

MAY 2025



The Evangel

FATHER BAILEY

INTERESTED IN GAINING MORE TOOLS TO HELP WITH YOUR FINANCES?

PLEASE SIGN UP FOR ONE OR BOTH OF THE UPCOMING FINANCIAL PLANNING WORKSHOPS!

During the month of June, St. Stephen's will be hosting two seminars to help our parishioners (and any guests you may want to bring) gain more tools on how to effectively manage and plan their financial resources. While we don't like to talk about money, the Scriptures do speak of money frequently. Jesus recognizes it is one of our greatest worries - and hindrances - in our relationship with God and with each other. One of the most common burdens people in any given church face is the stress of money - not having enough, not knowing enough to manage it, not knowing what to do with it after we die.

You are invited to attend either or both of the seminars listed below. The first one on June 1 is geared more towards planned giving during and at the end of life. The second one on June 29 is about learning strategies to manage our money for both present and future needs. Each will take place in the parish hall following the 10:30 service (start time is 12:00 pm). Lunch will be provided.

We ask that, both for food planning and for our presenter, that you sign up ahead of time by calling or emailing the office. Our presenter is Joe Ottaviano, CFP, CKA, a well-respected financial planner in Knoxville (his bio is also listed below). We are deeply indebted to our own Tom Clary for extending the invitation to Mr. Ottaviano to come and be with us.

Topic Summary, Sunday June 1st *Tax-Smart Gifting & Legacy Planning*

Psalm 89:11 says, *"The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them."* While others may attempt to claim what is rightfully God's, how can we preserve a Kingdom mindset with that which God has entrusted us." Joe Ottaviano from APC Financial Planning will share tax-smart **cont...**

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FATHER BAILEY (CONT.)

strategies to give to charities both now and in our estates. Joe will cover topics such as gifting from your Individual Retirement Account, using a Donor-Advised Fund, and naming specific beneficiaries to your insurance and investment.

Topic Summary, Sunday June 29th

Building for the Future while being Tax-Smart in your Gifting

Psalm 89:11 says, “*The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them.*” Joe Ottaviano from APC Financial Planning will help answer questions such as:

- As you think about money, what are your hopes?
- Do you want to understand your finances better? Do you want to be able to successfully face financial challenges and meet financial goals?
- Do you want to be able to communicate effectively about money with those you love?
- Ultimately, do you want to be able to handle money from a confident place – empowered by biblical financial wisdom?

BIO FOR JOE OTTAVIANO

In his role as President/CEO and owner of APC Financial Planning, Joe Ottaviano especially enjoys helping and encouraging individuals and families achieve their financial life goals.

Joe’s energy and wide-ranging expertise bring a valuable dimension to the APC client service team. He has over 45 years of investment experience, having purchased his first stock when he was 21 years old.

Joe is a graduate of Bentley University (B.S. in Accounting) and has a master’s in business administration (MBA) from the University of Texas at Austin. He is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER®, a Certified Kingdom Advisor®, and a CPA. He is also a member of the Financial Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Joe and his wife, Carol, have four children and six incredible grandchildren. He and Carol are members of Grace Presbyterian Church where Joe teaches Sunday School weekly. In his free time, Joe enjoys traveling the world with his lovely wife, serving in their church and community, eating delicious meals, exercising, and spending time with their growing family! He also thoroughly enjoys waxing and detailing cars!



750 Eggs in 3.5 Minutes

We have just completed the season of Lent, Holy Week, and a wonderful Easter, and I am so grateful for all of the many contributors to their success. Wednesday Lenten Soup Suppers saw 16 different soups made by 16 different people; all were delicious, and leftovers were rarely available. Following the dinners, *The Living Compass*, a powerful and popular course, was offered by Emily Doane and Pastor Laura. In addition to the Lectionary Studies, Jamey Kennedy led a Sunday class, Art as Prayer.

We were blessed by so many beautiful musical offerings. The Evensong by the UT Chamber Singers was breathtaking, and we are grateful to Simon Ballintoy for making it possible to have them at St. Stephen's. Our wonderful choir's Fauré Requiem was a gorgeous gift on the evening of Palm Sunday. Our Easter music was powerful, joyful, and inspiring...someone behind me kept saying "WOW!" after every hymn! Holy Week requires the efforts of many people: our office staff, the Altar Guild, Ushers, Choir, and Clergy. The Men's Group, who have been cleaning the building during our Sexton's medical leave, worked extra shifts. There are so many moving parts, but they all came together perfectly.

Which brings us to Easter; the church looked beautiful, the sermon was impactful, and **Alleluia** was the word of the day. The Easter Brunch had over 100 people in attendance. Many thanks to the Parish Life team for set-up, food wrangling, and clean-up. However, the highlight of the day may have been the Egg Hunt. Jennifer Davis and her crew stuffed and hid 750 eggs...which were all gathered up in 3.5 minutes!



ASCENSION DAY



Ascension Day is a principal feast day of the church. This year, it falls on Thursday, May 29—40 days after Easter. The risen Jesus had been seen by his disciples for those 40 days and then he ascended to his father in heaven in the presence of the disciples.

As Luke described the scene:

“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’”

Ascension is an ancient feast; it may have been observed as early as 68 AD. In the Orthodox Church, it is one of the Great Feasts. In the Western churches, it was a day when attendance at church was mandatory. In some countries, Ascension is a public holiday.

There are interesting customs, some ancient, that surround Ascension Day. Throughout Europe, during the Middle Ages, Ascension feasts featured birds: swan or peafowl if you were rich enough, or almost anything else that flew. Storks, cranes, quail, partridges, songbirds that could be caught in a net, or chicken, duck, or goose might grace the table. The birds might be roasted or boiled or cooked in a pie. In Germany, pastries were made in the shape of birds.

Why birds? Because Christ “flew” to heaven, of course! For dessert, there was gatnabour. Traditionally, this delicate rice pudding, flavored with rose water and cinnamon, was made from the milk the cows produced on Ascension Day.

Many believed that, when Christ ascended, the sky was blessed, and so all water that falls from the sky on the Ascension is blessed. In some areas, people collected rainwater that fell on Ascension Day, believing that it would heal the sick. But you weren’t supposed to do laundry with it!

Work of any sort was thought to be unlucky on this day. In particular, washing clothes was a bad idea – some even said that if you did the laundry on Ascension, someone in the family would die. And just as you couldn’t wash clothes, you couldn’t make them or mend them: clothing that had been touched by a needle on Ascension was thought to attract lightning.

Apparently, though, fishing doesn’t count as work. In some places, Ascension is considered the start of the fishing season. However, in the past, rivers and lakes were considered particularly dangerous on the Ascension: according to old folk beliefs, you were more likely to drown on this day than on any other day.

In central Europe, it was customary to hike, climb mountains, or take picnics on hilltops to celebrate the feast. In Sweden, people would have a gökotta, an early cuckoo morning. They would get up long before sunrise and walk into the forests to hear birds singing at sunrise. A picnic breakfast, singing, and playing music are all part of the festivities. In Portugal, it’s traditional to make bouquets of olive branches, wheat, poppies, and daisies on the Ascension. The bouquets are symbols of peace and prosperity.

Thanks to Charlotte Riggle for these interesting historical tidbits about the observance of Ascension Day in other countries.

MINISTRY UPDATES

Join the Fun at Clearfork Learning Camp July 7 through July 11.

Hey St. Stephen's parishioners! Looking for a delightful one-day adventure that makes a difference? Join us as a volunteer at Clearfork Learning Camp this summer.

Whether you distribute snacks, read with children, or share smiles, your presence can transform an ordinary day for the wonderful children we serve. It's just one day, but the impact will endure longer. No prior experience is necessary; however, to assure the safety of all involved, volunteers are required to have completed the Safe Church training course. It can be completed on-line by contacting Judith Delaney for log-in directions. An in-person training is being offered on June 22 following the 10:30 service. Because a light lunch will be provided, signing up ahead of time is suggested but not mandatory. Sign-up sheets will be available closer to the date.

Your Day of Service = Their Day to Shine!

This isn't just about volunteering—it's a wonderful opportunity to connect, serve, and bring joy to a child's life. When you join in, you'll leave with a heart full of warmth, maybe a handful of drawings, and a treasure trove of unforgettable memories. Pick a day that suits you and experience God's love in

The Blessing Box May's Loose Offering Recipient

It is hard to believe that soon we will be celebrating the two-year anniversary of the initiation and blessing of our Blessing Box

Most of you are familiar with our Blessing Box, the structure filled with non-perishable food items and toiletries, located at the Vienna Street entrance in the grassy area next to the parking area. In fact, the parish has been wonderful in supporting it through monetary donations and bringing requested food, cleaning, and hygiene items on a weekly basis

The Blessing Box is addressing a real need, being used daily. Recipients can pick up items anonymously and use them free of charge. It provides these items 24/7 to those who may have run out of food, or have been unable to purchase hygiene/cleaning items that are not covered by Food Stamps (SNAP)

We ask the parish to please continue to provide ongoing support in stocking the Blessing Box through in-kind donations of the items requested weekly in the E-News, and/or monetary donations that will be used to purchase needed items. Donated items may be placed in the red wagon located in the Narthex, in the box in the Hospitality Room, or directly in the Blessing Box. If writing a check or donating online, please designate that it is for the Blessing Box.

MINISTRY UPDATES (CONT.)

WOW!

WOW you say? Yes, the Wonderful World of WOW, also known as Walk over Wednesday!

Every Wednesday during the school year St. Stephen's volunteers provide lunch for the high school juniors and seniors who have open campus lunch hour. Four teams of four or five workers are responsible for a week. The Men's Group provides breakfast on the rare fifth Wednesday of a month.

How and why did this ministry develop? The theme of the 2015 Annual Convention was "Who Is Your Neighbor?" Obviously, one of our neighbors is Oak Ridge High School. Deborah Clary was a delegate that year and was the guiding force in our developing the WOW program. A group of interested parishioners visited our neighbors at the Methodist Church to see how they functioned. They provide meals on Thursdays. Other local churches have provided lunch for high schoolers in the past. We chose Wednesday as the best day for us and Walk Over Wednesday (WOW) was born. We started serving lunch the following January.

Cathy Chippendale developed menus for four meals that appeal to teenagers. Volunteers were recruited. Deborah served as chairman for several years. Most of the original cooks have been replaced by new ones and some of the menus tweaked but the very hungry kids keep coming! This year the numbers have ranged from a low in the mid-forties to a high of sixty. The numbers vary depending on what other activities the students may have that day.

Now for the pitch!!

New volunteers are always needed and welcome. We find this ministry very rewarding and just plain FUN. Working side-by-side with several of your fellow parishioners once a month is the best way to become friends. Could this be a ministry for you? Contact one or more of the following team leaders to learn more: Jim Anderson, Leah Bailey, Judith Delaney, John Murphy

On May 7th we will wrap up another very successful year preparing lunch and welcoming Oak Ridge High School students to our table. We look forward to working beside you next school year.



Evangelism

At the heart of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church lies a mission deeply rooted in the teachings of Christ—to share the good news of Jesus in a way that inspires others to receive Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord. This mission guides the work of the Evangelism Committee, a dedicated group committed to fostering a welcoming environment, nurturing community connections, and creating meaningful opportunities for fellowship.

In alignment with the broader goals of St. Stephen's, the Evangelism Committee has been hard at work planning a variety of events that reflect the Church's core values of hospitality, service, and spiritual growth. Whether within the church walls or out in the community, these efforts aim to make the love of Christ visible and tangible in everyday ways.

Upcoming Events and Outreach Opportunities

St. Stephen's Spring Clean – Saturday, May 17, 2025, | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Spring is a season of renewal, and what better way to refresh our church home than with a campus-wide clean-up day? With the leadership of Father Bailey, Senior Warden Leah Bailey, Junior Warden Ben Shasere, and the Vestry, the Evangelism Committee invites all parishioners to participate in this important initiative. The goal is to declutter and organize various areas of the church, ensuring that the physical environment reflects the

welcoming spirit we strive to embody. A sign-up sheet is available on Facebook, the church website, in The Evangel, and in the Parish Hall. If you have personal items in the church that you'd like to keep, please use the provided labels to mark them before May 16.

Unity Parade – Saturday, June 7, 2025, | Scarborough Community

St. Stephen's is excited to once again join the Unity Parade in the Scarborough community. During this joyful event, the church will host an arts and crafts booth for local families and children. This is more than just fun—it's about building relationships, being present in the community, and sharing the love of Christ through our actions. Participation in events like this is a vital part of our mission to extend our fellowship beyond the church walls.

Back to School Bash – Saturday, August 2, 2025, | Bissell Park

As summer winds down, St. Stephen's is gearing up to support families and students with a Back to School Bash. In partnership with the Christian Education and Parish Life committees, this event will provide school supplies, food, games, and learning activities to families from surrounding districts. The Evangelism Committee is currently in the early stages of planning and welcomes volunteers, suggestions, and support to help make this outreach a success.

Continued

MINISTRY UPDATES (CONT. _

Introducing the Calm Room

We're also thrilled to announce the development of a new resource within our church building—the Calm Room. Designed to offer a safe, inclusive environment for individuals of all abilities, the Calm Room will be a sanctuary for those who need a peaceful space to decompress and self-regulate. Located in Room 208, the space will be furnished with sensory-friendly items and tools to support emotional balance. An Amazon Wish List will soon be available for parishioners who would like to help bring this vision to life. This initiative reflects our desire to be a church where every person, regardless of ability or need, feels welcomed and supported.

Get Involved

As we look ahead, the Evangelism Committee remains committed to providing both outreach opportunities and internal fellowship events that align with the mission of St. Stephen's. We believe that evangelism is not just about words, but about showing Christ's love through hospitality, service, and presence.

The Evangelism Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM in the Parish Hall. We welcome anyone with a heart for service and a desire to share in this important ministry.

Together, let us continue to grow in faith, love, and community—both inside and outside the walls of St. Stephen's.

POST SCRIPTS

- Refurbished First Aid kits are located in the kitchen and the mail room. Thank you, Carol King!
- Kudos and thanks to Nancy Carow who has been updating the signage around the building. Visitors won't get lost, now.
- Our latest Health Department report on the kitchen lost a point because the inspector found a scoop in the ice maker. Please try to remember to store the scoops in the bowl on the counter.

CLOOKING AHEAD

May 11	Youth Sunday Our guest preacher will be Cyril Meredith IV
May 17	Smokies Game at the new stadium
May 25	Mass in the Grass
May 25	Lemonade in the Grove begins--weather permitting--following the 10:30 service and will run through Labor Day
May 31	Invite-Welcome-Connect Diocesan Workshop
June 8	Holy Ghost Weenie Roast following the 10:30 service
June 22	In-person Safe Church training following the 10:30 service
June 29	Parish Potluck