



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 36, Issue 11 & 12
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

November-December 2025
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Neutrality.” I have been reading a book by Gordon H. Clark entitled *A Christian Philosophy of Education*. In this book there is a chapter entitled “Neutrality,” in which Clark discusses whether neutrality is possible in education. In it he sees two types of education, theistic education, and non-theistic education. Though he is a big proponent of theistic, Christian education, he does not discount the need for non-theistic or secular education. Though he does argue that neutrality is not possible in education. What this chapter got me thinking about is the whole idea of neutrality.

All of us tend to have biases and preferences on a wide range of topics. We tend to lean one way or the other on many things. In my life, I have sought not to become overly dogmatic on many things, though there are a number of things that I hold a strong opinion on. There are a few things in life that we might truly be neutral about. For instance, I am a little bit of a sports fan. In many sporting events I do care about who wins. On the other hand, there are a lot of games played where I am neutral, I could care less about who wins. Many other examples could be given from life where we might be able to say, “I truly do not have a preference.”

There is one critical area though where neutrality is not possible. In Matthew 16 Jesus asks His disciples the question, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” He then asks His disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter gives the classic answer, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” In Luke 11:23 Jesus says, “Whoever is not

with me is against me.” When it comes to Jesus neutrality is not possible. There are people who want to be or think they are neutral when it comes to Jesus. There are those who will say that Jesus was a good man, a good teacher, a prophet. Some will go as far as to say that Jesus was the second greatest prophet who ever lived as is true in the Muslim faith. But this will not do! If we are not with Jesus, we are against Him. Our confession must be that of Peter, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

It is a matter of either/or. It cannot be both. John in 1 John makes it clear that a person is either walking in the light or walking in darkness. In Ephesians 2 Paul makes it plain that we are either dead in our sins or we are alive in Christ. Jesus tells the people in John 8:24, “unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.” Neutrality is not possible when it comes to Jesus.

By God’s grace, God makes us alive in Christ. Through the Holy Spirit we can say, “Jesus is Lord.” And it is the Holy Spirit that bears witness with our spirits that we are now children of God. This is where it begins. But our walk with Jesus must progress beyond our confession. After Peter’s confession Jesus tells His disciples “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). As we mature in the faith our lives must be marked less by “my will,” and more by “Thy will.”

This is a lifelong process. We are still aware that too much of our lives are about “me,” and not enough of our lives are about “Him.” Back to the

main point. There can be no neutrality when it comes to Jesus.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Mark

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER SERMON TOPICS

The first three Sundays in November we will be continuing our journey through the gospel of John. Beginning on November 23, Christ the King Sunday, and continuing through December 28, the First Sunday after Christmas, I will be preaching from what is known as the Common Lectionary. There will be two special services in November and December, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Eve.

November 2	John 10:11-21 <i>I Am the Good Shepherd</i>
November 9	John 10:22-30 <i>I and the Father are One</i>
November 16	John 10:31-42 <i>I Am in the Father</i>
November 23	Colossians 1:11-20 <i>The Preeminence of Christ</i>
November 27	Thanksgiving Day Deuteronomy 26:1-11 <i>Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes</i>
November 30	Matthew 24:36-44 <i>No One Knows That Day and Hour</i>
December 7	Matthew 3:1-12 <i>Prepare the Way of the Lord</i>
December 14	Matthew 11:2-11 <i>The One Who is to Come</i>
December 21	Matthew 1:18-25 <i>The Birth of Jesus</i>
December 24	Christmas Eve Luke 2:8-20 <i>The Shepherds and the Angels</i>
December 28	Hebrews 2:10-18 <i>The Founder of Salvation</i>

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:45 Adult & Children Sunday School
11:00AM – Worship
11:00AM – Streaming Online Worship
facebook.com/StStephensOKC

Thanksgiving Worship November 27 10:00AM
Christmas Eve Service December 25 6:00PM

SMALL GROUPS

Thursday Bible Study – November 13 and December 11 at 2:30PM

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

OCTOBER SESSION REPORT

FELLOWSHIP: The surprise dinner for the 25th anniversary of Pastor Mark and Anne Bradford pastoring our church was a huge success. Delicious food was prepared by the Fellowship Committee. Wendy suggested a soup dinner sometime in December.

NURTURE: Sunday school is going well. Cards continue to be sent out.

OUTREACH: Glenn Beaty has been researching information regarding how to reach the unsaved. He presented a handout with information, a tract, and how to access a video entitled "Hell's Best Kept Secret" He encouraged each of us to watch it and share with others.

WORSHIP: The Worship Committee has met, and things are going well.

OLD BUSINESS:

Awning - Kent Larason reported that he has found a company that will repair all areas for about half of any other bid he has received. Motion was made to have Kent move forward with this company.
Landscaping - Jean and Kent will defer this until spring.

Fencing - Given some unsightly areas of the wood fence facing 50th Street, it was suggested it should be repaired. No time frame was given as to when this could be done. We will not be replacing the entire fencing surrounding the playground area.

Kitchen oven The large oven in the kitchen is not working properly. Several areas need to be cleaned and repaired. Hagger Restaurant and Supply Company estimated \$738 for parts and labor to restore the oven.

Motion was made to hire them to do this work.
Stained Glass - Kent has been working on moving things from the gym to the classroom in the church. We need to hire someone to do the rest of the moving.

PEACE ~~LOVE~~ HOPE ~~LOVE~~ JESUS PEACE ~~LOVE~~ HOPE ~~LOVE~~ JESUS

November Greeter Adam Mendenhall

October Greeter Larry Wilson

****No Meet Our St. Stephen's Family**

Time Changes Sunday, November 2

Fall back ☺

Special Offerings

Our special **Thanksgiving Offering** will be collected on November 23rd and 30th and will be given to *Reaching Our City and Wings*.

Our special **Christmas Offering** will be collected on December 21st and 28th and will be given to the *Homeless Alliance* and *Jesus House*.

Women's Fellowship

Thursday, November 13 1:00PM

Thursday, December 11 *Potluck 12:30PM

If you have missed prayers or would like to be added to the Women's Fellowship prayer chain, please call Treva Gullett (405-735-9908) or Patsy Kuhn (405-820-2016).

Special Dates for November

All Saints' Day, *November 1*

Daylight saving time ends, *November 2*

Veterans Day, *November 11*

Christ the King Sunday, *November 23*

Thanksgiving Day, *November 27*

First Sunday of Advent, *November 30*

Special Dates for December

Second Sunday of Advent, *December 7*

Third Sunday of Advent, *December 14*

First Day of Winter, *December 21*

Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 21*

Christmas Eve, *December 24*

Christmas Day, *December 25*

New Year's Eve, *December 31*



December Potluck

Join our fellowship committee for a "Soup-er" potluck on December 14 following worship. Soup will be provided. Please feel free to bring a **side** or **dessert**.

November Fellowship Treats

November 2 – Dorla Beaty

November 9 – Keith & Karin Seidemann

November 16 – Laurie Daub

November 23 – Marta Clay

November 30 – Lori Pickrell

December Fellowship Treats

December 7 – Kent & Jean Larason

December 14 – Potluck

December 21 – Miss Butch Derrick

December 28 – Jaquelyn Kuhn



Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, November 29 at 4:00PM



**We will be selling poinsettias in December;
we will pass on information as we get it.**



CHRISTMAS

What was the reason for Jesus' birth
To show God's love for all the earth
From heaven above he came down
To spread Love and Joy all around

We celebrate by giving gifts of Love
God's greatest gift to us come from above
Let's not forget to ever remember
Why we celebrate the 25th of December

Singing carols within our hearts and mind
Let's not forget to always be Kind
To spread love around to one another
Like Jesus loves us our friend and brother

Let's keep it up in the New Year
Because Jesus is always ever so near
Don't ever let yourself go astray
For Jesus is with us every day

*Blessings & Love,
Anna May*



Elders

Class of 2025

Joan Miranda	210-1731	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Lori Pickrell	503-9585	Treasurer

Class of 2026

Dwight Daub	618-7497	President of Corporation/ Nominating
Kent Larason	808-3971	Nurture
Wendy Smith	850-6564	Fellowship

Class of 2027

Glenn Beaty	795-3393	Outreach
Keith Seidemann	474-5454	Worship

Deacons

Class of 2025

Michael Bassett	200-7995	Maintenance
Shirley Hampton	831-4852	Missions

Class of 2026

Dennis Bryley	664-3640	Flowers
Ruby Ochoa	301-9047	Ushers/Greeters
John Robison	627-3565	Work Day

Class of 2027

Kathy Boaz	850-3053	Clerk
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December 15 is the deadline to submit articles for the **January/February 2026 Witness**.

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HOPE
PEACE
LOVE
JOY



1	Ruby Ochoa
9	Mary Marshall
11	Pat Robison
11	Mark McBride
17	Kathy Flanigan
18	Michael Bassett
23	Randy Stateler
26	David Dawson

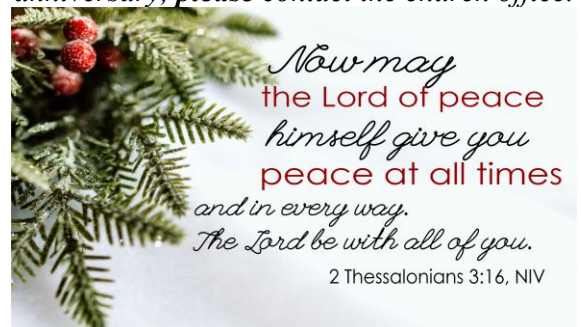


3	Kent Larason
3	Mason Kuhn
5	Marcia Ledbetter
5	Steve Wilson
5	Benjamin McBride
5	Eleanor McBride
11	Glenn Beaty
11	Dorla Beaty
16	Cynthia Cortright Hermes
20	Alex Ballaré
23	Nikki Dawson
28	Dennis Bryley
29	Linda Willis



18	Christa & Mark Ringering
28	Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford

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





HOPE
PEACE
LOVE
JOY

