

A Call to Serve

ST STEPHEN'S MILLBURN



Where Love Begets Love

WHO ARE WE?

- St. Stephen's is a warm, pastoral-sized congregation whose members live a commitment to diversity, a focus on social ministries, a dedication to helping the needy, and a deeply considered choice of St. Stephen's as our church home.
- A congregation welcoming each newcomer with a smile. Our ingrained hospitality is rooted in our belief in the mysterious replenishing power of God's love: we're grateful for God's love, and aware that the more love we give away, the more love we have to give.
- We are ambitious in our care for our hungry and homeless neighbors but challenged by decreasing membership and pledges and an aging congregation less able to provide physical support for our ministries.

WHERE ARE WE?

- Millburn Township, population 20,000 in Essex County, NJ, is located in one of the most desirable New York suburbs, 16 miles and a direct train from mid-town Manhattan. We are also 9 miles from Newark, the poorest city in the State.
- Millburn's award-winning schools serve approximately 4900 students, have an average of 12 students to each teacher, and are consistently ranked as among the top public schools in the nation.
- According to the latest demographic numbers, the town's population is 87% white, 17% Asian, 5% Hispanic and 1% African-American. The Church is

more diverse, drawing from neighboring towns of Maplewood, South Orange Springfield and Union whose racial and economic diversity enriches our congregation.

- Millburn adjoins the South Mountain Reservation with over 2,000 acres of mixed hardwood forest, hiking trails, stocked fishing ponds and a dog park. Its facilities include the Turtle Back Zoo, a ropes course, as well as a two-mile paved walking path around a lake filled with paddleboats, and equipped with fishing stations. We are 90 minutes from the Jersey Shore.
- Millburn Township also offers a large and well-maintained public pool with separate baby pool, tennis courts and a 9-hole golf course, available to town residents for minimal fees.



WHAT DO WE DO?

- **PARISH LIFE:** St. Stephen's is a consciously welcoming church, enriched by congregants from different nationalities, ethnicities, political leanings, sexual orientation and religious traditions, many of whom drive from towns across northern New Jersey to share our common life. We offer 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Rite II worship services, and parishioners share fellowship at Sunday coffee hour afterwards. We also host annual and ad hoc events such as Christmas Eve services, Blessing of the Animals, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Parish Picnic and other events.
- **SOCIAL MINISTRY:** A primary focus of our ministries is a program serving Newark children with an incarcerated parent. A highlight of this program is our annual one-week August drumming camp offering a joyful introduction to traditional African music, art and dance, as well as art projects, athletics and games, and lots of good food.

Most St. Stephens's parishioners proudly participate in ministries to those in need of food, shelter, clothing and companionship. A co-founder of the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Essex County (IHN) in 1988, St. Stephens's serves as a host congregation offering safe and welcoming shelter to temporarily homeless families for a week each year.

Programs that focus on hunger include:

- Christine's Kitchen, a soup kitchen in partnership with other area congregations

- Thanksgiving Turkey dinner baskets – in 2017 those were distributed to the families of our drumming camp children
- Collections for the food pantry at Apostles House in Newark. In 2016 our small but determined congregation delivered 24 barrels full of food to that ministry.

Other programs include North Porch that provides baby supplies to mothers and Angel Tree, collecting holiday gifts for families affected by homelessness.

- **WORSHIP:** St. Stephen's welcomes a blend of traditional and modern worship. We regularly celebrate the Rite II Eucharist, creation-season and other liturgies to deepen our worship life. We provide nursery care and welcome children to participate in junior choir and pageants. Parishioners serve as lectors, altar guild, and Eucharistic ministers and occasionally as preachers.



- **MUSIC:** Our von Beckerath organ, Baroque style Tracker Organ was designed and built in 1970 for the historic Gothic Revival interior of St. Stephen's Church by noted German organ builder Rudolph Beckerath. It enhances our music program and supports an annual organ-concert series for the community, featuring nationally and internationally known organists. Members of the Choir continue to present music in a variety of styles and historical periods. The children's choir presents anthems several times throughout the year, including some collaborations with the Senior Choir. The Choir participated in the Blue Christmas service, leading the congregation in singing meditative and reflective songs appropriate to the occasion. The Family Christmas Eve service included music by the children's choir. Parish organist, guest harpist as well as trumpets accompanied the Senior Choir at the 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Festival Eucharist and presented pre-service music.
- **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:** St. Stephen's welcomes AA meetings several times a week in our facilities, as well as the Paper Mill Playhouse show choir, which rehearses in the sanctuary routinely, and repays the church by offering an annual fundraising concert. The former Rector also provided "Ashes to Go" on Ash Wednesday, which was well received by commuters on the Millburn train platform.

OUR OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES:

St. Stephen's includes the church, a preschool and a cemetery.

- The St. Stephen's Preschool provides high-quality full-time day care and education for children of working families from all faiths, cultures and economic backgrounds.
- The school's employment policies and benefits demonstrate a respect for its employees and contribute to low staff turnover.
- St. Stephen's is the oldest corporate religious body in Millburn. Our Gothic Revival sanctuary built in 1855 houses 200 worshippers and our remarkable von Beckerath tracker organ.
- Our historic cemetery, located on a nearby wooded rise, includes memorials and a gothic-style mausoleum.

The church, cemetery/mausoleum and preschool of St. Stephen's operate on a combined budget of just over \$2 million. The preschool is on solid financial ground with solid management, full enrollment and a dedicated staff. While the cemetery is bolstered by a trust fund of approximately a million dollars (as of 11/30/17) those funds are not available for maintenance, and it's expensive to maintain with ongoing landscaping and mausoleum building and roof repairs which have required ad hoc funding by the church.

- A spacious, comfortable, recently renovated Victorian rectory on a quiet block a short walk from shops, schools, and the park and playground. Currently used for office space and meetings, it has served (and could again) as home to the Rector.

WHAT DO WE NEED?

- Sunday liturgy and homilies to support us in our mission to care for our neighbors and ourselves.
- Growth in the congregation to share the gifts of our community with more children, families and neighbors and to support our multiple ministries.
- Plan to reenergize our place in the community as a welcoming, engaged and vibrant spiritual home fueling loving outreach to our neighbors.

WE ARE LOOKING TO WELCOME A NEW RECTOR WHO WILL:

- Nourish our strengths and provide us with guidance and encouragement as we continue to make our social ministries a manifestation of our faith.

- Continue our tradition of thought-provoking, insightful preaching, with a focus on scripture to challenge us to confront our fears, encourage our obligation to our neighbors and sustain the spiritual energy that drives us.
- Celebrate our diversity and align with our church's open and welcoming approach to all seekers and believers, regardless of ethnicity, age, wealth, sexual orientation or faith background.
- In partnership with lay leadership, oversee the administration of the church, the preschool, the cemetery and the multiple outside users of the grounds.
- Help us shine a light on our unique place in the local faith community.

WHAT OUR NEW RECTOR CAN EXPECT FROM US:

- A congregation with a rich history of social justice and outreach.
- A congregation with an informal spirit, affection for tradition, and openness to new ideas.
- Lay leadership that has post-transition knowledge and practices to partner in an efficient and openhearted way.
- Part-time staff including a parish administrator, and a bookkeeper to manage payroll, bill paying, minor property management and annual reporting required by the Diocese.

