



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 39, Issue 7 & 8
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

July-August 2026
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Navigators, a Christian organization begun in 1933, has become known for their disciple-making ministry. They begin discipling new believers by teaching five assurances, of which the first is the assurance of salvation. They begin with this assurance because often one of Satan's first attacks on new believers is to get them to question their salvation. The thought that will often come into a person's head is "How can I be saved and my sins forgiven just by believing in Christ? Surely that is not enough!"

To counter this thought the Navigators have new believers memorize 1 John 5:11-12: "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in the Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." These two verses describe God's clear promise to us: If a person has the Son, Jesus, they have salvation.

Is faith enough? One of the five "*Solas*" of the Reformation is *sola fide*, faith alone. There are many passages of scripture that testify that we are saved by faith alone. John 3:16b says that "whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Romans 10:9 says "Because if

you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." In Romans 4 Paul argues that Abraham was justified by faith. Paul says, "For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.'" (Romans 4:2-3)

So, we see that our salvation is not based on something we do but on what God has done for us through Christ. Some might argue that "I did do something, I put my faith in Jesus." But where did this faith come from? Ephesians 2:8a says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith." In Ephesians 2:8b this faith is qualified, "And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." So, we see that even our faith in Jesus is not something that we conjured up in ourselves, but it was a gift freely given to us by God.

There are two enemies of the assurance of salvation. The first is thinking that our salvation is something we must earn. If we believe that salvation is by works, we will never be certain of our salvation because we will always wonder if we've done enough. We have seen that even the

Old Testament saints, such as Abraham, were not saved by works or by keeping the Law, but by faith. Ephesians 2:9 says clearly that our salvation is “not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

The second enemy of the assurance of salvation is believing one can lose one’s salvation. If I believe that I can lose my salvation, how can I have this assurance? One might be certain of one’s salvation today but one could never be entirely sure that one will still be saved a year from now. In His discourse on the Good Shepherd Jesus makes it clear that we cannot lose our salvation. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” (John 10:28-29) Notice two things. One, eternal life is a gift, a gift that will not be taken away. And two, we will never perish.

As God’s children, as the sheep of the Good Shepherd, we can be sure of our salvation. Do not allow Satan or your own thoughts to put doubts in your mind.

Yours in Christ
Pastor Mark

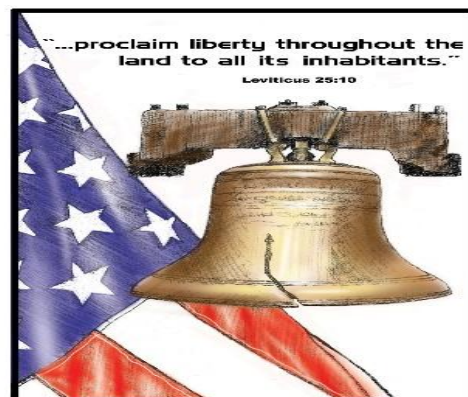


JULY/AUGUST

SERMON TOPICS

I will be out of town for the first two Sundays in July. During the remainder of July and August we will be continuing our series on the Gospel of John.

- July 5 Ed Bedrosian Preaching
- July 12 Branden Dillard Preaching
- July 19 John 17:20-26
The Prayer for the Church
- July 26 John 18:1-11
Jesus' Betrayal and Arrest
- August 2 John 18:12-27
Jesus Before the Jewish Authorities
- August 9 John 18:28-40
Jesus Before Pontious Pilate
- August 16 John 19:1-16a**
Pilate Scourges, Questions, and Delivers Jesus
- August 23 John 19:16b-30
Jesus Crucified
- August 30 John 19:31-42
Jesus Laid in the Tomb



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- 5 Elizabeth Garrett
- 6 Joan Miranda
- 7 Carol Davis
- 8 Margo Whiting
- 8 Brandon Dillard
- 11 Nelson Pickrell
- 12 Gentry Hine
- 18 Christa Ringering
- 19 Matt Stillwell
- 25 Laurie Daub
- 25 Dan Dutcher
- 25 Hudson Von Tungeln
- 29 Mark Ringering
- 29 Kym Manning
- 30 Mark Bradford
- 31 Peyton Hine

- 2 Jean Larason
- 3 Wendy Smith
- 5 Erin Von Tungeln
- 10 Madison VonTungeln
- 10 Clint Williams
- 17 Nancy Chotkey
- 20 Katherine Boaz
- 21 Lora Koetsier
- 22 Teresa Lampin
- 29 Curt Almen
- 31 John Robison



- 1 Dwight & Laurie Daub
- 11 Robert & Rebecca Buswell
- 27 Nelson & Carla Pickerell



- 7 Seth & Erin Von Tungeln
- 15 Dorla & Glenn Beaty
- 26 Mike & Joy Bassett
- 29 Dan & Shelley Dutcher

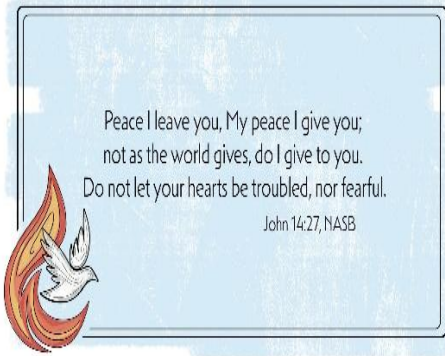


July Fellowship Treats

- July 5 – Dorla Beaty
- July 12 – Jaquelyn Kuhn
- July 19 - Pat Robison
- July 26 – Keith & Karin Seidemann

August Fellowship treats

- August 2 – Jean & Kent Larason
- August 9 – Marta Clay
- August 16 – Wendy Smith
- August 23 – Lori Pickrell
- August 30 - Joan Miranda



Elders

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 |

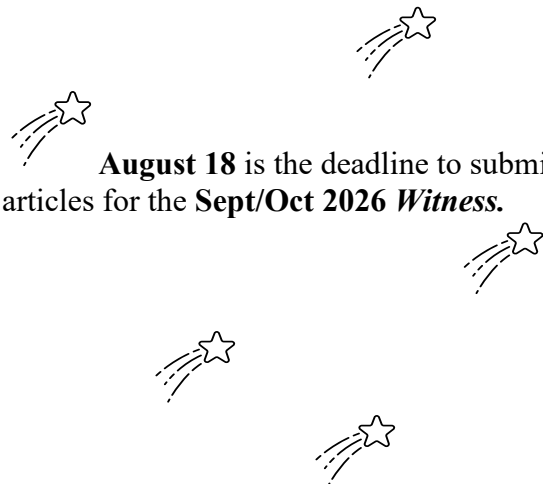
Class of 2027

- | | | |
|------------|----------|-------|
| Kathy Boaz | 850-3053 | Clerk |
|------------|----------|-------|

Class of 2028

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

August 18 is the deadline to submit articles for the **Sept/Oct 2026 Witness**.





Sunday Worship Schedule

9:45 Adult & Children Sunday School
11:00AM – Worship
11:00AM – Streaming Online Worship

SMALL GROUPS

Thursday Bible Study – July 9 & 23 and August 13 & 27 at 2:30PM

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

June Session Report

FELLOWSHIP: Potluck on 6/14/2026.

NOMINATIONS: Members of the Nominating Committee: Keith Seidemann, Carla Pickrell, Dwight Daub.

WORSHIP: Communion: July 19: Serving Elders: Kathy, Keith & Wendy. Aug 2: Serving Elders: Wendy, Kent & Dwight. Sundays Mark gone: June 14 – Jarad Chambers, July 5 – Ed Bedrosian, July 12 – Branden Dillard. Choir will be singing on Communion Sundays. Men’s Quartet will be singing “Battle Hymn of the Republic” on 7/5/26.

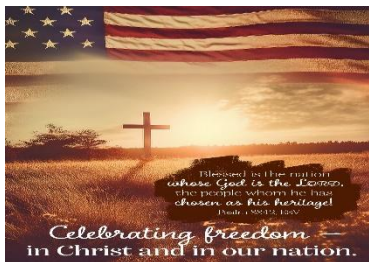
OLD BUSINESS:

Handrails: Kent will call, haven’t heard back from the vendor.

Stained Glass Room: Ready to host activities.

Will start small, see if it grows into regular size classes.

July Greeter Joey Martinez
August Greeter Larry Wilson



Special Dates for July
Independence Day, July 4



Women’s Fellowship

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).

Meet Our St. Stephen’s Family



Dan was born and grew up here in OKC . He was the only child of Jeanne, a business woman and Peter, Kiplinger, a banker.

In 1988 Dan married, and later divorced in 2001. He has one daughter, Christine, and 2 grandchildren: Eve age 7, and Gwen age 5. They live in Germany, his son-in-law is German born. They visit the USA once a year. Dan last visited Germany in 2015 for Christine’s wedding.

Dan currently lives at 50th & Brookline. He has lived in OKC all his life except for several months, when he worked for a hotel in Miami, Florida.

Dan recently adopted a stray black mini lab he rescued from the road. The puppy only weighed a few pounds when Dan took him in. He named him “Shadow”.

A favorite family mentor throughout his life was Aunt Dana. She was a stable force to Dan. He grew to appreciate her, a strong and loving woman of faith.

Another of Dan’s “heroes” is Luidgi Del Cid, former boss, manager and owner of Café Kacao here in OKC, a highly ranked Latin American

restaurant. Dan admires his success and his leadership in the local Latino community. Luidgi combines business intelligence with what Dan calls “a good heart”.

Dan has a new love in his life, Nikki Rex. They met at the Senior Citizens Center where Nikki works. Many of us have had the pleasure of meeting her during Sunday visits to St. Stephen’s.

Dan graduated from Heritage Hall in 1976. During high school, he worked at Braums and Casa Bonita. He says he was motivated to “earn his own money”.

After graduation, Dan attended UCO and earned a BS degree in psychology. After college he returned to work in the hospitality industry work in a Miami, Florida hotel for several months.

He took a job for the Oklahoma State Tax Commission in motor vehicle and truck registration. He started his own trucking registration business that continued for 12 years. He again returned to the hospitality business, working for his favorite boss as a waiter, bartender, host, etc... at Café Kacao, where he stayed for 8 years. Once Dan’s health deteriorated, he retired, unable to continue the functions of his work.

Dan says one of his favorite leisure activities is “people watching”. He loves old movies, especially from the 1950’s and 1960’s. He also enjoys music from those years and has a large vinyl record collection including artists like: Herb Alpert, Andy Williams, The 5th Dimension, Tom Jones, Saturday Night Fever, etc... He also likes to watch old TV shows. Like many if us, he is nostalgic for a simpler time in our nation’s history.

Dan and his family were Methodists, but had little involvement in church. He came to St. Stephen’s in 2020 stating: “my health drew me back to church”. Dan continues to deal with muscle weakness and pain, especially in his hands and arms. He says his condition at this time has no definitive diagnosis. To quote Dan: my condition is something I endure without complaint, instead it is my tribute to God”.

Dan received warm greetings when he first came to St. Stephen’s from his old high school

friend Valerie, and from Mary Marshall. He loves the warm reception from our St. Stephen’s family, and appreciates Mark’s sermons.

Dan says: “faith leads my life”. He says he loves engaging with all people, and believes in befriending and respecting every person, no matter their station in life or their background, etc...

From Romans 12:10

“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

Mother Teresa calls this an “offering”. She says: “To show great love for God and our neighbors, we need not do great things. It is how much love we put into the doing that makes our offering something beautiful to God.”

We all need to follow Dan’s inspiring example of love and respect for others. As it says in 1 John 2:10:

“whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person, there is no cause for stumbling” (in the dark).

Jesus The Shepherd

Jesus is our shepherd
We are all His sheep.
Jesus is loving and kind
He never leaves His sheep behind.

We follow Him wherever He goes
He leads us all because He knows.
We need Him even when we sleep
He keeps us safe, we are His beloved sheep.

Where would we be without Jesus
Terribly lost, we need Him to lead us.
Jesus is the best shepherd of all
We can follow faithfully when He calls.

Inspired by Pastor Mark’s sermon “Jesus the Shepherd”.

*Blessings & Love,
Anna May*
