

THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 41, Issue 11 & 12 **November-December 2026**
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor **Church Phone (405) 843-5333**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In my last several *Witness* articles I've been looking at the five assurances that the Navigators teach new believers. We have looked at the assurance of salvation and the assurance of answered prayer. Today, I'm going to focus on the third assurance: the assurance of victory.

The scripture verse that the Navigators have people memorize regarding this assurance is 1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." There is no temptation we will have to face that has not been faced by countless other believers. God can give us the victory when we are tempted. While we are not promised that God will remove temptations, we are promised that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to overcome.

Temptation is common to everyone. James tells us what the major source of temptation is. "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire." (James 1:14) Not all desires are wrong, but they can become wrong if they are outside the boundaries that God has set. 1 John 2:16 lists three primary areas of temptation: "the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life." Desires of the flesh are often interpreted as the desire for physical pleasure. Desires of the eyes are quite simply the desire for things. According to Glenn W. Barker, professor at Fuller Seminary, the pride of life "describes a pretentious hypocrite who glories in himself or in his possessions." Obviously, temptations come in many forms.

The good news is that God is faithful. 1 Thessalonians 3:3 says: "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish and guard you against the evil one." And Hebrews 4:15 tells us: "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Part of the promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 is that God "will provide a way of escape." Temptation itself is not a sin. Jesus was tempted but never sinned. Scripture provides ways to help keep temptation from leading into sin. First, we can pray. Part of the Lord's Prayer is, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Second, we can make the word of God an integral part of our lives. "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:9, 11) James 4:7 gives us two additional things that we can do: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:8a

is also another piece of good advice for resisting temptation, “Darw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”

We all face many kinds of temptation in this life, and most of us know where we are most vulnerable. When temptation comes, we must seek the way of escape God provides. Let us pray for ourselves and one another so that we may overcome temptation.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Mark





Elders & Deacons

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 Merriweather	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





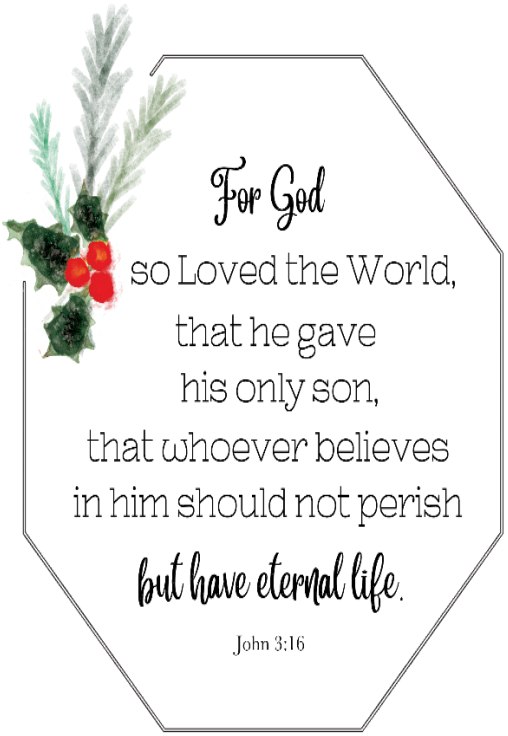


NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

SERMON TOPICS

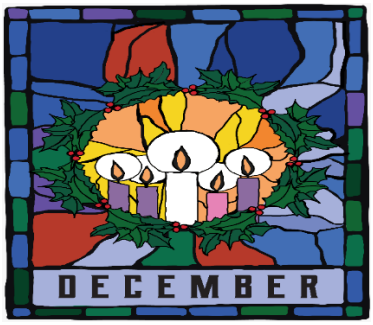
In November and December, I am going to continue preaching from the Common Lectionary. I will be preaching from the Old Testament passages each Sunday. There are two special Sundays in November and December, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

November 1 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
Paul's Reception by Them
November 8 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Comfort Regarding Those Who Have Died
November 15 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
The Day of the Lord
November 22 Nathan Carroll preaching
November 26 Thanksgiving Day Psalm 107: 1-9
O Give Thanks to the LORD
November 29 Isaiah 64:1-9
Prayer for Mercy
December 6 Isaiah 40:1-11
Comfort for God's People
December 13 Isaiah 61:1-9
The Year of the LORD's Favor
December 20 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
The LORD's Covenant with David
December 24 Christmas Eve Isaiah 9:2-7
For Us a Child is Born
December 27 Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Zion's Coming Salvation











Special Offerings

Thanksgiving Offering: On Sundays, November 22 and 29 we will be collecting a special offering that will be given to Reaching Our City and Wings.

Christmas Offering: On Sundays, December 20 and 27 we will be collecting a special offering that will be given to the Homeless Alliance and Jesus House.



1	Ruby Ochoa
1	Jodie High
9	Mary Marshall
11	Patricia M Robinson
11	Mark McBride
17	Kathy Flanigan
18	Michael Bassett
23	Randy Stateler
24	Audrey Broshuis
26	Cherry Droze

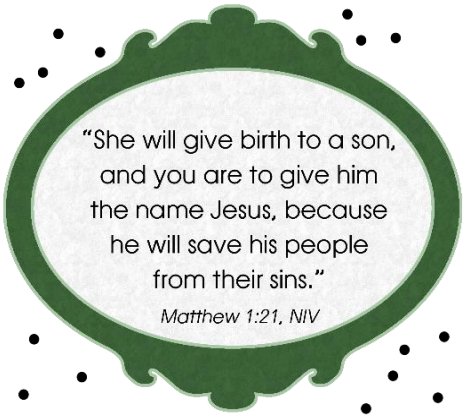


None









3 Kent Larason
3 Mason Kuhn
5 Marcia Ledbetter
5 Steve Wilson
11 Glenn Beaty
11 Dorla Beaty
16 Cynthia Hermes-Courtright
20 Alex Ballare
23 Nikki Dawson
28 Dennis Bryley
29 Linda Willis





5 Benjamin & Eleanor McBride
18 Christa & Mark Ringering
28 Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford



Women's Fellowship

Thursday November 12, 1:30PM and Thursday December 10, 12:30PM (Potluck). 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).

Sunday Worship Schedule

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

Small Groups

Thursday Bible Study – Nov 5 and Nov 19 at 2:30PM and Dec 3 and Dec 17 at 12:30PM
Men's Prayer Group – Saturday mornings at 7:30AM

Anna May
Would like to express her deep appreciation and thanks for all the thoughts and prayers and the wonderful chicken soup she has received from her church family as she battles her cancer diagnosis. Blessings and Love, Anna May



November Greeter Joey Martinez
December Greeter Larry Wilson

November Fellowship Treats

Nov 1 – Joan Miranda
Nov 8 – Dorla Beaty
Nov 15 - Jaquelyn Kuhn
Nov 22 – Pat Robison
Nov 29 – Keith & Karin Seidemann

December Fellowship treats

Dec 6 – Jean & Kent Larason
Dec 13– Laurie Daub
Dec 20 – Wendy Smith
Dec 27 – Lori Pickrell

December 18 is the deadline to submit articles for the **Jan/Feb 2027** ***Witness.***

October Session Report

FELLOWSHIP: Potluck planned for Sunday, November 8. Fellowship will provide soup and chili. The Congregation is asked to bring sides and desserts.

WORSHIP: Communion: November 1 (All Saints' Day). Nathan Carroll covering the pulpit on November 22. Special Services on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Eve.

OLD BUSINESS:

Tree Trimming: Additional Trimming completed Wed 10/7/26.

Playground: New swings installed.

KItchen Sink: Lack of pressure & hot water. Kent will be meeting with the plumber. Since the Session meeting, it has been fixed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Lifewise Academy: Met with Tim, Darin & Jannelle. They gave a nice presentation of the mission of Lifewise to provide religious education to school children for 1 hour per week at a partner location, such as church. Session will review materials used & consider whether St. Stephen's would be interested in being a host location.

Ceiling in Small Fellowship Hall: Not an HVAC leak, but a plumbing issue. Plumber fixed, but ceiling tiles need replacing due to water damage from leaking pipe.

Special Dates for November

All Saints' Day - Nov 1
Veteran's Day - Nov 11
Christ the King Sunday – Nov 22
Thanksgiving Day – Nov 26
1st Sunday of Advent – Nov 29

Special Dates for December

2nd Sunday of Advent – Dec 6
3rd Sunday of Advent – Dec 13
4th Sunday of Advent – Dec 20
1st Day of Winter – Dec 21
Christmas Eve – Dec 24
Christmas Day – Dec 25
New Year's Eve – Dec 31

"God, Bless us everyone.."



Nobility

His ears twitched forward in anticipation, as towards him they both came,
Mary, great with child, moved slowly, and Joseph, with a load did the same.
As the pack and saddle crossed his back, he looked at Joseph's face,
As Mary's weight settled upon him, stock still he stood in his place.
He instinctively knew something was different, his eyes became alert,
He chose his steps carefully, to protect Mary from pain and hurt.
Maybe he saw an angel or two, which neither Mary or Joseph could see,
And maybe angels held his halter, or patted his chin as they crossed Galilee.

He slept with ears open, when they rested in the day or camped at night,
He sensed the tension in Joseph, as he cared for his lovely young wife.
Each time Mary would shift her weight, or give a heavy sigh,
One ear would flip back, head raise high, to make sure there was nothing awry.
The relationship between nature and God, man does not understand.
But we are told even the rocks would cry out, if in silence would remain man.
At some level of intuition, this tiny beast of burden realized,
That upon his back, and in his care, Creation and Creator did ride.

This trek of over ninety miles, which took a week or maybe longer,
As Mary wearied and Joseph worried, the little burro became the stronger.
His dainty hooves clicked to a stop, before an inn, at evening, in Bethlehem,
His responsibility to carry the most important load ever, was now at an end.
He followed them into a stable, his neck lowering in fatigue,
But as Mary's cry, his head shot up, ceasing to chew his evening's feed.
Protectively he strained to see Mary, with a vigilant eye on the door,
An unseen hand stroked his neck, as he witnessed the birth of the Lord.

The faithful little burro, as unattractive and insignificant as could be,
Was preferred by Heaven for this task, more than any magnificent steed.
More times than we will ever know, he carried this precious load,
Keenly alert to potential danger or harm, as through the countryside they rode.
But on that night there came a reward, upon which there can be no price,
To be present at the moment shared by so few, the first coming of Christ.
As the angels left with one stop left, to tell shepherds and bid them haste,
Several patted and thanked the little burro, for carrying the King to this place.

By David Dawson & William Dawson







November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship & Online Worship 2:30PM Zami Worship	**2** 6:00PM Al-Anon 7:00PM Men's AA	**3**	**4** 6:00PM Choir 6:30PM NAMI 7:00PM AA	**5** 2:30PM Bible Study	**6**	**7** 7:30AM Men's Prayer Breakfast 10AM-3PM Al-Anon Eat & Speak
8 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship & Online Worship 2:30PM Zami Worship	**9** 6:00PM Al-Anon 6:30PM Session 7:00PM Men's AA	**10** 7:00PM BETA	**11** 6:00PM Bell Choir 6:30PM NAMI 7:00PM Choir 7:00PM AA	**12** 1:30PM Women's Fellowship	**13**	**14** 7:30AM Men's Prayer Breakfast
15 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship & Online Worship 2:30PM Zami Worship	**16** 6:00PM Al-Anon 7:00PM Men's AA 7:00PM Deacon's	**17**	**18** 6:00PM Bell Choir 6:30PM NAMI 7:00PM Choir 7:00PM AA	**19** 2:30PM Bible Study	**20**	**21** 7:30AM Men's Prayer Breakfast
22 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship & Online Worship 2:00 PM ATOMS 2:30PM Zami Worship	**23** 6:00PM Al-Anon 7:00PM Men's AA	**24** 7:00PM BETA	**25** 6:30PM NAMI 7:00PM AA	**26** Thanskgiving Day 10:00AM Worship Service Office Closed	**27** Office Closed	**28** 7:30AM Men's Prayer Breakfast 9:00AM Hanging of the Greens
29 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship & Online Worship 2:30PM Zami Worship	**30** 6:00PM Al-Anon - Dinner Following Meeting 7:00PM Men's AA					

December 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
			6:00PM Bell Choir			7:30AM Men's
			6:30PM NAMI			Prayer Breakfast
		6:00PM Worship	7:00PM Choir	2:30PM Bible Study		
		Committee	7:00PM AA			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:45AM Sunday				12:30PM Women's		7:30AM Men's
School			6:00PM Bell Choir	Fellowship Potluck		Prayer Breakfast
11:00AM Worship		7:00PM BETA	6:30PM NAMI			
& Online Worship	6:00PM Al-Anon		7:00PM Choir			
2:30PM Zami	7:00PM Men's AA		7:00PM AA			
Worship						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9:45AM Sunday						7:30AM Men's
School			6:00PM Bell Choir			Prayer Breakfast
11:00AM Worship	6:00PM Al-Anon		6:30PM NAMI	2:30PM Bible Study		
& Online Worship	6:30PM Session		7:00PM Choir			10AM-3PM Al-Anon
2:30PM Zami	7:00PM Men's AA		7:00PM AA			Annual Gift of
Worship						Fellowship
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
9:45AM Sunday				Christmas	Christmas	7:30AM Men's
School	6:00PM Al-Anon		6:00PM Bell Choir	Eve	Day	Prayer Breakfast
11:00AM Worship	7:00PM Men's AA	7:00PM BETA	6:30PM NAMI			
2:00PM ATOMS	7:00PM Deacon's		7:00PM Choir	6:00PM Christmas		
2:30PM Zami			7:00PM AA	Eve Service		
Worship					Office Closed	
27	28	29	30	31		
9:45AM Sunday						
School	6:00PM Al-Anon		6:30PM NAMI			
11:00AM Worship	7:00PM Men's AA		7:00PM AA			
& Online Worship						
2:30PM Zami						
Worship						


CELEBRATE
GOD'S GIFT!
FOR TO US A CHILD IS BORN,TO US A SON IS GIVEN ...
AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6, ESV



ARISE, SHINE; FOR YOUR LIGHT HAS COME, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAS RISEN UPON YOU.

ISAIAH 60:1, NRSV