

# The Witness

Volume 28, Issue 9

Welcoming Worshipping Working

September 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



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Probably the highest Cross in San Luis Obispo, the Cross on the St Stephen's Steeple, overlooking the southwest hills of the City.

dedicated on September 14, 335. Now the shrine is known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The cross on which Christ was Crucified has become the universal symbol for Christianity, replacing the fish symbol of the early Church. The cross in Jesus' time, though, was a symbol of Roman Persecution. It was utilized as an instrument of torture, designed to inflict maximum physical suffering, and with it, shame. The convicted were stripped of their clothes and hoisted naked, in a very public spectacle. It took hours to days for a person on a cross to die. That position puts weight onto the lungs, so it was very difficult to breathe. There were also blood loss, shock and trauma that came from the wounds that were inflicted. And it didn't matter the season, so hot, cold, direct sunlight, and other natural things contributed to the suffering and the indignity. It was the execution method for the dregs of society, far from a dignified death.

Jesus' Resurrection triumphed over Death and the Cross.

*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'. —Galatians 3.13*

In the mid-1980s, the cross became a fashion piece, attributed to Madonna's

## Symbol of Roman Persecution

By The Rev Ian M Delinger, Rector

September brings us Holy Cross Day on the 14th (which just happens to be the most popular day for birthdays of people I know, including one of my sister's). The day came about in the year 335CE when the Emperor Constantine had an enormous shrine built on the site where the hill of Calvary once was. His mother, Helena, oversaw the work. During excavations, she believes that she found the relics of the Cross on which Jesus was Crucified. The shrine was

*(Continued on next page)*

*(Continued from front page)*

Like A Virgin album and tour. It started with celebrities and worked its way down to the common folk. I remember some Christians being offended by non-Christians wearing cross jewelry or exhibiting the cross in other ways. The fashion waned a bit, and then, according to a New York Times article from last year, the cross as fashion statement is back! Seemingly sparked by a Sotheby's sale in January 2023 when Kim Kardashian paid the highest price ever for a piece of jewelry in the shape of a cross: the amethyst and diamond pendant that the Princess of Wales wore in the late 1980s. \$197,453.

The article also pointed out:

*"For some people, [a cross] can mean redemption from suffering. To pagans, it can mean the four directions. It can represent elements of fire, water, earth and air. It's a symbol that resonates on a global plane." Quoting Michael Coan, Associate Professor of Jewelry Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC. [https://tinyurl.com/NYT03122023]*

What does the Cross mean to you? When you see a Cross – or maybe you wear one around your neck – does it have significance to you?

I remember one person really having a go at me about Christians not having a monopoly on the cross: it doesn't necessarily carry any religious meaning to those who are not Christians, but the symmetry and shape is appealing to many, he argued. But symbols have meaning; they're not just nothing. The article pointed out two World War II military medals: the Croix de Guerre of the Vichy government in France and the Iron Cross of Nazi Germany, and warned that one understand the symbolism of their jewelry!

I no longer assume someone is a Christian if they are wearing a Cross, like I did when I was younger. But, the Cross to me is a symbol of Christ's sacrifice and triumph. (I actually have a collection of about 20 crosses ... somewhere unknown after my last move.) But I'm not going to die on one over someone who doesn't share the significance. But I do put forth to you: *What does the Cross symbolize for you, and how important is it to you? Feel free to send me your thoughts.*

### **Happy Holy Cross Day – September 14.**

+++++

## Who We Are

St Stephen's has its Mission Statement, but also an Inclusivity Statement, Values Statement and Land Acknowledgement. To remind ourselves who we purport to be, one of these statements will be printed in The Witness in July, August and September. All four statements can be found in our service booklets used in Sunday Worship, and on our website.

Land Acknowledgement: We acknowledge those who came before us: We acknowledge that we gather on the traditional territory and homelands of the tit'u tit'u yak tilhini (ytt) Northern Chumash people, the first peoples of San Luis Obispo, who are still here, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of the Chumash Tribe. Acknowledging the land is a transformative act that works to undo the intentional erasure of indigenous peoples.

# Engaging with Good Stuff In SLO!

Last month, Fr Ian's article emphasized that a way of being "Welcoming" is to join others in their spaces when invited. St Stephen's has been invited to two celebrations this late summer. Register directly with each event, go as an individual or as a group, and when people ask, say you're with St Stephen's.

## **SLO4Home Summer Soiree**

Saturday, September 14, 2024 at 4:00PM - 7:30PM

This is an opportunity to spend an evening enjoying delicious food, meeting SLO4Home supported families, and raising money to help many more families in the future. SLO4Home provides a year of intensive assistance and advocacy for all families enabling refugees to thrive and quickly become integral members of their new communities. Use Fr Ian's invitation to register: <https://tinyurl.com/SLO4Home9-14>

## **Diversity Coalition of SLO County**

SAVE THE DATE for October 9, 5pm-8pm at Flying Caballos Ranch: "Give for Good", Diversity Coalition's Annual Fundraiser

<https://betterunite.com/diversitycoalition-giveforgood2024>

## From the Vestry

The Vestry meets on the 2nd Sunday of the Month to discuss the business affairs of the parish. Here are some highlights of the meeting on August 11, 2024:

- We were updated on all the ministries that are being overseen by the Vestry members. One highlight was from Hospitality: Fellowship Hour & Coffee Hour are going well. Thank you to those who volunteer to host. Keep volunteering!
- We discussed the possibility of using our communications methods (particularly social media) to better express our Mission and Values.
- Fr Ian discussed how we use our buildings in a missional way. We discussed hosting desk space to a community group.

The next meeting is October 13, 2024. There will not be a September meeting due to the St Stephen's Day Celebrations. 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.



## Hands on Stewardship

Thank you all for  
your dedication and  
service to our many  
ministries at  
St. Stephen's

**Thank you to** Adele Butterfield, Bill Crewe, Lynn Hollister, Kay Lewis and Kathleen Pennington for counting the collection and preparing the deposits during August.

**Thank you to** Nancy Cook, Cheryl & Craig McCollum, Skip & Rosey Parks and Elizabeth Potter for hosting coffee hour in August.

**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 Deovlet, Elizabeth Potter and Cheryl McCollum, Kathleen Pennington who review, fold, tape and label The Witness every month.

**Thank you** to everyone who made God's Garden Vacation Bible Camp a faith building,

safe, joyful and fun week:

\* Everyone who prayed for the success of "God's Garden" Vacation Bible Camp.

\* Bob & Mary McCorkle, and Dorothy Truesdale who donated money toward scholarships.

\* Ogo Agbo, Sophia Agbo, Nancy Cook, Diana Kimball, Kathleen Pennington, Hayden Maggelet, Elizabeth Potter and Gail Taylor for volunteering at Vacation Bible Camp.

\* Our presenters: Alicia Bisselle (cooking cornbread muffins), Megan Hendrickson (SLO City Parks Ranger, local animals), Brian Kusco (Reptiles), Jen Prodzinski (SLO Botanical Gardens, insects & flowers) and River Steinberg (Speech Therapist, Moses' stuttering and God's help)

\* Dottie Ryan & Grandmother's House for letting us use their playground one afternoon

**Thank you to** Elizabeth Potter, Cheryl McCollum, Lee & Lynn Hollister & Shannon Larrabee for helping in the office.

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

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

**Thank you to** Craig McCollum, Kathleen Pennington and Beau Parks for live streaming the August Sunday Services.

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

## Parumpapumpum – A reminder from Fr Ian



In The Witness in January (read here: <https://tinyurl.com/WitnessJan24>), I asked you to think about the following over the year: 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? This is a reminder to think about this. At the end of the year, I'll find a way that we can share our thoughts in conversation.

### 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.

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

## Donations

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

You may go to this  
website:  
<https://tinyurl.com/SSECDonate> or scan  
the QR Code and it  
will take you directly  
to the page.





### Birthdays

- 15-Sep Sophia Agbo
- 19-Sep Margaret Larrabee
- 20-Sep Juliette Meinhold

### Anniversaries

- 21-Sep Mike & Shannon Larrabee

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

office@StStephensSLO.org 805-543-7212 1344 Nipomo Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

## St Stephen’s Day Celebrations: September 7 & 8! Join us, Being us!

Our patronal festival and Bishop’s Visitation is nigh! The tagline of our Mission Statement is Welcoming – Worshipping – Working. That’s us! So, come along, bring along others and join us, being us as we celebrate who we are as a Christian community and as a part of the wider San Luis Obispo Community!

**Saturday, September 7** at 7pm – WORKING with music! A recital of some of the wonderful music sung by our choral scholars. In the sanctuary. Enter through the main doors of the church at the corner of Pismo & Nipomo Streets.

**Sunday, September 8 at 8am and 10am** – WORSHIPING! The Bishop of El Camino Real will lead our worship and formally welcome newcomers into the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement (the Church) through Confirmation and Reception. Our worship is open to all: Whoever you are, and wherever you are on your spiritual journey, St Stephen’s welcomes you! In the sanctuary. Enter through the main doors of the church at the corner of Pismo & Nipomo Streets.

**Sunday, September 8 at about 11.30am** – WELCOMING with food, music and fun! Local artists will perform as we dine on end-of-summer BBQ fare. In the parking lot at 650 Pismo Street. Whoever you are, and wherever you are, Join us, Being us!

For more information:  
office@ststephensslo.org



St. Stephen's  
Episcopal Church  
Welcoming Worshipping Working



Dancing with Cal Poly Swing

**WELCOMING**



Midnight Mass 2023

**WORSHIPING**



With Gobble of SLO Food Bank supporting the Turkey Trot

**WORKING**

## JOIN US... BEING US!

ST STEPHEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

SEPTEMBER 7 RECITAL @ 7.00PM

SEPTEMBER 8 WORSHIP @ 8AM & 10AM

BBQ & MUSIC AFTER 10AM SERVICE

Join us for worship in person at 1344 Nipomo St, SLO  
or online at 10am [www.facebook.com/ststephensslo](http://www.facebook.com/ststephensslo)



## Treasurer's Report

The news is the Matching Donations offer has exceeded all expectations and the generosity of the parish is extraordinary. As of August 11, we had received \$21,340 in cash donations. Another \$4,000 has been pledged. In total that is \$25,340. This, plus the matching gift of \$20,000 will inject \$45,340 into our Operating Fund transforming our previous negative budget for 2024 into an operating profit. This will have a huge impact on improving our financial position. We will close this year with a positive operating result instead of the operating losses which we have been experiencing for several years.

For the rest of 2024, we are no longer concerned with the possible need to draw on our endowment to fund operating expenses.

Our job now is to ensure we manage St Stephens finances efficiently and focus on raising our operating income by increasing the number of pledge units and bringing new members into the life of St Stephens. Doing so will enable us to provide the services our congregants need and deserve.

On a separate topic, when you go to our website and click on the Green **GIVE** button, you will be able to make donations (one time or recurring) to the church (it actually works!). This is driven by Tithe.ly which was developed specifically for churches. Tithe.ly enables a donor to designate which of the church income accounts are to be credited with the donation. It also enables the giver to pay for the transaction costs thus providing St Stephens with the entirety of the intended donation. Try it out!!!

### Bible Selections for June



**1st Reading**  
**Psalm**  
**2nd Reading**  
**Gospel**

**1st Reading**  
**Psalm**  
**2nd Reading**  
**Gospel**

**15-Sept-24**  
**Pent 17**  
**Proper 19B**  
Proverbs 1:20-33  
Wisdom 7:26-8.1  
James 3:1-12  
Mark 8:27-38

**1-Sept-24**  
**Pent 15**  
**Proper 17B**  
Song of Solomon 2:8-13  
Psalm 45:1-2, 7-10  
Listen to trees & see their Beauty  
by Arthur Cole Riley  
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

**22-Sept-24**  
**Pent 18**  
**Proper 20B**  
Proverbs 31:10-31  
Psalm 1  
James 3:13-4:3,7-8a  
Mark 9:30-37

**8-Sept-24**  
**Pent 16**  
**Proper 18B**  
Jeremiah 26:1-9,12-15  
Psalm 31:1-5  
Acts 6:8-7.2a, 51c-60  
Matthew 23:34-39

**29-Sept-24**  
**Pent 19**  
**Proper 21B**  
Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22  
Psalm 124  
James 5:3-20  
Mark 9:8-50



## Notes from the Choir Loft

-Cassandra Tarantino, Director of Music

**The St. Stephen's Chancel Choir and Choral Scholars will return to the choir loft on Sunday, September 8!** We will kick off our singing season commemorating our patron Saint Stephen. We are all excited to sing together again and to welcome new choristers.

Prepping for the singing season includes pulling service sheet music for the new booklet, planning anthems and solos, washing the choir robes, cleaning the choir loft, and finally rehearsing the choir! Our first rehearsal Wednesday (August 21) will be a joyful day.

If you, and/or a friend, are looking for a choral home, the St. Stephen's Chancel Choir welcomes you! We rehearse on **Wednesday evenings 5:15pm-6:00pm and Sunday mornings at 9:00am** in the choir loft. Feel free to talk with the Director of Music, keyboardists, and any choir members if you have questions. Come try us on for size! We have a robe and a seat just for you.

In addition to preparing for the St. Stephen's Day Eucharist with Bishop Lucinda, the keyboardists and Choral Scholars are preparing their annual **Choral Scholar and Keyboard Recital for Saturday, September 7 at 7pm in the Sanctuary.**

The Choral Scholar Program is designed to help support our paid musician's performance opportunities. Solo performing is unique from ensemble performing in that the musicians memorize their music and choose pieces that may be longer and more ornamental than what is used for regular Sunday services. We spend the year collecting repertoire to rehearse, polish, and perform in our lovely acoustically friendly sanctuary.

**This is a free concert for the public.** If you would like to help sponsor our choral scholars and keyboardists through the year, **donation forms will be available.** The recital will be

# Esther—The Brave Queen

If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this? Esther 4:14

Circle the hidden words in the puzzle below:

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

- Adopted    Palace    Esther    Jews    Beautiful
- Gate       Mourn    King      Weep    Queen
- Fast       Xerxes    Death     Mordecai   Sackcloth



Esther Denouncing Haman (1888)

Oil on Canvas by Ernest Normand (1857-1923)



Esther and Mordecai writing the second letter of Purim (1685)

Oil on canvas by Arent de Gelder (1645-1727)

Answers:

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





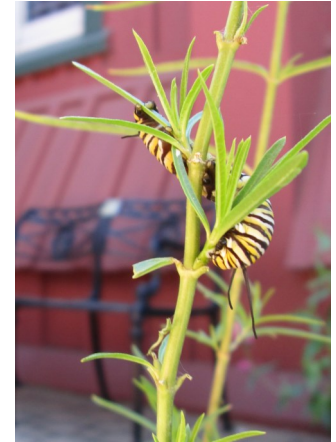
# God's Garden Vacation Bible Camp Photos



River Steinberg's presentation on God helping Moses do great things even though he had a stutter



Park Ranger Megan's presentation on animals in San Luis County



Monarch Caterpillar in the butterfly garden the kids planted



Flying Tissue Butterfly Jen, from the Botanical Garden taught us to make



Fun at Emerson Park playground



Making cornbread muffins with Alicia



A very, very, very long snake Brian, of Roving Reptiles, brought to visit.



Stamp art

## Time, Treasure, Talent Outreach and Fellowship

Have you seen the list of Outreach our congregation commits to? It is astounding!

Members of St. Stephen's engage with many other organizations and events, including:

- \* Diversity Coalition of SLO County
- \* Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA)
- \* 40 Prado
- \* Transitional Care Centers
- \* GALA Central Coast and Pride in the Plaza
- \* Commission on Aging, Senior Services
- \* SLO County Homeless Services Oversight Council

There is also General Outreach from the office in the form of distribution of bags of food, bus tickets, grocery cards, and gas cards. The bags of food are provided by SLO Food Bank, the rest is funded by the Rector's Discretionary Fund (RDF). A small bit of money comes from the church's budget, another bit from the donations at birthday prayers in the Sunday morning services, and additional from donors who are aware of the work that the RDF does.

Congregation-wide activities which occur on a regular basis include:

- \* Every 4th Wednesday, preparation and serving lunch at 40 Prado
- then, annually there are:
- \* Chocolate Easter Eggs as a fundraiser to help local relief agencies
  - \* Food Bank Hunger Awareness Day
  - \* Food Bank Turkey Trot fundraiser
  - \* "For Kids from Kids" Toy Drive
  - \* "Light Up A Life" memorial event held by Hospice SLO County
  - \* Welcome Home boxes for 40 Prado

There are booths to volunteer for, donations to be given, eggs to make, boxes of home items to donate to, even running to do! Regarding 40 Prado, which used to be called "People's Kitchen", Diane Levison has been the primary mover and shaker for 20+ years, and Cheryl and Craig McCollum have now agreed to be the overseers. Parishioners volunteer to cook, serve, and donate money in sponsorship of particular food items. The list of generous folk is long!

Fellowship at St. Stephen's among ourselves is highlighted by the coffee hour every week after the Sunday 10 am service. This is overseen by Liz Frost and Elizabeth Potter, and although we think of it as just putting out the coffee machines and a few treats, it includes set up, clean up, and providing the treats presented. There are sign-up sheets in Ramsden Hall for those who would like to sponsor and present this time of conviviality.

Additionally installed recently is the 4th Monday of each month Fellowship Hour, which is a 5:30-6:30 pm time to gather outside the usual Sunday morning worship hour to just have fun together and a light snack. There has been a wide variety of events presented by volunteers that have drawn parishioners and community members alike.

There is also an Outreach group of Elizabeth Potter, Gina Halfmeister, Jim Gates and Molly Supat who reach out to parishioners undergoing difficult times such as grief, economic setbacks, and other concerns. They make private calls to church members to offer assistance and express the support of St. Stephen's church family.

Many Congregants donating time, treasure, and talent to brighten other people's lives.

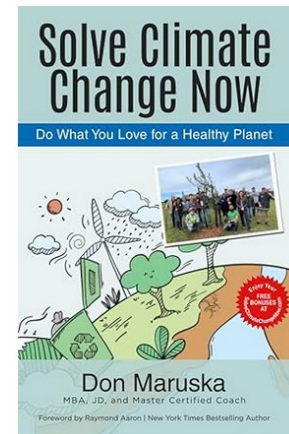
## Creation Care Event

### CREATION CARE: WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Depressed about climate change? Feeling helpless in the face of such a large problem? Don Maruska, climate solver and advocate for climate action, will show us how to work joyfully toward solutions. At Fr Ian's invitation, he will preach at both the 8am and 10am services on Sunday, September 29. His topic is "Creation Care. What's love got to do with it?" Explore how Jesus' Great Commandment can both guide and invigorate our efforts to care for creation.

At the special coffee hour following each service, meet with Don and knowledgeable Cal Poly Climate Fellows. Discover your "climate sweet spot" to make a meaningful difference and have fun doing it. The team will provide resources to help you put your intentions into action. Get practical information and learn how to benefit from affordable rebates and incentives. Save the planet and save money!

Don is a member of the Earthcare team at St. Benedict's Episcopal Church in Los Osos and the author, most recently, of *Solve Climate Change Now: Do what you Love for a Healthy Planet*. His book takes a very different position on the climate problem from the usual "doom and gloom" sources. Rather, it emphasizes positive action and hopefulness.



### Annual Work Day – Sprucing up the place September 14 9am to 1pm (including lunch)

The annual work day will take place after St Stephen's Day this year. Lee Hollister, the Sexton, will have a list of tasks, ranging all skill and interest levels. He does know that a room needs to be painted, and another room needs to be cleared out and rearranged. Mark your calendar and let Lee know that you're coming.

<<< Lee takes a call during the 2019 Spring Work Day

# Box it up for those in need!

## Boxes for Boxing Day (St. Stephen's Day Celebration – September 8)

We are calling on the Good People of St. Stephen's to support 40 Prado with Boxes for Boxing Day! 40 Prado is always in need of Welcome Home Boxes. These are boxes of basic household essentials that their clients need when they transition from 40 Prado into more permanent housing. These Welcome Home Boxes are received with great joy! Below are the three types of boxes and what goes in them.

Kitchen Box	Bathroom Box	Bedroom Box
Large Moving Box	Large Laundry Basket	X-Large Moving Box
Pots and Pans set	Toilet Paper	Bedding
Silverware set	Cleaning Supplies	Night light
Cup set	Bath Towels (2)	Pillow
Plates	Shower Mat	Inflatable Mattress
Bowls	Hand Towels (2)	
Basic utensil set	Wash Cloths (2)	
Knife set	Toiletry items	
Dish soap	Laundry detergent	
Heat pads	Cleaning Supplies	
Dish towels		



Welcome Home Boxes 2023

Purchase one or more items to go into a box or go together with friends or family to fill a whole box. Bring your Purchases to St. Stephen's on or before our St. Stephen's Day Celebration on September 8th.

*Background on Boxing Day and St. Stephen's Day: As you know, we celebrate St. Stephen's Day on the second Sunday of September. The Church remembers St. Stephen on December 26, which, in the British Commonwealth, is also known as Boxing Day. It was on that day boxes of supplies were given to those in need.*

## Fellowship Hour

Thanks to Cheryl & Craig McCollum who hosted the August Fellowship Hour with Bingo! Ice cream and other frozen desserts.

Fellowship Hour this month will be on a different day, date and time: Sunday, September 22 at 3.30pm at the home of Rosey & Skip Parks 10960 San Marcos Road in Atascadero. It's a good ol' fashioned pot luck! Fellowship Night is the last Monday of the month at 5.30pm. You can host whatever you want, as long as it brings us together for fellowship.

## 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.

For the August 11 meeting, we reflected on ways in which Jesus demonstrates or calls on us to be more relational as we share our Gifts of the Spirit in leadership and the idea of "Judge the Results vs. Evaluate the Relationship" reflecting on John 9.1-12 – The Man Born Blind.



*Georgia Maggelet, Gail Taylor's granddaughter, at Western Regional Youth Event*

## Western Regional Youth Event

This summer I was granted the opportunity to attend the quadrennial Western Regional Youth Event put on by the United Church of Christ. This was a wonderful and unique experience St. Stephen's had given me the opportunity to have. The conference consisted of people and churches across the west coast. Many different experiences and viewpoints united together to create an incredible once in a lifetime community.

When I first entered the camp I felt there would be a disconnect as I was not associated with any of the other churches attending but I quickly discovered it was a friendly environment for everyone. This event focused on equality and the way we treat others with different experiences than our own. There were speakers from every walk of life sharing their journey and how religion helped them along the way.

Rebekah Bruesehoff, a young transgender woman, shared her experience growing up, though she was only seventeen when speaking to us shared her lifetime of stories. She discussed the discrimination but also the support she had received throughout her transition and into living her everyday life.

I also got the pleasure of hearing Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, the president of United Church of Christ, share her story and bestow knowledge to the rest of us youth attending the conference. Thompson is not only the first female president of the UCC she is also the first female of African descent in her position. She was able to share how she rose to her position and the discrimination, sexism and racism she had to face on her way. As a woman who has been raised in a predominantly caucasian town many of her stories felt applicable to my life while others were completely foreign to me. That concept of learning from other people's stories and the ways they both do and do not relate to one's own life was the main takeaway I had from this experience.

We were also given the opportunity to participate in service projects for the community. I was able to create stationary kits for incarcerated individuals. We wrote handwritten notes and created kits to send to people in the prison system around the holidays. It puts into perspective the isolation people are feeling when they are incarcerated and the hope and connection a simple letter saying there are people rooting for them can create. This solitude is only amplified during the holidays and it was eye-opening to think of the people serving a sentence with no support and reinforcement from those around them.

Overall this event was a wonderful blend of inspiring lessons, beautiful messages, light-hearted fun and genuine connections. There is not enough gratitude I can express to the leaders of this event as well as St. Stephen's for making this experience possible for me.

# St. Stephen's

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## World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation: Sunday, September 1, 2024

The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation kicks off the Season of Creation, a time of sustained prayer and action which lasts a month and four days. We live in a culture that values busy-ness and accomplishments. Following our Creator's call to "Be still and know what I am God" (Psalm 46:10) humbles us. With prayer, we become open to God's guidance, inspiration, and calls to action. With prayer, God knits us closer together in community.

Only by the grace and inspiration of God can hearts and minds transform.

<https://www.creationjustice.org/world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation.html>

Our worship on September 1 will reflect our role in Creation Care, and be a precursor to a more encompassing worship experience later in the month. To learn more about Creation Ministries in The Episcopal Church: <https://newcreationliturgies.org/seasonofcreation/>