



The  
**ST. STEPHEN'S SENIOR NEWSLETTER**

**Summer 2021**

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church — Edina, Minnesota**

**DEAR BELOVED SENIOR MEMBERS OF ST. STEPHEN'S!**

This seems to be the season of “*two steps forward, one step back*” as we cope with changes in our lives due to the pandemic. Here at St. Stephen's we have taken one step forward. A **Senior Fellowship Luncheon is back on the calendar!** It will be a joyful reunion after a 22 month hiatus. We hope you all can come! See the program description on page three and make your reservation **soon.**

The **Sunday Morning Fall Schedule** has been announced. The timing of services is only slightly different from the summer schedule but with a new **Adult Forum** time. See details on page 2.

At long last the massive **creek wall renovation** is finished. The project was undertaken for practical reasons but the results enhance the look of the area. Our thanks to **the Properties Committee, Maren Christopher**, our resident gardener, and everyone who helped make this happen.

And speaking of enhancements, **Maren** has been busy working on the gardens on the property. We have photos and descriptions plus a little information about Maren for those who may not have met her yet. Did you know she majored in Chinese?!

We hope you are taking more steps forward than backward these days, but whatever you do, remember to take time to stop and smell the roses!



Connie Brekken, Editor  
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Jane Parry, Co-Editor

## THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW

- **SUNDAY MORNING FALL SCHEDULE:**

Sunday services will be held at **8:00 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.**

**Adult forum will be held at 9:00 a.m.** between the two services. This will allow those attending the first service to stay for the forum. Those attending the second service can come early to attend the forum. Coffee hour and fellowship begins at 8:45 and continues throughout the morning. This schedule begins Sunday, September 12.

- **CHURCH OFFICE HOURS** have returned to the pre-Covid schedule:

Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Friday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

- **PROGRAMS AND EVENTS ON THE CALENDAR:**

Mon., September 13: Final Summer **Ice Cream Stop #4** at *Sweet Science*, downtown Edina

Sun., September 12: **Newcomers' Lunch**

Wed., September 15: **Wednesday Night Kick-Off** dinner at Todd Park catered by Chef Jeff

Sun., September 19: **Blessing of Backpacks**

Wed., September 22: **Regular Wednesday night programs** begin.

Sun., October 3: **Blessing of the Animals**

Sat., October 9: The **Bash** (see page 11)

Mon., November 1: **Light the Night** (outdoor luminaries for All Saints and All Souls Day)

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Congratulations to **JIMMY BARNETT**, our Minister for Youth & Young Adults, who celebrated his **first anniversary** on August 10, 2021.

He says, *"This year was one of my best, but also one of the most challenging years of my ministry. I got to meet a whole new, amazing community that made my family and me feel welcome. It has been a very exciting time of reinvigorating the youth program, but in the toughest conditions of my career. We got through one year together and I'm excited to see how God continues to work at St. Stephen's."*



### IN REMEMBRANCE

*Of Current Members...*

**Marilyn Wooldridge**, age 82, died August 9, 2021. Former Senior Warden. Memorial service at St. Stephen's August 13, 2021.

*And Those We Knew and Loved...*

**Russell Bremner**, age 89, died October 12, 2020. Former member of St. Stephen's. Memorial service at St. John's Episcopal Church, August 12, 2021.





# SENIOR FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2021

12 Noon in the Gathering Space

You are invited to come and hear

## BARBARA ENGLISH

Guitarist and singer

**Barbara English** is a guitar, vocalist musician from Maple Grove, MN. She studied music at Hamline University. She was influenced by artists of the seventies including Joan Baez, John Denver, and Barbra Streisand.

Barbara has played for hundreds of events from small coffee houses, campfires, to holiday and national 'night out' gatherings, to private events, and community fundraisers. She is often seen at weekend retreats, celebration of life services and places of worship sharing sacred music, weaving story and song.

She is best known for her easy going style, sharing songs that people know and love. Her library of songs includes a variety of tunes that stretch back to the fifties to songs heard on the radio today. Several of her original tunes have been played on the HomeBrew Radio Show out of Thief River Falls.

During the pandemic she has kept busy offering online music to churches and groups seeking to keep connected during this difficult time of social distancing.

Barbara would like to think she'd be red carpet famous today were it not for popular artists like Taylor Swift, who just had a better agent!



### Make your reservation now!

**Cost is \$15.00 per person.**

- To make a reservation mail your check (payable to St. Stephen's Church) in the enclosed envelope or drop it off in the church office. Please write "Senior Fellowship Luncheon" on the memo line. Last day to make a reservation is Friday, October 1. (Your check is your reservation.)
- The menu will be escalloped potatoes and ham, peas and cheese salad with assorted bars for dessert.
- If you paid \$12 for the March 2020 luncheon that was cancelled, you can just pay \$3.00 when you register for this luncheon.
- PLEASE MAKE A RESERVATION! We need to know how much food to order.

## PEWS IN SANCTUARY ARE REINSTALLED

The pews were returned from North Carolina where they were stripped, sanded and lacquered to return them to the beauty and finish when they were purchased 80 years ago and all the nicks, scratches and visible wear and tear have been eliminated.

Every pew was disassembled for shipment so when they were returned, four men spent one week reassembling 42 pews and securing them to the floor. Each pew is seven pieces and must be put together like a giant three dimensional puzzle.

Unfortunately, they encountered installation issues and a number of pews had to be sent back to the restoration company. In the meantime chairs will be used as we did when all the pews were off site.



The pieces of the pews laid out on the floor prior to assembly.



Kneelers waiting to be attached.



Every pew had to be screwed into the floor, a job for young, nimble and flexible workers.



A single pew being assembled. Only 41 more to go.



# THE GARDENS OF ST. STEPHEN'S

*One does not need to be a master gardener to appreciate the beautiful flower beds surrounding St. Stephen's. Walk up to the main entrance and around the building and you will see a variety of gardens with lovely perennials, annuals and bushes laid out with thought and care by Maren Christopher, St. Stephen's official gardener. Here is a description of five of the gardens she maintains including two new gardens she recently added.*



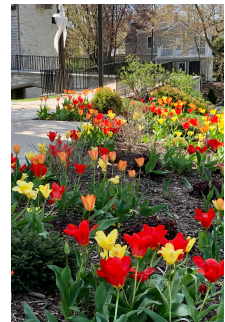
Summer

## THE FRONT DOOR GARDEN

This is the garden you see as you enter and exit the front doors of the church. It was redone several years ago in an effort to make our church entrance more welcoming both from the street and from the church.

With this in mind, all the plants were chosen to maintain a low height so as not to block the entrance.

In spring red, yellow and orange tulips cover this garden and when they die back, annuals and perennials come to life.



Spring

## THE SITTING GARDEN

This garden serves as the entrance to the cloister and the Memorial Garden. It is planted with pollinator-attracting plants. The stone path is planted with thyme that blooms in May and June and can be walked on.

When looking at the garden, take note of the two benches. Maren and Chance Ritchie, our sexton, made them during the summer of 2020. The benches provide a resting spot for contemplation or simply to enjoy the garden. There are leaf impressions on the seats from a variety of plants.

Next to one of the benches is a cement leaf bowl containing inspirational stones (Below). You may choose a stone that has significance for you and hold in in your hand while you pray for clarity, focus and intention.





## THE CHAPEL HILL GARDEN

This garden, below the walkway from the Church to the Chapel, was replanted a few years ago when several trees were removed leaving the garden in full sun.

The existing hostas were dug up and moved to other areas around the church's grounds. Fragrant rugosa roses, colorful annuals, perennials and hydrangea grace this hill.

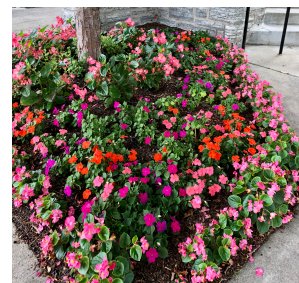


## THE RAIN GARDEN

This new garden is located outside the new entrance to the Commons Room. It was created to collect water coming off the roof and the hard surfaces surrounding it.

The plants were chosen because they help reduce runoff and filter pollutants. They were also chosen because they attract pollinators.

The bench at the edge of the garden was also made by Maren and Chance.





## THE CREEK WALL WALKWAY

Maren Christopher has served on the Properties Committee and continues to work closely with them on projects that affect the church grounds.

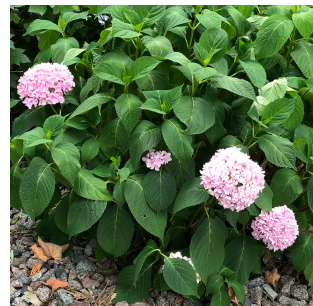
When the decision was made to renovate the Minnehaha Creek wall, Maren suggested a redesign of the area to add plantings along the edge of the creek wall plus a wide stone walkway between the plantings and the building.



First, the edge of the new wall was capped using the large stones from the original wall to give it a more finished look. (left)



Then, Maren and Chance laid paver stones in a random pattern for the walkway. It replaces a grassy area and provides a smooth sidewalk that will allow easy access from the Commons Room patio to the edge of the building where Baptisms in the Creek are performed.





## THE CREEK WALL GARDEN

Thus, our newest garden, *The Creek Wall Garden*, was created. The plants in this garden soften the harshness of all the stone on either side of the new walkway. In time some of the shrubs will grow toward the wall to discourage walking along the stone capping.

When the capping was installed, cuts were made (below right) every so often to allow space for planting a trailing plant close to the edge that will grow to cascade over the wall and soften the creekside of the wall.

The plant color scheme is yellow, purple, maroon with hints of orange.

Note the enhancement in design from what the space looked like in September 2020.



August 2021



September 2020



## MAREN CHRISTOPHER

For almost 20 years our “resident gardener” has tended our gardens with love and skill. She is a person of many talents and interests but, lucky for us, has chosen to concentrate on gardening.

Here is her story.

I began gardening at a young age when my mother offered me a patch of garden and told me I could choose what to plant. That began my passion with gardening.

Gardening remained an avocation while I pursued other careers of pediatric nursing and greeting card company owner. When I sold the card company I devoted myself to gardening and became a University of MN extension Master Gardener. From 2003-2019 I produced a Zone 4 gardening show and educational videos called ‘Master Your Garden’. This was a Master Gardener project. I worked at Noerenberg Gardens and took design courses.

I began my garden management business, **Maren’s Gardens** in 2003, providing garden design, install, seasonal containers, maintenance and consulting. It was at that time that St. Stephen’s was looking to hire someone to care for, plant and maintain the gardens. They hired me as a contracted position and I became the “official gardener”. I care for all the gardens around the church except for the hosta along the back and the Memorial Garden. The Memorial Garden is cared for by the Garden Committee volunteers and I am one of those volunteers. I am responsible for spring and fall cleanup, shrub trimming, planting annuals and maintaining the gardens.

When I designed the Memorial Garden as well as the gardens described earlier, I always consider several key elements. How will the garden be viewed? Is there a purpose for the garden? How much sun/shade does the garden get as this will determine which plants will thrive in the space. I consider bloom times so as to always have something of interest in the garden throughout the season and I choose complimentary plants to create a pleasing design. There are always challenges when designing any garden and I enjoy the challenge!

I graduated from St. Olaf College with majors in Nursing and Chinese Studies, which included courses in the language as well as culture, religion and philosophy. I became interested in the language and culture after our family hosted an AFS student my senior year in high school. She was Chinese from Malaysia and she quickly became part of our family. I spent five months of my junior year in Taiwan and Hong Kong continuing my study of the language and culture. At that time we were not allowed into mainland China! At one time I was able to read and speak Chinese fairly well, but years of non-use have left me with inadequate skills, to say the least.

When I’m not gardening, I love reading, knitting, paddle boarding and snowshoeing.

Over the years I have been active on the Vestry as well as Stewardship, Properties and Memorial Garden committees. I am an usher and I do Christmas greening of the church and Easter Floral display. Currently, with a group of others, I am helping to restore and maintain the labyrinth behind the church.

My roots at St. Stephen’s run deep as both my parents’ families were founding members and my paternal grandfather, Clint Christopher, was the inspiration and motivator behind the creation of St. Stephen’s. I was baptized here and my husband, Scott Vergin, and I were married here. I am passionate about St. Stephen’s and the gardens I care for.



# IN CASE YOU'VE BEEN GONE, HERE'S WHAT YOU MISSED.

## SENIORS' COFFEE HOUR - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11

More than forty people gathered in the Commons Room on a lovely day to finally see friends, visit and catch up over coffee and donuts. It appears everyone had a good time as some came early and some stayed late!



## THE (first annual??) SUMMER ICE CREAM SOCIALS

Ice cream lovers were invited to meet to indulge in their favorite ice cream treats each month. You can still get in on the last gathering on Monday Sept. 13 at Sweet Science in Edina.



**Scoops Ice Cream Parlor**  
in Bloomington on June 14



**The Pumphouse Creamery**  
in south Minneapolis on July 12



**2 Scoops Ice Cream Eatery**  
in St. Paul on August 18



Save the date:

## **BASH AFTER DARK**

**Saturday, October 9, 2021**

**6:30 to 9:30 p.m.**



The Bash has been a part of our community since 1988. It's taken several forms over the years and in its 34-year history, the Bash has raised over \$900,000 for outreach. **100% of the proceeds from the event go to outreach efforts and they will be the primary funds for determining our Outreach budget for 2022.**

***Here's how YOU can help right now!***

### **SAVE THE DATE. Mark October 9th on your calendar today!**

We're excited to be back together in person for this year's event and you won't want to miss it! We're also offering ZOOM access for those who can't be with us in person to join in the Live Auction portion of our evening. Information on purchasing tickets will be available soon.

### **DONATE AUCTION ITEMS.**

The online auction last year was a great success and our silent auction will be held online again this year. In addition, we'll have live auction items which will be bid on in-person or virtually on the night of the event. Our auctions are the main source of funds raised by the Bash and NOW'S THE TIME to get your donations in!

### **DONATE WINE, SPIRITS & MEAT.**

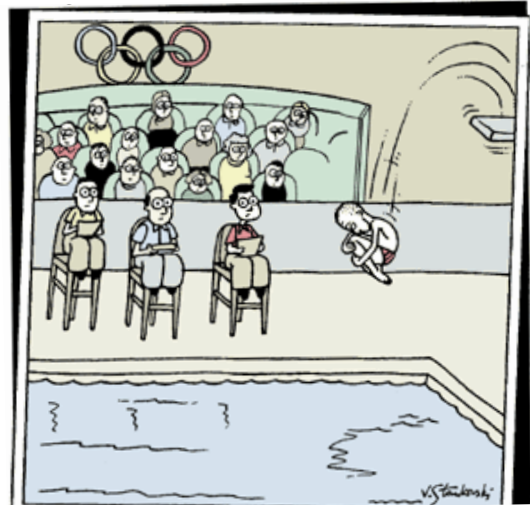
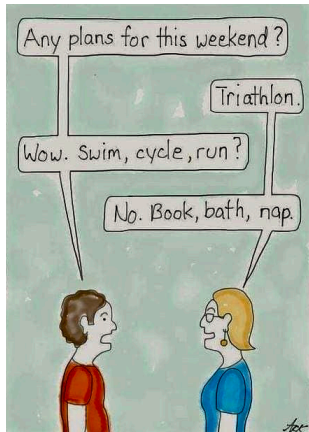
Our Wine and Spirit pull games as well as the Meat Raffle are back again this year! We rely on donations of Wine (bottle values of \$25-50 or \$50+) and Spirits (minimum bottle value \$30+) and Meat for these games. The more donations we have, the more tickets we sell, and the more money raised for outreach.

### **CONTRIBUTE FUNDS.**

A great way to support the Bash is by making a cash donation either online or via check. Every dollar matters! Mail a check to the church office (include "Bash 2021" in the memo line).

Co-chairs Sue and Jim Bizal and their team are busy making plans. Watch for more information as their plans are finalized.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
4439 West 50th Street  
Edina, MN 55424



Hopelessly behind in the score, Jack decides to soak the judges.



**THEY SAY THERE WAS A 100 METER BUTTERFLY IN TOKYO THIS SUMMER. I'M BLAMING THE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT.**