

The Witness

Volume 27, Issue 10

Welcoming Worshipping Working

October 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



Inside this issue:

Bible Selections	Insert
Birthdays	Insert
Campaign	7
Caroling?	7
Creation Care	6
From the	4
Stewardship	Insert
Living the Gospel	3

A Spirituality of Abundance

By Fr Ian M Delinger, Rector

It's that time of year again when parishes – including our own – dive into the Fall pledge drive: the Annual Giving Campaign. As of writing, we have not identified a lead person for the St Stephen's Annual Giving Campaign.

With successive budget shortfalls and rapidly dwindling reserves, we tend to focus on the scarcity of resources and operate from a place of scarcity, a metaphorical, physical and spiritual place of scarcity. Yet, our God is one of abundance! Over and over again in the Bible, the theology of abundance is placed in front of us:

- The manna in the wilderness.
- The wine at the Wedding at Cana.
- The 5 loaves and 2 fish.

The Bible presents us with a theology or spirituality of abundance.

The Re-Fresh Campaign was so successful that "it" raised an additional 25%! THANK YOU! A genuine, heartfelt thank you from me to all those who contributed! A parking lot is not a fun thing to fund! But on this day of writing, the parking lot is being ripped up and replaced because of YOU, not because of "it"! Your generosity led to such abundance that we will replace our parking lot, get new carpet in the sanctuary, refurbish the Choir Room and restore our landscaping. THANK YOU!

I recently read this (apologies for such a long quote):

Last year's budget debate at the annual meeting provides an interesting example. As always there was much conversation on the need to grow the budget. What was original was the discussion that centered on the budget as a reflection of the spiritual faith of the community. There were comments about the need to continue to grow the faith of the community, to better discern God's mission for our community, and to better attract and integrate new members of the broader community into the life of the parish. Though triggered by a shortfall in the pledge drive, the response was regarded more as a crisis of faith, the perception of a disconnection from the

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from front page)

abundance of God. Coming out of that discussion, our stewardship group renamed itself “The Generosity Project” and began broadening their vision, working to heal that breach.

- Bill Nesbit, “Spiritual Vitality”, September 2013, Wholehearted Stewardship, Episcopal Church Foundation website.

“...a disconnection from the abundance of God”. When we think about how we want to deepen our faith and then turn that into working in the wider community, we then see the abundance of God and where that leads us. It starts with faith.

The disciples said to Jesus, *‘Where are we to get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd?’* ← Scarcity mindset.

Jesus took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all of them ate and were filled.

← Abundance mindset. (Ref: Matthew 15.32-38)

When it comes to budgeting, most of us turn on this scarcity switch that tells us, *“We start with how much money we have, and that’s our limitation”*, the seven loaves and the fish. But if we start with our relationship with the God of Abundance, that all changes. The market-capitalists in the congregation should approach the budgeting process with *“If we invest in the work of the parish, then we will find ourselves flourishing!”* The democratic-socialist in the congregation should approach the budgeting process with *“It’s our responsibility to share what we have so that all may flourish – when one flourishes, all should flourish!”* But we’re Christians before we’re economists, right? So, we should all be approaching the budgeting process with *“My faith and life are borne out of God’s abundance, and I want all to see and know God’s abundance!”*

Jesus tells us that He came that we *“may have life and have it abundantly”* (John 10.10b). Let us together discern how we can *“continue to grow the faith of the community, to better discern God’s mission for our community”* with a life in Christ and have it abundantly.



The Big Bread Project from August 2020 was an

abundance of bread, a loaf for every household in the parish.

Living the Gospel

The Community Engagement of the Churches that Fr Ian Visited this Summer

As mentioned in my September article, the relevancy of the Church to those who are not part of it comes from the Church's engagement with their communities. Sharing my visits to parishes around the world and around California through The Witness focused on what those parishes did on Sunday mornings, which is only relevant to those sitting in the pews. This article offers a small snapshot of what each of those parishes is doing in their communities.

1. May 21: St Peter's, Santa Maria: The people of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the people of the Pine Ridge Reservation in Red Shirt, South Dakota have been in relationship for over ten years. Young people have been travelling the road between LA and Red Shirt every summer and learning a lot about themselves and one another. St Peter's supports this work financially, spiritually, and through the dedication of adults and young people who make the trip.
2. May 28: St John's, Waterloo (South London). They host Rush Hour concerts by Southbank Sinfonia.
3. June 11: St George's Cathedral, Cape Town. Actively support people living with HIV and those who care for them within the Cathedral and the wider Cape Town community.
4. June 18: Green Park Free Church, New Delhi. Participated in the Inter-religion Dialogue on Peace and Communal Harmony.
5. June 25: Christ Church, Bangkok. Committed to the Karen people for over 30 years through the work at Noh Bo Academy and in the Mae La refugee camp.
6. July 2: Christ Church St Laurence, Sydney. Committed to the support of the underprivileged, the persecuted and the socially marginalized.
7. July 9: Wellington Cathedral. Intercessors Aotearoa. They join with other Christians to worship and pray for government, legislation & heritage to positively impact our nation, our whānau, and future generations, that God's Kingdom would come there on earth as in heaven.
8. July 16: All Saints', Pasadena (online). Alternative Christmas Market (ACM) has reclaimed the Christmas story by offering an alternative to the consumer frenzy that has overtaken the Christmas season. In the spirit of making God's love tangible, the ACM brings together non-profit organizations that address social issues on a local, national, and international level to give consumers the opportunity to participate in socially conscious gift giving. The gifts purchased will

(Continued on next page)

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



(Continued from page 4)

help kids visit their incarcerated parents, gang members get back on track, homeless and abused women, kids in foster care, and many others.

9. July 23: St Mark's-in-the-Valley, Los Olivos. Offers cooking classes to low-income families whose challenges include providing nutritious meals on very limited budgets, sometimes supplemented by federal and state assistance.
10. July 30: St Augustine's, Oakland. Dating back to 1969 when the Black Panther Party started their Free Breakfast Program at St. Augustine's all the way until today, where every 2nd and 4th Saturday they distribute free groceries out of their Fellowship Hall.
11. August 6: St Paul's, Healdsburg. Shower Ministry for the homeless – EVERY DAY!
12. August 13: St Francis', Turlock. During their Camino de la Pascua (Lenten Walk), they visited the outreach ministries of the churches in the area, including sharing their own with other churches.
13. August 20: All Saints' by-the-Sea, Montecito. On the Sunday I visited, they were taking a collection to support relief efforts after the Maui firestorm.
14. My last Sunday, August 27, was at St Mary's Lompoc, which did not happen in time to make it into The Witness. I went with my brother, who lives in Lompoc and remembers the old church building that was downtown. The congregation was very welcoming. The sermon explored "Peter...on this rock I will build my church." The priest explored the difference in what "The Rock" is between the Roman Catholic view – Peter, himself, with The Pope as the successor – and the non-Roman Catholic view – the rock of the faith that Peter expressed, with the faith of all believers as the successors. St Mary's has an Outreach Ministry Development Team that provides support to the outreach programs across the city, such as Senior Nutrition, Meals on Wheels and Backpacks for Students.

Many say that the Church is irrelevant. It is activities like these, borne out of Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves, and when we do this for the least of these, we do this for Jesus, that the Church is *not* irrelevant...but very much indeed invaluable.

- Fr Ian



From The Bishop

"I want to thank you and everyone for a festive weekend. It was fun and varied, and filled with hope and joy. Thank you to everyone who planned and executed the events of the two days!"

- The Right Reverend Lucinda Ashby,
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real.



**Look who's
Celebrating in
October**

Birthdays

- October 5th Chris Kellett
- October 7th Lee Hollister
- October 10th Kathryn Bumpass
- October 10th Diane Levison
- October 11th Virginia Enney
- October 19th Carole Merrill
- October 25th Clark Lewis
- October 26th James Murphy

There are no known October anniversaries in the parish.

If we're missing your special celebration and you'd like to share it with us, please send an email to office@ststephensslo.org, call the office at 805-543-7212 or write a note to us. We'd love to add you to the list.

St Stephen's Coffee Café is Open in the Parish Hall after the 10 am Sunday Service.



Stop in for fellowship and conversation along with snacks, coffee, tea, and lemonade.

Please sign up to be a part of providing this wonderful parish family activity. No experience necessary. There are other volunteers that are willing to help you. The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall.

If you don't have time to set up, serve or clean up we'll gladly accept donations of fruit, cookies or other snacks.

To become a part of the St Stephen's Hospitality Committee, contact lizwfrost@msn.com, 805-543-7212

-Liz Frost



Bible Selections for October

	10/1/2023	10/8/2023	10/15/2023	10/22/2023	10/29/2023
	Pentecost 18	Pentecost 19	Pentecost 20	Pentecost 21	All Saints Day
1st READING	Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32	Isaiah 5:1-7	Isaiah 25:1-9	Isaiah 45:1-7	Revelation 7:9-17
PSALM	Psalm 25:1-8	Psalm 80:7-14	Psalm 23	Psalm 96:1-9	Psalm 34:1-10, 22
2nd READING	Philippians 2:1-13	Philippians 3:4b-14	Philippians 4:1-9	1 Thess 1:1-10	1 John 3:1-3
GOSPEL	Matthew 21:23-32	Matthew 21:33-46	Matthew 22:1-14	Matthew 22:15-22	Matthew 5:1-12

Hands on Stewardship



An enormous thank you to Sophia Agbo and Jamie Hess for orchestrating such a grand celebration after our St Stephen's Day services with the Bishop. And another enormous thank you to Cassie Tarantino for organizing a wonderful St Stephen's Day recital titled "Prelude", and to the Choral Scholars, Organists and Chancel Choir for helping us worship God in such a grand way.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Welcome Home Boxes for 40 Prado (see photo below). These household supplies are given to clients when the transition from the shelter into more permanent housing. Those who experience housing insecurity are truly gleeful when they discover that, not only do they have a new home, they have a pot to cook their dinner in and a pillow to lay their head on.

Thank you to Everyone who worked to make our St Stephen's Day celebrations amazing.

Thank you to Ethan Finn & Spud Schroeder and for taking the trash cans to the street for trash pick up each week.

Thank you to Sophia Agbo, Nancy Deovlet, Brenda Enney, Diane Levison, Mary McCorkle, Carolyn Platt and Jennifer Sayre for serving on the Altar Guild in September.

Thank you to Lynn Hollister, Kay Lewis, Kathleen Pennington and Elizabeth Potter for counting the collection and preparing the deposits during September.

Thank you to Liz Frost, Cheryl & Craig McCollum, and Rosey & Skip Parks for hosting coffee hour in September.

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

Thank you to Clark Lewis, Craig McCollum, and Beau Parks for live streaming our Sunday Services in September.

Thank you to Everyone who contributed to The Witness.

Thank you to Nancy Deovlet, Cheryl McCollum, Elizabeth Potter, and Gail Taylor for folding the Witness.

Thank you to Diane Levison, Cheryl McCollum and Gail Taylor for assembling the booklets for St Stephen's Day Services.

Thank you to Shannon Larrabee, Cheryl McCollum and Rosey Parks for covering the office.



Welcome Home Boxes for 40 Prado

A Grand Celebration!

The St Stephen's Day weekend was again spectacular! Thank you for all that everyone did to be a part of the celebration. St Stephen's Day is our annual opportunity to celebrate who we are as the St Stephen's Family, who we are within the wider community of San Luis Obispo, and who we are as the Body of Christ. Bishop Lucinda joined us for her official Visitation ... and her birthday! We welcomed Shane Guess and Torrie Fields at 8am, and Dalna Mills, Bill Grenek, Kathanne Lynch and Spud Schroeder into the Body of Christ and The Episcopal Church through their respective Baptism, Confirmations and Receptions. Molly Wyer and Alicia Perry were not able to be with us. They will be Confirmed by the Bishop on October 8 at St Benedict's on Los Osos Valley Road.





CREATION CARE *Reflections*

This year's Season of Creation concludes shortly, on October 4, St Francis' Day. As we have moved through this season during September, I have often reflected on a passage in Wendell Berry's "Another Turn of the Crank", as quoted in Daily Prayer for all Seasons.

Care. . .rests upon genuine religion. Care allows creatures to escape our explanations into their actual presence and their essential mystery. In taking care of our fellow creatures, we acknowledge that they are not ours; we acknowledge that they belong to an order and harmony of which we ourselves are part. To answer to the perpetual crisis of our presence in this abounding and dangerous world, we have only the perpetual obligation of care."

In his full essay Berry posits that humans have "an instinct for faith". Moreover, "As creatures of faith, we must choose either to be religious or superstitious. The present age is an age of superstition. . ."

He sees today's superstition in "the modern ambition to control nature". And to control nature we must reduce it to what we think it is and how it works. Our failure to recognize the "actual presence and essential mystery" of the creatures and processes of nature has led us to abuse the Earth.

This has brought on disruptions to the climate, species extinction and the possibility of undermining the very habitat that supports all life. Our presence is "the perpetual crisis" in nature. No wonder this era has been labelled the "Anthropocene", a time when humans finally have the power to alter Earth's processes directly.

Another Berry – Thomas Berry – warns: "We should be clear about what happens when we destroy the living forms of this planet. The first consequence is that we destroy modes of divine presence."

We urgently need to return to our "obligation of care" for creation, by living more simply, by altering our extractive attitude toward the Earth. We need to become, in Wendell Berry's analysis, "religious".

- Kathryn Bumpass



A Note from the Senior Warden Campaign Success!

Only a few short weeks ago, we announced the start of the “Re-Fresh” St Stephen’s Capital Campaign. The campaign’s goal was to supplement funds from the endowment earnings to complete five projects needed to refurbish St Stephen’s. The projects were:

- 1) replace the existing parking lot
- 2) refurbish the music/choir room
- 3) improve the landscaping around the church
- 4) repair the crack in the floor, which requires replacing the carpet
- 5) start a continuing repair and maintenance fund from any remaining funds

The goal was \$40,000.

Because of the generosity of the people of St Stephen’s, the “Re-Fresh” campaign raised \$75,000 as of September 13. And we’re still counting. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE who gave so graciously from your financial treasures.

Two of the projects are already completed or near completion: the music room and the landscaping. By the time you read this Witness, the new parking lot should be completed. The new carpet and floor repair will also be completed in the very near future.

Again, thank you!
Skip Parks, Senior Warden



?
? Sure, it’s not even Halloween yet, but it’s not too early to think about Christmas. We’ve got music for Christmas Caroling that we haven’t used since the pandemic. In the long ago before the pandemic we’d carol in the neighborhood or lead Christmas sing-a-longs at local care facilities. If that sounds like fun to you, let me know and let’s try to get together to spread some Christmas cheer.

- kapennington@netscape.net



Tired of getting your copy of
The Witness by Snail Mail?
email kapennington@netscape.net
to have it sent to your inbox
instead of your mailbox.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Welcoming Worshipping 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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Permit No. 57



Blessing of the Animals

October 1, 2023 at 3pm – Emerson Park

You and your beloved pets will receive a blessing at this annual service remembering St Francis of Assisi.

If your pet doesn't like to travel, bring a photo! Pets should be on a leash or in a carrier.

Please bring a folding chair or picnic blanket for your comfort.

The event is in Emerson Park, across the street from St Stephen's, along Nipomo Street between Pismo and Pacific Streets in SLO. It is easily accessible by walking, biking or SLO Transit Bus #2. If you must drive, please carpool. Parking is available at 650 Pismo, a half-block from the park.

Please join us after this brief service for light refreshments and some pet petting!

