

The Witness

Volume 27, Issue 5

Welcoming Worshipping Working

May 2023

Special points of interest:

Sunday

8:00 AM Service
10:00 AM Service with coffee hour following the service

Tuesday

5:00 PM Centering Prayer via Zoom & In-Person

Wednesday

12:15 PM Service



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Our Eucharistic Brunch

By The Rev. Ian M. Delinger, Rector

Our Gospel for the 2nd Sunday of Easter in all 3 lectionary years is the one of Doubting Thomas. The full list of readings for Year A are Acts 2:14a,22-32 / 1 Peter 1:3-9 / Psalm 16 / John 20:19-31. The story of Doubting Thomas is a favorite of mine because it reassures me that I am still accepted by Jesus even if I have doubts. Even though I don't have a Doubting Thomas moment, that doesn't mean I don't fail to live up to my Baptismal Covenant! And the Doubting Thomas story reminds me that wherever I am on my spiritual journey, Jesus welcomes me.



Images from the Eucharistic Brunch

At the Eucharistic Brunch on April 16, Holy Communion was celebrated in the context of a meal. The bread was broken at the beginning of the meal, as Jesus did at the Last Supper, a long Jewish tradition; the wine was taken at the end of the meal, just as it is described in the Gospels and in our Eucharistic Prayers. In between, we had brunch and conversation. Our first conversation was directly related to the Gospel reading of the day:

When have you doubted your faith or questioned what the Church believes, like Thomas did in today's Gospel?

After that robust conversation, it was time to move on to the other scriptures. In the readings from Acts and 1 Peter, Peter is just the opposite of Doubting Thomas. Peter is overly confident in his conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, and he is not afraid to let people know. Our conversation around that was:

At times when you have the confidence of Peter in the first 2 readings, in what ways do you "show forth in your life what you profess by your faith", as was prayed in the Collect of the Day?

Whether in times of doubt or in times of confidence, your own answers to these questions are part of your spiritual journey as a Christian. The Episcopal Church

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affirms 4 holy orders of ministry: the laity, deacons, priests, and bishops. These orders of ministry are mutually discerned based on our interdependent and conciliatory relationships. The laity is the first order of ministry. And the Catechism defines it first (before it defines bishops second):

What is the ministry of the laity?

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and His Church; to bear witness to Him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church. (BCP p855)

We each are on a spiritual journey, and our journeys intersect here at St. Stephen's. In relation to today's Gospel, that means when you have doubts about faith, Jesus does not reject you. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, Jesus welcomes you. It also means that you, too, can share your spiritual journey with others.

Whether you were part of the Eucharistic Brunch conversations or were elsewhere that day, reflect and pray on these questions and where your answers might direct the next steps on your spiritual journey. As we move through the Season of Easter, we will hear stories about how Jesus' Resurrection empowered the Disciples to do what Jesus was training them to do in the first place: To proclaim the Good News to others. While you reflect and pray on the questions above, think about how you can be a Disciple, and how you can show others the signs of Jesus so that they may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing others may have life in His name (ref John 20,31).

From the Vestry

The new Vestry will have its 2023 meetings on the 3rd Sunday of the Month to discuss the business affairs of the parish. The most recent meeting of the Vestry took place on April 17, 2023. Here are some highlights of that meeting:

The Vestry received two bids for the rebuilding of the parking lot. One bid is outstanding. The Vestry will review the bids side-by-side when the third bid is received.

Susan Olson, Director of Development for Hospice SLO County, has accepted an invitation to be the Volunteer Capital Campaign Advisor for the fundraising for the parking lot. Susan shared with the Vestry some of the basics of running a capital campaign.

Fr. Ian presented a few elements for St. Stephen's Day on September 9 & 10. Two co-chairs of the coordinating committee are being sought, one from the Vestry and another from the wider congregation.

There will not be a Vestry meeting in May. The next meeting is June 18, 2023. Skip Parks, Senior Warden, will be chairing the meetings while Fr. Ian is on sabbatical. If you have an issue that you think should be addressed by the Vestry, please submit your request no less than 2 weeks before the next Vestry Meeting to the Rector or Wardens. All Vestry Meetings are open to members of the parish. Requests to speak can be made, approved on an individual basis. Executive Sessions are closed to Vestry members only, including the Clerk, Treasurer and Rector.



The Rev. Caroline Hall to Retire

The Rector of St. Benedict’s in Los Osos, Caro Hall, will be retiring on May 31, 2023. Caro+ and her wife Jill will be leaving St. Benedict’s when Caro+ retires at the end of May. There will be several opportunities to gather for celebration and leave-taking We are all invited to the various events. Mark your calendar:



- ◇ Friday, May 19, 6:30 pm retirement celebration at St. Benedict’s
- ◇ Sunday, May 21, 2:00 pm John Rutter Requiem at St. Barnabas’
- ◇ Sunday, May 28, The Rev. Caro Hall’s last Sunday at St. Benedict’s
- ◇ Wednesday, May 31, Time?? Liturgy for the ending pastoral relationship at St. Benedict’s

Pascal’s Wager

Pascal was a French mathematician who lived in the 17th century (circa 1660+-). At one time he concluded that the concept of faith could be evaluated in mathematical terms by asking a basic question: “Do you believe or not?”

Given this question, he postulated the following options:

If you believe in God and heaven, and you behave (act) as there is a God and heaven, when you die you may find either of these possibilities:

There is no God and there is no heaven. You have not lost anything because you have lived a good life.

There is a God and there is a heaven. You are saved!

But what if you do not believe in God or heaven:

And you act as there is no God or heaven and when you die you find there really is a God and heaven, you will no doubt also find out there is a hell.

And while you don’t believe In God or heaven but act like there is one (by your actions on earth and to others) and die and find out there is no God or heaven, you have not lost anything because of the way you lived your life. But acting in this fashion and die to find out there really is a God and heaven, you have a reasonable chance of going to heaven.

		We believe in god	
		Yes	No
God exists	No	Wasted time and effort	Time spent usefully
	Yes	Eternal salvation	Eternal damnation

So what are your options? Are you a risk taker or prefer to play it safe? Personally whether there is a God and heaven or not, I’m not going to take the chance, so I try to act and behave towards my fellow humans in a Christian manner!

- Jim Murphy

Hands On Stewardship

Thank you to Bill Crewe, Kay Lewis, Carolyn Platt and Kathleen Pennington for counting the collection and preparing the deposits during April.

Thank you to Lynn Hollister, Kathleen Pennington, and Gail Taylor for teaching Sunday School in April.

Thank you to Sophia Agbo, Carole Astaire, MaryLud Baldwin, Berthina, Marge Cordova, Carol Curinga, Torrie Fields, Liz Frost, Shane G, Cheryl McCollum, Craig McCollum, Stephanie Olsen, Kathleen Pennington, Elizabeth Potter, Juliana Winninghoff and Bud Zeuschner for their work in the St. Stephen's Chocolate Factory making beautiful and delicious fudge Easter eggs.

Thank you to Cheryl & Craig McCollum, Bob & Mary McCorkle, Stephanie Olsen and Charleen VonGortler for hosting coffee hour in April.

Thank you to the Altar Guild for all of the extra effort and attention to detail for our Holy Week and Easter Services. BRAVE!! (*pronounced brah-VAY*). Mary McCorkle for the spectacular muffins she made for the Eucharistic Brunch .

Thank you to Gail Taylor, Nancy Deovlet, Elizabeth Potter, and Cheryl McCollum who folded, taped and labeled The Witness.

Thank you to Elizabeth Potter for helping with the celebration cards

Thank you to Clark Lewis for picking up the no cook bags to distribute to those in need.

Thank you to the A/V Team for their diligence in streaming the services.

Thank you for reading The Witness and watching the services at home.



Celebrations for May

Birthdays

Lynn	Hollister	May 14
Dick	Riggins	May 16
The Rev Ian	Delinger	May 19
Bill	Grenek	May 19
Roseann	Parks	May 29

Anniversaries

Craig & Cheryl	McCollum	May 08
John & Chris	Kellett	May 25



Are we are missing your special celebration? Please let us know so that we can celebrate with you.

Call, email, snail mail the information to Stephanie in the office at 805-543-7212 or office@ststephensslo.org

General Information

The Witness is a monthly newsletter published by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, San Luis Obispo, CA to provide information about the parish to the congregation. Subscriptions are free to anyone. Send request along with your name and mailing address to the church office. Donations to help offset distribution costs are appreciated.

Make checks payable to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

The Church's e-mail address is: office@ststephensslo.org

Contribution of articles is encouraged. Please e-mail submissions to witness@ststephensslo.org
The deadline for emailed submission of articles is the third Friday of the month. Email any questions to witness@ststephensslo.org © Copyright 2023 by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. All rights reserved.

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You can scan this QR Code with your phone and be taken directly to our PayPal site or go to paypal.me/ststephensslo



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CREATION CARE REFLECTIONS OF JOY, LOVE, NATURE & GOD

Excerpts from a Tessa Bielecki's writings as she captures
Teresa of Avila's love for God revealed through creation

Teresa teaches us how to live the human adventure with zest and enthusiasm. She was in love with every dimension of life: with people and places, music, laughter and celebration, with nature and its abundance.

We see her enthusiasm in the vibrant imagery she draws from her experience of the earth. She speaks of sun and wind and rain, clouds, crystal and falling comets, tempests, thunderclaps and lightning. She calls God the Sun in the interior of the soul, casting brilliant light into every corner of our being. When she prayed, Teresa loved to look at fields and flowers, "reading" from the book of nature. She loved to live near water, with good soil and gardens ...

Teresa urges us to embrace nature in our prayer because nature awakens us, reminding us of the Creator. She can't contain her praise and glorifies God as Lord of the world and Beauty exceeding all other beauties. "Who could make known the majesty with which You reveal yourself?" she cries out in one of her spontaneous prayers. "O my God, God, God author of all creation!

When we have trouble praying, Teresa recommends that we turn to nature: "Go to some place where you can see the sky, and walk up and down a little." Teresa said the spiritual life is like bees making honey, silkworms spinning their cocoons, fish swimming in a running stream. Depending on our stage of spiritual growth, we may be like mice, toads or snakes, flitting moths, butterflies, doves, wild horses or wounded deer.

Teresa's favorite nature image was water. She speaks lavishly of flowing springs, pools, wells and fountains, rivers, waves and sea urging us to irrigate our hearts with the waters of Life. She called her soul a garden and compared prayer to watering that garden.

As we move through Spring, perhaps we can take moments to do simple outdoor meditations ... water the plants, remove undesired growth, take in beautiful fragrance, watch a bird, notice a spider in its web, count the blades of grass in a square inch, observe a cloud cross the sky ...
And surely - surely ... we can be out in nature and find God within.

Cheryl McCollum



St. Stephen's Name Tags



Following several Vestry discussions on the subject of name tags, including a recent meeting on congregational development with Bishop Lucinda, a decision was made to provide all St. Stephen's members with name tags to wear at services and church events. Jamie Hess, a parishioner at the 8:00 am service, has made these name tags for everyone. They are the plastic type with clips to attach to your clothing. She's printed paper inserts with our names and the little red church logo. We will begin distributing the name tags at the April 30th church services.

There are many valuable reasons for wearing name tags. They include helping members know one another by name, helping members identify and welcome visitors, who obviously will not be wearing St. Stephen's name tags, and there is symbolic value in being part of our congregation. Church branded name tags can help create a sense of community and improve our welcoming to visitors.

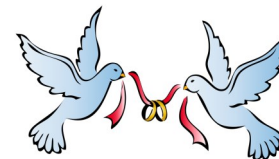
Another very important reason for our name tags is the arrival of Bruce Bramlett beginning Sunday, May 21st. He is our acting rector while Fr. Ian is on sabbatical. It will be much easier for Bruce to become acquainted with each of us when we all wear our name tags. I'm sure this is something he will appreciate.

We are not planning for a board or basket to collect name tags at the church. Everyone is responsible for your own name tag and to remember to bring it with you to St. Stephen's services and events. I belonged to two different Episcopal churches that provided name tags. I found them very helpful and useful in getting to know fellow parishioners. I recommend you keep your name tag in the glove box of your vehicle so it is handy when you come to church on Sunday morning. Please let me know if anyone else has a good idea for remembering name tags.

Kay Lewis

Nuptial Congratulations

Alicia Perry, with her daughter Adelaide, and Gabriele Bisselle, with his son Gianni, were married on April 22 at the Avila Beach Golf Resort, officiated by Fr. Ian. They have been at St. Stephen's for about a year, and Adelaide was Baptized by the Bishop on St. Stephen's Day last year. When you next see them, give them your hearty congratulations and show your support for them in their marriage now and in the years to come!



St. Andrew's Brotherhood Hosts Rev. Jen - Saturday, May 13



All the men from St. Stephens are invited to join with their brothers from St. Barnabas, St. Peter's and St. Benedict's to hear the Rev. Jen Crompton discuss the past year's activities with Campus Ministry, and future plans for serving this population.

We'll meet for breakfast at 8:00AM at Ramsden Hall on the St. Stephen's campus. Helping to bring Christ to youth is one of the central values and a core mission for the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, so come hear about local action in this service. Please join us for this important insight into our campus ministry and a chance to hear from and interact with Rev. Jen. All are welcome, especially first timers!

Please RSVP to Bud Zeuschner at rfzjr@aol.com by May 11, so he'll know how much food to bring.

Campus Ministry Chaplain to be Ordained

The Rev. Jen Crompton is our Campus Ministry Chaplain. They have been a Deacon for about a year, and now they will be ordained a priest.

Rev. Jen’s ordination to the Priesthood will be Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 5:30pm at St. Benedict’s Episcopal Church in Los Osos.

It would be wonderful for many from St. Stephen’s to witness and support Rev. Jen in their ordination and in their continued ministry.



Ask Me Anything

Do you have burning questions about the Bible? The Church? Christianity?

Stop by for refreshment and ask Fr. Ian and Rev. Jen anything church-related. We'll give you the most honest and transparent answers we can!

We'll be in Finney's on Monterey Street in SLO. We'll be the two dressed like clergy!

(Note: This is not a Bible study or a debate session. It's a social setting for curious minds!)

Can't make it in-person? Join via Zoom <https://tinyurl.com/StStZoom>

The final session before a summer hiatus will be on May 8.

If you want, send questions in advance to:

FatherIMD@aol.com

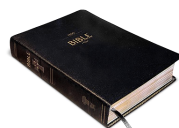
St. Stephen's Coffee Cafe is open for business!!!

Opening hour is after the 10 am Sunday Service.

Please sign up to be a part of this wonderful parish family activity. No experience necessary, there are plenty of previous experienced volunteers that are willing to help.



Bible Selections for May



7-May-23
Easter 5A

14-May-23
Easter 6A

1st Reading	Acts 7.55-60	Acts 17.22-31
Psalm	Psalm 31.1-5,15-16	Psalm 66.7-18
2nd Reading	1 Peter 2.2-10	1 Peter 3.13-22
Gospel	John 14.1-14	John 14.15-21

21-May-23
Easter 7A

28-May-23
Pentecost Sunday

1st Reading	Acts 1.6-14	Numbers 11:24-30
Psalm	Psalm 68.1-10,33-36	Psalm 104:24-34,35b
2nd Reading	1 Peter 4.12-14; 5.6-11	Acts 2:1-21
Gospel	John 17.1-11	John 20:19-23



Two Opportunities to Support the SLO Community!



Walk For Healing 2023

May 1, 2023 to June 11, 2023

Hospice of SLO County is calling on members of our community to fund raise in support of their mission.

You can do this by registering with the St. Stephen's Team to walk, run, bike, or other (roller skate!, paddle board!, hike a mountain!) and invite your friends to donate in your name.

Registration—go to this website and click “Join the Team”:

www.charityfootprints.com/team?id=10203

It's really simple: You walk! Then you log your miles on the website. If you want to get sponsorships to raise more money for Hospice, you can. Or you can just walk, which helps raise awareness of the fantastic work Hospice does.

Once registered, if you want, you can set a fitness goal and track your progress over the six week period. Set healthy habits! Make new friends! And help support Hospice of SLO County to reach their community goal of 25,000 miles logged and \$50,000 raised!

Registration is open until June 11. To sign up for Hospice of SLO County's Walk for Healing, Join the St. Stephen's Team at:

www.charityfootprints.com/team?id=10203

St. Stephen's is honored to also sponsor this event!

Hunger Awareness Day

June 2, 2023

Hunger Awareness Day is a countywide event to inform our community about the devastating effects of hunger in SLO County and to raise funds to support the SLO Food Bank's hunger relief efforts. St Stephen's has been a sponsor of this event for a number of years. In more recent years, the Food Bank has invited us to be on the planning team and to staff a fundraising booth.

It's time to build up our sponsorship funds. We're going for the \$2,500 sponsorship level which will get our logo on the website, posters and the t-shirt.

To contribute to our sponsorship, send a check made out to **St Stephen's Episcopal Church** with “Hunger Awareness Day” in the memo. (If you send the check to the Food Bank, it won't get credited toward our sponsorship.) You can also contribute by other means. Just check with the office. Donations of all sizes are welcome! If we raise more than the \$2,500 for this sponsorship, we will save that for sponsorship of the Turkey Trot in November.

Become a Hunger Hero today and join us in the important mission to alleviate hunger for our neighbors in need. Transforming into a Hunger Hero is simple and has a tremendous impact!

Volunteers from St. Stephen's are needed to help staff the fundraising booth.

St. Stephen's

Episcopal Church

Welcoming Worshiping Working

1344 Nipomo Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3935

805-543-7212
office@ststephensslo.org
www.ststephensslo.org
Office Hours: Mon-Thurs. 9am-1pm



St. Stephen's Vacation Bible Camp July 31 - August 4, 1-5pm

Mark your calendar for a week of fun and faith building for children who like to do super things! Cooking classes, theater, art, music, sports, healthy snacks, and more for just \$25. Scholarships available.

To Register: my805tix.com
Questions? email kapennington@netscape.net

Non-Profit Organization
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Address Service Requested

Flowers & Candles for Celebrations

St. Stephen's Altar Guild is grateful to everyone who has donated flowers and candles. The church wouldn't have looked as lovely without you!

A reminder also that flower and candle donations are needed every Sunday of the year.

The donation : \$50 for flowers, \$20 for candles.

It is a wonderful way to honor loved ones and share important events with the congregations at both services.

A chart to sign up is in Ramsden Hall or call /email Stephanie in the office.

Appropriately labeled checks may be put in the offering plate at your convenience.



All are welcome to join the Centering Prayer Group

Where: on your computer,
telephone or in-person

When: Tuesdays at 5PM on Zoom
(see below) or in the Sanctuary

How: Join Zoom Meeting
<https://tinyurl.com/CenteringPrayer2022>

Meeting ID: 327 152 8720

Password: 0908

Or dial in by calling :
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose),
When prompted enter the Meeting ID
and Password