

**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

School: 828-256-2166
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

JOIN US FOR
PICKLEBALL
SUNDAY

3-6 PM

ALL PICKLES WELCOME



NO PICKLE BALL SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1



Senior Session

Wednesday, January 28
1:00pm
in Conference Room

RSVP to Kristy Smith 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

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

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 sslcms.org/youth for all the latest.



Join us for an evening at Narroway
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.

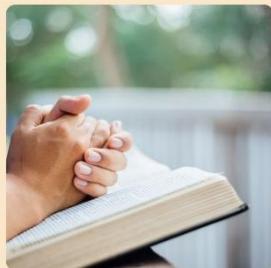
Cost: \$75
(Ticket, dinner, & transportation)

RSVP by Feb. 28 to Kristy at
ksmith@sslcms.org

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

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

Make A Joyful Noise (Psalm 98:4)

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

The image is a composite of several photographs and text elements. At the top center is the St. Stephens logo with the text 'ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL'. To the left is a photo of a boy writing at a desk. To the right is a photo of students holding flags. Below the logo is a yellow box with the text 'Winter Open House for prospective parents' and 'Thursday, January 22 6:30pm Preschool - 8th grade'. Below that is another yellow box with 'Please RSVP to: (828) 256-2166'. At the bottom left is a photo of two students. At the bottom right is a photo of students raising their hands. The background features decorative snowflake patterns.

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. 9th St.
Freemont, NE 68025

Mite Boxes

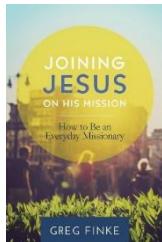
The coins we place in our MITE boxes seem so small, but, when combined with the coins of thousands of others, MIGHTY things happen. Many of us have either participated in or known people who have responded to urgent needs after a disaster such as a hurricane - dirty work. A current LWML mission grant 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 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.

FIENDS & 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