



# THE WITNESS

## St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

**Volume 32, Issue 3**  
**The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor**

**March 2021**  
**Church Phone (405) 843-5333**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The XXVI Chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith is a short one, only three paragraphs long. The doctrine of the communion of saints is an important enough one that it is included in the Apostles' Creed. Each week we profess, "I believe in the Holy Spirit..., the communion of saints...."

When we hear the word "communion" we often think of the Lord's Supper. In fact we often use this word in that sense such as when we say, "This is Communion Sunday." However, the word has a much broader meaning. It is defined as, "the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings especially when the exchange is on a mental or spiritual level." The word "fellowship" is closely akin to this definition of communion. John begins his letter of 1 John talking about the fellowship we have with God and with one another. "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

The Confession begins by talking about the fact that we are united to Jesus Christ as our head and united to one another in love. It goes on to say, "Saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tending to their mutual edification; as also in receiving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities." When I read those words, Hebrews 10:24-25 readily comes to

mind: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." In these two verses we are told three things we are to do: "stir up one another to love and good works," "encourage one another," and "meet together."

I left out six small words when quoting these two verses. After saying, "not neglecting to meet together," Paul adds, "as is the habit of some." Because of no fault of our own, many of us have had to neglect meeting together as a result of health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lord willing, as we begin to get a handle on this pandemic, let us not forget the importance of meeting together so that we can do the other two things we are told to do.

It was of interest to me that the last paragraph of this chapter tells two things that being united to Christ and to one another does not do. First, it tells us that it does not make us partakers of the substance of Christ's Godhead or equal with Christ in any respect. I guess the writers of the Westminster Confession wanted to remind us that we are not God. God speaking through Isaiah says, "I am the LORD (Yahweh); that is My name; My glory I give to no other" (Isaiah 42:8).

According to the Confession, the second thing that being united with one another does not do is "take away, or infringe the title or propriety which each man has in his goods and possessions." For some reason, the Confession felt it was important to affirm the right to private property and wealth. In

the account of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 Peter, speaking about their property said, “While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, did it not remain at your disposal?” (Acts 5:4a) The issue had nothing to do with the fact that the money Ananias and Sapphira had from the sale of their property was at their disposal but the fact that they lied about how much they had given. In what the Westminster Confession says, it is to be understood that we are to use what God has given to us to help and to bless others, but these resources are at our disposal and not at the disposal of other people.

How blessed we are to be able to have fellowship with God because of what Christ has done for us and to have fellowship with one another as the family of God. Let us not neglect either the one or the other.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

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**Worship Schedule**

Sunday

9:45 Adult Sunday School

11:00AM – Worship

11:00AM – Streaming Online Worship

**MARCH SERMON TOPICS**

We will continue our study of the Gospel of Mark during the month of March. We will be skipping ahead to Mark 11 for Palm Sunday and to Mark 16 for Easter.

- March 7 Mark 4:1-20  
*The Parable of the Sower*
- March 14 Mark 4:21-34  
*Parables of the Kingdom*
- March 21 Mark 4:35-41  
*Calming Storms*
- March 28 Mark 11:1-11  
*The Triumphal Entry*

**OUR SERVICE ONLINE**

You will be able to watch the service on Facebook at [facebook.com/StStephensOKC](https://facebook.com/StStephensOKC)



**FEBRUARY SESSION REPORT**

**Canceled due to weather.**

**NEW MEMBERS CLASS**

On Sunday, March 7, from 4:00-6:00PM we will be having a New Members Class for anyone who is interested in joining St. Stephen’s or learning more about us.

**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).

**SMALL GROUPS**

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evenings at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford’s – March 14 & 28 at 5:30PM.

Tuesday Bible Study – March 16 at 2:30PM

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

*Fellowship Hour Treats*

**March 7** – Jean & Kent Larason

**March 14** – Pat Robison

**March 21** – Margo Whiting

**March 28** – Keith & Karin Seidemann



A big “Thank You” to Women’s Fellowship for the elegant and delicious brunch they provided following the memorial for my daughter, Arden. The women outdid themselves with beautifully decorated and excellent food, and lovely flowers. Karin Seidemann had a great crew assisting her: husband Keith, Nancy & Fred Thompson and Butch Derrick. My sincerest thanks to all.

*Doris Cornell*

**Chosen People Ministries**

On Wednesday evening, March 17 Daniel Fox, with *Chosen People Ministries*, will be with us to share about reaching Jewish people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Daniel, his wife, and soon to be child are preparing to move to Israel to continue their ministry there. We will be meeting at 6:30PM here at the church.

**Easter Offering**

We will be collecting our special Easter offering on March 28 and April 4. The offering will be given to the *Infant Crisis Center* and *Manos Juntas Clinic*.



### Meet Our St. Stephen's Family JUDI DAWSON

Judi was born in Barberton, Ohio, an identical twin and one of five daughters of Nazarene missionary parents. Her father and grandfather were Nazarene ministers.

As a child Judi lived in a number of towns in northern OH including Elyria, Bedford, Wadsworth and Leroy, where she graduated from high school. She went on to attend Mt. Vernon University in Mt. Vernon, OH where she met and later married her husband David (also a minister's kid).

The couple first came to Oklahoma to visit Judi's sister, Joyce, at Bethany Nazarene College (now Southern Nazarene University). They loved Bethany and life in Oklahoma, so they relocated here in 1972. They currently still live in Bethany.

Judi has worked as a waitress, and she has been a ceramics instructor and owned her own ceramic shop. She spent a number of years as a "stay-at-home mom" and helped raise grandchildren.

She has devoted most of her career to her work as an apartment manager for Price Edwards Properties. She serves on the board of directors for the Apartment Managers Association of Central Oklahoma. She currently manages "The Seven at Page Woodson" a development near the OU Health Sciences Center. She especially enjoys interacting with a number of international residents, providing support, instruction and guidance for tenants from all over the world. Hearing her tell of her love and respect for others brings to mind Proverbs 31:26: "When she speaks her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness."

Of all her accomplishments throughout her life, Judi is most proud of her kids and grandkids. She and

David have two children: son Nathan and daughter Jenny, both in Edmond. Grandkids include Nikki (21), Savannah (17), Jeremiah (11), and step-grandson Matthew (20). All live in the OKC metro area.

Judi enjoys needle and yarn crafts, reading books on her Kindle and gardening. She and David grow vegetables in their backyard garden. She makes her own pickles and salsa, and preserves her crops by canning, sharing with the family.

She is a big fan of old British mystery movies and classic films.

When Nikki was in high school, David's research led them to St. Stephen's. They were in search of a small Bible-based church with a program for youth. They love the close friendly atmosphere at our church, Sunday school and Bible study as well as Mark's messages from the pulpit. Judi says they are grateful for all the prayers during David's recent health crisis.

Judi's favorite Bible verses are those in Psalm 1: "Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread;" "But their delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law they meditate day and night;" "For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." (NRSV) (Refer to your Bible for the complete text of Psalm 1.)

Judi and David are true "biblical scholars." Many in our St. Stephen's family have been blessed by the biblical knowledge and interpretation they have shared with us.

We are proud to call Judi a valued part of our St. Stephen's family!

*By Margo Whiting*



Flexible, part-time hours, friendly atmosphere, grateful boss, a chance to serve! Sunday worship greeters and ushers needed. ☺ Contact Margo – text or call 405-229-3344.



**MARCH 14 SPRING AHEAD  
CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS**

## HYMN OF the Month



*God Is My Refuge*  
It is #701 in our hymnal.

This modest hymn was composed in 1973 by Judy Horner Montemayor. Not very much is known about this hymn or its composer. What we do know is that it is unique to our hymnal. According to Hymnary, a hymn database, the *Celebration* hymnal is the only known hymnal that contains this hymn. The text carries a simple theme of provision and deliverance. The hymn acts as a reflection on the protection and fortitude which God provides to us. It is in a two-part AB form. The A section is a repeat of the phrase “God is my refuge and God is my strength, a very present help in trouble.” This is the reflection we have. The B section is the phrase “Therefore I will not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” This consequent of the reflection is a proclamation of the courage and solace given to us through our strength and refuge in God.

God is my refuge and God is my  
strength;  
A very present help in trouble.  
God is my refuge and God is my  
strength;  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore I will not fear;  
Though the earth be removed,  
And though the mountains  
Be carried into the midst of the sea.

For Hymn of the Month requests, contact Kaleb at [kalebbenda@gmail.com](mailto:kalebbenda@gmail.com) or (405)-410-9331.

## IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers



Charter member **Anne Dow** passed away on Saturday, February 13. Let us keep all her extended family in our prayers.

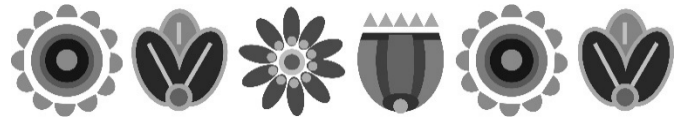
## COMMUNION/DIRECTORIES

As we journey through the Lenten season we are celebrating communion each Sunday during March.

\*For those of you in-house, remember to take a communion cup from the trays located by the main sanctuary doors.

\*For those of you still joining in by watching the online services, you can stop by the church (Monday-Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm) and I will bring the cups out to your car. Please call ahead if possible so I can have them ready for you.

\*Also, for those of you who haven't picked up a new directory yet, there are still some available and I can bring one of those out to your car.




## BETA FLOWER SALE

The flower sale is Friday, April 16 from 8AM-5PM. Most of the flowers sold this year will be hanging baskets as well as a few 6" pots. Most sales are made by pre-orders but we always order a few extra plants to sell on the date above. The profits from the sale go to provide scholarships to local students and to support our Literacy programs. Order forms are available in the church office.

Thank you for your support, *Marilyn Hanson*

## PRAYER

  
Norwegian theologian Ole Hallesby described prayer as simply letting God into our lives. God “knocks,” he said, “not only in the solemn hours of secret prayer” but “in the midst of your daily work, your daily struggles, your daily grind ... when you need him most.”

Prayer, added Hallesby, is as essential to life as air. “As impossible as it is for us to take a breath in the morning large enough to last us until noon, so impossible is it to pray in the morning in such a way as to last us until noon,” he said. “Let your prayers ascend to [God] constantly, audibly or silently, as circumstances throughout the day permit.”

## CHURCH OFFICERS

### Elders

#### Class of 2021

Lori Pickrell 503-9585 Treasurer  
John Robison 627-3565 Outreach

#### Class of 2022

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

#### Class of 2023

Dwight Daub 618-7497 President of  
Corporation/  
Nominating  
Kent Larason 808-3971 Nurture  
Matt Stillwell 520-7276 Worship

### Deacons

#### 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

#### Class of 2023

Linda Prince 215-1991 Flowers  
Margo Whiting 229-3344 Ushers/Greeters

### WITNESS DEADLINE

**March 22** is the deadline to submit articles for the April 2021 *Witness*. You may bring items to the church office or e-mail them to: [secretary@ststephensokc.org](mailto:secretary@ststephensokc.org). Thanks! Laurie Daub, St. Stephen's Secretary

**St. Stephen's Church 2424 NW 50<sup>th</sup> Street  
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[secretary@ststephensokc.org](mailto:secretary@ststephensokc.org)

[www.ststephensokc.org](http://www.ststephensokc.org)

[facebook.com/StStephensOKC](https://facebook.com/StStephensOKC)



## MARCH



7 Rebecca Stateler  
10 Nancy Thompson  
16 Marilyn Hanson  
17 Valerie Pulley  
21 Debbie Roberts  
23 Harper Hiline  
25 Jacob Kuhn

## MARCH



25 Jacques & Teresa Lampin

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



### Special Dates

World Day of Prayer, *March 5*  
Daylight Saving Time begins, *March 14*  
First day of Spring, *March 20*  
Holy Week, *March 28 – April 4*  
Palm/Passion Sunday, *March 28*



“Always show kindness and love to others. Your words might be filling the empty places in someone's heart.”  
*Mandy Hale*