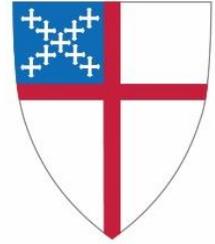




*St. Stephen's
Episcopal Church
Newsletter
December 2025*



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



From Our Reverend Deacon Dottie

We are happy to have Fr. JJ Bernall with us as an Interim Vicar until a Permanent Vicar is hired. Fr. Bernall is here part time and continues to be Vicar at St Stephen's Church, Douglas. He has made a few changes which have been well received. Our Wednesday morning service is now Holy Eucharist and Healing prayers. He is here all day on Wednesday and every Saturday afternoon for 5PM service. The 2nd Sunday he officiates the 10am Eucharist. He surprised everyone on November Birthday weekend with his ukulele accompanying the Happy Birthday song, it has been decided to change that celebration to the 2nd Sunday of each month.

Our Book of Common Prayer is back in the pews and most people were glad to be once again using our Episcopal book for guidance through every possible type of service from simple daily prayers through ordination of clergy, complete psalms, the catechism, and calendars to find the date and year of Easter Sunday, etc. The current BCP was published in 1979 but the original dates back to the 1500's. Archbishop of the England Anglican Church, Thomas Cranmer, wrote it to encourage Protestantism in the Anglican church as opposed to the more Roman Catholic ministry of the times. It has been revised few times since then but always to keep up with modern times language and simpler choices for various services.

Fr. JJ is putting together weekly bulletins to pair up with Mark's announcement sheets. He is such a wonderful addition to our church, and we enjoy getting to know him.

Sadly, we lost another one of our members. Paula Jones passed away November 6th. A celebration of her life was held here at St Stephen's then she was interred beside her husband at Our Lady of the Mountain Roman Catholic Columbarium. May she rest in Peace and rise to glory to our Father in Heaven.

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ADVENT is here and was welcomed with a wonderful service of and Carols led by Deacon Sherry. When the first candle, HOPE, was lit the anticipation of coming of the Christ Child became real once more

Fr JJ will be officiating the officiating at the Christmas Eve and Christmas day services. As in the past few years, a brunch will follow the Christmas Day 10AM service for all who join us. It is not a pot luck, the clergy - both Deacons and Fr JJ are putting it together for YOU.

The first Sunday in January, Bishop Jennifer Reddall will be visiting our church. So, please mark your 2026 calendar to join us for her officiating the 10AM worship time.

HAPPY ADVENT AND MERRY CHRISTMAS,
Reverend Dottie G, Deacon



Notices and Upcoming Events

December 5th 5.30pm - First Friday Film Night: choices for movie is found on the link in your announcement sheet. Please vote for the one you hope to win. We start at 5:30 with soup or salad supper and ask that you bring your own snacks/drink. Also, if you have a favorite for January, please let Mark know.

December 13th 6.30pm – Second Saturday Supper – Join us at Vinny’s Pizza, 1977 Frontage Rd, off Highway 92 S.

December 14th – Birthday Sunday – Please note that Birthday Sunday will now be celebrated on the 2nd Sunday of the month.

December 25th following the 10am service – Brunch, put together for you by Fr JJ, Deacon Dottie and Deacon Sherry. Do please Join us in the fellowship room. All welcome.

Thank you to everyone for the ongoing donations of (clean) crushed aluminum cans and separated pull tabs. They will be donated to the Animal Shelter. Thank you also for your donations to Huachuca City UMC of dry laundry sheets or laundry powder in Ziplock bags and other personal care items, to assist the needy in our area.

We are still collecting no-longer needed pairs of eye glasses and their cases. We donate them to the local Lion’s Club. Please drop them in the box located on the refreshment table in the Parish Hall.

From Our Reverend Deacon Sherry



NOTES OF OUR SERVICE

The 39 Articles, a 1536 foundational document of Anglican theology, relates that **“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.”** The Scriptures, comprised of the Old and New Testament, as well as some apocryphal texts, were written under the inspiration of the **Holy Spirit**.

The Bible is of extraordinary importance to Episcopal worship; during a typical service especially the Sunday morning service, the congregation will usually hear at least three readings from Scripture, and much of the liturgy from The **Book of Common Prayer** is based explicitly on the Biblical texts. According to the Catechism, **“We understand the meaning of the Bible by the help of the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church in the true interpretation of the Scriptures”**.

An important thing to know about the **Book of Common Prayer** is the book that defines Anglicans or in the United States, Episcopalians. As Vicar J. J. said, “It’s in our DNA”. The Book of Common Prayer and the Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church together with the Psalter or Psalms of David according to the use of the Episcopal Church, guide us.

The Church Year consist of two cycles of feasts and holy days: one is dependent upon the movable date of the Sunday of the Resurrection or Easter Day; the other upon the fixed date of December 25, the Feast of our Lord’s Nativity or Christmas Day.

Easter day is always the first Sunday after the full moon that falls on or after March 21. It cannot occur before March 22 or after April 25. The sequence of all Sundays of the Church Year depends upon the date of Easter Day. But the Sundays of Advent are always the four Sundays before Christmas Day, whether it occurs on a Sunday or a weekday.

Advent occurs on Nov 30 in 2025 and at the same time according to the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) we return to the cycle of **Year A** and continue until Advent next year.

During Advent the colors on the altar and the colors our clergy wear will be Blue or a sort of purple, different than what our Bishop wears. At St. Stephen’s clergy wear blue. You’ll notice the altar will be attired in blue, specifically Sarin Blue.

As we prepare to change the colors saying goodbye to Pentecost for the year 2025, signified by the color green we always need help to replace the colors. In preparation of Advent and we use the Advent wreath and candles which takes a bit of muscle to place in our church. Likewise, when they are removed before Epiphany, help will be needed. If you are free and able to volunteer, please volunteer.

As we enter into ADVENT and a new church year and continue with the Christmas season and enter into Epiphany remember the reason for the season. **It’s all about Christ!**



From our Treasure r

With the nation in an uproar because of so many people cut off from income and food, St. Stephen's was reliably steady and generous. Because of your generosity, we were able to help 11 people with rental assistance over these 3 months, and purchase another 600 booklets from Better Bucks to help feed people. Mark said he was going through 75 booklets a week during the crisis.

Yes, it's Stewardship time, and yes, we are asking you to send in your pledge by Nov. 30. Yes, some bills are going up; but we have been good stewards of the restricted funds that have been given to this church. Once we know what our income may look like for 2026, we will put together a budget for you all. We are running about \$130,000 a year right now, and that will change both up and down given our expenses. Fr. JJ has begun his half-time appointment with us now. Meanwhile, our investments are still earning interest, and that money can be used to maintain our buildings and grounds. Thanks to all of you, we are in amazingly good shape for now. Thank You!

Anne Roth, Treasurer.

December 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 Rev Deacon Sherry or Rev Deacon Dottie of substitutions and record substitution on the document posted in the sacristy

Saturday December 6th		
LEM -Tim Holsonback	Lector – TBA	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Saturday December 13th		
LEM – Jeff Speer	Lector – Tim Holsonback	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Saturday December 20th		
LEM – Tim Holsonback	Lector – Jeff Speer	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Wednesday December 24th		
LEM – Tim Holsonback	Lector – Sandra Calhoun	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Saturday December 27th		
LEM – Jeff Speer	Lector – Tim Holsonback	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
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Sunday December 7th		
LEM – MJ Mahland	Lector – Nancy Rea	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Sunday December 14th	BIRTHDAY SUNDAY	
LEM – Nancy Rea	Lector – Ann Crandall	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Sunday December 21st		
LEM – MJ Mahland	Lector – Peggy Brown	Altar Guild - Deacon or LEM
Thursday December 25th	CHRISTMAS DAY	
LEM – Renee Olejnicak	Lector – Anne Roth	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Sunday December 28th		
LEM - MJ Mahland	Lector – Peggy Brown	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	2	3 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers	4	5 Film Night TBD 5.30 in the Ed Building.	6 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Ante- Communion
7 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	8 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	9	10 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers	11	12	13 5.00 pm Service Followed by Supper at Vinny's Pizza 6.30 pm
14 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	15 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	16	17 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers	18	19	20 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
21 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	22 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	23 Newsletter Articles Due For January Issue	24 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers	25 Christmas Day 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion	26	27 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
28 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	29 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	30	31 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers			

Sunday December 14th will be “**BIRTHDAY SUNDAY**” celebrating everyone who has a birthday in the month of November. There will be cake for all to enjoy.



Ann Crandall	December 9th
Kathleen Jarvis-Breedlove	December 16th
Samuel Hardt	December 12th
Carol Doctor	December 21st
Alice (Mindy) Saunders	December 21st
Linnaea Schmid	December 23rd
Barbara J Singh	December 23rd
Rosemary Snapp	December 24th
Sherril O'Neil	December 25th
Elizabeth York	December 29th

Prayer Requests

If you would like our readers to pray for you or someone you know that is in need of extra prayers for healing or whatever is troubling them, please reach out to us at St. Stephen's Church.

Lord, we ask you to comfort and sustain all who in this transitory life are in sickness, or any other adversity.

Open their hearts to know your love and feel your presence.

We pray for:

Alverita Egbert (For healing and God's continuing blessings)

Doris Millard (For joy and peace while suffering with ongoing health issues at Via Elegante)

Jerry and Susan Fine (Continuing prayers for healing and peace)

Deacon Robin Hollis (Recovering and in rehab)

Carol Roselli asks will be undergoing a total left knee replacement on 5 December and is asking for prayers that it be as easy and successful as the last one on the right knee!

For the Soul of Paula Jones, may she rest in Peace

We pray also for:

*All those military and government workers who are laid off or working without pay as they struggle to make ends meet and care for families.

*Thanksgiving for the recent release of Israel hostages held by Hamas and prayers that the Peace continues.

To submit or update prayer requests, please contact editor: dianepyancey@gmail.com

