

Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church



The Servant

November, 2006

Volume 14 Issue 8

West Valley City, Utah

Rector's Reflections

I make no secret of the fact that one of my joys of being a priest is being in community with you. The community of St. Stephen's is one of the shining highlights of my life. You truly incarnate our Mission Statement: *"St. Stephen's is a welcoming, confident community with a diversity of gifts; where all are equal in Christ. We live our baptismal vows through mutual respect, shared ministry, and joyful worship."*

Our communal life finds its strengths in any number of outlets from worship to shared meals to the pastoral care you give one another to the good times we have whenever we gather as a community. One of the significant aspects of our common life is our support for the ongoing ministries and obligations of St. Stephen's.

We are in the midst of our Stewardship Program for 2007. Our Stewardship is built on the trinity of "treasure, talent, and time." This is the one time of year when we emphasize the "treasure" of our stewardship. It is your

financial commitment to St. Stephen's that allows us to carry on the other parts of "talent and time." Your financial pledge to St. Stephen's is absolutely critical to our ability to offer Sunday School, our growing Youth Group (SWAP), our WOW programs, our facilities and our obligations in utilities and other financial commitments. Literally, without you, we could not maintain our witness and ministries in the western part of Salt Lake County.

The Vestry set a goal of \$65,000 in pledges this year to meet our obligations as a parish. As of now we are almost half way there. I invite and encourage you to look at your financial commitment to St. Stephen's. I have suggested in my first sermon on stewardship that we consider a minimum increase of 10% in the pledge from last year. I invite you to look at your offerings to St. Stephen's and complete the enclosed pledge card and either mail it or put it in the offering plate next Sunday.

As I have shared in a couple of sermons:

Stewardship is the disciple's response to accepting the Good News of Christ.

Stewardship is what we do after we say, I believe.

Stewardship begins within you, not within your checkbook.

Stewardship continues in your relationship with one another.

Stewardship is, finally, an act of gratitude for the blessings already

given you by a very gracious and generous God.

I believe this calls us to be gracious and generous in our giving.

Thank you for your ongoing support in "treasure, talent and time" to the ongoing ministries of St. Stephen's Parish!

Peace,

Fr. Lee †

Baptisms - We Welcome You into the Household of Faith

On All Saints Sunday we welcomed the following young people into the Christian Faith through the Sacrament of Baptism:

Scarlet Brenda Bach
Alexander Ian Bach
Mackenzie Jean Bach

Kurt Malcolm Bach
Hailey Brianne Howard
Jarren Wayne Howard

Bishop's Visitation - Sunday, 17th December 10 a.m.

Bishop Irish will make her visitation with confirmations on the Third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 17. Joining us for this service will be San Esteban and St. Barnabas Church, Tooele. This will be a bi-lingual service and will begin at 10 a.m. Please join us for this joyous celebration with our bishop.

Thanksgiving Dinner - Wednesday 22nd November 6 p.m.

We will celebrate the Eve of Thanksgiving on Wednesday, Nov. 22 with a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner (with an English accent by Marjorie Ball). We will also have a formal celebration of the Holy Eucharist for Thanksgiving at 7 p.m. Please join us as we give thanks for the abundance of our lives.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the Rev'd Canon Pablo Ramos who was elected to the Standing Committee at Diocesan Convention.

Also, congratulations to Fran Crookston who won the raffle for a beautiful quilt at the Diocesan Convention.

Thank you Virgil Knight

During our Founders Day Dinner Party, Virgil Knight won the raffle to choose the hymns for a particular Sunday. The hymns we will sing on Nov. 12 were chosen by Virgil.

Stewardship

A few thoughts on Stewardship. One dictionary I consulted lists Stewardship as “the employment or use of one’s time, talents or possessions.” With this thought in mind, I think of all that God, through His church, has done for me in my life. Whenever I had a need, God has always been there, even though I may not have recognized it at the time. I have found that when I prayed I have found strength and guidance to see me through the tough times. I can also enjoy the beauty given us in nature, and the opportunity to live and be part of a free society. Thus, I feel that it is only right that I return the offerings given me, by giving of myself in those three ways.

The earthly treasures we give, are not “collections,” but are “offerings” to God in appreciation for what he has offered to us. The same goes for giving of our time and talents. God’s church cannot survive with these freely given offerings from our community of members. - *Isabel Sullivan, Senior Warden.*

Wow! Worship on Wednesdays

Our WOW program continues to draw people for “Food for the body, for the Soul, and for the Mind.” I wish to thank all those who have made possible this program by their participation. It seems the sociability of those who gather on Wednesday nights gives strength for the week that lies ahead.

If you would like to contribute by assisting in the food preparation, please let us know, as we welcome your assistance. You can be compensated for your expense if you will bring your grocery receipts.

Again, thank you all, and know that your help with food preparation, set-up, clean-up and program ideas are very much appreciated. - *Isabel Sullivan*

Our WOW program continues to be very popular with dinner at 6 p.m., the Holy Eucharist at 7 p.m. and a program from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Please join us for the following programs in November.

Nov. 1 & 8 – The Very Rev. Mary June Nestler, Canon for Congregational Development, will present a two-part program on Christian Fundamentalism, “Being Anglican in a Fundamentalist World.”

Nov. 15 – Craig Wirth will join us to share stories of his research for his video on the 140th Anniversary of the Episcopal Church in Utah. Join us for this interesting and entertaining evening.

Nov. 22 – A special Thanksgiving Eve Program

Nov. 29 – Our Parish Discernment Committee will share with us the need for and development of various ministries within our community.

Parish Prayers

Each Sunday we print the names of people we hold in prayer as a community. I invite you to take this home with you each week and remember these people throughout the week in your own prayer life.

Adult Christian Education

St. Stephen’s offers two adult Christian education classes. Fr. Lee has been discussing the book, *Always Open*, as an introduction and conversation to the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion. His class meets in the back classroom.

Martin Willcocks’ class meets in the Marjorie Black Library and is viewing the video of “Jews and Christians,” In Advent, we will have another opportunity to see “The Glastonbury Traditions.”

St. Stephen’s Youth Group – SWAP.

In September Zach Johnson attended, with other jr. and sr. high diocesan youth, Sabbath Time at Camp Tuttle. The weekend was all about Sabbath, taking a “time out” from our busy lives and connecting with God. The event ended with the election of youth delegates to our Diocesan Convention – Zach was elected an alternate and traveled to Convention with the other youth delegates. *CONGRATULATIONS ZACH!*

On October 28 SWAP met and made reverse painted skulls to put on the Day of the Dead Altar.

Game Night will be held November 18 at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

Confirmation has been moved to December 17. On that day several of our youth will be confirmed. The confirmation class is being held at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday. Those attending the class are: Andrea Diaz, Estephany Diaz, Carlos Garcia, Jr., Luis Meza, Elias Ramirez and Emily Ramirez. Zach Johnson and Pablo Ramos attended the class last spring. Please keep our confirmands in your prayers.

There is also a Sunday school class offered for junior and senior high youth. The class meets in the youth room at 9:30 on Sunday mornings.

SWAP is an acronym for Scripture, Worship, Amusement and Prayer. The youth group is for youth in grades 6 through 12. If you have any questions, please contact Becky Ball.

H) 566-3870 C) 652-2300 W)581-0380. Or email: bball@allsaintssl.org.

Articles – ANGEL TREE 2006 by Carol Powell

Last year Lorrin and I coordinated the Angel Tree at Saint Stephen's. It was a wonderful experience and was a great success. We enjoyed delivering the presents to the children and were overwhelmed with their gratitude and sweet spirit in receiving presents from their parents who were incarcerated. They knew the angels (parishioners) at Saint Stephen were the hands and feet of the Spirit of Christmas.

This year we are going to attempt to stay more in compliance with the Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Ministry out of Colorado. They are the entity that gather the children's names from the inmates and coordinate with different churches in the United States. This year we are planning on sponsoring 20 to 22 children. It's important that the children understand the gifts are from the inmate parent and that the parishioners at Saint Stephens are the angels that make it happen.

The guideline is each child receives a "fun" gift and a clothing gift with each gift valued at \$20. This year we plan on using Angel Tree Tags. The tags will have the child's name, sex, age and requested presents. We have contacted most of the care-givers and already have that information. We should have the list completed by November 3rd. It is sometimes difficult to keep in touch with the care-givers as most of them are having difficult financial situations and many families of prisoners move often. We will make every effort to keep in contact with each care-giver as the process moves along. On November 19th there will be an Angel Tree table in the gathering area. If you wish to participate, please take an Angel Tree Tag which will include the child's name, sex and age and desired gifts. We will complete a tracking card with your name to match up with the Angel Tree tag once the gifts have been purchased. We will have a gift wrapping party after church (coffee hour) on December 10th to wrap the gifts that have been purchased. This year we are going to host a Christmas Party for the children and their care-giver(s) at WOW on December 13th.

Please plan on joining us in the spirit of giving. The children of prisoners are numerous and need the support of their community. They suffer emotional trauma and need to know that they are loved and not forgotten.

Road Widening

The project to widen 3200 West has continued for several months now, and work is expected to continue well into November. Currently, both north and south entrances to the church are open, but the road is still closed to through northbound traffic. The road has been paved, but there is still some work outstanding on sidewalks, landscaping, striping, etc. so the road signs and diversions will stay signposted until this work has finished.

Articles - IT'S NEVER TOO LATE by Judy Carter

I'm not a cradle Episcopalian, or even a cradle Christian. I became a Christian by choice, and I am an Episcopalian by choice. Part of the process...the journey...was researching and deciding where I stood on many issues related to organized religions. One of the most interesting was trying to reconcile "stewardship", especially the giving of both myself and my money to a church. I'd like to share my thoughts on this.

Worship for me is something I try to do all day, every day. I try to act and make decisions based on the fact that I belong to God. As an extension, all that I have belongs to Him also. With the offerings of money, my talents, and my time, I give back to God a portion of all that He has given me. I believe that I do not give these parts of myself *to the Church*. Instead, I give them to God, *through the Church*. I trust the Church to accept my meager offerings, to consolidate them with the offerings of other members of our congregation, and to use them to do what is in the best interests of this community as a whole...to do God's work.

Jesus sacrificed everything for me, and I try to remember that what I give Him in return should also be a sacrifice. It's important for me to offer both my money and time to the community and St. Stephen's Church beyond what would be comfortable. Making coffee for Sunday's fellowship hour, helping fix dinner for Worship on Wednesdays, knitting a shawl, donating to the Prison Ministry, helping out wherever I can; these are all part of my worship experience and stewardship.

Stan and I are so blessed in all that we have, including that we have each other. When we can help another person in need, we do so with a prayer of thanks for the opportunity and the means to do so. Sometimes it's been money, but at other times what was most needed has been our time and talents. God presents the opportunities; it's our job as stewards to become aware of them and to respond accordingly.

At St. Stephen's, I like it that taking up our offerings to the Lord's Table is the first act we do during The Holy Communion. This is our opportunity to give back to God, sort of a "thank you" for all He has given us. The plates we use are not "collection plates", but "offering plates". We are not taking up a collection, but making an offering to God. When I put a check into the offering plate, I silently pray "Here I am, Lord", as a reminder that it is a part of me and my life that I am offering. I do this every week rather than once a month so that it's a regular, meaningful part of my worship.

After the offerings are collected, I like it that they are presented to the Lord's Table in a solemn manner as the congregation sings God's praises. I miss this part of the Communion when we don't do it during the WoW service.

Stewardship can be perceived as either an obligation or an opportunity. For me, it's an expression of my faith, an obligation I willingly accept, and an opportunity to serve God by serving His church and His people. Although the formal Pledge Month has passed, you can still fill out that little card and make a commitment to help St. Stephen's in 2007. Remember that **it's never too late** to make a pledge to God through His church.

Calendar

EVERY SUNDAY

- 9:00 a.m. San Esteban - Santa Misa
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Christian Education
- 10:00 a.m. San Esteban - Coffee Hour
- 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II
- 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour – Coffee, Refreshments

WEEKDAYS

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS

- 7:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
- 7:30 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship

WEDNESDAYS:

- 6:00 p.m. WoW! Dinner - come, eat and enjoy, you don't have to bring food.
- 7:00 p.m. Midweek Holy Eucharist - Contemporary Holy Eucharist
- 7:30 p.m. 1 Hour scheduled program or discussion

FRIDAYS:

- 8:30 p.m. Granger A.A. Group

SATURDAYS:

- 5:30 p.m. Santa Misa - Rite II
- 6:30 p.m. San Esteban Fellowship Hour

MONTHLY

- 2nd. Tuesday Hymn Selection Meeting
- 3rd. Tuesday Vestry Meetings
- See dates SWAP - Youth Group Meetings

SPECIAL DATES

- November 12 10:30 a.m. Virgil Knight's hymn selections today!
- November 15 7:30 p.m. Craig Wirth on 140th Anniversary of Church in UT
- November 18 5:30 p.m. SWAP Game Night
- November 19 10:30 a.m. Angel Tree program starts
- November 22 6:00 p.m. WoW! Thanksgiving dinner & special program
- November 29 7:30 p.m. Parish Discernment Committee on ministries
- December 17 10:00 a.m. Bishop Irish's Visitation, Confirmation, Reception

Deadline for the next "Servant" is Monday, December 11, 2006.

Editor: Martin Willcocks.

"The Servant" is St. Stephen's Church Newsletter and all materials in this publication are copyright © 2006 by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, except: article on page 4 by Carol Powell, article on page by Judy Carter; items from Diocesan Dialogue and other sources copyright their respective owners.

Due to lack of space, "Points to Ponder" and a submitted photograph could not be included this month.