



## St. Stephen's Beacon

*From the desk of Rev. Karen*

Happy New Year and Blessings as you enter into 2019! But wait...let's pause and take a look back before leaping into the New Year. The year 2018 was a memorable year for St. Stephen's. We were blessed to be able to support JKARL, the St. Nick's effort, victims of human trafficking, and our Blessing Box to name a few. This was made possible through a combination of our mission fund and generous donations from parishioners and the larger community. Throughout the year our congregation supported laundry nights, clothing giveaways, suicide prevention initiatives and efforts to house the homeless. Feeding the hungry was a high priority and was accomplished with generous donations from our food pantry garden, diligent shoppers, and donations from your own gardens and generous hens.

The Kiwanis, Rug Hookers, and 12 Step program members are extended members of our congregation. It was with great joy that we supplied treats at their meetings in November, provided lunches for the St. Nick's helpers, and hosted the 12 Step folks who participated in Ragbrai this year with treats and a place to meet, and even space on our campus for some to pitch their tents.

We are grateful for the donations made by those communities who use our building and the decision was made to use a portion of that money to make much needed upgrades to the upstairs bathrooms, replacement of damaged tables, and the purchase of energy efficient lights.

Worship was enhanced with the addition of the Gather Hymnal, and a Saturday evening service was implemented to serve those unable to attend Sunday services. Our adult and youth Sunday schools, seasonal studies, and the JustFaith program provided ample opportunities to expand our understanding of scripture and our call to serve God.

Surrounded by the warm glow of candlelight and a loving community, we came together for the final Eucharist of the year on New Year's Eve. We offered thanks for 2018 and pondered where God would call us both as individuals and as a parish in 2019. While I rejoiced, I also felt pangs of concern because there were roughly half the number of people attending the service as in prior years. Filling the pews is not our priority but caring for those who lack life's basic needs is, filling people spiritually with God's love and care, and supporting each other in life's journey is most certainly what we are called to do. I am concerned for our missing congregants spiritual well being and our ability to serve the larger community.

The year 2019 will present challenges as well as blessings. On January 20th you will have an opportunity to share your hopes, concerns, and ideas and develop priorities for the coming year. It will be a time to celebrate what has been and dream of what might be. Please join us for the Annual Meeting. There will be one service at 9:00 followed by brunch and the meeting.

*May God bless each of you in the New Year,*

*Rev. Karen*



## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

St. Stephen's will hold the annual parish meeting on  
**Sunday, January 20th**

An all parish brunch will follow the 9 am Worship Service. Bring a brunch 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 2019 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 2018

- Rev. Karen Crawford
- Rev. Merle Smith
- Steve Halstead (SW)
- Jim Tracy (JW)
- Kathy Trotter (clerk)
- Rita Baker
- Nancy Henderson
- Janice Carpenter (treasurer)
- Kay Clements (clerk)



## CURRENT FINANCIALS

YEAR-TO-DATE November 2018

|                   |                       |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Income</b>     | <b>\$ 5,342.30</b>    | <b>\$ 91,400.00</b>   |
| <b>Expense</b>    | <b>\$16,955.37</b>    | <b>\$111,284.50</b>   |
| <b>Difference</b> | <b>(-\$11,613.07)</b> | <b>(-\$19,884.50)</b> |

**LITURGICAL ROSTER**

**Jan. 6 (The Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ)**

**10am** Layreader/Chalice: Rita B.  
Layreader: Barry H.  
Petitioner: Winonah M.  
Ushers: Paul & Kay K.  
Counter: Rita B.

**Jan. 13( 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany)**

**10 am** Layreader/Chalice: Jim & Meredith T.  
Layreader: Rev. Merle S.  
Petitioner: Rev. Merle S.  
Ushers:  
Counter: Lorraine W.

**Jan. 20 (2nd Sun. after Epiphany and Healing Liturgy)**

**9 am** Layreader/Chalice: Steve H.  
Layreader: Steve H.  
Petitioner: Steve H.  
Ushers: Paul & Kay K.  
Counter: Meredith T.

**Jan. 27 (3rd Sun. after Epiphany)**

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

**Feb 3 (4th Sun. after Epiphany)**

**10 am** Layreader/Chalice: Rita B.  
Layreader: Rev. Merle S.  
Petitioner: Rev. Merle S.  
Ushers:  
Counter: Rita B.

**Feb. 10 (5th Sunday after the Epiphany)**

**10 am** Layreader/Chalice: Jim & Meredith T.  
Layreader: Barry H.  
Petitioner: Jason M.  
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.*



**Tuesday Morning Book Club**  
is starting the new year on  
**Tuesday, January 8 at 9:30 am**  
The book we will be reading and discussing is “Western Theology” by Wes Seeliger. Join us for as we explore various literature throughout the new year.



**January Birthdays**

3rd Karen Crawford, 18th Kay Koeppen,  
20th Bill Adams, 22nd Kaitlyn Stewart,  
26th Mary Halstead, 27th Emily Mehmen,  
31st Joy Axt

*Best wishes from your family at St. Stephen's*

No Listed Anniversaries



**Wednesday Evening Prayer at 5:15 PM led by The Rev. Merle Smith**



**Saturday Jan. 12th 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!





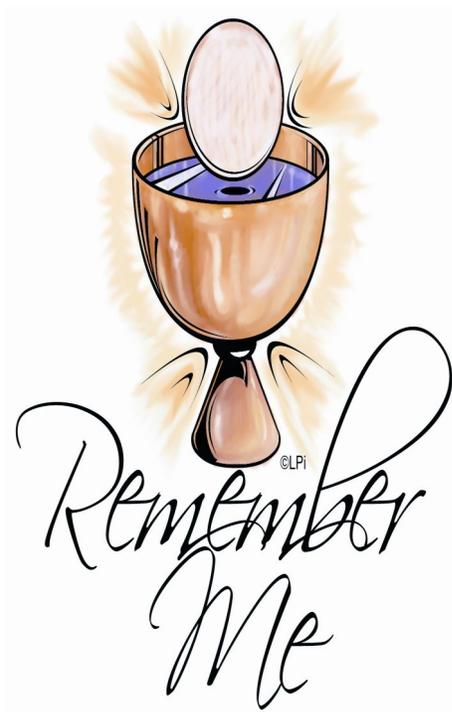
**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
**223 East Fourth Street North**  
**Newton, Iowa 50208**

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



**In 2019**

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**Saturday Night**  
**Holy Eucharist**  
**At 5 pm**

In January are:

**Saturday, January 5th**

And

**Saturday, January 19th**

Join us!

## The Season of Epiphany



Sunday, 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 Days of Christmas and launches us into a new season in the church's calendar year. Depending on Easter's date, there can be four to nine Sundays following Epiphany with the last Sunday always being a celebration of the Transfiguration. This year the Transfiguration will be on March 3, and Lent will begin the following Wednesday.

Epiphany brings changes to our worship service. The liturgical color returns to green, there is a different focus on our lessons and we hear different prayers. Overall there is an emphasis on living as "children of the light", reflecting on our Baptism and our discipleship, and specific to the Book of Mark we focus on the miracles. The Three Wise Men's visit to the Christ Child on the Feast of the Epiphany reminds us that not only were these three men Gentiles but they also represented both young and old, and different cultures. Thus we may rejoice in the knowledge that God came to all humankind.

This is indeed a time of celebration and throughout the world the day is marked by various traditions. One tradition is that of the King's Cake. This is an almond flavored cake sometimes baked in the shape of a wreath or flat circle. The circular shape represents the winding route the Magi took to avoid King Herod, who desired to harm the Christ child. Often a penny, or baby is baked inside the bread promising the finder special blessings in the New Year. It also reminds us of the hospitality offered to the Wise Men by the Holy Family and the oneness we share when we break bread together. The Magi brought gifts to the Christ child and so on Epiphany this is the day that gifts are given in Italy, Spain and many of the Latin American countries.

Another tradition is that of the Chalking of the Door. The front door of the home is marked with sacred signs and symbols as we ask God's blessings on those who live, work, and visit during the year. This is a sign that we have invited God's presence, and blessings into our home and into our life.

**These are but a few of the many celebrations that occur around the world but are three which St. Stephen's will honor on Sunday, January 6. We invite you to join us as we celebrate this great Feast Day by bringing a gift for the Blessing Box in the form of food, hats, mittens, or other articles of warm clothing, enjoy a bite of Kings Cake following the 10:00 service, and take home chalk to bless your home.**

*Blessings, Rev. Karen*