

From: **St. Francis Episcopal Church** vicar@stfrancisva.org
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St Francis





December 26, 2018

Undeclared

I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God! Acts 7:56

St. Stephen

Stephen is one of the original seven deacons we read about in Acts chapter 6. He is also the first Christian to be martyred for his faith. There are many things we can say about Stephen and about the church at this point in history. There is one thing that sticks out to me today about this story of the stoning of Stephen. Jesus is seen in heaven by Stephen *standing* at the right hand of God. We know that when Jesus ascended into heaven it was to sit at the right hand of the Father. So why here, at the stoning of Stephen, is Jesus standing?

Some Thoughts

Stephen recognized that Jesus is the Son of Man. He was testifying to that before the Jewish leaders who were about to stone him for blasphemy.

Saul, who was to become the apostle Paul, witnessed the entire thing. Who knows how deeply this must have affected him. That impression would have become a life changing encounter for him very soon after this when Jesus appeared to him. Jesus is standing, perhaps, because the advance of the Kingdom of God, His Kingdom, cannot be defeated. As he said before, the gates of hell will not prevail against the church and the kingdom of God.

The death of Stephen and the change it brought into those around him, especially Paul, could very well be why Jesus stood to oversee that incredibly powerful change.

What About Us?

Are we open to any change that Jesus wants to bring in us and through us?

What kind of New Years' resolutions will we make? Will we adopt rhythms that make space in our lives for the kingdom of God to come into our lives and those around us? Will we pray, worship, and relate to others in a way that we can see more of God and receive what he has for us? Let's ask God to lead us not that kind of living.

Coming Attractions

Sunday, December 30, 2018 Worship at 10:00am

Sunday, January 6, 2019 Worship at 10:00am

The first Sunday of each month, after church, Karen & Chris Webber will be collecting donated food from the Food Lion in Centerville and taking it to the food pantry. This would be an ideal time for anyone in the church to bring in their own donations!! The food pantry is in dire need of cereal, canned soups, and canned vegetables (not generally things donated by grocery stores). If this is something you would like to contribute to, just bring it to church and we would make sure it was delivered to the food pantry.

Please help us in the fun sharing our favorite recipes, in the form of a St. Francis cookbook. Please bring your recipes to the pot luck each month, and give to Libby or Karen. You can also email to lcp@libbyclarkphotography.com.

Centerville Circle of Prayer

Heart of Yoga. that the health of clients would greatly improve

The Diocese of Virginia

For all church musicians, the people of St. Gabriel's, Leesburg, and All souls, Atlee that they would continually walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Anglican Communion

For the people of the Diocese of Kushtia - (Bangladesh) [The Rt Revd Samuel Sunil Mankhin](#) that they would continually walk in the power of the Holy Spirit

Grace and Peace,

John Maher

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