



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 30, Issue 3
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

March 2019
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last month we began a look at the Westminster Confession of Faith with a discussion of Chapter I, "Of the Holy Scripture." Chapter II is "Of God, and of the Holy Trinity." This is a broad subject, but the Confession treats it rather briefly. In presenting the topic of God it lists many of God's attributes without giving commentary on any one of them. And in discussing the Trinity the Confession does not try to prove or explain it but rather makes a statement about who the Trinity is.

The Confession states that "There is but one only, living, and true God...a most pure spirit, invisible, without body." These are the basic things we believe about God. Rather than making a list of all the attributes of God mentioned in the Confession, I will highlight a few that have always made a profound impression on me.

God is immutable. God speaking through Malachi in Malachi 3:6 says, "For I the LORD do not change." James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." This is good for us to remember. Even in our day there are those who wrongfully teach that God does change, that God has and continues to evolve. We believe that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

God is incomprehensible. "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable." (Psalm 145:3) Isaiah 55:8 says, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your

ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." Our finite minds cannot comprehend our infinite and eternal God.

God is almighty. Nothing is impossible for God. God is again and again spoken of in scripture as the Almighty. In Revelation the four living creatures who are before the throne of God never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty." (Revelation 4:8)

God is most holy. The four living creatures before the throne of God have already made this clear. The seraphim in Isaiah 6:3 declare to us the same thing: "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" In a world where people only want to hear that God is love we best not forget that God is also holy. If you want to read a good book on the subject, I recommend *The Holiness of God* by R.C. Sproul.

The Confession strings together a list of God's attributes that bring us great comfort and which we all love to hear. God is "most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." But it also reminds us that God is "most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty." Both aspects of God are important for us to know if we are to have a better understanding of God and of His amazing grace.

We should rejoice in the fact that God is just and that He hates sins. How wonderful it is that He has

made a provision for our sins so that they can be forgiven and our guilt covered.

The Confession goes on to remind us that all life, goodness and blessedness come from God alone, that He knows all, and that worship, service and obedience are due Him from angels, humans and every other creature.

“Of the Holy Trinity” the Confession states: “In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.” Attempts to explain the Trinity always fall short. One of the important things for our understanding is that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are a unity that have always co-existed. The Son was not created, as some falsely teach, but has always existed.

God is incomprehensible and yet He desires and has made a way for us to have a relationship with Him. We can draw near to Him and He promises to reward those who seek Him. “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

Worship Schedule

Every Sunday

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

11:00AM – Worship

SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evenings at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford's – March 10 & 24 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – March 4, 11, 18 & 25 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – Bible study will be March 19.

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.

MARCH SERMON TOPICS

During the month on March we will be continuing our look at the *Parables of Jesus*. On Wednesday March 6 we will be having a special Ash Wednesday service at 7:00PM.

March 3 Luke 12:13-21

The Parable of the Rich Fool

March 6 Ash Wednesday Psalm 51
Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God

March 10 Luke 6:46-49

The Parable of the Two Builders

March 17 Luke 16:1-8

The Parable of the Unjust Steward

March 24 Luke 18:9-14

*The Parable of the Pharisee
and the Tax Collector*

March 31 Matthew 20:1-16

*The Parable of the Compassionate
Employer*

February Session Minutes

FELLOWSHIP: Discussion of a future potluck. February 17, 2019.

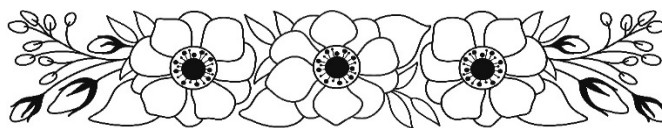
NOMINATIONS: A new person will be added to the nominating committee due to one of the current members' term expiring. Possible names were discussed to fill this position.

OUTREACH: Easter event is in the planning stages. Easter this year is April 21. The event will be similar to last year's very successful event.

WORSHIP: Next Communion – March 3. Ash Wednesday service March 6. Communion will be served every Sunday during Lent.

Way Day Dates 2019

March 6, 13 & 27 April 3, 10 & 17



Fellowship Hour Treats

March 3 – Joan & Frank Miranda, Pat Robison

March 10 – Margo Whiting, Laurie Daub

March 17 – Lori Pickrell, Sarah Welte

March 24 – Miss Butch Derrick, Gentry Hinline

March 31 – Treva & Jim Gullett, Marilyn Hanson

Ushers/Greeters

March Greeters: Dwight, Laurie & Audrey Daub

March Ushers:

March 3 – Randy & Rebecca Stateler, Ashley McCormick, Nancy Spradling

March 10 – Michael Bassett, Pat Robison, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

March 17 – Christa & Sumish Charlie, Pat Robison, Nancy Spradling

March 24 – Michael Bassett, Ashley McCormick, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

March 31 – Youth

ASH WEDNESDAY

WORSHIP SERVICE MARCH 6 - 7:00PM

*Create in me a
clean
heart,
O God,
and put a new &
right
spirit
within
me.*



Psalm 51:10, NRSV



**MARCH 10
SPRING AHEAD**

Sooner Sinfonia Concert

On Saturday, March 23, 2019 at 7:30PM the *Sooner Sinfonia* will present its free, inaugural concert in the sanctuary of St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church (2424 NW 50th, OKC). The concert will feature the music of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Ravel. The *Sooner Sinfonia* is a chamber orchestra based in Oklahoma City. It was founded in 2019 by conductor Kaleb Benda. The ensemble is comprised of professional musicians and college music students in the area. For more information go to KalebBenda.com or contact Kaleb at Kaleb.B.Benda@gmail.com.

SEQUENCE PLAYERS

Sequence March 26. Any questions, please call Doris Cornell at 605-6172.

SOMETHING NEW

I have fond memories of a time when Doris Cornell, our resident journalist, used to write a newsletter piece about our St. Stephen's family. We are fortunate to have another person who is willing to revive this old tradition. Margo Whiting has agreed to call or meet with selected individuals to find out a little bit more about the wonderful people in our church family. So, I hope you will "play along" so we can all get to know each other a little better!

Joan Miranda

A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder

Timothy Bradford will be performing in this musical presentation on March 14, 15, and 16.

Time: 7:00PM (all performances)

Location: Santa Fe High School

Admission: Adults \$11, Students and 55+ \$9.

Prescription Drugs Needed

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

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.

DRIVERS NEEDED

As the Transportation Deacon this year, I would like to begin building a list of those members who would be willing to help someone else get to church functions, or possibly even to doctor's appointments, or grocery shopping.

If you would be willing to be listed in the office, please, email Laurie, or me, put a note in the offering plate, or drop it by the office. Please, put your name, which part of town you live in, which days you would be willing to help, etc.

When someone has a need for a ride, one of us may call to see if you are available on that day. This is part of our congregational ministry.

Thank you to all who feel called to this ministry.

Jaquelyn Kuhn, jaquelyn@hotmail.com

HYMN OF the Month

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
#316 in our hymnal

This month, Lent will begin. During this time of prayer and penance we reflect upon the life of Jesus, and look to Easter Sunday and His resurrection. To me, Lent is a very solemn time. Personally, I tend to pick music on the less virtuosic, showy side. Simple, less ornate music helps me to convey the mood and meaning of this time. This, in turn, makes the more celebratory, grandiose music of Easter seem all the more joyful and exuberant. Therefore, I felt as though *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded* was an appropriate selection as our March Hymn of the Month.

Originally sung on Good Friday, *O Sacred Head* depicts all of Christ's suffering. The text of the hymn dates back to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. The original author of the text is disputed, but it is often credited to Bernard of Clairvaux, a French abbot and saint. In certain medieval orders, monks would spend hours meditating upon the crucifix. They would mentally divide the body of Christ into parts and meditate on each part respectively. Bernard wrote the text as a seven-part prayer to the suffering of Christ's body on the cross. In the 1600s it was translated into German by Paul Gerhardt, and into English from the German by James Waddell Alexander in the nineteenth century. Alexander's translation has undergone many alterations over the years, so it is nearly impossible to find any two modern hymnal versions in agreement about the text as a whole. The three verses shown in the hymnal are the most common, though some hymnals include a fourth verse.

The hymn is set to the tune of the *Passion Chorale*. This tune started as a secular love song known as *Confused Are All My Feelings, A Tender Maid's The Cause.* Like many older popular secular tunes, sacred text was set to the popular tunes to make them easily memorable in a time when printing was still in its infancy. It was later set to a funeral text before finally appearing in a harmonized setting in J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. The tune and text were first set together in 1656.

O Sacred Head has enjoyed great popularity since its composition; the hymn appears in all modern hymnals, in many languages and translations, and with various numbers of stanzas.

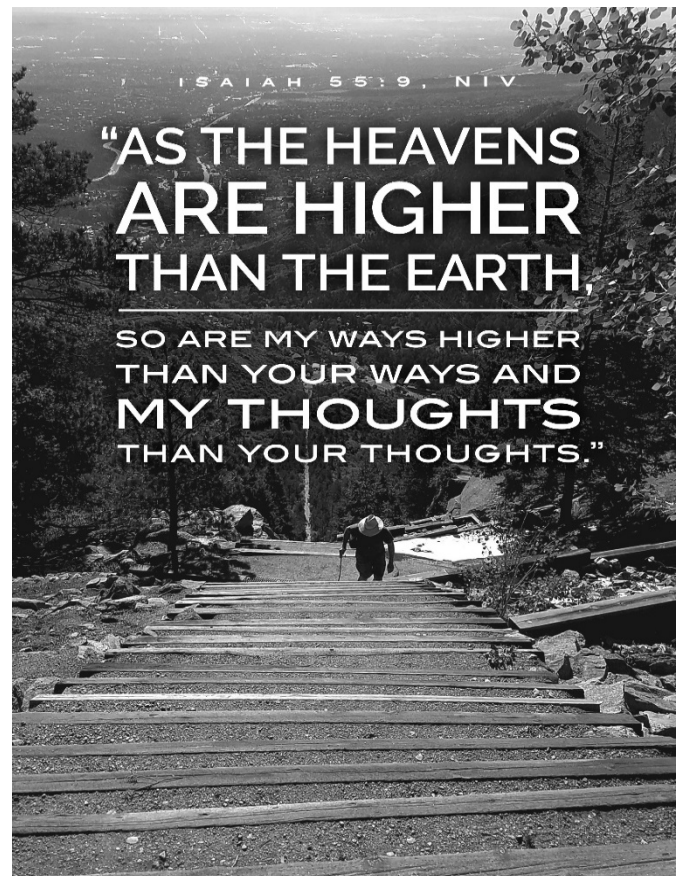
Just as Bernard would meditate on the crucifix, so too does this hymn call us to remember the wounded and broken body of Christ. Deeply devotional, the text makes a very personal application of Christ's atoning death and confesses our gratitude and commitment to Christ as he suffered for us.

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

“Never look down on anybody unless you're helping him up.”
Jesse Jackson

“There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature — the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.”
Rachel Carson

“It's better to bite your tongue than to eat your words.”
Frank Sonnenberg



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

March 25 is the deadline to submit articles for the April *Witness*. You may bring items to the church office or e-mail them to: secretary@ststephensokc.org.

Thanks! Laurie Daub, St. Stephen's Secretary

**St. Stephen's Church 2424 NW 50th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73112 405-843-5333**

secretary@ststephensokc.org

www.ststephensokc.org

facebook.com/StStephensOKC



The Lord
watches over you.

Psalm 121:5, NIV



7	Rebecca Stateler
9	Anne Dow
10	Nancy Thompson
15	Hannah Wells
16	Marilyn Hanson
17	Valerie Pulley
21	Debbie Roberts
23	Harper Hine
25	Jacob Kuhn
30	Liz Porter



25	Jacques & Teresa Lampin
----	-------------------------

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

Special Dates

World Day of Prayer, *March 1*

Transfiguration of Our Lord, *March 3*

Ash Wednesday, *March 6*

First Sunday in Lent, *March 10*

Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 10*

Second Sunday in Lent, *March 17*

First day of spring, *March 20*

Third Sunday in Lent, *March 24*

Fourth Sunday in Lent, *March 31*



Lord, Have Mercy