

Staying Connected

Growing CONNECTIONS

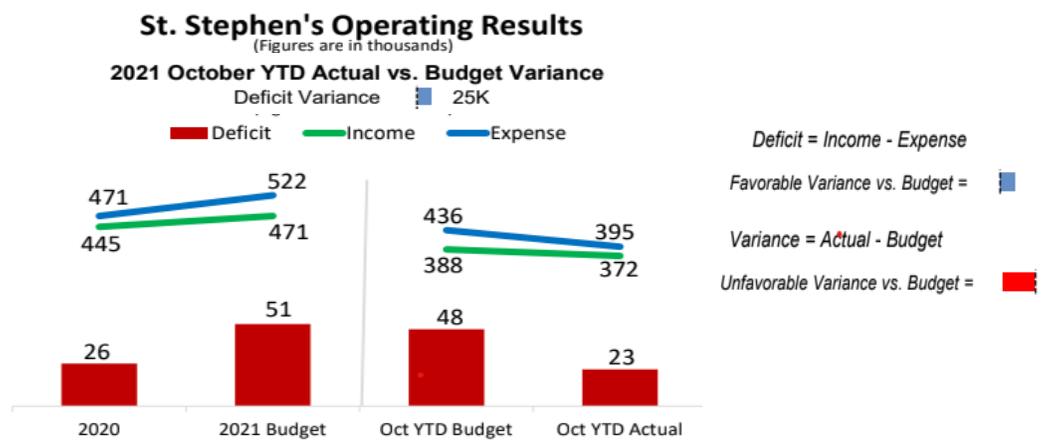


CLOSE THE GAP!

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)

Open Forum on Christian Nationalism with Pastor Tim

For some time now, I have been concerned about the rise of Christian Nationalism in America, which is harmful for our Christian witness as well as our civic life. In recent weeks I have been more diligent in collecting information about this movement and how it is showing up in current events. During today's Open Forum I will be sharing some of what I've been learning and seeing. I hope you will join me for this important conversation! - Pastor Tim



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

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 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
Facebook live stream

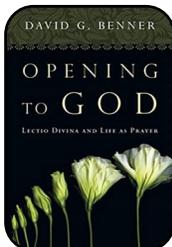
Contemplative Prayer and Study December 8 | 7-8pm

Contemplative Prayer and Study

is offered on the 2nd
and 4th Wednesdays
of the month.

We are currently using the book
"Opening to God: Lectio Divina
and Life as Prayer" by David G.
Benner. During our next gathering,
December 8 we will be focusing on
Chapter 5. **ZOOM ROOM 2 ID#894-
3514-0057 Password 55118 Or Direct
Access: bit.ly/SSLC-Room2**

Prayer has the potential to
transform your life. Try it and see.
You are welcome
to attend any meeting.



Small Group Invitation

**Tim and Janet Gibson are interested
in starting a small group** at
St. Stephen's and are inviting
anyone interested in exploring what
it means to be a part of a small
group to join us on **Sunday January
16 at 4:00 pm in the Church Lounge.**

We will discuss expectations of a
small group, dates and times to
meet, location for meetings,
structure and content for the group.
For example, we could base our
discussions around scripture or a
book we might read together,
always asking the question, how
does faith guide our daily life.
Looking forward to seeing you on
January 16th!

- Tim and Janet Gibson

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. So **you are invited** to attend one or both of the **Focus Group Conversations** we are hosting in December (see below). These conversations will be looking at plans for the first two Ministry Result Areas as follows. 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!



Focus Group QR code

"Connect to Our Neighborhood through Service" Focus Group.
Saturday, December 11, 2021, 10-11:30 am at church.

**"Build and deepen Relationships with
Each Other at St. Stephens" Focus Group.**
Thursday, December 16, 2021, 4:30-6pm am at church.

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)

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



Rest for Your Souls QR code

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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