



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Troy, MI 48098

May / June 2021

Come in! All are Welcome

Happy Easter everyone! I hope you had a wonderful celebration of our Lord's resurrection. Interestingly enough, it also coincided with the "resurrection" of our in-person Sunday Service — and the Easter Service was fantastic! We even had a quartet of choir members to sing! We had an indoor/outdoor Fellowship Hour and an Easter Egg Hunt after the service.

We are "open for business". In the last Witness I wrote you about how I think of St. Stephen's as the focal point of our Community – a Community Center. I am happy to inform you that our Community Center is open and we are eager to see it busy with committee meetings, Bible Study, renters, and many social events for our youth, adults – and our community.



Mark your calendars – Annual Meeting (Part 2) Sunday, May 16, 2021. I would like to invite you all to come to the Annual Meeting Part 2. While we were able to take care of the important business aspects of our Annual Meeting in January, we were not able to recognize

those who helped us get through last year, celebrate our accomplishments – and talk about where we go from here. I think this is at least as important as the business part of the meeting. We plan to have this meeting in-person starting right after the 10 am service in the Sanctuary. We will have morning beverages and some form of treats served at the meeting. I hope you can all come out and join us for this celebration of our work together as a Faith Community.

Mark your calendars – Parish Picnic Sunday, June 13, 2021. We will recognize our High School graduates from both this year and last year. We will get together on the lawn behind the church and just enjoy. Enjoy some good food, enjoy catching up with each other and enjoy that warm feeling of community we all love about St. Stephen's. I hope you can all come out and join us!

Hopefully, you will have other reasons to be at church and our community center. We will be having our spring clean-up in May, and of course, Sundays are always an option....

Peace,

Dave Stein

Sr. Warden

Message from the Pulpit

Finally!....Winter has left us and Spring is here! (Trumpet fanfare!!) Although it's been a chilly beginning, almost every growing thing in nature is blossoming and the birds are foraging for nesting materials. All is well in God's natural world.

Michigan's four seasons dramatically teach us about life...not just the lives of the birds, bees, flowers, and trees but also about the cycle of our own lives. From birth to death, our earthly lives are a cycle, and we experience it only once. And that's why we have memories...those we treasure and some we would like to forget. Memories are the mileposts of our lives; they remind us of where we've been, the best paths we've followed



Cont. Pg 3

Mother's Day around the World

May is the month for Mother's Day. Did you know that Mother's Day is a relatively new holiday? In most countries, Mother's Day is a recent observance derived from the holiday as it has evolved in the United States. As adopted by other countries and cultures, the holiday has different meanings, is associated with different events (religious, historical or legendary), and is celebrated on different dates. I did a search in Wikipedia and here's a sampling of how the world celebrated Mother's Day.

In Taiwan, Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of the month of May, coinciding with Buddha's birthday and the traditional ceremony of "washing the Buddha". In 1999 the Taiwanese government established the second Sunday of May as Buddha's birthday, so they would be celebrated on the same day.

Flowers are an important part of Mother's Day as well. Traditionally in Australia, the chrysanthemum is given to mothers for Mother's Day as the flower is naturally in season during May (autumn in Australia) and ends in "mum", a common affectionate shortening of "mother" in Australia. Men will often wear a chrysanthemum in their lapels in honor of mothers. In Japan, Mother's Day was initially commemorated during the Shōwa period as the birthday of the Empress on March 6, 1931 when the Imperial Women's Union was organized. Currently Mother's Day in Japan is a rather commercial holiday, and people typically give their mothers gifts of flowers such as red carnations and roses.

Mother's Day is becoming more popular in China. Carnations are a very popular Mother's Day gift and the most sold flowers in relation to the day. In 1997 Mother's Day was set as the day to help poor mothers and to remind people of the poor mothers in rural areas such as China's western region. The Chinese Mothers' Festival Promotion Society wants to replace the Western-style gift of carnations with lilies, which, in ancient times, we're planted by Chinese mothers when children left home.

In Argentina, Mother's Day is celebrated on the third Sunday of October. The holiday was originally celebrated on the old liturgical date for the celebration of the Virgin Mary. Around 1982, national merchants asked that Mother's Day be moved to the third Sunday of October to stimulate sales in the second half of that month. In the Netherlands, Mother's Day is all about flower sales.

In some countries, Mother's Day is more political. In Bolivia, Mother's Day is celebrated on 27 May. The date commemorates the Battle of La Coronilla, which took place on 27 May 1812, during the Bolivian War of Independence. In this battle, women fighting for the country's independence were slaughtered by the Spanish army. It is not a festive day, but all schools hold activities and festivities throughout the day. Mother's day in Thailand is celebrated on the birthday of the Queen of Thailand on August 12. The holiday was first celebrated around the 1980s as part of the campaign by the Prime Minister of Thailand to promote Thailand's Royal family. In Bulgaria, 8 March is associated with International Women's Day. The holiday honors women as human beings and equal partners.

In the Philippines, mothers are called the "light of the household" around which all activities revolve. Families treat mothers to movies or lunch or dinner out, spend time with their mothers in a park or shopping at the mall, or give their mothers time to pamper themselves. Most families celebrate at home. Children perform most chores that the mother routinely handles, prepare food or give their mothers small handcrafted tokens such as cards.

The modern Mother's Day has been assimilated into Indian culture as well. In India, mothers are considered as god to their children. Indians do not celebrate the occasion as a religious one, but do their best to thank their mothers for care and love.

In Belgium, in the week before this holiday children make little presents at primary school. Typically, the father will buy croissants and other sweet breads and pastries and bring these to the mother while she is still in bed – the beginning of a day of pampering for the mother. But ... there are also many people who celebrate Mother's Day on 15 August instead. They consider that day (Assumption) the classical Mother's Day and the observance in May an invention for commercial reasons.

I hope you enjoyed this quick tour of Mother's Day around the world.

Peace,

Dave Stein

Sr. Warden



Pulpit (from pg 1)

and the wrong turns we've made, and the great friends we've known along the way. They give us pictures of the good times we've shared and the places we've visited. Many memories are created from the traditions we've established, and sometimes forgotten memories are brought to life when someone says, "Remember when..."?

The COVID pandemic has certainly created memories that we will carry with us for many years. We will remember how the virus caused us to rearrange our everyday lives and to live without many of the conveniences we've learned to take for granted. We've learned that we've had to sacrifice many things and that's been difficult for many of us. Perhaps the greatest sacrifice was that which we have so casually taken for granted...our freedom of mobility. Lockdown and quarantine are now common words for us.



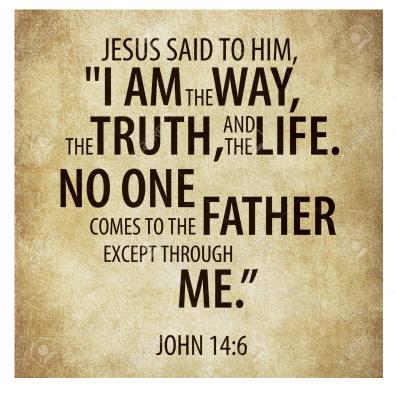
As we look back on the pandemic days, we will all have memories to share...and many will remark about how the restrictions and limitations severely inconvenienced them and prevented them from doing the things they normally would. Yes, we have been inconvenienced, but that seems to be such a small sacrifice considering the potential impact of our actions on the health and safety of everyone.

We are in the season of rebirth and it is beautiful. This is a good time for us to count the blessings we've received, to acknowledge the lessons we've learned, and to look forward with joy to the coming months. We have much to look forward to: the anticipated arrival of a new priest for St. Stephen's, the end of the spread of the virus, and the growth of our families. As we make new memories, we can also recall precious memories of our past and thank God for giving us the opportunities to make and keep those treasured memories.

So, my friends, it's the season to begin anew with refreshed spirits and a positive attitude. And as our current Sunday morning dismissal says, "Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit! Alleluia!!

Yours in Christ.

Mother Sharon





Priest Search Status

The Priest interview committee is looking forward with prayerful anticipation to the month ahead. May 1st is the deadline for candidates to submit their materials for consideration. Bishop Perry and Rev. Ekavag will then finalize their review of the candidates and forward them to

committee for consideration. our Although we do not have any specifics, we understand that our greatly improved parish profile documents and other support materials have been well received and that they have yielded positive results. If you would like to see of these materials. some www.ststephenstrov.org and click on the CLERGY SEARCH link at the top of the home page.



Although it will be difficult to keep you updated on any specifics due to the confidential nature of the process, we will continue to share general updates on the progress. However, YOUR PRAYERS are the most critical factor in our efforts to find the shepherd God has planned for us. Mother Sharon has written a wonderful prayer for this purpose that we use at each Sunday service. The community of St. Stephen's is strong in faith and strong in prayer. Thank you for providing your support in these next few critical months.

We'll Be Checking In

A vestry member may be calling within the next month to chat with you for a few minutes. Our fellowship hour after church allows the vestry to hear from different parishioners and learn what is going on in their lives and how St Stephens is a part of that. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's been a year since we have had time to gather and talk.

Vestry members will be reaching out to our church family members to see if you have questions or concerns. They will also discuss upcoming events. We look forward to connecting with you soon.

Miranda Spates vestry member



Holy and gracious God, you have created us in your own image and have blessed us with many gifts for the benefit of all our brothers and sisters and for your glory.

Guide us as we search for our new priest, that we may use our gifts of patience, compassion, wisdom, and prayer to bring us to a place of peace and confidence in your plan.

We know that our new priest will come in your own time to shepherd us and grow with us as we continue our path of ministry in your name.

Grant us strength and increase our faith as we await the new shepherd of our flock.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen
Mother Sharon

So technically Moses was the first man to download files from the cloud using a tablet.





Amy Ambry

Dylan Moose

Meghann Armstrong

Kim Morrow

Mary Bandsuch

Kenny Nelson

Tyler Braidwood

Mayme Oliver

Marge Coughenour

Zoey Rose

Jenny Dolan

Emily Thompson

Betty Feighner

Greg Thompson

Harold Ford

Joyce Vance

Ron Goetzke

Michelle Walter

Adrian Gross

Greyson Ingersoll

Sophie Wasik

Inge Wojas

Mary Koske

Jerome Wojas

Helen Livitzky

Ed Yates

Rick Lowery

Mike Montgomery

Those in the Armed Services

Nathan Cremeans—grandson of Barb Whitaker lan L'Hommedieu – godson of Linda Pierce Stephen L'Hommedieu—godson of Linda Pierce Kyle Rogowski—nephew of Ken & Kris Fuhr Jim Sands—grandson of Sharon Sands Gordon Bagley - friend of Vida family Capt. John Zimmer - friend of Vida family

These Parish Families

5/2

Margaret Fielder

Nancy Fischer

5/9

Steve & Corinne Fragnoli

Ken & Kris Fuhr

5/16 Dan & Tammy Gerard

Katelyn, Andrew, Brendan, & Emily

Marilyn Gilbert

5/23 Alan & Helen Giles

Liz Golding

5/30 Sue Gore

Adrian & Bonnie Gross

6/6

Kristi & Dave Grubb

Gillian & Molly

Claire Grutta

6/13 Paul & Melissa Hardy

Jacob, Cathryn & Mackenzie

Kathryn Hassell

6/20

Chris Herfurth

Kristin Kender & Brandon

Hespenheide

Bryson & Iris

6/26 Bob & Cathy Hoffman

Joe & Jan Hopper

May - the month of Mary and Mothers

I was raised Roman Catholic (and attended a Catholic School), May was always a special month. Not only is May the month we celebrate Mother's Day, it is also the month of Mary, the Mother of God. One of the signature events in our parish – right up there with Christmas and Easter in terms of pageantry – was the Crowning of the Virgin Mary. I have learned that this was also a tradition maintained in some fashion in the Episcopal Church as well.

A number of traditions link the month of May to Mary. In ancient Greece, May was the month dedicated to Artemis and some people allege that the reverence for this goddess was transferred to Mary with the Chistianization of Europe. Later, the Coronation of the Virgin became a popular subject in art. Alfonso X, king of Castile wrote in his "Cantigas de Santa Maria" about the special honoring of Mary during specific dates in May. Eventually, the entire month was filled with special observances and devotions to Mary. The tradition of honoring Mary in a month-long May devotion is believed to have originated in Italy, but spread eventually around the Roman Catholic world in the 19th century.

The queen symbol was attributed to Mary because she was a perfect follower of Christ, who is the absolute "crown" of creation. She is the Mother of the Son of God, who is the messianic King. Mary is the Mother of Christ, the Word Incarnate... "He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; the Lord will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Lk 1:32-33). Elizabeth greeted the Blessed Virgin, pregnant with Jesus, as "the mother of my Lord" (Lk 1:41-43). Mary is the perfect follower of Christ. The maid of Nazareth consented to God's plan; she journeyed on the pilgrimage of faith; she listened to God's Word and kept it in her heart; she remained steadfastly in close union with her Son, all the way to the foot of the Cross; she persevered in prayer with the Church. Thus, in an eminent way she won the "crown of righteousness" (II Tim 4:8), the "crown of life" (Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10), the "crown of glory" (I Pet 5:4) that is promised to those who follow Christ.

In my childhood parish, one of the girls in the eighth grade class (the "senior" class) was selected to be the May Queen and was given the honor of carrying

the crown and placing it on Mary's head during the ceremony. My older sister was selected when she was in eighth grade. Our whole family was so proud we could bust! The children's choir practiced, the side altar dedicated to Mary was wreathed in lilacs that all the kids brought from home. The Altar Guild pulled out all the stops to make the altar and the statue of Mary absolutely beautiful. The crowning was done on Mother's Day. With great pomp and circumstance, the May Queen and her court marched up the isle to the altar while the choir led the congregation in song. She would climb to the altar and carefully place the crown on the statue of Mary. The altar was maintained in this splendor for the entire month. It was a great way to begin Mother's Day. And, my mother who raised ten kids with my dad in a drafty old farmhouse with one bathroom certainly deserved at least one day off. She made sure we were presentable (well, she certainly tried!), got our chores done, did our homework and learned something about the Golden Rule. She would say, "Just because you have the right, it doesn't make it right." She was the center of our family.

If you are a mother, God bless you! If you have a mother, give her a big hug and say a special prayer for her – and give her a break once in a while.

Peace, Dave Stein Sr. Warden





May

June

Name	Date	Name	Date
Thomas West	1	Robert Baker	3
Sandy Jose	4	Brady Dengler	5
Claire Brumfield	5	Mary Jane Kerr	7
Emily Gerard	5	Pauleen Ottenhoff	7
Saramma Sundareson 5		Kay Coran	8
Barb Spina	6	Evan DeCiantis	9
Emmett Thiel	7	Hannah DeCiantis	9
Suzanne Gore	8	Brendan Gerard	9
David Eldon	11	John Morley	12
Roy Waters	13	Emma Boldt	13
Kristina Grubb	13	Catherine O'Brien	15
Cathy Hoffman	13		
Jacob Hardy	14	Rachel Rich	16
Caleb Sobolewski	15	Keegan Dengler	17
Lucinda Sabino	19	Kamsi Ezeugwa	18
Quinn Baker	21	Judy McClendon	25
Donna Bronsteen	24	Connie Jose	26
George Klempay	25	Connor Duggan	27
James Carnagie	26	Liz Golding	27
Adrian Gross	26	Garret Fragnoli	30
Peter Burean	31	Paul Kish	30

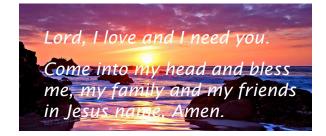
May

Name	Date
Margaret & Steve Brandon	2
Karol Sprague & James Carnagie	2
Elaine & Ed Church	11
Jan & David Eldon	20
Amy & Rob Redmer	23
Kris & Ken Fuhr	24
Sara Sue & Bob Westbury	26

June

Name	Date
Katherine & Michael Sobolewski	2
Kathy & Colin Davis	11
Kristina & Dave Grubb	12
Donna & Bob Brokenshire	18
Peggy & George Klempay	19
Melissa & Daniel Duggan	19
Melissa & Paul Hardy	24
Virginia & Lee Bennett	26
Alicia & Bob Baker	27
Jill & David Stein	30

Grant them your blessing, O God, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep their promises and vows; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.





It may appear that the Buildings and Grounds team has been a little quiet for the past few months. But as usual, that is not the case. We 've been very active in the overall building maintenance. This past winter some ice dammed near the back door and other areas

on the roof which needed to be removed. We still have some roof leaks that need to be addressed again.



We replaced two church furnaces and the air conditioners. This makes five furnace replacements in the past three years. The church furnaces were over 30 years old and deteriorating rapidly. The air conditioner units will be connected over the next few weeks.

The next project for everyone to help on is the Spring Cleanup. This will take place on Saturday, May 22 at 9:00 a.m. It is our yearly time to spruce things up for our church grounds. Plan a project and bring some tools and let's have some fun working together and beautifying our church. We hope to see as many volunteers as possible. Thank you very much.

Dave Eldon
Pat Wojas
Justin Wojas
Joan Morgan-Vestry Liaison



Lord, I'm weary. My energy is sagging, and my motivation is lagging. And I am so in need of you. I need your strength and your fresh touch to get back on track again. Your Word says the joy of the Lord is my strength. If that's true, then I need your joy to replace all the bone-tired parts of my mind, body, and soul.

The pressures of life sometimes push me into a corner, rendering me helpless to move forward. A hundred voices call my name, and I feel paralyzed at times to answer, not knowing where to turn. Lord, help me not to quit, to keep running the race faithfully, and to find strength in that safe, secret place of yours, under the shadow of the Almighty.

I need your strength to say no when I'm tempted to surrender to harmful things, or when selfishness clings to my clothes and won't let go. I need your strength to say yes, when cowardice and fear nudge me to deny the convictions of my heart. I need your strength to reach out in love to those both close to me and all around me. When don't I need your strength, God?

You are my rock, and I run to you today, believing that you will lift up my heavy arms, that you will fuel me for the tasks you've given me, and that your joy will completely consume the weakness of my life and make me strong again. I don't want to stay grounded, crippled by limitations and failed attempts. I'm tired of feeble efforts. Lord, I want to mount up with wings like an eagle and not just fly. I want to soar.

Renew my strength, Lord. Fill me with your supernatural power to overcome each obstacle in my path. With my eyes on you, Lord, with you walking beside me, working through me, I can make it. Thank you, Lord.

Joan Morgan



Outreach Thanks You

On behalf of the Outreach Committee, I would like to thank all those who have made generous cash contributions and/ or donations of food, clothing, cleaning supplies and household goods. It is an important mission of St. Stephen's that we continue to assist those in need. As you know, especially during this pandemic, the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves is great. The selflessness and heartfelt generosity of our parish family doesn't go unnoticed in our community.

Thank you for the ability you provide St. Stephen's to assist in this important ministry.

Warmest regards,

Kathy DeCiantis
Vestry Liaison, Outreach Committee

Please Help on May 30th to Serve Lunch at Crossroads

On Sunday, May 30th from 8:30am-1:30pm we have been asked to help serve lunch at Crossroads Soup Kitchen. Crossroads of Michigan, founded in 1971 is a social service outreach agency located in Detroit. The agency in partnership with parishes, local companies and other organizations in the metro area, offers assistance in the form of a hand-up in a welcoming, clean and safe environment. Please email Joan Morgan at clerk@ststephenstroy.org or Kathy DeCiantis at kmdeciantis@comcast.net if you would like to help in this ministry. Thank you.



"St. Stephen's Episcopal Church seeks to be a vibrant, multigenerational Christian Community combining Tradition with Humanity and Humor as we worship God and serve the community and each other."



Together We Will...

Sing Out, in worship to God,

Reach Out, in service to others,

Cry Out, with others in times of need,

Find Out, about our faith, and

Laugh Out Loud Together...

THE CASE FOR CHRIST

Last year, while I was quarantined, I starved to be spiritually fed. I stumbled upon Lee Strobel on YouTube. I previously viewed the movie about him, *The Case for Christ*. The IMDB storyline states the following to describe the movie: An award-winning investigative journalist -- and avowed atheist -- who applies his well-honed journalistic and legal skills to disprove the newfound Christian faith of his wife... with unexpected, life-altering results.

While the movie was very entertaining, watching the YouTube video of him describing his transformation and his findings is mesmerizing. He discusses how his family moved into a new

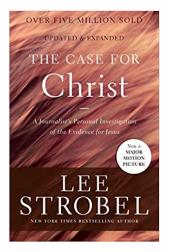
apartment in Chicago where his wife befriends a Christian neighbor who invites her to her church. Lee was legal editor for the Chicago Tribune and an avowed atheist. As he noticed the changes



Christianity made in his wife, he sets out to prove that Christianity is false using his legal investigative journalist skills. As Saul/Paul became a convert on the road to Mecca, so did Lee during his two-year investigative journey.

Lee understood that Christianity is based on the concept of the

resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the resurrection Christianity has no foundation. He sets out to provde that Christ was never executed, that Jesus resurrection was just a legend, and that the tomb was empty or the body was never entombed. At the end of his investigation, he examines the eyewitnesses of the risen Christ. While you may easily guess where he ends up, the data he provides and his conversion is compelling to watch.



Lee has written several books and can be seen in other videos on YouTube. Sometimes it takes a former atheist to bring us closer to Jesus Christ.

Rob Redmer





Confirmation is scheduled for June 26 at Christ Church, Cranbrook. Please let Mother Sharon know if you are interested in being confirmed, received from another denomination, or would like to reaffirm your confirmation vows.

We will be having classes to learn about the Episcopal Church and our faith, and these classes are also open to anyone who simply wants to learn more about being an Episcopalian. Sign up soon!

Peace, Sharon



Sunday School - Alive and Kicking

What a year we have had! The Sunday school classes and outings were off to an amazing start and then March 2020 came along and everything came to a standstill. But now we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and we are making plans for a terrific 2021-22 Sunday school year.

During the shutdown, Gretchen Waters and I put together Sunday school kits so the younger children could do the lessons with their parents.

Similarly, for Vacation Bible School, we provided the kids with kits full of lesson crafts to do at home. We



did this in conjunction with Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church across the street. This Easter we were able to have our annual Easter egg hunt with the Easter bunny making an appearance.

We have an outdoor tree-top obstacle course outing planned for the older kids in June. In addition to getting them together again, it will acquaint them with Evan DeCiantis who will be joining our teaching staff. The youth will also provide input regarding possible events for the coming year.

We couldn't have a youth pilgrimage last year, and this year is still too uncertain; but we hope to remedy that in the summer of '22 with a great event. High school graduates from last year and this year will also be invited. The youth auction will take place again in May of "22 to help support the funding of the pilgrimage and the many other activities we are starting to plan which will begin as soon as it is safe to do so.

We have missed the kids and look forward to seeing them and feeling their energy once again.

Jackie Ingersoll

Sunday School Teachers Needed

We are well into planning for next year's Sunday school, but we have one hole we need to fill. We are lacking some teachers. There is an opening in the

J2A (Middle school age) class for a lead teacher and an assistant. Scott Armstrong needs an assistant to help him in



the YAC (High school age) class.

Evan DeCiantis has joined our YACYM group, but his job as a realtor is not always compatible with Sunday school class times. So, instead of teaching, he is going to help us out by helping with our outings, which will be great. Gretchen Waters and I teach the PK-3 class. If you are interested in working with kids that age, let me know and we may be able to work something out.

Class Times

PK-3 During the 10 am service-

enter the service at the Peace.

J2A and YAC After Communion until noon

every other week.

Volunteers are critical to our success. Please think hard and pray about this calling. Our children deserve a high-quality Sunday School program.

Please call me if you have any questions or wish to discuss options.

Jackie Ingersoll 248 704 3476



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Ken Fuhr	YACYM				
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Ami O'Neill	Publisher	office@ststephenstroy.org			
E-mail, bring to church or	fax your articles				

Weekly Service Schedule (until further notice)

Weeknight Compline 9:00 pm

Prayers / Sermon on Facebook Sunday, 7:30 am

Eucharist with instrumental Sunday, 10 am

music

Livestream Video Sunday, 10 am

If you have e-mail, you can receive our newsletter faster! Please send your e-mail address to

office@ststephenstroy.org. Thank you in advance for helping us with our continued effort to.....THINK GREEN!



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

5500 North Adams Road Troy, MI 48098

Please remember St. Stephen's in your will.