

# Vision of St. Stephen

## August 2024



St. Stephen Lutheran Church  
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Be Curious. Ask Questions.

Did you know that in the gospels Jesus asks over 300 questions? Sometimes he posed questions as a teacher, sometimes he was a curious listener. But either way, that's quite a few questions!

Martin Luther in his Small Catechism discussions used the question, "What does this mean?" as he helped shape the conversation between portions of the 10 commandments and his explanations of them. I am grateful for this. This, Luther's best question, gives us permission to ask questions as well.

I think that curiosity is a very important piece to how we look at the world around us. Curiosity helps us to explore everything—from relationships with other people to the habits of squirrels.

The odd thing about Christian churches is that sometimes they have been accused of asking people to stop asking questions, to check their brain at the door. Some churches see questioning as a dangerous sign that your faith is shaky. I think that's the furthest thing from the truth.

Being curious is a sign of wanting a deeper, stronger faith. Asking questions is a big part of how we grow and figure out what we believe about God. So, bring them on!

This month and next, we're expanding our opportunities to learn as we offer more opportunities for Bible studies. You're invited and encouraged to participate!

So, at the start of this new school year, as you see sales for pencils, crayons, and rulers—pause—and no matter your age, give thanks for the reminder to be curious, ask questions, and keep learning!

God's peace,  
*Pastor Beth*

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# Spiritual Growth

## Wednesday Bible Study

Our 11:00 a.m. Bible study of the apocryphal book of Judith continues, likely through August 7<sup>th</sup>. We'll be picking up again with a new topic on August 28<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned to our This Week bulletin insert for the topic as we get closer to the end of the month. New participants are always welcome to this group that has interesting discussions about faith and life.

## JOY Luncheon

Would you enjoy a lunch out with other women? Our JOY club will be trying a new restaurant, Olive's on Main, 5629 Main street, Sylvania, on Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at noon. If you'd like to go, please sign up on the bulletin board or call the church office and ask Janell to add you to the list!

## "The Chosen" Bible Study

Have you heard of "The Chosen" TV series? It is a "groundbreaking historical drama based on the life of Jesus Christ, seen through the eyes of those who knew him". We'll be offering an 7 week opportunity to watch an episode of the series together and then have a discussion about it. Our discussions will be led by Jamile Shibley, a friend and former co-worker of Marilyn Scuralli's. Our first session will be on September 10<sup>th</sup> and will be from 6:30-8:00 p.m. We'll be meeting in the Gathering Space classroom off the fellowship hall, so you're invited to enter the building through our outside fellowship hall door. We hope to see you there as we think about Jesus's life and ministry together.



## Gathering Space

Gathering Space, our Sunday morning time of learning, will begin again on September 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:15 a.m. Look for more information to come in our September newsletter.

## Book Club

Book club is still meeting on the 4th Thursday of each month at 7 PM! Here are the books chosen for the coming months:

September: *Becoming Madam Secretary* by Stephanie Dray

October: *The Women* by Kristin Hannah

November: *Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict

## Lutheranism 101

Coming later this fall, we'll also be having a Bible study that focuses in on aspects of the Lutheran faith. Whether you're new or seeking to brush up on your knowledge, you are welcome to join in this conversation!

# Why Attend Spiritual Growth Sessions?

*A while ago, Pastor Beth asked some of the regular Wednesday morning Bible study participants to answer that question. Here's what Nancy Pfau wrote:*

Why do I attend Bible study? I have always enjoyed learning and I love anything history. I guess that's why my favorite Biblical books are Genesis and Exodus. In this busy, noisy, messy world we live in we often forget that God created us to thrive in truth and peace. We need to be intentional about scheduling time that brings some quiet and peace and teaches how to maintain this concept. The New Testament teaches us who Jesus interacted with others, what He taught, how He loved; the Old Testament teaches us God's relationship and covenant with his people. How easily we forget these stories! Bible study can be a reminder of this right along with worship services, prayers, and hymns. In addition, Bible study offers us social time with others, who are also challenged by life's demands—we share ideas, tell our stories, and reaffirm God's presence in our lives. I will honestly admit that I often leave with more questions than answers, but those questions are what keep me returning each week. In the words of Romans 15:4, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope".

## Youth & Family

### Vacation Bible School

St. Stephen will be holding a mini-VBS this year for an hour on Thursdays from 11-12. Our first session, on August 1st, will focus on the story of Jesus stilling the storm. We'll think together about how Jesus helps us through the good and bad events of our own lives, promising to be with us always. Our final session will be on August 8<sup>th</sup>. At that session, we'll look at Jesus' feeding of the 5,000. Students aged 4-10 are invited to participate!

### Catechism Resumes

Our Catechism classes for our junior high aged students will be resuming this fall, as we look at Jesus's life and also Luther's Small Catechism! If you or someone you know would like to participate, please let Pastor Beth know. Parents of current students should be expecting an email shortly to arrange our fall schedule.

# Outreach

## Prayer Shawls

Our needler group has been crocheting away, creating prayer shawls for you or for someone you know. If you're aware of someone who is living with a chronic condition, please consider giving them a prayer shawl. You'll find them on the table outside of Pastor Beth's office. The prayer shawl has an attached paper that explains this gift in more detail.



## Baseball Game

Would you like to go out to a ballgame? Then reserve Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>! If we can get 15+ people to go, the tickets are only \$14. The game starts at 5:05! Please sign up on the bulletin board or call our secretary to add you to the list!

## "Bread Drive" for Lutheran Social Services

In August our gospel texts focus in on Jesus being the "bread of life". We're collecting "bread" items for the LSS pantry from now through the end of August. You're invited to bring in donations of crackers, granola bars, cake mixes, cornbread mixes, etc. as we celebrate Jesus as the bread of life! (Unfortunately, we can't gather actual loaves of bread, because they are not shelf-stable in our time frame).



## Church Picnic

We're having an indoor picnic after worship on August 25<sup>th</sup>! Lin McKelvey is using a Thrivent Action Team to help with the picnic, so everything will be provided, just come and enjoy! At our worship on the 25<sup>th</sup>, you'll find a snazzy new St. Stephen magnet in your bulletin—actually there will be 2—one for you to hang on your fridge and another for you to share with a friend—inviting them to our Back to Church worship on September 15<sup>th</sup>. We'll be having coffee and pastries before and after worship that day, with time for people to connect as the summer draws to a close.





# Volunteer Opportunities

## Sunday Streaming

Have you enjoyed worshipping by watching our livestream? Would you like to learn how to do that to help others when they're sick or away on vacation? We're looking for 1-2 people to help with our weekly worship streaming. This may seem very complicated, but Tom Deanglo and Jake Bogdan have simplified it to pushing just a few buttons! If you're interested or if you'd like to see how it works, please speak with Pastor Beth, Tom, or Jake—or sit by the computer in the back on Sunday for a closer look.

## Welcome Committee

We'd like to send out a postcard to new home buyers in our Sylvania zipcode, welcoming them to the area and inviting them to visit our faith community. Would you like to join a committee to send out these postcards monthly? Once we're organized, this can be done from home at your leisure and we'll provide the needed supplies. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you're interested.

## Toledo Pride

If you're interested in walking in the Toledo Pride parade with members and friends of 30 local congregations, please let Pastor Beth know! The parade begins at 12 noon on Saturday, August 24th.



# Thank You!



## New Tables

Darrell Staup has created the little wooden tables in the seating area of our narthex. They're a perfect spot for a cup of coffee or a waterbottle during a conversation by our windows on Erie Street. Thanks, Darrell!

# LSS PANTRY PROJECT



Our first servant event at the LSS food pantry was so well received, both by LSS and by those on our cleaning crew, that we will be doing it again. Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:30 a.m. As the date gets closer, we'll find out exactly what they need us to do, but another deep clean of the food pantry facility is likely to be needed.



The Food pantry at Lutheran Social Services is looking for 2-3 people to volunteer there once or twice a month, typically in the morning. What would be involved? Driving their van to a food distribution location (ie Seagate), loading items into the LSS van, driving it to LSS, and helping to load it onto carts and take it into the food pantry. The LSS staff would work around your schedule. If you have questions about this opportunity, please check with Pastor Beth, Steve Ziegler, and Doug Paxton. It's a great opportunity to help our neighbors in a behind the scenes way. If you're considering it, please let Pastor Beth know and she can connect you with the LSS food pantry staff.



# Prairie Update



Our Prairie is really growing well, especially given this is its first summer! Look for a welcoming sign to be added soon! We have had some benches and small tables donated, too, so we'll be incorporating them into a path through the prairie sometime soon.



# Church Finances

## FINANCE UPDATE FROM MARILYN SCURALLI

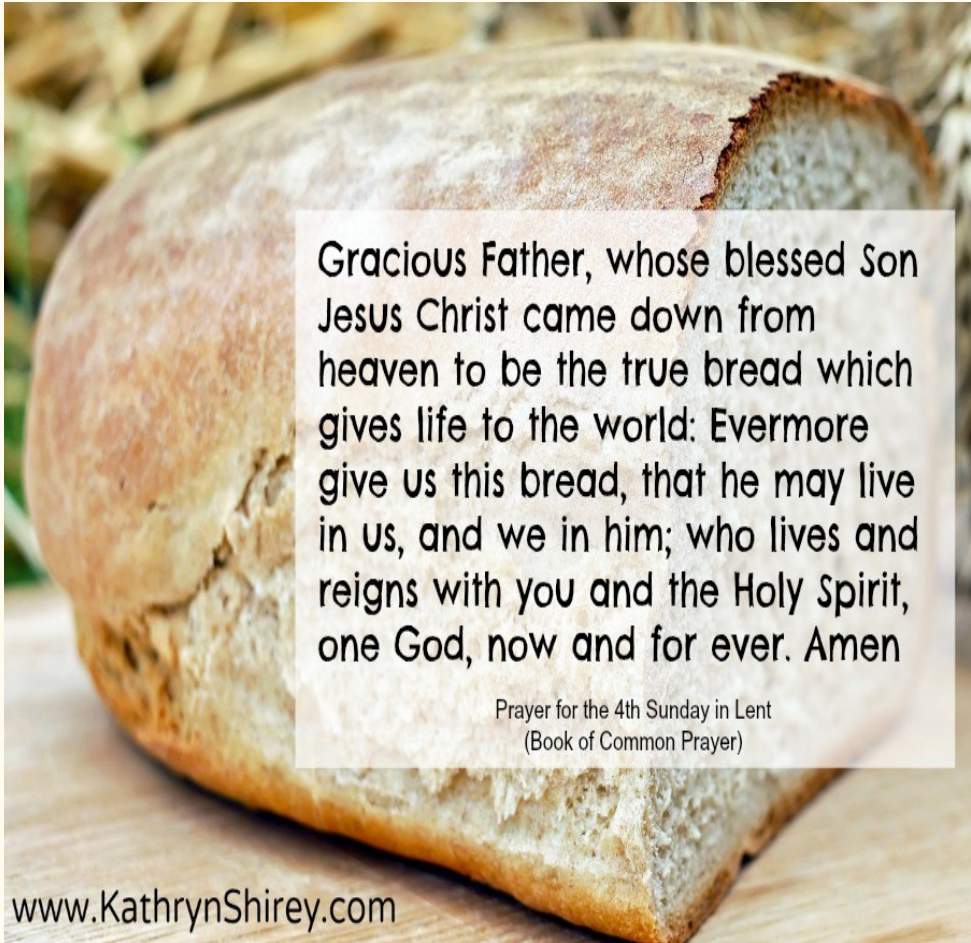
Finance Update – at our annual meeting last November, we raised the concern of finances. I wanted to provide an update on our status. As of the end of June we have rec'd a total income of \$100,695. Our expenses during this same time have been \$105,233. Below is a snapshot of finances over the past number of months.

	<u>Jan/23</u>	<u>Jan/24</u>	<u>Mar/24</u>	<u>Jun/24</u>
General Checking	\$ 20,518.23	16,539.19	22,199.29	12,141.55
General Savings	\$ 19,377.78	19,881.09	19,883.57	19,886.05
Building Savings	\$ 18,345.75	22,928.45	23,059.87	23,191.54
Mission Scholarship	\$ 15,992.52	16,064.37	16,188.92	16,317.55
Mission Scholarship/LT	\$ 15,202.66	15,392.66	15,440.40	15,440.40
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 89,437.03</b>	<b>90,194.15</b>	<b>96,437.82</b>	<b>86,977.90</b>

We have seen a slight drop in giving the past couple of months but are now receiving an increase in rent from Little Miracles beginning in July which is helping to offset some of this. We want to thank everyone for your continued support of St Stephen and our ministries. Council will continue to monitor this monthly and provide an overall view at our annual meeting in November.



# Prayer



## 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—Upcoming Surgery  
Clarke Family—Comfort  
Mason Family—Comfort  
Judie—Healing  
All victims of trauma and war

# All In Good Fun

† TOMICS by Tom Gould

Exodus 16:13-16





# Steve's Bulletin Board

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **September 2022** Newsletter please have all your items submitted by **August 13.**

## Pastor Beth's Vacation

Pastor Beth will be on vacation from August 12-23rd. If you are in need of pastoral care during this time, please contact the church office or Marilyn Scuralli. They will help arrange a visit with a local pastor!

## Congratulations to Tristan and Heather Bonde!



# August Celebrations

## Baptismal Birthdays

8/1 Mollie McCoy  
8/7 Steve Ziegler  
8/15 Karen Bogdan

## Birthdays

8/2 Kristi Shepler  
8/4 Niel Johnson  
8/5 Julie Dangelo  
8/6 Kathie Tefft  
8/8 Reagan Fox  
8/9 Amelia Huddleston  
8/10 Marsha Grouls  
8/10 Bill Markin  
8/16 Marty McKelvey  
8/20 Eli Ballard  
8/22 Sue Marvin  
8/27 Wendy Staup  
8/28 Jalen Ballard  
8/30 Jake Bogdan  
8/31 Ashley Huffman

## Anniversaries

8/2 D&K Aldrich  
8/5 J&L Boldt  
8/21 D&C Haddix  
8/22 L&L Golba  
8/25 H&P Hoehing  
8/27 J&L Hopkins  
8/29 T&N Pfau

## 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>	
<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.

# August 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 11:00 AM VBS	2	3 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation 12PM Memorial Service
4 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship	5 1:00 PM Knit/ Crochet Group	6 1:00 PM Com- munion	7 11:00 AM Judith Study	8 11:00 AM VBS	9	10 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
11 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship	12	13 Newsletter Deadline	14	15	16	17 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
<b>Pastor Beth on Vacation</b>						
18 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship	19 1:00 PM Knit/ Crochet Group	20 12:00 PM JOY Club 6:00 PM Coun- cil Meeting	21	22	23	24 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation 12PM Toledo Pride
<b>Pastor Beth on Vacation</b>						
25 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship 11:30 AM Church Picnic	26 LWR Quilting	27 3:00 PM Com- munion	28 11:00 AM Bible Study	29	30	31