

Vision of St. Stephen

December 2020



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
7800 Erie St. • Sylvania, OH
(419)885-1551
www.ststephenlutheran.church

Pastor: Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson
sslcpastor@buckeye-express.com

Stir up your power, O Lord....

On Advent Sundays, our prayer of the day begins with these words: Stir up your power, O Lord...

Advent is the season of waiting; and this year we've gotten either very good or very frustrated with waiting—or both! Only in entertainment do we have instant gratification—no more need to wait for prime time to start at 8 p.m. or for the movie theatre to release a film...just jump on a streaming platform and hours of entertainment await you. But in the rest of our lives, we wait... we wait for packages to come. We wait for our Kroger order pick-up time to arrive. We wait for the host to let us into a zoom meeting. We waited for election results longer than we're used to. We wait for the weekly update to see what will happen with our schools. We wait to see family and friends. We wait to be in worship together. We wait for a vaccine.

We wait ... and as we wait, we pray, "God, help us!". Help us to hang in there. Help us to cope with disappointments. Help us to cope with grief that comes from missing milestones and occasions. Help us to keep up the safety protocols, of 6 feet, social distancing, and wearing our masks. Help us who are looking for jobs. Help us whose cupboards are empty. Help us whose kids are struggling. Help us who have older parents and loved ones in care facilities. Help us who have no money for rent. Help us who have loved ones in prison. Help us! Help us!

So, yes, God, this year, especially, we ask you to stir up your power and come to us. Remind us that you are with us always—through thick and thin—even to the end of the age. Remind us that you are here with us, cheering us on as we help our neighbors, crying with us when we are exhausted and overwhelmed, rejoicing to hear our voices raised in thankfulness, hearing us as we call out our needs. Stir up in us a willingness to help our neighbor, to be Christ to each other. Stir up in us a sense of your great love for us and provide us with a will and with opportunities to share that love with others.

Beth Ferne Johnson, pastor

December Contents

Spiritual Growth	2
Youth & Family	3
Additional Opportunities	3
Quilting	4
Outreach	5
Church Finances	6
Birth Announcement	6
Administrative News	7
Prayer	8
Fun	8
Council	9
Steve's Bulletin Board	10
Celebrations	10
Calendar	11

Spiritual Growth

WORSHIP REMINDER

While Lucas County is “red”, as designated by the Ohio Department of Health, St. Stephen will be worshipping on-line together at 11:00 each Sunday. We’re working to have our YouTube channel stream the worship in real time, as Facebook Live does. The worship service is available on each platform throughout the week, as well.

ADVENT WORSHIP

On December 2, 11, and 16, we’ll gather by Zoom for a time of music, quiet, and reflection as we wait for the birth of Jesus. We’ll be sending out the Zoom code for this 7:00 worship service through our One Call Now app. Please join us as we prepare for Christmas in a new way!

WALK-UP COMMUNION

We continue to hold Communion each Wednesday from 3-6 p.m. With the cold, we have moved up the sidewalk so that those who are communing are standing between the double entry doors, while Pastor Beth is in the narthex itself.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

We will have 2 Christmas Eve worship opportunities at St. Stephen this year. At 5:00 p.m., a Christmas eve worship will be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. It will feature Christmas music and a sermon by Pastor Beth. You will be able to view this worship service at any time (after 5:00 p.m.) on Christmas eve and day. At 6:00 p.m. (weather permitting), we’re planning to hold an outdoor Christmas carol service. Standing around a bonfire, wearing masks and social distancing, we’ll gather outside to sing some Christmas carols together and to hear the Christmas story from Luke’s gospel. We’ll light candles and sing Silent Night together before heading in different directions. Depending on the weather, this service will last from 10 to 25 minutes. (If it’s nice we’ll sing more, if not, we’ll sing less). A similar outdoor caroling service will be held at Olivet Lutheran at 5:00 p.m. You’re invited to attend either outdoor service as it fits with your plans that evening. (The outdoor service will not be live-streamed)

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP

A worship service will be available on Christmas Day for viewing on our Facebook page and YouTube channel. Members of our synod contributed to the worship, which celebrates Mary’s Magnificat, as well as the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the ELCA.

A LIGHT IN THE PARK

While Advent is a season of hope and Christmas is a season of joy, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating. Grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss (especially this year) are magnified. This “Light in the Park” service is intended to provide a time and a place of solace during the business of preparing for Christmas. We come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, loneliness or confusion when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays. You’re invited to gather with the whole community at Burnham Park on December 20th from 2-4 p.m. St. Stephen, Olivet Lutheran, and Sylvania First United Methodist churches are sponsoring this worship opportunity. At the park, there will be 4 stations where people can go, pray, and light candles, while wearing masks and observing social distancing. You can come and go at your own pace any time during this time frame.

Youth and Family

CATECHISM

A zoom class will be held on Sunday, December 6th at noon. We're hoping to finish our discussion of the 10 commandments and their meaning for us today.

YOUTH EVENT

Our youth are invited to gather on Sunday, December 20th, at 12 noon. We'll use zoom to talk about a Bible story and to a craft together. Please let Pastor Beth know if you'd like to join us!

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Our young people will soon be preparing a Christmas pageant on Zoom. We don't have a "performance" date set, but we will let you know when it will be available to see on Facebook and YouTube.

Additional Opportunities

ZOOM CASUAL MEETING

You're invited to join in a conversation with others here at St. Stephen on Saturday, November 28th at 10:30 a.m. It was so good to see people at our annual meeting a few weeks ago, we decided to try a get-together with no agenda--other than just to share what's happening. Here is the zoom information you'll need:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87340421777?pwd=MnJEaGNDZVdmaXdSM216TkRTaG9ldz09>

Meeting ID: 873 4042 1777

Passcode: 885824

One tap mobile

Hope you can join us!

THINGS TO DO COURTESY OF OUR ELCA COLLEGES

Are you looking for safe ways to celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons? Here are some virtual offerings you might like to participate in.

Christmas at Luther (College); Friday, December 4th at 8:30 p.m., Pre-registration is needed.

<https://www.luther.edu/christmas-at-luther/>

Capital University Christmas Festival. Saturday, Dec. 5th at 7:30 or Sunday, Dec. 6 at 3:30

www.capital.edu/christmas-festival

St. Olaf Choir, Sunday, December 6th at 4:30

<https://christmas.stolaf.edu>

Stars and Promises concert, with Peter Mayer, lead guitarist for Jimmy Buffet and a Lutheran! December 9th at 6:00 Eastern (7:00 Central Time) Fundraiser for ELCA World Hunger

Check out ELCA.org/StarsAndPromises for more information.

National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival, Friday, December 11th at 9 p.m.

<https://nlca.com/christmas2020>

Gustavus Adolphus December 19th, 8:30 p.m., You may need to register, "purchasing" 1 free ticket to get the online code.

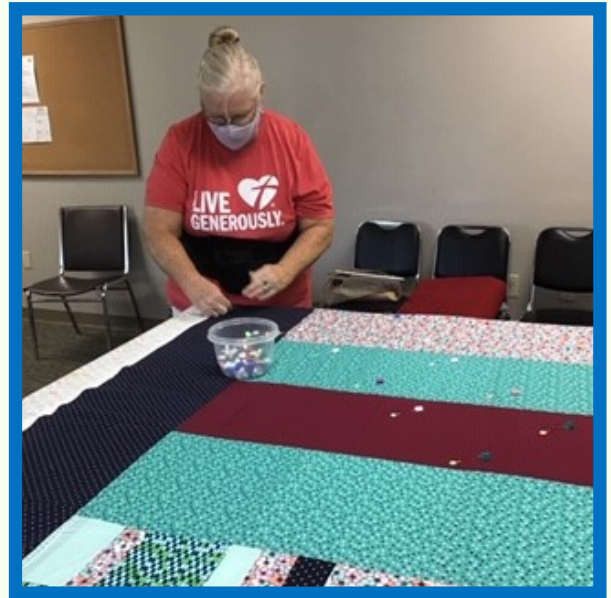
2020 Quilting for LWR

Our special thanks go to our leader from the inception of this project, through February of 2020, Mary Ann Klimesh. When we started, Mary Ann was the only one who actually knew how to make quilts. She taught us everything we know and spent countless hours between work days, preparing materials, learning more to share with us. She also finished many of the quilts herself. Thank you, Mary Ann for your patience and encouragement. We also thank Don Klimesh, who made our special ironing table and the wood lifts for our worktables.

Thanks to all the kind and dedicated people who participated in the quilting project, our statistics for 2020 are:

44 quilts for Lutheran World Relief (LWR) were finished between January and September and delivered to the LWR ingathering site near Pemberville, Ohio on October 10th. 8 more were in process for the rest of this year and next at that time as well.

18 St. Stephen Lutheran Church members and 5 friends contributed time, talent, fabrics/supplies/ or Thrivent Action Team money to the project. The Thrivent Action Team \$250 gift cards help purchase the sheets used for backings and the battings for the quilts.



2,112 11-inch squares were used to make the 44 quilt tops. Each quilt takes 48 squares, 1 twin flat sheet and a twin size batting.

The entire process of making a quilt takes approximately 12 hours.

The narthex, fellowship hall, 2 storerooms and 3 Sunday school rooms were utilized this year, to maintain safe distances and work efficiently.

Some work was done by members at home or while visiting. Several boxes of fabric squares came to us from Texas and one quilt top was sewn in Indianapolis, IN.

Several quilters sewed masks for friends, family and front-line workers during the time we were unable to meet.

One member made a huge stack of school bags for LWR from our donated fabrics too heavy for quilting, during the shut-down.

We would also like to thank the second service gentlemen who helped us set up for workdays in January and February and to Pastor Beth, for letting us leave our work areas set up between workdays.

Outreach

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

We were able to collect 149 packed boxes for this year's Operation Christmas Child project! This is especially amazing since last year we collected close to 180 with a packing party! The boxes were dedicated on November 15, thank you so much for your generosity!



SAFS Christmas

We are participating in SAFS Christmas food/gift program. Thanks to your generosity we have reached our food goal! There is a Christmas tree on the front door with each individual person for Christmas gifts if you would like to buy 1 Christmas gift card for a person in the community. All gift cards for Christmas are due December 13th. Thank you again St. Stephen!

ELCA Good Gifts

Looking for the perfect gift for someone who has everything already? How about a sheep, cow, or some honeybees? Hard to keep in Sylvania? Well, never fear...ELCA Good Gifts provides these animals to help them become self-sustaining. You can find more information at goodgifts.elca.org. If you'd like to send along a card with your gift, you'll find some available on the round table in the narthex. Janell would also be happy to mail one to your house for you to send to the recipient.



Winter Clothing Drive

We are collecting new and gently used warm winter clothing for children and adults in the area who may be in need. A wooden donation box will be available soon at St. Stephen or drop them off to the church office during the week. Thanks in advance for your generosity!



Church Finances

GIVE PLUS

With social distancing and limited abilities to come together to worship at church, our ability to contribute to St. Stephen has been impacted. For those members who are comfortable with using new technologies to contribute, there is a smart phone app to make our donations. For complete instructions on how to use GivePlus, please see the St. Stephen website!

ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS

Please remember to direct your "Thrivent Choice" dollars now and again before year end. Call me at (419)654-6264 with any questions.

Sally Goetz

SIMPLY GIVING

Any members who are currently enrolled in the Simply Giving Program at St. Stephen who would like to make changes to their withdrawals are encouraged to do so prior to December 23, 2020, for them to be effective on or after January 1, 2021. Call me at 419-654-6264 for a form and I will mail it to you.

Sally Goetz

Birth Announcement



Salvatore Thomas Scuralli

Congratulations to Adam and Jenna Scuralli on the birth of their second son Salvatore! He was also welcomed into the world by his big brother Sonny (Santino) and his proud grandparents Amy Chauvette and Marilyn and Nick Scuralli!

Administrative News

COMMUNITY VACCINATION SPOT

We have been approached by the Lucas County Health Department about serving the community as a site for vaccination for the Covid-19 virus. Several years ago, we had put together a team in case a mass vaccination event were to occur, and some of you had been recruited to help. We're not sure if the county is following the same model, but if we would be a vaccination (not a testing site), we may need some volunteers to help with this. If you'd be interested, stay tuned for further information.

ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

On November 8th, we held our annual meeting virtually with 30 attendees. We also received 11 paper ballots. The 2 proposed constitutional changes, the 2021 budget, and the renewal of 3 council members to a 2-year term were all unanimously approved. Council will be meeting this month to elect officers, assign liaison ministries, and begin planning for 2021. Thank you to all who participated.

DECORATING

For our Christmas Eve outdoor Carols and Christmas reading service and the 12 days of Christmas, we're hoping to have some Christmas lights on our trees and bushes to add a festive note for us and our neighbors. If you have some white Christmas outdoor light strands that you won't be using this year, would you consider donating them to St. Stephen? If you'd love to help with the outdoor decorating, please contact Joe Kahl. Thanks!

FACEBOOK FOCUS

During the days of Advent, you're invited to take a cell phone picture of your family's Nativity and send it to Pastor Beth. If you'd like to include a note about its origin, or a favorite figure, or a favorite story that accompanies it, Pastor Beth will share those with people on Facebook. During the 12 days of Christmas, Chrismons (the cross-stitched round ornaments on the narthex Christmas tree) will be featured.

PASTOR BETH VACATION

Pastor Beth will be on vacation from December 25th through January 2nd. She will be available for pastoral emergencies during that time, but she will not be in the office. Deaconess Jennifer Heinze will lead our on-line worship on Sunday, December 27th.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for the **January 2021** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by December 8.**



Prayer

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Lord, please guide us as we head toward Christmas and the new year. We ask for Your love to permeate our lives. We're grateful for all we have, and we ask that we can keep our focus on what is right and good. Please protect us throughout the holiday season and prepare our hearts for what's to come in the new year. In the name of Your son Jesus I pray. Amen.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Jill—Comfort, Strength & Peace
Joel—Strength and Recovery
Jamie—Healing and Insight
Hanna C.—Strength and Healing
Chelsey—Healing & Peace
Lila & Lib—Peace & Comfort
Sarah's Family—Comfort & Healing
Linda—Cancer
Zachary—Answers and Comfort
Don—Healing
Richard—Work
Ryan—Peace & Success
Noah—Strength and Understanding
Jeff—Guidance & Understanding
Lyndsey—Healing and Comfort
Chesney's Family
Mark D—Healing & Comfort
Amber—Migraines
Rich—Transplant Healing
Holt Family—Healthy Family
Julie—Patience, Peace & Guidance
Kathleen—Comfort & Healing
Joan—Healing & Comfort
Nora—Continued Healing
Joyce—Cancer

Fun

ALL IN GOOD FUN

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



Thanks to Nadine Fafard (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-24-2001

THAT'S THE BEST ONE-STAR HOTEL THAT I'VE EVER SEEN

BIBLE QUIZ

Which Gospel is written by a doctor?

(Answer page 8)

- A. Matthew
- B. Mark
- C. Luke
- D. John

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

2020 Council Members

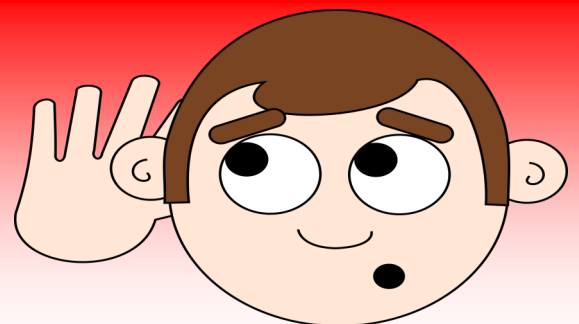
<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Joe Kahl
<i>Secretary</i>	Corrie Schuppenies
<i>Treasurer</i>	Libby Boldt

Ministry Liaisons were established as follows:

<i>Christian Education</i>	Pastor Beth
<i>Finance</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Prayer, Praise, Worship</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Property</i>	Joe Kahl
<i>Stewardship/Staff Support</i>	Beth Thomsen/Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Technology</i>	John Lock
<i>Youth & Family Ministry</i>	Corrie Schuppenies
<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.

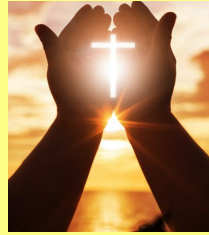


Steve's Bulletin Board

Congratulations

We wish God's blessings upon Beth Thomsen and Nick Madden who will be married at Nazareth Hall on Saturday, December 5th. Congratulations to you both!

Facebook Prayers



For the past few months, we've been inviting people to pray with us through our Facebook page. We've prayed for a variety of people and

places and situations in our world. If you have a suggestion for our prayers, please let Pastor Beth know and she will include it.



Passing Out Candy at Mask-Par-Aid

Bible Quiz Answer:

C. Luke

December Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

12/1	Jalen Ballard
12/5	Patrick McCoy
12/19	Michelle Ballard
12/21	Ashley Senci
12/23	Ashley Huffman
12/24	Kristin Huffman
12/28	Kay Bork


Birthdays

12/5	Sarah McCoy
12/4	Rich Cornell
12/6	Kay Bork
12/12	Becky Henderson
12/18	David Aldrich
12/31	Ray Hendricks

Anniversaries

12/15	Marty & Lin McKelvey
12/17	Ken & Sue Marvin

December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion 7:00 PM Advent Zoom	3	4	5 Beth Thomsen & Nick Madden Wedding in Grand Rapids, OH
6 11AM Online Worship 12 PM Catechism	7	8 Newsletter Deadline	9 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion 7:00 PM Advent Zoom	10	11	12
13 11AM Online Worship	14 7:00 PM Coun- cil Meeting	15	16 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion 7:00 PM Advent Zoom	17	18	19
20 11AM Online Worship 12 PM Youth Event 2PM Light in the Park @Burnham Park	21	22	23 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	24 5:00 PM Online Worship 6:00 PM Out- door Caroling Service	25 	26
27 11AM Online Worship	28	29	30	31		
Pastor Beth Vacation						