



# THE WITNESS

## St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

**Volume 30, Issue 11**  
**The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor**

**November 2019**  
**Church Phone (405) 843-5333**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Chapter X of the Westminster Confession of Faith is entitled "Of Effectual Calling." Jesus in Matthew 22:14 says, "For many are called, but few are chosen." The idea is that through the ministry (proclamation) of the Word (scripture), many people are called, but not everyone who is called accepts Christ and comes to salvation. Effectual calling would mean that from among all who are called there are some in whom the calling is effectual, that is, has the desired effect of resulting in salvation.

Chapter X thus begins, "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ." Paul presents a very similar idea in Romans 8:30 where he writes, "And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified." In 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 he says, "But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this He called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Confession goes on to stress that this effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone. It is nothing that we do. It is because of the Holy Spirit working in us that we are enabled to answer this call and to embrace the grace offered

and conveyed in it. Scripture tells us that it is God, "who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our words but because of His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began..." (2 Timothy 1:9) There are a number of scripture passages that talk about the fact that the natural (unspiritual) person cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. In order for us to receive the things of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit has to first be working within us. Those who are dead ("in sins") cannot respond to the calling of God unless through God's grace they are first made alive in Christ.

One other interesting point about this chapter has to do with infants and those who are "incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word." The Confession states that, "elect infants, dying in infancy are regenerated, and saved by Christ, through the Spirit..." The scripture references cited would not be unique for these two groups but would include all who have been born of the Spirit. The question that could be raised would be "what about non-elect infants?" Charles Hodge, one of the great Reformed theologians of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, held that all who died in infancy would be saved. The fact that the destiny of infants is included in the Confession is likely a response to the Roman Catholic doctrine of Limbus Infantum, which is the supposed abode of all unbaptized children. According to Louis Berkhof the Roman Catholic understanding is that unbaptized infants remain in Limbus Infantum "without any hope of deliverance, suffering no positive punishment

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indeed, but excluded from the blessings of heaven.” This is not the Reformed or Protestant understanding of the destiny of those who die in infancy. Most would hold to Hodge’s view.

The shorter catechism summarizes the idea of effectual calling in question and answer 31. “What is effectual calling?” “Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.” One may ask, “How do I know whether I have been effectually called?” I think the answer to that question is fairly easy. Anyone who has embraced Jesus Christ as their savior has been effectually called.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

### Worship Schedule

Every Sunday

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

11:00AM – Worship



Thursday, November 28 at 10:00AM

### NOVEMBER SERMON TOPICS

During the month of November we will be continuing our study of the book of 1 Corinthians. We will be having a special service on November 28, Thanksgiving Day.

November 3 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

*Participation in Idol Feasts Prohibited*

November 10 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

*Do All to the Glory of God*

November 17 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

*Head Coverings*

November 24 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

*The Lord’s Supper*

November 28 Deuteronomy 26:1-11

*Offerings of First Fruits and Tithes*

*It is not happiness that makes us grateful. It’s gratefulness that makes us happy.*

David Steindl-Rast

### October Session Minutes

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Discussion was conducted concerning the shortfall of general giving and revenues for the months of June, July and August. Additionally, the building maintenance fund needs to be replenished due to the unexpected expenses associated with the replacement of several air conditioning units.

**FELLOWSHIP:** Our Thanksgiving Potluck will be held at church on November 17, 2019.

**NOMINATIONS:** The nominating committee (John Hermes, Frank Miranda, Wendy Smith and Pat Robison) continue to search for two elders and two deacons positions for 2020.

**OUTREACH:** Fall Festival to be held October 19, 2019.

**WORSHIP:** Reformation Sunday, October 27, 2019. Next communion November 3, 2019. (Intinction)

**OLD BUSINESS:** Church pictorial directory photos will begin soon. Pastor Mark will announce the dates and times for the photos.

### SMALL GROUPS

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

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

Tuesday Bible Study – November 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.



*November 3-  
turn those  
clocks back  
for an extra  
hour of rest.*



**Way Day Dates 2019**

November 6, 13 & 20

### **Greeters/ Ushers**

**November Greeters:** Nelson & Carla Pickrell

**November Ushers:**

**November 3** – Michael Bassett, Christa & Sumish Charlie, Nancy Spradling

**November 10** – Ashley McCormick, Wendy Smith, Pat Robison, Nancy Spradling

**November 17** – Michael Bassett, Christa Charlie, Ashley McCormick, Pat Robison

**November 24** – Youth

*We would like to thank our new Fellowship partners: the Seidemanns and the Stillwells as well as the others who have graciously provided snacks.*

### *Fellowship Hour Treats*

**November 3** – Miss Butch Derrick, Gentry Hiline

**November 10** – Carla & Nelson Pickrell, Jaquelyn Kuhn

**November 17** – Thanksgiving Potluck

**November 24** – Lori Pickrell, Molly McBride



**Turkey**  
Potluck

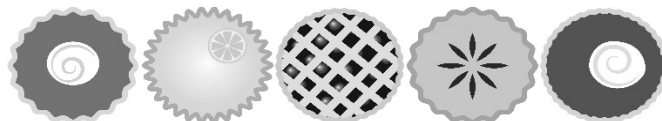
**Thanksgiving Dinner** will be a potluck on Sunday, November 17 following worship. The Fellowship Committee will supply turkey, dressing (there will be enough this year), gravy and rolls. The rest is up to you.



### **Thanksgiving Giving!**

Our special Thanksgiving Offering will be collected on Sundays November 24 and December 1. This offering will be given to The *CARE Center* and *Wings*. The *CARE Center* is an advocacy agency for child abuse victims. *Wings* provides programs for adults with special needs.

### **SEQUENCE – NOVEMBER 26**



### **THANKSGIVING BAKE SALE**

Women's Fellowship is sponsoring a Bake Sale in our church fellowship hall on Sunday morning, November 24, before Sunday school and during fellowship time. We can help each other get ready for the holidays, stock our freezers with delicious goodies and raise some project funds. The congregation is encouraged to bring donations of your favorite foods and **have a great time enjoying each other's specialties!**

Participation by all is welcomed. We will be receiving and pricing on Saturday, November 23 from 9:00AM until noon.

Contact: Carla Pickrell (525-2901, carlasmithpickrell@gmail.com) or Patsy Kuhn (820-2016).



### **November Key Verse**

“Do not worry” (Matthew 6:31a)

### **Bible Story/Scripture**

Week 8 - The Kingdom Divides (1 Kings 11:28-12:24)

Week 9 - Elijah Helps a Widow ( 1 Kings 17:7-24)

Week 10 - Elijah Challenges the Prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:16-40)

Week of November 24th- Review

*Robin Page*

### **Something NEW**

This year instead of the Children's Christmas Drama, Miss Anne and Miss Valerie are going to be doing something new. They will be presenting a Christmas program with songs by the children. Practices will be announced once dates are finalized. Date of performance will be announced later also.

## MEET OUR ST. STEPHEN'S FAMILY



*Linda Faye Merriweather*

Linda was born in Little Rock, and grew up in Arkansas. Her father died before she was born. The mother who raised her was a family friend, who adopted her when she was only two, her biological mother being unable to care for her.

Like her mother, Linda's calling was teaching. She studied at Arkansas Baptist University, and Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, and she completed both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Elementary Education from Langston University.

She taught students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grades in schools in Topeka, Little Rock and Pine Bluff, Arkansas and here in Oklahoma City.

Linda is most proud of her successful career in education, in spite of her complicated beginnings. Throughout her career she has impacted the lives of many children in a positive way.

She is currently pursuing an opportunity to possibly serve on the Oklahoma City school board, and is preparing for the April election. She would be a valuable asset to Oklahoma schools!

Linda has also worked as a videographer for a local production company, and once played a "church lady" in a film.

She is passionate about the art of photography, taking pictures of nature, especially trees, bare of

their leaves. She has been told her works resemble Georgia O'Keeffe. She also loves fashion and had dreams of becoming a costume designer or a fashion buyer.

A few of her favorite things: Pittsburgh Steelers football, watching situational comedies, mysteries, and British T. V., as well as reading. She was founder and leader of a book club from 2001-2006.

Her family includes her brother, Alvin, in Little Rock; great-niece, Patrice, in Edmond; son, Darryl, in California; son, Donnell, in Texas; and one grown grandson, Diante. She considers our Fred and Nancy Thompson her family. They enjoy traveling and celebrating events together.

She came to St. Stephen's about seven years ago after meeting Fred and Nancy. She and Fred were both taking photos at a piano recital at St. Augustine's Church.

She loves her St. Stephen's family, and Pastor Mark, who she says has taught her so much about the Bible and Biblical history. She especially appreciates all the support and prayers from her fellow parishioners.

Linda is a "ray of sunshine" to our church family. Her smile is contagious and she exemplifies Christian love and fellowship.

"The fruit of love is service  
The fruit of service is peace  
And peace begins with a smile."

*Mother Teresa*

*By Margo Whiting*



### SSPC CHRISTMAS CHOIR

We are seeking additional members to join the SSPC Choir through the Christmas season. Joining only for Christmas does not commit you to joining choir for the rest of the year. No previous musical experience or knowledge is required. Join us on Wednesdays after Way Day at 7:00PM for fellowship and music making. For more information, contact Kaleb Benda (405)-410-9331 or Kaleb.B.Benda@gmail.com

*God is in control, and therefore in everything I can give thanks — not because of the situation but because of the One who directs and rules over it.*

*Kay Arthur*

## HYMN OF the Month



*O Word of God Incarnate*  
It is #414 in our hymnal

The prominent theme throughout “O Word of God Incarnate” is one of Light. God and His word is our light, and in turn, as the church we should be a light to all nations and people. When the hymn was originally published for the first time, it bore a subtitle of the quotation “For the commandment is the lamp: and the law is the light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.” Some hymnals, including our own, share the belief that the hymn is based on Psalm 119 which shares a similar theme of light; “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” The text was first published in 1867 in an addition to the 1854 *Psalms and Hymns*. The author of the text is William W. How. The tune, MUNICH, originates from 1593 in Dresden, Germany, and is likely named after the German town of the same name (though spelled München in German). Romantic era composer Felix Mendelssohn adapted the tune for use in his No. 15 Quartet “Cast Thy Burden Upon the Lord” in his sacred oratorio *Elijah*. This adaptation is the most common tune used for the hymn. In 2015 the Gospel Coalition ranked “O Word of God Incarnate” as “One of the hymns we should sing more often.”

William W. How was born in 1823 in Shropshire, England and died in 1897 in Ireland. He studied at Wadham College, Durham University, and most notably, Oxford University. He was ordained into the Church of England in 1847. From 1847 to 1879 he served various congregations before becoming Suffragan Bishop in east London, and later in 1888 Bishop of Wakefield. How’s nicknames included both “the poor man’s bishop” and “the children’s bishop” due to his work in the slums of London and with the factory workers in west Yorkshire. He wrote a number of books about the Oxford Movement, and attempted to reconcile biblical creationism with the theory of evolution. How was the joint editor of both *Psalms and Hymns* and *Church Hymns*. He is credited with writing at least 60 hymns, including many for children.

German composer Felix Mendelssohn lived from 1809-1847. He was the son of a banker and the grandson of famed philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. His Jewish family converted to Christianity in the Lutheran denomination. Mendelssohn gave his first public performance at the age of 9, and by 16 had already composed symphonies. Mendelssohn is credited with the Bach revival, bringing the music of long-forgotten Bach back into popularity. At the age of 20 he conducted a performance of Bach’s *St. Matthew’s Passion* to great acclaim. In 1843 he founded the Leipzig Conservatory of Music. He traveled widely, notably to Scotland and Italy. His oeuvre includes organ works, symphonies, overtures, and sacred works of oratorios and hymn harmonizations (and his fifth symphony titled “Reformation” which the hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” is used as the melody for the last movement).

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



### MAJOR MAINTENANCE FUND

St. Stephen’s is very blessed that our church building was fully paid for over 15 years ago. However, our building is aging and with that comes occasional and unexpected major maintenance issues.

For those of you who are not aware, we have had to replace 4 A/C units over the past few months at a total cost of \$27,000. We do have designated funds budgeted every year for routine maintenance; however, this is for basic issues such as plumbing emergencies and lawn maintenance and is not intended to cover such major expenses.

The Session has determined that we need to develop a fund for major maintenance issues. Our goal is to raise \$50,000. We are asking that those members who can make additional gifts consider supporting this effort.

Respectfully,  
Lori Pickrell  
Treasurer

**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**

**November 18** is the deadline to submit articles for the December *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

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9	Mary Marshall
11	Pat Robison
11	Wanda Meeks
11	Mark McBride
18	Michael Bassett
18	Lana Stephens
23	Randy Stateler
25	Chris Willis
26	David Dawson



13	Robin & James Page
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*\*\*If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.*



**Special Dates**

All Saints' Day, *November 1*  
Daylight Saving Time ends, *November 3*  
Veterans Day, *November 11*  
Christ the King Sunday, *November 24*  
Thanksgiving Day, *November 28*

