



The Flame

February 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.

Annual Meeting

Last month we held our annual parish meeting. Special thanks to the Vestry for providing the amazing brunch and all those who stuck around afterwards to help with the clean-up. Besides thanking Ken Gomeringer and Leslie Nutting, who were stepping down from the Vestry as their terms ended, we welcomed two new members to the Vestry, Rick Horejs and Vince Cummings Jr. We also elected Cindy Pekarek as the new Senior Warden and Judy Darrell as the Junior Warden. Marcia (our parish Treasurer), and JR Pekarek (President of our Endowment Board) offered us an update on the financial wellbeing of our parish. While we finished 2023 with a slight deficit, thanks to the generosity of parish members, 2024 prospects look very good. Other items discussed included the possible return of the common cup during communion, the development of a new funeral ministry team, along with the need to paint the outside of the church, make parking lot repairs, and upgrade our online broadcasting capabilities. Before adjourning the meeting, Fr Tom announced that he would be retiring in June of 2025 and Ken Gomeringer shared a brief summary of the search process that will begin in the near future.



Fr. Tom's Tidbits



Tidbits

As many of you know, I have been talking about my potential retirement for several months. After much prayer, and discussion with the bishop and the Vestry, I announced my planned retirement from full-time parish ministry during our Annual Meeting. Typically, when clergy announce retirement, they leave very soon afterwards. What often follows is about 18 months of turmoil as the parish deals with part-time pastoral care during their search for a new priest. This can be a very tumultuous time in the life of a parish and generally results in an interruption in the work of many of the ministries the parish is involved in.

Our bishop has learned that when a parish is healthy and thriving, when they enjoy a good relationship with their clergy, and the clergy are willing, conducting the search while the retiring clergy remains in place has been very beneficial for both the parish and retiring clergy. Since we meet these criteria, the bishop gladly offered this opportunity to me and the Vestry. It was an easy decision for us to make. Looking 18 months into the future, my planned retirement will be June of 2025, with Sunday 22 Jun 2025 being my last projected service.

Some have asked what I will do after I retire. My first answer, is to spend time with Sharon. For the last 48 years, time for Sharon has often taken second place to the demands of military and clerical life. Our hope is to travel and see some of the places we have always wanted to. My second answer is that I plan to continue being part of the mission and pilgrimage efforts of the diocese, both in the Dominican Republic and regionally with youth. Our home will remain here in Omaha, so there is a real good chance we will run into each other time and again.

Now, just because I have announced my retirement, doesn't mean I am going to sit back and wait for it to happen. We have a lot to do between now and then, and with God's help we will get it all done, making the transition as seamless as possible. There will be time later for farewells. Until then, we will continue to strive to be a place where people meet Christ and grow in their relationship with God through our worship, service, and fellowship.

Father Tom



The office will be closed Monday,
19 Feb for Presidents Day

**HAVE YOU
TALKED
TO GOD
TODAY?**

Parish Life

A Note from our Senior Warden

Now that Father Tom has officially announced his retirement, we will begin moving ahead with the search process. The vestry will soon meet with Canon Liz Easton who will direct the process. The vestry and the yet to be formed search committee will be in regular contact with her throughout the search process.



Our initial steps will be the selection the search committee chair(s), selection of committee members, and putting together a parish profile. Any parishioner interested in serving on the committee will be able to put their name forward. It was recommended by the Diocese, that members selected will be representative of all aspects of the parish. Those who have been here a long time and those who are new. Men and women. Those who love change and those who love things staying as they are. Representatives from each service. Once the committee has been selected, the search for our new rector will move forward as we search for the best match for our parish. This is a lengthy process which will take 18-20 months. The good news is that Father Tom will be with us the entire time to lead our church family, thereby helping make our transition as smooth as possible.

Inquirer's Class



Did you miss the first meeting of our Inquirer's Class? If so, no problem. During our first meeting we looked briefly at our church history. Beginning on Sunday (11 Feb) we will begin exploring the vows we make during baptism and how we live them out in the world today, as Christians, as Episcopalians, and as members of Church of the Holy Spirit. Classes will meet every other week, in the conference room, beginning at 11:00am. A calendar of classes and the material we will cover can be found on the chapel hallway bulletin board. For more information, please contact Fr Tom or just stop in to join the discussion.



Shrove Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday is just around the corner. On Tuesday (13 Feb) we will hold our annual pancake dinner between 5-7pm. We invite everyone to stop by for some tasty treats and fellowship. Please bring any palms you have from last year. The palms collected will be burned and used for ashes on Ash Wednesday. This year, for those who don't want pancakes, we will also offer some (hopefully tasty and not too spicy) chili. Proceeds from the free will offering will go to support the ministry of Magdalene Omaha.



ASH WEDNESDAY Worship

On Ash Wed (14 Feb) there will be three services during which we will offer the imposition of ashes. The first two services will be held in the chapel (in the sanctuary if we have a large turnout) at 9:30am and Noon. You can enter through either the red parking lot doors or the blue office/chapel door on Thomas Dr. Between 6-7pm, our Journeys youth will offer a simple soup supper in the parish hall.

Our evening service will be held in the Sanctuary beginning at 7pm. If you are unable to attend any of the three services, and desire the imposition of ashes, ashes will be available curbside at the parking lot doors. Please watch the announcement for times. You may also call the office to schedule a time that works.

Valentines Extravaganza



It is not too late to buy tickets for our Valentine's Extravaganza (Fri., 9 Feb beginning at 7pm). This event has limited seating, so if you have not yet purchased your ticket, or reserved your seating, please contact, or visit with, Sharon Jones by this coming Sunday (4 Feb). Our evening includes five rounds of food and bingo with tastings each round of wine or other non-alcoholic beverages.

Ministry Team Leader Meeting

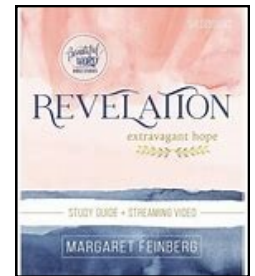
On Saturday (24 Feb) following our Pantry event, Ministry Team Leaders are asked to join Fr Tom at 11:30am for the Spring Team Leader meeting. During this meeting we will be discussing development of continuity binders that tell ministry teams and leaders more about what they do, how they do it, and important contacts associated with the different ministries. We will also review the successes and challenges faced in supporting the Spirit Hub, as well as how we might better highlight the role our ministries have in the life of our parish.



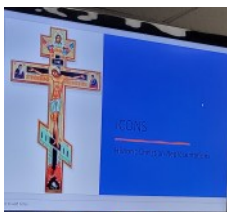
Lent Program 2024

Beginning Sunday (18 Feb), our Sunday evening Lenten Soup and Study will resume starting with a shared soup supper at 5pm, followed by a study beginning at 5:45pm. As in the past, our goal is to wrap things up by 7pm. This year's study will be on the Book of Revelation, following up the questions raised during last year's Lenten study on the formulation of the New Testament.

Using Margaret Feingold's six session DVD study, we will explore how the final book of the Bible is a survival guide for the suffering, a book of promises for the persecuted, and a banner of hope for the beaten down and how it is a reminder for us of God's power and promises during times of great suffering and persecution. Looking at the descriptive and poignant expressions of the place, the end, and the eternity that God has promised to us, Margaret wants us to see that God has indeed saved the best for last, and that while life is not always fair, Jesus is NOT finished. Sign up sheets are located at the Spirit Hub to let us know if you would like to bring soup, bread, or dessert. To watch an intro offered by Margaret to our study, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEwLkhDFtC8>



Daughters of the King



During the DOK's January Meeting, Father Michael gave the chapter a presentation on Icons. Father Michael, who is Barb Smith's husband, is an Orthodox priest serving at St. Vincent of Lerins Church in Omaha. In his presentation, Father Michael explained some significance of colors found in icons, the difference between veneration and adoration, and when icons were allowed according to the Ecumenical Councils. The chapter also learned about the Orthodox church and their beliefs.



CHS Songbooks

Special thanks to our Daughters of the King ministry team. Following their meeting, several were able to help us insert new music into our Songbooks. Thanks to those who offered suggestions of songs to be added. Some we noted were already available in our current hymnals (and will be added to our worship over the next year) some there were copyright issues our current license did not cover, and a few we were able to add. The Songbooks should be back in the pew later this month.



Youth Activities

Lock-in

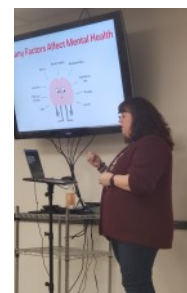
Our annual New Year's Eve lock-in was a great success. We were blessed with the opportunity to provide childcare, between 7pm and 1am, for 11 youth. All proceeds from providing childcare went to support youth camp and mission scholarships. Our senior high youth did an excellent job preparing dinner and organizing games and activities for both while the younger youth were present, and for the hours afterwards. Special thanks to the adults who helped chaperone, Sharon Jones, Barb Smith, Jan Sinram, Rick & Amber Horejs, and Jon Nelson,



Suicide Prevention



Once again we welcomed Jennifer Moffett to Journeys to talk with our youth, and the parents present, about suicide prevention. While for some, the message is the same, as Jennifer pointed out, every once in a while we need a refresher, and the fact that it is remembered as the same, is good. For others, it was the first-time hearing what she talked about, and that was good as well. We want to thank Jennifer and the youth group from St Augustine's who joined us that evening. It was a great time for some to reconnect with friends made previously at camp or on mission.



Youth Bingo

The week following our discussion about suicide prevention, it was time to have a little fun. Our Journeys youth, along with some of their friends, enjoyed a night of fun, food, and fellowship. After dinner, we played three rounds of bingo, during which our youth were able to win some really fun, and tasty, prizes. Special thanks to Marcia who organized dinner, and to mentors who donated prizes.



The Bridge

Our Journeys youth will watch the movie “The Bridge” during their meeting on Wed (28 Feb). This 20-minute movie offers a powerful message that has ties to the message of Holy Week. We invite anyone who wishes to join us to do so. Please stop by the Spirit Hub and sign-up to let us know if you are coming for dinner (at 6:30pm) or for just the movie (at 7:00pm). Following the movie, we will break into age-appropriate groups to discuss the message it shares. The night will end with Compline at 8:00pm, followed by a snack to go.



Sunday School

Sunday School Curriculum: January-May 2024

This semester we will be bringing the New Testament to life! The kids will have stories, games, crafts, and more to ‘plant the seeds’ of God’s word. I wrote this curriculum with our kids & teachers in mind. It should be fun for everyone! We are always happy to have volunteers! We will need help to create our Vacation Bible School as summer gets closer. Please check with Cindy or Mrs. Cook to see what our Kids Ministry needs help with!

-Cindy Pekarek, Christian Ed. Director

Sunday School Calendar:

February

14- Ash Wednesday

18- First Sunday in Lent

March

24-Palm Sunday: Food of Jesus-Families Welcome

31-EASTER: Egg Hunt follows 9:30am service

April

7-Youth Sunday 9am

May

5-Recognition Sunday-9:30 Service

12-Last Day of Sunday School for the summer

June

24-27th-Vacation Bible School Ages 4-11 6-8pm

Youth Sunday

April 7th-9:00am

Youth Sunday will be the week after Easter. This is a great time for our youth to try out some traditionally adult roles in the church. We invite kids Preschool-High School to participate! There will be a brief rehearsal at 9am before the service to get our ducks in a row. Please see Cindy, Mrs. Cook, or Fr. Tom with questions.

Outreach

Mobile Pantry

Last month's pantry enjoyed the break we had in the harsh winter weather. It was still cold, but compared to the previous two weeks, it felt like a heat wave. Once again we served the community by providing food for 125 households. We continued our effort, began last year, to provide once each quarter some type of household assistance. This quarter, we also provided each household with three individually size boxes of laundry



detergent (enough for three loads). We know that is not much, but we know it was greatly appreciated. Next quarter (in April) we hope to offer dish soap and sponges to our guests. Do you have an idea of a household help we could offer? If so, let Fr Tom know. Volunteers for our pantry events are always welcome.



Red Cross

The Red Cross Bloodmobile will be here at CHS on Saturday (3 Feb) between 8am and 2pm. If you have questions, please contact Carol McLaughlin. You can reserve a time for donating blood, by visiting the Red Cross website at <https://www.redcrossblood.org>, Enter our zip code 68005 in the "Find a Blood Drive" window, hit return, then scroll down until you see Church of the Holy Spirit. We would love to once again fill all of our allotted time slots. Please help make a difference and donate.



CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



"Its from our church... we've been called up for active duty."



Mission DR Stockholder's Dinner

Last month we held a stockholder's dinner as a way of saying thank you to all who purchased shares of stock in Marcia's mission trip to the Dominican Republic. Marcia prepared a classic Dominican meal and the stockholders enjoyed seeing



pictures and hearing stories about the trip from Marcia, Fr Tom and another member of the Team, Ashley Crossman of St Andrew's. Besides the great food, pictures, and stories, there was also a drawing for several door prizes that included hand painted nativities along with items that highlighted the Dominican culture. With our several trips this year, we encourage everyone to support our teams by purchasing shares of stock.

DioNeb Dominican Team



We are currently forming our team to participate in DioNeb's next pilgrimage to the Dominican Republic. During this adult trip, we will return to Mission Santa Anna to worship with and continue the work we have been doing to help restore a church and its associated buildings. The dates for our trip are 13-19 Apr. A passport is needed. Parish members who wish to attend can receive a \$500 scholarship to help offset the cost. For more details, please speak with Fr Tom.

DioNeb Dominican Youth Mission



Plans are underway for two youth opportunities to serve in the Dominican Republic. The first will be the week of Sat (29 Jun) – Fri (5 Jul). This trip will be for youth 12-15, accompanied by a parent or guardian. We will work out of the Diocesan Camp near Jarabacoa. We expect to be working projects both in the camp and in the local community. Our second trip will be the week of Sat (6 Jul) - Fri (12 Jul). This trip is for youth 16-20 and will also work in and around the Diocesan camp. Passports are needed for both trips. Those interested who would like to know more about fundraising should speak with Fr Tom. Scholarship funds are available for CHS members who wish to attend either of these trips.



Vestry Meeting Minutes

18 Jan 2024

Vestry Members present: Fr. Tom Jones, Leslie Nutting, Lori Erickson, Judy Darrell, Ken Gomeringer, Barb Smith. Also present: Marcia Adams, Carol McLaughlin

The meeting was opened at 6:35 PM with prayer.

INFORMATION / UPDATES: Fr. Tom went over the calendar for the upcoming month. Next week he will be at the Dio-Neb Clergy Retreat. He leaves Tuesday afternoon and will be gone for the remainder of the week. Blood Drive is coming up Feb. 3, Carol reported that 14 of the 20 appointments are filled.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Marcia reviewed the December finance reports. Our YTD total contribution income came in at 98.76%. This was an updated report due to a correction made to Rector expenditures; any unused Sabbatical and Professional Development not used gets put into his Fr. Tom's fund to be used at another point in time. Nothing else out of ordinary in this report. Fr. Tom pointed out that although the report shows YTD we came in at -\$3154.07, this does not reflect a late contribution of \$900. So, we are actually closer to \$2,000 in the hole instead of \$3,000. Marcia also commented that the ministry teams did a good job and came in close to budget overall. The Changes in Equity report shows all of the changes that were approved at the December Vestry Meeting. Balance Sheet reviewed: Total Available Assets are \$696,959.39. **M01-18-01:** Judy moved and Lori seconded that we accept the reports as presented. Motion passed with unanimous approval. **M01-18-02:** Judy moved and Barb seconded that we pay the bills. Motion passed with unanimous approval.

Fr. Tom presented the Designated Funds Expense for approval:

FUND	PURPOSE	AMOUNT
Vicar of Mission	Language Training	508.92
Holiday Fair	Advertising	24.00
Youth Fund	Gift Cards	325.00
Building Fund	Driveway markers	39.80

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Leslie updated on the stained glass windows. She met with the artist and discussed design for a panel incorporating a dove. Also discussed a design incorporating a chalice. He will need 20% down up front, then when sketches approved an additional 50%. He said they could be done by late April or May.

Two more delegates are needed for the Dio-Neb Annual Council which will be October 24 – 26 in Hastings. Lori and Leslie said they would like to go as delegates. They will be in addition to Michele and Corey Hagen. Judy volunteered to serve as an alternate.

Fr. Tom handed out copies of his annual rector's report showing attendance at all services for 2023. Principal Services average was 93, which is close to pre-pandemic average.

Proposed dates for the Vestry Retreat are March 8 and 9. Members should let Fr. Tom know if those dates work so he can firm it up. Plan is for the retreat to be held here at CHS.

DECISION ITEMS:

Fr. Tom handed out copies of the 2024 Budget – Approved Amendment 1. The amendment was necessary because we received a last-minute pledge which increased the pledge offering and reduced the non-pledge amount. The pledged amount was more than originally entered as non-pledge. The budget comes in at -\$1256 which is improved from previously. **M01-18-03:** Lori moved and Leslie seconded to accept the Amended Budget as presented. Motion passed with unanimous approval.

Grant Requests: The Endowment Board received a total of 12 Grant Requests. All 12 were approved having met the Endowment Board's criteria. The original requests totaled \$20,100. The total grant money available is \$22,381.

Fr. Tom is recommending that the requests be changed as follows:

PURPOSE	AMOUNT REQUESTED	RECOMMENDED
Computers	2,600	500
Parking Lot	1,500	2,500
Sanctuary Lighting	2,500	2,500
Painting Church (exterior)	2,000	3,500
Rector Search	4,000	4,500
Adult DR Scholarships	1,500	2,000
Youth DR Scholarships	2,000	2,000
Youth Camp Scholarships	1,500	2,000
Magdalene Omaha	1,000	1,000
Ted Powell Dcn Training	500	500
Terri Storm Dcn Training	500	500
Bellevue Together	500	500
TOTAL REQUESTED	20,100	22,000
TOTAL AVAILABLE	22,381	22,381
BALANCE	2,281	381

The amount for computers was reduced because there was a previous grant authorized and an additional \$2,600 is not needed. Discussion followed on some of the grants requested. **M01-18-04:** Judy moved and Lori seconded the recommended changes. Motion passed with unanimous approval.

There will be a ministry team meeting coming up and vestry members are encouraged to attend. One thing we need each ministry to do is continuity planning. In case of the loss of a key member of the ministry this will allow for a seamless transition. We will be forming a Funeral Ministry team, and a sign-up sheet will be handed out at the Annual Meeting requesting volunteers to sign up for one or more of the functions: Set-up, Cooking, Baking, Kitchen, or Clean-up.

Canon Liz cannot come to our Vestry Retreat. She offered two alternate dates to come and speak to the Vestry: at our March Vestry Meeting or Sunday February 18 in the afternoon. After discussion it was agreed to have her come to the March meeting. We will have our meeting from 5:30 to 6:30 and Canon Liz will meet with us from 6:30 to 7:30.

Of the outgoing Vestry Members, either Judy or Leslie can take on the Junior Warden duties. They will decide between themselves who will assume this position and let Fr. Tom know before the Annual Meeting on Sunday.

Judy stated that the Gift Shop has grant money available for ministries to request. Fr. Tom suggested that purchasing household items to give away at Mobile Pantries might be a good use for this money.

M01-18-05: Ken moved and Lori seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed with unanimous approval.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Report as of December 31, 2023

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Pledged	\$ 24,523.00	\$ 17,265.92	\$ 205,446.00	\$ 207,191.00
Other Inc.	\$ 3,312.00	\$ 1,962.50	\$ 20,560.75	\$ 23,550.00
Total Inc	\$ 27,835.00	\$ 19,228.42	\$ 226,006.75	\$ 230,741.00
Expenses	\$ 20,104.94	\$ 19,303.83	\$ 229,160.82	\$ 231,646.00
			\$ - 3,154.07	

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS!

Feb 02 - First Friday Sack Lunch - noon
 Feb 03 - Red Cross Blood Drive - 9am to 2 pm
 Feb 04 - Pancake breakfast after services
 Feb 09 - Valentine's Extravaganza - 7pm
 Feb 11 - Finance Committee Meeting - 11am
 Feb 11 - Inquirers Class - 11am
 Feb 13 - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner - 5pm to 7pm
 Feb 14 - Ash Wednesday - 9:30 am, noon, & 7pm
 Feb 15 - Vestry Meeting - 6:30pm
 Feb 18 - Lenten Soup Supper and Program - 5pm
 Feb 24 - Mobil Food Pantry - 10am to 11:30 am
 Feb 24 - Ministry Team Leaders Meeting - 11:30
 Feb 25 - Inquirers Class - 11am
 Feb 25 - Lenten Soup Supper and Program - 5pm



LAY MINISTRIES SCHEDULE

Ministries	Feb 4	Feb 11	Feb 18	Feb 25
VPOD	Judy D	Lori E	Leslie N	Cindy P
Hospitality Team 9:30 am Greeters ,Ushers & Coffee Hour Host	Team 3	Team 4	Team 1	Team 2
Altar Guild	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4
Spirit Hub	Jean C / Karen G	Ted P	Sue P / Barb S	Katarina K
Altar Bread	Leslie N	Leslie N	-	-
Recycle Team	Jan S	Marcia A	Jan S	Karen G
LEM Saturday 5:00 pm	Brian C	Kristi S	Charlotte A	Kathy B / Toby W
LEM Sunday 8:00 am	Doug A	Rick S	Doug A	Rick S
LEM Sunday 9:30 am	Amber H Jan S	Jen W Anika S	Ted P Lori E	Michele H Vince C
Acolytes Crucifer Torch Torch	Isaiah J H Ailynn M MacKenzie C	Vincent C Evelynn C Mya H	Isaiah C H Olivia H MacKenzie C	Olivia H Kyper M Ailynn M

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



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February



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 February 22nd.

Webpage: www.chsepiscopal.org

Email: holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org

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