

# Vision of St. Stephen

## October 2024



St. Stephen Lutheran Church  
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This August, we heard the Bible story of the feeding of the 5,000. It is such a beautiful story of God's abundant love and care for God's people. A fascinating details in the story is that **everyone** eats until they are filled and there are multiple baskets full of leftovers. The message is clear. God not only provides, God provides in abundance.

God's abundance isn't about opulence or extravagant wealth. It is about having more than enough for everyone to be cared for - more than enough for everyone to be loved and fed. God's abundance is about creating something beautiful out of nothing (God's specialty) and making a way where no way seemed possible. God's abundance is about bringing life out of death.

The opposite of abundance is scarcity. And scarcity is the message that we get bombarded with every day - *1 day only! Limited time! While supplies last! Or the saying, not enough hours in the day.* Politicians use a scarcity mentality and fear of "other" to polarize groups and pit "us" against "them." The threat is always that "they" will take what "we" need. Scarcity mentality grows from fear of there not being enough to go around—but it also creates it, as people hang on to what they have. It is a cycle of anxiety that makes us close off and protect what's ours, even at the expense of others.

In the midst of all of this fear and anxiety, our biblical witness points us again and again to a different message - the message of God's **abundance**. When we pay attention to God's abundance, what grows within us is not fear but hope. God's abundance leads not to defensiveness and hoarding, but generosity. When we live our lives rooted in God's abundance, we experience God's generosity which allows us to be generous as well. God's generosity allows us to be generous with our kindness, compassion, forgiveness, giving people the benefit of the doubt, and welcoming our neighbor. God's generosity allows us to be generous with who we are and what we have, sharing our time, our abilities, and our resources.

Biblical scholar Karoline Lewis writes, "This is the nature of abundance - it cannot NOT overflow." When we pay attention to God's abundance, when we see it in our lives, recognize and give thanks for it, it naturally overflows in how we treat one another, how we share ourselves and whatever we have to give.

We live in anxious times, and we are surrounded by messages of scarcity and fear every day. I invite you to ground yourself in the hope-filled promise of God's abundance. Practice looking for it... Where do you see God at work in your life, providing and caring for you? Where do you see God abundantly providing for creation? An easy way to start this practice is making a list of things you are grateful for - thank God for the sunshine, for the kind words of a stranger, or the warm hug of a family or friend. Thank God for the beautiful color green in the tree outside your window, the time to sit and listen to your favorite song, or the delicious meal someone prepared for you (share the love and thank the person who cooked it!).

However big or small, taking the time to list the various and **abundant** gifts in our life reminds us of all the ways God cares for us. It helps to fill us up with joy and gratitude until we can't help but overflow.

Peace, Pastor Beth - large portions of this article were written by Pastor Heather Grell, Omaha, NE

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# Spiritual Growth

## **QUILT BLESSING**

Don't miss seeing the beautiful colors and patterns of the quilts that our members have been making for Lutheran World Relief. On Sunday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, we will bless them and send them on their journey, by way of Baltimore, MD and then the world! This year our group finished 46 quilts. The shipping cost is \$3 a quilt, so if you'd like to help send them on their way, please mark LWR on your check or (if paying with cash) on a giving envelope before putting that in our narthex offering box.

## **WORSHIP**

We will welcome Deacon Jennifer Heinze to lead us in worship on Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, while Pastor Beth is on vacation. Thank you, Jennifer, for being here!

## **WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Ever disagree with a close friend? The apostle Paul is in a bit of a pickle, as he writes the letters to the Corinthians—they're having some disagreements about how best to follow Jesus—and Paul is offering some "best practices" for them to follow. Does Paul's advice have things to say to us in our own day? Come and see! In October, the Wednesday Bible study begins studying 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. You're welcome to join in the 11:00 a.m. discussion! No prior experience is needed.

## **CATECHISM**

Our catechism classes for junior high-early high school youth have been scheduled! This year, our 6 young people will be focusing on Luther's Small catechism and how Luther's teachings relate to our faith. In October we'll be meeting on Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> for a 2 hour session.

## **GATHERING SPACE**

Our Sunday morning study ends its topic about Sabbath rest on October 6<sup>th</sup>. Starting the next week, Dave Haddix will be leading a discussion on "Israel's Royal Family—David, Solomon and beyond". You are welcome to join this time of learning and discussion on Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. We meet in the large classroom to the north of our fellowship hall.

## **"THE CHOSEN" BIBLE STUDY**

We have had a group of 12-16 people gathering on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m. We've been watching an episode from season 1 of The Chosen, then discussing what we've just seen. We'll likely conclude this watch party on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. It's not too late to join in, though—so feel free to drop in and see what you think. Many thanks to Jamile Shibley for leading our discussion!

## **NOTICE OF OUR ANNUAL MEETING**

Our annual meeting of the congregation will follow our 10:30 AM worship service on Sunday November 10 (around 11:30 AM). This is a chance to see the ministries we've been involved with during the past year! Please plan to stay after the meeting for our chili cook off and fellowship.

## **MATCHING NEEDS TO VOUNTEERS**

With the cooler weather coming soon, are you finding that you need assistance with some things at home? Do you need help changing furnace filters, or putting your summer lawn furniture in storage for winter? Do you need help pulling your Christmas decorations out? Do you need help understanding your medical bills? There are folks here at St. Stephen to help! If you need assistance with anything, let Pastor Beth know, or call Janell and let her know. Likewise, if you would be willing to assist our members and friends who need help, let Pastor Beth know. Many hands make light work!

# Activities

## **MONTHLY FELLOWSHIP MEAL**

Looking for some fellowship midweek? Come and join the Fellowship Meal on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month—In October, that's October 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. We'll have soup and bread, provided by Vickie Veitch, and conversation around a question everybody can talk about—and there are no wrong answers! Come and break bread together!

## **SOUP POTLUCK**

It's Fall, and a warm bowl of soup is starting to sound really good! Looking to try out some new recipes or to share a favorite one of your own? Well, you're in luck, because we're having a soup potluck on Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup> right after worship. There's a signup sheet on the bulletin board—so let us know what you're planning to bring and we'll see you for lunch then!

## **JOY CLUB**

Our JOY club will be lunching at The Grape Leaf, 909 S. McCord Rd, Holland on Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. Please sign up on the narthex bulletin board if you'd like to come to our 12 noon lunch.

## **FUN FRIDAY**

Our Youth will be having an evening of crafts, snacks, and board games on Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. If you'd like to provide a snack for the kids, please speak with Pastor Beth. The event runs from 7-10 p.m.

## **BOOK GROUP**

Have you heard about The Women by Kristin Hannah? If you'd like to join in a discussion of this story that follows women nurses in the Vietnam war and after, please mark your calendar for Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. If you'd like to read ahead, our November book will be The Personal Librarian, about the life of Bella da Costa Greene, librarian to J.P. Morgan.

## **SYLVANIA FAMILY SERVICES HOLIDAY FAMILIES**

Are you interested in helping local families this holiday season? Following tradition, St Stephen has the opportunity to assist families with Thanksgiving and Christmas meals and Christmas gifts. We will not be collecting gift cards this year, instead, we will be having a special collection from October 6- November 10 to donate money for SAFS. SAFS will then purchase the gift cards for families. Please leave your offering in the collection box by using the envelopes provided or simply mark SAFS on your check memo. Please make checks out to St Stephen. Your generous offerings are appreciated.

Below describes how the donations will be used.

\$25 per person for Thanksgiving meal

\$25 per person for Christmas meal

\$50 per person for Christmas gifts

## **BREAD OF LIFE COLLECTION**

Our August Bread of Life collection for LSS food pantry generated the following: 11 cake/brownie mixes, 11 corn bread mixes, 6 pancake mixes, 4 large boxes of individually packaged muffin mix, 13 boxes of crackers, 1 box of oatmeal. We collected lots of granola bars---we had a total of 366 individual packages of granola bars! Thank you for your donations! And thank you to Dave and Kathy Aldrich who took everything down to the food pantry!

# Outreach

## Pet Blessing

Our annual Pet Blessing will be held on Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. We'll have the official blessing of the pets offered at 12 noon, 12:30, and 1:00 p.m. We'll have a metal tag that can be added to your pet's collar, as well as a treat for the humans! During these 90 minutes, you can meet the pets available for adoption from Best Friends Forever Rescue as well!



## Euchre for ALS

Would you like to play euchre and support a good cause? Ruth Moeller is hosting a euchre party for ALS on October 17th from 1-4 here at St. Stephen. Please contact her before October 14th to RSVP. Snacks and prizes will be provided as part of this event to raise money to benefit Paul's Crew, a team for the Walk to Defeat ALS fundraiser supporting the ALS association that serves Northern Ohio.



## LSS Food Pantry Volunteer Day

Our originally scheduled day to clean and organize at LSS's food pantry had to be changed because of a scheduling conflict with the LSS coordinator. However, we've rescheduled this event for November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10-11:30ish at their location, 2149 Collingwood Blvd, Toledo!



## Isaiah 117

Lucas County is embarking on a new program that changes the way foster care begins. This program is called Isaiah 117, based on Isaiah 1:17. When kids are removed from their homes out of concern for their welfare, they typically sit in the child welfare services office waiting for a placement. This wait can be long and uncomfortable in an office space. Isaiah 117 envisions having a house setting in which these children could wait, that is full of toys, clean clothes, the opportunity to get cleaned up, and to have a good meal—and if things take a while—a cozy bed to sleep in. Would you like to learn more about this program? St. Stephen is hosting a table of 8 (at no cost to us) on October 24<sup>th</sup> from 12-1:00 p.m. at The Stables at Wheeler Farms in Whitehouse. If you'd like to be part of this group of 8, please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex or call the church office to have Janell do that for you.

# Prairie Update

We were astonished to see our prairie erupt into a plethora of yellow tickweed sunflower plants in the last few weeks! The plants are about 7 feet tall and are visible from Erie Street as people drive by. It's simply amazing—and unexpected. Our seed mixture purchased from Ohio Prairie Nursery contained 8% tickweed sunflower—so there were likely many seeds laying dormant in the soil. Once they were disturbed by the ground

preparation, they woke up, and my did they bloom! The pollinators are loving them! However, we intended this to be a waist-high prairie, without the height it currently has. Our prairie consultant, Zack Wertz, suggests that we cut the prairie back, keeping it at about a foot high, to encourage the growth of the other plant varieties, before the tickweed plant goes to seed. He'll be here doing that in early October. So next year, we'll likely have some tickweed sunflowers, but not as many as we had this year.

Once the prairie is cut back, we'll be installing a sign for it. Our sign is currently on display in the narthex—it was created by Gary Harrell, a former student of Larry Golba. This fall, we hope to be rehabbing the donated benches and table—getting them ready to be placed along a path in the prairie. If you're interested in joining this committee, please speak with Pastor Beth.



## Administrative News

### ANNUAL REPORT

We are beginning work on the annual report. If you have any articles or pictures you would like to include, please e-mail or call the office!

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **November 2023** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by October 8**



# Prayer

## OCTOBER HARVEST PRAYER

Dear God,

Each season brings something new for  
us to see and enjoy,

With sunny days and rainy days,  
our crops grow larger,

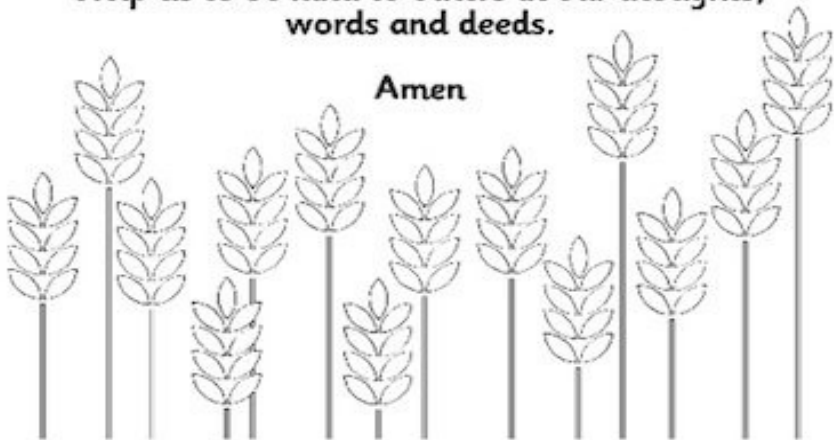
Fruit and vegetables ripen, ready for us to harvest.

Thank you for all of the food we have to eat,

Let us remember people who may  
not have enough.

Help us to be kind to others in our thoughts,  
words and deeds.

Amen



## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Tracey—Healing

Wolf—Stomach Cancer

Richard—Healing

Dave—Comfort & Healing

Lisa—Peace

Jessica—Answers & Healing

Gary—Stroke & Recovery

Tre—Healing

Laura—Healing & Comfort

Noah—Recovery & Healing

Judie—Healing

Ann—Healing & Comfort

Irina—Healing & Comfort

Steve—Healing & Comfort

Frank—Healing & Comfort

Alice—Comfort & Peace

Joe Recovery—Recovery

Carrie—Healing

Diana—Comfort & Answers

Terrie—Healing

Judie—Comfort & Healing

Nancy—Healing

Tony—Healing & Comfort

Ali—Guidance & Comfort

Hurricane Helene Vicimts

All victims of trauma and war

# Fun

## ALL IN GOOD FUN



## BIBLE QUIZ

The Reformation helped to spread Lutheranism and what else?

(Answer page 7)

- A. The Plague
- B. Literacy
- C. Catholicism
- D. German Cuisine

## 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

## 2024 Council Members

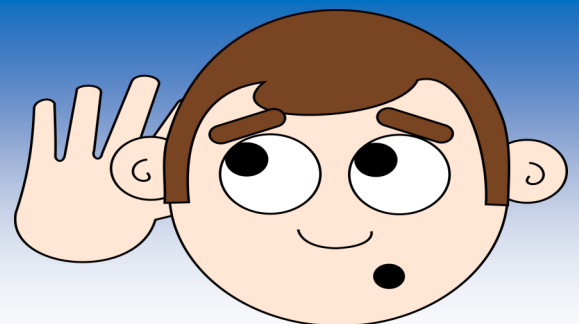
<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Secretary</i>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Treasurer</i>	Kathie Tefft

## 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 &amp; 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

**Mark your calendar!**  
Nov. 10—Annual Meeting  
& Chili Cook Off  
Dec. 6—Faith & Art at  
TMA @ 6:30

Congratulations to Preston and Alicia Hendricks  
who got married September 14!



**Updated Photo Directory!**  
We are working on an updated photo directory to be ready before the annual meeting! If you have a photo you would like used or any updated information please call or e-mail the office!

Bible Quiz Answer:

B. Literacy

## October Celebrations

### Baptismal Birthdays

10/2 Carol Haddix  
10/11 Megan Cook  
10/14 Evin McCoy  
10/21 Kathy Ziegler  
10/23 Wendy Staup  
10/25 Eli Ballard

### Birthdays

10/12 Angela McCoy  
10/17 Tom Schmidt  
10/20 Tina Williams  
10/28 Lin McKelvey  
10/29 Kristin Huffman

### Anniversaries

10/3 D&J Paxton  
10/4 R&C Schuppenies  
10/16 D&W Staup  
10/20 D&B Davis



# October 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> 3:00 PM Walk-Up Communion 6:30 PM "The Chosen" Study	<b>2</b> 11:00 AM Bible Study	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
<b>6</b> <b>Quilt Dedication</b> 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship Catechism	<b>7</b> 1:00 PM Needler's	<b>8</b> <b>Newsletter Deadline</b> 3:00 PM Walk-Up Communion 6:30 PM "The Chosen" Study	<b>9</b> 11:00 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Fellowship Meal	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
<b>13</b> 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 PM Soup Potluck	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 12 PM JOY Club 6:30 PM "The Chosen" Study	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 1:00 PM Euchre for ALS	<b>18</b> 7:00 PM Fun Friday	<b>19</b> 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
<b>Pastor Beth Vacation</b>						
<b>20</b> 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship	<b>21</b> 1:00 PM Needler's  6:00 PM Council Meeting	<b>22</b> 3:00 PM Walk-Up Communion 6:30 PM "The Chosen" Study	<b>23</b> 11:00 AM Bible Study	<b>24</b> 12:00 PM Isaiah Lunch 7:00 PM Book Club	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation 12:00 PM Pet Blessing
<b>27</b> 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship	<b>28</b> LWR Quilting	<b>29</b> 6:15 PM HOA Rental	<b>30</b> 11:00 AM Bible Study	<b>31</b> <b>Reformation Day</b>		