

**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

School: 828-256-2166
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 September 26 & 27, 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

Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, 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 by Tim & Tonya Boliek in honor and celebration of their 46th wedding anniversary on September 27.

Greeters

September 26 - Linda McNeely
September 27 - 8AM- Gregg & Vickie Fletcher
September 27 - 10:30- Michael & Katie Vaughn

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

Communion Assistants

September 27 - 10:30am - David Propst, Jon Guelzow, Tony Cook
October 4 - 8:00am - Dwight Hollar & Tony Spencer

Nursery Volunteers - 10:30 am

September 27 - Teresa Ritchie October 4 - Shannon Cline

Our Response to God Last Week

Last Sunday's Attendance - 497 (71, 125, 228, 73-Camp)
Sunday School - 155
General Fund: \$19,995.35 (Regular Offer. needed each week: \$30,392.22)
Church Expansion Fund/Building Fund: \$631.08
School Endowment Fund: \$200.00
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 & Holy Communion

SUNDAY

8:00am – Traditional Worship

10:30am – Contemporary Worship & Holy Communion

12:00-1:00pm – Confirmation Check In - Sanctuary

12:00-5:00pm – Youth Service Opportunity – Youth Modular

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

1:00pm – Ruth Circle – Creation Room

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

TUESDAY

4:00PM – MID-WEEK CONGREGATIONAL NEWS DEADLINE

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

6:00pm – Praise Team Rehearsal

WEDNESDAY

10:00am – Women's Bible Study – Creation Room

6:00pm – After the Boxes – New Conference Room

6:30pm – Life Group (Paul Miller) Youth Modular

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

SUNDAY

8:00am – Traditional Worship & Holy Communion

9:15am – Family Bible Hour

10:30am–Contemporary Worship

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

3:00-6:00pm – Pickle Ball – Gym

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





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

Sunday Morning LifeGroup | 9:15am | Youth House

Mark Your Calendars!

9/27 | 12:00-1:00 PM | Confirmation Check-in



Confirmation students and their families will meet in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the 10:30 AM worship service. We'll check in, answer any questions, and make sure everyone is on track as we continue through Confirmation together.

9/27 | 12:00-5:00 PM Service Opportunity



Fuel up, grab your gear, and let's get after it! One crew will give The Youth House a fresh coat of paint while the other heads back into the community to finish replacing deck boards. Bring your energy, get your hands dirty, and let's serve together!

10/3 | 6:00-10:30 PM | Lake Hickory Haunts



Who's brave enough to go first? We're heading out for a night of haunted attractions, ridiculous reactions, and plenty of laughs. Bring a friend and find out who's fearless—and who's hiding behind everyone else! Sign up & get more info at sslcms.org/youth.

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.

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 for all the latest.

**PICKLEBALL
RESUMES**

SUNDAYS

3-6 PM

ALL PICKLES WELCOME



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



Samaritan's Purse®
INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

**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**

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!

Administrative Assistant Opening at St. Peter's Lutheran Church

St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Conover is seeking a part-time Administrative Assistant to support the congregation's office operations and ministry. Additional information is available at stpetersconover.org.

Interested applicants may email a résumé and cover letter to pfrank@stpetersconover.org.



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

ST. STEPHENS
LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

ROOTED IN CHRIST

COLLECTION

ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM —
COLOSSIANS 2:7

20%
OF EVERY
PURCHASE GOES
BACK TO
ST. STEPHENS!

ROOTED in Christ
COLOSSIANS 2:7

STORE DATES
SEPTEMBER 10-27

FAITH • FAMILY • COMMUNITY

SCAN TO SHOP!



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
- 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
4pm



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.

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!



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.**

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

Ezekiel 18:1-4; 25-32

18 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge’? 3 As I live, declares the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. 4 Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

25 “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? 26 When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. 27 Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. 28 Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? 30 “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”

Philippians 2:1-10

2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and

sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Matthew 21:23-27

23 And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" 24 Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

LET US PRAY FOR.....

SPECIAL PRAYERS

BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION - MISSION & MINISTRY CENTER
ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
PARISH CHOIR & PRAISE TEAM
OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
SHAUN & 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 MEN'S WEEKEND

PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE

ANNIE BRAUCH, RICHARD & DEE STARNES & WADE & DONNA LEE
FAMILIES. Gil was called to glory on September 18.
SHEILA & RICK POOVEY FAMILY. Her brother, Tony Bumgarner, was
called to glory on September 18.
SHANNON & RANDALL CLINE FAMILY. Her aunt, Shirley Brittain,
passed away on September 24.

PRAYERS FOR OUR HOME MEMBERS

REBECCA MOFFETT
JEAN ROLLINS
GARNER SETTLEMYRE

FIVE FAMILY PRAYER

AMY MESSAGEE
LYNWOOD & JANICE MILLER
STEVE & AMBER MOULTON FAMILY
JOHN NYE
RICK & SHEILA POOVEY

HOSPICE CARE

KEITH SMOTHERS, ALS, friend of Brian & Myrna Boman

MATTHEW JOHNSON, son of Linda Bristow

JOYCE MCCARTY, grandmother of Adam Wilson

UPCOMING SURGERIES, TESTS, or RESULTS

RHYNE MAYNARD, upcoming heart MRI at Duke

PRAYERS FOR ONGOING TREATMENTS

KEVIN CARPENTER, treatments for PTSD

PAULA SPENCER, cancer treatments, friend of Martha Propst

ZACHARY, cancer, former student of Janet VonDohlen

CAROL EWALD, dementia

DAVE KRYDER, stage 4 cancer

JEFF KUYKENDALL, cancer

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

PAT SEALE, oral cancer

CHRISTA RISSER, cancer, mother of Heidi Beliveau

RALPH CASSANO, bladder & bone cancer, family friend of Kristy Smith

LYNN TEETERS, stage 4 liver cancer

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

RECOVERING

REGGIE CRAIG, health issues

LINDA TILLEY, recovering from a fall

TERESA PHILLIPS, recovering from broken shoulder/heart cath

SANDRA WALKER, health issues/rehab, sister-in-law of Betty Flowers

KATHY BOLCH, severe eye issues, sister of Sherry Craig

KELLI BROWN, recovering from shoulder surgery

A FAMILY MEMBER OF Jill and Charlie Long, health issues

JERRY RITCHIE, recovering from a fall

STEPHANIE, double mastectomy, friend of Miriam Mecimore

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