

# The Witness

Volume 29, Issue 2

Welcoming Worshipping Working

February 2025

## Special points of interest:

### Sunday

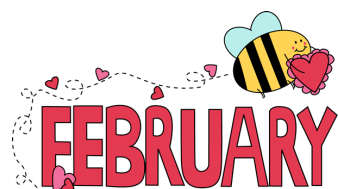
8:00 AM Service  
10:00 AM Service with coffee hour following the service

### Monday

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

### Wednesday

12:15 PM Service



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## The Work of Christmas

By The Rev Ian M Delinger, Rector

For January's article, I shared with you Howard Thurman's poem "The Work of Christmas". In short, now that all the glitter is gone, it's time to do the work that Jesus came into this world to have us do. Shortly afterward, fires engulfed the Altadena and Pacific Palisades, among other communities in Los Angeles County. It's horrific and beyond words.

There may be more that we can do beyond the "thoughts and prayers" that politicians are so keen to offer. We may be able to do the work of Christmas and find the lost, heal the broken and feed the hungry. By the time you receive this, we will have a better idea if we on the Central Coast can provide some tangible assistance to the victims of the Eaton, Hurst, Palisades, Kenneth, Archer and Sunset Fires of January.

Katie Knapp is the Diocesan Resilience Coordinator. Her job is to help parishes in crisis and connect parishes who can help. She is in close communication with the Diocese of Los Angeles, assessing the needs and ways that we can help. Again, we will probably know more by the time you read this (*time of writing was only 8 days after the fires started*). She has been invited to discuss this at the Deanery Meeting on March 2, to which everyone is invited.

At the time of writing, two Episcopal parishes were lost, St Mark's Altadena and St Matthew's Pacific Palisades. No doubt many other places of worship have been destroyed, too. We all want to know how to be helpful and useful, but it's hard to know what to do. So we hear that a church or a service organization is collecting toothbrushes and socks, and we rush to the dollar store to buy as many as we can. It feels good, and it looks good on social media when it's being handed over. But it's usually not the most helpful.

 Episcopal Relief & Development  
January 15 at 6:30 AM · 🌐

During a disaster, well-intentioned people often want to help immediately by sending supplies. However, this approach can inadvertently create additional challenges for local response teams. Here's why:  
Learn more at <https://www.episcopalrelief.org/.../us.../disasterhelp/...> See more

<p><b>Understanding Disaster Relief: WHY UNSOLICITED SUPPLIES CAN HINDER RECOVERY</b></p>	<p><b>Key Considerations for Sending Donations During a Disaster:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● LOCAL SYSTEM OVERLOAD: Unsolicited donations can overwhelm already strained local agencies and emergency response infrastructure.</li> <li>● NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Communities directly impacted are best positioned to understand and prioritize their most critical requirements.</li> <li>● ADAPTIVE SUPPORT: The most effective assistance evolves with changing needs throughout the recovery process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommended Approach for Sending Donations During a Disaster:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WAIT FOR OFFICIAL REQUESTS: Do not send physical supplies or self-deploy during the active disaster phase.</li> <li>● PRIORITIZE FINANCIAL DONATIONS: Monetary contributions provide flexible, immediate support.</li> <li>● FOLLOW LOCAL GUIDANCE: Only send specific items when explicitly requested by official relief organizations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Best Practices for Donating During a Disaster:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● DONATE FUNDS TO TRUSTED RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS</li> <li>● STAND READY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT WHEN SPECIFIC NEEDS ARE COMMUNICATED</li> <li>● REMAIN PATIENT AND RESPONSIVE TO OFFICIAL GUIDANCE FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES</li> </ul>

4-panel Facebook post from Episcopal Relief & Development on January 15, 2025 in response to the Los Angeles fires.

(Continued on next page)

*(Continued from front page)*

I volunteered at a Hurricane Katrina relief center in Gulfport, MS coordinated by the Episcopal Church that had lost its building, but its school was intact. The only differences between the photos you see of Altadena and of Gulfport was that there were no burn marks in Gulfport, and while there were no buildings in Altadena, in Gulfport, there were piles of matchsticks. In both places: utter devastation.

It was in Gulfport that I experienced first hand how unsolicited stuff was challenging. I think there were THREE cubic yard boxes of toothbrushes! There was no way we were going to offer that many toothbrushes to people. The bigger problem was that those cubic yard bins were taking up space that could be used for items of greater necessity. Nonetheless, I spent a couple of days extolling the virtues of replacing your toothbrush every month and encouraging people to take a handful! Eventually, the coordinators had to put the word out through The Episcopal Church network to stop sending items and to donate to Episcopal Relief & Development. FEMA and other relief agencies can get those supplies much cheaper than we can. And they can direct resources to where they are most needed.

So, we may have to sit and wait...wait until we have official word from official agencies on how we can best be of service to those in need. Some of those ways may be from your phone (donating) and others may be more hands-on. When the word gets out, let's be there. Stand ready!

## From the Vestry

The Vestry meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Month (usually) to discuss the business affairs of the parish. Here are some highlights of the meeting on January 12, 2025:

- ◇ The Vestry approved the 2025 Budget to be presented at the Annual Meeting. The Budget was balanced for the first time since 2021! We ended 2024 with a small surplus, the first time since 2019!
- ◇ The current Vestry members will be meeting with all members of the congregation in small groups to engage in conversations about their life at St Stephen's.
- ◇ Grass Roots II has decided to cease as an organization. CAPSLO / 40 Prado will be taking over the GR2 operations. Very little should change in the transition. Procedures and management should improve over the course of the year.

The next meeting is during the Vestry Retreat on February 8, 2025. 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.



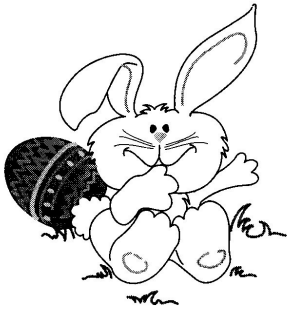
Millions of people watch the Big Game while millions of Americans struggle with hunger. What if each person watching the game gave just one non-perishable food item or one dollar to feed their neighbor in need? Don't sit on the sidelines. Join our Sunday School kids in making a difference in our community.



It all started with a single prayer in a church in South Carolina in 1990 "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat." Since then over \$200 million has been generated through Souper Bowl of Caring drives like ours.

Please bring non-perishable foods to church on February 2, 9 and 16!

## Be an Easter Bunny!



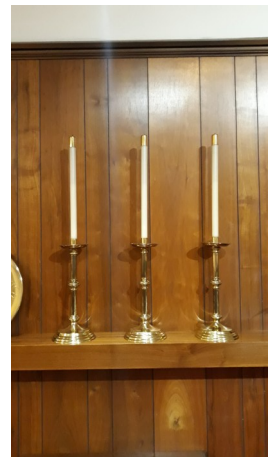
Once again this year Easter Bunnies will fill the Parish Hall creating beautiful chocolate Easter eggs, and you can be an Easter Bunny, too! Sign-up sheets for Easter Bunnies will be on the bulletin board in Ramsden Hall in early March and order forms to purchase these wonderful chocolate eggs for friends and family or to sponsor Easter eggs for children in need will be in the March Witness, on the bulletin board, and inserted in bulletins in March. The Chocolate Easter eggs, hand made by Easter Bunnies, will be ready to pick up on Palm Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>.

Questions? See, call or email Kathleen (805-546-0880, [kapennington@netscape.net](mailto:kapennington@netscape.net))

## Candlesticks & Cross Returned to Sparkling

Due to a generous donation to altar guild, all the candlesticks and the small brass cross have been refinished and returned to sparkle in the sanctuary and library chapel. Brenda Enney stepped up to take the items to Alberto's Metal Finishing in Santa Barbara and return them, all in the matter of a month. We are grateful to her for her driving to and fro and to the craftsman for his excellent work.

On Sunday, February 2, for The Presentation of Christ in the Temple or Candlemas, we will have a Candlemas Procession and re-dedicate our candles both at 8 am and 10 am. We continue to be grateful to the donors of some fifty years ago. The candlesticks have held up beautifully and served us well, Sunday after Sunday for these many decades.



## Hands on Stewardship

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

**Thank you to** Nancy Cook, Lee & Lynn Hollister, Cheryl & Craig McCollum, Rosie & Skip Parks and Elizabeth Potter for hosting coffee hour in January.

**Thank you to** The Music Team for the wealth of music they showered us with during January.

**Thank you to** Lee Hollister for leading the Cal Poly Afrikan Black Coalition in our painting party. Also, thank you to Gabe Bisselle, Skip Parks, David Bartholomew, Spud Schroeder & Ethan Stan for assisting in painting the Gritter Library, Boydston Room and Hallway.

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

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

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

**Thank you to** Kay & Clark Lewis for preparing the St. Stephen's January People's Kitchen lunch and delivering it to 40 Prado.

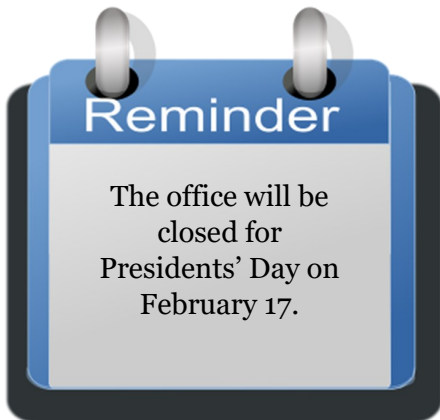
**Thank You to** Elizabeth Potter for baking over 100 cookies to accompany the lunch

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

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

**Thank you to** Craig McCollum, Clark Lewis, and Beau Parks for live streaming the January Services.

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



## Shrove Tuesday: March 4, 2025 at 6pm Mark your calendars

Join Fr Ian in a last indulgence before Lent! Let's meet at Woodstock's Pizza downtown. (Pizza is a bit like a pancake, right?) We'll enjoy one another's company and maybe engage in some Shrove Tuesday or Mardi Gras antics! RSVP to [rector@ststephenslo.org](mailto:rector@ststephenslo.org) so Fr Ian can reserve a table.

## 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.



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

Contribution of articles is encouraged. Please e-mail submissions to [witness@ststephenslo.org](mailto:witness@ststephenslo.org). The deadline for emailed submission of articles is the third Friday of the month. Email any questions to [witness@ststephenslo.org](mailto:witness@ststephenslo.org) © Copyright 2025 by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. All rights reserved.

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## Sharing Your Story

Few of us at St. Stephen's are very comfortable talking about our faith with other people, even with those that we know well. "It's just not something that Episcopalians do," we tell ourselves. And yet those who study congregational development know that sharing our experience as believers provides one of the most important paths that others can follow to faith. In this sense, we are all called to be evangelists, to share the good news of Jesus in our lives.

To do this well requires some courage and confidence, a willingness and ability to be our authentic selves. It is not a matter of forcing our beliefs on other people, nor is it a matter of censoring ourselves when the occasion calls for us to be who we really are.

To do this requires some practice, which is why Bishop Lucinda and Father Ian initiated a series of small group conversations among the members of the Vestry. Groups of three — triads — met to continue asking the basic questions that were discussed at the Ingathering:

- ◆ How did you come to St. Stephen's?
- ◆ Why do you stay?

The members of the Vestry want to continue this triad process with the rest of the congregation. Vestry members will invite other members of the congregation to meet in groups of three to further consider these two basic questions, plus an additional one: What does it mean for you to be here at St. Stephen's?

You should expect to be contacted by a Vestry member with some options to meet. Hopefully there will be a date and time that works for you.

One of the goals of the triad process is to develop greater ease in sharing your faith story with others. The other is to develop and deepen our relationships with each other at St. Stephen's. The members of the Vestry look forward to engaging in this process with you.

*- Bruno Giberti*

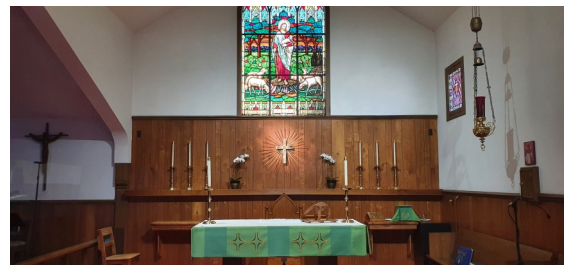
## Second Chance Sunday Servers' Training February 15 & 16, 2025

Feb 15 at 10am – Ushers & Lectors

Feb 15 at 11am – LEMs

Feb 16 at 11.30am - Ushers & Lectors

Ushers, Lectors and LEMs who didn't attend the January training should attend this training. If anyone is interested in becoming an Ushers, Lector or LEM, please contact Fr Ian to discuss.



# The Golden Rule

Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:31 (NIV)

The activity is based on words found in Luke 6:27-38

Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with the correct words from the word bank at the bottom of the page.

1. Love your \_\_\_\_\_, do good to those who hate you.
2. Bless those who curse you, \_\_\_\_\_ for those who mistreat you.
3. If someone slaps you on one \_\_\_\_\_, turn to them the other also.
4. Do to \_\_\_\_\_ as you would have them do to you.
5. If you \_\_\_\_\_ those who love you, what \_\_\_\_\_ is that to you?
6. Be \_\_\_\_\_, just as your \_\_\_\_\_ is merciful.
7. Then your \_\_\_\_\_ will be great, and you will be \_\_\_\_\_ of the Most High.

enemies  
love

others  
merciful

cheek  
reward

children  
Father

pray  
credit

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## Easter Flowers



Each year the Altar Guild decorates our church with beautiful greenery and vibrant flowers for the Easter Season. If you would like to donate toward the Easter Decorations, please fill out this form with a check made payable to:

**St Stephen's**

Please note on the memo line: **Easter Flowers**

Feel free to drop it in the offering plate or mail it into the office:

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

If you would also like to have a dedication mentioned in the Service Bulletin, please turn this form in with your donation to the office by **April 16th.**

Name of Donor:

\_\_\_\_\_

Memorial or thanksgiving to be noted in the bulletin:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Celebrations for February

## Birthdays



- 6-Feb Lynn Wiech
- 7-Feb Robert Atkins
- 9-Feb Eric Fisher
- 11-Feb Frances Edwards
- 12-Feb Al Williams
- 16-Feb Kathleen Pennington
- 16-Feb Torrie Houlgate-West
- 17-Feb Gus Gibson
- 18-Feb Frances Robertson
- 23-Feb Bud Zeuschner
- 28-Feb Chioma Boukai
- 28-Feb Peter Agbo

## Anniversaries



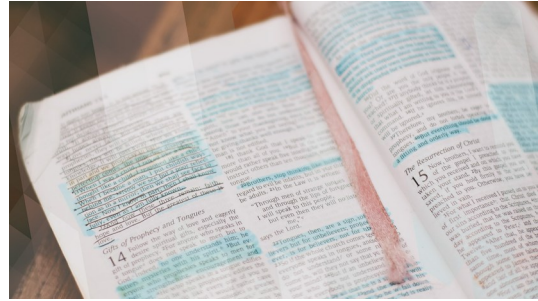
- 14-Feb Fred & Carol Astaire
- 25-Feb Ed & Kathy Garner

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



# Bible Selections for February



## 2-Feb-25

### Presentation of Christ - Candlemas

- 1st Reading** Malachi 3.1-4
- Psalm** Psalm 24.7-10
- 2nd Reading** Hebrews 2.14-18
- Gospel** Luke 2.22-40

## 09-Feb-25

### Epiphany 5C

- 1st Reading** Isaiah 6.1-8
- Psalm** Psalm 138
- 2nd Reading** 1 Corinthians 15.1-11
- Gospel** Luke 5.1-11

## 16-Feb-25

### Epiphany 6C

- 1st Reading** Jeremiah 17.5-10
- Psalm** Psalm 1
- 2nd Reading** 1 Corinthians 15.12-20
- Gospel** Luke 6.17-26

## 23-Feb-25

### Epiphany 7C

- 1st Reading** Genesis 45.3-11,15
- Psalm** Psalm 37.1-12,41-42
- 2nd Reading** 1 Cor 15.35-38,42-50
- Gospel** Luke 6.27-38

# St. Stephen's

Episcopal Church

Welcoming Worshipping Working

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**Electronic Service Requested**



## Lent Begins

Ash Wednesday is March 5, 2025. There will be two services: 12:15 and 5:30pm. They will both be Eucharists with the Imposition of Ashes.

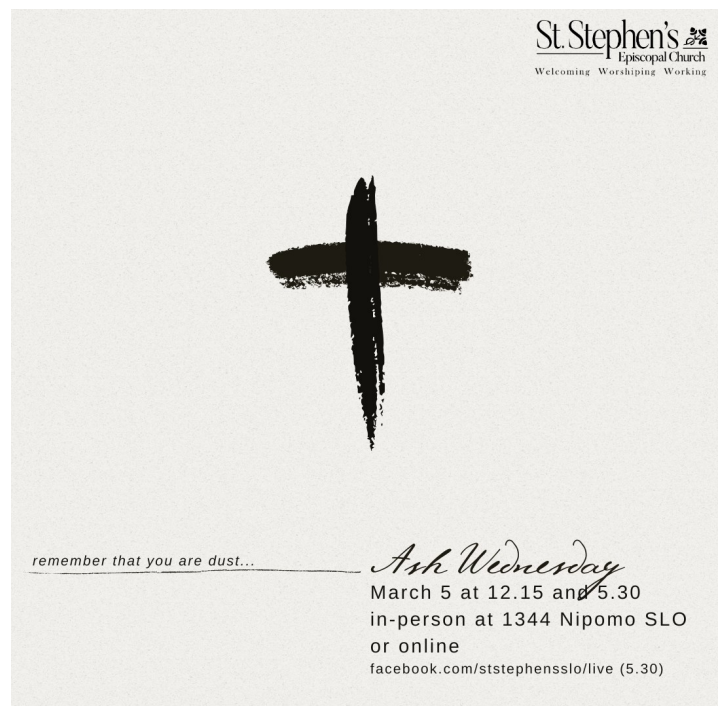



**SHROVE  
TUESDAY  
PIZZA  
SUPPER**

**MARCH 4 @ 6PM**

It's time to "pre-Lent" with pizza!  
Join Fr Ian at Woodstock's Pizza.

**KINDA LIKE  
PANGAKES!**



St. Stephen's   
Episcopal Church  
Welcoming Worshipping Working

*remember that you are dust...*

*Ash Wednesday*  
March 5 at 12.15 and 5.30  
in-person at 1344 Nipomo SLO  
or online  
[facebook.com/ststephensslo/live](https://facebook.com/ststephensslo/live) (5.30)