



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 31, Issue 2
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

February 2020
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Of Sanctification” is Chapter XIII of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Webster defines sanctification as “**1:** an act of sanctifying, **2a:** the state of being sanctified or **2b:** the state of growing in divine grace as a result of Christian commitment after baptism or conversion.” Definition 2b is really the best definition for us and is Westminster’s understanding of sanctification: a process of growth over time, not something that happens immediately at a specific time.

So those who are called, regenerated as new creatures in Christ and having a new heart and a new spirit created in them are further sanctified (made more good, more like Christ). This happens through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in us. As a result we are no longer slaves to sin; hopefully, sin in our life is more and more weakened and put to death and we become more and more like Christ. Romans 6:5-6 says, “For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin may be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.” In His high priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus prays, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17).

The Westminster Confession understands that “this sanctification is throughout, in the whole person; yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence arises a continual and irreconcilable war...” Most of

us wish that this were not so. At times we grow weary with our struggle against temptation. And often when we feel as if we have gained mastery over a particular struggle or sin in our lives, the Holy Spirit points out the next area of our life that needs work. The Confession makes it clear that we will never be perfect in this life, but this gives us something to hope for in the life to come. Romans 7:18, 23, 24 says, “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out....but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Paul then goes on to say, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord...For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 7:25, 8:2)

The hope is that in this war, that though the remaining corruption within may prevail for a time, eventually as we are supplied with the strength of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ the new creature in us will overcome and we will continue to grow in grace and holiness. Over time, as we continue to grow in grace, there are a couple of promises in Scripture that should be more and more realized in our lives. “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” (Romans 6:14) “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory

that has overcome the world – our faith.” (1 John 5:4)

Question and Answer 35 of the shorter catechism is a good summation of Chapter XIII of the Westminster confession. “What is sanctification?” “Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.” Among Christians there is some disagreement about whether sanctification is wholly the work of God or whether it is something people cooperate with God in. My personal experience has been that my efforts are pretty feeble, and that the victories can be accredited solely to God. Let us pray that in God’s grace He will continue His sanctifying work in our lives for His glory.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

Worship Schedule

Every Sunday

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

11:00AM – Worship

FEBRUARY SERMON TOPICS

During the month of February we will be continuing our study of 1 Corinthians. We will be having a special Ash Wednesday service on February 26 at 7:00PM.

February 2 1 Corinthians 14:1-12
The Greater Gift
February 9 1 Corinthians 14:13-25
Prophecy and Tongues
February 16 1 Corinthians 14:26-40
Orderly Worship
February 23 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
The Resurrection of Christ
February 26 Ash Wednesday
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 *Practicing Righteousness*



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.

January Session Minutes

FINANCIAL REPORT: No unexpected expenses occurred during December. Discussion of the financial report included a more detailed breakdown of revenues and expenditures. There is still great concern regarding the status of the General Fund. Current giving is significantly below normal. **NURTURE:** Committee assigned to develop guidelines for the Way Day dining hall had met and their proposal was discussed by the board. It was also reported that the Way Day curriculum had been ordered.

OUTREACH: Robison and McBride are proceeding with plans for a photographic church directory.

WORSHIP: Ash Wednesday Service, February 26 at 7:00PM.

Next Meeting – February 10, 2020.

SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evenings at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford’s – February 9 & 23 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – February 3, 10, 17 & 24 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – February 18 at 2:30PM.

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

Greeters/Ushers

February Greeters: Nelson & Carla Pickrell

February Ushers:

February 2 – Michael Bassett, Christa & Sumish Charlie, Ashley McCormick

February 9 – Ashley McCormick, Wendy Smith, Pat Robison, Nancy Spradling

February 16 – Becky & Randy Stateler, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

February 23 – Youth

Fellowship Hour Treats

February 2 – Margo Whiting, Laurie Daub

February 9 – Joan & Frank Miranda, Pat Robison

February 16 – Scout Pancake Breakfast

February 23 – Patsy Kuhn, Jean & Kent Larason

Way Day Dates 2019

February 5, 12 & 19

SEQUENCE – FEBRUARY 25 2:00PM

MEET OUR ST. STEPHEN'S FAMILY



Miranda Almen

Miranda was born here and grew up in the family home in Edmond. She currently lives in an apartment in Stillwater, attending OSU.

She graduated high school from Deer Creek, also taking classes at Frances Tuttle. She is pursuing a degree in Industrial Engineering, with a minor in Emergency Management at OSU.

Her parents are Curt and Susan Almen. Her grandmother Patty Almen (now deceased) was one of the charter members of St. Stephen's Church. She has a brother Chase, a sister-in-law Katie, and an Aunt Natalie and Uncle Jeff in Edmond. A rescue Boston terrier named Laverne also lives in the family home.

She is most proud of her volunteer work with Kanakuk Ministry (out of Missouri). She has been a camp counselor, and serves as a "K Life" disciple, part of a college group mentoring school children in Stillwater.

She is also very proud of receiving the "Gold Award," the Girl Scouts' highest honor. As part of her "Gold Award", she started a library of books to distribute to families and children at the Edmond Food Bank. She has continued this project at the Stillwater Food Bank, stocking donated books for families. (Donations of children's books are always needed.)

Miranda is learning to knit wool socks, and has enjoyed quilting. She likes board games, "escape rooms", and musicals. Some of her favorite things: napping, Cookie Monster ice cream, Mission Impossible movies, and OSU basketball. She calls herself the family "black sheep" since everyone else in the family are OU fans. She enjoys traveling and is looking forward to a trip abroad with her OSU*CEAT Scholars group. Last year the group visited DC and the Bible Museum.

Miranda and her brother grew up at St. Stephen's. Hope Bradford is her best friend and Miss Butch, Marcia, and Robin have been important parts of her life.

She is currently attending a Baptist church in Stillwater, but loves coming back to her St. Stephen's church home. After church shopping in Stillwater, she has a greater appreciation for her smaller "intimate" St. Stephen's family.

Miranda has started an organization for OSU women called "Worthy". Their goal is to unite Christian women, help them follow Christ, and strengthen their biblical literacy. As part of the executive team, she is helping plan a yearly conference with financial support and a meeting place provided by the college. "Worthy" is offering ten "break-out classes" for this year's conference participation. Last year 125 young women attended.

(Those of us concerned about the future of the church and Christianity, need only to meet young people like Miranda to be reassured.)

This remarkable, accomplished young Christian woman is, among other things, the result of years of support and guidance from St. Stephen's Church. She is not only a child of God, but a St. Stephen's kid. Let us all hold her in prayer, as she goes forward seeking God's plan for her life.)

"And He has appointed some with grace to be apostles, and some with grace to be prophets, and some with grace to be evangelists, and some with grace to be pastors, and some with grace to be teachers. And their calling is to nurture and prepare all the holy believers to do their own work of ministry, and as they do this they will enlarge and build up the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-12 TPT

By Margo Whiting

*College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology



Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken
It is #400 in our hymnal

Originally titled “Zion, or the City of God,” “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken” was written in 1779. The text was written by John Newton and is most frequently paired with the tune AUSTRIAN HYMN by Franz Joseph Haydn. The hymn was first published in the hymnal *Olney Hymns* in 5 stanzas of 8 lines each (our hymnal only has 4 stanzas of 4 lines each). The opening line of the hymn is a quote from Psalm 87:3, “Glorious things of Thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God.” The theme is of the universal church, and the history of it. It continues to speak of a new city of God, then looks back to the story of the early journey of the Israelites (with references to manna, cloud, and fire). By this, we are reminded of the long history that God has with his people, and the future that are awaiting those who are members of God’s family by grace.

John Newton was born in London in 1725 and lived there until his death in 1807. His infamous life included serving in the British Royal Navy where he was flogged for attempted desertion, being captured by slave traders, and a stint as a slave trade sailor himself. In 1748 he had a near-death drowning experience. This, coupled with the piety of his friend and later wife, Mary Catlett, and a reading of Thomas à Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ*, led to his conversion. He quit the slave trade in 1754 to become an abolitionist. He came to study for seminary under John and Charles Wesley. He was ordained to the Church of England and served in Olney (1764-1780) and London (1780-1807). His legacy includes over 280 hymns, with his most popular being “Amazing Grace.”

Franz Joseph “papa” Haydn was an Austrian composer who lived from 1732-1809. He was one of the most famous musicians of his time, and remains so to this day. Haydn began his musical training as a choirboy at St. Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna. He served as court composer and music director of the Esterhazy family from 1761-1780.

He is credited with the invention of both the symphony form and the string quartet genre. In his retirement, he took two extended trips to London, which resulted in some of his most well-known works, aptly named the “London Symphonies.” His sacred music output includes six masses, various hymn tunes, and a few oratorios. Hymnal editors have also arranged various tunes from his secular melodies.

Of note: There are only two Haydn music festivals in the world. One is in his hometown of Eisensadt, Austria, and the other is here in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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

Seeking New Choir Members

If you are looking for a new way to serve in the church, the St. Stephen’s Choir is recruiting new members. The choir sings an average of 3 Sundays per month. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings from 7:00pm-8:00pm, and Sunday mornings from 10:30am-11:00am. No previous musical knowledge or experience is required. For information, see any current choir member, Valerie, or Kaleb. This is an excellent opportunity for those who are called to serve in our congregation. Come make music and fellowship with us.



Key Verse

If we believe in Jesus, we become God’s children.
(Adapted from John 1:12)

Week 5- Joseph takes his family to safety in Egypt.
(Matthew 2:13-23)

Week 6- Jesus is baptized. (Matthew 3:13-17)

Week 7- Peter and Andrew meet Jesus.
(John 1:35-42)

Week 8- News about Jesus spreads.
(Matthew 4:12-25)

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We extend a huge thank you to all who helped with our annual bake sale. To those who helped set up, label, bake, cook, sell and purchase goods, great job! A special thank you goes to Carla Pickrell, who chaired our event.

Our final total of sales and donations was \$1, 772.

All in all, a success!

Thank you again to all,

Patsy Kuhn



Our congregation along with Troop and Pack 98 will be celebrating Scout Sunday on February 16. As part of Scout Sunday, the Scouts will be serving a pancake breakfast before Sunday School and during fellowship time (9:00-10:45AM).

Chosen People Ministries

Chosen People Ministries is a Christian ministry that is seeking to reach Jewish people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. On Tuesday, March 31, we are going to have one of their mission speakers with us, Emily Emanuel. Emily was born in Los Angeles and grew up in London with her mother. Her father is a secular Jew who still lives in Los Angeles. Her grandparents were Russian and German Holocaust survivors. Currently she is doing evangelistic work in Europe and the Middle East.

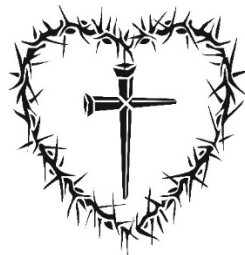
Christa Charlie has agreed to host an evening, with Emily Emanuel, at her home. We thought it would be nice to have Emily share with us in a home rather than at our church building. Mark your calendars for this special event. The time will be 6:00PM.

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.

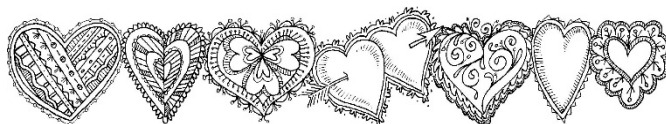
Prescription Drugs Needed

If you have any prescription drugs to donate, please give them to Laurie. **No expired medications will be accepted.**



Lent, the church-year season that begins on Ash Wednesday, is a time of penitence and spiritual renewal. Some people give up a luxury or vice during Lent as a form of self-denial; others undertake a project that benefits others.

The point isn't to denigrate ourselves or to see how much we can do without. Instead, Lent helps us reflect on Jesus' death. As Timothy Keller writes in *The Reason for God*: "The Christian Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and sniveling. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself nor less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less."



Love

The precise number varies depending on the Bible version, but roughly how many times does the word "love" occur in the Old and New Testaments combined?

- A. 200-300
- B. 400-500
- C. 600-700
- D. 800-900

Answer: C

"A smile is the light in your window that tells others that there is a caring, sharing person inside."

Denis Waitley

CHURCH OFFICERS

Elders

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

Class of 2022

Robert Buswell	426-7429	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Wendy Smith	850-6564	Fellowship

Deacons

Class of 2020

Christa Charlie	834-7031	Flowers
Nancy Spradling	206-5828	Ushers/Greeters

Class of 2021

Michael Bassett	942-2074	Church Work Days
Erin Von Tungeln	410-5901	Clerk

Class of 2022

Robin Page	514-8240	Missions
Keith Seidemann	474-5454	Transportation

WITNESS DEADLINE

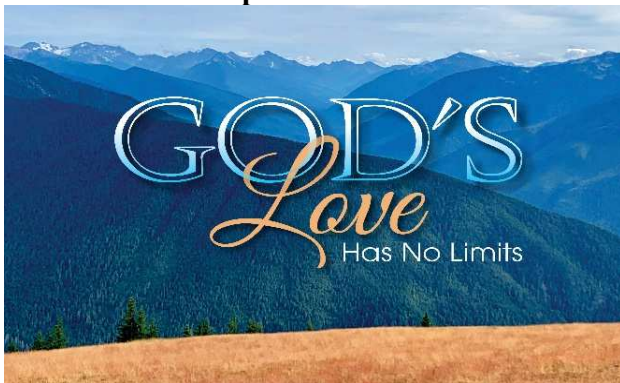
February 17 is the deadline to submit articles for the March 2020 *Witness*. You may bring items to the church office or e-mail them to: secretary@ststephensokc.org. Thanks! Laurie Daub, St. Stephen's Secretary

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FEBRUARY Birthdays

4	Nancy Spradling
5	Hope Bradford
5	Larry Wilson
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
26	Dylan Smith

***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 17

Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 23

Ash Wednesday, February 26

Leap Day, February 29

