

# What's all the Excitement at St. Stephen's Today?



It's early in the morning on Saturday, February 12, 2011 and, though it's still hours before the service begins, St. Stephen's is coming alive with excitement. People greet one another as they arrive and then busy themselves with the necessary and important preparations.

The altar guild has done an amazing job. They have been setting up for days, and now it's all ready; the high mass set, candelabras, pew torches, even the baldacchino. The sanctuary is set for a glorious service.



Over in Spurling Hall tables are set up, flowers placed, balloons set out. After a lot of time and effort, it stands ready for a joyous celebration.



More and more people are arriving. The table and chimes are carefully arranged. Four choirs (Chime Choir, St. Stephen's Parish Choir, The Stones, and the Children's Choir) are setting up, warming up, getting ready.

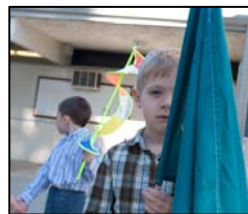


Twelve acolytes are vesting; the four chalice bearers getting set. The litanists, all twenty-three of them, are finding their places and preparing for their part of the service. The Deacon arrives and prepares.

“The Bishop is here!” someone calls out. He greets the people, helps with the preparations, and prepares himself. He lays hands on those in need of healing, prays for those celebrating a wedding anniversary, and blesses some of the gifts that will be presented after the service.



More and more children arrive. All of them are invited to participate in the service.



Some will be costumed as Chinese lions and dance in procession. Some will wave banners and sing. All are welcome. There's a place for everyone.





Clergy are vesting in the sacristy behind the choir. The banner bearers are getting ready. Photographers begin their task of documenting this wonderful occasion. It's been a long time in coming. A child calls out in joyful expectation, "it's almost time!"



The readers are checking the lessons, each preparing for their part of the service. One had to take a dear friend to the hospital and is not able to be with us. A faithful member of the altar guild gladly agrees to step in. Sound system; "check!" Acolytes; "ready!" Readers; "in place!" The narthex can barely hold all the people that will walk in the procession.





“Are you ready? Is everyone ready? Places everyone! Call in the children, here we go!”



The time comes, the service begins. The music is wonderful, the procession glorious.





The children sing.



The Lessons come alive in the telling.





A great sermon is preached.



Words are spoken, bread is broken, the people fed; holy food, for holy people.



Then we recess and are sent out into the world to love and serve the Lord.



***Why all the excitement at St. Stephen's today?***



Two of their own  
became priests of the church.  
Thanks be to God.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!