



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 30, Issue 7
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

July 2019
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The title of Chapter VI of the Westminster Confession of Faith is "Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and the Punishment thereof." The chapter begins with these words, "Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptations of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. This sin, God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory." Most of us are familiar with the sin of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 that resulted in the Fall. There are a few things of note in these first two sentences of Chapter VI. One is that God permitted the fall according to His wise and holy counsel; the other is that God purposed to order it to His own glory. We could spend a lot of time discussing how the Fall could possibly bring glory to God. Here are a few ways. First, God is glorified by the salvation He has provided for those whom He has called. Second, God is glorified as a result of the mercy and grace He has shown to those who have been saved. God is also glorified by those who have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The Confession goes on to discuss the effects of the fall on humankind. Too often we lose sight of the extent of the effects of the Fall upon us. Consider what we lost: righteousness and communion with God. As a result we also became dead in sin and completely defiled. The Reformed faith speaks of total depravity. The apostle Paul in Ephesians 2 says, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked..." The emphasis here is on "dead". As a result of the Fall we are spiritually

dead and totally helpless when it comes to doing anything towards our own salvation. Romans 3:10-18 also stresses the sinfulness of humans. It begins, "There is none righteous, no, not one."

It is from this original corruption of our nature that all of our sins proceed. I am indebted to Martin Lloyd-Jones for recently reminding me that Sin is the disease of which sins are the symptoms. We sin because we are sinners.

The Confession makes another good point when it states that even after we become new creatures in Christ Jesus this corruption of nature remains in us during this life. The good news for those who God has made alive with Christ is that we have been pardoned and we have received the Holy Spirit which is doing a sanctifying work in our lives. John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8) Paul in Romans 7 discusses the struggle the Christian continues to have with sin in this life.

We come now to the last part of the title of Chapter VI, "and the Punishment thereof." Because God is holy, righteous and just, there has to be a penalty for sin and for the transgression of God's law. All have sinned and are therefore guilty before God and subject to His judgment. Scripture tells us that "the wages of sin is death." Paul says that before God made us alive together with Christ we "were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." That is, children who are subject to the wrath of God. But the good news is that we have been saved by grace so that we are no longer children of wrath but children of God.

There are a number of questions and answers in the Shorter Catechism that deal with this whole topic. Let me just mention a few. Q. & A. 14. "What is sin?" "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." Q. & A. 19. "What is the misery of the estate whereinto man fell?" "All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever."

This is a terrible place to leave ourselves. Question #20 asks the question, "Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?" The short answer to that question is a resounding, "No!" Which will lead us into the topic for next month, Westminster Confession, Chapter VII: "Of God's Covenant with Man."

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

Worship Schedule

Every Sunday

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

11:00AM – Worship

JULY SERMON TOPICS

On July 7 and 21 we will be continuing our study of 1 Corinthians. July 14 will be the Children's Musical. On July 28 we will have a guest preacher, Randy Faulkner, who before retiring was the pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church for thirty years. On that Sunday my family and I will be in South Carolina celebrating Anne's step-mother's eightieth birthday.

- July 7 1 Corinthians 3:10-23
The Church Must Be Built With Care
- July 14 Children's Musical
The Born Again Identity
- July 21 1 Corinthians 4:1-13
On Being a Servant and Being Judged
- July 28 Randy Faulkner Preaching



"Sometimes when you're in a dark place you think you've been buried, but you've actually been planted. Bloom!"
Christine Caine

SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evening at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford's – July 14 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – July 1, 8, 15 & 22 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – July 16 at 2:30PM.

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

June Session Minutes

FELLOWSHIP: Father's Day Event was discussed. This event will be similar to the Mother's Day activity.

NURTURE: All nurture is going well at this current time.

OUTREACH: Men's Luncheon to be held at church June 15 at 11:30AM. This will be a catered event. Adults \$12 and children \$5. Additionally, an impromptu outreach event was held immediately after the classical music concert on Saturday, June 1. The orchestra and the attending patrons enjoyed great fellowship.

WORSHIP: Traditional communion July 7. Pastor Mark will be out of town June 9, June 16 and July 28.

NEW BUSINESS: The Personnel Committee met with each staff member for their annual reviews. Each of these meetings went extremely well.

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.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Drama Camp July 8–12, 9AM–12PM

Programs: Saturday, July 13 at 6:00PM

Sunday, July 14 at 11:00AM

Fellowship Hour Treats

July 7 – Carla & Nelson Pickrell, Jaquelyn Kuhn

July 14 – Miss Butch Derrick, Molly McBride

July 21 – Lori Pickrell, Sarah Welte

July 28 – Margo Whiting, Laurie Daub

Greeters/ Ushers

July Greeters: Frank & Joan Miranda

July Ushers:

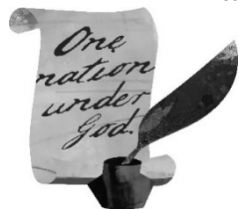
July 7 – Michael Bassett, Rebecca & Randy Stateler, Nancy Spradling

July 14 – Christa & Sumish Charlie, Ashley McCormick, Nancy Spradling

July 21 – Michael Bassett, Wendy Smith, Pat Robison, Nancy Spradling

July 28 – Youth

Prayer for the Fourth.



Loving God, we thank you — the true Father of our country — for the blessings of this land and the gifts of cultures around the world. Prompt us to strive for justice for all, at home and

abroad. Remind us, in the words of the hymn, that “this is our Father's world” and that your goodness prevails. Amid tragedies and conflicts, guard us against despair. Help us focus on the kindness evident daily: from generous neighbors to conscientious public servants (because most are). On Independence Day and every day, “O let [us] ne'er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.” Amen. *Sandy Hyland*

SEQUENCE PLAYERS

Sequence July 23. Any questions, please call Doris Cornell at 605-6172.

NEW MEMBERS

On June 30 we welcome to the St. Stephen's family: *Mary Marshall, Matt & Karen Stillwell and Larry Wilson.*

SELF-FULLFILLING PROPHECIES

“Children have this amazing way of becoming exactly who we tell them they are,” writes Amy Weatherly. “If we tell them they are strong, they become strong. If we tell them they are kind, they become kind.”

Perhaps Jesus knows this when He tells His disciples, “You are the salt of the earth [and] the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13-14). Clearly they haven't already mastered sharing Jesus' goodness with everyone! They are works in progress, as are we. But Jesus, teacher that He is, seems to set the bar high so His followers will strive to meet His expectations.

“You are Peter,” Jesus tells Simon, “and on this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). We can hear Weatherly: “If we tell them they're faithful, they become faithful.” And when Jesus declares, “You are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:31), we believe in our worth and live it out. We become what Jesus tells us we are.

Heidi Mann

ANGELS ALONG LIFE'S TRAIL

Weary long-distance hikers sometimes encounter “trail angels” — people who offer food and drink, bandages, shoelaces and even a place to do laundry. Along the Pacific Crest Trail, one home, dubbed Hiker's Heaven, serves as a mail drop. Trail angels say they find great joy in offering kindness to strangers.

Unexpected kindnesses — and regular rest stops — make any journey less grueling and more enjoyable. That's also true on the journey of life as we experience (and bestow) generosity and pause to spend time with God. After all, “It is God to whom and with whom we travel,” said Elisabeth Elliot. “And while He is the end of our journey, He is also at every stopping place.”

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.

“Truly it seems that we are never so alive as when we concern ourselves with other people.”

Harry Chapin

MEET OUR ST. STEPHEN'S FAMILY

Kaleb Benda



Kaleb was born in OKC, grew up in Norman and is a graduate of Norman High. He attended the University of North Texas in Denton and studied abroad in Hungary. After

graduation with a music education degree, he returned home and in May 2018 received a master's degree in conducting from OKC University.

He currently resides in NW OKC, working as our choir director. He is also music director of the Sooner Sinfonia Orchestra, assistant conductor of the Enid Symphony, and director of the concert band at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in Chickasha. An accomplished musician himself, he continues trumpet performances, rehearsing currently for the Haydn Festival at Casady School.

In spite of being discouraged by High School music teachers, he is especially proud of his successes as a conductor. (Boy, were they wrong!)

Immediate family includes: both parents who work for Norman Public Schools, a younger brother Kelby who is pursuing an EMT career, and a little Dachshund named "Lenny" (after Leonard Bernstein). He and his fiancé, Ashley, are planning to marry in the Fall of 2020.

Kaleb and Ashley are Dallas Stars hockey fans and Kaleb still cheers for the North Texas' football team, as a former member of the marching band.

Favorite leisure activities include: cooking, movie nights with Ashley, and watching reruns of "The Office." He is also learning Tai Chi.

He loves traveling and enjoyed a return trip to Hungary last summer. Kaleb collects coffee mugs from every city he visits.

He came to us after seeing a "Help Wanted" ad posted in Penders Music Store. He says he is impressed with the diversity of our congregation of "unique individuals", all contributing their own special talents to our church.

We are grateful that Kaleb brought his musical talent, knowledge, and leadership to our music program. We are most blessed by the enthusiasm and friendship he brings to our St. Stephen's family.

HYMN OF the Month

Shine, Jesus, Shine, #431 in our hymnal
This is a church member-requested hymn.

Born in 1950, composer Graham Kendrick is a British singer, songwriter, and worship leader from Laindon, Essex. He is the son of M.D. Kendrick, a Baptist pastor, and resides in Tunbridge Wells, England where he is a member of Holy Trinity with Christ Church, and the Ichthus Christian Fellowship, a neocharismatic Christian Church movement and Apostolic network based in London. Kendrick began writing songs in 1960. Most of his songs are popular in Great Britain. In 1983 he founded the March for Jesus movement with Roger Forster, Gerald Coates, and Lynn Green. In 1995, he received a Dove Award for his international work. He worked for "In the Name of Jesus" as a member of the mission team. In 2000 and 2008, he was awarded honorary doctorate of divinity degrees from the London School of Theology and Wycliffe College in Toronto, Canada.

"Shine, Jesus, Shine" was composed in 1987 and is Graham Kendrick's most famous composition to date. It regularly achieves high marks on hymn popularity polls. A former bandmember and songwriter, Stuart Townsend, said about the popularity of "Shine, Jesus, Shine" and Kendrick, "I have no doubt that in 100 years the name of Kendrick will be alongside Watts and Wesley in the list of the UK's greatest hymn writers." The hymn was voted 10th in a UK 2005 survey of favorite hymns by the BBC. However, it has also been described as "the most loathed of the happy-clappy hymns." It was performed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development staff and students from the Mary Immaculate Parish Special School at Villamor Air Base at the departure of Pope Francis from his tour of the Philippines.

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



CHURCH OFFICERS

Elders

Class of 2019

Dwight Daub	618-7497	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Kent Larason	808-3971	Fellowship

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

Deacons

Class of 2019

Jaquelyn Kuhn	424-2123	Transportation
Kym Manning	426-7298	Van

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
Robin Page	514-8240	Missions
Erin Von Tungeln	410-5901	Clerk

WITNESS DEADLINE

July 22 is the deadline to submit articles for the August *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

www.ststephensokc.org

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- 4 Austin Andrews
- 5 Elizabeth Garrett
- 6 Elizabeth Bradford
- 6 Joan Miranda
- 6 Dorothy Powell
- 7 Katie Jones
- 8 Branden Dillard
- 8 Margo Whiting
- 10 Glenda Leinbach
- 11 Nelson Pickrell
- 12 Gentry Hine
- 16 Micah Morgan
- 18 Christa Charlie
- 19 Mary Walker
- 19 Matthew Stillwell
- 21 Hunter Page
- 22 Cher Brooks
- 25 Hudson Von Tungeln
- 25 Dan Dutcher
- 25 Dean Mikkelson
- 25 Laurie Daub
- 29 Pat Tsoodle
- 29 Kym Manning
- 30 Mark Bradford
- 31 Peyton Hine



- 7 Seth & Erin Von Tungeln
- 8 Aaron & Gentry Hine
- 26 Michael & Joy Bassett
- 29 Dan & Shelley Dutcher

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

Special Dates

Independence Day, July 4