



# The Flame

January 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.

## Christmas Pageant

The Sunday School kids with some help from our Journey's teens put on "One Night in Bethlehem" during our December 18th service this year. We worked to make sure the kids really knew the story of Christ's birth, not just their character. Afterwards we had a "cast party" with cookies to decorate and Santa to visit. Thank you to our congregation for singing the carols on-cue! Thank you to everyone who pulled this together! You can see a replay on our YouTube channel. Merry Christmas! -Cindy Cast List:

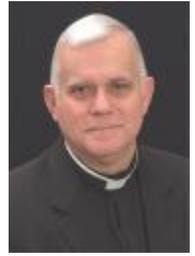


Director: Cindy Pekarek, Costumes: Jean Cook and Maggie Howell, Child Wranglers: Lisa Weilandt and Ciaya Smith, Stage Hands: Ciaya & Anika Smith, Patrick Howell, Music: Ali Clark and Julie Neish, Narrators: Anika Smith and Isaiah Hagen,

Mary: Amanda Neville, Joseph: Kyper Misek, Angels: Evelyn Cummings, Ailynn Misek, and Vivi Neubauer, Shepherds: Jaxson Neubauer And Vinny, Wisemen: Leland Howell, Beckham Clark, and Wesley Clark.



## Fr. Tom's Tidbits



As we begin the new year, I invite you to join me in giving thanks for the many blessings we have known, both as individuals, and as a community, especially those we have received over this past year. Despite the fiscal problems we all faced this past year, as a community, we were still able to meet our financial commitments, serve the surrounding community in some wonderful ways, and explore more deeply the faith we all share. As last year began, with the pandemic having taken its toll, I wasn't sure what 2022 had in store for us. But as the year progressed, it became more and more clear, that despite the pandemic's effects, there was a resurgence of life and hope in our midst. Do we still face some challenges? Yes, we do. However, this resurgence gives me confidence that they will overcome them, working together and with God's help.

One challenge we must overcome, is how to provide a more reliable, and more fulfilling, online worship experience. We have an average of 20 members and guests who watch our service each Sunday morning. With such a significant portion of our parish worshipping online, we must figure out how to do it better. Our volunteers have done a remarkable job, and our vestry has provided us with some top-notch equipment to make it possible. Unfortunately, we still run into technical difficulties that detract from the experience we hope people online will have.

Beyond the occasional problem we have broadcasting, something we lack is real-time interaction with our online participants that can help them feel more a part of the service. To do all this better, we really need to find someone who understands the ins and outs of social media, and computers, to help us design and run a platform that does what we have seen done more successfully by others. While a volunteer would be a blessing, I, and the Vestry, know such a person will most likely need to be a paid employee. Please keep us in your prayers as we try and work the bugs out of what is really an important part of our parish ministry; and if you know anyone who might fit this need, please let us know.

Unlike the beginning of last year, I am not all that anxious about the challenges we face. Instead, I find myself excited. Some signs of hope, that help excite me, include our expanding youth group, Terri Storm's continued formation to her diaconal ministry, the return of overseas mission trips and the addition of our first Journeys pilgrimage, a developing plan by our ministry team leaders to better serve the parish and our guests, and a full calendar of ways we plan to serve those around us in need. In a time when it would have been so easy to turn our focus inward, it is a real blessing to see how we have stayed busy looking beyond the church walls. I would truly enjoy hearing from you what signs of hope you see in our midst. If you would please drop me a short note, in the offertory plate, by email, or text, I would gladly share them with our parish family in next month's newsletter.

*Father Tom*

## End of Year Giving Statements

When you receive December's report, please check it carefully to ensure all your donations (through the month of November) are annotated. We discovered that sometime between 18-22 Nov, some checks mailed to the church were taken from our mailbox and somehow cashed. If you are missing a planned donation, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can double check our records and if not found, you can notify your bank of possible fraud.



## 2022 Giving

**YEAR END GIVING**  
**YOUR GIFT MAKES**  
**A DIFFERENCE**

As we roll into the new year, Corey will be closing out the books on 2022. To allow for checks in the mail to arrive before doing so, and for any last-minute offerings made to fulfill 2022 pledges, we will accept checks dated no later than 31 Dec 22 up until Monday, 9 Jan 23. All funds received after this date will be attributed to 2023 regardless of date.

## Office Closed

The office will be closed Monday, January 16 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day



## Outreach

### Holiday Fair

A big thank you to everyone who baked all of the delicious goodies, donated to the Christmas Flea Market and



volunteered at the 2022 Holiday Craft and Bake Sale. Thanks to you it was a great success! It was great to see the customers enjoying it once again this year. Some of the vendors have already committed for next year. The Church of the Holy Spirit earned approximately \$565 to support our mission.



### Mobile Pantry

Another very successful pantry. We served over 100 households and over 300 family members. We were blessed with more moderate temperatures than originally expected, and for this we are thankful. We would also like to thank those who came out to volunteer. Our next pantry is scheduled for Saturday (28 Jan). Please help us spread the word. For those who follow us on Facebook, please help us spread the word by sharing the event announcement with family and friends.



### Friends of Tamar



The in-gathering originally planned for January is being rescheduled to a later date as this ministry is in the process of relocating their offices and non-resident programs. Once a new date for our in-gathering has been determined, we will announce it to the parish. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

## Red Cross Blood Mobile



The Red Cross Blood Mobile will be here at CHS on Saturday (4 Feb). If you are able and willing to give blood, please consider reserving a time slot to do so. Time slots can be reserved by visiting the Red Cross Website (<https://www.redcrossblood.org>) and entering the church's zip code in the red "Find a Blood Drive" box and pressing enter on your keyboard. A new screen will come up and along the left side you will see all the blood drives happening in and near our zip code. Simply scroll down the list until you find Church of the Holy Spirit, select "See Times" and then pick the time you would like to reserve. This is a great way to help the community. Please help us once again fill all our time slots.



## 2023 Mission Trips

We have some great news. The Diocese will be returning to the Dominican Republic in 2023. There are two tentative dates set for adult trips, both to the Santiago region. These dates are 15-21 April and 4-10 Nov. While final costs for these trips are being finalized, due to the higher airfares, cost for these trips may be between \$1,800 and \$2,000. If you might be interested in attending one of these trips, please let Fr. Tom know. There are some limited scholarship funds available to help offset the cost. A youth pilgrimage is being offered to the DR as well. See below for details.



## Youth Activities

### 2023 Journeys Pilgrimage

In 2023, our Journeys youth will go on a prayer and service pilgrimage. Departing on Sunday (18 Jun), following a blessing by the bishop who will be conducting his annual visit that day, they will head out to visit Episcopal churches across the diocese, stopping to see some interesting and fun things along the way. The team will return to CHS on the evening of 23 Jun, and complete their pilgrimage by helping with the Mobile Pantry on Saturday morning. A full itinerary, along with pilgrimage costs, should be available in early February. This trip is open to all parish youth 12-18 years of age. We will be looking for a few adults to travel with us to assist in chaperoning and to meet the church requirements with regards to safeguarding of God's children.



### 2023 Youth Dominican Republic Pilgrimage

The tentative dates for a youth pilgrimage to the Dominican Republic in 2023 are 1-7 Jul. This trip is for youth 16-20. All youth must have a passport. Like the adult trips planned for 2023, costs are being finalized, but expected to fall between \$1800 - \$2000. Scholarship funds are available to help offset the cost. Adults who might wish to help chaperone this trip should contact Fr. Tom. This trip will operate from a church camp in the area of Jaraboca (northern region of the DR) and will serve the church, its school, and the neighboring barrio.



**Journey's Christmas** Just before our Christmas break, our Journeys staff and youth set aside their normal night's activities to have a party. We played a few new games (and some older favorite ones too), to get a feel for how they worked, all of which we expect to play again during our New Year's Eve Lock-in, most with any younglings we provide childcare for. Enjoying pizza, candy, and treats, it was a great night.



## **New Year's Eve Lock-in**



Final preparations were underway (at the time of printing) for our 13th Annual Youth Group New Year's Eve Lock-in. We missed one year due to the pandemic. We had several adults sign up to help chaperone and our youth were busy making arrangements to serve members of the parish and the local community by providing childcare for the first part of the night. Our senior high youth finalized their activities plan and look forward to sharing news about this event in February issue of *The Flame*.

## **Journeys – Suicide Prevention**

On Wednesday (18 Jan 23) our Journeys youth will participate in a class on Suicide Prevention. Jennifer Moffett (our previous youth coordinator) will be here to share the latest on how to recognize the warning signs in oneself and one's friends. Jennifer has served on the board for Nebraska's Suicide Prevention efforts for several years, and offers our youth real and age appropriate insights. Parents are invited to join their youth on this evening. As our evening begins with a meal, parents wishing to participate are asked to let Fr. Tom know by Sunday (15 Jan 23) so that our team can plan accordingly.



## **Youth Group Bingo Night**

Our Journeys youth invite parish youth (10-18) to join them on Wednesday (25 Jan 23) to enjoy a night of fun and excitement. Following dinner, our youth will enjoy several games of bingos, win some wonderful prizes, and finish the night offering Compline. There is no cost for youth or their friends who attend. We ask that youth sign-up at the Spirit Hub, by Sunday 22 Jan, letting us know if they are bringing family or friends, so that we can plan accordingly.



## Parish Life

### Blue Christmas

Last month we held our first Blue Christmas service. It was a moving service offering those who participated an opportunity to seek God's help in carrying, or letting go of, those things that keep them from knowing the joy of Christmas season. While an emotional experience for some, it was uplifting for others, all leaving with the feeling of God's peace and presence surrounding them. Based on the feedback provided, we will offer this service again next Advent season.



### Christmas Eve



Despite the bone-chilling cold this year, the skies were clear, the roads were safe, and we had a good turnout for our Christmas Eve celebration. There were many compliments shared about the beauty of our sanctuary. This could not have been possible without the ministry of our Altar Guild. Their tireless efforts week in and week out help set the stage for the sharing of God's blessings and grace during our weekly worship; and on special occasions like Christmas, their efforts make such a difference and are greatly appreciated.

Our 5pm service enjoyed hearing several of our younger members ring out with joy their Christmas Spirit. Special thanks to Ali Clark who helped as many as six of our youth prepare. Sadly, due to illnesses, only three were able to attend, but they stepped up to the plate, playing two bells each. What a blessing. At 7pm, our adult bell choir provided us with a beautiful rendition of "O, Come Little Children".



Probably one of the most complicated hymns they have shared, and it sounded amazing. Of course, our choir and organist led us through familiar hymns at all three services, bringing not only closer together, but closer to the Lord. One final note, we were blessed with many visitors this year and to God we give thanks.



## Parish Life

### Women of Spirit Mocktails

Women of Spirit is now an unstructured group open to all women of the parish over 16. Events are what ever moves the spirit of someone, whether it be a group to attend a play, a movie , or a mocktails party. The Women of Spirit met December 10 for a Mocktail tasting party. Lots of fun for everyone. They can't wait to see what is next. Any ideas???



### 2022 Ministry Reports & Annual Meeting



It is that time of year again to begin our preparations for the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Sunday (5 Feb) immediately following our 9:30 am service. We are asking all Ministry Team Leaders to please submit their ministry reports no later than Sunday (15 Jan) so that we can prepare a draft report, available then for review, prior to our meeting. Parish members are asked to attend this important meeting in the life of our parish, during which we will review our 2022 and 2023 budget successes and hopes, elect new members to the Vestry, and delegates to DioNeb's 156<sup>th</sup> Annual Council to be held in North Platte 26-28 Oct 23. If you have any questions about reports, please contact Jean in the church office.

### Valentine's Extravaganza

Tickets will go on sale beginning Sunday (22 Jan) for our 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Valentine's Extravaganza. This adults only event is scheduled for Friday (10 Feb) beginning at 7:00 pm. It includes five rounds of bingo (with prizes) five rounds of food, and five rounds of sampling either wine or non-alcoholic beverages. As this is always a great night to spend with family and friends, tickets tend to go quickly. To purchase your tickets, please see Sharon Jones or call the office. The cost per person is \$12.50



### CHS Inquirer's Class



A sign-up sheet can be found at the Spirit Hub for anyone 12 and older interested in participating in Fr. Tom's Inquirer's Class beginning Sunday (12 Feb). This class will meet over eight Sundays exploring how we, at CHS, strive to live into our baptismal promises. This class is an excellent way for those new to CHS, the Episcopal Church, or considering baptism or confirmation, to gain a deeper insight into what we believe as Christians first, and Episcopalians second. For more information about this class, please contact Fr. Tom.

## **Vestry Meeting December 15, 2022**

Members present: Ken Gomeringer, Margie Crawford, Leslie Nutting, Cindy Pekarek, Lori Erickson, Fr. Tom Jones, & Treasurer Marcia Adams.

Meeting was opened by Fr. Tom with a short prayer at 6:35pm.

First order of business: As minutes were not approved for the November Meeting, Fr Tom presented them to the Vestry for approval. After review, Lori moved, Cindy seconded to approve the minutes as submitted.

**MO 12-15-01** passed by unanimous vote.

The Vestry briefly reviewed of upcoming events.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Marcia reviewed the reports noting that while giving was down slightly in Nov, with the upcoming holiday, we are still in a position to finish out the year strongly. With one month remaining, the parish sits at 95% of planned income and expenses. Although we are likely to finish the year with a deficit, we are hoping it will be smaller than budgeted. In a review of our budget-vs-actuals report, Marcia noted there were no unplanned expenses to note. Some of the higher payments made reflect both quarterly and semi-annual payments. In a review of the Changes in Equity Report (CIE Funds), Marcia noted several expenses. We purchased new coffee mugs (cost split between hospitality and fellowship), Expenses for thanksgiving baskets and event postcards, a pass through donation to support the Troop and Pack, assistance given out of the Rector's Discretionary Fund, and the purchase of the new computer for the sanctuary and other worship related items.

Margie moved, Leslie seconded approval of the reports as presented. **MO-12-15-02** passed by unanimous vote.

Lori moved, Leslie seconded, to pay the bills. **MO-1215-03** passed by unanimous vote.

### **Discussion Items**

A brief discussion was held with regards to the use of the parish hall during worship. Fr Tom noted that occasionally individuals gather during worship for fellowship outside the kitchen and that this is distracting for those who chose to participate in worship watching the service on the television. As our parish hall is an extension of our worship space, VPODs are encouraged to invite those who wish to enjoy a time of fellowship, during either our 8am or 9:30am service, to move to the conference room where they may more freely converse. It was also recommended that small table tents be created to remind people of our preference for quiet during worship.

Vestry nominations for 2023 include Ken Gomeringer (Sr Warden), Cindy Pekarek (Jr Warden) and Patrick Howell and Barb Smith (Vestry members at large). Fr. Tom is looking for four delegates to represent CHS at the 2023 DioNeb Annual Council to be held on 26-28 Oct in North Platte. Nominations will be presented for parish approval at our 5 Feb Annual Parish Meeting.

Spirit Hub: A proposed rotation for ministry team support of the Spirit Hub was distributed. Vestry member were asked to meet with their respective ministries to discuss beginning this in February of 2023. As discussed during the Fall team leader meeting, ministry teams would provide one member, an assigned Sundays, to be present at the Hub for at least the first 20 minutes after service. While present, Spirit Hub hosts will assist those who want to sign up for different events, answer guest questions, and capture guest information for follow-up. Also, teams will be invited to offer a ministry display to share information about their ministry and invite members to consider joining them in their efforts. The proposed schedule offers each of the listed ministries three opportunities to participate throughout the year. As discussed during the team leader meeting, it is anticipated that ministry teams will rotate their scheduled dates within their ministry. It was recommended we seek quotes on signage to identify Weekly Hub hosts.

Unconnected: Looking back at their book study, the Vestry sought the answer to two questions. What might be our first steps to better connect with the local community look like and what is one thing we feel we can commit to in 2023. Several ideas were discussed, and with the ever-widening influence of social media, it was felt we

needed to increase our community visibility across different media platforms and that there must be follow through if our efforts are to be successful.

Fr Tom asked for Vestry assistance in answering new questions for this year’s parochial report.

**Decision Items**

A final Draft of the 2023 budget was presented for approval. Fr. Tom noted we had a very successful annual appeal. However, we did fall short of our goal and despite changes made in next year’s expenses, along with the increases recommended during the November Vestry meeting, there is now an anticipated deficit of \$517. After further discussion, Cindy moved, Lori seconded, approval of the 2023 budget as presented. **MO-12-15-04** passed by unanimous consent.

After budget approval, Fr. Tom submitted his Church Pension Group’s required resolution. It reads: “Whereas Rev. 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 \$77,255 to be paid to Rev. Jones, during 2023, that \$40,200 be designated a housing allowance with the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and be it further resolved, that \$40, 200 of compensation is designated as housing allowance for this 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. Fr. Tom moved; Cindy seconded approval of the resolution as submitted. **MO-12-15-05** passed by unanimous vote.

The Vestry reviewed the proposed Parish Activities and Fundraising calendars. After visiting with their respective ministries, the only change to the proposed calendars was a change to the date for our 2023 Dec mobile pantry. Lori moved; Leslie seconded approval of the calendars with the changes made. **MO-12-15-06** passed by unanimous vote.

With no further business, at 7:45pm, Ken moved; and Margie seconded that we adjourn. Motion **MO-12-15-07** passed by unanimous consent.

The Church is not a building.  
It's the people

- . Acts 8:3
- . Acts 12:5
- . 1 Cor. 3:9
- . 1 Peter 2:5



# ***FINANCIAL REPORT***

**Financial Report as of November 30, 2022**

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Pledged	\$ 13,531.00	\$ 16,704.42	\$ 175,150.70	\$ 183,748.58
Other Inc.	<u>\$ 1,158.00</u>	<u>\$ 1,457.33</u>	<u>\$ 14,685.30</u>	<u>\$ 16,030.67</u>
Total Inc	\$ 14,689.00	\$ 18,161.75	\$ 189,836.00	\$ 199,779.25
Expenses	\$ 22,373.00	\$ 18,873.83	<u>\$ 198,862.50</u>	\$ 207,612.17
			\$ -9,026.50	



## UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS!

- Jan 02 - Office Closed
- Jan 15 - Finance Committee 10:45
- Jan 16 - Office Closed
- Jan 19 - Vestry Meeting - 6:30
- Jan 25 - Youth Bingo - 6:30
- Jan 28 - Mobile Food Pantry



## LAY MINISTRIES SCHEDULE

Ministries	Jan 1	Jan 8	Jan 16	Jan 22	Jan 29
<b>VPOD</b>	Cindy P	Judy D	Leslie N	Lori E	Kristi S
<b>Hospitality Team</b> 9:30 am <i>Greeters ,Ushers &amp; Coffee Hour Host</i>	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 1	Team 2
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 1
<b>Recycle Team</b>	Jan S	Marcia A	Lynda W	Karen G	Jan S
<b>LEM Saturday 5:00 pm</b>	Alberta Y	Alberta Y	Charlotte A	Kristi S	Charlotte
<b>LEM Sunday 8:00 am</b>	Ken G	Doug A	Rick S	Ken G	Doug A
<b>LEM Sunday 9:30 am</b>	Michele H Terri S	Lori E Vince C	Jan S Michele H	Jennifer W Lori E	Vince C
<b>Acolytes</b> Crucifer Torch Torch	LEM	Isaiah H Kyper M Ailynn M	Anika S Vincent C Evelynn C	Olivia H Alex W	LEM


  
**Please submit articles for the February 2023 FLAME to the church office by January 16th.**
  
**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](mailto:holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org). The next deadline for submitting news is January 16th.

**Webpage:** [www.chsepiscopal.org](http://www.chsepiscopal.org)

**Email:** [holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org](mailto:holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org)

**The Flame**  
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1305 Thomas Drive  
Bellevue, NE 68005-2973  
402-291-7732