



THE WITNESS

St. Stephen's Church Newsletter

Volume 29, Issue 6
The Rev. Mark Bradford, Pastor

June 2018
Church Phone (405) 843-5333

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have been discussing the doctrine of the Church and the means of grace. Doctrine is a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by the Church, so the doctrine of the Church has to do with what we believe about the Church. We have considered the nature of the Church and the government and power of the Church. We now want to move on to discuss what has traditionally been referred to as the “means of grace.” The means of grace are the Word of God and the sacraments. In the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition the Word of God has always been viewed as the most important means of grace. The Roman Catholic Church has tended to ascribe this honor to the sacraments.

When we refer to the Word of God we are speaking of God’s Word as it is contained in Scripture. There is another very important component in all of this, for many people have read the Bible without it having any effect on them. The Holy Spirit is essential in the Word becoming a means of grace. Louis Berkhof observes, “The Word is made effective as a means of grace only through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Word alone is not sufficient to work faith and conversion, but is yet the necessary instrument.” The Holy Spirit does not ordinarily work without the Word. Paul emphasizes this important aspect of the Word when he says, “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)

There are two parts of the Word that are a means of grace, the Law and the Gospel. The Law is a means of grace in that it brings us under the

conviction of sin and arouses within us a consciousness that we cannot meet the demands of the Law but are in need of a savior. It also instructs us in how we are to live our lives even though we are aware that we will never reach the perfection required by the Law in this life. When we speak of the Gospel here, we are thinking of the good news which is contained not just in the four Gospels, but in the entirety of the New Testament.

The Gospel is a clear representation of the way of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ. It calls us to come to Christ in faith and repentance, and promises to save those who do repent and truly believe the blessings of salvation in the present and in the future. So Paul is able to say, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel: *it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith*, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (Romans 1:1)

Next we want to discuss the sacraments as a means of grace. We will begin with a discussion of the sacraments in general and then at a future time discuss the specific sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. It is our understanding that the Word of God is complete as a means of grace, but the sacraments are not complete without the Word. We mention this because the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the sacraments contain all that is necessary unto salvation.

Louis Berkhof lists three ways in which the Word and the sacraments differ: (1) the Word is absolutely necessary, while the sacraments are not (There are certain Protestant denominations as well as the Roman Catholic Church that teach that baptism is

necessary for salvation.); (2) the Word serves to beget and to strengthen faith, while the sacraments can only strengthen it; and (3) the Word is for all the world, but the sacraments are only for believers and their seed.

The simple definition I was taught regarding a sacrament was, “a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of and inward work of grace.” Berkhof has a longer and more comprehensive definition. He defines a sacrament in this way: “A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, in which by sensible signs the grace of God in Christ is represented, sealed, and applied to the believers, and they, in turn, express their faith and obedience to God.”

There are three parts that must be distinguished in the sacraments. The first is the outward and visible sign. This consists of water in baptism and the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper. The second part is the inward spiritual grace signified. This is the internal matter of the sacrament. The third part is the union between the sign and the thing signified. Berkhof says that this really constitutes the essence of the sacrament. Where the sacrament is received in faith, the grace of God accompanies it.

We will continue our discussion of the sacraments next month. Though not all denominations recognize sacraments at all or that there is an inward working of grace that takes place when the sacraments are received by faith, Presbyterian and Reformed churches have traditionally taught that there is. Next time you participate in the Lord’s Supper consider the fact that we view it as a means of grace and that as we partake of the Lord’s Supper in faith, God through His Spirit is doing a special work in our lives.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mark*

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

JUNE SERMON TOPICS

During the month of June we will be finishing our study of the Book of Ecclesiastes. The writer reaches his conclusion in chapter 12, verses 13 and 14, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the

whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

- June 3 Ecclesiastes 9:1-10
Make the Best of This Life
- June 10 Ecclesiastes 10:1-11
Folly Hurtful; Wisdom Helpful
- June 17 Ecclesiastes 11
How to Invest a Life
- June 24 Ecclesiastes 12:1-8, 13-14
The End of the Matter

May Session Report

FINANCIAL REPORT: Discussion of the financial report indicated that the general fund is currently in a positive position.

FELLOWSHIP: Easter brunch was extremely well attended with a lot of positive feedback.

NURTURE: Sunday school – Looking for substitute teachers for the summer to give the current teachers a break.

VBS – June 22-23, Friday night and Saturday during the day.

OUTREACH: Thanks to the Mother’s Day committee and cooks for making this celebration a great success. Next up is prep for Father’s Day and to create a possible outreach for the community.

STEWARDSHIP/MEMORIALS: Additional donations have been given in the names of Cleo Larason, Dorothy Bryson, Patty Almen and Charlie Mighton.

WORSHIP: Ascension Thursday service had good attendance.

OLD BUSINESS: Unanimous vote to offer Kaleb Benda the choir director position. Parking Lot Repair – Motion was made and passed to have Robert Buswell move forward with the parking lot repairs.

NEW BUSINESS: The Session unanimously agreed that lights in the kitchen and choir rooms should be replaced with LEDs. Replacement will begin upon notification of the church’s electrician.

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.

SMALL GROUPS

Bible Study & Prayer – Sunday evenings at Pastor Mark & Anne Bradford’s – June 3 & 24 at 5:30PM.

Monday Prayer Group – June 4, 11, 18 & 25 at 12:30PM, church library.

Tuesday Bible Study – June 19 at 2:30PM.

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

Ushers/Greeters

June Greeters: Chris & Ruby Ochoa

June Ushers:

June 3 – Sandy Gifford, Randy & Rebecca Stateler, Nancy Spradling

June 10 – Michael Bassett, Pat Robison, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

June 17 – Michael Bassett, Pat Robison, Wendy Smith, Nancy Spradling

June 24 – Youth

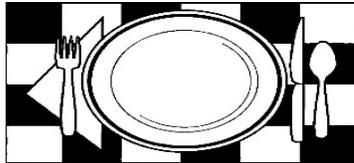
Fellowship Hour Treats

June 3 – Patsy Kuhn, Kent & Jean Larason

June 10 – Wendy Smith, Kari Kosanke

June 17 – **Father’s Day Brunch**

June 24 – Carla & Nelson Pickrell, Jaquelyn Kuhn



BRUNCH

Father’s Day Sunday, June 17

Begin serving at 9:15AM

CLEAR-HEADED FAITH

Most often ... worry is a lack of confidence in life, in its purpose, in God. Faith in life, in God, is native to the human spirit. ... Worry is faith in reverse. Not only because most of the things we are anxious over never come to pass, but also because, when we worry, the most obvious things to do in our situation are overlooked. We should relax our tension by trusting God and putting at the disposal of that trust a clear head. Howard Thurman, *Deep Is the Hunger*

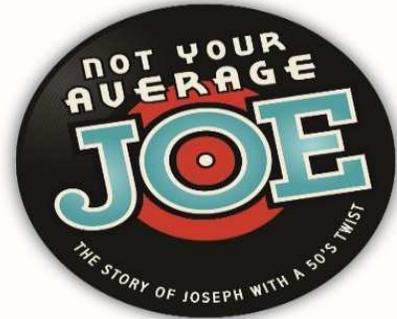
Well Done!

Congratulations to **Brayden Murphy** for making the *National Honor Society* through Epic Schools.

Vacation Bible School

Friday, June 22 & Saturday, June 23

Times to be determined.



Drama Camp

July 9–13, 9AM–12PM

Programs: Saturday, July 14 at 6:00PM,

Sunday, July 15 at 11:00AM.

SEQUENCE PLAYERS



Sequence will meet June 26. Any questions, please call Doris Cornell at 943-1732.

A FLASH OF PERSPECTIVE

If summer storms make you or a loved one nervous, the perspective one mom offered her young son might help:

“Though lightning can be harmful, God created it for good: The powerful electricity converts unusable nitrogen to nitrate, which plants need for growth and human bodies use to produce proteins.”

The boy was still uncertain, so Mom continued. “Did you know there’s lightning in heaven?” (See the description of John’s vision in Revelation 4:5.)

“And nothing in heaven can hurt,” said the boy, catching on.

Mom added, “Plus, lightning reminds me that Jesus is coming. Matthew (24:27, NIV) says, ‘As lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.’”

This summer, as lightning brightens the sky, reassure yourself — or a child — of lightning’s purpose and wonder.

Based on “I’m Afraid of Thunder and Lightning” *Family Time Story Devotions*

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

June 18 is the deadline to submit articles for the July 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

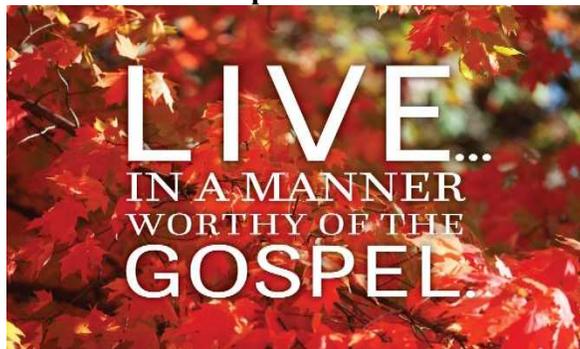
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Oklahoma City, OK 73112 405-843-5333

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2	Anna Welte
5	"Miss Butch" Derrick
11	Jaquelyn Kuhn
13	Kaleb Benda
19	Jon Powell
19	Dan Wilson
27	Elijah Morgan
30	Frank Miranda



6	Kent & Jean Larason
23	Glenn & Valerie Pulley
30	Dave & Judi Dawson

***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

Flag Day, *June 14*



Father's Day, *June 17*

First day of summer, *June 21*

My Compliments to the Creator

Dear God,
I saw the Grand Canyon this summer. Nice piece of work!
Love, Kyle (age 9)