

the shield

This Sunday in Worship January 22, 2012

This week's sermon is titled "Wishing We Were Back Inside the Cozy Whale" based on Jonah 3:1-5.

Mark Your Calendars

- ◆ Rev. Jeremy Smith Shares the History of General Conference and LGBT Concerns February 9 at 6:30
- ◆ Yousef Khanfar comes to Roundtable the evening of February 26th
- ◆ Dr. Walter Brueggemann speaks in Tulsa at Boston Avenue UMC February 26-28

This Week at St. Stephen's

Friday January 20:
12:00 Top of the Hill—Community Hall

Sunday January 22:
12:30 Finance Committee—12
1:00 Reconciling Committee—CH
2:00 Girl Scouts—Lyle Hall
2:00 Ad Council—11
3:15 Adult Education Committee—Ch
3:30 Care Team—12
5:00 Youth Group—Lyle Hall
6:00 Meditation—rm. 11

Monday January 23:
5:30 Girl Scouts—11
6:00 Norman Serenity Group—6
7:00 Augustine Fellowship Group—6
8:00 Alan on- 11

Tuesday January 24:
Food and Shelter for Friends
5:30 Weight Watchers—Lyle Hall
7:00 Chess Club—CH

Wednesday January 25:
1:30 Sacred Journey—12
7:00 ACTS NA Group—6
7:00 Choir—Sanctuary

Saturday January 28:
Local Church Leaders workshop—OKC
10:00 Altar Guild—CH



2011 Final Giving Statements will be mailed out

this week. If you are in need of your statement prior to receiving it in the mail please call or email Amy LeBlanc at the church office.

Thanks, Amy

"Who is that person sitting over there?" Come be a part of our Family Album New Pictorial Directory Coming Soon

If the question above is one you often ask, then you will appreciate the value of a Pictorial Directory. Please sign up to be photographed for our directory as soon as possible by going to the church website

www.ststephensnorman.org .

The Lifetouch company will be producing St. Stephen's pictorial directory and *pets are welcome*. You will be receiving an invitation by phone to participate and reminder calls will come later. The dates will be Thursday, Friday, and Saturday on Feb. 16-18th and the next week Feb. 23-25th. Please watch for more information on how to schedule an appointment. It is our hope that every family will make an effort to sign up.

Helpers are needed to host each evening. A helper sign-up sheet will be available on Sunday in the loggia.





From Amy's Desk... This Tuesday, every ordained United Methodist minister in the state was called to Oklahoma City for our biennial Orders' Meeting. We began the morning with the Wesleyan Covenant Renewal Service, and were inspired by a sermon by our Bishop, Robert E. Hayes, Jr., who encouraged us to stick our necks out, take risks, and give our all in sharing the love of Christ. The afternoon featured a presentation by Dr. Elaine Heath, McCreeless Associate Professor of Evangelism at my alma mater, Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Two of her works include *Longing for Spring: A New Vision for Wesleyan Community*, co-authored with Scott Kisker, and *The Mystic Way of Evangelism: A Contemplative Vision for Christian Outreach*. In my opinion, her brand of outreach is refreshing in its ancient nature, looking more like the first Christian communities than anything we've come up with in the ensuing two thousand years or so.

Many of my colleagues balked openly at her presentation, which was frankly, sad, and in a couple of cases, downright rude. During the question-and-answer period, some showed a real fear that what they do in their jobs every week might be undermined by Heath's work in forming home communities. My reaction to the presentation was quite the opposite! I was inspired by what she and her graduate students have taken on as a full-time project. Some of the students live in covenant communities, much like the one our former guest preacher, Shane Claiborne, described to us from his own life. They share the responsibilities of cooking, cleaning, buying groceries, and they live by a covenant of rules. They invite folks in from their low-income neighborhoods in Dallas for a weekly meeting that includes worship, prayer and sharing. They really and truly ask the old Wesleyan questions from the band societies: "How is it with your soul?" "How have you fallen short this week?" They hold each other accountable. They take up an offering each time that is immediately disseminated into the neighborhoods for whatever someone might need: A new air conditioner, a new school uniform, or a bag or two of groceries for the week.

Their network of communities has reached out to many different types of folks, many of whom are from refugee communities and who speak six or seven different languages. It must look like Pentecost in some of these groups at times, when among the ten or so people around the circle, five or six different languages of origin are represented.

I was inspired by her presentation and am encouraged to read more of her books. Unlike some of my fearful colleagues, I feel that a rising tide lifts all boats. Let's celebrate the fact that someone is doing great work in the Dallas area, especially to include those who are so far from home and who need to feel the love of Christ. Way to go, Elaine!

Rev. Amy Venable

Life Happenings

Sunday, January 15th, 2012

We celebrate...

Joe Antinoro being home from the hospital and feeling better * Ann and Gene Groff being on the road to recovery; Gene remembering his parents on what would have been their 98th wedding anniversary * Jennifer Smith being home for the holidays * the birth of Bob and Sally Vandewater's grandson, Mason Christopher * the contributions of all those who were leaders in the Civil Rights' movement * Venita's musical contribution on the flute * the birth of Easton Edwin Aaron Yoder * Judith Maute reuniting with a friend in Washington D.C. and seeing the Martin Luther King Memorial * Gaye Sayers' friend, Courtney, who had a good report concerning her skin cancer * Kim Milton's former student who is expecting a child * Joy Hampton's enlightened writing in the Norman Transcript *

Our prayers are with...

Steve Gresham as he awaits another heart procedure * Greg Pettitt as he heals from knee surgery * Pam Kelleher's family after the loss of her aunt and uncle; her brother who will have an angiogram * Julie Sondag's friend, Lee's daughter who is seriously ill * Lena Frost's friend, Gary, who has been battling cancer and is now being moved to a nursing home * Leslie Osborn and Susan Kruk as they care for their aging parents * Anne Higby's husband's grandmother who is facing the end of her life *

A heartfelt thank you for the outpouring of concern during my recent crisis. Thanks to all who visited, sent cards, flowers, prayer and food. The term "Church Family" has even more meaning for us.

Regards! Bob and Pat Denton





OOPS - Where Was Sharon Gray?

Shortly after the Shield was distributed last week, the calls and texts began. Where was Sharon Gray in the article about St. Stephen's staff? Without a complex explanation of the way the church's "Publisher" program works, we'll just say that when that long article was cropped to fit on two pages, the paragraph about Sharon was hidden from view, outside of the printable range. Much of what Sharon does is "hidden" or quiet and behind-the-scenes, but the omission was unintended. Printed here is what was lost:

"Sharon Gray, Director of Care Ministry coordinates and works with our church's Care Team, Prayer Team and Community Action Committee. She makes regular visits to those hospitalized and is a calm presence and advocate for those undergoing surgery and those experiencing difficult times. Sharon retired from a career in elementary education, having taught a variety of age levels, preschool through fourth grade."



It is a new year and one of the exciting new things we are hoping to kick off this spring is the Tween Ministry. A tween is a young person among the ages of 4th-6th grade and who is in between a child and teenager. I am hoping to create a group that brings these young persons together and prepares them for middle school, youth group, and helps them continue to be an important part in the life of the church.

There will be a parent meeting about the Tween ministry Sunday, January 29th from 5:00-6:00pm.

Some of the things I am currently planning for this group include:

- Sexuality Retreat - Its Great To Be Me!
- A retreat about children in the gospels led by an arts integrated class at OCU
- Pancake Palooza and a Shrove Tuesday Service

If you have any questions about this or want to know more, feel free to contact me. I hope to see each of you are the parent meeting.

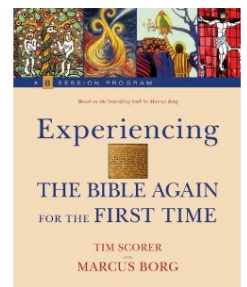
Erin R. Floyd Director of Children's Ministries
St. Stephen's UMC

Experiencing the Bible Again for the First Time Monday Evenings, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Beginning Monday, February 6 10 Weeks with Glen Roberson

Do you have difficulty with literal interpretations of the Bible, especially claims that the Bible is God's inerrant and infallible revelation? Do you hunger to know and engage the Bible at deeper levels? Consider this small group exploration of the variety of biblical literature and the diversity of biblical stories and voices that offer understandings of what life with God is about. "Experiencing the Bible Again for the First Time," is a ten-week group experience that "takes the Bible seriously without taking it literally."

The course is one of the foundational offerings for St. Stephen's *Seminary for Life*, and it is being offered again, beginning February 6 and running through the season of Lent. Group members read one chapter of Marcus Borg's popular book of the same title and attend a weekly class gathering on Monday evening from 7:00-8:30. The class offers each member a time for responding, questioning, engaging imagination, listening for and discovering "words of life" from scripture and from their own life experiences. Glen Roberson is facilitating the class. Glen is an experienced leader of both Disciple Bible Study and this foundational curriculum, and he uses a wonderful storyteller approach.

A sign-up sheet for the class can be found on the Education bulletin board in the loggia, or contact kay@coxinet.net to enroll. Books for participants will be ordered the third week of January.



As the community of St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, we believe our specific place in the body of Christ calls us to...

Create a style in worship and throughout our church life which is intentionally inclusive.

Welcome and affirm all persons without regard to any of the divisions which have been used to separate God's family such as ethnicity, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability.

Take care of those who are hurting, on an individual level.

Work to relieve systems of oppression that often lead to this hurt.

Take risks; to be a church that is not afraid to participate in the process of change.

Equip people for the tasks of ministry through study, worship, and discussion of the Word. Commit ourselves, our time, and our resources to the work of the community of faith.

Invite others to join in this journey.

God calls us to be partners in community and partners for justice.

In the Spirit of Christ we will

Care for one another

Offer sanctuary and healing

Unite head and heart



Phone: 321-4988
Fax: 321-4731
E-Mail:
ststephensumc@coxinet.net
Office Hours:
8:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.
Web: www.ststephensnorman.org



Worship 8:30 & 10:50
Sunday School Classes 9:40