



The Flame

January 2024

Our Mission is to be a welcoming place where people meet Christ and grow in their relationship with God through our worship, service, and fellowship.

Christmas

Despite the on again off again rain on Christmas Eve, we enjoyed one of our largest gatherings in the last 16 years. During our 5:00 service, we were blessed to hear our children's bell choir with their rendition of some Christmas favorites. During our 7 & 10 pm services, our adult bell choir offered two magnificent hymns as well. Special thanks to all who helped make the celebration so special. First and foremost

our Altar Guild who did such a marvelous job preparing our worship space, second, our ministry teams who served at each of our services, our choir members (both bell and vocal), and especially all those who joined us either in-person or online, both on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. This was truly a blessed celebration.



Fr. Tom's Tidbits



Tidbits

As I look back on last year, I feel blessed beyond all measure. Together we did some wonderful things that helped change lives, both the lives of those who are members, and the lives of those who may never be. One blessing I feel really good about was one that arose out of our reflections on who we are and why we are here. Realizing that worship, while important and essential to our very being, is not the only reason we gather together each week, we saw, that in the midst of the fellowship we share each week, it is coming together that enables us to find strength in those times we need it most, and that working together, as one body, we care for all those in need, not only those within our community, but those who surround it as well.

Our outreach efforts this past year seemed to really matter. Yes, we have given to many of the organizations we served before, but not with the energy and joy which I sensed this past year. Maybe this is in part to the reintroduction of our youth and adult pilgrimages. Through our teams, we could see and know the difference these trips make, in the lives of those who participated, and in the lives of those they served. We have several trips planned for this year to carry on the work begun in the last. While we will strive to help each team-member cover the cost (through scholarships offered through our Endowment Fund), they will need all of our help, through the continued purchase of stock shares in their trip, in supporting the work they will do.

I am praying, that as the new year unfolds, even more in our parish will want to participate in either our regional or international efforts. There is something that feeds the soul as we work alongside those we serve. Can't make the kind of trips we do? No problem, this same feeling can be experienced right here serving in a parish ministry. Opportunities like our food pantries, our clean-up days, assisting the efforts of Bellevue Together, even the Arrows to Aerospace Parade, all give us an opportunity to get out from the pew and do something that fills us with the joy that comes from sharing the love of God with our neighbor.

While I am excited about what the new year holds, for us as a community, I understand how some might see things more cautiously, maybe even with a little trepidation. As I have made known, I intend on retiring from full-time parish ministry in 2025. This can create some real turmoil in the life of a congregation that must deal with uncertainty and often less than desired clergy support. Another blessing we can celebrate, is that the search process, which will begin following this year's Annual Meeting, will take place while we continue to work and serve alongside one another. Thanks to the healthy relationship we enjoy, the bishop sees no reason to inject a chaos that often accompanies an 18-month search process. We will be able to continue doing what we are doing and growing where we are growing.

There will be a lot to do to prepare for the inevitable transition. But together, we will come through it all deepening our relationships with God and one another, finding ourselves blessed by the work we do and the love we share.

Father Tom

Parish Life

Craft & Bake Sale



Another successful Holiday Craft and Bake Sale! Thanks to wonderful volunteers who shared their talents to set up and take down, help the customers, and filled the bake tables with a record amount of tempting and delicious baked goodies. The Christmas Flea Market was full of shared beautiful and fun gifts and decorations. Returning

vendors, plus new ones, were welcomed. And thank you to all who shopped!



Blue Christmas

We were blessed this past holiday season to offer our Blue Christmas service again. The word looks to have gotten out with regards to the hope the service offers those who struggle to find the joy of the holiday season. Our attendance nearly doubled from the year before. Thank you to those who helped make this service possible. Our service this year will take place on Saturday (21 Dec) beginning at 5pm.



Ministry Team Leaders

It is that time of year again. Ministry Team Leaders are asked to submit all end of year reports to the office no later than Sunday (14 Jan). Please include a brief description of your 2023 efforts and a look ahead at what opportunities the new year offers.



Annual Meeting



Mark your Calendars. Our Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Sunday (28 Jan) following our 9:30am service. We will begin our meeting with a shared brunch (provided by your Vestry). After brunch, we will take a quick look at our last year, elect new Vestry members and Annual Council delegates, review our 2024 budget, and look at some of the challenges we face in the coming year. If tradition holds, our meeting should end by 12:30.

Delegates to Annual Council

Our Diocesan Annual Council will be held in Hasting this year beginning Thursday evening (24 Oct) and finishing by Noon on Saturday (26 Oct). We are allotted four lay delegates based on our the number of active members here at CHS. If you might be interested in serving as a delegate, please visit with Fr Tom. Delegates will be elected from nominees presented at our Annual Parish Meeting (28 Jan)



Inquirer's Class

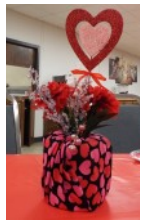


Our winter Inquirer's Class will begin on Sunday (21 Jan) beginning at 11:00 am. This approximately 75-minute, eight session class will meet every other week in the conference room. A schedule of classes may be found on the Chapel hallway bulletin board. The Inquirer's Class is an excellent opportunity for those 12 years old and older, those new to CHS, or to the Episcopal Church, and all those who want to learn more about the faith we profess and how we may strive to live faithfully into the promises we make at baptism. While not a requirement, following this class, all participants will be invited to be baptized, confirmed, renew their baptismal promises, and/or be received into the Episcopal Church when the bishop visits on Pentecost Sunday (19 May). To plan accordingly, we ask anyone interested in attending to please stop by the Spirit Hub and sign up for the class.



Valentine's Extravaganza

Later this month, tickets will go on sale for our annual adults only event to be held on Friday (9 Feb), right before the start of Lent. During this event, we will enjoy five rounds of food, five rounds of tasting your choice of wine or non-alcoholic beverages, and five games of bingo, along with door prizes, and this year a 50-50 raffle. The cost will once again be \$12.50 per person. This event is open to all parishioners, their friends, and their family. To purchase your tickets, contact Sharon Jones.



Emails and Text Messages



Just a reminder to carefully check the email addresses and phone numbers (not only the name) of anyone asking you to do something or who is seeking help. This past year has seen a rise in attempts to solicit info and funding by falsely identifying themselves as the church office or Fr Tom. Please know that we will never message you directly for assistance of any kind. If you are unsure of an email or text you receive, that asks for help, money, or announces an event not listed on our parish calendar, please call the office or Fr Tom. DO NOT click on any links the message contains or respond in any way. Doing so may open your computer or phone to hacking by someone with alterative motives. Another practice is a form of ghosting, in which the email or text message appears to be genuine, disguising very small changes they hope you will not notice. Again, we will not reach out to anyone asking for help in this way. If you ever wish to donate to the church, always use a check (either dropped off or mailed only to the church), place cash into the offertory plate, or use the secure link found on our website. To further protect yourself, never give out banking or credit card information over the phone to anyone who asks for help, and never send it to someone via email or text.

First Fridays

The women of the church get together for an informal sack lunch on the First Friday of the month. It is a chance to catch up with friends you don't often see or to get to know someone you don't know. Come join us at noon on the first Friday of the month and bring a sack lunch.



Youth Activities

Christmas Pageant

Thank you to everyone who attended and volunteered for our kids' nativity play this year! It was a bit crazy because of the story and because of many last-minute cast changes. The play was called "A Very Mixed-up Christmas Pageant" by Gwynne Watkins. In this story, the priest had to get someone to run the play during dress rehearsal. Since they couldn't get to the costumes, kids wore Halloween Costumes. In the end everyone learned that it matters more how the people acted than what they looked like. We had Ninja-Turtle wise-men, Wonder Woman Mary, and many more! All of the kids really learned the story of Christ's birth and had a great time! After the service Santa Clause and his wife stopped by for a visit. Merry Christmas everyone!



Christmas Caroling



Just before their Christmas break, our Journeys youth, their mentors, some parents and other youth shared Christmas Carols with the Richmond Senior Living Community. We were blessed to find so many who came to hear us sing, and we did our best to share with them the joy of the Christmas season. Special thanks to Grace Roby and Ali Clark who came out to play the piano and lead us in our caroling.



Sunday School



Our Sunday School program (for grades Kindergarten – 5th grade) will resume meeting this coming Sunday (7 Jan). Our staff appreciates the brief respite and are excited to once again work with our youth. Parents are always welcome to stop by our upstairs classrooms to check out what they are all doing.



Journeys

Having enjoyed their Christmas Break, our Journey's program will resume meeting on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm beginning on 10 Jan. This program is open to all youth 12-18 years old, or in the 6th-12th grade. For more information about this program, please visit with Fr. Tom.



Suicide Prevention Class



On Wednesday (17 Jan) Jennifer Moffett will meet with our youth, and youth from other area Episcopal Church to offer them a class on Suicide Prevention. Jennifer, our former youth leader, offers this class each year talking to our youth on a level they can get their arms around. Parents, and any who are interested in the information Jennifer will offer, are invited to join us that evening to hear what is said. If you would like to join us, please stop by the Spirit Hub and sign up (by Sunday 14 Jan) letting us know if you are going to join us for dinner, the class, or both.

CHS Youth Group Fun

Attention all parish youth 10-18. Our Journeys youth invite you to join them for an evening of fun on Wednesday (24 Jan). Beginning at 6:30 pm, our youth will enjoy not only a tasty meal, but several games of bingo and the chance to win prizes. If you are 10-18, please let us know you are coming by stopping by the Spirit Hub and signing our guest register. Youth are welcome to invite a friend. Just let us know if they are coming by entering their name on the guest register at the Spirit Hub. While there is no cost for this event, we need to know how many are coming by Sunday (21 Jan).



Outreach

Mobile Pantry



We were very thankful for the milder weather during last month's mobile pantry event. Although we could have enjoyed it more if not for the light rain showers that came through about halfway through the event. While our volunteer pool was smaller than usual, we were still able to serve all those who stopped by the weekend before Christmas. Our next pantry is scheduled for Saturday (27 Jan) and during this pantry, in addition to the food we will provide, we will also be distributing laundry detergent to our guests.

Each quarter, we will strive to offer something needed besides just food. In April, our hope is to provide dish washing soap along with a sponge or two to our guests. If you would like to help us financially, please note Outreach Misc in the memo line of your check.



Stockholder's Dinner



We are excited to announce that, on Friday (19 Jan), beginning at 6:30pm, will hold our first stockholder's dinner in several years. Those who purchased shares of stock in support of Marcia Adams should receive an invitation to the dinner in the coming week. If you purchased one or more shares of stock, and do not receive your invitation, please reach out to the office by Wednesday (17 Jan) so that we can plan accordingly. Come enjoy a Dominican inspired dinner and hear about Marcia's experience, along with that of a few of her team members.



Victory Apartments

Beginning this year, we are taking on a new outreach ministry in service to Victory Apartments, a facility that serves homeless veterans. After a brief visit, we learned they are in need of regular pastoral support that understands the challenges of veterans, that



they wish to begin some kind of study program, and that there are items the complex is in regular need of. During Fr Tom's visit, he learned Trinity Cathedral offers a Sunday afternoon service once a month, that the Cathedral provides the complex with 100 dozen eggs each month, and that Moving Veteran's Forward is the main source of furniture and household needs provided to Veterans starting a new life. While we don't have the resources of the Cathedral, this month, we plan to offer residents periodic support, and beginning sometime in February, Fr. Tom will offer the community a weekly/bi-weekly Tuesday study and service. As this new ministry matures, we hope to better understand their needs and how we can help meet them.



Vestry Meeting Minutes

14 Dec 2023

Members Present: Cindy Pekarek, Kristi Smith, Barb Smith, Leslie Nutting, Lori Erickson, & Fr. Tom. Also present, Marcia Adams.

Fr Tom called the meeting to order at 6:30pm, opening with prayer. He then reviewed upcoming events. Cindy said the Pageant was coming together nicely and we were all to expect something a little different this year. Fr Tom discussed the holiday service and office hours and asked members to reach out to the ministry with liaison with to remind team leaders end of year reports will be due to the office by Sunday 14 Jan 24.

Financial Reports

Marcia reviewed our November finances. Our pledge giving was down again in November. The Vestry was reminded that traditionally, those who have been behind in their giving, tend to catch up in December. If this holds true, then we should finish the year with a minimal deficit. It was pointed out however, our income year to date is currently \$10, 880 below our expenses. Our operating expenses in November were largely routine except for the Greeter's ministry which purchased new items for our guest gift bags as the supply was extremely low. Expenses from our funds included are listed below. Marcia also reported that we had another month of positive gains in the Endowment Fund and that it looks like there will be funds available in 2024. Fr Tom noted that we have received several grant requests and he would be passing them on the Endowment Boards for assessment. He also noted that the Vestry will determine the level of funding grants requests receive after the Board reviews the requests and advise the Vestry of total funds available. Judy moved, and Cindy seconded **MO1214-01** to approve the reports as presented. Motion passed by unanimous consent. Lori moved, Leslie seconded **MO1214-02** to pay the bills. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

November Fund expenses:

Camp & Msn Fund	Travel Insurance	58.17
Vicar of Msn Fund	Travel Insurance	58.17
Vicar of Msn Fund	Airfare	1395.84
Altar Guild Fund	New Lectern	56.96
Journeys Fund	Notebook dividers	26.97
Outreach Misc	Cooler (Magdalene Hse)	96.29
Building Fund	Soil/Shelving/bug zappers	157.79
Camp & Msn Fund	DR Msn Trip Hotel	252.50
Oktoberfest	Supplies/prizes	49.34
Outreach Misc	Thanksgiving Baskets	1352.59
Vicar of Msn Fund	Dr Expenses/lang class	991.61
Outreach Misc	Camera/Detergent	365.42
Building Fund	AED Battery & Pads	641.00

Discussion Items

Fr Tom provided the Vestry with a status update on the 2024 pledge drive. There was a total of 60 pledges received. We welcomed five new pledges and received 29 pledge increases. There were 21 pledges that remained the same as the previous year, and five that were decreased. Also noted, was that eight pledges received last year did not return their 2024 pledge card. Overall, we have a 1% increase in parish giving for next year. Vestry members noted that thank you notes were sent and that a few more need to be sent pledges arriving late in the drive.

While Patrick was unable to attend, he did send an update on the Bomba socks study. He has reached out to the company several times and has not yet received any directions. He attempted to reach out to an individual who

supposedly worked with non-profits and his email was returned. Patrick will continue to research to see if this is a potential future ministry opportunity.

Leslie reported that she has met with an local artist and set up an appointment to review our ideas for additional stained glass panels for the sanctuary. Leslie hopes to have more details next month on this project's progress.

Fr Tom shared some info on the proposal to upgrade lighting in the sanctuary. One company has responded with a bid. While the lighting they recommended is beautiful, and would improve light distribution significantly, lighting and installation would run \$25,000. The Vestry has tabled this proposal for the time being until another bid is received. All agreed, we may have to research other alternatives.

There are two individuals currently interested in filling positions that become vacant in February. Vestry members were encouraged to reach out and see if there were any questions the individuals might have. If none, their names will be placed in nomination for our Annual Meeting.

Decision Items

The proposed 2024 parish budget was presented with some changes from the last draft to reflect late pledges and some last minute ministry requests. Lori moved, Cindy seconded **MO1214-03** that the budget be approved as presented. Following a brief discussion, motion passed by unanimous consent.

After budget approval, Fr Tom submitted his Church Pension Group's required resolution. It reads: "Whereas Fr. Tom Jones is employed as minister of the Gospel by Church of the Holy Spirit, in Bellevue, NE., which does not provide a residence for him, the Vestry resolves that of the total compensation of \$78,027 to be paid to Rev. Jones, during 2024, that \$40,200 be designates as housing allowance with the meaning and that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Cond of 1986; and be it further resolved, that \$40,200 of compensation is designated as housing allowance for this and all future years, unless otherwise provided." It was noted that the only change to this resolution, when compared to the one approved for 2022, is that it includes a 1% increase in total compensation. Judy seconded **MO1214-04** as presented. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

The Vestry reviewed the proposed parish calendar and outreach plan for 2024. It was noted that neither the Christmas Pageant nor last day of Sunday school were included and it was recommended these dates be added. Also noted was a new Outreach ministry we are exploring in the coming year serving veterans living in Victory Apartments. Cindy moved, and Leslie seconded **MO1214-05** the calendars be approved as amended. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Fr Tom presented the Vestry with a list of funds transfers he wished to make distributing discretionary funds to ministries in need.

- Move \$3144 from CHS grant fund to Rector Search Fund
- Move \$2000 from Rector's Discretionary Fund to Msn/Camp Scholarship Fund
- Move \$2000 from Rector's Discretionary Fund to CHS College Scholarship Fund
- Move \$2000 from Rector's Discretionary Fund to Parking Lot Fund
- Move \$1000 from Rector's Discretionary Fund to Lighting Fund
- Move \$250 from Rector's Discretionary Fund to Funeral Fund
- Move \$250 from Rector's Discretionary Fund to Kitchen Fund
- Close Roof Repair Fund as it is no loner needed
- Move Adams, Smith, and Brown memorials from Special Fund to Memorial Fund

Kristi oved, Cindy seconded **MO1214-06** to transfer and close funds as requested. After some discussion about the projects these funds are to support, it was decided that the Smith Memorial Fund would remain in the Special Funds at this time. Motion as amended passed by unanimous consent.

With no other business before the Vestry, Judy moved, Cindy seconded **MO1214-07** to adjourn. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Did you know you can contribute to the church just by shopping?

Baker's Rewards

TO ENROLL IN THE COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

Members must visit Baker's website at www.bakersplus.com

- Sign in OR create an account (if you need help, see Sharon)
- Go to "My Account" under your sign in name
- On the Menu list on the left, click on Community Rewards
- Click on Enroll
- Under "Find an Organization", either type in **IB693** or **Church of the Holy Spirit (Episcopal)**
Click on Enroll.



When you shop, make sure to swipe your Plus card or enter the registered phone number. Every time that you purchase qualifying items at Baker's the amount is contributed to Holy Spirit. CHS then is given a percentage allocation of Baker's giving based on the percentage of total purchases by all organizations. The more that our members purchase at Baker's, the larger our share of their giving. Typically, the amount has averaged about \$125 every quarter. Free money!

Also, check your receipts. It should state that "At your request, Bakers is contributing to Church of the Holy Spirit (Episcopal)"



FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Report as of November 30, 2023

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Pledged	\$ 13,857.00	\$ 17,265.92	\$ 180,923.00	\$ 189,925.08
Other Inc.	\$ 1,517.00	\$ 1,962.50	\$ 17,248.75	\$ 20,587.50
Total Inc	\$ 15,374.00	\$ 19,228.42	\$ 198,171.75	\$ 211,512.58
Expenses	\$ 21,794.26	\$ 19,303.83	\$ 209,055.88	\$ 212,342.17
			\$ -10,884.13	

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS!



Happy Epiphany

- Jan 1 - Office Closed
- Jan 5 - First Friday sack lunch - noon
- Jan 7 - Sunday School resumes - 10:45am
- Jan 10 - Journeys resumes - 6:30pm
- Jan 14 - Finance Committee Meeting - 11am
- Jan 17 - Suicide Prevention Class - 6:30pm
- Jan 18 - Vestry Meeting - 6:30pm
- Jan 19 - Stockholder Dinner
- Jan 21 - Inquirer Class begins - 11am
- Jan 24 - Youth / Journey Fun Night
- Jan 27 - Mobile Food Pantry - 10am - 11:30am
- Jan 28 - Annual Parish Meeting - 11am



LAY MINISTRIES SCHEDULE

Ministries	Jan 7	Jan 14	Jan 21	Jan 28
VPOD	Ken G	Kristi S	Barb S	Patrick H
Hospitality Team 9:30 am <i>Greeters, Ushers & Coffee Hour Host</i>	Team 3	Team 4	Team 1	Team 2
Altar Guild	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4
Spirit Hub				
Altar Bread	Ryan M	Ryan M	Ryan M	Ryan M
Recycle Team	Jan S	Marcia A	Lynda W	Karen G
LEM Saturday 5:00 pm	Charlott A	TBA	TBA	TBA
LEM Sunday 8:00 am	Doug A	TBA	TBA	TBA
LEM Sunday 9:30 am	Lori E Anika S	TBA	TBA	TBA
Acolytes Crucifer Torch Torch	Isaiah J H Mya H MacKenzie C	Evelynn C Vincent C Mya H	Isaiah C H Olivia H MacKenzie C	Kyper M Vincent C Ailynn M

Please submit articles for the February 2024 FLAME to the church office by January 22st. Thank you



Like Us!
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Regular Services:

Sunday: 8:00am Holy Eucharist Rite I
9:30 am Holy Eucharist Rite II *
Wednesday: 9:30 am Holy Eucharist *
Saturday: 5:00 pm Holy Eucharist
* Broadcast live on Facebook

Education: September- May

Sunday: Sunday School @ 10:30 am
Wednesday: Bible Study @ 10:15 am
Journeys to Adulthood @ 6:30 pm

Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 9:00 am–3:00 pm
Friday: 9:00 am–Noon

Rector's Day Off:

Friday

The Flame is a monthly production of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Episcopal, in Bellevue, Nebraska. We welcome all stories, pictures, and suggestions, but must reserve the right to choose what we can print. Please send articles and pictures to CHS Admin at holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org. The next deadline for submitting news is December 20st.

Webpage: www.chsepiscopal.org

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The Flame
Newsletter of The Church of the Holy Spirit - Episcopal
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