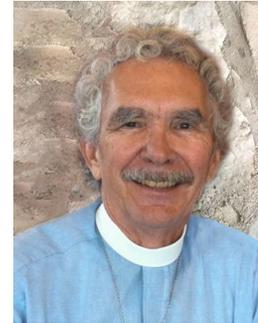


LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

The Body of Christ--One Body with Many Members

[Fr. Phil Mason](#)



I have a fondness of St. Paul's comparison of the Body of Christ to our human bodies and our various body parts. Here he is teaching the Corinthians.

One Body with Many Members

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we are all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

-- 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Right now the body of Christ has a virus and has become very sick. The worldwide community of mankind is in pain. The nose is running, the head is aching, the chest is coughing and straining to breathe. Some of the members--body parts Paul would call us--of the great universal body have died. To expand this metaphor--a lot--we could imagine

that the one great body, like our individual bodies, has an immune system that is working tirelessly to combat the virus that infects us. That great immune system would be the doctors, nurses, hospital workers, and so many others that, enduring great risk, are fighting hard and tirelessly to support the bodies of the sick. These are the saints that we are so grateful for, and we pray for every day. And there are others, scientists working day and night to find treatments and vaccines. They are the world's immune system fighting hard to help the world heal and make the world safe and whole again. There are many others who venture out and do their work. The rest of the members of the body of Christ are called to do our part by allowing the body to rest and be calm as mankind heals. How many of us, at one time of illness or another, have heard a doctor say, "Go home and get some rest and let your body heal."?

Many of us have been called to stay home, shelter in place, rest, wear a mask, wash our hands; no hugging, no kissing, Zoom a lot. The idea is to not get sick from the virus that threatens us. This is for our own personal safety, but even more importantly, when we stay well, it relieves the incredible strain that our health care system is enduring. It is essential that we do our part in controlling the spread of COVID-19 so that our health care system has a fighting chance. Matt Pearce of the *Los Angeles Times* calls it "an amazing act of social solidarity."

Paul says, "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."

Please enjoy this poem by Lynn Ungar.

*Peace and love to all,
Phil+*

Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath--
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.
And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.
Promise this world your love--
for better or for worse,

in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.
- Lynn Ungar 3/11/20



SENIOR WARDEN NEWS

[Nancy Cooke-Jenkins](#)

I hope everyone has been enjoying our services "in an altered state" on Sundays. They are, indeed, a production. Cameraman and Director Robert McLemore has done magic with filming. Jackie McFadden and Hunt Sparra have proven to be excellent editors. Performances by Music Director Anne Jones and organist/pianist Allen Hennig have added to the beauty of the service. [Be sure to watch this Sunday, May 3rd](#)--Anne's solo will take your breath away. Of course, Fr. Phil is on hand to feed our souls.

It is with great sadness that the Vestry announces the resignation of David Boles as Junior Warden. David's responsibilities at Ace Hardware are demanding all of his time. We will miss him, and we wish him well. He and Cathy will continue to head the 8:00 a.m. Usher team, and he will continue as LEM. In light of this, we are so grateful to Todd Schmidt for stepping up to the plate in the role of Interim Junior Warden. The next order of business for the Vestry is finding a replacement for David.

David is also resigning as a St. Stephen's School Board member. At this time, we would like to announce that John Odell, newly elected School Board member, has assumed David's position. We are indeed fortunate to have John completing this term. To many, you may recognize John's name already. He has been active in organizing the school golf tournament and serves on the school's Scholarship Committee.

Bishop David Reed has extended the "worship at home" date through Friday, May 15, 2020. That means we will abide by his request and continue with virtual Church.

Resuming actual services will probably be left at the discretion of each parish. I am sure we all will be conservative upon returning and keep safety the utmost concern for our St. Stephen's church family.

Stay safe stay well.

*Blessings,
Nancy*

*"Hope is being able to see that there is light
despite all the darkness"*

- Desmond Tutu

FROM YOUR TREASURER

Your Financial Support Keeps Us

Steady

[Roy Buckley](#)



Can it be that we are seeing the light at the end of this long and worrisome tunnel? I think that is the case, absent any setbacks in the coming weeks that are unforeseen at this juncture. A good indication, among other signs, that we are moving toward restoring our lives and old fellowships is the March 2020 financial picture for St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, plus an unexpectedly strong flow of Easter Offerings that began arriving during Holy Week and continue to flow in the two weeks following Easter.

The March Revenue receipts moved very close to budgeted expectations. March Pledge Income was \$36,475 - only \$785 below budgeted expectations for the month. Non-Pledge receipts (what we referred to in days past as Plate offerings) totaled \$2,213 - being \$130 above budgeted expectations. Although we have been left in a deficit position of <\$8,584> for the month of March, the previous collection of robust Pre-Paid/Carried Forward Pledge revenues in January 2020 has placed us in a surplus at the conclusion of our First Quarter by \$24,815. These numbers tend to assuage the concerns and worries we held at the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown. Add to that our exceedingly positive Easter Offerings that have been collected and tallied to this date, we will likely step out from the setback of the pandemic in a sound financial position.

Other events that tended to enhance our financial picture included (a) the Diocese travel ban, and (b) the cancellation of the Diocese Apportionment obligation for the month of April. Our Rector Search Committee anticipated some travel expenditures during the months of March and April, which we had budgeted in each of these months at \$3,667/month. The Diocese travel ban caused us to forestall all travel plans relative to the activities of the Rector Search Committee until such time as the ban is lifted. Bear in mind, this only forestalls our travel plans for the First Quarter and part of the Second Quarter of 2020. When the ban is lifted, we shall be free to recommence the Rector search with respect to candidates that are situated in Parishes or locales that would necessitate overnight travel arrangements.

The second event, i.e., the cancellation of the Diocese Apportionment obligation for the month of April, will save SSEC \$8,340 during April. Apportionment obligations will resume in May. Therefore, approximately \$12,000 (i.e., Travel and Apportionment) will be eliminated on the Expense side of our Financial Activities Statement at April's conclusion.

In summary, we have been blessed with a resilient and faithful Congregation that has not forgotten its Church and a Diocese that has stepped up to the plate and did what it could to ease the burdens that fell upon us during these dark times. We are both blessed and proud to have in our corner both the members of SSEC and the Diocese of West Texas. It will be a great day when we can return to our pews and give each other a hearty pat on the back and, to Father Phil's delight, a well deserved and never-too-soon hug of affection in God's House and under His blessings.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please email me, roy.r.buckley@rice.edu. I look forward to soon seeing all of the happy face repositioned in the pews. Be safe, be cautious, and stay healthy. This could soon be behind us, praise God.

Roy R. Buckley, Treasurer

ZOOM TIME GETS THEME SONG

Each Wednesday between 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Fr. Phil Mason waits, coffee cup in hand, to talk about whatever is on your mind. No appointment is needed, and you can use the same meeting ID and password to Zoom in.



[ZOOM TIME LINK](#)

Meeting ID: 824 792 5886

Password: 2468

Thank you to Carroll Wilson and Tom Dawson for creating the entertaining theme song. To listen, [click here](#), and in no time at all don't be surprised if you find yourself singing along to the catchy ditty.

FR. PHIL OFFERS CCP THROUGH ZOOM

If you are interested in participating in Christ Centered Prayer, CCP, Fr. Phil will now be offering this meditative practice through ZOOM. Contact the office, office@ststeve.org for ZOOM instructions. ZOOM CCP will meet on Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m. CDT for about an hour.



ALTAR GUILD

**INVITATION TO SHADOW THE MAGIC
OF THE ALTAR GUILD**

For one it started as a childhood fascination, for another it began as an invitation from a neighbor, and for a third it began as a connection to her mother. And, here they are decades later, smiling at the shared realization that they have become self-proclaimed "Lifers," to the Altar Guild ministry and invite you to shadow them to experience the magic first-hand.

"My interest was first piqued when I was a child. I was fascinated by the Magic of the Altar Guild; their devotion and love of setting the Lord's table," relates Joann Seeberger.

Mary McIntosh, Altar Guild co-chair, may well have received a "God wink" 20 years ago when she landed unknowingly in a neighborhood filled with Episcopalians.

"A neighbor suggested I join the Altar Guild," she recalls. "And, you know what? It was the first thing I did when I joined St. Stephen's. It proved to be a really beautiful way to learn about the Church and sacraments."

"I would go to church with my mother and do Altar Guild. So when we moved here, I felt like it was a ministry in which I could immediately contribute. This sacrament brings all Episcopalians all over the world together," shares Sondra Blanford, Altar Guild co-chair.

At St. Stephen's the Altar Guild is a volunteer group of women and men in the parish whose ministry is most sacred and vital. Their duty is to assist the Rector in creating worship services for all that are both spiritual and beautiful.

"We Are the Marthas of the church. We prepare the table and set out the food for the Lord (Priest) to bless and serve. Anyone can join, men included," assures Joanne.

"It is a spiritual connection to the Last Supper each time you set the table," explains Sondra.

Something that may surprise people is how closely Altar Guild team members work with the priest.

"You are learning something new every time, with every new priest. For instance the setup may be different depending on whether the priest is right-handed or left-handed," elaborates Mary McIntosh.

Responsibilities include caring for the altar, vestments, and altar linens of the parish. The Altar Guild members prepare the altar for the Eucharist and for special occasions such as Christmas, Easter, Celebration of Life services, and weddings. They clean up afterwards. In fact, at the time of the printing of this feature, Sondra Blanford was making plans to clean up from the Easter services, which were held virtually this year.

The Altar Guild team, like Linda Reed, Claire Gibson, Mary Goodwin, Donna Bosholm, and Carolyn Stafford have been surprised at how enriching their experience has been. These are the folks who not only know the names of the parts of the church, they know the church seasons, colors, names of vestments, linens, holy hardware, and the most widely used church symbols.

"We're not the group that gets up and talks," Mary McIntosh ponders out loud, "It's a different way to express--visual, hands-on."

"What surprised me was how many different things I did not know and how special every item on the table is," comments Joanne.

In addition to knowledge, the Altar Guild members each have experienced a new depth of spirituality.

"I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit," states Mary Goodwin.

"I get a great sense of serenity," adds Linda Reed.

"It keeps me grounded in faith and service," comments Donna Bosholm.

"It made me appreciate the Offering and imagine what the first supper was like," wonders Joanne.

Whether church services are being held in person or virtually, the Altar Guild team is there performing their duties that are very dear and sacred.

They invite you to shadow and experience the magic first-hand yourself, no strings attached.

For those interested in taking the next step and receiving training, Mary and Sondra have created a user-friendly training in which you will learn the history and are taught about the elements being used and their corresponding meaning. Team members are on a rotating schedule with your shift usually taking two hours a month--one to setup and one to clean up.

"We will gently guide you. Know that the training is an on-going process. You won't be alone," assures Mary McIntosh.

"It is rewarding to know you are contributing to His commandments...do this in remembrance of me," sums up Sondra.

To schedule a time to shadow or to learn more, contact co-chairs:

Sondra Blanford, lazyboutpost@aol.com

Mary McIntosh, Mary.mcintosh@att.net



DWTX NEWS

EXTENSION OF SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON GATHERINGS THROUGH FRIDAY, MAY 15

The Rt. Rev. David Reed announced in an April 24, 2020 letter the extension of suspension of in-person worship and meetings through Friday, May 15. He states in the release, "My fervent hope and prayer, and I know it is yours as well, is that by mid-May we can begin to reopen churches and begin to resume something resembling normal church life, and also begin to discover what our new 'normal' may be. **But we all need**

to understand that this reopening will be phased. It will not happen all-at-once nor will it look the same in all our churches and communities at the same time. We would be reopening while the pandemic is still in our midst, and so it will be essential that we fully recommit ourselves, and our churches, to continue the self-restraint and love of neighbor that have been at the heart of our response to COVID-19." To read the entire letter, [click here](#).

INTERNATIONAL GIVING TUESDAY TUESDAY, MAY 5

An International Giving Tuesday will take place Tuesday, May 5 and be a day of global action for giving and unity to respond as a community to COVID-19. Please consider a gift to the Camp Scholarships Fund on this dedicated giving day. Follow our camps social media pages to participate and for more information. [Click here](#) to donate.

MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL OFFERING FOR WORLD MISSION OUTREACH SUNDAY, MAY 10

The Rt. Rev. David Reed and diocesan World Missions Department invite you to give to World Missions in honor of someone special this Mother's Day, May 10. This annual special offering provides vital support for our World Mission outreach each year, helping mothers and children around the world. [Click here](#) to donate.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR CAMPS 2020

Our diocesan camping programs include summer camps, family camps, and year-round retreats at Camp Capers, Mustang Island Conference Center, and Duncan Park. Registration is open for 2020. These programs provide opportunities for children, adults, and families to experience the beauty of creation, have fun with friends, and grow in faith, rooted in the transforming love of Christ. Visit dwtx.org/camps for more information, a Letter from the Directors, and registration.



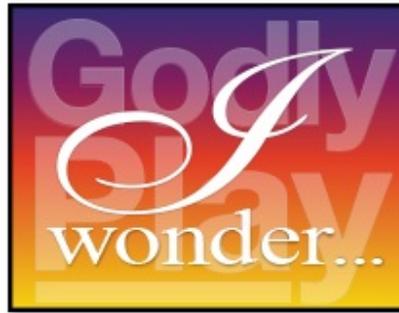
CHECK OUT TED TALKS ONLINE

St. Stephen's TED Talkers ministry is taking a break along with other regularly scheduled in-person gatherings. Therefore, Jo Bourke, TED Talkers ministry leader would like to introduce everyone to the amazing resource, TED, that the ministry uses for its discussions.

Nonprofit TED stands for Technology, Education, and Design and is the basis behind website, <https://www.ted.com/>, which was founded in 1984. The site has more than 3,400 videos averaging 20 minutes each on a huge number of topics.

Over the course of two years, St Stephen's TED Talkers have viewed and discussed: pollution, the power of introverts, the transformative power of classical music, origami, art, photography, and heard popular personalities such as Brene Brown, Anne Lamont, and David Griffin, the director of photography for *National Geographic* magazine.

The options for both future TED Talkers and for you at home are endless and ever changing. We recommend that you check it out at: <https://www.ted.com/>. Social distancing can be tedious...why not consider using TED to bring new insight into your days. And, at the next time we reconvene for in-person TED Talkers, perhaps we can discuss some of your favorite TED Talks that kept you company during COVID-19 shelter in place. We look forward to seeing familiar and new faces at the next TED



GODLY PLAY THIRD EASTER SUNDAY
RECORDED & ONLINE
[CLICK HERE](#)

Easter is such a mystery, and it takes a long time to celebrate. Easter is the biggest mystery of all. Come join us for another Godly Play time with Darelle Jordan. This story belongs to you and has been recorded for your whole family to enjoy together. It originally aired on Sunday, April 26, on YouTube.

These approximately 15 minute Godly Play stories are recorded by Fr. Phil Mason in our very own St. Stephen's chapel. Although Godly Play stories are particularly enjoyed by PK4 through Kindergarten ages, many adults, teens, and older children look forward to "settling in" for Godly Play time with Darelle Jordan.

I wonder if you have ever walked the road with Jesus and didn't know it?



ST. STEPHEN'S
Episcopal School

Wimberley, Texas • Founded 1989

SCHOOL UPDATES

The St. Stephen's School (SSES) campus will remain closed through the 2019-2020 school year as guided by Governor Abbott. SSES will continue to offer Virtual Learning through May 15, 2020.

SUMMER CAMPS & RESOURCES

Head of School Amanda Ebner reports, "Right now we are in a holding phase as to whether we will be able to offer our Summer Camps...some teachers will be providing families with summer packets/resources and these will be available on the school website on Friday, May 1.

SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021

SSES is moving forward with plans and preparations for the 2020-2021 school year. First



YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

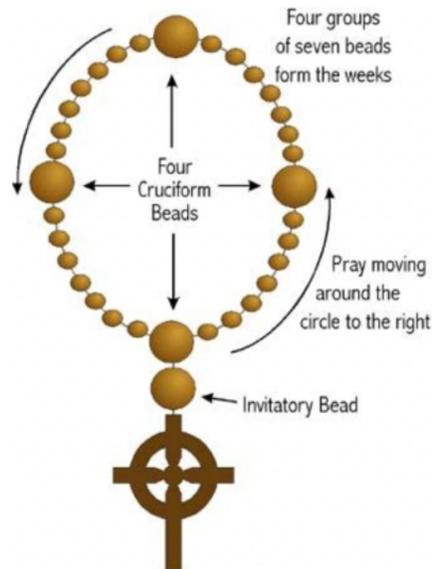
HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR DAY AT SSEC

ATTN: Parents, grandparents, and guardians of graduating high school seniors

Each May, St. Stephen's Church honors our seniors in a special tribute and presentation of the senior blankets. We want to be sure to include your high school senior. Let Elisa know you will be there! Send digital headshot photos to: eeant@mac.com by **Friday, May 8**. Stay tuned for more details.

MAKE YOUR OWN MINI EPISCOPAL ROSARY

The Youth have received an email on the life of Christ and how He went to quiet places to pray. They are now looking at four simple steps to prayer, and the different types of prayer like the adoration and thanksgiving. Youth should be on the lookout in their mailboxes for May's Youth packet. This will contain the instructions to make and use their own mini Episcopal Rosary to carry with them.



YOUTH ZOOM MEETINGS TO BEGIN

Family & Youth Minister Elisa Webster will begin holding ZOOM meetings with the Youth Sunday, May 3. Now is a great time to make certain she has the correct email to send you an ZOOM invitation.

For more information, contact: Elisa Webster, elisawebster9@gmail.com.



FAMILY MINISTRY NEWS

The theme for the first part of May is prayer: how to talk to God and how to listen. The second part of the month includes ideas about things you can do for moms in honor of Mother's Day on May 10.

In other news, we are looking at the possibility of having a family picnic on May 16 dependent upon the COVID-19 situation.

If you have any questions or need more information, contact:
Elisa Webster, elisawebster9@gmail.com.



ANNOUNCE YOUR BIRTHDAY OR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

If you would like us to announce your birthday or wedding anniversary in the virtual order of worship, [click here](#) to complete the online form. Birthdays are grouped by month, rather than specific days.



WIMBERLEY GARDENERS ON THE GO

Fellow parishioner Greg Webb, Susan Webb's husband, has organized a signup for people to share their extra produce being grown now in their home vegetable gardens. The extra donated produce will be collected and taken to the Wimberley Crisis Bread Basket. You may not know this, but the number one request from people at the Crisis Bread Basket is for more produce. It's a great way to share your spring and summer bounty. "It doesn't have to be a lot," Greg says, "Just a few fresh summer tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, peppers--whatever you have."

To sign up as a gardener or a driver, [click here](#).



ASK & ANSWER AVAILABLE 24/7

You can now find a form on the church website called ["Ask & Answer."](#) It is available to you 24/7 for all those questions that you don't know quite who to ask. [Fill out the simple form online](#), and we'll get started on your answer.

Community of Hope Ministry

HOPE
LIVES

Do you need someone...

*To listen, without judgment, to what is weighing on your heart?
To recognize your needs and respect your rights to your feelings?
To honor any conversation with complete confidentiality?
To support you as you take steps of change on your journey?
To just walk with you and let you be you?*

Each one of us, at some point in our lives, could use a "companion" to walk with us during the challenges of our journeys. A Community of Hope Lay Chaplain is someone who cares about you, will not promise miracles, will not decide for you what you should do, will not take steps for you, and will not rescue you. He or she will be available to you, support you, pray for you, and assure you that you are God's beloved. Please, if you are walking alone, invite one to join you on your path.

For more information during MAY contact:

Nancy Cooke-Jenkins, nmjenkins@austin.rr.com or Kristen Schmidt, tkschmidt@anvil.com.



UPCOMING SUBMISSION DEADLINES

The eNEWS is published on Fridays generally every two weeks and delivered straight to your e-mail's in-box. If you have an e-mail address update, please make sure to send these to the church office, office@ststeve.org.

With more than 25 ministries and groups here at St. Stephen's Church, we've got a lot happening! Help us cover your event by submitting articles, photos, and artwork to: Communications Manager, Jackie McFadden, eeant@mac.com.

UPCOMING DEADLINES:
12 noon Wednesday or earlier

May 13

May 27

IN THE LIFE OF SSEC

St. Stephen's members enjoy serving in the community through outreach and recently received these thank you letters.

Dear ST. STEPHEN'S church Members,
We are so very thankful for your donation to Operation Good Shepherd. NOW more than ever your donation is such a blessing as we are seeing such a big increase in need in our community. We send so much thanks and love to you all. Many Blessings,
K. Sowell

Thank you for your generous donation in support of the Crisis Bread Basket. Your donation will help us provide distribution of nutritious food to over 50 families from the Wimberley area every week. In addition, it will help us partner with other area programs to provide supplemental meals and food to children in the summer months when normal programs (e.g., school lunches) may not be available. We are stocking up our food inventory and your donations will help us have plenty of food on hand.

We at the Crisis Bread Basket are grateful for your support and help keeping our food inventories up in this time of the COVID-19 crisis. Your assistance and participation in our mission of "Neighbors helping neighbors by providing food and encouragement" is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

John Myers



Treasurer



SUN, MAY 3

Holy Eucharist Sunday Service (online), 10:30 a.m. (YouTube, Facebook)

SUN, MAY 10

Holy Eucharist Sunday Service (online), 10:30 a.m. (YouTube, Facebook)

**Are you on Facebook? YouTube? Instagram?
St. Stephen's is!**

[Click here to visit our Facebook page](#)
and don't forget to **LIKE** and **SHARE** us!

Please contact the church office at 512.847.9956, Monday through Thursday,
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon Fridays if you have any questions.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Stay Connected

