



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 36, Issue 9 & 10
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

September-October 2025
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Life has its rhythm. Human history up to about two hundred years ago was an agrarian society. In an agrarian society the rhythm of life was seedtime and harvest. As we have been following the life of Jesus through the Gospel of John one can see the rhythm of the Jewish culture in which Jesus lived. There was the weekly rhythm of six days of work followed by a Sabbath day of rest. There was also the rhythm of the year with the three major festivals: The Feast of Unleavened Bread, The Feast of Weeks, and The Feast of Booths. God provided these regular times of rest for His people.

In today's society we see similar rhythms. Weekly we have our weekends which look different for different people. Traditionally in our country Sunday is a day of rest and worship. Unfortunately, many people have lost this tradition. We also have holidays that mark certain times of year. I do not know if it has always been the case, but since I was a child, Memorial Day always marked the beginning of summer and Labor Day the end of summer. For those who are in school or who have school-age children or even grandchildren, these days mark an important rhythm in life.

It is interesting that January 1 is the first day of the New Year and yet in many ways we see fall as the start of a new year. This rhythm is true not only for schools. Churches and many other organizations follow the same rhythm as schools, suspending certain of their activities during the summer months and resuming them in the fall.

I have been thinking a little bit about my life over the past couple of months. It has felt like a somewhat leisurely summer. I began to think, "I could get used to this!" Now suddenly fall is upon us. The pace of my life is about to quicken. Teaching part time, more evening commitments, and activities suspended during the summer months resuming. Am I ready for this?

All of this has made me think about a poster I once had. I think I might have had it hanging in my dorm room at college. On the poster was a picture of a ship with its sails rolled up sitting in a calm harbor. The caption on the poster read, "Ships are safe in the harbor, but that is not what ships are made for." It always spoke to me. The harbor is nice, but the time comes to hoist the sail.

As we grow older, we do have to slow down, but we should not stop prematurely. Jon Powell has been an inspiration to me. At the age of ninety-two he is leading a daily prayer group at the assisted living facility where he lives. There are a number of passages in scripture that have always been an encouragement to me. "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58) "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Let us enjoy our Sabbath day rests and the festivals (holidays) that God has given to us. But

let us also look for ways to serve and to show the love of Christ to those whom God brings into our lives.

Yours in Christ, Pastor
Mark

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER SERMON TOPICS

During September and October, we will be continuing our journey through the Gospel of John.

September 7	John 8:12-20 <i>I Am the Light of the World</i>
September 14	John 8:21-30 <i>I Am Not of This World</i>
September 21	John 8:31-41a <i>The Truth Will Set You Free</i>
September 28	John 8:41b-50 <i>I Came from God</i>
October 5	Branden Dillard Preaching
October 12	John 8:51-59 <i>Before Abraham Was, I Am</i>
October 19	John 9:1-17 <i>The Man Born Blind</i>
October 25	John 9:18-41 <i>The Blind See</i>

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:45 Adult & Children Sunday School

11:00AM – Worship

11:00AM – Streaming Online Worship

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SMALL GROUPS

Thursday Bible Study – September 11 & 25 and
October 23 at 2:30PM

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

AUGUST SESSION REPORT

FINANCIAL REPORT: Nelson Pickrell joined us to discuss ways to decrease our insurance premium. Scott Loades (Church Mutual) was invited to present ways we could reduce our insurance, which has gone up from approximately \$25,000 to \$40,000 for the coming fiscal year. Motion was made (Pickrell/Smith) to eliminate the

following coverages: [1] Equipment breakdown (\$1,275); [2] Business Income loss (\$4,968); [3] Signage on front of church (\$1,126); and [4] Gym coverage reduced to just liability (\$5,000), resulting in a total savings of \$12,360. Kent Larason will draft a contract for signatures from outside organizations wishing to use the gym, which will allow them to use the gym and will hold us harmless from any injuries that may occur. Motion passed unanimously.

FELLOWSHIP: The fellowship dinner went well last month. There will be an ice cream social and guitar concert by Michael Fresonke this Saturday, August 16th in the small fellowship hall.

NURTURE: Summer Sunday school is going well with the two children classes combined. Kent will confirm with Pat Robison that she will begin teaching the younger children after Labor Day.

OUTREACH: Glenn Beaty presented statistics on Christianity in America, which showed a significant decline from 2023-24 to 2024/25. Fortunately, the decline has begun to slow. He noted that there are many reasons at this time to seek the LORD and that it is the responsibly of all of us to assist with that.

WORSHIP: September 7th communion will be served by Keith Seidemann, Joan and Frank Miranda. Pastor Mark will be absent October 5th, with Branden Dillard preaching in his absence.

OLD BUSINESS:

Gate/Fencing - Kent has received a bid of \$7,000 to complete work on the south side of the church for the gym alley and the nursery entrance. The chain link fence area will be delayed. The Session agreed we should go ahead.

Landscaping - Kent would like to have some areas cleaned up on the September 13th workday.

Stained Glass - Kent reported that all plumbing needs have been completed. The nursery had a toilet that did not work. Since Myanmar is using those rooms, it was determined that the toilet needed to be removed and the old one from the stained glass shop put in its place. There was difficulty with that and so we need to complete the rest of the project; repair of the floor and new tile needs to be placed. Next project to be addressed will be rekeying the two doors to the stained glass shop.

Spruce Up Committee - Carla Pickrell has been researching ceiling fans for the library. As many fans are now operated with remote control, it has taken longer than we originally projected. Since many people use the room, we decided it would be best to have a wall-operated one.

****No Meet Our St. Stephen's Family**

Women's Fellowship Returns

Thursday, September 11

Thursday, October 9

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).

Special Dates for September

Labor Day, *September 1*

National Grandparents Day, *September 7*

Patriot Day, *September 11*

National Grandparents Day, *September 7*

First Day of Autumn, *September 22*

Special Dates for October

Pastor/Clergy Appreciation

Sunday, *October 12*

Columbus Day, *October 13*

Indigenous Peoples Day, *October 13*

Reformation Sunday, *October 26*

Reformation Day, *October 31*



September Greeter Larry Wilson

October Greeter Frank Miranda

September Fellowship Treats

September 7 – Dorla Beaty

September 14 – Wendy Smith

September 21 – Jaquelyn Kuhn

September 28 – Laurie Daub



October Fellowship Treats

October 5 – Joan Miranda

October 12 – Pat Robison

October 19 – Marta Clay

October 26 – Miss Butch Derrick

JESUS

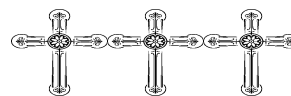
Jesus the name of our salvation
Around the world and every nation
Jesus the name that brings us Joy
When to him our prayers we employ

Jesus to him we pray each day
Always listens to us, never far away
Jesus lives in Heaven above
Showering down on us all his love

Jesus gave his life for all our sins
That's when our love for him begins
Never forget or take for granted that he died
Let our hearts, minds and souls in him abide

Jesus always praise his name
Our lives will never be the same
Jesus our Lord, savior, brother and friend
Let our love for him and God never end.

*Blessings & Love,
Anna May*



The Power of the Prayer Warrior

Prayer warriors are spiritual soldiers—men and women who faithfully lift others in prayer, often behind the scenes. Though their work may go unnoticed by the world, it is deeply valued by God. Their intercession can strengthen the weary, comfort the grieving, and open doors for God's will to be done.

In Scripture, we are urged to "pray one for another" (James 5:16, KJV), reminding us that healing and restoration often come through the prayers of the faithful. A prayer warrior stands in the gap,

bringing needs before the Lord with boldness and persistence.

The Apostle Paul recognized the power of prayer, often asking others to pray for him as he shared the gospel. In the same way, prayer warriors today uphold churches, pastors, families, and communities.

Their prayers may be silent, but their impact is mighty. Never underestimate the difference a praying heart can make.



Elders

Class of 2025

Joan Miranda	210-1731	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Lori Pickrell	503-9585	Treasurer

Class of 2026

Dwight Daub	618-7497	President of Corporation/ Nominating
Kent Larason	808-3971	Nurture
Wendy Smith	850-6564	Fellowship

Class of 2027

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

Deacons

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

Class of 2027

Kathy Boaz	850-3053	Clerk
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October 19 is the deadline to submit articles for the **November/December 2025 Witness**.

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1	Ava Young
2	Chris Robison
6	Patsy Kuhn
7	Will Robison
8	Sandy Gifford
8	Anne Osborn
11	Timothy Bradford
16	Robin Page
19	Richard Urdahl
24	Joe Young
28	Miranda Almen



6	Kathy & Dale Boaz
13	John & Patricia Robison
19	Richard & Donna Urdahl
30	Mark & Molly McBride



1	Patty H. Robison
8	Hope Hudson
8	Devin Page
21	June Ranney
22	Molly McBride
22	Shelley Dutcher
23	Lucy McBride
23	Audrey Daub
26	Holly Welte
29	Anna May
30	Linda Merriweather



5 Curt & Susan Almen
7 Frank & Joan Miranda
10 Gary & Kate Catron

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

