The Witness

Volume 28, Issue 11

Welcoming Worshipping Working

November 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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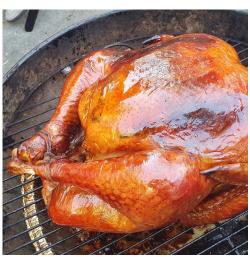
Thanksgiving is a Practice

By The Rev Ian M Delinger, Rector

Since May, I have been asking the LEMs and the Choir what in their week they are grateful for that they can take into worship. I ask this just before our pre-worship prayer as we line up to begin the service. It's intended to get us to focus on worship as

we enter the sacred space, holding in our hearts what we are grateful for and consciously bringing that into our worship. But it is also intended to foster the practice of gratitude or thanksgiving. I stole it from a priest I met earlier this year. He noticed his young daughter would complain at the dinner table every night, so he started the practice of sharing three things each family member is grateful for from that day. It has revolutionized dinner time!

November is the month of Thanksgiving Day. We're already seeing the inaccurate images of English Pilgrims with their bazookas and American Indians with their tomahawks, smiling turkeys, and overflowing



Fr Ian's sister's turkey on Thanksgiving Day

cornucopias, the symbols we have accepted as the sign of our national celebration. Soon, the news outlets will be offering advice on how to get through Thanksgiving Dinner with your family members with opposing political views. And the person at the table who enthusiastically suggests that we share what we're thankful for is mustering up the energy to be shot down by the rest at the table. How many of us actually feel thankful on Thanksgiving Day? I'll be honest: while I give thanks when I wake up on the day, I spend the rest of the day focused on the excellent food and drink, and the merriment that will ensue when my brother-in-law's family arrives along with my sister's friends.

Thanksgiving and gratitude should not be confined to a particular day or moment. Thanksgiving is a practice! Thanksgiving as a practice puts in front of you that for which you are grateful, and probably puts that ahead of that which is bothering you. We are socially conditioned to complain. I think we complain less than some of our European counterparts, but we're definitely a nation of complainers. There are two good articles on why we complain in *Psychology Today*: "Why we complain" by Thomas Henricks, and "The Psychology of Complaining" by William Berry. It's a necessary negative. But

(Continued from front page)

engaging in thanksgiving as a practice can bring you into better balance with your complaining. Spiritually, we give thanks twice a week at St Stephen's. The word "Eucharist" is from the ecclesiastical Greek *eukharistia* which directly translates as 'thanksgiving', and from classical Greek *eukharistos* which means 'grateful'. You will see in some liturgies "The Great Thanksgiving" as the title for the Liturgy of the Sacrament. Together, we are giving thanks for all the God has done through Jesus Christ to affect our salvation. We express the need to give thanks right at the beginning:

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give God thanks and praise!

And all are invited to receive the Sacrament with the words:

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your hearts by faith, with **thanksgiving**.

Liturgy – the work of the people – is to flow with our lives: we bring ourselves into the liturgy, are transformed by it, and go out with more than we came in. Be transformed by *thanksgiving*! As you go through November looking forward to Thanksgiving Day, try *thanksgiving as a practice*. Give thanks for one thing each day. And when that becomes easy, give thanks for TWO things each day! And so on! And see if it changes your life!

Adult Ed: Christianity and the Book of Isaiah

A 2-session course will be held on Wednesdays December 4 and 11 at 1pm in Ramsden Hall. It will be taught by Lenny Erickson who taught Philosophy and Religion at Cuesta College for 33 years, and, upon retirement, short courses in philosophy and religion for Cuesta College and for the community for many years. She has an MA in Philosophy from the University of Chicago. Come to the 12:15 Service, bring your lunch and we'll learn about the foretelling of Jesus found in the Book of Isaiah.



Sing out the joy of Christmas! Even if you think you can't sing, come join us. It's not about great music, it's about sharing the great joy of Jesus' birth. We'll have jingle bells, tambourines and music with chord symbols in easy keys for sing-and-play-along on familiar Carols as we lead sing-alongs at local care facilities. We'll have a couple of practices toward the end of November and schedule a few caroling adventures in December. Watch for more info on bookmarks in the hymnals during November, or contact Kathleen, kapennington@netscape.net or 805-546-0880.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

November 20, 2024 10am to 12pm

DSS Building, 3433 South Higuera Street, Room #101, SLO.

The public is welcomed and encouraged to participate in Q&A following the presentations.

Questions? Please email: slocommissiononaging@gmail.com Or visit: https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/coa

if interested in learning more about this, please see Elizabeth Potter who has been attending these meetings

From the Vestry

The Vestry meets on the 2nd Sunday of the Month to discuss the business affairs of the parish. We had a conversation meeting on October 13. Here are some highlights:



- The Treasurer reported that the state of the 2024 budget is good, thanks to Matching Gift Campaign.
- The Lay Pastoral Care Exploratory Team provided an update. What looked like a "not yet" is now forming
 into one of the ministries of the parish. The Team will work with Fr Ian to ensure needs among
 parishioners are appropriately supported.
- The Vestry reviewed their time with the Bishop when she took us through an exercise of "What is our why?" The Vestry planned next steps to draw the congregation into the conversation. The first will be during the Ingathering Coffee Hours on October 27.
- The Vestry has been exploring the possibility of a pilot project with SmartShare Housing to put a tiny home on the property. There are lots of details that need to be shared before a decision can be made. The Vestry plans to have a parish-wide conversation during the Annual Meeting on January 26, 2025 and include SmartShare Housing.

The next meeting is November 10, 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.

Welcoming Spaces

There's an opportunity for us to get an update on what it means to be welcoming to our LGBTQ+ neighbors.

Creating Welcoming Spaces: A Beginner's Guide to Inclusion Saturday, November 9, 2024 from 11am to 3pm Cal Poly San Luis Obispo College of Engineering Room Bonderson 104

FREE LUNCH courtesy of Cal Poly

We will thoughtfully examine ways in which groups of people and individuals experience exclusion historically and currently. Facilitators and participants will share their own experiences and discuss practical methods for creating a welcoming environment for everyone who enters a shared space. We will explore how diversity and inclusion leads to equity and belonging and improved outcomes for everything from mental and physical health to business success.

If you are a student leader, professor, teacher, nonprofit leader, group facilitator, business owner, manager or anyone who hosts others in a shared space this workshop is for you!

Presented by: The Central Coast Coalition for Inclusive Schools Register here: https://forms.gle/MAyqE7zsc4fYohVZ6

Hands on Stewardship

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

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

Thank you to Nancy Cook, Craig & Cheryl McCollum, Elizabeth Potter and Jamie Hess for hosting coffee hour in October.

Thank you to Kathleen Pennington, Elizabeth Potter and Gail Taylor for teaching Sunday School in October. **Thank you to** Gail Taylor, Nancy Deovlet, Elizabeth Potter and Cheryl McCollum who fold, tape and label The Witness every month.

Thank you to the Finance and Endowment Committees—Bill Crewe, Kay Lewis, Clark Lewis and Lee Hollister—for archiving the Finance and Endowment files. It was a big job!

BIG Thank You to the Social Justice Committee—Kathryn Bumpass, Molly Supat, and Becky Moseley—for the September 29 Climate Care Coffee Hour with climate educator and Episcopalian Don Maruska and the SLO Climate Coalition Climate Fellows, and the October 13th "Loving Your Black Neighbor As Yourself coffee hour with author Chanté Griffin

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

Thank you to Clark Lewis for picking up the no cook bags to distribute to those in need in October.

Thank you to Clark Lewis, Craig McCollum and Beau Parks for live streaming our Sunday Services in October. **Thank you** for reading The Witness and watching the services at home.

Reminder

The office will be closed 11/27 & 11/28 for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Sunday Servers' Training – January 18, 2025

10am – Ushers & Lectors 11am – LEMs

All existing Ushers, Lectors and LEMs should attend this training. If anyone is interested in becoming an Usher, Lector or LEM, please contact Fr Ian to discuss.

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

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.





7.30am in Ramsden Hall at St Stephen's with Breakfast

In this historic and joyful season, we invite you to pray for guidance for our church and our new presiding bishop as he leads us in envisioning the reign of God in our midst. May our celebration unite us as a sacramental community, and may we be filled with new energy to bear witness to God's work of redemption.

Who: Everyone is invited! Come as you are... so, if you're still in your PJs, we're cool with that.

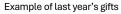
What: The Episcopal Church will officially welcome the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe as its 28th presiding bishop with a smaller, simpler investiture service aimed at reducing carbon footprint and increasing churchwide virtual participation.
When: Nov. 2, with a prelude featuring a "roll call" of dioceses starting at 6:30am PT (*We'll probably miss that!*). The service itself starts at 8am PT.
Where: In Ramsden Hall at St Stephen's we will livestream the service.

For Kids From Kids Toy Drive

The kids of St. Stephen's have been holding a toy drive for children in need in our community since 2010! Shown here are photos of some of the toys collected last year. Though this is our 13th year, it won't be an unlucky year for children

served by CAPSLO/40Prado and other local agencies who receive the gifts you donate.

Though we won't begin getting "wish lists" until around the middle of November, you can start shopping whenever it fits your schedule. There will be a basket by the entrance to the church beginning November 3rd. Any kid-appropriate gift is welcome. When you're purchasing gifts for the children in your life, please consider also getting a gift for a child in need. If you've been given gift cards that you're not likely to use, consider re-gifting them to our toy drive. If you'd like a wish list emailed (or snail mailed) to you, contact Kathleen (kapennington@netscape.net, 805-546-0880). Of course, checks dropped into the collection plate or mailed to the church are welcome, too. Write "Toy Drive" on the memo line. The church's mailing address is St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1344 Nipomo, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.









If you would like us to help you celebrate your special day, please reach out to the office to have you and your family members added to the list.

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



1st Reading

Psalm

Gospel

Bible Selections for November

3-Nov-24 All Saints Day

3-Nov-24 All Souls' @ 5.30pm

1st Reading Psalm Gospel

Isaiah 25:6-9 Psalm 24 2nd Reading Revelation 21:1-6a John 11:32-44

Wisdom 3:1-9 Psalm 130 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 John 5:24-27

10-Nov-24 Pent 25 - Proper 27

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17

Psalm 127

Mark 12:38-44

2nd Reading Hebrews 9:24-28

17-Nov-24 Pent 26 - Proper 28

1 Samuel 1:4-20 1 Samuel 2:1-10 Hebrews 10:11-25 Mark 13:1-8

24-Nov-24 Christ the King

2 Samuel 23:1-7 Psalm 132:1-13 Revelation 1:4b-8 John 18:33-37

Maximizing Opportunities with Spaces

Several changes in the use of some of our spaces have taken place over the last couple of months.

- ⇒ Library Chapel: The Gordon Gritter Library (small room next to the office) has been cleared out and rearranged to make it more useful for our much pared-down library collection, user groups and parish meetings. The beloved Parkfield Altar has been moved into the Library, in front of the stained-glass window honoring the ministry of Deacons. Starting in December, the Wednesday 12:15 Service will be held in the Library, through Holy Week in April. Establishing a consistent location for the Wednesday 12:15 Service will better help people know where to go. Previously, the decision to move the service was based on the weather. Worshiping in the Library during the winter will eliminate the need to heat the sanctuary for hours prior to the service.
- ⇒ Children's Chapel: Sunday School has moved to Room 4/5! As part of making our spaces more useable, Room 4/5 has been cleared out. It was being used as a dumping ground from everything from furniture to old costumes! The Children's Chapel was being shared with Grass Roots II, a charity that offers food and clothing at no cost to those who need it. Now they have access to the entirety of the Children's Chapel. Room 4/5 has been set up for Sunday School and can now accommodate two age groups with fewer persons qualified to oversee work with children.



Cross of Hands mural formerly in Room 4

⇒ Treasurer's office: The Treasurer's Office is occupied only a few hours each week, and it, too, had become a dumping ground for files, documents and office stuff. It was cleared out, and the required documents were filed or put into our archive. Fr Ian is working on a partnership for past of the office to be utilized by a non-profit that really needs some part-time downtown space.

Churches often have lots of spaces that lie dormant most of the week and then become spaces that accumulate "stuff we couldn't possibly get rid of!". Regularly reviewing how we use our spaces and how to utilize those spaces for mutual benefit ensures that we are good stewards of our possessions and keeps us relevant within the wider community.



A New Way To Give

There is a new way to give electronically. Scan this QR code or go to https://tithe.ly.com and search for St Stephen's San Luis Obispo.

To designate your contribution, use the dropdown box to choose the purpose of your donation. Of course, you can still give by cash or check.

Helping the Unhoused

Being a downtown church is exciting! There is always activity going on around us, and even though we are situated a couple of blocks from the most action, the "life" of the City is definitely felt here on the corner of Pismo and Nipomo Streets.

One of the dynamics of being downtown is ministry to persons who are experiencing homelessness. St Stephen's has had an active ministry to the homeless and unhoused persons for 40 or 50 years, ever since Deacon Tom Tarwater lived next door to Maxine Lewis and he, along with other parishioners, supported the work that she began. The ministry has taken many forms over the years. Let's take a moment to review what it looks like at this moment in 2024.

The most interaction St Stephen's has with unhoused persons is through the food bags that are handed out from the office. The bags are sourced from SLO Food Bank at no cost to us. A bag is given to any person who requests one, regardless of who they are, without any strings attached. The number fluctuates, but roughly 5 to 15 bags per week are given out. With the human, financial and professional resources within St Stephen's, this is about the limit of the services we can provide.



Homeless Jesus sculpture outside Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral, by Timothy Schmalz

Helping persons who are unhoused is a bit complex, and fortunately

St Stephen's is connected to all the resources available to support and help them. It sounds odd, but the best chance of an unhoused person to get engaged with services is through the various outreach teams provided by the City, Transitions-Mental Health Association, and CAPSLO. The City of SLO's Police Department (SLOPD) has a dedicated Community Action Team: The CAT is comprised of an officer who is assigned to work with a social worker to connect people to services and resources to address housing, addiction counseling and services, food insecurity, mental health counseling and services and family reunification. The City's Fire Department also has a Mobile Crisis Unit (MCU), which provides proactive outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Pretty much every unhoused person is known to the City's Homelessness Response team as well as outreach workers from Transitions-Mental Health Association and CAPSLO's SLO City Outreach Team. When someone from St Stephen's calls the Police (non-emergency), they send out the CAT or MCU teams who can direct the person to the resources available (resources that St Stephen's does not have). The complication is that the regulars who sleep on our property or come into the office for food bags are often very resistant to engage in services. The CAT and MCU teams, as well as TMHA and CAPSLO outreach staff, are able to spend the time with each person to encourage them to engage in those services. The more times those outreach teams engage with a person, the more opportunities they have to encourage them to receive services, build relationships and hopefully get them the services they need. SLO has no lack of services for the unhoused! It's a very robust network of services, better than many cities.

This is why you may hear Fr Ian or Stephanie or another parishioner who often interacts with those who sleep on our property say, "Have you called the police?" This is actually a step in the direction of doing the best we can for that person. It's not to penalize the person or to get them in trouble. All of us in SLO are very fortunate to have such a forward-thinking PD and engaged service providers.

Fr Ian is a member of the Police Advisory Committee. This Committee's concern about the needs of the unhoused

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led to the creation of CAT, in collaboration with Transitions-Mental Health Association. It's very helpful for us to know that there is someone upon whom we can call to give the help that we cannot give. It's also important that St Stephen's remain networked with the various agencies so we can direct those who need services to the correct services. In the office there is a huge poster that has all of the services available in the City. There are pocket-sized versions of that 'Homeless Resources Guide' to give to people as well.

What we DO NOT do is late-night sweeps of our property to shoo people away. We do not encourage people to sleep here; we know they do; we do our best to manage what we know, but we don't know.

We definitely do our best to support the unhoused persons in our community. We do experience some negative effects, but that's all part of being a downtown church. Fr Ian is engaged with all of the agencies who help us support the unhoused persons. We know all the rules about 40 Prado Homeless Services Center and how they DO give meals out to those who may have previously been excluded, and they DO open their doors to ALL unhoused persons when the temperature is low and/or there is rain in the forecast. When an unhoused person tells us these services are not available to them, we assure them that they are. So, we're working with those who can provide services and resources that we are unable to provide.

Additionally, Grass Roots II (GR2) is an organization that gives out food and clothing to those who slip through the cracks of the services provided – some unhoused; some very low-income. In November 2023, GR2 moved onto the St Stephen's property. They rent space in the Children's Chapel for their operations. If you want to see their operations, they are open 11-2 Monday through Saturday. One of our parishioners is a volunteer there. The whole organization is volunteer-led. And we can't leave out the decades of serving meals at 40 Prado and its predecessor through the organization People's Kitchen. This is a volunteer opportunity on the 4th Wednesday of the month and a ministry that you can support financially. For more information, contact (and give thanks to) Cheryl & Craig McCollum who have taken on the coordinating role. And enormous thanks to Diane Levison who kept this ministry going for 30+ years with her beloved Bob.

Keep the unhoused in your prayers!

Stewardship Time, Talent, and Treasure

As of this writing, pledge cards have been arriving steadily. Thank you to all those who pledged your time, treasure, and talent for the coming year. Our ingathering coffee hours were held on Sunday, October 27, after each service. There were no speeches or pleas, just time for open fellowship and celebration of the many

gifts each of us received throughout the year. The financial committee depends on pledged figures from parishioners to formulate our budget for the coming year, so that date was very important for submission.



However, even though the official ingathering is over, pledges are gratefully accepted at any time.

Walking in love, Your Vestry

RECENT EVENTS AT ST STEPHEN'S

Activity committees at St. Stephen's have been busy. September 29, the Social Action and Creation Care committees joined forces to present a special program on actions individuals, families and our church can take to help heal the climate. Guest preacher Don Maruska and several Cal Poly Climate Fellows were on hand to assist in our efforts.

Too often people who care about the climate crisis feel overwhelmed and ineffectual in the face of such a large problem. Enter Don and the Climate Fellows, who helped to identify and promote ways we can confront the climate crisis and make a difference.

Don preached at both the 8am and 10am services on "Creation Care. What's love got to do with it?". Following the sermon, parishioners were invited into Ramsden Hall for a catered coffee hour. Feeding our minds, the Climate Fellows offered simple yet effective strategies for practicing climate care.

A very big thanks goes to all those who contributed to this program: Don Maruska, our preacher and climate specialist who led and assisted in all aspects of the event; the Cal Poly Climate Fellows; and Lexi Head of the SLO Climate Coalition, who with Don arranged for the presence of the Fellows. Kudos also to Lorienne Schwenk, our caterer, who prepared delicious "planet friendly" foods.

Many parishioners also aided in the event. Thanks to Becky Moseley, Molly Wyer Supat and Kathryn Bumpass who planned and organized the program; Gail Taylor and Gina Hafemeister, who worked as climate action "shepherds" and guided parishioners through the Fellows' stations.

Elizabeth Potter, Kay and Amy Lewis, and Liz Frost assisted in keeping the food table full and in cleanup. Special thanks go to Cheryl and Craig McCollum, who helped in many ways with the food, and who made endless pots of coffee throughout the event. Cheryl and Craig also were the leaders in cleanup. Thanks as well to the always-helpful and creative Kathleen Pennington, who made the Creation Care Tree, where we all pinned our "leaves" of actions done and actions to come in support of the climate.

The Social Action Committee undertook another special project just 2 weeks later on October 13. At their invitation, author Chanté Griffin came to speak about her most recent book, *Loving Your Black Neighbor as Yourself.*

Chanté grew up in South Los Angeles and lived securely in an "all-Black world". When she was 10 years old her parents moved to the San Fernando valley, where she experienced racism for the first time.

That set her on a career course of seeking reconciliation between the races and providing support for Black people, especially students. Writing at the intersection of race, culture and faith, she now challenges and encourages her readers to be reminded that we are called to live and grow together as the family of God. It was a message much appreciated by the many parishioners who heard her talk.

Thanks to the Social Action committee – Becky Moseley, Molly Wyer Supat and Kathryn Bumpass -for planning a special coffee hour and Chanté's visit. And thanks again to Cheryl and Craig McCollum for major help with the coffee hour and cleanup. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the correct words from the word bank at the bottom of the page. You can check your answers in Mark 12:41-44 (NIV)

sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put					
and watched the crowd putti	ng their	into the temple	e treasury.		
Many people th	nrew in	amounts. But a	a poor		
came and put i	n two very small	copper	_, worth		
only a fraction of a					
Calling his disciples to him,	Jesus said, "I tel	I you the truth, this	poor		
widow has put more into the		than all the others.	They all		
gave out of their	: but she, out o	fher	put in		

everything -- all she had to live on."

Mark 12:41-44 (NIV)

treasury	rich	widow	large	penny
money	coins	poverty	wealth	Jesus

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Welcoming Worshiping Working

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805-543-7212 office@ststephensslo.org www.ststephensslo.org Office Hours: Mon-Thurs. 9am-1pm



Don't forget to change your clocks on Saturday, November 2nd or you will be really early for church

All Souls: The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed

November 3 at 3pm will be the All Souls' Service.

The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed will be observed with Healing Services with Eucharist.

All are welcome to this service of remembrance and of hope. The service will be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage Paid San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 Permit No. 57

Electronic Service Requested

