

**Connecting People with Jesus...  
In Us... Among Us... Through Us**



# **ST. STEPHENS**

**LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL**

2304 Springs Road NE  
Hickory, NC 28601

Church: 828-256-9865  
[www.sslcms.org](http://www.sslcms.org)

School: 828-256-2166  
[www.sslswarriors.org](http://www.sslswarriors.org)

## **St. Stephens Staff**

David Ziehr, Pastor + Shea Pennington, Pastor  
David Guelzow, Visitation Pastor + Tim Rollings, Vicar  
Ross Chiles, Principal + Jessica Westby, Assistant Principal  
Randall Cline, Youth Ministry  
Donna Lee, Children's Ministry + Brandon Buff, Facilities and Technology  
Robert Smith, Traditional Music Director + David Day, Praise Team Director  
Jadi Gurganious, Mission Facilitator + Savannah Lee, Communication Coordinator  
Sharon Maynor, Administrator + Tashia Fisher, Church Administrative Asst.  
Debbi Becker, School Administrative Asst.  
Tiffany Sigmon, Receptionist & Visitor Engagement Coordinator  
Kristy Smith, New Member Coordinator

**Season After Pentecost**

**October 3 & 4, 2026**

## Welcome to Worship

We pray you will find the presence of God in our worship. We ask that all of our members and all guests to please print your name in the book passed along the pew before the offering. Guest, we encourage you to fill out a Connect Card also.

**Holy Communion:** We welcome all who have been instructed in the faith, who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and in the true presence of His body and blood in the sacrament. If you are a guest today and would like to participate in the Sacrament, please consult a pastor or elder beforehand with any questions. **We do offer white grape juice and gluten free bread for those who need it.**

**Children are welcome in our worship services.** As an alternative, a nursery for infants through 2 years old is available in Room #101. The nursery is staffed from 8am to 12pm on Sunday mornings. For assistance, please see an usher.

**Children's Worship** (preschool & early elementary) is offered in the choir room during the 10:30am worship. Children will be dismissed before the sermon and return for offering.

**Fire Exits:** In addition to the main entrance, fire exits are located on both sides of the chancel and are opened for quicker exit from the church after worship.

**Broadcast & Photography:** Just a reminder that our services are live streamed on YouTube and may include images of the congregation. St. Stephens Lutheran Church reserves the right to use any photograph/video taken at any service on church grounds or event sponsored by St. Stephens Lutheran Church. A person attending who does not wish to have their image recorded for distribution should make their wishes known to the photographer. By participating in a St. Stephens Lutheran Church service or event or by failing to notify your desire to not have your photograph used, you are agreeing to release and the use of your picture.

## Sunday School - 9:15am - 10:15am

For room location assistance, please see an usher.

Little Lambs /Preschool (3 & 4yrs) & Kinders:--- Ed Wing Riser Room---Martha Propst, Jane Guelzow, Sue Seabock & Cynthia Hewitt  
Kid Connect/ Grades 1 & 2:-----Ed Wing #222----- Andrea Trent  
Kid Connect/ Grades 3-5:-----Ed Wing #220 -----Teresa Ritchie  
Jr. High Life Group: Led by Randall & Shannon Cline-----Youth House  
Sr. High Life Group: Darel Reese & Jon Guelzow-----Youth House  
Young Adult Life Group: Led by Taryn Cline & Dalton Powell-----Peace House  
Adults: Led by Pastor/Vicar-----Scripture-----New Fellowship Hall  
Adults-Men's Bible Study: Led by Dwight Hollar--Genesis -- Old Conference Room  
Adults: Led by Caleb Taylor/Katie Clontz-----Bible Lessons-----Choir Room  
Adults - Led by Dean Ledbetter-----Eleven Days----- School Bldg. #109  
Adults-Ladies Led by Regina Propst & Cindy Brinn---Ephesians---Creation Room  
New Members - Led by the Pastors-----New Conference Room

## **Prayer on Entering**

Loving Lord God, reveal to us the depth of Your love that we learn greater love for You in return and that we grow in love toward our neighbors and one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## **Flowers**

Flowers placed at the altar are given to the glory of God in loving memory of Jerry Fisher's birthday on October 4 by Tashia and Anthony.

## **Greeters**

October 3rd- Chris, Danyelle & Connor Wyatt  
October 4th 8AM- Judy Gurganious  
October 4th 10:30- Eric & Nikki Fisher

October 10th- Brenda Little & Cathy Drum  
October 11th 8AM- Pat Wilson  
October 11th 10:30- Micheal & Katie Vaughn

## **Communion Assistants**

October 4 - 8:00am - Dwight Hollar & Tony Spencer  
October 11 - 10:30am - Chris Barringer, Eric Kent, Eddie Warren

## **Nursery Volunteers - 10:30 am**

October 4 - Shannon Cline      October 11 - Amy Crouch

## **Our Response to God Last Week**

Last Sunday's Attendance - 497 (87, 84, 329)      Sunday School - 160  
General Fund: \$27,179.64 (Regular Offer. needed each week: \$30,392.22)  
Church Expansion Fund/Building Fund: \$7,129.05  
School Endowment Fund: \$100.00  
Church Expansion/Building Fund Funds Needed: \$4.4 Million  
Church Expansion Bills Paid So Far: \$3,971,935.97

*\*We have started drawing on the construction loan as bills come in*

## **Stay Connected to St. Stephens Lutheran**

### **SATURDAY**

5:30pm – Saturday Evening Worship

### **SUNDAY**

8:00am – Traditional Worship & Holy Communion

9:15am – Family Bible Hour

10:30am – Contemporary Worship

11:45am – SSLS Prayer Warriors – New Conference Room

11:45am – Alaska Mission Team – Creation Room

3:00-6:00pm – Pickle Ball – Gym

6:00pm – Life Group (Dwight Hollar's) – New Conference Room

### **MONDAY**

9:00am – Lifelight (Pastor Guelzow) – New Conference Room

10:00am – With Our Hands Ministry

10:30am – LWML Executive Board – Creation Room

7:00pm – Men's Bible Study – Youth Modular

### **TUESDAY**

**4:00PM – MID-WEEK CONGREGATIONAL NEWS DEADLINE**

1:00pm – Comfort Dog Ministry – Conference Room

4:00pm – Lifegroup (Pastor Guelzow) – New Conference Room

6:00pm – Lifegroup Leader Meeting – Church Office Conference Room

6:16pm – Praise Team Rehearsal

6:30pm – Comfort Dog Ministry – Conference Room

### **WEDNESDAY**

9:00am-3:00pm – Quilters – Conference Room

10:00am – Women's Bible Study – New Conference Room

**6:00pm – After the Boxes – Creation Room**

6:30pm – Mary Circle – New Conference Room

### **THURSDAY**

10:30am – Life Group (Larry Bowman) New Conference Room

**NOON – BULLETIN & SCREEN ANNOUNCEMENT DEADLINE**

5:45pm – Handbell Choir – Sanctuary

7:00pm – Life Group (Richard Starnes) New Conference Room

7:00pm – Parish Choir – Choir Room/Sanctuary

### **FRIDAY**

10:00am – With Our Hands Ministry

2:00pm – Life Group – David Rittenhouse's home

5:30pm – Halo Bible Study – Youth Modular

### **SATURDAY**

5:30pm – Saturday Evening Worship & Holy Communion

### **SUNDAY**

8:00am – Traditional Worship

10:30am – Contemporary Worship & Holy Communion

12:00-3:00pm – Midder School Youth – Youth House/Mall

3:00-6:00pm – Pickle Ball – Gym

5:00-8:00pm – High School Youth – Youth House/Dinner

6:00pm – Life Group (Dwight Hollar's) – New Conference Room

# HONEY SUNDAY



On **Oct. 10/11**, LWML is hosting a Honey Sunday Fundraiser to support the residential treatment and educational programs at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

Purchase a bottle of honey for \$10 to change the life of a child. See a LWML representative in the area outside the gym on Oct. 10/11 to make a purchase. Honey will be shipped to you in November.

The mission of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is to help at-risk children and their families succeed in the name of Christ.

[www.dakotaranch.org](http://www.dakotaranch.org)





*Building relationships in Christ to develop and strengthen faithful followers for life."*

**Sunday Morning LifeGroup | 9:15am | Youth House**

**Mark Your Calendars!**

**10/11 | 12:00-3:00 PM | Mall Rats**



Calling all middle schoolers! Join us as we kick things off at The Youth House with lunch and continue our Fruit of the Spirit discussion with Joy & Peace. Then we're heading to the mall to hang out, roam around, and have some fun.

**10/11 | 5:00-8:00 PM | Feast Mode**



High School Only. We'll kick off the night at the Youth House with a devotion from our Fruit of the Spirit series, then head out for a nice dinner and time together. Come hungry and get ready to switch FEAST MODE: ON!

**10/18 | 12:00-3:00 PM | Kickball Classic: Youth vs. Parents**



The rivalry is BACK. Stick around after service for our Fall Festival, cookout, and the ultimate showdown - Youth vs. Parents! The Parents have the trophy. The Youth want it back. Bragging rights are on the line.

**10/24 | 4:30-11:30 PM | Scarowinds**



When the sun goes down, the screams begin! Take on coasters, haunted attractions, and scares around every corner with your crew. Think you're brave enough? details & sign up at

[sslcms.org/youth](https://sslcms.org/youth) or scan the code!



Get

### **Want to Get Connected?**

Parents and families are always encouraged to reach out with questions or to learn how to partner in their student's faith journey.

Visit [sslcms.org/youth](https://sslcms.org/youth) for all the latest.

# LWML Foothills Zone Rally

Oct. 11 - 3-5pm

St. Stephens Lutheran Church - New Fellowship Hall

**Speaker: Pastor Peter Frank will share his experiences in Israel**

RSVP by Oct. 4 to [lwmlpresident@sslcms.org](mailto:lwmlpresident@sslcms.org)

We're collecting new and gently used devotionals and Bible study guides for an exchange table at the Fall Festival.

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Drop off devotionals or Bible study guides to the church office or Kristy by Fri. 10/16.



Disaster Relief  
Warehouse

## Wanna Go?

Thursday, October 22  
9am-2pm

See an Emergency Field hospital, a  
Pop-up mobile clinic and discussions  
about disaster relief

**Cost: \$10 (transportation)**  
Lunch on your own at HillTop restaurant

RSVP by October 16 to Kristy at  
[ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)

## Children's Ministry

Sunday Morning Bible Hour - 9:15-10:15am Ed Wing

Preschool & Kinders: Riser Room

Grades 1 & 2: Ed Wing #222

Grades 3 - 5: Ed Wing #220

CPH Enduring Faith

Children's Worship

10:30AM CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

Preschool- 5th Grade

Meet in the choir room during the sermon

Opportunities to serve weekly

### JOIN THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEAM

We are looking for caring leaders and helpers to serve during Sunday Bible Hour, Children's Worship, or Special Events. Help us create a safe, fun space for kids to grow in faith!



Who gets to hoist the trophy this year?

**YOUTH**  
VS  
**Adults**  
Kickball Game

Adults - 3  
Youth - 4

Sunday,  
October 18  
12pm-3pm



**Community TRUCK-OR-TREAT Event**  
**Saturday, October 31**  
starting at 6 pm  
St. Peter's Lutheran Church  
6175 St Peter's Church Rd, Conover, NC  
828-256-2970

Invite your friends and family to this fun event!

**Prizes will be given for the best decorated trunk!**

We also need candy (NO NUTS PLEASE), stickers and/or small prizes for this event!

**DONATIONS**  
Boxes are in the hallway outside the church office.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**  
Please contact Ashton Sigmom or the church office if you can volunteer and/or decorate your vehicle trunk.



## **St. Stephens Lutheran School News**

Excellence in Education since 1943

**Rooted in Christ**  
(Colossians 2:6-7)

**School Board Members** – Scott Clontz, Chairman, Erica Moretz, David Janisko, Kim Yancey, and Shawn Sigmon

### **Prayer Warriors** **Pray. Encourage. Partner.**

Our school is one of St. Stephens Lutheran Church's greatest ministries, and we want to further grow in our partnership with the people who serve there. **On Sunday, October 4th, immediately after church**, we will launch "PRAYER WARRIORS".

Participants will be invited to be prayer partners for an individual member of our school and church staff, committing to faithfully pray for that person throughout the coming year. This is more than a one-time prayer– it is an opportunity to intentionally lift up a member of our church and school family, their work, their needs, and the students they serve.

If you are willing to make this year-long commitment to pray for one of our staff members, please **join us after the 10:30 service on October 4th in the Conference Room located at the Main Entrance.**

Come be a WARRIORS Prayer Partner!

### **Out of the Office**

Pastors and Vicar will be attending the Southeastern District LCMS conference in Asheville, October 7-9.

Pastor Shea will be on vacation October 10-11.

Sharon will be on vacation October 8-9, 15-16 & 29-30.



**ST. STEPHENS**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

# FALL FESTIVAL



**and**

## **Mission & Ministry Building celebration**

**Sunday, October 18, 2026**

following the 10:30 worship

- Main meal BBQ (please bring a side to share)
- Children's activities
- Crafts
- Outdoor games
- Youth vs. adults kickball
- and more!



hello  
FALL



**Our church and school families are  
invited to join together for a time of  
fun and fellowship.**



Please register for this event so we know how much BBQ to fix.

Confirmation  
Service  
Sunday,  
October 25  
3pm



## Sock & Underwear Drive

Donate **NEW** socks and  
underwear for a local  
elementary school

**Boys and Girls  
size 5 - 14/16**



Donated items can be dropped off in the  
Mission Box in the narthex.

# QUILTERS

Wednesday,  
Oct. 7  
9am - 3pm  
(come when you can)

*Welcome*

We will meet in the Conference Room.



# Celebrate the Church workers of St. Stephens Lutheran



*"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,"* writes St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians (PHIL. 1:3).

**With this same gratitude,** we thank the more than 11,000 church workers who serve our Synod with the Word and mercy of Christ. Throughout this month, congregations and schools are encouraged to show their appreciation for all church workers.

**For teachers especially** we give thanks, who teach God's Word to our children, dedicate countless hours to the classroom, who love the children of God they teach and who live a life of service to Christ and His church.

**For all church workers,** from pastors to deaconesses to directors of Christian education, parish music, family life and outreach, who teach God's Word and point us to Christ.

Tell them "Thank you!" this month for all they do!

## **Some ways to thank a Church Worker**

- **Thanks.** Send a "thank you" card or note.
- **Prayer.** Your church workers need prayer.
- **Honor.** Make a donation in church workers honor to a church/school mission ministry.
- **Personal.** Gift cards to local restaurants, stores, online shopping

## School Expansion Update

St. Stephens approved the Vision of School Expansion at our Voters' Assembly on August 2, 2026:

St. Stephens Lutheran Church & School seeks to connect children and families to Christ by expanding our school ministry. In advancing our mission, we envision a larger preschool, a strengthened middle school, and two classes per grade from kindergarten through 5th grade, creating greater capacity for students to Love, Hope, Serve, and Achieve.

Now, we are taking the next step.

The Church Council is establishing a **School Expansion Task Force** to study the opportunities, needs, and feasibility of this vision and to recommend a comprehensive, mission-aligned, financially responsible, and achievable plan for the future of St. Stephens Lutheran School.

As part of this work, the Task Force will identify and recommend ways to address our needs at 3 stages:

1. **Immediate needs** – what may be needed as soon as the next school year.
2. **Interim needs** – how our current campus and facilities can support growth before any new school building is constructed.
3. **Ultimate needs** – the long-term plan for a new school facility and continued growth of our ministry.

The Task Force's role is to **study, plan, and recommend**; it does not have authority to authorize, obligate, construct, borrow, fundraise, or implement. The Church Council shall provide oversight, and remember: any major decisions regarding funding, borrowing, construction, or implementation shall come before the Congregation for approval. **We will not move forward with a major expansion project without Congregational approval.**

Additionally, an important part of preparing for that future is finishing what we have already begun. **Before we can move forward** with any major facility remodel, additions, or new construction, **we need to pay off the Mission & Ministry Building.** Every gift to our Building Fund reduces our debt and helps prepare the way for future Expansion. As God provides, we encourage continued generosity so that, together, we may faithfully prepare for the opportunities He places before us— including the future growth of our school ministry.

As this work begins, please pray for our Church Council, Task Force members, school leadership, staff, and everyone who will help with this process. Pray especially that God would give us wisdom, unity, patience, and clarity as we seek His direction for the future of our school ministry to continue to grow as a blessing for the children and families of our community.

This is a significant undertaking, and we are committed to moving forward thoughtfully, prayerfully, and one step at a time.

**Stay tuned for continued updates – and please continue to pray!**

## Today's Readings

### Isaiah 5:1-7

1 Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.  
2 He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?  
5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. 6 I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

### Philippians 3:4b-14

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that

depends on faith – 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

### **Matthew 21:33–46**

33 [Jesus said:] “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. 34 When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. 35 And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. 37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ 39 And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” 41 They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” 42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’ 43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. 44 And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. 46 And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

# **LET US PRAY FOR.....**

## **SPECIAL PRAYERS**

**BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION - MISSION & MINISTRY CENTER**

**ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN SCHOOL**

**UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL**

**COMFORT DOG MINISTRY**

**SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**SHAUEN & KRISTA TRUMP**, Missionaries in Africa

**TRINITY HMONG LUTHERAN CHURCH & PASTOR ZANG YANG**

**OUR COMMUNITY, COUNTY, STATE, NATION, AND THE WORLD**

**FIRST RESPONDERS/FIRE FIGHTERS**

**POLICE/CIVIL SERVANTS**

**VIA DE CHRISTO WOMEN'S WEEKEND**

**FINLEY**, God's guidance and protection, grandson of Cindy & Doug Johnson

## **PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST LOVED ONES**

**RALPH CASSANO FAMILY**. Ralph was called to glory on September 30.  
Family friend of Kristy Smith.

## **PRAYERS FOR OUR HOME MEMBERS**

**RUTH WILLIS**

**CATHERINE WINKLER**

**WILLINE AUSTIN**

## **FIVE FAMILY PRAYER**

**TIM & RONDA REID FAMILY**

**SARA MORRISON**

**BETTY SIGMON**

**KAY WEAVER**

**JO WILHELM**

## **HOSPICE CARE**

**KEITH SMOTHERS**, ALS, friend of Brian & Myrna Boman

**MATTHEW JOHNSON**, son of Linda Bristow

**JOYCE MCCARTY**, grandmother of Adam Wilson

## **HOSPITALIZED**

**ANDRA PINGEL**, CVMC

**MATTHEW HAMBY**, CVMC

**PAT SEALE**, CVMC

**JO BURNS**, FRMC, grandson of Helen Suttlemyre

**BARBARA RILEY**, CVMC

## **PRAYERS FOR ONGOING TREATMENTS**

**KEVIN CARPENTER**, treatments for PTSD

**PAULA SPENCER**, cancer treatments, friend of Martha Propst

**CAROL EWALD**, dementia

**DAVE KRYDER**, stage 4 cancer

**JEFF KUYKENDALL**, cancer

**MARC SIGMON**, cancer treatments, friend of David & Jennifer Eckard

**CHRISTA RISSER**, cancer, mother of Heidi Beliveau

**LYNN TEETERS**, stage 4 liver cancer

**SHEILA RODRIGUEZ**, breast cancer, friend of Brian & Myrna Boman

## **RECOVERING**

**REGGIE CRAIG**, health issues

**TERESA PHILLIPS**, recovering from broken shoulder/heart cath

**KATHY BOLCH**, severe eye issues, sister of Sherry Craig

**KELLI BROWN**, recovering from shoulder surgery

**JESSICA MANUEL**, recovering from torn bicep surgery, daughter of Mike & Diane Davis

**GINNY QUINLAN**, home recovering

**TIM HEFNER**, home recovering from triple bypass surgery

**SAMMY NEUBAUER**, home recovering, nephew of Tom & Kristy Smith

**DIANE SLIVENSKY**, recovering at home

**LINDA FRITZ**, home recovering from melanoma removal

**PATRICIA SHELDON**, infections in her legs, friend of Ashleigh Johnson

**MISTY ELDER**, recovering from a heart attack, neighbor of Mecimores

**AMANDA VIERELA**, kneecap dislocated, friend of Elyjah Johnson

**NANCY BEAN**, health issues