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The Steeple



July 17, 2025



The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Let's GLOW!!!

In last week's newsletter, Father Nick told us about the enrollment growth at Saint Crispin's Summer Camp. He said this growth is more than just statistics... *"it's the work of weaving souls together and building lasting friendships. And, what is more, you had a hand in that!"*

He also quoted Teresa... *"More than a number, it's a reflection of something deeper: a community that's growing, reconnecting, and investing in this place. I've watched returning campers grow in confidence and faith, and I've been so proud of the way we've welcomed new faces into the circle."*

We all join in celebrating this! Seeing more young people connecting with each other in faith is a blessing for all! It is what we all want...to connect in faith!

Encouraging, supporting, connecting and helping our youth is a shared goal with our St. Luke's family. The Vestry has made a commitment to keep this as one of our goals. Last year we got together on two occasions and cooked a meal and prepared an activity/craft with our YD. One evening we prepared dinner and then joined the leaders and members and shared a "life skills" evening. On another Wednesday, we talked about what Vestry means and made advent candles along with preparing a light meal. Karole Cozby and I also took one Wednesday and spoke with the youth about our Walking the Mourners Path workshop. They decorated small wooden crosses for the WTMP room. They also chose a prayer from the BCP to put on the wall along with the crosses for those that go through these grief workshops. We ended the evening by going up to the room and showing them where their crosses would be displayed. All these moments have given us a chance to get to know one another and share with our youth some of the things that we do at St. Luke's.



Blair Ellis recently reached out to the Vestry to see if we would be willing to sponsor another Wednesday night this next season. This past Vestry meeting we agreed to host two Wednesday

nights for the upcoming year. We will cook for them and either prepare an activity or join in the activity that the leaders have planned.

As I said before, one of the Vestry's goals for the past two years has been to try to find new ways for us to connect with our youth. After reading Nick's letter last week and hearing Teresa's comments about the growth of Saint Crispin's, it has reenergized our goal. Talking with Blair we thought perhaps this could be a way for more of the ministries at St. Luke's to get to know our young disciples. Sandy Whitson heard the idea and said the Ladies Prayer Group would like to take a Wednesday! Yay, ladies!!!

So...THIS IS A *SHOUT OUT* TO ALL MINISTRIES **to consider sponsoring a Wednesday night with the YD!**

Ideally, that is cooking a meal and planning an activity or craft. Sharing with the youth what your ministry means to you and what is involved in your ministry is a plus as well! You will be blessed by your time with our very special young people and their exceptional leaders.

As we celebrate and support what is happening at St. Crispin's...let's share in that "gentle glow" and bring that energy to our YD as well!

If you are interested, please contact the YD leaders or your Vestry members.
In Peace always... Nancy Woods

Theologian's Corner: Elizabeth Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman

Four amazing women of two different races, whose lives touched three centuries are the subject of a single commemoration this week. They gave themselves to the cause of justice in a variety of realms, and through their energies and imaginative leadership, they made significant and lasting contributions to the rights of all people, but most particularly of women.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton challenged the church's oppressive limiting of women to subordinate roles in marriage and in church life. Amelia Bloomer took on the fashion mavens of the day, advocating for less restrictive clothing for women, whose health was endangered by the corsets worn even by pregnant women. Sojourner Truth found affinity with the abolitionists and the advocates of women's rights, both groups benefiting from her considerable gifts for preaching and oratory. Harriet Ross Tubman was a literal liberator, personally responsible for freeing over three hundred



African Americans by securing refuge for them in Canada, where she had gone to escape slavery herself.

These four women, whose biographies offer many examples of heroism and virtue, are united not only in their commitment to justice, but in a principle of faith—that God does not intrude but rather invites and awaits our asking. The presumption that God orchestrates human affairs is challenged in Jesus' own instruction that we are to ask for what we need and desire: "Ask, and it will be given you," he tells his disciples. "Search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds" (Luke 11 :9-10).

Each of these women believed that God called them to the struggles they engaged. But they were not passive agents; they were formidable, forceful women. They had a lively, energetic faith attuned to their energetic lives. They did not blame God for the conditions of the world they inhabited; the sources of evil and oppression were—in their cases literally—man-made. Thus, as they sought to redress the wrongs, they took responsibility and called others to accountability. And when they needed something of God, they asked for it.

The tragic flaw in many a would-be hero is the pride that seeks to go it alone. The single-handed liberator, the lone ranger, sets out to achieve great things independently. Life's highway is littered with the tragic *momenti mori*, the sun-bleached remains of the burned-out, used-up messiahs who could not or would not ask God or anyone else for assistance. Ask, says Jesus, and it shall be given. But ask we must. Ask these four amazing women; they will tell you.

Together we pray: Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pack the Backpacks Item for July





The Episcopal Diocese *of* Oklahoma

The Separation of Church and State is Good for Both

Since 1954, the Johnson Amendment in the tax code has said that churches risk losing their tax-exempt status if they participate in "any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office." On Tuesday, the IRS announced that it will no longer restrict churches from endorsing candidates, on the grounds of freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

As Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma, I'm urging our clergy and congregations to refrain from such endorsements, for several reasons.

Our congregations consist of members of good faith from both political parties, as well as many independents. Ours is not a blue or red diocese, but a purple one, and above all, a Christian one. Friendship in Christ across difference is one of our God-given gifts, and bringing partisan politics further into our sacred communities threatens that gift, opening the door to the bitter division all too present in our wider culture. In addition, this new "freedom" will bring pressure (from the Right and Left) on clergy to endorse, compromising both their spiritual and pastoral roles.

And lastly, there is the matter of faith. We follow a servant king, a humble savior, Jesus Christ, who said that his kingdom was not of this world. His example and his teachings inform how we live our lives, including how we consider important issues, especially in light of Jesus' call to love our neighbor. This is why dioceses and congregations have always been free to encourage voter registration and education on matters related to the common good, and to speak in the public square on the moral questions of our day, especially as it relates to the poor and vulnerable. But to advocate for one political candidate over another, however well intentioned, takes us down an unsteady and perilous path, where discernment is considerably less clear. Far better to leave the decisions of the voting booth to each individual conscience, informed by faith, but not coerced by it. The clear separation of Church and State is essential to the well-being of both.

Bishop Poulson Reed
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma

Prayer List

Please pray for: Ben Baker, Steve McCraw, Josh Harris, David Swindell, Connie Finch, Terry Grogan, Tyler Roberson, Jerry Nezam, Miriam Petrovich, Lynette Beebe, Jack Smith, Danny Clem, David McAtee, Shawn, Stephanie Gallegos, Pat Sare, Steve Linn, Jean Mason, Adam Thomas, Tom Oakes, Bill Pendley, Mary Wallace, Lynda Stephens, Marcie Zervas, Audrey Harris, Peggy Rockey, Lauren Barlowe, Ken Harvey, Nan Buhlinger, Bill Birk, Carol McSpadden, Dionna Cameron, Betty Rogers, David Anderson, Dan & JoAnn Gallery, Freda Bretz, Kathleen Turner, Susan Dick, Steve Clark, Sue Sherrill, Lauren Gandy, and Betty Hardin.

Please add the following to your prayers for the Fifth Week of Pentecost
St. Basil's, Tahlequah The Church of North India (United)

Birthdays and Anniversaries July 20th – July 26th, 2025

Birthdays



Fr Nick Phares	(7/20)	Patricia Legatski	(7/25)
Pax Phares	(7/21)	Henry Tedstrom	(7/25)
Jason Carroll	(7/23)	Nancy Hix	(7/26)
Barbara Todd	(7/24)		

If your or a loved one's name doesn't appear on the list, please email or call the office, and we will add your birthday or anniversary!

AT LUKE'S PLACE:

July 18th – July 24th, 2025

July 20th

8:00 Holy Eucharist, Rite I,
Chapel

9:15 Faith Forum, Metcalf

10:30 Holy Eucharist, Rite II,
Nave

July 22nd

12:15 St Mary Magdalene Feast
Day Eucharist, Chapel

July 24th

7am, Men's Fellowship, Metcalf

9:15 Bible Study, Metcalf Hall

1pm Green Country Eucharist
GVC

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