

## THE WOMEN OF ST. STEPHEN'S

The Women of St. Stephen's was founded in 1911 to provide support for the clergy, staff, and vestry of the church. Every woman who is a member of St. Stephen's Church is considered a member of the Women of St. Stephen's.

From October through May, the Women of St. Stephen's offer monthly programs, usually on the first Tuesday of the month, with a break in January. Topics and speakers are varied and range from lectures or talks to demonstrations to musical performances. The February program convenes in the evening and includes dinner and a special guest speaker.

The Women of St. Stephen's supports various organizations and groups that work with women and children in the community using funds generated by the May Fair House and other sources. In 2016, we made grants totaling \$35,000 of which \$5,500 was for ministries that take place at St. Stephen's Church (\$1,000 to the Fruit Ministry, \$4,000 to St. Stephen's Preschool, \$500 to the annual math camp that takes place here for Peter Paul Development Center students). The remaining \$29,500 went to 20 different organizations in the community. May Fair House profits provided \$25,000 toward this total, with the remaining funds coming from the Women of St. Stephen's budget.

May Fair House is supported by over 100 volunteers who select/purchase merchandise, display it, inventory it, and sell it. In addition, more than 100 volunteers, women and men, cook the extremely popular and delicious food specialties sold in May Fair House.

The Women of St. Stephen's also oversee the collection of our parish's gifts to the United Thank Offering, a nationwide ministry of the Episcopal Church. The total collected for 2016 was \$4,837.92 (\$ 2,923.90 in the spring ingathering, and \$1,914.02 in the fall ingathering). Our UTO offerings are added to those of other churches and are used to fund grants locally and around the world.

In 2016, the Women of St. Stephen's gave three of the more than 50 painted canvasses for the new needlepoint kneelers being installed in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.

Also this past year, we participated in two outreach projects. In November, we took fruit snacks to St. James's Children's Center at St. James's Episcopal Church. Also we helped serve refreshments at the Elijah House Christmas program.

Another ministry of the Women of St. Stephen's is Gracious Gourmets. This team of volunteers provides a meal to families who have experienced either a death or birth in the family. We delivered 67 meals in the past year.

Condolence notes were written by the Corresponding Secretary to each family of the 24 women parishioners who died in 2016. The names of the deceased have been inscribed in the Diocesan Book of Remembrance. The Women of St. Stephen's also made a memorial

contribution in their memory to the Diocesan Scholarship Fund.

In April a group of women traveled by motor coach to Fort Monroe for their Garden Week tour, a fun-filled and informative outing.

The Coffee Guild has worked hard this year to coordinate the various groups who provide refreshments at the reception after the 11:15 Sunday service. This is a time of enjoyment and fellowship for parishioners, enjoyed by many. The Altar Guild and Flower Guild work very hard to provide beauty and dignity for the services at St. Stephen's as well as special events. Communion every Sunday is arranged by the Altar Guild and the beautiful flowers during the worship services are arranged by the Flower Guild.

The Women of St. Stephen's work faithfully in many and varied capacities to support the clergy, staff and lay leaders of this parish both within and beyond the church. I feel very privileged to be the president of such a fine group of dedicated women.

Respectfully submitted,

Patsy Barr, *President*