

Vision of St. Stephen

February 2025



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
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2025 The Year of Listening

“Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live...” Isaiah 55:3

Several months ago, our synod began to think about 2025 and a yearly theme. The synod staff decided to focus on the “year of listening”.

Listening is a skill we’re called to use with intentionality. I once told someone close to me—“You’re hearing me, but you’re not listening to me”. This person was clearly hearing my voice but was failing to listen to me as I expressed what I needed and what was important to me at that point in my life.

Focusing in on what someone is saying with their words and what is behind those words and those word choices is fascinating. Deep listening helps us to be present with people—hearing their story and responding with care, concern and occasionally a word of challenge.

As we move through the world, how do we refine our ability to listen—to listen to God, to listen to ourselves, to listen to each other, to listen to our community?

In a world where we often hear each other, but don’t fully listen to each other, would you be interested in working on this skill?

Our synod website has some resources, including a monthly listening guide that centers in on a song, with weekly suggestions to engage the music; a reading plan to hear the whole New Testament in 5 minutes a day, 5 days a week. You’ll find those here at <https://nwos-elca.church/listening/> Our St. Stephen book group is also reading and discussing “I never thought of it that way”, by Monica Guzman, as our February book. Our church council is planning to focus our monthly devotions on this theme.

So, as you hear the sounds of the world around you, from the neighborhood dog barking, to the sound of the furnace kicking on, to the voice of your loved ones speaking, to the voice of God—what do you hear? How are you listening?

God’s peace to you,

Beth Ferne Johnson, pastor

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Spiritual Growth

GATHERING SPACE

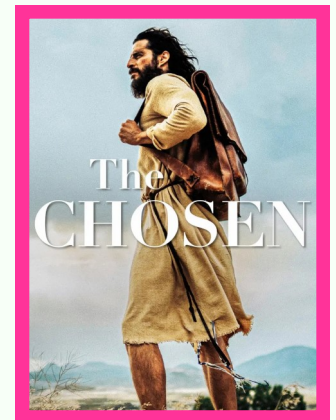
Beginning on February 2nd, Nancy Pfau will be leading us as we study the letters of the Apostle John. The New Testament books of 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John will be our focus for a 6 week period. If you've been thinking about joining a Bible study, you're invited to try this out! We meet at 9:15 on Sundays in the library, right off the narthex. No expertise or prior experience is required!

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Our Wednesday Bible study group is in the last half of 1st Corinthians. Paul is writing to the church in Corinth about the gifts of the spirit that they've been given and offering insight into how they're using these gifts in the congregation. You're invited to join in the discussion on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. We'll likely be moving on to a different topic in March.

"THE CHOSEN" BIBLE STUDY

On Tuesdays in February, you'll find a group of 12 or so folks meeting to watch and discuss episodes from season 2 of the Chosen! This is a series focusing on events from Jesus' life as recorded in the Gospels, and also as imagined by the screen writer. You're invited to join in the viewing and conversation at 6:30 on Tuesdays!



CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

Our annual event celebrates the loving partnership spouses have found together. It provides couples with an opportunity to renew their marriage vows during our worship service. This year, we're opening up the opportunity to renew vows to all of our couples, regardless of how many years you're celebrating. Corsages and a porch delivery of special treats will be shared with those who have celebrated a significant anniversary from Valentine's Day 2024 to now! If you'd like to renew your vows, please sign up on the bulletin board or call Janell and ask her to add your name to the list in the narthex!

If you'd like to help assemble and deliver the packages, please meet here around 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 15!

CATECHISM

Our youth will be meeting on Sunday, February 2nd and 23rd for catechism class after our worship service. We're looking at Luther's explanation of the Apostle's Creed and the 10 commandments. Our next Fun Friday will be on March 7th from 7-10 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE

- Ash Wednesday worship, 12 noon (no music) and 7:00 p.m.
- March 15th—Spiritual Gifts Retreat from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
- Lutheran Ministries of Mercy Annual meeting, March 10, 2:00 p.m. Speak with Pastor Beth if you'd like to RSVP for this report on the work done by Lutheran Home of Mercy, the Filling Home, and Lutheran Social Services.

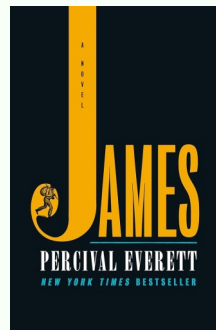
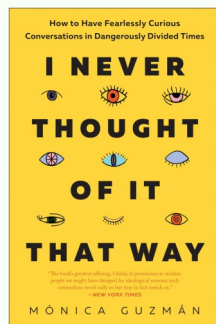
Fun & Fellowship

JOY Lunch

Meeting for lunch on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, the “Just Older Youth” group of women enjoys catching up and exploring area restaurants. Our next lunch will be on Thursday, February 18th. The location will be shared through e-mail and on the Narthex bulletin board.

BOOK GROUP

We have our selections for February and March, so if one sounds particularly appealing and you haven't been part of the conversation, please join us! We typically print off a list of book club discussion questions from the internet and discuss them together. We're meeting on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Here are our upcoming selections: February 27, I never thought of it that way, by Monica Guzman, March 27th, James by Percival Everett.



SERVANT EVENT

We'll be helping deep clean the food pantry at Lutheran Social Services on Saturday, February 22nd from 10 a.m. to 11:30ish. Our presence there has been a great help to the staff at LSS, as they are seeing an increase in our neighbor's requesting assistance from the food pantry. If you'd like to car-pool there, please meet in the church parking lot at 9:30 a.m. The photo on the cover of the newsletter is of our most recent cleaning crew back in November, outside the LSS pantry at 2149 Collingwood Blvd in Toledo.

SANCTUARY CLEANING DAY—MARCH 23!

Our sanctuary needs a little sprucing up before Easter. You're invited to join the crew on Saturday, March 23rd from 10:30 til noonish. On the agenda is to dust the book holders of the sanctuary chairs, remove Christmas eve wax drippings, and give the cloth a quick vacuum. Other jobs are to use Murphy's wood oil on the wood of the altar, baptismal font, and ambo/pulpit as well as general dusting and straightening up.

GODSPELL

"Godspell" will be performed at Epiphany Lutheran from March 28-30 and from April 4-6. Would you like to go as a group to enjoy the show? Look for more info to come soon and sign up on the bulletin board!

Outreach

Are You Ready For Some...Soup?

Our annual SouperBowl Sunday arrives on February 9th as we feast together on your soup creations! This warm event also raises money and donations of canned soup for the Lutheran Social Services food pantry! So, bring in canned soup and add them to the round table in the narthex! We'll also have a soup pot ready to accept monetary donations during our meal together. If you know what soup you're planning to make and bring, please sign up on the narthex bulletin board!

Many thanks to Jackie Cornell for obtaining a Thrivent Action Team to purchase \$250 worth of soup for the pantry!



California Wildfires

Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with local partners to provide needs and recovery assistance to those affected by the wildfires. Please pray for the communities affected as well as and those working to contain the fires and other disaster volunteers. If you would like to give, you can write a check to St. Stephen with California wildfires in the memo line or check out other options online at ELCA.org/wildfires.

Euchre/Puzzle Night

On March 14th, we'll be gathering for euchre at 7:00 p.m. If you're not a euchre player, but love puzzles, we'll have a table devoted to assembling one! If neither of those options appeal to you, bring a board game you love, and we'll try it out. Mark your calendars for another Euchre/puzzle nights on April 11.



Thank You!

The Christmas gifts for our members at home were a big hit! We've received notes, phone calls, and texts of thanks from the recipients! The Scholl's even shared a photo of Peggy opening up her surprise. Thank you for helping make someone's day with your donations for this project!

Nursery Farewell

Thank You Vickie!

Vickie Veitch, our nursery attendant, is stepping away from this position on February 9th. Vickie has served in this capacity for the past 3 years and we're so very thankful for her kind and generous care for our youngest worshippers and their families. Vickie is looking forward to sitting among us in worship—she's missed that opportunity! Thank you!

In Loving Memory



David Elliot Lock was born Feb. 20, 1939, in Erie, Pa. As a child of Salvation Army officer parents, David lived in several locations growing up including Newark, Paterson and Atlantic City, N.J., and Buffalo, N.Y.

David was a talented musician, playing the piano and singing in several choral groups. David used those talents to fulfill his great passion for the theater. David performed many roles in local theater companies but discovered that he loved directing the most. He directed numerous productions for different theater companies in Portland, and mostly in the Lewiston/Auburn area.

David spent many years working at the Poland Spring Inn both at the desk and directing shows performed there. He was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award from Community Little Theater in Lewiston/Auburn.

David was a very friendly and outgoing individual who became well known by many in the Lewiston/Auburn area especially in the many dining establishments that he would frequent.

David is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, John W. and Annette Lock of Buffalo, N.Y.; grandsons Nicholas Lock of Groton, Conn., and Jordan Lock (Anna Lock); and great granddaughter Lucy of Medina, Ohio; niece and nephew Dorothy Kuhl of Greenville, S.C., and John D. Lock of Sylvania, Ohio.

David was predeceased by his brother and sister-in-law Richard and Betty Lock of Sylvania, Ohio, both of whom showed great kindness and love for David and had a very special place in David's heart.

David's funeral was held here at St. Stephen on December 14, 2024.

Church Finances

ONLINE GIVING

For those who are comfortable using technologies to contribute, Vanco services provides us with a smart phone app (Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement) that we can use to make our donations. You can use this app to make a one time gift to St. Stephen or an ongoing gift. If you would prefer online giving without an app, use this link: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z8XP>. If you have any questions please contact the church office!

2024 GIVING STATEMENTS

The year end giving statements will be available for pick up in the Narthex starting on February 9! Please review your statement, and if there are any issues don't hesitate to contact Janell in the office! If you need your statement mailed to you, please contact Janell as well.

Administrative News



LEVEL 1 Roads are hazardous, drive carefully

LEVEL 2 Drive only if necessary

LEVEL 3 Roads closed to non-emergency personnel

WINTER WEATHER

A reminder that if Lucas County happens to be at a Level 3 snow emergency on a Sunday morning, we will not meet for worship. Instead, Pastor Beth will attempt to livestream her sermon on Facebook from home. In case of a Level 1 or 2, we will hold worship and if our tech people can get here, we will livestream as well—but feel free to watch from home! For **non-worship activities**, if Lucas County is at a level 2 or 3, they are cancelled. If a Level 1, use your own personal discretion.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **March 2025** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by February 11.**



THANK YOU FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Thank you so much for all the donations toward Christmas gifts for Pastor Beth, Janell, and Scott! We were able to provide each with a generous end of year 'bonus' in recognition for all that they do throughout the year. *Beth Madden*

Prayer

*Be on your guard;
stand firm in the faith;
be courageous; be strong.
1 Corinthians 16:13*

Heavenly Father, thank You for another day of life. Help me to be vigilant and to stand firm in my faith. I pray that you would give me courage and strength to face whatever comes my way today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

THE CONSECRATED WOMAN.COM

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Tracey—Healing
Wolf—Stomach Cancer
Richard—Healing
Dave—Comfort & Healing
Gary—Stroke & Recovery
Tre—Healing
Laura—Healing & Comfort
Ann—Healing & Comfort
Irina—Healing & Comfort
Steve—Healing & Comfort
Frank—Healing & Comfort
Alice—Comfort & Peace
Joe —Recovery
Diana—Comfort & Answers
Terrie—Healing
Nancy—Healing
Tony—Healing & Comfort
Ali—Guidance & Comfort
Cathy—Healing & Comfort
Larry—Healing & Comfort
Jenny—Healing & Comfort
Bill—Healing & Comfort
John M—Back Surgery & Recovery
CA Wildfire Victims
All victims of trauma and war

Fun

ALL IN GOOD FUN

Is your name Grace?
Beacuse you are
AMAZING!



BIBLE QUIZ

1 Corinthians is the _____ letter Paul wrote to the church in Corinth?

(Answer page 9)

- A. First
- B. Second
- C. Third
- D. Fourth

ARE YOU OKAY?

If you find yourself in need of emergency supplies or in need of someone to talk to, please don't hesitate to call the church office and we will assist you however we can or direct you to resources that may be able to help.

Council

2025 Council Members

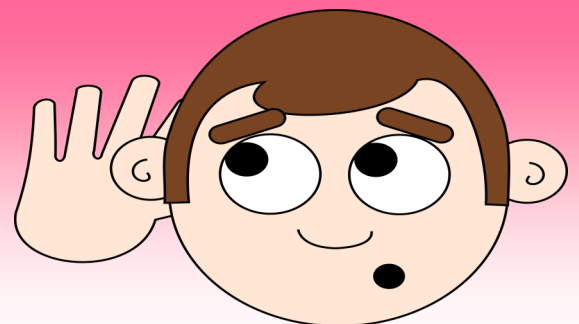
<i>President</i>	Beth Madden
<i>Vice President</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Secretary</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Treasurer</i>	Kathie Tefft

Ministry Liaisons were established as follows:

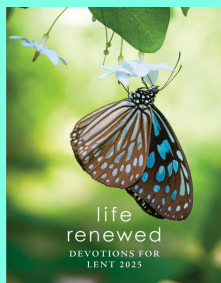
<i>Christian Education</i>	Pastor Beth
<i>Finance</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Prayer, Praise, Worship</i>	Pastor Beth
<i>Property</i>	Tom Schmidt
<i>Staff Support</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Stewardship/Evangelism</i>	Beth Madden
<i>Technology</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Youth & Family Ministry</i>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Social Ministry</i>	Joan Haddox

HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Hearing assistance equipment for up to 8 users available for anyone who needs help hearing the service better. Please ask Jeremy Hopkins or anyone who uses the equipment for assistance.



Steve's Bulletin Board



Please feel free to pick up your Lenten devotionals from the Narthex!

BAG RECYCLING

Recycling Bags- Have you noticed a big box in the narthex for recycling bags? Our local Lion's Club is collecting 500 pounds of plastic bags (many types of plastic bags are accepted: grocery and shopping bags, plastic envelopes from on-line shopping etc.). The bags will be made into a Trex bench (recycled plastic "wood") placed at Sylvania Area Family Services and at the Sight Center. Each bench is made up of 500 pounds of plastic bags!

Did We Miss Your Birthday?

Have we missed your birthday or baptism anniversary? If so, we don't have it in the church database! Please let the church office know, via phone or e-mail, so our records will be complete! Thank you for your help!

Bible Quiz Answer

B. Second

February Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

2/1 Jim Boldt
2/8 Kathie Tefft
2/8 Lynn Tefft
2/19 Amber Mercer
2/22 Richie Johnson

Birthdays

2/2 Mollie McCoy
2/3 Dave Aldrich
2/5 Nancy Pfau
2/19 John Lock
2/23 Tricia Kunkel
2/25 Joan Paxton
2/28 Jeremy Hopkins

February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
2 9:15AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Catechism	3 1:00 Needler's	4 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion 6:30 PM Chosen Study	5 11:00 AM Bible Study	6	7	8 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
9 Super Bowl Sunday 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Soup Lunch After Worship	10	11 6:30 PM Chosen Study	12 11:00 AM Bible Study	13	14	15 9:30 Coffee and Conversation 11:30 Cookie Assembly
16 Celebration of Marriage 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	17 1:00 Needler's 6:00 PM Council Meeting	18 12:00 PM Joy Lunch 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion 6:30 PM Chosen Study	19 11:00 AM Bible Study	20 7:00 Book Group	21	22 10:00 AM LSS Cleaning Day
23 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Catechism	24	25 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion 6:30 PM Chosen Study	26 11:00 AM Bible Study	27 7:00 Book Group	28	