**St. Stephen Catholic Church**
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**Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**
February 23, 2020

Love your enemies, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes the sun rise on the bad and the good.
Matthew 5:44, 45

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<th>Week At A Glance</th>
<th>Schedule of Masses</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mon, Feb 24</strong></td>
<td><strong>Monday - Friday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 9:30 am-1:30 pm, Office Open</td>
<td>7:30 am (Chapel, Room 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 7:00 pm, Lector Practice</td>
<td><strong>Saturday</strong>: 5 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tues, Feb 25</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sunday</strong>: 9:30 pm</td>
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<td>• 10 am-2 pm, Office Open</td>
<td><strong>Confessions</strong>: Saturday - 4:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wed, Feb 26</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 7:15 am, Mass with Ashes</td>
<td>Sat Feb 22, 5:00 pm - Saint Stephen Parishioners</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 11 am-3 pm, Office Open</td>
<td>Sun Feb 23, 9:30 am - St Stephen/CTK Priests</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 5:00 pm, Mass with Ashes</td>
<td>Sat Feb 29, 5:00 pm - St Stephen/CTK Priests</td>
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<td><strong>Thurs, Feb 27</strong></td>
<td>Sun Mar 1, 9:30 am - Saint Stephen Parishioners</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 11 am-3 pm, Office Open</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 7:00 pm, Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<tr>
<th>Ministers Schedule:</th>
<th>February 26 (Ash Wednesday)</th>
<th>February 29 – March 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>7:30 am</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LECTOR</strong></td>
<td>Regular weekday ministers</td>
<td>J. Gotelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.L.O.W.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST</strong></td>
<td>J. Kurpinsky</td>
<td>B. Rusca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALTAR SERVERS</strong></td>
<td>J. Kurpinsky</td>
<td>F. McCormick</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SACRISTAN</strong></td>
<td>M. Milani</td>
<td>M. Milani</td>
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<td><strong>COUNTERS: Feb 24</strong></td>
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<td><strong>COUNTERS: Mar 2</strong></td>
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11 Highlights from Pope Francis’s Querida Amazonia

Pope Francis released his latest apostolic exhortation today: *Querida Amazonia*, a follow up to the “Amazone Synod”, or Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian Region, which was held in October 2019. The document is divided into four interrelated “dreams” for the Amazon. To give you a sense of the document, here are some highlights: (Taken from the Jesuit Post)

**Social Dream**

I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced. (7)

1. “We do not need an environmentalism ‘that is concerned for the biome but ignores the Amazonian peoples.’ (8) 2. “The Amazon region has been presented as an enormous empty space to be filled, a source of raw resources to be developed, a wild expanse to be domesticated. None of this recognizes the rights of the original peoples; it simply ignores them as if they did not exist, or acts as if the lands on which they live do not belong to them.” (12)

3. “The businesses, national or international, which harm the Amazon and fail to respect the right of the original peoples to the land and its boundaries, and to self-determination and prior consent, should be called for what they are: injustice and crime.”(14)

**Cultural Dream**

I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways. (7)

4. “Here I would like to point out that ‘a consumerist vision of human beings, encouraged by the mechanisms of today’s globalized economy, has a leveling effect on cultures, diminishing the immense variety which is the heritage of all humanity’. This especially affects young people, for it has a tendency to ‘blur what is distinctive about their origins and backgrounds, and turn them into a new line of malleable goods.’” (33)

5. “Starting from our roots, let us sit around the common table, a place of conversation and of shared hopes. In this way our differences, which could seem like a broken bridge, can become a bridge. Identity and dialogue are not enemies. Our own cultural identity is strengthened and enriched as a result of dialogue with those unlike ourselves. Nor is our authentic identity preserved by an impoverished isolation.” (37)

**Ecological Dream**

I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests. (7)

6. “In a cultural reality like the Amazon region, where there is such a close relationship between human beings and nature, daily existence is always cosmic. Setting others free from their forms of bondage surely involves caring for the environment and defending it, but, even more, helping the human heart to be open with trust to the God who not only has created all that exists, but has also given us himself in Jesus Christ. The Lord, who is the first to care for us, teaches us to care for our brothers and sisters and the environment which he daily gives us. This is the first ecology that we preach.” (41)

7. “Let us awaken our God-given aesthetic and contemplative sense that so often we let languish. Let us remember that ‘if someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple.’” (56)

**Ecclesial Dream**

I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features. (7)

8. “An authentic option for the poor and the abandoned, while motivating us to liberate them from material poverty and to defend their rights, also involves inviting them to a friendship with the Lord who can elevate and dignify them. How sad it would be if they were to receive from us a body of teachings or a moral code, but not the great message of salvation, the missionary appeal that speaks to the heart and gives meaning to everything else in life.” (63)

9. “[T]he indigenous peoples of the Amazon Region express the authentic quality of life as ‘good living’. This involves personal, familial, communal and cosmic harmony and finds expression in a communitarian approach to existence, the ability to find joy and fulfillment in an austere and simple life, and a responsible care of nature that preserves resources for future generations.” (71)

10. “It is possible to take up an indigenous symbol in some way, without necessarily considering it as idolatry. A myth charged with spiritual meaning can be used to advantage and not always considered a pagan error. Some religious festivals have a sacred meaning and are occasions for gathering and fraternity, albeit in need of a gradual process of purification or maturation.” (79)

11. “In a synodal Church, those women who in fact have a central part to play in Amazonian communities should have access to positions, includingecclesial services, that do not entail Holy Orders and that can better signify the role that is theirs.” (103)

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**Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**

February 23, 2020

**First Reading:**

Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

We are reading today from the third book of the Bible, Leviticus, which is a collection of Jewish laws. Today’s passage discusses how to treat your neighbor. For Old Testament people, a neighbor was a fellow Israelite. (When we listen to today’s Gospel, we will hear Jesus take this a step further.)

**Second Reading:**

1 Corinthians 3:16-23

In this reading, Paul continues to address the problem of factions in Corinth. One group followed Apollos, an eloquent preacher who came there after Paul had left. Another group was loyal to Kephas (which is the Aramaic name for Peter). Paul uses an unusual image to explain why such factions don’t belong in a Christian community.
Join us for Coffee & Donuts after Mass this Sunday.

Plan on attending our Lenten Soup Suppers on Wednesdays (March 4 – April 1) at 6:00 pm followed by a presentation at 7:00 pm. More details to come.

Join us for a bit of Spring Cleaning around our parish grounds on Saturday March 21 from 9:00 am to roughly 3 pm. There will be a signup sheet in the back of the church starting this weekend. A simple lunch will be provided.

**ctkAlive! Scripture Study—Lent 2020**

Weekend A-Cycle readings are really beautiful (incl. Raising of Lazarus, Woman at the Well, Man Born Blind). Let’s prepare together for a Joyous Easter. Join us for this 6-wk series—Tuesdays, Feb. 25 through March 31. Mornings from 9:15 to 10:45. Evenings from 7:15 to 8:45. No charge. Presenter: Al Garrotto. Pre-registration required at algarrotto@comcast.net or call the CTK office at 682-2486.

Women’s Retreat - The Return of the Prodigal: Reflections on Creativity, Beauty and Prayer. Presenter: Toinette Eugene, Ph.D. All women are invited to join for our annual retreat to be held: Saturday, March 14 from 9 am - 4 pm. St. Stephen Parish Hall. $25 suggested donation. See information in vestibule of church. Registration required.

**Men’s Retreat**

Save the Date! Men’s Retreat will be held at San Damiano on April 3-5, 2020. More information to follow soon.

**LifeShift Retreat on Work and the Christian Journey.** An opportunity to reflect on life and faith while considering new career, work, and/or retirement possibilities. San Damiano Retreat from February 28 - March 1. Information at sandamiano.org or call 925-837-9141. Presenters: Jim Briggs and Tom Bachuber.

Dynamic Catholic offers a “BEST LENT EVER” program that is free and sent daily to your email. You will receive short, inspirational videos each day to help you see some amazing possibilities! These videos include an inspirational message from Mathew Kelly or a member of the Dynamic Catholic Team. Simply go to https://dynamiccatholic.com/best-lent-ever and sign up.

Also, we have a limited number of 'Best Lent Ever Journals' at the back of the Church on the table closest to the book cases. Please only take one if you are signing up for the daily emails.

The Little Black Book of daily Lenten meditations are still available in the back of the Church. The Lenten meditation books are complimentary for you to take, but you are welcome to make a freewill donation to help cover their costs. Also available are the Lenten CRS Rice Bowls. Please pick one up to fill during Lent.

**Parish Mission:**

To Live and Love in Christ

40 Days for Life Begins Ash Wednesday!

Help Save Lives in Walnut Creek and NOW in Concord. Our 40 Days for Life Vigils PRAYERFULLY AND PEACEFULLY give witness outside Planned Parenthood at 1357 Oakland Blvd., WC and NOW at 2185 Pacheco St., Concord. We are present in two's or more from 7 am to 7 pm daily, except Sundays. WE ARE HELPING WOMEN AND SAVING BABIES! Contact: 40daysforlife.com/WALNUTCREEK (925) 984-7602 OR 40daysforlife.com/CONCORD, (925) 595-0401. SEE YOU THERE!

Parish Stewardship Feb. 15/16

Regular Collection: $2910.00

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