



# BLUE DIVINITY

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH NEWSLETTER

NOV/DEC 2025

## STRANGELY, Our November Newsletter began this year on Hallowe'en



*Mark Peterson with his great grandchildren, Olivia & Ruben*

IT WAS AMAZING to watch as hundreds of children of all ages headed towards the entrance of St. Stephen's for their yearly trick or treating, an old custom that is not withering away any time soon. The children know us and that is good. Many thanks to this year's help committee of six (Jamie, Jena, Lani, Mark, Mike, and Valerie) and to all of you, who donated the much needed candy that helped to make this event a success.

Nothing is more awesome than to watch young children with their abundance of excitement and energy! It makes us all feel like we are none too far from Heaven.



*Gwendolyn & Francis, the grandchildren of Fran and Karen Ettenhofer*



*Children in the neighborhood of St. Stephen's celebrating Hallowe'en*





# ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY

## NOVEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NOVEMBER Worship Schedule

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10 AM  
WEDNESDAY SERVICES AT 11 AM

**SUNDAY, NOV. 9<sup>TH</sup>**  
**PENTECOST EUCHARIST SERVICE**  
Our Missioner, the Rev. Meg (Mo) Trimm

**SUNDAY, NOV. 16<sup>TH</sup>**  
**MORNING PRAYER SERVICE**  
Service Leader, Charles Guenette

**SUNDAY, NOV. 23<sup>RD</sup>**  
**MORNING PRAYER SERVICE**  
Service Leader, Paul Hay

**SUNDAY, NOV. 30<sup>TH</sup>**  
**ADVENT BEGINS**  
**RESERVE SACRAMENT SERVICE**  
Service Leader, Karen Ettenhofer

**SUNDAY, DEC. 7<sup>TH</sup>**  
**RESERVE SACRAMENT SERVICE**  
Service Leader, Karen Ettenhofer

**EVERY WEDNESDAY**  
**HOLY EUCHARIST SERVICE**  
**IS HELD AT 11 AM IN THE CHAPEL**  
with The Rev. Paula Marvic

WED. NOV. 5<sup>TH</sup> 12:30 PM COVENANT GROUP meets

SUN. NOV. 9<sup>TH</sup> STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

WED. NOV. 12<sup>TH</sup> at @ Noon OUTREACH & MST meet

WED. NOV. 19<sup>TH</sup> 12:30 PM COVENANT GROUP meets

SUN. DEC. 7<sup>TH</sup> ST. NICHOLAS DAY

SUN. DEC. 7<sup>TH</sup> CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FORMS ARE DUE IN OFFICE

SUN. DEC. 14<sup>TH</sup> LESSONS & CAROLS 3 PM

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup> FEEDING AMERICA WEST MICHIGAN'S MOBILE FOOD PANTRY will be held at: SALVATION ARMY ESCANABA, 3001 5TH AVE. S., ESCANABA, MI 49829. DRIVE-THRU DISTRIBUTION.

EVERY Mon/Tues./Thurs./Fri. FREE LUNCHESES can be found also at the Salvation Army in Escanaba from 12 to 1pm. Donations are accepted.

EVERY Monday, Wednesday, and Friday A FOOD PANTRY is also available at SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SERVICE CENTER, from 10 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Address is: 115 8th St N, Escanaba, MI 49829



On Sunday Oct. 26th, we were so thankful for the Rev. Paula Marvic (photo:left) for officiating a communion service for us and picture to her left is Deacon Karen Ettenhofer and Sexton Mike Metor.

(photo: right) it was the last live appearance this season of our Snr. Warden Jon Flath and Tony Quist who were headed to their home in Palm Beach, Fla. before traveling to Paris, France. We already miss them! ♥



# A SERMON ABOUT SAINTS



*The Rev. Katie Gould is Assistant Chaplain and religion teacher at St. Francis Episcopal School in Houston Texas.*

ST. CLAIRE said we become what we love, and who we are, shapes what we become. If we love things, we become a thing. If we love nothing, we become nothing.

IMITATION IS NOT A LITERAL MIMICKING of Christ. Rather it means becoming the image of the beloved, an image disclosed through transformation. This means we are to become vessels of God's compassionate love for others.

WHEN WE HEAR THE WORD 'Saint', our minds often conjure up images of stained glass windows, figures of immense historical significance or perhaps spiritual super heroes. People who seem entirely set apart from the messy realities of daily life. We celebrate these great witnesses to the faith throughout the church year. St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Peter, St. Nicholas, and countless others.

THEY INSPIRE US with their radical acts of faith. Whether it's divesting themselves of their wealth to embrace poverty and service or leading movements of justice or confronting the forces of evil or tending to the ill among many

other things. We might think of martyrs who have died for a righteous cause in the name of Christ, people of extraordinary faith who are indeed inspirational but at times can feel impossible to live up to.

BUT WHAT TRULY DEFINES A SAINT? You have encountered many in your life. And in fact, you're encountering them right now, as you sit in this room, as we sit here and worship together. You encounter them as you conduct meetings, as you drive to work, as you go for walks. You encounter them every day unaware of the different ways that people are living into their own various sainthoods.

A SAINT IS SIMPLY A PERSON whose life has become a prayer, a life of profound service, who has sought God's will above their own and who has found their deepest identity wrapped up in the identity and character of Christ.

THE BEAUTY OF THE COMMUNION of saints is that *no two saints are exactly alike*. Their diversity is a testament to the myriad of ways one can step into holiness. Yet they all share something common in their journey. A journey that requires a bit of discomfort perhaps a willingness to leave behind what is easy or familiar.

DYING TO SELF, following the path of Christ who said that a seed must die in order that it might sprout a new and bear much fruit. It involves sacrifice and risk.

THE SAINTS THAT WE CELEBRATE throughout the church year were not mythological figures. They were ordinary people like you and me. Doctors, teachers, parents, laborers, priests who realized the extraordinary gifts offered to them in Christ. They found their anchor in the one who completely offered himself for us even in our imperfection.

WE CELEBRATE SAINTS BECAUSE in a world that can so easily lead us to into despair, anxiety, anger, and even resignation. These faithful folk carried a light within them out into the world. And they refused to let darkness overwhelm them. And their light had the potential to catch fire in us. And our light likewise has the potential to catch fire in others.

THE HOPE THAT THEY OFFER that we might offer is not that we must mimic their actions, but that their very differences prove that there is a unique path to sainthood for each one of us.

SO WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR US TO LIVE INTO THIS POTENTIAL SAINTHOOD? Prayer and humility being one thing, a consistent yielding of our will to God's compassion and service, a willingness to know the experience of the poor and the brokenhearted and the hungry, and courage to have a heart that is broken by the world's brokenness and that is willing to heed God's call to do something about it.

THIS MAY OFTEN MEAN being at odds with culture, choosing a different path to bear the fruit of king, God's kingdom here on earth.

THE APOSTLE PAUL SPEAKS directly to our inheritance in this kingdom, reminding us that this is not merely an aspiration, but a vocation given by God to us. Listen to his words to the Ephesians again. In Him, you also. So when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and had believed in him were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit. This is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people to the praise of his glory.

THIS HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERED the saints then and it empowers us today. It is our seal. It is our inheritance toward

*(cont. on p. 4)*

redemption and our guide to hearing the will of God in our own lives.

PAUL FOLLOWS THIS TRUTH with a powerful prayer. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him. So that with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you. What are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe according to the working of his great power.

THE SAME PRAYER is a prayer for you and I. That overwhelming power is at work among us. We often look up to people admiring their strength or ad-

miring different aspects of their character. But today the church asks us to look up to the saints not as impossible ideals but as proof that holiness is possible for us. We are all saints in the making, members of the communion of saints, because as Paul concludes, the church is the fullness of him who fills all in all.

SO TODAY, I INVITE YOU to slow down and consider what the spirit is whispering to you. *In what ways are you being called into your own sainthood?*

THIS DAY IS OUR GREAT REMINDER that you already have the inheritance. You already have the seal. It is an extraordinary call to you and I ordinary people to become a saint. **Amen.** ☩

## CONGRATULATIONS ON A SUCCESSFUL AUTUMN CONCERT!

THE AUTUMN PIANO RECITAL on Oct. 12th went really well with over 75 people



LEONORE HALL

attending, lovely music and generous donations for the Outreach Committee. A Special Thank you to all involved, esp. Jon Flath, Tony Quist, Dawn Martin, Liz Deneau, Pat Olesak, Nancy Olexick and, not least, Lani.

## ADVENT BEGINS NOV. 30TH PLAN TO JOIN US FOR LESSONS & CAROLS ON 12/14 AT 3PM

**IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ADVENT** is the first season of the church year, the season of preparation and anticipation for the "coming" (*from the Latin adventus*) of Jesus Christ. It focuses both on his birth at Christmas and his second coming.

**IT IS A LITURGICAL SEASON** that begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, this year on Nov. 30th, and is characterized by themes of HOPE, PEACE, JOY, & LOVE. This time is also marked by penitential practices, such as wearing purple vestments by the clergy, having a somber reflection about the future, while simultaneously looking forward to the joy of Christ's birth.

**THIS SEASON** has a dual nature, combining elements of joyful hope with sober, penitential reflection. The "*Gloria in Excelsis*" is often omitted from services un-

til Christmas Eve to heighten the sense of anticipation, replaced by the "*Kyrie/Lord have Mercy*". Traditional Advent music, such as "*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*," emphasizes waiting and longing. It is a time for reflection and prayer, but also for action, such as caring for the poor, the lonely, or those who are grieving.

**A COMMON TRADITION** in both churches and homes is the **Advent wreath**, a circular wreath of evergreen boughs (*symbolizing God's endlessness and eternal life*) holding four candles (three purple/blue, one pink/rose). One candle is lit each Sunday, with the light growing brighter each week to signify the approaching Light of the World. A central white "**Christ candle**" is often lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

**LESSONS AND CAROLS** is a beloved Anglican tradition that tells

the Christmas story through Scripture readings and music. **St. Stephen's will host a Lessons & Carols on Sunday, Dec. 14th this year at 3 PM.** Soloists will include, *David Block, vocalist; Phil Stapert, organ and oboe; Brad Bender, French Horn, Glenn Bengry, trumpet and Lani Van Voorden, piano.*

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH also offers resources like the "**Advent Word**" an online calendar that provides a daily word from the Sunday lectionary readings during Advent for reflection and creative expression. This online project, hosted by Forward Movement, invites individuals and congregations to engage with a daily word like "*Watch*," "*Light*," "*Rejoice*," or "*Mercy*" through meditations, images, and social media, where people share their own reflections. For more info and to sign up, go to the [adventword.org](http://adventword.org) website. ☩