

# The Witness

Volume 28, Issue 1

Welcoming Worshipping Working

January 2024

## 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:

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## When we come

By The Rev. Ian M. Delinger, Rector



The Feast of the Epiphany (January 6) is older than Christmas! (In the East!) And some Eastern churches have their main celebration of The Incarnation as the Feast of the Epiphany rather than Christmas. The Armenian Church does not celebrate Christmas, only Epiphany. Eastern churches still using the Julian calendar celebrate Christmas on January 6 and Epiphany on January 19 because of the 13-day difference between the two calendars.

But never mind calendars. Epiphany is the time we honor the manifestation to the world of the Christ Child as the long-awaited savior. That is accomplished through the story of the wise men from the East visiting the Holy Family. So, for some, the feast is known as 3 Kings Day. Even though the Bible does not specify the number of wise men, they brought gold (for Jesus as king), frankincense (for Jesus as Divine) and myrrh (for Jesus' eventual suffering and death).

Fast-forward to the inter-war period, and another visitor offered a gift: Me and my drum. *The Little Drummer Boy* was written in 1941 and popularized in a 1958 recording by the Harry Simeone Chorale. Fun fact: It had previously been recorded by the Trapp Family whose story became the basis for *The Sound of Music*. The

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drummer boy's gift was not nearly as grand, but it was all he had ... his Gift of the Spirit ... to offer Jesus.

Thinking about gift-giving at Epiphany made me wonder what I would give to the Christ Child if I were to be in that situation. If you were to be invited to meet the Messiah, the Son of God, Emmanuel: God with us, what would you bring as a gift?

Christmas as the celebration of the Incarnation of God as Human is part of the “was, and is, and is to come” of God. It was God’s time with us in Human form, but, even after The Ascension, we believe that Jesus is still with us in spirit, yet, we believe that Jesus will Return. So, when you think about the gift you would bring to Jesus, would it be different if it were Jesus, the Christ Child, Jesus who is with us until the end of the age (last line of Matthew), or Jesus who comes at the Second Coming? Or would it be the same? Would it be material and/or something with deep significance, like the Wise Men’s gifts? Or something from your own humbleness?

I implore you to consider what gift you would bring, and I’ll give you throughout 2024. There will be some reminders along the way. Perhaps thinking about gift-giving to Jesus might stir up different ways of relating to God ... or maybe different ways of relating to Humanity. It’s never a bad thing to think about Jesus!

## A Case for Love

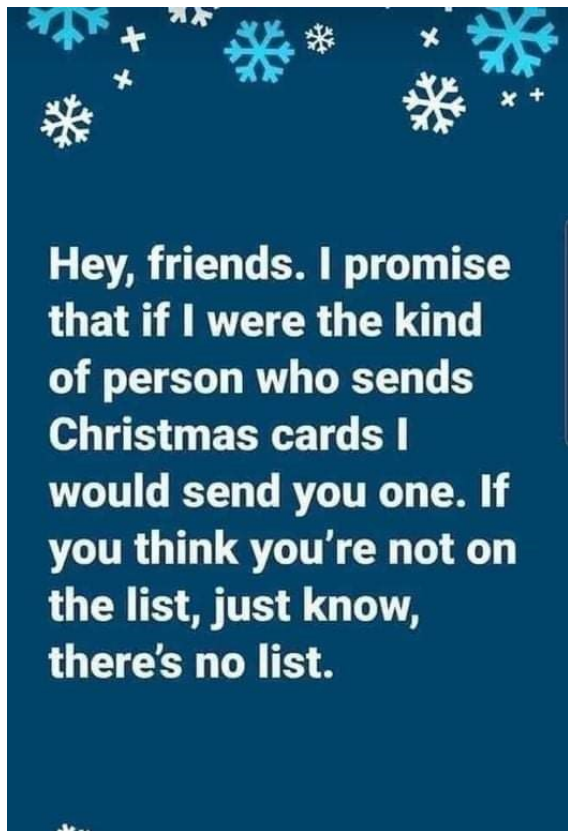
Fr. Ian would like to gather a group to attend A Case for Love, a heartfelt yet personally challenging movie inspired by the teachings and writings of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, most well-known for his passionate sermon about “The Power of Love” at the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. This documentary examines whether or not love—specifically unselfish love—is the solution to the extreme societal and political divide facing the US. Tickets for screenings on Tuesday, January 23, 2024. Fr. Ian has a ticket for 4pm in Santa Maria. Let him know if you want to go. You can buy your ticket, or if you need assistance, please ask. We can carpool.

More information at [www.fathomevents.com/events/a-case-for-love/](http://www.fathomevents.com/events/a-case-for-love/)



## Christmas Cards from the Rector

In December, a meme went around social media:



This has been my practice for about 20 years now. As you know, I don't send Christmas Cards. Thank you all for your cards. They truly brightened up my home as the primary form of Christmas décor. In lieu of Christmas cards for the parish, I made a donation to Episcopal Relief and Development in the name of St. Stephen's. This year, I donated toward literacy for children.

The gifts help increase access to information and resources. In addition to teaching reading and writing, this gift also provides education on how government and financial institutions run and empowers community members in their decision-making processes.

At Episcopal Relief and Development:

“works in collaboration with church partners and other local organizations to facilitate healthier, more fulfilling lives in communities that are struggling with hunger, poverty, disaster and disease. We also work around the world and here in the US responding to and rebuilding after disasters. Our programs impact the lives of over 3 million people annually. We respect the dignity of all people and view them as our neighbors, working alongside participants regardless of religious affiliation or background. Our unique expertise, experience and practical knowledge allow us to guide communities to lasting change with a focus on three key priorities: Women, Children, Climate.”

Thank you again for your cards and gifts. May 2024 bring you joy and peace and every blessing that God has in store for you.

*-The Rev. Ian M. Delinger*

Thank you for all  
that you do

## Hands on Stewardship

**Thank you to** everyone who contributed to the “For Kids from Kids Toy Drive”. **Thank you to** Adele Butterfield, Bill Crewe, Lynn Hollister, Kay Lewis, Kathleen Pennington and Elizabeth Potter for counting the collection and preparing the deposits during December.

**Thank you to** Lee & Lynn Hollister, Cheryl & Craig McCollum, and Mary & Bob McCorkle for hosting coffee hour in December.

**Thank you to** Kathleen Pennington, Elizabeth Potter, Jennifer Sayre and Gail Taylor for teaching Sunday School in December.

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

**Thank you to** Gail Taylor, Nancy Devplet, Elizabeth Potter, and Cheryl McCollum who fold, tape and label The Witness. As well as helping with the Service Booklet replenishment.

**Thank you to** Shannon Larrabee & Lee Hollister for organizing the clean up of the church campus for the Christmas Services.

**Thank you to** Diane Levison, Craig & Cheryl McCollum for cooking monthly for 40 Prado.

**Thank you to** Kathleen Pennington, for your warm welcome of the Victorian walking tour participants on Sunday evening, December 17. She greeted them with hot beverages as they arrived. When their walk ended back at St. Stephen’s, Kathleen opened the church to everyone and shared her knowledge of St. Stephen’s history. We owe you one

for your gracious welcome of the San Luis Obispo Community.

**Thank you to** Elizabeth Potter for helping with the celebration cards.

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

**Thank you to** the Clark Lewis, Craig McCollum, Kathleen Pennington & Beau Parks for live streaming the Sunday Services in December.

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

### Robert Burns Fellowship Hour

Monday, January 29, 2024, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Ramsden Hall



Robert Burns

#### Celebrate Scotland’s Famous Bard!

##### Featuring

Songs and poetry of Robert Burns

Bagpiper Paul Dunn

Dr. Tarantino reading “Address to a Haggis”

Traditional Celtic Céilidh (music and dance)

Traditional Scottish Appetizers

This is an all-ages event: spirits will be in our hearts, not our glasses.

Hosted by St. Stephen’s, St. Benedict’s, and St. Barnabas’ Celticists:  
Cassandra Tarantino, Lorianne Schwennk, Rachell Mann

#### 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](mailto:office@ststephensslo.org)

Contribution of articles is encouraged. Please e-mail submissions to [witness@ststephensslo.org](mailto:witness@ststephensslo.org)  
The deadline for emailed submission of articles is the third Friday of the month. Email any questions to [witness@ststephensslo.org](mailto:witness@ststephensslo.org) © Copyright 2024 by St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church. All rights reserved.

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1344 Nipomo Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3935

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Church

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**Psalm 111: 1-6**

**1 Hallelujah!**

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

**2 Great are the deeds of the LORD!**

they are studied by all who delight in them.

**3 His work is full of majesty and splendor, and his righteousness endures for ever.**

**4 He makes his marvelous works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.**

**5 He gives food to those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.**

**6 He has shown his people the power of his works in giving them the lands of the nations.**



**Bible Selections for January**

7-Jan-24

**EPIPHANY**

14-Jan-24

**Epiphany 2B**

1st Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Psalm

Psalm 72:1-7,10-14

Psalm 139:1-5,12-17

2nd Reading

Ephesians 3:1-12

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

John 1:43-51

21-Jan-24

**Epiphany 3B**

28-Jan-24

**Epiphany 4B**

1st Reading

Jonah 3:1-5,10

Deuteronomy 18.15-20

Psalm

Psalm 62:6-14

Psalm 111

2nd Reading

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

1 Corinthians 8.1-13

Gospel

Mark 1:14-20

Mark 1:21-28

**Happy Birthday!**

**Happy Anniversary**

**Who is celebrating in January?**

**Anniversaries**

- 1-Jan Marshall Granger & MaryLud Baldwin
- 29-Jan Hugh & Carolyn Platt

**Birthdays**

- 3-Jan Shannon Larrabee
- 4-Jan Carol Misson
- 7-Jan Elisabeth Abrahams  
Linda Zeuschner
- 12-Jan Craig McCollum
- 13-Jan The Rev. Jen Crompton
- 20-Jan John Shakley
- 20-Jan Fred Astaire, Jr.
- 22-Jan Mary McCorkle
- 25-Jan Liz Frost
- 27-Jan Pat Brown



## From The Treasurer

The pandemic was a difficult time for all of us - including St. Stephens. We on the Pledger/Givers of Record faced high inflation in our personal lives as did St. Stephens. Many of us continued to contribute to St. Stephens in the same amounts as in the past. However, with inflation, this meant St. Stephens was losing its buying power to support the programs and activities which we expect our church to provide. The financial strain has placed us in a difficult position. Interestingly, the Refresh St. Stephens campaign exceeded all expectations bringing in over \$80,000 when we hoped to take in approximately \$45,000. Thank you for your generosity.



### Thank you for your generosity!

As of November 30, 2023, our Operating Account at Mechanics Bank had a balance of \$99,522.19. This is an illusory number when one looks at what it comprises:

- \$77,570.30 is the unspent remaining cash from the Refresh Campaign and is a designated fund meaning it can only be used on specified Re-fresh activities and not overall expenses. Donors gave their money only for the specified activities and thus the funds therein can only be used for those specified activities
- \$12,950.81 is deferred pledge income. This is cash received for 2024 pledges. Thus it is not recognized income in 2023 and cannot be spent until 2024.

Working the math gives this result:

#### CALCULATION OF AVAILABLE CASH TO SPEND

	\$99,522.19	Operating Cash 11/30/23
Less	\$77,570.30	Refresh St. Stephens
Less	\$12,950.81	Deferred Pledges
	\$ 9,001.08	Cash available for Operations
Less	\$25,000.00	Average monthly expenditures (of this, approximately \$11,000 are salaries for staff)
	<b>-\$15,998.92</b>	Cash Remaining

This means we are surviving by drawing on the Refresh St. Stephens funds (borrowing). We are living hand-to-mouth. Pledges are front-end loaded with many pledges being paid

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in total at the beginning of the year (January).

The problem is the amount of committed donations to St. Stephens does not meet the cost of maintaining the St. Stephens we love.

### **How Do We Solve This Challenge?**

Pledges represent funding commitments. Givers of record equal what we expect non-pledging family units to donate. There is no commitment. Givers of Record income was under budget by \$8,800 after eleven months this year.

What your Vestry is doing to solve the problem has three separate focus areas:

1. Increase the number of Pledging Units. This has two components:
  - a. Our congregation has about 50% pledging households. We aim to increase this.
  - b. Convert Givers of Record to pledging units willing to commit to donating a specified amount each year
2. Work with the whole congregation toward numerical growth and becoming a thriving faith community.
3. Judiciously decrease any expenses not contributing to the life of the church.

We need your help in ensuring the life of St. Stephens:

- Consider increasing your pledge
- If not a current pledger, consider becoming one
- Always striving to welcome any new worshiper by enthusiastically welcoming them.





### YOUR SPONSORSHIP IMPACT

This Thanksgiving, through the SLO County Turkey Trot, we united as a community with a shared mission of providing meals to neighbors experiencing hunger. The results are extraordinary:

**1,400+**

TROTTERS CAME TOGETHER

**43**

TEAMS UNITED

**\$65K+**

NET FUNDS RAISED

Thanks in part to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's sponsorship, the SLO Food Bank and its Hunger Relief Network distributed:

**4,000+**

TURKEYS & HAMS TO PEOPLE IN NEED.

**THANK YOU!**



Community-wide

## Lamentation for the Holy Land

A time to gather without political agenda to remember our common humanity and to grieve the trauma and loss of life that has happened and is happening in Israel and Gaza, and the fear and suffering it is causing locally.

**Sunday January 7, 2 - 3pm**  
**Meadow Park, San Luis Obispo**

You are invited to wear black as a sign of lamentation.

**Sponsored by**  
Interfaith Coalition for Peace  
The Episcopal Clergy of San Luis Obispo

### Notice Board:

If you locate any service booklets that are not from the current seasonal booklet, please direct them to an usher or the office.

Thank you.



**ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION**  
CALIFORNIA CENTRAL COAST CHAPTER

### Healthy Aging Club

An Active Social Club for those living in the early stages of dementia

### Get out, get active, and get connected!

Keep your brain and body active with different activities. Meet others who are living in the Early Stages and want to remain cognitively and socially active.

**2nd & 4th Thursdays**  
**10 - 11:30am**

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Ramsden Room  
1344 Nipomo Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

RSVP to Laura Deloye  
ladeloye@alz.org | 805.342.0956





## From the Vestry

The Vestry meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Month (usually) to discuss the business affairs of the parish. Here are some highlights of the meeting on December 17, 2023:

The Vestry approved more projects under the Re-Fresh Campaign: Better drainage in the landscaping around the church building, repairing the irrigation in the jasmine and sprucing up those planters, new carpet for the Sacristy, which will be the same as in the Sanctuary, and new lighting in the parking lot. Thank you to all who contributed to the Re-Fresh Campaign.

The Stewardship & Mission section of the Strategic Plan is designed to address our stewardship of time, talent, treasure and creation, including increasing the number of pledging units and implementing the draft 4-part Stewardship Program that was developed in 2019, and address numerical growth of the congregation. The initial Stewardship Team and the Mission Team were created at November's meeting. They have met and will begin forming formal teams made up of a few more members of the congregation to address these areas of ministry.



The Vestry approved a 4% cost of living adjustment for the Staff following recommendation from Diocese.

The next meeting is January 21, 2024. 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.

# Annual Meeting: January 28, 2024 at 11:15am

In-Person in Ramsden Hall and Via Zoom <https://tinyurl.com/StStZoom>

Mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting. This is when we do the official business of the parish, required by law. We will elect 3 Vestry members as we give our thanks to Kathryn Bumpass, Kay Lewis and Skip Parks for their 3-year term of service. And we will elect Delegates to Diocesan Convention. If you would like to enquire about nominations, please see one of the 3 mentioned above who form the Nominations Committee.

There will be a slight change to the agenda of the Annual Meeting in order to allow more time for dialog about the work and ministries of the parish. The morning will look like this:

- Opening Prayer
- Presentation of Candidates, Distribution and Collection of Ballots
- Motion to Accept the Reports as presented
- Presentation of the Budget and Voting
- Motion to Adjourn the BUSINESS portion of the Meeting
- Lunch with a Review of 2023 followed by Ministry Highlights and the opportunity to dialog with heads of ministries. SLO Food Bank will also make a presentation during this time.

The Annual Report will be available to members of the congregation no later than January 21. To request it in electronic form, please contact Fr. Ian the week prior. Voter and candidate eligibility includes having pledged or been a giver of record in 2023 and 2024 and a communicant in good standing. The term for a Vestry member is 3 years; for Delegates is one year with the commitment to attend 4 meetings during the year and Diocesan Convention via Zoom on Saturday, November 9, 2024.

## Fellowship Hour

Let's spend some time just enjoying one another's company! For the next couple of months, the St Stephen's family is going to carve out time to simply enjoy one another's company. On the last Monday of the month, we'll have an hour-long "event" starting at 5.30pm. Any person from the congregation can volunteer to take a month and host whatever event they want to host. Learn how to knit; game night; look-how-cute-my-grandkids-are night ... whatever. The host will decide how hospitality will be offered: They can provide snacks or a meal, or ask people to bring stuff, or have nothing. It will be up to them. If people want to mingle more after the event is finished, they can do so. If you want to host, get in touch with Fr. Ian or Susannah Williams at [susannahmercy@gmail.com](mailto:susannahmercy@gmail.com). Thanks to Cassie Tarantino and Marti Lindholm for hosting the December Carol Sing-a-Long.

## For Kids From Kids Toy Drive Successful



CAPSLO/40 Prado Gifts

Wish lists were received for 15 children served by Operation Santa and 16 kids served by CAPSLO/40Prado. Parishioners donated money or brought toys and other gifts to Sunday morning services to put in or around a basket at the back



CAPSLO/40 Prado Gifts wrapped

of the church. The donations were brought to the Children’s Chapel where children in Sunday school said a prayer of blessing over them. At the end of the collection period the gifts were

sorted and matched to wish lists then put into gift bags and brought to CAPSLO/40 Prado and Operation Santa.



Operation Santa gifts wrapped

Operation Santa gifts before wrapping up



Thanks to your generosity we were able to provide toys, games, puzzles, baby toys, Barbies, Legos, a baby doll stroller, trucks, baby dolls, skateboards, art supplies, Squishmallows, playdough, slime, board games, gift cards and more to make Christmas 2023 a happier time for children in need in our community.

## Caroling was fun!

For the first time since the Pandemic, we went Christmas Caroling at local care centers. At one location (San Luis Post Acute) we wandered the halls, singing carols for people in their rooms. At the others, we gathered with residents in a main room and led them in singing familiar carols with us. To be even more festive and fun, we wore funny hats, sometimes told jokes or stories between songs and brought jingle bells for residents to ring on some songs. Carolers included: Ogo Agbo (piano), Eric Fisher (guitar and flute), Cheryl McCollum, Craig McCollum (guitar), Kathleen Pennington (mandolin), Adelaide Perry, Alicia Perry, Gail Taylor and Jeff Wheelwright.

At Mission View most of the residents sang along and some staff stopped in for a few songs, too. At Sydney Creek one fellow seemed to know all the words to all the songs, one woman really enjoyed jingling bells, and everyone enjoyed exercising their lungs. At San Luis Post Acute there was a fellow celebrating his 99th birthday with his family visiting in his room. They asked us to come in to sing with him and we sang his favorite Christmas Carols with them.



Caroling at Mission View Health Center

# St. Stephen's

## Episcopal Church

Welcoming Worshiping Working

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Office Hours: Mon-Thurs. 9am-1pm

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We three kings of orient are  
bearing gifts we traverse afar  
field and fountain  
moor and mountain  
following yonder star

HYMN 128

FROM THE 1982 HYMNAL,  
CHURCH PUBLISHING



**EPIPHANY**

### Bible Word Search: Hope

All of the words listed below are in the puzzle - left, right, up, down, or diagonally.

Find each word and circle it. The letters that remain form a MYSTERY Answer.

Can you figure out what that answer is?

S	K	G	D	L	O	H	G	N	O	R	T	S	C	N
G	E	C	N	N	T	T	L	O	P	H	T	U	O	M
N	V	M	O	O	E	H	O	I	P	S	R	T	L	P
O	K	S	I	R	L	K	R	G	R	S	B	N	O	I
L	I	T	T	T	Y	W	O	U	E	E	A	S	R	N
E	D	R	A	M	L	M	O	P	S	T	I	L	D	W
B	O	E	V	E	I	L	O	H	S	T	H	N	M	A
M	O	N	L	D	N	H	A	R	I	C	H	E	S	R
U	H	G	A	L	Y	K	N	O	O	K	N	A	R	D
R	E	T	S	L	E	A	N	I	N	G	W	A	L	L
D	S	H	N	N	E	S	R	E	T	H	G	I	L	Y
E	L	I	B	A	L	A	N	C	E	S	T	S	E	R
R	A	S	S	A	I	L	T	U	O	R	U	O	P	O
V	F	G	E	S	N	E	P	M	O	C	E	R	S	L
L	U	O	S	G	N	I	D	R	O	C	C	A	T	G

ACORDING	MURDER	STRENGTH
ALL TIMES	MY ROCK	STRONGHOLD
ASSAIL	NOT BE SHAKEN	THRUST
BALANCES	O LORD	TOGETHER
BELONGS	OPPRESSION	TRUST IN HIM
COUNSELLED	POSITION	VAINLY HOPE
CURSE	POUR OUT	
FALSEHOOD	PSALM	
GLORY	RANK	
HOW LONG	RECOMPENSE	
INWARDLY	REST	
LEANING WALL	RICHES	
LIE	SALVATION	
LIGHTER	SOUL	
MOUTH	SPOKEN	