



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 30, Issue 5
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

May 2019
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Westminster Divines, as they have been called, were together a long time and had plenty of time to consider in what order to present their material. Chapter 4 of the Westminster Confession is titled "Of Creation." For some people it might be a bit of a surprise that the chapter on creation comes after the chapter on God's eternal decree. This is because we often think of creation as the beginning of time, but it was not the beginning for God who has always existed. So chronologically God ordained what was to come to pass before God created the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them.

Chapter 4 begins with these words, "It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good." In the Apostles' Creed we confess, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." As a result of this we often think of the Father as the creator; however, scripture presents the Son and the Holy Spirit as being involved in creation as well. In Genesis 1:2 we read, "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." In speaking of Christ, the Son, in Colossians 1 Paul says, "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...all things were created through him and for him." (Colossians 1:16)

When the Confession states that God created the world in the space of six days, the question is raised as to whether each of the six days was a literal twenty-four hour period or not. God certainly could have done so, but I am what is called an old-earth creationist, which is a person who believes that God is the creator but that the earth is millions of year old, not 6,000 years old. I believe that Genesis 1 follows the form of Hebrew poetry marked by what is known as parallelism. Notice the parallelism between days 1-3 and days 4-6 with day 1 being parallel to day 4, day 2 to day 5, and day 3 to day 6:

Day 1: the creation of light and darkness; Day 4: the creation of the sun and the moon.

Day 2: the separation of the waters above the expanse (sky) from the waters under the expanse (sea); Day 5: the creation of birds and sea creatures (things that fly in the sky, and live in the seas).

Day 3: the separation of water and land and the creation of vegetation; Day 6: the creation of the animals that live on the land and man.

Believing that it is God who created the heavens and the earth is important for many reasons including the very purpose of our existence. What we believe about how God created and how long it took is of less importance.

The Westminster Confession goes on to talk about the fact that after God made all other creatures He created man, male and female, with immortal souls, endowed with knowledge and righteousness. They were created in God's own image with the law of God written in their hearts and the power to fulfil it. However, they were left to the liberty of their own

will with the possibility of transgressing the law of God. They were also given one command: not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The fall has affected us in many ways. However, there are scriptures that suggest that in spite of the fall we are still created in the image of God and that God's law is still partially written upon our hearts. In speaking about the tongue, James in James 3:9 says, "With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people *who are made in the likeness of God*....My brothers, these things ought not to be so." In Romans 2:14-15 Paul speaks about Gentiles having the law written on their hearts. "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts."

What we have said can be summed up in questions 9 and 10 of the Shorter Catechism. Question 9: What is the work of creation? The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good. Question 10: How did God create man? God created man, male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

What should our response be? We should give thanks to God for all that He has created for our enjoyment and benefit. We should live our lives not as owners but as stewards of what God has entrusted to us. And though fallen we can rejoice that as believers of Christ we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. The old has passed away, the new has come.

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 evening at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford's – May 19 at 5:30PM.

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

Tuesday Bible Study – May 21 at 2:30PM.

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

MAY SERMON TOPICS

The first Sunday of May we will be finishing our series on the parables. The second Sunday of May we are going to begin a journey through Paul's letter to the church at Corinth known as First Corinthians. I have never preached through the book of First Corinthians largely, I think, as a result of being intimidated by its length. I am looking forward to it. On Thursday, May 30, we will be celebrating Christ's Ascension with a special service.

May 5 Luke 19:11-27

The Parable of the Pounds

May 12 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Greeting and Thanksgiving

May 19 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Divisions in the Church

May 26 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

May 30 Ascension Day Luke 24:44-53

Jesus' Final Words to His Disciples



April Session Minutes

Financial Report: Gary Catron provided a contribution in Mary's name to the General Fund and made a second contribution to the choir/bell choir to sponsor a catered dinner. A gift was made to do some remodeling of the Fellowship Hall.

Nominating Committee: After discussion, three possible nominees were named to fill the vacant 2021 Nominating Committee spot. John Hermes was authorized to make a selection and make contact with the nominees.

Nurture: The nursery is running well. We are looking for summer substitute teachers for Sunday school. Way Day ended strong on April 17 with kids and adults having a great time.

Outreach: Materials were purchased for Easter children's event.

Worship: There will be communion on May 5 (traditional). Pastor Mark will be out of town on Sunday, June 9 (Stanley Balch to preach) and June 16 (Ed Bedrosian to preach). Kaleb continues to work on the on-line access. John Robison is working on monitors for the choir loft.

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.

Fellowship Hour Treats

May 5 – Molly McBride, Gentry Hine

May 12 – **Mother's Day Brunch**

May 19 – Lori Pickrell, Sarah Welte

May 26 – Margo Whiting, Laurie Daub

Ushers/Greeters

May Greeters: Don & Pamela Lee

May Ushers:

May 5 – Ashley McCormick, Rebecca & Randy Stateler, Nancy Spradling

May 12 – Christa & Sumish Charlie, Michael Bassett, Nancy Spradling

May 19 – Ashley McCormick, Wendy Smith, Pat Robison, Nancy Spradling

May 26 – Youth



Sunday, May 12, beginning at 10:15.

SEQUENCE PLAYERS

Sequence May 28. Any questions, please call Doris Cornell at 605-6172.

Fellowship Needs

Fellowship is requesting donations of frozen sausage biscuits and/or mini-quiches.

TO ALL WAY DAY VOLUNTEERS

A HUGE thank you for your time, planning, preparations and love for our St. Stephen's Way Day Program. I am always reminded that the world is just a generation away from losing religion, so what you do makes a huge difference in God's Kingdom. Our children and Christianity depend on many servants. I know it isn't about us and "what we do" but it's about God and "what He is doing". And that is why I love our St Stephens family!

MEET OUR ST. STEPHENS FAMILY

Nancy Hall Chotkey
(aka "Flag Lady")

Nancy was born in Oklahoma City, grew up in the Heritage Hills neighborhood, graduated from N.W. Classen, and earned a Fine Arts degree from OCU. She currently lives in Nichols Hills with her pet cat, Carrie (named for her grandmother), in a house she purchased from her brother over 50 years ago.

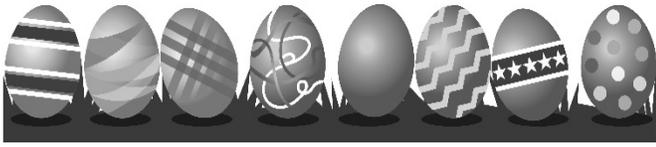
She was married to Raymond Chotkey in 1985 until his death 27 years later at age 92. She has a favorite step granddaughter ("Wassie") who lives in south OKC, and a cousin Barbara in NC. Other relatives include a brother and niece in CA, and a niece in TX.

Although Nancy worked for the Oklahoma Dept. of Public Safety, she is most proud of her job as a full-time caregiver for her mother, late husband, and close neighbor.

Nancy takes great pride in her patriotic ancestors (10 from the Revolutionary War period). Currently she is the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) state chairwoman of Americanism. She considers her work as past state president of the Daughters of the War of 1812 one of her biggest accomplishments. As DAR local flag chair, she distributes the "stars and stripes" throughout the community and presents flags to every new naturalized citizen in OKC. Nancy is also a member of the Dames of the Court of Honor (descendants of Commissioned Officers of early American wars), the Colonial Dames, and the Daughters of the Union Vets of the Civil War.

Nancy is an avid Thunder fan and once met Russell Westbrook at her bank. She loves Quarter Horse shows and transported her horse all over the state to participate in numerous shows during her younger years. She still has her big Stetson hat!

A choir director friend introduced Nancy to St. Stephens Church in the early '80s. A long-time member of the choir, she loves Pastor Mark, choir director Kaleb, and her numerous church friends. Over the years she has visited many larger churches but "none were as welcoming as St. Stephens." She considers all of us family.



EASTER

Thank you to everyone who helped make our Easter Adventure a success again this year. A special shout out to Robin Page for her many hours of “labor of love”.

Thank you to the Fellowship committee for providing such a delicious, special Easter Brunch. Thank you to those who helped spruce up our church to shine for our Easter worship.

HYMN OF the Month

A member request

Jesus, Lover of My Soul, #710 in our hymnal.

Composed in 1740 by Charles Wesley, “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” was originally published under the title “In Temptation” in a collection of hymns titled *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. Wesley wrote the hymn just two years after converting to the Methodist church. In later years, he was opposed to publishing the hymn because he felt the text was too pious and intimate for public worship services. Many other hymnal editors have also shared this sentiment. It was originally composed in five stanzas, but one stanza, starting “Wilt Thou not regard my call” is often omitted by hymnals. Now in a 4-verse setting, performance practice often dictates the omission of the third stanza when being sung. Wesley originally intended for the hymn to be sung in times of temptation.

There are two tunes associated with this hymn, ABERYSTWYTH by Joseph Parry, written in 1876, and MARTYN by Simeon B. Marsh, composed in 1834. The MARTYN tune is used almost exclusively with this hymn, and is the tune featured in our hymnal. Marsh composed this tune on his weekly commute between two schools he served as music director in Amsterdam and Johnston, New York. The tune was originally intended to be the tune of another hymn, “Mary to Her Savior’s Womb.” It was published to that text in 1836. MARTYN did not become associated with “Jesus,

Lover of My Soul” until 1851 when it was paired with the text in a published hymnal called *Temple Melodies*. An original direction in the hymnal instructs the singer to “Sing this tune with even rhythm and firm accompaniment.”

Charles Wesley was a leader of the Methodist movement and is credited with writing approximately 6,500 hymns. He was born on December 18, 1707 in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England to an Anglican Cleric, Samuel Wesley, and his wife Susanna. He is the younger brother of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church. His other brother, Samuel II, like his father, was an Anglican Cleric. Charles studied at Oxford, where his siblings had as well. In 1729 while at school, he and his brother founded “The Holy Club,” a precursor to the Methodist denomination. Upon graduation, Wesley followed the path of his father and brother and joined the Anglican Church. In 1748 he traveled to the United States, and upon his return in 1749 he married Sarah Gwynne, the daughter of a Welsh nobleman who had converted to Methodism. They had eight children, of which only three survived infancy. Wesley died in 1788 at the age of 80. Since he considered himself a member of the Church of England, he had requested to be buried as such, and is buried in the Marylebone Parish church graveyard.

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



Pentecost

Something New, Something Special

Pastor Mark has a new hobby. He has become quite the quilter. He has offered/consented ☺ to quilt two *St. Stephen’s Church Family Pentecost Paraments*.

We would like every family to be represented by donating a piece of “red” material to be a part of the paraments. Any shade of red, plain or patterned, is fine which will beautifully show our church’s diverse individuality. ¼ yard or less of material is fine. Please bring material **before May 12** to the church office. For those who can’t get to a store, there will be a few pieces of material in the church office that you could claim as yours.



Congratulations to our Seniors!
Graduation Sunday May 19

- Joshua Bradford**, Edmond Santa Fe
- Emma Shockley**, Harding Fine Arts
- William Robison**, Edmond Santa Fe
- Seth Wilson**, Home School
- Hope Bradford**, University of Tulsa

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.

ECHOES OF EASTER

The Resurrection wasn't a "one-off"; it was a spark that lit a flame that continues burning even today, especially where people minister in the Risen One's name. One such outreach, Camp Noah, serves children traumatized by disaster. Nationwide, volunteers offer week-long experiences of kindness, love, listening and safety to kids who've recently survived a tornado, flood, hurricane, wildfire or shooting. Kids often open up for the first time to share their "storm stories" and begin a journey of healing.



Leaders at Camp Noah attest to God's power to bring joy out of sorrow, trust out of fear and life out of death. A boy who initially was aloof dances with another camper at the closing worship; kids who arrived with uncertain expressions leave with smiles and regained confidence. Mental health counselors are part of camp teams, and referrals are made to continue care afterward.

Resurrection often happens in steps, not overnight. But wherever "ordinary" daily ministry takes place in Christ's name, extraordinary echoes of the first Easter are evident. *Heidi Mann*



Joy's of Motherhood

- A hug for no reason.
- Belly laughs.
- The light-bulb moment when your child understands something you've been trying to teach them.
- Smiles and giggles.
- Mud pies.
- Arms raised in the air after a big accomplishment.
- Hearing Scripture and prayer from your child's lips.
- Quiet moments on the couch.
- Reading aloud together.
- A family meal filled with conversation and laughter.
- Watching your child be kind to another.
- Recognizing a moment you'd like to freeze in time.
- A child's look of surprise and joy.
- A quiet conversation that heals a wounded heart.
- The words "I love you" — and a sticky kiss.

Unknown

From a church bulletin:

THE CHURCH IS AVAILABLE FOR FUNERAL SERVICE
Please call the office for arraignments.
Details are also available online.

These arrangements sound rather criminal.

From a church newsletter:

AN INVITATION FROM OUR YOUTH
Join us for the Eater breakfast.
Sunday, April 21 at 9:30 a.m.

They must be expecting hearty appetites on Easter!

LOOKING AHEAD
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
Drama Camp July 8–12, 9AM–12PM
Programs: Saturday, July 13 at 6:00PM
Sunday, July 14 at 11:00AM

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

May 20 is the deadline to submit articles for the June *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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Count Your Blessings



- 1 James Page
- 3 Lori Pickrell
- 7 John Hermes
- 7 Cindy Bowden
- 7 Josiah Morgan
- 10 Fred Thompson
- 11 Peter Bradford
- 14 Eli Nichols
- 15 Toni Stateler
- 18 Hannah Wilson
- 18 Karen Ballaré
- 20 Robert Buswell
- 22 Rory Stateler
- 28 Susan Almen
- 28 Dwight Daub



- 15 Paul & Liz Porter
- 26 Steve & Ann Wilson

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

Special Dates

National Day of Prayer, *May 2*

Mother's Day, *May 12*

Armed Forces Day, *May 18*

Victoria Day (Canada), *May 20*

Memorial Day, *May 27*

Ascension, *May 30*

