Cleaning of the Church for Christmas
Saturday, December 15th @ 9:00 a.m.
ALL members of the Altar Guild and the parish are invited to this day of cleaning (& greening)!
Please RSVP to Sue Cameron at 308.383.2998 or the office, so that we order enough food for everyone who will be with us all day!!

Greening of the Church
Noon - ?

Please select a tag, purchase the suggested gift, bring it back gift-wrapped WITH THE ORNAMENT ATTACHED (this identifies which child the gift is for). Please place gifts under the tree by Sunday, December 16th to be in time for Christmas delivery!
Call Samantha Hubbard at 308.850.4218 with questions or for more information.

Poinsettias
Once again, we will decorate the church for Christmas with Poinsettias. If you would like to donate $25 for poinsettias for Christmas please bring your donation to the office. Be sure to let us know if you would like your donation given in memory or celebration of someone special!

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule
Holy Eucharist on Christmas Eve at 5:00 p.m.
Carol Sing on Christmas Eve at 10:00 p.m.
Holy Eucharist following Carol Sing at 10:30 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship
Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

Church Office Closing
Please note that the church office will be closed between Christmas and the New Year. Messages will be checked regularly.

Happy Holidays!
Prayers for the People

If you or a loved one needs prayers, please submit that information to the church office. Prayers run in the weekly bulletin as well as the monthly Guide. Prayer Chain requests can be sent to Mary Kvetensky at 308.382.4090 or to Donna Weaver Smith at dowesm@yahoo.com


**Prayers of Strength and Protection for those Serving Our Country:** Michael, Ryan, Randy, Dustin, Charles, Sherri, David, Cathleen, Ben, Joe.

**Prayers for the Departed:** John Richardson, Bob Blair, Mary Boosalis and Ellen Parmley

If you would like to add a name to our prayer list or submit birthdays and anniversaries, please contact the church office 382.4961 or parishsecretary@ststephengi.org

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Nolan Goodman 12/1
Sue Soden 12/1
Steve Baxter 12/2
Karen Mayer 12/3
Dennis Bjorkman 12/4
Tom Marble 12/5
Aksel Hansen 12/6
Dave Jepson 12/7
Betty Lou Crittenden 12/8
Dan White 12/8
Dorothy Stoddard 12/12
Sam Rasmussen 12/16
Paxton Lagueux 12/16
Merlin Kluge 12/17
Taylor Wieland 12/17
Jim Lewis 12/19
Terry Bjorkman 12/20
Andrew Bennett 12/21
Tim Reisinger 12/23
Ryan Jepson 12/24

**Happy Anniversary**

Rich and Roxie Webb - 12/6
Lloyd and Stacia Larson - 12/15
John and Marilyn Albers - 12/22
Dave and Kathy Stoddard - 12/28

**Congratulations!**

To our Deacon Betsy Blake-Bennett, who was installed as Arch Deacon of the Diocese of Nebraska at the 145th Annual Council.

**Dedication Sunday Update**

We currently have 52 pledges committed for 2013 for a total of $143,626!

**Thank you for your ever-faithful giving!**

If you are interested in making a pledge for 2013, please contact Leslie at the church office 382.4961 or by email at financialsecretary@ststephengi.org
“From Our Past”...

Selections by Sue Clement

*From the Platte Valley Independent, December 25, 1875:*
“The Christmas services at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church will be celebrated on Sunday the 28th instead of on Saturday. The Rev. Henry C. Shaw will be present to conduct the services and administer the holy communion. A special collection will be taken at the same time to be applied towards the debt on the church. The intention is to soon have a resident clergyman, which cannot be until a portion of the debt is paid."

“The Christmas tree for the Sunday school at the Episcopal Church, will be on Tuesday evening next, the 28th, at 7 o’clock p.m. at the church.” *(Sue’s note: at this time it was customary for gifts to be presented to Sunday school children and any local children in need; the gifts were hung on the tree and distributed to those present)*

*From the GI Independent, December 13, 1888:*
“The ladies of the Episcopal Church will serve lunch at any hour, day or evening, during the fair at Hurford’s block, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of this week. A lunch by these ladies means a hearty and delicious meal.”

*From the GI Independent, December 19, 1888:*
“The Episcopal ladies realized about $700 from their bazaar last week...the proceeds of which will go far toward completing their magnificent new church building.”

*From the GI Independent, December 11, 1891:*
“WANTED—Twenty boys for St. Stephen’s Episcopal church choir. Apply on Friday afternoon to John D. Blake, organist, Room 3, Michelson block.”

This photo was taken in December, 1967, at the time of the presentation of the Boy Scout God and Country Award. In the photo are Jerre Mallory, Kim Mallory, Bev Arnold, David Arnold, the Rev. Jess Hansen, and acolyte Douglas Damerst.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christmas Eve Worship Volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order to prepare a schedule of worship volunteers for the Christmas Eve services, please be sure to sign up for the service and duty you prefer. A sign up sheet is located in the hallway or you can contact the office 308.382.4961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Meeting - January 27th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Annual Meeting of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Parish will take place Sunday, January 27, 2013 with a pot-luck dinner following the 9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besides a year-end financial report and budget for 2013, the material for the meeting should include brief reports from every ministry, ministry group, and leader. In doubt? Turn in a report! All reports are due in the office in electronic form no later than January 15, 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will also be electing New VESTRY Members and Delegates to Annual Council! Please reserve the date in your calendars.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
St. Stephen’s Leadership

Priest-in-Charge  The Rev. Timothy D. Raasch  
interim@ststephengi.org

Archdeacon  The Ven. Betsy Blake Bennett 
deaconbetsy@windstream.net

2013 Senior Warden  Dave Jepson 
dcjep@hamilton.net

2013 Junior Warden  Mike Timmerman 
mtimmerm@hornady.com

2013 Vestry  Tracy Goodman 
jdg93@charter.net

2013 Vestry  Jen Wieland 
jdg93@charter.net

2013 Vestry  Leslie Lewis 
laolewis@hotmail.com

2014 Vestry  Roxie Webb 
roxannkaywebb@hotmail.com

2014 Vestry  Raynette Martin 
raynette@charter.net

2014 Vestry  Gary Bennett 
glbfam@windstream.net

2015 Vestry  Calvin Hubbard 
chubbard@gips.org

2015 Vestry  Kathy Stoddard 
djkstoddard@gmail.com

2015 Vestry  Dave Beck 
harryd68959@yahoo.com

Parish Nurse Ministry  Kathy Stoddard  
djkstoddard@gmail.com

Music Ministry  Dan Korensky  
dk_adams1@yahoo.com

Financial Secretary  Leslie Lewis  
financialsecretary@ststephengi.org

Parish Secretary  Elisa Day  
parishsecretary@ststephengi.org

Custodian  Henry Mayer

Regular Weekly Schedule at St. Stephen’s

**Sunday**
- 9:30 am  Holy Eucharist
- 1:00 pm  Arabic Worship Service

**Monday**
- 6:45 pm  AA Study Group
- 7:00 pm  1st Monday: Disaster Preparedness
- 2nd Monday: Financial Planning & Rvw
- 3rd Monday: Vestry
- 8:00 pm  Young Procrastinators AA meeting

**Tuesday**
- No AA Workshop in Parish Hall going forward

**Wednesday**
- 10:30 am  Lectionary Study* (*begins 12/12/12)
- 12:00 pm  Holy Eucharist and Healing Service*
- 1:00 pm  1st & 3rd Wed - St Martha’s Guild
- 6:00 - 7:15 pm  Christian Education Classes
- 7:30 pm  Choir practice
- 8:00 pm  Young Procrastinators AA meeting

**Thursday**
- 9:45 am  1st & 3rd Thurs - St Mary’s Bible Study

**Friday**
- 8:00 pm  Young Procrastinators AA meeting

**Saturday**
- Altar Guild preparations for Sunday worship

**DECEMBER 2012 Events**

- **4-6**  Fr. Tim out of town
- **6**  6:00 - 8:00 pm  CASA Christmas party (parish hall)
- **9**  Blood Pressure Clinic after service
- **15**  9:00 - noon  Christmas Cleaning of the Church
- **12:00 - ??**  Hanging of the Greens & lunch
- **23**  Christmas Potluck following service
- **24**  5:00 pm  Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist
- **10:00 pm**  Carol Sing, Holy Eucharist following
- **24 - 31**  Office closed
- **25**  10:00 am  Christmas Day Holy Eucharist
- **26**  NO Christian Education or Choir rehearsal

**Coming in January**

- **15**  Reports due for Annual Meeting
- **27**  Annual Meeting of the Parish with pot-luck following
National Handwashing Awareness Week
December 2 - December 8, 2012

“Wash your hands” turns out to be some of the best advice our mothers gave us. It might seem silly to focus on hand washing for a week, but health experts believe it is necessary to promote this health-saving practice over and over again.

There is a science to washing your hands. Bacteria and viruses sit on your hands waiting for an access point into your body...a mouth, nose or eyes! As soon as they are in, they can unleash their “magic” in your body! Hand washing properly done, will destroy and wash these nasty critters down the drain before they have a chance to harm you. All living creatures have cells...bacteria have cell walls that keep them together. During the process of washing your hands, the friction used (I am talking rubbing and scrubbing) breaks down these cell walls and they die. This is not a casual lather and rinse folks...this is rubbing and scrubbing to the tune of Happy Birthday or Row, Row, Row, 2 times through!

What about sanitizers? Sanitizers don’t work on really dirty hands...it is most effective on cleaner hands...those who wash their hands frequently like doctors and nurses. And, the type of dirt matters. Fatty materials often found in food in the kitchen on meat, fish, eggs can actually be resistant to alcohol-based sanitizers. If soap and water are not around, sanitizers are the next best thing, but they need to contain a minimum of 60% ethanol to be effective in reducing the number of bacteria.

When should I wash? The Center for Disease Control says:
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom
- Before preparing or eating food
- After handling an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- Before and after treating a cut or wound.

In addition, you should wash after handling raw meat, dog food and dog treats.

A few added steps to keep ourselves healthy include:
- No purses on the table ladies
- Sanitize phones and keyboards regularly (includes cell phones)
- Clean doorknobs around home and work
- Keep your germs to yourself...utilize tissues

For more healthy tips, find information in the parish hall. Here’s to a healthy winter.

Thank You, From the Bottom of our Hearts
- to our Annual Council Delegation for representing St. Stephen’s to the Diocese
- to Raynette Martin for serving as chair for our UTO Fall Ingathering
- to everyone who gave of themselves to help with memorial services this month
- to Mike McElroy for continuing to provide oversight for our Columbarium
- to Joan Barton for serving on the Tract Rack & Bulletin Board ministry
- to all who have donated and helped with the Wednesday night Christian Education dinners
- a big THANK YOU goes out to those who support our office staff with kindnesses and all who come into the office to fold bulletins, cut invitations, and fold letters.
- to the Altar Guild for their commitment to ministering to all of us as you prepare for worship services each week

Blood Pressure Checks
After the 9:30 am service at Coffee Hour

St. Stephen’s Classifieds
Wondering what you can do for a couple of hours each week?
Varied opportunities available, including:
- Weekly Office Volunteer
- Web Site Updater
- Monthly GUIDE Editor
- Community Center Liaison

To apply or request more information,
Contact Elisa at the Office at 308.382.4961
Advent is a time for preparation and anticipation. Not only are we preparing for Christmas and the birth of Jesus, we are anticipating God doing something new in our lives and parish, country, world and universe. Without that sense of preparation for new movements of the Spirit, our faith becomes sentimental and frozen in place. It’s the difference between an evolving and living tradition, and certain and absolute traditionalism no longer open to revelation. The Holy Spirit is truly the abiding energy at work in Advent, moving around in the backyard and peering over the far horizon while our attention is focused on what we know, what is comfortable and familiar.

We can’t prepare and anticipate, of course, while we are still living in the past. And so Advent is also a time for reflection and review. One of the primary tasks of an interim year, and interim minister, is to come to terms with the history of a faith community. St. Stephen’s Church is healthy, but we could be healthier. The parish has gone through much transition in the past decade with clergy and community changes that are still being digested, understood, forgiven and released. Forward-moving energies collide with leftover emotions from the past and prevent us from inviting new visions and spiritual practices. Other tasks of an interim time, including raising up new leadership, re-establishing ties with a diocese and exploring new congregational identities, emerge out of a sense of closure with our past, a closure that has turned to thanksgiving and celebration for who we are now and who we might become.

And Advent is a time for re-commitment. We may have been raised in the Episcopal Church—cradle Episcopalians, as if our parent’s denominational choice was inherited through our DNA—but do we attend St. Stephen’s out of choice or habit? On our first Sunday, November 4th, we re-affirmed the Baptismal Covenant of our faith. Five questions and answers follow the creed. The first asks us if we will “continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?” Discipleship only makes sense within a faith community. We’re here to grow the Body of Christ with baptized members involved in worship and prayer, fellowship and pastoral care, education and discernment of spiritual gifts, pledging and stewardship, compassion and service. Worship is the place and time where it all comes together.

We arrive as individuals on Sunday morning, discern spiritual gifts for ministry through the word proclaimed, become one around the altar and are sent out to be vehicles of joy, transformation, reconciliation and compassion. Discipleship is a lifelong journey, it is transformative and it is the commitment itself that is transformative. As Woody Allen once said, 90 percent of success is just showing up!

I invite all of us to fully walk, live and inhabit this Season of Advent. Prepare for God doing something new. Reflect and learn and let go of our past, becoming a new people on a new journey of faith that requires faith, hope and love. Re-commit to loving God and loving neighbor in all things and places. And as we move outside of ourselves to the work of shared mission and ministry in the world, our deepest personal, spiritual and soul needs are met, and even surpassed. I wish everyone a joyful, and surprising, Advent.

in Christ, Fr. Tim+
How can you connect with St. Stephen’s?

Phone: 308.382.4961  Fax: 308.384.6688

Website: www.ststephengi.org

Church Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Worship Services: Holy Eucharist on Sundays @ 9:30 a.m.
Holy Eucharist and Healing on Wednesdays @ 12:00 noon

ECO TIP of the Month

Cut down on use of single-use plastic items. For Christmas meals and parties, use metal flatware and real dishes and glasses. If you must use disposables, choose paper over plastic or Styrofoam.

Join Us for

a New Study
beginning December 12
Wednesdays
10:30 - 11:45 a.m.
All are welcome!

Lectionary Study

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angel gave the sign.

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angel gave the sign.