

The Evangel

St. Stephen's United Methodist Church
February 5, 2016
Volume 21, No. 3

Sunday, February 7:

Fifth Sunday
after the Epiphany
Transfiguration of the Lord
Communion Sunday

Contemporary Worship
8:30 am

Sunday School
9:40 am

Traditional Worship
11:00 am

Sunday, February 14:

First Sunday in Lent
Boy Scout Sunday
Food Pantry Sunday
Valentine's Day

Contemporary Worship
8:30 am

Sunday School
9:40 am

Traditional Worship
11:00 am



OUR MISSION
is to know God and
make God known!

A Message from the Pastor

Faithful Questions



"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^a have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Gil Rendle, a senior vice-president at the Texas Methodist Foundation tells an old story (which predates our contemporary understanding of the dangers of smoking) "of a young priest [who] went to his superior to ask if he could smoke while he prayed. 'No,' was the answer, 'prayer should not be sullied by common things.' Several days later a different young priest went to the same superior to ask if he could pray while he smoked. 'Yes, my son,' was the reply, 'pray at all times and in all circumstances.'"

Thus, how we ask a question can influence its answer quite remarkably, don't you agree? Good questions, it is said, can spur great conversations --and visions!

Last Saturday, January 23, Dan Barcus and I hosted our first ever (I was told) ministry leadership planning retreat. The goal was to bring together, in collaboration, the leaders (chairs and committee members) that will be dreaming up, planning, and coordinating our church's ministries in 2016. Dan asked a series of three questions to get the committees (ministry teams) started, "**What new things do we need to do** this year to focus on our official St. Stephen's mission of "Knowing God and Making God Known?" **What things do we need to continue doing** to fulfill our stated mission of "Knowing God and Making God Known?" And, **what things do we need to stop doing** because they don't help us accomplish our goal of "Knowing God and Making God Known?"

The energy unleashed in faithful plans to answer these questions is still resonating through the hearts of our congregation as we seek to "Know God and Make God Known" in 2016!

See you Sunday,

Kevin

Bells Ring and Children Sing



St. Stephen's bell choir rang and the Deep Blue Children's Choir sang on Sunday, January 31.

2 Attendance and Contributions at St. Stephen's:

	<u>8:30 am</u>	<u>11:00 am</u>	<u>Sunday School</u>	<u>Operating</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Missions/ Communion</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Repairs</u>
January 24	46	166	118	\$5,463.10	\$225.00	\$40.00	\$86.76	—
January 31	45	157	118	\$7,462.28	\$270.00	\$55.00	\$37.31	—

From the St. Stephen's Foundation Committee



Leveling Up for Lent

Lent, which begins February 10, represents a time of self-examination and preparation for Christ's miraculous rebirth at Easter. Many people consider giving something up during Lent as a way to focus on Christ and the reason for the season. This year, consider taking your goals to the next level by adding something to your daily routine. Think about your stewardship efforts and how they fit with the financial needs of our church and other causes close to your heart. What could you do for 40 days to help support these ministries? Texas Conference financial partner Heartspring Methodist Foundation can help with creative ways to meet your charitable goals. Reach them at 713-533-3780, 1-800-521-9617 or office@heartpringmethodist.org.

Milestones

Tuesday, January 26, 2016



Johnson Memorial School

Dear St. Stephen's families,

It is with mixed emotions that I announce my retirement effective at the conclusion of this school year. Over the past 12 years, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at JMS, both as a classroom teacher and as director. I will long remember the many wonderful children and parents with whom I have had the privilege of working.

Please be assured that the JMS school board and I are working diligently to find a director who will maintain the high standards and loving atmosphere for which JMS has always been known. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to come to me. I would be happy to talk with you!

Sincerely,
Amy Mingle
Director



January 21, 2016



Dear Pastor Otto,

We are excited that The Gathering Place Care Team at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church is celebrating one year of partnership with InterFaith CarePartners in service to individuals experiencing memory loss! It is such a joy to work alongside such a wonderful team of caring and compassionate volunteers led by Bill Cummins and Gwen Hunt. What a blessing each of the 30 Care Team members are by providing companionship, socialization and stimulation to the care partner (care recipient). Family caregivers regularly comment how grateful they are for The Gathering Place and the ability to care for their loved one at home longer because of the respite opportunity provided.

Since the inception of the Care Team in February, 2015, the volunteer care team from St. Stephen's has given 2,159 hours in their service with Interfaith CarePartners and have served a total of 37 care partners and their family caregivers. We are so thankful for the ministry of St. Stephen's UMC and your partnership with us this past year, and we look forward to many more years of service together!

God's Grace and Peace,
Monica Baumgarten
Care Team Coordinator

2016 Dessert Extravaganza

Get a head start on celebrating Valentine's Day! Bring your sweetie to St. Stephen's 7th Annual Dessert Extravaganza Saturday, February 13, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in our Fellowship Hall. We've got everything you need to make Valentine's Day special for your special someone, including over 35 unique handmade dessert items, chocolate-covered strawberries, treats to go, roses, handmade Valentines—even treats for your four-legged Valentines! Dessert sampling will be available from 2:00-3:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$5 for 6 tastes, with additional tastes available for purchase at \$1 each. Full-size desserts will be available through a silent auction, which closes at 3:30 p.m. All profits will go to our Youth Dept. to help with the cost of camps this summer.



St. Stephen's bakers and dessert makers, we need your special handmade sweets! Two of each dessert you donate are needed—one for the silent auction, and one to cut into small bite-size pieces for sampling. We also need volunteers to help set up on Friday, February 12, at 2 p.m.; to help serve and host during the event; and to help with clean up. You may also choose to make individual desserts such as cookies, candy or cupcakes for the "to-go" packages. If you are interested in baking or volunteering for the Dessert Extravaganza, please contact Cindy St. Lawrence at rps95@aol.com or 281-448-7772; Dixie Hardwick at ddixon0126@aol.com or 713-957-1245; or Kathy Bruns at brunskg@gmail.com or 713-956-8925.

Evangel Deadlines

<u>Publication Date</u>	<u>News Deadline</u>
February 19	Noon, Tuesday, February 16
March 4	Noon, Monday, February 29

Send articles to maryellen@stsumc.org or call the church office.

THE EVANGEL Vol. 21 Issue 3, February 5, 2016 (USPS 019-947) is published bi-weekly free of charge to subscribers by St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 2003 West 43rd St., Houston, TX 77018-3009. Periodicals postage paid at Houston, TX. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 2003 West 43rd St., Houston, TX 77018-3009.

Friday, February 5:

Crunch Time Retreat—College Station, Texas

6:00 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Denny's @ 34th & 290)
6:30 pm—Family Movie Night (Fellowship Hall)

Saturday, February 6:

Crunch Time Retreat

8:00 am—Garden Angels Dirt Diggers Workday (Work on flowerbeds.)
8:00 pm—Narcotics Anonymous Support Group (Scout House)

Sunday, February 7:

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany/Communion Sunday

Transfiguration of the Lord

Crunch Time Retreat

8:30 am—Contemporary Worship (Sanctuary)
9:40am—Sunday School for Children, Youth & Adults (Education Bldg)
9:40 am—Christian Faith 101 (Room 203)
11:00 am—Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)
12:00 pm—Chili Cook-Off Fellowship Lunch (Fellowship Hall)
12:30 pm—Christian Believer Study (Church Library)

Monday, February 8:

10:00 am—The Gathering Place (Fellowship Hall)
11:40 am—Staff Prayer (Sanctuary)
7:00 pm—Boy Scout Troop 604 Meeting (Scout House)

Tuesday, February 9:

Shrove Tuesday

9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
9:30 am—COVENANT Women's Bible Study (Room 201)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Dance Class (Room 101)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Teacher Meeting (Church Library)
5:00 pm—Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
6:30 pm—GriefShare Grief Support Group (Room 201)
7:30 pm—Sea Scouts Ship 24 Meeting (Scout House)

Wednesday, February 10:

Ash Wednesday

6:00 am—Men's Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)
9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
9:30 am—Senior Games (Fellowship Hall/Bring a sack lunch.)
10:15 am—Homebound Visitation (Room 101)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Stay-N-Play (Church Library & Fellowship Hall)
7:00 pm—Ash Wednesday Worship Service (Sanctuary)

Thursday, February 11:

9:00 am—Johnson School Class Valentine Parties (Education Bldg)
11:00 am—VIPs Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Gymnastics (Room 101)
1:15 pm—Office/Program Staff Meeting (Church Library)
6:15 pm—Handbell Choir Practice (Room 101)
7:30 pm—Chancel Choir Practice (Choir Room)

Friday, February 12:

Dessert Extravaganza Set-Up in Fellowship Hall

6:00 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Denny's @ 34th & 290)

Saturday, February 13:

2:00 pm—Dessert Extravaganza (Fellowship Hall)
8:00 pm—Narcotics Anonymous Support Group (Scout House)

Sunday, February 14:

First Sunday in Lent

Boy Scout Sunday/Food Pantry Sunday

Valentine's Day

8:30 am—Contemporary Worship (Sanctuary)
9:40 am—Sunday School for Children, Youth & Adults (Education Bldg)
9:40 am—Christian Faith 101 (Room 203)
11:00 am—Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)
12:00 pm—United Methodist Women Meeting (Fellowship Hall)
12:15 pm—Youth Group & Methodist Youth Moving Up Cookie Bake (Fellowship Hall)
4:00 pm—Christian Believer Study (Church Library)

Monday, February 15:

Church Office Closed in Observance of President's Day

7:00 pm—Boy Scout Troop 604 Meeting (Scout House)

Tuesday, February 16:

9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
9:30 am—COVENANT Women's Bible Study (Room 201)
12:00 pm—Deadline to turn in articles for February 19 Evangel (Send to maryellen@stsumc.org or call the church office.)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Dance Class (Room 101)
6:15 pm—Girl Scout Cadettes Meeting (Rooms 112 & 113)
6:30 pm—GriefShare Grief Support Group (Room 101)
7:30 pm—Sea Scouts Ship 24 Meeting (Scout House)

Wednesday, February 17:

6:00 am—Men's Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)
9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
9:30 am—Senior Games (Fellowship Hall/Bring a sack lunch.)
9:30 am—Hope Mission Group Meeting (Room 112)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Stay-N-Play (Library & Fellowship Hall)
4:00 pm—Artist's Prayer (Fellowship Hall)
6:30 pm—Sonrise Choir Practice (Sanctuary)
7:00 pm—Education Committee Meeting (Room 112)

Thursday, February 18:

Texas Ministry Conference-Champion Forest Baptist Church

9:00 am—Johnson Memorial School Classes (Education Building)
10:00 am—Prayer Shawl Ministry (Room 112)
1:00 pm—Johnson School Gymnastics (Fellowship Hall)
6:15 pm—Handbell Choir Practice (Room 101)
6:30 pm—Girl Scout Brownies Meeting (Room 108)
6:30 pm—Girl Scout Brownies/Jr.'s Meeting (Room 113)
6:30 pm—SEAL Security Meeting (Church Library)
7:30 pm—Chancel Choir Practice (Choir Room)

Friday, February 19:

Boy Scout Troop 604 Campout

6:00 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast (Denny's @ 34th & 290)



VIPs Luncheon
Adults age 50+ are welcome to join the VIPs for our next meeting and luncheon, Thursday, February 11, beginning at 11:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall, featuring entertainment by Jim Connors, the One Man Band, Crooner and Entertainer. A catered lunch will be served at noon. The cost is \$10 per person. Please RSVP to Barbara Johnson at 713-686-6116 no later than Monday, February 8.

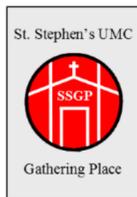
Adult Bible Class Lunch Trip
The Adult Bible Class will be heading to Tomball, Texas, for lunch at Goodson's Café, the home of chicken-fried steak, Sunday, February 21, following the 11:00 a.m. service. All men and women age 50+ are welcome to join us; you do not have to be a member of the class. RSVP to Ed Abrahams at edabrahams@att.net or 281-447-6730 to reserve your seat on the bus.




Presidents Day
The church office will be closed Monday, February 15, in observance of Presidents Day. The deadline to turn in articles for the February 19 Evangel will be extended to noon on Tuesday, February 16.

UMW
The United Methodist Women welcome ladies of all ages to join us for our monthly meeting Sunday, February 14, following the 11:00 a.m. service. Please bring a sack lunch. Our program this month will be the pledge service.





February Communion Offering

Our Communion offering for the month of February will go to The Gathering Place, a ministry for persons with memory loss and their caregivers. Each month on the second Monday, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., our volunteers, in partnership with InterFaith CarePartners, lead our carepartners in fun, memory-stimulating activities and serve lunch. Caregivers can choose to stay and participate in the activities or use the time for a much-needed break. There is no charge to the carepartner or caregiver to attend "Gatherings". Please help us continue the ministry of The Gathering Place by supporting it with your prayers and generous donations. Our next "Gathering" will be Monday, February 8.

The Gathering Place could use a few more volunteers, especially those who are able to help "on the floor", assisting our carepartners in moving to and from the various activity areas. We want all the caregivers to have a break, if they choose. If you are interested in volunteering for The Gathering Place, please contact Bill Cummins at 713-742-8168, or Gwen Hunt at 713-686-1202.

Food Pantry Sunday

Sunday, February 14, is Food Pantry Sunday. Please bring donations of non-perishable food to the basket in the Narthex (sanctuary foyer) marked MANNA (Ministry Assistance of the Near Northwest Alliance). The food will be delivered to the MANNA Food Pantry to be given to needy families in our area.



Snack Lunches

Our Jr. and Sr. High Youth are now meeting after the 11:00 a.m. worship service, and we have been averaging nine youth and two adults. If you would like to provide snack lunches, please contact Mary Gossett, our Director of Student Ministries, so that she can add you to the schedule. Thank you for supporting the youth!



Snacks and Massages!

Are you stressed, hungry, and looking for some Christian fellowship? Come and join the chancel choir for snacks and massages on Thursday night at 7:10! These are just some of the perks of singing in the chancel choir. Other benefits include: sharpening of the mind, increased breath control, deep theological thought about hymns, and laughter with friends. All skill levels and ages are welcome as we offer our voices in praise to our Lord Jesus Christ!



Church T-Shirt Sale



The Youth are sponsoring a church-wide t-shirt sale. The shirts are \$15 each, and they are available in children's and adult sizes. The proceeds from the sale will go toward sending the youth on mission trips and to summer camp. The youth are very excited to sell these shirts to the congregation so that we can proudly promote our church to our community. Please make checks out to St. Stephen's and put "youth t-shirt sale" in the memo line. Please turn in all orders by Sunday, February 21. The shirts will be available for pick-up before Easter! You can order a shirt in your Sunday School class or by contacting Mary Gossett. (You can see a larger view of the shirt on St. Stephen's United Methodist Church Facebook page.)

♪ Notes from the Minister of Music ♪



It is so good to be back! Thank you all for your prayers, notes, and continued support during my maternity leave. Adelynn is a wonderful baby, and we are so blessed by our new addition.

It is 2016, and I have plans for wonderful new musical and artistic happenings at St. Stephen's UMC! I hope that you will get involved, whether you join the choir, bells, or band, or lend you voice as we have hymn sings or Taizé services throughout the year! It is my hope and prayer that each event would help us all draw nearer to Jesus Christ, and feel his deep and never failing love for us.

Do you have an eye for design? Is interior decorating a passion for you? I would like to assemble a small team for Altar design. Each season of the year, we can bring to life the scriptures read during worship on and around our Altar. Now that the Altar is more visible, we can utilize the length and beauty of its features! If this sounds like a way that you would like to serve the church, please contact me!

Are you an artist? Would you like to explore new ways to pray? Please join us for Artist's Prayer, a time of creating and listening to God. Our first encounter with Artist's prayer will be on Wednesday, February 17th at 4:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Art supplies and inspiration will be provided.

Prayer Concerns

In Our Prayers

Ed and Claytie Abrahams, Jane Anderson, John Artz, Chappie Ashburn, Ruth Austin, Brooklyn Barner & family; Carolyn Belk, Dorette Benjamin and family, Anita Bishop, Doris Birdsong, Paula Brady, Henry Burton (Lindsay Smith's uncle), Florence Caldwell, Lonnie Coursey, Dorothy Cox, Margaret Demuth, Elizabeth Dennard, Charlotte Dorton, Sammi Douglas & family, Gerald Dupree, Rev. Tom Edwards, the Emerson family, Jack Ford, Penny Gadmer, Bill & Mildred Gandin, Katy Hayden, Virginia Head, Tripp Hensley, Elizabeth Hickerson, Robert & Monica Hicks, Ann Hill, Elizabeth Huebner, Wanzel Jessie, Sr. & family; Thelma Jones, Tripp Hensley, Angus & Virginia Lewis, Deidre Martin (home hospice), Frances Mayberry, Mary Nelle Moore, Dian Parker, Margie Perron, Milton & Noni Ray, Caroline Reaves, Betty Reilly, Kathleen Saathoff, Dianna Shinall, Barbara Smith, Sarah Skinner, Lura Smith, Jean & Vance Sorrells, Melissa Soto, Cindy St. Lawrence, Billy Stephens, Elizabeth Sutherland, Danny Thomason, Hazel Thompson, Marianne West, Charles Zimmermann

In the Military

Dirk Ray Jr., Allen Troth

In the Hospital

Brookdale Place-Heights—Henry Demuth (hospice)
HeathSouth Rehabilitation of Cypress—Bill Reaves

Colonial Oaks Westchase—Anna Ruth Putnam (hospice)
TIRR Memorial Hermann—Cameron Elliott



A Message from the Director of Student Ministries

MYMU & Youth Cookie Decoration

Following the late service on February 14, the MYMU and Youth groups will combine to have a quick lunch and to decorate sugar cookies. After we're done, we'll take the cookies down to the firehouse, and if they aren't out on a call, maybe they will show us around the new firehouse. This event is open to those in the 3rd grade and above.

Jeans in January

The youth have finished their collection of jeans. If you would still like to cut out a few pieces, please see Mary Gossett. Donations of \$10 are still being accepted to help with the cost of shipping and to pay the workers in Uganda to create the shoes. The youth prayed over the pairs that they had cut up and assembled. Together, we assembled over 30 pairs of shoes that will be given to children, who will have their feet treated and healed, and who can now run, play, and go to school with their friends. We are continuing to do the work of Jesus through projects like this one!

Deep Blue Rotation and Singers

This past Sunday, the Deep Blue Singers treated us to the song, "God Chose Jesus, Jesus Chose God" as they wrapped up their lesson on Jesus' baptism. Our next unit starts this first Sunday of February, and it is on Jesus calling the Disciples. This is a great point for children to try out our great Sunday school program!

Ms. Emily Leffler hosted our latest Deep Blue Party, and she helped lead the children on a discussion of water conservation and what we could do about it. The children will be receiving a small bucket and a calendar for Lent that describes ways that we are blessed by water, and have an opportunity to fill up their bucket to bless others. The change will be pooled together to build a well for people in a foreign country through cleanwater.org. This group will give us updates on the well that we help build by telling us where it is and how far they've gotten with building it.

Crunch Time Retreat & Mid-Winter

Max and Dylan, two of our juniors, are headed off to a new retreat called Crunch Time, February 5-7. It's held at A&M and run by the Wesley Foundation students, and the retreat is designed to help juniors and seniors get ready for college. They want to talk to the students about how they are able to focus on Christ while they are at college. Thank you to Jami and Juli for volunteering as adult chaperones!

Alec and Camdyn are ready to go to this year's Mid-Winter retreat at Forest Glen. The retreat focuses on the story of Abraham. Thank you to Steven for going on your first youth retreat!

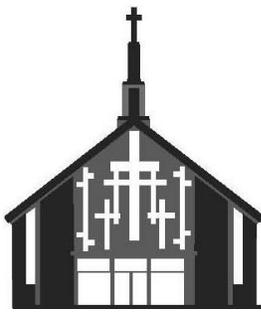


Johnson Memorial School

Johnson Memorial School Now Registering for Fall Classes



The Johnson Memorial School is now registering students for the 2016-2017 school year. Classes are available for 3 and 4 year-old children. Children must be 3 years of age as of September 1, 2016, and potty-trained in order to join our youngest 3s class. Registration forms are available on the St. Stephen's website or in the Johnson Memorial School office. For additional information or to schedule a tour of our wonderful preschool, please contact Amy Mingle, Director, at 713-686-8241 or jms@stsumc.org.



**St. Stephen's
United Methodist Church**

2003 West 43rd Street
Houston, Texas 77018
(713) 686-8241

www.stsumc.org



Rev. Kevin Otto
Senior Pastor
kevin@stsumc.org

Program Staff



Rev. Lindsay Smith
Minister of Music
music@stsumc.org



Mary Gossett
*Director of Student
Ministries*
youth@stsumc.org



Juyeon Kim
Organist



Amy Mingle
*Director,
Johnson Memorial School*
jms@stsumc.org



Melissa Soto
Nursery Coordinator

**Anita Cabrera, Lydia Soto,
Jo Ann Spivey**
Nursery Staff

Administrative Staff



Mary Jessie
Accounting Manager
mary@stsumc.org



Mary Ellen King
Executive Secretary
maryellen@stsumc.org



Cindy Tindol
Receptionist
cindy@stsumc.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**PERIODICAL
PAID
HOUSTON, TX**

Family Movie Night



Everyone is welcome to join us this Friday, February 5, at 6:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall for an evening of fun, featuring a family-friendly flick. Admission is free, and we'll provide the popcorn and lemonade, too! Bring pillows and blankets, and dinner, if the family's hungry. We hope to see you there!

Chili Cook-Off Fellowship Lunch



Our annual Chili Cook-Off Fellowship Lunch is this Sunday, February 7. If you have a favorite chili recipe, cook a pot of it and bring it to the fellowship hall by 9:30 a.m. The winners will be announced and the chili entries served at a Fellowship Lunch following the 11:00 a.m. worship service. John Jackson, who is organizing this year's event, will be cooking his famous chicken soup for those who prefer a milder meal. Plan to stay for lunch and fellowship this Sunday. You'll be home in plenty of time to watch the Super Bowl!

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



Our Youth welcome everyone to join them as they host a pancake supper this coming Tuesday, February 9, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent, is traditionally a day of celebration in which rich foods like butter and eggs can be used up before the time of Lenten fasting begins. A suggested donation of \$5 is encouraged.

Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. Ash Wednesday emphasizes two themes: our sinfulness before God and our human mortality. The Ash Wednesday worship service focuses on both themes, helping us to realize that both have been triumphed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Please join us for Ash Wednesday worship this coming Wednesday, February 10, at 7:00 p.m. The nursery will be available for children age 4 and under.

Looking Ahead to Holy Week



March 20
Palm Procession during Both Services
Chancel Choir Cantata -11a.m. Service



March 24
Worship & Communion at 7 p.m.



March 27
Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m.
Contemporary Worship at 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School at 9:40 a.m.
Traditional Worship at 11:00 a.m.



March 25
Worship at 7 p.m.
at St. Stephen's