



# ST. STEPHEN'S SPIRIT

The Newsletter of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wilkinsburg PA

DECEMBER 2022

## ADVENT

*The birth of Jesus is celebrated in many kinds of songs: carols, hymns, oratorios and cantatas , and the Africa American spiritual. And yet the season of Advent is not just preparation for the Christmas season; putting up decorations, buying presents, baking treats, and lighting candles. The Advent season is the preparation in our hearts for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The season serves as our confession that even though we did not know who Jesus was when God came wrapped in flesh the first time, we are cultivating a value system that embraces the hope, joy, transformation and communal healing that will be realized when Christ returns. African American spirituals provide excellent medium by which to cross the divide between the first and second coming of Christ. Through them, all people can come to a better understanding of the unconditional love, justice, mercy, hope, faith, and community that Jesus brings for the flourishing of all God's children. - "Mary Had a Baby: An Advent Bible Study Based on African American Spirituals," by Cherly Kirk-Duggan and Marilyn E. Thornton*

This passage comes from the introduction to the book our Thursday bible study group is reading for Advent as we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ using the African American spirituals. Advent reminds us to keep our prayer focused on Jesus' return and to rededicate ourselves to our call to love one another each precious day we're given in this life. Join us for our Advent and Christmas services.

First Sunday of Advent - November 27

Second Sunday of Advent - December 4

Third Sunday of Advent - December 11

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Lessons and Carols - December 18

Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m. - December 24

Christmas Day Service at 10:30 a.m. - December 25

*(There will be no 8 a.m. service on Christmas Day.)*

The Holy Name Sunday: Lessons and Carols - January 1, 2023

## 2023 Stewardship Campaign

So far this year, we have had 20 people pledge a total of \$112,960. These members made a commitment for next year, and we are very thankful for these generous members who, with God's blessings, make it possible for us to continue to serve in this community. If you could not pledge, we know you will give as you are able, and for anyone else who feels called to pledge, it's not too late! With thanksgiving for this church,  
Gerry Dalton, Treasurer

## Prayer for December

**Be Still and Know that I am God.**

**Psalm 46:10**

There is a new blue 2022-23 prayer cycle booklet in the church! Please grab one and take it home to pray for the people and organizations near and dear to our hearts at St. Stephen's.

**WANT TO MAKE  
PEOPLE HAPPY?  
SIGN UP FOR  
COFFEE HOUR!  
DECEMBER IS  
OPEN!**



## BIRTHDAYS

December 5 - Nancy Tragard,  
December 9 - John Ferraro and Joann Rau  
December 14 - Bob Schauf  
December 16 - Ray'Onna Thompson  
December 25 - Chris Sovich

**MORNING PRAYER WILL BE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY,  
DECEMBER 7 AT 10:30 AM.**

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh provides several opportunities to get involved with the Beloved Community Initiative. On the first Wednesday of every month, you can join a zoom Bible Study; on the third Wednesday of the month you can participate in a zoom prayer and share. See the links below if you are interested in learning more.

**Reading the Bible through the Beloved Community  
Lens, 1st Wednesdays**

[Reading the Bible Through the Beloved Community  
Lens – Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh  
\(episcopalpgh.org\)](https://www.episcopalpgh.org/reading-the-bible-through-the-beloved-community-lens)

**Prayer and Share, Third Wednesdays**

[Prayer & Share with the Beloved Community – Episco-  
pal Diocese of Pittsburgh \(episcopalpgh.org\)](https://www.episcopalpgh.org/prayer-and-share)

## FOOD OF THE MONTH

Please put in boxes in back of the church.

### HOLIDAY MEAL BAGS

*Did you know that 25% of Wilkinsburg residents are food insecure? Let's help our neighbors by contributing to the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry holiday meal bags.*

*Boxes of stuffing mix*

*Cans of green beans*

*Cans of corn*

*Cans of cranberry sauce*

*Cans of sweet potatoes*

*Boxes of corn bread mix*

*Boxes of dessert mix*

*Giant Eagle gift cards*

## Mission of the Month

### Shepherd's Heart

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

The founders of Shepherd's Heart Fellowship were once homeless themselves. They know the truth of Psalm 46 which they quote on their homepage. Shepherd's Heart provides housing and support for 15 formerly homeless male veterans. In fact, 30% of those using their services are veterans. In downtown Pittsburgh, Shepherd's Heart has a drop in center that provides food, prayers, referrals, clothing for the homeless. They provide a shuttle bus to the VA, and use it to reach people in need. They have a food pantry, resource center, emergency fund for those in dire financial need and a cold weather shelter for women. If you wish to support this vital ministry, you can visit their website or drop a check payable to "Shepherd's Heart" in the collection basket, and we will make sure they get it. Thank you!

<https://shepheart.org>

*SACRED GROUND is a film based dialogue about faith and race consisting of eight week sessions that meet once a week. There are sessions at Calvary and other churches that are held at different times and during different months. If you'd like to attend one, please contact the office or find it on the diocesan website. [Episcopalpgh.org](http://Episcopalpgh.org)*

The Neighborhood Resilience Project in the Hill District is requesting donations for Christmas gifts for those in need. Contact the office if you are interested.

# 2022 Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

Red and White Poinsettias - must order by December 11 (the date by which the florist needs the orders)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Dedication: \_\_\_\_\_

Size	Cost	#Red	#White	\$Total
Small	\$8.95 each			
Medium	\$19.95 each			
			Sub-total	
Please write Christmas Flowers on your check & Envelope			Total Due	

Sunday Worship 8AM & 10:30AM

Contact Us

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Parish Staff  
Rev. Chuck Esposito, Priest  
Soon Choi, Dir. of Music Ministry  
Melanie Sprenkel, Parish Ministry Coordinator  
Gerry Dalton, Financial Admin  
Dave Stefanik, Caretaker  
Elise Morris, Archivist & Historian

**THERE'S A PRAYER  
CYCLE BOOKLET IN  
THE SANCTUARY!  
GRAB YOUR YELLOW  
BOOKLET AND START  
PRAYING!**

