



NOTE: Please be aware that office hours have changed to Monday - Thursday, 09:00 AM - 2:00 PM. The office will continue to be closed on Friday.

Letters From Our Leadership

The Holy Season is upon us. We invite you to take some time and read these thoughts:

Link: [Fr. Bailey Norman - Why We Celebrate](#)

Link: [Fr. Ashton Sims - Advent Hope Through Mary](#)

Link: [Courtney Manrod - Senior Warden's Perspective](#)

Advent/Christmas Events at St. Stephen's

Use this quick list to mark your calendars!

Sunday, December 10: Camino De Santiago Info meeting - 11:15 AM

Sunday, December 10: Daughters of the King Monthly Meeting - 11:15 AM

Thursday, December 14: Blue Christmas - 7:00 PM

Sunday, December 17: Lessons & Carols and Catered Dinner - 5:00 PM

Sunday, December 24: Choral Eucharist - 9:00 AM in the Parish Hall

Sunday, December 24: Nativity Pageant / Holy Eucharist - 4:00 PM

Sunday Eve, December 24: Carol Vigil / Festal Choral Eucharist - 10:00 PM

Monday, December 25: Christmas Day Eucharist - 10:00 AM

Sunday, December 31: First Sunday After Christmas Eucharist - 10:00 AM

St Stephen's E-News

Download printable copy: [St. Stephen's E-News for December 8, 2023](#)

This Sunday - December 10, 2023

Second Sunday of Advent

Note: During the season of Advent, all services will be celebrated as Rite I.
There will be two services on Sunday:

- 7:45 AM: Spoken Holy Eucharist - Rite I - in the Nave (no streaming)

- 10:00 AM: Choral Eucharist - Rite I - in the Nave (live-streamed)

Bulletins for the services can be downloaded [here](#).

This week we will light the Second Candle: The Bethlehem candle symbolizes the preparations made to receive and to cradle the Christ Child.

The Advent Wreath and Candles

We light the Advent Wreath candles on the four Sundays of Advent. Each candle of the Advent wreath has a meaning: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Purple is the liturgical color for Advent, thus three of the candles are purple. The rose candle has always been connected with joy, because the third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday (*gaudete* in Latin means 'rejoice'). Finally, on Christmas Eve, the central Christ Candle is lit to represent the long-anticipated birth of Christ into the world.

from [BuildFaith.org](https://www.buildfaith.org) - [Advent Wreath Prayers](#)

Conversations on the Mission of St. Stephen's

When: Sunday, December 10, 2023, and Sunday, December 17, 2023

Over the next two Sundays, in place of our usual adult education after the 10:00AM service, Fr. Bailey will lead a conversation on the mission and vision of St. Stephen's as we prepare to enter 2024. He will present some current ministry that the parish is pursuing. In addition, these conversations are opportunities for you to share new ideas and ways in which we can grow both in deepening the involvement of our parishioners and our witness in the wider community.

So please join us at 11:30 AM, this Sunday and next in the Pollard Room. Look forward to seeing you there!

Christian Education



To all who helped with our Advent Fair!!!

Linda Twohig

Rebecca Cavender

Ashley Hillis

Brittany & Josh Tipton

Ohla Malakhova

Jen Davis

Cameron Ellis

Rachel Kirk

Ben & Brittany Shassere

Craig Brent

Judith Delaney & kitchen staff

Our Kids: "This is fun!"

Christian Education Schedule - December 2023

► Sunday, December 10, 2023 - Advent Lessons

- ▶ Sunday, December 17, 2023 - Pageant Rehearsal
- ▶ Sunday, December 24, 2023 - Nativity Pageant / Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, December 12, 2023 - Holy Eucharist 11:30 AM

Join us in the St. Alban's Chapel for Holy Eucharist - Rite I / Healing Service.

This Week's Loose Offering

This week's loose plate offering is designated for the General Fund.

Rite of Reconciliation

During this penitential season of Advent, Frs. Bailey and Ashton will be offering the Rite of Reconciliation (known in other traditions as "confession"). It is, in the good Anglican way, not necessary but very beneficial in one's faith journey. Please contact either Fr. Bailey or Fr. Ashton to set up a time. You can read more about this Sacrament here: [Rite of Reconciliation](#)

This Week's Outreach Spotlight

- ▶ The Outreach Clearfork team is looking for donations of egg cartons. WE need almost 40 more cartons - so please donate!
 - ▶ Please keep the Blessing Box in your shopping list.
- You can read more about these ministries in the "Outreach Spotlight" section of this e-newsletter.

This Sunday - St. Stephen's Parish Events

Sunday, December 10, 2023 - 9:00 AM Camino De Santiago 2024 Informational Meeting



Coming Next Year:
September 28 - October 7, 2024
(Oak Ridge Schools Fall Break 2024)
The Pilgrimage of the Camino de Santiago
de Compostela in Northern Spain
Led by Fr. Ashton Sims and Leah Bailey

In 2024, we will walk the last 116 km of the Royal French way of the Camino - from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela. This is an ancient pilgrim/Roman trade route walked by many over the millennia. This trip is focused on middle school age and up. This will be an unforgettable experience, as we travel the route with a rich history of over 1200 years.

Come join us in the Parish Hall for this informational meeting and to find out more. Our own Leah Bailey will share her own experiences of walking the Camino. Fr. Ashton Sims will have a word to say about the importance of pilgrimage, as well as reflect on his experiences of pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Sunday, December 10, 2023 - DOK meeting



The next meeting of the St Agnes Chapter of Daughters of the King will be on Sunday, December 10, 2023, in St. Alban's Chapel following the 10:00 AM service. Our ministry highlights for that meeting include Altar Guild and the Caring Meals ministry.

Upcoming Parish Events

Thursday, December 14, 2023: Blue Christmas - 7:00 PM



Christmas is not always a joyful time for everyone. Memories of loved ones who have died rise to the surface, reminding us of their absence during the holidays, and we feel keenly the heaviness of loss. We may be feeling overwhelmed with too many activities, not enough time, or trying to complete an insurmountable list of things to do.

The Blue Christmas service at St. Stephen's will give you an opportunity to slow down and receive some healing in worship with fellow strugglers.

All are welcome. We invite you to come reflect on all the good things God has given you and to know that joy can be present even in the midst of sadness.

Sunday, December 17, 2023 - Lessons and Carols - 5:00 PM

Deadline to RSVP - Thursday, December 14, 2023



DINNER MENU

- Parmesan Herb Baked Chicken Breast or Roast Pork Loin with Gravy
- Redskin Mashed Potato Casserole
- Sautéed Vegetable Medley
- Tossed Salad / Assorted Dressings
- Yeast Rolls
- Cookie Assortment (from our Choir)

Our annual service of Lessons and Carols will be held on Sunday, December 17, 2023. The Parish Choir will present the story of the coming of Christ with Advent hymns and carols. Following the service, we will have a festive catered dinner - so you just need to bring yourselves. Please come be a part of this Advent tradition!

The service will be held at 5:00 PM, with dinner in Parish Hall at 6:00 PM. The cost will be \$15 per person/ \$45 per family. **We need an accurate headcount for the caterer**, so we are requiring those who wish to attend to sign up. There are two ways:

- On our website: [RSVP - Lessons & Carols Dinner](#)

- On the sign-up sheets in the Narthex or at the Hospitality Desk.

Sunday, December 24, 2023 - Christmas Pageant

December 24



Christmas Pageant

Our annual Christmas Pageant returns this Christmas Eve. This is a St. Stephen's tradition for over 40 years! We're excited to be back in the Nave, and we're hard at work getting ready. We need YOU to help us by coming and being part of this celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

4:00 pm Christmas Eve Family Eucharist & Nativity Pageant
Location: St. Stephen's Nave

If you have any questions, please contact our Christian Education director, Sherry Burchfield, at mommaburch@gmail.com.

Focus on the Parish

Stewardship Update - from Fr. Norman

As of 12/4, we have 77 pledges for a total of \$441,768. While this is a good start for the campaign, we remain short of the goal we need to have to fund our current ministries.

There are families/individuals who pledged last year who have not yet turned their pledge in this year. If you fall into this category, please turn in your card as soon as possible. Finance will begin working on the 2024 budget in December, and we use the numbers from pledges as our hard numbers for income.

In addition, if you are new to St Stephen's and have not pledged, please consider doing so. No pledge is too small. We simply hope to have all of our families participate to the extent they can in financially supporting the work of our awesome parish.

You can pledge by filling out a card at the church office, or by pledging online at [St. Stephen's - Pledge Now!](#)

Peace, Bailey

St Stephen's Financial Status As of December 3, 2023

Here at St. Stephen's, we are blessed to have Rachel Durfee, CPA, to watch our books. As such, we present an updated "snapshot" of the parish finances.

Last Week's Offering: \$ 8,065

2023 YTD Offering: \$ 463,936

2023 YTD Budget: \$ 486,166

Over/Under \$ (22,230)

Flower / Ambry Candle Sign-up

The 2024 sign-up charts for altar flowers and ambry candles are now posted on the bulletin board outside of the secretary's office. The cost for an ambry candle is \$5. and for altar flowers is \$85.

You can sign-up on the website: [Donate for Altar Flowers](#) - Just select *Altar Flowers*, and also put in the memo whether you would like to sign up for a candle or the flowers. Someone will contact you to determine a date - thank you!

Daughters of the King (DOK)

We will be hosting an informational meeting in mid to late January. We would love for you to join us and see if DOK is the right fit for you. As Daughters of the King, we take a vow of prayer, service, and evangelism, sharing Christ's love with the world! If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Beth Reed (865) 850-6135 or Jenny Meredith (865) 414-7899. Thank you!

Outreach Spotlight

Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. - Matthew 25:40 (KJV)

A Clearfork Christmas - We Need Egg Cartons!

The Outreach Clearfork volunteers are busy! And we need your help! Since 2020, we have prepared Christmas activity bags for the families and children. In the past, we have included such goodies as crafts, books, snacks, and fun activities that the family can do together. Last year, we recognized the need for hygiene products that are not included in gov't assistance programs.

This year, we've put a lot of thought (and love) into the crafts activities that we will include, such as several books, snacks, and a lot of cool "surprise items". We are SO excited to have received a generous donation of rocks and minerals from an amateur geologist. These will be a special addition to the activity bags, to help keep the children occupied over the Christmas break.

The ideal way to distribute these rocks and activity kits is in egg cartons!

We would like to enlist your help by asking you to donate your empty egg cartons. We'll put the kits together - we just can't eat that many eggs on our own! Please bring your empty, clean egg cartons to the church, and leave them in the mailroom right next to the church office. There is a plastic bin marked "egg cartons" for the donations, and the deadline is Sunday, December 10, 2023.

Thank you for helping us spread Christ's love in this season of hope!

Here NOW! The Compassion Tree



Clothing



Baby Supplies



Toys



Donations

This December, our Outreach program will be the Compassion Tree. You will see this Tree set up in the Parish Hall by the stage. The Compassion Tree will be decorated with tags that represent various items and gifts needed for children placed in foster care in the weeks before Christmas, as well as for

those coming into care without any clothing or personal items.

It's easy to help out - simply look over the tags and determine where you can help. Pricing begins at \$10. When you find a tag, remove it from the tree and take it with you. After purchasing the item(s), place both the tag and the item(s) under the tree. You don't have to wrap them - we'll do that!

We ask that all items be returned with the tags no later than Wednesday, December 20, 2023. We invite all parishioners to take a tag and make a foster child's Christmas a little brighter!

Here is a partial list of items on the tags:

- ▶ Toy List: Lego (any age), arts/crafts kits, Barbie dolls, remote control cars
- ▶ Other gifts: Scooters, Children's Bibles, \$25 gift cards for teens
- ▶ Necessities: All sizes pajamas, underwear, socks, crib and twin sheets
- ▶ Larger items: cribs, car seats, crib and twin mattresses, pack 'n plays

Support our Blessing Box

Our Blessing Box is very active, and we continue to grow in meeting this genuine need for this ministry. This week, we are requesting donations of hygiene items, laundry detergent, dish detergent, bar and liquid soap. Please be aware of size limitations inside the Box - thank you!

Ministry Updates

Ongoing Church Events

Tuesday Bible Study - Pollard Room, 10:00 - 11:00 AM

For more information email james.rousey@aol.com.

Wednesday WOW - lunchtime for ORHS juniors and seniors

Our Walk Over Wednesday (WOW) will continue this week.

Wednesday Men's Group - Pollard Room, 8:30 AM

Thursday Contemplative Prayer (Zoom) - 4:00 PM

If you'd like to join us, feel free to call/text us (Steve Herbes: 865.250.9123; Liz Herbes: 865.228.2537)

Helpful Links

[Those Who Serve](#)

[Calendar of Events](#)

[News and Events from the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee](#)

The church's office hours are 9:00 am to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Offices are closed on Fridays and weekends.



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