



September 28, A.D. 2017

Beloved in Christ,

Please review the attached reports in advance of the Annual Parish Meeting which is scheduled for Sunday, October 15th. Please note, this document does not include all the reports that will be submitted at the Annual Parish Meeting. If you have questions or concerns about the information included in this document, please feel free to contact me or any members of the vestry in advance of October 15th so that the meeting may be conducted and concluded in a timely manner.

In Christ,

The Rev. Jonathan M. Kell
Rector

Reports for the Annual Parish Meeting
St. Stephen's Anglican Church
October 15, A.D. 2017

Report of the Senior Warden

Reflecting on 2017 as your Senior Warden what I always come back to is all that was accomplished by the two men who proceeded me. We as a Parish owe a great debt of gratitude to Rick Gamblin and John Dinning for all their work, as well as the Vestry in the time of their stewardship. Thanks to all of you.

Over the past year with the groundwork laid by Rick, John, Neill Bryant, Fr. Kell, the Vestry and others, we were able to pass much needed changes to our bylaws. A name change to St. Stephen's Anglican Church was approved as well as a logo that reflects this change. We have made an effort to improve the Church grounds with clearing and beautification projects that are still ongoing. An expanded Columbarium has been approved and work will begin on this shortly. Again, thanks to John Dinning for his leadership with this.

Our social network platform has improved greatly and under the leadership of Fr. Kell, a new website has launched this past month. Thanks to the generosity of the members of our Parish and the work of the Vestry, we introduced new Prayer Books and new Hymnals for our services at St. Stephen's. After being contacted by a new church plant in Oklahoma, our older prayer books were sent to them as they are now transitioning to the 1928 edition. St. Stephens and Fr. Kell received a heartfelt thank you from Fr. Richard Jones expressing his gratitude for the gift. Without doubt God is at work in and through St. Stephen's.

Just a brief word about our incredible ministerial staff. Fr. Kell is a masterful teacher and is wholeheartedly committed to the traditions of the REC. There is no better Rector in our Diocese and we are privileged to have him directing and ministering to our Parish. Dcn. Richard Rankin has led us through good times and bad; what a blessing he continues to be for our Parish. We currently have three Postulants: Calvin Basil, Eric Parker, and me; very learned, capable men that mean a great deal to us as a Parish and we are thankful for their work. We are also so fortunate to have the talented Tricia Dennis to lead our Music Department. All of our Department Heads do tremendous work leading different aspects of Christian life for all ages and both genders - thank you for your hard work and dedication.

Our Vestry continues to be active in the management of the business of our church. All are very caring, intelligent individuals that come together for one common purpose, the betterment of St. Stephens. They continue to do excellent work with your best interest in mind. Thanks to all of you!

We have some difficult financial decisions to make in the coming days, but by God's grace and with the continued support and dedication of the members of St. Stephen's we will persevere. We are grateful for each and every one of you.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you as Senior Warden. This has been a very humbling, yet rewarding time and it has been an honor to work for you and with you. God Bless!

Respectfully Submitted,

Brent Belton/ Senior Warden 2017

Report of the Junior Warden

This year a few projects were completed and several are being planned:

- A new wooden cross was donated for use during worship.
- A new laptop computer was donated for Fr. Kell's use.
- A new copier was leased for the Church office.
- An easement for the installation of a power line across the north side of the church property was negotiated with Entergy.
- New prayer books were purchased with special donations and placed in the pew racks.
- Plans for expanding the columbarium were reviewed and the vestry approved the installation of an additional 64 niches.
- Plans are being made for the replacement of the protective exterior windows around the nave. Some of the windows in the parish hall need to be replaced. Quotes have been received from three companies.
- A new sign is being planned for the Church. Various designs have been reviewed by the vestry. The sign will be located on Church property to the right of the entry drive. Discussions are being held with the City of Flowood for a variance on the 10' height restriction for signs.
- The new website for the Church is up and running.
- A new security camera for the location at the back door to the office has been purchased and will be installed soon. Additional exterior security cameras and interior cameras for children's classrooms and the nursery are being considered.
- New hymnals were purchased with special donations and placed in the pew racks.
- Due to possible lightning damage, it was necessary to replace the secretary's computer and router.
- The new parish directory was published in August.
- Landscaping work including the clearing of underbrush and planting of flowers has been performed to open up and beautify the area around the parking lot and behind the playground. New shrubbery was donated and planted around the outdoor stairs leading to

the parish hall. Pine straw has been donated and spread around church beds twice. A new mailbox has been installed.

- New handrails were added to the outdoor stairs leading up to the back door of the parish hall. The open area under the outdoor stairs leading up to the nave was closed in with wood planks and painted.
- The coil for one of the outdoor air conditioning units that serves the nave was replaced.

Respectfully submitted,

David Dennis, Junior Warden

The Order of the Daughters of the Holy Cross

The Vision of the Order of the Daughters of the Holy Cross is to gather Anglican women and girls into a nurturing and empowering community called to be servants of Jesus as He unites and builds up His Body, the Church.

What is meant by being part of an Order? Persons who belong to a Christian religious order: publicly vow to imitate Jesus more closely, live a common life following a religious Rule, profess to obey certain guidelines for living, and live set apart (at least spiritually) from society in accordance with their specific religious devotion.

The Daughters of the Holy Cross have been faithfully led by Mrs. Ruth Basil Hughes for many years. In May she stepped down from her position as president and the vacuum she has left is substantial. By God's grace, another president will be elected in October. St. Stephen's has benefited greatly from the discipleship and service of the Daughters and we expect God to continue to use this lay order for His glory and our good in the years to come.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Jonathan M. Kell, Chaplain of the Daughters of the Holy Cross

The Sisters of St. Stephen's

The Sisters of St. Stephen's is an organization which provides all women and girls of the parish with the opportunity to participate in a variety of ministries to grow in the Lord as they serve others. Currently, our ministry encompasses the following areas: Hospitality; Outreach Support; Nursery/Sunday School; and Visitation.

Last year, the Sisters met to ratify new bylaws for the organization, formalizing the mission of the group. Fr. Jonathan has asked the Sisters to work with him to provide oversight

for several service ministries at St. Stephens. On October 15 the Sisters will sponsor a special Volunteer Sunday Signup event, during which all the members of the Parish are asked to consider how they might serve Christ through the various ministries of the Church for the coming year.

The Sisters hosted another successful and entertaining dinner and a show this past year and are already making plans to host another in February. We express our deepest gratitude to both Tricia Dennis and Charlotte Curtis for their work in making that event a delightful and effective fundraiser.

Charlotte Curtis served faithfully over the last twelve months as the president of the Sisters. As the Curtis family has move to Louisiana, it is necessary to elect a new president this October to ensure the continued ministry of the Sisters.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Jonathan M. Kell

Children's Church

Children's Church, directed by Christine Barron, provides hands-on, engaging, and age-appropriate lessons for four major time periods of the Church calendar. Children ages 4-12 are led through discussions and games in an exploration of Advent, Lent, Easter, and Ascension. To attend Children's Church, children are invited into the Fellowship Hall after the notices, and then are brought back to the service during the offertory.

For 2016, no money was spent, but for 2017, \$17 has been allotted to replace lost manipulatives for the Lenten lesson. More games and manipulatives will be needed for teaching about the seasons, but expenses are not projected to exceed \$75.

The dates for the future Children's Church lessons are: November 26th for Advent, February 11th for Lent, April 8th for Easter, and May 13th for Ascension.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Barron

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew is a men's ministry that meets at St. Stephen's one Saturday of every month at 8:00 am. Together we discuss current events, workings within the church, and issues that pertain to the lives of men. We currently are reviewing a study series by Bishop N.T. Wright called *Living Faith: Exploring the Essentials of Christianity*. Bishop Wright offers reflections on all aspects of our Christian Faith. Fr. Kell is extremely helpful with these

issues as well, and joins us to add his vast knowledge to the discussion when his extensive duties allow.

The Brotherhood's vision is to inspire, empower and equip men to fulfill the Great Commission. The mission is to bring men and youth to Christ through the threefold disciplines of prayer, study and service.

Discipline of Prayer: To pray daily for the spread of Christ's kingdom, especially among men and youth, and for God's blessings upon the labors of the Brotherhood.

Discipline of Study: To study the Holy Scriptures regularly and the teachings of the Church, to attain a better understanding of how to follow Christ and bring others into His kingdom.

Discipline of Service: To make continuous efforts, week by week, to bring others nearer to Christ through His Church.

We invite men of all ages who attend St. Stephen's to join us for a unique opportunity to gather together to share the Gospel. A continental breakfast is provided along with plenty of coffee! So, please take a little time out on Saturday morning for our next meeting and come fellowship with your Brothers in Christ at St. Stephen's!

Respectfully Submitted,

Brent Belton, President of St. Stephen's chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew

Music Ministry Report 2017

Organist/Choirmaster

The St. Stephen's music ministry has as its objective to worship and praise God through the medium of music, both instrumental and choral. It is our prayer that through the excellence of music, the faith might be confirmed, hearts might ascend to God, and grace might be bestowed upon all worshipers.

We have two choirs, the Chancel Choir and the Youth and Children's Choir. Also, we have had guest instrumentalists in several services over the past year. Our Chancel Choir at present has 12 members. Our Lou Underwood Memorial Music Scholarship recipients this fall are Faith Schumacher, Sallie Kaye Streeter, Brendan Moir, Marilyn Sharp, and Enriqueta Cavalier. We also welcome Aaron Bryant as a new choir member.

Thank you to all Chancel Choir members for faithfully singing in the 10:30 a.m. service each Sunday and in special services throughout the year. A special word of thanks to those who have been faithful for many years!

Our Youth and Children's Choir meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. We presently have nine members. During the hour, we include Bible stories, craft work, singing, and tone chime playing. This fall we are studying The Creation and working on memorizing Scripture. Also, our service project will be to make Thanksgiving cards for all "mostly shut-in" members of St. Stephens. The choir has been working on new songs to sing in worship services periodically throughout the year. We want to thank Christine Barron for helping with the choir when they sing in a service. She is also working on much needed new robes for the choir. All materials have been donated and Christine graciously accepted the task of making them. This project is in the works and has been great fun to plan. Thank you Christine!

We are very happy to have the new hymnals here and are thankful to all who made this possible. We pray that they will be a blessing to the whole church family.

A huge thank you goes to my husband David for being our accompanist on the guitar and helping with all activities. Thank you to all the parents who are sharing your talented children with us. This is a great group to work with! My gratitude goes to Fr. Kell for being such a wonderful guide and support for the St. Stephen's music ministry.

Psalms 146:2- "While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being."

Respectfully Submitted,

Tricia Dennis, Organist & Choir Master

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild continued to keep busy this past year with setting up for the regular Sunday services, and Saint's days and setting up and decorating for the periods around Christmas and Easter in our already beautiful church. We have a wonderful group of women who work tirelessly, and are always willing to help service the church. St. Stephen's is blessed to have this group of women!

We did lose a valuable member of the Altar Guild and the church in Charlotte Curtis. She did so many tasks and jobs for the whole church. She will be sorely missed.

Our biggest project this year was to replace the worn out liquid candles for the altar. The old ones could not be cleaned anymore, and looked dirty and sooty. We were able to do this for the Easter service, and the Altar was so beautiful with the new clean white candles. The new Paschal candle came too late for this past Easter, but we are eager to have it out next Easter.

Fr. Kell is continually teaching, and we are still learning so many wonderful things! Fr. Kell explained that since the Ciborium (the vessel that always stays on the Altar between services) contains consecrated wafers, it should always be veiled. We researched, and found a beautiful veil to cover the Ciborium in reverence to the sacrament.

The Altar Guild also helped with another of Fr. Kell's projects – for every family to make an Advent wreath. This was enjoyed by all, and everyone was so proud to have their own wreath for their home. This will be a yearly project for the St. Stephen's families.

We look forward to another year of service and learning.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Allison

Sunday School

St. Stephen's is committed to bringing everyone to a mature understanding of the faith that was once delivered to all the saints (Jude 1:3). As such, age appropriate instruction is being offered to every member of the parish. As the Church grows and gains more young families, the Church will need to continue to grow its organization and the class offerings. There are currently four different Sunday School classes which meet weekly and we should expect that this number will increase in the coming years.

St. Stephen's is blessed with dedicated and talented teachers and it is appropriate that we acknowledge them and their labors. Special thanks are offered to Barbara West, David Dennis, and Ruthie Basil along with the volunteers that assist them.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Jonathan M. Kell

Nursery

The Nursery of St. Stephen's is intended to offer safe child care for infants and children who are preparing to join the Church in her corporate worship. This past year our nursery worker, Leann Wann, looked after and cared for the younger children of our parish, ages 0-4, during the hours of Sunday school, the 10:30 Sunday service, Wednesday nights, and a few Holy Days. We had approximately eight nursery volunteers who rotated on a weekly basis. We are truly grateful for their sacrifice and charity. The number of children in nursery on any given day ranged from 2-7.

We are so grateful to Leann and everyone who volunteers,

Respectfully Submitted,

Annie Kell

Report on the Synod of the Diocese of Mid-America & the 2017 General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church

Fr. Kell, Richard and Jane Allison attended the 109th Synod of the Diocese of Mid-America, and the 55th General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church held at the Embassy Suites in Dallas, Texas June 14 – 16, 2017.

To quote from Bishop Sutton's report and Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose." Truly, there were people from all over the world here working together for Him.

Several points from the Synod held the morning of June 14:

- The Very Rev. Walter Banek From the Good Shepherd Church in Tyler, Texas was presented and elected as the Suffragant Bishop
- All by-laws are to be provided to the Ven. Dr. James T Payne, and to Deaconess Annette Johnson
- All reports including the budget were approved and are available upon request.

The General Council met the afternoon of June 14 through Friday June 16 at noon. Many reports were presented and approved. All reports are available upon request.

Bishop Sutton presented his report June 14. Bishop Sutton has devoted his prayer and attention to the vision God initially gave to Most Rev. Royal Grote- a vision that Bishop Grote called REC 100. More will be presented on this vision later.

Chris Hoyt, a most talented musician and organist from the Church of the Holy Communion and the Chairman of the Liturgical Music Commission, presented a wonderful program on the revised Hymnal at the banquet. This was the culmination of twelve years of very hard work by a group of talented individuals to update the present 1940 Hymnal. There were 400 of the original 800 that remain in the new hymnal, and many old and new favorites have been added for a total of 600 hymns. The index has been improved to include distinct categories that were omitted from the 1940 Hymnal, and more hymns added to several occasions that were lacking in the number of hymns. There was no mandate for parishes to change to the new hymnal, but the music contained therein will be more conducive to present day.

On Thursday June 15, all clergy and delegates traveled to the Church of the Holy Communion for the installation of the Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Ray R. Sutton, and a service of Holy Communion.

At the second night's banquet, a presentation of foreign missions was given by several clergy. These presentations were most interesting and humbling to those attending.

Presenters included:

- Fr. Matt Colvin, who visited St. Stephens with his family last fall, who were in mission work in the Philippines and Indonesia

- Bishop Meyer and his wife, Grace, from Germany
- Bishop Milic from Croatia and Serbia
- Bishop Willans Mendez Suarez, along with Claudia Dorrington, presented missions in Cuba

Throughout the meeting, Bishop Sutton presented the program first visualized by Bishop Grote on REC 100.

To Revitalize Mission in the Parish Means:

- Remaining Committed to Prayer Book Worship as we have approved in the REC
- “Reaching out without dumbing down” (Marva Dawn book title), the worship of God or the content of the faith
- Rising from a preservation mindset to promotion of the Gospel... The dual movement of Holy Altar Table to Mission and Mission to the Throne of God should drive everything we do... Therefore mission/evangelism is more than a committee tacked on to everything else.
- Resulting in the making of disciples in the Anglican Way to become worshippers through the multiplication of prayer book congregations.
- Realizing that the world of post modernity is different and has rendered certain approaches to evangelism much less effective.

We should see our work of Mission as a Parish Task of the Whole... The Entire Community of the Parish bringing people to Christ. Question: Is our Parish a mission-al Community?

1. The Parish must become a Community desiring to move from preservation to proclamation, to become a worshipping community on mission.
2. The vestry should create a five-year long-range plan..with objective, quantifiable goals, with a vision and mission reflected in them, and a strategy for developing a Proclamation Parish with front porch ministries to all three disciple groups/cultures with all four aspects of the Great Commission
3. Present the recorded Gospel Tree sermon, the REC 100 Prospectus and the Revitalization talks to the parish
4. Create front porch ministries
5. Form intercessory teams and Daughters of the Holy Cross prayer groups to pray for the parish day and night
6. Commit to the REC 100 in the church, your diocese, and parish

One last point, Bishop Grote and Sutton want parishes to commit to having each adult member of the church to donate \$100 each to missions like we did for the Lenten season this year.

Respectively submitted by: Richard and Jane Allison

Missions

During this church year we supported the Colvin Family as missionaries to Indonesia. Due to health issues, the Colvins decided that they needed to leave Indonesia. The Vestry has

decided to focus our church's foreign missions efforts in support of Fr. James Crofts and St. Stephen's Reformed Episcopal Church in Neuss, Germany. On Sunday, October 22nd, Dr. West will present his ministry and how we can assist him and the church he serves.

St. Stephen's is to be commended for its generous response to the Bhp. Suttons call to give money to toward the building of a Reformation Museum in Croatia. St. Stephen's collectively gave \$3,651.00 throughout Lent to assist this means of Gospel. Thank you.

St. Stephen's has also generously exercised charity by giving to the relief of those who have been effected by hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

The Daughter of the Holy Cross and other church members supported the ministry of Joni and Friends, Jackson by delivering Christmas gifts to community members, as well as children of our own church, with disabilities. We will engage in this ministry again this Christmas. Members may sign up on the missions' bulletin board to participate in this program. We need to let Joni and Friends know the numbers of recipients we can gift by November 8. In addition, The Sisters of St. Stephen's and individual church members financially sponsored a family with two sons with disabilities to attend the Joni and Friends Family Camp in July. We hope to have the family visit with us shortly.

In December members of our church, including children and young people, rang the bell for the Salvation Army in front of the Dogwood Festival Kroger. We will be doing this work again this year. We will know the exact date and location by Missions Sunday. Families and individuals will be able to sign up to participate once the date has been confirmed.

Finally, in the past year we began helping to serve lunch at the Stewpot in downtown Jackson. About a dozen members of St. Stephen's, at various times, participated in this program. We will continue to support this ministry until at least December.

At the last General Council Dr. West was elected to serve on the Board of Foreign Missions. Her participation will help us to be fully informed about our denomination's foreign missions efforts.

Recommendations:

1. That a missions committee be formed to guide the involvement of our congregation in local and foreign missions works.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. West

Missions Coordinator