

The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

January 2011



Making Time Holy

A new year! Many of us find our thoughts drawn towards resolving to do better in 2011, compared to 2010, in some specific way: to lose weight, exercise more, spend more time with the kids, read a novel a month, ... (Maybe some of you are even resolving to gather with the church more often on Sunday mornings in 2011!)

Let me challenge you to think a little more deeply. In 2011, how will you become more conscious that time is a holy gift from God?

Many of you have heard me say, many times, that each day is a gift. I have often urged you to begin the morning with the spiritual practice of gratitude: giving thanks for the new day. Luther teaches us to make the sign of the cross on ourselves first thing in the morning, to remind ourselves that we are baptized. In the Small Catechism, Luther teaches us to be conscious that, daily, the old person must be drowned in the waters of baptism, so that the new person may arise. Each new day is given to us so we can practice the faith during that 24 hours.

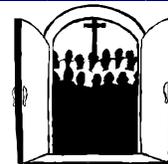
Throughout the Christian tradition, there have been two times especially emphasized for prayer each day: Morning Prayer at the beginning of the day, and Evening Prayer as the sun is setting. Evangelical Lutheran Worship offers these, and prayer services for other times, as well: Responsive Prayer, which can be used mid-morning, noon and mid-afternoon, and Night Prayer (also known by the Latin, "Compline"), to be prayed just before sleep. In the morning, we give thanks for the new day and pray for the work God will give us to do. At noon, we give thanks for this moment of rest, give thanks for the work we have begun on this day, and pray God's blessings as we finish our work in the afternoon. In the evening and, especially just before sleep, we give thanks for the good we have done on this day, we pray for forgiveness for how we have failed, we pray for restful sleep. (As

Luther puts it, at the end of his evening devotion: "Then you are to go to sleep quickly and cheerfully." You'll find Luther's own suggestions for short devotions, upon rising and just before sleep, in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, pages 1166 and 1167; and in the Lutheran Study Bible, page 1537.)

I find that, when I discipline myself to practice this daily prayer, the Spirit helps me process my experiences of the day during the moments of prayer. Then it is less likely that I'll experience sleepless hours during the night, under attack (by the devil? by my own neuroses?) by regrets about the day just past, or anxieties about the day to come. And I find that the faith practice of daily prayer keeps me aware that time is a holy gift from God. Thanks be to God!

I pray for you a blessed 2011.

Pastor Andy Ballentine



Congregational
MEETING

Congregational Meeting

The January Congregational Meeting will be **Sunday, January 23 following the 11:00 AM worship service**. The agenda includes adoption of the Ministry Program Budget for 2011, an update on the renovation project, and election of 2011 Synod Assembly Voting Members. Feel free to bring a sandwich. Drinks will be provided.

*Quill Musings December 2010 from our
Ministry Associate, Doug Cummings*



Walking around Colonial Williamsburg with the Youth for Grand Illumination, we were greeted as we arrived and again as we left by people on bullhorns proclaiming that we must "repent or die" that "Jesus is King," and a few other phrases that detracted from the evening's festivities. Evangelism refers to the practice of relaying information about a particular set of beliefs to others who do not hold those beliefs (Wikipedia). These Christians were evangelizing in a pretty provocative manner, screaming at people during a large festive gathering. As I was listening the term "hellfire and brimstone" leaped out at me. Were they trying to scare people into believing in Jesus?

Being part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are supposed to spread our beliefs to others. It says so in our name! Yet much of the time, Lutherans are seen as the ones who sit in the back of the church and leave the front few pews open, so much so that there are jokes about it:

Q: How many Lutherans does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: I don't know, but if it's in the front row, it will never get fixed! (lutheransonline.com)

I have struggled with the very nature of what it means to be Evangelical. To me, that name has come to be associated with Billy Graham and Bob Jones University, bastions of conservative Christianity that preach a very focused kind of gospel. Then there are the young adults of the Church of Latter Day Saints that come knocking on my door every once in a while. I see TV commercials calling us to go to church at different places, talk show hosts, Sunday morning preachers on TV, the list goes on. How in a society saturated by religion, can we as Lutherans spread the Gospel of Jesus?

Does Jesus call us to scream at people on street corners that unless they repent, they will go to hell? I struggle to find the relevance of that message. We believe that we are saved by grace alone. My wife Stacey told me a story she heard the other day. A fundamentalist Christian was describing the moment they were saved, in the manner of everybody being able to describe what they were doing the morning of September 11, 2001. After a lengthy description, she paused, and asked the person she was talking to when they were saved. After a brief pause, the person replied, "on a Friday, around 3 PM, on a hill outside Jerusalem, around 30 AD." I thought that summed up the Lutheran style of Evangelism quite well. We generally don't go around yelling on street corners, or calling on every house in the neighborhood to try and convert people to our way of believing in Christ. We spread the Word of God by simply being good Christians and inviting the people we know in our lives to join us at Church. Ours is a quiet Evangelism; often practiced from the rear pew; that in its own quiet way is making a difference in the lives of others. The simple things often are the most profound. So, simply because we don't have a "Street Corner Yelling" sign-up check on the blue sheet, doesn't mean that we aren't living up to our name, the ELCA.

Doug Cummings – Ministry Associate



*Quill for January
2011 from Michael
Monaco, our Director
of Music*

growth, and some attrition, but the Church is a living entity, and change is part of that reality. We pray that the Holy Spirit guides us all, and we are always looking forward to the challenges and joys that the New Year will bring. I must say that having so many new folks from different age groups come forth, especially with our Summer Music Ministry, have been a joy for me and a solid foundation on which I hope to continue to build.

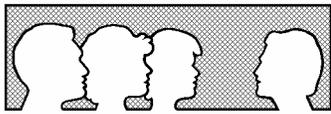
Once again we have celebrated the joys of the Advent and Christmas Season, and I am always in debt to the many who come forth and offer their time and talents to enrich the Music Ministry. We had some

The past year also brought some very positive musical development with our choirs, and there were sev-

eral anthems that were particularly challenging which the choirs embraced and sang very well. As important as the physical process of making the music is, the willingness of the choirs to “pray” the music makes our efforts an acceptable gift for the Lord. Our cantors, the guitarists, and the musicians deserve our thanks and prayers. Also, the Faith Formation Choir is an established, and welcome, part of our ministry, and I thank those who facilitate this with our youth.

Please know that my door is open and that you are welcome. I also ask you to pray to see if the Lord is calling you to be a part of Music Ministry. Thank you so much for taking the time to let me know when something touches your heart, as I share that with all concerned so that we may be affirmed in our calling.

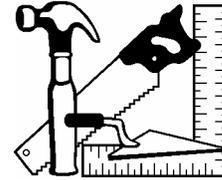
Respectfully submitted,
Michael Monaco



Fellowship and Conversation about the New Health Care Legislation

Gather for a “Health Care Reform pot-luck dinner” at **6:00 PM, Friday, January 28**, in the Fellowship Hall. **Louis Rossiter**, Ph.D., a member of St. Stephen, author, professor and past senior health care official in Washington D.C., will provide an overview of the new Health Care Law and how it will impact all of us. He is looking forward to hearing and responding to your questions about this very complex law. Dr. Rossiter is a former Secretary of Health and Human Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia; he is currently Research Professor in Public Policy at the College of William and Mary.


1 CHRONICLES 29:13, NIV



Renovation Questions and Suggestions

Many thanks for all the “orange sheet” suggestions, questions, and comments received over the last few months. Each has been individually responded to by phone or email or in person. Taken all together, there’s good information for the entire congregation, so here’s the input received so far, with Renovation Committee responses in italics:

Suggestions and questions:

- Replace fabric strips in sanctuary wall panels. *Yes, that’s in the plans.*
- More space for coats. *Yes, about two feet more, easy access, yet out of view.*
- Will there be handrails along both ramps? *Yes.*
- Folding doors to cover the coffee serving area? *Yes.*
- Drawers under narthex seat benches for donated items? *Yes.*
- Can the appearance and lighting of the stairway to the undercroft be improved? *Yes, wall surface treatment and lighting are in the plans.*
- Motion sensor light switch for stairs to and from the undercroft? *Automatic lighting is envisioned for most-used access passages, stair way as well as between narthex and fellowship hall via the sanctuary.*
- We need a welcome mat. *This idea need not wait for renovation. Referred to the Property Committee.*
- Exterior lighting on the stained glass windows so they’re illuminated inside for evening services. *Not in the plans; feasibility and effect will be explored.*
- Will slate from the forecourt be recycled or available to members? *Slate that can be salvaged may be used elsewhere on the church property or/and offered to members. Look for details later.*

Other Comments:

- It would be nice to have a niche or special shelf for communion elements brought into the sanctuary as part of the service, perhaps where the old memorial book is housed.

Reworking the memorial niche is planned; this may be a viable usage.

- Glass doors and hanging lights don't fit the historical context and personality of St. Stephen. *The intent is that all changes are respectful of our unique architecture. Glass doors are envisioned as helping to showcase that.*
- Cushioning pews and chairs is more important than improved lighting. *Sanctuary lighting is inadequate for many and not in compliance with current minimum code requirements. Seat cushioning is not included in, nor precluded by, the renovation.*
- Glass doors should be done in a way so that movement in the narthex does not distract worshippers in the sanctuary. *Design of the doors will take that as well as compatibility with architecture into account.*

Comments and suggestions are useful and welcome throughout the renovation process, so please keep them coming as pre-construction planning continues.

Bob Harman for the Renovation Committee

A Hearty Social Ministry Thanks!



As we begin another year of ministry, it's a great time to offer thanks to each and every one of our members who have made contributions and participated in the Social Ministry projects and programs during 2010. We are truly blessed to have so many opportunities to share our blessings, and to be involved in helping people – here in the Williamsburg area, in Virginia, and as far away as Tanzania!

Here is a short summary of the organizations, and the people involved, who have been blessed by your generosity:

FISH; Grove Christian Outreach Center; Angels of Mercy clinic; Avalon; Williamsburg Faith in Action; Olde Towne Medical Center; United Way; Hospice Support Care; Housing Partnerships; Meals on Wheels; Williamsburg AIDS Network; Williamsburg Fire Department; Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center; PORT; Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy; United Lutheran Appeal; World Hunger Appeal; Special Needs Retirement Fund for ELCA Pastors; Bread for the World; and Mongai Lutheran Parish, Tanzania!

For more details on these projects and organizations, check out the Annual Report, which will be available soon.

Diane Bean for Social Ministry



Momentum Builds Going Into the 2011 Session of the Virginia General Assembly

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) is Virginia's oldest faith-based advocacy group. It is a nonpartisan coalition of faith communities working to create progressive public policy by engaging people of faith, educating the public about social issues, the legislative process, and the call to advocacy.

The energy is building for the new session of the VA General Assembly because of recent gains this year. The VICPP led the fight to stop predatory lenders from preying on Virginia's citizens, resulting in an estimated reduction of almost 2,000,000 payday loans this year alone. The effort is going local with over 70 localities adopting anti-predatory lending resolutions.

Another important initiative is Enterprise Virginia, a micro-enterprise program that is helping small business owners who do not qualify for traditional loans to create businesses in areas like Petersburg, Martinsville and Richmond.

The plan to sell the state ABC liquor stores is another important issue for VICPP. It will dramatically change the face of Virginia in so many ways, the most important of which is the drastic expansion of stores selling liquor, including gas stations and convenience stores. The expected increase in liquor sales are thought to have social costs in terms of health care, property damage, domestic violence, and criminal justice.

You can join (www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org) as an individual member and "learn, pray and act" with one of the best faith-based organizations in Virginia.

Lou Rossiter for Social Ministry





Financial Peace University

Are you worried about credit card and other debt?
Are you struggling to live within your means?

St. Stephen member, **Jay Dunbar**, will lead a course called, "Financial Peace University." Jay would like to begin the course on **February 13, 2011**, on Sunday afternoons in the Fellowship Hall. It's a 13-session course; two hours per session.

You'll learn practical steps to take to eliminate debt - one credit card at a time! You'll learn the freedom that comes from living within (and even below) your means! You'll learn the joy of having enough money to save some, and even to give away some, every month!

Some of you remember meeting with Cary Mangus, former Stewardship coordinator for the Virginia Synod, who led leadership retreats at St. Stephen. This is a program that Cary recommended highly.

The cost for the course is \$100 per household.

If you'd like to take advantage of Financial Peace University, please contact Jay at jdd2724@gmail.com or (757-293-8820).



Parish Nursing is coming to St. Stephen!

With Council approval, we are going to begin a Parish Nursing Ministry here at St. Stephen. Naturally, the first thing that pops to mind is "What is a Parish Nurse?" To answer that question, here is a definition from Rev. Dr. Granger Westberg who began the first parish nursing program:

A registered nurse, who serves as a resource person, health educator, a personal health counselor, a volunteer coordinator and support group organizer, a community liaison and a role model for the relationship between one's faith and health.

We have several nurses who will be going through a

program of training at Bon Secours to become Parish Nurses. Once they have completed that training in the spring, we will commission them as Parish Nurses and they will begin their ministry. There are going to be a lot of questions regarding what the nurses can and cannot do in the coming months. If you have questions, please let one of the Health Ministry Team members know!

The Health Ministry Team

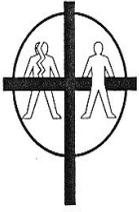
- Gerri Bass**
- Marcie Clark**
- Sandy Croushore**
- Stacey Cummings**
- Jay Floyd**
- Nancy Rivolta**



Those attending St. Stephen Women's Retreat this coming March will be assembling health kits for Lutheran World Relief. People who must flee their homes quickly often do not have time to pack essential items. Health kits can help refugees maintain personal hygiene while living in exile. Items may also contribute to a new start for those who can return home. We are asking the congregation to help contribute items for the kits. If you wish, items may be brought to the narthex, and placed in the available box. Items needed:

- ◇ Dark colored hand towels
- ◇ Dark colored washcloths
- ◇ Bath-size bar soap (4-5 oz). in original wrapping
- ◇ Adult-size toothbrush, in original wrapping
- ◇ Combs
- ◇ Metal nail files or nail clippers with file attached – NO emery boards
- ◇ Band-aids® (or similar brand), preferably 1/2 to 3/4 inch sizes

Thank you for your help with this mission project.



A Journey With (and Without) Stephen Ministry

When I began my training I did not know where I would find the time or the voice (I could only speak at a whisper), but I trusted that God would provide, and He did. My spouse found the grace to hold his tongue when he was the object of my new "skills."

In January a new group of Stephen Ministers will begin training, studying, praying for guidance, growing in faith and compassion. Please pray for new Stephen Ministers as they navigate this life-changing journey.

Cindy Gibbs



Faith Formation news for January 2011

Last month, our Elementary and Middle School youth learned about Advent and Christmas. The study culminated in the writing and production of the Christmas Story for the Children's Christmas Eve service. For January, Elementary youth will be learning about Baby Moses, the Burning Bush, and the Plagues. In February, the stories include the Red Sea and House on the Rock.

As part of our Elementary-age Faith Formation, we collected money and winter clothes for the Grove Christian Outreach Center. Our collections included over \$45 and 25 items of clothing. We will be dropping off the donations this month. Starting this month, we will be collecting food or money to purchase food for FISH.

Faith Formation occurs between services (**9:45 to 10:45 AM**) in the undercroft for Elementary students (and younger) and in the Pastor's office for Middle School and High School students.

Jill Lucy

*Happy New Year!
From the
Preschool*



The staff, students and their families collected bags and bags of food for the St. Olaf Food Pantry at their

Christmas Parties. The St. Olaf Pantry was very appreciative of this generous donation.

The Preschool gave books to a non-profit organization, *Erase The Need*, who provides children's services such as food and clothing and puts books in their backpacks. The books were donated to the Preschool from Scholastic Sales.

Now that winter is really here, the children are busy creating snowmen, snow flakes and winter scenes as part of their educational focus.

Our Extended Day program will have a visit from Dr. Gerald Johnson, William and Mary's famed Paleontologist! He brings Fossils and bones from animals found in our local area. Can't you just hear the ooh's and ah's and of course, someone saying "yuk?" But I imagine he will have enough simple why and how questions from the kids to test his mettle.

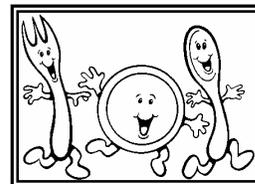
On **Monday, January 17**, the Preschool will be closed in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King.

A BIG Thank You for all who donated to the newly formed St. Stephen Preschool Scholarship Fund! Donations are always welcome!

And another BIG Thank You from the Preschool teaching staff for the teacher's appreciation luncheon on December 10. Michelle Staik, mother of preschooler, Loreley, organized the affair and had it delivered from Sal's. The staff really enjoyed it and appreciates the generous families of the Preschool children.

NOTE: Registration is open for the 2011-2012 school year. Stop by the church office to pick up a registration form.

For the Preschool, **Lauren McQuain and Rudy Stegmann**



Start the New Year with the Dining Out Group!

The Dining OUT group will gather at Maurizio's on **Saturday, January 22 at 5:00 PM**. Make your reservations on blue sheet, or by calling **Bill and Joani Wallis (565-1759)** by January 17.

The Church Mouse Hears



The Daily Press had a great article about Norge Elementary's weekly news show "Beep Beep News" and their faculty advisor **Lori Harms** discussed the student written and produced program A total of \$4,434 has been contributed by our congregation for the World Hunger Appeal and the fund is still growing. . . . On **Saturday, January 15** come to the Family Pizza and Game Night – the mouse really likes Pizza.

- | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|
| 22 | Leah Hardenbergh
Charles Schumacher | Julia Mahony |
| 23 | Zeb Bishop | |
| 24 | Helen Lenox | |
| 25 | Mary Bieber | Gwen Deierling |
| 28 | Nancy Carter
John Warner | Ethan Owens |
| 29 | Lisa Maroney | |
| 31 | Alyssa Alpino
Christopher Shearer | Abby Compton
Joani Wallis |

Is your name missing? Is your date wrong?
Please let us know immediately! Rev. December
16, 2010



Please Pray For

Pray for each other in our daily
journeys in faith.

Pray to know God's will for healing: **Marv Happel, Anna Lou Hobday, Carole Meyer, Michael Monaco, Judie Schrag, and Dan Stimson.**

Prayers of peace and comfort to **Susan Bosworth and her family** on the death of her father; to **Stacey Cummings** and her family on the death of her great uncle; and to the family and many friends of **Ernie Pilant.**

Pray for those who are physically unable to get to worship: **Pat Chandler, Elsa Englert, Bernice Fah-ncke, Elsie Hall, Willetta Heising, Jean Kircheis, Helen Lenox, Chuck and Jo Schumacher, John Warner, Dot Wright, and Earl and Lois Wysong.**

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Michael Arellano, Janet Atherton, Kathleen Baldwin, Lisa Ballinger, Margie Benjamin, Kelsey Berg, Frances Boitnott-Schluter, Lois Bomba, Jimmy Burkle, Joy Butler, Kelly Callahan, Ron Campana, Donna Cherel, Angie Cobb, Tom Cobb, Jacob Corneall, Janice and Walter DeGree, Paul Derin, Brad Donnell, Demetrius Dukes, Liz Edelman, Mae Failoni, Lonna Gibson, Pat Going, Angela Wellington Gooden, Gail Henson, Mary Jo Hill, Clara Horan, Denise Jones, Ned Kramer, Margaret McMiller, Caitlin Meehan, Amy Michael, Sammy Mifflin, Paul Nelson, Janet Overdorf, Barbara Owens, Sampson, Atticus, and Evelyn Parsons, Bob Reeves, Jacob Remis, Lisa Rivolta, Don Romig, Kris Saunders, Roland Scheiding, Gary Sloan, Dianne Spearman, Jon Spinnanger, Connie Testerman, Marcus Tyler, Doug Viafora, Melissa Villarreal, Travis Waddle, Cassidy Weekes, Lester Weekes, Thomas Wellington, Mary Williams, Peggy Wood, Jim Yankovich, Suzette Yearwood, and Charles Zerbe.

Address changes



Gregg and Kiera Brown
1480 Manuels Drive
Fort Meyers FL 33901-5824
(Formerly in Care Group 3)

Debbie Lawhon
debrajane@verizon.net



January Birthdays

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 4 | Lauren Franck
Ken Spencer | Ralph Johnson |
| 5 | Cliff Henderson | Gayle Spencer |
| 6 | Amanda Buckley
Jim Mayfield
Anders Timberg | Melissa Buckley
Chris Punchard |
| 7 | Judy Joppa | |
| 8 | Andy Fisher | Carole Meyer |
| 9 | Andy Franck
Bill Wallis | Karen Shoberg
Clay White |
| 10 | Shirley Basley | |
| 13 | Peter Stauffer | |
| 14 | Steve Bailey | Elise Emanuel |
| 15 | Brad Jefferson
Brock Jefferson | Brandon Jefferson
Justice Jefferson |
| 16 | Julie Jefferson | Jim Nickols |
| 17 | Susan Bosworth | |
| 19 | Chuck Frey | |
| 20 | Mark Gulesian | Fred Haecker |
| 21 | Patty Ballentine
Emily Rossiter | Tommy Peterkin |



Letters thanking our members

Church World Service sent us a thank you note for the \$848 for the *Blankets+* program and they sent us an honor certificate in recognition of our support. Williamsburg Area Faith In Action thanked us for the \$1000 donation. Olde Towne Medical Center thanked us for our support and \$500 donation. FISH thanked us for the November Tuesday volunteers working in the Clothes Closet.

Special St. Stephen Christmas Events!



Practice for the 5:00 service



Carol Singing and Chili Supper



May the Peace, Joy, Love, and Hope of Christmas be with all

Thanks to photographers Stacy Cummings, Toby Lucy and Harlan Schone