

ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL - MISSOURI SYNOD



MISSION CONNECTION

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Centro Latino

**Congregational Meeting
and Building Dedication
Sunday, May 17
11:30am**

Election of Officers and Board Members



Join us for an afternoon at Daniel Stowe Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Belmont, NC

Wanna Go?

Friday, June 5

9:00am - 3:00pm

Cost: \$20

(Ticket, transportation and tour)

*Lunch is on your own or bring a picnic lunch.

Reserve your space by June 2 to Kristy at ksmith@sslcms.org

Reflections on the beauty of worshipping our God

Holy Week has always been a very special time for me. The unity of Communion on Maundy Thursday, the focus on the sacrifice of Jesus to pay for sin, the absolute joy of the Resurrection all combine to proclaim the love of God through the work of Christ. Oh, and all the various worship services are pretty great as well!

In our Lutheran understanding, the Word and the Sacraments are primary, but when you combine those with the power and beauty of music it becomes truly glorious. For me, music (of all kinds) is a “heart language” for the soul. Just consider the way that these lyrics carry the Truth of God’s Word:

“Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord” - (Maundy Thursday)

*Your body and Your blood, Once slain and shed for me,
Are taken at Your table, Lord, in blest reality.*

“How Great Thou Art” - (Good Friday)

*And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin.*

“Christ the Lord is Risen Today!” - (Easter)

*Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia! Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia! Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!*

“I know that my Redeemer lives” - (Easter)

I know that my Redeemer lives; what comfort this sweet sentence gives!

I have long appreciated the many gifted volunteers who enhance our worship - talented singers and musicians in our Choir and Praise team, and our newest addition, the Bell Choir. All are a blessing! This year, as I remembered the passing of my Mother in December, it brought me great joy to consider my faithful parents as part of the “great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne.”

Sometimes people get distracted from what is most important and are tempted to create division in the body of Christ by pointing to differences between various styles of worship. But whether that is within a congregation like ours (with our three distinct services) or across the whole Christian church, this division never makes sense to me. Yes, most people have a personal preference when it comes to music styles, but the command that we have from the Lord is this: “True worship is to worship in Spirit and Truth” and of course, “**Honor** the Sabbath and keep it **holy**”. The holiness that we have is a gift of being set apart by the Holy Spirit - which is the exact opposite of criticizing the way others worship.

But God be praised! We are ALL part of the “Holy Christian Church”. We do worship in “spirit and truth”, focused upon the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We are faithfully serving (beyond our worship services) the “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:6).

I rejoice in our unity as a Christ-centered congregation, mission-focused on “Connecting All with Jesus”. We have a few differences, but most importantly, we have unity as the Body of Christ.

He is Risen! He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor Dave

Congregational Meeting

Congregational Meeting and Building Dedication Sunday, May 17 11:30am

Election of Officers and Board Members

Candidates for President (Vote for 1):

Eric Kent
Kirk Hymes

Candidates for School Board (Vote for 1):

Garry Butler
Erica Moretz

Candidates for Finance & Facility (Vote for 2):

Jennifer Eckard
John Link
C E Moser

Candidate for School Endowment Fund (Vote for 1):

Cheryl Frye

Candidates for Nominating Committee (Vote for 1):

Diane Maynor
Barbara Underwood

Candidates for Elders (Vote for each individually):

Keith Binns, Tim Boliek, Tony Cook, Coach Mike Davis, David Eckard, Mike Hoke, Mark Kastner, Eric Kent, Andrew McLain, Ralph Mueller, Scott Plassman, Robert Propst, Darel Reese, Kevin Sherrill, Tony Spencer, Phillip Starnes, & Bob Vogt

Connecting People With Jesus

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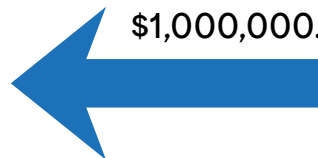
Loan Slides

Originally presented to the church on February 22, 2026.

Loan Authorization Schedule 1

ENTER VALUES		LOAN SUMMARY	
Loan Amount	\$1,000,000.00	Scheduled Payment	\$7,236.61
Annual Interest Rate	6.13%	Scheduled Number of Payments	240
Loan period in years	20	Actual Number of Payments	240
Number of payments per year	12	Total early payments	\$0.00
Start Date of loan	7/17/2026	Total Interest	\$736,786.50
Optional Extra Expenses		Lender Name	Peoples Bank


\$1,000,000.00 loan for 20 years



Loan Authorization Schedule 2

ENTER VALUES		LOAN SUMMARY	
Loan Amount	\$1,000,000.00	Scheduled Payment	\$11,164.93
Annual Interest Rate	6.13%	Scheduled Number of Payments	120
Loan period in years	10	Actual Number of Payments	120
Number of payments per year	12	Total early payments	\$0.00
Start Date of loan	7/17/2026	Total Interest	\$339,791.14
Optional Extra Expenses		Lender Name	Peoples Bank

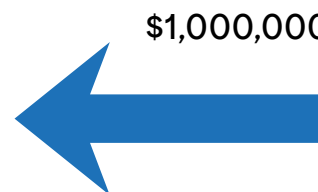
\$1,000,000.00 loan for 10 years



Loan Authorization Schedule 3

ENTER VALUES		LOAN SUMMARY	
Loan Amount	\$1,000,000.00	Scheduled Payment	\$19,390.98
Annual Interest Rate	6.13%	Scheduled Number of Payments	60
Loan period in years	5	Actual Number of Payments	60
Number of payments per year	12	Total early payments	\$0.00
Start Date of loan	7/17/2026	Total Interest	\$163,458.70
Optional Extra Expenses		Lender Name	Peoples Bank


\$1,000,000.00 loan for 3 years



Loan Authorization Schedule 4

ENTER VALUES		LOAN SUMMARY	
Loan Amount	\$1,000,000.00	Scheduled Payment	\$30,478.61
Annual Interest Rate	6.13%	Scheduled Number of Payments	36
Loan period in years	3	Actual Number of Payments	36
Number of payments per year	12	Total early payments	\$0.00
Start Date of loan	7/17/2026	Total Interest	\$97,229.86
Optional Extra Expenses		Lender Name	Peoples Bank

\$1,000,000.00 loan for 3 years



School News

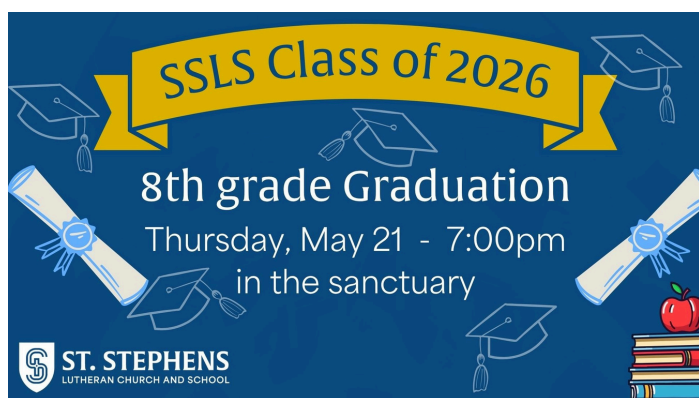
The end of our school year is fast approaching. I look at my ministry here at St. Stephens Lutheran Church and School and think back to my first year. My youngest son Josiah was in the fifth grade and my daughter Ellie was in the 8th grade. Now, Ellie is finishing up her fourth year of teaching middle school and Josiah is finishing up his junior year of college. Not forgetting my oldest son Joshua, who was a freshman in college, is now well on his way, and is a father himself. I am finishing my twelfth year here - hard to believe. I am so thankful that God brought our family to St. Stephens.

Although there were some rough patches along the way; it is easy to look back and see God's blessings on our church and school. Now with the soon completion of our Mission and Ministry Center, we enter the next phase of growth in ministry in our church and school. So, we look forward once again, even as the dust settles, to what is next. Our school enrollment has steadily grown over the past decade. Currently we have 201 K-8 students and 56 children in preschool. That is a long way from the 150 students when I first walked in the door. In the fall we are projecting another increase.

Stories of blessing after blessing have run through the halls year after year. Our teachers have devotion every day and we keep a prayer journal. Once and a while we look back at the prayers from years past and there is a clear picture in those pages of God's work here. Our school ministry continues to impact our community in the name of Christ; we are "Connecting People with Jesus" each day. As our enrollment grows, we shower more families with the love of Christ. Just as in our church, Christ is central to our school's mission; our school truly thrives on the love of Christ.

We are in continual praise for the work our Lord is doing in our school ministry and we know God's not done yet. As we look ahead to the next phase, we ask that you continue to pray for our school ministry. To God be the Glory.

In Christ,
Ross



SCHOOL STAFF

Ross Chiles, Principal
Debbi Becker, Admin Asst.

Deb Anderson,
Family & Community Liaison
Tiffany Sigmon, Receptionist

Kathryn Fisher, Kindergarten
Taylor Bosley, Kindergarten
Rebecca Flowers, 1st Grade
Devon Payne, 2nd Grade
Natasha Whitaker, 3rd Grade
Kelly Hooper, 4th Grade
Rachel Wilson, 5th Grade
Kelli Butler, 6th grade Homeroom
April Drake, 7th grade Homeroom
Cheryl Stiles, 8th grade
Homeroom/Religion
Laura Frank, MS ELA
Donna Lee, Art
Rae Fritz, Health/PE
Jadi Gurganious, Library
Krystal Travis, Athletic Dir.
Amity Enci, Lunch Room Head
Sheila Poovey, Lunch Room
Renee Stiles, Lunch Room
Pam Manfredi, Lunch Room
Kristin Priola, Resource Teacher
Amber Boston, Music
Beverly Fagan, Opener
Nora Shaver, Afterschool
Karla Martinez, Afterschool

Preschool Staff

Angela Parlier, Director
Karen Ly, PS3
Cassie Todd, PS3
Kimberly Clontz, PS4
Glenda Setzer, PS4
Bethany Kahill, TK



“Building relationships in Christ to develop and strengthen faithful followers for life.”

WHAT WE’VE BEEN UP TO

We’ve been on a roll lately. From climbing at Cliffhangers and skiing at Sugar Mountain to snow tubing, Airsoft, and some wild rounds of Indoor Manhunt–this group has brought the energy every time. Add in Silent Basketball and A Quiet Place game ... yeah, it’s been a blast.

But it hasn’t just been fun—we’ve been serving too. Packing backpacks for The Corner Table, serving at the Mystery Dinner Theater, and showing up for others is a big part of who we are. And events like the Chili Cookoff + Dessert Auction and the Middle School Retreat reminded us how strong this community really is.

WHATS COMING UP!

5/3 - Manhunt
5/15 - Serve at Corner Table Gala
5/23 - Community Day of Service

5/25 - Carowinds
5/31 - Graduation Sunday + Lock-In
6/22-25 - VBS: Glow



This July, 15 of our youth and leaders will travel to Belize with the LCMS. This trip will help students grow in faith, serve others, and consider how God may be calling them into church work. We’d appreciate your prayers and, if you feel led, your financial support as we prepare and go. Donations can be made through the church office, by scanning the QR code, or by going to the following website: zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/belize-mission-trip. For more information contact Randall Cline at rcline@sslcms.org.

Stay Connected!
Find photos, updates,
and event details online!



sslcms.org/youth



@St Stephens Lutheran
Church & School Youth



@sslcyouth

St. Stephens Youth = Faith that’s real. Friends that feel like family. Fun that you don’t want to miss.

Children's & Family Ministry Summer 2026



Connecting Families to Christ



SUMMER FAMILY BIBLE HOUR

Sunday mornings 9:15-10:15am

PS and Kinders
Education
Wing
Riser Room

Grades 1 & 2
Education
Wing #222

Grades 3, 4, & 5
Education
Wing #220

**MOVE UP
SUNDAY**

Sunday, May 31

Join us on May 31 as students “move up” grade levels to new Sunday School classes. This is also a great time for adults to choose an adult class to grow in their faith.

Vacation Bible School

June 22-25

6:00pm-8:30pm

Elementary (rising K-5th grade)

Middle School (rising 6th-8th grades)

Childcare available for Volunteers

Register your child(ren) at
www.sslcms.org



V.B.S.

All Volunteer Meeting
May 17 - 2-4pm
Childcare provided. RSVP
to dlee@sslcms.org

For more information about these and other upcoming events check out sslcms.org/children.
Children's Ministry Director, Donna Lee 381-5391 or dlee@sslcms.org

Lutheran Women Mission League (LWML)

THANK YOU to everyone who came out to the LWML Salad Luncheon and Bazaar on April 11. The Luncheon and Bazaar were a huge success. Our ladies prepared a great variety of salads and cakes that were delicious. Shoppers were able to buy many handcrafted items for gifts or for themselves. The monies from the Luncheon and the Bazaar will be used for missions.



Join us for the LWML Quarterly event on
Sunday, June 7 from 3:00-5:00pm.



Jenna Miller (AKA Tonya and Tim Boliek's daughter) will present a program on women's health and nutrition.

Jenna's business is **Live Truly Nourished**. She supports women in optimizing their energy, improving gut comfort, balancing lifestyle & nutrition to support healthy hormone rhythms. Her mission is to simplify wellness because taking care of yourself shouldn't feel like another source of stress. It should be empowering, enjoyable, and sustainable.

Join us in learning something new about living a healthier lifestyle and feeling better. All women are welcome. Invite a friend!



Comfort Dog Ministry



Hello my friends at St. Stephens!

First, I want to give a big, joyful welcome to our newest handler, Tim Herman! He just returned from training at LCC headquarters in Illinois, and I couldn't be more excited to have him join our team. I know you'll be seeing him around soon, so be sure to say hello when you do!

April was such a special month as we celebrated the most important holiday of all—Easter. I absolutely love seeing all of you at church, rejoicing in the resurrection of Jesus and reflecting during the season of Lent. One of my favorite days was our annual Easter Eggstravaganza. I had so much fun watching everyone enjoy the games, crafts, and egg hunt. And I have to say—the face paint this year was extra impressive!

On April 10, we attended the Catawba County Veteran Stand Down at CVCC. This meaningful event brings together veterans in our community—especially those who are homeless or at risk—to provide essential supplies, services, and support. From food and clothing to health screenings and housing assistance, everything is offered in one place. It's always an honor to be there, sharing comfort and showing our support for those who have served.

I also had an amazing time at the annual Catawba County Special Olympics! It was such a joy to cheer on my friends from Adult Life and Goodwill Workforce, reconnect with familiar faces from last year, and meet so many new friends. I'm already looking forward to going back next year!

Thank you to everyone who supported our annual plant sale fundraiser. Because of your generosity, we're able to continue this ministry—going out into the community and sharing mercy, compassion, presence, and the love of Jesus Christ with others. I'm so grateful for each of you.

Looking ahead, from May 29 to June 2, some members of my team and I will be traveling to Spartanburg, South Carolina, and the Lake Lure and Chimney Rock areas in North Carolina. We'll be joining the South East District and Spartanburg Emergency Management for a special mission event, bringing together LCC ministries, Disaster Response, Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, and fellow Comfort Dogs—Seth Comfort Dog (Seneca, SC) and Zora Comfort Dog (Hilton Head, SC). These communities are still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Helene. More than a year later, over 300 families are still without homes and living in tents. It's heartbreaking, and they need continued support. Please keep these families, and all the teams traveling to serve them, in your prayers.

Thank you for being part of my journey and for allowing me to share comfort, love, and hope wherever I go. I can't wait to see you all again soon!

With love,
Faith Comfort Dog
John 11:25-26 🐾



Mission Connection



This year's Conundrum on the Crackerjack Cruise: Mystery Theater & Dinner was a great success. We enjoyed an evening of fellowship, food and fun. This particular script had audience participation and we thank those that took part in the games.

Thank you to all that came out to support the Alaska Mission team. A special thank you to the "crackerjacks": Randall & Shannon Cline, Micheal & Katie Vaughn, April Drake - Bell, Rachel Wilson, Sheila Poovey, Heather Poovey, Bobby Butler and Wayne Auton.



DAY OF SERVICE

Needed:

- Team Leaders
- General Volunteers
- Hospitality volunteers



**MAY
23**

Contact Vicar Tristan at tjones@sslcms.org



All of the paperwork and registrations are completed for the Alaska Mission team. As we prepare for our trip (June 18 - 28), please pray for the members of our Alaska Mission team members: **Jadi Gurganious, Sheila Poovey, Rick Poovey, Heather Poovey, Teri Cain, Bobby Butler, Lark Gurganious, Ruth Gurganious, Andreza Sperb and Estela Sperb.** Pray that as we participate in the training and preparation for this trip, we will be fully equipped to be an effective lay missionary. Also please pray for our safety and health while on mission.

Thank you for your support.

Meet the Next Vicar - starting August 2026



The Rollings Family Tim, Ariana, Tiana, & Santiago

My family and I are so blessed to be called to serve His church at St. Stephens in Hickory, North Carolina! We were told that if we were willing to go, God would be faithful and provide. He has been faithful to provide for us in more ways than we could have ever imagined! We have made so many new friends throughout our journey at the Seminary. The wonderful people that have crossed our path has all been a part of His divine plan for our lives. We are so excited for our vicarage with you all, because we trust that God has more friends waiting for us at your congregation!

I was born and raised in Northeast Arkansas, where I had lived my entire life before being called to the Seminary. Being a 2nd career Seminarian, my previous work experience has been in Blue-collar environments. I served as a soldier in the National Guard and also served the city of Jonesboro as a firefighter. I always had a servant's heart, but little did I know I would be called to serve in ministry! I was working as a crane operator at a steel mill off the Mississippi River when I was led to the Lutheran Church in 2020. Saved by Grace alone through Faith alone changed my life! My desire is for all people to know Jesus and receive the same free gift that I have been given.

God had also blessed me with the vocation of being a husband and a father! My lovely wife, Ariana, and I have been married for 13 years. We first met in high school when she moved here from Mexico! Our children, Tiana and Santiago, will be in 6th and 5th grade this year at St. Stephens. It is our greatest joy to watch them grow and develop as Baptized Children of God! We know that the Lord has big plans for their lives! We are very proud of them and enjoy spending time together as a family.

We are so thankful that God has called us to a loving and supportive church and school for me to serve as your Vicar! Our formation process continues as we are being shaped for life in ministry. We look forward to building relationships with the faithful saints of your congregation. My prayer is that I serve you well this year, as my family becomes a part of your church family!

Your Servant in Christ,

Timothy Rollings



Summer schedule at Camp Linn Haven

5/9 Camp Work Day

Help get camp open and running for the season. Contact Teirsa Lane at camplinnhaven@gmail.com to sign up

5/16 Camp Work Day

Help get camp open and running for the season. Contact Teirsa Lane at camplinnhaven@gmail.com to sign up.

6/6 - 6/13 Family Week #1

Multi-day weeks with family oriented activities, devotions, games, and worship. Register and learn more at camplinnhaven.org/family-weeks.

6/27 - 7/4 Family week #2

Multi-day weeks with family oriented activities, devotions, games, and worship. Register and learn more at camplinnhaven.org/family-weeks.

7/12-7/18 Middle School Week at Camp Linn Haven

Middle school students won't want to miss a week of faith, friendship, and fun at Camp Linn Haven! Join us for outdoor adventures, games, and opportunities to grow in Christ. Spaces are limited—sign up early! Sign up and more information at sslcms.org/youth

7/18 - 7/25 Family Week #3

Multi-day weeks with family oriented activities, devotions, games, and worship. Register and learn more at camplinnhaven.org/family-weeks.

7/26-8/1 High School Teen Servant Week at Camp Linn Haven

Hey high schoolers! Join us for a week of serving, hanging out, and making new friends at Camp Linn Haven. Work hard, laugh a lot, and grow in your faith! Spots are limited – don't miss out! Sign up and more information at sslcms.org/youth

8/2-8/8 Pre-Teen (rising 3rd - 5th grade) Week

Pre-teens, gather your friends and spend a week at Camp Linn Haven before school starts back. Join us for crafts, outdoor adventures, games and devotions to grow in Christ. Spaces are limited, so sign up today at camplinnhaven.org/pre-teen-week

9/18 - 9/20 SSLC Family Weekend

A weekend reserved for St. Stephens Lutheran families. More information coming soon.

Finance and Facility Board Report

	<u>Church Income Jan thru March</u>		<u>Church Income Year to Date</u>			<u>School's Financials</u>	
	<u>Given</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Given</u>	<u>Total Budgeted</u>		<u>Jan thru March</u>	<u>Total Budget</u>
Offerings	\$363,364.00	\$395,096.00	\$363,364.00	\$1,580,395.00	Income	\$879,864.00	\$2,499,579.00
Other Income	\$6,166.00	\$5,850.00	\$6,166.00	\$23,400.00	Expenses	\$554,578.00	\$2,499,579.00
Total Income	\$369,530.00	\$400,946.00	\$369,530.00	\$1,603,795.00	Balance	\$325,286.00	\$0.00
	<u>Church Expenses Jan thru March</u>		<u>Church Expenses Year to Date</u>				
	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Spent</u>	<u>Total Budgeted</u>			
Less expenses	\$375,773.00	\$398,200.00	\$375,773.00	\$1,603,795.00			
Balance	(\$6,243.00)		(\$6,243.00)				
	<u>Church Expansion Fund March</u>						
Needed:	\$4.4 Million						
Account Balance	\$461,163.05						
Bills Paid So Far	\$2,879,338.52						

May/June/July Birthdays of the Homebound and Seasoned Members

Harold Kent 5/13
 Bill Huffman 5/16
 Nancy Huffman 5/16
 Arlys Rullman 5/19
 Pat Hollar 5/25
 Helen Suttlemyre 5/29

Walt Schoenegge 6/1
 Joan Drum 6/17
 Hazel Lovelace 6/24
 David Janisko 6/25
 Bob Hollar 6/28
 Ervin Bolick 6/28 (100)

James Spencer 7/6
 Grady Bowman 7/11
 Pat Fredell 7/13
 Nancy Hicks 7/14
 John "Garner" Settlemyre 7/16
 Barry Poovey 7/23
 Martha Propst 7/26
 Sandra Turner 7/27
 Helen Martin 7/28
 Frances Rullman 7/28
 Eric White 7/30



Celebrate the Family

Weddings

Grant Miller and Bailey Tesh were married on March 21, 2026. Grant is the son of Rodney & Tracy Miller and the grand son of Bob & Helen Miller and Donna Setzer.

Alyssa McAlpin and Dylan Wilcox were married on April 20. Alyssa is the daughter of Randall & Shannon Cline.

Allen Crowe and Bobbie Starnes were married on April 24, 2026

Births

Ruby Ellen Houston, born on March 4, 2026, daughter of Zachary & Taylor Houston. Ruby is the granddaughter of Matt & Tammi Houston.

Baker Wit Teegarden, born on April 25, 2026, son of Travis & Lauren Teegarden. Baker is the grandson of Tom & Kristy Smith.

Baptisms

Jeremy Dula, baptized on March 6, 2026.

Beau McKinley Lail, baptized on March 29, 2026. Beau is the son of Ally and Carson. Great grandson of Dwight & Kathy Hollar.

Amy Capri Goff, baptized on April 4, 2026. Amy is the daughter of Michael & Liz Goff. Granddaughter of Tom & Doris Goff.

Ethan Alexander Chester & Eli Nikolas Chester baptized on May 3, 2026.

Bo Patten Fletcher, baptized on May 9, 2026, son of Jason and Jaqueline. Bo is the grandson of Mark & Sharon Radke and the great-grandson of Martha Killian.

Eternal Glory

Pete Lavine—October 27, 1939 –February 5, 2026. Husband of Sharon Lavine

Charles Shook—March 30, 1935 - February 16, 2026. Father of Jennifer Shook

Marsha Watson—November 30, 1947 – March 9, 2026. Wife of Bob Watson
Mother of Gena Watson Smith and Jeff Watson. Sister of Delaney Jessup

**THANK
YOU**

David Pingel, Mike Davis, Billy Beard, Bob Watson, DuWayne Westby, James Bradshaw for changing filters and oiling statues in the church and school.

Steve Flowers, Jon Guelzow and Shawn Sigmon for updating lights in the gym.

Contact Information
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Hickory, NC 28601
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St. Stephens Lutheran Church & School

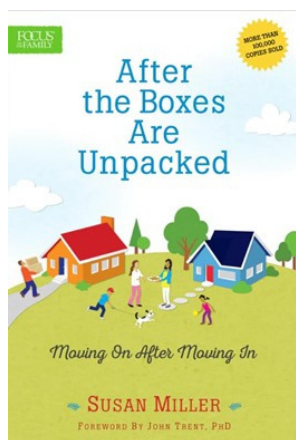
SENIOR SESSION

Wednesday, May 20 @ 1:00pm



Tour the Mission & Ministry building for a behind the scenes of the day to day operation of this new facility.

RSVP to Kristy Smith at ksmith@sslcms.org



The After the Boxes are Unpacked just completed a third 10-week session of fellowship and study for women experiencing a significant life change, i.e. relocation, relationship change, career redirection, empty nest. A ministry of Focus on the Family, this program walks women through the emotional packing and unpacking that comes with big changes. The next group will be offered in the fall of 2026. To ask questions or to register, reach out to Kristy Smith at ksmith@sslcms.org.



CENTRO LATINO

Centro Latino is seeking volunteer conversation partners for the spring session May 14 -June 25. Partners do not need to speak Spanish. They will visit with English students to practice English speaking skills Thursday evenings, 5-7PM. If you are willing to serve as a conversation partner, contact Jane Guelzow, 828-638-7005.



ST. STEPHENS

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