



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 30, Issue 2
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

February 2019
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Through the years I have done many “series of articles” in *The Witness*. Doing series keeps me from having to think up something new to write about each month. Reviewing the last several months I was surprised to notice that the last series I did was back in September. It was a series on the sacraments. As I thought about what to do next the Westminster Confession of Faith came to mind. This Confession has been the primary confession of Presbyterian denominations worldwide since it was written by the Westminster Assembly in London. The assembly consisted of about 150 delegates, primarily Puritan Calvinists and Scots Calvinists, who met from 1643-1646. It was a long meeting!

In the opinion of the great Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield, the Westminster divines left posterity with not only “the most thought-out statement ever penned of the elements of evangelical religion” but also one which breathes “the finest fragrance of spiritual religion”. The Westminster “divines”, as the Assembly participants are referred to, wrote not only the Westminster Confession of Faith but also what is known as the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The two should not be confused. The first is a confession of faith, the second a catechism written in question and answer format. It is the shorter catechism that begins with the question, “What is the chief end of man?” And answers it, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” Where the Catechism intersects with the Confession I will seek to give the questions and answers of the Catechism

so that we can see some of its richness. The Confession is divided into 33 chapters. The Catechism has 107 questions and answers.

Chapter I of the Confession is titled, “Of the Holy Scripture.” The Confession recognizes that nature, the works of creation, and providence show the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so as to leave men inexcusable as the apostle Paul makes clear in Romans 1:19-20. However, this revelation of God, often referred to as natural revelation, is not sufficient to give us the knowledge of God and of His will which is necessary for salvation. Thus, as Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “At many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son.” These special revelations of God have been recorded and preserved for us in the Holy Scriptures.

The Westminster Divines wanted to make it very clear what the Holy Scripture consisted of. So in the Confession they list individually all 66 books of the Bible. After listing the books they state, “All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.” To remove any possible confusion they specifically state that the books of the Apocrypha are not of divine inspiration and do not belong in the canon of Scripture.

The Westminster Confession clearly understands God as the author of Scripture, which ought to be believed and obeyed, not on the testimony of man or of the Church, but on the testimony of God. It also understands Scripture to be complete unto itself in regards to the whole counsel of God concerning the things necessary for His glory, our salvation, and

how we are to live our lives. Scripture is not to be added to! Or is anything to be taken away from it. One last thing that the Confession states that I would like to mention is “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself.” Though the Confession does not use the phrase it would certainly agree with *Sola Scriptura*, Scripture alone. Scripture alone should be the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are resolved.

In conclusion I quote questions and answers 2 and 3 from the Catechism. Question 2 asks, “What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?” Answer: “The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.”

Question 3: “What do the Scriptures principally teach?” Answer: “The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.”

Let us never forget the priority of Scripture when it comes to what we believe as Christians and how we are to live our lives.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

FEBRUARY SERMON TOPICS

During February we will be finishing up our series on the book of Habakkuk and beginning a series on the parables of Jesus. I was inspired to do a series on the parables of Jesus as a result of reading a book by Kenneth Bailey entitled *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. Several months ago an old friend, Rainey High, gave me a copy of this book. I was very impressed by Kenneth Bailey’s scriptural insights. The entire book is excellent. The last third of the book is devoted to the parables of Jesus. Dr. Bailey looks at eleven of Jesus’ parables in his book.

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|-------------|---|
| February 3 | Habakkuk 2:6-20
<i>Woe to the Chaldeans</i> |
| February 10 | Habakkuk 3:1-19
<i>Habakkuk’s Prayer</i> |
| February 17 | Luke 10:25-37
<i>The Parable of the Good Samaritan</i> |
| February 24 | Luke 12:13-21
<i>The Parable of the Rich Fool</i> |

January Session Minutes

FINANCIAL REPORT: The financial report was discussed in detail.

FELLOWSHIP: Discussion of a future pot luck. Date February 17.

NURTURE: All nurture is going well at this current time.

OUTREACH: Evangelism and outreach committees are continually working on future program developments.

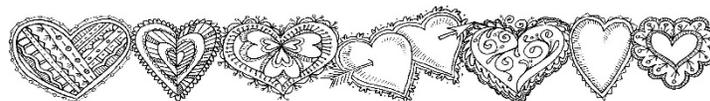
WORSHIP: There were very positive comments on the Christmas Eve service. We are ready to make audio available of pastor’s sermons on our website.

Worship Schedule

Every Sunday

9:30AM - Adult & Children’s Sunday School

11:00AM – Worship



Way Day Dates 2019

February 6, 13 & 20

March 6, 13 & 27 April 3, 10 & 17

SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evenings at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford’s – February 10 & 24 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – February 4, 11, 18 & 25 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – Bible study will resume February 19.

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

Prayer Requests

If you have missed prayers or would like to be added to the Women’s Fellowship prayer chain please call Doris Cornell 605-6172 or Treva Gullett 735-9908.

Ushers/Greeters

February Greeters: Don & Pamela Lee

February Ushers:

February 3 – Michael Bassett, Donna & Richard Urdahl, Nancy Spradling

February 10 – Christa & Sumish Charlie, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

February 17 – Randy Stateler, Ashley McCormick, Pat Robison, Nancy Spradling

February 24 – Youth

Fellowship Hour Treats

February 3 – Patsy Kuhn, Jean & Kent Larason

February 10 – Erin Von Tungeln, Wendy Smith

February 17 – Potluck

February 24 – Carla & Nelson Pickrell, Jaquelyn Kuhn



Come One, Come All

St. Stephen's potluck on February 17.

THANKS from the HEART

I would like to thank everyone at St. Stephen's for your thoughts and prayers while I was undergoing cancer treatment.

This has taken almost nine months because of all the problems in between treatments. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your support and prayers. We were told by the doctor I would probably not have lasted more than two months if Pamela had not kept pushing me to make an appointment. Never lost my Faith, and am now in remission with only two more maintenance chemo treatments. Thanks again and may GOD BLESS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU.

Don and Pamela

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

We have a great group for FPU this new year! Three from the community and three from our church. Dave Ramsey is giving out sound financial HOPE and Biblical principles. So thankful our church can host such a grounded method of teaching.

For questions contact Susan Almen at susanalmen@gmail.com.

SEQUENCE PLAYERS

Sequence February 26. Any questions, please call Doris Cornell at 605-6172.

Prescription Drugs Needed

If you have any prescription drugs to donate, please give them to Laurie.

Salvation Army Request

Reminder that we are collecting small soaps like the ones you get at hotels or motels. Bring them to the church office.

"Love is like a tennis match; you'll never win consistently until you learn to serve well."

Dan P. Herod

HYMN OF the Month

This month's Hymn of the Month is a new hymn.

It is "Lord of Love"

For the month of February, the month where we are reminded of all whom we love, I thought it was appropriate to have "Lord of Love" as our hymn of the month. This simple yet beautiful hymn bears a powerful message: that the Lord has our hearts and that He will love us forever. Composed in 1989 by Bob W. Miller, "Lord of Love" features a two-line affirmation: *Lord of love, You have won my heart; Your love forever will endure*. This affirmation, sung twice, is followed by a middle section stating how we are safe in the Lord's arms: *Every moment, every hour You remain a faithful tower, In Your arms I rest secure*. One last affirmation of *Lord of love, You have won my heart; Your love forever will endure* finishes the hymn in its final line. This hymn is meant as an assurance of God's love, stating how He is forever with us, His unfailing love lasts forever, and we will never be alone.

"Lord of Love" was made popular by Kelly Woods in a recording of the hymn on the album *Believe* in 2006.

For Hymn of the Month requests, contact Kaleb at Kaleb.B.Benda@Gmail.com or (405)-410-9331.



LOVE AND LAUGHTER GO HAND IN HAND!

Share these jokes with your beloved on February 14 — or whenever some humor can brighten a day!

Q: What valentine did the French chef give his wife?

A: A hug and a quiche

Q: What did the paper clip say to the magnet?

A: "I find you very attractive."

Q: What did the pencil say to the paper?

A: "I dot my i's on you!"

Q: How did the phone propose to his girlfriend?

A: He gave her a ring.

Q: What do you call a very small valentine?

A: A valentiny

CHURCH OFFICERS

Elders

Class of 2019

Dwight Daub	618-7497	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Kent Larason	808-3971	Fellowship

Class of 2020

John Hermes	202-9621	President of Corporation/ Nominating
Mark McBride	410-2003	Worship

Class of 2021

Lori Pickrell	503-9585	Treasurer
John Robison	627-3565	Outreach
Joan Miranda	210-1731	Nurture

Deacons

Class of 2019

Jaquelyn Kuhn	424-2123	Transportation
Kym Manning	426-7298	Van

Class of 2020

Christa Charlie	834-7031	Flowers
Nancy Spradling	206-5828	Ushers/Greeters
Randy Stateler	620-253-6431	Maintenance

Class of 2021

Michael Bassett	942-2074	Church Work Days
Robin Page	514-8240	Missions
Erin Von Tungeln	410-5901	Clerk

WITNESS DEADLINE

February 18 is the deadline to submit articles for the March *Witness*. You may bring items to the church office or e-mail them to: secretary@ststephensokc.org. Thanks! Laurie Daub, St. Stephen's Secretary

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4	Nancy Spradling
5	Hope Bradford
15	Seth Von Tungeln
15	Emma Shockley
15	Kandice Jones
16	Aaron Bradford
16	Breanna Petty
17	Rebecca Buswell
18	Don Lee, Sr.
20	Sarah Hudson
20	Paul Porter
26	Dylan Smith



14 Randy & Betsy Felton

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



Special Dates

African-American History Month
Valentine's Day, *February 14*
Presidents Day, *February 18*

