

**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.sslswarriors.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

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20 & 21, 2025

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-----2 Peter----School Bldg. #108
Adults: Led by Caleb Taylor/Katie Clontz-----Bible Lessons-----Choir Room
Adults-Ladies: Led by Regina Propst-----*The Wonder of Christmas*-----Parlor

Prayer on Entering

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy, that our lives may be enabled to serve You faithfully and with great joy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Greeters

December 20th (Children's Christmas Service) - Linda McNeely, Judy Buff, Brent & Donna Townsend

December 21st 8am- Pat Wilson

December 21st 10:30am- April Drake

December 27th - Cathy Drum & Brenda Little

December 28th 8am- Gregg & Vickie Fletcher

December 28th 10:30am- Phillip & Sarah Starnes

Communion Assistants

December 21 8:00am - Todd Little & Ralph Mueller

December 28 10:30am - David Propst, Jon Guelzow & Tony Cook

Nursery Volunteers - 10:30 am

December 21 - Shannon Cline

December 28 - Sheila Poovey

Our Response to God Last Week

Last Sunday's Attendance - 555 (85, 92, 378) Sunday School - 152

General Fund: \$40,841.69 (Regular Offerings needed each week: \$28,306.91)

Church Expansion Fund/Building Fund: \$7,718.54

School Endowment Fund: \$195.00

Church Expansion/Building Fund Funds Needed: \$4.4 Million

Church Expansion/Building Fund Account Balance: \$1,256,601.58

Church Expansion Bills Paid So Far: \$1,790,300.09

Stay Connected to St. Stephens Lutheran

SATURDAY

5:30pm - Children's Christmas Worship & Cookie Reception

SUNDAY

8:00am - Traditional Worship

9:15am - Family Bible Hour

10:30am - Contemporary Worship & Holy Communion

MONDAY

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

10:00am - With Our Hands Ministry

NOON - BULLETIN & SCREEN ANNOUNCEMENT DEADLINE

NOON - MID-WEEK CONGREGATIONAL NEWS DEADLINE

TUESDAY

4:00pm - Lifegroup (Pastor Guelzow) - Parlor

6:00pm - Praise Team Rehearsal

WEDNESDAY - CHRISTMAS EVE - OFFICES CLOSED

7:00pm - Contemporary Candlelight Service

10:00pm - Traditional Candlelight Service

THURSDAY - OFFICES CLOSED

10:00am - Christmas Day Service & Holy Communion

FRIDAY - OFFICES CLOSED

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

5:30pm - Halo Bible Study - Youth House

SATURDAY

5:30pm - Saturday Evening Worship & Holy Communion

SUNDAY

8:00am - Traditional Worship

9:15am - Family Bible Hour

10:30am - Contemporary Worship & Holy Communion

PICKLEBALL



**PICKLEBALL IS ON HOLIDAY BREAK
JOIN US AGAIN JAN. 4**

ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

2304 SPRINGS ROAD NE
HICKORY, NC 28601

(828) 256-9865
WWW.SSLCMS.ORG

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

***7 PM CONTEMPORARY CANDLELIGHT
10 PM TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT**

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE:

10 AM WITH HOLY COMMUNION

*LIVE-STREAMED SERVICE

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!

12/31 8p-8a New Year's Eve Lock-In

Students are invited to ring in the New Year at our annual New Year's Eve Lock-in! Join us for a night of games, food, fellowship, and a fun New Year's countdown. Sign-up and more information can be found @ www.sslcms.org/youth

1/4 5p-8p Middle & High School Hang Time

Join us in The Youth House for an afternoon of fellowship, food, and discussion as we begin a new devotional series, You Live It. This series will encourage us to connect faith with real-life challenges and daily decisions.

1/11 12p-6p Cliffhangers Climbing

Join us for an afternoon of climbing and fellowship as we head to Cliffhangers! First-time climber or pro, this is a great chance to challenge yourself, have fun, and spend time with friends. Sign-up and more information can be found at sslcms.org/youth

1/18 12p-1p Confirmation - Unit Check-in

Confirmation students and their families will meet in the sanctuary immediately after the 10:30 am worship service for the Confirmation Unit Check-in.

1/18 5p-8p Middle & High School Hang Time

Join us in The Youth House for an afternoon of fellowship, food, and discussion as we continue our devotional series, You Live It. This series will encourage us to connect faith with real-life challenges and daily decisions.

Looking to serve or want to learn more about Youth Ministry?

Visit sslcms.org/youth for all the latest.

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

Cemetery Updates For 2026

On January 1, 2026 cemetery plots will see an increase in price. The cost of a cemetery plot is for the perpetual care, long term maintenance of the grounds.

Church members - \$400

Non-Members who currently own a plot - \$1,300

Attention Ladies

Ladies of the church are invited to the women's Sunday school class that meets in the parlor at 9:15 AM each Sunday. We are currently completing an Advent study and will start a new book, "Is God Speaking to Me?" by Lysa Terkeurst, in January.

2026 Offering Envelopes

The 2026 offering envelopes are out in the narthex to pick up. They are in numerical order. A list is provided if you do not remember your number. **If you are an online giver, you will not have offering envelopes but you still have an offering number.** If you have questions about your offering envelopes, please call Tashia at the church office.



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

DECEMBER
UPCOMING EVENTS

ST STEPHENS LUTHERAN SCHOOL

DEC 22- 31

**CHRISTMAS BREAK
SCHOOL CLOSED**



Thank You

On Sunday afternoon, December 7, a merry bunch of carolers left the church to bring joy and cheer to our home bound members with their singing. It was a great time of fun and fellowship, spreading the love at Christmas to a total of twenty-three homes or facilities. Many thanks to all who participated: Carolers were Sandy Matthews and Faith, comfort dog, Toby Laws, Kim Yancey, Sadie Flowers, Scott & Jenny Plassman, Jan Rabe, Jon & Jane Guelzow, Matt Hamby, Nancy Huffman, Tim & Tonya Boliek, Betty Ikerd, Eric Kent, Cindy Brinn, Steve, Rebecca & Daniel Flowers, Cynthia & Ashleigh Johnson, Michael, Katie, Benjamin & Beatrice Vaughn, Sue Vogt, Vicar Tristan Jones, Mark & Deb Kastner, Jorge, Jen, Mark, Nico, and Elizabeth Colato, Teri Cain, Dwight & Cathy Hollar, Regina Propst, Amy & Darren Crouch, Priscilla Crouch, David Pingel, Linda Tilley, and Carolyn Watson. Regina Propst, Teresa Ritchie, and Doris Sigmon worked on the organization and logistics.

Assembling the gift bags for carolers to deliver, along with serving hot chocolate and sweet treats upon their return were the following people: Judy Buff, Pat Fredell, Lenora Isenhour, Debbie Laws, Cynthia Hewitt, and Pat Wilson. Char Ewald made a special craft for the gift bags.

Sponsored by the LWML, this is a grand group effort, enjoyed by all who were on the receiving end, as well as those who were caroling. Many touching and positive comments were heard. Thank you so very much for those of you who gave of your time and talents to bring this most special event to fruition. May you all be truly blessed by your efforts to brighten the Christmas season for these special members at St. Stephens."

Christmas Memorials/Honorariums

Building Fund

In memory of Eddie M. Sigmon by Doris Sigmon and family

In honor of St. Stephens Lutheran Faculty and staff by the LWML

Comfort Dog Ministry

In memory of James Weaver's birthday on December 28, by Kay & Kristi.

In memory of Jerry Watson by Carolyn Watson and Darren, Amy & Grace Crouch.

In memory of Tyler Warren by Eddie & Vanessa.

Good Samaritan Fund

In memory of James Weaver by Kay and Kristi.

School Endowment Fund

In memory of Urban & Helen Ewald, Louis & Charlotte Demme, Elwyn Ewald, Thomas Denne, Tim Demme, Matthew Ewald, Kim Rundel and Harry & Vida Bruss.

Lunchbox for Seniors

In memory of Walter & Metta Fry, by Birdie & Elaine Kent.

In memory of Harold Allison by his family.

General Fund

In memory of Don McNeely by Linda McNeely.

In memory of Leisa White by the Hines Family.

Today's Readings

Isaiah 7:10-17

10 Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: 11 "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." 13 And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. 15 He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. 17 The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!"

Romans 1:1-7

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, 7 To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

LET US PRAY FOR.....

SPECIAL PRAYERS

BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION - MISSION & MINISTRY CENTER

ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

FINANCE & FACILITY

SHAUN & KRISTA TRUMP, Missionaries in Africa

TRINITY HMONG LUTHERAN CHURCH & PASTOR ZANG YANG

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH in Hickory, NC

OUR COMMUNITY, COUNTY, STATE, NATION, AND THE WORLD

SSLS COMMUNITY - FLU/STREP/STOMACH BUG

MEDICAL PERSONNEL

PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE.

BOBBIE STARNES & ALLEN CROWE, Bobbie's mother, Wanda Brittain, was called to glory on December 12.

SHEILA & CHRIS DYSON & BOB & PAT HOLLAR FAMILIES. Sheila's mother/Bob's sister-in-law, Doris Hollar, was called to glory on December 13.

MATT & TAMMI HOUSTON FAMILY. Matt's father, Frank, was called to glory on December 13.

GENE & CHAR EWALD FAMILY. Their nephew, Matthew, was called to glory on December 10.

DANNY & MIRIAM MECIMORE and **JAMES & LESLIE FOGLE FAMILIES.** Their brother-in-law, Roger Braswell, was called to glory on December 16.

PRAYERS FOR OUR HOME MEMBERS

JEAN ROLLINS

GARNER SETTLEMYRE

CHARLES SHOOK

FIVE FAMILY PRAYER

LARRY CLINE

CRAIG & KIM ANDERSON FAMILY

TALESA AUTON FAMILY

MATT & SEANA BENEDICT FAMILY

DEREK & ELIZABETH BOLIEK

PRAYER OF PRAISE & THANKSGIVING

CHRIS & MELISSA BARRINGER, who celebrated their 42nd wedding anniversary on December 17.

DAVID & MARTHA PROPST, who will celebrate their 62nd wedding anniversary on December 22.

HOSPITALIZED

MICHAEL RINK, health issues, friend of Allen Killian

ADAM FOGLE, CVMC, pneumonia

KAY HOLLAR, FRMC, pneumonia

BILLY SMITH, hospitalized in Pittsburgh, Tom's brother

PRAYERS FOR ONGOING TREATMENTS

DINKY EDDINS, breast cancer

GIL BRAUCH, cancer

ERVIN BOLICK, cancer & recovering from a fall/compression fracture in spine

LINDA TILLEY, cancer

DELANEY JESSUP, cancer

SHERRY NORRIS, breast cancer

KAY WEAVER, Squamous Cell (Skin) Cancer

SHARON JONES

SALLY RADER, treatment for mold/autoimmune illness

JIM SETZER, cancer, friend of Bob & Marsha Watson

DEBBIE, cancer, awaiting test, friend of Coach Mike Davis

PATSY BURGESS, pancreatic cancer, friend of Ronda Reid

MANDY FREELAND, breast cancer, neighbor/friend of the VonDohlens

CRYSTAL MACK, cancer, friend of Faith Comfort Dog

RECOVERING

J P NELSON, kidney transplant

DEAN LEDBETTER, kidney donor

JOE BURNS, health issues/upcoming surgery in January on veins in his arms, grandson of Helen Suttlemyre

TIMOTHY MARTIN, recovering from bypass surgery

PAM SIGMON, health issues

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

KATHY BOLIEK, home recovering

ALLEN CROWE, recovering from knee surgery

MIKE BENSON, health issues, brother of Melissa Mace

ELAYNE LAMBRECHTS, health issues, mother of Deanna Dickinson

RUBY HALL, home recovering

JASON PRUITT, recovering from thumb surgery

LARRY HARRIS - Uncle of Angie Poovey, health issues

DANE CLINE, recovering from surgery