

SAINT STEPHEN

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph - December 26, 2021

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday 5:15 p.m.
Sunday 7:30, 9:30, 11:30am, 5:15pm
Monday-Thursday 9am

RECONCILIATION

Saturday 3:30 to 4:30pm and by appointment

ADORATION

Most Thursdays after 9am mass
Fridays at 6pm in early 2022:
Jan. 7, Feb. 4, March 4



Rev. Henry Hoffman, Pastor
Rev. Lourduraj Pitchai, O. Praem
John DiTaranto, Deacon
Donald Ross, Deacon

Lisa Romano, Secretary (203) 268-6217
Nina Keane, Secretary (203) 268-6217
Barbara Upton, Music (203) 258-9103

Faith Formation and Youth Ministry
Janet Wrabel, (203) 268-6860
ststephenfaithformation@gmail.com

David Ference, Finance Council Chair

St Stephen Parish Office
6948 Main Street , Trumbull, CT 06611
(203) 268-6217

www.ststephentc.org
9:00am to 4:00pm Monday through Friday
ststephenrectory@yahoo.com



We Ask Why

A number of you have asked me why recently. Upon learning of the tornadoes in Kentucky. Upon remembering the anniversary of Sandy Hook.

Why? A three letter word that is so profound that it can turn your life upside down. Think about the Christmas Season. Why did Jesus, the Savior of the World, enter our world as a tiny, helpless baby? Or for that matter, why did the Word Incarnate even enter our world? Why was He born in a manger with animals? You would think that His birth would have been in a comfortable, warm home, surrounded by family and friends. When we look at Jesus' life, we ask, why wasn't He accepted as the Messiah among His own people? Why was He crucified?

In our own lives we often ask, 'why?' Why was there such a devastating tornado a few weeks ago in Kentucky that took the lives of so many people? Why are we still in the midst of a global pandemic which has changed the way we live, work and go to school? Many of us have our own personal 'why's.' Why did that person in my life have to die so young? Why does the person I love suffer so?

It's perfectly ok to ask 'why.' Mary and Joseph, in this week's Gospel from St. Luke ask Jesus, "Son, why have you done this to us?" when He stayed behind at the Temple. Jesus, himself, asked His Father 'why' as He hung on the cross when He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But, the question must then be, what do we do with our 'why' questions? Do they cause us to doubt and thus weaken our faith? Or do we, as Jesus did, come to the point when we can say, "Not my will, but yours be done."

When Thomas, the Apostle, doubted Jesus' resurrection, he told the other disciples, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." Jesus appeared to him soon after and said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Perhaps, implied in Jesus' words is this: Blessed are those who *believe* in the midst of the 'why's.'

Yours in Christ,
Fr Henry

Fellow St Stephen Parishioners:

From time to time, in my daily spiritual reading, I come across something that I would like to share with you in the bulletin. And here is something about bringing together the two worlds: the material world and the spiritual world.

Yours in Christ,
Fr Henry

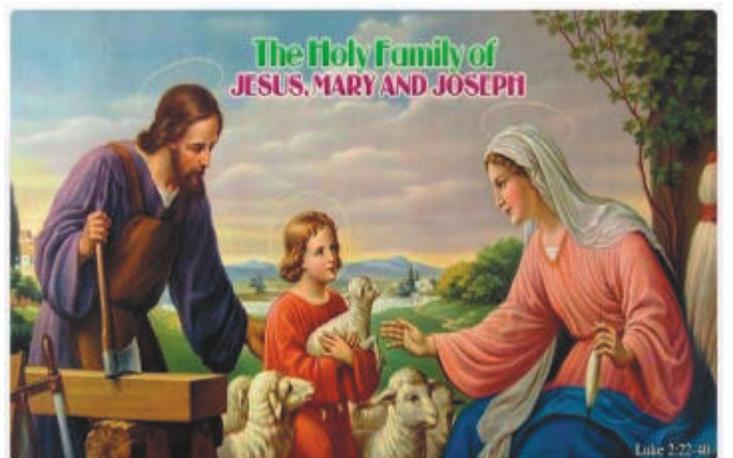
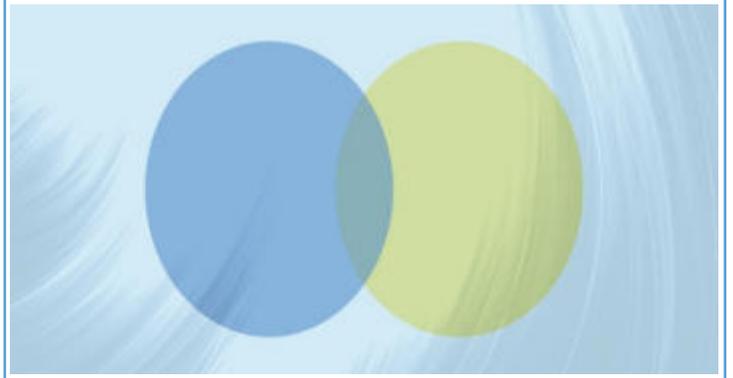
In Two Worlds

Like a tree with its roots buried in the ground and its branches raised toward the sky, we live in two worlds. Both are necessary for us if we are to survive and grow.

Learning how to use our senses brings us a feeling of oneness with the material world. The more we are alive to our senses, the more clearly we become a part of the world around ourselves.

Learning how to develop a sense of faith and hope tunes us in to the world beyond the senses. Faith and hope teach us about a presence that goes beyond the material world. Faith and hope teach us about a God who is not only in the world, but also infinitely beyond it. In discovering the transcendent God, we discover more deeply that part of ourselves that also transcends the material world.

We live in two worlds, one visible, the other invisible. For the wise person, the experiences of the two worlds meet and sometimes they seem to become as one.
Kenneth E. Grabner, C.S.C.



Sacraments

Baptism

Sundays at 12:45 p.m., by appointment
Pre-Baptism Class is necessary for first child.
Please call the rectory for an appointment.

Marriage

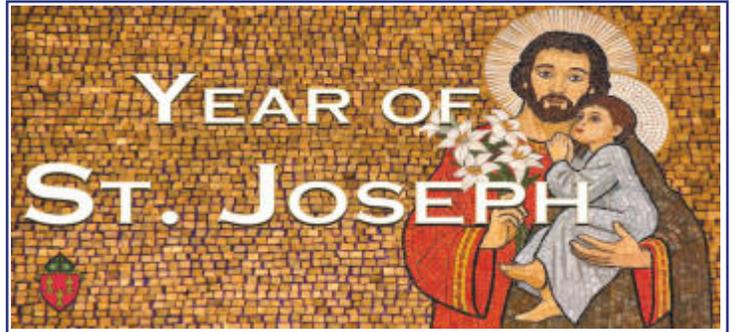
Arrange with the priest at least 1 year
in advance.

Penance

Saturday 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Prayer Line

For special intentions call
Agnes Lazor (203) 220-8043



An Advent Journey with St. Joseph at Our Own St Stephen Church

In preparation for Advent, a recollection service was held at St. Stephen Church on Saturday, December 11, 2021 from 3 PM – 5 PM. The goals of the service were:

- 1) To look beyond Christmas commercialism and experience God's grace and everlasting love through a devotion to St. Joseph;
- 2) To unwrap the gifts of ourselves and share our special God given gifts with family, friends and the St. Stephen Community;
- 3) To rediscover the joy of spiritual giving, and, perhaps, consider answering a call to Christian community service. Following the recitation of Pope Francis' Opening Prayer for the Year of St. Joseph, Father Henry, our pastor, gave an opening sermon. In his delivery, he urged that "...in imitation to St. Joseph, we allow ourselves to be moved from a position of fear, to a position of hope." Presentations by Deacon Don and members of St. Stephen's Men's group followed. Time for reflection took place after each presentation. Included in the service was the recitation of the Litany of St. Joseph by a member of the Men's Group and Women's Group. Barbara Upton provided beautiful liturgical music at appropriate times throughout the service.

Confessions were held simultaneously from 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM.

The service ended with time for adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament and Benediction.

In commenting about the event, Father Henry said, "The message of hope was powerful and consistent throughout the service." He went on to say that the quality of this liturgical service was so strong that he was confident that the numbers of parishioners who attend this type of event will surely grow in the coming months and years.

Hospital Visits. If you or a family member are in the hospital, and you would like a visit from a priest. Please call the Parish office at 203-268-6217. You must also let the hospitals know that you are a member of St. Stephen Parish, since the priest does not have access to patient information.

Pray for our Recently Deceased Parishioner...

Please pray for those who have gone home to the Lord...

Marion Ciesielski

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to their loved ones.



PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Let us remember in our prayers the following parishioners and friends who are sick:

Therese Karr, Bernie Engelman, Peggy Lawler, Deborah Fredrickson, Sophie Buzzeo, Dolores Montelli, Mark Mahoney, John Kelnhofer, Rose DiMartino, Carol Moyer, Joseph Sheridan, Aiden Hutto, Steve Krehley, Deacon Joe Gagne, Kevin Maguire, Lori Cimeno, Patricia Forcier, Gene Orsenigo, Mitchell Yeoh, Ann Ianniello, Patricia Farrell, Joseph Tereira, Adriana Schanbusch, Anita Tynan, Mark King, Hugh Croll, Emmie B., Richard Turco, Ann Hamlin, Marian Nanchy, Marie Tedesco

Remember in Your Prayers
ALL THOSE AFFECTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD



Everyone has a vocation! To the married life, to religious life, to living out the Christian life as a single person in a counter-cultural society. Please ask Fr Henry, if you have any questions of any kind about any kind of vocation.

PARISH NEWS

Sunday, January 2, 2022
during the 11:30 am Mass

The Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport
will install

REV. HENRY J. HOFFMAN
PASTOR OF ST. STEPHEN CHURCH

Reception will follow in Church Hall



Spiritual Direction Available

Spiritual direction is a space and place to unpack and notice, through conversations with a prayerful companion, personal encounters with the Jesus for whom each and every one of us matters. The very act of holy listening and sharing that occurs within spiritual direction sessions is an experience of Jesus meeting us and entering our life in the world, where we are, as we are.

People meet with a spiritual director for many reasons. Perhaps they want to grow in their relationship with God and are seeking guidance as to how to start their prayer lives or how to take their prayer lives deeper. Or maybe they are trying to discern an invitation from God to minister in some way. Or maybe they are in the middle of having to make a major life decision or transition. Perhaps they are experiencing some crisis of faith. No matter what draws someone to seek spiritual direction, the conversations between prayerful companions always lead back to the One who draws a person to seek spiritual companionship in the first place—the Living Spirit of God.

If you desire to “find God in all things”, Deacon Don Ross is available to be a prayerful companion on your journey to the fullness of life in Christ. Conversations can occur via Zoom, Google Meet, or in person. Deacon Ross is Certified as a Spiritual Director through Fairfield University’s Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality. He can be contacted at 203-948-1036 or dnross@diobpt.org.



Thursday mornings
after 9am mass

First Friday Evenings
in Early 2002
at 6pm
January 7
February 4
March 4

St. Stephen’s Men’s Solidarity Group **No Ordinary Path**

On September 16, 2017, the St. Stephen’s Men’s Solidarity Group was founded.

The Men’s Group is an informal gathering that acknowledges God’s everyday presence among us. We work together in fellowship, develop community ministries, engage in meaningful discussions, pray in community, and generally have a good time.

Our journey begins with Matthew 25:40.

“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these the least of my brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Since founding, the Men’s Group has launched the following Community Ministries:

- Bi-weekly Men’s Group meetings, Monday evenings (7:00 pm) in the Parish Hall.
- Weekly Volunteer Service at the Trumbull and Monroe Food Pantries.
- Semi-annual Spring and Fall American Red Cross blood drives in the Parish Hall.
- Advent and Lent Spiritual Days of Prayer, Renewal and Reflection.
- Annual February Men’s Retreat at Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center.
- Cleared a pathway and erected the Stations of the Cross in the woods behind the Church, accessible to all, anytime, for contemplative prayer and solitude.

Why don’t you come join us?

“So could you not keep watch with me for one hour?” Matthew 26:40

- The following ministries, discontinued due to Covid-19, hope to resume in the future.
- Monthly Sunday Eucharistic Prayer Service at Middlebrook Nursing Home.
- Monthly Friday Shabbat Ecumenical Prayer at B’nai Torah.
- Weekly Sunday evening Eucharistic Prayer Service at the Bridgeport Detention Center.

“The only way for us to give witness is...to be what we are in the midst of everyday banal realities.” Fr. Christian de Cherge, Trappist Monk / Martyr - (d. 1996).



Mrs. Janet Wrabel
 (203) 268-6860 (Office) or (203) 913-4393 (Cell)
 ststephenfaithformation@gmail.com

Faith Formation
 Are you interested in registering your child(ren) for the 2021-2022 school year and are thinking it's too late? It's not! Please contact Janet Wrabel for more information.

FAITH FORMATION
VBS 2022 (Vacation Bible School): Seeking adults who have an interest in making VBS happen at our parish during the Summer of 2022. Come to a meeting on **Wednesday, January 5 at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall** to begin the discussion and planning for **VBS 2022**. Teens will be invited at a later date to be a part of the VBS 2022 team. Adults, please let Janet Wrabel know if you are interested in being a part of this very exciting and much needed committee; and also, if you will be attending the meeting on January 5 at 7 p.m..

YOUTH MINISTRY
 Seeking high school students who are interested in being a member of the **Youth Ministry Advisory Board**. You will have a voice in the planning and also help coordinate service, spiritual and social activities involving the middle school and high school youth of St. Stephen Parish. If you are interested in this leadership role please come to the **Youth Ministry Advisory Board Meeting on Sunday, January 9th in the parish hall following the 5:15 p.m. Mass**. Please RSVP to Mrs. Wrabel if you will be attending so enough pizza will be ordered.

Family Mass - Sunday, January 9 - 9:30 a.m.
 Readers for the Mass will be the Wich Family.
 Go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D48AFA828ABF58-family11> to sign up to help with the Mass. After Mass come to the parish hall for refreshments and also to participate in our **CARD MINISTRY**. We will make **GET WELL CARDS** to share with our parishioners throughout the year.

Christmas cards created by youth and adults too for the residents at Spring Meadows Senior Community.



Giving Tree 2021
 Many thanks to the Iwaszkiewicz & Corsino Families who have been behind the scenes for many, many years so St. Stephen parishioners are given the opportunity to spread Jesus' joy once again to the people of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bridgeport. Decorating the altar with the Christmas tree for the 1st Week of Advent, hanging stars on the branches to inform the givers for whom presents are needed, and delivering the many, many wonderful gifts to Blessed Sacrament in time for Christmas is accomplished in less than 4 weeks! A super thanks to all the gift donors too. Our community is so very blessed to have loving, kindhearted people like all of you.

Staying Connected!
 Many thanks to those who have introduced themselves to me, and have given me a warm welcome! And I look forward to meeting all the rest of the St. Stephen Parish family.
 Having arrived a short time ago on November 1, I am already so impressed with what I have seen here at St. Stephen Parish:

Wonderful staff! Wonderful lay leadership! Wonderful parish groups and ministries! And most especially, wonderful parishioners!

Let us all join in our Advent preparation, all leading up to the most holy of days – Christmas itself – and the celebration of the coming of Jesus. And then enter 2022 to discover all the possible ways we can continue to grow as a parish and each of us get even more involved in all the wonderful groups and ministries that make up St. Stephen Parish.

In order for us to best stay in touch with you, and to provide you with an easy way to access parish information in a efficient and timely fashion, we are asking for the following information:

Name(s): First Name(s), Last Name (names)
 Address: Number, Street Address, Town, State, Zip
 Contact Information: Home and Mobile (for texting) Phone Numbers
 Primary Email Address:

Please drop this information in the basket during mass, or at the parish office, or email to us at StStephenRectory@yahoo.com or send to us via the US Postal system.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
 Fr Henry Hoffman



Christmas Eve
 4:00 pm (Church)
 4:00 pm (Lower Church)
 5:30 pm
 10:00 pm
 (Lessons and Carols at 9:30 pm)



Christmas Day
 7:30 a.m.
 9:30 a.m.
 11:30 a.m.
 No 5:15 p.m.



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