

the **EPISTLE**

SCRIPTURE
TRADITION
REASON



Celebrating
75
years in Christ
ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH



by the Rev. Neil Alan Willard

Earlier this year, St. Stephen's received the 2011 Edina Heritage Award in recognition of excellence in preservation, from the initial construction of our church buildings through the various changes that have been made to them over the years. It still looks like an Welsh country church that has been set within the beauty of God's creation beside Minnehaha Creek. It still looks like it belongs in the neighborhood.

Of course, since the first worship service on April 18, 1937, the most important things about St. Stephen's are the activities that have shaped the people on the inside of those buildings. There, "like living stones," we have been "built into a spiritual house, to be a royal priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5). There Christ is the cornerstone, providing the context for everything else.

In accepting the 2011 Edina Heritage Award on behalf of the church, I said the following:

It's a great honor for St. Stephen's to receive [this award], especially at this point in our history as we look ahead to our 75th anniversary. Our church has grown with the community itself and was intended at its founding to be a community church, a neighborhood church. So, on the one hand, this award is a testimony to that original vision from those who have gone before us. But it's also an opportunity for us to pause and reflect deeply on what it means to be that kind of a church today as we look ahead to the future. That, I think, is the really exciting part."

Standing together with longtime members Ann Marx and Jane Parry as the Mayor of Edina, James Hovland, presented that award to us was a wonderful moment for me. It was also a beautiful prelude to the present time as our congregation stands on the threshold of a Jubilee Year to celebrate the founding of St. Stephen's 75 years ago.

The official beginning of this Jubilee Year will happen on All Saints Sunday, November 6, and continue through the next All Saints Sunday on November 4, 2012. That great festival of the Christian faith brings together our memories of those on whose shoulders we stand, our prayers of thanksgiving for the saints in our midst today, and our hopes and dreams for the youngest ones among us – the children and youth whom we have promised to support in their life in Christ. It brings together past, present, and future.

This special edition of *The Epistle* contains lots of information on events that will take place throughout the next 12 months. More details about some of them will appear in written communications or verbal announcements as we move through the Jubilee Year.

So come and celebrate the 75th anniversary of St. Stephen's. The doors will be open to welcome you. Let the baptismal font on the other side of those doors remind you of the Christian journey that we have been called to walk together as God's people from the corner of 50th and Wooddale into the world that God has both made and redeemed.

Neil



ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS CELEBRATIONS ON ONE DAY NOVEMBER 6TH

Special services and events are planned for November 6th. Come celebrate the following:

Baptisms

The Sunday after All Saints Day is one of five Sundays designated for baptizing the newest saints of the church. Holy Baptism will be celebrated at the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services.

The Necrology

As we observe the feasts of All Saints and All Souls on November 6th, at most of the services we will lift up in prayer the names and lives of those who are known to the universal community as well as those known only to us. We will read aloud the names of all St. Stephen's parishioners who have died since the previous All Saints Sunday (known as the 'necrology'). All of these, and hosts of others, comprise the "glorious company of heaven" along with the angels and archangels.

Choral Classics at 9:00

St. Stephen's Parish Choir will sing special choral music of Maurice Duruflé ('Kyrie' from *Requiem, Op. 9*) and Arvo Pärt ('The Beatitudes').

Gospel and Jazz at 11:00

St. Stephen's own Revelation Gospel Choir and E11 Jazz Ensemble will be joined by our Cantori youth choir for an amazing rendition of 'Wade in the Water.' The Alleluia Choir will also sing special music for All Saints.

Contemporary Songs at 5:00

St. Stephen's worship leaders will lead the singing of contemporary praise-and-worship songs, adding a 'contemporary' flair to All Saints Sunday!

All Souls Concert at 7:30 p.m.

The Parish Choir will return in the evening to perform Duruflé's *Requiem, Opus 9*, featuring soloists Henry Dougherty and Lisa Ramos. Also on the program will be Arvo Pärt's haunting setting of The Beatitudes and Moses Hogan's spiritual arrangement, *We Shall Walk Through the Valley*, as well as Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*.

Concertgoers will be invited to write the names of departed loved ones in a Book of Names as they arrive on the evening of the concert. Those names and others will be read during the 'Tolling of Names' towards the end of the free concert. An offering will be taken.



PASSPORT



Pick up a Passport to share in the history of St. Stephen's.

We are celebrating our 75th birthday this year, to adults this is known as an Anniversary. No matter if you call it an Anniversary or a Birthday it is going to be a great happening for our community of faith.

One way you can engage your children in this celebration is to have them pick up a Passport. We have created a Passport for your children to carry with them to each event otherwise known as a destination. When they arrive at each event they will have an opportunity to stamp their Passport.

This Passport will provide is a fun memory for them as they collect each stamp. Please join me in as we travel through our 75th Anniversary Year.

Official Travel Expedition:

- November 6, 2011 All Saints Worship and Kick Off Reception
- January 6, 2012 Three Kings Dinner
- January 22, 2012 Jubilee Sunday
- Lenten Formation
- Day of Service
- April 14 and 15 Cornerstone Weekend
- August 25 and 26 Laughing Water Weekend
- November 4, 2012 All Saints Worship and Final Celebration



Fun Family Ministry Excursions:

- June 18 – 22, 2012 Babylon – Courage in Captivity – Week One of VBS
- June 25 – 29, 2012 Babylon – Courage in Captivity – Week Two of VBS
- July 30 – August 3, 2012 Fun and Art – Week Three of VBS
- October 26, 2012 Boo Night

Detours (Destinations to look for in the Coming church calendar)

- Second Annual Family Trivia Night
- Parent Date Night

If you have any questions about these destinations please contact the Family Ministry Travel Director, Dave Sheldon at dsheldon@ststephens.com and let me book your family's escape plans.



Your Invitation to the Party

Jubilee Sunday • January 22, 10 a.m.

**All Parish Worship, Annual Meeting
and Reception at Edina Country Club**

At the beginning of each year, near the end of January, St. Stephen's holds its Annual Parish Meeting. This is an opportunity to pause for a moment as a congregation, reflecting on the past calendar year before hearing about the church budget and voting on those who have been nominated for various positions of leadership.

Our next Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2012. Because this falls within our Jubilee Year, celebrating St. Stephen's 75th anniversary, there's a heightened awareness of that need to reflect together, to give thanks together, and to celebrate our life together. So this next meeting and celebration will be uniquely festive.

The first thing to know is that we'll have only one service of worship at 10:00 a.m. on January 22 so that we can gather around the Lord's Table as one congregation, one family of brothers and sisters in Christ. Yes, there will be a "full house" and some will have to sit in the Chapel or the Commons Room or the Gathering Space. But everyone will be able to hear and see what's happening, and all of us will find a place at the holy meal that Christ has set before us. The service itself – and the meeting too – will be more brief than usual. That's because . . . there's more!

After the service and the meeting, the celebration will continue across the street at the Edina Country Club (and their parking lot will also be available for our use earlier that day). This will be a festive reception for everyone at St. Stephen's. Like the parable of the wedding banquet, the doors to the banquet hall will be opened wide for all to come and enjoy the food and the company. So I hope that you will receive this invitation with excitement and joyful anticipation. Let's celebrate this moment together, sharing our stories and rejoicing in the next chapter of our life together as the people of God at the corner of 50th and Wooddale!



First Junior Choir, 1939



Former Singers from St. Stephen's Music Ministry Invited to Return in April

Former choir members who have sung in any choir (children's, youth, adult) at any point in their life are invited to join the combined St. Stephen's Parish Choir and Revelation Gospel Choir to form a JUBILEE MASSED CHOIR for the official Diamond Jubilee Celebration Services on Sunday, April 15th, at both 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Only one rehearsal will be held on the previous Wednesday evening, April 11th, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., followed by a Choir Alumni Reception. Together we will sing Ralph Vaughan Williams' festive *Old Hundredth Psalm Tune*, Harold Friedell's *Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether*, and a gospel favorite (to be announced). Contact Larry Reynolds at lreynolds@ststephens.com to sign up. Singers may bring their own copies of the selected music, or scores will be available to borrow from St. Stephen's after March 1st.

Know any of these singers? Let us know who they are by emailing office@ststephens.com.

FAITH AND WORK:

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Connecting the Dots, Shaping the Future

In many ways, St. Stephen's was founded to be a gift to the community, a neighborhood church with doors open wide to welcome those seeking a deeper purpose and meaning in their lives. As we celebrate 75 years of doing that, there's a wonderful opportunity for us to invite our neighbors in the surrounding communities to connect the dots between faith, work, and daily life. Imagine what it would be like if people in the Twin Cities knew that St. Stephen's helped individuals to make those connections and equipped them to understand how their beliefs on Sunday influence their actions on Monday.

A NEW INITIATIVE

Creating that kind of reputation in the neighborhood – broadly defined – is one of the reasons for a new initiative that will be offered next February and, hopefully, repeated annually. Although details are still being finalized, the idea is to invite the community to a Saturday morning lecture and conversation that addresses one of the themes mentioned above. It might be about business ethics, corporate responsibility, personal integrity in the marketplace, the relationship between the spheres of faith and work, etc.

OUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY GIFT TO THE COMMUNITY

At the end of that lecture and conversation, those present would be encouraged to hear the guest speaker again on the next morning at St. Stephen's between the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. worship services (and to attend one of those worship services in which a few of these themes are also weaved into the sermon).

So this would be a gift to the community in more than one way. It would appeal to those with questions about their vocation and about discovering a sense of purpose in that and making a difference in the lives of others. More importantly, however, it would establish an environment in which people might be a little more open than usual to taking one step further, coming back to the church for a time of worship and additional reflection on these matters in the context of the Christian faith. The goal is to have them say what some of the philosophers said to Paul at the end of his conversation with them in the marketplace of Athens (Acts 17:32): "We will hear you again about this."

So stay tuned for more information about this exciting initiative in the weeks to come!

NEWS FLASH:

Best Way to Help St. Stephen's Celebrate is Also the Most Fun

JOIN IN

If you want to help St. Stephen's celebrate its Diamond Jubilee, make sure to participate! Organizers have planned a year full of events, from educational forums on Sunday mornings to parties on Saturday nights. We want everyone, from first-time visitors to long-standing members, to take part.

VOLUNTEER

We'll need lots of volunteers, too, from party planners to greeters, and table decorators to clean up crews. We'll also need volunteers to make phone calls throughout the year reminding people about upcoming events. If you'd like to help in any way, go to www.ststephens.com and register your interest (no commitment at that point, we promise!) Someone will follow up to help you find volunteer job or project that works for you.

DONATE/SPONSOR

Want to help with the cost of this once-every-seventy-five-year celebration? We welcome all donations, big or small. And we'll use it where it's needed most, or you can direct your donation. Here are some suggestions:

Buy former staff or clergy a ticket to our April 14 Birthday Dinner	\$25
Treat a whole pew to breakfast at a reception between services	\$40
Host a table at the all-parish reception at Edina Country Club on January 22	\$250
Underwrite celebration flags and banners on church grounds	\$500
Pay for the whole first-ever Laughing Water Picnic on August 26	\$2,000

DONATIONS: Make checks payable to St. Stephen's with a note designating it for the Diamond Jubilee. Mail to St. Stephen's 4039 W. 50th St., Edina, MN 55424
QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS: Contact Julie Baker at jubilee@ststephens.com

I THANK MY GOD EVERY TIME I REMEMBER YOU, CONSTANTLY PRAYING WITH JOY IN EVERY ONE OF MY PRAYERS FOR ALL OF YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR SHARING IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW. I AM CONFIDENT OF THIS, THAT THE ONE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK AMONG YOU WILL BRING IT TO COMPLETION BY THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST.

Philippians 1:3-6



The celebration of our Diamond Jubilee Year here at St. Stephen's offers a wonderful opportunity for us to remember those who helped make St. Stephen's a reality. From the dreamers who first conceived of a community church in Edina to those who built it and have given so generously to sustain it for the past 75 years, we have many to remember and to thank God for in our prayers.

To that end, at the Rector's Forum on Sunday November 13th and Sunday November 20th, our own Keith Friede, who plays with Ensemble 11, will take us on a guided tour of the beautiful stained glass windows that adorn our building called "Scripture and Stained Glass: The Windows of St. Stephens".

But just as this celebration is an opportunity to look to the past with gratitude, it is also an opportunity to look forward in hope. Just as some envisioned and were called to build this church 75 years ago, we're being called to envision and build the future of this community of faith. So for the 2012 Lenten season we've put together a series called "The Hospitality of God". The Rev. Dr. Dwight Zscheile, Episcopal priest and Assistant Professor of

Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther Seminary will kick off the series by helping us think about how we are invited into God's own communal life and what that means for our life together in this place. The Rev. Dr. Lee Doucette, O.S.B., Assisting Priest at St. Stephen's, will share something of the wisdom and richness of his experience of living as a Benedictine, vowed to life in a particular community, and how the principles that guide Benedictine life might inform and enrich our common life. Both of these presentations will help guide further conversations about how we are being called to continue to engage God's mission at the corner of 50th and Wooddale now and in the days to come.

I hope you'll join us for these forums and others throughout this anniversary year as we continue to learn and grow together in faith and in our life as a people in whom God has begun a good work.

Nancy B+

DAY OF SERVICE

Join your fellow parishioners for an outreach event hosted at St. Stephen's in the spring. We'll be working with an organization focused on helping to feed some of our homeless neighbors. As we learned from the Outreach Survey, most of us want to serve local families in need. The event is for everyone, including young children, and will be held on a Sunday between or after services. This will be a great chance for us all to spend time together, for the benefit of others.

> DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED



Will YOU Be a Sponsor?

Doug and Julie Baker Want to Know

In the next couple of months, we will be reaching out to various groups in the church to share our enthusiasm for this year of celebration. And we will asking these groups to consider sponsoring one of the upcoming Diamond Jubilee events.

What would sponsorship entail?

We're hoping sponsoring groups will take ownership in their events, as if they were the hosts. That might involve making phone calls or using social media to encourage attendance, helping with set-up, and acting as greeters. Ideally, sponsoring groups would also help underwrite the cost of their event, so we might ask everyone in the group to donate \$15-25, enabling us to charge less for guests. If we do it right, everyone in the parish will be both a guest and a sponsor at some point during the year – and feel honored to be in both of those roles.

And fear not, sponsorship would NOT entail planning the event, chairing the event or food prep.

We're seeking sponsors for the following events:

January 22	Jubilee Sunday Lunch at Edina Country Club
Lenten Sundays	"Hospitality of God" Adult Forums
Late February	Community Discussion on Faith and Work
April 14	Birthday Dinner in the Commons
April 15	Cornerstone Sunday Breakfast Reception
June	TEC and Youth Ministry Reunion
August 26	Laughing Water Picnic

We'll be contacting Senior Fellowship, former Vestry members, Children's Ministry families, TEC and Teen families, the Martyrs, and Adult Formation groups to consider sponsoring an upcoming Diamond Jubilee event. If you are interested in forming your own sponsorship group (with your house group, extended family, neighborhood or any other group of church friends), please let us know.

>>> jubilee@ststephens.com

Save the DATE

November 6

All Saint's - 75th Celebration Kick Off

January 22

Jubilee Sunday

All Parish Meeting and Party

April 14 - 15

Cornerstone Weekend

Birthday Dinner - Fabulous Food, Recognition and Entertainment, 6:00 pm in the Commons
Sunday Celebration Worship and Reception

August 24-26

Laughing Water Weekend
All-Parish Picnic in Utley Park

T.E.C. / YOUTH PROGRAM REUNION

This coming summer of 2012 we will host as a part of our 75th anniversary celebration a T.E.C./Youth program reunion. All those who have attended T.E.C. or have been involved in our youth program in the past thirty some years will be invited to gather for a special T.E.C. style worship service with a reception following. Date and time will be announced.

ST. STEPHEN'S 2020: *Envisioning Our Future*

As many of you know, St. Stephen's 75th anniversary is coming up in 2012. Plans are already underway to help us celebrate this milestone and remember those who were important in our lives as a parish through the years. As we honor the legacy of those who helped build St. Stephen's, work is also underway to ensure that we can continue to be a vibrant church for the next 25 years and beyond, to help us remain an integral part of our members' and guests' spiritual lives, and to become a stronger part of our community.

The first step is to examine and reaffirm our parish's values and priorities to help us assess what we need to do, as a parish, to remain a welcoming spiritual home long into the future. We have enlisted the help of Erin Weber-Johnson of the Episcopal Church Foundation to work with a small group of St. Stephen's members (Cathy Cella, John Ellingboe, Dave Holmberg, Fei McKhann, Brian Ostenso, Len Slade, Karen Smith, and Neil Willard) to enter into a discernment process to determine the best way forward. This Discernment Committee is asking for your input and participation.

In November, we will be inviting all members to add their voices and bring their ideas to the table. We'll be asking questions like "What keeps you at St. Stephen's?" and "What do you believe is most important for St. Stephen's to remain a vital Christian community over the next 10 or 20 years?". We will be surveying our members, conducting "listening Sundays" after each worship service on November 6 and 13, and also inviting St. Stephen's committees and small groups to bring us in to solicit ideas and input. We want to be sure that anyone who wants to be heard and involved can be.

In December and January, we'll analyze what we've heard and, with the help of our Vestry, will put together a plan of action. We'll continue to keep the parish fully informed of our progress along the way and will endeavor to keep the two way conversation going. Stay tuned for more information. In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact anyone on the Discernment Committee.





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