



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 29, Issue 4
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

April 2018
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The past couple of months we have been discussing the doctrine of the Church. With Easter being today or next Sunday, depending on when you pick up the *Witness*, I have been thinking a bit about the importance of Easter to the Church. In fact it is safe to say if there had been no Easter, no resurrection of Jesus, there would be no Church. Most certainly if Christ had not been raised from the dead, the disciples would have disbanded, and that would be that!

Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is vain... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied." (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17-19) He goes on to say, "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:20) The Church exists today because Christ was raised from the dead 2000 years ago!

Having looked at the nature of the Church let us now consider what Louis Berkhof refers to as "the government and power of the Church." Starting at the top, Christ is the Head of the Church and the source of its authority. "And He (God) has put all things under His (Christ's) feet and has made Him the head over all things for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." (Ephesians 1:22-23) Christ rules the Church, not by force, but by His Word and Spirit. It is important that we always remember who the Head of the Church

is. It is not the Pope, local bishops, the minister, or the elders, but Christ. Peter refers to Christ as "the chief Shepherd."

Subject to Christ and submitting to His Word are the officers of the Church. Berkhof divides them into two groups, one he refers to as extraordinary officers and the other as ordinary officers. Under extraordinary officers he includes apostles, prophets and evangelists. In the strictest sense the term "apostle" refers to the twelve chosen by Jesus, to Paul and possibly to a few others. A couple of qualifications for being an apostle include having been directly called by Christ and having seen Jesus after the resurrection. Based on this definition the apostles were limited to the first century.

Prophets were men and women who were specifically gifted to speak for the edification of the Church. This was their primary calling, though occasionally they predicted future events. Evangelists were those with the gift of evangelism.

What Berkhof refers to as ordinary officers include elders and deacons. Elders are the governing officers of the Church and are sometimes referred to as overseers. Those appointed as deacons are those who had a special calling to serve the Church. Many think that the institution of this office is recorded in Acts 6:1-6 where deacons are appointed to meet the physical needs of the Church so that the apostles/elders could devote themselves to meeting the spiritual needs of the Church.

Also as a part of the government of the Church is what are referred to as ecclesiastical assemblies. "Ecclesiastical" comes from the Greek word

ekklesia, which is translated in English “church”. The government of the local church is by the elders. We refer to the assembly of the elders of the local church as the Session (or consistory).

In addition to the Session there are also other major assemblies. Because we are an independent congregation we do not participate in these other major assemblies, but in the Presbyterian tradition they are referred to as presbyteries (or classis) and synods. The purpose of these major assemblies are to oversee the local congregations and ministers and to settle matters relating to church order and doctrine. Berkhof puts it this way, “Ecclesiastical assemblies should naturally deal only with church matters, matters of doctrine and morals, of church government and discipline.”

Because my ordination is in the Reformed Church in America I attend the meetings of the Central Plains Classis. I was also asked to be a delegate to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America this year but had to take a pass since Anne was going to be out of town at the same time and someone needed to be around to manage the household.

Enough about church government. Next month we will consider what Berkhof refers to as “the power of the Church.” In the meantime let us remember that we are called to submit to those whom God has placed in positions of leadership in the Church. But more importantly we are called to submit to Christ who is the Head of the Church and who is the “chief Shepherd.”

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

Worship Schedule - Every Sunday
9:30AM - Adult & Children’s Sunday School
11:00AM – Worship

Maundy Thursday March 29, 7:00PM
Easter Sunday Worship April 1, 11:00AM



APRIL SERMON TOPICS

The first Sunday in April is Easter. On Easter we will be looking at Mark’s account of Jesus’ resurrection. On the remaining Sundays in April we will be continuing our study of Ecclesiastes.

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| April 1 | Mark 16:1-8 | |
| | | <i>The Resurrection of Jesus Christ</i> |
| April 8 | Ecclesiastes 2 | <i>Disgusted with Life?</i> |
| April 15 | Ecclesiastes 3 | <i>Time and Toil</i> |
| April 22 | Ecclesiastes 4 | <i>Life Just Isn’t Fair</i> |
| April 29 | Ecclesiastes 5 | <i>Stop, Thief!</i> |

February Session Report

FINANCIAL REPORT: Discussion of the financial report indicated that general fund giving is still below annual budget planning. A financial report comparison was developed by Robert Buswell covering FY 2016, FY 2017 and (YTD) 2018. This allowed the session to have a detailed direct comparison of the total picture associated with all facets of our general fund.

FELLOWSHIP: Great participation in the church potluck. Easter brunch is in the developmental stages and will be finalized very soon.

NURTURE: Sunday school and Way Day attendance increased during the month of February. VBS discussions will begin soon.

OUTREACH: Easter program will be conducted Easter morning from 9:30-10:30AM. The focus is on Holy Week and the true meaning of the Easter story, with an emphasis on Jesus and the season. Mother’s Day preparation continues to develop.

STEWARDSHIP/MEMORIALS: Several donations have been received in honor of Patty Almen, Charlie Mighton, Cleo Larason and Dorothy Bryson.

WORSHIP: March 29 – Maundy Thursday service at 7:00PM.

OLD BUSINESS: Choir director discussions-postings of the position have been placed at various locations.

Prayer Requests

If you have missed prayers or would like to be added to the Women’s Fellowship prayer chain please call Doris Cornell 943-1732 or Treva Gullett 735-9908.

WAY DAY DATES 2018

April 4, 11 & 18

Remember, the congregation is invited to dinner at 6:00PM on Way Days. Call the church office by noon on Wednesday if you wish to dine with us.

SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evenings at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford's – April 8 & 22 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – April 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – April 17 at 2:30PM.

Men's Prayer Group – Saturday mornings at 7:30AM.

Ushers/Greeters

April Greeters: Nelson & Carla Pickrell

April Ushers:

April 1 – Kym Manning, Wendy Smith, Sandy Gifford, Nancy Spradling

April 8 – Michael Bassett, Frank Miranda, Pat Robison, Nancy Spradling

April 15 – Michael Bassett, Sandy Gifford, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

April 22 – Michael Bassett, Pat Robison, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

April 29 – Youth

Fellowship Hour Treats

April 1 – Easter Fellowship

April 8 – Carla & Nelson Pickrell, Jaquelyn Kuhn

April 15 – Wendy Smith, Kari Kosanke

April 22 – Joan & Frank Miranda, Pat Robison

April 29 – Laurie Daub, Lana Stephens

Special

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EASTER OFFERING

We will be collecting our Special Easter Offering March 25 and April 1. Our offerings will be going to support the work of *Infant*

Crisis Center and Manos Juntas Clinic.



“The resurrection ... was only the beginning of a great, grand and vast outreach that has never ended and will not end until our Lord Jesus Christ comes back again.”
A.W. Tozer

Easter Adventure



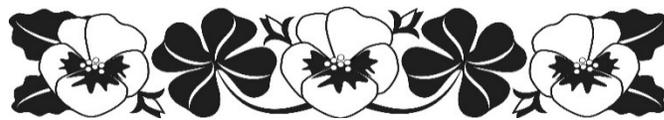
The Easter Adventure will take place on Easter Sunday, April 1 during Sunday school time, 9:30-10:30AM. Children need to be at church by 9:15AM in the sanctuary to start promptly at 9:30AM. The children won't want to miss any part of the hunt so be on time! Mark McBride will be taking candid photos and there will be a photo area staged so bring your cameras/phones.☺ Following the hunt will be our wonderful Easter fellowship time with family and friends.

We will need prizes for the children to purchase with their Bunny Bucks. There is a sign-up to purchase prizes or you can make a donation.

Please extend an invitation to friends and family to join us Easter Sunday.

THANKS
from the
HEART

Richard and I would like to thank St. Stephen's for the cards and many expressions of caring we have received after the passing of my mother, Dorothy Bryson. We have felt so embraced and supported by our church family. Many thanks to Butch Derrick, Marcia Ledbetter and others with them who visited Mom. Special thanks to Treva Gullett who sent weekly cards and letters to Mom for the last 23 months. We are so thankful for all the faithful church members who with Pastor Mark kept the church alive for my mother while she was unable to attend.
Donna Urdahl



BETA FLOWER SALE

The flower sale is Friday, April 20 from 8AM-5PM and Saturday, April 21 from 9AM-12:00PM.

Most sales are made by pre-orders but we always order enough extra plants to sell on the dates above. The profits from the sale go to provide scholarships to local students and to support our Literacy programs.

Thank you for your support, *Marilyn Hanson*



SEQUENCE PLAYERS

Sequence will meet April 24. Any questions, please call Doris Cornell at 943-1732.

HELP NEEDED



Have a Green Thumb and want to volunteer? We need help watering the church's outdoor flowers this summer. Many hands will make watering easier. You can help weekly or monthly. Please contact Christa Charlie if you are able and willing to help with the watering.

LOOKING AHEAD

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Drama Camp July 9-13, 9AM-12PM
Programs: Saturday, July 14 at 6:00PM,
Sunday, July 15 at 11:00AM.

OUR TRUE POWER SOURCE

The story is told of someone who plugged a power strip into itself and then couldn't understand why the system wouldn't turn on! We get a kick out of such tales, yet how often do we try to "power" our own lives? We frequently think we need to be the source of our own strength, joy, peace, energy and wisdom.

Jesus doesn't teach us to find life within ourselves — or in any human being or earthly circumstance, object or philosophy. Rather, calling Himself the good shepherd, Jesus says, "I have come that [my sheep] may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

We don't access that abundant life by "plugging into" ourselves. Instead, Jesus invites us to plug into His power — and joy, peace, hope, truth — through prayer and Scripture, worship and service, fellowship with other Christians and the beauty of God's world.

"Easter is the soul's first taste of spring."

Richelle Goodrich

"Nothing is so strong as gentleness, and nothing is so gentle as true strength."

St. Francis de Sales

Following God's Lead



Jazz musician Thomas Dorsey traveled an unlikely road to become the "father of black gospel music." At age 11, he dropped out of school to be a vaudeville performer and blues pianist. While Dorsey recovered from a nervous breakdown at age 21, his mother urged him to serve the Lord with his talents. It took several years, but the musician committed to composing spiritual songs — rejected by many mainstream churches as "the devil's music."

In 1932, after Dorsey's wife and infant son died during childbirth, he channeled his grief into the piano, writing "Precious Lord, Take My Hand." Known to be a favorite song of Martin Luther King Jr., it ends with these lyrics: "Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light. Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home."

Quiche Laraine Newman

From Nick & Barbara Hermes

Love, Laughter and Good Food Cookbook

- 6 slices bacon
- ½ onion, chopped
- Frozen pie crust
- 3-4 beaten eggs
- 1½ cup milk
- ¼ tsp salt
- 8 oz. shredded Swiss cheese
- 8 oz. shredded cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 375 F. Cook bacon over medium high heat until crispy. Move bacon to paper towel and pat as much grease off as you can; crumble bacon. Reserve 2 T of the bacon grease in the skillet. Add onion and cook until tender. Remove onion and pat away as much grease as you can. In a large bowl, mix eggs, milk and salt. Stir in the bacon and onion. In a separate bowl, mix Swiss cheese and 1 T flour. Add to egg mixture and mix together with your (clean) hands. Add mix to the pie shell in an even layer. Bake 10 minutes. Remove from oven and cover top with cheddar cheese. Bake 30 to 40 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving with fruit or vegetables.

CHURCH OFFICERS

Elders

Class of 2018

Robert Buswell	426-7429	Treasurer
Jon Powell	470-0230	Outreach
Dana Wilson	706-3191	Nurture

Class of 2019

Dwight Daub	618-7497	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Kent Larason	808-3971	Fellowship

Class of 2020

John Hermes	202-9621	President of Corporation/ Nominating
Mark McBride	410-2003	Worship

Deacons

Class of 2018

Lori Pickrell	503-9585	Clerk
Pat Robison	879-2762	Missions

Class of 2019

Jaquelyn Kuhn	424-2123	Church Work Days
Kym Manning	426-7298	Van/Transportation

Class of 2020

Christa Charlie	834-7031	Flowers
Nancy Spradling	206-5828	Ushers/Greeters
Randy Stateler	620-253-6431	Maintenance

WITNESS DEADLINE

April 23 is the deadline to submit articles for the May 2018 *Witness*. You may bring items to the church office or e-mail them to: secretary@ststephensokc.org. Thanks! Laurie Daub, St. Stephen's Secretary

St. Stephen's Church

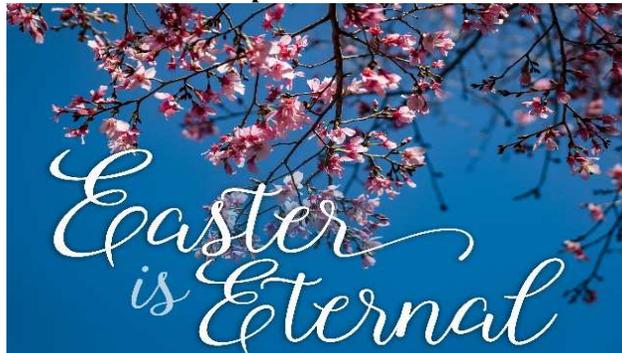
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[facebook.com/StStephensOKC](https://www.facebook.com/StStephensOKC)



1	Raymond Conn
2	Joy Bassett
3	Joshua Bradford
3	John Wood
7	Patrick Larsen
11	Ann Wilson
18	Betsy Felton
21	Jacques Lampin
22	Donna Urdahl
24	Hannah Hudson
24	Treva Gullett
24	Jenni O'Neil
25	Miranda Von Tungeln
27	Eden O'Neil



26	Fred & Nancy Thompson
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***If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.*

Salvation Army Request

Reminder that we are collecting small soaps like the ones you get at hotels or motels. Please bring them to the church office.

Prescription Drugs Needed

If you have any **unexpired** prescription drugs to donate, please give them to Laurie.

Special Dates

Easter Sunday, *April 1*

