

Vision of St. Stephen

September 2020

"THOUGH THE MOUNTAINS BE SHAKEN AND
THE HILLS BE REMOVED, YET MY UNFAILING
LOVE FOR YOU WILL NOT BE SHAKEN NOR
MY COVENANT OF PEACE BE REMOVED,"
SAYS THE LORD, WHO HAS COMPASSION ON YOU.

ISAIAH 54:10

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"Everything is so different now." Have you found yourself saying that, or hearing others say it?

During September, here at St. Stephen it's time for re-covenanting. Attendees are invited to sign a covenant that restates the promises made in baptism and in confirmation, bring that paper to worship, and place it in a basket on the altar. When I came to St. Stephen, this was a new tradition for me. I had never been part of a congregation that did this. It has become a special event. I so enjoy seeing all of you, one by one, or representative from the family, come forward and place your paper on the altar. It is a powerful visual sign of a commitment to follow Jesus and to be part of the life of this congregation. I find the Sundays in September when we do this to be very moving.

As you can read in the re-covenanting letter enclosed with your paper copy of this newsletter, or coming soon to your mailbox, if you receive this by e-mail, we'll be returning these covenants differently this year.

Rather than just sighing over yet one more thing that is different, I invite you to be intentional about reading, praying over, and returning the covenant.

The questions it asks, the ones we ask at baptism and confirmation, are powerful ones. How do you go about living among God's faithful people, hearing the word of God and sharing in the Lord's supper, proclaiming the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serving all people, following the example of Jesus, and striving for justice and peace in all the earth?

During the past few months, life has been different. You may know people who are really struggling with anxiety and worry. Having a community where they hear that they are loved and valued and where they can use their gifts to make a difference may help! This is a good time to invite them to come to worship here at St. Stephen.

On September 13th, we're having our annual Friends and Family Sunday. Of course, it will be a bit different! You're welcome to invite people to our drive-in worship that day. We'll be sharing ice cream treats after worship. You're welcome to invite people to worship on-line with us that day, as well. Joe Kahl has used a Facebook feature called a watch party where you can invite people on your friends list to join you on-line (from their own homes) and watch our worship together. (I am volunteering him to help you figure out how to do that if you'd like to try it.) If people respond to your invitation, please follow up with them and ask them about their experience.

May God's peace surround you and bring you the knowledge that you are beloved and precious to God and to the people of St. Stephen.

Beth Ferne Johnson, pastor

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Spiritual Growth

WORSHIP PLANS

For the next two months, our worship schedule will be as follows. On-line worship with Facebook Live happens every Sunday at 11:00 and is posted for participation on Facebook and YouTube afterwards. Drive-In Worship services will happen (weather permitting) every other Sunday. Drive-in worship will be held on September 13, 27, and October 11 and 25.

WALK-UP COMMUNION

Walk-up Communion is offered outside under our covered walkway on Wednesdays from 3-6 p.m. for households that have been quarantining together. We are communing using wafers, and a choice of wine or grape juice, which have been prepared in a safe manner. A bulletin and instructions are available on our website under the Resources tab. This 5-7 minute service features Confession and Forgiveness, as well as Holy Communion. It is also designed to provide physical distancing. The service is very similar to how communion is shared with folks in the hospital and those unable to come to worship. If these times don't work for you or your family, please contact Pastor Beth to make alternate arrangements.

ONLINE WORSHIP

We will be hosting Sunday Worship online at 11:00 a.m. while Ohio is in phase 1 and safety procedures are in place. You can find previous worship services or tune in live on our facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/StStephenSyl/>) or our YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcriagedIjITq2ljXXUnB7Q>). Feel free to send this link or share our page to friends and neighbors who might want a worship experience without leaving home!

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.

Youth and Family

CATECHISM

Classes will be starting soon!

FRIENDS AND FAMILY SUNDAY

On Sunday, September 13th, we'll be having a socially distanced ice cream social after our drive-in worship. You're invited to reach out to family and friends, especially those who don't have a church home, and invite them to worship with us on Facebook or in our parking lot! For those who'd like to stay after worship, we will be passing out popsicles or another similar treat and inviting you to eat it, while socially distancing.

Women

LWR QUILTING

Quilting will still continue with safety restrictions. Please RSVP to Libby Boldt at 419-356-6244 or Lboldt@bex.net, and feel free to contact her with any questions that you may have.

Sylvia Haddad, the executive director of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), shares this personal account of her experience with the Beirut explosion on August 4, 2020.

On August 4, 2020, at 7 pm local time, all buildings in Beirut felt the earth shake beneath them. As I live on the 10th floor of a 12 story building, my immediate reaction was to run down the steps as an earthquake was about to demolish my building, But seconds later a brief and sharp deafening strong blast stopped me in my tracks and sent me to the window to look up searching for Israeli planes bombing us, an experience we have had before. But a clear sky told me I was mistaken and so I ran to the balcony looking for smoke. Looking down I saw huge window frames flying down from the 4 flats beneath me landing on the parked cars. My immediate reaction was to look with my heart pounding, for the children of our doorman who play most of the day with their toys in a small area right to the side of the parked cars where the window panes had fallen. Relief engulfed me when I saw they were not there.

But my mind raced-what happened- whom shall I ask?!! No radio or TV as it was not our turn to have electricity [The community has access to electricity on a rotating basis]. I then remembered my battery run radio which saved me and I started to hear the horror of what was happening as our excellent reporters had arrived at the scene and were trying to relay what was happening. As the electricity came on, I sat dumbfounded watching what was happening on the television and horrified by what I was seeing. Suddenly, the doorbell rang and my two grandchildren, who had gone to the mountains the day before, stood there. „Our house has been hit, they said and our parents have gone to check". Expecting a quick return of the parents, I was shocked to hear from them an hour later that the debris on the streets to their house in the Rmeil area of Ashrafiyeh was preventing them from reaching.

They also reported seeing the big Orthodox hospital of Beirut next to their house badly hit. Upon their return, the expression on my daughter's face told the story. Their apartment, one mile and a half away from the scene of the explosion, was badly hit and most of the contents damaged. We all looked at each other connected with one thought: thank God they were not in their house when the explosion happened.

The next morning, the horror of what had happened began to unfold. A colossal explosion had taken place at the Beirut Sea-Port which destroyed it completely. A big number of the one thousand persons who worked there had disappeared under the rubble or in the sea. The main grain silo, which holds around 85 per cent of the country's wheat was destroyed and so were many containers storing vital necessities of life such as medicines and life-sustaining equipment were also gone. All the buildings across from the port were very badly damaged including the huge building of the administrative offices of the electricity company of Lebanon. The Lebanese Civil Defense and the Red Cross came to the rescue, evacuating the injured. The last to be rescued was the badly injured CEO of the company who is still struggling for his life.

Credible reports state that some 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate unloaded from a disabled vessel in 2014 had been stored in a port warehouse. An accident – undetermined cause yet – caused the ammonium nitrate to explode. As time goes on, the consequences of this explosion will be even more serious than the immediate casualties and property damage. The port will no longer be able to receive goods, especially that, Lebanon imports 80 per cent of what it consumes and the government has lost one of its major income revenues.

Outreach

Salem Non-Food Pantry

The Salem Non-Food Pantry is in need of supplies! Toothpaste, toothbrushes, natural hair care products, laundry detergent, diapers, onesies, shampoo, conditioner, hand soap, and other similar items are all needed for those in need in the community!



Kid's Movie Club

St. Stephen's Kid's Movie Club is hoping to meet Thursday, October 1st at 5:00 PM. We are now aligning our meet-ups with the school color system. If it goes red we will not meet, yellow and green we will meet with COVID restrictions in place.

Feed Your Neighbor

We were recently featured in the Sylvania Advantage for "Feed Your Neighbor", a local initiative to collect canned goods and non-perishable food items to restock LSS food pantries which have been hit hard with the current pandemic. The collection bin will be located outside the church main doors, making it possible for you to drop off donations at your own convenience! Thank you!



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Our gathering of Operation Christmas Child boxes continues this year, although without a packing party. You're invited to pick up a shoe-box here at church (by appointment, during quilting, during communion) at your convenience, fill it and return it to the church.

Church Finances

FINANCIAL UPDATE

We appreciate your continued financial support of our congregation during these challenging times. Our giving is down, but some of our expenses are down as well. From January through July, we have received \$10,000 less than our expenses. Thank you for your generosity, as you mail in your offerings and use the GivePlus app.

QUARTERLY GIFT

For the 2nd quarter of this year, we're giving a gift of \$500 each to Lutheran World Relief and to Lutheran Disaster Response. Lutheran World Relief is helping the people of Beirut following the explosion in their port. Lutheran Disaster Response is helping those here in the United States dealing with devastation from recent tornados, the Deroche in Iowa, the fires in California and other disasters.

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. This is the same company we process our Simply Giving donations through. For complete instructions on how to use GivePlus, please see the St. Stephen website!



TREASURER

Are you gifted with a talent for accounting, bill paying, and financial acumen? We're looking for someone to become our church treasurer. The job includes paying bills, keeping track of balances on church accounts, and preparing the yearly budget. It involves 4-5 hours per week. If you'd like to know more, please contact Libby Boldt, Marilyn Scuralli, or Pastor Beth. Thanks!!

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The six month financial statements will be available for pick up through September. They will be made available at Wednesday communion or you can call the office to arrange a time to pick yours up, or we can mail you yours if you would prefer. These statements will only be for the first six months of the year and the complete reports for 2020 will be available in 2021, but can let you know how much you have given this year or double check that we have recorded all your giving accurately since we have expanded our giving options!

Administrative News

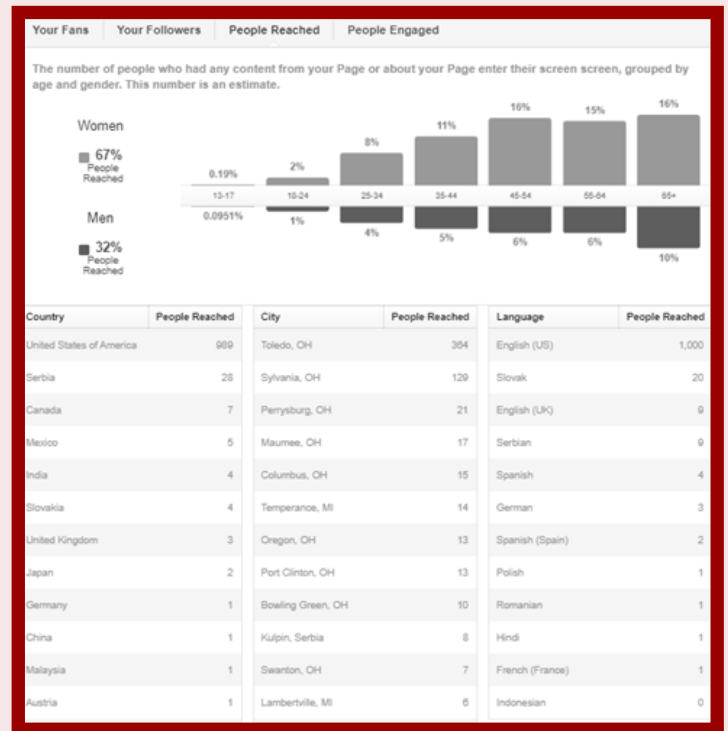


NEW COPIER

We have received our new copier! With updated features that should make this machine more user friendly, as well as all the features that we have required for years. It is still 5 cents per black and white copy.

FACEBOOK STATISTICS

As we continue to expand our use of Facebook for our worship services, announcements and prayer requests, we're seeing a real uptick in our views. Currently, in the past month, we've had 1,006 visits to our page. John Lock shared this slide with council recently, which gives some perspective as to the location of those who are engaging with our page in some way.



LITTLE MIRACLES

As the situation with Covid-19 continues to affect school plans around our area, Little Miracles has decided to suspend their operations here at St. Stephen until January 2021. Their bus will be here each day to take Highland students to and from the Little Miracles location on Harroun Road, but the students will not be here in the building.



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **October 2020** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by September 8.**

Prayer

SEPTEMBER PRAYER NOTES

There are two devotional books that I use each morning. One is "The Word in Season" (available free at church) and "Mornings with Jesus". This starts my day. I looked at the introduction page for "The Word in Season" this morning and I was both surprised and glad to read the following: "I hope you will find time to carve out your own practice with these devotions. You don't have to set aside mornings.....any time of day will do! Grab a cup of tea and a treat, and take time to dwell with God for a bit." Now I grew up learning that you start your day in prayer and you end your day in prayer. And that is what I try to do. Sometimes, though, I might have an appointment to get to or something I want to finish doing and I forget to take that time. But when I start my day with God, it is a good day! Even Jesus had to find time to be alone with God. "Now it came to pass in those days that He (Jesus) went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke 6: 12) Let's pray.

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
Kim—Surgery Complications

Fun

ALL IN GOOD FUN



BIBLE QUIZ

What type of insects did John the Baptist eat in the desert?

(Answer page 8)

- A. Scorpions
- B. Locusts
- C. Spiders
- D. Ants

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

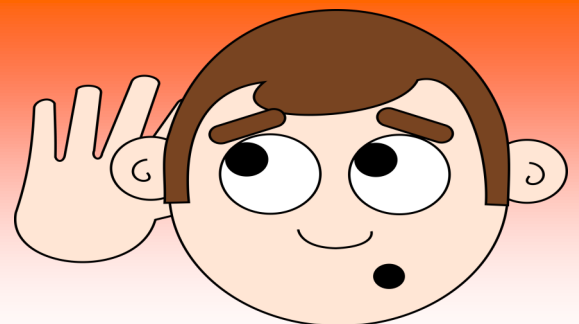
<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Joe Kahl
<i>Secretary</i>	Corrie Schuppenies
<i>Treasurer</i>	Libby Boldt

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 S./Doug Paxton
<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

"I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help Him. I ended up by asking God to do His work through me."
-Hudson Taylor



Bible 101.

Our online group discussion continues as we're working through Mark's gospel. We regularly have 6-7 participants, but with zoom, there's room for more! If you interested in joining the group, please let Pastor Beth know and she'll include you in the email with our zoom meeting code! It's never too late to join in!

The Word In Season

"The Word in Season" books for July, August and September are now available by the usher's table. If you would like one, please call Janell to schedule a pick up. This is a great daily resource for at home study! Please feel free to take one today!

Bible Quiz Answer:

B. Locusts

September Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

9/1	Marty McKelvey
9/17	Marilyn Scuralli
9/22	Jacob Pratt
9/28	Joan Haddox
9/30	Niel Johnson

Birthdays

9/2	Darrell Staup
9/5	Patrick McCoy
9/6	Zoey Jacob
9/8	Mark Mercer
9/9	Kelly Parker
9/12	Clare Aldrich
9/12	Haden Aldrich
9/14	Lisa Hopkins
9/16	Connor Murphy
9/22	Aaron Ziegler
9/25	Daniel Hall
9/25	Ruth Moeller
9/28	Jackie Cornell

Anniversaries

9/2	R&P Pearson
9/5	J&C Hopkins
9/6	L&K Tefft
9/8	S&A Senci
9/14	J&K Bork
9/22	J&S Kahl
9/27	S&K Ziegler

September 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7:00 PM Bible 101	2 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	3	4	5
6 11AM Online Worship	7	8 Newsletter Deadline 7:00 PM Bible 101	9 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	10	11	12
13 Friends and Family Day 11AM Online Worship 11AM Drive-In Worship (Weather Permitting) Ice Cream After Service	14	15 7:00 PM Bible 101	16 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	17	18	19
20 11AM Online Worship	21 6:30 PM Coun- cil Meeting	22 7:00 PM Bible 101	23 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	24	25	26
27 11AM Online Worship 11AM Drive-In Worship (Weather Permitting)	28 9:30AM LWR Quilting	29 7:00 PM Bible 101	30 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion			