

**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 + Tristan Jones, Vicar  
Ross Chiles, 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

**Ascension**

**May 16 & 17, 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 guest 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----- Fellowship Hall  
Adults-Men's Bible Study: Led by Dwight Hollar----Genesis----School Bldg. #108  
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:  
In His Image by Jen Wilkin-----School Bldg. #110

## **Prayer on Entering**

O ascended Lord Jesus, You promise not to leave Your disciples as orphans, for as You ascended into heavenly glory, so You shall return. Meet us here also in Word and Sacrament, that we might never doubt Your presence nor our place in Your eternal kingdom, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Flowers**

Flowers on the altar are given by Jeremy and Joanna Moore in honor and celebration of their 11<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on March 21.

## **Greeters**

May 16 - Keith & Sue Binns  
May 17<sup>th</sup> 8am - Pat Wilson  
May 17<sup>th</sup> 10:30am - Teri Cain

May 23 - Linda McNeely  
May 24<sup>th</sup> 8am - Volunteer Needed  
May 24<sup>th</sup> - 10:30am - Micheal & Katie Vaughn

## **Communion Assistants**

May 17 8:00am - James Fogle & Tony Spencer  
May 24 10:30am - David Propst, Jon Guelzow, Tony Cook

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

May 17 - Cynthia Hewitt    May 24 - Shannon Cline

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

Last Sunday's Attendance - 586 (92, 108, 386)    Sunday School - 119  
General Fund: \$25,592.35 (Regular Offer. needed each week: \$30,392.22)  
Church Expansion Fund/Building Fund: \$1,834.23  
School Endowment Fund: \$195.00  
Church Expansion/Building Fund Funds Needed: \$4.4 Million  
Church Expansion/Building Fund Account Balance: \$92,700.49  
Church Expansion Bills Paid So Far: \$3,431,915.52

## **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 - Congregational Meeting and Mission & Ministry Building Dedication

6:00pm - Life Group (Dwight Hollar) - Conference Room

### **MONDAY**

9:00am - Lifelight - Conference Room

10:00am - With Our Hands Ministry

1:00pm - Esther Circle - Conference Room

6:00pm - After the Boxes - Conference Room

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

### **TUESDAY**

4:00pm - Life Group (Pastor Guelzow) - Conference Room

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

5:15pm - Finance & Facility - Conference Room

6:00pm - Praise Team Rehearsal

6:00pm - Life Group Leaders Meeting - Youth Modular

### **WEDNESDAY**

10:00am - Women's Bible Study (Sonni Thornton) Youth Modular

**NOON - BULLETIN & SCREEN ANNOUNCEMENT DEADLINE**

6:00pm - Hearts & Compassion - Conference Room

6:00pm - Life Group (Paul Miller) Youth Modular

### **THURSDAY**

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

**7:00pm - SSSLS Graduation**

7:00pm - Life Group (Richard Starnes) Youth Modular

7:00pm - Parish Choir - Choir Room

### **FRIDAY**

10:00am - With Our Hands Ministry

**11:30am - SSSLs Early dismissal SSSLs**

2:00pm - Life Group - David Rittenhouse's

5:30pm - Halo Bible Study - Youth Modular

### **SATURDAY**

5:30pm - Saturday Evening Worship & Holy Communion

### **SUNDAY**

8:00am - Traditional Worship

9:15am - Family Bible Hour

10:30am - Contemporary Worship & Holy Communion

6:00pm - Life Group (Dwight Hollar) - Conference Room



Via de Cristo, “The Way of Christ” is a highly structured three-day weekend retreat designed to strengthen and renew the faith of Christian people and bring them to a new awareness of living in God’s grace.

The retreat is intended for lay people from every walk of life, for pastors, for people who live strong and active lives in Christ, and also for those who seek to be renewed and strengthened in their relationship with Christ and the people around them. It is open to married couples as well as single men and women.

A Via de Cristo retreat includes Christian fellowship, worship, and instruction, led by lay people and clergy and concentrates on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. Special focus is placed on the spiritual renewal of the church, family and community.

Please join us on a Via de Cristo retreat for a grace-filled, spiritual renewal through a closer walk with Christ.

This Via de Cristo retreat will be held at Camp Walter Johnson in Denton, NC. Each retreat begins on Thursday evening and ends Sunday afternoon. The cost for first time attendees is \$125.

## **Upcoming Retreat Date**

May 28-31 (men & women)

For additional information please contact:

Jon or Jane Guelzow, Tim or Teri Herman,  
Larry or Beth Bowman

or visit our web site at:

[www.wncvdc.org](http://www.wncvdc.org) and click on “What is Via de Cristo?”



# SSLS ROBOTICS CAMP

Be one of the first students to experience Robotics at St. Stephens and help us kickstart our Robotics Program by joining us for our first ever Robotics Summer Camp!



**Current K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Students**  
June 15-19 9am-12pm  
OR  
July 13-17 1pm-4pm  
**LIMIT: 12 Students per Session**

**Current 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students**  
June 15-19 1pm-4pm  
OR  
July 13-17 9am-12pm  
**LIMIT: 10 Students per Session**

**Registration Fee: \$125**  
*We will be pairing up on our robotics work, so register with a partner, and you will each receive \$10 off your registration fee.*

## YOU WILL LEARN:

- ✓ Collaborative Problem-Solving
- ✓ Engineering & Design
- ✓ Beginner Robotics
- ✓ Beginner Coding
- ✓ Debugging



Ready to register or have questions?



Contact Mrs. Bell  
[adrake@sslcms.org](mailto:adrake@sslcms.org)

## Out of The Office

Pastor Ziehr is at Well Spring Conference on May 18-19.  
Sharon Maynor will be on vacation May 18-22.  
Pastor Shea will be on vacation May 21-25.  
Brandon Buff will be on vacation May 22-30.  
Tashia Fisher will be on vacation May 22-30.



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

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

**Youth House**

**Mark Your Calendars!**



**5/17 | 5:00-8:00 PM After Hours: Classified**

This isn't your normal night. No full details. No spoilers. Just know this—once you're in, you're in. Expect the unexpected. Games? Maybe. Chaos? Likely. Something meaningful? Always. You don't want to hear about this one later—you want to be there.



**5/23 | 9:00-2:00 PM Community Service Day**

St Stephens will be providing basic lawn care for those from the community in need—like weeding, trimming, and brush removal. Need help or want to volunteer? Contact Vicar Tristan Jones at [tjones@sslcms.org](mailto:tjones@sslcms.org)



**5/25 | 9:00-7:00 PM Carowinds**

Get ready for a day of adrenaline, water park chaos, and nonstop fun at Carowinds! From massive coasters to the lazy river and everything in between—this is the kind of day you'll be talking about all summer. Sign up and more information at: [sslcms.org/youth](http://sslcms.org/youth)



**5/31 | Graduation / Move Up Sunday**

Join us for a special service as we celebrate our graduating seniors, officially welcome our rising 6th graders into Youth, and launch our rising 9th graders into the High School Ministry. New season. New adventures. New memories. Don't miss it!

### **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](http://sslcms.org/youth) for all the latest.

**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):**

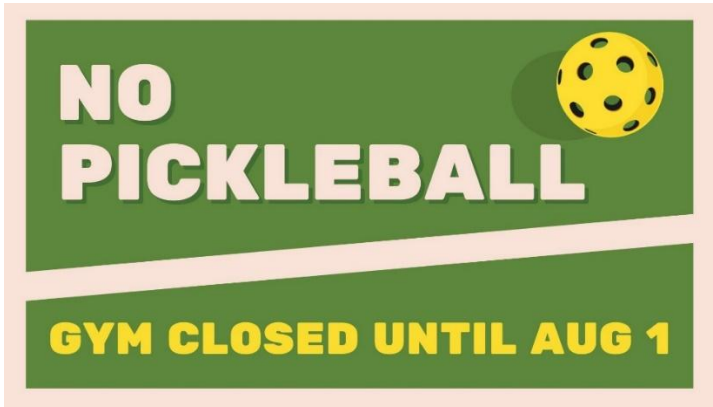
Cheryl Frye

**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

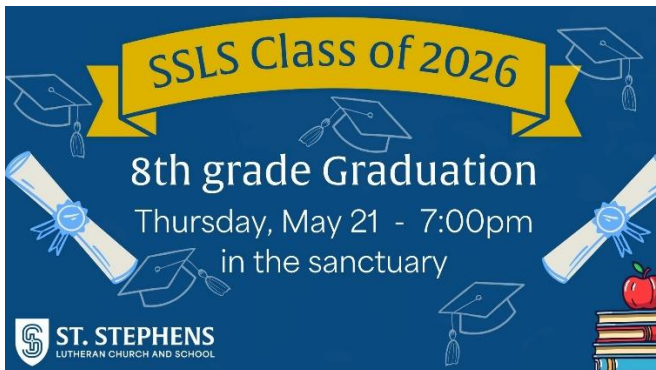


**St. Stephens Lutheran School News**  
Excellence in Education since 1943

**Make A Joyful Noise**  
(Psalm 98:4)

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

Temporary School office is located in the Church Parlor. This is a temporary move for the rest of the school year and summer, until the current school office is complete. This will not change any pickup or drop procedures; the school will continue as it has been all school year.



## Comfort Dog Ministry



Lutheran Church Charities will serve in Spartanburg, SC this May for Helene Recovery and Preparedness Day, providing care and support to a community still recovering from the 2024 hurricane. Many families there have received little assistance and are in great need.

Around 300-500 families will receive essential items like food, clothing, and emergency supplies. We strongly encourage members of St. Stephens to support this mission by donating through the Amazon Wish List (scan the QR code below), helping provide items such as fans, heaters, and other critical needs. We're also grateful that our quilters are sharing Christ's love by sending handmade quilts to bless those in need.

Faith Comfort Dog will be attending alongside the Southeast District, Spartanburg Emergency Management, LCC Disaster Response, Hearts of Mercy & Compassion, and fellow Comfort Dogs Seth (Seneca, SC) and Zora (Hilton Head, SC) for this special mission event.

Please continue to keep all those affected in your prayers. Thank you for helping us make a meaningful impact.



Scan the QR code for items list.

## 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](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)

# Carowinds

Monday, May 25  
Jr. & Sr. High youth  
(and anyone else that wants to go)  
9am-7pm  
Register at [sslcms.org/youth](http://sslcms.org/youth)

## JOIN US FOR GRADUATION *Sunday* May 31 10:30am

We need the following from high school and college graduates by May 27.

1. Graduates full name
2. Where graduating from
3. Two pictures (younger and senior)

Email pictures to [jgurganious@sslcms.org](mailto:jgurganious@sslcms.org)

## Children's Ministry

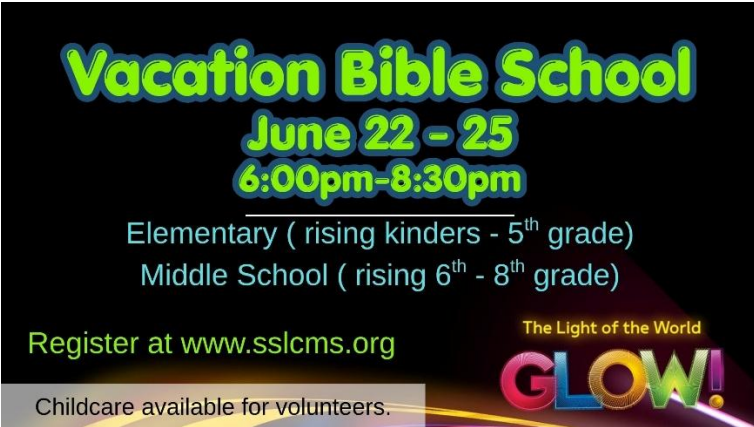
Sunday Morning Bible Hour - 9:15-10:15am Ed Wing  
Preschool & Kinders: Riser Room  
Grades 1 & 2: Ed Wing #222  
Grades 3 - 5: Ed Wing #220  
CPH Enduring Faith

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!



**Vacation Bible School**  
**June 22 - 25**  
**6:00pm-8:30pm**

Elementary ( rising kinders - 5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
Middle School ( rising 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade)

Register at [www.sslcms.org](http://www.sslcms.org)

Childcare available for volunteers.

The Light of the World  
**GLOW!**

### VBS meeting and donation

VBS meeting will be held Sunday, May 17 at 2:00pm in the Conference Room.

VBS Donations are welcome. Scan the QR code to check out our Amazon wish list. Items are being added daily.



## Volunteers Needed Vicar's Outreach Project

As vicars, we organize a community outreach project, where the church reaches out and serves in the greater community. For my project, we will be doing a day of service on **Saturday, May 23rd**. I am putting together teams who will go out and provide basic lawncare services for people who need them. Pulling weeds, trimming, hauling brush off, spreading mulch, etc. I need your help with two things for the project.

First, I need a list of people for us to serve that day. We are looking for people outside the church. Think about your neighbors. Who do you know of that could use a hand with their yard?

Second, I need volunteers. I am looking for:

- Team leaders - Experienced people who will take point at each service site.
- General volunteers - The hands to do the serving.
- Hospitality volunteers - The goal is not just to provide a service but to use this as an opportunity to build bridges in the community. Hospitality people will focus more on talking with the people we are serving, getting to know them, praying for them, and giving them some information about St. Stephens.

Please contact Vicar Tristan at [tjones@sslcms.org](mailto:tjones@sslcms.org) to volunteer and/or connect us with people to serve.



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](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)



## LWML QUARTERLY EVENT

Guest Speaker will be, **Jenna Miller**, with "Live Truly Nourished". Her mission is to simplify wellness because taking care of yourself shouldn't feel like another source of stress. Come to learn something new about living a healthier lifestyle and feeling better.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 7 | 3-5PM**

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need conversational partners to help ESL students improve their English.

Volunteers do not need to speak Spanish.

**Thursdays - 5pm-7pm**  
**May 14 - June 25**



For more information contact: Jane Guelzow 828-638-7005

## Today's Readings

### Acts 1:1-11

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

4 And while staying[a] with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with[b] the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

## Ephesians 1:15-23

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love[a] toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

## Luke 24:44-53

44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for[a] the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

## The Ascension

50 And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple blessing God.

# LET US PRAY FOR.....

## SPECIAL PRAYERS

BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION - MISSION & MINISTRY CENTER  
ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL  
ALASKA MISSION TEAM  
ST. PETERS LUTHERAN  
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

## PRAYERS FOR OUR HOME MEMBERS

CASSIE DEAL  
MARGARET DEAL  
CAROLYN GARREN

## FIVE FAMILY PRAYER

ROGER & SHERRY DRUM  
GENE, CHAR, AND SETH EWALD  
ANGELA FREDERICK  
SAL & MARY HAZBOUN  
ERIC KENT

## PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

**THEODORE EDWARD DELAND** was born on May 11. Proud grandparents are Jeff and Cindy Brinn

**ALEXANDER DAVID LUTZ** was born on May 13. Proud grandparents are David & Darla Day.

## HOSPICE CARE

**KEVIN CLOHESY**, ALS, brother of Brian

## UPCOMING SURGERIES

**TERESA RITCHIE**, upcoming knee replacement on May 20

## **HOSPITALIZED**

**CLARK NORRIS**, recovering from tumor removal, Atrium Health Concord

**GINNY QUINLAN**, knee replacement complications, Atrium Health Charlotte

**SHERRY ECKARD**, CCU Catawba, Will's stepmother

**CHRISTIAN CALDWELL**, ICU, friend of Randall & Shannon Cline

**KIM MULLEN**, brain bleed, hospitalized in Indiana, sister of Joel and Jonathan

## **PRAYERS FOR ONGOING TREATMENTS**

**DINKY EDDINS**, breast cancer

**GIL BRAUCH**, cancer

**KAY WEAVER**, health concerns

**KEVIN CARPENTER**, treatments for PTSD

**LINDA BOLICK**, radiation treatments

**RICHARD ELDER**, receiving treatment for an infection around the heart, friend of Danny & Miriam Mecimore.

**HEATHER FORBES**, breast cancer, daughter of Karen Killian

**KIM MILLER**, cancer, daughter-in-law of Bob & Helen Miller

**BRENDA BENFIELD**, cancer, friend of David & Andra Pingel

**MATTHEW JOHNSON**, colon cancer, son of Linda Bristow

**ROB MABE**, cancer, friend of Tim & Teri Herman

## **RECOVERING**

**GARNER SETTLEMYRE**, Hickory Falls, Rehab

**LINDA STEELMAN**, Trinity Village Rehab, sister of Betty Bostain

**CAROLE HUFFMAN**, health issues

**RUBY HALL**, recovering from shoulder surgery

**KATRINA CONWELL**, health issues

**TOBY LAWS**, recovering from a broken arm

**DAVID DRUM**, health issues

**DIANE SLIVENSKY**, recovering at home

**PAUL MILLER**, recovering at home from surgery

**LINDA LAIL**, rehab at Trinity Village

**SAVANNAH LEE**, recovering from hip surgery

**BRILEY TRAVIS**, recovering from hand surgery

**TABITHA WORLEY**, recovering at home from surgery

**ROGER & SHERRY CRAIG**, health issues

**RANDY CONWELL SR.**, health issues, father-in-law of Katrina Conwell

**RALPH CAUSBY**, health issues, Jeremy Dula's grandfather

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

**CHARLES**, health issues, friend of Linda & Rae Fritz

**EVELYN COGDELL**, fractured pelvis, friend of Carolyn Watson

**CONNIE BOWMAN**, glaucoma, sister of Bill Cline