

# Staying Connected

## Growing CONNECTIONS

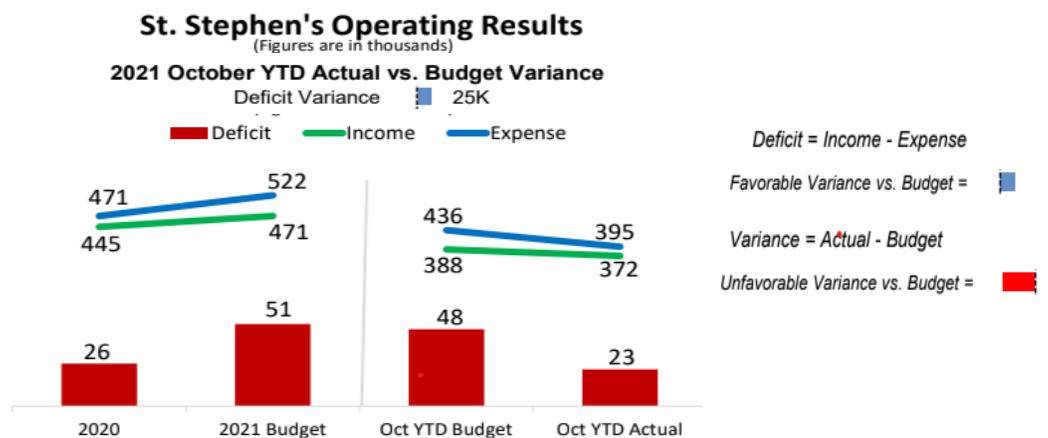


### CLOSE THE GAP!

We are overjoyed that we are “this close” to achieving our 2022 Stewardship goal! Intentions are down compared to last year, but the increases in giving we have received so far have made a BIG difference – we are nearly there! **Can you help?** Please turn your 2022 Intention in now so we can keep “**Growing Connections!**”

When we say “increase” we are simply asking you to consider how you can make an impact. If you are able to increase your giving by \$25 (this year’s average monthly increase), or even a \$1 a day increase will make a difference. Receiving intentions helps us plan for the coming year. **Remember, a \$15,000 match is at stake!**

**In the meantime we still need help closing out 2021 on a high note.** Our giving remains lower than budgeted, but we have faith that together we will meet this challenge.



### TODAY (10:40-11:30am)

We welcome **Mrs. Shawna Perkins - local Director of Young Life.** Young Life is a national program reaching youth not affiliated with a church. Come hear Shawna’s exciting story and learn of the hope she is helping grow in young hearts.

### NEXT SUNDAY

**West St Paul Police Chief - Brian Sturgeon.** How is policing changing in our community? How can we help? Please join us for this important discussion.



### Advent Reverse Calendar—Join in the fun ...

Last year’s “Reverse Advent Calendar” project was so well received by all that we are going to repeat again this year. How does it work? Normally, Advent calendars count down the days until Christmas by providing a treat each day until Christmas. Please join our Faith Formation students by doing the reverse—giving vs. receiving. Here’s how: find an empty box and each day place a food item in the box (suggested item list below) then on Christmas Eve bring your box to the St Stephen’s manger on your way to worship. It’s as simple as that. All items collected will be donated to the Neighbor’s Inc. Food Shelf.

#### 2021 Reverse Advent Calendar—We’re at the half way point.

- |                              |                                |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Nov. 28 - box of cereal      | Dec. 7 - applesauce            | Dec. 16 - chicken noodle soup  |
| Nov. 29 - peanut butter      | Dec. 8 - canned sweet potatoes | Dec. 17 - tomato soup          |
| Nov. 30 - stuffing mix       | Dec. 9 - cranberry sauce       | Dec. 18 - can corn             |
| Dec. 1 - boxed potatoes      | Dec. 10 - canned beans         | Dec. 19 - can mixed vegetables |
| Dec. 2 - macaroni and cheese | Dec. 11 - box of crackers      | Dec. 20 - can green beans      |
| Dec. 3 - canned fruit        | Dec. 12 - package of rice      | Dec. 21 - box of granola bars  |
| Dec. 4 - canned tomatoes     | Dec. 13 - oatmeal              | Dec. 22 - can carrots          |
| Dec. 5 - canned tuna         | Dec. 14 - package of pasta     | Dec. 23 - can of chili         |
| Dec. 6 - dessert mix         | Dec. 15 - spaghetti sauce      | Dec. 24 - canned ham           |

## Christmas Eve Worship

Christ ★ Communion ★ Candles  
Community



3:30 p.m. Family Worship  
10:30 p.m. Traditional

In-person and  
Live streamed on Facebook

## Asante Sana! Thank you!

St. Stephen's members have pledged \$9,055 to support scholarships in 2022 for students from Ihimbo and Iwonde, our partner congregations in Tanzania. In addition, Faith Formation students chose to direct \$269 of previously undesignated Missions benevolence funds to Ihimbo and Iwonde scholarships. Finally, \$600 was pledged by a few members to support scholarships for students from congregations in the Iringa Diocese who aren't partnered with St. Paul Area Synod churches.

Your generosity will change lives and is much appreciated.

**Mungu Awabariki!**  
**God bless you and yours!**

## New Member Classes to be Offered

Hybrid  
Attend in person  
or via Zoom

**Thursday, Dec. 16, 7-9:30pm OR  
Saturday, December 18, 10-11:30am**

The new member class is an orientation to St. Stephen's, the Lutheran church and what it means to be a Christian today. Children are welcome. You need only attend one of the classes offered. New members will be **received on Sunday, December 26** during the 9:30a.m. worship service. Please RSVP to the office.

Zoom—Meeting ID: 380-950-620  
Password: 55118

## You Can Help with Ministry Planning!

The visioning work of the congregation has been steadily moving from big picture questions towards detailed plans. We began by renewing our overall mission statement and naming our core values. Next, we identified four general areas where we want to invest our energy in the coming years. Now we are working to decide on the particular things we intend to do in each area. The Team has brainstormed ideas and gathered many from the congregation to compile a list of "candidate objectives" for the final Ministry Plan. As with each step before, we very much want to have the congregation review our work before we move into the next step in the process.



Focus Group QR code

We will be hosting two focus groups. Our first focus group "**Connect to Our Neighborhood through Service**" met on Saturday morning. The second "**Build and deepen Relationships with Each Other at St. Stephens**" is scheduled for **Thursday, December 16 from 4:30-6pm in the Lounge**. These focus group conversations will give us an opportunity to look and discuss the plans for the first two Ministry Result Areas – **Neighborhood Service and Deeping Relationships**.

Everyone is welcome and you do not need to register in advance, but if you do it will help us know how many tables and chairs to set up so please do! You can find the sign-up sheet here: <http://bit.ly/VAT-FG>. We hope to see you there!



## Rest for Your Souls

How are you holding up these difficult days? Are you feeling weary? Discouraged? Remember what Jesus says; "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden... and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-29)



Rest for Your Souls QR code

One of the ways we can receive that gift of rest is through the practice of Sabbath: intentionally and routinely taking time to simply stop. But for many of us, it's hard to even imagine that kind of rest!

If it's time for you to explore what Sabbath could look like in your life, then I hope you will join me for a short-term group in the new year. "**Sabbath Explorers**" will meet **online twice a month for two months starting in January. From 10 to 10:30 am on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays** I will be sharing one or two practical "Sabbath nuggets" that I've collected from my own explorations. You'll be able to try these simple practices out between sessions and as we go along, we'll be able to learn from each other's experiences too. Follow the link or use the QR code to get more information or to sign up if you're ready to go! <https://bit.ly/SSLC-SabExp>

Finding ways to have Sabbath in my life has been a huge blessing to me. I hope you'll come and check it out and we can explore together! - Pastor Tim

**You Can Make a Difference!** We are collecting winter Clothing for Garlough and Moreland Elementary schools. Students are in grades K through 4. Help keep our neighborhood students warm this winter!



ST STEPHEN'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**PLEASE NOTE:** Links included in the eUpdate are not active— watch for a separate email that contains resources available and active links all in one handy document.

**Thank You for your Support of our St. Stephen's Ministries ♥**

By Mail | Online thru St Stephen's website | GIVE+Text (Text 844-907-2702) | GivePlus Vanco Mobile App

Connecting to God, each other and the world

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