

Sharing the Good News of Christ through the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement Rector's Notes Article, March 2, 2020

Earlier this year I was awarded a grant from The Episcopal Church for an evangelism project (or more accurately, projects) looking at how we can utilize digital media to reach out to local millennials where they are readily found: online.

The projects I proposed are based on having an immediate local flavor and access point to connect millennials in our region to St. Stephen's in particular and the Episcopal Church overall. Over the next several months I will be producing a number of different projects that I hope you will join me in sharing, promoting, and participating in.

The first project I'm officially launching today is a locally-focused podcast called "Your Neighbor, A Priest." You can find it currently on Spotify or at Anchor.fm

This podcast will debut on the first Monday of each month and will tackle topics that are pertinent to our local conversations about how we treat our neighbors, specifically seen through a progressive Christian perspective.

In addition to the podcast I am also working on the following projects:

- Local Video Advertisements on Social Media for Major Events (Holy Week and Easter will be our first two videos)
- An App for connecting our parish and our visitors together in one place

I will be asking for volunteers to help "star" in the videos we put together and to help on the production side of things as well. If you are interested in participating, please let me know!

These projects are important for a number of reasons but perhaps the most important is this: the Episcopal Church offers something unique in our world and culture and even in Christianity, and that uniqueness needs to be shared with those who would benefit from knowing we exist and are a potential home for their journey in faith.

St. Stephen's and the Episcopal Church preach the Good News of Jesus Christ, a Good News that is full of love and compassion and acceptance and radical inclusion and welcome, and it's past-time that we spread that Good News out into the world.

FR. Nic

The Liturgical Word of the Week

This weeks word and definition is:

Oblation

- 1) Prayer of self-offering. Oblation is "an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God" (BCP, p. 857). Christian oblation is based in Christ's one offering of himself for our salvation. The BCP states that oblation is one of the principal kinds of prayer.
- 2) In reference to the eucharist, oblation has a broad and generic meaning as well as a narrow and technical meaning. In both cases, oblation is a kind of offering. In the broad sense, oblation refers to any offering-money, bread and wine, self, soul and body-made at the eucharist. The people's offerings are presented to the deacon or celebrant and placed on the altar for consecration (BCP, p. 361). The elements of bread and wine, consecrated at the eucharist, are identified with Christ's self-oblation. At the Last Supper, Christ identified the bread with his body and the wine with his blood of the new covenant. Christ's sacrifice is made present in the eucharist, uniting us in his one offering of himself (BCP, p. 859). The term "oblations" has at times been applied to money (alms) or other gifts that are presented at the eucharist. However, the Prayer Book rubrics distinguish the oblations of bread and wine from such other gifts. The "oblations of bread and wine" may be presented by the newly baptized or their godparents at the baptismal eucharist (BCP, p. 313), and by the persons newly confirmed at the eucharist in a service of Confirmation (BCP, p. 412). One of the offertory sentences provided by the BCP is the bidding, "Let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to the Lord" (p. 377). In its more technical usage, the term refers to the section of the eucharistic prayer dealing with offering. The oblation comes after the memorial (anamnesis) and before the invocation of the Spirit (epiclesis) in eucharistic prayers A, B, and D of the 1979 BCP. For example, eucharistic Prayer D prays to God the Father, "offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you." This prayer of oblation immediately follows the memorial prayer, "Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory . . ." (p. 374).

All Are Welcome

St. Stephen's is a reconciling, affirming, and inclusive Christian community striving through worship, love and service to welcome all people just as God created you. No matter where you are on your journey of faith, and whether you are single, married, divorced, separated, or partnered, our welcome knows no boundaries of age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, economic condition, physical or mental ability. We believe that God delights in the diversity of creation and so do we!

We as people of faith who are called to care for this creation want to respectfully acknowledge the Cowlitz and Chinook People, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

Children of any age are always welcome at St. Stephen's liturgies, and mothers are most welcome to breastfeed their infants during the service. During the service, the gated pew and the two front pews will have activities and coloring for children. Children may engage with these activities at any time during the liturgy, although parental supervision is advised.

Lent Soup & Study

Our Lent Soup & Study series will kick off on Wednesday March 4, running for 5 total weeks.



This year we will engage in what it means to be reconciled to God through the care of creation. Through study, conversation, and presentations, we will wrestle with our call to be stewards of this creation and how our faithful action can change the world.

Please feel free to come to all or parts of our evening gatherings. Each week we will tackle specific aspects of creation care and you do not need to have attended previously to participate:

- 6:00 pm Eucharist in All Saints Chapel
- 6:30 pm Soup Dinner (Volunteers Needed to provide soup!)
- 7:00 pm Program

This Week at St. Stephen's March 8, 2020

Sunday

Monday

- Yoga 7:00 am
- Yoga 8:30 am

Tuesday

- Bible Study 10:00 am
- St. Stephen's Moms 5:00 pm
- Zen Meditation 7:00 pm

Wednesday

- Yoga 7:00 am
- Yoga 8:30 am
- Radical Love Meal Share 4:30 pm
- Lenten Dinner and Eucharist 6:00 pm

Thursday

Friday

- Yoga 7:00 am

Saturday

Radical Love

Radical Love shares nutritious meals twice a week with dignity and caring to our homeless neighbors. Last month an average of 120 meals were provided each week. **This costs a approximately \$130 a week. Your donations are needed.**



LCC Choirs, with members of the SW Washington Symphony, present

Mozart's Requiem

Friday,
March 13, 2020
7:30 p.m.

Wollenberg Auditorium
Rose Center for the Arts

LCC Choirs will be traveling to NYC to sing Mozart's Requiem at Carnegie Hall with renowned director, Jeffrey Douma. Please join us in our preview performance of this exciting work, accompanied by members of the SW Washington Symphony.

Tickets: \$10.00 - General audience
Free - Age 16 or younger, any student with ID, LCC faculty and staff
lowercolumbia.edu/music

1900 Maple Street, Longview



Evil Forum

The Tuesday Morning Bible Study Group has invited Fr. Nic to discuss Evil and Satan on March 10. Fr. Nic wrote his seminary thesis (Evil? An Episcopal Dilemma) on addressing evil through a uniquely Episcopalian Theology of Pastoral Care. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to attend (even if you're not a Tuesday regular). The presentation will start at 10am on March 10 in the Parish Hall, coffee is of course provided.

St Stephen's mission is to:

- Courageously serve the diverse world, to care for one another, our community and the earth in Christ's name.
 - We ground this service in joyful and thoughtful worship, drawn from past and present, trusting in the Holy Spirit to refresh and guide us.
 - We are committed to grow together, to find our being in God, and to welcome all on their faith journey.
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Office Closed

Becky will be on vacation from March 8 and the office will be closed. Please contact Fr. Nic if you have any concerns while she is away.



Our Response to COVID-19 (aka the Coronavirus)

As the world continues to combat the spread of this particularly virulent corona virus, it is appearing more and more likely that we will experience wide-spread infection in our communities throughout the world, let alone here in Southwest Washington.

With that, I want to encourage you to be prepared personally for this likely eventuality. This includes finally getting around to stocking your emergency supply kit (something as residents in a high-risk earthquake zone we should have anyways) and having enough food on hand to handle potential quarantine measures (current practice appears to be roughly 14 days of isolation, although that could be extended if it hits our community especially hard).

The following link at the Diocesan website has been put together to keep up to date resources available in one easily accessible location: <https://ecww.org/covid19response/>

Regarding liturgical actions, we will be taking extra measures to insure the most hygienic practices, including but not necessarily limited to:

- Hand Sanitizer use by Clergy and Chalice Bearers immediately before distribution of Bread and Wine
- Mandatory hand washing with soap and water before handling elements or vessels (applies to all servers and altar guild, oblation bearers asked to use hand sanitizer)

If there are non-isolated cases in Cowlitz County we will also practice:

- Passing the Peace through verbal and non-physical contact means
- Hand Sanitizer use by ALL as they come up to receive communion

If you are feeling any symptoms of illness, please stay home during this time as a way to protect yourself from further illness. Please also reach out to Fr. Nic (nic@sslv.org) to let him know if you expect to be out for an extended period of time.

Fr. Nic will be available for pastoral visits as appropriate and safe for all parties.