

Vision of St. Stephen

October 2026



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

7800 Erie St. • Sylvania, OH

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www.ststephenlutheran.church

Pastor: Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson

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Martin Luther once was asked what he would do if he knew that the world would end tomorrow. His reply, "I would plant a tree".

His response can elicit puzzlement, questions, and outright laughter—how ridiculous, to plant a tree that will only be in the ground one day before disaster strikes.

And yet, his answer addresses our own sense of helplessness in a world, where we sometimes feel too small, too miniscule to make any kind of difference, especially compared to the power that corporations, CEOs, and governments have at their fingertips.

So...what are we Christians called to do when life seems full of tension, trials, and tribulations?

We're called to do the small things—love, pray, vote, help, share, listen, care...the list goes on and on. And in doing these small, vital things together, we help shape and mold our world to benefit everyone.

A question to ask ourselves is, "Do my actions look like love?", or "Do my actions reflect the fruit of the spirit? Did I demonstrate love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in that conversation, in that interaction?"

We plant these seeds, these trees, and we sleep at night—trusting that God is in the mix and God is working with our words and actions to produce good things in our world, here and now.

Peace, Pastor Beth *Peace, Pastor Beth*

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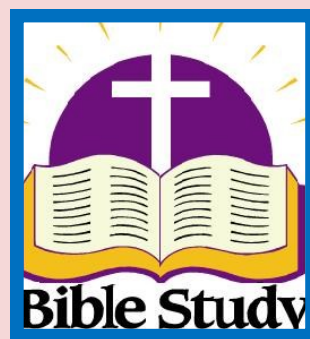
Spiritual Growth

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Our Wednesday Bible study is working their way through the book, Love is the Way, by Bishop Michael Curry. We meet on Wednesdays at 11 a.m.

GUEST PREACHER

Pastor Greg Olsen will be preaching on October 18th, as Pastor Beth leads us in worship. Pastor Beth led 2 afternoon worship services at the Wolf Creek campus while Pastor Greg took a Sunday off.



GATHERING SPACE

Wondering about the end times? Curious about the Book of Revelation? Dave Haddix is leading us through a study of Revelation on Sunday mornings at 9:15. New folks are most welcome to join in the conversation and study. We meet in the library, by the front doors.

“THE CHOSEN” BIBLE STUDY

We plan to conclude our look at Season 5, the events of Holy Week, on October 27th. We’d like to thank Jamile Shibley for leading this viewing and conversation of each episode. We meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays in the large classroom off the fellowship hall (enter through the Fellowship hall door).

PRAYER AT THE PRAIRIE

Join us for an evening at the prairie! We’ll provide a bonfire, S’mores dessert, cider and donuts, camp songs, and some prayers! You’re invited to bring a bag chair (Folding chairs will be available, too). Larry Golba will be leading us on guitar in some camp songs, as we view and enjoy the prairie from the edge of the parking lot. Please join us from 6:30-7:30 PM on Wednesday, October 14th (rain date October 21st).

NOTICE OF OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, November 8th. Please plan to join us as we hear reports of our ministry work during the past year and consider our 2027 budget. After our meeting, we’ll adjourn for our Chili-cook-off! Who will have the winning chili this year? Will it be yours?

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1st

Join us in worship as we remember those who have died before us in the faith, especially those who have died since last All Saints. You’ll have the opportunity to write the names of those who are special to you in our Book of the Dead and have those names lifted up in our prayers of the church.

Activities

BLESSING OF THE QUILTS AND KITS

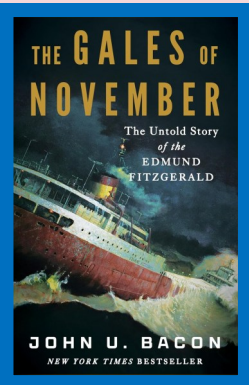
During worship on Sunday, October 4th, we'll be blessing the quilts and school kits as we send them off to Lutheran World Relief. We're also having a collection for the shipping of these items to their final destinations. Our goal is \$450, as each quilt costs each school kit cost \$4 to ship.

JOY CLUB

Women, you're invited to join the Joy Club for lunch at Rooster's, 5702 Monroe Street on Tuesday, October 20th, at noon. Please sign up on the bulletin board. Kathie Tefft will be organizing our lunch this month.

SOUP POTLUCK

After worship on October 11th, we'll enjoy our annual soup potluck! Sign up on the bulletin board to bring your favorite soup for our meal together. This is a change in date as the previous date wasn't working for our volunteers. You're invited to bring a soup to share and enjoy those brought by others!



BOOK GROUP

For October 17th, our book Group is reading, "The Gales of November, The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald" by John U. Bacon. Eric Johnson, who joined St. Stephen this spring, was on the Arthur Anderson that night, the freighter that was asked to turn around and go the aid of the Fitzgerald. Eric will be joining us to speak about his experience on Lake Superior. The author, John U. Bacon, will be presenting a free lecture at the Valentine Theatre on Thursday, November 19th, 7:00 p.m. (You need to register with the National Maritime Museum, a Zoom option is also available.)

LSS THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the LSS food pantry. Your donations of nonperishable food items really help stock the shelves.

If you have led a Thrivent Action Team or participated in an accompanying food drive, please know that your efforts have made a significant impact on our pantry shelves and the choices available to our clients. Thank you Mary Hanson and Kathie Tefft for your recent Thrivent Action Teams!

The Birthday Kits are also very much appreciated and have certainly brought joy to others. As the kits are received, they will be delivered to the pantry. We have a 12 pack of the needed soda in the nar-thex—so grab a can to add to the birthday kit! (no need to buy a can yourself.)

Lutheran Social Services of Northwest Ohio is celebrating 115 years of serving our neighbors!! That's a good long time to be at work in our communities! Nationally, LSS assists 1 in every 6 Americans!!

Parking Lot

Hello, members and friends of St. Stephen! Here's a summary of our special meeting of the congregation to discuss our parking lot.

Aside from a repair in the early 2010's, most of the parking lot is original. It is beginning to show its age, especially in the main track that runs north and south.



In these photos looking south, you can see the lines of the pavement breakdown. We have tried to fill holes with cement, but these patches we have done ourselves (see bottom right photo) are a band-aid.

As we think about this, we have some good news to share with you!

It all started with a conversation last spring that I had with Mr. Swaggerty, the Highland school principal. On our last Euchre night, I arrived to find that our parking lot was rapidly filling up with Highland cars, as they also had an event that night. I called Mr. Swaggerty and

he came over to help redirect some of the Highland parents to park elsewhere. As we stood in the parking lot, we ended up talking about the state of the parking lot and how frequently it is used by Highland parents, for morning and afternoon pickup and dropoffs as well as any other events attended by family members. I told him that we were looking at redoing the parking lot, but that the price was intimidating—to the point that church council had talked about intentionally making the lot smaller

to save costs. Mr. Swaggerty said that he'd see if the School District could help. After conversation with the superintendent this summer, the district has agreed to our ask of paying for half the project. Please note that the monies coming for this are from the district's building fund, not their operating funds. The levy before Sylvania residents in November is related to the district's operating funds that pay salaries and student services. The building fund purchases buses, provides building upgrades, etc.

We have a bid to tear out the existing parking lot and to rebuild it. The center of the lot, from Erie Street to the north, where people drive, will be rebuilt to a level of 4.5 inches. The parking spots will have 3.5 inches of asphalt.



Here are numbers from Jennite:

Quote for repaving of parking lot	\$93,005
Less: School portion	<u>-46,003</u>
St. Stephen portion	46,002
Plus: pad for the dumpster (100% ours)	<u>+ 5,380</u>
Total project cost for St. Stephen	\$51,382

The paving company suggests adding a concrete pad in front of the dumpster, so that when the trash truck stops and lifts the dumpster up over the cab of the truck, it will be stopped on a concrete pad, which will take the weight, rather than having asphalt there, which isn't as strong. (The trash truck currently comes once a month to empty the dumpster.) Since this is not related to the school, council felt we should absorb this entire cost.

So, what's the plan?

St. Stephen's total project cost	\$51,382
Current balance in our building fund	<u>-37,000</u>
Additional funds needed	\$14,382

**Total Funds
Received
as of 9/20:
\$24,130**

Our plan is to begin a capital campaign to raise money in the next month to provide for the additional needed funds and to replenish our building fund. If we can achieve this in the next month, we will go ahead with the project. If we do not raise the funds needed, we will need to return to the congregation with a plan on how to finance the project. Our goal is to have the parking lot replaced this fall.

We will have more information to come as we align on timing.

Peace, Pastor Beth

Outreach

Pet Blessing

Our annual blessing of the pets will be held on Saturday, October 17th from 12-2. Blessings will be held each half hour from 12-1:30 p.m. Best Friends Forever rescue will be here with dogs available for adoption and we hope to have other rescues as well. Please bring your pet (furry, scaly or feathered) by to have a blessing for the year ahead.



Euchre for ALS

ALS: Our mission: Make ALS Livable and Cure it
OCTOBER 21, Wednesday, 1-4 at St. Stephen. Ruth Moeller is hosting a Euchre Party to benefit ALS in memory of her husband, Paul. Enjoy good fellowship, competitive Euchre, homemade cookies and snacks. Lots of prizes.. Donations to ALS welcome. Reservations preferred. http://web.alsa.org/goto/Pauls_Crew 419-360-3302

Common Table, a ministry for young adults

In October, we are exploring the theme of light and darkness through a fun activity and conversation. We will end with light and darkness themed interactive prayer stations. October 27, 6pm-8pm at the Reynolds Corners Branch Library.

Common Table is also hosting smaller Pop-up Mixer events at various churches around the Toledo area for those who might be intimidated to come to a larger Common Table event where they don't know anyone. If you think St. Stephen should host a gathering, please speak with Pastor Beth.



SAFS Holiday Collection

Our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas drive begins on October 11th and will conclude on November 8th. Our goal is to collect \$2,500 to help 4 families with Thanksgiving food, a Christmas meal, and \$50 for Christmas presents. Your gifts of cash, check, or online can be designated SAFS. We'll be announcing the totals received as we go long. If we collect more than the amount requested, we'll donate that to assist SAFS in their work of helping our neighbors. Thank you for your ongoing support of this program.

Financial News

Kroger Rewards

By signing up for the Kroger Rewards program and designating St. Stephen as a recipient, you're helping to support our ministry more locally. We receive a quarterly check from this program. January-March, donations help fund expenses for our quilting group here at St. Stephen, purchasing needed supplies that go into the quilts. April-June, donations go to St. Paul Community Center, a Toledo organization that works with our unhoused neighbors, working them into housing. July-September, donations are given to Salem Lutheran Church. Then October-December, the reward check is given to Sylvania Area Family Services.

Administrative News

ANNUAL REPORT

We are beginning work on the annual report. If you have any articles or pictures you would like to include, please e-mail or call the office!



SECRETARY ANNIVERSARY

Janell, our administrative assistant, has been with us for 10 years in September!! To mark that anniversary, we gifted her with a tree for her yard! It's the same ruby falls weeping redbud that can be found in the landscaping under our library window! Thank you, Janell, for your dedication and care for our community!

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **November 2026** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by October 13.**



Prayer

MARTIN LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER



LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER
I THANK YOU, MY HEAVENLY FATHER,
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, YOUR
DEAR SON, THAT YOU HAVE KEPT
ME THIS NIGHT FROM ALL
HARM AND DANGER. KEEP ME THIS DAY ALSO
FROM SIN AND EVERY EVIL, THAT
ALL MY DOINGS AND LIFE MAY PLEASE
YOU. INTO YOUR HANDS I
COMMEND MY BODY AND SOUL
AND ALL THINGS. LET YOUR HOLY ANGELS
BE WITH ME, THAT THE WICKED FOE MAY
HAVE NO POWER OVER ME.

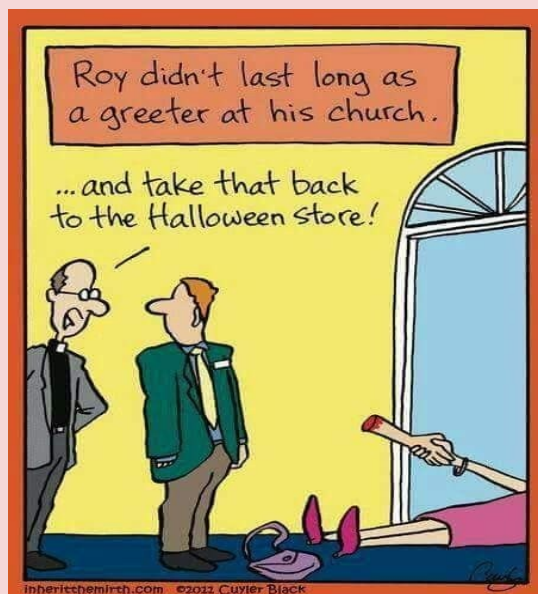
AMEN.

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
Danny—Safety & Protection
Roger—Comfort & Healing
Katie—Comfort & Healing
All Victims of Trauma and War

Fun

ALL IN GOOD FUN



BIBLE QUIZ

The Reformation helped to spread Lutheranism and what else?

(Answer page 7)

- A. The Plague
- B. Literacy
- C. Catholicism
- D. German Cuisine

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!

Steve's Bulletin Board

Mark your calendar!
Nov. 8—Annual
Meeting & Chili
Cook Off

Let's Build Beds 2026!



Toledo Pride Parade!



Bible Quiz Answer:

B. Literacy

October Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

10/2 Carol Haddix
10/14 Evin McCoy
10/23 Wendy Staup
10/25 Eli Ballard

Birthdays

10/12 Angela McCoy
10/14 Vinnie Graber
10/17 Tom Schmidt
10/20 Tina Williams
10/28 Lin McKelvey

Anniversaries

10/3 D&J Paxton
10/4 R&C Schuppenies
10/16 D&W Staup
10/20 D&B Davis

October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				Pastor Beth Vacation		
4 9:15 AM Gathering Space LWR Quilt/ Kit Dedication 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship	5	6 6:30 PM "The Chosen" Study	7 11:00 AM Bible Study	8	9	10
11 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Soup Potluck	12	13 Newsletter Deadline 6:30 PM "The Chosen" Study	14 11:00 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Prayer at the Prairie	15	16	17 12:00 PM Pet Blessing
18 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship	19 5:30 PM Coun- cil Meeting	20 12 PM JOY Club 6:30 PM "The Chosen" Study	21 11:00 AM Bible Study 1:00 PM Euchre for ALS *Prairie Rain	22 7:00 PM Book Club	23	24
25 Reformation Sunday 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship	26	27 6:00 PM Com- mon Table @ Reynolds Li- brary 6:30 PM "The Chosen" Study	28 11:00 AM Bible Study	29	30	31 Reformation Day