



Trinity Tidings

July 2022

Summer 2022

I ask your prayers for the people of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Vestavia Hills, Alabama. We have all heard the news about the active shooter incident that occurred there on Thursday, June 16.

The following day, June 17, would mark the seventh anniversary of an active shooter incident at Mother Emmanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S. C.

These events are similar in that they began with a church community gathered together for an occasion: One for a bible study, the other for a potluck supper. Both groups conducted actions tantamount with the meaning of our faith, particularly the welcoming of a visitor: *I was a stranger and you welcomed me* (Matt.25:35).

Of course, the setting in which we are in when we meet a person for the first time plays a role in that encounter. No one gathered at these two events expected for a moment that their situation would suddenly turn into one of horror. The stories of those who were present remind us that there are risks in life. Their stories also remind us why we are people of faith.

An article from the Episcopal News Service, which is printed in this newsletter, tells of the event on June 16. It includes the poignant thoughts of The Revd. John Burruss, Rector of St. Stephens.

While it is difficult to read its narrative, it is important for us to be more aware of matters as they exist in current society.

But in reading it, and in the story of Mother Emmanuel, we discover a people determined to live out the teachings of Jesus in the world. Even in the midst of tragedy, they carry onward with a sustained strength given by the knowledge that God is always present with us.

--- Blessings and Peace, James+

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We seek your presence, O God,
Not because we have managed to see it clearly
Or been true in all things this day,
Not because we have succeeded in loving
Or in reverencing those around us,
But because we want to see with clarity,
Because we long to be true
And desire to love as we have been loved.
Renew our inner sight,
Make fresh our longings to be true
And grant us the grace of loving this night
That we may end the day as we had hoped to live it,
That we may end this day restored to our deepest yearnings,
That we may end this day as we intend to live tomorrow.
Amen.

From *Sounds of the Eternal*

Important dates in July:

Summer Worship Schedule:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Holy Eucharist, Rite II.

Vestry Meeting: Tuesday, July 19, at 6:00 p.m.

TECW Meeting: Saturday, July 2, at 9:30 a.m.

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Episcopal News Service

Alabama church shooting victims' act of hospitality became an act of sacrifice, Rector says.

www.episcopalnewsservice.org

Posted: June 21, 2022

By Egan Millard

The three victims of a [shooting on June 16](#) at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Vestavia Hills, Alabama, "modeled how to live in love," offering food and companionship to the man accused of killing them, the church's rector said.

"This is what it means to be Christian, to love unconditionally at the ultimate cost," the Rev. John Burruss told Episcopal News Service on June 21.

[Bart Rainey](#), 84, [Sharon Yeager](#), 75, and [Jane Pounds](#), 84, all longtime parishioners, were catching up at a monthly church potluck for people of the baby-boomer generation and older, Burruss said.

According to police, they noticed 70-year-old Robert F. Smith sitting alone and invited him to their table, and then Smith pulled out a handgun and shot them.

"Three of the most faithful people kept inviting this member of our community to sit with them and be with them and they loved him," Burruss said. "And it cost them their life. And there's not a doubt in my mind that they would do it again."

Rainey had moved farther away from the church because of health issues but still attended either in-person or online every week, Burruss said. Yeager and Pounds were the leaders of the altar guild, and on the day they died, they set the altar for the coming Sunday – the 19th – when the congregation and clergy returned to the church for the usual Sunday Eucharist.

"There's no other place in the world I'd have rather been," Burruss told ENS. People came "pouring out of the woodworks" to attend the Sunday service, "just hungry to be together and be in that space."

Messages of support have been pouring in from around the world ever since Burruss was awoken to the news of the shooting at 3:30 a.m. while in

Athens, Greece, where he was leading a pilgrimage at the time. The response, he said, shows "that love and compassion break through the most horrible of circumstances."

Episcopalians from around the Diocese of Alabama and across The Episcopal Church and leaders from Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith communities in the Birmingham area are among the many who have reached out to offer support, and locals have tied thousands of green ribbons on trees and mailboxes around town as a sign of remembrance and healing, Burruss said.

The parish's youth group held a vigil in the church on the night of the 19th to pray, to sing and to process the events." Grief counselors have been available at the church every day since the shooting, and each person who attended the potluck has been assigned an individual counselor, according to Burruss.

The [funerals for the three victims](#) will take place at St. Stephen's on the 22nd and 23rd, and will be livestreamed.

Smith, who has been charged with capital murder, had attended the previous month's potluck, Burruss told ENS. "He was a newer parishioner – he'd been worshiping with us for six months – and we knew him, we loved him and invited him to be a part of the community," Burruss said.

Parishioners who attended the June 16 potluck said Smith sat alone, drinking from what appeared to be a small liquor bottle, while everyone else shared food and lighthearted conversation, the [Associated Press reported](#). Susan Sallin, 73, said he had previously attended services and a few other events but seemed "disengaged."

Sallin told the Associated Press she was sitting at the same table as the three victims, and she and others invited Smith to their table, but he refused. "I personally invited him to come and sit at our table twice because I wanted him to feel a sense of inclusion, but he did not come," she said.

Rainey's wife, Linda, offered to get him a plate of food, which he also refused, Sallin said. Then he pulled out a handgun and started firing. According to Sallin, another attendee in his 70s grabbed the gun out of Smith's hand and subdued him, and

several other attendees held him down until police arrived.

“The person that subdued the suspect, in my opinion, was a hero,” Vestavia Hills Police Capt. Shane Ware told reporters during a [press conference](#) on the 16th, saying that act was “extremely critical in saving lives.”

After Bart Rainey was shot, according to a statement provided by the Rainey family to the Associated Press, Linda Rainey held him and “he died in her arms while she murmured words of comfort and love into his ears.”

Burruss told ENS that he sees a parallel between the church potluck and the last supper of Christ, an analogy he discussed in his sermon on the 19th.

“We are Christians because of an act 2,000 years ago ... All of us are wrapped up in this story because someone modeled compassion and love so much that they invited the person that would ultimately betray them to a meal,” he told ENS.

Smith had a federal firearms dealer license that expired Jan. 1, [as reported by The Trace](#), a reporting partnership with USA Today that created an interactive database of interactions between the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and gun dealers or manufacturers.

In 2018, ATF issued Smith a warning letter for not being able to account for missing firearms listed in his inventory, the records show; an in-person inspection had found Smith had 86 guns on hand, compared to 97 in his official dealer’s record. He was cited for a violation but no further action was taken beyond the warning letter, the records show.

For updates on the tragedy at St. Stephen’s, [visit its website](#).

Thank you, Trinity parishioners for supporting the Lakeshore Humane Society.

As a non-profit organization, they are dependent upon donations from outside organizations and individuals so they are most appreciative of our continued support. Cleaning supplies and paper towels are always on their list so thank you!

--- Parish Outreach Team

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Trinity Episcopal Church
Vestry Minutes
May 17, 2022
As approved at the June Meeting

Present: William Roberts, Senior Warden; Janeil Rey, Junior Warden; Karin Wheelock; Sally Ludlum, Mary Lou Vercant; Jennifer Wilkins; Virginia Becker, Treasurer, and The Reverend James Clement, Rector.

Excused:

Call to Order: Fr. Clement called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., with an opening prayer.

The Meeting Agenda was approved as given, as moved by Sally Ludlum, seconded by Karin Wheelock.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Karin Wheelock, seconded by Mary Lou Vercant, to approve the April 19, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Committee Reports: Finance / Building and Grounds

Finance: Virginia Becker reported. A motion was made by William Roberts, seconded by Janeil Rey, to receive the Treasurer’s report. Motion carried. See attached.

- Treasurer’s Report – Investments are down, but this decrease is still less than industry average.
 - Parish Outreach: Ukraine Relief – the special collection for the Ukraine Fund totaled \$1,145. A check in this amount was recently sent to *Episcopal Relief and Development*.
 - Mary Lou Vercant offered further information about a credit card for the parish. She stated that Inner Lakes FCU. The parish currently has two accounts open with this credit union, which may have credit card options available for us.
- Memorial Fund Report – no change to the account since the April meeting.

Buildings and Grounds: Fr. Clement reported.

- The roof and downspout work as contracted with A. W. Farrell is done and no issues

have been found since completion. We should receive an invoice soon.

- Toilet in the downstairs restroom needed repair. Gugino Plumbing was contacted and completed necessary work.

Additional Reports: Congregational Ministries

- No reports

Rector's Report: Fr. Clement reported.

- Attended several clergy meetings via online conferencing.
- Attended an overnight clergy retreat/meeting in Ludlow, PA. The second session will take place in early June.
- Preparations are complete for the Children and Youth Formation workshop at Trinity on Saturday, 21st.
- After receiving an update, he is hopeful that Dr. Woo, parish organist, can return in late June.
- He attended the regional confirmation service in Jamestown.
- Vestry handbooks have been ordered – these should arrive in the coming days.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

- Fr. Clement reported that the summer worship schedule will begin on Sunday, June 5th, the Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday, with only one service (H.E., Rite II) scheduled on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Sunday School sessions will also be on break during the summer. He stated that this summer season is a good time for persons to become involved in Sunday worship as service participants. It is time for us to return to a steadier, pre-pandemic, liturgy.
- Fr. Clement also suggested that Vestry consider some sort of retreat together, even if for a one-time meeting free from the business of the parish. Janeil Rey suggested time at Chautauqua – a labyrinth walk or a worship service.
- Ginny Becker stated that she will need volunteers for the annual parish audit. This work will need to be completed before the month of September.
- Janeil Rey reminded Vestry that Lauren Sercu will soon graduate high school. She

and Fr. Clement will coordinate the purchase of a gift to be given by the congregation. This graduation gift is traditionally given on the first Sunday in June; Fr. Clement will confirm a good date with the family.

- Ginny Becker inquired about the new pricing on the contract with Olson Paving. Their contact person has not yet responded with an update.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m. with a motion made by Sally Ludlum. Carried.

Vestry concluded its time by reciting the Lord's Prayer together. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Jennifer Wilkins, Clerk.

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Lectionary Readings in July:

www.lectionarypage.net

Sunday, July 3

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 9

Isaiah 66:10-14

Psalms 66:1-8

Galatians 6:1-16

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Sunday, July 10

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 10

Deuteronomy 30:9-14

Psalms 25:1-9

Colossians 1:1-14

Luke 10:25-37

Sunday, July 17

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 11

Genesis 18:1-10a

Psalms 15

Colossians 1:15-28

Luke 10:38-42

Sunday, July 24

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 12

Genesis 18:20-32

Psalms 138

Colossians 2:6-15

Luke 11:1-15

Sunday, July 31

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 13

Ecclesiastes 1:2,12-14; 2:18-23

Psalms 49:1-11

Colossians 3:1-11

Luke 12:13-21

The Collect: For the Nation

Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 258

Birthdays in July

- 2 Jack Torrance
- 4 Frank Pullano
- 6 Patti Cooper
- 7 Robert Maytum, Jr.
- 10 Rebecca Sedlmayer
- 13 Chris Eichmann
- 23 Sally J. Ludlum
- 24 Julie Maytum
- 26 Joel Hudson
- 30 Dave Sherman

Wedding Anniversaries in July

- 31 Lee and Maureen Blackburn

In Memoriam

- 14 Susan Roberts

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Trinity Episcopal Church

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Parish Clergy and Staff

The Revd. James Clement, *Rector*

rector@trinitychurchwny.org

Dr. Ji Hyun Woo, *Organist and Director of Music*

Sara Jagoda, *Sexton*

The Vestry of the Parish

William Roberts, Sr. Warden

Janeil Rey, Jr. Warden

Karin Wheelock

Jenn Wilkins

Sally Ludlum

Mary Lou Vercant

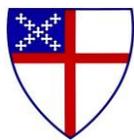
Virginia Becker, Treasurer

Happy Independence Day!



Trinity Episcopal Church
11 Day Street; P.O. Box 467
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The newsletter of Trinity Episcopal Church

*“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”
Ephesians 1:2*