

Life and Times
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Christmas 2011 Edition



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Holy Eucharist
Sundays 8:00 & 10:00 am
Wednesday at 6:30 pm
Friday with Healing 9:00 am

Bible Study
Wednesday at 7:00 pm

A Note From The Rev. Terry L. Martin....

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I want to begin by thanking this year's Stewardship Speakers; Ken Baulderstone, Tom Don and Ron Turner. I found their insightful messages to be of great assistance in providing us all with a clear picture of our parish's current situation. We have concluded our Stewardship Campaign, and we are drawing close to our goal! If you have already turned in your 2012 pledge card, I thank you for your faithfulness. If you have not yet made a pledge for the work of St. Stephen's during the coming year, I ask that you prayerfully consider doing so. Pledge cards are available in the office and at the entrance to the church. Or, call us, and we'll get one to you. If we all work together, I know that we will be able to continue, and maybe even expand, the ministries of this parish offered to the greater glory of God.

Our Advent season culminates with an Advent Festival of Lessons and Music to be offered on Sunday, December 11 at 10:00 am. Please plan now to be present for this special celebration. On December 18, following the 10:00 Eucharist, we will begin our annual Greening of the Church. Join us for this festive event, and help transform our sanctuary into a Christmas wonderland!

As we prepare for our Christmas celebrations, perhaps some of us are having difficulty getting into the Christmas spirit. Let me offer you my favorite personal Christmas story:

If we are willing, we can learn quite a bit from children. During Christmas, the spirit of this season is most easily found when we look through the eyes of a little child. The joy and excitement has not been tainted by years of routine and broken dreams. When I forget what it's

all about, all I have to do is stop and watch the children.

The Christmas my youngest son turned 11, he asked for only one thing; a Santa suit. A strange request, but we honored it. On Christmas day, he donned his new outfit, complete with beard and boots, and begged me to take him to the store. Since there were a couple of items needed for Christmas dinner, I finally gave in, and off we went, with this miniature Santa sitting in the front seat, clutching a red pillowcase which he had filled with candy canes.

When we entered the only convenience store open on Christmas Day, there were a few young children waiting in line with their parents. They stared in awe at my little companion in his red suit, who promptly walked up to each one, and presented them with a candy cane.

As we left the store, it began to dawn on me what was going on. As he approached the age when the realization that Santa is a mythical being begins to come to light, my son was determined not to completely let go of something that had been a source of much joy for so many years. His solution was to become
S a n t a f o r o t h e r s .

As we drove home, we passed the city park. Since it was a beautiful California day, there were a number of families enjoying a Christmas picnic. Santa turned and gave me one pleading look. I pulled in and parked. He got out, and a gaggle of children soon surrounded him as he began to distribute candy canes. The parents thought he was simply adorable (which he was of course, but I am a bit bias).

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Sr. Warden: Ken Baulderstone

Jr. Warden: Tom Don

Vestry:

Chris Baker

Gloria Davis

Beth MacKenzie

Pattie Meyer

Chris Presti

Becky Smith

Bob Terentz

Ron Turner

John Will

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Pledge Sunday

Sunday, December 4th, was Pledge Sunday where St. Stephen's held the Ingathering of Pledge Cards for the year 2012. If you did not have an opportunity to submit your Pledge Card please do so that plans may be made for 2012. If you are in need of a Pledge Card, just let the office know, we will be happy to get one to you!

ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 15th, 2011

St. Stephen's Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 15th, immediately following the *one service which will be held at 9:00 am.* Please plan to take part in this vital activity in the life of our church.

Also please note: Committee Reports are due into the office no later than Sunday, January 1st, 2012 for the compilation of the Annual Report. Thank you in advance for your timely cooperation!

SHOP-RITE GIFT CERTIFICATES



Thank you for your continued response to our Shop-Rite Gift Card fundraiser. Gift Cards continue to be sold after the 8:00 and 10:00 am services.

Also please note, \$5.00 & \$10.00 denominations are now available for stocking stuffers for Christmas! Thank you!

THANKSGIVING AT ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH



For the second year in a row, St. Stephen's hosted a free Thanksgiving Dinner for those who did not want to spend the day alone. The doors opened at 1:30 pm, and 40+ were served a delicious Thanksgiving dinner. In addition, 75+ Thanksgiving Baskets were given out and delivered to local families to have Thanksgiving Dinner at home.

Thank you to all who made Thanksgiving Day possible for so many people!

"GIVING TREE"



Our "Giving Tree" is up in the Narthex. Simply take a gift tag and return a 'wrapped gift' with the tag attached by Sunday, December 18th. (Have a tag for a teen? Gift cards are always enjoyed!) Thank you for your faithful kindness to our "Giving Tree", and sharing the love and joy of the season with those who are in need! The need in our local community is overwhelming. Thank you for caring and reaching out!

Christmas Pageant December 24th at the 4:00 pm Service

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS



Starting December 4th, the children will not be in church due to Pageant practice.

The Christmas Pageant will be Saturday December 24th, at 4:00 pm. We will be celebrating Jesus' Birthday on Sunday, December 18th. We are looking forward to a wonderful holiday season!

Linda Rietmann



"GREENING OF THE CHURCH"



Please join us Sunday, December 18th, after the 10:00 am service as we prepare and decorate our church for Christmas. All are welcome! (Men are needed for some heavy lifting.) Thank you for helping with this festive activity in the life of our church!

A Note From The Rev. Terry L. Martin.....

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Finally reaching the bottom of his sack, he reluctantly returned to the car. As we pulled away, the children and their parents all waved and shouted, "Good bye Santa!" He rolled down the window, and his white gloved hand slowly waved back in forth, in perfect imitation of the best Santa from any Macy's parade.

Not feeling in the Christmas spirit? Watch the children. Let them remind you, or maybe even teach you, what it's all about.

We begin our celebration of The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ on Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm with a Christmas Pageant. At 10:00 pm, we will offer a candlelight Choral Eucharist. On Christmas Day, we will celebrate the Holy Eucharist at 8:00 and 10:00 am. I look forward to sharing those celebrations with you.

As we prepare for the coming of the Christ child born in a manger, may we also prepare for fresh hopes and dreams to be born anew within each of our hearts.

In Christ's Love,

Terry +

**Christmas
Bazaar**

Thank you to all who made the ECW Christmas Bazaar such a huge success! A special thank you goes to Booth Chairpersons, Jane Platt, Marion Agresti, Beth MacKenzie, Marie Carr, Barbara Heilich, Dolores DeWitt, Gloria Davis, Linda Pugliese, and Jean Brown. You all did a fabulous job! Thank you to all who patronized and shopped at all the wonderful booths!

Also, a great big thank you goes to Karen Egan and Mary Beth Tallman for the delicious Spaghetti Dinner. Your culinary efforts were very much

**PARISH CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
"Ribbons of Love"**

Our Christmas Card "Ribbons of Love" is now again on display in the Parish Hall for all parishioners to place their Christmas Cards to all in the church. This saves on the multiple mailings to individual parishioners. Please make a point to have a look.

merry Christmas!

ecw Christmas party

December 19th

7:30 pm



All women of the church are invited to attend the ECW

Christmas Party, Monday, December 19th, at 7:30 pm.

Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share and a \$5.00 gift (From our Thrift Shop if you can) for our Grab Bag exchange. Great fun is always had by all!



**CHRISTMAS
FLOWER
MEMORIALS**

Envelopes are now in the church pews to remember a loved one this Christmas. These may be placed in the offering plate in church, or given into the office.

If you are in need of an envelope for a memorial, please call the office, we will get one to you!

Thank you!

WATER COLOR CLASS



A Water Color Class, being conducted by June Merrifield, will begin here on January 18th, at 1:00 pm. June will teach a basic watercolor class and a materials list is available in the office. Please call June at 698-4761 if you have any questions. Join the class and express your artistic self!

**ST. STEPHEN'S
MEMORIAL GARDEN**

Work has been completed in our Memorial Garden installing memorial plaques to more easily identify loved ones who are interred in the Columbarium. Thank you to Gloria Davis and Bill Matlock for their efforts in this project. Please go browse and see the beautiful work!

YOGA CLASSES

Parishioner, Ellen Keosseian, a registered Yoga Instructor, has started an 8 week gentle Yoga Class here in the Parish Hall, on Tuesday mornings, from 9:15-10:15 am, cost \$5.00 per class.

Please refer to the sign-up sheet in the Narthex, or call her at 410-610-8529.

Thank You!

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
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“Believers seeking unity
with God and each other”

THRIFT OUTLET NEWS

The Thrift Outlet will offer a one half price sale on Christmas items the week of December 12th.



Starting December 19th, all Christmas items will be \$1.00.



The store will be closed the week of December 26, re-opening on January 2nd, 2012.

Church Prayer Lists

Beginning Sunday, January 1st, 2012, the names on our various Prayer Lists (Sickness and Military) will be revised and refreshed.

If you would like continued prayers for a loved one, please re-submit a prayer request using the request card found in the church pews. Thank You!

SCHEDULE OF CHRISTMAS SERVICES



Christmas Eve, December 24th, 4:00 pm
Holy Eucharist with Christmas Pageant

Christmas Eve, December 24th, 10:00 pm
Candlelight Choral Mass

Christmas Day, December 25th
8:00 am & 10:00 am Holy Eucharist

