

The Witness

Volume 27, Issue 8

Welcoming Worshipping Working

August 2023

Special points of interest:

Sunday

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

Wednesday

12:15 PM Service



Hello August!

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Musings from your Visiting Priest The Rev. Bruce Bramlett

I realized as I was sitting down to write this article that I've already been among you at St. Stephen's for almost 10 weeks. My time here has gone quickly and I have to say I've been having a great time indeed. I could not have asked for a more generous and warm welcome and your kind response to my time among you has been deeply moving. Thank you!

Beyond that, I have been so happy that calls to be present and engaged have been so eagerly taken up. Our Monday morning "Prayer and Pastries" gathering at the Bridges Café has seen our numbers getting up to seven or more folks weekly and we have a great time together. The Tuesday class has been averaging about thirty-eight people either in the Parish Hall or on zoom. More have clicked the Zoom link and watched at other times. Our Wednesday noon Eucharists have had seven or eight on a weekly basis. It has become a meditative and spiritual break in the middle of the week. More than that, I have sensed a deepening of spirituality throughout these past weeks showing connection and curiosity that is exciting for any priest serving a congregation. Again, I'm impressed and gratified.

I have had numerous conversations with you all about the present struggles that almost all Churches around the country have been experiencing since the disaster of COVID and the shocking effects that awful pandemic has had on American culture as a whole. Everywhere one looks it is possible to discern the deep wounds and destructive effects that those years have brought. Our children have been permanently marked by their experiences of isolation and panic, losing sometimes as much as a full year or more of their school progress. Many of us have lost friends or close family and watched as the virus has imbued us all with a deep sense of caution and reservation in even considering any return to living together in any sort of community. It has deeply affected our social lives in ways we are just now beginning to ascertain. As for religious institutions, the double whammy of COVID and a much larger sense of a cultural loss of trust in or alienation from all institutional life has turned reasonably successful and functioning congregations into struggling communities where young families and especially the joyful noise of children has been largely silenced. I have listened as you have shared stories and feelings about all this and what it has meant for you as faithful members of this congregation. It has been a painful but important opportunity for you to share with an "outsider" what all this has meant for you. I have been moved by your sharing.



In thinking about all this, the one thing that I'm reasonably sure of is that, at least some of what we are facing collectively is very much beyond anyone's control.

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There is no one to blame and much of what we're struggling with collectively is a part of a much larger worldwide cultural and political phenomenon that some folks have suggested is a part of a cyclical 500 year "resetting" of the entire culture. We are just at the beginning of that process. For the church, we remember one such "resetting" as the great reformation of the 1500's. For our wider culture, the coming of the 17th c. "Enlightenment" also brought such a "resetting" to our larger western world. The Church has been reacting and adjusting to those changes and challenges ever since.

It now appears (at least to me) that we in the institutional Church are facing a time similar to that of the biblical exile in the 6th century BCE. Much like that which was experienced by our ancestors, the people of Israel, were taken off into Babylon, a foreign and "pagan" culture. Once there, they had to learn how, not only to survive but to grow and prosper. We know that their whole spiritual world was deeply transformed by that experience. Perhaps we should remind ourselves that I suspect those taken away must have believed that the Divine presence had left them permanently and that all was lost. We also know from vivid testimony from prophets like Ezekiel that nothing like that happened. Rather, the Divine love not only continued to surround them but the exile proved to be the most creative and transformative time for God's holy people during the whole story of Israel. If I am anywhere near correct, we are entering a similar period of history. We also must learn how to respond faithfully in the years to come where many of our most precious held traditions and place markers will disappear. At the core of our faith is our deep and unswerving conviction that the Divine presence is ever faithful, despite appearances to the contrary. Our God will not abandon or spurn us.

So, how should we respond to such a difficult awareness. I believe that we will be called on to become a community of visionaries and a courageous gathering of people of faith. We will probably be forced to let go of favorite and even precious aspects of our traditions. We will be pressed to find creative and compassionate ways to engage our changing world with the challenge to live into the fullness of our humanity as we have known it in our Lord Jesus, the true Son of Humanity. We will have to dig much deeper into the treasure chest of our spiritual traditions to bring forth all the tools and resources we can muster to meet this new world with hope and confidence. I believe we can and must become a community of journeyers on a pilgrimage where the Divine love will lead us and meet us at every turn. We are, after all, a people of resurrection faith where things dying are the seeds for new life to germinate, sprout and grow. You are a community of great strength and skill. You are a people of hope and courage. As I spend my last 5 weeks with you, I look forward to thinking and talking together about just what this future might hold for us all. I hope you'll join the conversation and that it will continue long after I've returned home.

COFFEE CAFÉ

Summer is in the Air!!! Be a part of the café volunteers. The team does accept donations of fruit and cookies if you are unable to sign up for a Sunday morning.

First time, no problem. Volunteers are always around to help. To become a part of the volunteers for the St. Stephen's Hospitality Committee, email lizwfrost@msn.com





DIVERSITY COALITION
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Diversity Coalition Annual Fundraiser:
Give for Good

Thursday, September 21st
5PM to 8pm
Flying Caballos Ranch
San Luis Obispo

**TICKETS AT
DIVERSITYSLO.ORG**

Email ed@diversityslo.org for questions,
media or sponsorship enquiries.

Give for Good: Diversity Coalition Annual Fundraiser

St. Stephen's has been a sponsor of the good work of DiversitySLO. Please consider attending this event as a commitment to your support and the support of St. Stephen's for San Luis Obispo to be a diverse, equitable and inclusive community!

Tickets: <https://betterunite.com/diversitycoalition-giveforgood2023>

Goodbye to Hosting Meals That Connect, Hello to Meals That Connect Delivery Opportunity

As most of you know, we were able to be temporary hosts to our friends at Meals That Connect while they moved out of the Anderson Hotel and transitioned to a permanent site for their operations. During these past few months, we got to know many of our neighbors in need who came each day of the week for a hot meal and some fellowship. Starting in July, Meals That Connect consolidated their operations to the United Church of Christ on Los Osos Valley Rd. in SLO. We wish them all the best as they serve the hungry, needy and lonely senior citizens who depend on their service for their daily bread.

But, that need not be the end of our support for Meals That Connect. Each day they deliver over 150 meals in SLO, and hundreds more at sites around the county to homebound seniors who meet the eligibility criteria. The program is supported and administered by the County Senior Volunteer Services in conjunction with the Senior Nutrition Program. They depend on a small fleet of volunteer drivers to get these meals out to those who need them.

Linda and Bud Zeuschner have been delivering with Meals That Connect since the pandemic started. They enjoy getting to meet seniors all around SLO and dropping off the prepared meal trays. They say it takes about 1.5 hours on average to deliver the 15-17 meals on their route. The delivery time is from 9:30-11:00 or so in the morning. Often, this short interaction is the only visit these seniors get all day, and it is a way to check in and show them support, along with providing a nutritious meal,

Would you like to be involved? They have a pressing need for delivery drivers, and you may select any morning Monday through Friday that works for your schedule. You can get reimbursed for your mileage should you so choose, or donate the miles back to support others who cannot afford that expense. We have such a long and distinguished history doing the monthly meal service for the Prado center, and this service would be a nice adjunct inspired by that ministry. It requires a dependable car, a background check clearance, and a short training in HIPPA and program procedures.

Information? For SLO, contact Dallas at 805 543-0469. For Los Osos, call Malia at 805 528-6923. Routes are also available in North County, the Coast and South County. Since Meals on Wheels ceased their operations, the need is greater than ever.

- Bud Zeuschner

Hands on Stewardship

Thank you to Bill Crewe, Lynn Hollister, Kay Lewis, Kathleen Pennington, Carolyn Platt and Elizabeth Potter for counting the collection and preparing the deposits during July.

Thank you to Liz Frost, Lee & Lynn Hollister, and Craig & Cheryl McCollum for hosting Coffee Hour in July.

Thank you to all who helped support Hospice SLO County & SLO Food Bank.

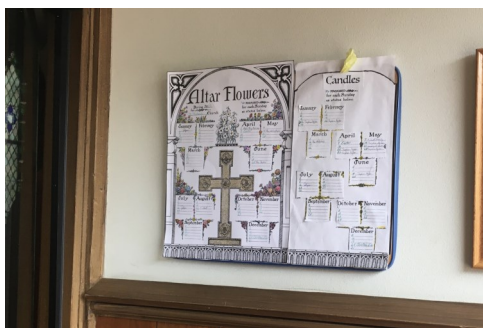
Thank you to Gail Taylor, Elizabeth Potter, and Cheryl McCollum who folded, taped and labeled The Witness.

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.



New Sign up for dedicating Altar Flowers & Candles

The sign up sheet for dedicating flowers or candles for Sunday Services has been moved to the entrance to make it more convenient for you to sign up.

Please contact Jennifer Sayre at jsayre_1@charter.net if you have any questions or comments.

The Book of Common Prayer is digital

The eCP app is a complete, digital Book of Common Prayer. Ideal for personal devotion and liturgical use, eCP includes:

- ◇ An interactive calendar for the Daily Office and Eucharist
- ◇ Bookmarking, sharing, and printing
- ◇ No internet access required.

Available on these platforms:



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.

POSTMASTER: Please send address corrections to: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1344 Nipomo Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3935

If you would like to make a donation to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

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



Scan. Pay. Go.



August Celebrations

Birthdays

August 19 Gina Hafemeister
 August 25 George Gorrindo
 August 25 Pam Myers
 August 26 Carol Astaire
 August 31 Kay Lewis

Anniversaries

August 02 Bob & Carol Misson
 August 29 Lee & Lynn Hollister

Are we 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



Selected Bible Readings for August



	6-Aug-23 The Transfiguration	13-Aug-23 11Pent A - Track 2
1st Reading	Exodus 34.29-35	1 Kings 19.9-18
Psalm	Psalm 99	Psalm 85.8-13
2nd Reading	2 Peter 1.13-21	Romans 10.5-15
Gospel	Luke 9.28-36	Matthew 14.22-33
	20-Aug-23 12Pent A - Track 2	27-Aug-23 13Pent A - Track 2
1st Reading	Isaiah 56.1,6-8	Isaiah 51.1-6
Psalm	Psalm 67	Psalm 138
2nd Reading	Romans 11.1-2a,29-32	Romans 12.1-8
Gospel	Matthew 15.10-28	Matthew 16.13-20

August's flower of the month is The Poppy.

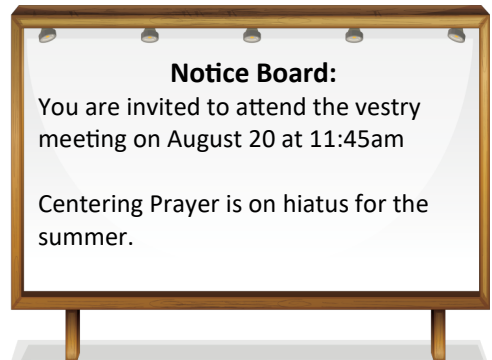


The Poppy has various meanings depending on the color, culture they are found. Red is consolation, remembrance. Blue is Faith. But it can also mean imagination and messages delivered in mysterious dreams.

Notice Board:

You are invited to attend the vestry meeting on August 20 at 11:45am

Centering Prayer is on hiatus for the summer.



Worshipping at opposite ends of the world!

By The Rev. Ian M. Delinger, Rector

At the time of writing, I am in SLO, not back a full week from New Zealand. I have finished my 50-day world tour, but I haven't finished world pilgrimage of Sunday morning worship (...will one ever?).

June 25: Christ Church, Bangkok "...was established by permission of His Majesty King Mongkut. Rama 1V. in 1864. It is open to all without distinction of nationality or denomination. It is controlled by a committee elected annually by the parish community and is maintained entirely by contributions and funds raised within the community. The liturgy is Anglican." That is the sign outside of Christ Church. It was a very ethnically and culturally mixed worshipping community. The first part of the service is what I have experienced at Evangelical Anglican services. There were several praise songs, one Bible passage (not following the Lectionary) and some prayers. The sermon was part of a summer series by an Irishman who is a priest in South London (Diocese of Rochester) who is on sabbatical. His theme was "*Faith and Patience*" based on Hebrews 6:1-12. He said a LOT of things in 30-31 mins, but said nothing. That was disappointing. As I've said before, whether sermons, music, announcements, prayers, etc, there's a point at which it becomes self-indulgent.



Lots of unrelated personal stories. The Offertory started at the same time that our service would normally end, at about 65min. The Eucharist was very much like our own. Among the praise songs were hymns straight from the hymnal. We ended with a rousing rendition of "*Crown Him with Many Crowns*"! The Bishop of Singapore was present in the congregation. And at the end, the congregation said "thank you" and "farewell" to their volunteer organist of 3yrs, a young American man who was moving back to the United States.

July 2: Christ Church St. Laurence, Sydney is an Anglo-Catholic bastion in the Diocese of Sydney. Sydney is known as a conservative evangelical Diocese, and only about 4 Anglo-Catholic parishes exist, my friend Cliff having been Rector of one of them before retiring. The most memorable part of the service was that the "prayers" did not rise before God fast enough (ref Ps 141:2) in this not-large-but-not-small building, and I had to use my shirt as a mask from the incense. But it was lovely to worship with all of the body's physical senses. As the priest noted in the announcements about the upcoming Commemoration of the Oxford Movement, the liturgy was "sumptuous". Unfortunately, the preaching was again a lot said, yet nothing said, but in only 12 mins this time. As at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town, Christ Church St. Laurence rings bells at singing of the words "Holy, Holy, Holy" which Cassie had noted in Rutter's "Requiem" to the Deanery Choir back in May.

July 9: Wellington Cathedral was a welcome sanctuary from the rain after seeing off my friend on the train back to Auckland. The building is a 20th Century version of an English Gothic-revival cathedral. It's very light and airy inside, a very light shade of pink. The congregational was predominantly of European descent, and few in number, about 60 people by the time the service started. But it was a rainy winter's day, the school break, and no Choir. Out of all the places I have worshiped, Wellington Cathedral's liturgy was the most like St. Stephen's', almost identical, but adjusted for the cathedral setting. The sermon was suitable for the school break. And I experienced first-hand – as with Bangkok – the importance of a friendly greeting from anyone, lay or ordained, as I left the service! It doesn't take much either way, does it!

July 16: All Saints', Pasadena (online, image is a screenshot). I arrived home at midnight on Saturday, stayed at a friend's as not to disturb Bruce before his joining y'all for worship, and returned home at 7:30am on Sunday morning, just as Bruce was leaving. After 3 years, it was *my turn to worship in my pajamas!!!* So, Smokey and I joined All Saints', Pasadena, that beacon of social action in Greater Los Angeles! With their multi-camera setup, I was able to see the church from many angles. The pews were comfortably full; the diversity of Greater Los Angeles seemed represented and *included* in the full "*work of the people*" the liturgy – in language and ability, in particular; the place was vibrant-yet-humble (*only one other place of worship I've experienced that with a congregation so large*). The liturgy was similar to ours. The music was a pleasant mix of traditional and contemporary music and hymns. The service music was challenging, and since I didn't have the score, I didn't sing along. The sermon's message was needed for the day: *Jesus is proposing an alternative economy in which no one goes without*. And: *What is holding you back, and how do you let it go?* I don't normally join Coffee Hour as a visitor, but I was intrigued by the continuation of online Coffee Hour. There were 4 windows on Zoom: the host, a man in the North West of England, a couple in the West of England and me. It was an intentional way to maintain connections made during the pandemic.

July 23: St. Mark's-in-the-Valley, Los Olivos (photo from March 31, 2018). The service started 15min late because there was a

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problem printing the service bulletins. The building is one of the most beautiful on the Central Coast. The liturgy was dotted with modernizations that made it a bit quirky. I'm not sure if there is less music (fewer hymns, some service music said instead of sung) in the summer and a few other things omitted, and the Rector speaks quite quickly, but the service managed to end at 11:05am despite starting so late! The sanctuary was quite full, quite elderly, one person of color, and it felt very much like a country club!

It was notable that 4 of the 5 parishes were exclusively sharing the Common Cup, with no individual cups (except St. Mark's) and no intinction. I plan to attend a Sunday Service in Oakland and Healdsburg, and then I'm not sure where, as I finish out my sabbatical Sundays. Hopefully one of them will be the church where I was baptized: St. Mary's, Lompoc. That will be for the September issue. God bless!

-Fr. Ian

Re-Fresh St. Stephen's Campaign

St. Stephen's is a very lucky congregation. We have a beautiful and historic church which is a landmark in San Luis Obispo. St. Stephen's is also a very unlucky congregation because we have a beautiful and historic church and grounds that require a lot of maintenance. And I mean a lot of maintenance. Not only on those things we see, but also those we don't see, like pipes, electrical, HVAC, etc. Unfortunately, the required maintenance on some items has been deferred way too long. As such, the price for fixing repairs continues to rise. It's time we face the realities and get to work on what needs to be done.



Skip giving his Re-Fresh St. Stephen's Capital Campaign speech

As announced at both services on Sunday, July 16th, the St. Stephen's Vesty approved a plan to "Re-Fresh" St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. It's a mini capital campaign for launching and completing four projects in the next two months. These projects include:

A new parking lot (halleluiah)

Removing the carpet in the church, filling the foundational crack in the nave floor, and installing new carpet

Removing old, moldy carpet in the music/choir/LEMs room and installing laminate flooring

Repairing the winter damage to the landscaping and upgrading plantings to beautify the exterior, making it more attractive to neighbors and visitors.

The total cost to complete these projects is \$100,000. While this amount may seem daunting, we are fortunate to have some funds available from our cumulative interest earnings from the St. Stephen's Endowment. The Vesty has authorized \$60,000 from these interest earnings to help support the "Re-Fresh St. Stephen's" campaign. That leaves us with \$40,000 to raise in additional support.

In the event that donations are received above what is needed for the main four projects, these funds will be placed into a Continuing Maintenance and Repair Fund to be used for ongoing and unanticipated situations. For example, we already know that within the next couple of years, all the water lines leading from the church and other buildings will have to be replaced. (ugh)

Thanks to members of the vestry, church officers, and other members of St. Stephen's, the campaign is well underway. I ask that you give careful and prayerful consideration to how you might assist in the "Re-Fresh St. Stephen's" campaign.

*Yours in Christ,
Dr. Dennis "Skip" Parks
Senior Warden*

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Welcoming Worshipping Working

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*and after the earthquake a
fire, but the Lord was not in the
fire; and after the fire a still
small voice.*

1 Kings 19:12 (NKJV)



ST. STEPHEN'S CELEBRATION SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023 – AFTER 10AM SERVICES ST. STEPHENS SLO

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Choral Scholar Recital

Songs of Hope & Inspiration

Saturday, September 9, 2023
7:00pm

Featuring:

Roseann Parks, Talia Ortega, Lia Fagan,
Joseph Lilly, George Gorrindo,
Cassandra Tarantino,
Ryan Hartzell, and Dr. Marti Lindholm

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Sanctuary
Reception following in Ramsden Hall

This is a **FREE** recital open to the public
as a part of the
St. Stephen's Feast Day
Celebration Weekend 2023

It's almost time to celebrate
St. Stephen's.

We will be 156 this year! Our
BIRTHDAY PARTY will be after the
10am service and will include food,
music and fun. Our doors (and
parking lot) will be open to the wider
SLO community.

Invite those you know as we not only
celebrate our patron saint, but also
reach out as the welcoming,
worshipping and working
congregation that we are. We give thanks for this opportunity to celebrate and
hope you will join! We will be putting together baskets for 40 Prado for
delivery as well.

More info to come during August services.



- Jamie Hess