

FROM THE HEART OF THE PASTOR

Dear Family,

In 2023, we celebrate our 125th year as St. Stephen Church — and it has been a year of firsts! *This Sunday will be our first St. Joseph Altar in our 125 year history:*

OUR FIRST ST JOSEPH ALTAR: A LABOR OF LOVE

Our St. Joseph Altar has truly been a “labor of love,” offered up to the foster father of Jesus. The altar (*along with the spaghetti lunch, goody bags, over 8,000 Italian cookies, and much more*) represents many, many hours of work from over 40 parish volunteers.

A GRATEFUL PASTOR!

I’m grateful to everyone who has helped to make this altar a reality — *especially Mrs. Mary Etta Taylor. Mary Etta has given countless hours of thought, prayer, and work to our altar, and I owe her a great debt of gratitude. I am also grateful to the many donors and local businesses who have helped us prepare for the altar.*

Over the past few months, I’ve watched as the St. Joseph Altar has built community and friendships in our parish. I know you will agree: we, as St. Stephen Parish, will have so much to be proud of on March 19th!

In preparation for the St. Joseph Altar, we have undertaken three projects to improve the Parish Hall:

NEW BRICK PAVERS AND SEATING OUTSIDE OF HALL

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, the sidewalk outside of the hall has been expanded with brick pavers. New benches and planters have also been donated to be placed on top of the brick pavers. This will provide a place for parishioners to visit outside at parish functions — and for our Early Learning students to use. *I’m very grateful for this generous gift!*

HALL DOORS AND METAL REPAIRED AND REPAINTED

The parish hall exterior doors are in need of repair — the veneer is peeling off and they have not been repainted in many years. Similarly, the paint on the metal framing around the doors and windows on the parish hall is flaking and rusting. I’m grateful to Paul Tholen for taking on the job of sanding, priming, and painting the doors and metal framing.

STATUES HUNG IN PARISH HALL

Three statues (Our Lady, St. Anthony of Padua, and St. Jude) which are from the original 1898 church have been placed on plaster wall brackets in the Parish Hall. I’m grateful to Fereale Richard for hanging these wall brackets and placing the statues. These images of Our Lady and the saints will help remind us of the sacred at parish functions.

With great gratitude, Fr. Istre

RESTORING ST. STEPHEN

Honoring 125 Years of Faith and Family

We, the St. Stephen Parish Family, owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who helped to make our parish what it is today. With the “Restoring St. Stephen” Campaign, we intend to honor this legacy of faith by undertaking urgently needed repairs to the House of God.

In the coming weeks, I will be coming to you with a more formal appeal, ways to give to this new fundraising campaign, and more information about the work to be done (including renderings of the project). Until that time, we will begin taking up a second collection once a month for the RESTORING ST. STEPHEN FUND — formerly called the building fund. I’m very grateful to the many parishioners who — already sensing the pressing need for repairs — have donated towards this effort.

THE RESTORING ST. STEPHEN FUND
(total donations and second collections to date):

\$ 191,094.00

*Thank you for your generosity,
honoring our legacy of faith!*

PHASE I

- Removal of current metal roof
- Assessment and repair of termite-damaged joists & roof decking
- Installation of new standing-seam metal roof
- Extending current roof line to cover the two lean-to sections that extend from the sacristy and servers’ room
- Repair & bracing of termite-damaged beam in church
- Treatment, cleaning, and repainting of ceiling in sanctuary (as well as damaged portions of high altar reredos)
- Repair to faulty drainage around church and installation of gutters on new roof

**Current projected cost of Phase I:
\$500,000**

PHASE II

Addressing interior aesthetic concerns
(improved lighting, painting interior of church,
removal of carpet in sanctuary, etc.)



GRAZIE A TUTTI!

THANK YOU to the many volunteers, donors, and local businesses who helped to prepare for our first Saint Joseph Altar!



AROUND THE PARISH AND DIOCESE

ALTAR SERVERS FOR TRIDUUM

We, as a parish, are very blessed to have dedicated altar servers at both daily Mass and the weekend Masses. (*Many parishes do not have any altar servers to assist in the sacred liturgy.*) However, we are continuing to build our altar server program — especially as Eastertide and the Sacred Triduum approach. To begin serving at Holy Mass, contact the parish office at 385-1280.

CONSIDERING A PRIESTLY VOCATION: THE SPRING “COME & SEE” DISCERNMENT RETREAT

This retreat is for any young man ages 16 and older to experience a weekend at St. Joseph Seminary College with other young men from the Gulf South who are discerning the possibility of the priesthood. Fr. Blake Dubroc, Vocation Director for the Diocese of Lafayette, will be taking a group to the retreat. The Spring “Come and See” Retreat will be March 31st — April 2nd. Contact Fr. Istre for more details.

BEREAVEMENT COMMITTEE RETURNS

The St. Stephen Bereavement Committee helps to support parishioners who have lost a loved one — *just the simple gift of a meal can mean so much to those who are mourning.* There are multiple teams that coordinate a meal for families. If you are interested in being a part of this committee, contact Linda Thomas at 985-312-4728.

SACRIFICIAL GIVING

Weekend Collection \$7,735.00

| DATE / TIME | READERS | EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION | ROSARY |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| March 25, 4:00 p.m. | Sandra LeBlanc | Kathy LaBouve | Shelly Adams |
| March 26, 7:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m. | Prissy Davis Cliff Journey Monique Ratcliff | Debra Parker Belinda Boudreaux | |

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

Monday, March 20, 12:10 pm
No intention requested

Tuesday, March 21, 12:10 pm
John Czajka

Wednesday, March 22, 12:10 pm
AML

Friday, March 24, 12:10 pm
Frank Russo, AML

Saturday, March 25
4 pm M/M Herman Pellerin, Sr. fly. (L&D),
M/M E.J. Lemoine fly. (L&D), Miles Liner fly. (L&D),
John Tholen, Louis Boudreaux, Michael R. Adams,
Shirley Savoie, John Czajka, Earline Manfre,
Lester Beadle, MLD, Cay Price, Wade Landry,
Allie W. Adams, Jr., CLR, Frances Domingue

Sunday, March 26
7 am Calvin LeLeux fly. (L&D), Kenneth Garber, Sr.,
Willie & Emily Smith fly. (L&D)
10 am *For St. Stephen Parishioners,*
Lee Nini, Jr. fly. (L&D), Brenda White, Don Lasseigne
Earline & Mario Manfre fly. (L&D),
David Duhon II & fly. (L&D)
6:30 pm Carolyn & Ernest Parro

We will take up a Second Collection for The Restoring St. Stephen Fund The First Weekend of Each Month

*The next second collection will be:
The Weekend of April 1st and 2nd*