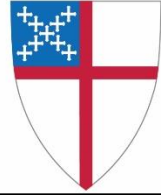




St. Stephen's Episcopal Church



November 2021

email: mark.sowards@ststephensaz.org

Telephone: (520) 458-4432

From our Rector:

Dear Friends of St. Stephen's,

I have recently been asked about our continued use of masks and social distancing in church.

First, let me thank you sincerely for your willingness to abide by the decisions of our church leadership on the Vestry in consultation with our diocese and Bishop Reddall to re-instate our protocols. Believe me, no one enjoys wearing masks as we have all needed to do over the past two years. However, because we have been diligent and taken cautionary measures during this Covid crisis, I am happy to report that only a few of our members have caught Covid, none from church services, and no one in our congregation has died of Covid over these many months. For that I am both thankful for your cooperation and grateful for our success in limiting Covid exposure.

I monitor our infection rates in our community regularly (a few times a week) to keep informed of the trends in our area. The guidance that we have from the Bishop says that when we have a 14 consecutive day stretch of declining infection rates, we can once more relax our Covid restrictions. For the past month our area has been at a plateau, however the last week has shown the beginning of what may be that point of declining infection rates.

When we reverted back to wearing masks at the beginning of August, the infection rate for our area was 5 new cases per day. It rapidly escalated to the plateau of 55 new cases per day with the Delta variant causing our new wave of infections. This past week we dropped down to 45 new cases per day.

If history is an indicator of projected trends, then we can hope that we will see a significant continued downward trend in new cases in the coming weeks. When we see that consecutive downward trend for 14 days, we will once more relax our mask wearing and social distancing for those who are fully vaccinated. Those who are not vaccinated are asked to continue to wear masks in church. Also, any who feel that they have compromised immune systems and feel vulnerable may choose to wear masks.

Please be patient as we watch for declining numbers in our community and hang in there for what we hope will be just a couple more weeks. Your church leaders and I thank you and appreciate your observing our protocols. You have all been great during this very trying time of virus anxiety.

Rev. Allison



From our Sr. Warden

I hope everyone is doing well during our extraordinary time. On March 16, our 2021 Vestry Members volunteered to contact our parish members. It's important that we all stay in touch with each other. The Vestry needs to know how the church can help you, how you are doing, or what can you do for the church. If you have not been contacted recently, please call me as listed below.

Due to the Delta variant of Covid, we continue to use to phase 2 protocols (social distancing and all wearing masks). But, we can take communion with Rev. Allison doing intinction with the wafer. Until this variant subsides, we will maintain these protocols. Let us give the glory to God that we are still having in-person church.

In September, our monsoon rains subsided. Our weeds around the church are going dormant. We now have a "fancy lawnmower" to cut back these weeds. Let us all pray we get good rains in the coming winter months.

Please continue to send in your pledges to the church, either by mail or the donate link on our <https://www.ststephensaz.org>. My home number is 520-459-1937; cell 520-227-4483; email: Holsonback@cox.net.

May God continue to bless us all during these extraordinary times!!

We need more Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, and Alter Guild personnel.

If you are interest in any of these positions, please contact Robin StClair at rscinca@gmail.com

From our Jr. Warden



Here is my Zoom meeting room information.

There are new things from Anonymous donors from a new door, sound system and brush mower.

Pardon our dust, due to cutting the new door.

New brush mower takes muscles. If you are looking for a workout, talk to either Tim or me.

Coffee Hour helpers needed!

As we return to having a time of fellowship with each other after worship on Sundays, we can use some helpers to set up the coffee and snacks before and clean up after the coffee hour. Please sign up on the sheet on the snacks table.



Bible Study

Every Tuesday at 5pm join in Zoom for an in-depth review of the Psalms.

We use several interpretations for a lively discussion.

The zoom link is: 811-888-8197.

Saturday Evening Worshippers:

Please recycle your bulletins for Sunday worshippers if you are not taking them home with you.

From our Administrator Mark

Please notify the church office when you move or change phone or emails. If you change your email, please update your sign-on with our website prior to shutting down the old email.

Our office hours have really changed, but with Covid-19 impacts, they have been very flexible.

Standard hours are:

Tuesday and Thursday 9:00am to 2:00pm

Wednesday 11:00am to 2:00pm.

Special Thanks:

New Sound System is in, new field mower works, and new emergency exit has been installed. Thank you to all who have contributed to these new additions to our church. We are grateful.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

November 26th

Sunday's service will be In Person and Live Stream.

We need a church treasurer!

One of the key leadership positions of a church is the church treasurer. We thank Cheryl Stone for being our treasurer these past 9 months and for doing a very nice job during a difficult pandemic year. The position entails ensuring our bills get paid, monitoring and reporting on our budget, and keeping our bookkeeper informed of financial transactions. Please let Rev. Allison know if you would like to be considered for this position.

The church needs recommendations for a **janitor (sexton)**. Our current sexton will complete her time with us at the end of October. The contract would be for a total of 6 hours a month (two 3-hour sessions every other week) for a total of \$120 / month.

It is that time again where I ask you if you want Giving envelopes. They sure came in handy this past year with all the remote services. If you want Giving envelopes, please let the office know either by calling, emailing, or stopping by and telling me in person.

Where to sign up for a Covid-19 vaccine?

Please see the following link which has information for residents of Cochise County:

<https://covid-cochisehealth.hub.arcgis.com/pages/vaccines>

If you need help with registering for a vaccine, our church will help you. Currently only 65 and older plus those in certain priority groups like healthcare workers and teachers are being registered (groups 1A and 1B priority).

Birthdays

4 Nov: Alverita Egbert

20 Nov: Dinah McCreery

22 Nov: Priscilla Burrows

24 Nov: Gretchen Lamberth

**Coming this fall:**

Jesus was a Jedi and you can be too! A combined youth group activity and study of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and Sierra Evangelical Lutheran Church: Looking at the Jedi in the Star Wars movies and how the beliefs and practices of Jedi parallel the ways and teachings of Jesus. Meeting at Sierra Evangelical Lutheran Church, 101 N Lenzner Ave, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635, on Tuesday evenings. 6-8 pm, dinner will be provided. Date that this will begin is in October. Open to Jr. High and Sr. High School aged students. More to follow.

Changing Hours:

Sunday Worship time will change Nov 7th to 11am start time. Adult forum will move to 12:30am start. Rev. Allison's office hours will be Wed, Thurs, Fri, 9am to 3pm starting Nov. 3rd.

November 6th – LGBTQ Pride in Phoenix!

St. Stephen's has entered to have one car and several walkers at the parade on Saturday Nov. 6th. We can carry signs, flags, and banners to show there are welcoming and inviting churches for LGBTQ. We will make signs on Friday evening at 5pm for decorating the car. We will leave St. Stephen's parking lot on Saturday morning Nov 6th at 5am to get to Phoenix for a check-in time of 8-8:30am. Please see Rev. Allison to carpool up and back to Phoenix that day. If no one else wishes to participate, we won't go this year.

St. Stephen's to co-pastor with Sierra Evangelical Lutheran Church at St. Raphael's Episcopal / Lutheran Church in Benson. Bishop Reddall and Bishop Hutterer have discussed a partnership for providing worship and pastoral care for the church in Benson that would allow both denominations to support the St. Raphael's congregation. Details are being worked out about how this would work and what it will look like. It may require a shift in worship times at St. Stephen's. This new arrangement is expected to start in October.

Newcomer Welcome service November 6, 7.

Even in the pandemic we have new people exploring and discovering St. Stephen's. We have some new faces at St. Stephen's and would like to welcome them to our faith community in an "official" recognition of their being with us. Join us as we celebrate their spiritual gifts and presence with us, expanding God's family in our church. Meet our new folks and get to know them a little better and share your own names and stories.

New Program for giving in Sierra Vista – Better

Bucks: The vestry voted Tuesday to shift our Groceries 4U program to using the Better Bucks booklets to give to those who need some assistance with food, clothing, and other necessities. Please donate to the church to buy the booklets or donate booklets for us to use. Cannot be used for alcohol or tobacco.

website: <https://betterbuckssierravista.org/>

Annual Senior Thanksgiving Dinner:

This event will be returning to the Ethel H. Berger Center this November 16th! All active adults (55+) are invited for a delicious traditional Holiday dinner. Tickets will be on sale from September 13 to November 5 or until sold at the Ethel H. Berger Center. All tickets must be purchased in advance. Seating is very limited for this year's event so get your tickets early! Doors will open at Nov 16th 3:30 p.m. and dinner will be served at 4:00 p.m. Please call Parmalee Mitchell at (520) 439-2300 for more information. \$16 per person.

SINGERS!

The annual Messiah sing is back! Advent and Christmas portions will be performed on Dec 19th 7pm at St. Andrew's Catholic Church. Any wishing to sing, rehearsals are Saturdays at 10am on Nov 6, 13, 20, Dec 4, 11, 18 at St. Andrew's Catholic Church, 800 Taylor Dr.

Coats for Kids of Cochise County:

The Big Red Box on our porch is for donations of coats for kids in our county. Please donate new or gently used, clean coats. Donations can be made from now through Dec 15th. All sizes of kids thru young adult.

Stewardship Campaign to begin November 7th – Our theme this year is "And the Beat Goes On!"

How each of us is part of the heartbeat of our church, contributing our money, talents, and time in ways that allow us to worship, learn, pray, love, and serve **one** another and others in our community. We thank you for your contributions these past years and gratefully anticipate your pledges for the coming year.

Kickoff social on November 7th at 3pm in Benson at St. Raphael's as a meet and greet.

Short Welcome Rite will take place then. Outdoor beverages and snacks will be served. Address: 730 Historic Route 80, Benson, AZ 85602. Come meet our new ministry friends!

Ministry Teams Schedule for November

Wednesdays 3, 10, 17, 24

LEM, Lector, Altar Guild – Dottie / Sherry

Saturday 6

LEM – Jeff Speer Lector – Sandra Calhoun Altar Guild – Jill Holsonback

Saturday 13

LEM – Ed Stone Lector – Robin StClair Altar Guild – Ed Stone

Saturday 20

LEM – Sherry Simon Lector – Sandra Calhoun Altar Guild – Jill Holsonback

Saturday 27

LEM – MJ Mahland Lector – Robin StClair Altar Guild – Sherry Simon

Sunday 7

LEM – Nancy Rea Lector – Sherry Simon Altar Guild – Deb Ash

Sunday 14



LEM – Sherry Simon Lector – MJ Mahland Altar Guild – Robin StClair

Sunday 21

LEM – Robin StClair Lector – Nancy Rea Altar Guild – Deb Ash

Sunday 28

LEM – Nancy Rea Lector – Sherry Simon Altar Guild – Robin StClair

November						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 5:00 pm New comer Welcome Service
7 11:00 am Necomer Welcome Service	8	9 Bible Study (Phalms) 5 pm via Zoom	10	11 	12	13 5:00 pm Worship
14	15	16 Bible Study (Phalms) 5 pm via Zoom	17	18	19	20 5:00 pm Worship
21 11:00 am Worship In person and Live Stream	22	23 Bible Study (Phalms) 5 pm via Zoom	24	25 	26 New sletter Articles Due	27 5:00 pm Worship
28 11:00 am Worship 4:00 pm EFM via Zoom	29	30 Bible Study (Phalms) 5 pm via Zoom		