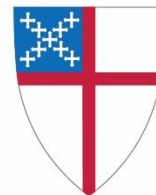




St. Stephen's Episcopal Church



December 2022

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From our Rector:



Joyous Advent and Merry Christmas,

Here we are back at that wonderful time of the year when we celebrate Jesus' birth and anticipate his coming again in the future... the "already" and the "not yet" in the same season. For the "already" we are filled with wonder, gratitude, and gladness... a deep abiding happiness that Christ came and lived among us to be with us and Christ continues to want to be with us... God with us... such an amazing gift.

The other part of our Advent season is the "not yet"... Jesus has "not yet" returned. In the early days of Jesus' resurrection, the followers thought it would be immediately... as years passed, decades passed, millennia passed, we keep anticipating... which can lead us to question...how soon? When? Will I be ready? A mix of excitement and anxiousness. Added to our thoughts of when is Jesus coming back are the more secular pressures of the season... all the things that our culture tells us need to be accomplished by December 25th... decorating, shopping, wrapping, baking, cooking, cleaning, traveling, writing, attending, hurrying, mailing, ... Whew! I'm tired just from all the "-ings" in that list.

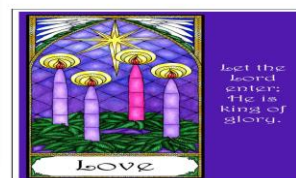
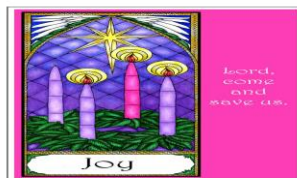
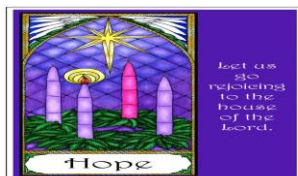
Our theme during Advent this year is "simplicity" – finding ways to lessen the pressures, the anxiousness, the bustling and doing. As we enter this season, may we all look for ways to simplify our expectations, habits, and traditions such that we are more likely to feel that peaceful anticipation of our Advent and Christmas seasons this year. May we relax into "peace on earth, goodwill towards all" and "silent night, holy night".

We invite you to read daily the Advent devotional booklet available at the church or online for free at:
<https://shop.livingcompass.org/products/living-well-through-advent-2022-8-5-x-11-pdf-file>

Share with us some of your thoughts about the reflections in the booklet on Saturday mornings at 9am in the Parish Hall with coffee and donuts as we explore ways to simplify this season and our lives overall.

With peace and love,

Rev. Allison



Senior Warden

Fellow Parishioners

December is when we prepare for the birth of Christ. This is very important time when celebrate His coming and the many blessings that He will be giving to us.

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
December 26th**

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

Saturday Evening Worshippers:

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

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.

Photos Wanted – Please send Mark any photos of events or happenings around our church to Mark for him to have in refreshing our photo library. Can be photos of various activities around the church or decorations or even flowers/trees on our property.

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

Duplicate Bridge Club to begin meeting at St. Stephen's in Ed Bldg on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12 noon to 4pm. Classes for new players offered. Any interested please contact Bob Walton at publius92@yahoo.com or phone 520-249-6635.

First Friday Film Night December 2nd at 5pm – We will watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas". These long-standing traditional Christmas specials have messages about "simplicity" relevant to our Advent devotionals this year. Light supper of soup is offered. Bring your own beverage. All are welcome! Bring a friend!

Second Saturday St. Stephen's Supper group will meet Saturday December 10th 6:30pm – Following the 5pm service (about 6:30pm) meet at Manda Le Restaurant, 3455 Canyon de Flores, Sierra Vista, AZ behind the Papa's 50s diner, same shopping center). Menu link: http://places.singleplatform.com/manda-le-restaurant-and-lounge/menu#menu_1800362. All are welcome, invite your friends.

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.

December 3rd – Doreen O'berg Christmas piano concert – 2pm in the church. Donations to benefit The Good Neighbor Alliance, our local homeless shelter.

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/>

Are you curious about what the 12-steps used in various support groups are all about?

Come and learn how the 12-steps used in their formation and how they can be used for anyone in any situation. They are not confined to those in recovery from addiction. The 12 steps are helpful for everyday life. Join us on Wednesday evenings in the Parish Hall at 5pm til 6pm as we explore these 12 steps through our Christian perspective. Open to everyone.

Junior Warden:

Christmas is the time of year where we travel to be with friends and family in celebration of Jesus' birth. Our church welcomes all those who wish to celebrate this illustrious occasion and welcome baby Jesus into our own family.

**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.

Birthdays

21 Dec: Carol Dockter
23 Dec: Linnaea Schmid
24 Dec: Rosemary Snapp
25 Dec: Sherril O'neil
29 Dec: Elizabeth York



Dec 31st 5pm New Year's Eve service and Jan 1st 11am New Year's Day service – Be sure to have your blackeyed peas, greens, and cornbread to bless the new year!

Annual Meeting Saturday January 21st 3pm in Ed Bldg with Chili potluck early dinner –

Everyone is encouraged to come and attend the annual meeting to review the 2023 budget, elect new members of the vestry, and thank all our ministry folks for their time and talent in the preceding year. We will need two new folks to be on vestry as Andy Anderson rotates off and we did not fill the other vestry vacancy last year. Please see Rev. Allison if you are interested in serving on the vestry for a two year term.

Saturdays in Advent starting Nov 26th thru Dec 17th at 9am in Parish Hall – Advent reflections discussion with coffee/hot chocolate and donuts. Come share your thoughts on the Advent readings/reflections in our Advent devotional

Clergy retreat Jan 24-26 – Rev. Allison and Deacon Dottie will be away at clergy retreat in Prescott at Chapel Rock.

Teller Volunteers are needed to help count & deposit funds from weekly collections. Computer knowledge will be helpful, but not necessary. Training will be provided. You will be scheduled once a month for about a hour. Please consider lending a hand! Contact Nancy Rea 520-227-3827 for more info.

Re-starting our outreach ministry team, "Community Connections". Looking for those who would like to be part of the team to identify community needs that our church may be able to help meet. Please add your name to our signup sheet if you are interested in helping out!

Sunday December 18th 2pm to 5pm – Bruce Hardt, a newer member of St. Stephen's is hosting a Christmas party/open house at his home in Hereford. Wear red and green to the party to make it festive and bring your own beverage and appetizer/finger food to share.

Christian Ed Forum – Study of the Book of Revelation continues Sat 4 pm. Sunday Adult Forum is reading "How to Read the Bible & Still Be a Christian: Struggling with Divine Violence from Genesis through Revelation" by John Dominic Crossan. Copies of the book are \$12.00/ea from Rev. Allison.

Lay Ministry Teams

If you are unable to serve at the appointed time and day, you are responsible for finding a replacement. Please notify Robin of substitutions.

Now forming a Pastoral Care Team (also known as Eucharistic Visitors) – volunteers to be trained to take communion to people unable to come to church and visit with them for a bit. If you are interested, please sign up for this ministry.

November & December – Food collection at a local grocery store to stock local food pantry shelves for the holidays, we will ask some of you to volunteer to man our table at a local store for an hour where we will ask shoppers to pick up one, only one, item from a list to donate as they exit for the local food pantry.

Vestry retreat – Friday and Saturday Feb 3 - 4
Members of the vestry are asked to reserve Friday from 3 to 7pm and Saturday from 9am to 4pm for our annual vestry retreat in the Parish Hall for planning 2023 and getting to know each other/team building. booklets.

December 24th Christmas Eve Service 5pm & 25th Christmas Day Service 10am – Celebrate once again with joy the coming of Jesus into our world, the Messiah, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Ministry Teams Schedule for December

Wednesdays 7, 14, 21, 28

LEM, Lector, Altar Guild – Dottie / Sherry

Saturday 3

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

Saturday 10 (Evening Prayer – No Eucharist)

LEM – Ed Stone Lector – Jeff Speer Altar Guild – Ed Stone Deacon – Dottie Gutwein

Saturday 17

LEM – Tim Holsonback Lector – Jeff Speer Altar Guild – Jill Holsonback

Saturday 24 (Christmas Eve – 5 pm service)

LEM – Jeff Speer Lector – Tim Holsonback Altar Guild – Jeff Speer

Saturday 31 (New Year's Eve – 5 pm service)

LEM – Robin StClair Lector – Sandra Calhoun Altar Guild – Robin StClair

Sunday 4

LEM – Peggy Brown Lector – Peggy Brown Altar Guild – Sherry Simon Deacon – Dottie Gutwein

Sunday 11

LEM – MJ Mahland Lector – Wilma Swartz Altar Guild – Robin StClair Deacon – Dottie Gutwein

Sunday 18

LEM – Nancy Rea Lector – Judy Davis Altar Guild – Deb Ash Deacon – Dottie Gutwein

Sunday 25 (Christmas Day – 10 am service / come on pajamas if you want)

LEM – Robin StClair Lector – Sherry Simon Altar Guild – Robin StClair Deacon – Dottie Gutwein

Sunday Jan 1, 2023 (New Year's Day – 11 am service)

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

Rev Allison will be out of town the 9th and 10th of December

December						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 5:00 pm Spoken service with Holy Communion 
4 11:00 am Worship In person and Live Stream	5	6 Bible Study (Psalms) 5 pm via Zoom	7 9:30 am Spoken service with Holy Communion	8	9	10 6:30 pm Manda Le Restaurant, behind Papa 50s
11 11:00 am Choral service with Holy Communion	12	13 Bible Study (Psalms) 5 pm via Zoom	14 9:30 am Spoken service	15	16	17 5:00 pm Spoken service with Holy Communion
18 11:00 am Worship In person and Live Stream	19	20 Bible Study (Psalms) 5 pm via Zoom	21 9:30 am Spoken service	22	23	24 
25 	26 New sletter Articles Due	27 Bible Study (Psalms) 5 pm via Zoom	28 9:30 am Spoken service with Holy Communion	29	30	31 
1-Jan-23 						