



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.

Advent/Christmas Events at St. Stephen's

Use this quick list to mark your calendars!

Saturday December 2: Clearfork Community Meal (contact Cameron Ellis)

Saturday December 2: Silent Auction and Italian Potluck - 5:30 PM

Sunday, December 3: St. Stephen's Advent Fair - 11:15 AM

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

There are a lot of other activities going on - our parish is very active during this season! We hope that you take the time to **read all the way** to the bottom of the e-news - we don't want you to miss ANYTHING!

St Stephen's E-News

Download printable copy: [St. Stephen's E-News for December 1, 2023](#)

This Sunday - December 3, 2023

First 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 First Candle: The Prophecy Candle, or Candle of Hope. This candle is for expressing our longing for peace, for healing, and the well-being of all creation.

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 - [Advent Wreath Prayers](#)

Adult Christian Formation

There will be no Adult Christian Formation this Sunday.

Christian Education

There will be no Christian Education classes this Sunday.

Tuesday, December 5, 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 Clergy Discretionary 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 Week's Events - St. Stephen's Parish

Saturday, December 2, 2023 - Clearfork Meal - 1:00 PM

On December 2, 2023, the St. Stephen's Clearfork team will be returning to visit the families of the Clearfork area and share a meal. This is a new event, set up as a get together of our church community, camp children and families, and maybe with a few others in the community who really could enjoy a full meal.

St. Stephen's is providing the turkeys, hams, and drinks. Since this is a "potluck" meal, we encourage you to bring a side dish. If anyone would like to go with us and meet some fine folks, contact Cameron Ellis at 865-414-5742.

Saturday, December 2, 2023 - 5:30 PM SHHH...IT'S A SILENT AUCTION!

ITS TOMORROW!



On Saturday, December 2, 2023, at 5:30 PM, St. Stephen's will hold a Silent Auction to support the mission and ministry of the church.

You can make a donation or see the donated options on our website - check it out!

[St. Stephen's Silent Auction](#)

Accepting Donations On The Night of the Auction!
So if you haven't donated, just bring the item with you!

DONATING

You can donate items in advance at this link: [Donation Form](#) - and then bring them with you the night of the auction. We've got over 70 items! We have everything from baked goods, holiday services, and theater tickets; kitchen items, sport memorabilia, art; and even a piano!

THE AUCTION

Check out the website - [Auction Listing](#) - and start planning your bidding. We have something for everybody's tastes and pocketbook! On the night of the auction, bidding will begin at 5:30 PM and will last until 6:30 PM. Winners will be announced during the Potluck.

PASTO ALLO BUONA - A GOOD MEAL!

During the auction, you will enjoy beverages and appetizers. At 6:30 PM, the Italian Themed potluck dinner will be served. Parish Life will provide beverages and bread. Please bring a favorite Italian dish, such as lasagna, spaghetti, manicotti, antipasto platters, or cannoli to share. These may be dropped off prior to shopping the auction. The Italian-themed potluck promises to have excellent food and will provide an opportunity for great fellowship.

Sunday, December 3, 2023: Advent Fair



Mark your Calendars!
Advent Fair
December 3rd!
A traditional Family Day
at St. Stephens
Following the 10am service
Food, Crafts, & Fun!

We are so excited about the Advent Fair! After the 10:00 AM service, Christian Education will present the annual Advent Fair! This is a wonderful opportunity for families of all sizes to make their own Advent crafts. There will be several "stations" to choose from - we supply all the necessary materials, and there will be teachers to help all children - regardless of age! This is a wonderful opportunity for children to create home-made crafts to give as Christmas presents that embody the Reason for the Season. We look forward to seeing you there!

Peace, Sherry Burchfield, Director of Christian Education

Upcoming 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.

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



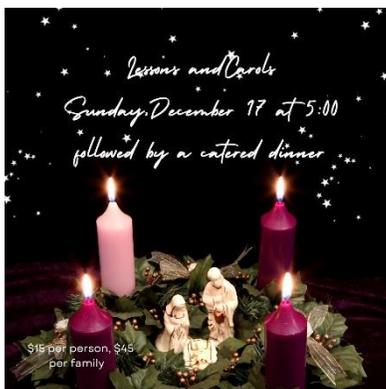
Christmas is not always a joyful time for everyone. Memories of loved ones who have died rise to the surface, reminding us of their absence during the holidays, and we feel keenly the heaviness of loss. We may be feeling overwhelmed with too many activities, not enough time, or trying to complete an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

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

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.

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 11/28, we have 71 pledges for a total of \$419,548. 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 approximately 35 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. You may turn in a physical pledge card or pledge through our online portal on our website. 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 November 26, 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: \$ 8,860

2023 YTD Offering: \$ 455,871

2023 YTD Budget: \$ 476,038

Over/Under \$ (20,167)

Coming in January 2024

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 – thanks!

Daughters of the King (DOK)

We will be hosting an informational meeting 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!

Lay Pastoral Caregiving Program - January 2024

Mark your calendars! St. Stephen's Clergy and the Pastoral Care Committee will begin a new lay pastoral caregiving program (postponed from this Fall due to scheduling challenges). If you have questions about the Companionship training program, or to express interest in participating, please email Frs. Bailey or Ashton.

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 - This Week's Request: Oatmeal/Fruit

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 oatmeal and fruit cups. Please be aware of size limitations inside the Box - thank you!

Ministry Updates

This Week's Prayers

Please join us in this week's Prayers of the People and for our Parish Family:

- ▶ Diocese of East TN: St. Luke's, Cleveland
- ▶ Diocese of South Dakota: St. John's, Deadwood; St. John's, Browns Valley
- ▶ Diocese of Haiti: St. John the Evangelist Church and Medical Clinic
- ▶ Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Church of North India (United)
- ▶ Prayers for those dealing with illness: Elizabeth Pack, her family James and Philip
- ▶ Those in assisted living: Jo Ann Baker, Dianne Davis, Roger Derby, Mary Rhoades.
- ▶ Our parish members: Cathy Whitten, Wendy Whitten, Melisha Willis, Joe and Melissa Womble, Madison Womble; Caroline Wood
- ▶ Those currently serving in the armed forces: Thomas Bautz, Brian Bustle, Courtenay Clary, Robert Graf, Jr., Reid Hartman, Alex Mol, Thomas Stickle, and Kyle Zirkel.

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

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



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee
[Website](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)