

# *The Servant's Voice*

*News for the community of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
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**December 15, 2021**

Blessings and Greetings to all at St. Stephen's Beaumont,

As the Advent Season moves toward Christmas, I am writing to thank you for your love and continued support of the ministry we share at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church as we prepare to receive the Christ child and celebrate the 106th Anniversary of our congregation in the coming days. I want to make sure everyone who reads this letter knows how much you are loved, you are needed, and you are always welcome to be part of everything we do at St. Stephen's.

By now you have probably read about the state requirement that we mask when having indoor worship and other community activities that started today and extends through January 15, 2022. In March 2020, we made the commitment to stay safe, healthy, and connected during this pandemic, and compliance with the state requirement is but another step in this journey of faith. I know other congregations and clergy will protest, offer legal challenges, and defy the order. I want to assure you that Bishop John Taylor and your Vicar will continue to comply with the state requirements.

We have continued to hold our own financially during 2021. Our most recent financial statement (through October 31) shows operating income of \$160,280.34 verses operating expenses of \$157,741.01. We also have been able to restore \$59,830.41 of value to our account in the Diocesan Investment Trust from which we borrowed \$80,000 last year to complete the Restroom Renovation Project that added more toilets, koala care (diaper-changing) facilities, and ensured compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Our 16th Annual Christmas Tree Festival, themed "Gifts of Love and Peace", was a huge success! The spirit in Annis Hall was contagious for the Wassail Party and both teas, and all three events were sold out. While the final totals have not been announced, it looks like more than \$19,000 will be divided among Carol's Kitchen, H.E.L.P., Inc., and Table of Plenty—nonprofits who do so much to feed the hungry in the San Gorgonio Pass and beyond. General Chair Nancy Guthrie, Wassail Party Chair Sue Wilson, and all the volunteers and patrons deserve our thanks for giving of their time, money and talents,

Now, more than ever, each of us can make a difference when we:

**Pray** daily wherever we are.

**Call** the church office at 951-845-1358 at least once a week. If no one answers, leave a brief message with your name, health status, needs you may have, and your phone number if you need a return call. You can also call/text me directly at 951-543-6730 if you need a more immediate response or have an emergent need.

**Visit** our [ststephensbeaumont.com](http://ststephensbeaumont.com) website and our “Friends of St. Stephen’s” Facebook page for community information and resources that can help us stay connected and nourished spiritually. Check both often!

**Worship** with us in person on Sunday at 8:00 and 10:00 am; and Tuesday and Thursday at 10:00 am. You can also worship with us online if you are unable to worship in person. The Christmas schedule is shown separately. Our Saturday service will return January 22. Visit our [ststephensbeaumont.com](http://ststephensbeaumont.com) website and/or Friends of St. Stephen’s for more information.

**Give** financially as you can after you have taken care of all of your individual and family needs. Our regular church obligations such as supporting the Diocese and other ministries remain. For 2022, we are asking that you give at your 2021 level plus an additional amount to help pay back our account in the Diocesan Investment Trust, and help fund future capital projects.

As important as all of these indicators of congregational vitality are, and as important as our spiritual and temporal needs can be, I want to share something written in Christmas 1945 by The Reverend W. Reid Hammond, rector of St. Stephen’s from 1954-1959, which I believe is as relevant today as it was then:

“Now, as never before, do we need a Saviour. We need to be saved from the choice of less than the best; we need to be saved from the standards set up by man apart from God; we need to be saved from the folly of judging success or happiness on the basis of what we can touch or handle; we need to be saved from ourselves,—for God!

“We need the confidence and hope for the future that the angels brought so dramatically to the Shepherds that first Christmas Eve. We need the assurance that God is the source of all truth, and we need the strength to search, as did the Wise Men, until we find it,—to be satisfied with nothing less. We need to be saved from that sense of futility that tempts us so bitterly in this day.

“We need the inner peace and calm that comes to those who look beyond the historical fact of Our Lord’s birth to the fact of his living vital presence in the world today; to the victory that pledged to the World that evil and brutality can never conquer the forces of good, and that God’s plan for each life and the world at large can never be gain-said (denied).

“Let us then rejoice with the angels and come and adore Him! Let us prepare our hearts and lives that He may be born in us again this Christmas!”

Thanks for all you do. I look forward to worshipping with you, in person or online.

Faithfully,

*Bill Dunn*

Vicar