



# THE WITNESS

## St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

**Volume 35, Issue 5 & 6**  
**The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor**

**May & June 2024**  
**Church Phone (405) 843-5333**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the Church calendar, there are three special Sundays that fall in May this year. May 12 is Ascension Sunday, May 19 is Pentecost Sunday, and May 26 is Trinity Sunday. Trinity Sunday was a relatively late addition to the Church calendar. However, Ascension Sunday and Pentecost Sunday have been celebrated in the Church almost since its inception. Unlike the birth of Christ, we know the exact time in which Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit. Jesus ascended into heaven 40 days after His resurrection. This would have been on a Thursday; this year Ascension Day is Thursday May 9. Ascension Sunday is always the Sunday after Ascension Day. The Holy Spirit was given to the Church on the Jewish holiday of Pentecost which occurs 50 days after the Passover. This is always the Sunday after Ascension Sunday, or more appropriately one might say 10 days after the Ascension.

As I was thinking about preaching through the Apostles' Creed I had thought about preaching on "He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty" on Ascension Sunday, and "I believe in the Holy Spirit" on Pentecost Sunday. However, I decided that I did not want to take the statements of the Apostles' Creed out of order. When I preach on these two statements of the Apostles' Creed I will go into much more detail than I have time to do in this article. But I do want to point out how significant Ascension Day

and the Day of Pentecost are in the life of the Church.

Jesus' earthly ministry needed closure. It would not do for the disciples to be constantly waiting around for Jesus' next appearance. They needed to get on with the work Jesus had called them to do. This closure took place when the disciples witnessed Jesus ascending into heaven. The ascension though was more than this. The ascension has also been understood as Jesus' coronation, His enthronement. "And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." We understand that Christ's ascension benefits us in that Jesus is pleading our cause in the presence of the Father. But it is also true that Jesus' ascension brings us comfort because we know that in the fact that He is said to be seated at the right hand of God that "He is the head of the Church, and that the Father rules all things through Him" (Heidelberg Catechism). Jesus' reign is not merely a future reality, Jesus is reigning now though His perfect reign is not yet complete.

Pentecost is the day that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church as is recorded in Acts 2. While He was still on the earth Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth that would guide Jesus' followers into all truth. The Holy Spirit was also to be the one who would empower Christians to be witnesses and to live holy lives. In the sermon Peter preached, on the Day of Pentecost, he viewed what took place as a fulfillment of the promise God had made to His people over 500 years earlier through the prophet

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Joel. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28). It is of interest that the Apostle Paul at the end of his third missionary journey was hurrying to get to Jerusalem in time for Pentecost. Traditionally Pentecost along with Easter and Christmas were the three most important holidays (holy days) of the church year. It happens to be the only one that has not been commercialized.

As we come together to worship on May 12 and May 19 let us be mindful of the significance of what took place on Ascension Day and on the Day of Pentecost.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Mark

### MAY/JUNE SERMON TOPICS

During May and June I will continue to preach on the Apostles' Creed. The following dates are subject to change depending on how fast I end up going through the Apostles' Creed. Brandon Dillard will be preaching for me on June 2.

- May 5 Matthew 1:18-23  
*Who was Conceived by the Holy Spirit*
- May 12 1 Peter 3:18-25  
*He Suffered under Pontius Pilate*
- May 19 1 Corinthians 15:1-11  
*The Third Day He Rose Again From the Dead*
- May 26 Luke 24:44-53  
*He Ascended into Heaven*
- June 2 Brandon Dillard Preaching
- June 9 Acts 10:34-43  
*From There He Shall Come to Judge*
- June 16 Acts 19:1-7  
*I Believe in the Holy Spirit*
- June 23 John 10:14-16  
*I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church*
- June 30 1 John 1:7-2:2  
*I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins*

### 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)

### SMALL GROUPS

Thursday Bible Study – May 9 & 23 and June 13 & 27 at 2:30PM

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

*May Greeter*

Michael Bassett

*June Greeter*

Shirley Hampton

**Church Work Day**

**May 4 at 9:00AM**

### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship will meet

Thursday, May 9 at 12:30PM

Potluck

### NO SESSION REPORT

### PENTECOST OFFERING

We will be collecting our special Pentecost Offering on May 12 and 19. The offering will be given to the *City Rescue Mission* and the *Urban Mission*.

### WELCOMING THE PORTERS

One of our missionaries to Thailand, **Derek Porter**, will be with us the weekend of May 17-19. We are in the process of planning his stay with us. Derek will be sharing with the Men's Prayer Breakfast on Saturday morning. On Sunday morning, Derek will be sharing with our congregation during the Sunday school time, 9:45-10:30AM.

GUARD  
YOUR  
heart,  
FOR EVERYTHING  
YOU DO  
flows  
FROM IT.  
PROVERBS 4:23, NIV



## Meet Our St. Stephen's Family

### John Robison

John was born in OKC to Dr. Clarence (deceased) and Patty Robison. He has three living siblings: twin brother Paul, a retired heart surgeon, brother Timothy, a practicing surgeon in Muskogee, and adopted sister Becky, a retired teacher. His oldest brother Mark died suddenly at the age of 12 years old. John has four nieces and six nephews.

John married Pat on September 13, 1986. They met at OU Ironically "roommates married roommates". Pat married John, and John's roommate Frank married Pat's roommate.

John and Pat have two sons who are well known to us all, their technical skills are essential to our Sunday worship service. Christopher is pursuing a master's degree in Geography and William is a research tech at OU. They reside in Edmond.

John spends four days a week living in a cabin in Muskogee with "traveling cat" Atticus while he works for his brother Timothy. Otherwise he has always been a resident of the OKC area.

John's heroes are family ancestors, role models who gave John inspiration, support and strong examples to follow. His maternal grandfather Hagee was a self-made highly successful business man, a member of the board of First Security Bank and a "staunch religious Baptist". Uncle Henry was a successful grocer and business man and is known as the creator of the "Big Box Stores". John's paternal grandfather, Clarence Robison (senior) was a teacher, judge, and Mayor of Tecumseh. He founded the Pottawatomie County Historical Society. At the young age of nine, Clarence kept a journal of the family's trip to relocate to Oklahoma Territory. The journal is one of John's prized possessions, and he plans to use its historic content to author a book.

John began his schooling at Pleasant Hill Elementary where his kindergarten teacher was Mrs. Hall, the mother of our own Nancy Chotkey. He graduated from Deer Creek High School in 1976, the senior class president and a member of the National Honor Society. While in high school he worked for his grandfather in his grocery store. In college, he held jobs at First Security Bank and Alliance Bank as a teller and bookkeeper and he worked for the Paul Drake Insurance Company. John graduated in 1985 from OU with a B. S. degree in Business Management, he also received special education in computer skills and analysis. Even before he was a college graduate, John has had a highly respected career in banking, a "money expert" in a field where trust in relationships is essential. He summarizes in his resume: "My primary experiences are in the oversight of accounting systems, analysis of financial condition, and improving my client's financial position."

After college John was employed by Security Bank of Oklahoma City, Alliance Bank, First Commercial Bank, United Companies Lending and Real Time Products LLC. His favorite job was serving as vice president and 25% owner of Home Lending Services (AKA Covenant Mortgage) from August 1995-September 2005. He sold his company interests to partners, and went into "semi-retirement" and took on the role of "Mr. Mom" while Pat continued teaching and provided medical insurance for the family. As of 2005 John has been a self-employed financial consultant. He currently continues to work for his brother Dr. Timothy Robison, providing financial services for 11 small Muskogee companies owned by Timothy. This job requires special challenges such as property liquidations, managing commercial rental spaces and dealing with flood and fire damage. Currently his hours require time in Muskogee Tuesday through Friday every week.

John loves music. He took voice lessons from John Blackwell from age 15 until five years ago when Mr. Blackwell died. John taught himself to play guitar in the early 1970's. While on a church mission trip he purchased his guitar for only \$32. In addition to singing here at St. Stephen's, John has performed in a special Mozart concert at the Scottish Rites Masonic Center in Guthrie. John joined the Masons

in 1979 and was a “Master Mason”, although he is currently not active in the organization.

John is an OU fan. He loves carpentry, woodworking and enjoys watching YouTube “do it yourself” videos. He looks forward to when he is able to devote more time to his craft and puttering in his own workshop. He also enjoys hunting and took many past quail-pheasant hunting trips with his old friend Dean Mikkelson (a former St. Stephen’s member now deceased). John is a former president of the Sportsman’s Club and served on its board in the 1980’s.

A highly decorated Eagle Scout himself, John served as Scout Master for Troop 98 here at St. Stephen’s. He commuted to weekly meetings from his job in Muskogee for eight years. John says: “Unfortunately Covid killed the scouting program.” John’s favorite Bible verse is the popular John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life”. (NRSV) Until John was eight years old, he and his family attended Capital Presbyterian, but transferred membership to First Presbyterian, where as a young man, John was active in their youth program led by Pastor Ralph Rainey. In 2008, John, Pat and sons came to St. Stephen’s in search of a meeting place for his Boy Scout troop and a new church for the family. John says he “needed more structure in a church” and he already knew a number of St. Stephen’s members, including Pastor Mark and family. He “believes the mission statement here at St. Stephen’s,” and says, “I have been in love with the people here since I walked in the door.”

John’s contributions to St. Stephen’s church are numerous. He has served as a deacon twice, and an elder three times. John is well known for sharing his musical talents both vocally and on the guitar, participating in choir, men’s quartet, and solo performances during worship. He has been a leader in church Outreach and Evangelism. John currently oversees sound and media maintenance along with both sons and he is active in the men’s prayer group. To quote Chuck Colson: “While we are creating sophisticated organizations and employing the latest technology to win the world to Christ, let us not forget that our neighbors judge Jesus Christ by what he sees in us.”

John is a dedicated church and community leader, a fisher of men, an example to us all. What a blessing to observe this man of faith, always serving others, serving his church, and serving the Lord!

*By Margo Whiting*

## OUR CHURCH

Where would we be without our church  
I am glad I found St. Stephen’s on my search  
A church that shows God’s precious love  
A fellowship that comes from Heaven above

We share so many blessing with each other  
Because we care for one another  
We keep the Faith, Hope and Grace  
That puts the smiles upon our face

So grateful for the music that we hear  
Sometimes so hard not to shed a tear  
Teachings we get from sermons are there  
Pastor Mark shows it in his heartfelt prayers

The congregation so loving and kind  
Each Sunday always makes me find  
I can face the days with strength and peace  
Until we meet again next week  
*Many Blessings & Love,  
Anna May*

## Jesus

Jesus truly God truly human, truly divine  
May our hearts be always thine  
Through the Holy Spirit you live in our hearts  
Always there never far away, never apart

Christmas Day has come and gone  
Yet in our lives you carry on  
We can worship you every day  
It is in your name we can come and pray

The New Year is here let us always know  
Our love for you Jesus will continue to grow  
Our Heavenly Father gave us you to love  
The greatest gift given to earth from above

*Blessings & Love,  
Anna May*

*(A little late but a wonderful reminder any time.)*

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### *May Fellowship Treats*

**May 5** – Joan Miranda

**May 12** – Laurie Daub

**May 19** – Wendy Smith

**May 26** – Pat Robison

### *June Fellowship Treats*

**June 2** – Margo Whiting

**June 9** – Jaquelyn Kuhn

**June 16** – Keith & Karin Seidemann

**June 23** – Dorla Beaty

**June 30** – Kent & Jean Larason

### **Special Dates for May**

National Day of Prayer, *May 2*

Ascension Day, *May 9*

Ascension Sunday, *12*

Mother's Day, *May 12*

Armed Forces Day, *May 18*

Pentecost, *May 19*

Trinity Sunday, *May 26*

Memorial Day, *May 27*

### **Special Dates for June**

Flag Day, *June 14*

Father's Day, *June 16*

Juneteenth, *June 19*

First day of summer, *June 20*



**MAY 12**

**Happy  
FATHER'S  
Day**

**JUNE 16**



### *Congratulations Graduates*

**Devin Page** is graduating from Epic Charter High School.

**Timothy Bradford** is graduating from Oklahoma State University on May 11 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering.

**Josiah Morgan** is graduating from the University of Oklahoma on May 11 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology and Immunology.

### **COWBOY TEN COMMANDMENTS**

Submitted by Miranda Almen

1. Just one God.
2. Put nothin before God.
3. Watch yer mouth.
4. Git yourself to Sunday Meetin!
5. Honor yer Ma and Pa.
6. No killin.
7. No foolin around with another fellers' gal.
8. Don't take what ain't yers.
9. No tellin tales or gossipin.
10. Don't be hankerin for yer buddies stuff.



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

*Dear heavenly Father, we come as your children to praise you for putting us in our family — and in our church family. Thank you for the love and nourishment we receive from the people in whose presence you've placed us. We confess our need for your guidance in our families and congregation. Please grant us harmony in our homes and church body. In all situations, help us show love, patience and respect for one another. In your name we pray.*

*Amen.*



**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

**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

**June 17** is the deadline to submit articles for the  
**July/August 2024 Witness.**

**St. Stephen's Church 2424 NW 50<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73112 405-843-5333**  
**secretary@ststephensokc.org**  
**www.ststephensokc.org**  
**facebook.com/StStephensOKC**



1 James Page  
1 Kinley Stateler  
3 Lori Pickrell  
7 John Hermes

7 Josiah Morgan  
10 Fred Thompson  
11 Peter Bradford  
14 Eli Nichols  
15 Toni Stateler  
16 Adam Mendenhall  
18 Karen Ballaré  
20 Robert Buswell  
22 Rory Stateler  
28 Susan Almen  
28 Dwight Daub



4 John & Cynthia Hermes  
26 Steve & Ann Wilson



2 Anna Welte  
3 Ashley Benda  
5 Miss Butch Derrick  
11 Jaquelyn Kuhn  
13 Kaleb Benda  
19 Jon Powell  
21 Karin Seidemann  
29 Barton Davis  
30 Frank Miranda  
30 Marjorie Forehand



6 Kent & Jean Larason  
10 Keith & Karin Seidemann  
23 Glenn & Valerie Pulley  
30 Dave & Judi Dawson

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