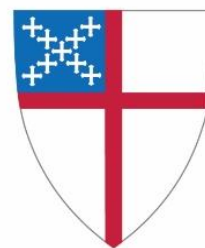




*St. Stephen's
Episcopal Church
Newsletter
May 2025*



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



From our Rector



Rector's Greeting April 2025



"You, Lord, are my shepherd. I will never be in need. You let me rest in fields of green grass. You lead me to streams of peaceful water, and you refresh my life." – Psalm 23 :1-3 CEV

Greetings for the Merry Month of May,

The trees and flowers continue to burst forth in blossom and leaves, the days are warming up and lasting longer, and birds and bunnies are having babies! Spring is in full vigor again. Despite allergies and hay fever, I enjoy spring as the earth around me awakens to a new season of growth and loveliness. To use the line from Psalm 23 above, it (God's Springtime) refreshes my life. The Easter Season continues that theme with stories of Jesus' resurrection and opportunities to refresh our lives. We look for Christ's footsteps in the dewy grass where he has trod ahead of us to lead us to new possibilities that we could not imagine when we saw only the starkness of winter's hibernation around us... If you struggle with anything currently that seems cold, hard, empty, dormant, may this springtime offer you reassurance and hope that such seasons will eventually come to an end and afterwards appears the blossoming and rejuvenation of spring and all its hopes of new life and new beginnings and new dawns glorious in their promises of better days ahead.

Spring and God's Saving Presence Be With You,
Rev. Allison Cornell

Update on Robin's Surgery

As of the end of April, Robin's surgery has been a blessing and a challenge. She has had relief in her hands and arms from the pinched nerves, however, the surgery itself bruised her muscles in her back and shoulders and has been very painful. She is expected to move to a rehab or skilled nursing facility to continue to heal and practice her activities of daily living (ADLs) to allow her to safely return home. We thank you for all your prayers and well wishes as she heals. The surgeons said it will be between 8 and 12 weeks for recovery from the surgery.

Happy Mother's Day!

We thank all those in our lives who are moms or who have been like a mom for us to include grandmothers, aunts, cousins, and even close friends of the family. We hope that our moms and mother-figures will be spoiled and given love and celebration for the nurturing and caring they do for us and their families not just on Mother's Day but every day.

Search Committee Begins Its First Steps

Four of our members have agreed to be the search committee for the next priest for St. Stephen's: Dennis Gallus, Renee Olejnicak, Nancy Rea, and Pat Wick. They had a video chat with the Diocesan Canon to the Ordinary, the Rev. Canon Anita Braden, and received their instructions on the various steps to be completed. The first will be to review the "Church Profile" which was last published in 2018. They will make revisions to bring it up to date and have the diocese review it. When it is ready, it will be published for all to see on the national (Episcopal church) Church-wide website. Then an announcement for the position of Priest of St. Stephen's will be drafted and put out to call for resumes of interested persons. The search committee will review all applicants and make arrangements for interviews. The vestry will be notified of potential candidates and with help from the diocese, the selected candidate will be offered a hiring package. This is approximately how the process usually unfolds.

St. Stephen's to move from Parish to Mission Status:

In consultation between Bishop Reddall and the Vestry of St. Stephen's, the leadership of the church has decided to apply to the Diocese of Arizona Standing Committee to be moved from Parish Status to Mission Status. This may be a short-term move or maybe longer. For those who perhaps are not well acquainted with Episcopal nomenclature the differences in our Episcopal Bylaws are these:

Continued

- **Parish Church** – is a fully self-supporting congregation of 50 or more members/communicants in good standing with a full-time priest (titled Rector). The Parish church also offers tenure to the priest allowing the priest to stay in position of leadership indefinitely unless there is a serious disciplinary situation that arises.
- **Mission Church** – is a possibly fully-supporting congregation or a congregation that receives some financial help from the diocese that however cannot support a full-time priest (titled Vicar) or which does not have 50+ members/communicants in good standing. A Mission Church is under the supervision of the Bishop of the Diocese and the Bishop can appoint or remove a priest from leadership at their discretion.

Given the bylaws of the Episcopal Church and the financial obligation a church has towards their priest, there is concern that St. Stephen's cannot sustainably support a full-time or $\frac{3}{4}$ time priest. A priest in the Episcopal Church is to be paid not only their salary, but also their pension, and those who work more than 20 hours a week are also expected to receive a healthcare plan paid for by the church. Some priests are also offered housing allowances on top of all that.

Rev. Allison has been receiving compensation as a $\frac{3}{4}$ time priest since 2019 and while the church has been able to support her at that rate, given the current ages of the congregation, there is concern that without more growth in membership with individuals who generously tithe, the church will not be able to support a new priest at $\frac{3}{4}$ time over the course of their tenure. Additionally, with anticipated moves and deaths among the membership, the numbers of members is also in question.

Bishop Reddall also advised the vestry that she recently had an unfortunate situation where a church called a part-time priest while they were in Parish status. Sadly, the church and priest were not a good fit and caused turmoil within the church and that led to financial downfall and nearly caused the church to have to close. The Bishop advised the church to apply for mission status and that allowed the Bishop to step in and remove the priest and appoint a Vicar. That church has been saved and is now rebuilding.

Bishop Reddall believes St. Stephen's to be doing well overall and that we are a healthy church in that we are doing things that healthy churches do. We have no internal conflicts, no power struggles, no bad reputation with the community. We take care of each other and have a heart to care for others in our community and around the world. All of that is good and praiseworthy. The Bishop is wanting to be proactive positioning the church in the best possible way for the next priest and to be prepared if something does not go well to offer her assistance.

For all of the above reasons, St. Stephen's will be applying for Mission status. What will this mean in our daily lives together? Not much will change. You will have a Vicar instead of a Rector (title change). You will have a Bishop's Committee instead of a Vestry (title change). Both Vicar and Bishop's Committee will operate the same as a Rector and Vestry, just under the "supervision" of the Bishop. Your priest will work 20 hours a week, including worship services weekly. They will have fewer office hours (Rev. Allison works 30 hours a week).

Should the new priest attract more new members and revitalize the congregation with additional contributions, the church can then apply for Parish status again.



From our Treasurer

The Diocesan Audit that was begun in February has not yet been finished. We were given an outside date of 30-90 days, and documents were forwarded to the auditor some 4 weeks ago. The project that began with Memorial gifts for a "tree" for Ann Carswell has grown into something far more substantial for her family and the church. This week the cement slab for the cabana is being poured behind the two buildings off the walkway overseen by our Jr. Warden, Pete. The building should be delivered after next week, when the cement is set and dried. And yes, there will also be a tree. In between all this we managed to get through Holy Week and Easter services, with a good group on Sunday and a good brunch buffet afterwards. Thanks for all the givers of both gifts and dishes and presence!

Anne Roth, Treasurer

May 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 May 3rd

LEM – Tim Holsonback

Lector – **TBD**

Altar guild – Tim Holsonback

Saturday May 10th

LEM - **TBD**

Lector – **TBD**

Alter Guild – **TBD**

Saturday May 17th

LEM - Jeff Speer

Lector – Jeff Speer

Alter Guild – Jeff Speer

Saturday May 24th

LEM – **TBD**

Lector – Tim Holsenback

Alter Guild – **TBD**

Saturday May 31st

LEM - **TBD**

Lector - **TBD**

Alter Guild - **TBD**

Sunday May 4th **BIRTHDAY SUNDAY**

LEM – Cheryl Stone

Lector – Ann Crandall

Altar Guild – Cheryl Stone

Sunday May 11th

LEM – MJ Mahland

Lector – Peggy Brown

Altar Guild – MJ Mahland

Sunday May 18th

LEM – Nancy Rae

Lector – MJ Mahland

Altar Guild – Nancy Rae

Sunday May 25th

LEM – MJ Mahland

Lector – Wilma Swartz

Altar Guild – Deb Ash

May 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Film Night 'Sister Act' 5.30pm in the Ed Building.	3 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
4 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	5	6 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	7 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	8	9	10 5.00 pm Service followed by Supper at Taco Giro Mexican Grill 6.30pm
11 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	12	13 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	14 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	15	16	17 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
18 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	19	20 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	21 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	22	23 Newsletter Articles Due For June Issue	24 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
25 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	26	27 Bible Study 5 pm Via Zoom	28 9.30 am Spoken Service With Holy Communion	29	30	31 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion



Gerry Fine

May 4th

Joe De Paul

May 10th

Timothy Holsonback

May 14th

Alesia Ash

May 16th

Tony Rosselli

May 18th

Mark Sowards

May 22nd

Sunday May 4th will be **“BIRTHDAY SUNDAY”** celebrating everyone who has a birthday in the month of May. There will be cake for all to enjoy.

St Stephen's Latest Announcements

Ongoing Weekly Discipleship Opportunities

Education for Ministry (EFM) – Discipleship program meets August to May in person or on zoom. See Deacon Sherry for information on joining this program. The program will start again this coming August.		
Adult Forum – Saturdays 4pm & Sundays 12pm in the Education Building	Bible Study on Zoom – Tues 4pm Book of Isaiah See Deacon Sherry for Zoom connection	March 8th – May 31st Saturdays 10-11am “Women of the New Testament Bible Study in the Parish Hall.

- **First Friday Film Night – May 2nd 5:30pm.** We will be watching “Sister Act” with Whoopi Goldberg. Salad dinner with rolls. Join us for this comedy and discussion about attracting people to church in different ways.
- **2nd Saturday Supper – May 10th 6:30pm,** Taco Giro Mexican Grill, 2097 E Fry Blvd, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635, join us for dinner!
- **Donations for Huachuca City UMC distribution to people with needs:** We have started a collection bin for toothpaste, toothbrushes, powder laundry detergent or detergent sheets to assist Lay Pastor Sara Evans with folks in Huachuca City. Please put powder detergent into smaller ziplock sandwich bags for easier distribution to people with needs.
- **Concrete pad has been poured** for Ann Carswell’s memorial cabana.



- Rev. Allison out of town May 13-17 for filming as extras in Utah for Season 6 of “The Chosen.”

From The Kitchen Koordinator

I would like to remind everyone that I am still in need of an assistant to help me to set up the refreshments etc., before the service and to help clear away afterwards.

If there were 4 or 5 people willing to volunteer, then each one of them would only need to step up once a month to help me. Also, those of you that do enjoy the Fellowship Hour on Sundays, along with the refreshments and goods from the Free Table/Fridge drawer, please put a little something in the **Koffee Kitty** if you are able.

Please also put your name on the sign-up sheet if you would be willing to either bake or purchase a cake for a Birthday Sunday. Thank you, Wilma Swartz.

From the Newsletter Editor -Articles for publication should be sent to me before the 25th day of the preceding month. Those that do not reach me in time may not be included. Thank you, Diane. (dianepyancey@gmail.com)