

Saint Stephen, pray for us!



The Children's Word is a weekly bulletin for Orthodox Christian young people. Copyright 2020 Alexandra Houck.  
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# The Children's Word

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark 10:14

Sunday, December 27, 2020

Volume 8, Issue 52

A Ministry of the  
Orthodox Christian Network



## A different kind of manger

**Are you still celebrating Christmas?** Maybe you are still enjoying your presents or munching on Christmas chocolates. But are you *really* celebrating? In church, we still sing the Christmas hymns, and our Gospel reading today tells us about Jesus as a baby. Everything is still decorated for the feastday. Yes, we are still celebrating the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ!



We think about the birth of our Lord throughout the whole year too! When we get ready to receive Holy Communion, we say special prayers to ask God to make us ready to receive it. (When you're older, you can pray all of the prayers, but kids can pray what they can.) One of the Communion prayers says, "As you willed in the cave to lie in a manger of senseless animals, take it upon yourself now to enter the manger of my soiled body."

This prayer reminds us of what God did for us when He sent Jesus to us. And this prayer reminds us of what God does for us each time we receive Holy Communion! Our Lord, Jesus Christ is God, but He came and was born in a dirty, old cave. And every time we receive Holy Communion, He comes into our dirty, old bodies. (They're "dirty" because we have all done wrong things.)

God comes to us anyway because He loves us so much. He comes to save us! So, let's do what we can to ask God to make us ready to receive Him.

# WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

COMMUNION  
DEACON  
ENEMIES  
FORGIVE  
HOLY  
HUMBLE  
MANGER  
PRAYERS  
PREPARE  
STEPHEN

Z Y C F E Q N S E P E U B M L  
Y U R U H I Y N M X L W R S Y  
K A B E I O E D N K B J G X T  
P Z Q R G M P O O D M E I B M  
A S L Y I N C R N Y U C G Y S  
Q F M E E A A O E N H G T K X  
Z B S I E R I M F P W L X B C  
V W W D R N S R E Y A R P L J  
S L O A U A E R A L Y R I F C  
A S P M S T E P H E N V E O Q  
C K M V K L L T Y H B A E R S  
O O D X K X D L Q C F K M G P  
C T X Q H N B Z F D J W E I Q  
X I H O L Y V R F T Y L U V P  
Y I U N N Q V T Y J E P Z E M

## What's in an icon?

Here is an icon of Saint Stephen. If you have a deacon serving at your church, you will know how a deacon is dressed...and St. Stephen is dressed as a deacon.

Why? Because he was a deacon! The Bible tells us that the apostles chose Stephen to be a deacon, a servant.



## SAINT STEPHEN FORGIVING OUR ENEMIES

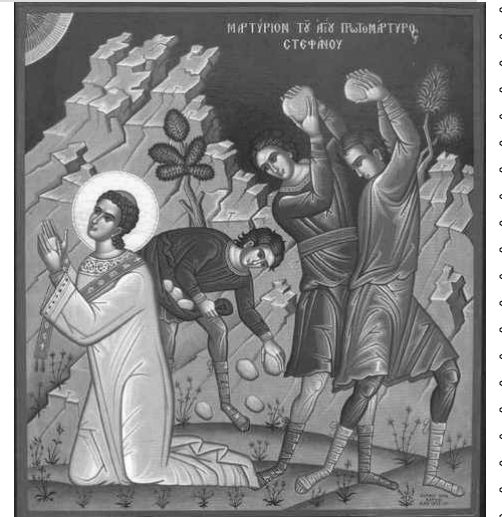
### Did somebody ever do

something mean to you...and you forgave him? We all know that God wants us to forgive our enemies. Well, you might not even have any enemies. But you can always try hard to forgive somebody for being a little mean to you.

Today we remember a saint who had enemies. Saint Stephen had people who really hated him! They lied about him. They tried to get others to hate him too. And in the end, they threw stones at him and even killed him. But Stephen forgave them all. We hear in the Bible, "And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'"

Saint Stephen prayed for his enemies, even when they were throwing stones at him! If he could do a huge thing like that, then do you think you can do a little thing? Do you think you can pray for people who do little mean things to you? Maybe a classmate gossips about you. Maybe a friend won't play with you today. Maybe your sister says something mean to you. We can pray and forgive little things, because Saint Stephen gives us this great example!

We celebrate St. Stephen today, December 27th (OC: Jan 9th).



An icon of the stoning of St. Stephen