

DECEMBER 2021  
JANUARY 2022

The Rev. Bailey Norman  
PRIEST-IN-CHARGE  
clergy@ststephensor.org

The Rev. Ashton Sims  
ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR  
curate@ststephensor.org

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Damos  
PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Simon Ballintoy  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC  
choir@ststephensor.org

Cameron Ellis  
TREASURER  
treasurer@ststephensor.org

Elizabeth Pack  
PARISH SECRETARY & WEBMASTER  
secretary@ststephensor.org

Sherry Burchfield  
DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
cecoord@ststephensor.org

Craig Brent  
Molly & Caleb Justice  
EPISCOPAL YOUTH FELLOWSHIP (EYF)  
eyf@ststephensor.org

Sharon Thomas  
NURSERY SUPERVISOR

Judith Delaney  
SENIOR WARDEN  
seniorwarden@ststephensor.org

Barbara Steele  
JUNIOR WARDEN  
juniorwarden@ststephensor.org

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
212 N. Tulane Avenue  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830  
Tel: 865.483.8497  
www.ststephensor.org

# The Evangel

## CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

### *Christmas Pageant & Family Service*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2021, 4:30 P.M.

We will have a Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. in our Parish Hall!

### *Carol Vigil & Festal Choral Eucharist*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2021, 10:00 P.M.

We are pleased to offer our traditional Carol Vigil and Festal Choral Eucharist on **Christmas Eve**, starting at 10:00 p.m. with carols, and a joyous service of choral Eucharist at 10:30 p.m. This service will also be livestreamed on our YouTube channel.

### *Christmas Day*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2021, 10:00 A.M.

We will be having a lovely Christmas Day service of Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m. in our Nave! Come celebrate the Nativity of our Lord!

### *Patron Saint Day, St. Stephen*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021, 10:00 A.M.

This year, the feast of our patron saint St. Stephen falls on the first Sunday after Christmas! The next time this occurs will be in 2027! We will have one service of Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m. in our Nave.

## WHO WAS ST. STEPHEN?

Saint Stephen was the first Christian martyr. He was a Hellenist, a Greek-speaking Jew born and reared outside Palestine. His name is Greek, meaning "crown." He was one of the seven chosen by the Jerusalem congregation to see that the Hellenistic Jewish Christians got their fair share of the contributions. Stephen's preaching caused a revolution in the attitude of some of the Jewish people toward the young Christian church. There was a period of persecution which scattered Christians into many parts of the world outside Jerusalem.



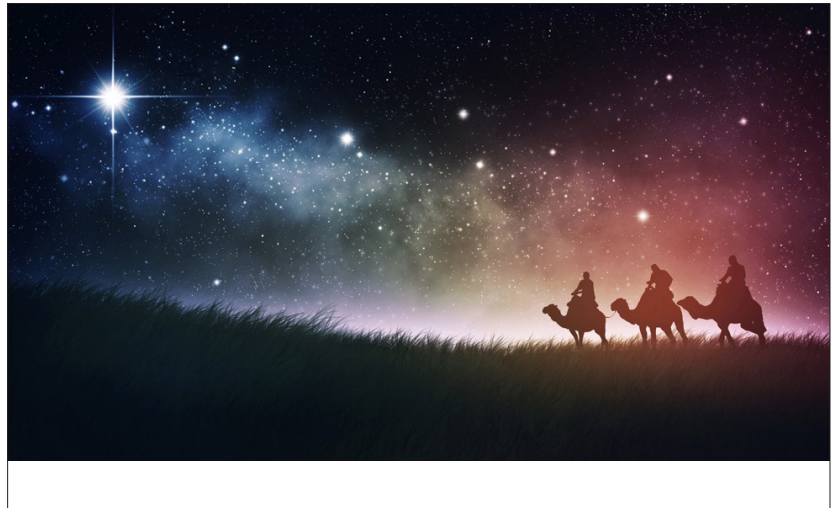
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The young Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, witnessed Stephen's stoning and heard the martyr's prayer for his enemies. Saul eventually took up the work cut short by Stephen's death. Tradition says that Stephen's burial place was discovered on December 5, 415, and that his bones were moved to Jerusalem on December 26. Some scholars say that December 26 was chosen as St. Stephen's Day because he was the first martyr for Christ and that he appropriately appears first in the procession of saints who surround the cradle of Christ. Stephen is commemorated in the Episcopal calendar of the church year on December 26.

## PREPARING FOR EPIPHANY

Epiphany is sometimes considered a forgotten season in the liturgical year, sandwiched between the exciting 12 days of Christmas and the penitent season of Lent. Epiphany offers amazingly rich themes and images that give the season its own character. The season begins with the Feast of the Epiphany, featuring the gospel of the revelation of Christ to the Magi, the first Gentiles to honor him with gold, frankincense and myrrh. The core theme of the season is simply "epiphany", meaning a revelation, discovery or new manifestation. Our gospel readings reflect a series of epiphanies: Jesus is revealed as God's beloved Son at his baptism; Simeon and Anna recognize the light of God in the child at his Presentation in the temple; Jesus's first disciples are called from their daily lives to join his mission; Jesus begins his ministry of healing, preaching and drawing crowds; and finally, we receive the revelation on the mountaintop as we receive the gospel of the Transfiguration on the last Sunday of the season.



The colors of Epiphany are usually the colors of Christmas: white, gold, and green: the colors of celebration, newness and hope that mark the most sacred days of the church year. On the days of Epiphany, the Baptism of Our Lord and Transfiguration, the altar is decorated white, but the *season* of Epiphany is marked by the color green. The traditional liturgical symbols of Epiphany are usually associated with the Magi: three crowns, three gifts, a five-pointed star, or a combination of a star and crown.

Some of the most common and comforting images of Epiphany include Christ as the Light of the world; light, illumination, and glory; revelation - of mystery, holiness, and love; wandering and seeking; and the call for God's people to bear witness to that light and love. As James Farwell writes,

*"If Advent prepares us for the coming of God and the call to final transformation under God's reign, and Christmas celebrates its inauguration in Christ, then Epiphany turns us toward the outworking of our participation in that reign as followers of Jesus by following him into his ministry."*

Beyond the Epiphany gospel, in this season the gospel lessons offer the story of Jesus' baptism and the beginning of his public ministry, told through the lens of one of the Gospels - this year, Luke. The season after Epiphany is long - nearly two months - offering an opportunity to dwell with both the season and with Luke's narrative and voice. What do these gospel lessons tell us about who Jesus Christ is, in and for the world? What does it teach us about what we are called to be, as his disciples?

## HOLY DAYS AND SPECIAL EVENTS IN EPIPHANY

The Feast of Epiphany is celebrated on January 6<sup>th</sup>, a date chosen in ancient times to counteract a pagan festival in Egypt that marked the winter solstice. The pagan festival used themes of light, water, and wine. Making use of these same elements, the Eastern Church celebrates the revelation of Jesus Christ at his birth, marked by the light of the Nativity star; at his baptism in water; and at Cana, where he changed water to wine. The word Epiphany means **manifestation**. The readings for Epiphany manifest, or reveal, the person and nature of Jesus.

The Western Church, which had begun to celebrate Christmas on December 25<sup>th</sup> in opposition to a pagan winter solstice in Rome, appropriated some, but not all, of the Eastern significance of Epiphany. In the West, celebration of Epiphany emphasized the visit of the magi, guided by the Nativity star. This event came to be interpreted as the revelation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

Scripture does not describe the number or race or mode of travel of the magi. The biblical emphasis is on the magi's three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts reveal the royal, divine, and sacrificial nature of the infant Jesus.

Many customs exist in European countries that give the day far more significance than in our own culture. Some countries use this day, rather than Christmas Day, as the time to exchange gifts. Other countries observe the day with "Star Carols" sung by a procession of singers, dressed as magi and carrying stars.

### THE FEAST OF LIGHTS ~ TWELFTH NIGHT

You might be familiar with Shakespeare's play *Twelfth Night*, which refers to the evening of January 6<sup>th</sup>. Counting from December 25<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Day), January 6<sup>th</sup> is always the Twelfth Day of Christmas. Thus, that evening is Twelfth Night. **This year, we will introduce a new Feast of Lights on January 9, 2022, in the Parish Hall after the 10 a.m. Sunday worship service.** This event marks the beginning of our journey through Epiphany, which lasts until Shrove Tuesday, which falls on March 1, 2022.

### THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

The Baptism of Christ, always celebrated on the first Sunday *after* The Day of Epiphany, is an important feast of the season. It is an auspicious time for baptisms, and we frequently use the Renewal of Baptismal Vows in place of the Nicene Creed. At his baptism, Jesus is revealed as the Son of God and sealed by God's Holy Spirit. After this feast, the Sundays of Ordinary Time, between Epiphany and Lent, reveal Jesus enacting his baptismal ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing. Our own baptisms share in this manifestation or revelation. At baptism, each of us stood revealed as God's own child, sealed with the Holy Spirit, and called to ministry and mission.

### CANDLEMAS

Candlemas is another name for the Presentation of Christ, a gospel feast that falls on February 2 every year. The name refers to the custom of blessing candles on this feast - as a symbol of the Light named by Simeon in the gospel story (Luke 2:22-40) and as hopeful signs of the return of light as winter wanes. This day also happens to be the midpoint between the winter solstice and the vernal equinox! (It's also Groundhog Day!) Simeon's song - the Nunc Dimittis (BCP 93) - is the third of three powerful songs of faith about Jesus and his significance for the world, found in the first two chapters of Luke, following the *Magnificat* (BCP 91) and the song of Zechariah (BCP 92).

### SYMBOLS OF EPIPHANY : 20 + C + B + M + 22

House blessings are a special custom in Epiphany. Around January 6<sup>th</sup>, the symbol H + C + B + M with two numbers before and two numbers after are sometimes seen written in chalk above the doorway of Christian homes. The letters are the initials of the traditional names of the Three Magi: Caspar, Balthazar, Melchior. These three letters also abbreviate the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house." The beginning and ending numbers are the year, 2022, and the crosses represent Christ.





# December & January Celebrations

## BIRTHDAYS

12/2 Liz Johnson	1/1 Brian Robertson
12/4 Amelia Knight	1/2 Anne Campbell
12/8 Pat Reuss	1/3 Lola Estes
Emily Doane	1/4 Andrew Payzant
12/10 Christine Gammage	1/5 Linda Twohig
12/11 Mary Nell Campbell	Alex Green
12/12 Happy Johnson	Robert Thurman
12/13 Horia Iskander	1/6 Jack Lee
Daphne Giuliano	1/9 Donny Sams
12/15 Shafik Iskander	1/11 Judith Delaney
Cyril Meredith, IV	Pat Swinney
12/18 Bonnie Nestor	1/12 Anne Parks Johnson
Brad Hillis	Jennifer Kruzic
12/12 Paul Kruzic	1/13 Leo Mauk-Olson
12/23 Ann Aaron	Bonnie Bautz
12/24 Julie Webber	1/14 Katherine Grubb
12/25 Wes Delaney	1/15 Dustin Cox
12/26 Ed Johnson	1/16 Lindsay Mayes
12/29 Liam Schramm	1/17 Goldie Kennedy
12/30 Judie Liby	Craig Brent
Dean Hartley	1/20 Kelly Cooper
Nancy Higdon	1/21 Elwood Gift
	Carolyn Stanley
	Keegan Yearwood
	1/23 Leah Bailey
	1/26 Louis Pennoyer
	1/27 Courtney Manrod
	1/31 Betsy Ellis
	Liz Herbes
	Wayne Rhoades

## ANNIVERSARIES

12/5 Deb & Roger Johnson
12/8 Ruth & Blynn Prince
12/15 Leah & Matt Bailey
12/19 Jennifer & Paul Kruzic
12/29 Joy & Serge Fournier
Jeanne & Jim Kring
12/30 Liz & Derek Baker
1/3 Carolyn & Parker Stanley
1/30 Judie & Alan Liby



Where God is seen, love is felt, lives are changed!

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church 212 N. Tulane Avenue Oak Ridge, TN 37830

865.483.8497 Tel • 865.483.9926 Fax • [www.ststephensor.org](http://www.ststephensor.org)