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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OUR HEARTS BEAT THE SAME!
TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. STEPHEN'S DRUMMING CAMP**

MILLBURN, NJ.

"Drumming!"
"Dancing!"
"Jumping rope"
"Making tie-dye t-shirts!"
"Free time!"

These responses, all accompanied by big smiles, were campers' answers to the question "What's your favorite part of Drumming Camp?" This summer marks the 10th anniversary of Drumming Camp at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. The camp was established in 2013 in partnership with the Diocese of Newark Prison Ministry, which advocates for restorative justice, interfaith programs, and personal healing for prisoners, their families, and communities.

After having to shorten the duration of camp for the past two years due to Covid concerns, this year's camp rebounded to a full week of vibrant activity with twice as many children as the previous year. African drumming and dance classes, led each day by master drummer Yah'Ya Kamate, formed the core experience of each day's schedule. The campers also engaged in arts and crafts activities, outdoor sports and games, and other learning activities led by camp staff and volunteers from the parish and community. Campers enjoy healthy snacks and dinner each day, with special treats throughout the week provided by parishioners. They especially look forward to S'mores night, when parishioner Suzanne Holt brings her fire pit and instructs the children in fire safety while teaching them how to roast marshmallows to make the gooey dessert.

The theme of this year's camp, "Our hearts beat the same," came from the children's book I Am You—a book about Ubuntu, by Refiloe Moahloli. The Rev. Karen Eberhardt, deacon at St. Stephen's, read the book to the children and led them in discussions of ubuntu—the belief from southern African countries that we are all connected. Eberhardt shared, "Helping the kids learn about the concept of ubuntu has been fun and challenging, but one of the best moments was when one of our youngest campers said, 'I love this book! Will you read it again tomorrow?'" On the last day of camp, the children's performance included an original song based on the book, along with their joyous and energetic dancing and drumming.

In addition to backpacks stuffed with school supplies and treats, this year each family received a bag of fresh produce from St. Stephen's brand new Good News Garden. Eberhardt said, "We hope that, along with the rhythms and songs they learned this week, the spirit of ubuntu and connection will stay with them!"

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is located at 119 Main Street, Millburn, NJ.

For more information about St. Stephen's Drumming Camp and other ministries at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, you can visit the St. Stephen's website at <http://ststephensmillburn.org/>.

For information about the Episcopal Diocese of Newark Prison Ministry, you can visit their website at <https://sites.google.com/site/newarkprisonministry/>.