

Vision of St. Stephen

April 2023



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

Pastor: Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson
sslcpastor@buckeye-express.com

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

In the cross of Christ I glory,
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.

All the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me;
lo, it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

John Bowring, 1792-1872

This was our closing hymn for worship on Sunday, March 26th. The gospel text was Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, of life winning out over death, of God demonstrating the power of love over evil. It is a foretaste of the Easter story.

As we sang this together, I was struck by how these words encompass all of life—from the troubles and trials of this life that overwhelm us (second stanza) to the wonderful and fantastic moments of this life (third stanza). The whole of our lives, the good and the bad, are seen by the cross. Through the living of this life and working through the good and the bad of it, we are on the path of sanctification—shaped and molded to care about others and to follow Jesus more closely.

For centuries, we Christians have used the symbol of the cross as a mark of our identity.

How do crosses speak to you? Do you have a cross in your home? Do you wear a cross? During this Holy Week, on St. Stephen's Facebook page, you'll find some crosses from around our building. I invite you to add a photo with or without a few words of explanation, about a cross that has significant meaning for you.

I also invite you to worship during Holy Week as we celebrate together God's love for us all through the events that Jesus journeys through—the bittersweet joy of being with his friends during their final meal together, the heartache of being betrayed by those same friends, the pain and agony of the crucifixion, and the transcendent love and glory of that Easter morning in the garden. All of it happens because of the cross—and that Jesus was willing to die for us—and so, yes, we celebrate and glory in this cross, this sign of God's love for us!

Peace, *Pastor Beth*

April Contents

Spiritual Growth	2
Youth & Family	2
Holy Week	3
Outreach	4
Church Finances	5
Administrative News	5
Prayer	6
Fun	6
Council	7
Steve's Bulletin Board	8
Celebrations	8
Calendar	9

Spiritual Growth

JEREMIAH STUDY

Our study of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah continues to meet on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. We're discovering the fierce power of God's yearning love for the people, even as they run away from God, chasing after other gods and other political alliances in the face of encroaching empires. New people are always welcome!

GATHERING SPACE SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:00 AM

On April 16th, Dave Haddix will be sharing about a hidden gem in our community, Habitat for Humanity. Our local Habitat for Humanity is doing some tremendous work here in Lucas County. Come and learn about their dream of creating a world in where everyone has a decent place to live.

During the last 2 Sundays in April, Dave will be leading us in learning about historical Bible study resources and related subjects! Prior knowledge is not a requirement!

Gathering Space will not be in session on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.

SMALL GROUPS

Most of our groups have had a first meeting and are onto a second one!

The knitting/crochet group held its first meeting! There are some experienced crafters as well as some that are just learning! Whatever category you're in, feel free to come to our next session together on Monday, April 3rd at 1:00 p.m.

Our helping hands group met on an unexpectedly cold Saturday and filled a car with branches from the church yard! We hope to schedule another event on a warmer day later in April or early May!

Our book group meets Thursday April 27 at 7 PM as we'll be reading the 2nd half of the novel, Ordinary Grace, by William Krueger. We will also pick our book to be read for our meeting on May 25th at 7 PM.

The Men's Brunch group will be meeting at Scrambler Marie's 6819 Central Avenue on Wednesday, April 12th at 11:00 a.m. Please stop by for food and fellowship!

JOY CLUB

Neta Schmidt will host our luncheon gathering on Tuesday, April 18th at noon. She will be providing the meal so just bring yourself! If you can sign up on our bulletin board, that would be very helpful. Thanks!

Youth and Family

YOUTH EVENT/MOVIE MATINEE

For April we will be hosting a movie matinee! Families are waiting to know their athletic schedules for the Spring. When we find out we will publish the youth event/movie matinee schedule!

Holy Week & Easter

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 2

On Palm Sunday, April 2, our worship will feature the narrative reading of the Holy Week story. We're looking for people to read the words of those who saw these events firsthand. If you'd like to read some of these parts, please sign up on the narthex bulletin board.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 14

On Maundy Thursday, April 6, we will remember Jesus' final meal with his disciples as we worship together at 7:00 p.m. As Jesus and his disciples end their meal, go into the garden to pray, Jesus is arrested by the Roman authorities. At the close of worship, our altar items are removed—reminding us in their starkness of Jesus' vulnerability.

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 7

On Good Friday, April 7th, we have 3 completely different options to remember the day of Jesus' death.

At 12 noon, the Sylvania Methodist, United Church of Christ, and St. Stephen will worship together at Sylvania United Church of Christ, as we hear from various people who "were there" on the day of Jesus' death.

At 3:00 p.m., you're invited to meet in the lobby the Toledo Museum of Art. Pastors and docents from Glenwood Lutheran and Grace Lutheran will be leading a guided tour of 5 art pieces at the museum that feature Jesus' crucifixion. If you wish to park for free, please use the parking lot at Glenwood Lutheran.

At 7:00 p.m., you're invited to gather here at St. Stephen for a Tenebrae service of gathering darkness as we reflect on Jesus' last moments on the cross.

EASTER, APRIL 9

On Easter Sunday, April 9th, we'll be worshipping together with many "alleluias" at 10:30 a.m. Before worship, we'll be having an Easter potluck breakfast beginning at 9:15—there is a sign up sheet in the narthex. At 9:45 a.m., we'll hold an Easter Egg hunt (weather permitting, in the church yard!).



Outreach

Fruits of the Spirit Can Drive

Last summer, the LSS food pantry asked specifically for donations of canned fruit, applesauce, etc. In May and June, we'd like to help stock these needed items! So, look for more information to come after Easter, and be thinking about what favorite fruit you'd like donate!



Salem Non-Food Pantry

Our ongoing collection for Salem Lutheran non-food pantry could use an infusion! They are always in need of any baby supplies, natural hair care products, dry laundry detergent, toothpaste and toothbrushes, lotions, and hair styling products! They always appreciate our donations and it really makes a different to people in need in our community!



Feed Your Neighbor

Donations continue to be delivered to our bin. We are taking about a trunk load full of food to LSS every month. We appreciate your continued support in donations and sharing our "Feed Your Neighbor" mission!



March Macaroni Madness

Our Macaroni and Cheese collection continues through Easter! So far our donations for the Lutheran Social Services food pantry are covering the table in the narthex. We've reached 143 boxes—but can we do more? Thanks for all your donations!



We Welcome



Amber Bartolet

Amber Bartolet has been welcomed into St. Stephen as a member! Amber was baptized on February 19! Her baptismal sponsors are her fiancé, Chase Mercer, and friend, Marsha Grouls. Welcome Amber!

Mary Dwyer

“I’ve been very fortunate to grow up in the Toledo area, teach elementary school here and be a children’s librarian. I got more training in Colorado, and then spent ten years teaching in Florida. More than half my adult life was spent doing church work in Ireland. I’m so grateful for the wonderful work I’ve been given to do, and now for the opportunity to be back in Toledo close to family.” Mary was welcomed as a member on Sunday, March 26.



Administrative News

First Call Retreat

Pastor Beth will be away on a retreat from April 17-19. All first call pastors in the ELCA are expected to be in a support group with a mentor during the 1st three years of their ministry. Pastor Beth and her father, Pastor John Ferne, are mentoring a group of 5 women in our synod. They and others from Region 6 (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Kentucky) will be at Pokegan State Park for this time of sharing and learning together. Please keep these new pastors in your prayers.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **May 2023** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by April 11.**



Prayer

JELLY BEAN PRAYER

Red is for the blood he gave,
Green is for the grass made.
Yellow is for the sun so bright.
Blue is for the sins we made,
White is for the grace He gave.
Purple is for His hour of sorrow,
Pink is for our new tomorrow!
A bag full of jelly beans,
So colorful and sweet.
Is a prayer,
is a promise,
Is a special treat!

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Carrie—Healing
Brian—Heart Surgery
Alice—Healing & Comfort
Chris—Peace & Comfort
Sutherland Family—Comfort & Peace
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
Devon—Healing & Recovery
COVID Sufferers
Afghanistan Refugees
Ukraine
Victims of Gun Violence
Stephanie & Layla—Healing
Lin— Comfort & Healing
Mary—Healing & Comfort
Betty—Healing & Comfort

Fun

ALL IN GOOD FUN

Q: Why did the Easter bunny cross
the road?

A: Because the chicken had his
eggs!

BIBLE QUIZ

What did the Romans do with the coat
that Jesus wore?

(Answer page 8)

- A. Burned It
- B. Ripped it Up
- C. Gave It To A Beggar
- D. Cast Lots

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

2023 Council Members

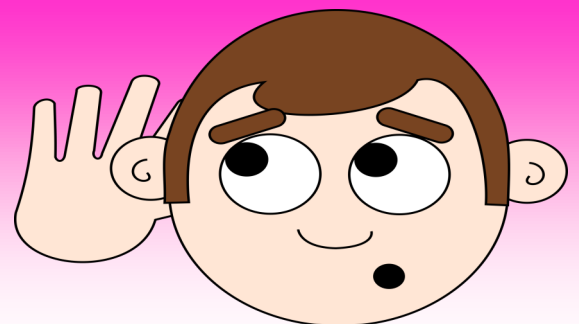
<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Secretary</i>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Treasurer</i>	Bob Housel

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.



Steve's Bulletin Board

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Warm Clothing Drive! Ruth Moeller was able to take multiple loads of warm clothes to organizations that really needed them!

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who helped us pick up the sticks in the church yard!



The Word In Season

Word in Season

The Word in Season for April, May and June are now at the church! If you can't make it to the building to pick one up, call the office and Janell can send you one!

Bible Quiz Answer:

D. Cast Lots

April Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

4/1 Jake Bogdan
4/1 Barb Davis
4/1 Tricia Kunkel
4/1 Sandy Markin
4/1 Sharon Mason
4/5 Amy Chauvette
4/6 Betty Lock
4/6 John Lock
4/17 Bill Markin
4/22 Marsha Grouls

Birthdays

4/2 Mike Bogdan
4/3 Tom Dangelo
4/5 Brenden Shadle
4/7 Pat Hoehing
4/7 Bryan Huffman
4/10 Tom Davis
4/11 Cathy Gustafson
4/12 Tom Pfau
4/13 Kayla Marchant
4/19 Larry Golba
4/21 Joanne Johnson
4/29 Jenny Troutman

Anniversaries

4/21 Mike & Karen Bogdan

April 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
2 Palm Sunday 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	3 1:00 PM Knit/Crochet Group	4	5 11:00 Bible Study	6 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Worship	7 12:00 PM SAC Worship @ UCC 7:00 PM Good Friday Worship	8 9:30 Coffee and Conversation *Hall Rental
9 Easter 9:15 AM Easter Breakfast 9:45 AM Easter Egg Hunt 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship	10	11 Newsletter Deadline	12 11:00 Men's Lunch 5:00 Communion	13	14	15 9:30 Coffee and Conversation *Hall Rental
16 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	17	18 12:00 PM JOY Club	19	20	21	22 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
	Pastor Beth @ First Call Retreat					
23 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	24 LWR Quilting	25	26 11:00 Bible Study 5:00 Communion	27 7PM Book Club	28	29 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
30 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship						