



St. Stephen's Beacon

From the desk of Rev. Karen

I write this letter to you on the eve of my 72nd birthday. This is a critical year in the life of an Episcopal priest because it is the year of mandatory retirement. Mandatory unless the vestry, priest, and Bishop request and grant an additional year. This process is then repeated on a yearly basis. I, as well as the vestry, have requested that I continue to serve as your rector. The Bishop has granted verbal permission but we have received nothing in writing, so an element of uncertainty exists. I mention this because elements of uncertainty in our life loom like an evil spirit that can prevent us from moving forward and living our life to the fullest. In my mind, succumbing to this uncertainty borders on a breach of faith. Each minute, each day, each year, is a gift to be used to glorify God as best we know how. This gift of time is not to be wasted worrying about the "what next". In faith we keep in our hearts that God walks with us and guides us. However, it is important that we pay attention to the uncertainties that life presents and use them as stepping stones instead of

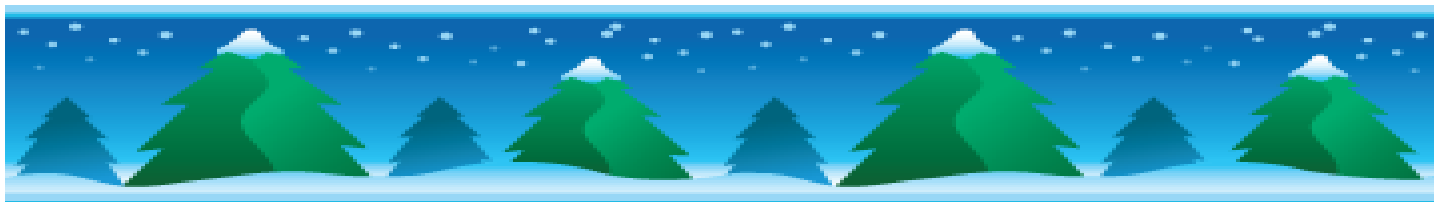
barriers. It is also important to counter-balance them by rejoicing in all the goodness that surrounds us.

On January 21 we will have an opportunity to do both at our Annual Meeting. It will be a time to celebrate our life as a parish and plan for the future. The parish survey results from this fall indicate that we are facing some uncertainties. They center around our dwindling numbers, fewer families with children, and the desire for a greater number of people who can help do God's work.



Ignoring our uncertainties will not make them go away, in fact they will only become more threatening. We need to address them head on and prayerfully take action. Its time to think out of the box, consider new ideas but most important to come together and celebrate the gift of being a member of St. Stephen's.

Happy New Year and may God bless us all as we strive to do God's work to bring forth the heavenly kingdom.



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

St. Stephen's will hold the annual parish meeting on
Sunday, January 21st

An all parish potluck will follow the 9 am Worship Service. Bring a potluck type dish to share. After the meal we will proceed into the Parish Meeting. This is a very important meeting for the parish with election of new vestry members and also going over the 2018 budget. Who can come to the Annual Meeting? Who can vote and run for office? Anyone who is interested in the state of the Parish is welcome to attend! Vestry elections will also be held at this meeting. In order to vote for or be elected to open Vestry positions, a person must be baptized, older than 16 years of age, faithful in giving to the church, and faithful in attending Sunday worship (unless for good cause prevented) for the last three months.



DONATIONS FOR JANUARY FOR THE SALVATION ARMY

Jello, pudding & canned fruit in snack packs, spaghetti sauce always needed.



St. Stephen's Vestry 2017

- Rev. Karen Crawford
- Rev. Merle Smith
- Steve Halstead (SW)
- Jim Tracy (JW)
- Kathy Trotter
- Christopher Templeton
- Jonnelle Farver
- Nancy Henderson
- Janice Carpenter (treasurer)
- Kay Clements
- Brenda Malott



CURRENT FINANCIALS

YEAR-TO-DATE December 2017

Net Income	\$8,123.78	\$162,255.36
Net Expense	\$7,523.97	\$115,439.18
Difference	\$599.81	\$46,816.18

LITURGICAL ROSTER

Jan. 7 (1st Sunday after the Epiphany & Renewal of Baptismal Vows)

10am Layreader/Chalice: Rita B.
Layreader: Barry H.
Petitioner: Caleb V.
Ushers: Paul & Kay K.
Counter: Rita B.

Jan. 14(2nd Sunday after the Epiphany)

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Jim & Meredith T.
Layreader: Winonah M.
Petitioner: Jason M.
Ushers: Winonah M. & Ron H.
Counter: Lorraine W.

Jan. 21 (3rd Sun. after Epiphany and Healing Liturgy)

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Steve H.
Layreader: Larry H.
Petitioner: Steve H.
Ushers: Brenda M. &
Counter: Mary H.

Jan. 28 (4th Sun. after Epiphany)

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Kathy T.
Layreader: Barry H.
Petitioner: Zeb T.
Ushers: Winonah M. & Ron H.
Counter: Janice C.

Feb 4 (5th Sun. after Epiphany)

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Rita B.
Layreader: Larry H.
Petitioner Deacon Merle S.
Ushers:
Counter: Rita B.

Feb. 11(Last Sunday after the Epiphany)

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Jim & Meredith T.
Layreader: Winonah M.
Petitioner: Caleb V.
Ushers: Winonah M. & Ron H.
Counter: Lorraine W.

If you are unable to be here the Sunday you are scheduled, it is your responsibility to find a substitute or switch. Please let the office know.



*The Blessing Box has touched so many in need. Letters of gratitude are often found in the box. Please know that your contributions make an enormous difference in the lives of so many. Food is always needed and as the thermometer plummets, winter coats are in high demand. Thank you for being the hands, feet and face of God. **Blessing Box needs:** Toothpaste, veggies, canned chicken and tuna, paper towels, chapstick, hand sanitizer, breakfast bars. Winter coats are still needed, but these are our primary needs for now!*

January Birthdays

3rd Karen Crawford, 18th Kay Koeppen,
20th Bill Adams, 21st Carol Kramer,
22nd Kaitlyn Stewart,
26th Mary Halstead, 27th Dan Kelley Sr.,
& Emily Mehmen, 31st Joy Axt
No Listed Anniversaries



Wednesday Evening Prayer at 5:15 PM led by Deacon Merle Smith



Saturday Jan. 13th at 9:00 am in the Undercroft the St. Stephen's Men's Group meets

Come join us for food, fellowship, scripture and discussion. There is always room for one more!





St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
223 East Fourth Street North
Newton, Iowa 50208

*Our Vision: "To be the hands,
feet and face of God"*



In 2018

December Mission Update

1. The mission committee met on December 10, 2017. Due to a change in policy by the Salvation Army children over the age of 12 were not designated to receive Christmas gifts this year. As a result St. Nick's lacked funds to serve the 650 children in need. The mission requested and it was approved by the vestry that \$5000 be given to St. Nick's.
2. Rita Baker is serving on a committee that is examining the need for mental health facilities in Jasper County.
3. Neighbors helping neighbors is a group made up of people from several churches in Newton. Their current project is to provide free laundry nights for those in need. They also provided a free clothing event.
4. The Blessing Box has received blankets, coats, and shoes from the Lutheran church and donations from Texas. Currently between \$200 and \$250 is spent each week. There is a huge need for socks, caps, and blankets.





**You Are Invited
To The Epiphany
Feast!**

**Saturday,
January 6th
at 5:30pm (service)
Celebration of the
Eucharist,
Pageant,
Festive Dinner (follows)**

January 6 is the celebration of the Epiphany of our Lord and the proclamation of Christ to the world. It marks the end of the Twelve Day's of Christmas and recalls three wise men from the east who followed a star to pay homage to the King of the Jews. Why did they leave their lives of work and science to follow a star? What was missing in their lives that compelled them to make this journey?

What is missing in our lives that might drive us to seek the Light of the World? Just as the Magi shared their gifts with the Christ Child, you are invited to share your abundance with those who are in need. Do you have an extra coat, gloves, hat, or blanket that could be shared? You are invited to bring a gift and place it at the altar. *“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”*

Matthew 25:40