

Vision of St. Stephen

November 2024



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
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In our Wednesday Bible study this week, we got “off the topic”. While looking at 1 Corinthians 3:2, where Paul writes, “I fed you (members of the church in Corinth) with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food”, we began talking about how participants have grown in their journey as a Christian.

One of the growth areas was in their understanding of prayer.

Paul’s critique of the church in Corinth also applies to us, today. When we first learn to pray, we often approach God as if (in the words of the cartoon Calvin and Hobbes), God is a cosmic Santa Claus—and if we ask hard enough, God will jump through hoops and do what we ask God to do.

Praying for something over and over again (and not getting the result we think we want) can become discouraging. We begin to wonder if God is listening, if God is truly there. Why are we not getting the results we’re praying for?

But hopefully, as we mature in faith, we realize that God doesn’t always just do whatever we ask, whenever we ask it. (If so, that would mean that we control God). God sometimes says, “Yes”, “No”, “not now”, or “not as you’re imagining it” to our prayers.

Since so much of our life is reciprocal (like you will get an A if you demonstrate you know xyz – or you got me a Christmas gift so I need to get you one), we sometimes think this is the way God works as well. We think that if I am a good follower of Christ, then God should do (fill in the blank) for me.

But God doesn’t choose to work this way. God’s ways are not our human ways.

Instead, God acts as God wishes. And sometimes, its only years and years later that we realize God did answer our prayer—just in an unexpected way—and in some ways that this was even better than anything we could have imagined. And in response to this unending, inexplicable grace of God, we stand in awe and gratitude.

So in this season of thanksgiving, what are some of the prayers you had made that God has granted, just as you asked? And what prayers has God answered in a different way that you ever dreamed? What prayers are you continuing to pray, waiting to hear from God?

Peace on our journey together
Pastor Beth

November Contents

Spiritual Growth	2
Advent & Christmas	3
Activities	4
Outreach	5
New Members	6
Administrative News	6
Prayer	7
Fun	7
Council	8
Steve’s Bulletin Board	9
Celebrations	9
Calendar	10

Spiritual Growth

GATHERING SPACE

Dave Haddix is leading us as we look at what happens to the Jewish people as they separate into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, after the reign of King Solomon. You're invited to dive into this interesting period of God's people, as they struggle with juggling faithfulness to God and the problems of being a little country in amongst empires. Gathering Space meets each Sunday at 9:15 a.m. in the large room to the north of the fellowship hall.



ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

On November 3rd, during our worship service, we'll be reading the names of those who have died in the faith before us. If you have a name of someone you'd like to add to our Book of the Dead, please contact Janell in the church office to have her add the name or come to worship that day and write in the person's name yourself. As we do this, we give thanks to God for these people who have made an impact in our lives.

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Our look at the early church in the city of Corinth continues each Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. Paul has heard that this congregation is struggling with several issues—including welcoming new folks, how to use the gifts of the spirit, and sharing meals together. If you had been there, how would you hear his advice? No prior experience is needed to join this group!

"THE CHOSEN" BIBLE STUDY

Our Bible study focusing on "The Chosen" concluded our viewing and discussion of season 1 on October 29th. Look for this group to restart with Season 2 in January 2025.

YOUTH CATECHSIM

Our catechism class will be meeting twice in November as they study Luther's Small catechism together. On Sunday, November 3rd, we meet right after worship; on Sunday, November 10, we meet at 4:30 p.m.

YOUTH FUN FRIDAY

Our youth will be gathering for a Fun Friday evening on Friday, November 22nd, with crafts, games and a movie. If you'd like to contribute a snack to share, please let Pastor Beth know. The event is from 7-10 p.m.

Advent & Christmas

ADVENT

The First Sunday in Advent is December 1st, also the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend. While you're visiting with family and friends, why not encourage families to celebrate the Advent season together? Pastor Beth will have a display of Advent resources (devotional books for families, open the door calendars, etc.) beginning November 17th—Look them over and take something with you to share with other family members, helping them to focus their December activities on preparing for Jesus' birthday!

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

Sue Kahl is using a Thrivent grant to purchase Christmas flowers, which will then be distributed to our members at home. If you'd like to have a loved one recognized in the Christmas eve bulletin, you're invited to "pay" for the flowers by bringing in a nonperishable food item for the LSS food pantry. Look for the box in the narthex after November 1st where you can fill out a form noting that this is given "in memory/in honor of" people. Any funds remaining from the Thrivent grant will be used to purchase additional food for LSS. Please bring in all contributions by December 15th.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR OUR MEMBERS AT HOME

Would you like to provide some practical gifts for our members at home or in nursing care centers? We'll be collecting lip balms, non-scented lotions, tissues, sanitizers, large print activity books, socks, and sugar-free hard candy beginning after Thanksgiving through Saturday, December 14th. We'll assemble these care packages and deliver them to folks before Christmas. Any extra items will be shared with Salem Lutheran's personal needs pantry! Thank you for your generosity at this special time of year.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

We'll be gathering for worship on Christmas Eve, a Tuesday this year, at 4 & 7 PM. Please mark your calendar now as the season gets closer!



Activities

ORGANIZE LSS FOOD PANTRY

We'll be providing a deep clean to the Lutheran Social Services Food pantry on Saturday, November 2nd from 10-11:30ish a.m. At our last event, we attacked cobwebs, washed down shelving units and freezers, washed off chairs and waiting room furniture, and unpacked pallets of food and arranged them on shelves. If you'd like to help, you're welcome to meet at LSS—2149 Collingwood Blvd, Toledo or carpool from the church, leaving here at 9:30 a.m. All cleaning supplies are provided for us.

THE NEEDLER'S

Our group of crocheters meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 1:00, for conversation as we work on individual projects. If you'd like to join in (with crocheting or another craft project) please do!

MONTHLY FELLOWSHIP MEAL

Our monthly fellowship meal will be at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 13th. In these darkening days, if you need a ride, please don't hesitate to touch base with Pastor Beth to arrange one. We'll have a sign up sheet on the narthex bulletin board, so please sign up

ANNUAL MEETING

St. Stephen will be having our annual meeting on Sunday, November 10th after our 10:30 worship service. At this meeting, we will be sharing our current financial situation and celebrating the things we've done during the past year. We'll be voting to approve our 2024 budget and voting on council members. After our meeting, we'll adjourn to the fellowship hall for a Chili cook-off! If you have a great chili recipe, bring it in and we'll give it a taste! Bragging rights will go to the top 3 ranked chili's! We have a sign up sheet in the narthex for chili's and other food items.

Also on November 10th we'll be having a special offering for Isaiah 117 project, changing the way kids enter into foster care. You're invited to bring \$1 per person—we're participating in this \$1 fundraiser with Lutheran churches around the Toledo area—so together we're hoping to raise a meaningful gift to this program as it begins to be organized.

JOY CLUB

On Tuesday, November 19th, JOY club will be having lunch at Rose Thai (5333 Monroe St, in the Hobby Lobby plaza)

BOOK GROUP

Our book group will be reading The Personal Librarian for November 21st at 7:00 p.m. We'll be meeting again in January with a conversation about the book, "My Brilliant Friend" by Elena Ferrante.

Outreach

Christmas Cookies

Is your kitchen going to be filled with the delicious smells of baking cookies? Would you like to join a cookie exchange? We're planning to have one on December 8th after worship—more details to come, but keep some cookies in reserve for this!



Quilt Blessing

46 Quilts were dedicated and sent off to begin their journey to their final destination through Lutheran World Relief. Many thanks to all those who participate in this ministry—from faithfully setting up tables to the various jobs involved in creating them.



Warm Winter Clothing Drive

We'll begin our annual collection of coats, mittens, scarves and hats this month. Look for the collection boxes in the narthex! Items will be shared with Sylvania Area Family Services and other local charities.



Sylvania Area Family Services

St. Stephen has a history of working with Sylvania Area Family Services to provide food for Thanksgiving, Christmas and gift cards for Christmas presents. This year, we're helping 4 families of 4, 16 people in total from our community. As of Oct. 20th, we had collected \$1,280 towards our goal of \$1,600! All donations are appreciated, and the sign on the Narthex table will be updated with our current total! We hope to be able to send this money to SAFS by November 10th. If we end up collecting more than \$1,600 that extra money will be sent to SAFS to help additional community members with gifts/food for the holidays.

New Members

Welcome to the Turveys

Bob & Carol will have been married 48 years on November 15th. They are the proud parents of 5 children who have graced them with 13 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. They are lifetime residents of the Toledo area. Bob attended Cherry Grade School and Scott High School, graduating in 1963. Carol attended Christ the King and Notre Dame Academy before graduating from Start High School in 1969. Both Bob & Carol received their bachelor's degrees from the University of Toledo.



Bob began his career with the Toledo Scale Company and has worked in the weights and measures industry ever since. Carol is a Registered Nurse, retired. Her career in medicine spanned many of the medical disciplines, culminating as a consultant, where she traveled extensively all over the country.

They both enjoy traveling and participating in sports such as golf and bowling which helps them stay active. They have been searching for the right church home for many years and were introduced to the Lutheran faith at a church in Florida where they have been spending their winter months. When they returned to Sylvania in April of 2024, they sought a Lutheran home and found St. Stephen's. After attending services for several months, they both feel that St. Stephen's is the perfect place to further their relationship with God and would like to make St Stephen's their permanent church home.

Administrative News

NEW DIRECTORY

The 2024 Member & Friends Photo Directory will be available for pick up in the Narthex by November 10! If you would like to request a copy as soon as they are ready, please contact Janell in the church office!

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **December/January 2024** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by November 14.**



Prayer

A Prayer for Thanksgiving

Loving God,
We turn our hearts to you on this
day for giving thanks, mindful of
your many gifts.
For each one, we are grateful.
For each one, we are blessed.
For each one we are opened to the
abundance of your love.
May this Thanksgiving Day offer a
reminder to be generous with others,
as you are with us.
We praise you.
We rejoice in you.
We give you thanks.
Amen.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Tracey—Healing
Wolf—Stomach Cancer
Richard—Healing
Dave—Comfort & Healing
Gary—Stroke & Recovery
Tre—Healing
Laura—Healing & Comfort
Judie—Healing
Ann—Healing & Comfort
Irina—Healing & Comfort
Steve—Healing & Comfort
Frank—Healing & Comfort
Alice—Comfort & Peace
Joe —Recovery
Carrie—Healing
Diana—Comfort & Answers
Terrie—Healing
Nancy—Healing
Tony—Healing & Comfort
Ali—Guidance & Comfort
Beth—Healing & Recovery
Jettie—Healing & Recovery
The Highland Community
Hurricane Helene Victims
All victims of trauma and war

Fun

ALL IN GOOD FUN



BIBLE QUIZ

What year was the first copy of the Bible published?

(Answer page 10)

- A. 1395
- B. 1455
- C. 1496
- D. 1505

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 & Family Ministry</i>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Social Ministry</i>	Joan Haddox

Steve's Bulletin Board

Time Change

The Fall Back Time Change is happening on November 3! Don't forget to set your clocks back!

Euchre Fundraiser for ALS



Richard Cornell used 2 Thrivent action teams to help our ministries. The first provided funds for lights in the library to assist the quilters. The second was to supplement our ongoing collection for the LSS food pantries! Thank you Richard and Thrivent!

Bible Quiz Answer:

B. 1455

November Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

11/1 Aaron Ziegler
11/3 Lin McKelvey
11/5 Angela McCoy
11/11 Becky Henderson
11/14 Joyce Cunningham
11/24 Amelia Huddleston
11/26 Kristi Shepler


Birthdays

11/2 Mary Dwyer
11/13 Michelle Ballard
11/13 Sharon Sorenson
11/19 Linda McDonough

Anniversaries

11/12 M&A Mercer
11/13 T&A Schmidt
11/21 B&S Markin
11/30 R&J Cornell

November 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 10:00 AM Organize LSS Food Pantry
3 All Saints Sunday Fall Back Time Change 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Catechism	4 1:00 PM Needler's	5 Election Day 3:00 PM Walk-Up Communion	6 11:00 AM Bible Study	7	8	9 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
10 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Annual Meeting 12:15PM Chili Cook-Off/\$1 for Isaiah 117 4:30PM Catechism	11	12 Newsletter Deadline 3:00 PM Walk-Up Communion	13 11:00 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Monthly Meal	14	15	16 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
17 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In Sanctuary/ Online Worship	18 1:00 PM Needler's 6:00 PM Council Meeting	19 12:00 PM JOY Club 3:00 PM Walk-Up Communion	20 11:00 AM Bible Study	21 7:00 PM Book Club	22 7:00 PM Youth Fun Friday	23 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
24 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In Sanctuary/ Online Worship	25	26 3:00 PM Walk-Up Communion	27	28 	29	30