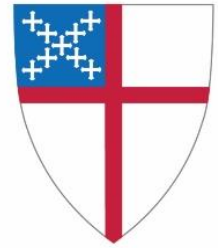




St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Newsletter August 2026



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



From Our Reverend Deacon Dottie

Have you noticed that so many of our Gospel readings during this time of year have been about Jesus' Parables? The Bible presents parables as one of Jesus' favorite ways to teach his disciples about the kingdom of Heaven. There are about 40 parables across the three gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. You remember hearing lately about the mustard seed, lost sheep, prodigal son and wheat vs weeds. They are illustrative stories which apply to life now as much as it did when Jesus first told them. His parables are unique and distinctive among world literature---but they themselves are not. Parables occur in other Jewish sources before and after Jesus' time, though never as consistently and extensively as in the gospels. Other rabbinical scribes and teachers drew on the same scriptural and apocalyptic traditions as Jesus—often including some of the same imagery: kings, shepherds and vineyards. Jesus used them to get by the scriptural ways. He addressed a subverted common expectation around those images in extremely counter cultural, even less scriptural, ways. He spoke to cultural outsiders (gentiles and Samaritans) to become more faithful while the devout were exposed for their Hypocrisy (Pharisees). The stories show that God's Kingdom arrives not out of might and power but mercy, meekness, forgiveness and servitude. On a last thought, may I say that many parables hinge on a reversal: the unexpected person is praised, the presumed hero is judged; the small thing becomes great; or a grace is given in a way that it challenges our notions of justice and fairness. If we are not careful, we can miss the shock of these moments. Acknowledging the gap between our understanding of the world and Jesus' is the primary point of parables. They are meant not just to inform, but to transform. That what it means to have ears that hear, and to be the "good son" for his word to take root (Mark 4:3-8,14-20),

That is where the growth happens.

Faithfully submitted, Reverend Dottie g. Deacon

From Our Bishop's Warden



Hello St Stephen's Family!

How blessed we are for all the Monsoon rain we have had so far! Hope you have experienced the big, booming thunder storms at your home as I have had! House shakes & rain barrels running over! Don't we love the rain in the desert...Alleluia! It's hard to imagine that summer is nearly over, school has started & Labor Day is just around the corner!

We are planning a fun afternoon learning to make Origami Cranes in honor of our immigrant citizens. Bill Roth (Anne's husband) has generously agreed to teach us. The date will be **Saturday August 15th** at 1:30pm until 3:30 pm. In the Parish Hall. We will then hang our completed Cranes in the Parish Hall in remembrance. Please join us for fun, learning & my BROWNIES! Let me know if you plan to attend so that we have plenty of materials. Telephone 520-227-3817.

We had the pleasure of a homily from Fr Henri last Sunday following one by Fr J J on Saturday. Both were based on the parables of the mustard seed, the pearl of great price, the land with the hidden treasure, etc. It reminded me of our God given ability to make choices. Yes, life throws a monkey wrench to us in many forms, but God created us as free agents: we always have the ability of choice. We experience change every minute of our day...and night...that requires us to make choices nearly every minute of our existence. Change, requires we make choices, which direction we decide to go is totally dependent our basic outlook from previous choices we have made in our lives. Many of us perceive we "have no choice", that decisions have already been made for us. I challenge you to rethink that perspective: God gave us the ability to make a different choice! Look at ALL the choices, share your questions and concerns with others who have wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Pray! There is help out there, just ask & PRAY. There are always other choices. and answers for us to explore. Thanks for letting me share!

The Search Committee is meeting with the Rev Robert Phillips, the interim Canon for the Ordinary (big title for the Bishop's Assistant), on July 31st to discuss our search for a new priest. We have had absolutely no response to our advertisements since January when our vacancy was officially listed and advertised. We are one of 7 Churches in the Diocese needing a new priest, so we have lots of competition. Much as we are enjoying the presence of Fr Henri & Fr J J, they cannot serve as our permanent Vicar. If you have an idea, a benefit or situation we haven't explored, please let Dennis Gallus, 571-217-1704 or me 520-227-3817 know so we can add it to the profile we have posted with the nationwide outlets for Clergy looking for a new position. Many thanks for your help!

I always look forward to seeing you at Church & in the community. Call me if you have any cares or concerns...I have innumerable resources I can put to use for you. We are here to Love & Serve each other!

Warmest regards,

Nancy Rea

Bishop's Warden

From our Treasurer



The reality of life in Arizona was underlined this week with the report that 68,000 people in this state were cut off from the Federal SNAP program. That means hungry and malnourished children. St. Stephen's has been working with the Better Bucks program in Sierra Vista, founded by members of the police force, to help people on limited income get a little extra for their groceries. The "bucks" do not allow alcohol or cigarettes, but they are usable at places like McDonald's and Fry's. So far in 2026 we have spent \$9,600 on Better Bucks to help feed people. And with the constant rise of grocery prices and the rise in need, we have had to cut back on how many of these booklets we can give. The booklets are worth \$5 given once a month. There are elders in town who have relied on our generosity every month, and now we are having to say "No" for a while. We are running out of resources. If you have a cushion in life, please think about contributing to this ministry. Write "Better Bucks" on the memo line of your check, and help us help others. Talk to Mark Sowards, who has monitored the work carefully to make sure people do not take more than one booklet, if you want more information.

Anne Roth, Treasurer.

Property Team report:

We are waiting (still) for word from High Desert Signs about when our new sign will be installed. It was due the end of June. Meanwhile, Anne has contacted "Dan the Yardchitect" about doing clean up at the church landscape. With the rains came the weeds!



Notices and Upcoming Events

August 8th at 6.30pm. Second Saturday Supper - We will be meeting at Golden Dragon Chinese Restaurant, off Hwy 92, Sierra Vista. Please RSVP to Deacon Dottie so reservations can be made early. Telephone: 520 737 5025

August 9th – Birthday Sunday.

August 15th – A fun afternoon making Origami Cranes, 1.30pm Until 3.30pm in the Parish Hall. Please contact Nancy Rea to reserve your place. Telephone 520-227-3817.

Deacon Sherry and I are looking for someone (or 2 or more) who would like to join the Altar Guild.

*The Altar Guild is sometimes known as the quiet service because the work is done behind the scenes: caring for the soiled linens, washing the chalice and other elements used during worship, assisting with changing of seasonal altar colors and keeping the brass and wood polished. We will train you and work alongside as needed. Please let either of us know.

***We are also in need of volunteers** to read the lessons on Saturday 5PM and others to be trained as Lay Eucharistic Ministers who process with the Cross and assist the deacons and priest at the altar, and lead the Prayers of the People. LEM's are especially needed for both Saturday and Sunday services. Please contact Deacon Sherry with your preferred service so she can schedule you accordingly.

August 2026 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 of substitutions and record the substitution on the document posted in the sacristy.

Saturday August 1 st		
LEM - Tim Holsonback	Lector – Sandra Calhoun	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Saturday August 8 th		
LEM – Tim Holsonback	Lector – Sandra Calhoun	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Saturday August 15 th		
LEM – Tim Holsonback	Lector – Sandra Calhoun	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Saturday August 22 nd		
LEM – Tim Holsonback	Lector – Sandra Calhoun	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Saturday August 29 th		
LEM – Tim Holsomback	Lector – Sandra Calhoun	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Sunday August 2 nd		
LEM – Nancy Rea	Lector – Sharon Lake	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Sunday August 9 th	BIRTHDAY SUNDAY	
LEM – Renee Olejnicak	Lector – MJ Mahland	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Sunday August 16 th		
LEM – Nancy Rea	Lector – Ann Crandall	Altar Guild - Deacon or LEM
Sunday August 23 rd		
LEM – Renee Olejnicak	Lector – MJ Mahland	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM
Sunday August 30 th		
LEM – Renee Olejnicak	Lector – Anne Roth	Altar Guild – Deacon or LEM

August 2026

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 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	4	5 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers	6	7	8 5.00 pm Service Followed by 2nd Saturday Supper at Golden Dragon Chinese 6.30 pm
9 Birthday Sunday 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	10 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	11	12 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers	13	14	15 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
16 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	17 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	18	19 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers	20	21	22 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
23 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	24 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom	25 Newsletter Articles Due For September Issue	26 9.30 am Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayers	27	28	29 5.00 pm Spoken Service with Holy Communion
30 10.00 am Choral Service with Holy Communion (Live Stream)	31 Bible Study 3 pm Via Zoom					

Sunday August 9th will be “**BIRTHDAY SUNDAY**” celebrating everyone who has a birthday in the month of August. There will be cake for all to enjoy.



Edgar Stone
Chester Yancey
Joan Strom
Timothy Ash

August 10th
August 18th
August 23rd
August 24th

Prayer Requests

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 (at Via Elegante for comfort and peace)

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

Bill and Mindy Saunders (Continuing healing and comfort)

Harriet Kolen (For speedy recovery at home)

Linda Hunter (At Haven for rehab)

Sandra Dushensky (For healing and comfort)

Anita Hancock (For healing and physical therapy)

Bill and Mindy Saunders (Continuing prayers for healing and comfort)

Peggy Brown (For comfort and sympathy after the passing of her mother, Ester Wyatt)

The family of Deacon Sherry Simon and Renee Olejnicak (For the loss of Michael Simon---father, friend, son and grandfather)

Please continue praying for our church to receive a faithful Pastor to lead us in Worship and guide us to a fuller understanding of God's Word in our lives together.

We pray also for:

All who have been affected by unreasonable violence, weather, and struggling to make ends meet/care for self and families worldwide.

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.



If you wish to submit an article for publication, please make sure it reaches me by the cut off date which is the 25th day of the preceding month. Materials received after that date cannot be guaranteed inclusion.

Thank you, Diane Yancey, editor: dianepyancey@gmail.com