

The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

March 2011



As Late As It Can Be

“Hmmm. This feels funny. We’re relaxed these days! What’s going on?”

Those weren’t the actual words we used, but that was the gist of a conversation I had a couple of weeks ago with our Director of Music, Michael Monaco. Finally, here’s what we realized: we’ve been enjoying a lull this year because we haven’t had to turn immediately from the frenzy of Christmas to planning for Lent!

This year, Easter is about as late as it can be. Easter (of course!) is the first Sunday following the first full moon following what we in the Northern Hemisphere call the vernal equinox, March 20 or 21. Got it?

The vernal equinox is the first day of spring for us in the Northern Hemisphere. (Actually, most of the world’s Christians live in the Southern Hemisphere – and for them this date is the autumnal equinox, the beginning of autumn!) “Equinox” means “equal night.” Because the sun is positioned above the equator, the hours of day and night are about equal in length all over the world. This year, the equinox will occur at 11:21 PM March 20.

This year, March 19 will be a full moon! The first full moon after the equinox will not be until April 17 (which is actually Passion Sunday/Palm Sunday this year), so the first Sunday after the full moon will be Easter, April 24.

In 2012, Easter will be April 8. In 2013, Easter will be March 31! Wait a minute! I vote for a late Easter every year! This year, we’ve been able to catch our liturgical breaths during an unusually long Epiphany season. We’ve been able to spend a few weeks more experiencing the theme of Epiphany in our worship and study: what it means that God has come into our human flesh in Jesus the Christ. This year, since it’s Year A, when gospel readings come primarily from

Matthew, we’ve been able to spend many weeks in the Sermon on the Mount (chapters five through seven).

But, soon, Lent “is icumen in!” At St. Stephen, we follow the practice of the ancient church, taking advantage of Lent as an opportunity for increased practice of the faith; for deeper nourishment through shared food and fellowship, and worship. Here’s the schedule:

Ash Wednesday is March 9:

6:00 PM pot luck dinner in the Fellowship Hall

7:00 PM worship, featuring confession, ashes, sermon and Holy Communion

Lenten Wednesdays, March 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13:

6:00 PM soup and bread suppers in the Fellowship Hall

7:00 PM Holden Evening Prayer

Holy Week worship:

Maundy Thursday, April 21 worship at 7:00 PM

Good Friday, April 22 worship at 7:00 PM

The Easter Vigil, April 23 at 8:00 PM (note time difference)

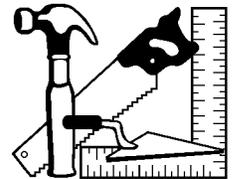
Easter Sunday is April 24:

Worship at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 AM - Bring a dish to share for the Easter breakfast in the Fellowship Hall 8:30 – 11:00 AM.

Blessings to you on your journey of faith –

Pastor Andy Ballentine

***Congregation
Unanimously Approves
Renovation Project***



The long-planned, mission-driven project to provide a more welcoming and engaging narthex and worship space was **unanimously** approved at a Special

Meeting of the congregation on Sunday, February 20. The \$650,000 project encompasses new lighting, painting and refurbishing of the sanctuary, expansion of the narthex, and replacement of an aging roof and deteriorating forecourt. A new meditation garden, replacing an area sacrificed for the 2001 addition, will do double duty as a pleasant spot for meditation or conversation, and encompass an environmentally desirable storm water retention cistern.

The project will be funded through congregation pledges over the next three years and permanent financing of approximately \$200,000. \$294,000 has been pledged to date and \$86,422 has already been received. A \$300,000 line of credit is in place, a construction loan for an additional \$325,000 will enable payment through completion of construction.

Exterior construction will commence as early as March. Interior work will not begin until after April 24, so that access and worship space are unimpeded throughout Lenten, Holy Week, and Easter services. Total construction time is estimated at five months.

Several task groups continue to work on final contract details, décor and lighting. **Paul Kristiansen** is the congregation's Construction Project Manager and primary contact with architect William Henry Harris and Associates and general contractor David A. Nice Builders, Inc.

Bob Harman for the Renovation Committee



March Ministry Associate Quill Musings

Hanging from my Bulletin Board is a large piece of newsprint that symbolizes much of what Winter Celebration, the Synod retreat for High School Youth, is all about. On it are short messages from the small group that I led during the retreat. The purpose of this group was to explore in depth the message of the retreat, *Wherever You Go*, based on Joshua 1:9. Eight 11th graders and two adults spent six roughly hour and a half sessions discussing that topic and it brought a massive range of responses and questions and debates that carried us through the weekend. It was a unique group in a unique environment and I learned as much, if not more from the kids than they took from me.

The group that I had was a pretty unusual collection of characters. We had a novelist, who is writing her second novel (the first is working its way towards publication); a nationally ranked roller blade break-dancer (you dance to music on roller blades while doing tricks); a future obstetrician; an aspiring rapper and producer; a highly bible-literate and well-versed future theologian; and a few others who defy categorization. These massively different people jelled immediately through our shared commitment as Lutheran Christians. One of the great things about a retreat where you are put in the midst of strangers is the strong bonds of trust that can develop very quickly. The key is trust, trust amongst a community of believers who are open to sharing their faith experiences and fears among people that they have never met before.

For my faith journey, that magical trust has been one of the wonders of exploring faith outside the confines of the church building. It is one of the reasons that I am encouraging the youth to go to Synod youth events, or to summer camp, or even on camping trips to the mountains. Trust and acceptance by others who share a common faith is an exciting way to expand your own faith and explore its depths in a friendly atmosphere.

Now, not everybody can traipse off to camp and do group building ropes courses or run rapids in a canoe, but there are ways to enjoy that same kind of Christian fellowship. The biggest step is to get out of your comfort zone. One of the consequences of moving so often in the last decade (7 moves since

college) is that I have been constantly thrust out of known situations into completely unknown areas and forced to meet new people and find new things to do. All of this has made me more willing to step outside my comfort zone and find new ways of looking at the world, and my faith. Besides moving, a rather painful way of getting outside the comfort zone, our church and the Synod has a wide range of options for getting outside the comfort zone. From Family Camp at Camp Caroline Furnace, Career Crossroads for discerning faith in your career, the Women's Retreat in March, and the Power in the Spirit event in July; there are a host of ways to explore your faith outside your comfort zone in a Christian community of trust. However uncomfortable it may be to trust others you don't know and try something new, it can be a great way to explore and expand your faith in a way that a year of sermons can't!

Doug Cummings

*From the Director of
Music*



I have been working with both the 8:30 and 11:00 choirs to improve our musicianship in our anthems. With the 11:00 choir I have been selecting some more difficult anthems, and we are spending more time working on the individual selections, really trying to bring out the best in our Sunday morning efforts. Recently, we have used some challenging music particularly some Handel pieces, which have brought some very positive comments from our Congregation. For the 8:30 choir, we have been working on blending and balancing the parts. Most of our anthems for the early service are in two parts; and, although it may seem easier to sing than four parts, the voices are quite exposed, and care is necessary to effect a good musical result. We have received some positive feedback from the Congregation with our efforts, and sharing these small moments of affirmation is one of the joys of my ministry.

Once again, we will be offering the Holden Evening Prayer during the Wednesdays in Lent. I continue to be reminded of the presence of the Holy Spirit whenever we celebrate the Holden Service, as it seems to attract such a diverse group of people who truly want to be there. The congregational response, particularly in the singing of the canon "Let My Prayers Rise Up," is very inspirational, and I get so much from the experience. We will also be offering some different selections for our Lenten Anthems, and I am in the final process of selecting our Easter Anthems. We have some very fine music in our library which has not

seen the light of day recently, and I have pulled two of these for Lent. Although I must confess that the Augsburg catalog is very tempting, I try to use what we already have as much as possible, using texts that are appropriate for the day.

As always, I ask for your prayerful support...

Your Brother in Christ,
Michael Monaco

*Lives are Saved in our
Fellowship Hall Each
Week*



"Thank you for your gift to us."

"Many thanks for your enlightened understanding."

"Thank you for your hospitality. Blessings on you."

"Much love for all you do."

"It gets better a day at a time. It works."

"Merry Christmas from Waverly P. – a grateful recovering alcoholic who wants to thank St. Stephen for its kindness and support on behalf of the Wednesday night meeting and all of its participants."

"Dear Pastor Ballentine and members of St. Stephen, We are so grateful for your great support and hosting this meeting year after year. Many, many blessings!"

We host a number of meetings in our building each week, of AA and AI Anon groups, of Overeaters Anonymous, of the Williamsburg Area Alliance for the Mentally Ill. Lives are saved in our Fellowship Hall each week!

I've been meaning to share with you some of the comments above, written in a Christmas card that appeared in the church office mailbox following a meeting of the Wednesday night AA group.

Thank you for the ministries you make possible, through your Building Fund contributions!

Pastor Andy Ballentine

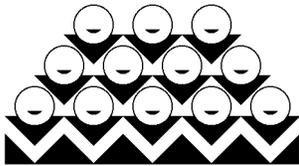


Men's Breakfast

Join with other men **8:00 AM Thursday, March 3**, at the Colonial Pancake House, at the corner of Page Street and Penniman Road.

This breakfast happens the first Thursday of each month. The agenda is: "How are you doing?" with discussion!

(Is there any way to figure out a breakfast time and place for men who are still working? If you have ideas, let **Pastor Ballentine** know!)



The Susquehanna University Choir sings at Gloria Dei on March 7, 2011 at 7:00 PM

The Susquehanna University Choir is the flagship choral ensemble in the Department of Music at Susquehanna University. The choir presents several concerts per year, tours annually and performs in service of the institution on and off campus. The University Chamber Singers join them under the direction of Dr. Rodney H. Caldwell.

Come join them at Gloria Dei 250 Fox Hill Road for an evening of delightful music.



You're invited...

To the Fifth Annual Banquet of the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail and Merrimac Juvenile Detention Center

When: On Friday, April 8, 2011 – 6:30 p.m.

Where: At the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 6945 Pocahontas Trail – Williamsburg

Cost: Ticket prices: \$20 – deadline is April 5

For tickets or additional information, please call Chaplain Harold Dimmitt – 820-3900, x 7777

or Pete Fowler – 870-2650

This is a special opportunity to celebrate 50 years of providing

'Hope Beyond the Walls.'



St. Stephen Members Give Hundreds of Hours to Faith in Action

We received this thank you from our own **Jeane Gillespie**, who's the Program Coordinator for Faith in Action:

"Williamsburg Area Faith in Action (WFIA) would like to thank **Stew Fretz, Carol Gabram, Jo Hanny, Pat Janot, Marilyn Johnson, Karen Shoberg** and **Corky Umberger** for the over 370 hours of driving, visiting, shopping, reassurance calls, chores and housekeeping which they performed in 2010. Volunteers like these are vital to our mission goal of helping seniors and adults with a chronic illness or physical disability remain independent in their homes."

For more information on WAFIA, click on: <http://www.wfia.org/>

If you would like to explore how you could minister to those in need through Faith in Action, call **Jeane Gillespie at 258-5890**.



Christian Education Committee News

Last month, our Elementary School youth continued to learn about Moses. This month, they start to study the New Testament and two parables, *House on the Rock* and *The Sower*. Next month, the youth will focus on Holy Week and Easter. As part of our morning studies, the youth have been learning the Ten Commandments and now will return to learning the Apostles' Creed. The youth are also 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. The elementary youth will be singing at the **11:00 service on March 13** and the **8:30 service on March 20**.

Adult Faith Formation offerings in March include the Randall Balmer: Theologian in Residence, on **March 6** and a discussion of Christianity and Modern War by **Doug Cummings on March 13 and 20**. **Starting March 27 and running through April 17**, **Diane Bean** will lead a discussion of Paul and Acts.

Jill Lucy



A Journey With (and Without) Stephen Ministry

The doctor's eyes widened and he hastened to call 911. I wasn't worried; I knew God was with me. "OK, God, I'm ready for your comfort." Silence. "God?" Nothing. Had God rejected me? Was there a God? Ten years later in a true time of need I didn't have to call him—he was already there. But I wandered in that barren wasteland of shame, doubt and fear. I did not know that this has happened with many—even Mother Theresa.

Are you feeling alone and abandoned? A Stephen Minister (and your pastor) can walk with you, showing you spiritual guideposts and comfort. "O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you." Psalms. 63:1.

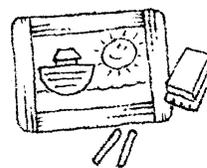
Cindy Gibbs



The Dining Out Group Meets in March

The Dining Out group will gather for lunch at the Plaza Azteca Restaurant on **Sunday, March 20, 2011 at 1:00 PM**. The restaurant is located at 1430 High Street in Williamsburg (near the Tavern Movie Theater). If you plan to attend, please call **Preston** or

Birdie Burton (564-8846) or sign-up on the blue sheet for the offering plate.



March 2011 Preschool News

Get prepared! March holds two of the most cherished highlights of the school year and the children are already excitedly working on projects to make it even more special.

The PreK and the M/W/F classes will bring their Dads to school **Monday night, March 7**. (Talk about March Madness!) The fathers will participate in some of the children's class activities. Sometimes, everyone is told a story and then asked to draw a picture describing something in the story. The children immediately start sketching out marvelous things and, when they are done, the Dads are sitting wide-eyed holding their favorite crayons and an empty paper and saying to one another, "What are we supposed to draw?" How quickly spontaneity of thought wanes as we become grown-ups.

Then, on **March 17** (St. Patrick's Day), the PreK and T/TH classes will bring their Grand parents/Special Friend to school for a modified school day. Of course, the children have made presents for their guests and are enjoying the controlled mayhem which occurs at times like these.

As you may imagine, both these functions are made more glorious with all the snacks and drinks provided. They are fun-filled and happy times, and as you may suspect, grandparents are a somewhat quieter and more reserved group -- but they still have lots of fun!

Additionally:

Class photos will be taken **Wednesday March 9 and Thursday, March 10**.

The PreK and M/W/F classes will visit the Williamsburg Fire Department on **Friday, March 18**. They will come back with their heads full of safety clues regarding fire and will probably ask you to show them the fire alarms in the house and ask you to make them work!

NOTE: The Preschool is filling up for the coming fall semester; however, there are still a few spots

available. Tell your friends about us, check us out on the web, or call the office for specific information.

For the Preschool, **Rudy Stegmann**



Address Changes

Dave Clark: addition

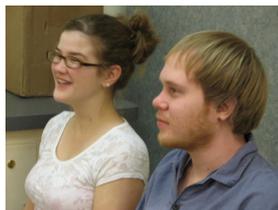
dfclark@fsi.illinois.edu

Warren and Shirley Melhorn

Heritage Commons #106,
236 Commons Way
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185,
757-229-7165

Christopher, Samantha, Jacquelyn and Hailey Shearer

3035 Torrington Trail
Williamsburg, Virginia 23188
258-1337 (same as before)



A Note from Joel and Kara

This spring break (March 5-13) LSA members **Kara Hunt** and **Joel Gillespie** will go on a service trip to San Pedro, Belize. While there, they will work at the Holy Cross school helping children in the classroom. They will tutor the children, enhancing their athletic and extracurricular programs, and work on other projects. Specifically, they will start construction on a junior school, as the current school has reached capacity.

To contribute to the costs of their trip, please contact Kara klhunt@email.wm.edu or Joel jdgillespie@email.wm.edu for more information.

Thanks,
Kara and Joel



The Church Mouse Hears

Have you checked our library lately? We have many new books available to borrow it has been wonderful having such large turnouts for the programs at the church – the study group, the evening meetings for Kirsten Holmstedt, the Congregational meeting members voted unanimously for the narthex renovation and more. Upcoming will be the Theologian in Residence, Ash Wednesday, and then Lenten soup suppers, and Easter week. St. Stephen is a special family! How wonderful to see the article about **Harlan Schone** in the "Next Door Neighbors" magazine! Over many years, Harlan has contributed much to the entire Williamsburg community.

Please Pray For



Pray for each other in our daily journeys in faith.

We offer prayers for God's mission at Living Water Lutheran Church, in Kilmarnock, VA, as they install their new pastor, John Ericson, this afternoon at 4:00 PM!

Pray to know God's will for healing **Susan Britcher, Preston Burton, Carolee Bush, Bill Dickerson, Art Dorsey, Ruth Fenstermaker, Lisa Fisher, Mel Melhorn, Carole Meyer, Tommy Peterkin, Judie Schrag, Phyllis Spencer, and Dan Stimson.**

Prayers of peace and comfort to **Marilyn Mallue and her family** on the death of her uncle, Michel Seranne.

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

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Kelsey Berg, Frances Boitnott-Schluter, Lois Bomba, Lynn Bonneau, Ed Borg, Melvin Bowen, Jim Burkle, Ron Campana, Joanne Carlson, Dawn Cantafio, Rochelle, Jerry and Elijah Conner, Walter and Janice DeGree, Paul Derin, Brad Donnell, Demetrius Dukes, Mae Failoni, Loretta Fletcher, Janice Floyd, Lonna Gibson, Angela Wellington Gooden, Mary Jo Hill, Gretchen Imlay, Junius Jenkins, Greg Johnson, Denise Jones, Dolores Kampf, Myrna Lund, Janet Marlatt, Brian McMorrow, Rick Meyer, Eleanore Jane

Mortimer, Roy Nester, Janet Overdorf, Barbara Owens, Sampson, Atticus, and Evelyn Parsons, Jacob Remis, Janet Pendergast, Bob Reeves, Lisa Rivolta, Don Romig, Don Scanlan, Gary Sloan, Connie Testerman, Marcus Tyler, Melissa Villarreal, Cindy Warner, Thomas Wellington, Bob Wesche, Mary Williams and Charles Zerbe.

Donald and Nyla Spitzer
 Jo Ann Daus
 Sandra Stephan
 Frances J. Palmer
 Joseph and Margaret Lesnowski
 Robert H. Derr
 Rebecca C. Paden
 Eugene and Janna Roche
 Gertrude D. Weakley
 Sylvia Welty Geer
 Marjorie Thompson
 Mary L. Voorhess



Happy Birthdays in March

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Travis Spencer | |
| 2 | Bill Chapman | John Scanlan |
| 3 | Sarah Harms | Janice Mayfield |
| 4 | Shelley Delehanty | Christine White |
| 5 | Chelsea Cowan | Dave Gamble |
| | Reed Nester | |
| 7 | Gary Chenault | |
| 8 | Janet Higgs | |
| 9 | Allison Lucy | Spencer Sipes |
| 10 | Marilyn Mallue | |
| 11 | Haley Poynter | James Wiers |
| 12 | Katie DeMari | Stan Hobday |
| | Alexander Stouffer | Rachael Wiers |
| 13 | Preston Burton | |
| 16 | Pam Buckley | |
| 17 | Karen Einarsen | Pat Gamble |
| | Lorraine Hudson | |
| 18 | Hans Tiefel | |
| 19 | Erika Rinehimer | |
| 20 | Carol Gabram | |
| 21 | Jane deSolms | |
| 22 | Liana Alpino | |
| 24 | Julian Jefferson | |
| 25 | Judie Schrag | |
| 26 | Stew Fretz | |
| 27 | Arthur Gibbs | |
| 28 | Joyce Behlendorf | Jill Lucy |
| | John Watson | |
| 29 | Mike Scholberg | |
| 30 | Bob Newman | |
| 31 | Lea Chenault | Margaret Krull |



St. Stephen Gifts

Thank you to everyone that donated to Avalon and Grove Christian Outreach Center for our Advent Focus project. \$2,415.00 was donated for Grove, and the matching gift made a total of \$4,830.00 for their building fund. A total of \$1,120.00 was donated to help the women and children at Avalon. The Social Ministry Committee thanks you for your generosity! This special Advent gift was gratefully accepted by both groups.



Thank you to St. Stephen from the community

Angels of Mercy Medical Clinic thanked us for our donations of \$2500 throughout the year of 2010 and wished us a happy and blessed New Year. Southern Seminary thanked us for our gift to them through the Virginia Synod. Grove Christian Outreach Center thanked us for our annual contributions in 2010 of \$1,400 and praised the volunteers, the food donations, and the many gifts to the Grove area children. More information will be forthcoming about their fundraising events for their building program.

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

Memorials



Ernie Pilant

Bill and Jane Holcombe
Renovation Fund
 Harlan and Anne Schone
Parish Nursing Fund
 Michael and Sharon Sams
 Dianne D. Colton

Pot Luck and Discussion attended by many

On Friday, February 18 at 6:00 PM, many St. Stephen members and guests attended a pot luck followed by an interesting presentation by William and Mary Writer in Residence **Kirsten Holmstedt** about the experience of women who have been in combat.

