February Schedule
Season of Epiphany

5   Holy Eucharist & Sunday School @ 9 AM; Men’s Breakfast; no service St. Brigid’s
12  Morning Prayer II @ 9 AM; Vestry @ 7:30
14  Valentine’s Day
18  Women’s Potluck Luncheon @ Meadowbrook @ Noon
19  Holy Eucharist @ 9 AM; St. Brigid’s in the Pines in Sumpter @ 11:30 AM
20  Presidents’ Day Holiday
26  Transfiguration Last Epiphany—Morning Prayer @ 9 AM
28  Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5–7 PM

LEN'T BEGINS

March 1   Ash Wednesday – Noon – Imposition of the Ashes

The Voice of St. Stephen’s

Celebrating Mardi Gras
Our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper is February 28 followed by Ash Wednesday service at noon on March 1. Please mark your calendars for all the events that happen during this special time of year.

Passage into Lent
Lenten Service and Soup Supper
We will continue the close fellowship throughout Lent with a short Wednesday evening prayer service in the Chapel starting at 5:30 p.m. on March 8th, followed by soup supper downstairs at 6 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Everyone is encouraged to join in and bring a friend if you like.

We will be inviting members of the community to join us for supper at 6, with the option of coming early for the Chapel service. We hope to expand suppers into the community as a year-round ministry.

Coffee hour volunteers and altar flower donors are still needed for March and April. Please see Maryanne Lovell at church or give her a call (541-709-8097) to sign up. Thank you and God bless!
In this small corner of the Earth, you and I are greatly blessed to see every day the visible wonders of God’s creation. We live among mountains alive with animals, snow that melts into pulsing streams and rivers than teem with fish and water our crops. At night we have a clear view of the constellations and galaxies that lead to an indescribable infinity. We are set in a poem of the universe.

But this isolation, this sense of good fortune, this safety, can also remove us from a compelling sense of our duty as Christians of seeking the needy, of acting on an empathy that stirs one to suffer with the suffering world, to help relieve its pain. Out of sight, out of mind, one is in danger of worshipping God in the abstract, buckling at the knees if called to stand for truth, to speak God’s wisdom by the Holy Spirit, to share the teachings of Christ, written for us in Scripture. Let your tears flow when you see suffering. Feel the heartbeat of the world in your breast. Will your prayers this day remember those who suffer in war-torn countries; will your treasure be shared to alleviate want when confronted by it, and not turn away. Will you speak up when we see an injustice in our town; are you brave enough to expose yourself to ridicule to speak an unpopular truth? Are any of us?

Though we revel in the beauty of our world, the true magnificence of the living God is found in the indwelling Spirit of his followers, his adopted children, the brothers and sisters of Christ down through the ages. In other words, you and I, and all whom we encounter. Some are brothers and sisters awaiting discovered grace. They are part of our world for a reason, as we are a part of theirs.

By our baptism we are Church, the mystical body of Christ. The church is not a social club, united for the sake of pleasure and convenience, it is not a political group bound by common material interests or ideological persuasion. Our Church is a spiritual body, bound by charity and love and in possession of the Holy Spirit. Being Church, being the body of Christ - this is our call from God. In our Lenten journey, let us strive by study and prayer to be more worthy of this sacred responsibility. There is a song we sing: "In Times like these, we need a Savior..." As long as the Earth abides, that will always be, even as it is today.

Annual Meeting Reports

It has been an inspiring year with the continuation of the Preschool 3 days a week and an active Sunday School program on the first Sunday of each month, to coincide with the Men’s Breakfast, which earns money to send kids to camp. It’s a wonderful kid-focused happening. Two campers were subsidized last year through the Men’s Group’s breakfasts.

The faithfulness of every member is truly a gift to God and our Church. Everyone has a special ministry, and some two and three. There were several changes this past year behind the scenes. Saying goodbye to...
February
St. Stephen’s Worship Schedule
February 2017

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Sunday
- 5th Epiphany
- 6th Epiphany
- 7th Epiphany
- Transfiguration
- Sunday
- Last Epiphany
- Pancake Supper
- Shrove Tuesday

Celebrant/Sermon
- Rev. Aletha Bonebrake
- Hannah Violette
- Rev. Aletha Bonebrake

Worship Leader
- Beth Bigelow
- Barbara Prowell
- Molly Larsen
- Betty Palmer
- Rev. Aletha Bonebrake

Prayers of the People
- Hannah Violette
- Betty Palmer
- Rev. Aletha Bonebrake

Music
- Harry Violette
- Cathy Whitesell

Altar Guild
- Barbara Prowell
- Beth Bigelow
- Betty Palmer
- Karen Zimmer

Nancy Buehler just before the beginning of the year was both a personal and an administrative loss. Maryanne Lovell has stepped up to the secretarial duties and done a marvelous job, and I thank God for her initiative in working with everybody for flowers and coffee hours and setting up recycling and other unsung jobs.

Nancy had also done all the bookkeeping as an unpaid ministry. When she left Aletha separated responsibility of counting incoming money, making bank deposits, writing checks and entering activities into the bookkeeping program. I want to thank Karen Zimmer and Mike Durgan for stepping up to share these duties.

Last year we used $5,000 transfer from Dreyfus Investment Fund that we believed would help with cash flow only, but in the end it was needed to meet budget obligations. As a result, a Budget Committee was formed to prepare a budget for 2017 that would not rely on transfers from Investments. Pledges increased to help achieve this goal and some costs decreased due to changes in Choir and St. Brigid’s clergy. Richard Thew, who has served St. Stephen’s and St. Brigid’s for many, many years, is moving to Echo to be nearer his and Cathy’s son and grandchildren. Two couples moved from Sumpter just before Christmas, leaving a small cadre of two to four parishioners, who faithfully continue altar guild and housekeeping duties.

We are blessed to have Betty Palmer and Hannah Violette preach once each month, and to have Molly join the Worship Team as a Worship Leader. Taylor Clark has joined the parish and is looking forward to transferring his canonical residence to Eastern Oregon, having been ordained Deacon many years ago and serving in that capacity in the Dioceses of Hawaii and of Oregon.

Aletha has served this past year on the Eastern Oregon Diocesan Council and begins a term on the Diocesan Commission on Ministry.

Senior Warden Report by Cammy Warner

Successes
- 2016 Year-At-A-Glance
  - Consecration Sunday – Richard Thew preached and was very inspiring; Vestry provided wonderful brunch, there were 23 pledging units, with overall increases in promised giving.
  - Pancake Supper – every member participated in serving; about 100 people in community came
  - Soup Suppers -- held faithfully during Lent after Compline in the Chapel., led by Rob Palmer. We are planning to continue most Wednesday evenings during 2017 and have advertised to the community in the hope of welcoming others.
  - Pot Luck Suppers are held every month in someone’s home.
  - Bible Study -- a solid crew on Wednesday evenings, led by Nancy Rorick; study books are purchased by St. Stephen’s.
  - Sunday School -- revitalized with great commitment for teaching; many children from preschool
  - Men’s Breakfast -- great fellowship and great food. Men donate food and offerings send kids to camp.
  - Fireplace insert (to be installed soon!!! )

Future Wishes of your Senior Warden

- Attract young families by offering activities once a month that make newcomers feel welcome
- Possible study tables for at-risk youth on Wednesday (also gives youth food at Soup Suppers)
- Encourage congregates to volunteer to take on some of Aletha’s duties
Women’s Group – submitted by Aletha Bonebrake

The Women’s Group promotes social fellowship and supports celebratory events of the church family. In March last year the Group put on a beautiful reception for Katherine Kemp’s memorial service. It had been organized by her step-son from Enterprise for the benefit of all the family from this area. Katherine and her husband Phil were long-time members of St. Stephen’s. The family deeply appreciated the gracious welcome at St. Stephen’s and made a donation to the Women’s Group.

The Women’s Group also sponsored once again a gingerbread and hot cider respite in Nevius Hall for people participating in Historic Baker City’s annual Parlour Tour. St. Stephen’s itself was also on the tour this year and hosted several visitors. Many thanks to Karen Zimmer for organizing the downstairs event and to all the women who baked the gingerbread. Thanks also to enthusiastic tour guides upstairs. We all learned a lot of history from each other.

The Women’s Group also meets for luncheon and fellowship each month except in the summer, going to a different restaurant each time. Thanks to Maryanne for finding new restaurants to try and for making all the arrangements.

Junior Warden Report - submitted by Rob Palmer

Various small projects were accomplished via the usual group effort of the church body. Joel Bigelow hung a new door, Dave Boucher ground down a dangerous lip on the concrete sidewalk, Pete Mankins installed a fire escape from the downstairs area, Hess Reynolds installed a security camera, action plumbing fixed the sink issues in the sacristy, Molly Larsen busied herself with numerous projects both at the church and the rental house and many different people have contributed to helping remove snow. I know I have left out many names that have contributed to maintaining business as usual for our monstrous building. There was much accomplished during the cleanup Sunday. Everyone that was at church on that Sunday helped out.

I attended one day at the diocesan convention in Cove as our Junior Warden representative.

Altar Guild Report - submitted by Beth Bigelow

Our Altar Guild membership continues to remain strong. We have a dedicated group of seven women who serve Saint Stephens. They work quietly to prepare the altar in the church for every service. The altar gospel book, lectern Bible, linens and cloth, candles, credence table, win and bread, oils, vessels for the elements and the processional cross are just some of the responsibilities in the special care of the Altar.

Members met in December to polish and clean the silver and brass candlesticks, book stands, crosses and other materials associated with the altar. Special thanks to the members who put in extra effort during the Advent and Easter season. Thanks also to Maryanne Lovell for scheduling flowers for the altar every Sunday.


New members are always welcome!

St. Stephen’s Outreach: Bountiful Baskets Program – reported by Aletha Bonebrake

Fresh fruits and vegetables supplied by a non-profit organization every 2 weeks were purchased by St. Stephen’s for the first 6 months of 2016 to give to six families with children identified through the school or social service group. This program has been going for several years, but the non-profit reorganized its distribution process in July and Oregon is one of the states that has not yet received restored service. In 2016 there were 144 baskets (72 fruit, 72 vegetable) delivered from January-June at a cost of $1,212. The program will resume when the distribution starts up. The program is funded by gifts from parishioners, $500 from the Leo Adler Grant each year, a $1,000 gift from the Sunday School auction proceeds, and a grant sought from the high school’s Community 101 program. The goal is to raise $2,400 for a year’s worth of deliveries in 2017.

St. Stephen’s Outreach: Bread Ministry – reported by Mike Chase and Maryanne Lovell

St. Stephen’s Bread Ministry is an outreach of our faith community in Baker County. We are registered and accredited with the Oregon Food Bank. Safeway food store in Baker City is our principle source of bread. Though our support by Safeway we estimate St. Stephens’ provides hungry people with between 2500-4000 loaves of bread annually. We supply hungry people with bread regardless of their faith journey. St. Stephens normally serves 17+ families/individuals directly. We also have working relationships with school programs, food banks and churches in the community who feed hungry people. We have expanded the bread ministry to the communities of Huntington and Durkee. St. Stephen’s also collects donated food on the first Sunday of the month to give to the food banks to help fight local food insecurity.

St. Stephen’s Outreach: Partnerships – submitted by Jim Tomlinson

1. Jim T. started taking bread to the high school in November, 2016, for the homeless kids. St. Stephens has provided 56 loaves of bread so far. Mike Chase picks up the bread and stores it in the church freezers.
2. Jim and Mary T. make and deliver dinner approximately once per week to a family with limited means. Jim reads with the daughter in the literacy program. He spoke with the father and learned they needed food, e.g., groceries and meals, so he and Mary started helping them last fall. Thanks to Joel and Beth for their support, too. No church funds are involved.
3. Jim started helping with the “open door” program at the Presbyterian church in the fall one morning per week. The church serves 30-50 kids every day. Ma’Lena Wirth is organizing the bread drives again to give to the “open door” program.

Men’s Group Report - submitted by Joel Bigelow

The Men’s Group continues to raise money for young people from the Baker area to attend Ascension School. Joel Bigelow, Rob Palmer, Jim Tomlinson, Taylor Clark and Michael Chase prepare a delicious breakfast during the first Sunday of every month. The members of the Men’s Group donate the food items used to prepare the breakfast.

Contributions received for the breakfast are used for the Ascension School scholarship fund. Two children were sent to camp last summer because of the money raised from the breakfasts. Our goal is to offer significant help to defray the costs of Ascension School for the young members of our church. Thanks to the men who make the breakfast and to all of you who attend the breakfast and support Ascension School.

We have raised $4478 to install a gas insert in the Fireplace Room. Aside from it's a aesthetic appeal, it should allow us to discontinue using one of the furnaces that heat the offices, chapel and sacristy. Thanks to the church members who have made donations.