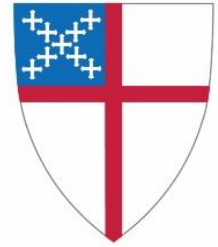




*St. Stephen's  
Episcopal Church  
Newsletter  
February 2024*



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*From our Rector*

Love is in the air! Happy Valentines Month and also the start of Lent.

May you always know that God loves you and always wants to be your “Valentine.” According to Wikipedia, St. Valentine lent his name and martyr date to the tradition based on legends that he once performed weddings of Roman soldiers (who were forbidden to be married by the Emperor) in the 400s CE. In his last letter to the jailer’s daughter before he was killed, he signed his letter “Your Valentine.” In the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, St. Valentine’s Day grew in popularity as a celebration of courtly love and romance, a day on which to express your love to someone special. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century hand-made cards decorated with hearts, doves, and winged cupids began to flourish as ways to share your message of love. Such messages were often accompanied by flowers and confections.

As the winter begins to give way to spring, may we see the flowers that start to bloom and the sweetness of the warmer days as part of God’s reminders of his love for us in giving us this creation. May we also remember God’s love shared with us in Jesus, his Son, sent here to assure us we are loved by God, precious in God’s sight, and that God wants to be in a loving relationship with each and every one of us. God asks us every day, “Will you be my Valentine?”

God’s Love be with you,  
Rev. Allison Cornel

## **Fasting as a Tradition in the Season of Lent**

Fasting or participating in a personal sacrifice (giving up something of value or desire) has long been a tradition in the Christian Church, and in our roots from the Jewish traditions. Historically it has meant an intentional time of not eating in the usual way and instead eating very little and doing without certain foods altogether. From the Roman Catholic practices during the Lenten Season, this has meant no meat (beef, poultry) on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and all Fridays in Lent. It also meant those whose health would not be compromised to then consume on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday one full meal, along with two smaller meals, which together should not equal the full meal.

In the Church of England, and throughout much of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, the entire forty days of Lent are designated days of fasting. Fridays are designated as days of abstinence in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. Saint Augustine's Prayer Book, a resource for Anglo-Catholics, defines "Fasting" as "usually meaning not more than a light breakfast, one full meal, and one half meal, on the forty days of Lent."

In contemporary times, people who desire to fast throughout the full 40 days have often given up either certain types of foods or habits that may have too much influence on their lives. Some give up sugary desserts like chocolates or cookies. Others may give up caffeine in coffee, tea, or sodas. Still others may refrain from drinking any alcoholic beverages. For those who look to habits, some give up watching TV or playing video games. Some even give up smoking with the hope that this habit will end even after the Lent Season is over.

The purpose of depriving one's self of such things is to notice how much of it has become too central to our daily lives and how its absence affects our health in all areas of our lives. How are we spiritually, physically, emotionally, and intellectually with and without these things? Do we fill the void with turning our attention to God in prayer, reflection, study, connection? The hope is that we will use the time freed up from our fast to try to improve our life with God by examination of ourselves and our practices and see if we can deepen or augment those practices in ways that bring us closer to God and God's will for our lives.

We are all encouraged to consider what we might want to give up during the weeks of Lent. What do you think you cannot do without? What seems to have too strong a hold on you? What impinges on your ability to spend more time with God? How can you restore or start a practice that helps you feel closer to God?

May God bless you with perseverance, strength, peace, and hope in your fasting this Lent.

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## **Why do we put ashes on our forehead on Ash Wednesday?**

Each year on Ash Wednesday when we come to church, we receive ashes in the shape of a cross on our foreheads. What does this mean and why do we do this? In the early Biblical times, in the Old Testament, to cover one's self with ashes was a sign of great remorse, grief, and repentance. For example, in 2 Samuel we read this description: "Tamar tore the robe she was wearing and put ashes on her head in grief. Then she covered her face with her hands and cried loudly as she walked away."

There are quite a few verses that mention putting ashes on one's head (often accompanied by the tearing of clothes and putting on sackcloth or burlap) as an outward and visible sign of great emotional distress over something terrible going wrong either with the person's actions or something that happened to them. In the book of Esther, we read: "When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly."

The church has borrowed from our Jewish roots the tradition of taking time for some self-reflection of how we are living our lives and how that compares with how God would like us to live our lives. We are asked to take stock of the past year and evaluate how we have behaved and spoken and thought about one another. We are asked to be very honest with ourselves and admit there are times and places when we have acted more out of our own ego, pride, and will and not out of God's desires for us. The ashes we put upon our foreheads are a symbol of our recognition of being sorry for the ways we have acted that did not match up to God's ways and Christ's teaching.

In the book of Isaiah, the prophet tells the people what God thinks about their day of fasting and repentance:

*“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?”*

*“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.”*

Therefore, we see that the symbolism of ashes for remorse cannot stop there. We should not end with just being apologetic. It needs to be combined with action, with a pledge to ourselves and to God that we will take positive steps to try to do better from this day forward. It does not mean we will be perfect, only that we admit we have not done things according to God's will and ways and that we know where we have fallen short and that we will try to do better. The ashes in the shape of the cross remind us that there is always resurrection... that we are not dead in our past, not dead in our wrongs. Instead, there is always an opportunity to rise to a new life, to be a new person.

As you receive your ashes on Ash Wednesday, may they be an invitation to consider in what ways you may need or want to change to be more Christ-like in your daily life and an invitation to begin to put new and better ways into practice to come closer to that desire to live an improved life.

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## Save the Dates

- **2<sup>nd</sup> February – Friday Film night – 4.40pm at the movie theatre in Sierra Vista Mall.**
- **10<sup>th</sup> February – Saturday Night Supper -6.30pm meet at New R&R Pizza on Fry Blvd if open by then. If not open, meet at Chili's.**
- **13<sup>th</sup> February – Pancakes and Sausage Shrove Tuesday Supper. 5pm to 6pm in Parish Hall. 14<sup>th</sup> February – Ash Wednesday. Services at 9:30am and 6pm. Lent starts early this year.**
- **16<sup>th</sup> February - Friday Film night – 4.50pm at the movie theatre in Sierra Vista Mall.**
- **23<sup>rd</sup> February – 6pm Professional Pianist John Nilsen in concert at St. Stephen's in the Church. Free will offering and wine/sparkling soda/hors oeuvres reception to follow.**



## *From Our Reverend Deacon*

January was off to a bright beginning with New Year's and then Epiphany celebrations. It is so sad to have to take down all the lovely candles and Christmas/Advent/ Epiphany decorations for another year.

Those of us who had the task agreed the church seemed so bare after storing everything away again. But now we have another season approaching: Ash Wednesday is February 14<sup>th</sup> and coming at us fast.

Rev. Allison is supplying us with a meditation booklet called, "Steadfast Love". Some of us are familiar with other books by Henri Nouwen and these daily meditations are taken from them. We hope you will enjoy meeting on Saturday at 3:30pm or Sunday after coffee hour (about 12noon until 1:30pm).

Our Wednesdays during Lent will also feature the mid-week readings from the same booklet.

The weekend of January 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, I will be going to Phoenix to be one of several hostesses for the new Ordinands class of 2023 Deacons. My class was asked to be of assistance and once again it is exciting to witness another class become ordained. I will return in time for the Sunday service/Annual Meeting and Mexican Pot Luck Luncheon.

There were some folks I need to thank for their part in the Secret Santa gift giving ---However, they cannot be named since it is after all a SECRET. So you know who you are and THANK YOU!!! It was fun putting it together.

Thank you to those who expressed sympathy for the loss of my niece/nephew's brother, David, who recently died from aggressive brain cancer. He is at Peace and we are glad his suffering is done.

Rev. Deacon Dottie g.

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## *From our Treasurer*

We wrapped up 2023 within \$1000 of our projected budget for the year, thanks to the generosity of the people of St. Stephen's. Details are all available in the Annual Meeting notes. The Vestry had approved a budget for 2024 and will "tweak" that at the retreat meetings this weekend.

Anne Roth

## February 2024 Lay Ministry Teams Schedule

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

<b>Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup></b>			
LEM –Jeff Speer	Lector – Tim Holsonback	Alter guild – Jeff Speer	
<b>Saturday 10<sup>th</sup></b>			
LEM – Robin StClair	Lector – Sandra Calhoun	Alter Guild – Robin StClair	
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> ASH WEDNESDAY</b>			
LEM –Tim Holsonback	Lector – TBD	Altar Guild – Tim Holsonback	
<b>Saturday 17<sup>th</sup></b>			
LEM - Tim Holsonback	Lector – Jeff Speer	Alter Guild - Tim Holsonback	
<b>Saturday 24<sup>th</sup></b>			
LEM – Jeff Speer	Lector – Robin StClair	Altar Guild – Jeff Speer	
<hr/>			
<b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>			
LEM – MJ Mahland	Lector – Wilma Swartz	Alter Guild – Deb Ash	Deacon - Dottie Gutwein
<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>			
LEM – Nancy Rae	Lector – Doris Millard	Altar Guild – Nancy Rae	Deacon - Dottie Gutwein
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> ASH WEDNESDAY 6.00 pm</b>			
LEM – Robin StClair	Lector – Nancy Rae	Alter Guild – Robin StClair	Deacon – Dottie Gutwein
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>			
LEM – Robin StClair	Lector – Peggy Brown	Altar Guild – Robin StClair	Deacon - Dottie Gutwein
<b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup></b>			
LEM – MJ Mahland	Lector - Ann Crandall	Alter Guild – Deb Ash	Deacon - Dottie Gutwein

### **St Stephens Church is looking for more volunteers!**

1. For more people to join the Ministry Team as a Lector.

Every month Robin StClair puts the Ministry Team Schedule together. Ideally, she would like a larger pool of members who would be willing to read the lessons – especially if the scheduled person is unavailable, or due to holidays etc. fewer people are available to be called upon.

If you think you could do this, even if not on a regular basis, please give your name to either Allison or Robin.

2. More help is needed during our Fellowship Hour on Sunday Mornings.

Currently our Fellowship Coordinator – Wilma Swartz – sets refreshments up alone.

Because there is no other scheduled coordinator to assist, this means that she has to leave the service early to enable her to set things up. This also means that the only people willing to regularly help to clear up are Allison, Dottie, Nancy and Anne who also have other things to attend to. Please, please, if you regularly enjoy this time and the refreshments that are offered, put your name down on the list or give your name to Wilma. She would be delighted!!

3. Furthermore – Our Fellowship ‘Kitty Jar’ is often replete! If you are enjoying fellowship time, along with snacks, drinks and socializing. Please do consider making a donation.

Occasionally, some items are donated by people who have surplus to their needs and will bring (not ‘beyond use by date’) snacks or refreshments, or wish to show their gratitude by contributing to the ‘Jar’. Please help as you are able.

## February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
					<b>Film Night</b> <b>"The Chosen"</b> <b>Episodes 1-3</b> <b>4.40pm</b> <b>(see notes)</b>	5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)		Bible Study (Proverbs) 5 pm Via Zoom	9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion			5.00 pm Service followed by <b>Supper at</b> <b>R&amp;R Pizza</b> <b>6.30pm</b>
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)		Bible Study (Proverbs) 5 pm Via Zoom	<b>Ash Wednesday</b> 9.30 am & 6 pm Spoken Service With Holy Communion		<b>Film Night</b> <b>"The Chosen"</b> <b>Episodes 4-6</b> <b>4.50pm</b> <b>(see notes)</b>	5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)		Bible Study (Proverbs) 5 pm Via Zoom	9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion		Professional Pianist John Nilson in concert 6pm	5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
25	26	27	29			
10am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	<b>Newsletter</b> <b>Articles</b> <b>Due For</b> <b>March Issue</b>	Bible Study (Proverbs) 5 pm Via Zoom	9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion			

**Please Note – Friday film nights** will be held at the movie theatre at Sierra Vista Mall on  
 February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4.40pm, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 4.50pm and also on March 1<sup>st</sup> at 3.50pm.  
 Tickets can be purchased on line or at the theatre and you can get all 8 episodes for \$30  
 when purchased at the same time.



<b>Andrew Anderson</b>	<b>February 2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Wilma Swartz</b>	<b>February 10<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Carlos E Zeisel</b>	<b>February 12<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Nancy Rae</b>	<b>February 21<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Hunter Reid Zavala</b>	<b>February 23<sup>rd</sup></b>

## SOME FACTS ABOUT LIFE IN ENGLAND IN THE 1500s

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

- People used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot & then once a day it was taken & sold to the tannery.... if you had to do this to survive you were "Piss Poor" But worse than that were the really poor folk who couldn't even afford to buy a pot. ....they "didn't have a pot to piss in" & were the lowest of the low.
- Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June... However, since they were starting to smell..... Brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting Married.
- Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it... Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water!"
- Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof... Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."
- There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.
- The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "Dirt poor."
- The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way. Hence: a thresh hold.
- In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire... Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme: Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old.
- Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat.
- Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.
- Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust.
- Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial... They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a wake.
- England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive... So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift.) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer.

And that's the truth... Now, whoever said History was boring?

**From the Editor** – Last month Chet and I attended the **First Friday Film Night**. We watched the historical drama “The Lion in Winter” with Katherine Hepburn as Eleanor of Aquitaine and Peter O’Toole as Henry II.

Afterwards, during the discussion, I was absolutely amazed at how knowledgeable everyone was about British history! Everyone, that is, except me, a native of the UK! However, I did know just about all the idioms listed on page 7!!

Along similar lines, I am often asked why we refer to the ‘toilet’ as the ‘loo’ and I am able to enlighten them! Who knows, I may pick up some more odd sayings as Chet and I will be spending a few months in the UK this year. I’ll be continuing with the newsletter whilst there so keep a look out if you are interested!

Hope the weather cheers up a bit!!

