

St. Stephen's Beacon

From the desk of Sr. Warden, Steve Halstead

St. Stephen's—Exciting

These are exciting times to be an Episcopalian in Newton.

Your Vestry recently held its annual retreat. This is a time for the Vestry to get to know one another; to orient the new members and refresh the skill sets of the returning members. It is also a time to pray, eat, laugh and share. And a time for team building. We elected officers and established a mentoring program for the new members. We began with Morning Prayer and ended with the Eucharist. Perhaps the most tangible outcome was the setting of goals for 2017.

Building on our Mission--"To be the hands, feet and face of God" and the input we received from the table talks at the Annual Meeting, we set four tentative goals as a starting point which we will finalize at the March Vestry Meeting: 1) Increase participation by school aged children; 2) Support Tracy's Food Box; 3) Work with other denominations in our efforts to reach out to Newton's homeless; and 4) Increase our efforts to feed the hungry through participation in the Salvation Army's Food Pantry.

How we will reach these goals depends on you, and you, and you. Pick a goal that interests you and help make it happen. The route(s) we take are wide open and with God's help and guidance we will achieve them

I think all the Vestry members left the Retreat charged up and excited about the year ahead. I know I certainly did. Come share that excitement and help make St. Stephen's "*that small church that does so much in our community.*"



Mardi Gras Dinner is Saturday, March 11

Social time at 6 pm, Dinner at 7 pm

Come celebrate Mardi Gras with your friends and families of St. Stephen's. Bring family members, other friends, and acquaintances. We will meet in the undercroft.

The dinner will be provided, just bring what you want to drink. The entry fee will be a donation to the Animal Rescue League.

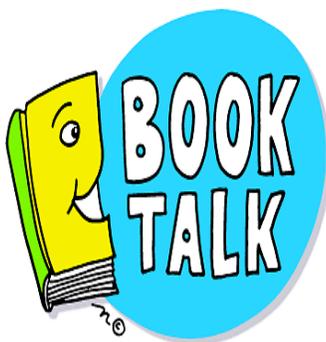
Wear your Mardi Gras attire. There will be a contest and prizes awarded. Come join the fun!

Happy Birthday!



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

9th Kathy Trotter
21st David Giildenzopf and
Joyce Rabedeaux
NO ANNIVERSARIES



The Tuesday Morning Book Club meets at 9:30 am in Latham Hall

We are discussing the book "Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action" by J. Matthew Sleeth M.D.

We are reading and discussing one chapter each week. It's not too late to join.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS SUNDAY, MARCH 12TH

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 11th.



The Vestry Meets Sunday, March 19th At Noon in the Undercroft



Food Pantry Needs

MARCH DONATIONS FOR THE SALVATION ARMY

Pancake, muffin, bread mixes and syrup. Also spaghetti sauce.



Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 5:00 PM led by Deacon Merle Smith

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



LITURGICAL ROSTER

Wednesday Night Lenten Study 6:30-7:30 pm (Led by Steve Halstead)

We will be using the book “Caring for our Common Home- A Lenten Reflection for Iowans”. The first meeting will be after the 7:30 Ash Wednesday service and the lesson for Ash Wednesday will be discussed. The following meetings will focus on the past week’s reflections. Contact Steve if you desire a book. Download for free at
:http://iowacatholicconference.org/2017/01/new-Lenten-booklet-reflects-on-iowas-environment-ecological-encyclical-laudato-si/

Report from the Mission Committee

Some exciting information that the Mission Committee is wanting to accomplish this year.

1. Find a way to help pay some of the lunches for children that are not able to pay for on their own. We have talked with Newton Schools about this problem.
2. Christopher Templeton distributed copies of the resource section of Half of the Sky. He had marked the website for further information.
3. Steve Halstead talked about the Just Faith Hunger. He thought St. Stephen’s would be interested in getting involved in this.
4. Rita Baker spoke about a food pantry at Berg middle school. She is going to find out what their basic needs are, and how we can help assist with this.
5. Jennifer Mehmen presented some information about Progress Industries VIP program. This is a program geared to assisting people into their apartments. She will give us more information on how we can get involved
6. Jim and Meredith Tracy gave us information about a homeless distribution food box that will be located behind their home garage. This will be stocked with easy to open food . Their hope for the future is to offer blankets, clothing and information about resources available in Newton.
7. Nancy Henderson will acquire information about how we can assist the Animal Rescue League.
8. Our hope is to have collection bins available at St. Stephen’s for –a) Body Closet b) ARL c) City Hygiene Closet d) Salvation Army.

We ended our meeting feeling that our city needs one location where people in need can go to obtain resources. We thank our Mission Committee for their research and presentations. As you can see this group of ministers are already busy.

Peace, Merle

Mar. 5 (1st Sunday of Lent)

8 am Layreader/Chalice: Jim & Meredith T.

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Rita B.
Layreader: Winonah M.
Petitioner: Jason M.

Ushers: Winonah M. & Ron H.
Counter: Lorraine W.

Mar. 12 (2nd Sunday of Lent)

8 am Layreader/Chalice: Kathy T.

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Rita B.
Layreader: Terry G.
Petitioner: Shannon K.

Ushers:
Counter: Janice C.

Mar. 19 (3rd Sunday of Lent and Healing Litany)

8 am Layreader/Chalice: Steve H.

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Steve H.

Layreader: Barry H.
Petitioner: Steve H.
Ushers: Brenda M. & Roxanne V.
Counter: Meredith T.

Mar. 26 (4th Sunday of Lent)

8 am Layreader/Chalice: Jim & Meredith T.

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Rita B.
Layreader: Larry H.
Petitioner: Winonah M.
Ushers: Winonah M. & Ron H.
Counter: Rita B.

Apr. 2 (5th Sunday of Lent)

8 am Layreader/Chalice: Kathy T.

10 am Layreader/Chalice: Rita B.
Layreader: Phyllis F.
Petitioner: Jason M.
Ushers: Paul & Kay K.
Counter: Paul K.

Apr. 9 (Palm Sunday)

8am Layreader/Chalice: Steve H.

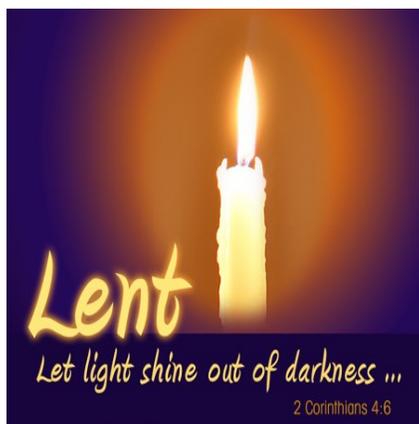
10 am Layreader/Chalice: Steve H.
Layreader: Winonah M.

Petitioner: Steve H.
Ushers: Winonah M. & Ron H.
Counter: Lorraine W.

We are in need of ushers, and Chalice Bearers, and those to sign up for coffee time. See Rev. Karen or Deacon Merle.

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.

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



Keeping A Holy Lent

"I Invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent."

The Ash Wednesday liturgy than outlines the ways in which one observes a holy Lent.

It is suggested that we pray, fast, read and meditate on God's word. Furthermore we are called to self examination and repentance.

March 5 is the first Sunday in Lent and it is a good time to assess your Lenten program. The whole point of Lent is to draw closer to God by discovering within ourselves what might be causing us to stray and than eliminate or modify that factor in our life.

Many times we set unrealistic goals and when we aren't able to attain them we just give up and write it off as a bad idea. Sometimes its easier to accomplish things in small chunks or to change things up. If you are struggling, perhaps its time to end your first discipline and try on something new. If you decided to read the entire New Testament during Lent and it proved to be beyond your ability, find some good Lenten meditation and carve out some time each day to read and meditate on those. If it is hard for you to read a meditation each day try pausing to say morning, noon or evening prayer. Don't be afraid to add or delete disciplines. Just keep moving forward.

BUT..whatever you do, don't stop attending Sunday services because this is the time you are invited to the table to share in the most blessed of sacraments and receive the strength and courage to continue in this journey of faith.

May you continue to have a most Holy and blessed Lent.

March 5 PSALM 63:1-4 "O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name". As your REVIVAL event draws near, simply turn to the Lord today and seek the Lord. Bless the Lord. Praise God's holy name. Give thanks and surrender your life and your REVIVAL event to the Lord God.

March 6 MATTHEW 28:16-20 "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age'". Pray that the saving presence of Jesus at your REVIVAL event may lead many to follow him as faithful disciples. Pray for the people you have invited, that they will hear the call of Jesus to follow him.

March 7 MARK 9:35 "He sat down, called the twelve and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all'".

March 8 HEBREWS 12:1-2 "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely and let us run with perseverance p.2 the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame and has taken his seat at the right hand off the throne of God. Pray that the communion of saints may be expanded as a result of your REVIVAL event, that man people will come to turn away from sin and look to Jesus in faith. Pray that the cloud of witnesses at your event will reflect the love of God.

March 9 PSALM 25:4-5 "Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach e, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long". Ask the Lord to release the power of the word in the REVIVAL event, that people may be led by God's truth.

March 10 PSALM 145:14-18 The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. The lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

March 11 EPHESIANS 6:18-20 "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak. As you pray today, commend the leaders and speakers for your REVIVAL event once more to the Lord, that God may use them to speak clearly and boldly, making the mystery of the gospel known to all who attend.

March 12 JOSHUA 1:9 "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God Is with you wherever you go". Pray that the Lord's presence in your REVIVAL event will lead people to a strong and courageous faith.

March 13 JOHN 16:12-14 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify them, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you".

Dedicate the physical space where the REVIVAL event is to be held to God's gracious purposes. Pray that the Holy Spirit will call, gather, enlighten and sanctify many people through your REVIVAL event in the way, truth and life that is found in Christ Jesus.

March 14 THESSALONIANS 3:5 "May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ". Ask the Lord to draw people to the steadfast, faithful love of God, for the pure joy of believing in the Lord.

March 15 MARK 4:26-28 "He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground and would sleep and rise night and day and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head". Pray that God will grow the kingdom in your community as the seed of God's word is spread at your REVIVAL event.

March 16 HEBREWS 13:2 "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it". Pray for a spirit of warm hospitality at your REVIVAL event, that everyone who comes may experience a graceful welcome.

March 17 MATTHEW 5:14-15 "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket but on the lampstand and it gives light to all in the house".

Pray that the light of Christ will shine on your REVIVAL event, leading everyone in attendance to leave the event ready to let their light shine wherever they go. Dedicate your REVIVAL event to the glory of God.