



ST. STEPHEN'S STORY

January – February

2021

HOW MUCH IS MY CHURCH WORTH?

How much is my Church worth? Maybe that should be the question we ask ourselves each year as we contemplate stewardship and annual pledges. To be honest I don't think this is a question most of us dwell on, until that time when we want and need the ministry of the Church. When we want to schedule a wedding, then the church becomes important. At the time of death and mourning, we come to the church looking for funerals and the reassurance of resurrection. We want the church to be there when it is time to baptize our children or grandchildren. We look to the church to teach us, and our children, about God, and Jesus, and what is right and honorable in life. We want...we need... the church for many things, but are we willing to support the church financially so that those ministries are available when we need them?

Soon, St. Stephen's will be inviting a priest to come and be our new Rector. Please remember, you are not hiring a priest! You are inviting a priest to become part of this parish community. You are inviting a priest to come and assume a position of leadership in conjunction with the vestry and the leadership of the larger church. You are inviting a priest to come and share the most intimate moments of life: to visit the sick, to bury the dead, to celebrate the Sacrament and reveal to us a path to the Risen Christ and life everlasting. You are inviting a priest to laugh with you, to weep with you, to walk with you in good times and bad times.

If you call a good and dedicated priest, that person will give their heart and soul to you! You will be a major focus of their life. That person will sacrifice much for their parish family. But...what will you do for your priest? I hope you will give your love and support. I hope you will invite them into your lives and allow them to walk with you in this life and prepare you for the next life.

One of the major ways a parish shows their care and concern is with the very tangible thing we call money. I would hope that this parish would be generous in salary and housing. That you would make sure the priest and his/her family have very good health care. That you would provide your new rector with all the tools needed to successfully minister the Gospel of Christ in St. Stephen's, and the surrounding community.

Now, down to "brass tacks". The current projected 2021 parish budget, including a full-time rector, is \$371,734.00. This is a "bare-bones" budget! It does not include much for Christian outreach, and it does not include much for needed (critical) deferred maintenance which only gets more expensive the longer we put it off.

Annual 2021 pledges (at least the last figures I saw) will leave us close to \$56,000 short of the projected budget. So, "how much is your church worth"? I have no clue what men and women pledge to their church each year. But you do! So, let me ask: Has your pledge increased for 2021?

Has it increased over the past several years? Could you do more? Or, have you made a pledge for 2021?

So, let me ask a couple of questions:

If you have not made a pledge to the parish for 2021, would you consider doing so?

If you have made a pledge, would you consider increasing it?

The reality is that it takes a fair amount of money to keep the doors of the church open!

How much is my church worth?

God bless, Bishop Milliken

Rector Search Update

Dale Graham, Chair

The Rector Search is ongoing with the Search Committee and the Vestry conducting initial interviews with candidates and second interviews ongoing. A decision should be forthcoming early 2021. Address questions to members of the committee or vestry.

Search Committee: Dale Graham, Barbara Fizer, Jason Hart, Gina Hollingshead, Janice Knox, Richard Shield, Joe Rothwell

SERVICES at St. Stephen's—Due to the Covid-19 numbers in Sedgwick County, our Sunday Service will most likely continue as a video uplink on our Facebook page, E-notes and our website (ststephensec.org). Bulletins of the service will be mailed so that parishioners may follow and participate in the service. The Wednesday Chat with Bishop Milliken will continue. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the Parish Office (Hours: Monday—Friday, 9 am—1 pm).

Lectors

There is a need for willing lectors to read for our recorded services. Volunteers need to be available on Wednesday's between 10 am—1 pm to come to the church and record the service with Bishop Mike and Ashley. The recording takes less than 30 minutes and can be conveniently scheduled in that time frame. Mask wearing and social distancing is used while in the building together. Please call Vera in the Parish Office if you are willing to read. Thank you!



VIRTUAL ALTAR FLOWERS

Even though, currently there isn't "in-person" services, Altar Flowers can still be dedicated and they are on the altar during the video taping of the services. Dedications will be listed in the bulletin and on the video. You can also dedicate the **Memory and Sanctuary Lamp** and they will also be included in the bulletin and video. Suggested donation: Altar Flowers-\$60, Lamps-\$5. The lamps remain burning at all times.



Call or email (ssec@sbcglobal.net) the Parish Office!

2021 STEWARDSHIP Dear Parishioners,

Thank you St. Stephen's for your continued generosity and stewardship. Despite not being "in" the Church for much of the year, we continued to "be" the Church in our talents and tithing. From DOK and Book Club by phone, to prayers-on-postcards, to Advent-in-a-Bag, we found creative and innovative ways to stay active and connected. To be sure, our staff and volunteers didn't figuratively phone it in (even when literally phoning it in), and we leave 2020 with wisdom and grace. A special thank you to my Stewardship cohorts of Maggie, Anne, Sydney and Matt for their letters, to Vera for the behind-the-scenes, and to Lyndy and the Finance Committee for their mindful engagement.

As we put 2020 in the rearview, I am heartened by St. Stephen's response to pledging for 2021. So far, we received 68 pledges, totaling \$277,746. As we continue our Rector-search process and navigate Church in the time of Covid19, your pledges of time and treasure amplify Christ's message. And if 2020 is any indicator, we have even more great ideas for Christian fellowship and growth, just waiting to be made into reality. Let's find a way to make them happen in 2021!

Blessings, Jason Hart, Stewardship Chair

PSST! THANK YOU to Jason and his heartfelt leadership and his enthusiastic energy!



59 Advent kits were picked up or delivered!

THANK YOU

to Ashley & Cooper Winters for packing the kits, Julia Hart for the items that went into the kits, Mike Morrow for the Forward Movement books and for all those who helped with delivery!

PROJECTS FROM THE ADVENT KIT



Gorgeous quilt! Gary & Janice Knox project during their free time! Send pictures of your projects that have occupied your time during the pandemic.

St. Stephen's 2021 Calendar January—February

BOOK CLUB	Noon via phone	Every Thursday
DAUGHTERS OF THE KING	To be announced via In-person on Phone conference	Sunday, January 17th Sunday, February 21st
EFM	By Zoom 6:00 pm	Every Monday
FINANCE COMMITTEE	6:00 pm—Zoom Meeting	Tuesday, January 12th Tuesday, February 9th
VESTRY MEETING	6:30 pm—Zoom	Wednesday, January 20th Wednesday, February 17th
YOUTH GROUP	Zoom	Every Thursday Night
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING	1:00 pm—Zoom	Sunday, January 24th



Hello St. Stephen's Children and Families!

We hope you had a good Advent and Christmas season at home! We miss seeing your smiling faces! We are taking off the Sunday of New Years weekend from Sunday School! Enjoy that time with your family!

The week after New Years, be watching for a special delivery to your home of At-Home Sunday School for the season of Epiphany. In these uncertain times of not knowing if we will be able to worship in person together, the bag will cover the next seven weeks until Lent begins.

Our goal for this season of Epiphany, we are not following along with the Gospel readings, but instead really concentrating on the wise men, their gifts and the role they played with the Holy Family. It is our thoughts that by spending *more* time on a smaller subject, our children will have a good working knowledge of Epiphany moving forward!

If there is anything we can do to help you with your child's Christian formation, or if you have ideas of what works/doesn't work for your family as we worship separate, but together, please reach out and let us know! We are here to help!

Enjoy this season of light! We hope to see you again soon! You all are in our prayers!

Most Sincerely, Julia Hart and Tish Seeley

St. Stephen's Sensational Youth Group

Currently, the youth are meeting virtually Thursday evenings at 7 pm as one large youth group which has made for some very fun conversation! We took a short break for the holidays, but are resuming our regular meetings on January 7th.

Something to look forward to in the next month is another Youth Game Night towards the end of January - please check your email and the Facebook group for more info coming soon.

We can't wait to start meeting with you all again and see what 2021 has in store!



Wishes for a great New Year, Sydney Anderson, Youth Director

Donated items on their way to Operation Holiday!

Thank you for the generous support of the



Miqra and Mini-Miqra registration now open!

Due to the on-going pandemic, we anticipate Miqra will need to be online this year. We've scheduled multiple sessions over the traditional Miqra weekend, January 15-18, and invite all youth in grades 6-12 and young adults age 18-

24ish to join us. The registration fee is \$20 and includes a Miqra stocking cap and Miqra-in-a-box with activities and handouts for Miqra. Please register by January 1 to ensure timely arrival of your Miqra box. More information and registration available here: <https://tinyurl.com/EDoKUltraCampSessions> Questions? Contact Karen Schlabach, kschlabach@episcopal-ks.org.

Miqra readers needed! While we cannot have Miqra in-person this year, the reading will continue, online! All members of the diocese are invited to help with the reading, Friday, January 15, 10 am through Sunday, January 18, 10 am. Sign-up for a reading slot, log-on to Zoom at your time, find out from the previous reader where to begin, and read! You may recruit/invite others to read with you and split the time up however you wish. Just make sure someone replaces you before you leave. Sign-up for time slots to read here: volunteersignup.org/ETBWT. Questions? Contact Karen Schlabach, kschlabach@episcopal-ks.org.

Miqra stocking caps available Instead of t-shirts we'll be offering embroidered Miqra stocking caps this year. They will be dark grey hats with a red brim and a pop-pom on top. The Hebrew Miqra letters will be embroidered on the rim. Order yours online and they will be shipped in early January. Hats are \$8 plus \$5 shipping & handling. Order here: <https://tinyurl.com/MiqraHat> (one hat is included with registration in Miqra or Mini-Miqra).

Youth Game Night & Compline

On the first Sunday of the month, there will be a youth game night for all youth in the diocese in grades 6-12. Join us! Sunday, February 7, 7-8:30 pm; Sunday, March 7, 7-8:30 pm

To join on Zoom, use meeting ID: 857 4195 0793 and the passcode is the current season of the church year. (Don't know? that's okay, e-mail kschlabach@episcopal-ks.org and she'll send you the info, or text her at 913-708-5927).

January Birthdays

1/6 Melanie Shurden
1/7 Brad Vining
1/9 Amanda Shield
1/10 Suzanne Graham
1/13 Dave Hudson
1/24 John Myers
1/28 Joan Seaton
Becky Samaniego
1/29 Kim Vining
1/31 Jan Benningfield

January Anniversaries

1/11 Steve & Anne
Stephens
1/15 Bruce & Lisa
Schriefer
1/21 Seth Miller &
Nadia Gibson
1/28 Dick & Earlene
Foote

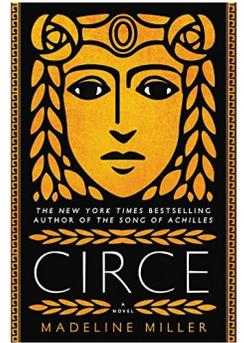
February Birthdays

2/4 Liz Steele
2/5 Dick Foote
2/6 Maggie Benefiel
2/8 Libby Marshall
2/14 Susan Gaskill
Amy Staples
Amare Seely
2/16 Bill Thompson
2/23 Justin Cooke
2/25 Luke Stapes
2/27 Lisa Schriefer
2/28 Dr. Nadia Gibson

January & February Celebrations

ST. STEPHEN'S BOOK CLUB

Reading is one thing that helps keep us sane in these crazy times, and the St Stephen's Book Club is doing fine by reading, and sharing our thoughts at our weekly phone meetings. We are currently reading "CIRCE" by Madeline Miller, the #1 New York Times bestseller. We are always glad to have readers join us on Thursday's at noon in our telephone meetings (Call 978-990-5000, access code 701904)



Daughters of the King (Julian of Norwich Chapter) will continue to hold virtual meetings on the 3rd Sundays of the month through May of 2021 and perhaps beyond if necessary. Using Free Conference Call.com, we will meet on **Sunday, January 17th** and **Sunday, February 21st**, both at 1:00 pm. Detailed agendas will be sent to members prior to each meeting. Guests and prospective members are welcome. The phone number is 1-701-802-5150. Our meeting number is 786650 #. Please contact Nan Myers if you want to discuss becoming part of our prayer community. (nan.myers@wichita.edu or 316-755-3818)



At our December meeting, we continued to learn about the newly formed Pastoral Care Committee at SSEC, to volunteer to make contacts with parish members and to keep a log of our activities. In 2021, we will continue to support efforts to keep church members in close contact with each other and to support the needs of those in isolation. In addition, we will discuss ideas for other service projects.

Just announced: Province VII Daughters of the King **Spring Assembly 2021** will be held via ZOOM on Saturday, February 27th from 9 am until noon. Hopefully, members will make every effort to attend this important event!

We welcome new members, inquiries about our activities, and relationships in partnership with other SSEC groups. Contact any DOK member or Nan Myers, President.



On behalf of our staff, board members and program recipients, we are grateful for the outpouring of support and affection we've received from St. Stephen's parish members over the years. Our hearts are full – even if our pantry cycles low at times. Abundance comes in many forms, and kindness is one of them. The food and pantry gifts you've provided have gone straight to feeding those who are hungry and in need. The other unrestricted gifts have sustained us in a time of need as an agency. There is a strong sense that this homeless community can count on Breakthrough. It's because of you that we will come out a stronger agency at the end of this pandemic. Blessings to you all!

Happy New Year!, **Rachel L. Newell**, Director of Development

Current Needs:

Hygiene items (small travel size is best); **Pantry items** (canned goods with pop-top); **Men's used shoes** in good condition (sizes 10-11-12); **Men's belts** (med – large); Used winter clothing; **Kitchen goods in bulk** – pasta, dried potatoes, soups; Fresh food items each week
Juice for breakfast

Items can be dropped on at the Parish Office and will be delivered to Breakthrough (ESS)!

WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE

There is a large box by the Parish Office if you would like to donate winter clothing!



December 25, 2020

Dear family of St. Stephens,

Greetings from the family of Rt. Rev. James D. Warner. In 1955, James began work to restore the part of Wisconsin that he had been raised in, the Wisconsin Rapids area. He obtained a parcel of land that had been an abandoned potato farm and planted a forest. Over the many years that the forest grew, James and family worked with each church that he was serving to raise funds by selling Christmas trees from his farm.

Today, 65yrs later, the land has become a nature preserve that supports wildlife, birds and many species of native Wisconsin trees. The tree farm still produces wood products; and this year, a final harvest of a number of trees occurred. As a tribute to our father and the churches that welcomed his ministry and his family, we are sharing a bit of the story of his ministry and our gratitude to God for his life. With that, we are sharing a portion of the proceeds from this harvest with you so that you can continue to minister to the people that your church serves.

It is our wish that this donation be used as needed to meet the concerns of your congregation for building or programs as you see fit.

In God's Grace, The Children of James: Dave, Steve, Cherie, Jim, and Kathy

(Included was a three pages biography of his life, if you would like a copy, please contact the Parish Office.)

Annual Meeting Sunday



**ANNUAL PARISH
MEETING
SUNDAY,
JANUARY 24, 2021
a1:00 PM**

The meeting will be an on-line video conference by Zoom.

**Watch for additional information and
instructions.**



**SAINT
STEPHEN'S**



WICHITA

St. Stephen's
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Parish Office Hours
Monday - Friday
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The Rt. Rev. Michael Milliken, Interim Rector
Vera Aikman, Parish Administrator/Bookkeeper
Ashley Winters, Choir and Music Director
Aubree Brasser, Music Section Leader
Aubrey Watson, Organist
Julia Hart, Tish Seely, Church School Coordinators
Maddie Ramsey, Sophie Ramsey, Church School
Sydney Anderson, Youth Director
Matt Anderson, Assistant Youth Director
Lise Van Arsdale Hansen, Nursery Coordinator
Natalie Lemanski, Nursery
Nan Myers, DOK President