

The Witness

Volume 29, Issue 1

Welcoming Worshipping Working

January 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



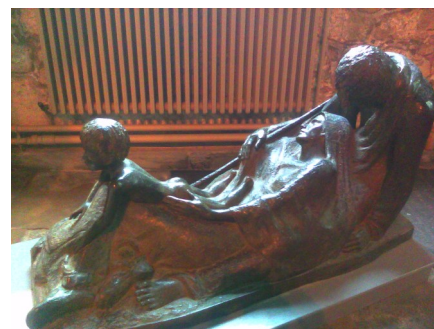
Inside this issue:

Annual Meeting	3
Bible Selections	7
Caroling	5
Celebrations	7
Pastoral Care	2
Sunday Servers	Back
Toy Drive	5
Vestry	3

Let the Work of Christmas Begin

By The Rev Ian M Delinger, Rector

You may have noticed in my Advent and Christmas sermons over the years that I try to point us toward the reality of our faith that stems from The Incarnation and away from the “Christmas” that the Victorians, Coca-Cola, Hallmark and “Away in a Manger” have tried to make the “breaking into the world by God” into. God breaking into the world is the *beginning* of a personal and global transformative movement, not the culmination of a month of carols, parties and presents. The carols, parties and presents are fun, valuable and positive bonding opportunities. I have nothing against them, and I start listening to Christmas music at Thanksgiving! But *in our faith*, Christmas is a beginning, not an end, the beginning of the work we must do that Jesus’ Birth initiated. This work is encapsulated in a poem by civil rights leader, author and theologian Howard Thurman:



They Fled By Night sculpture by Josefina de Vasconcellos in Cartmel Priory, the Lake District, UK

The Work of Christmas

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.*

- Howard Thurman

Each one of those action verbs are activities of Jesus in the Gospels and activities He calls us to do as His followers. He tells us that, when we do these for the least of them, we do these for Him! And that should make music in our hearts! And as my Sacraments professor Clare Watkins repeatedly drilled into us: *Your participation in the Eucharist is your call to mission!*

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from front page)

A friend from my childhood posted on social media a stone pillar with a quote from the founder of the American Atheists Madalyn Murray O’Hair:

An atheist believes that a hospital should be built instead of a church. An atheist believes that deed must be done instead of prayer said. An atheist strives for involvement in life and not escape into death. He wants disease conquered, poverty vanished, war eliminated.

When I commented that so does the Christian, and that the churches were the actual creators of modern social work, I got SLAMMED! There was no good that a Christian has done, does do, or could do, only the horrific actions Christians had done in the past were what I was accused of! (*My friend never commented, neither did friends we have in common; only her friends who don’t know me.*) There is also the meme that comes up every December: *Rather than putting “Christ” back in “Christmas”, I’d settle for putting “Christ” back in “Christians”.* There is a lot of anti-Christian sentiment out there! In no way would I say that Christians are being persecuted in the United States – far from it. But there is definitely an image problem. And Howard Thurman hit the nail on the head! What we do to celebrate Christmas has very little to do with what Christmas is about. So, now that all the razzle dazzle is gone, let’s get on with the work of Christmas and repeatedly prove the anti-religites (as I call them) wrong! Like Sr Greta said in her sermon on Advent 2: *Let’s let Christ be born is us again and again!*

Let’s not leave Jesus in the manger and imperil Him as He is surrounded by undomesticated animals and their feces, without proper heat and clothing (*seriously...Luke did NOT intend for this to be a pretty picture!*); let’s get on with Work of Christmas that the Christ born in us today draws us to.

Pastoral Care Committee

Occasionally we all need help.

- ◇ You have just had a baby, an operation, sprained an ankle, a tree fell on your house . . . and you could use some support as you adapt or recover (unfortunately we can't help you move a tree trunk!!)
- ◇ You could use a ride someplace for an appointment and you aren't able to drive.
- ◇ You would like a meal or two because you are having difficulty functioning in the kitchen.

As the newly formed Pastoral Care Committee, we are hoping to help meet the occasional needs of our St. Stephen's congregation. Interested in helping? We are looking to create a running list of those who have the ability and time to make a meal or give someone a ride once in a while.

You can email Molly Supat at mhwyer@gmail.com to learn more. Or, if you fall into a category similar to those listed above, let Father Ian know your need, and he will contact the newly formed Pastoral Care Committee to lend a hand!



The Parish Annual Meeting: January 26, 2024 after the 10am Service

Mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting. This is when we do the official business of the parish, required by law. We will elect 3 Vestry members for 3-year terms and 1 Vestry member for a 2-year term since we did not fill the seats at the last Annual Meeting. We will give our thanks to Jim Gates, Shannon Larrabee and Elizabeth Potter for their 3-year term of service, and we will elect Delegates to Diocesan Convention. If you would like to enquire about nominations, please see one of the 3 mentioned above who form the Nominations Committee.

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

- ◆ Opening Prayer
- ◆ Presentation of Candidates, Distribution and Collection of Ballots
- ◆ Motion to Accept the Reports as presented
- ◆ Presentation of the Budget and Voting
- ◆ Motion to Adjourn the BUSINESS portion of the Meeting
- ◆ Lunch with a Review of 2023 followed by Ministry Highlights and the opportunity to dialog with heads of ministries.
- ◆ Parish-wide conversation about partnership with SmartShare Housing

The Annual Report will be available to members of the congregation no later than January 19. To request it in electronic form, please contact Fr Ian the week prior. Voter and candidate eligibility includes having pledged or been a giver of record in 2024 and 2025 and a communicant in good standing. The term for a Vestry member is 3 years (with one 2yr term); for Delegates is one year with the commitment to attend 4 meetings during the year and Diocesan Convention via Zoom on Saturday, November 1, 2025.

From the Vestry

The Vestry meets on the 2nd Sunday of the Month (usually) to discuss the business affairs of the parish. Here are some highlights of the meeting on December 8, 2024:

- * The Treasurer presented the 2025 Budget. There was consensus among the Vestry that the Budget was sound, and that it would be reviewed and amended as necessary and voted on at the January meeting in order to present to the parish at the Annual Meeting. As it stands, the 2025 Budget will be a balanced one!
- * Vestry is grateful for the increase in pledge amount for those who did that and for new pledgers and all pledges in general. We may have a balanced budget for the first time since 2018.
- * The Vestry engaged in a conversation about "What Next?" after the Ingathering Conversation. The members of the Vestry will take on an initiative to gather small groups to discuss the same questions as at the Ingathering, but in a casual and community-building way.

The next meeting is January 12, 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.

Hands on Stewardship

Thank you to Adele Butterfield, Bill Crewe, Kay Lewis, Kathleen Pennington and Elizabeth Potter for counting the collection and preparing the deposits during December.

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

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

Thank you to Lee Hollister for putting up the Christmas banner and getting odd jobs done in the run-up to the Christmas Services.

Thank you to The Altar Guild for making our Advent and Christmas worship visually beautiful.

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 December.

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

Thank you to Cassie Tarantino and the choir for hosting a Christmas Carol Sing along during coffee hour

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 many December 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 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

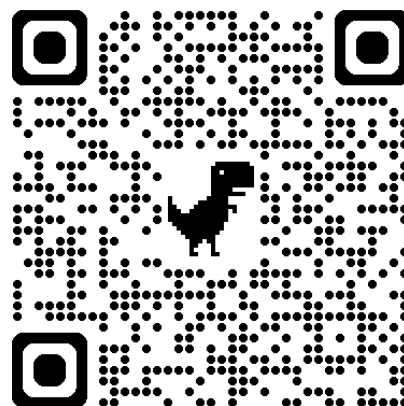
The Witness is a monthly newsletter published by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, San Luis Obispo, CA to provide information about the parish to the congregation. Subscriptions are free to anyone. Send request along with your name and mailing address to the church office. Donations to help offset distribution costs are appreciated.

Make checks payable to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

The Church's e-mail address is: office@ststephenslo.org

Contribution of articles is encouraged. Please e-mail submissions to witness@ststephenslo.org. The deadline for emailed submission of articles is the third Friday of the month. Email any questions to witness@ststephenslo.org © Copyright 2025 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



For Kids From Kids Toy Drive



Gifts from St. Stephen's to children staying at the 40 Prado shelter

Wish lists were received for 15 children served by Operation Santa and 14 kids served by CAPSLO/40Prado. Parishioners brought toys and other gifts to Sunday morning services and put them in or around a basket at the back of the church. The donations were brought to the Children's Chapel where children in Sunday school said a prayer of blessing over them. Several parishioners donated money that was used at the end of the collection period to buy additional gifts to fill in the gaps.



Gifts from St. Stephen's to Operation Santa for kids served by local Social Service Organizations

Thanks to your generosity we were able to provide baby toys, backpacks, Barbies, books, diapers, dinosaurs, games, gift cards, Hatchimals, Hello Kitty, Legos, a musical garbage truck, puzzles, Squishmallows, stuffed dogs & lions, super soft blankets and more to make Christmas 2024 a happier time for children in need in our community.



Caroling at Mission View Health Center

2024 Caroling Adventures!

This year, thanks to the Bisselle family, we had kids singing Christmas Carols with us. Alicia brought her new baby who looked so cute in her Christmas outfits! Big sister Adelaide sang with us last year, came again this year and brought friends. They all dressed for the occasion, sang every song and took song sheets and jingle bells to the residents, who really enjoyed having children in the group.

At all three locations, we gathered with residents in a main room and led them in singing familiar carols with us. At one location (San Luis Post Acute) we also wandered the halls singing Christmas carols to residents in their rooms. Carolers included: KT Bertrand, Elizabeth Diggle, Craig McCollum, Kathleen Pennington, Adelaide Perry (and two of her friends), Alicia Perry, Elizabeth Potter, and Jeff Wheelwright.

Wise Men Still Seek Him!

Unscramble each word, then use the marked letters to reveal the secret word.



M I G A

--	--	--	--	--

1 6

R S T A

--	--	--	--

3

S T E A

--	--	--	--	--

2

I K G N

--	--	--	--

5

G I T S F

--	--	--	--	--	--

4

W I P R H O S

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

7

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Here are some clues in case you need help!

1. Another word for the wise men.
2. A twinkling point of light in the night sky
3. The direction that is opposite of west.
4. The maile ruler of a country. Herod, for example.
5. What the wise men brought to the Christ child.
6. Why the wise men wanted to find the new-born king.

Celebrations for January

Birthdays

First Name	Last Name	Date
Shannon	Larrabee	3-Jan
Carol	Misson	4-Jan
Elisabeth	Abrahams	7-Jan
Linda	Zeuschner	7-Jan
Sherrill	Atkins	9-Jan
Craig	McCollum	12-Jan
John	Shakley	20-Jan
Fred	Astaire Jr	21-Jan
Leslie	Bearce	21-Jan
Mary	McCorkle	22-Jan
Liz	Frost	25-Jan
Pat	Brown	27-Jan

Anniversaries

First Name	Last Name	Date
Marshall Granger	MaryLud Baldwin	1-Jan

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



Bible Selections for January



5-Jan-25

Feast of Epiphany

1st Reading	Isaiah 60.1-6
Psalm	Psalms 72.1-7,10-14
2nd Reading	Ephesians 3.1-12
Gospel	Matthew 2.1-12

12-Jan-25

Epiphany 1C

1st Reading	Isaiah 43.1-7
Psalm	Psalms 29
2nd Reading	Acts 8.14-17
Gospel	Luke 3.15-17,21-22

19-Jan-25

Epiphany 2C

1st Reading	Isaiah 62.1-5
Psalm	Psalms 36.5-10
2nd Reading	1 Corinthians 12.1-11
Gospel	John 2.1-11

26-Jan-25

Epiphany 3C

1st Reading	Nehemiah 8.1-3,5-6,8-10
Psalm	Psalms 19
2nd Reading	1 Corinthians 12.12-31a
Gospel	Luke 4.14-21

St. Stephen's

Episcopal Church

Welcoming Worshiping 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



They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of
the Lord.

Isaiah 60:6 (NRSVA)

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid

San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Permit No. 57

Electronic Service Requested

REMINDER

Sunday Servers' Training
January 18, 2024

10am – Ushers & Lectors
11am – LEMs

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

**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!**

