger**. Did you wonder how the candles were getting lit each week? [Ans. There are magnets behind the banners and the flames had washers sewn into the back of them so a new flame could appear each week.] . . . Have you noticed all the sleepy St. Stephen members with big smiles on their faces? What a treat it was to work with the Methodists at the Community of Faith Mission for the homeless. The organization done by **Jo and Bob Hanny, David Allen and Sandy and Tom Peterkin** was an inspiration for all of us — good food, good fun and the feeling of satisfaction “offering our gifts in ministry” serving people in Williamsburg who need a hand.



February Birthdays

1	Hailey Shearer	
2	Don Hardenbergh	Gretchen Osborn
3	Thord Einarsen	Debbie Lawhon
5	Gwendolyn Agor	
6	Kurt Bailey	Robert Mazur
	Larry Shoberg	Christopher Stempien
14	Harlan Schone	
15	Chad Bingman	Rebecca Drake
16	Sarah Dell	
17	Jane Bailey	Pat Janot
	Marilyn Johnson	
18	Glenn Joppa	
20	Samantha Shearer	
22	Keara Mahony	
23	Nicholas Brisson	Angie Groom
25	Nancy Egloff	Max Hinders
26	Kate Sipes	
27	Chelsea Dunbar	
28	Michael Nester	

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

Rev. January 21, 2013

Prayers

Join your prayers for healing

with God's desires for **Jo Austin, Ray Basley, Gerri Bass, Preston Burton, Ray Crocker, Pat Fretz, Cindy Gibbs, Paul Kristiansen, Rick Meyer, Bob Newman, Sue Neidlinger** and **Linda Vonderheide**



Pray God's blessings

upon **Matt Bosworth**, serving in Afghanistan
upon the folks from **St. Stephen** and the churches
who are staffing and hosting the homeless in
Williamsburg this week as part of the **Community of Faith Mission**

Pray Easter peace and hope to **Sue Neidlinger** and her family on the death of her father.

Pray for these who are physically unable to get to worship: **Bill Dickerson, Elsa Englert, Ruth Ennis,**

Bernice Fahnce, 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: Nathalee Accomando, Jack and Barbara Adkins, Donna Alt, Millie Andrews-Young, Michael Arrelano, Lisa Baltinger, Laurie Berger, Cathy Bierd, Gilbert Burton, Cara Cameron, Bob Canny, Joanne Carlson, Karen Heide Carney, Bob Casey, Sue Chapman, Donna Cherel, Rosemarie Cristofolo, Betsy Cummings, Jeris DeKievit, Joe Dellinger, Wally Elliott, Lucy Eyer, Inge Feilbier, Nick and Ann Finley, Mary Funkhouser, Lori Galloway, Bill Garcia, Norma Geary, Nancy Gottschalk, Mary Hallman, Theodore Harms, Eleanor Harms, James Hart, Janis Hepburn, Mary Jo Hill, Carol Horton, Jane Kent, Truitt Layman, John Lester, Charlotte Litterer, Sheena McCabe, Laura McDonald, Kristin McGraw, William McMichael, Diana Miller, Flip Miller, Roxanne Morris, the Nasra family, Mary Noyes, Cindy Overman, Arthur Pate, Betty Perella, Donald Peters, Christina Phillips, George Pollin, Ann Rathkamp, George Rauffuss, Lisa Rivolta, John and Suzie Roberts, Clarice Rohling, Don Romig, Mark Salsman, Cathy Schappell, Abbi Schaub, Roland Scheiding, Deb Schilling, Bernadine Schlicht, Jeffrey Shafer, Chris and Ale Skinkle, Brandon Smith, Ron Smith, Linda Soucek, Nancy Spaniol, Gail Swan, Connie Testerman, Family of JohnAnn Thompon, Vivian Villaseñor, Bitsy Whitten, Gloria Williams, Peggy Wood, Anna Zabdyr



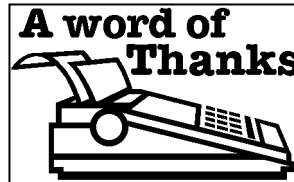
Memorials

Marvin Happel

Gloria Happel
Pamela Glasgow

Sam Trapani

Mr. and Mrs. Brian Foote
Mr. and Mrs. Carlton Revere
Damuth Trane
Mr. and Mrs. William Henry
Ms. Priscilla Saunders and Family
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carden
Pomoco of Hampton
Carole and Freddie Sager
Suzette Sager
Suzanne Speck
Glenda Hottle
Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Leahey
Mr. and Mrs. Keith Frigo
Mr. and Mrs. John Wainwright



Letters to St. Stephen

(Ed: We are so pleased to see Paul and Rita Kristiansen back home at St. Stephen with Paul's healing going well and we recently received a lovely note from Paul and Rita Kristiansen's children)

"I was visiting my parents this weekend and was touched by the outreach shown to our parents. It's wonderful to know that they have such a wonderful church home. If possible, I was wondering if you could convey our family's gratitude in your church communication. I understand if that is not possible, but we wanted to make sure that you knew how much we all appreciate the concern you all have shown. Our message is below:)"

Our family would like to express our gratitude to the congregation at St. Stephens for the support you have shown to our parents, Paul and Rita Kristiansen, during this trying time. We are happy that Mom and Dad are home and Dad is on the road to recovery. It means a lot to us to know that they have such caring friends willing to go the extra mile until we can be there.

During this holiday season, we wanted to make sure to thank you all for your help, concern and friendship. Your calls, cards, letters and meals have meant so much to our family. Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

Karen Kristiansen Morrissey
John Kristiansen
Pat, Rachel, Michael, Brian and Selena

Thank you,
Karen Morrissey

We received acknowledgements from several groups this month. The Salvation Army thanked us for our donation of \$750 to the From His Hands Program. FISH thanked the Children's Faith Formation group for their donation to their program. Angels of Mercy thanked us for our continued donations for their program. Avalon thanked us for our gift of \$1,020 for their program. The Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center thanked us for our ongoing support of the center and FISH also thanked us for our continued support.



Welcome New Members

Ruth Geary
3102 Pristine View
Williamsburg VA 23188
345-2303
rugea4@aol.com



Denny and Diana Krieger
710 College Terrace
Williamsburg VA 23185
565-1826
dhkrieger@aol.com

Doug Moore
3001 Mossy Creek Drive
Williamsburg, VA 23185
903-4969
the_dugger@yahoo.com



Dave and Roberta Sulouff
100 Paddock Lane
Williamsburg VA 23188
818-4482
ragiardi@gmail.com

COMMUNITY OF FAITH MISSION (COFM)

During this past week the members of St. Stephen have donated supplies, money, and many, many volunteer hours to support the new program for the homeless here in Williamsburg. Most of you know that we partnered with the Williamsburg United Methodist Church (UMC) which worked out so well both in cooperation and because their building space was ideal for this type of program.

Some of you donated food and supplies, some donated funds, some helped with check-in, some helped shop for, prepare, and transport meals, some served meals, some spent all or part of the night, others did check-out procedures, and some unloaded and/or reloaded the COFM trailer which contains sleeping mats, blankets and other supplies. A number of people volunteered for more than one shift during the week. More than 60 individuals worked one or more times during the week and they ranged in age from school age, to William & Mary students, to young people with families, to seniors, to people who attend St. Stephen who are not members and to those in the community who are friends of members of St Stephen and who wanted to help. Almost every member of our congregation helped in some way. Some donors chose to remain anonymous and many, many offered prayers that this program would be successful. It is truly astonishing how many have helped. Thank you!

The program housed an average of 16 people each night this week and provided dinner and breakfast each day. On Wednesday night, which was very cold, we housed 20 clients. St. Stephen provided three days of meals and the UMC, which has a much larger congregation, provided for four days. If you multiply these numbers by seven days you can see that many were served.

It is tempting to list by name all those who participated in this project, but difficult without leaving out someone. But, there is one person that must have special recognition - Sandy Peterkin (with Tom by her side), who early in the process volunteered to plan, shop for, and prepare all meals with the help of others. Thank you!

Our congregation has again acted on Andy's frequent words to us as we leave church----
"Serve the Poor."

Blessings to All of You,

Jo Hanny, Co-Chair

David Allen, Co-Chair