

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
180 Route 539, Whiting, NJ 08759  
Phone: 732/350-2121, Fax: 732/350-6000  
ssechurch@gmail.com  
www.saintstephenswhiting.org  
A parish of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey

The Rt. Rev. William H. (Chip) Stokes, Bishop  
The Rev. Paul A. Van Sant, Sr., Rector  
Sandra Gaskill, Treasurer  
Randy Walton, Assistant Treasurer  
Pam Unger, Organist & Choir Director  
Colleen Clover, Parish Administrator  
Tom O'Brien, Sexton  
Janet Spieth, Office Volunteer

**Wardens and Vestry 2017**  
Janet Spieth, Rector's Warden  
Jim Jados, Property Warden  
Laura Gural, Richard Smithson  
Shelagh Bluni, Lillian Fink, Pat Russo  
Carol Cavanaugh, William Bodine, Randy Walton  
JoAnn Smithson, Clerk

**Mission Statement**

To proclaim the faith that our years have engendered: to use the diversity of our Episcopal experience while working toward a common goal; to teach the young about Jesus and to reach out and affect the lives of those in the community.

*"Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them."* Matthew 7:20

**Welcome to St. Stephen's Church!**

We thank you for joining us for worship today. Please stay for coffee hour, and sign our guest book at the podium in the Narthex. If you are looking for a church home, you have just found it. We would love to have you at St. Stephen's. Arrangements for weddings and baptisms can be made by speaking directly with the Rev. Paul A. Van Sant, Sr., Rector.

**To Report Illness, Hospitalization, etc.**

Please notify the church office 732/350-2121 of any illnesses or hospitalizations. If it is an emergency you may also reach Janet Spieth, Rector's Warden at 732/716-1656 or Father Paul at his home 609/268-2864.

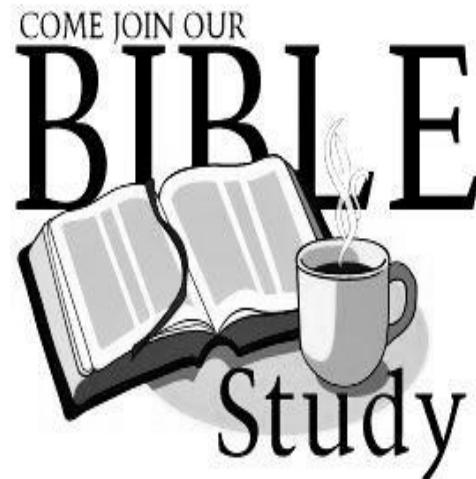
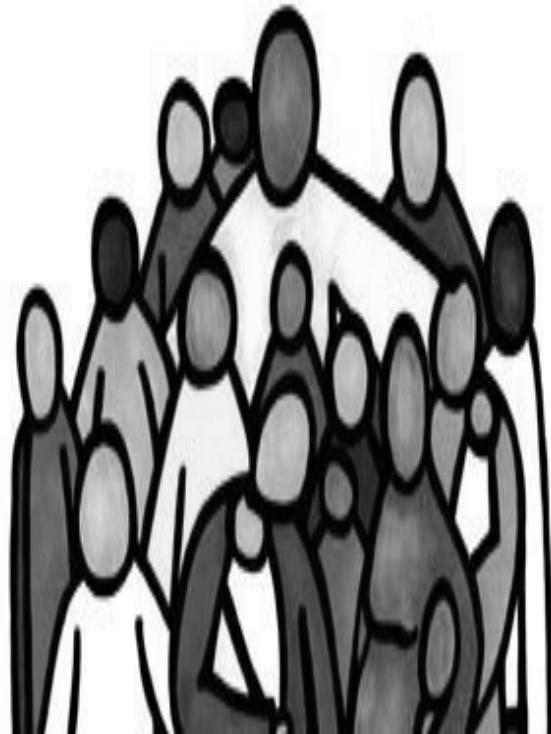
... when the  
goodness  
and  
loving  
Kindness  
of God  
our Savior  
appeared,  
he saved us ...

**TITUS 3:4-5, ESV**



*Come to Bible Study  
on Mondays @ 6PM-  
Tuesdays @ 1PM*

*We are studying the book of Mark*



### Collect of the Day

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever.  
*Amen.*

### First Reading

*Isaiah 62:6-12*

Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: "I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored; but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the Lord, and those who gather it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary." Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples. Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him."

And they shall be called The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought out, a city not forsaken.



## Psalm 97

- 1 The Lord is King;  
let the earth rejoice; \*  
let the multitude of the isles be glad.
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him, \*  
righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.
- 3 A fire goes before him \*  
and burns up his enemies on every side.
- 4 His lightnings light up the world; \*  
the earth sees it and is afraid.
- 5 The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, \*  
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- 6 The heavens declare his righteousness, \*  
and all the peoples see his glory.
- 7 Confounded be all who worship carved images  
and delight in false gods! \*  
Bow down before him, all you gods.
- 8 Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, \*  
because of your judgments, O Lord.
- 9 For you are the Lord,  
most high over all the earth; \*  
you are exalted far above all gods.
- 10 The Lord loves those who hate evil; \*  
he preserves the lives of his saints  
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
- 11 Light has sprung up for the righteous, \*  
and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.
- 12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, \*  
and give thanks to his holy Name.



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Office Closed December 25– January 3, 2018

CHIME CHOIR: Wednesdays 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
HEALING SERVICE Thursday 10:00 am  
CHOIR PRACTICE: Thursdays 1:30 pm  
ECW Meetings 2017: Dates to follow  
ORDER OF ST. LUKE: 2nd Thursday of each month after  
Healing Service  
PINELAND SYMPHONIC BAND: Fridays 9:30 am

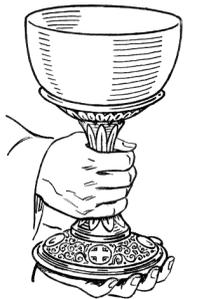


**CHAPEL CLOTHES LINE** sells well to groups and meeting at our church. Now accepting **LADIES WINTER** clothes **ONLY** in **TOP** condition, (clean, with no missing buttons, tears or stains). Also, continue to use the **FOUR BINS** in our parking lot for *out of season clothing, all men's wear*, and other items. We are very appreciative of your kind donations to, and purchases from, this fundraising project.

**LAY EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS NEEDED** There is an **URGENT** call out for Lay Eucharistic Ministers for our 10:00 a.m. service. Two LEMs are needed at this service.



**ST. STEPHEN'S PRAYER CHAIN** is in need of additional members. The Prayer Chain is a dedicated group of parishioners who will pray for any who are in need. If you are interested or would like further information, please contact Greta Pearl at 732/350-7584 for details. Greta is the contact when placing, on the Prayer Chain, your name or the names of family, neighbors, or friends who would like prayers for healing, comfort, or any other purpose.



**CARE GIVERS VOLUNTEERS** JoAnn Smithson is the Congregational Coordinator for Care Givers Volunteers here at St. Stephen's. Please continue to use the mailbox in the Office to put in your hours. JoAnn's phone number is 609/268-0821.

**HEALING PRAYERS** The Order of St. Luke provides prayers of healing to anyone after Holy Communion on the last Sunday of the month at each service. Members are also available every Sunday after the services. Look for a member near the baptismal font if you would like a prayer of healing after any service.

**YOUR PERSONAL ESTATE PLANNING** Prayerfully consider making an endowment gift to St. Stephen's as part of your estate plan.

**RECTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND** Thank you to all who have donated. There are parishioners as well as other members in our community who benefit greatly from this valued fund. If you wish to contribute, please use the basket on the back table.



### *Just a Little Donkey*

*Just a little Donkey  
but on my back I bore  
the one and only Savior  
the world was waiting for  
Just a little donkey  
but I was strong and proud  
I gladly carried Mary  
through the chaos of the crowd  
I brought her to the stable  
Where she made a tiny bed  
A place for Baby Jesus  
to lay his little head  
I pray the world remembers  
that special Christmas Night  
when just a little donkey  
carried Heaven's precious Light*

## Second Reading

*Titus 3:4-7*

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

## Holy Gospel

*Luke 2:1-20*

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for

them in the inn. And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God

in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

## Welcome to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Welcome to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We welcome people of every race and tongue and faith to this celebration. We invite you to participate fully and to join us in rejoicing at the birth of the one who is the fulfillment of the deepest and best hopes of all people and all faiths.

Luke describes Jesus' birth with the song of angels and the shepherds who were the first to learn of that birth and the first to come to see the infant. In those days shepherds were a despised group rejected by most people. Luke's inclusion of them in the story stresses that God has come for all people, high and low, rich and poor.

Centuries earlier, Isaiah had foreseen the coming of the Messiah as the establishment of God's reign. This event would summon all people into God's Kingdom and make of them "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord." Paul, writing to Titus, tells us that in the water of baptism we too have been made part of that people and given eternal life. In story, song, word, and sacrament we celebrate the coming of God into the world and renew our own place in the story of God's salvation of all of humanity.

From *The Rite Light: Reflections on the Sunday Readings and Seasons of the Church Year*.

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## Announcements

December 25, 2017

### Prayer to send out LEMs with the Sacrament:

**Celebrant:** N. we send you out to share Communion this week with those who have been entrusted to your care.

**People:** May you carry the prayers of all of us as you take this Sacrament of Christ's presence.

**Celebrant:** Continues with a closing prayer.

*The Sanctuary Candle is given to the Glory of God*

*In memory of Pat Laursen by her husband Carl*

*And in honor of my sister Claire Wolpert by Stefanie Rotsaert*

*And in memory of my husband Robert by Greta Pearl*



*And in memory of my husband Robert by Greta Pearl*

*The Altar Flowers are give to the glory of God*

*In loving memory of my wonderful wife Pat by Carl Laursen*

*And*

*In memory of my husband Robert*

*By Greta Pearl*

### ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNION SERVICES

|                 |                             |         |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| The Pines       | 1st Sunday of each month at | 9:30 am |
| AristaCare      | 1st Monday of each month at | 2:00 pm |
| The Arbors      | 2nd Monday of each month at | 2:00 pm |
| The Pines       | 3rd Monday of each month at | 2:00 pm |
| Crestwood Manor | 4th Monday of each month at | 2:00 pm |