

Staying Connected

Growing Connections to God, Each Other and the World

Welcome Pastor Scott Jakel—Bridge Pastor from Salem Lutheran Church.

Pastor Scott is here, and Pastor John is at Salem in an exchange of pulpits. St. Stephen's and Salem work together to enhance each other's ministries.

Over the decades we have frequently offered Vacation Bible School together. For almost four years we have shared Faith Formation. Recently men from Salem have begun to attend our Men's Friday breakfast group. **On Tuesday, April 12, at 1:00 p.m. St. Stephen's is invited to Salem for O.W.L.S. (Old Wise Lutherans!)**

We have different strengths and challenges as congregations and we celebrate Christ at work in both our communities. As we are reminded in Psalm 133:1 "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity."



ST STEPHEN'S

Our Journey of Generosity

Well done! As we unanimously decided at our Congregational Meeting on January 30, 2022, the Gift Committee has made their recommendations to the Congregation Council, which approved them Wednesday, March 16, **for a giving total of \$62,163.** While we have so much to celebrate along **our journey of generosity**—and we will share all the details in the coming weeks—**now is the time to respond to the need of the Ukrainians.** St. Stephen's is giving \$10,000 to the ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response. The ELCA has a remarkable reputation and track record in service to those in need.

We invite your individual gifts to be sent to the ELCA. Gift forms are included in today's worship bulletin. **Checks should be written to the Lutheran Disaster Response and can be mailed to: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gifts Processing Center, P.O. Bo 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.** Please write "Eastern Europe Crisis Response" (100% will be used to provide support for people impacted by conflict in this region.) St. Stephen's will also forward your checks.

March is Minnesota FoodShare Month

Neighbors needs our help to provide food support to our community. Join us in the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign and make your donation go further to help meet the increased need for food in our community. Any donation you wish to make, whether food or cash, is welcome, but we would like encourage financial donations. Food shelves have access to food banks and discount purchasing programs, allowing them to get more with financial donations. Checks can be written to St. Stephen's with "MN FoodShare" on the memo line. Thank you for helping to feed hungry people in our community.

Open Forum—Sundays

(10:30-11:20am)

Today's Open Forum— "Let's put the Christianity back into Christian politics"

Robert Vischer, *Dean and Mengler Chair in Law, of the University of St Thomas School of Law and co-author of the new book, "Beyond Imagination?: The January 6 Insurrection"* will speak to us today regarding his article recently published in the *Star Tribune* on December 31—"Let's put the Christianity back into Christian politics" subtitled—"We must be clear about why Christian nationalism distorts our faith and threatens the rule of law." Dean Vischer's article can be found on the *Star Tribune* website.

Next week's Open Forum— "Liberating Spirit"

Let's get to know our friends from Liberating Spirit. Pastor Tim and the folks from Liberating Spirit will share with us how their Congregation was formed, their goals and aspirations. Come and greet our fellow followers of Jesus and partners with him in the work of God in the world.



"Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I may know thee." - Augustine

Explore this insight and others contained in the book *"The Gift of Being Yourself"* by author David Benner. This Zoom class led by Pastor John is on the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of March at 7:30pm, and April and May at 7:00pm. **Zoom meeting ID: 894-3514-0057 Password: 55118.** All are welcome!

COVID—It's been 2 years since we announced that in person worship would be suspended—we thought maybe for a few weeks, little did we know! Our Safety Committee continues to monitor and assess what our best next steps forward will be. The next Committee meeting is Thursday, March 24.

Here are some of the steps we are taking now towards returning to normal ...

- ♥ **We recommend being fully vaccinated—it remains our best line of defense!**
- ♥ **Masks are no longer “expected” at St. Stephen’s—but they are “welcomed”. Please wear them as determined by your own comfort level.**
- ♥ **Food and drink will be served again. Sunday Coffee Hour is back!**
- ♥ **Music can include choirs and woodwinds, though worship leaders will continue to be masked.**

GEMS

There are gems for our lives in Luther's Small Catechism—let's find them together!

from Luther's Small Catechism

Wednesdays in Lent—Worship at 6:30 p.m.

Our ongoing weekly focus schedule is as follows:

March 2-Confession and Forgiveness

James 5:16

March 9-The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:1-17

March 16-The Apostle's Creed

1 Corinthians 15:3-5

March 23-The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:7-12

March 30-Holy Baptism

Romans 6:3-4

April 6-Holy Communion

Matthew 26:26-29

We would like to remind you that each morning in Lent, our Pastors are providing short reflections that we're calling **Morning Moments!** These little videos follow the themes of our Wednesday night worship services, where we are exploring a different part of Luther's Small Catechism each week. There will be seven reflections for each theme, with a new set starting each Thursday morning at 6am.

Please use this link <https://www.facebook.com/sslcwsp/videos> to access the videos on our Facebook page. You may need to scroll down a bit to the "Latest Videos" section if the Morning Moment is not already at the top of the page. Or, if you have a Facebook account and haven't yet, follow St Stephen's Facebook for morning notifications.



12 People! That is the number of people who are considering being part of Faithful Connections. This ministry focus is one way to strengthen how we live together as a community of faith. People will choose one of three ways to make these connections here at St. Stephen's: writing a card, making a phone call or face to face visit. **Training for this ministry will begin April 2 from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.** If you are interested in finding more about this ministry please contact Chris and Linda Becker at beck1230@comcast.net.



Time to Order your Easter Flowers

Yes, it's time to order your Easter flowers for this year's Sanctuary Easter garden. The deadline to submit your order is **Sunday, March 27th**. We have five flower varieties to pick from, the cost of each is \$17. Your plants can be taken home after the Easter worship service. Order forms can be found in your Sunday bulletin, on our website under the resources tab or by using sign-up genius. If you need assistance, please contact the church office.

Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord

We excited to announce that the choir is returning to St. Stephen's! **Our first rehearsal will be Monday, March 21 at 6:30p.m. in the Sanctuary.**



We will plan on singing during the **Easter Festival Service on Sunday, April 17**. In addition, **Sundays, May 8 and June 5**. All are welcome to participate as we rebuild our choir as it is an essential and important element of worship and the music ministry of St. Stephen's.

On the 21st, we will discuss the choir's role in worship, optimal choir rehearsal times and schedule, upcoming repertoire, and planning a Choir Clinic. Hope to see you there. Please contact Bryon Dockter with questions.



**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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