



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 31, Issue 1
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

January 2020
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Chapter XII of the Westminster Confession of Faith is entitled "Of Adoption." When I think of the doctrine of adoption my mind right away turns to Romans 8:15-17a, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." In Roman culture an adopted child had all the benefits, privileges and rights of a biological child. An interesting fact is that a number of emperors were actually adopted children. Paul says in the passage just quoted that if we are children (adopted children) then we are heirs.

One of the misconceptions that some people have is that everyone is a child of God. There are a number of scriptures that clearly imply that this is not the case. One is John 1:12 where we read, "But to all who receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." The implication here being that a person is not automatically a child of God, but that through believing is given the right or the power to become children of God. The same thing is implied in the idea of adoption. If we were already children of God why would there be a need for us to be adopted?

A wonderful thing is that once we are adopted we have the full rights and benefits of a natural born child. For me the doctrine of adoption is also a strong argument for the Reformed doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. When someone tells me

they believe that a person can lose their salvation, one of the questions I ask is "will God disown or unadopt someone He has adopted?" I cannot imagine God doing that.

I think chapter XII of the Westminster Confession of Faith might be the shortest chapter of the confession. Being that it is only one paragraph, allow me to quote it in its entirety. As you read it notice all of the benefits we receive as adopted children of God. "All those that are justified, God vouchsafes, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and changed by Him as by a Father: yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation."

In addition to the passage already cited from Romans 8 there are other passages in the New Testament that teach and support the doctrine of adoption including, Ephesians 1:5, "He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will." And Galatians 4:4-5 "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

The Shorter Catechism puts it very simply in question and answer 34: "What is adoption?"

“Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are receive into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.”

As we begin a new year let us remember how God, out of the great love with which He loves us and by His grace, has adopted us as His children. “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. Beloved, we are God’s children now.” (1 John 3:1-2)

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

Worship Schedule

Every Sunday

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

11:00AM – Worship

December 24 – 7:00PM

Christmas Eve Worship



JANUARY SERMON TOPICS

As we begin a new year we will be returning to our study of the book of 1 Corinthians.

January 5 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Spiritual Gifts

January 12 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

One Body with Many Members

January 19 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

The Way of Love

January 26 1 Corinthians 14:1-12

Prophecy and Tongues

SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evenings at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford’s – January 5 & 19 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – January 6, 13, 20 & 27 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – January 21.

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



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.

December Session Minutes

FELLOWSHIP: 82 people attended the Thanksgiving potluck.

NOMINATIONS: Nominating Committee has been confirmed: Wendy Smith (2020), Pat Robison (2021), Dwight Daub (2022).

OUTREACH: Outreach programs have been completed for the year.

WORSHIP: Thanksgiving Day Worship went well. Advent services are currently underway. Christmas Eve service 7:00PM. Next communion January 5.

OLD BUSINESS: Pictorial directory photos schedule will be organized and announced in the near future.

NEW BUSINESS: January 12, 2020—Installation of new officers.

Way Day Dates 2019

January 8, 15 & 22

Greeters/Ushers

January Greeters: Matt & Karen Stillwell

January Ushers:

January 5 – Michael Bassett, Rebecca & Randy Stateler, Nancy Spradling

January 12 – Ashley McCormick, Wendy Smith, Pat Robison, Nancy Spradling

January 19 –Christa & Sumish Charlie, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

January 26 – Youth

Fellowship Hour Treats

January 5 – Miss Butch Derrick, Gentry Hinline

January 12 – Jaquelyn Kuhn, Carla & Nelson Pickrell

January 19 – Karen Stillwell, Karin Seidemann

January 26 – Molly McBride, Lori Pickrell

SEQUENCE – JANUARY 21

“Our hope is not in the new year, but in the One who makes all things new.”

Unknown

* * *

“What a wonderful thought it is that some of the best days of our lives haven’t even happened yet.”

Anne Frank

MEET OUR ST. STEPHEN'S FAMILY



Marcia Ledbetter

Marcia grew up in Bartlesville, OK but was actually born in Parsons, Kansas, her mother's home town. The family moved to Wichita her senior year of high school, she graduated and went on to the University of Wichita. She then transferred to Stillwater, Oklahoma A & E (OSU) graduating with a degree in Radio Speech.

She currently lives a few blocks from St. Stephen's with her pet cat "Kitty Bess".

After graduation she worked as a "continuity writer" (writing commercials) for the local KTVK radio station here in OKC. She went on to work as a "traffic director" (scheduling sales visits) for KWTW when the station first went on air. After marrying in 1955 to Bob Ledbetter and starting a family, she became a stay at home mom. Once her youngest daughter, #4, started school, she took a job as a controller at Heritage Hall, and retired after 22 years of service.

She and Bob were married almost 56 years when he died. Bob was well known here at St. Stephen's as an electrical engineer. He designed an outstanding sound system for the sanctuary.

Her four daughters are: Celia, an architect in Fort Worth; Marciale, a child psychiatrist in Wisilla, Alaska; Valerie, our own organist who also owns an art studio in Paseo; and Lindy who does computer work for Wendy's restaurants, and is the Children's Director at Bridgeway Church.

She has seven grandkids and two great grandkids. They were all together at Christmas. She takes great pride in all her daughters and families.

A special memory is from her college years when she attended a summer session at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She met Eleanor Roosevelt and her Scotty dog. She will always remember speaking with this very famous and charismatic celebrity.

Marcia enjoys: China painting, playing bridge, and reading mystery novels. She loves OSU football and basketball. She enjoys Women's Fellowship and choir. She and our own "Miss Butch" visit "shut-ins" together, which she finds very fulfilling. She loves being with people!

She and Bob were among the founders of St. Stephen's Church – charter members. The church was started by a group that broke away from First Presbyterian Church of Oklahoma City in the late 70's. She has taught Sunday school and has been a choir member since St. Stephen's began. She was an elder three times and a deacon once. She says St. Stephen's is her extended family.

Reporter's editorial notes.

An essential part of St. Stephen's foundation, this charming, energetic lady lives out her faith, as a shining example to us all. Marcia had devoted many years to Monday prayer group. Thanks to Marcia for the multitude of prayers and good works for our St. Stephen's family.

"If you deepen your prayer life you will grow in holiness and obtain many graces for the souls entrusted to your care.

Deepen your love for one another by praying for each other, and by sharing thoughts and graces you have received in prayer or reading."

From the book "Mother Teresa: Her Essential Wisdom".

By Margo Whiting

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another."

Charles Dickens

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.

HYMN *OF* the Month



There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
It is #355 in our hymnal.

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” was originally composed to include eight stanzas and bore the title “Come to Jesus.” It was later composed to include a total of 13 stanzas and began “Souls of men, why will ye scatter/ Like a crowd of frightened sheep?” The first version, composed in 1854 was originally intended to be a part of a set of hymns that added to the Roman Catholic hymnody and brought it into the recent metrical traditions of the time. The overarching theme of the hymn is one of a sovereign God that unlike earthly rulers, demonstrates welcome, kindness, grace, and mercy. We only need to have faith that “rests upon God’s word.” A version of the hymn omitted two verses that spoke of God’s unfathomable mercy in a manner that displayed the composer’s affinity with Charles Wesley and other 18th century evangelical writers. One can see that throughout time, this hymn has changed drastically in versions that ranged from 2 verses to 13 verses. I encourage everyone to spend some time with this hymn and reflect on this encouraging text that speaks of forgiveness, welcome, grace, and love.

Frederick William Faber composed this hymn in 1854. Faber was born in Yorkshire, England in 1814 and lived until his death in 1863 in London. He came from a Calvinist background and was educated at Balliol College in Oxford. He was ordained to the Church of England in 1839. Influenced by the teachings of John Henry Newman, Faber converted to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845 and served under Newman’s supervision at the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Heavily influenced by Rome, Faber and Newman founded a community in Birmingham called “Brothers of the Will of God.” Because he believed that Roman Catholics should sing hymns like those written by John Newton, Charles Wesley, and William Cowpe, in the more metrical style, Faber wrote 150 hymns himself. All of his hymns were composed after his conversion to Catholicism.

One of his best known, "Faith of Our Fathers," originally had these words in its third stanza: "Faith of Our Fathers! Mary's prayers/Shall win our country back to thee." He published his hymns in various volumes and finally collected all of them in a collection called Hymns (1862). Collections of his hymns were published posthumously.

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 to join. 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.



During the month of December, we wrapped up our Fall curriculum with:

Week 12- God speaks to Elijah in a whisper (1 Kings 19:9-18)

Week 13- God takes Elijah to heaven (2 Kings 2:1-15)

Week 14- Jehoshaphat trusts God for victory (2 Chronicles 20:1-30)

The kids spent two weeks doing Christmas crafts and stories!! On our final week of Way Day, the kiddos made 40 Blessing Bags for the homeless and 4 bags for pets!

January will begin our Winter curriculum!

Week 1- Solomon tells of Jesus’ coming (Psalm 72:1-19)

Week 2- An angel appears to Joseph (Isaiah 7:13-14, Matthew 1:18-25)

Week 3- Jesus is born (Luke 2:1-20, Hebrews 1:1-4)

Week 4- Foreign visitors worship Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12)

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
Randy Stateler	620-253-6431	Maintenance

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

January 20 is the deadline to submit articles for the February 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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secretary@ststephensokc.org

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JANUARY Birthdays

5	Jacob Page
7	Sumish Charlie
12	Glenn Pulley
12	Collin Pulley
13	Keith Seidemann
16	Grady Hineline
21	Anne Bradford
24	Judi Dawson
25	Gloria Stanley
25	Chris Howard
26	Pamela Lee
27	Carla Pickrell
27	Elijah Morgan
27	Dana Wilson
31	Zoë Gifford

JANUARY Anniversary

12	Joe & Ava Young
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***If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.*

Special Dates

New Year's Day, *January 1*

Epiphany, *January 6*

Baptism of the Lord, *January 12*

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, *January 18-25*

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, *January 20*

