



St. Stephen's E-NEWS

WHERE GOD IS SEEN, LOVE IS FELT, LIVES ARE CHANGED.

March 11, 2022

A MESSAGE FROM FR. BAILEY

Beginning **NEXT Sunday, March 20, 2022**, St. Stephen's will move to **"masks optional"** for all in-person activities. Due to the recent CDC guideline changes and the dropping number of cases both within St. Stephen's and our local community, I have made this decision in consultation with the Vestry. We have delayed this implementation for a week to allow this news to travel through the whole community and to make sure everyone knows when and what they can expect with this change.

While the data gives support to this decision, the driving force behind doing this now is that many of our people are chomping at the bit to gather again in person for fellowship activities, particularly meals. In addition, our congregation has a heart and passion for engaging in the local community, and the season has finally come for us to expand our reach as a church to serve the needs of Oak Ridge and beyond.

With that said, please remember that there is a substantial number of our people who will choose to remain masked for the foreseeable future. **We have parishioners who are immunocompromised, live or work with people who have health issues, or are understandably remaining cautious.** While all of us are tired of masks, not everyone is ready to take theirs off just yet.

As such, I want to strongly reemphasize the following guidelines:

- If you have a fever, sore throat, hacking cough, or any other cold/flu symptoms, **PLEASE REMAIN HOME** until your symptoms go away. (I also realize that we are entering the notorious allergy season here. Use your best judgment, but err on the side of caution. If you are sneeze a lot due to allergies, at the very least wear your mask when here.) **NEVER come to church - under any circumstance - with a fever.**
- During the peace, please restrain your greetings. We are a friendly bunch who like to hug and shake hands, but please be aware that not everyone is comfortable with that. Sometimes simply waving to your neighbor in the pew is all some people want to do. Please respect those who wish to remain distant.

Above all, our mission as the church is to praise God and care for each other. All along, you as the people of St. Stephen's have been very patient and kind to one another through the pandemic. I remind you to extend your care toward those you know who remain uncomfortable or to those you haven't seen or spoken to in some time. All are welcome at St. Stephen's, and we carry out that mission by always making sure that we find ways to include people who might not be ready to return. We will continue virtual services and studies and, as the weather warms up, we will look at offering occasional outside services once again.

I am blessed by each of you and continue to pray for you individually and us as a church.



SPRING FORWARD

It's your favorite time of year...Lent. We also get to **Spring Forward this weekend!** **Please remember that our clocks move forward one hour this Sunday, March 13, 2022.** So don't be late to church!



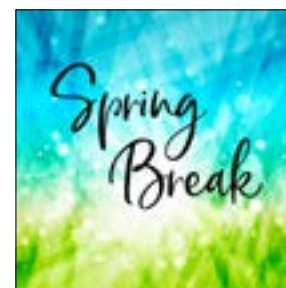
INCLEMENT WEATHER

PLANS FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2022

In addition to the time change, there is the potential for snow/ice and frigid temperatures Saturday night. If conditions are unsafe and we need to cancel church, we will notify the parish through email, an updated phone message, and announcements over social media **no later than 6:30 A.M. Sunday morning.** Even if church continues, please use your judgment as to whether it is safe for you to drive in. If church is cancelled, we will either livestream or pre-record a service that will be broadcast on YouTube.

SPRING BREAK

As Oak Ridge schools are on Spring Break, there will be no children or youth programs following church this Sunday. We will resume Sunday, March 20, 2022.





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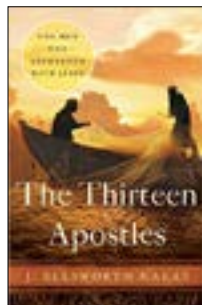
SUNDAY WORSHIP

On the First Sunday in Lent, and our readings will be:

- Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
- Psalm 27
- Philippians 3:17-4:1
- Luke 13:31-35

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

On Sunday at 9 A.M., the Rev. Dr. Paul Scheirer will lead a Bible study from the book The Thirteen Apostles written by J. Ellsworth Kalas. This week we will be looking at PETER. Kalas calls him a "man of action". Come learn more about this impetuous disciple of Jesus.



THE LIFEGIVING HOME

The Lifegiving Home book study will focus on **Chapter 3: A Symphony of Grace**, led by Emily Doane on Sunday at 11:45 A.M. in the Pollard Room.



WEEKLY PRAYERS

WE PRAY FOR PARISH MEMBERS

Wes and Judith Delaney
Roger and Glenna Derby
Michelle Derieux
Peggy DeVan

Please include these people in your prayers.

OUTREACH FOOD BASKETS

St. Stephen's has a vital Food Basket Ministry that distributes food baskets to about 30 needy families in our area four times a year. In the last two years, gift cards for groceries have been given in lieu of food. As we emerge from Omicron, we will begin to distribute a gift card and a limited number of non-food items to our families, beginning at our May distribution. Please help us by purchasing specific non-food items for us to distribute. We ask you to purchase one or more items from the weekly list as you shop for your own groceries. We will need both large and medium sizes for our various families. Grocery carts are available for you to drop off your items, located near the downstairs office area and in the Narthex. This ministry is also a wonderful opportunity to help your children and grandchildren become aware of the needs of those less fortunate in our community. Monetary donations are also gratefully appreciated.

This week, please help us with the following items:

- Paper towels
- Bath soap
- Conditioner
- Dish soap
- Deodorant

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

We are offering a light soup supper during Lent on Wednesdays from 6 to 6:30 P.M. Please help us know how many people are coming by completing the [Soup Supper Sign-Up form](#).

An email reminder will be sent each Monday in Lent.



GROUNDS WORKDAY

The Grounds Workday has been **POSTPONED** until **Saturday, March 26, 2022**, from 9 A.M. to 12 noon, hoping for better weather. Please reserve a place on your calendar for a mulching party!



LENTEN OPPORTUNITY: RECONCILIATION LITURGY

Did you know that the Episcopal Church has a "rite of confession?" However, rather than being mandated at least once a year like in the Roman Catholic tradition, it is a purely optional service called "The Reconciliation of a Penitent." It is a powerful liturgy in which you sit one-on-one with a priest in the church or at your home (and not behind a screen in a booth) and share anything that you need to release from your conscience within this liturgy. During Lent, Fr. Bailey and Fr. Ashton invite you to make an appointment with one of us if you wish to participate. If you'd like to check out the liturgy, there are two forms, the first one beginning on page 447 in the Book of Common Prayer. Again, these are purely voluntary, and they are also strictly confidential. During your Lenten journey, if you'd like to have an opportunity to hear a tangible proclamation of forgiveness or grace, we are happy to offer this sacrament of the church to anyone who wishes. You may either come to the church, or we can come to you. Please contact Fr. Bailey directly at revnorman1011@gmail.com or 865-323-1417 if you are interested.





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HOW WE CAN HELP: KNOXVILLE AREA RESCUE MINISTRIES

Knoxville Area Rescue Ministries (KARM) provides a bed in a warm caring environment for hundreds of men and women every night. A Note of Encouragement, provided by churches and organizations, is placed on every bed every day. The Outreach Committee has introduced this ministry at St. Stephen's for the month of March and it will continue periodically throughout the year. This is a wonderful opportunity for all aspects of church life to help those in need in an easy and meaningful way.

Every family should receive a letter and packet in the next few days explaining this ministry in more detail. KARM asks us to use index cards which can easily be slipped into a pocket or backpack. Our Notes of Encouragement can be a source of support for someone throughout a tough day. KARM stations, which will have blank cards, along with baskets for completed cards, are located in the Narthex, side exit of the nave by the organ, Pollard room, Parish Hall and Hospitality Center. Feel free to use your own index cards if you prefer. If you can't get to church in person, we will gladly go to your house to drop off and pick up cards if you contact the church office. We thank you for your help with this ministry as we reach out to support those in need.

~ Mary Anne Morse



GIFTS & MEMORIALS

The Gifts & Memorials Committee wants to be sure that any **material donations and/or gifts** are appropriate and support the operations and missions of St. Stephen's.

Therefore, a Gifts & Memorials sub-committee has been established to preview and screen all potential material donations given to the church.

If you have an item you think is needed or would be useful to the church please contact one of the Gifts & Memorials committee members listed below who can answer any questions you may have regarding your donation.

The existing [relevant policy is C-10, Section II F.](#)

"Refers to the Material Gifts Sub-Committee for determination (of) all material gifts intended for use in the church such as furnishings, equipment, art, etc. provided:

1. That the gift is an item consistent with the décor and use of such items within Episcopal Churches,
2. That the acceptance does not increase the operating expenses of the Parish (for instance a vehicle). If that is the case, Vestry approval is required.

Note: Material gifts in some cases may be offered to heads of Parish committees and programs such as gifts of books to the Library, donations to the Archives, to the Kitchen, to Christian Education, etc. They may be accepted by them provided they meet these criteria and will not increase the operating cost of the church. If an acknowledgment or registry in the Gifts and Memorials registers is desired, Gifts and Memorials should be notified."

Dan DiGregorio, Chairman, Gifts & Memorials

GIFTS & MEMORIALS SUB-COMMITTEE

- Barb Bovee
- Barbara Neill
- Barbara Steele
- Deborah Clary