

Vision of St. Stephen

December/January 2022/2023



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

Pastor: Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson
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Shepherd

*Until tonight
I could not fit the size of God
into my head.
I thought he was a God
for prophets and kings,
men of words and wisdom.
But tonight I am looking at God made small, small enough for me,
small enough to pick up
and hold like a lamb.
I could not talk to a God in the clouds;
but tonight when I look and smile
and talk nonsense to this tiny thing,
I know that I am
talking to God.
And it is God who smiles
back at me and waves his
perfect hands in delight.
And tonight in your smallness, God,
you seem bigger and more powerful
to me than you ever did before.
I can hold you now,
hold you in my head
and hold me in your arms,
and know that you are holding me in yours.*

Lisa Debney

A blessed Advent, Christmas and New Year to you and yours.

Peace,
Pastor Beth

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Spiritual Growth

Building a Culture of Generosity

Thanks for participating in our fall stewardship program! Over a ⅓ of our giving units returned cards. Of those, 34% indicated an increase in giving over the past year! If at any point in the year, you'd like to complete a card, you'll find them in the wooden rack in the narthex. You may put them in the offering box on the narthex table. Thank you!

Bible 101

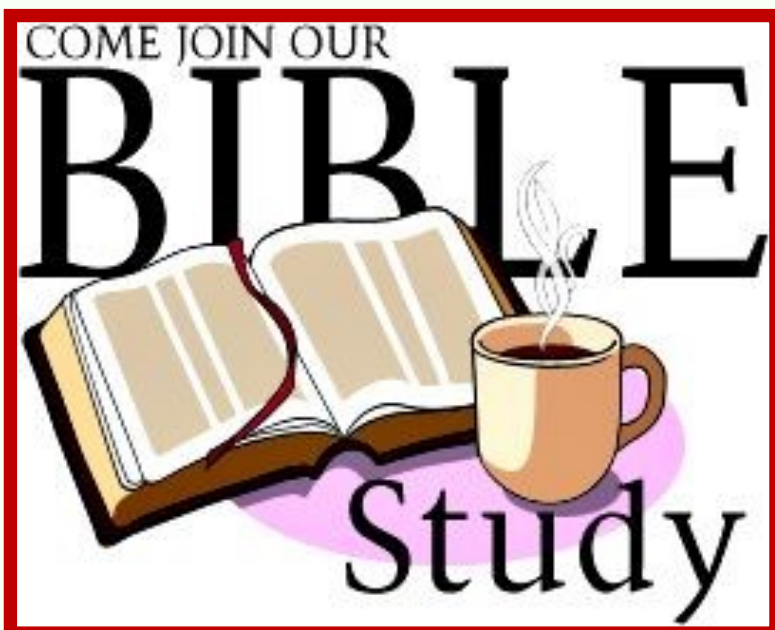
We will conclude our study of Shalom Sistas on November 29th and decide what we will be looking at next. We will meet December 6 and 13th!

Professional Leadership Retreat

Pastor Beth will be away for continuing education from January 24-25. This annual event involves clergy and leaders from all 3 Ohio synods.

Gathering Space Returns

On Sunday, January 8th, our Gathering Space returns! This group of learners meets from 9:00-10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the large room off the Fellowship Hall. We'll be looking at a variety of topics over the next year, so come eager for conversation and opportunities to ask questions and get to know each other better.



Wednesday Bible Study

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope". Have you heard or seen this quote from Jeremiah 29:11 before? It's a Bible verse popular in home decor and social media posts. What else does the book of Jeremiah say to both the original hearers and to us? We'll explore this Old Testament book together on Wednesdays from 11a.m.-12:00 p.m. beginning on January 11th. We will gather in the library, next to our main doors for this time of conversation and growing in faith.

Advent & Christmas Services

Advent Wednesdays—Eat. Worship. Create

We have a multitude of opportunities to gather on Wednesdays in Advent! At noon, we'll have soup/bread, followed by a craft/short litany at 12:30. Communion will be offered after the craft. At 6:00, we'll gather for a supper meal of soup/bread, followed by Holden Evening prayer with communion at 6:30 p.m., and then a Christmas themed craft will begin at 7:00 p.m. You're invited to come and go as your schedule allows during these events. For the craft portion, you'll be invited to make something to take home and another item to share with a shut-in or one of our SAFS families.

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

We'll gather on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24th for worship with candlelight, carols, and communion at 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Our nursery will be staffed for the 4:00 worship service. On Sunday, Christmas Day, we'll gather for worship at 10:30 a.m. We'll have a time for fellowship after worship with a "Happy Birthday Jesus" cake. If you like, you're welcome to come in your pajamas as we celebrate Jesus's birth!

Christmas Program

On Sunday, December 18th, our worship will feature our young people talking about their favorite person in the Christmas gospel story. We'll also intersperse these video clips with Christmas carols. Please join us for a celebration of Jesus' birthday!



Fun & Fellowship

Christmas Caroling to Our Shut In Members

Would you like to bring some Christmas joy to our shut-in members? We'll be gathering on Sunday, December 11th at 1:00 p.m. to get organized. We'll stop at folks houses/care centers and sing 3-4 songs, read the Christmas gospel, and drop off a gift we'll create at our Advent Worship services. If you'd like to carpool, that would be great. Please sign up on the narthex bulletin board to let us know of your interest in participating. Thanks! (Please bring a mask in case we need to wear them at the care facilities.)



JOY club

Joy Club will meet on Tuesday, December 13th at the home of Libby Boldt. Libby will provide lunch, but you're invited to bring a fun inexpensive gift for a gift exchange. Please wrap the gift in a warm hat or scarf that will be donated to someone in need. A sign up sheet for this 12:00 noon lunch is on the narthex bulletin board.



Game Night

Looking to enjoy a night of fellowship? On Epiphany, January 6th, we'll be having a game night from 7-9 p.m. You're welcome to bring a favorite board game or card game to share!

2023 Small Groups

Are you looking to make connections with others at church? Interested in getting together with others in a different format from Sunday morning? We'd like to establish some more small groups here at St. Stephen. Here are some ones that have been suggested. A men's lunch group, similar to JOY club, that would eat out monthly with conversation. A crochets/knitting group for folks to learn these skills and perhaps make things for Operation Christmas Child boxes, or work on their own established projects and chat while working together. A book group that would select a novel (on any topic) and then meet once a month to discuss it. An Auto Angels group that would help drive some of our folks to medical appointments. We're planning to bring back our Sunday afternoon movie in February. Are there other ideas you'd like to try? Please speak with Pastor Beth or a member of church council and share your ideas.

Coffee & Conversation

Our coffee and conversation group which meets Saturdays at 9:30 AM will be rotating its location between Chick-Fil-A and Geer Edibles in Mayberry Square!

Outreach

Sylvania Area Family Services

If you'd like to help an area family through SAFS, we have 22 individuals from 5 families to sponsor. If you'd like to provide gift cards for food and Christmas gifts, take a look at the display in the narthex or call the church office and Janell can help guide you. All gift cards need to be back at the church by Saturday, December 10th. Thank you for helping others



Warm Clothing Drive

Warm clothing Collection here: We'll be gathering warm winter clothing to share with others in the area as part of Jettie Sansbury's Thrivent Action Team. SAFS and the Family House have requested good clean items for all ages such as coats, hats, scarves, boots, leggings, sweats, and sweaters. Twin blankets and fleece throws are welcome. Thank you!

Ukraine Fundraiser

We would like to say thank for all the support of Thrivent and for everyone that helped with the Spaghetti Luncheon. So far we've raised \$1,541.85. With the left over funds from the Thrivent action team we were able to purchase 13 boxes of pasta, 6 jars of pasta sauce, 30 boxes of Mac and cheese, and 6 (5 pound) jars of peanut butter which were donated to SAFS!



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.



Church Finances

ONLINE GIVING

For those who are comfortable using technologies to contribute, Vanco services provides us with a smart phone app (Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement) that we can use to make our donations. You can use this app to make a one time gift to St. Stephen or an ongoing gift. If you have any questions, please contact the church office!

4th Quarter Noisy Offering

Since the Giving Store is no longer operating, we needed to choose another local organization to receive our Noisy offering in the 4th quarter. We will now be donating to Olivet Lutheran for their Wednesday "Daily Bread" community meal. The noisy offering collected during October, November and December will be going there!

Administrative News

NEW YEAR, NEW PRAYER LIST

Our list of people in our prayers for Sunday morning may not be current. In an attempt to refresh it, all names on the prayer list will be suspended, beginning January 8th. Please let Pastor Beth know if the person you named continues to be in need of prayer and she will gladly add it back on our Sunday morning prayer list.

OFFICE CLOSED

Due to Christmas and New Year's falling on Sundays this season, the office will be closed the following Mondays after each holiday. Thank you!

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

If you have something that you want to include in the February Newsletter please submit your article to sslcsecretary@buckeye-express.com by January 10th. Thank you!



A Year in Review

- Advent Worship
- Ash Wednesday & Lenten Services
- Back to Church Sunday
- Bible 101
- Bonfire Get Together
- Celebration of Marriage
- Children's Programs
- Church Photo Directory
- Consecration Sunday Program
- Christmas Donations & Gifts
- Clothing Collection
- Drive-In Worship Sessions
- Easter Contemporary Breakfast / Egg Hunt
- Family Game Nights
- Friends & Family Day / Picnic / Pasta Collection
- Gift Bags + Letters for Shut Ins
- Generosity Stewardship Program
- Green Beans vs Syrup Collection
- HVAC Replacement (2002 unit)
- In House & Online Worship Sessions
- Increased Benevolence
- Inquirer's Class / New Members
- Joy Group Events
- LPGA Parking
- Larry Golba Art Show
- Little Miracles School Program
- Nursery Worker in place
- Operation Christmas Child Packing Event
- Pet Blessing
- Prayer for the Cure
- Property Maintenance Upgrades
- Quilting & Dedication
- Salem Personal Care Collections
- Saturday Morning Coffee Group
- Scholarship Distributions
- Shepherd Team / Postcards
- Souper Bowl Donations - \$600 / 140 cans of soup
- St. Paul's Community Donation
- Staff Gifts
- Synod Assembly
- Technology Improvements
- Thanksgiving Food Gifts
- Training for Greeters, Ushers, Lay Assistants
- Tupperware Sale for Ops Christmas Child
- Vacation Bible School
- Warm Clothing Drive
- Wednesday Outdoor Communion
- Welcome Highland Teachers
- Worship Time Survey /Change of Service Time
- Youth Events

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In the News

In the News

Did you hear that author and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott has just given \$15 million to the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service? That's the largest gift received by L.I.R.S. in its 83-year history. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee services is the largest faith based non-profit serving vulnerable immigrants and refugees in the United States. For more information on their good work, check out their website www.lirs.org or their Facebook page.

Prayer

PRAYER FOR A RENEWED HEART *in the new year*

Dear God,
Thank you for your goodness and mercies in
my life.
Thank you for the gift of life and the
forgiveness of sins
As I welcome a new year,
I pray that you Oh God will create in me a
clean heart.
Help me to let go of all my wrong ways
Let your spirit be my guide and teach me the
right thing to do
I've done some things in the past that I'm not
proud of
I want to be a better person
I want to do things right this year.
So please help me in Jesus' name,

Amen

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Jakob—Healing & Comfort
Bolt Family—Healing & Comfort
Helton—Comfort
Alice—Healing & Comfort
Patrick—Comfort & Healing
Imber Family—Comfort & Healing
Jill—Comfort, Strength & Peace
Joe—Strength and Recovery
Chelsey—Healing & Peace
Those with Cancer—Healing
Greg—Healing & Comfort
Olivia—Healing & Comfort
Shannon—Comfort & Peace
Dave—Healing & Comfort
Noah—Strength and Understanding
Devon—Healing & Recovery
COVID Sufferers
Tornado Survivors
Afghanistan Refugees
Ukraine
Victims of Gun Violence

Fun

ALL IN GOOD FUN

Knock Knock.

Who's there?

Mary.

Mary who?

Mary Christmas!

BIBLE QUIZ

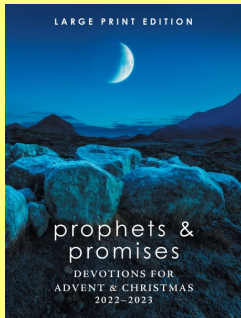
How many miles did Mary and Joseph
travel to Bethlehem?

(Answer page 10)

- A. 50
- B. 80
- C. 95
- D. 130

Steve's Bulletin Board

NEXT WORD IN SEASON IS
AVAILABLE NOW! PLEASE
FEEL FREE TO TAKE ONE!



Advent Devotionals

The Advent devotionals are set out and able to be taken home by anyone who would like one!

Operation Christmas Child

We collected and blessed 116 packed OCC boxes this year!



Bible Quiz Answer:

B. 80

In Loving Memory



Condrad Helton passed on Wed., Nov. 23. The arrangements are being handled by Newcomer on King Road, on Saturday December 10. The visitation will be from 10-Noon with the funeral at Noon. Prayers are requested for Karen Helton and Condrad's daughter, Victoria as well as the extended family. Condrad's obituary was not available at time of publication and will be included in the February newsletter.

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



January Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

1/1	Rich Cornell
1/1	Tom Davis
1/1	Dave Haddix
1/1	Herb Hoehing
1/1	Pat Hoehing
1/1	Nancy Pfau
1/1	Tom Pfau
1/1	Jettie Sansbury
1/3	Elliott Huddleston
1/22	Libby Boldt

Birthdays

1/3	Elliott Huddleston
1/5	Libby Boldt
1/6	Vickie Rygalski
1/9	Megan Cook
1/12	Kathy Ziegler
1/14	Dave Davis
1/25	Richard Johnson
1/26	Jim Boldt
1/26	Craig Scholl
1/30	Barb Davis
1/30	Sandy Markin

Anniversaries

1/18	John & Debbie Lock
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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

2022 Council Members

<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Secretary</i>	(Lin McKelvey beginning in March)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Bob Housel

Ministry Liaisons were established as follows:

<i>Christian Education</i>	Pastor Beth
<i>Finance</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Prayer, Praise, Worship</i>	Pastor Beth
<i>Property</i>	Tom Schmidt
<i>Staff Support</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Stewardship/Evangelism</i>	
<i>Technology</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Youth & Family Ministry</i>	Lin McKelvey
<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.

December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation 10:30 AM Greening of the Church
4 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	5	6 7:00 PM Bible 101	7 12:00 PM Advent Events 6:00 PM Advent Events 6:00 PM Girl Scouts	8	9	10 SAFS Cards Due 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation 12:00 PM Funeral for C. Helton
11 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship 1:00 PM Caroling for Shut-Ins	12	13 12:00 PM JOY Club @ Boldt's 7:00 PM Bible 101	14 12:00 PM Advent Events 6:00 PM Advent Events	15	16	17 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
18 Kid's Christmas Program 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	19 7:00 PM Council	20	21 6:00 PM Girl Scouts	22	23	24 4:00 /7:00PM Christmas Eve Service
25 Christmas Day 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	26 Office Closed	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

January 2023

31Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	2 Office Closed	3 7:00 PM Bible 101	4 5:00 PM Walk-Up Communion	5	6 7:00 PM Game Night	7 10:30 AM Un- decorating the Church
8 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	9	10 Newsletter Deadline 7:00 PM Bible 101	11 11:00 AM Bible Study 5:00 PM Walk-Up Communion	12	13	14 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
15 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	16 7:00 PM Council	17 12:00 PM JOY Club 7:00 PM Bible 101	18 11:00 AM Bible Study 5:00 PM Walk-Up Communion 7:00 PM Gir Scouts	19	20	21 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
22 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	23 9:30 AM LWR Quilting	24 <div>Pastor Beth's Leader Retreat</div>	25 7:00 PM Parkin- son's Group	26	27	28 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
29 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	30	31				