

FROM THE DEAR PEOPLE OF GOD,



We are at the time of year referred to as “ordinary time.” Most of us know it as the Pentecost Season. This season comprises the bulk of the Liturgical Year. At least in part, the reason we use green as the liturgical color is to symbolize nature - the time of being in this world, ordinary time. Consequently, over the millennia, the church has tended to drift off into some form of lethargy. Afterall, the bulk of major feasts days are in other seasons of the year.

However, I would submit to you that such an understanding is way off the mark. Ordinary time, or the Pentecost Season, follows the Day of Pentecost in which the Holy Spirit descends upon the church for the purpose of empowering its people for the “work [God has] given us to do.” (BCP p. 366) That work is carried out in the mundane, ho-hum, ordinary time of our lives. One might choose to look at ordinary time as the time of discipleship; the work we are ALL called to do - fulling the Great Commission by living the Great Commandment.

In a world where the individual is emphasized and honored, it is tough to remember that God’s intent is for us to live in communion; to live for the benefit of one another; to live as members of The One Body. In a world where the individual is emphasized and even honored, it is tough to remember that we are called (each of us) to a life of sacrifice in the service of the Lord God of Hosts - our Creator, our Redeemer and our Sustainer. We are meant to be and called to be “a peculiar people” who “go against the flow” of what is popular and decidedly self-serving in this world. At this time of year, in ordinary time is when we begin to consider what our mission and ministry will look like in the year to come. The Mission Committee proposes a financial budget to the congregation, but we all need also to consider what God is calling us to DO, both corporately and *individually*.

Discipleship (stewardship) requires that each of us is intimately involved with the life of St. Stephen’s. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of excuses for why we do not/can not participate in all the forms of life within the church (i.e. worship, study, mission, ministry, healing, teaching, fellowship, etc, etc.). The question is whether or not God would be satisfied with our reasons/excuses. For each of us that is a personal question and a personal commitment to the relationship the Lord God calls everyone to with HIM. That is the bottom-line. The relationship is with God, for his purposes. Someone who annoys us, or maybe insulted us is not the question. Not having the particular skill (gift of the Holy Spirit) that we *think* is required is not the question. That a particular calling is “beneath us” is definitely not the question. Things are tough in the world right now, but that we are just too busy with getting by in this world is not the question. The question is only how we are living in the ordinary time of our lives to further God’s Holy Kingdom. It is indeed in the ordinary time that the work is done as God calls us to sacrifice ourselves for his purposes.

The time of Stewardship is upon us and I ask each person to consider the paragraph above when you are asked to pledge. I ask you to consider it when you are asked to serve some role on the Rota. I ask you to consider it when you are approached to serve on the Mission Committee. I ask you to consider it when you are approached to coordinate one of the annual church events. I ask you to consider taking on a mission and/or ministry within the congregation and/or in the community. I ask you to consider it when you are invited to participate in the study of God’s word that is so essential to our knowing the Lord allowing him to transform us into the disciples he calls us to be. A good place to start is with the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Joshua. Then ask yourself how that applies to you in this world, in this call issued by the Lord God.

God bless you and keep you,  
and hold you always  
in the palm of his hand,  
Fr. Tommy+



HERE IS TO ALL  
THE SAINTS  
CELEBRATING IN  
SEPTEMBER

Matthew Harris	09/07	Owen Trimmier	09/26
Geo. C. Langdale	09/15	Gaye Milling	09/26
Dutch Lindsay	09/13	John Cosby	09/28
Margaret Murtaugh	09/24	Berk Palmer	09/30
Carolyn Cosby	09/26		

Sr. Warden:	Doug Bryant	2009
Jr. Warden:	Tom Willingham	2009
Member:	Mike Floyd	2008
Member:	Patti Palmer	2008
Member:	Mike Autry	2010
Member:	Bob Moore	2010
Secretary:	Carter Siegling	2008
Treasurer:	Tom Harwood	2008



**CHURCH SCHOOL**

Sunday School both for children and adults will resume at 9:30AM on Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>. Children will meet in the classroom and adults will meet in the Quiet Room. If there are sufficient numbers, the adults will meet in the Parish Hall. Curriculum for the children is still being considered. Watch the Sunday announcements for the decision. Adults will start the year looking at the letters of Peter and their meaning for us as the church today.

**NOMINATIONS**

The Annual Congregational Meeting is coming the end of November, but now is the time to start considering nominations for leadership offices that are due to come open. Two members of the Mission Committee will step-down and at least four names are requested to form a ballot for those two slots. The two Wardens will then be elected from the remaining four members and the two electees.

Two Delegates to Diocesan Convention along with two alternates must also be elected. Again, we would like at least four nominations to fill these slots; six would be better. The two persons with the highest number of votes will be the delegates and the next two will be the alternates.

To be nominated for any of these offices you must be a Qualified Voting Member of St. Stephen's (a confirmed member who is at least 18 years of age), and be in good standing (having received Communion at St. Stephen's at least three times in the last year). You may nominate yourself or someone else. If you are nominating someone else, please get their consent first. The Nominating Committee is Mike Floyd and Patti Palmer; please, submit nominations to them. At the annual meeting, "nominations from the floor" will also be accepted.



**ADULT EDUCATION**

Two classes will be offered beginning at 6:30PM, the week of Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>. On Tuesday (9/9) the Adult Study Group will resume with the Gospel of Matthew as the opening topic. The Curriculum is from Kerygma and is like the one we used for the Gospel of Mark. There is a cost for the workbook and they need to be ordered, so please express your interest to the Vicar to ensure we have sufficient quantities.

The second class is for those interested in becoming members of the Episcopal Church and St. Stephen's in particular. It will begin meeting Thursday (9/11) The Vicar will conduct this Confirmation/Reception class based on the Outline of the Faith (the Catechism) found in the back of the Book of Common Prayer. According to Canon you must be a minimum 16 years of age, or in the tenth grade to be Confirmed. The class is also open to those who just may want to explore what it means to be Anglican and Episcopal.

The cost of operating St. Stephen's is significant. The costs are covered by the generous pledges and donations of the parishioners. Every year St. Stephen's pledges a sum of money to the Diocese and we have done a good job of meeting that pledge. At this time we cannot meet the requirement. This year has been a year in which we have encountered higher than budgeted expenses in the building maintenance and utilities areas. At this point in time we are over budget by \$2,500.

The problem is not the budget but the support of the budget. We received \$7,050 less in anticipated pledges and are \$5,100 short in year to date receipts from pledges. This puts us in a serious cash flow position. We are in a (\$9,800) negative cash flow position which explains our inability to meet the pledge to the Diocese and jeopardizes our ability to stay current in paying our normal monthly obligations. We are squeaking by at present and emphasis needs to be put on squeaking.

Our normal operating monthly fixed expenses are approximately \$6,800. This does not allow for any variable expenses or the pledge to the Diocese which makes up the balance of the budget. The variable amount plus the pledge totals is approximately \$2,400. This gives us a grand total of \$9,800 per month for operating the entire facility.

Some items are paid quarterly which allows the variances we normally see in the collections to stay current with our expenses. We accrue funds to pay the quarterly expenses, the pledge being one of them. We have not been able to pay the pledge because we have had to use the accrued funds to stay current with expenses.

The Church is just like everybody else, there is always something unexpected we will have to spend money on. Right now we have a roof leak in the vicarage. We don't have the money to repair it. With the whole facility getting older these things will happen. We can budget for them, but once again budgeting is only good if we have the funds to meet the budget, otherwise we have a problem.

To sum up we are \$9,800 short year to date and by year end will be a total of \$14,700 short if something doesn't change. ANY HELP will be appreciated.

One thing you can do is to complete a Pledge Card for 2009. This will allow the Mission Committee to do a more comprehensive job of providing a meaningful, and yet faith based, budget for next year. Year to date statements are being sent out soon to all currently pledging families; a Pledge Card will be included. A copy is also attached below.

Faithfully Yours,  
The Treasurer and  
Mission Committee

-----detach here-----

# 2009



Established 1839

**ST. STEPHEN'S**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
RIDGEWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA

## ST. STEPHEN'S PLEDGE CARD

AS A RESPONSIBLE CHRISTIAN STEWARD IN GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S GIFTS, I COMMIT MY TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE FOR GOD'S WORK IN THIS CONGREGATION:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per

- WEEK  
 MONTH  
 YEAR

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: HOME \_\_\_\_\_

WORK \_\_\_\_\_

THIS PLEDGE MAY BE CHANGED OR CANCELED AT ANY TIME UPON NOTIFICATION OF THE TREASURER.

EITHER PLACE IN THE ALMS BASIN OR MAIL TO:

ST. STEPHEN'S RIDGEWAY, P.O. BOX 26, RIDGEWAY, SC 29130 ATTN: TREASURER