

# Vision of St. Stephen

## December 2017



St. Stephen Lutheran Church  
7800 Erie St. • Sylvania, OH  
(419)885-1551  
[www.ststephensylvania.church](http://www.ststephensylvania.church)

Pastor: Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson  
[sslcpastor@buckeye-express.com](mailto:sslcpastor@buckeye-express.com)  
Worship: Sundays 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM  
Spiritual Growth 9:45 AM

**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. (John 1:6-7)**

During the season of Advent, we spent at least two Sundays thinking about John the Baptizer and his role in Jesus' life. We hear stories from Mark and from John's gospel about this man, living in the wilderness, calling people to repent and to turn their lives around, giving them up to God. As a sign of that repentance, John baptizes people in the river Jordan.

John's gospel is the sole one to include this other item of the Baptizer's job description. John comes "as a witness to the testify to the light". In other versions, the wording is John came "to bear witness to the light".

In this season of winter, when it gets dark close to 5:30 and when a flood of horrible events has inundated our consciousness, it can feel like we're drowning in darkness. No place seems safe, no one has immunity. Death and destruction seem to be lurking right around the corner. During a very mundane shopping trip to Kroger, I overheard a stranger talking on her phone about new baby in her family that was on life support and close to death. Life feels so precarious.

In this darkness, the image of a light burning fiercely, steadily, and brightly is a powerful one for me. The rays of light punch through the darkness, eliminating its power. With John the Baptizer, we too are called to bear witness to this light, especially in the midst of darkness. It is a tall order. How do we do this?

We keep on keeping on. Do not get discouraged or give up. Keep working little bit, by little bit.

We pray.... we're not able to do this alone. It's okay to ask God for help, even for God to help us spread the good news.

We share...we share our blessing of time, talents, and possessions with those we meet.

We take time to celebrate and rejoice...even the little things we see are signs of hope around us.

We revel in the gift of music. It doesn't matter what style is your favorite...even the notes of blues keep the blues away!

We ask for help when we become overwhelmed...remembering that, then, we provide another with a chance to give of themselves to help us.

So, as you drive through neighborhoods admiring the Christmas lights, or go the zoo to see their display, remind yourself of our calling as Christians. Because, "The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world" (John 1:9). We are called to bear witness to the light, Jesus, born as a little baby.... born to die.... for this weary, lonely world.

Peace,  
*Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson*

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# Spiritual Growth

## **ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES**

Our Advent worship services will be held at 7:00 PM, beginning December 6, 13 and 20. As we wait, a good way to pass the time is to tell stories. This Advent, as we wait for Jesus' birth, we'll be hearing stories at our 7:00 p.m. worship. These are stories of hope, stories of expectation, stories of God's presence in our world gathered from a variety of sources. Among those stories may be a sermon or two that Martin Luther preached on Christmas eve. You're invited to this half hour worship time together.

## **ADVENT CAMP**

You are invited to an Advent Camp at Camp Mowana from December 1-3. This family retreat is designed with time Holiday Crafts, Family Devotions, Prayer Stations, Hiking, Snacks, Playground Time, Games, and Song, as we take a break from the busy Christmas season to "Make Room for Jesus".

## **BOOK STUDY**

Our Brand Luther book study has come to an end, but some would like to continue, with a different person and book as the focus. So far, a suggestion has been made to study Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and work. If you have an additional idea or person you'd like to study, please speak with Pastor Beth.

## **COOKIE EXCHANGE AND FELLOWSHIP**

Please join us for a cookie exchange and fellowship between services on Dec 3 in the Fellowship Hall. All you need to do is bring a dozen cookies to exchange for a dozen cookies to bring home. Feel free to bring your cookie recipe to share. Hope to see you all there!



# Youth and Family

## **2018 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING**

As two of our youth prepare to attend the National Youth Gathering in Houston this summer, we have a couple of upcoming events. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, we meet at Olivet for a preliminary session at 3:30. Then in January, during Christmas break, we'll have an overnight retreat on Thursday, January 4<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Beth will be accompanying this group of high school students from Olivet and St. Stephen to Texas next summer.

## **SUNDAY YOUTH**

Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade youth meet at 9:45 each Sunday to focus on one of the Bible readings for the day. Our themes in December are:

December 3: Keep Alert

December 10: John the Baptist

December 17: Light in the Darkness

We will not be having sessions on Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **CATECHISM CLASSES**

Our journey together through the Old Testament continues as we meet on December 10<sup>th</sup>, following our 11 worship together.

# Christmas Events

## CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

We will be hosting our annual congregational Christmas celebration on December 17th at both the 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM services. The choir will be performing at both services! Please make sure to mark your calendars and join us as we focus on the real reason for this holiday and celebrate together!

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

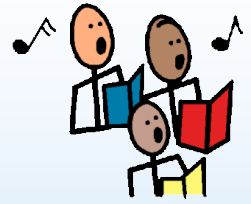
Thank you to everyone who helped to contribute to our OCC boxes as well as those who helped us to pack and deliver them! We were able to send 202 boxes to those around the world who wouldn't get gifts otherwise! Our boxes went to the Ukraine and some hard to reach places, which are not disclosed because of safety concerns for the ministry partners. Thank you again to everyone at St. Stephen who helped make it possible!

## SHOWER FOR MARY

As we celebrate Christmas and the birth of baby Jesus, let's remember those who are bringing babies into the world with few resources. On December 31st, you're invited to bring items for new babies and their mothers to add to our donations to Salem Lutheran's personal needs pantry. Ideas include: onesies, baby shampoo, diapers, lotions, etc. (Please no baby powder, though). "Mary's baby shower" will include a special treat during our fellowship time between services.



## CHOIR PRACTICE



We will be having a special Christmas music performance on December 17th at both services. In preparation we will be holding choir practice between service on December 3rd and 10th. We will be using most of the music from last year, but adding one new song. We hope to see you there!

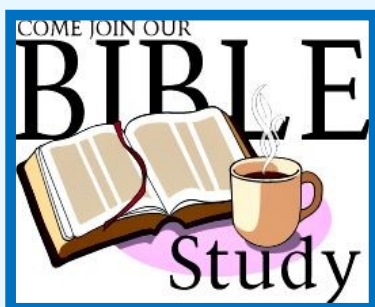
## Christmas Eve Schedule

<i>Service</i>	<i>Time</i>
Sunday Morning Advent Service/ One Wonderful Worship	10:00 AM
Family Christmas Eve Service	4:00 PM
Candlelight Service	7:00 PM
Candlelight Service	10:00 PM

# Women

## JOY CLUB

JOY stands for Just Older Youth and is a great chance for a fun lunch out and fellowship with the women at St. Stephen. The JOY Club meets every month. The next luncheon is scheduled for December 12 at Nancy Pfau's home at 12:30 PM. Lunch will be a salad potluck. Look for the sign up sheet on the bulletin board!



## WOMEN'S DAYTIME BIBLE STUDY

The Women's Daytime Bible study will resume on January 10 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at church. We are studying the book of Exodus and we left the Israelites wandering in the desert. (Exodus 14) We will continue the study in Exodus through February 14 (Ash Wednesday) and resume again after Easter (April 1). If you have not attended before, join us. If you cannot commit to every week, come when you can. We look forward to studying God's Word together. If you have any questions, speak to Nancy Pfau or Betty Lock

# Additional Opportunities

## GREENING OF THE CHURCH

St. Stephen will be decorating the church for Christmas from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM on December 9th in what we call the "Greening of the Church". All help is greatly appreciated and we hope that you will join us!



## SATURDAY MORNING COFFEE

Enjoy a cup of coffee and good conversation in the morning? Head over to McDonald's on Alexis at 9:45 AM every week. It is a great chance to connect and participate in fellowship! *Questions? Contact Tricia Kunkel or Pastor Beth!*



# Outreach

## WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE

Be on the lookout for a clothing box in the Narthex. We will be gathering clean gently used warm clothing though mid February. They will be taken ( all sizes) to area sites such as SAFS or The Giving Store at Glenwood. Think of the coat that is being replaced, outgrown, etc. New items are welcome as well. Watch for the those wonderful sales, knowing your gift will help another.



## LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES FOOD PANTRY

The LSS pantry is currently experiencing heavy request for food from the community. Thanks to everyone who helped to decorate our Thanksgiving altar with donations for the LSS Food Pantry. All donations go to help those in need in our local community. Also, thanks to everyone who continues to donate food to our cart!

## SAFS THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

Thank you to everyone who donated food to the SAFS Thanksgiving baskets and thanks to the Tigers of Boy Scout Pack 116 for helping to pack the baskets for the local families! Also, thanks to everyone who has signed up to help make Christmas special for more local families!



## SALEM NON-FOOD PANTRY

We have an on going collection of hygiene items that we donate to the Salem Non-Food pantry! Things like new toothpaste, toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, soaps, and shampoos are always appreciated. Thank you to everyone who has donated! If you would like to donate, feel free to leave your items on the shelf above the coat rack under the TV in the narthex.

# Administrative News

## MEMBER DIRECTORY

The Membership Directory has been updated and is available for pick up on the usher's table. If there isn't one, please let Janell know and she would be happy to print one out for you! Thank you to all who helped and updated their current contact info!



## CHURCH RENTAL

Want to use St. Stephen rooms? Contact the office to have your activity logged in the church calendar, which is available to view online. However, space approval is based on the secretary's calendar. Please note that set-up and clean up is your responsibility when using the building.

*Please contact the church office before you borrow tables or chairs as they may be promised for other functions. Thanks!*



## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **January 2018** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by December 12.**

# Church Finances

## NOVEMBER GIFTS

### **General Fund**

\$12,089

### **Building Fund:**

\$915

### **Other Designated**

\$721

**NOTE:** TOTALS DO NOT INCLUDE  
NOVEMBER 26 OFFERINGS.

### **KROGER REWARDS**

Kroger's has a rewards program that includes donating to the community. If you have not already done so, please go online to:

[www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com)

Once there, sign up to have your Community Rewards directed to St. Stephen! If you would like assistance in signing up for this program, please see Marilyn Scuralli or Kathy Aldrich.



# Prayer

## PERSONAL PRAYERS

Those desiring prayer for ANY NEED, HEALING, or THANKSGIVING, may find two chairs BETWEEN THE SANCTUARY DOORS with a Praying Friend seated in one of the them. After receiving communion, sit in the other chair and confidentially let the prayer *friend know of your need. She/he will anoint you with oil and pray with you.*

## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

St. Stephen welcomes prayer requests from the community and for family and friends. We will keep each request on for the current month, and an additional month upon request. Here are our current prayer requests:

Jill—Strength and Peace	Joyce—Comfort
Drake—Cancer	Kay—Grieving
Joel—Strength and Recovery	Jamie—Healing and Insight
David Lee—Healing and Comfort	Family of Ron—Comfort and Peace
Jim—Healing and Family	Bea—Cancer
Kay—Comfort and Recovery	Chuck—Healing and Recovery

## **PRAYING FOR THE CONGREGATION**

12/4 Florence Kopfmann  
12/5 Nancy Kubiak  
12/6 Jerry & Tricia Kunkel  
12/7 Kayla Kunkel  
12/11 Edward Labo Sr.  
12/12 Judith Lanham  
12/13 Ruth Liaros  
12/14 Betty Lock  
12/18 John & Debbie Lock  
12/19 Kyle Lock, Autumn  
12/20 Ashley Lock  
12/21 Marian Luck  
1/8 Kayla Marchant  
1/9 Elaura Maple  
1/10 Bill & Sandy Markin  
1/11 Ken & Sue Marvin  
1/15 Linda McDonough  
1/16 Andrew & Val McKelvey, Isabel  
1/17 Marty & Lin McKelvey  
1/18 Mark & April Mercer  
1/22 Austin Mercer  
1/23 Chase Mercer  
1/24 Carley Mercer  
1/25 Ruth Moeller  
1/29 Shawn & Carrie Murphy, Haleigh, Connor  
1/30 Caitlynn Murphy  
1/31 Kelly Parker  
*For specific concerns, please call 419-885-1551, or email Pr. Beth @ sslcpas-tor@buckeye-express.com. Do not leave confidential messages on the machine.*

# Fun

## ALL IN GOOD FUN

A passenger jet was suffering through a severe thunderstorm.

As the passengers were being bounced around by the turbulence,

a young woman turned to a minister sitting next to her and with a

nervous laugh asked, "Reverend, you're a man of God, can't you do something about this storm?"

To which he replied, "Lady, I'm in sales, not management."

## BIBLE QUIZ

What does the word "Magi" mean?

(Answer page 10)

- A. Magic Men
- B. Wise Men
- C. Star-Gazers
- D. Old Men





## **HANDICAPPED PARKING**

We have a few people who are finding it difficult to get from their cars into the church building On Sunday mornings. In addition to the marked spaces at the front door, if we could leave the 6 spaces closest to the back door (3 on either side of the door) available to them, it would make it much easier for them to worship with us. Thank you!

# Council

## **2017 Council Members**

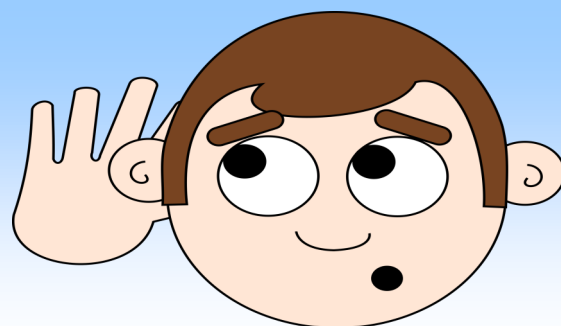
<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Joe Kahl
<i>Secretary</i>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Treasurer</i>	Libby Boldt

## **Ministry Liaisons were established as follows:**

<i>Christian Education</i>	Bryan Huffman
<i>Finance</i>	Libby Boldt
<i>Prayer, Praise, Worship</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Property</i>	Joe Kahl
<i>Stewardship/Staff Support</i>	Beth Thomsen
<i>Technology</i>	Shawn Murphy
<i>Youth &amp; Family Ministry</i>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Social Ministry</i>	Anetta Schmidt

## **HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

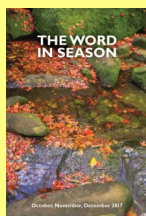
Hearing assistance equipment for up to 8 users available for anyone who needs help hearing the service better. Please ask Jeremy Hopkins or anyone who uses the equipment for assistance.



# Steve's Bulletin Board

See the Bulletin Board in the Narthex for more information and opportunities!

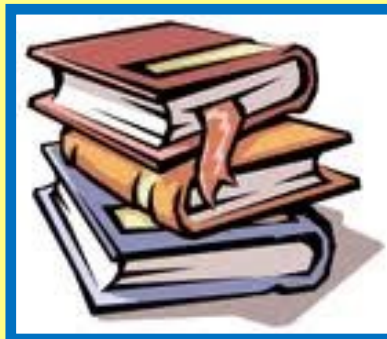
## THE WORD IN SEASON



"The Word in Season" books for October, November and December are now available by the usher's table. This is a great daily resource for at home study! Please feel free to take one today!

## Book Club

Our St. Stephen book group on a brief hiatus until after the holiday season. Hopefully we will be meeting again in January and discussing a book that will be announced at a later date! Keep an eye on future Beacons, newsletters and the St. Stephen website for more information about not only the book, but the date!



# December Celebrations

## Baptismal Birthdays

12/1 Jalen Ballard  
12/1 Patti Pearson  
12/19 Michelle Ballard  
12/20 Carrie Alexander  
12/21 Ashley Lock  
12/23 Ashley Huffman  
12/25 Kristin Huffman  
12/28 Kay Bork

## Birthdays

12/4 Rich Cronell  
12/5 Sandy Brown  
12/5 Michele Ritzenthaler  
12/6 Kay Bork  
12/11 Rodney Pearson  
12/12 Becky Henderson  
12/17 Rob Johnson  
12/18 David Aldrich  
12/19 Jayne Pratt  
12/22 Haleigh Murphy  
12/31 Ray Hendricks

## Anniversaries

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

Bible Quiz Answer:  
C. Star-Gazers


# Volunteer Celebration

	December 3, 2017		December 10 ,2017	
	8:30 AM	11:00 AM	8:30 AM	11:00 AM
<b>Counter</b>	Tom Pfau		Tom Pfau	
<b>Council Person</b>	Libby Boldt			
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Shawn Murphy	Bob Rieck	Dan Gustafson	Marilyn Scuralli
<b>Altar Prep</b>	Carol Brown	Joanne Johnson	Mary Ann Klimesh	Sue Marvin
<b>Greeters</b>	C&D Gustafson	Marty McKelvey	B&C Huffman	Marty McKelvey
<b>Ushers</b>	C&D Gustafson	T&L Tefts	B&C Huffman	Tricia Kunkel

	December 17, 2017		December 24, 2017
	8:30 AM	11:00 AM	10:00 AM
<b>Counter</b>	Dave Haddix		Dave Haddix
<b>Council Person</b>		Marilyn Scuralli	Beth Thomsen
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Nancy Pfau	Beth Thomsen	
<b>Altar Prep</b>	Nancy Pfau	Kathy Ziegler	Cathy Gustafson
<b>Greeters</b>	Carol Brown	Marty McKelvey	
<b>Ushers</b>	Carol Brown		

	December 24, 2017		December 24, 2017	December 31, 2017	
	4:00 PM	7:00 PM	10:00 PM	8:30 AM	11:00 AM
<b>Counter</b>	Dave Haddix			Marilyn Scuralli	
<b>Council Person</b>					
<b>Lay Assistant</b>		Beth Thomsen		Cathy Gus- tafson	Beth Thomsen
<b>Altar Prep</b>	Cathy G./Kay Bork	Kay Bork	Carol Brown	Carol Brown	Nancy Rieck
<b>Greeters</b>				P&H Hoehing	
<b>Ushers</b>				P&H Hoehing	

# December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 9:45AM Saturday Morning Coffee
3 <b>Cookie Exchange</b> <b>Noisy Offering</b> 8AM Prayer 8:30AM Traditional Worship 9:45 AM Spiritual Growth 11AM Contemporary Worship	4	5 6:00PM Girl Scouts	6 7:00PM Advent Worship	7	8	9 9:45AM Saturday Morning Coffee  10:00AM Greening of the Church
10 8AM Prayer 8:30AM Traditional Worship 9:45 AM Spiritual Growth 11AM Contemporary Worship	11 <b>Church Carpet Cleaning</b>	12 <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>  12:30 PM JOY Club	13 5:30/6:30 PM Girl Scouts  7:00PM Advent Worship	14	15	16 9:45AM Saturday Morning Coffee  12:00PM Children's Rehearsal
17 <b>Bring A Friend Sunday/</b> <b>Congregational Christmas Celebration</b> 8AM Prayer 8:30AM Traditional Worship 9:45 AM Spiritual Growth 9:45 AM 5th & 6th Graders 11AM Contemporary Worship 11AM Children's Christmas Program	18 6:30 Council Meeting @ Schmidt's	19	20 7:00PM Advent Worship	21	22	23 9:45AM Saturday Morning Coffee
24 <b>Christmas Eve</b> 8AM Prayer 9:30AM Prayer 10:00 AM One Wonderful Worship  4:00 PM Christmas Eve Service 7 PM Christmas Eve Service 10 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 	26	27	28	29	30 9:45AM Saturday Morning Coffee
31 <b>New Year's Eve</b>  8AM Prayer 8:30AM Traditional Worship 9:45 AM Spiritual Growth 11AM Contemporary Worship						

**Pastor Beth on Vacation**