

The Witness

Volume 28, Issue 3

Welcoming Worshipping Working

March 2024

Special points of interest:

Sunday

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

Monday

8:30AM Prayers & Pastries at The Bridge Café—1074 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo

Wednesday

12:15 PM Service



Hello March and Happy Easter to all!

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Faith & Justice: An Ash Wednesday Sermon

By The Rev. Ian M. Delinger, Rector

Sin comes up a lot during Lent. So, what is sin, and am I doing it right?

Sin is the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation. (BCP p848)

Anglicans are intentionally vaguely specific and specifically vague, so interpretations of that definition of sin most likely cover a wide spectrum. But clearly the definition



Welcome Home Boxes – household items collected by members of St. Stephen's for 40 Prado's clients who transition into permanent housing.

understands sin as being much more than breaking the 10 Commandments (*look them up as a refresher in BCP p350*).

What we discover later in the Bible after the 10 Commandments, particularly in the writings of the Prophets, are more concerns that distort our relationship with God and God's people. In Ash Wednesday's passage from Isaiah 58:1-12, economic disparity and a disregard for social justice are specifically pointed out as sins.

Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice? Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day, and oppress all your workers.

This warning against piety without social justice is a theme for Isaiah, Amos, and other prophets, and it is a theme for Jesus, as He states in the Ash Wednesday Gospel, Matthew 6:1-6,16-21:

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them.

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We joke that this is the Gospel set for Ash Wednesday, the day we visibly mark our piety and then go out into the wider world to show that we've done our duty. The important part of the sentence, though, is "in order to" – or "that your purpose be". Don't be pious "in order to" be seen. Be as pious as you want, publicly or privately, but make sure that your piety is accompanied by humility and justice, not by vanity.

Jesus goes on to elaborate what a pious and righteous person should do: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. The first action Jesus mentions is *ALMSGIVING!* Then prayer, then fasting.

I don't know how many of you know this, but the Bible is chock-full of social justice...like...the social justice issues that we're concerned about today: Economic disparity, concern for widows, orphans and foreigners & refugees, the environment, the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer...the list goes on. Social justice is part of having a right relationship with God. So, our prayer and fasting should support our almsgiving (our social justice).

Lent is a journey, a journey toward being reconciled to God. Really, one's whole life is a journey toward God in the hope of one day fully realizing God's love. That journey may look like almsgiving, prayer and fasting. But your almsgiving, prayer and fasting may also look like making a substantial difference in the lives of those who struggle with economic injustice, climate injustice, legal injustice, racial injustice and injustices of all kinds.

This Lent, drink wine, eat steak and enjoy chocolate. I don't care, and I don't think God does, either. More importantly, serve the poor, restore the earth, heal the sick, and help the oppressed go free. Love God, love your neighbor, love your enemy.

This, Lent, I *entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God* (2 Cor 5.20).

Fellowship Hour

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 on susannahmercy@gmail.com.

Thanks to Liz Frost for hosting the February World Travel Night.



Spring Renewal 2024 May 17 & 18, 2024



It would be wonderful to have a delegation from St. Stephen's SLO at Spring Renewal!

Don't miss the opportunity to join us for our annual in-person Spring Renewal on May 17th and 18th in Salinas. Unlike the Diocesan Convention, this event is open to everyone in the diocese. Our keynote speaker, the Right Reverend Michael Hunn, Bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande, is a former Canon to the Ordinary for our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry. He will share his unique and inspiring perspective on our Stepping Out with Soul theme.

Mark your calendar now and join us for a gathering of fun, fellowship, and spiritual growth.

Being More Relational By Fr. Ian

For Vestry meetings in 2024, the Vestry will reflect on how we can be more relational in our leadership of the parish. Each month we will reflect on a message from Jesus on how Jesus is calling us to be more relational. At the Vestry Retreat on March 2 we will go into more detail about being more relational, and I will share that more widely after that session. Each month in The Witness, I will also commend to you to reflect on the same scripture and how Jesus is calling you to be more relational in your daily life. For January, we reflected on this sermon from The Rev Adam Thomas (link below):

Sermon for Sunday, February 16, 2020 || Epiphany 6A || Deuteronomy 30:15-20

The Rev Adam Thomas, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Mystic, CT

Read this sermon here and come to the meeting prepared to discuss "Transactional vs. Relational"

<https://wherethewind.com/2020/02/17/transactions-and-relationships/>

Hands on Stewardship

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

Thank you to Cheryl & Craig McCollum, Rosie & Skip Parks and the Coffee Committee for hosting coffee hour in February.

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

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

Thank you to Lee Hollister for all of the little things that he does to make the church grounds look beautiful.

Thank you to Kay Lewis for assisting in the office, assisting the Treasurer and coordinating the Sunday Servers.

Thank you to Jim Murphy, Jamie Hess, Steph Sherman, Charleen VonGortler, Cheryl McCollum, Bud & Linda Zeuschner, Bob & Mary McCorkle, Lee & Lynn Hollister, Kathryn Bumpass, Sophia Agbo, Liz Frost, Gail Taylor, Shannon Larrabee, Gina Hafemeister, Diane Levison and Jennifer Sayre for your time being a Lector, Usher, and LEM.

Thank you to Gail Taylor, Nancy Deovlet, Elizabeth Potter, and Cheryl McCollum who fold, tape and label The Witness.

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

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 February.

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



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 2024 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

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.

Sunday Service on March 24, 2024
 at 8am & 10am
 8am starts on the porch
 10am starts in the parking lot
 Continue your spiritual journey with us
 in-person at 1344 Nipomo SLO or online
facebook.com/ststephensslo/live (10am)



Palm SUNDAY



HOLY WEEK BEGINS

Maundy Thursday

March 28, 2024 at 5:30pm
 in-person at 1344 Nipomo SLO
 or online
facebook.com/ststephensslo/live



Footwashing

The Lord's Supper

Stripping the Altar

Lent: A Time to Turn

Wanted: Feet and Voices

Voices: About a dozen voices are needed for the dramatic reading of the Gospel on **Palm Sunday, March 24** at the **10am Service**. Depending upon the number of volunteer readers, you may have 1 or 2 parts. If you are interested, please contact Fr. Ian as soon as possible.

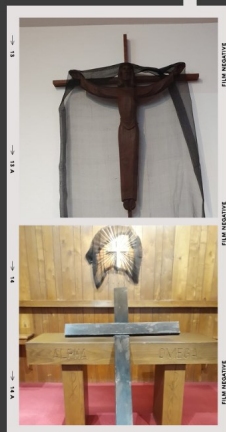
Feet: The traditional foot washing will take place during the **Maundy Thursday Service on March 28 at 5:30pm**. Anyone who would like to volunteer to have their feet washed by the act of humble service of the priest, please contact Fr. Ian as soon as possible.

GOOD FRIDAY

Service on March 29, 2024
 at 12.15pm
 Join the journey
 in-person at
 1344 Nipomo SLO
 or online
facebook.com/ststephensslo/live

Lent: A Time to Turn

All are welcome



Celebrate the Savior

Easter Services
 March 31, 2024
 at 8am & 10am

HE IS
Risen

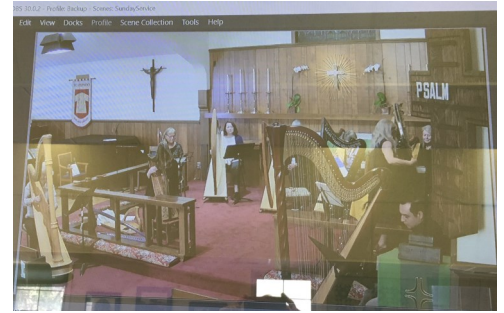


in-person at
 1344 Nipomo SLO
 or online at 10am
facebook.com/ststephensslo/live

Celebration of Harp Concert

Dear Members of the St. Stephen's Community,

We are delighted to share the wonderful success of our recent "Celebration of Harp Concert" that took place on Sunday, February 11, at 2 PM. It was truly an afternoon filled with enchantment as our talented harpists Jennifer Sayre, Nancy Thym, and Jan Walters graced us with their remarkable skills, presenting a delightful repertoire of medieval songs, lively Spanish dances, and elegant European salon music.



A view of the harp concert taken by
Jennifer Sayre

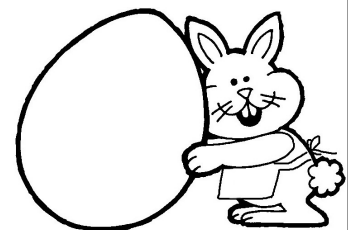
We are immensely grateful to all who attended and contributed to the event. Your generous freewill donations not only allowed us to enjoy this enchanting performance but also supported the continued flourishing of our church community. We are pleased to inform you that a portion of the proceeds has been earmarked for the benefit of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

It was a joyous occasion that brought us together in celebration of the beauty of music and the spirit of giving. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this event a success.

*Warm Regards,
Elizabeth Potter
On behalf of the Stewardship Committee*

Order Chocolate Easter Eggs by March 10th!

Though inflation has hit our economy, the Easter Bunny doesn't care. St. Stephen's chocolate coated fudge Easter Eggs are still just \$11 for half a pound of beautifully decorated, handmade chocolate or \$6 for a quarter pound. Order for yourself, your friends and family or sponsor an egg for a needy child. Proceeds from the sale of these eggs go toward outreach programs that care for children in need in our community. Eggs will be ready to pick up after both services on Palm Sunday, March 24. We'll be making the "no nut" eggs first, so if you'll need yours early, choose "no nut" and you can pick them up March 17. There's an order form in this issue of The Witness. Pick up more at the back of the church, on the bulletin board in Ramsden Hall or see, call or email Kathleen (805-546-0880, kapennington@netscape.net)



Bible Quiz: The Easter Story

- 1. It was all part of God's mysterious plan of salvation that Jesus would be killed, then rise from the dead as a sign that we too can overcome death and live with God forever. That's what Easter is all about. The Easter story begins with an event of Jesus' life that we celebrate on Palm Sunday. What event is it?**
 - a) Jesus preached a famous sermon in Palm City.
 - b) Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem, and the people spread palm branches on the road ahead of Him.
 - a) Jesus put a curse on a palm tree that would bear no fruit

- 2. As part of God's plan, one of Jesus' disciples betrayed Him to his enemies. What was his name?**
 - a) Judas
 - b) Matthew
 - c) Peter

- 3. What is Good Friday about?**
 - a) The day Jesus died on the cross
 - b) The day Jesus escaped from His enemies
 - c) The day Jesus preached his final sermon before his death

- 4. What do we celebrate on Easter?**
 - a) The day Jesus escaped from His enemies
 - b) The day Jesus preached his last sermon on Earth
 - c) The day Jesus rose from the dead

- 5. What happened 40 days after Jesus rose from the dead?**
 - a) Jesus' enemies tried again to kill Him
 - b) Jesus ascended to Heaven
 - c) Jesus visited Jerusalem for the last time



Answers:

1. B, 2. A, 3. A, 4. C, 5. B

For more quizzes check out:

<https://www.christianbiblereference.org/>

Making the fudge with Carol & Marge



Carol writing names



Chocolate Factory opening in Ramsden Hall early in March

Chocolate Factory sign up sheets will be on the bulletin board in Ramsden Hall early in March or call or email Kathleen (805-546-0880, kapennington@netscape.net) to let her know when you'd like to play with chocolate. Both experienced and inexperienced workers are needed. Please sign up for whatever shifts best fit your schedule. If you've worked in "the chocolate factory" before, you know the task schedule may



Jayne, Elizabeth, MaryLud and Kathleen moulding the fudge into eggs



Craig making leaves on the eggs

not be adhered to precisely, but whatever we happen to be doing each day you'll be in the company of friends and the place will have that wonderful smell of chocolate. Questions? See, call or email Kathleen (546-0880, kapennington@netscape.net)

Bible Selections

for March



3-Mar-24

Lent 3B

10-Mar-24

Lent 4B

17-Mar-24

Lent 5B

1st Reading	Exodus 20.1-17	Numbers 21.4-9	Jeremiah 31.31-34
Psalm	Psalm 19	Psalm 107.1-3,17-22	Psalm 119.9-16
2nd Reading	1 Corinthians 1.18-25	Ephesians 2.1-10	Hebrews 5.5-10
Gospel	John 2.13-22	John 3.14-21	John 12.20-33

24-Mar-24
Palm Sunday

28-Mar-24
Maundy Thursday

29-Mar-24
Good Friday

31-Mar-24
Easter Sunday

Liturgy of the Palms:
John 12.12-16, Psalm
118.1-2,19-29

1st Reading	Isaiah 50.4-9a	Exodus 12.1-14	Isaiah 52.13-53.12	Acts 10.34-43
Psalm	Psalm 31.9-16	Psalm 116.1,10-17	Psalm 22	Psalm 118.1-2,14-24
2nd Reading	Philippians 2.5-11 Mark 14.1-15.32 /	1 Corinthians 11.23-26	Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9	1 Corinthians 15.1-11
Gospel	Mark 15.32-47	John 13.1-17,31b-35	John 18.1-19.42	John 20.1-18

A Time
to
Celebrate



Happy Anniversary!

Jon & Cassandra Tarantino 04-Mar
Dennis & Nancy Deovlet 25-Mar

Happy Birthday!

Sandi Crewe 11-Mar
Nancy Deovlet 12-Mar
Sari Dworkin 18-Mar
Beverly Williams 24-Mar
Rev Karen Siegfried 28-Mar



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@ststephenslo.org

From the Vestry

The Vestry meets on the 3rd Sunday of the Month (usually) to discuss the business affairs of the parish. Here are some highlights of the meeting on February 18, 2024:

After years of abeyance, the Vestry will be returning to having assigned ministries. Each Vestry member will be responsible for ensuring that a ministry of the parish is functioning and resourced. They may or may not be the Head of Ministry, but will certainly be the Vestry liaison. Assignments will be made at the Vestry Retreat on March 2.

The annual Parochial Report was approved. Data on membership, attendance and finances are reported to the national Church and the Diocese, due March 1.

The drawdown and use of Endowment Available to Spend 2024 has been delayed until needed. As a short-term measure to ensure that the deficit budget does not impact cash flow, it was agreed upon passage of the 2024 Budget at the Annual Meeting that the Available to Spend would cover the shortfall. At the moment, the cash flow is fine, so the Vestry came to the consensus that, with ongoing review and consultation with Treasurer, cash flow will be reviewed regularly, and the draw down would take place only if necessary.

The next meeting is March 17, 2024, and then the meetings will revert to the 2nd Sunday of the month. 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.



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Welcoming Worshipping Working



Each year the Altar Guild decorates our church with beautiful greenery and vibrant flowers for Easter Day.

If you would like to donate toward the Easter flowers, please fill out this form with a check made payable to:

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Place it in the offering plate or mail it to:
St. Stephens Episcopal Church
1344 Nipomo Street, SLO, CA 93401
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name of donor:

Memorial or thanksgiving to be noted in the bulletin:

Deadline for inclusion in the Service Bulletin is March 25.

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
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Permit No. 57



Daylight Saving Time starts on March 10th.
Don't forget to turn your clocks forward
before bedtime on March 9 or you will be
late for church!

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



Scan. Pay. Go.

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

Mark your calendars... Holy Week is coming!

Palm Sunday—March 24 at 8am and 10am
Maundy Thursday—March 28 at 5:30pm
Good Friday—March 29 at 12:15pm
Easter—March 31 at 8am and 10am



Reminder

The office will be closed
on Monday, April 1 in
observance of
Easter Monday