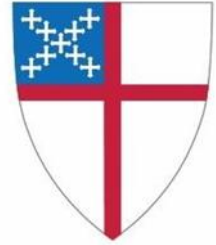


*St. Stephen's
Episcopal Church
Newsletter
March 2025*



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From our Rector

*“When we arrived in Jerusalem, the [d]brothers and sisters welcomed us gladly.
– Acts 21:17*

Peace and Greetings to you all,

We begin March with the arrival in our area of Southeastern Arizona of warmer temperatures and budding trees and blossoming flowers. Spring is once more making its welcome return. The season of spring coincides with the church seasons of Lent and Easter. As the Earth reawakens and renews life in the plant kingdom, our souls may feel a similar stirring to be renewed and reborn to new possibilities and new opportunities.

For some of us our Lenten season is a time to pause and reflect on our relationship with God. How is it going with our souls? Where and how do we feel God’s spirit moving within us? Am I struggling to be in God’s presence? Do my usual spiritual practices still bring me closer to God? What might I do to enhance or expand or change my prayer life, my scripture life, my worship life to renew a right spirit within me?

We have received a few new visitors in our church in the past months. They also may be looking for new ways to connect with God and other faithful people. Let us be alert to new faces among us and welcome them when they arrive on our doorstep, showing them friendliness and hospitality as they seek their own deepening of relationship with the Divine One.

May you be blessed this Lenten Season,
Rev. Allison Cornell

Acceptance and Connection: That's what finding a home at St. Stephen's is all about!

Your Church Needs Your Help – As part of our joining in with nature's renewal and rebirth, we are asking you to be agents of renewal and rebirth in our church. During Lent and Easter, we ask you to invite others to come to church with you... to come and see what our faith life, worship, and welcoming congregation are like. We will have flyers that speak to our Episcopal Church motto: The Episcopal Church Welcomes You! Our flyers highlight our acceptance of everyone who seeks a closer relationship with God in Christ and Holy Spirit and also emphasize the Episcopal Church as a way to find connection not only with God but with others to form a beloved community that cares for one another. Please take a flyer or two and invite people you know or people you just met to come to church with you during Lent or for Easter.

Easter Newcomer Celebration and Baptism Service! On Easter Sunday we will recognize with a short ceremony those who are newer attendees in our church and we will also offer the opportunity to be baptized and renew of our own baptismal vows as we celebrate Jesus' rising to new life and his promise to us for the same resurrection in Christ's name. Be sure to let others know we baptize folks of all ages and if they want to be baptized to come on Easter Sunday. You are never too old and it is never too late to be baptized!

Shrove Tuesday Pancakes and Sausage March 4th 5:30pm to 6:30pm in the Parish Hall, come and eat! – On the night before Ash Wednesday, Christian churches everywhere often hold a Shrove Tuesday Supper. The origins of this tradition are founded on the fasting from certain foods during the season of Lent. "Shrove" means to confess one's sins, do penance, and receive absolution.

The season of Lent is a time of reflection for examining one's life, admitting to ourselves and to God when we have done something that is wrong or falls short of God's will for us, and then making changes to improve one's way of living. Historically, part of this season has been fasting from things that are pleasurable and which may have an imbalance in their presence in our lives. Part of those items were traditionally sweets and meats... such as pancakes with syrup and sausages... People would then fast from or do without eating such things during Lent to limit their availability and rebalance one's focus on God. So, to reduce the temptation to consume those sweets and red meats during Lent, churches would hold suppers to use-up butter, flour, sugar, and red meats before Lent began. In some places this same night is called "Mardi Gras", French for "Fat Tuesday" or "Carnival" in which people feast and eat as much of those sweets and red meats as they can, to fill up on them, before they fast or give them up for Lent.

Does the Episcopal Church require fasting during Lent?

Fasting as a practice in the Episcopal Church has waned in importance as people wrestle with the understanding of how does fasting help one's faith life with God. As mentioned above, fasting can be from certain foods, but is not limited to just foods. It might be social media, or video games, or TV watching, or gambling, or partying/drinking, or smoking, or anything that takes-up a significant portion of time or money that could be understood as wasted or misused...

More than once I have heard people ask, how does my not eating chocolate/desserts/sweets during Lent improve my faith life? Well, the real question is whether such things have an unhealthy imbalance of importance in our lives... Do I consume such things to excess on a

regular basis? Could my money be spent on something more helpful to others? Could my time and attention be used more faithfully with loving God and my neighbor?

When we find that something(s) seems to have a hold on us to the exclusion of other things, there may be an unhealthy imbalance happening. The season of Lent is a good time to refrain from those potential “addictions” to see if we can restore some balance in our lives. When we fast from those things, we can look for healthier options that would replace those things and begin to make changes to improve our way of living. Instead of having cake for dessert, maybe I will take a walk after dinner and notice God’s creation. Maybe instead of buying those cookies I will save that \$5 for a local charity and give to that charity each month.

Our church does not require that we fast during Lent, but we invite you to consider what things in your life may be out of balance and encourage you to take steps to improve or restore balance in your life.

Lenten Devotional Books Now Available in the Church – This year we will be using booklets that discuss the “Fruits of the Spirit” and how we can grow in those fruits as followers of Jesus. Booklets are free to congregation members and our Adult Forum groups (Sat 4pm and Sun 12pm) will be sharing our reflections using these readings.

United Thank Offering (UTO) blue boxes for Lent season – The Episcopal Church has an organization called the United Thank Offering which receives donations that it in turn makes available to churches for grants that help with ministry opportunities. Some of the ministries UTO has supported this past year include providing healthcare for chronically ill people, protection from domestic abuse, asylum and immigration seekers, supporting seniors with planning for the second half of life, LGBTQIA education and outreach, and other community building efforts.

Please take a blue box and during the next several weeks of Lent, drop your spare change in the box in gratitude for the blessings we enjoy in our lives. You may wish to also use the UTO calendar that has a reflection for each day of things to be grateful for specifically around the topic of feeling welcomed. On Easter Sunday, bring your blue box to church to donate and we will say a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for our boxes and then send a check to UTO for the total of all the boxes.

Our Free Table/Fridge Drawer – Thank you to all who continue to share items that you hope will find new homes. We want to update you with how this works. If you have pantry or fridge items that are not expired that you are not likely to use, you can put them on the Free Table or in the Fridge Drawer. However, if the items are not taken after 2 weeks, we ask that you take them back and dispose of them yourself. Please do not use these placements as a dump. Items should be unopened and unused in good condition and not expired. And anyone who can use such offerings are free to take them and use them.

The Lion’s Club Eyeglasses and Cases Donation Box – We have a box for no-longer needed eyeglasses and cases that we donate to the Lion’s Club locally. They then determine who can use those donations as eyeglasses can be expensive to get. The local club thanks us for the donations we have made in the past year. Check your office or junk drawers at home and see if

you have some old pairs of glasses that you no longer need and drop them in the box located on the refreshment table in the Parish Hall.

Upcoming events:

- March 1 & 2 – Annual Quilt Show at Buena H.S. Both Jill Holsonback and Peggy Brown have quilts entered in the show this year. 9am to 4pm.
- March 2 – Birthday Sunday – we may not have any March birthdays to recognize among our congregation, but we will have cake anyway... It is someone’s birthday in March so happy birthday to whomever is born in March!
- March 4 – Shrove Tuesday Pancakes and Sausage Supper. 5:30-6:30pm in the Parish Hall
- March 5 – Ash Wednesday Services 9:30am or 6pm. Lent starts.
- March 7 – 1st Friday Film night – “Jesus Christ Superstar” live performance recorded 2021, with John Legend and Alice Cooper. Soup supper before the movie. 5:30pm in Parish Hall
- March 8 – Bible study of “Women of the New Testament” led by Deacon Dottie. Study booklets provided. 10am to 11am in Parish Hall. Learn about some of the significant women in the New Testament and how they inform our faith life.
- March 8 – 2nd Saturday Supper at Olive Garden 6:30pm. Join us for dinner and fellowship together.
- March 9 – Nancy Rea’s house blessing 2-3pm. Come and help bless and fill her new home with love and laughter. Bring an appetizer or dessert to share. 1040 Carmelita Dr., off of 7th St. at CAS School.

Holy Week Schedule:

- April 13 – Palm Sunday
- April 17 – Maundy Thursday 6pm service
- April 18 – Good Friday 6pm service
- April 19 - No Worship Service this Saturday, please come Sunday for Easter service.
- April 20 – Easter Sunday w newcomer recognition and baptisms followed by potluck brunch in Parish Hall.



From Our Reverend Deacon

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

In an ongoing effort to be responsible with the church's money that has been designated or restricted for use, the Vestry agreed to move some of the bank Savings account into short-term CDs at National Bank. We have a line item in the budget for use on maintenance and upgrades. The separate Savings account has been getting about \$1.25/month in interest. Their CDs show 3.44% interest on a CD that runs 179 days, just short of 6 months. So we will arrange to pick up a series of staggered CD's there and earn a little better interest for you. Thank you all for your endless generosity to St. Stephen's so that we have the funds to work with.

Anne Roth, Treasurer

From The Kitchen Koordinator

There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall 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.

March 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

Saturday March 1st

LEM – Tim Holsonback

Lector – Sandra Calhoun

Altar guild – Tim Holsonback

Saturday March 8th

LEM - Jeff Speer

Lector – Jeff Speer

Alter Guild – Jeff Speer

Saturday March 15th

LEM – Robin StClair

Lector – Tim Holsonback

Altar Guild – Robin StClair

Saturday March 22nd

LEM – TBD

Lector – TBD

Altar Guild - TBD

Saturday March 29th

LEM – Tim Holsenback

Lector – Sandra Calhoun

Sunday March 2nd BIRTHDAY SUNDAY

LEM – Cheryl Stone

Lector – Ann Crandall

Alter Guild – Cheryl Stone

Sunday March 9th

LEM – Nancy Rea

Lector – Myra Azarga

tar Guild – Nancy Rea

Sunday March 16th

LEM – MJ Mahland

Lector – Wilma Swartz

Altar Guild – Deb Ash

Sunday March 23rd

LEM – Cheryl Stone

Lector – Anne Roth

Altar Guild – Cheryl Stone

Sunday March 30th

LEM – MJ Mahland

Lector – Peggy Brown

ALL SUNDAYS – DEACON - DOTTIE GUTWEIN

March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	31					1 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
2 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	3	4 Shrove Tuesday Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	5 Ash Wednesday 9.30 am & 6pm Spoken Service With Holy Communion	6	7 Film Night 5.30pm Jesus Christ Superstar in the Parish Hall	8 5.00 pm Service followed by Supper at Olive Garden 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 Spoken Service with Holy Communion
23 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	24 Newsletter Articles Due April Issue	25 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	26 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	27	28	29 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion



Diane Yancey March 31st

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



- **From the Newsletter Editor:** Articles for publication in the newsletter should reach me no later than the 25th day of the preceding month. My email is dianepyancey@gmail.com and I look forward to hearing from you.

--- Diane Yancey, editor.