



The Flame

December 2023

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.



Holiday Service Times



As Advent unfolds and Christmas approaches, we will once again be adding some additional services to celebrate the holidays. This year our Blue Christmas Service will return on Saturday (16 Dec) at 5:00pm. Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. We will not have an 8:00am service that morning. We will offer a simple 9:30service (no music) during which we will celebrate the fourth Sunday of Advent. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day times will be the same as last year. Please plan to join us this Christmas Eve or Day to give thanks for the love God revealed to us with the birth of Jesus. Services identified with an * will also be broadcast live on our Facebook page.



16 Dec	5:00 pm	Blue Christmas *
17 Dec	9:30 am	Eucharist with Christmas Pageant *
24 Dec	8:00 am	No Service
24 Dec	9:30 am	Simple Service (Advent 4) *
24 Dec	5:00 pm	Christmas Eve (Eucharist)
24 Dec	7:00 pm	Christmas Eve (Rite 2) *
24 Dec	10:00 pm	Christmas Eve (Rite 1)
25 Dec	10:00 am	Christmas Day (Rite 2) *
31 Dec	8:00 am	Eucharist (Rite 1)
31 Dec	9:30 am	Eucharist (Rite 2) *



Fr. Tom's Tidbits



This year has flown by, and it is hard to believe Christmas is once again just around the corner. With Thanksgiving behind us, and an early Easter (31 Mar) before us, we are getting ready for a very busy, and blessed, four months. During our Hospitality and Worship Committee meeting last month, it was hard not to notice the long list of special services needing to be planned for. Come April, I think we will all be ready to take a deep breath and offer a sigh of relief.

As I look back over this past year, there are some real blessings for us to give thanks for, not only as a parish, but as individuals as well. One blessing I wish to share is God's help in sorting out a personal struggle I have been dealing with for the last couple of years; that is the decision of if, and when, to retire from full-time parish ministry. As many of you know, I felt drained by the pandemic, both personally and spiritually. I really didn't know what I would do. Our pilgrimage to the Holy Land helped me realize, that despite my fatigue and frustrations, I was not alone as I thought, God was with me, and through the prayers along our journey, I found a renewed strength to continue; for how much longer I did not know. This year, God helped me answer this question.

My intention is to retire in 2025, most likely no later than the end of June. As alluded to in last month's issue of The Flame, our Vestry has met with the Bishop to discuss the options before us. With the healthy nature of our parish family, the bishop has endorsed a search for my successor while I remain here, serving the community I so dearly love. This is another real blessing. Our parish life will continue uninterrupted, thereby allowing us time to work together to shore up the areas needing attention in order to make for a smooth transition, avoiding the typical disruptions that occur when a long-term interim is used.

Over the next few months, our Vestry will be asking for your help in forming a search committee to do the work needing to be done. Once committee co-chairs have been identified, and the committee is formed, they will then take the lead in collecting the thoughts and prayers of this community, as the process unfolds.

I know my decision to retire is not welcomed by all, and part of me is not ready to do so. But another part of me feels that the time is right. To coin a military phrase, I do not intend on being ROAD (retired on active duty). There is still a lot to do; and my hope is that, together, we will continue to keep moving forward, sharing in a mission and ministry that offers hope to all; a mission and ministry inaugurated by the incarnation we celebrate later this month. May we all share in a blessed and joy-filled celebration. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Father Tom

The office will be closed December 25th and 26th for Christmas and a day of rest.

The office will also be closed January 1st for New Years Day.



**Happy
Holidays!**

Parish Life

Clean up day



A heartfelt thank you to all who showed up to help with our Fall parish clean-up. A lot was done to spruce up the place and prepare ourselves for the upcoming change in weather. There are still some projects we need to get done. If you have a little spare time on your hands and would like to help out, please visit with Dean Olander or Chris Darrell.

2024 Estimates of Giving

If you have not yet submitted your 2024 Estimate of Giving Card, please do so as soon as possible. We are trying to finalize our 2024 budget and are currently falling short of our goal.



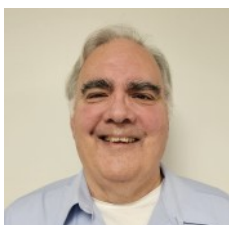
Beautifying the Church



Last month the Altar Guild spent a morning polishing the brass and fluffing greenery in preparation for the upcoming Holiday Season. It was a morning of joyous work filled with friendship, laughter and some doughnuts.



Another Deacon in the making



I am excited to share the good news that the Bishop has been granted permission by the National Church to welcome Ted Powell into the Deaconate of the Episcopal Church. As many of you are aware, Ted came to us a Deacon in the wider Anglican Church. While it has been a long road getting to this point in time, and there is still much Ted will need to do before his clerical orders are blessed, the end is in sight. Please keep Ted and his family in your prayers as he continues his journey in faith.

LEV Commissioning

Last month, we celebrated the ministry of our Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEV), commissioning them for the work they will do. The primary role of Lay Eucharistic Visitors is to extend pastoral care and Holy Eucharist to those in our parish family unable to attend worship due to health or life circumstance. If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, or you would like an LEV to visit, please contact the church office



Advent Workshop



Last month, our Christian Ed staff offered our annual pre-Advent workshop. Youth and adults assembled various crafts to include Advent Wreaths, Nativities, and an Angel Ornament. Special thanks to Cindy, Jean, Anika, Kathy and Jon for organizing and conducting this event. There was glue and good cheer everywhere!

Thanksgiving Eve



This year's pre-holiday gathering was well attended and enjoyed by all. Besides the blessed worship we shared, we hung the greenery and feasted on pie. A special thanks to those who helped make the night such a success, especially our altar guild who spent several hours ahead of time fluffing the greenery as it was taken out of storage, and to those who shared their favorite pies.



Craft and Bake Sale



It is once again time for our annual Christmas Craft Fair and Bake Sale. We hope you are able to stop by the church on Saturday (2 Dec) between 9am and 3pm to do a little holiday shopping. We are blessed to have some returning vendors, and are excited to welcome some new ones as well. If you have some time to volunteer, it is not too late to let Karen Gray know. Just give her a call, or call the office. You can also drop off any items you have for the bake sale, either Friday (1 Dec) or the morning of 2 Dec.



Blue Christmas



Our Blue Christmas service will return this year on Saturday (16 Dec). The service will begin at 5:00pm and is intended to lift up and offer hope to those who struggle this time of year to embrace the holiday's joy.



Christmas Pageant



Our youth group Christmas Pageant will take place during our 9:30 am service on Sunday (17 Dec). This is always a joyous event and one not to miss. Starting November 26th Sunday School (10:30am) will have been learning the Christmas story and preparing the Nativity Play during Sunday School. This is after the 9:30am service each week. Children can participate even if they cannot make it to rehearsals; please let Cindy (circlecnp@gmail.com) know so she can plan.

We are looking for some adults and older youth to help with the nativity. We will have props, scenery, and a couple of speaking parts that might work better with an older reader. Please let Cindy know if you are interested in helping. If many people volunteer, most people will not have to be there every week.

Please plan to join us in-person or online to hear the Christmas story as told by our youth.

Annual Ministry Reports

Attention all Ministry Team Leaders. It is once again that time of the year to begin pulling together your end of year reports for the Annual Parish Meeting. Please submit a short description of the work your ministry did this past year, along with some hopes for next. We request that all reports be forwarded to the office (holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org) no later than Sunday (14 Jan 24) so that a draft report is available for review the following Sunday (21 Jan). If you have any questions, please contact Jean Cook at the office.



Clarkson Scholarships



Please check out the updated information on Clarkson College Scholarships offered to students enrolling in one of their programs. A copy of their letter has been posted on the Chapel Hallway bulletin board. Please feel free to take a picture or to ask for a copy.

Endowment Fund Grant Requests

Does your ministry have an idea, but not sure how to fund it? If so, stop by the Spirit Hub and pick up one of our Endowment Fund Request forms. All requests for 2024 grants need to be turned into the office by Friday (15 Dec). Our Endowment Board will review all requests and forward those meeting the criteria stated to the Vestry for approval and funding. Grant requests may or may not be funded to the full requested amount based on availability of funds.



Youth Activities

God and Church Presentations

We were excited to present Scouting's God and Country Awards to Vincent & Eveline Cummings and to Mya Horejs. Thank you to our youth for their commitment and to Jean Cook who assisted our youth in their preparation.



Journeys Break

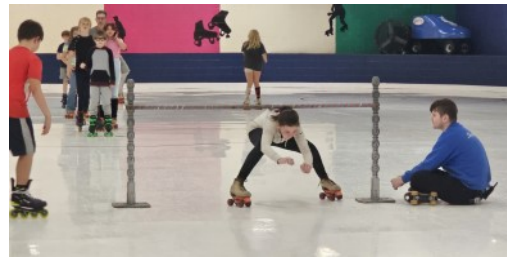


Journeys will take a holiday break (27 Dec-3Jan). They will resume meeting on Wednesday 10 Jan. Parents, and those interested, on Wednesday (17 Jan) Jennifer Moffett will be here to offer our youth a class on Suicide Prevention. All are welcome to join in and hear what she has to say. If parents plan to join us for dinner, please let know by signing up at the Spirit Hub



Roller Skating

As always, this is a fun night. While our youth skated, parents got to visit and get to know one another better. A few even put on a pair of skates and gave the rink a try. Our next youth group event is our New Year's Eve Lock-in.



Youth Group Lock-in

Our youth are getting ready for our Annual New Year's Eve Lock-in and Child Care service. The lock-in will begin with a shared meal at 6:00pm and is open to all parish youth 10-18. It will end at 8:00am on New Year's Day. In addition to spending all night at the church, our youth (under supervision) will also provide child-care for youth 3-9 years of age between 7:00pm and 1:00am. Please stop by the Spirit Hub to let us know if you are able to help us chaperone this event, if youth will be attending, or if there are youth needing Childcare. Permission slips can be found at the Spirit Hub and must accompany youth to this event.



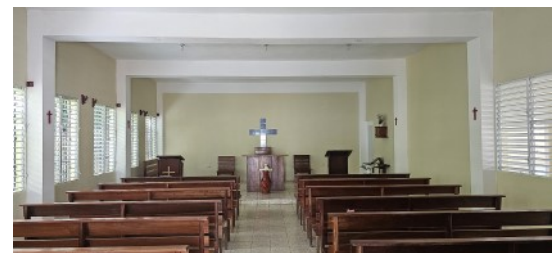
Outreach

Mission Santa Ana



Our team had another very successful trip. Again, painting was a large part of what they were asked to help with. In addition to the painting, they also worked alongside parishioners and members of the community to clear the church grounds of both trash and abundant overgrowth. Our next trip to Mission Santa Ana is planned for 13-19 April. To learn

more about how you can take part in the work we do in the DR, please visit with Fr Tom.



Thanksgiving Baskets

The Bellevue Food Pantry was excited to learn we had pulled together 30 Thanksgiving Boxes for the holiday season. Each box contained 2 boxes of stuffing, 1 box of Chicken broth, 2 cans of green beans, 2 cans corn, 1 lg can of yams, 2 boxes of Jiffy Cornbread Mix, 1 box brownie mix, 1 can cranberry sauce, 2 packages of potatoes and turkey gravy, 1 lg roasting pan with baking bag, and a \$20 gift card for the protein of their choice. Thank you to all who made this gift to the local community a possibility.



Mobile Pantry



Last month's mobile pantry was a huge success. We ran out of product at 11:00. Thankfully, only a few people stopped by after we ran out, and we were able to direct them to where they could find out about other pantries in the coming week. Thanks to all our scouts who joined in to help make the holidays a little better for those in need. Our next pantry is scheduled for

Saturday (16 Dec). We don't have any scouts to help that weekend, so volunteers are needed.



DOK Care Packages



On the morning of November 2nd, the members of Holy Spirit's Daughters of the King chapter met in the parish hall to accomplish 2 things. The first was to remove several songs and the index from the CHS Songbook, which will be replaced in the future. The second was to pack College Boxes. Nineteen total boxes were filled with chips, peanut butter sandwich crackers, fruit snacks, granola bars, microwave popcorn, other goodies, a CHS coffee mug and leftover Halloween candy. Fifteen college students are affiliated with Holy



Spirit plus one new military member--our former organist, Julie Neish. The DOK were asked by the diocese's Commission on Ministry to fill 3 boxes so that they could be sent to the 3 seminarians in the diocese who will be taking their General Ordination Exams (GOEs) in January.

Hands of Hope

If you picked up a Hands of Hope Gift Request, please return it, with the unwrapped gift, by Sunday (3 Dec). We must deliver all gifts to Bellevue Together on Monday (4 Dec) for sorting and wrapping.



Ministries	Blue Christmas Dec. 16, 5pm	Christmas Eve Dec. 24, 5 pm	Christmas Eve Dec. 24, 7 pm	Christmas Eve Dec. 24, 10 pm	Christmas Morning
Altar Guild	Barb S, Sue P, Leslie N	Kathy B, Leslie N	Barb S	Jan S Carol M	Barb S, Sue P, Carol M, Sharon J,
Greeters	Barb S & Girls	Barb S	Pam C Bill F	Barb S & Girls	Barb S
Ushers		Lora C Doug C	Casey M Ryan M	Chris D	Sharon J
LEM	Charlotte A Brian C	Ted P Doug A.	Rick S Carol S	Brian C	Ted P
Acolytes Crucifer Torch Torch	Vincent C	Isaiah C H Olivia H Mya H	Kyper M Vincent C Ailynn M	MacKenzie C	Isaiah J H

Vestry Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2023

Members present: Ken Gomeringer, Barb Smith, Kristi Smith, Judy Darrell, Patrick Howell, Fr Tom, and Marcia Adams.

Fr Tom offered an opening prayer at 6:30 pm, after which the Vestry looked over and discussed upcoming parish events.

Marcia led a review of the October Financial Reports. Marcia noted that while our total income for the year is down \$10,000 from what was budgeted, we are only \$4,463 in the red, as some of our expenses have been less than anticipated. There were some higher than normal ministry expenses but all, with the exception of Greeters, fell within their annual budget plan. Greeters had an unexpected expense in the purchase of replacement items for the guest gift bags.

Marcia next reviewed the Funds expenditures for Oct. Movement was noted in the Oktoberfest fund, the Outreach Misc Fund, Mission Fund, Deacon Professional Support Fund and Rector Discretionary Funds. Also noted were the addition of funds given this year for next and a loss in Endowment Fund earnings. Marcia then provided an overview of the balance sheet. We have a total of \$245,880 in cash assets and \$417,456 in our Endowment Fund.

Fr Tom reviewed individual fund expenditures

Oktoberfest Fund	Supplies	291.36
DOK Fund	Notebooks	17.60
Camp & Msn Fund	DR Expense	925.00
Outreach Misc Fund	Moving Vets Fwd	490.36
Deacon Prof Dev Fund	Tuition Assistance	1220.00
Oktoberfest Fund	Decorations/Supplies	108.35
Oktoberfest Fund	Supplies	258.47
Vicar of Msn Fund	Ann Council/Language Class	508.24
Building Fund	Signs/Mulch	129.84
Rector Disc Fund	Family Assistance	57.47
Landscape Fund	Trees & Plants	535.15
Oktoberfest	Supplies	103.84
Outreach Misc Fund	Gift Card	25.00
Camp & Msn Fund	Scholarship	391.00
Vicar of Msn Fund	DR Expense	391.00

Judy moved to accept the reports as presented. Seconded by Barb. **MO111601** passed by unanimous consent. Kristi made a motion to pay the bills. Seconded by Ken. **MO111602** passed by unanimous consent.

Fr Tom presented the latest draft of our 2024 budget. Noted was that we are still missing a number of offerings from members who regularly give leaving the budget with an unexpected deficit. The good news was that our DioNeb faith asking was considerably less than anticipated. Fr Tom said at Annual Council, he saw he had used the wrong year's income to determine the amount and immediately corrected our planned budget. Several Vestry members agreed to send thank you notes to those who have returned their 2024 estimate of giving cards.

The Vestry took a quick look at the 2024 parish and fundraising calendars. They will be reaching out to our various ministries to see if there are any changes.

Off going members Judy Darrell and Leslie Nutting, along with Ken Gomeringer will comprise our 2024 Vestry Nominating Team. They will be canvassing members to see who might be willing to serve on the Vestry following the Annual Parish Meeting.

Patrick asked if there was any update on the 5G tower plan the diocese was engaging in. Fr Tom said that there was not, we are still waiting to hear if we might be on the survey list.

Fr Tom presented the 2024 faith asking letter from the diocese. Judy moved and Ken seconded the motion we accept our full faith asking payable in 10 payments. **MO111503** passed by unanimous consent.

A motion to adjourn was made by Patrick, seconded by Judy. **MO111604** passed by unanimous consent.



FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Report as of October 31, 2023				
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Pledged	\$ 24,241.00	\$ 17,265.92	\$ 167,066.00	\$ 172,659.17
Other Inc.	\$ 1,047.00	\$ 1,962.50	\$ 15,731.75	\$ 19,625.00
Total Inc	\$ 25,288.00	\$ 19,228.42	\$ 182,797.75	\$ 192,284.17
Expenses	\$ 19,413.81	\$ 19,303.83	\$ 187,261.62	\$ 192,038.33
			\$ -4,463.87	

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS!



Dec 1 - Craft Fair & Bake Sale Set-up - 10am
 Dec 2 - Craft Fair & Bake Sale 9am - 3pm
 Dec 8 - First Friday Pot Luck - Noon
 Dec 10 - Finance Committee Meeting - 11am
 Dec 14 - Vestry Meeting - 6:30pm
 Dec 16 - Mobile Food Pantry - 10am - 11:30am
 Dec 16 - Blue Christmas - 5pm
 Dec 17 - Childrens Christmas Pageant - 9:30 service
 Dec 17 - Childrens Christmas Party - 10:45am
 Dec 24 - Rite II - 9:30am Only
 Dec 24 & Dec 31 - No Sunday School
 Dec 24 - Christmas Eve Service 5pm, 7pm & 10pm
 Dec 25 - Christmas Morning Service - 10am
 Dec 31 - New Years Eve Lock-In - 6pm - 8am



LAY MINISTRIES SCHEDULE

Ministries	Dec 3	Dec 10	Dec 17	Dec 24	Dec 31
VPOD	Patrick H	Judy D	Lori E	Leslie N	Cindy P
Hospitality Team 9:30 am Greeters ,Ushers & Coffee Hour Host	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 1	Team 2
Altar Guild	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 1
Spirit Hub	Jennifer W		Jan S	Deanne M	Kathy B
Altar Bread	Leslie N	Leslie N	Leslie N	Leslie N	Leslie N
Recycle Team	Jan S	Marcia A	Lynda W	Karen G	Jean C
LEM Saturday 5:00 pm	Alberta Y	Amber H	Charlotte A	Brian C	Kristi S
LEM Sunday 8:00 am	Rick S	Doug A	Ted P	Doug A	Rick S
LEM Sunday 9:30 am	Lori E Anika S	Grace W Jen W	Anika S Carol S	Vince C Amber H	Michele H Jan S
Acolytes Crucifer Torch Torch	Olivia H Kyper M Ailynn M	Isaiah J H Evelynn C Mya H	Kyper M Ailynn M MacKenzie C		Vincent C Evelynn C Ailynn M

Please submit articles for the
 January 2024 FLAME to the
 church office by December 20st.
 Thank you



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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

Email: holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org

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