



# THE WITNESS

## St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

**Volume 37, Issue 3 & 4**  
**The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor**

**March-April 2026**  
**Church Phone (405) 843-5333**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are currently in the season of Lent, which is a time of preparation and self-examination as we approach the Passion of Christ and anticipate the celebration of His resurrection. The “seven last words” of Jesus often come to mind as we think about Jesus’ crucifixion and death. The seven last words are not actual words, but seven sentences that Jesus speaks from the cross. Since they are the words of Jesus they are all wonderful and each holds its own significance. I have three personal favorites which I would like to focus on today, though I will mention all seven so that they will be before us. My favorites are Jesus’ first, second and sixth sentences.

The first is from Luke 23:34: *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”* Imagine hanging on a cross in great agony and forgiving those who had caused your pain! Jesus is following his own teaching, “love your enemies...and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil” (Luke 6:35). Part of the irony is that Jesus’ death is the basis upon which those who crucified Him could receive forgiveness. As Stephen is being stoned, he follows Jesus’ example by saying, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60). How quick are we to forgive those who sin against us?

The second saying is from Luke 23:43. It is in response to the words of one of the criminals crucified next to Him who said, “Jesus, remember

me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus’ words to him were, *“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”* Grace! Whether this man’s crimes against the state warranted crucifixion we do not know, but the Romans certainly believed so. This felon who had done nothing deserving of eternal life and who was dead in his trespasses receives the gift of eternal life in the last hours of his life on earth. Why? He had put his faith in Jesus. He was saved by grace alone, through faith alone, by Christ alone.

The third saying is from John 19:26-27: “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, *‘Woman, behold, your son!’* and to the disciple, *‘Behold, your mother!’*” The beauty of this saying is that even amidst His own suffering Jesus was concerned about His mother. Jesus never thought about Himself first.

The remaining four sayings are as follows: The fourth saying is from Mark 15:34: *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”* Mark tells us that these words mean, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This saying is a quote from Psalm 22:1. If we had more time there would be much to discuss about this saying. The fifth saying is from John 19:28, *“I thirst.”* Saying number six is *“It is finished”* (John 19:30). Jesus’ death on the cross seems to be the

ultimate of human tragedies. The life of a young man is snuffed out in the prime of life. The greatest man who ever lived, who had so much to offer the world, has been put to death. As Andreas J. Köstenberger puts it, “It is finished’ proclaims that Jesus had completed all the work the Father sent Him to accomplish, particularly His work of bearing the penalty for sins.” Jesus’ work had not been cut short; His work was completed. The seventh and final saying of Jesus is from Luke 23:46: “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, *‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’* And having said this he breathed his last.” This reminds us of something Jesus said in John 10:17-18: “*I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.*”

Good Friday is called Good because it was on this day that Jesus procured for us the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life. Let us follow Jesus’ example: His example on the cross in forgiving the sins of those who wrong us and in not taking thought for ourselves but for those around us.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Mark

### MARCH/APRIL SERMON TOPICS

During the months of March and April we will continue our study of the book of John. There will be a special Maundy Thursday service on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

March 1	John 12: 12-26 <i>The Triumphal Entry</i>
March 8	John 12:27-36a <i>The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up</i>
March 15	John 12:36b-50 <i>The Unbelief of the People</i>
March 22	John 13:1-20 <i>Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet</i>
March 29	John 13:21-32 <i>The One Who Will Betray Jesus</i>
April 2	Maundy Thursday John 13:33-38 <i>A New Commandment</i>
April 5	John 20:1-18 <i>The Resurrection</i>

April 12	John 14:1-11 <i>The Way, the Truth, and the Life</i>
April 19	John 14:12-24 <i>The Promise of the Holy Spirit</i>
April 26	John 14:25-31 <i>The Promise of Peace</i>

### Special Easter Offering

On Sundays March 29 and April 2, we will be collecting our Easter Offering which will be given to the Infant Crisis Center and Manos Juntas Clinic

### Sunday Worship Schedule

9:45 Adult & Children Sunday School  
11:00AM – Worship  
11:00AM – Streaming Online Worship  
[facebook.com/StStephensOKC](https://facebook.com/StStephensOKC)

### SMALL GROUPS

Thursday Bible Study – March 12 & 26 and April 9 & 23 at 2:30PM

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

### FEBRUARY SESSION REPORT

**FELLOWSHIP:** Planning to have a Potluck sometime in the first quarter.

**WORSHIP:** We will be celebrating communion each Sunday during the season of Lent. February 22-April 5.

**OLD BUSINESS:** 1) Handrails for the sanctuary: Kent continues working on this project. 2) Stained Glass Room: It is coming together and almost complete. Kent & Glenn got workstations and table set up. 3) Spruce Up Committee: New floors are being installed in pastor’s office on February 20. 4) Secretary Position: Kathy Flanigan has been hired for secretary position.

*March Greeter* Larry Wilson

*April Greeter* Glenn Beaty

### Love Kept Drinking From the Cup

They were gathered in the Upper Room, the meal had just commenced, The apostles were tense and restless, and Judas had already left.

With bread and wine before Him, He reflected  
what it once meant,  
The Hebrews' liberation, and this ritual so they  
wouldn't forget.  
What new meaning this ceremony would have, for  
all the years to follow,  
But what it meant to Christ that night, left Him  
feeling hollow.  
As He held the chalice in His hand, He stared into  
its murky depth,  
The sin of all the world, was what to Him it  
represent.  
He broke the bread and passed it around, for all of  
them to sup,  
He raised the chalice to His lips, and love drank  
from the cup.  
From the room He retired to Gethsemane, a  
favorite place to pray,  
The contents of the cup haunted Him, every step  
along the way.  
Prostrate on His face, a little ways beyond His  
three best friends,  
He besought His Father if another way, could serve  
to meet His ends.  
He had resisted every temptation Satan presented  
in His life,  
And most people fail to grasp, the enormity of that  
fight.  
His divinity revolted, His humanity was ill, at  
being so defiled,  
For He would never willingly take in anything, so  
evil and so vile.  
His Father told Him, to redeem mankind, He must  
sacrifice His Son,  
In love for His Father and man He said, "Not My  
will, but Thine be done".  
Comforted by angels God had sent, to help His Son  
hold up,  
Heaven held its breath as Jesus started sipping  
from the cup.

They took Him from the garden, with murder in  
their hearts,  
They beat Him and abused Him, until His body  
went into shock.  
...But love kept drinking from the cup.  
They treated Him as a sinner, "a transgressor", said  
the Pharisees,

They cried to have Him crucified, on the hill  
between two thieves.  
...Still, He kept drinking from the cup.  
They watched Him nailed and pitched aloft  
Golgotha's barren brow,  
Their hatred almost sated, towards this man with a  
thorny crown.  
Although the cup was very full and very wide and  
tall..  
Jesus drank, and drank again, until He'd drank it  
all.

When the cup was empty, having taken in the sins  
of man,  
He cried, "It is finished", dropped the cup, and fell  
into His Father's hands.  
Darkness crashed in, the earth convulsed, the veil  
was rent in twain,  
It seemed as though the angels, were having to be  
restrained.  
We may never understand the depth of love, or the  
sacrifice,  
Or why we were ever considered, worth such an  
enormous price.  
He provided us a Comforter, a paraclete to lead our  
way,  
Until the Father decides it's time, to rapture us  
away.  
Each time I take communion, from my knees I  
humbly look up,  
And give eternal thanks, that Love kept drinking  
from the cup.

*William Dawson & David Dawson*

### **Special Dates for March**

World Day of Prayer, *March 6*  
Daylight saving time begins, *March 8*  
St. Patrick's Day, *March 17*  
First day of spring, *March 20*  
Holy Week, *March 29-April 5*  
Palm/Passion Sunday, *March 29*

### **Special Dates for April**

Holy Week Continues, *March 29-April 5*  
Maundy Thursday, *April 2*  
Good Friday, *April 3*  
Easter Sunday, *April 5*  
Earth Day, *April 22*  
Administrative Professionals Day, *April 22*

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## Women's Fellowship

Thursday, March 12 and Thursday, April 9 at 1:00PM. If you have missed prayers or would like to be added to the Women's Fellowship prayer chain, please call Treva Gullett (405-735-9908) or Patsy Kuhn (405-820-2016).



Sign up for Easter lilies Sundays, all of March. They are \$12 each and can be taken home immediately following our Easter worship.

No "Meet Our St. Stephen's Family" this time.

### PRAYER

Pray to your Heavenly Father and Jesus too.  
Pray what's on your mind only comes from you.  
Faith and Prayer that's all it will take.  
Let your prayer work relax and wait.

Pray abundantly in their name,  
Your day will never be the same.  
A day for you where all will work out.  
A day your prayer will leave you no doubt.

A prayer to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Will change your life and within it.  
A prayer that always comes from your heart,  
God and Jesus are never far apart.

Don't forget when your prayers come true,  
To thank and praise God and Jesus too,  
It will really show all your love,  
That you believe in them in heaven above.

*Blessings & Love,  
Anna May*

### March Fellowship Treats

March 1 – Jaquelyn Kuhn  
March 8 – Wendy Smith  
March 15 - Pat Robison  
March 22 – Keith & Karin Seidemann  
March 29 – Lori Pickrell

### April Fellowship treats

April 5 – Jean & Kent Larason  
April 12 – Marta Clay  
April 19 – Dorla Beaty  
April 26 – Joan Miranda

### WHAT IS DEACON'S SUNDAY AND WHY DO WE OBSERVE IT?

Deacon's Sunday is observed on the first Sunday of each month. This is an opportunity for us to donate to the Deacon's fund. Funds given are designated for use by the Pastor and Deacons to assist members of our congregation with special and emergency financial needs as determined by Pastor Mark and our serving Deacons.

Please consider Deacon's Sunday and these special needs as you consider your charitable giving. To give to the Deacon's Fund just place your donation in one of the Deacon's envelopes in the pew racks on the first Sunday of the month.



#### Class of 2026

Dwight Daub 618-7497 President of Corporation/Nominating

Kent Larason 808-3971 Fellowship  
Wendy Smith 850-6564 Treasurer

#### Class of 2027

Glenn Beaty 795-3393 Outreach  
Keith Seidemann 474-5454 Worship

#### Class of 2028

Kathy Flanigan 885-7309 Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials

Carla Pickrell 819-6494 Nurture

**Deacons**

**Class of 2026**

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

**Class of 2027**

Kathy Boaz 850-3053 Clerk

**Class of 2028**

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

**April 20** is the deadline to submit articles for the **May/June 2026 Witness.**

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- 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



- 18 Barton & Carol Davis
- 26 Fred & Nancy Thompson

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



- 7 Rebecca Stateler
- 10 Nancy Thompson
- 10 Rachel Clay
- 16 Marilyn Hanson
- 17 Valerie Pulley
- 21 Debbie Roberts
- 25 Jacob Kuhn
- 31 Dan Kiplinger
- 31 Joey Martinez



- 25 Jacques & Teresa Lampin

