



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

Grace Notes ~ January 28, 2026

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Upcoming Formation Hour Topics

- **February 1** - No Formation Hour due to Annual Meeting
- **February 8** - Deacon Sam: "You Have to Be Prepared to Die Before You Can Begin to Live: 10 Weeks in Birmingham That Changed America"
- **February 15** - Black History Month: Telling Our Story
- **February 22 & March 1** - Broken Altars, Rising Wings: George Herbert and the Poetry of Prayer. George Herbert (1593–1633) was a parish priest whose poetry grew out of the daily rhythms of Anglican worship. Together we will read and listen to Herbert's poems as acts of prayer, attending to how poetic language can shape the heart in humility, repentance, and hope. Led by parishioner Josh Hamm, Instructor of English at the Air Force Academy.



Iconography Workshop

Iconography is the art of "writing" an icon. It creates sacred images, especially in Orthodox Christianity. It involves precise steps to aid prayer and facilitate a connection with the spiritual world serving as "windows to heaven."

Brenda Fox is an excellent artist and has been writing and teaching iconography for many years. Our next class will be March 26, 27 & 28 in Rm 211 from 9am to 5pm each day. The

Our Lady Undoer of Knots



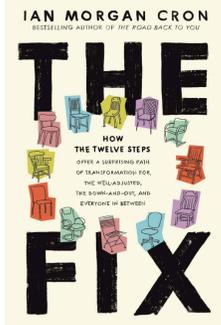
St. Hildegard of Bingen



cost is \$350 and all supplies are included. There is no need for artistic talent as the image is traced onto the board and Brenda directs us in the painting process. Anyone can do it!

Our choices this year are St. Hildegard of Bingen or Our Lady, Undoer of Knots. Please email [Leigh MacHaffie](mailto:LeighMacHaffie) if you are interested in this class and please select the icon you would like to write. The majority votes will win as we can only choose one icon for the class. Deadline to register for the class is March 1st.

Wednesday Night Lenten Study



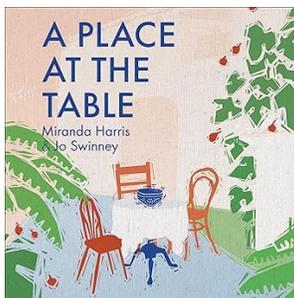
Please join us on Wednesday evenings in Lent: February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25, for faith, fellowship, and formation opportunities.

5:00pm - Eucharist in St. Stephen's Chapel
5:30pm- Dinner
6-7pm - Lenten Study

The study will be guided by 'The Fix' by Ian Morgan Cron. You are welcome to purchase and read the book, but it is not expected or required.

We all suffer from a sense of spiritual homelessness - a feeling that we're not fully at home in the world. To cope with our painful feelings and life traumas, we search for quick "fixes" that eventually become habitual, self-destructive behaviors that ultimately create more problems than they solve. This book helps us work through the Twelve Steps of AA so that we can see ourselves, others, and the world in startlingly new way - and ultimately receive the freedom God has been waiting to give us all along. Even if you have no personal experience with addiction or a Twelve Step group, there is an abundance of wisdom and grace in these steps for us all.

Women's Book Group

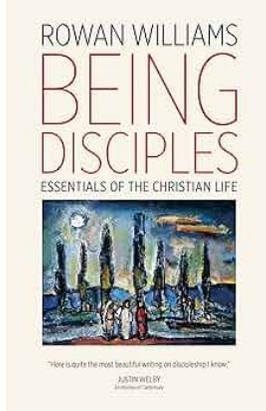


Women's Book Group will be starting a new reading selection on Tuesday, February 10th. We'll be reading 'A Place at the Table: Faith, Hope and Hospitality' by Miranda Harris & Jo Swinney.

From the simple act of preparing vegetables to the warm welcome of a stranger, co-authors Miranda Harris and her daughter Jo Swinney re-define hospitality for the modern age. Drawing on biblical insights and a deep well of experience, this is a warm invitation to embrace the loving kindness of others. To be hospitable doesn't require culinary excellence or matching cutlery—it doesn't even require a home of one's own; true hospitality offers a welcome into imperfection and messiness, a place to belong and be embraced.

Graceful Conversations

Are you looking for a quiet time during which you can engage in matters close to your spiritual heart? Join us in Blaik Library as we read 'Being Disciples' by Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury. We'll be basing our conversations [not a class!] on this reading selection as we meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays at noon from February through May. Our bi-weekly discussion will be followed by the service of noonday prayer, which includes a period of silent meditation. For more info contact: [Marti O'Dell](mailto:MartiO'Dell) or [Kim Millsap](mailto:KimMillsap).



The 'Gesimas' Are Coming!

You might wonder, “What is a gesima?” Some may view it as an antiquated thing that the Church says – just more jargon that people don’t understand. However, another way to view these gesimas is that they clue us into the gravitational pull of Easter.

In the ancient Church (and through the 1960s), the Sundays leading up to Lent were given special names such as Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima – meaning that we are (approximately) 70, 60, or 50 days from Easter, respectively. “Gesima” means “days.” We know that Ash Wednesday is 40 days from Easter, and these older Latin names mark the ninth, eighth, and seventh Sundays before Easter. You will notice on bulletins this nomenclature beginning on Sunday.

The two major Feasts related to Jesus Christ are Christmas and Easter, and each has a pull on the surrounding holy days. While Christmas is set on December 25, as the days of the week move each year; thus, Christmas impacts when Advent begins. And it is by counting from Christmas that we arrive at the Feasts of the Epiphany (Jan 6) of the Presentation (Feb 2).

The same is true for Easter, which falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the spring equinox (Mar 21). In the early Church, there was an idea to fix Easter on a set date on the calendar, but this was resisted, and wisely so. Easter is not only about the redemption of humanity, but it is the dawning of the New Creation. So it makes sense that we would have to look at creation to determine when Easter will be each year. And from that date of Easter, various other holy days find their dates in each year – Ash Wednesday is 40 days prior and the Ascension is 40 days after, for example. The enormity of Easter has a gravitational pull on the calendar.

And this is what the gesima Sundays recognize. Once we get to nine Sundays prior to Easter, the gravitational pull of the Resurrection begins to pull us into that orbit. No longer will be counting the Sundays since the Epiphany, but Easter will come into focus. These Sundays alert us that as we move towards Easter, we are also drawing closer to the start of Lent, so they remind us to begin thinking about our Lenten practices. These Sundays with exotic names are intended to prepare us to have a holy Lent, that we might be drawn closer to the grace of God in Easter.

Girl Scout Cookie Sales

It’s that time again! Need help stocking up on Girl Scout cookies? Want to support scouts from our parish? We’ll have girl scout cookie sales in parish hall the following Sundays:

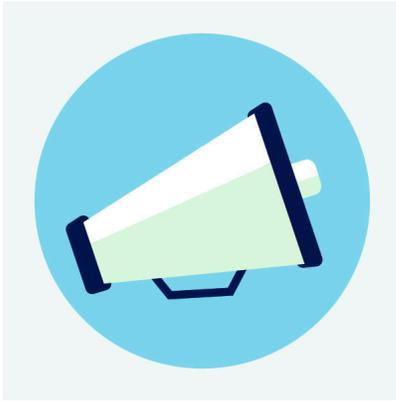
February 1st - Kylen Jaynes
February 15th - Audrey Ross
March 1st - Marzila Johnson
March 8th - Antonia Hensel



Please help support our budding entrepreneurs!



Have Something to Share?



Grace Notes, our weekly parish newsletter, is one of the ways we stay connected, share stories, and celebrate the life of Grace & St. Stephen's—and we'd love your help shaping it.

We invite submissions from anyone in the parish! This might include:

- Reflections and prayers
- Ministry updates or upcoming events
- Photos from parish life
- Short stories of joy, service, or meaningful moments at Grace & St. Stephen's

If you have something on your heart or a story you'd like to share, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Submissions of all kinds are welcome, whether polished or still taking shape.

Please send your contributions to our [newsletter email](#) by 5pm on Tuesday for inclusion in the newsletter the following day. If you have questions or aren't sure whether your idea is a good fit, don't hesitate to reach out—we're happy to help.

Thank you for being part of what makes this parish so vibrant and alive.

Prayer List



Those in crisis of health or circumstance: Conni Eggers, Eunice Ferguson, Annika Johnson, Maggi Johnson, Sheliah Johnson, Br William Marion Page, Linda Stump, Henri Velandia

Those who have died and those who grieve: Jo Greear, mother of Debbie Barents

Those in need of ongoing prayer: The Rev. Canon Jon Anderson, Laura Bayless, Lee Ehrhart, Mary Ellis, John Hough, Dorothy Kipp, Devon Mack, Luden McLord, John McVicker, Debra Millsap, Ed Quinn, Edie Reichert, Jill Wasinger, Calvin Wulf, Pete Zobenica, Alice, Ericka, Jennifer, Oliver & Family, Wes

Those in harm's way: Mark Jaskot, Bill Mack, Rachel Pearson, Adam Tayhar, Nicholas Wolf

This Week's Happenings

Wednesday 1/28

- **Holy Eucharist**, 5pm, St. Stephen's Chapel
- **Communal Supper & Bible Study**, 5:30pm, Parish Hall
- **No St. Nicholas Choir** this week



Thursday 1/29

- **Morning Prayer**, 9am, on Facebook
- **Centering Prayer**, 10am, Weir Conference Room

Friday 1/30

- **Chanted Noonday Prayer**, 12pm, St. Stephen's Chapel

Sunday 2/1

- **Rite I Eucharist**, 8am, Nave
- **Nursery Available**, 9am -12pm
- **Annual Meeting**, 9:10am, Nave
- **Children's Chapel**, 10:30am, Lower Level
- **Rite II Choral Eucharist**, 10:30am, Nave
- **Youth Group**, 12pm, Youth Rm 2nd Floor
- **Sandwich Sunday**, 12pm, Taft Hall
- **Brave Irene's Mysticism & Middle English**, 7pm, Rm 211

Monday 2/2

- **Noonday Prayer with the Anglican Rosary**, 12pm, St. Stephen's Chapel

Tuesday 2/3

- **Morning Prayer**, 9am, on Facebook
- **Women's Book Club**, 10am, Blaik Library
- **Docent Training Class**, 5pm, Zimmerman Rm

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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