



# THE WITNESS

## St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 35, Issue 3 & 4  
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

March & April 2024  
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are in the middle of the season of Lent, but before we know it we will be entering Holy Week and then celebrating Easter. Last month I had my eighth grade New Testament classes do a quadriga on Mark 16. A quadriga is an ancient practice of looking at a passage of scripture and asking four different questions of the text. One of the questions to be asked is, "What is the Church to believe?" The most important answer to this question in Mark 16 is that we are to believe that Jesus rose from the dead. Some of my students missed this important point. One of the young ladies did a great job of picking up on this point and wrote, "We are to believe that Jesus rose again. This is the pinnacle of our religion and is the most important belief." She is exactly right.

Some have argued that the greatest proof of Jesus' resurrection is the existence of the Church. If there had been no resurrection the Christian Faith would not exist and there would be no Church. In the first century this argument was not needed because they had eyewitnesses whose personal testimonies were proof that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15, "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that **He was raised on the third day** in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Paul then gives a list of those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection. Jesus appeared

to "Cephas," that is Peter, and then to the twelve. Paul then tells us that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred people at one time. This is an event that the gospel writers do not record. Some have conjectured that it was at the Ascension. The problem with this hypothesis is that if Paul's list is chronological, this event would have had to have happened before the Ascension. Paul mentioned that most of these people were still alive. Paul was writing this sometime between 53 and 55 A.D., roughly 23-25 years after Jesus' resurrection. Paul goes on to tell us that Jesus appeared to James (probably the half-brother of Jesus) and then to all the apostles. Then he tells us, "Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me" (1 Corinthians 15:8).

In a court of law, two eyewitnesses were what was required. In 54 A.D. there were more than enough witnesses to prove the fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Paul goes on to make a case for the importance of Jesus' resurrection. Its importance cannot be over-stressed. "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied" (1 Corinthians 15:17-19).

Fortunately for us, "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Jesus' resurrection is thus of utmost importance because if Jesus had not been raised from the dead His death would have been a monumental tragedy, a travesty of justice. But the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead is proof that Jesus is whom He said He was, that His death was an atoning sacrifice for our sins, and that He has conquered death. In Jesus' resurrection is the hope of our resurrection. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

During the Lenten Season let us not forget what is coming, the celebration of the resurrection. And as we celebrate Easter let us remember the absolute necessity of Jesus' resurrection for our faith.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Mark

### MARCH SERMON TOPICS

During the month of March we will be finishing our study of the book of Romans. On Palm Sunday, March 24 and Easter Sunday, March 31, we will be looking at passages that have to do with these special days. There will be a special service on Thursday, March 28 to celebrate Maundy Thursday.

- March 3 Romans 15:22-33  
*Paul's Future Plans*
- March 10 Romans 16:1-16  
*Personal Greetings*
- March 17 Romans 16:17-27  
*Final Instructions*
- March 24 John 12:12-19  
*Triumphal Entry*
- March 28 Maundy Thursday John 18:33-38  
*"My Kingdom is Not of This World"*
- March 31 Mark 16:1-8  
*The Resurrection*

### APRIL SERMON TOPICS

During the month of April, I will be starting a sermon series on the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed is typically divided into twelve parts. I am planning to preach one sermon on each part. However, I reserve the right to divide or combine parts as it seems necessary. There is a lot contained in the Creed, particularly the first part.

- April 7 Acts 4:23-26  
*"I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."*
- April 14 Hebrews 1:1-9  
*"And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord"*
- April 21 Matthew 1:18-23  
*"Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary"*
- April 28 1 Peter 2:21-25  
*"Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell"*

### Worship Schedule

Sunday

9:45 Adult & Children Sunday School

11:00AM – Worship

11:00AM – Streaming Online Worship

[facebook.com/StStephensOKC](https://www.facebook.com/StStephensOKC)

### MARCH 10 – Change Clocks Spring forward

#### SMALL GROUPS

Thursday Bible Study – March 14 & 28 and April 11 & 25 at 2:30PM

Men's Prayer Group – Saturday mornings at 7:30AM

#### *March Greeter*

Larry Wilson

#### *April Greeter*

Dorla Beaty

#### *Women's Fellowship*

Women's Fellowship will meet

Thursday, March 14 at 1:00PM

and

Thursday, April 11 at 1:00PM

### FEBRUARY SESSION REPORT

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Several one-time monetary gifts were recorded for January, which leaves us in good standing at this time. As our Cox bill has increased \$100 per month, Nelson Pickrell volunteered to look into why this is and see if we can get a better rate. Part of the increase could be because of the need for high-speed Internet to cover our online service.

**FELLOWSHIP:** All is going well. Lori Pickrell extended a thank you to Dorla Beaty for her work in cleaning and organizing the kitchen on Monday mornings. We are looking at a possible potluck dinner for April 14.

**NURTURE:** Sunday school is going well.

**OUTREACH:** Facebook and YouTube views remain consistent. Pat Robison will send out a FB blast prior to Easter.

**WORSHIP:** Communion will be served every Sunday during Lent (Feb. 18 – Mar. 24).

**OLD BUSINESS:** Crossings: They still need to use our church for their Food Pantry.



Sign up for Easter lilies Sundays, March 17 & 24. They are \$10 each and can be taken home immediately following our Easter worship.

### SPECIAL EASTER OFFERINGS

On Sundays March 24 and March 31 we will be collecting our special Easter Offering which will be given to *Infant Crisis Center* and *Manos Juntas Clinic*.



### Meet Our St. Stephen's Family Patsy Kuhn

Patsy was born and grew up here in Oklahoma City. Her parents were Dr. John (Jack) Kuhn, an OB, Gyn physician, and Agnes Adair Kuhn. Her older brother Fred, now retired, lives in Savannah, Georgia, was an ENT doctor. Her sister Sarah was the second sibling, she is now deceased and was a St. Stephen's member. Our own Jaquelyn is the youngest of the siblings.

Patsy has one adopted son, Jacob, born in 1986. In the 1980's, Patsy felt "called to be a parent". After an extensive search for a child, while on a mission trip to the Yucatan region of Mexico, God answered her prayers. She periodically visited there where she worked with a Presbyterian minister named Sixto Castillo. He was involved in arranging adoptions for children in need of a permanent home. He introduced Patsy to a precious tiny baby boy, and helped to facilitate the adoption. Jacob and Patsy were all part of God's plan for both their lives. She is blessed by Jacob, and a grandson Mason (11).

Patsy currently resides in her home in NW Oklahoma City with nieces Anna and Holly (also part of our St. Stephen's family). She has many other relatives, but maintains close touch with cousins: Steve in Harrah, Mike in Edmond, Kitty in Vinita, and Dorothy in McAlistar.

After graduating from Harding High School in 1964, Patsy went to OSU, and graduated with a B. S. degree in elementary education in 1968. She studied the Montessori Method of education at OCU. Later in 1992 she received a master's degree in early childhood education from UCO.

Her first job in 1968 was teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Parker Elementary in Oklahoma City. In 1970 Patsy and her sister Sarah founded Pathways Child Development Centers and served as co-directors. Sarah later moved to Colorado and Patsy became the sole director. The original facility was opened in the Dunger Oklahoma City housing project. At the request of the Oklahoma City Housing Authority, they planned a school at 36<sup>th</sup> and Kelly, but the building was burned down twice. They went on to establish other school locations at the Zachary Taylor School, Epworth Methodist Church and St. Andrews Church.

After 22 years at Pathways, Patsy took a new job as Resource Coordinator for the Oklahoma State Department of Education; she stayed there for five and half years. After she received her master's degree, she went to work for Rose State College as the Child Development Lab Center director. As part of this job she taught child development courses to childcare workers.

At 65, Patsy retired after many years dedicated to the children and families of our community. "God calls us to live for ideas bigger than ourselves and to

invest in things bigger than ourselves. And if we do, we bring lasting change and hope to the world.”

*Richard Henry Blackburn*

Throughout her life music has always been dear to her heart. Patsy was a majorette in high school, and since her childhood she has loved vocal music, participating in choir. She has performed singing with the Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra. Once on a choir trip abroad she sang at the Vatican. She considers singing a “valuable part of worship”; and is heartbroken that since she suffered a stroke, she is no longer able to sing.

Patsy’s favorite Bible verse is Romans 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that neither death, not life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Some of Patsy’s favorite everyday activities include spending time with Jacob and her grandson, gathering with six other neighbors on her neighbor’s porch, swimming and water exercises, Women’s Fellowship, and volunteering at the Civic Center.

Patsy has traveled extensively abroad to Germany, Italy, England, France, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, and the middle east. She has visited Mexico, Florida, Canada, California, New England, just to name a few.

For 55 years Patsy has been a member of the P.E.O. sorority, promoting women’s education and providing financial assistance for female students.

Patsy, her brother and her parents were charter members of St. Stephen’s. She helped with renovations of our first church building on Military Road in Britton. Patsy has been ordained both as deacon and elder, serving multiple times and she was a member of the choir for many years. Her list of accomplishments and contributions to St. Stephen’s are impressive and numerous including: organizing a church art festival, teaching pre-school and Sunday school, serving as president of the Women’s Fellowship, and volunteering for vacation Bible school. She loves the “family, spirit-filled” people at our church who “accept people for who they are”. She believes Pastor Mark is a “gift from God”.

Patsy served as a board member for LOGAS, youth conference held in Estes Park, Colorado and

she filled the role of Dean of Women at the conference many times.

Patsy’s life has been blessed by “heroes”! Her #1 hero is son Jacob, a “smart, kind hearted young man” who she says, “has taken such good care of me”. Others are her dear friend Harriet, who was by her side when she suffered a stroke while vacationing in Maine; Pastor Sixto Castillo who helped to find Jacob, and facilitate the adopting; and Holly who rescued her last spring during a seizure event.

Patsy says, “As I mature in my faith, I walk the path God has for me”. I especially feel blessed “God gave me the responsibility to guide Jacob in the faith.” When speaking of her life events and crisis’s she says, “God had a hand in it all.” She is a “prayer warrior” believing in the power of prayer, she is always ready to accept other’s prayer requests!

A life led by faith, Patsy is an example of dedication to a better life for children and families, to her own family, to her church, and first and foremost to her Lord.

*By Margo Whiting*



As you know the church office had been manned by volunteers since Sarah resigned last September. A BIG shout out to those who are sharing time in the office Monday through Thursday mornings. Monday – Glenn & Dorla Beaty or Nelson Pickrell; Tuesday – Dan Kiplinger or Ruby Ochoa; Wednesday – Shirley Hampton or Frank Miranda; Thursday – Laurie Daub, Joan Miranda and Carla Pickrell. Kent Larason is our substitute volunteer any day needed. Pat Robison keeps our calendars up to date.

Pastor Mark preached a few weeks ago on the gifts God had given us. Seems to me the gift of service is being seen right here. There are so many people in this congregation who use their gifts for the church. These are just a few. Thank you for volunteering.

*Joan Miranda*

## LOVE

Love is the answer, love is the key  
Loving Jesus who first loved me  
The Holy Spirit came from above  
To give us the help to show our love  
The Holy Spirit lives in your heart  
That is where love for others will start  
Love is not something that will come and go  
When you have love you will know  
Don't forget to love yourself  
So you can share the love with everyone else  
Life will change you, you will feel  
The love in your heart is truly real.

*Blessings & Love*

*Anna May*

*(I wrote this poem inspired by Pastor Mark's sermon on Love, Sunday, January 28.)*

## God

Who is God Almighty, what has he done  
Well he gave us Jesus his beloved son  
When God is in the house there is always hope  
When trouble arrives he helps us to cope

We know that God lives in Heaven above  
Showering down upon us all his love  
It's true that God always does care  
God comes to us when we are unaware

Through the Holy Spirit God lives in our hearts  
That is where our love for God will start  
Out time here on earth is a short one  
Yet in Heaven with God we live on and on

*Blessings & Love*

*Anna May*



If you have missed prayers or would like to be added to the Women's Fellowship prayer chain, please call Treva Gullett (735-9908).

## **BETA Flower Sale**

There are order forms in the church office if you would like to place an order which are due back by March 27. Flowers can be picked up on April 12 at the gym.

## *March Fellowship Treats*

**March 3** – Pat Robison

**March 10** – Margo Whiting

**March 17** – Keith & Karin Seidemann

**March 24** – Kent & Jean Larason

**March 31** – Easter – Miss Butch Derrick  
and Lori Pickrell

## *April Fellowship Treats*

**April 7** – Jaquelyn Kuhn

**April 14** – POTLUCK

**April 21** – Dorla Beaty

**April 28** – Marta Clay

## **Special Dates for March**

World Day of Prayer, *March 1*

Daylight saving time begins, *March 10*

First day of spring, *March 19*

Holy Week, *March 24-31*

Palm/Passion Sunday, *March 24*

Maundy Thursday, *March 28*

Good Friday, *March 29*

**Easter Sunday, *March 31***

## **Special Dates for April**

Administrative Professionals Day, *April 24*

## **THE JOY OF JESUS**

The joy that Jesus offers His disciples is His own joy, which flows from His intimate communion with the One who sent Him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.

This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated.

Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Lifesigns*



**Elders**

**Class of 2024**

Nelson Pickrell	650-6431	Treasurer
Pat Robison	620-7863	Outreach

**Class of 2025**

Joan Miranda	210-1731	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Lori Pickrell	503-9585	Fellowship

**Class of 2026**

Dwight Daub	618-7497	President of Corporation/ Nominating
Kent Larason	808-3971	Nurture
Wendy Smith	850-6564	Worship

**Deacons**

**Class of 2024**

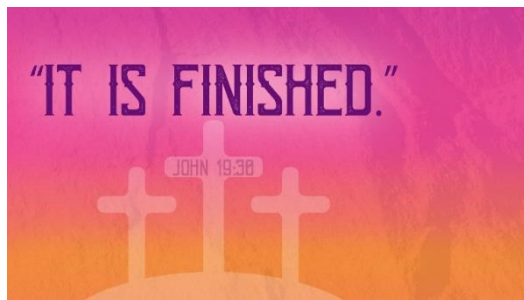
Jaquelyn Kuhn	245-6479	Clerk
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**Class of 2025**

Michael Bassett	200-7995	Maintenance
Shirley Hampton	831-4852	Missions

**Class of 2026**

Dennis Bryley	664-3640	Flowers
Ruby Ochoa	301-9047	Ushers/Greeters
John Robison	627-3565	Work Day



**April 18** is the deadline to submit articles for the **May/June 2024 Witness**.

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7	Rebecca Stateler
10	Nancy Thompson
10	Rachel Clay
16	Marilyn Hanson
17	Valerie Pulley
21	Debbie Roberts
23	Harper Hine
25	Jacob Kuhn



25	Jacques & Teresa Lampin
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1	Raymond Conn
2	Joy Bassett
3	Joshua Bradford
11	Ann Wilson
16	Marta Clay
21	Jacques Lampin
22	Donna Urdahl
24	Hannah Tedesco
24	Treva Gullett
24	Jenni Lowell
25	Miranda Von Tungeln



26	Fred & Nancy Thompson
28	Matt & Karen Stillwell

*\*\*If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.*

### St. Patrick's Day

On March 17, when we remember the Christian missionary St. Patrick, Irish blessings abound. Here are two benedictions to share with friends in the faith:

Deep peace of the running wave to you,  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,  
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you. Amen.

May there always be work for your hands to do;  
May your purse always hold a coin or two;  
May the sun always shine on your windowpane;  
May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain;  
May the hand of a friend always be near you;  
May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

"Pray, and let God worry."  
Martin Luther



Sign up for Easter lilies Sundays, March 26 & April 2. They are \$10 each and can be taken home immediately following our Easter worship.





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#### **OUR FEEBLE PRAYERS, OUR FATHER'S RESPONSE**

In *He Still Moves Stones*, Max Lucado recalls the story of Derek Redmond, a 1992 Olympic competitor in the 400-meter race. Halfway through Redmond's semifinal run, a torn hamstring sent him tumbling to the ground. His dad, Jim, immediately ran onto the track. He met up with Derek, who, though crying, had managed to stand and was hopping forward. "You don't have to do this," Jim said. But Derek insisted. "Well, then, we're going to finish this together," said Jim, who supported his son as

he hobbled to the finish line. The crowd cheered and wept as Derek, with Dad's assistance, finished the race.

Lucado writes: "What made the father do it? ... Was it the strength of his child? No, it was the pain of his child. ... God does the same. Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the One who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference."





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