



GRACE *and* ST. STEPHEN'S
✦ EPISCOPAL CHURCH ✦

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From Father Robert



Christmas Thanks

What a grand and holy Christmas Eve and Day we celebrated together! It was beautiful and joyous. I want to extend my deep gratitude to all those who served and helped us to celebrate anew the central miracle of our faith - that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The acolytes, ushers, lectors, choir, pageant participants and volunteers, and Altar Guild offered their best, and the staff faithfully handled so many things. And thank you to all of you who added your voices in prayer and song to our Christmas celebrations. Indeed, "joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

Update on Personnel Searches

Please keep the parish in prayer as we are in the search process for both a Director of Music Ministry and an Assistant Rector. You can view the job postings [here](#) (and please share if you know of someone that might be interested in either position). I've formed a search committee for each position and am grateful for their wisdom and support.

Music Search Committee: Thom Andreas, Bobbie Bradford, Nicole Hensel, Brittany Joerger, Anna Johnson, and Susan Paulson

Assistant Rector Search Committee: Tanya Anderson, Karon Coefield, and Benjamin Ramey

Given that Easter is early this year (April 5), we may not be able to fill either position before then. But I hope that both positions will be filled by late spring.

Newsletter Refresh for 2026

Going forward, we are moving to a weekly parish email called Grace Notes. We aim to have this email go out on Wednesdays, starting January 14th. By moving to a weekly format, we intend to provide more relevant and timely information to the parish while also being able to offer a condensed format. If you have announcements that are relevant to the entire parish, you can submit them by Tuesdays at 2pm to newsletter@gssepiscopal.org.

Volunteer Appreciation

We are so grateful for the many, many parishioners who give of their time and talents to support this church. In honor of the faithful dedication of so many of you, a

donation has been made to Episcopal Relief and Development from the Rector's Discretionary Fund.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our thanks and praise, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, who in their vocations and ministries truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (adapted from BCP, 256)

Faithfully,

Father Robert Black

Annual Meeting & Vestry Elections

On **Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026**, Grace and St. Stephen's **Annual Meeting** will take place in the church between the 8am and 10:30am services (9:15 am). Please join us for this time of holy planning. The agenda includes reports from the Jr. and Sr. Wardens, Treasurer and the election of three candidates to serve on the vestry from 2026-2029. A more detailed email with candidate bios coming soon!



Candidates for Consideration

Senior Warden: Chad Reynolds

Junior Warden: Terry Hensel

Vestry: Daniel Couch, Russell Moses, Benjamin Ramey, Ruth Rogerson, and Josh Vandiver

Religious Life Sunday - January 18, 2026

You may have noticed parishioners in black or brown robes or habits. There are a few “religious” in our congregation, people who have chosen to follow Christ in community. Not all of us wear our habits in church, so you might be surprised to find yourself sitting next to a member of a religious community. The Episcopal Church (TEC) designates one Sunday in January every year as *Religious Life Sunday*.



What is Religious Life? TEC recognizes two distinct forms under the canons: Religious Orders and Christian Communities. Religious Orders take the traditional form that most people think of when they think of monks and nuns – vowed monastics living in community, usually in a monastery. In contrast, Christian Communities live in their own homes, either alone or with their families. Either way, “many are called to join together with others for mutual support in their spiritual journeys, for growth in their life in Christ, and for extension of mission”. We will celebrate Religious Life Sunday in our church on January 18th at the 10:30 service. Here is a [link](#) to more information. Cindy Page/ [Sister Cynthia Anne](#), Oblate, Companions of St. Luke, Order of St. Benedict

Adult Formation

Sunday Adult Formation

In January, the 9:15 Adult Formation Hour will feature three listening sessions to dig deeper into some of the results of the Holy Cow survey with the congregation. As we are building towards the Vestry retreat in February, I'd like get your input on a few topics and share some of the things that I've noticed in my first four months of ministry at Grace and St. Stephen's.



January 4: Listening about Hopes for Parish Life and Fellowship

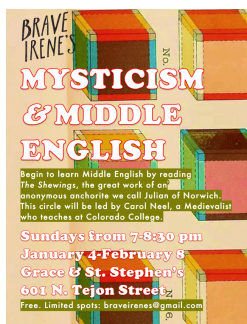
January 11: Listening about Interests for Christian Formation

January 18: Dreams and Directions for Our Life Together

Bible Study

The Wednesday night Bible study resumes on January 7 and we're in the "home stretch." Over the next few weeks, we'll cover Hebrews; 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2, 3 John; and Revelation.

Brave Irene's Mysticism & Middle English



This month, GSS will begin hosting a reading group, sponsored by the new literary non-profit organization Brave Irene's and led by parishioner Carol Neel, focusing on the work of the fourteenth-century mystic Julian of Norwich. Beginning on January 4 and meeting for six Sunday evenings in January and February at 7pm in the Zimmerman Room, this circle of readers will encounter Julian in the Middle English in which she wrote. Participants will enrich their understand of Julian's work, the first book-length work in English by a woman, while engaging with a language at once accessible and different from our own. Interested readers please contact [Mia Alvarado](#)

to reserve your place in this reading group.

Children & Youth Ministries

Children's Chapel - Sun. Jan. 4, 10:30 am

Join us for family worship! Moms, dads, grandparents and kids of all ages are invited to our kid-friendly worship service. We love having the children help lead the worship. We have many roles: reader, ushers, cross bearer, candle lighter, etc. Those interested should arrive at 10:15 in the Children's Chapel.



Sunday School - Sundays, Jan 11-25, 10:15 am

Our Sunday School program provides a sacred space for children to encounter God and grow in their faith. Together we learn hymns, pray, listen, and meditate on stories from our Christian tradition. During January, we'll be focusing on the life and teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. Newcomers welcome! Register for the 2025-2026 program year [here](#).

Thank You Volunteers!

December was a festive month for Children's Ministry. It was a joy working together with so many of you in marking these most beautiful moments in the life of the church. A big thank you to those who gave of their time and talents for the Advent Festival and Christmas Pageant:

Advent Festival: Tanya Anderson, Amily Beidelman-Almy, Kristin Brown, Jan Demolli, Joan Hensel, Helen Hazelton, Amy Holcomb, Jean Qualtrough, Ellie Schueler, Lisa Steves, Debby Van Orden, Rebeccah Wall, & Youth Group
Christmas Pageant: Sarah Arehart, Rachel Ash, Ed Brown, Kara Carroll, Chris and Clare Davis, Jaye Davidson, Echo Eldridge, Sophie Graf, Joan Hensel, Erin Jaynes,

Mary Paul, Jean Qualtrough, Benjamin Ramey, Natalie Warner, Cathryn Wells, and all the parents who supported their children in taking part in this annual tradition!

To volunteer in Children's Ministry or schedule a time to meet, contact [Sister Marcella](#).



Youth Group (Grades 6-12) meets in the Youth Room from 12:00-12:30 pm the first and third Sunday of each month. Please join for pizza, fun and games. Youth are then split into Middle School (Grades 6-8) and High School (Grades 9-12) for Reflections and Volunteer Corp from 12:30-1:30 pm.

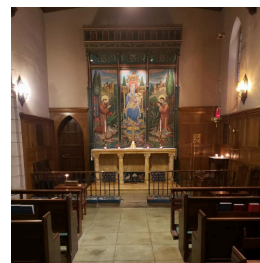
January 4 12:00-12:30 pm Youth Food & Games. 12:30-1:30 pm MS Reflections/ HS Volunteer Corps

January 18 12:00-12:30 pm Youth Food & Games. 12:30-1:30 pm HS Reflections/ MS Volunteer Corps

Stay tuned for more details regarding a Youth Group Ski Trip to Ski Cooper! Contact [Denise](#) for more information about Youth Group.

Prayer Workshop - January 10, 2026

Are you called to pray with parishioners on Sunday morning? You may have noticed, or even stopped to pray with, a member of the Sunday Prayer Team in the St. Stephen Chapel, or by the Tower Door on your way back from taking communion. Praying with parishioners on Sunday during Communion is part of Pastoral Care at Grace and St. Stephen's. It's a ministry of the congregation, and you are invited to prayerfully consider joining us.



Father Robert describes this ministry as "a call and a gift". Ask anyone on the team and they will tell you that it is a joy to pray with and for others, and we are mutually blessed. We would like to offer this prayer ministry every Sunday during communion. Members of The Community of Hope, our pastoral care training & support program, are hosting a prayer workshop on Saturday, January 10th from 1-4pm. This is an opportunity to gather, learn more about this ministry, learn a bit about spontaneous prayer, and to discern if this is a ministry to which you are called. We'll have light snacks, drinks and fellowship. Please let us know if you will be joining us – even if you are not entirely sure that this is for you. We'd love to spend some time with you. For more details, contact [Cindy Page](#).

Outreach Update

What a wonderful Advent and Christmas Season we've had together. As we looked forward to the birth of our Savior – God's greatest gift to humanity - we reached out with His love and concern to our brothers and sisters here in El Paso County.

Crossfire Ministries

Crossfire Ministries received \$10,000 to restock the food pantry in response to YOUR response to Outreach's challenge to match our \$5,000.00, \$2,991.00 was given with a final anonymous \$2,001.00 donated to bring the total to the target \$10,000.00. Just for fun, an additional \$200.000 was sent after our November Noisy Sunday collection. Can you imagine how many families are able to eat healthy meals as a result of your response? Thank you!





Salvation Army Angel Tree

Seventy-five children in El Paso County awakened Christmas morning to gifts under their Christmas tree, thanks to your generous support of this program. Our Angel tree took over Taft Hall and we needed two large SUVs to deliver all the Christmas cheer to local families! Thank you!

Stuffed Animals for Children's Hospital

Are you enjoying the stuffed animals in our pews? They will be with us until Epiphany, when they will be collected and taken to Children's Hospital to help an ill child feel a bit of love.

Coat Drive

Coats will be delivered to both Columbia Elementary School (children's coats) and Crossfire Ministries (Adult Coats) after Epiphany as well. Thank you!!

As we plan for 2026, your Outreach Committee looks forward, with your help, to responding to our baptismal covenant – to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to love our neighbors as ourself and to strive for justice and peace among all peoples, respecting the dignity of every human being. Please join us January 25 in the parish Hall for an Outreach Fair, an opportunity for you to discover more details about this committee and perhaps find your place amongst its ministries. See you then!

Upcoming Outreach Events:

Jan. 4: Sandwich Sunday

Jan. 11: Little Pantry Shoppe open

Jan 12: Outreach Committee meeting, 6pm in Taft Hall – All are welcome!

Jan. 18: Noisy Sunday

Jan 25: Outreach Fair; Haitian coffee sales

Interfaith Build for Unity

Grace & St. Stephen's is seeking a representative to serve as a liaison for the **Interfaith Build for Unity** program through Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity. This is a meaningful way for our congregation to live out our faith in action and collaborate with other local faith communities to build homes, hope, and connection.



The commitment is modest but impactful: roughly two hours per month. You would attend the subcommittee's one-hour monthly meeting (typically held online) and coordinate our church's volunteers two to four times a year. There is also an upcoming Interfaith Dialogue on Sunday, February 1st from 3-5:30pm. More details [here](#).

The next **Interfaith Build for Unity day** is scheduled for February 7th. If you're passionate about service, community, and building bridges across faith lines—and would be willing to represent our church in this important partnership—please let us know. You can reach out to [Stephanie Sparks](#) for details about how the role functions. Thanks!

Docent Training

Docent Training

Would you like to learn about the history of the Episcopal Church in Colorado Springs? Or the roots of the theology behind the Gothic Revival architecture of Grace and St. Stephen's? Or what prompted Alice Bemis Taylor's organ philanthropy? The four-session Docent Training Class will answer all of these questions and more!

We'll meet on Tuesdays throughout the month of February (2/4, 2/11, 2/18 & 2/25), from 5-7 pm in the Zimmerman Room (2nd floor). We'll study our parish's 102-year



history and the 153-year presence of the Episcopal Church in our city. There is no charge for this class. You'll build a three ring binder notebook which will serve as your docent handbook.

Please contact [Marianna McJimsey](#), Parish Historian and Archivist, by January 20th to register for this training class.

Thank You - Christmas Decor & Music Donors

Diana Anderson: In honor of Doug Anderson and Josh Anderson

Jack & Deb Barry: In memory of Murphy Barry

Father Robert: In honor of The Vestry, Staff, and People of Grace and St. Stephen's

Tyler & Robert Black: In honor of Eleanor and Rowen

Gayle Bleckert: In memory of family

John Bois: In memory of my beloved grandmother Alice

Shane & Stormy Burns: In honor of our beloved organist, Joel

Kelly Champion: In honor of my special memories at Grace

Sue Culver: In memory of Basil & Jean Culver

Sue Culver: In memory of Pearl Pickering

Rob DeWitt: In memory of Richard & Barbara Eaton DeWitt

Nancy Duell: In memory of Amy Duell and Father Ken Burton

Dierdre & Tom Duff: In honor of Evan, Elena, and Ryan Duff

Joseph Galema

Anna Johnson: In memory of Guinevere & Lewis Johnson

Marianna McJimsey: In memory of Robert McJimsey and in thanksgiving for our children, Elizabeth, George, and Katharine

Dave & Leah Niedringhaus: In memory of our son, Patrick

Lisa Noll: In memory of Sue and Bob Noll

Robyn Noufer: In memory of Cody Snodgres

Robert & Debbie Pearson: In memory of Don Pearson

Brian & Lauren Pilger: In memory of Barbara "Nana" Hoffman

Mary Roney

Kathye Stribrny: In honor of Kenneth Mac

Keith & Amy Welsh: In thanksgiving for our family

Tom & Corie Wilcox: In honor of Martha deUlibbani

Fran Zankowski: To the glory of God



Worship with Us

Sunday Services

8:00 am: Holy Eucharist

10:30 am: Choral Eucharist**

The nursery is open on Sundays, 9:00 am-noon!

Epiphany Eucharist, January

7 pm: Holy Eucharist

Please join us and invite any friends or visiting family.

**These services are live-streamed on the Facebook Grace & St. Stephen's: Parish Happenings Group: click [here](#).

[Weekday Worship Schedule: Click here](#)

Ways to Give

Grace and St. Stephen's offers several easy ways to contribute.

- The ushers pass the plate at each service for your convenience.
- You can also donate on the website [here](#).
- **Text GSS to 73256**, followed by your gift amount, e.g. GSS 25 (e.g. to give \$25). You will receive a return link from the system. Follow the instructions from there.

Thank you for your financial support of Grace and St. Stephen's -- every gift makes it possible for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world.

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