

St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral Discerning Joy & Grace



Dear Members and Friends of St. Stephen's,

We believe that this may be the most extraordinary year any of us has experienced. Despite the many challenges, we are seeing our community coming together in ways we could not have imagined.

- We have seen increased numbers attending online services for morning and evening prayer.
- Our Saturday afternoon in-person services are often filled to their limit.
- Our school is continuing its educational mission with both virtual and traditional programs.
- The Episcopal Service Corps interns are working in Harrisburg non-profits, caring for the most vulnerable of our community.
- Our members continue to serve the Food Bank, fill the Little Free Pantry, and work to establish justice.
- Our music director is creatively including music in our live-streamed services.

We see kindness and many reasons for celebration every day. We want to continue our work into a blessed future. For this reason, we have chosen ***Discerning Joy & Grace*** as this year's stewardship theme.

More than ever, we are living into the mission of God in our community. Last year's success was due to the generous response of our members. We perceive that this year offers us a great opportunity and challenge: to consider our commitment to continuing God's work in Harrisburg and in the world beyond it, in spite of - and perhaps because of - the many uncertainties around us. What do we need to do to move forward? What can we offer to the wider community?

Here's what we have planned to celebrate God's Holy Spirit at work in our midst:

Stewardship: The Musical!

To celebrate the success and commitment of our parish, this autumn we will produce a new theatrical offering during our services. This delightful collection of light-hearted songs will unfold as a series of anthems during each Saturday service, performed for you by our own members. We hope that you will enjoy the generosity of our members, who will share with us all the many reasons that our faithful stewardship of God's blessings brings transformation and joy to our lives.

Virtual Cottage Meetings

As we move through our stewardship programming this year, the Vestry of St. Stephen's has contracted with a consultant to guide us through a discernment phase that process will help us

identify who we are as a faith community, our strengths, needs, desires, and values, and why it matters. Only then can we ascertain where we are headed and what we need to get us there. Our consultant, Leslie Pendleton, will be live at our Virtual Coffee Hour on **October 11**, and we invite you to come to meet her and to ask questions. In mid-October, we will begin gathering in small groups for Virtual Cottage Meetings, to have some conversations about what works well at St. Stephen's and what we want to be able to do next. These will take place via Zoom, which allows people to call in (for a conference call) or to participate in a video format. If you do not have access to a computer for the video format, please call the office to find a meeting date. We want as many people as possible to participate!

All this will take place while we continue our "regular" process of inviting our parishioners to give thanks to God for our many blessings, and prayerfully consider a pledge for 2021, to continue God's work through our parish.

You can expect to receive a pledge card in the mail in late October. We also anticipate adding an online pledge card to our website, so physical presence is not required in order to support the work of God through St. Stephen's. We will celebrate a virtual ingathering on November 22, and to share the good news of our success before Thanksgiving.

As our stewardship season continues, we hope that you keep watch for the invitation to join a small group conversation (via Zoom) to discuss how we can make this wonderful parish even better!

Faithfully yours,

Peter Robelen

Eugene McHugh

Anthony Alexander

Stewardship Chair

Senior Warden

Junior Warden