

**Connecting People with Jesus...  
In Us... Among Us... Through Us**



# **ST. STEPHENS**

**LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL**

2304 Springs Road NE  
Hickory, NC 28601

Church: 828-256-9865  
[www.sslcms.org](http://www.sslcms.org)

School: 828-256-2166  
[www.sslwarriors.org](http://www.sslwarriors.org)

## **St. Stephens Staff**

David Ziehr, Pastor + Shea Pennington, Pastor  
David Guelzow, Visitation Pastor + Tristan Jones, Vicar  
Ross Chiles, Principal + Randall Cline, Youth Ministry  
Donna Lee, Children's Ministry + Brandon Buff, Facilities and Technology  
Robert Smith, Traditional Music Director + David Day, Praise Team Director  
Jadi Gurganious, Mission Facilitator + Savannah Lee, Communication Coordinator  
Sharon Maynor, Administrator + Tashia Fisher, Church Administrative Asst.  
Debbi Becker, School Administrative Asst.  
Tiffany Sigmon, Receptionist & Visitor Engagement Coordinator  
Kristy Smith, New Member Coordinator

**Joining Jesus on His Mission**

**January 17 & 18, 2026**

## Welcome to Worship

We pray you will find the presence of God in our worship. We ask that all of our members and all guest to please print your name in the book passed along the pew before the offering. Guest, we encourage you to fill out a Connect Card also.

**Holy Communion:** We welcome all who have been instructed in the faith, who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and in the true presence of His body and blood in the sacrament. If you are a guest today and would like to participate in the Sacrament, please consult a pastor or elder beforehand with any questions.  
**We do offer white grape juice and gluten free bread for those who need it.**

**Children are welcome in our worship services.** As an alternative, a nursery for infants through 2 years old is available in Room #101. The nursery is staffed from 8am to 12pm on Sunday mornings. For assistance, please see an usher.

**Children's Worship** (preschool & early elementary) is offered in the choir room during the 10:30am worship. Children will be dismissed before the sermon and return for offering.

**Fire Exits:** In addition to the main entrance, fire exits are located on both sides of the chancel and are opened for quicker exit from the church after worship.

**Broadcast & Photography:** Just a reminder that our services are live streamed on YouTube and may include images of the congregation. St. Stephens Lutheran Church reserves the right to use any photograph/video taken at any service on church grounds or event sponsored by St. Stephens Lutheran Church. A person attending who does not wish to have their image recorded for distribution should make their wishes known to the photographer. By participating in a St. Stephens Lutheran Church service or event or by failing to notify your desire to not have your photograph used, you are agreeing to release and the use of your picture.

## Sunday School - 9:15am - 10:15am

For room location assistance, please see an usher.

Little Lambs /Preschool (3 & 4yrs) & Kinders:---- Ed Wing Riser Room---Martha Propst, Jane Guelzow, Sue Seabock & Cynthia Hewitt  
Kid Connect/ Grades 1 & 2:-----Ed Wing #222----- Andrea Trent  
Kid Connect/ Grades 3-5:-----Ed Wing #220 -----Teresa Ritchie  
Jr. High Life Group: Led by Randall & Shannon Cline-----Youth House  
Sr. High Life Group: Darel Reese & Jon Guelzow-----Youth House  
Young Adult Life Group: Led by Taryn Cline & Dalton Powell-----Peace House  
Adults: Led by Pastor/Vicar-----Scripture----- Fellowship Hall  
Adults-Men's Bible Study: Led by Dwight Hollar----Genesis----School Bldg. #108  
Adults: Led by Caleb Taylor/Katie Clontz-----Bible Lessons-----Choir Room  
Adults-Ladies: Led by Regina Propst-----"Is God Speaking to Me?" -----Parlor  
Adults - Led by Dean Ledbetter-----Eleven Days----- School Bldg. #109

## **Prayer on Entering**

Lord Jesus, You meet us on ordinary roads and in ordinary moments. You walk beside us even when we do not see You. Slow us down enough to notice You. Open our eyes to recognize Your presence, our ears to hear Your voice, and our hearts to join You in Your work. Teach us to seek You in everyday life and strengthen our faith to respond to our neighbors with simple acts of grace. In Your name we pray.

## **Greeters**

January 17th- Keith & Sue Binns  
January 18th 8am - Pat Wilson  
January 18th 10:30am -- Brittany Wesson

January 24th- Linda McNeely & Judy Buff  
January 25th 8AM- Judy Gurganious  
January 25th 10:30am - Tim & Tonya Boliek

## **Communion Assistants**

January 18     8:00am – James Fogle & Ralph Mueller  
January 25    10:30am – David Propst, Jon Guelzow, Tony Cook

## **Nursery Volunteers – 10:30 am**

January 18 – Betsy & Lila Hendrix  
January 25 – Teresa Ritchie

## **Our Response to God Last Week**

Last Sunday's Attendance – 498 (65, 112, 321)     Sunday School – 147  
General Fund: \$36,085.51 (Regular Offerings needed each week: \$30,392.22)  
Church Expansion Fund/Building Fund: \$885.65  
School Endowment Fund: \$195.00  
Church Expansion/Building Fund Funds Needed: \$4.4 Million  
Church Expansion/Building Fund Account Balance: \$1,056,044.91  
Church Expansion Bills Paid So Far: \$2,086,567.27

## **Stay Connected to St. Stephens Lutheran**

### **SATURDAY**

5:30pm - Saturday Evening Worship

### **SUNDAY**

8:00am - Traditional Worship & Holy Communion

9:15am - Family Bible Hour

10:30am-Contemporary Worship

12:00 - 1:00pm - Confirmation Unit Check-In - Sanctuary

3:00-6:00pm - Pickle Ball

5:00-8:00pm - Jr. & Sr. High Hangtime - Youth House

6:00pm - Life Group (Dwight Hollar) - Conference Room

### **MONDAY - NO SCHOOL MLK DAY**

9:00am - Lifelight - Pastor Guelzow - Conference Room

10:00am - With Our Hands Ministry

1:00pm - Esther Circle - Conference Room

6:00pm - School Board - Science Room

7:00pm - Men's Bible Study - Youth House

### **TUESDAY**

4:00pm - Lifegroup - Pastor Guelzow - Parlor

**4:00PM - MID-WEEK CONGREGATIONAL NEWS DEADLINE**

5:15pm - Finance - Conference Room

6:00pm - Praise Team Rehearsal

### **WEDNESDAY**

10:00am - Women's Bible Study (Sonni Thornton) Youth House

6:00pm Lifegroup (Paul Miller) - Youth House

### **THURSDAY**

10:30am - Lifegroup - (Larry Bowman) - Conference Room

**NOON - BULLETIN & SCREEN ANNOUNCEMENT DEADLINE**

5:45pm - Handbell Choir - Sanctuary

**6:30-8:00pm - SSLS Open House**

7:00pm - Parish Choir - Sanctuary/Choir Room

7:00pm - Lifegroup - (Richard Starnes) - Parlor

### **FRIDAY**

10:00am - With Our Hands Ministry - Youth House

2:00pm - Lifegroup - David Rittenhouse's

5:30pm - Halo Bible Study - Youth House

5:00pm - Confirmation Retreat - Camp Linn Haven

### **SATURDAY**

Confirmation Retreat - Camp Linn Haven

5:30pm - Saturday Evening Worship & Holy Communion

### **SUNDAY**

8:00am - Traditional Worship

9:15am - Family Bible Hour

10:30am-Contemporary Worship

2:30-9:00pm - Winter Jam 2026 - Charlotte

3:00-6:00pm - Pickle Ball

6:00pm - Life Group (Dwight Hollar) - Conference Room



## NO PICKLE BALL SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1



### Senior Session

Wednesday, January 28  
1:00pm  
in Conference Room

RSVP to Kristy Smith [ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org) by Friday, Jan. 23

Providing a focal point for aging resources, as well as opportunities designed to extend independent living and enrich the quality of life for older adults.

**Presenter: Vickie Blevins, Executive Director**

Honor and Remember with

## ALTAR FLOWERS



The 2026 Flower chart is available for weekend signups on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Starting this month, we will be using a **new florist** for our altar flowers. We are changing to **Thistle Dew Nicely**, located on Union Square. The phone number is 828-322-3242. The gentlemen's name is Leroy Kennedy.

## Youth News

*Building relationships in Christ to develop and strengthen faithful followers for life.*

### Sunday Morning Bible Study (9:15 am):

- Middle School (The Youth House side "B")
- High School (The Youth House side "A")

### Mark Your Calendars!

#### 1/18 | 12:00-1:00 PM Confirmation - Unit Check-in

Confirmation students and their families will meet in the sanctuary immediately following the 10:30 AM worship service. This is a chance to reflect on learning so far, ask questions, and stay connected as we continue this faith journey together.

#### 1/18 | 5:00-8:00 PM Middle & High School Hang Time

We continue our **You Live It** devotional series with another evening of food, connection, and faith-filled discussion in the Youth House. Each week builds on the last, helping students see how faith is lived out daily.

#### 1/23-1/24 | Confirmation Retreat

Confirmation students are invited to a weekend focused on faith, relationships, and community. This retreat is for all Confirmation students, including those exempt from first-year Confirmation. Sign up and more information at:

[www.sslcms.org/youth](http://www.sslcms.org/youth)

#### 1/25 | 2:30-9:00 PM Winter Jam 2026

Join us for an unforgettable night of powerful Christian music, faith, and friends as we head to Winter Jam '26! This high-energy experience is one you won't want to miss. Sign up and more information at: [www.sslcms.org/youth](http://www.sslcms.org/youth)

#### 2/8 | 12:00-4:00 PM Corner Table Backpack Program

Hang out in the Youth House, grab some lunch, and then jump in to help pack food bags for local kids through the Backpack Program. It's an easy, hands-on way to serve others, have fun together, and make a real difference in our community!

### Want to Get Connected?

Parents and families are always encouraged to reach out with questions or to learn how to partner in their student's faith journey. Visit [www.sslcms.org/youth](http://www.sslcms.org/youth) for all the latest.



Join us for an evening at Narrowway  
Christian Dinner Theater,  
Fort Mill, SC

## Wanna Go?

Sunday, March 29

5:00pm

(bus leaves SSLC at 3pm)

A deposit of  
\$25 is  
required to  
reserve your  
seat.

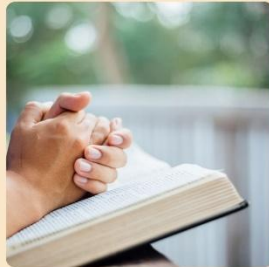
Cost: \$75  
(Ticket, dinner, & transportation)

RSVP by Feb. 28 to Kristy at  
[ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)

Have a devotional that you have loved?  
Looking for one to dig into this year?

Join us for a  
**Devotional Exchange**  
with fellowship and refreshments

**Sunday, February 15**  
following the 10:30 service



RSVP by Feb. 12 to Kristy at [ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)

## Children's Ministry

Sunday Morning Bible Hour - 9:15-10:15am Ed Wing

Preschool & Kinders: Riser Room

Grades 1 & 2: Ed Wing #222

Grades 3 - 5: Ed Wing #220

CPH Enduring Faith

Children's Worship

**10:30AM CONTEMPORARY SERVICE**

Preschool- 5th Grade

Meet in the choir room during the sermon

Opportunities to serve weekly



## St. Stephens Lutheran School News

Excellence in Education since 1943

**Make A Joyful Noise**  
(Psalm 98:4)

School Board Members - Scott Clontz, Chairman, Erica Moretz, David Janisko, Kim Yancey, and Shawn Sigmon

**NC OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP**  
ACCEPTED HERE

**ST. STEPHENS**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

**Winter Open House**  
for prospective parents  
Thursday, January 22  
6:30pm  
Preschool - 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
Please RSVP to: (828) 256-2166

Providing a Christian Education for over 80 years!

School Office: (828) 256-2166 Website: [www.ssllswarriors.org](http://www.ssllswarriors.org) Email: [school@sslcms.org](mailto:school@sslcms.org)

## JANUARY UPCOMING EVENTS

ST STEPHENS LUTHERAN SCHOOL

JAN 19	MLK DAY SCHOOL CLOSED
JAN 22	SSLS OPEN HOUSE 6:30 PM
JAN 23	WAPC DRESS DOWN DAY
JAN 26-30	BETA CLUB SNOWBALL FUNDRAISER
JAN 30	SPELLING BEE 1:30 PM SSLS WINTER DANCE 6:30 PM



## Please Pray for the SED Group that's serving Ethiopia January 7-20

1. **Rev. Dr. Bill Harmon** - President, Southeastern District LCMS; Theologian on Biblical Vocation
2. **Rev. David Ziehr** - Vice President, Southeastern District LCMS; Expert in Peacebuilding and Reconciliation
3. **Dr. Craig Olson** - Business Leader and Educational Consultant
4. **Rebeka Cook** - Senior Coach and Consultant in Vocational Development
5. **Rev. Phil Cook** - Missionary Pastor and Engineer
6. **Max Harmon** - Director of Early Christian Education and Leadership
7. **Rev. David Maack** - Executive Director of Social and Community Services
8. **Deacon David Grandt** - Congregational Outreach Leadership Practitioner
9. **Rev. Dr. Yared Halche** - Vocational Mission Leadership and Engagement Facilitator

The mission and vision of the Southeastern District is to connect people with Jesus so that lives are transformed and God's Kingdom grows!

## Dean Hansen turns 75

Dean Hansen, former Director of Christian Education (1992-2006) is turning 75 in early February. His daughter, Emily, would like to surprise him with a card shower. If you know Dean and his family, please send him well wishes for his milestone birthday. The cards can be sent to:

Emily Cotter

Attn.: Dean

419 E. 9<sup>th</sup> St.

Freemont, NE 68025

## Mite Boxes

The coins we place in our MITE boxes seem so small, but, when combined with the coins of thousands of others, MIGHTY things happen. Many of us have either participated in or known people who have responded to urgent needs after a disaster such as a hurricane - dirty work. A current LWML mission grant to provide shower/laundry facilities (moveable trailers) for use by the Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) has been fulfilled. We continue to pray that our MITE coins fund projects that meet a variety of need. Have you been placing coins in your MITE box? Empty it next weekend into the large MITE box in the narthex next to the church office.

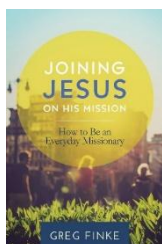


**NEW MEMBERS CLASS**

Beginning Sunday, January 18 at 9:15am  
in the Conference Room.

RSVP to Tiffany at [Tsigmon@sslcms.org](mailto:Tsigmon@sslcms.org) or call the church office.

## Joining Jesus On His Mission



As we step into 2026, we embark on a shared journey of everyday mission. This January, we will be using “*Joining Jesus on His Mission: How to Be an Everyday Missionary*” by LCMS pastor Greg Finke. This engaging and practical book (along with video bible studies) will help us discover what it means to join Jesus in the places we already live, learn, work, and play.

Jesus is already at work in the lives of people around us—neighbors, co-workers, classmates, friends, and even strangers. Our calling is not to “add more to our plates,” but to recognize and join the mission He’s already carrying out. This is what it means to live out our **Core Values**:

- **We are Disciple-Makers** – The practice of everyday mission helps us grow in faith and nurture the faith of others.
- **We are Everyday Missionaries** – We believe we are called to connect people with Jesus exactly where we live, learn, work, and play.
- **We are Servant Leaders** – Jesus leads by serving; joining Him means loving and serving our neighbors in practical, real ways.
- **We are Kingdom-Driven** – Jesus is the heart of everything we do. As we follow Him, we seek His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Imagine what God can do as each of us joins Jesus right where we are! Over the coming months, we’ll explore practical ways to recognize His work and participate in it with joy. Whether at the dinner table, on the ball field, in the classroom, or at the office, Jesus is already on mission. He’s inviting *you* to join Him.

## Today's Readings

### Isaiah 49:1-7

49 Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. 3 And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." 4 But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God." 5 And now the Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him— for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength— 6 he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." 7 Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

### 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

1 Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— 6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **Luke 24:13-35**

13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles[ from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 29 but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" 33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

# LET US PRAY FOR.....

## SPECIAL PRAYERS

**BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION - MISSION & MINISTRY CENTER**  
**ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN SCHOOL**  
**UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL**  
**CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT MISSION TRIP TO ETHIOPIA**  
**SHAUEN & KRISTA TRUMP**, Missionaries in Africa  
**TRINITY HMONG LUTHERAN CHURCH & PASTOR ZANG YANG**  
**SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH** in Taylorsville, NC  
**OUR COMMUNITY, COUNTY, STATE, NATION, AND THE WORLD**

## PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE

**GENA WATSON SMITH FAMILY.** Her father-in-law, Wallace Smith, was called to glory on January 14.

**KAREN SHADE FAMILY.** Her sister, Lydia Mathis, was called to glory on January 10.

**FRIENDS & FAMILY OF PATSY BURGESS.** She was called to glory on January 13.

## PRAYERS FOR OUR HOME MEMBERS

**RALPH CAZIRE**

**RUTH COOK**

**CASSIE DEAL**

## FIVE FAMILY PRAYER

**MICHAEL & KATE VAUGHN FAMILY**

**DANA & SUSAN HOPKINS**

**BETH IKERD**

**DAVID & HELEN JANISKO**

**DELANY JESSUP**

## HOSPITALIZED

**MARSHA WATSON**, CVMC- CCU, pneumonia

**SPENCER RADKE**, recovering from motocross accident, son of Mark & Sharon

**PAM BENFIELD**, fluid around heart, aunt of Randall Cline

**KAREN SHADE**, CVMC, knee surgery

## **UPCOMING PROCEDURES**

**STEVE CAIN**, hip replacement 1/21

**LISA DAVIS**, upcoming cancer surgery, friend of Mark & Kim Bolick

**JOE BURNS**, upcoming surgery in January on veins in his arms, grandson of Helen Suttlemyre

**JERRY RITCHIE**, upcoming hernia surgery, Winston

## **PRAYERS FOR ONGOING TREATMENTS**

**DINKY EDDINS**, breast cancer

**GIL BRAUCH**, cancer

**ERVIN BOLICK**, cancer

**LINDA TILLEY**, cancer

**DELANEY JESSUP**, cancer

**SHERRY NORRIS**, breast cancer

**KAY WEAVER**, Squamous Cell (Skin) Cancer

**SHARON JONES**

**GERRY HOEKZEMA**, cancer, friend of Larry Bowman

**JA'NEICE DAVIS**, cancer, neighbor of David & Martha Propst

**EARL WYATT**, liver cancer, uncle of Chris Wyatt

**MARIE BUFF**, cancer, wife of Jerry, sister-in-law of Rick & Judy

## **RECOVERING**

**J P NELSON**, kidney transplant

**PAM SIGMON**, health issues

**JACK ROBERTS**, College Pines rehab/broken hip, husband of Dana

**ALLEN CROWE**, health issues

**JERRY FISHER**, health issues

**DAVID DAY**, home recovering from heart ablation

**DENNIS COMBS**, colitis, son of Bobbie Flowers

**MIKE DRUM**, heart issues

**THE BELL FAMILY**, health issues, friends of Betsy Hendrix

**SAVANNAH LEE**, recovering from an accident

**TIFFANI TRAVIS**, home recovering from gallbladder surgery

**CINDY BRINN**, home recovering from eye surgery

**DIANE MAYNOR**, home recovering from heart ablation

**LINDA LAIL**, The Green's, Rehab

**KAGE HEFNER**, broken collar bone, grandson of Ken & Linda Tilley

**MADISON STARNES**, blood clot in lung, daughter of Phillip & Sarah

**WINDY & ANTHONY PRUITT**, flu

**TOMMY LONDON**, flu, father of Windy Pruitt

**REGGIE & SHERRY CRAIG**, health issues

**DARRELL & CINDY RHAME**, health issues