

# St. Stephen Parish

*SaintStephenSF.org | 451 Eucalyptus Dr., San Francisco CA 94132 | Church 415 681-2444*

*StStephenSchoolSF.org | 401 Eucalyptus Dr., San Francisco 94132 | School 415 664-8331*

**Weekday Mass: 8:00 a.m. Reconciliation: Saturday 3:30 p.m. or 30 min. before each Sunday Mass**

**Vigil Mass Saturday 4:30 p.m. Sunday Mass 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.**

## FOURTH SUNDAY

# OF Advent

Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.  
May it be done to me  
according to your word.

Luke 1:38



DECEMBER 24, 2023

## 2023 CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

**Dec 16-24**

*9-day Novena Dawn Masses  
for Simbang Gabi  
6:00 am*

**Sunday, Dec 24th**

*Regular Sunday Mass  
8:00am & 10:30am*

**Sunday, Dec 24th**

*Christmas Vigil/Family Mass  
4:30pm*

**Sunday, Dec 24th**

*Christmas Eve Mass  
10:00 pm*

**Monday, Dec 25th**

*Christmas Day Mass  
8:00 am & 10:30 am*

**Sunday, Dec 31st**

*Regular Sunday Schedule  
8:00 am, 10:30 am, 6:30 pm*

**Monday, January 1st**

*Solemnity of Mary, Holy  
Mother of God  
10:30 am*

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***Encounter Jesus Christ. Love Jesus Christ. Live Jesus Christ.***

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

**First Reading** (2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12). **Psalm** (Psalm 89). **Second Reading** (Romans 16:25-27). **Gospel** (Luke 1:26-38).

This Sunday we read the story of the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary about the birth of Jesus. This story is found only in Luke's Gospel. On this fourth Sunday of Advent, the liturgy shifts our attention from John the Baptist to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both John and Mary serve as important figures for our reflection during the season of Advent; they both played instrumental roles in preparing the way for Jesus. Last week we reflected on John the Baptist's announcement that the Savior was among us, although not yet recognized. This week we reflect upon Mary's example of faith and obedience to God, traits which permitted her to receive the angel's message that God's Son would be born as a human person, as one of us.



We are familiar with the story of the Annunciation, and it is fitting that we recall how God announced the birth of Jesus as we make our final preparations for our celebration of the Incarnation. The angel Gabriel visited Mary, a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph. Mary greeted the angel's news with awe and wonder and asked how it could be possible that she could give birth to a child. In his reply, the angel Gabriel announced the seemingly impossible reality: the child to be born would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and would be God's own Son. The angel reported to Mary another miracle; her relative Elizabeth was also pregnant despite having been thought to be unable to have a child. Mary's response to the angel, which is called her *fiat*, is an example of complete faith and obedience to God.



The story of the Annunciation calls to our attention God's wondrous action in human history. God chose a human person to give birth to his Son so that all humanity would know God's salvation. Mary, already full of God's grace, was able to cooperate in this great plan for our salvation. Thus Jesus was born as one of us, fully human and also fully divine. This is the mystery we prepare to celebrate at Christmas, the mystery of the Incarnation. In the model of Mary, we pray that we will be people of faith who recognize God's saving plan for us and are able respond with obedience.

### Our Saint of the Week December 26, 2023 - St. Stephen

One of the first deacons of the Church was a man named Stephen, a man filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. Besides his job of overseeing the distribution of the poor, he also preached. A group of Jewish Hellenists strongly resented Stephen's preaching of salvation through Jesus. The situation became so tense that they found witnesses to falsely testify that Stephen had committed blasphemy. Stephen was arrested and brought to the court. The odds were against him and Jesus said, "When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your father speaking through you (Mathew 10:19-20). Stephen knew he would be helped by the Holy Spirit, and he wasn't afraid.

When Stephen testified in court, he made two major points. First he believed that God could be found everywhere, not just in a single place like temple or a single person like Abraham. Second he demonstrated how from the beginning, the Israelites had consistently rejected God's messengers, prophet's, and chosen servants. And now they rejected and killed God's Son who had been sent to them.

Those who had been listening to Stephen were blinded by anger so strong that they didn't even wait for normal court proceedings. They rushed toward him, dragged him out of town, and stoned him. Stephen was the first person killed for Christ. His last words were "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60).

### 2023 AAA UPDATE INFO

The 2023 Annual Appeal is coming to a close. It is our hope that each household/parishioner will assist us by sharing their treasure as we move forward to reach our required tax of \$86,973.

To date, we still have a balance of \$18,242. ALL cash/ check donations should be with the Archdiocese of SF by December 31st to be counted towards our AAA 2023 goal.

In making your donations, please take note of the following:

- 1) **Parishioners planning to make a contribution at the end of the year, please be sure your check (Payee: AAA 2023) is dated on or before December 31, 2023** for your donation to count for our year's goal;
- 2) Cash or check donations should be with the Parish Office by Dec 27, 2023 to give us time to process its turnover to the Archdiocese;
- 3) You may also donate ONLINE on [www.sfarchdiocese.org](http://www.sfarchdiocese.org), click on Giving tab, then AAA. *Don't forget to credit ST STEPHEN CHURCH as your beneficiary.*

Know that no amount is too small and all gifts are received with great thanksgiving.

### We Rent Our Hall

Our 20,000 Sq. Ft. Parish Center  
Available to Rent

For more info, call Shay at 415 681-2444 x7  
or [donworthevents@saintstephensf.org](mailto:donworthevents@saintstephensf.org)

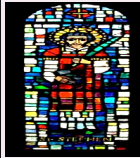
online  
GIVING

St Stephen Church provides Online Giving--  
a convenient and safe way to make a one-time or  
recurring donation. When you participate, your gift  
will be securely transferred directly into the parish.  
Visit [www.saintstephensf.org](http://www.saintstephensf.org), click on Giving link.

# Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK



<b>Monday, Dec 25</b> 8:00 a.m.	<b>Christmas Day</b> <b>Barbara Villanueva</b> Sp. Int. <i>(By: B. Barbara Villanueva)</i>
10:30 a.m.	† <b>Jess De Jesus</b> <i>(By: Cindy &amp; C.JC)</i>
<b>Tuesday, Dec 26</b> 8:00 a.m.	† <b>Pauline Dee</b> <i>(By: Ongian Family)</i>
<b>Wednesday Dec 27</b> 8:00 a.m.	<b>Colleen Dowling</b> Sp. Int. <i>(By: Maureen Dowling)</i>
<b>Thursday, Dec 28</b> 8:00 a.m.	† <b>Rosalina Elchico</b> <i>(By: Rey-Elvie Ysip)</i>
<b>Friday, Dec 29</b> 8:00 a.m.	† <b>Anna Thompson</b> <i>(By: Thompson/Bautista Family)</i>
<b>Saturday Dec 30</b> 8:00 a.m.	<b>Rosalio Dy &amp; Family</b> Sp. Int. <i>(By: KIT)</i>
4:30 p.m.	† <b>Evelyn El Chico Magie</b> <i>(By: Rey-Elvie Y.)</i>
<b>Sunday, Dec 31</b> 8:00 a.m.	<b>Thanksgiving Mass</b> Sp. Int. <i>(By: Cagalingan Family)</i>
10:30 a.m.	<b>Fr Tony LaTorre</b> Sp. Int. <i>(By: Parish Staff &amp; Volunteers)</i>
6:30 p.m.	<b>St. Stephen Parishioners</b> <i>(By: Fr. Michael)</i>



**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
*December 24, 2023*  
The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. —*Luke 1:35*


**Today's Readings**  
**First Reading** — I will fix a place for my people. (2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16).  
**Psalm** — For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord (Psalm 89).  
**Second Reading** — To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever and ever (Romans 16:25-27).  
**Gospel** — Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:26-38).  
The English translation of the Psalm Responses from Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

**SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES**

Monday:	<b>The Nativity of the Lord</b> <b>Saint Jacopone</b>
Tuesday:	<b>Saint Stephen, the first Martyr</b>
Wednesday:	<b>Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist</b>
Thursday:	<b>The Holy Innocents, Martyrs</b>
Friday:	<b>Saint Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr</b>
Saturday:	<b>Saint Sabinus</b>
Sunday:	<b>Pope Sylvester I</b>



**You're ALL Invited!**  
**HOLY HOUR of EUCHARISTIC DEVOTION**  
 Exposition, Adoration and Benediction  
*(Weekdays, right after the 8am Mass)*  
**Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.**



**Stewardship: A Way of Life**  
**November 2023**


\$ 21,295.17	Sunday Collections (11/5, 12, 19, 26)
\$ 7,071.00	Online Sunday Collections (11/1-30)
\$ 16,291.00	Donworth Hall NOV Rental Income
<b>\$ 65,932.55</b>	<b>Total Income for November 2023</b>
<b>LESS:</b>	
<b>\$ 23,145.51</b>	<b>Parish Maintenance for November 2023</b>
<b>\$ 42,787.04</b>	<b>OVER/ Under</b>

*Please continue to generously support your Parish!*

**ADVENT**

**Dec 24th: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

The fourth candle of Advent represents LOVE, the ultimate love of God that He might send His only Son for us. Called the "Angel's Candle," the fourth candle of Advent is lit the Sunday before Christmas, as it is the color purple, leading us to eagerly await the new Kingdom of God on earth.



## Sick Relatives & Friends

Please pray for the sick and homebound of our community and for all those written in our book of the sick. May they know the healing touch of Jesus.

**Perry Young, Antoinette Mishirsky, Maggie Harbison, Danilo Dacasin, Greg Lorio, Adelle Caunan, Debbie Nunes, Tony Devincenzi, Julie Burton, Nestor & Nelson Plondaya, Marie Bachand, Francis Yiu, Edna Amora, Rodney Clark, Michelle Vicente, Michelle Weeks, Franz Tittiger, Carlota Plondaya, Robert Liam, Marino Tulao, Eden Finn, Edileide Jose Barbosa, Kenneth Fambrini, Larry Barbieri, Carol Dominguez, Marc Gutierrez, Catherine Scosseria, Gwendolyn Walsh, Joel Rivera, Jovita & Richard Thompson.**

*Please call the office to add or remove names of people that we should pray for this month.*

## SOME “THOUGHTS ABOUT “XMAS”

### What did the first Christians call what we today know as Christmas?



The first Christians do not appear to have had a word for this day, because the first Christians do not appear to have celebrated this day. It took some time for the practice of celebrating Christmas to emerge.

#### Benedict XVI explained:

The Church’s year of feasts first developed, not with a view to the birth of Christ, but from faith in his Resurrection. Thus the original feast of Christianity is Easter, not Christmas. For indeed it was the Resurrection that established Christian faith and let the Church come to be. For this reason, Ignatius of Antioch (who died at the latest in A.D. 117) already called Christians those “who no longer keep the Sabbath but rather live according to the Lord’s Day.” Being a Christian means living from Easter, that is, from the Resurrection that is celebrated every week on Sunday. It was Hippolytus who first established with certainty, in his commentary on Daniel, written about A.D. 204, that Jesus was born on December 25. . . . Be that as it may, the feast of Christmas did not assume clear contours in Christendom until the fourth century (*Images of Hope, ch. 1*).

### **Inspiration for the Season Saint Joseph**

If anyone had to rely on a feeling that things will turn out for the best, it was Saint Joseph. He took in Mary, risking his reputation and accepting a responsibility that he at first didn’t understand. But he had hope and faith, and he forged on to serve as the father and protection of the Savior.



Saint Joseph’s trust was called upon again when Jesus was a baby. An angel appeared to Saint Joseph in a dream and told him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape King Herod, who was seeking to kill the newborn king (Mt 2:13-18). Joseph didn’t call up his friends in Jerusalem to confirm or Google places to stay in Egypt. He fled with faith, believing that what he desired – safety for his family – would be fulfilled. Like Saint Joseph, we can proceed with the quiet confidence that Saint Joseph exhibited so well in such a tremendous role.

### **Advent Meditation**

#### Prayer at home:

Loving God, we open ourselves to you, trusting you created us for joy-filled hearts and lives. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained within, but must be shared. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you. That we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

## St. Stephen Catholic Book Club



Our Book Club is open to anyone interested in reading and discussing books with inherent or implied Christian themes. We meet the second Saturday at 10:00 am in the Conference Room at the parish offices. Contact Mary Molly for more information.

Book we are reading for **November & December:**

*Jesus: a Pilgrimage* by James Martin, S.J.

**January, 2024 - *Searching for and Maintaining Peace***  
by Father Jacques Philippe

### **FINDING PEACE**

**If you want peace, work for justice. —Pope Paul VI**

## **NOTICE to the PUBLIC**

### **U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION**

**In re: The Roman Catholic Archbishop of San  
Francisco, Case No. 23-30564**

**Notice of Deadline for Filing Claims:  
February 20, 2024**

### **YOU MAY HAVE A SEXUAL ABUSE CLAIM OR OTHER CLAIM AGAINST THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO**

On August 21, 2023, The Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco, a California corporation sole, aka Archdiocese of San Francisco (the “Debtor”), filed for protection under chapter 11 of title 11 of the United States Code (the “Bankruptcy Code”)

**If you were sexually abused by any person connected with the Debtor, you must file a claim so as to be received by February 20, 2024, or otherwise you will be forever barred, estopped, and enjoined from asserting such claim against the Debtor.**

**Claims based on acts or omissions of the Debtor that occurred before August 21, 2023, must be filed on or before February 20, 2024, even if such claims are not now fixed, liquidated, or certain or did not mature or become fixed, liquidated, or certain before August 21, 2023.**

For more information on how to obtain and file a proof of claim form and associated documents, please visit <https://omniagentsolutions.com/RCASF>, or contact Omni Agent Solutions, Inc., the Debtor’s claims agent via email at [RCASFInquiries@omniagnt.com](mailto:RCASFInquiries@omniagnt.com) or by phone at 888-480-6507 (U.S. and Canada toll free) or 747-293-0084 (International), between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Pacific Time), Monday through Friday.

**\*\*If you have questions about the bankruptcy case filed by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, please also visit the website at <https://sfarch.org> and follow the links for Chapter 11 Filing\*\***

## 2023 ARCHDIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

Campaign GOAL : \$ **86,973.00**  
 Total Payments Received : \$ 68,731.00  
 Campaign Goal Balance : \$ **18,242.00**

We thank the following parishioners who have shared their treasures with the parish **this week** as of 12.19.2023: (For a complete listing, refer to AAA Poster in Church vestibule.)

Anonymous	Ms Maria Luz Illenberger
M/M James Brady	Mr. Lan Huong D Nguyen
M/M Patrick Casserly Jr	M/M Edwin Quan
Ms Nora Coussinat	Ms. Alice Ransom
M/M John J Duggan	Mr. Edward j Reidy

### Christmas Mass Obligations Clarified

With Christmas Day on a Monday this year, many people want their Mass obligations clarified. The short answer is: Yes, there is a Sunday obligation and a separate Holy Day obligation. On Sunday, December 24, which is the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Masses **after 4:00 pm** should be the Vigil Mass for the Nativity of the Lord and not the Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent.



If your parish has a regularly scheduled Sunday evening Mass, the Vigil Mass for the Nativity is to be used. Obligation to Attend Mass: This year we have the unusual occurrence of the obligation to attend Mass on two consecutive days. People ask: 'Can I satisfy two obligations with one Mass?' The U.S. Catholic Bishops have clarified that "When consecutive obligations occur on Saturday-Sunday or Sunday-Monday, the faithful must attend Mass twice to fulfill two separate obligations." Therefore, the people are obliged to attend one Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent (from Saturday evening 12./23 up to 4:00 pm on Sunday 12/24); and one Mass for the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord (from 4:00 pm on Sunday 12/24 through all Masses on Monday 12/25).



**Join the FUN!**  
**Monday, January 8, 2023**  
**Doors Open 12:30pm**  
**50+ Seniors are ALL INVITED!**  
**Enjoy camaraderie, snacks, Bingo games, Bridge, etc**  
**For any questions/ concerns, please call: Helga at 415-731-8211**



### Prayer to St. Michael

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; And do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen. *Pope Leo XIII 1810-1903*

## SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT "XMAS"

Is writing "Xmas" okay?

Yes, it is "okay" to write "Xmas." It's just an abbreviation, and there is nothing sinful about abbreviating a word, even one containing the term "Christ." In fact, the earliest Christians *did* frequently abbreviate sacred terms. Scholars studying early Christian manuscripts are familiar with a phenomenon known as the *nomina sacra* ("sacred names"; singular = *nomen sacrum*) in which terms like "God," "Jesus," "Lord," and "Christ" were *regularly abbreviated precisely because they were sacred*. This happens in our earliest manuscripts of the New Testament documents. Thus, "God" (Greek, *theos*) was abbreviated with a *theta* and a *sigma* (its first and last letters in Greek), "Jesus" (*Iesous*) was abbreviated *iota-sigma*, "Lord" (*Kurios*) was abbreviated *kappa-sigma*, and "Christ" (*Christos*) was abbreviated *chi-sigma*. The appearance of the *nomina sacra* is one of the ways that we date when a Christian manuscript was written, because this practice characterized the early centuries.



Similar abbreviations have appeared later, though. Concerning "Xmas," the Online Etymology Dictionary [says](#): Xmas (n) = "Christmas," 1551, *X'temmas*, wherein the *X* is an abbreviation for *Christ* in *Christmas*, English letter *X* being identical in form (but not sound signification) to Greek *chi*, the first letter of Greek *Christos* "Christ" (see *Christ*). The earlier way to abbreviate the word in English was *Xp-* or *Xr-* (corresponding to the "Chr-" in Greek *Χριστος*), and the form *Xres mæsse* for "Christmas" appears in the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" (c.1100).

### HUMILITY

No human being is too big to be humble, but some human beings are too small.

—Anonymous

### TEXT to GIVE

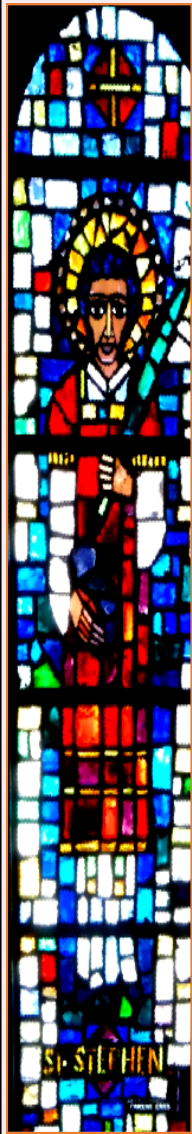
Text "SAINTSTEPHENSF" to 73256 to give using your mobile device.

### SAVE THE DATE!

**SATURDAY, February 3, 2024**  
**6:00 — 9:00 pm**  
**Donworth Hall**



**St Stephen Parish Community's Annual Fundraising Event**



## PASTORAL STAFF

**Rev. Michael Lilledahl**  
*Pastor, ext. 1*  
 Fr.Michael@SaintStephenSF.org

**Rev. Ben Rosado**  
*Parochial Vicar, ext. 8*  
 frbenrosado@gmail.com

**Rev. Mr. Manuel "Olet" Abad**  
*Permanent Deacon*  
 deacon@SaintStephenSF.org

**Sharon McCarthy Allen**  
*Principal*

**Carol P Cagalingan**  
*Parish Manager, ext. 3*  
 carol@SaintStephenSF.org

**Mary Molly Mullaney**  
*Faith Formation, ext. 4*  
 faithformation@SaintStephenSF.org

**Shay Ingelfinger**  
*Event Center Coordinator, ext. 7*  
 donworthevents@SaintStephenSF.org

**Teresa Devincenzi**  
*Bookkeeper, ext. 5*  
 teresa@SaintStephenSF.org

**Ed Prete**  
*Bulletin Editor, ext. 6*  
 e.prete@SaintStephenSF.org

### *Our warmest welcome to all who celebrate with us!*

You can **sign up** or **update** your information by completing this form & placing it in the collection basket, or by mailing it to the Parish Office, or by phone at 415-681-2444 or at [www.saintstephensf.org](http://www.saintstephensf.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone (H W CP) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ City/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Sunday envelopes , circle one: Yes No, but commit to participate thru Online Giving.

*You will receive in the mail within a week, a Parish Registration Form to complete the registration process. Or just get the paper Parish Registration in the vestibule. Thank you!*

## ST STEPHEN PARISH 2023-2024

### ORGANIZATION/MINISTRY      CONTACT PERSON

- |                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Altar Servers              | Giovanna Hrvatin      |
| • Altar Society              | Joan Leehane          |
| • Bridge Group               | Virginia Stefanelli   |
| • Caritas                    | Nellie Hizon          |
| • Church Hospitality         | Mary Molly Mullaney   |
| • Communion Ministers        | Mary Molly Mullaney   |
| • Faith Formation            | Mary Molly Mullaney   |
| • Fifty Plus Club            | Helga D'Arcy          |
| • Finance Council            | Laura Birsinger       |
| • Front Ofc Lead Volunteer   | Fely Boquiren         |
| • Grief Support              | Clergy                |
| • Head Sacristan             | Ed Quan               |
| • Lectors                    | Mary Molly Mullaney   |
| • Liturgy Committee          | Fr. Michael Lilledahl |
| • Marriage PreparationClergy |                       |
| • Men's Club                 | Marcus Lam            |
| • Parish Council             | Vicky Francisco       |
| • RCIA                       | Mary Molly Mullaney   |
| • St. Stephen Book Club      | Mary Molly Mullaney   |
| • Ushers                     | Jim Scheg             |
| • Women's Guild              | Jamie Allen           |
|                              | Naomi Kelly           |

**Parish Office Phone 415.681.2444**

### Be sure to REGISTER in the parish!

As we approach year-end, if you're a regular donor but not a registered parishioner, take a moment to be sure your giving history will be complete for your tax letter.

Go to <https://saintstephensf.org/parish-registration-form> to REGISTER ONLINE OR use the paper Registration Forms provided at the church's vestibule or drop by the parish office to inquire and familiarize yourself with the Pastor's office and his parish staff.

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Your generosity makes a difference!

St Stephen Church is a 501C(3) non-profit corporation. Our TAX ID# 94-1156799

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We are working to make your gift-giving easier. We're on the way to using VENMO and PAYPAL for your convenience. Stay tuned as we work on this process!