

Vision of St. Stephen

August 2026

I know the LORD
is always with me.
I will not be shaken,

for he is right beside me.

-Psalm 16:8

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

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If you went to Sunday worship as a child, what's your earliest memory of being in worship?

I asked that question recently and got a variety of responses. Some remembered how hard it was to be quiet and still. The word "boring" may have been mentioned. Others remembered being in the nursery. Some went to Sunday School during a portion of worship. Others didn't go to church until they were older. I remember being slightly confused when we moved from one church to another—in the Montpelier church, I could go up and get a blessing during communion. In the early days of being in worship at Clyde, kids had to sit in the pew while their parents' received communion.

As the larger church thinks about how worship shapes us, researchers are beginning to realize that the more we're in church and engaged in it (from the first months of life onward) the more likely we are to be in worship as adults.

To help our younger members and visitors grow and learn during worship, many congregations are beginning to have a "pray ground" area as part of their worship space.

"What's that?", you might wonder. A pray ground is a designated place in the front of the sanctuary where our youngest members can clearly see the altar area. They also can experience worship through different materials that will help them engage with what they see happening through soft toys and imaginative play. Currently we have, with a Thrivent Action Team, purchased some board books, some interactive books, a ragdoll Jesus, and wooden toys where the kids can "play church", imitating what they're seeing happen in the altar area during the communion portion of worship. As we go along, we'll be figuring out what works and what doesn't work so well. All the pray ground items are either worship or Bible based, to encourage learning about God (i.e. no trucks or princess toys).

If you have abilities in making things with wood or with fabric and you'd like to help create some items as we go along, please let me or someone in our planning group know. Currently our group includes Kathy Aldrich, Andrea Bogdan, Karen Bogdan, Jennifer Davis, Michael Gochenour, Lin McKelvey, Marilyn Scuralli, and Pastor Beth.

When you're next in worship, you're invited to take a look at the pray ground area and check out the items there. You're also invited to pray for our youngest members and for all of us, as we grow in faith—no matter what our age might be.

Peace,

Pastor Beth

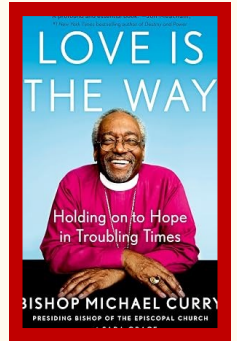
August Contents

Spiritual Growth	2
Activities	3
Outreach	4
Prairie Update	5
Property	5
Administrative News	5
Prayer	6
All In Good Fun	6
Steve's Bulletin Board	7
Celebrations	7
Council	8
Calendar	9

Spiritual Growth

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday Bible study begins on August 5th with a focus on The Way of Love, our synod's focus for 2026. Our hour together will use a synod Bible study, prepared by members of synod staff and Love is the Way, Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times, by former presiding Bishop of the Episcopal church, Bishop Michael Curry. We meet at 11 for discussion and learning together. You're welcome to join—no prior experience is needed!



Save the Date

- The Chosen Bible Study—Season 5 begins Tuesday, September 8, 6:30-8 PM
- End of Summer indoor picnic, Sunday, September 13
- Gathering Space—Dave Haddix leads a study in September
- Pet Blessing—October 17

Planning Ahead for the Holidays

Sylvania Area Family Services are beginning to work on their list of families who need support at Thanksgiving and Christmas. We'll be working on our annual collection of money to support local families in October, hoping to collect all the needed funds for both holidays by early November. Thank you for your generous support of our neighbors!



Activities

JOY Club

We're headed to the Sidelines Sports Eatery on August 18th, at 6060 Renaissance Place, just off Holland-Sylvania. Please sign up on the bulletin board and plan to enjoy food and conversation at noon!

Coffee and Conversations

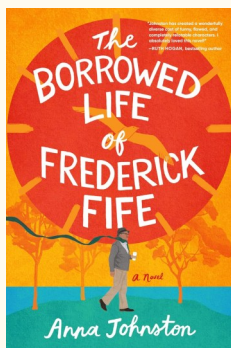
You're invited to stop by at Chick-fil-A on Central and McCord on Saturday August 22, at 9:30 a.m. We try to gather along the back wall—some order some breakfast—others are just there for the conversation. Either way, we visit for about an hour before heading off in different directions.

LSS Food Pantry Cleaning

Do you enjoy a chance to organize cans on a shelf? How about wiping down a refrigerator? Or cleaning chairs in a welcome area? If this sounds like fun, please join us as we clean and organize various areas at the Lutheran Social Service Food Pantry, 2149 Collingwood Blvd, on Saturday, August 8th. We gather at 10 and typically are there until around 11:30. Signing up on our narthex bulletin board is helpful so we know to keep an eye out for you to arrive, as the building is locked over the weekend.

Let's Build Beds

Did you know that there are hundreds of kids within an hour's radius of Whitehouse who don't have a bed to sleep in? Want to help change that number? We'll be participating for the 3rd time with Let's Build Beds event at St. Paul Lutheran, 428 N. Erie Street, downtown Toledo on Sunday, August 23rd from 4-6 p.m. From sanding boards, to drilling holes, to screwing the headboard and footboard together—there's a job for everyone! If you'd like to car-pool, please indicate that on the signup sheet—otherwise, we'll meet at St. Paul's!



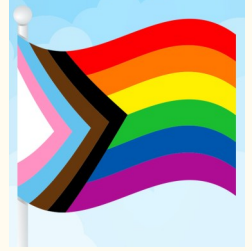
Book Club

Our book club resumes meeting in September on the 4th Thursday of each month at 7 PM! Our September book is "The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife" by Anna Johnston. It's a heartwarming story of redemption and forgiveness, where the main character discovers the power of second chances and found family.

Outreach

Toledo Pride

St. Stephen will be participating with 30+ other faith communities in the Pride Parade March on Saturday, August 15th. If you'd like to join in, please check out the bulletin board or speak with Pastor Beth. We will be meeting at the corner of 18th and Adams Street at 11:30 AM and will be taking a group photo at 11:45 AM! If you'd prefer to volunteer in other ways, there are opportunities to do that as well!



Mudhens

Play Ball! Would you like to go to see the Mudhens play with a group from St. Stephen? We're planning to attend the game on Saturday, September 19th, at 5:05 p.m. If you'd like to go please sign up on the narthex bulletin board. RSVP's are needed by Sunday, August 30th. To pay for your tickets, please write a check to St. Stephen or enclose cash in an envelope clearly marked Mudhens by the RSVP date. Tickets are non-refundable, so please pay even if you end up not attending the game. TARTA is running a \$3 shuttle that departs from the Lourdes Franciscan Center at 90 minutes before each game. We hope you can join us!

Diaper Drive Results

How many diaper changes does a little one go through in a days' time? We may not be able to answer this question—but we provided 2,466 diapers for the Norf End neighborhood pantry based in Salem Lutheran Church! These will be repackaged and distributed to families in need. Many thanks to all who contributed to this cause!



LWR School Kits

It's time for kids to be thinking about heading back to school—but in many countries around the world, education is not free. To help families, LWR provided school kits with all the needed supplies—so we're looking to have people donate 70-100 page school notebooks (either wide or college ruled) for these kits. This year, a Thrivent Action Team will be providing the other items as we seek to provide 50 school kits. We'll be looking for people to help put the items together at our church picnic on September 13th. We will be shipping 50 school kits, and 50-60 quilts this year to those in need! LWR's approximate cost to transport, process, store, and deliver quilts and kits is \$4.00 per item. Please consider making a monetary donation in any amount to help get these items to the people who need them. If you decide to donate, please note "quilt/kits shipping fund" on your donation so the counters know how to direct your contribution.

Prairie Update



Our prairie group will meet on Thursday, August 6th at 7:00 p.m. The report from our friends at Sylvania Outdoor is that it is wonderful! The tickweed sunflower which was so tall and overpowering previous summers is gradually fading out--and the diversity of plants is increasing as they're doing more growing up, now that their root systems are more fully established! We're looking at doing an additional application of seed, as the north side of the prairie is a bit thin, relative to the south side. If you're interested, please join in our conversation on the 6th.

Property Update: Front Door

Have you tried our new handicap door opener? It's a breeze to use--just push the blue button, either coming or going, and the door will swing open to allow a hands-free entry! So whether you're carrying in a donation for LSS food pantry or a pot of soup, it'll be much easier to enter the building. We do have one caveat, however—when the building is locked, because the Little Miracles students are here or is there isn't an event happening, the opener will be turned off. (Basically when the door is locked, the opener will not be turned on to prevent the motor from being burned out trying to open a locked door).



Administrative News

6 Month Financial Statements

The 6 month financial statements are available for pick-up in the Narthex. If you have any questions about your statement, or if you need yours mailed to you, please contact Janell in the office!

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the September newsletter is August 11! If you would like something included, please e-mail Janell at sslcsecretary@buckeye-express.com.



Prayer

BACKPACK BLESSING

Lord bless this backpack,
And the child who carries it this school year.
Wherever they carry their backpack,
Remind them of the love they are surrounded by every day.
Keep them safe and in Your loving care.
Throughout the school year,
May they grow in knowledge, confidence, friendships and faith.
Let them be the best student they can be.
Give them confidence when they are nervous,
Comfort when they are afraid,
And encouragement when they are stressed.

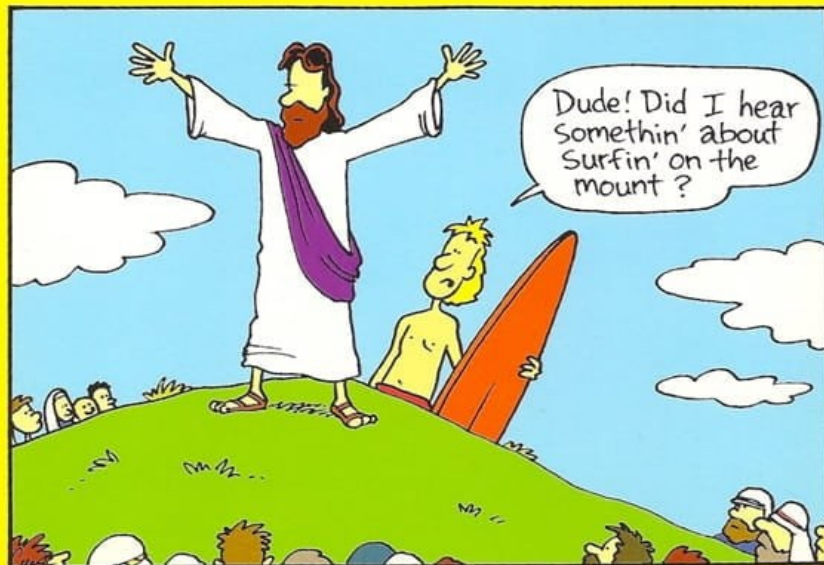


COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Wolf—Stomach Cancer
Laura—Healing & Comfort
Ali—Guidance & Comfort
Lisa—Healing
Brenda—Healing
Mike—Recovery & Guidance
Beth—Healing & Comfort
Nancy P.—Healing & Comfort
Jim—Healing & Recovery
Kay—Healing & Comfort
Nancy—Healing & Comfort

All Victims of Trauma and War

All In Good Fun



Steve's Bulletin Board

HELP SOMEONE CELEBRATE A BIRTHDAY!

As you donate to the LSS food pantry, please consider putting together a special birthday kit to help those experiencing food insecurity celebrate their special day.

To participate, please collect the following items:

- 1 cake mix
- 1 can of frosting
- Birthday candles
- Balloons, a banner, or other festive items
- 1 can of soda (typically lemon-lime)
- A 9x13 foil pan with a lid
- Sprinkles (optional)

Place these items in the 9x13 foil pan and leave the kit on the shelf above the LSS collections. These kits allow for a delicious, fluffy cake to be made without eggs or oil; instructions for the recipients will be included at the pantry. There is no specific timeframe for this collection—we welcome your donations whenever you are moved to participate.



Recycling

We are continuing to collect bags for the Lion's club! Please bring your plastic bags to the box in the Narthex!

August Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

8/1 Mollie McCoy
8/7 Steve Ziegler
8/15 Karen Bogdan

Birthdays

8/1 Dan Noe
8/4 Niel Johnson
8/5 Julie Dangelo
8/6 Kathie Tefft
8/8 Reagan Fox
8/9 Amelia Huddleston
8/10 Marsha Grouls
8/10 Bill Markin
8/16 Marty McKelvey
8/20 Eli Ballard
8/22 Sue Marvin
8/27 Wendy Staup
8/28 Jalen Ballard
8/30 Jake Bogdan
8/31 Arnie Page

Anniversaries

8/2 D&K Aldrich
8/5 J&L Boldt
8/12 B&J Housel
8/20 W&M Dennis
8/21 D&C Haddix
8/22 L&L Golba
8/25 H&P Hoehing
8/29 T&N Pfau

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

2026 Council Members

<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Secretary</i>	Beth Madden
<i>Treasurer</i>	Kathie Tefft

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>	Beth Madden
<i>Technology</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Youth & Family Ministry</i>	Joan Haddox
<i>Social Ministry</i>	Kathy Aldrich
<i>Member at Large</i>	Carol Turvey

WHAT IS COUNCIL?

Church council is a group of members that regularly meet to help guide St. Stephen. If you are interested in being a part of council or learning more about it, please reach out to any member or Pastor Beth for more info!

August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship	3	4	5 11:00 AM Bible Study	6 7:00 PM Prai- rie Meeting	7	8 10:00 AM LSS Cleaning
9 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship	10	11 Newsletter Deadline	12 11:00 AM Bible Study	13	14	15 11:30 AM Toledo Pride
16 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship	17 5:30 PM Church Coun- cil	18 12:00 PM JOY Club	19 11:00 AM Bible Study	20	21	22 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
23 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship 4:00 PM Let's Build Beds	24 LWR Quilting	25	26 11:00 AM Bible Study	27	28	29
30 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/ Online Worship *Mudhens RSVP Deadline	31					