



# THE WITNESS

## St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

**Volume 28, Issue 12**  
**The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor**

**December 2017**  
**Church Phone (405) 843-5333**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This month we are going to consider the ninth commandment which is, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Exodus 20:16) In its narrowest sense we think of this commandment meaning simply what it says - - bearing false witness in a court of law. Exodus 23 expands this by saying, "You shall not utter a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man, to be a malicious witness. You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; nor shall you bear witness in a suit, turning aside after a multitude, so as to pervert justice." (Exodus 23:1-3). But if we start to expand this commandment it can easily extend to forbidding such things as any kind of lying, slander and gossip. Someone once noted that of the Ten Commandments, two of them have to do with the tongue, commandments 4 and 9.

The Heidelberg Catechism only has one question and answer related to the ninth commandment. The question is, "What is God's will for us in the ninth commandment? The answer is, "God's will is that I never give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words, nor gossip or slander, nor join in condemning anyone without a hearing or without a just cause. Rather, in court and everywhere else, I should avoid lying and deceit of every kind; these are devices the devil himself uses, and they would call down on me God's intense anger. I should love the truth, speak it candidly, and openly acknowledge it. And I should do what I can to guard and advance my neighbors' good name."

Let us briefly consider some of the scriptural support for what the Heidelberg catechism states. In

Romans 1:28-32 the Apostle Paul gives a list of sins that those who "do not see fit to acknowledge God" are guilty of. The ones that relate to the ninth commandment are deceit, gossip and slander. Proverbs 12:22 says, "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD." Proverbs 13:5 says, "A righteous man hates falsehood."

John in his writings allows for no middle ground. Either one is in the light or one is in the darkness; either one has the Son and has life or one has not the Son and has not life. John sees the same dichotomy between truth and falsehood. This comes out very clearly in his gospel. Jesus is "the truth" (John 14:6), the embodiment of truth itself. In contrast, the devil is the one in whom there is no truth. Jesus says, "When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44b). In keeping the ninth commandment we imitate our Lord Jesus; in breaking it we imitate the great deceiver himself, Satan. Which is it going to be? The Heidelberg Catechism tell us that we should love the truth. Paul exhorts the church with these words, "Therefore, putting away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." (Ephesians 4:25)

The last sentence of the Heidelberg Catechism's answer gives us a positive command. It tells us what we should do instead of bearing false witness. "And I should do what I can to guard and advance my neighbor's good name."

Let us work on taming our tongues. Let us learn to love the truth and hate falsehood. May God by His grace work in us that which is pleasing in His sight.

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

**Children's Christmas Programs**

December 16 at 6:00PM

December 17 11:00AM

**Christmas Eve Worship**

**December 24 at 7:00PM**

**DECEMBER SERMON TOPICS**

December is the season of Advent leading into the Christmas Season. The first couple of Sundays in December we will be looking at the lectionary passages from Mark's Gospel. This year Christmas Eve is the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We will be having two services on Christmas Eve, our normal Sunday morning service at 11:00AM and our Christmas Eve Service at 7:00PM.

- December 3 First Sunday of Advent  
Mark 13:24-37  
*The Second Advent of Christ*
- December 10 Second Sunday of Advent  
Mark 1:1-8  
*The Ministry of John the Baptist*
- December 17 Third Sunday of Advent  
Children's Christmas Musical
- December 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Luke 1:26-38  
*The Birth of Jesus Foretold*
- December 24 Christmas Eve  
Galatians 4:1-7  
*When the Time Had Fully Come*

**WAY DAY DATES**

**2017**

December 6 & 13

**2018**

January 10, 17 & 24 February 7, 14 & 21

March 7, 14 & 28 April 4, 11 & 18



*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.

**NOVEMBER Session Report**

**FELLOWSHIP:** Our annual Thanksgiving fellowship dinner held yesterday (November 12) was very well received, with 94 people in attendance.

**NOMINATIONS:** Nominees for Elder are: John Hermes and Mark McBride. Nominees for Deacon are: Nancy Spradling and Randy Stateler.

**NURTURE:** All nurture-related activities (nursery, Sunday school, and Way Day) are functioning smoothly. The 20 backpacks being assembled for the Feed Our Sheep ministry are nearly completed. Twenty gift cards from McDonald's (\$10 each) will be purchased and added to the backpacks. In addition to cash already collected, the balance of the \$160 purchase price will come from the Deacon's Fund.

**OUTREACH:** This year's Trunk or Treat event actually did better than last year's even though a recent downward trend had been noted. Despite the decreased focus on candy and the elimination of horror-based trunks, there were more trunks present than were actually signed up, and about 10-15 more people attended than in 2016. No written survey was distributed this year, but Pastor Mark and Don Lee manned an information table that drew many attendees.

The Session had a lengthy discussion on the concept and goals of evangelism, providing many salient comments and ideas to Jon Powell for sharing with the Outreach Committee.

**WORSHIP:** The Thanksgiving Service is scheduled for Thursday, November 23 at 10:00AM. The next regular communion service (by intinction) will be on the First Sunday of Advent, December 3. Our annual Christmas Eve Service (Sunday, December 24) will begin at 7:00PM.

**OTHER BUSINESS: ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Coming events of note include [1] the annual Hanging of the Greens on Sunday, November 26 at 4:00PM and [2] a congregational meeting on Sunday, December 10 immediately following worship services for presentation of new Elder and Deacon nominees.



## SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evening at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford's – December 3 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – December 4, 11 & 18 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – December 5.

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

## Ushers/Greeters

**December Greeter:** Sandy Gifford

**December Ushers:**

**December 3** – Michael Bassett, Nancy Spradling, Wendy Smith, Sandy Gifford

**December 10** – Kym Manning, Patsy Kuhn, Pat Robison, Sandy Gifford

**December 17** – Michael Bassett, Nancy Spradling, Wendy Smith, Sandy Gifford

**December 24** – Pat Robison, Kym Manning, Patsy Kuhn, Sandy Gifford

**December 31** – Youth

## Fellowship Hour Treats

**December 3** – Patsy Kuhn, Jean & Kent Larason

**December 10** – Carla & Nelson Pickrell, Jaquelyn Kuhn

**December 17** – Wendy Smith, Gentry Hinline

**December 24** – Lori Pickrell, Sarah Welte

**December 31** – Laurie Daub

## WAY DAY NEWS

The Way Day November Service Project was a booming success!! We filled 20 backpacks for Oklahoma City's homeless, and collected enough surplus to easily fill 20 more! What a great lesson in generously loving our neighbors, thanks to the overwhelming kindness of our church family. All donated items will be delivered to *Feed My Sheep Ministry*.  
*Dana Wilson*



We will be selling Poinsettias again this year. The sizes are: 6" - \$7.00 and 10" - \$15.00. Watch for Terianne Wood in the hallway for signups December 3, 10, & 17.

## Women's Fellowship Bake Sale

Thank you to everyone who baked and purchased from our bake sale. It was an amazing turnout. The grand total came to \$1,787.00. Praise God!

## Manos Juntas

The Board at Manos Juntas elected to cease receiving **expired medications** so we will no longer be accepting prescriptions or over the counter meds that have expired here at church. They will continue to take any medical machines. Thank you to everyone who has given and supported this wonderful service. They greatly appreciate all that we have sent.

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



## Rehearsals will be:

Saturdays: 10:00AM-12:00PM

December 2, 9 & 16

## Children's Christmas Program

Saturday, December 16 6:00PM

Sunday, December 17 11:00AM

## SEQUENCE PLAYERS



*Sequence* will meet in January. Any questions, please call Doris Cornell at 943-1732.

## Special Christmas Offering

We will be collecting our special Christmas Offering on December 17 and 24. This offering will be given to *Reaching Our City* and the *Salvation Army*.



*"The only blind person at Christmastime is he who has not Christmas in his heart."*

*Helen Keller*

## CHURCH OFFICERS

### Elders

#### Class of 2017

Frank Miranda	802-1731	Clerk/Stewardship & Memorials
Wendy Smith	691-8830	Fellowship

#### 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	President of Corporation/ Nominating
Kent Larason	808-3971	Worship

### Deacons

#### Class of 2017

Michael Bassett	942-2074	Maintenance
Sandy Gifford	947-7226	Ushers/Greeters
Terianne Wood	657-2213	Flowers

#### 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

### WITNESS DEADLINE

**December 20** is the deadline to submit articles for the January 2018 Witness. You may bring items to the church office or e-mail them to: [secretary@ststephensokc.org](mailto:secretary@ststephensokc.org).

Thanks! Laurie Daub, St. Stephen's Secretary

### St. Stephen's Church

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1	Sarah Welte
3	Kent Larason
3	Mason Kuhn
5	Marcia Ledbetter
5	Steve Wilson
5	Benjamin McBride
5	Eleanor McBride
9	Kyler Kosanke
13	Claire Wilson
13	Mariah Bailey
15	Patty Almen
16	Jim Gullett
20	Alex Ballaré
21	Jessica Welte
21	Kathy Conn
23	Nikki Dawson
28	Denita Harrison
29	Linda Willis
31	Charles Mighton



4	Shane & Jimalee Murphy
28	Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford

*\*\*If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.*

### Special Dates

First Sunday of Advent, *December 3*

Second Sunday of Advent, *December 10*

Third Sunday of Advent, *December 17*

First day of winter, *December 21*

Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 24*

Christmas Eve, *December 24*

Christmas Day, *December 25*

New Year's Eve/Watch Night, *December 31*

