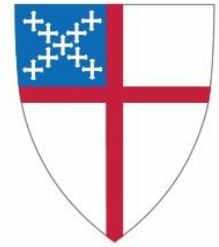




*St. Stephen's
Episcopal Church
Newsletter
February 2025*



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From our Rector

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” – Joshua 1:9

Happy February,

Many of our members may have seen, read about, or heard about the Episcopal Bishop of Washington DC, The Rt. Rev. Budde preaching at the inaugural prayer service on January 21st at the Washington Cathedral. This is a traditional service to pray for the incoming new administration. It is normal and anticipated that the preacher will address the incoming President and Vice President as part of the service.

This is what Bishop Budde did. And she did so in light of actions that the President had already announced and directed his administration to begin steps towards implementing with respect to removing protections for LGBTQIA and deporting immigrants. Bishop Budde calmly, respectfully, and with Biblical authority asked the President to have mercy and show kindness to those who are part of these scared groups of people and to any marginalized populations as Jesus has instructed his followers to do.

Bishop Budde spoke Christian and Biblical principles and truth to those in power. She did so in a direct and yet courteous manner. This is what our Christian witness is supposed to look like. This is what we are all asked to do as part of our calling as Jesus' followers. Our Baptismal covenant which we vow or promise to do when we were baptized and each time that we renew our baptismal covenant during the year asks us:

- Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
- Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
- Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
- Will you seek and serve Christ in ALL persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
- Will you strive for justice and peace among ALL people, and respect the dignity of EVERY human being?

And to each of these vows/promises we answer: “I will, with God's help.”

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The coming years may contain multiple instances of people in authority making decisions and taking actions that will be in direct contradiction of our vows and beliefs in what God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit uphold as God's righteous ways. We may have opportunities, as Bp. Budde did, to stand firm in our faith and beliefs and to speak truth to those in power. May we all trust in God and find the courage and conviction to "persevere in resisting evil" and "proclaim by word and example" and "strive to justice and peace" when we see or experience or hear about anything that disrespects the dignity of any human being.

Be strong and courageous,
Rev. Allison Cornell

Sherry Simon Ordained Deacon on 25 January 2025:

Several of our church members travelled to Phoenix for the ordination service at Trinity Cathedral on Saturday the 25th of January to celebrate Sherry Simon and several others being ordained to the Holy Order of Deacons. It was a joyous celebration for those who have been in formation as both vocational (permanent) Deacons and those who are transitional (taking this step before becoming ordained Priests) Deacons. An inspirational sermon was heard, the laying on of hands by the Bishop and clergy was accomplished, communion was shared, and a reception to congratulate those newly admitted to the diaconate was enjoyed.

Deacon Sherry will now participate in the life of the church by:

- studying the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and modeling her life upon them....
- making Christ and his redemptive love known, by word and example, to those among whom she lives, and works, and worships.
- interpreting to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.
- assisting the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and
- At all times, her life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

St. Stephen's presented Deacon Sherry with new Deacon stoles in the seasonal colors of the church that she may be vested appropriately for and in accordance with our liturgical services.



Greg Lamberth Memorial Service and Celebration of Life:

Just after Thanksgiving St. Stephen's received notification from Gretchen that her husband, Greg Lamberth, had passed into the eternal life following complications from a heart valve surgery earlier in the fall. A 1st Lieutenant of the United States Marine Corps, Greg will have military honors and a short funeral service at the Southern Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery on February 21, 2025 at 11am. Any who wish to attend should arrive at the cemetery no later than 10:45am. Following the service, everyone is invited to St. Stephen's church at 11:45am for a time of story sharing and remembrance and a lunch reception.

Carswell Memorial Cabana Project:

In accordance with the wishes of the Carswell family, St. Stephen's is in the process of receiving bids to place a 10' x 12' cabana between the Church and Education Building. It will be a covered, open-sided structure with built-in benches for enjoying the view across the back of the property and the mountains. We will also be planting a tree in honor of Ann Carswell who passed last year.

New Rector Search – Steps:

This spring Senior Warden Jeff Speer will be working with the Diocese of Arizona and Rev. Canon Anita Braden, the Canon to the Ordinary (overseeing the ordained clergy of the diocese) to begin the next steps for the church in seeking a new Priest to minister at St. Stephen's following Rev. Allison's retirement in August this year. We have four volunteers for the search committee: Dennis Gallus, Renee Olejnicak, Nancy Rea, and Pat Wick.

These folks will start reviewing and updating the St. Stephen's church profile that is posted on the national Episcopal Church website. Their updates will include the discussion items that the church congregation did late last fall identifying the character or personality of our church, the things we want to continue into our future, and the hopes we have for the next Priest/Rector.

When the profile is ready, it will be posted along with a call for resumes. As resumes are received, the search committee will review candidates and initiate interviews as appropriate. We then hope to have someone identified to become the new Priest later this summer.

Please keep this process in your prayers that God will guide it in its deliberations and search for candidates who will be best suited for our church's continued ministry to love and serve and for the glory of God.

Announcements:

- **New Vestry Retreat** – January 31st 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm and Feb 1st 8:30 am to 2 pm in Parish Hall. New and continuing vestry members will meet to get to know each other and plan for the coming year.
- **February** – Nancy Rea is planning a house blessing for her new home. More on dates and times coming soon.
- **February 7 – First Friday Film Night: “The Jesus Revolution”**, 2023 film in which Kelsey Grammer plays Chuck Smith, a pastor who is at first totally against the counterculture movement that the hippies of the '60s and '70s represent, but when he actually meets with one, the charismatic Lonnie Frisbee, his view of them begins to change and he welcomes them into his church. Soup supper 5pm-5:30pm and movie to follow in the Parish Hall. Invite a friend.
- **February 8th 6:30pm Second Saturday Supper** – Join us for dinner out and conversation at Manda Le Restaurant, 3455 Canyon de Flores, Sierra Vista, AZ 85650. Menu link here: https://places.singleplatform.com/manda-le-restaurant-and-lounge/menu#menu_1800362 .

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- **United Methodist Church in Sierra Vista hosting a BBQ lunch/dinner Feb 9th 12 noon.** The BBQ will be provided by AZBarbeque Catering, LLC, and if you haven't tasted their food, then you are in for a pleasant treat. The Adult Menu includes a choice of Pulled Pork, Shredded Chicken, or Sliced Tri-Tip. You have a choice of two of the three sides - Home Recipe BBQ Beans, Famous Peppered Bacon Corn, or Potato Salad. All of this is topped off with a dessert of Apple Cobbler with Vanilla Ice Cream and Whipped Cream. This BBQ Meal also includes drinks from the Watering Hole of ice tea, water, lemonade, and coffee all for ticket price of \$20. The Kids Meal consists of a Beef Hot Dog, a bag of chips, and the above dessert and drinks for a ticket price of \$10. More info on tickets coming soon.
 - **February 14** – Valentines Day!
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From Our Reverend Deacon

As of Saturday, Jan. 25th 2025, St Stephen's Church now has TWO Deacons! Yes, Sherry Simon is now officially Reverend Sherry Simon, Deacon. After 3 long years, the moment finally arrived. Rev. Allison, Renee Olenicak, and I were honored to be Sherry's sponsors. Also attending from our church were Nancy Rea, Anne Roth, Mark Sowards, Nick Santanocito, and Tim and Jill Holsonback. The whole ceremony was elegant. Sherry and two classmates were made Vocational Deacons along with 5 other Transitional Deacons who will eventually be ordained priests.

On Sunday morning before the procession, Rev. Allison presented to Sherry from St. Stephen's new Deacon's green and purple stoles. Other colors will be given at the Wednesday and next Saturday services. For fellowship hour, we celebrated with a delicious gluten free cake and ice cream. Wilma took some pictures and, hopefully, they will make this edition of the newsletter. If not, they will appear either online or in a later edition.

Earlier in January, I attended a party at a friend's home for Epiphany and we were entertained with a reading of the story called "The Christmas Card." I found it delightful and thought provoking. If you never saw or heard it, I recommend it for your next Jan. 6th Epiphany's pleasure.

So, now the church has been undecorated from Christmas and we are in the Green Season before Lent. The days and months are going by so fast--it is hard to realize not only a new year, but already Lent is bearing down on us.

Continued.....

On Saturday March 8, I will begin leading a 12-week study on the “Women of The New Testament” authored by Phyllis J. LePeau. We will meet in the Parish Hall Cozy Corner and each week participants will have a copy of the lesson and some questions to ponder. I have read through it and believe it will be an interesting and informative way to know these women and why they were important. The sessions will be on Saturday from 10am to Noon, with snacks and coffee or cold drinks. AND, it is not just for women, men are also invited.

AND, again, bring a friend. A sign-up sheet will be on the counter in the kitchen so I will know how many copies to furnish.

Respectfully yours, Reverend Dottie Gutwein, Deacon



From our Treasurer

Treasurer's Report for 2024

Have I told you all lately how much I appreciate your attention and your generosity? If not, please know how much difference your attitude and caring for your church makes. In the year 2024 the incoming pledges added up to \$103,876. Non-pledged giving came in at \$44,523. Interest income from our various investments was \$1526. When we put together a budget for the coming year, we look at the actual numbers spent on things like electricity and salaries and pensions and medical coverage. We look at what that “non-pledged giving” number was last year, and we estimate about half – just in case. So for the coming year we have a “straw” number of \$155,380.

The expenses – like salaries and staff, building maintenance and outreach, Mission Share (to the Diocese) and worship supplies – added up to \$155,896. The difference is only \$516.88 . . . and as soon as these numbers were reported at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, a couple of people came forward to add to the “worship costs” and some interior upgrades.

We are doing our best to be responsible with all your money. The investments at the Episcopal Fund have gone from \$31,000 to \$36,883.79; from 10,000 to \$12,965.50. The Emergency Fund loan from the Diocese during the Covid years was put into CD's and has earned \$1568.28. That interest account will accrue until we have another \$10,000 to buy another CD. One of these CD's will mature in May, and if we need it, we will use it to help a new priest visit us and/or move here.

It's not just all about “us.” This church has been amazingly generous to all kinds of groups and people around our area. Rev. Allison's Discretionary Fund has helped a dozen people with bills, while we have loaded up school supplies, personal care items, aluminum cans, etc. We gave scholarships to kids whose parents are incarcerated so they could go to camp last summer. Rev. Allison read the entire list at the meeting, and it is more than a page long with all the details.

Your blessings are the blessings of our world, small and large. We give thanks for all of you! May St. Stephen's keep the doors open to all who come, all who need, us and all whose lives are changing in the coming year. The Rites of Passage mark our way through life, and this is the place to anchor.

Anne Roth, Treasurer

Your donations of unwanted eyeglasses and case

For over a year now, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church has been collecting used eyeglasses and cases for the Lions Club. Last year we donated over a full box of unused eyeglasses and already this year we've half a box full. Please bring your used eyeglasses and cases to St. Stephen's and put them in the Lions Club box, located in the enclosed patio on the counter to the left of the aluminum cans recycling tub.

Introducing: Wilma Swartz The VENTertainer!

Anyone needing a good, clean, Christian VENTertainer in Arizona should call me, Wilma Swartz, The VENTertainer, or PM me. I'll also go to surrounding states like Colorado, New Mexico, and California. My shows are audience participation, with fun teaching of The Word. There will be plenty of laughs, singing, and even a dance with a 6' ostrich puppet to "The Holy Bible". For our Christmas shows, we tell the story of The Nativity but we have a stand in for the donkey that brings Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. We use a horse named Sylvester Stallion. For the Last Supper, the children get to sit at the table with Jesus.

These shows are for all ages from children to adults and seniors <https://wilmapuppets.com/index.html>

....and from your Kitchen Koordinator

As from this month there is a sign-up sheet for members to sign up to either bake or purchase a birthday cake for Birthday Sunday. Please sign your name for one of the months so that we can be sure that we will all be able to piece of cake each month.

I would also like to remind you that I am still in need of a **kitchen assistant** who will help me set up the refreshments etc. before the service and also to help me clear away when everyone is finished. Also - **Hosts/hostesses/servers** and **help required during clear-up** required for Potluck meals etc. Please consider volunteering.

And again - our Koffee Kitty is feeling a little neglected. Please make a small donation if you are able.

NB. If you are bringing home made food for the Fellowship hour and/or for the Pot Luck meals, please either list the ingredients or inform me, so that members and guests who are gluten/lactose intolerant or have other food allergies will know in advance.

Thank you, Wilma Swartz.

February 2025 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 Cheryl (520 732 6052) of substitutions

ALL SUNDAYS – DEACON - DOTTIE GUTWEIN

Saturday February 1st

LEM – Tim Holsonback

Lector – Sandra Calhoun

Altar guild – Tim Holsonback

Saturday February 8th

LEM - Jeff Speer

Lector – Jeff Speer

Alter Guild – Jeff Speer

Saturday February 15th

LEM – Robin StClair

Lector – Tim Holsonback

Altar Guild – Robin StClair

Saturday February 22nd

LEM – TBD

Lector – TBD

Altar Guild - TBD

Sunday February 2nd **BIRTHDAY SUNDAY**

Morning Prayer – Cheryl Stone

Lector – TBD

Sunday February 9th

LEM – MJ Mahland

Lector – Tim Hollo

Altar Guild – Deb Ash

Sunday February 16th

LEM – Nancy Rae

Lector – Wilma Swartz

Altar Guild – Anne Roth

Sunday February 23rd

LEM – MJ Mahland

Lector – Peggy Brown

Altar Guild – Deb Ash



Andrew Anderson

February 2nd

Wilma Swartz

February 10th

Carlos E. Zeisel

February 12th

Justin C. Crouch

February 12th

Nancy Rea

February 21st

Hunter Reid Zavala

February 23rd

Sunday February 2nd will be “**BIRTHDAY SUNDAY**” celebrating everyone who has a birthday in the month of February. There will be cake for all to enjoy.

February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
2 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	3	4 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	5 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	6	7 Film Night 5.30pm The Jesus Revolution in the Parish Hall	8 5.00 pm Service followed by Supper at Manda Le 6.30 pm
9 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	10	11 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	12 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	13	14 	15 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
16 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	17	18 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	19 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	20	21	22 5.00 pm Evening Prayer
23 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	24 Newsletter Articles Due For March Issue	25 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	26 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	27	28	

From the Editor

Dear Readers, if you have an interesting story, photos, etc., that you would like to share with us, do please email me at dianepyancey@gmail.com and have them added to our monthly newsletters.

Thank you, Diane Yancey