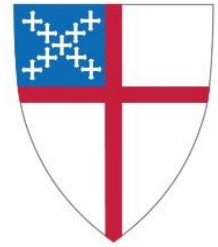




*St. Stephen's
Episcopal Church
Newsletter
April 2025*



Office manager: Email: mark.sowards@ststephensaz.org Phone: (520) 458 4432



From our Rector



“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” - 1 Peter 1: 3

Joy and Hope to you all,

As we enter April, we approach our annual remembrance of Jesus' Last Supper, Crucifixion, and ultimately his unforgettable resurrection. The early church celebrates these notable events in spring which happily shows-off nature's own form of resurrection as the barren trees and fields come to life with buds, flowers, and green leaves. Any maybe even within ourselves a similar experience of rebirth, renewal, and restoration begins with nature's encouragement to allow new growth to take place in our hearts, souls, and lives.

There is much happening in the world right now and quite a bit of it seems precarious and threatening to the stability that we had before this new year began. Two things come to mind for me as I witness the turbulence that is taking place around us: 1) You don't know what you've got --- until it's gone. And 2) For everything under heaven there is a season... Sometimes we have to lose something to recognize how precious and valuable it was. And perhaps its loss inspires us to take action ... a time to die and a time to be born.

May we find the changes happening to us or around us that bring sorrow, grief, fear, anxiety, and pain give birth to us for hope and action to respond by being better – more Christ-like – in our growth of our society as a whole. May we care more, love more, listen more, support more, and come together more as the days unfold ahead of us. May this Spring season resurrect us to a new life dedicated to following Jesus daily in all that we think, do, or say.

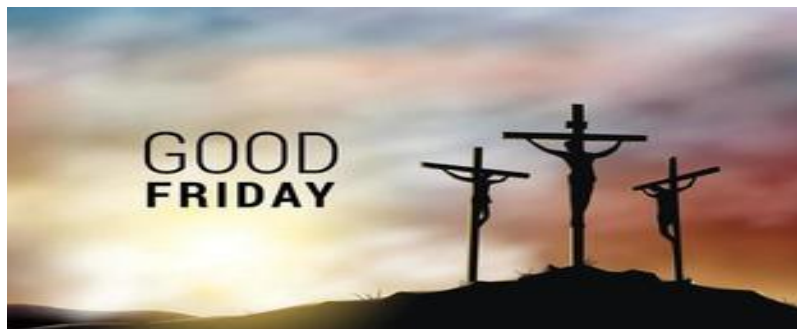
Hope springs eternal,
Rev. Allison Cornell

Palm Sunday 13 April – In liturgical churches like the Episcopal Church, Palm Sunday is a bit strange because we enter to “Hail! Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” celebrating Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem as the Messiah and halfway through the service we are shouting “Crucify him!” as we read the Passion narrative of Jesus’ last day alive on earth. The church does this for the benefit of anyone who cannot attend Holy Week services of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday... so that we may observe Jesus’ crucifixion before the following Easter Resurrection Sunday. Come and receive your blessed Palms and prepare for Holy Week and Easter.

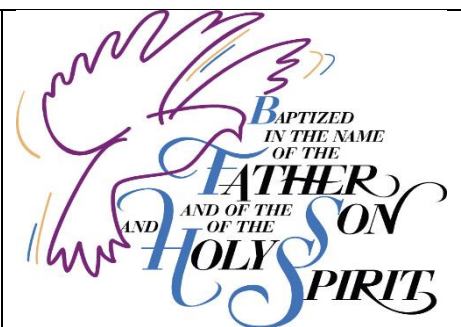
Maundy Thursday Agape Meal 17 April 6pm – Join us as we come together to recall Jesus’ institution of his Last Supper with a “love feast” or Agape meal. We will share food items that Jesus may have shared with his friends on that last night with them as they celebrated Passover. The parish hall will be rearranged and decorated with candles and place-settings to share our first part of our evening together. We will have our communion here. Then at the peace, we will go into the church for some last prayers and the stripping of the altar before departing in silence.



Good Friday service with veneration of the cross 18 April 6pm – We take time to remember how Jesus, who did nothing wrong or illegal, was arrested, beaten, tortured, and sentenced to death through a perversion of justice... and Jesus did not resist, did not run away, but accepted his death for us. That we might witness his love of God and God’s people and be inspired to live a life that imitated Jesus’ own.



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!



Easter Brunch following the Easter Service – Join us for an Easter Feast after our Easter Sunday service. Ham, devilled eggs, potatoes, veggies, desserts, and mimosas! Wilma is bringing her Easter Bunny friends and will help distribute Easter Eggs to young and old. Photo opportunities with the Easter bunny also.



United Thank Offering (UTO) Blue Boxes - Bring your blue box collections on Easter Morning for blessing and counting. We will then send donations to UTO for their support of Episcopal ministries in churches across the denomination.

Rev. Allison asks for prayers for her wife Robin for her spinal surgery on April 16th at Banner Hospital in Tucson. The surgery is expected to last 7 hours and Robin will be in the hospital for 5 days following the surgery.



From Our Reverend Deacon

On Thursday, March 13th, I attended the open house at the newly refurbished Good Neighbor Alliance Center on 7th Street. It houses homeless people in Sierra Vista.

The first thing I noticed as we were touring the main building, was the absolute efficiency in setting up areas for men and women. Everything there is brand new, from the heavy-duty bunk beds, to the mattresses, bedding, laundry area and bathroom/shower. The women's bathroom also has a tub for easy bathing of children. Attractive flooring and fresh paint on all walls. There is room for 8 men and 10 women - any children are housed with their parent. The dining room and kitchen are equipped with all new furniture, appliances and storage cabinets. The area organizations funded and helped do all the renovation. Even a former Diamondback baseball player came to paint outside of building. Area church groups and others volunteer on a regular basis to make meals in the kitchen for residents. The hope is to have the shelter open 24/7 in the near future. Currently the residents must be out of the building by a certain time in the morning and back no later than 6pm. There are other restrictions including no smoking, alcohol consumption or drugs in the complex or when arriving back at end of day. If any is detected they are not allowed to re-enter for a specific time.

Some property has been donated to build several tiny houses near the Forgach House, to accommodate women and even men who are abused. We were offered a tour of the Forgach House which I also took. It is also a lovely well-appointed building with rooms for women and children. At the end of a long hallway in the bedroom area is room for two men. Both areas have full bathrooms and storage shelves/closet for personal items.

There is an area for meals, cooked and served only by the employees. Another room is dedicated for all those being brought in, mostly by local police and other authorities for medical exams and legal paper work. Outdoors there is a private play area for the children, closely monitored for their safety. In time there will be outdoor seating under a shade tree or awning.

Continued.....

Continued from page 3

Since Catholic charities have invested in these two very important missions, their presence in restoring the Good Neighbor Alliance and improving shelter availability for The Forgach House's residents, Sierra Vista now has better facilities for our neighbors in need.



From our Treasurer

The Diocesan Auditor met with the Rector and Treasurer by Zoom early in March to discuss the process by which money is handled at St. Stephen's. Since several different people access information in several different ways, she seemed to be content with that. Any money that comes to us goes through the Teller teams for input to the computerized Teller Sheets. The Parish Administrator checks those. The Treasurer pays the bills from the account, and collects the bank receipts that confirm the Teller Sheets. And our bookkeeper is outsourced to provide reports to the Vestry. After that meeting, she requested reports from a number of specific areas. The process may take a couple of months. Meanwhile, we desperately need more tellers to help us with the income. If you have computer skills and/or are willing simply to second the count, please let us know.

Anne Roth, Treasurer

April 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 April 5th

LEM – Jeff Speer

Lector – Jeff Speer

Altar guild – Jeff Speer

Saturday April 12th

LEM - Robin StClair

Lector – Tim Holsenback

Alter Guild – Robin StClair

Thursday April 17th Maundy Thursday

LEM – TBD

Lector – TBD

Altar Guild – TBD

Saturday April 19th - No Service today

Saturday April 26th

LEM – Tim Holsenback

Lector – Sandra Calhoun

Alter Guild – Tim Holsenback

Sunday April 6th **BIRTHDAY SUNDAY**

LEM – Cheryl Stone

Lector – Ann Crandall

Altar Guild – Cheryl Stone

Sunday April 13th Palm Sunday

LEM – Nancy Rea

Lector – Myra Azarga

Altar Guild – Nancy Rea

Friday April 18th Good Friday

LEM – TBD

Lector – TBD

Altar Guild – TBD

Sunday April 20th Easter Day

LEM – MJ Mahland

Lector – Wilma Swartz

Altar Guild – Deb Ash

Sunday April 27th

LEM – Nancy Rea

Lector – Anne Roth

Alter Guild – Nancy Rae

April 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	3	4 No Film Night See notes	5 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
6 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	7	8 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	9 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	10	11	12 5.00 pm Spoken Service With Holy Communion No 2nd Saturday Supper see notes
13 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	14	15 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	16 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	17 Maundy Thurs. 6pm Service and Agape meal in the Parish Hall	18 Good Friday 6pm Worship with Veneration of the cross	19 No Service today
20 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	21	22 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	23 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	24	25 Newsletter Articles Due For May Issue	26 5.00 pm Evening Prayer
27 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	28	29 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	30 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	31		



Ginny Gisvold

April 11th

Eduardo (Eddy) Masga

April 18th

Peggy Donovan

April 20th

Linda S Hunter

April 30th

Carol Rosselli

April 30th

Patricia Wick

April 30th

Sunday April 6th will be **“BIRTHDAY SUNDAY”** celebrating everyone who has a birthday in the month of January. There will be cake for all to enjoy.

NOTES

- **April 4 – NO FILM TONIGHT.** Instead make plans to join us at Sierra Vista Mall Movie Theater for Season 5 of “The Chosen” on Sunday March 30th at 1:40pm, Saturday April 5th at 11:15 am, and Saturday April 12th at 12:00 pm. See flyer for more info.
- **April 12th - NO 2nd Saturday Supper** – Instead Join us April 5th for late lunch at 2:30 pm at Golden Dragon Chinese Restaurant across the hwy from the mall or join us for Potluck Easter Brunch on Sunday April 20th in the Parish Hall.

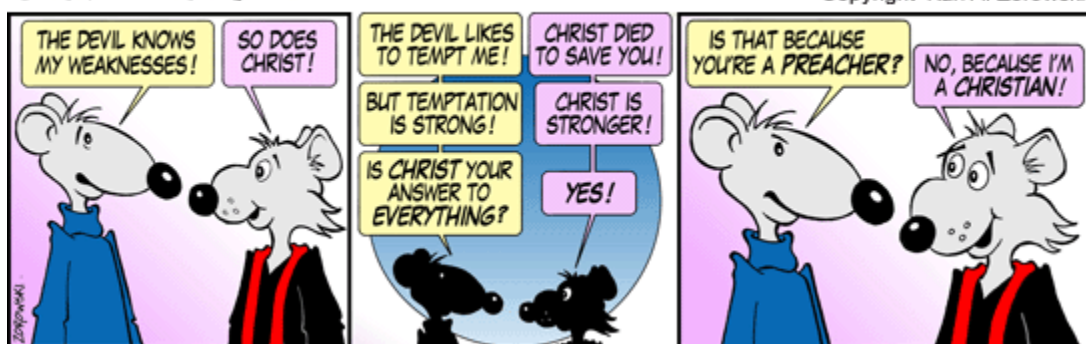
An invitation to Easter Sunday Brunch

From St. Stephen’s Church and your Kitchen Koordinator

This year on Easter, April 20th, during Easter Brunch, you need to bring the entire family and friends because not only will we have food but **VENTertainment** by our own **Wilma Swartz The VENTertainer** who will be bringing her characters with her like Squeeker the Church Mouse, 3 Easter Bunny wannabees, Cinnamon Stick the angel, Miss Sterious, and a couple of surprise mystery guests that you don't want to miss. Afterwards, there will be a photo opportunity where you can have your photo taken with the characters as a memory of your visit to St. Stephen's. This is going to be the greatest Easter celebration! **COME JOIN US FOR FUN AND FOOD!**



Church Mice



I couldn't resist adding this little cartoon strip. It was one I remembered from a previous church I attended in the UK. The organist always kept a wooden mouse beside him as he played. Diane Yancey, Editor.

(dianepyancey@gmail.com)