



The Flame

February 2026

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.

Mother Margaret is official now!

More photos on page 6 and 7.



Celebration of New Ministry



Thursday, January 22nd we celebrated the new ministry of Mother Margaret at Church of the Holy Spirit. The Bishop, Canon and clergy from surrounding parishes joined our congregation in person and online for a service to officially install our new Rector. In addition to the prayers we offered for Mother Margaret, she knelt in the center of the pews and prayed to be “an instrument of God’s salvation for the people entrusted to her care...” and for God to be with her in the administration of her duties. Individuals representing various ministries also presented Mother Margaret with gifts to aid her in the work to which God calls her. It was a beautiful service in which we were able to celebrate an answered call.

- PRAYER IN FEBRUARY 2026 -

During February our Episcopal prayers focus on the transition from the Epiphany season to Lent (beginning Feb 18), featuring themes of light, service, and repentance. Key observances include the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (Feb 8), on being "salt and light," and Ash Wednesday (Feb 18) marking the beginning of Lent.



EPISCOPAL PRAYER THEMES & LITURGIES: · Epiphany 5 (Feb 8, 2026): Prayers focus on themes of light and social justice, based on Isaiah 58 and Matthew 5, encouraging action to "loose the bonds of injustice" and "share your bread with the hungry". · Global Mission (Feb 15, 2026): Prayers for the Anglican Communion, particularly in Cuba and Venezuela, held on the last Sunday of Epiphany. · Ash Wednesday (Feb 18, 2026): This Service begins the Lenten season, focusing on the Book of Common Prayer's invitation to a holy Lent through fasting, prayer, and self-examination. We will offer services with the distribution of Ashes throughout the day: 9:30am - Chapel, Noon - 'Ashes to Go' and 7pm – Church

Here are some prayers for you to use during the month of February

For Guidance: "We pray Lord, that you guard our hearts, cover our homes, and order our steps as we enter this month of February with all its special days. (Valentine's Day, President's Day, Lent)

For Service: "Set us free, God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ".

For Creation: A prayer to "deepen our gratitude for all you have made and awaken in us a renewed commitment to care for the earth".

Mother Margaret+

Life Transformed – The Way of Love in Lent

The journey through Lent into Easter is a journey with Jesus. We are baptized into his life, self-giving, and death; then, we rise in hope to life transformed. This Lent, communities are invited to walk with Jesus in his Way of Love and into the experience of transformed life. Together, we will reflect anew on the loving actions of God as recounted in the Easter Vigil readings. Together, we will walk through the depths of salvation history into the fullness of redemption.

Even if you have done this program before it is made unique each year. I look forward to us walking this path together every Sunday evening!

Mother Margaret+

THE WAY OF LOVE *Practices for Jesus-Centered Life*

More details on page 4

Deacons Corner

I'm going to be very honest. I struggled to write this. I struggled with the subject because one thought kept coming to my mind and I didn't want to address it. Then I struggled with what to say because I was concerned people would think I was taking sides. Then I struggled with "How do I play the role of diplomat?" because that is the role I am often asked to play when there are differences of opinion. However, I'm not sure that's what I'm supposed to be doing. Regardless, these thoughts keep coming to mind so here goes.



My brothers and sisters, what is going on (and has been going on) in our country for some time has me more than just a little concerned. The issues along with the behaviors of many are shocking. The political divide, regardless of the side, has led to such ugliness. In the past week I have read posts stating "If you if you voted for this president, I will never forgive you," and "The people coming into our borders are criminals of the worst kind." Both of those comments and many like them are coming from Christians. I don't see Jesus in any of those types of comments.

I have not heard comments as unloving towards fellow humans within our parish like what I witnessed on social media. Sentiments like that could tear a parish apart. At the same time, we all have opinions and are entitled to them. In many cases, we should act on the same. Sometimes, it is easier to just stay quiet with the thought "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." However, I believe not speaking up will not solve anything. So, here is my ask of all of us: That we are passionate about what we believe. That we approach issues with open hearts and minds. That we respect the dignity of every human being – whether we agree with them or not. That we look for Jesus in everyone. If we can't find Him, we look again. Most importantly, that we love so greatly that others will see Christ in us.

Amen

Deacon Terri

Dear CHS Family,

It is with sadness that I share with you that Deacon Ted Powell will be retiring. He had stepped down from ministry on the altar last month. He now will be taking a well-deserved time from all of his many active duties here at CHS. He has been an ordained deacon for over 15 years and served in two traditions. We will be celebrating his ministry here at CHS at the 9:30 am Service this Sunday, Feb. 8th. Please join us after the service for cake and shared time together.



The Church office will be
closed February 15 in honor
of Presidents Day.



Parish Life

Shrove Tuesday

Our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner is early this year. All are invited join us on Tuesday, February 17 in the parish hall between 5-7 pm. If you still have palms or palm crosses from last year's Palm Sunday, please bring them with you and drop them in the box provided. They will be burned and the ashes used during our Ash Wed services.



ASH WEDNESDAY Worship

Ash Wednesday is February 18. Once again, we will offer three services (9:30am, Noon, and 7:00pm) all with communion and the imposition of ashes. Beginning at 6:00pm on Ash Wednesday, our Journeys youth will offer a soup supper (between 6:00-6:45pm) for anyone who wishes to come early. Please sign up to bring a soup or bread to share.

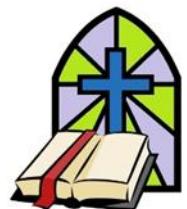
We will also offering 'Ashes to Go" for those on their way to or from work. Mother Margaret will be available between 7:30am and 9:00 am, then again between 5:30pm and 6:30pm. at the red doors. Please contact Mother Margaret (240) 904-6171 or the office for Ashes to be brought to you.

Lenten Soup and Lessons

Beginning on Sunday February 22 at 5:00pm our annual Lenten Soup Supper and Study return. Each year we gather for a shared meal between 5:00-5:45pm followed by a study that explores some facet of our faith. We typically end our study by 7:00pm with Compline. This year's study is titled "[Life Transformed – The Way of Love in Lent](#)". Sign-up sheets for soup are at the Spirit Hub.

Inquirer's Class

This year's Inquirer's Class is just starting up. Mother Margaret is still gathering names of those interested in exploring how we, as Christians, and Episcopalians, here at CHS, strive to live into our baptismal promises. This class is open to anyone 12 years old and older. We would love to have you join us. Please sign up at the Spirit Hub and Mother Margaret will contact you about a start date.



Remembrance Tea

Thursday, February 19, at 2pm Mother Margaret will begin hosting a monthly Remembrance Tea on the third Thursday of each month for widows and widowers. This is a time for sharing, counseling and prayer.



Outreach

Mobile Food Pantry

While our January Food Pantry was canceled, the turn out in December was terrific. Our next pantry is February 28th. Please show up at 9:30 to get ready. The drive through is from 10:00 to 11:30. Please let those in need know.



Youth Activities

Suicide Prevention



January 14th, long-time CHS member and National Leadership Council member of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Jennifer Moffett, spoke to our Journey's youth and their parents regarding mental health and suicide prevention.

This is part of the annual programming at CHS for both Journeys and the parish members. This year, because the age of all participants was older, Jen was able to present a version geared to older participants. The youth were able to describe new information that resonated with them and everyone enjoyed the presentation. A major focus was on mental health – what it is and isn't as well as normalizing each point of the mental health spectrum.

If you or anyone you know are in need of assistance, resources are available at <https://afsp.org/get-help/>, or call/text 988 or text TALK to 741741.

Kids and Worship

Mtr. Margaret has added a children & youth sermon to the 2nd Sunday of each month. We want our kids to feel part of the worship of God. This service is for them too!

I encourage families to include their kids in the service. Young children can say "Amen" and "Alleluia" at the appropriate times. Readers can read prayers and sing songs along side you. Even if you are loudly whispering what "incarnation" or some other word means, you are engaging your whole family. If you have acolytes, encourage them to follow the service too. Church is not just for grown-ups. Let's share our joy and worship with our families!

Sunday School

New Semester: January 11th

Welcome to 2026! I feel like this will be a great year for to get to know Jesus and ourselves better.

In the first few weeks we learn that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We will learn about who we are in God's eyes. This is a special time for the kids to start falling in love with Jesus. During Lent we will learn about being the Light of Jesus. What does that mean? How do we do that?

I will also be spending more time in the classrooms this semester. I am excited to reconnect with our kids! I loved being Sr Warden, but kids are my real passion.

Parents/Grands, please feel free to join us during Sunday School. We love to have your company and input in our discussions.

Calendar 2026

February

- 8 Youth Sermon 9:30am Service
- 15 Agape Love Party during Sunday School
- 17 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- 18 Ash Wednesday

March

- 8 Youth Sermon 9:30am Service
- 15 St Patrick's Day Celebration in Sunday School

Have a Wonderful 2026!

-Cindy Pekarek, Christian Ed Director





On January 11, 2026, at 9:15 a.m.,

A meeting of the Vestry of the Church of the Holy Spirit was called to order by Reverend Mother Margaret to discuss the proposed Day Skys – Day Reporting Program and its approval to be sponsored and supported by the Church of the Holy Spirit.. A quorum was confirmed to be present.

After discussion, the following motion was brought to the floor:

Motion:

That the Vestry of the Church of the Holy Spirit approve the sponsorship and support of the Day Skys – Day Reporting Program.

The motion was made by Margie Crawford and seconded by Patrick.

Following discussion, a vote was taken. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting proceeded accordingly

Vestry Meeting Minutes Jan 16, 2026

Attendance:

Mtr. Margaret Brack (Rector), Judy Darrell, Ken Gomeringer, Rick Horejs, Vince Cummings Jr., Margie Guy, Barb Smith, Brian Caskie, Marcia Adams (Treasurer), Jenn Moffett (Recorder)

Excused:

Patrick Howell

Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with prayer, followed by a review of the Listening Guidelines. Ken Gomeringer led devotions and served as timekeeper.

Motion M011526: Approve the December 2025 Minutes

Motion: Rick Horejs

Second: Barb Smith

Motion Carried

TREASURER'S REPORT / Finances

Marcia Adams presented the financial report, which included Budget vs. Actual, CIE Report, and the Balance Sheet. The following highlights were noted:

- Net cash assets: \$231,567.49
- Unrestricted funds: \$41,549.71
- Temporary funds: \$110,911.29
- Restricted funds: \$33,744.52
- Endowment Fund: \$542,437.44

Total Assets: \$774,004.93

Motion M021526: Accept the Treasurer's Report

Motion: Judy Darrell

Second: Margie Guy

Motion Carried

OLD BUSINESS

Copy Machine Lease

Mtr. Brack reported that the current lease runs through 2027. A buyout option is being explored.

Action Item: Mtr. Brack to obtain a copy of the existing lease for review.

Pledge Drive Update

The current pledge total stands at \$198,053. Follow-up is in progress with consistent givers.

2026 Budget

Ken Gomeringer presented the revised 2026 budget, including:

- Income: \$214,907
- Expenses: \$256,138

Projected Deficit: \$41,230 Revisions included halving the diocesan asking and restoring the \$2,000 line item for audit.

Motion M031526: Approve the Revised 2026 Budget

Motion: Judy Darrell

Second: Margie Guy

Motion Carried

VPoD Checklist

Judy Darrell introduced updates to the checklist with emphasis on building procedures, alarms, and financial documentation. The attic door and locking policies were also discussed.

Action Item: Revised checklist will be implemented immediately.

Eagle Scout Projects

Vince and Evelyn Cummings' projects remain in progress. Approval pending committee and district review.

Action Item: Tabled until updates are received.

Sound System Headset

New headset purchased and in use. Two types now available.

Status: Closed.

Probation Program Room Use

Formal contract is active for classroom use by the SKY Program. Daily fee is \$20.

Action Item: Ongoing invoicing and calendar documentation.

NEW BUSINESS

Roof Repair

Questions arose around a \$1,000 discrepancy between invoices.

Action Item: Mtr. Brack to clarify with contractor.

Handicapped Bathroom Repair

Toilet replaced due to persistent leak. Labor was \$50; toilet donated by parishioner Chris.

Motion M041526: Approve \$50 Labor Payment from Building Fund

Motion: Brian Caskie

Second: Judy Darrell

Motion Carried

Annual Meeting Buffet

Brunch items will be provided by vestry. Judy Darrell coordinating contributions.

New Vestry Members

Kristi Smith and Josh Cummings will join the vestry; Patrick Howell and Barb Smith are completing their terms.

Parliamentarian

Mtr. Brack requested nominations for a new parliamentarian.

Action Item: Suggestions to be submitted before Annual Meeting.

Grants & Endowment Funds

\$17,730.55 is available. Around \$10,000 has been requested. Vestry encouraged to consider increasing amounts for eligible ministries.

Scholarships Discussion

Vestry discussed establishing grant or scholarship support for youth attending diocesan events such as camp and leadership conferences.

Action Item: Follow-up with Endowment Committee to explore mechanisms.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- Meeting extended by 20 minutes by unanimous vote.
- Discussion about formatting of Vestry minutes- remove checks, no longer need to follow strict formatting as previously required.
- Communication improvements were discussed (e.g., updated contact list, shared calendars).
- Contact Judy Darrell or Jean with changes to vestry roles or information.

Closing Prayer

The meeting closed with prayer.

Next Regular Meeting of the Vestry: February 19, 2026

Financial Report as of December 31, 2025

	Actual	Budgeted	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Contributions	\$18,671.00	\$20,080.92	\$229,328.47	\$240,971.00
Other Income	\$714.30	\$611.33	\$5,776.41	\$7,336.00
Total Income	\$19,385.30	\$20,692.25	\$235,104.88	\$248,307.00
Expenses	\$27,450.30	\$21,126.88	\$225,042.32	\$253,522.57
	-\$8,065.00	-\$434.63	\$10,062.56	-\$5,215.57

The Rector responds to concern that Lent is a downer



A Short Reminder:

The Flame has been late the last three months. Part of it is getting ready for Christmas and the Annual Meeting, but we have been having trouble getting articles in on time. You no longer have someone in the office to write them for you. Please take note of the due dates and try to have the articles in by then. If you have an event the last two weeks, please let the office know and get the article and photos in the next day.

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS!



- Feb 1** - Annual Meeting - 10:45am
- Feb 6** - First Friday Sack Lunch - 12:00
- Feb 6** - Valentines Extravaganza - 6:30pm
- Feb 8** - Finance Committee Meeting - 11:00am
- Feb 12** - Vestry Meeting - 6:30pm
- Feb 16** - Office Closed
- Feb 17** - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner 5pm - 7pm
- Feb 18** - Ash Wednesday
- Feb 22** - Lenten Soup Supper - 5pm - 8:30pm
- Feb 28** - Mobile Food Pantry - 10am

LAY MINISTRIES SCHEDULE

Ministries	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	
VPOD					
Hospitality Team 9:30 am	Team 4	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	
Greeters ,Ushers & Coffee Hour Host					
Altar Guild	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	
Spirit Hub	Christian Ed	Acolytes	Altar Guild	Bell Choir	
Altar Bread	Judy D	Judy D	Judy D	Judy D	
Recycle Team	Jan S	Marcia A	Susan H	Karen G	
LEM Saturday 5:00 pm	Kristi S	Toby W / Kathy B	Charlotte A	Kristi S	
LEM Sunday 8:00 am	Cindy P	Doug A	Cindy P	Doug A	
LEM Sunday 9:30 am	Jan S Carol S	Emily W Lori E	Brian C Vince C	Amber H Jen W	
LEV	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 1	
Acolytes	Crucifer Torch Torch	Olivia H MacKenzie C Ailynn M	Isaiah H Amanda N Evelynn C	Vincent C Olivia H Mya H	MacKenzie C Evelynn C Kyper M

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥
 ♥ Please submit articles for the ♥
 ♥ March 2026 FLAME to the ♥
 ♥ church office by February 17th. ♥
 ♥ 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 @ 10:45 am*
Wednesday: *Bible Study @ 10:15 am*

Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 9:00 am–1:00 pm
Friday: 9:00 am–Noon

Rector's Day Sabbath:

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 17th.

Webpage: www.chsepiscopal.org

Email: holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org

The Flame

Newsletter of The Church of the Holy Spirit - Episcopal
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