

ST. STEPHEN'S SPIRIT

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

JANUARY 2023

Church attendance is not just a “good suggestion;” it is God’s will for believers. [Hebrews 10:25](#) says we should “not [be] giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Even in the early church, some were falling into the bad habit of not meeting with other believers. The author of Hebrews says that’s not the way to go. We need the encouragement of being church together.

Church is the place where believers can love one another ([1 John 4:12](#)), encourage one another ([Hebrews 3:13](#)), “spur” one another to love and good works ([Hebrews 10:24](#)), serve one another ([Galatians 5:13](#)), instruct one another ([Romans 15:14](#)), honor one another ([Romans 12:10](#)), and be kind and compassionate to one another ([Ephesians 4:32](#)).

As disciples, God makes us a member of the body of Christ ([1 Corinthians 12:27](#)). For a church body to function properly, all of its “body parts” need to be present and working ([1 Corinthians 12:14-20](#)). It’s not enough to just attend a church; we should be involved in some type of ministry to others, using the spiritual gifts God has given us ([Ephesians 4:11-13](#)). A believer will never reach full spiritual maturity without having that outlet for his gifts, and we all need the assistance and encouragement of other believers ([1 Corinthians 12:21-26](#)). For these reasons and more, church attendance, participation, and fellowship as a regular aspects of a believer’s life blesses everyone.

Jesus is the Cornerstone of the Church ([1 Peter 2:6](#)), and we are like living stones being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ([1 Peter 2:5](#)). As the building materials of God’s “spiritual house,” we naturally have a connection with one another, and that connection is evident every time the Church is gathered.

Father Chuck+



Prayer for January

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31



BIRTHDAYS

January 3 - Maria Sprenkel
January 19 - Marilyn Cram
January 24 - Beth Hardie

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. Or ask us to mail you one.



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

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY IS
MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2023**

**MORNING PRAYER WILL BE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 4 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://episcopalpgh.org)

Prayer and Share, Third Wednesdays

[Prayer & Share with the Beloved Community – Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh \(episcopalpgh.org\)](https://episcopalpgh.org)

FOOD OF THE MONTH

TEA BAGS AND COFFEE



Weekly contribution envelopes for 2023 are now available. Those who don't pledge may request envelopes for their use. Please see Gerry Dalton. An annual giving statement can be received by using these envelopes for your contribution.

Mission of the Month

BETHLEHEM HAVEN WOMEN'S SHELTER

For the last 39 years, Bethlehem Haven which is in downtown Pittsburgh has provided nearly 13,000 nights of shelter, every night, and the need continues to grow. Each year, the Haven provides nearly 60,000 meals; sees around 600 men and women in the health and wellness clinic; fills countless physical and emotional needs for their residents and day program attendees; and provides employment training for more than 100 men and women in the community.

Bethlehem Haven's mission is to provide a continuum of care for homeless individuals that leads toward self-sufficiency. Their founding values of Hospitality, Compassion, Integrity and Empowerment are still at the heart of everything they do today even as they have expanded their offerings.

If you would like to contribute, you can write a check to "Bethlehem Haven's Women's Shelter" and put it in the offering plate or you can donate with the link below. Thank you!

[Bethlehem Haven](#)

<https://bethlehemhaven.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

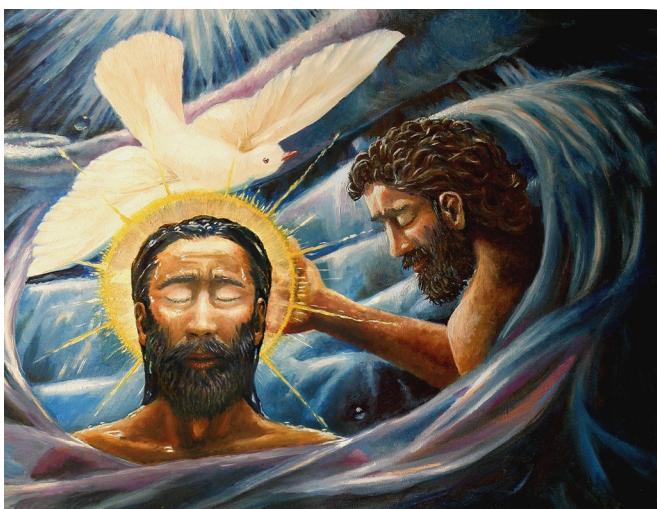
OUR THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY resumes on January 5. Please join us from 12 noon to 2 p.m. We will be studying the gospel of John. Come and follow Jesus' footsteps with us!

Living into our Baptismal Covenant

All members of District 2 parishes are invited to the first of a series of events to deepen our faith and our connections to each other. This event will be held on the weekend of Dr. Martin Luther King Day and will honor his legacy. On Saturday, January 14, join us for a time of study and deep conversation facilitated by Rev. Canon Eric McIntosh.

In our congregations, we baptize or reaffirm our baptismal covenant regularly. We profess, and we want to believe that we seek and serve

Christ in every person, and we respect the dignity of every human being. This is an opportunity to study scripture and have deep conversations about how we actually can do that. We will gather from 10 - 11:30 a.m. at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 336 E. 10th Avenue, Homestead (a few blocks from the Waterfront shopping center). The parishes of District 2 are Calvary, East Liberty; Holy Cross, Homewood; Redeemer, Squirrel Hill; St. Andrew's, Highland Park; St. James, Penn Hills; St. Matthew's, Homestead; St. Stephen's, Wilkinsburg; and St. Thomas, Oakmont. Due to the pandemic there have been few opportunities for the district's members to gather and build community. Please join in this special opportunity. To indicate that you will attend, please respond to Deacon Carter Hawley at crickshawley@gmail.com



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.
Elise Morris, Archivist & Historian

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting will be held on January 22 after the 10:30 a.m. service. We will be serving light lunch. Please let us know if you can attend! We hope all will be there.

Reports for the Annual Meeting are due to Melanie by January 8.

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

