



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

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From Father Robert

- I continue to be blessed by your generous welcome. As I've now been here at Grace & St. Stephen's for about 2 1/2 months, I am recognizing more and more what the Spirit had in mind in drawing us together and I remain excited and honored to joyfully embrace our future. Truly, I am grateful for this call and thrilled to be here.
- As you hopefully read in the email that went out earlier in November, I'm thrilled to welcome the Rev. Katie Presley to serve with us as a Priest Associate. She'll be helping to lead worship once a month, will preach quarterly, and will occasionally lead some formation classes/discussions.
- I'm excited to announce that John Herman will move into the role of Interim Director of Music on January 1. Having John's experience with our parish, the St. Nicholas Choir, and Taylor Choir will be a huge blessing to us in the music ministry search.
- I'm also very grateful that Susan Paulson has agreed to serve as Interim Organist and am thankful that she will be offering her gifts to help us sing praises to God.
- We will have a reception after the 10:30 Eucharist on December 14 to celebrate Joel, thank him for his ministry here, and send him off with our well wishes. Joel's final Sunday with us is December 21 and his final day is Christmas Eve.
- Speaking of the music search, I've put together a search committee to help me in the process. We'll begin with creating a job description and posting and will then begin the process of interviewing candidates. Given the rhythms of the Church Year, it is not likely that we will have a new Director of Music before Easter, but it is my goal to have someone hired in the season of Eastertide. A similar process and timeline will be true for an Assistant Rector search (though we're waiting on updates from the Annual Giving campaign to make sure the budget will be able to support that).
- In January, the Sunday morning 9:15 formation hour will be three "listening sessions" for me to learn more about the findings in the Holy

Cow Survey that was conducted during the Rector Search process. I've read the report and watched the presentation, but hope to dig a bit further into some of the desires and hopes for this parish as I am planning for the Vestry's retreat in February. The topics will be:

- **January 4:** Listening Session about Christian Formation & Discipleship
 - **January 11:** Listening Session about Parish Life and Fellowship
 - **January 18:** Reflection Session on what I've seen, heard, and observed in my first few months at Grace and St. Stephen's
 - **January 25 & February 1:** We'll be starting a series for Black History Month and in these first two sessions, we'll be reading through and discussing Martin Luther King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail.
- As we head into a season that is full of parties, stress, and traditions, I ask that you please pray for our staff, clergy, and ministry leaders. I'm quite excited about celebrating my first Advent and Christmas with you all at Grace and St. Stephen's. Together, I look forward to experiencing the joys of the season in story, song, and Sacrament.

Faithfully, Father Robert

Robert +



Vestry Nominations for 2026-2028

The Vestry is a Lay lead ministry, that serves as the parish's leadership and decision-making body, similar to a board of directors. The Vestry plays a vital role in the life of our parish: offering prayerful leadership, stewarding our resources, supporting our clergy, and strategically forming a long-term vision for our parish that guides our mission and ministries.

We are now receiving nominations for parishioners who feel called to serve in this way. If you would like to nominate someone — or if you yourself feel called to serve — please fill out the [nomination form](#) and return it to nominations@gsepiscope.org or drop it at the church office by **Dec 16th**.

The [nomination form](#) details the time commitment, eligibility requirements and responsibilities associated with serving on the Vestry. If you have any questions, please reach out to the nominating committee by email at nominations@gsepiscope.org or call the office and we can connect you with a member of the nominating committee to learn more.



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!

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services

Christmas Eve, December 24:

3:30 pm Christmas Pageant (nursery available)**

7 pm Holy Eucharist (pre-service music begins at 6:30 pm, nursery available)**

11 pm Holy Eucharist (pre-service music begins at 10:30 pm, incense present)

Christmas Day, December 25:

10am 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](#)

Baptisms

Next Date for Baptisms

January 11, 2026

Baptism of Our Lord

If you have a child to be baptized or are an adult seeking to be baptized please complete the form [here](#); for questions, please send an email to emily@gssepiscopal.org.



Catechumenate Program for Adult Baptism

If you or someone you know is interested in Baptism as an adult, Father Robert will be beginning a Catechumenate program in January that will conclude with Baptism at the Easter Vigil on April 4. The Catechumenate is a process that has been used since the earliest day of the Church and prepares adults for becoming a part of the Body of Christ through study, prayer, and mentorship. The program includes selecting a Baptismal sponsor/mentor, regular meetings with Father Robert, some self-guided reading, and being formally admitted as Catechumens during Sunday worship. To enroll in this program and prepare for adult Baptism, **[please let Father Robert](#)** know of your interest by December 20.

Adult Formation

Sunday Formation - Living Well Through Advent

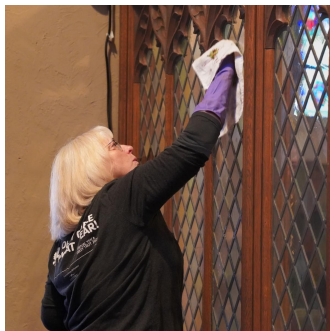
Pick up a copy of the 'Living Well Through Advent 2025' booklet in the Nave or download a [free copy](#) and join us as we practice generosity with all our heart, soul, strength and mind. Join us for each Sunday in Advent, Nov 30-Dec 21 at 9:15 am in Rm 211 with Fr Robert.

Bible Study

Bible study will continue at 6pm in Parish Hall, with livestream [here](#) on Facebook, through December 17th. We'll then be on hiatus for two weeks, resuming Jan 7th.

December Clean Up Day

Help us freshen up in preparation for Christmas and the New Year! We need assistance with a clean up day on Saturday, December 13 from 9-11 am. We'll clean the pews and mop the floor in the nave and we would love to have 6 or 8 people for that. We have volunteers that will be taking loads to the dump or recycle center that day. If you are able to help sort and gather things before the actual work day, please email [Mark Basenberg](#). We have lots of furniture polish, paint, fluorescent bulbs, etc. that need to be sorted and made ready for disposal. Thank you so much for your willingness to make our church shine for the holiday season!



Children & Youth Ministries



Children's Chapel - Sun., Dec. 7, 10:30 am

Join us for Advent 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 am in the Children's Chapel.

Sunday School - Sundays, Dec. 14 & 21 10:15 am

Our Sunday School program provides a sacred space for children to encounter God and grow in their faith. Together we learn songs, pray, listen, and meditate on stories from our Christian tradition. During Advent, we'll be exploring the mystery of the coming Christ. There will be **NO Sunday School Dec. 28**. Children are invited to worship with their family. **Register for the 2025-2026 program year [here](#).**

Advent Festival, Parish Hall, Dec. 7, 4:00 PM

All are invited to celebrate the season with food, crafts, advent wreaths and more! Advent candles and wreath frames will be available for purchase. **Please sign-up [here](#) to bring cookies, host a craft table, or help with set-up/tear-down.**



The Christmas Pageant is Here!

Celebrate the birth of our Lord at our annual Christmas Pageant! The Pageant is a live narration of the Christmas story presented by children 3-11 years of age. Look for details about sign-ups the first week of December. Mark your calendars for the following:

Dec. 10 - Deadline for role preferences

Dec. 20, 10-12 pm - Rehearsal (All Call)

Dec. 24, 2:30 pm - Arrival (Service begins @ 3:30 pm)

To volunteer or learn more about Children's Ministry, contact [**Sr. Marcella**](#).

Youth Group (Grades 6-12) typically 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. See below for



changes to the schedule for December:

December 7 12-3 pm Youth Group Christmas Party in the Youth Rm (2nd Floor). All youth grades 6-12 will kick off the season with food, games, crafts, gift swap and Christmas movies. Bring a gift (under \$15) if you wish to participate in the gift swap. There will be no Reflections or Volunteer Corp this Sunday.

December 21 12:00-12:30 pm Youth Food & Games. 12:30-1:30 pm HS Reflections/ MS Volunteer Corps

Contact [Denise](#) for more information about Youth Group.

Greening of the Church – Volunteers Needed!

Sunday, December 21st • Immediately Following the 10:30 Service

Join us as we prepare our church home for the joyful celebration of Christmas! Our annual Greening of the Church will take place right after the 10:30 am service on Sunday, December 21st.

We need volunteers to help:

- Hang wreaths on each of the sanctuary pillars
- Set up both the indoor and outdoor nativity scenes



All ages and skill levels are welcome—many hands make light (and festive!) work. Come enjoy fellowship, holiday spirit, and the joy of helping our church shine beautifully for the season. Thank you in advance for lending your time and enthusiasm!

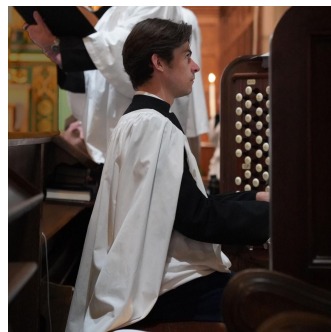
Farewell for Joel Trekell, Music Director

Sunday, December 14, 2025 following the 10:30 am service

Please join us on Sunday, December 14, immediately following the 10:30 am service, as we gather to honor and celebrate the ministry of Joel Trekell, our beloved Music Director.

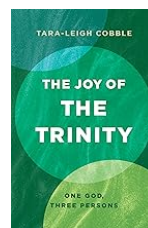
Joel has shared his talent, leadership, and heart with our congregation in countless ways. From inspiring choral music, to moving organ performances to beautifully curated Taylor Concert events, his ministry has enriched our worship and strengthened our community. As Joel prepares for his next chapter, we invite everyone to come together in gratitude for his dedication and the many gifts he has shared with us.

We will hold a special reception in his honor, with light refreshments and an opportunity for you to offer personal thanks, memories, or well-wishes. Let's send Joel off with the warmth, appreciation, and love he has so generously poured into our church. All are welcome.



Women's Book Group

Join us in the Blaik Library every Tuesday from 10-11 am as we read 'The Joy of the Trinity' by Tara Leigh Cobble. Our book group will be on break 12/23 & 12/30. We're looking for recommendations for our next book beginning 1/6/26. Books should be non fiction and spiritual in nature. Please email suggestions to: womensbookgroup@gssepiscopal.org



We're Thankful for...

Thank you hospitality volunteers

A very big thanks to all our hospitality volunteers. Each week teams 1-4 create a spectacular spread of food provided from their home. Your work is greatly appreciated. We would also like to thank the many parishioners that have helped with the larger church events throughout the year!



Thank you Family Promise Volunteers

Thanksgiving week and the week after we are providing three evening meals for families experiencing homelessness. Our volunteers have these meals covered. However, if you would like to help in other ways, cash contributions of any size to Family Promise, whose mission is to end family homelessness, are also welcome. You can use the dropdown on our [giving page](#) and select "Family Promise", or memo your check 'Family Promise.'

February Docent Training

Save the Date!

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 in February 2026 will study these and other features of our parish's 102-year history and the 153-year presence of the Episcopal Church in our city.

If you are interested, please contact [Marianna McJimsey](#), Parish Historian and Archivist

Stay Tuned - More Coming Soon!

We have so many amazing Outreach opportunities throughout the month of December, we'll be sending a separate newsletter to highlight those! Here's a sneak peek:

- Creation Care
- Salvation Army Angel Tree
- Stuffed Animals for Children's Hospital
- Salvation Army Bell Ringing
- Coat Drive for Columbia Elementary
- Illuminating Hearts

We'll also be sending out an email update on our Annual Giving campaign shortly!



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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