

Vision of St. Stephen

March & April 2026



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
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“A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone,
swift as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.”

O God our Help in Ages Past, ELW hymn number 632

The concept of time is an interesting one. Sometimes an inconsequential moment can seem to last forever but an event we’ve been anticipating can be over in a blip. An individual day stretches on and on, but the years go by in a flash. We’re about to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States, but even that impressive number is nothing compared to the ancient society of Egypt where the Pharaohs ruled for 2,500 years!

Compared to these numbers, what impact does a human life—even one that lasts for 100 years—have? We are just a little blip on the stage of history.

And yet, God tells us that we are important, God trusts us with the gospel message! And God trusts us enough that God only does this once. Jesus is born in a particular time, into a particular family, into a particular place. God gives even the news of such things to regular people. The shepherds are the first humans to announce Jesus’ birth; women are entrusted with the fantastic news of Jesus’ resurrection, and the job of spreading this new faith is given to a rag tag group of disciples who don’t have the best track record of understanding what Jesus was talking about.

In this season of Lent, you’re invited to think about your own legacy. How do you want to be remembered? Does this align with the things God values, love, peace, justice and mercy? If yes, great! If not so much, get working on that! But as you do so, give thanks for this God who sees, loves, and values you—just because this is who God is!

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us, and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God’s peace to you,
Beth Ferne Johnson, pastor

P.S. If you’d like to think more about Egypt and how it impacts our faith life, please join in our Lenten Wednesday worships at 12 noon or 7 p.m.

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Spiritual Growth

GATHERING SPACE

During the month of March, Dave Haddix will be teaching on the minor prophets—those small books in the Old Testament with the prophetic words of people like Micah, Amos, and Malachi! Curious to learn more? We meet on Sundays at 9:15 in the library, to the left of our main entry doors.

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Did you know that other than the 4 gospels and Psalms, the Biblical book we hear the most read on Sundays is Isaiah? This book has passages of great comfort and of great challenge for us and for the people of Isaiah's time. We'll be unpacking this book on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome, no experience or prior knowledge necessary!



"The Chosen"

We continue to work our way through Season 4 of "The Chosen", watching an episode each week and discussing it together. You're invited to join in—we meet from 6:30-8:00 on Tuesdays (check the calendar because Jamile Shibley, our leader, is not available for 2 Tuesdays). You're welcome to join in, we enter through the Fellowship hall entrance.

LSS CLEANING

You're invited to help clean, restock and organize the Lutheran Social Services Food pantry on March 21st. Here are some words from people who have helped in the past about why this service event is important to them:

"I feel we have been so blessed in our life & have never had to feel food insecurity. Unfortunately, that isn't the case with everyone. If we can help out by stocking shelves, cleaning the Pantry, & straightening things up, we are making it a more positive experience for those less fortunate. It's a small gesture, but hopefully one that reaches out to many in our community.", Lynn Golba.

"As one who has utilized services at LSS it is gratifying not only to Serve God but to be able to contribute in a small way to a local organization that continues to help so many in our community.", Sharon Mason.

If you'd like to join in, we meet at 2149 Collingwood Boulevard, Toledo, at 10 a.m. If you'd prefer to carpool, please let Pastor Beth know. Usually, we are there about 90 minutes.

SANCTUARY CLEANING

As we prepare to welcome neighbors and friends to our Holy Week events, we're having a cleaning day! Because our building will be in use for meetings of Via di Cristo, we'll be gathering later in the day, at 3:30 PM. On the agenda, dusting chairs, vacuuming chair fabric, removing any wax from Christmas eve candles, polishing the wood of the altar and ambo, and a general tidying up.

INQUIRER'S CLASS

Interested in becoming a member of St. Stephen? Wondering about transferring your membership here? We'll be holding an inquiry session on Sunday, April 19th from 11:30-12:30 in the library, next to the front doors to the building. If you'd like to learn more and this date doesn't work for you, please speak with Pastor Beth to arrange a separate session. Participation in this session does not automatically indicate a commitment to become a part of this congregation—but to explore that possibility.

Fellowship

FUN FRIDAY

Youth from 7th grade through high school are invited to our Fun Friday on March 6th from 7-10 p.m. We'll have crafts, games, and snacks! You're invited to bring a friend, too!

JOY Club Lunches

A group of women meets monthly to enjoy conversation and local restaurants. On March 17th, the group will be dining at Rose Thai. On April 21st, the group will be at Rick's Diner. Both places are in the Hobby Lobby plaza on Monroe Street. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the church narthex. We hope to have you join us!



"HELLO DOLLY"

Well, Hello Dolly! Epiphany Lutheran will be presenting the musical "Hello, Dolly" two weekends in March. We're planning to take a group to go the March 22nd performance at 3:00 p.m. If you'd like to go, please sign up on the bulletin board or call the church office by noon on Saturday, March 7th. Tickets are \$22.25, please write a check to St. Stephen with Hello, Dolly in the memo line, or put the appropriate amount of cash in an envelope labeled the same. If this date doesn't work for you, the show is being presented March 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, and 22. For times and to purchase tickets see their website:

<https://www.epiphanylutheranchurch.com/hello-dolly>

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Would you enjoy a chance to catch up with people in a relaxed setting? Our monthly coffee and conversation might be just the thing you'd enjoy! A group meets at Chick-fil-a on Central and McCord on the 4th Saturday, from 9:30-10:30ish. Some get some food, some don't—so whatever you're comfortable with works! Look for a table of folks against the wall by the bathroom on March 28th and April 25th.

BOOK GROUP

Our Book Group will be discussing The Correspondent by Virginia Evans on March 26th and Theo of Golden by Allen Levi on April 23rd. Our book for May will be Love is the Way by Bishop Michael Curry. If you love to read and would enjoy having a discussion guided by specific questions, we'd love to see you at 7:00 p.m. in the library!

COMMON TABLE

This city wide opportunity for young adults (18-35) continues to meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

CHIDESTER LECTURES AT SYLVANIA UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Gareth Higgins, author of How not to be Afraid, seven ways to live when everything seems terrifying, will be a guest speaker on April 25th at 2:00 p.m. Gareth grew up in Belfast during the northern Ireland troubles and speaks about the transforming power storytelling has to change us and our world.

Lent, Holy Week & Easter

WEDNESDAYS WORSHIP IN LENT

Our weekly Lenten Worship services this year will look at the Old Testament book of Exodus. The story of the Hebrew people leaving Egypt has had a profound impact on both the Jewish and Christian faith. We'll take a deep dive into this book and supplement it with some photos that Pastor Beth took in Egypt. Our 12 pm worship will not include music, but our 7 pm worship will! Together, we'll explore the topics of Not on my Watch; Paying attention, Seeing injustice; Holy Ground; Wade in the Water; and Wilderness School.

CHOIR PRACTICE

Our choir will begin practicing after worship beginning on March 1st. We plan to sing for Easter Sunday. If you're interested in joining the choir, please do! You don't need to know how to read music to join in!

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 29th. At our 10:30 worship, we'll gather in the narthex and, with palm greenery, walk into the sanctuary as we sing together, remembering Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. During worship, the tone shifts as we move from the joyous shouts of Hosanna to hearing the account of Jesus' last week. If you'd like to read the part of Jesus, Peter, and others during our narrative reading, please sign up on the bulletin board.

During our 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday worship, we'll focus on Jesus sharing his last supper with the disciples in the upper room before his arrest and trial. During this worship on April 2nd, you're invited to help take items from the altar into the kitchen, leaving the altar area bare, as we remember Jesus was stripped of all earthly protections as he awaited his execution.

On Good Friday, April 3rd, we have two different worship opportunities. At noon, Sylvania First United Methodist hosts the ecumenical Good Friday worship service with participation from Sylvania UCC and St. Stephen. At 7:00 p.m., we'll have our service of deepening darkness, the Tenebrae service, as we hear Jesus' last words from the cross.

EASTER EVENTS

On Easter Sunday, April 5th, you're invited to our annual Easter breakfast, beginning at 9:30 a.m. We'll have a sign up on the bulletin board for items to share. At 9:45, we'll have a true Easter egg hunt in our narthex area—youth will be invited to truly "search" for these eggs and receive a bag of candy! (Candy donations will be accepted during Lent)

At 10:30 a.m., we'll sing "Alleluia" as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead and the news that God has triumphed over death—and we too share in this promise of resurrected life!



In Loving Memory



Peggy Scholl

Margaret "Peggy" Ellen Scholl entered into the arms of her precious Savior on February 3, 2026, passing peacefully at 5:55 a.m. A resident of Sylvania, Ohio, Peggy was a woman of incredible soul who spent her life as a living testament to God's unconditional love.

Born in Hoboken, NJ, and having spent her young adulthood in Los Angeles, Peggy eventually brought her vibrant spirit to Ohio. Throughout every season of her life, she possessed a tremendous heart for Jesus. Her faith was a radiant force; family and friends often remarked that when Peggy entered a room, she didn't just light it

up with her physical smile – though her smile was indeed incredible – she illuminated every space with a spiritual light and love that she poured into every person she met.

As a wife, Peggy's love, support, and unwavering faith in Jesus was the bedrock of their marriage. Her love for Craig was entirely unconditional. She stood steadfastly by his side in his pastoral duties, often joining him to visit members of the congregation in their homes and at the hospital. Peggy was the living example of walking Jesus's path; she was the quiet, constant embodiment of the love they shared in Jesus. When Craig's ministry called him away, Peggy stepped in as the primary parent, ensuring their sons were always supported, nurtured, and loved.

As a mother, Peggy was truly special. Her ability to listen, love, and teach was beyond measure. That maternal love extended far beyond her two sons to include all of their friends and every child at her church. She was a woman who never judged; she had a rare gift for making anyone feel heard and loved in a way that could ease any troubled heart. Peggy was a trusted confidant, a steady shoulder to lean on, and a constant voice of encouragement through life's darkest and brightest moments.

Peggy's ministry of service was often shared with her "best friends" and partners in work. Alongside her cherished Irish Wolfhounds – Milo, Bentley, and Tara – and her faithful Border Terrier, Nautie, Peggy served as a therapy dog handler. Together, they brought comfort and peace to children and adults in hospitals, libraries, and senior facilities.

Beyond her therapy work, Peggy was a devoted mentor to young adults at Memorial Lutheran Church, where she also led Sunday School and shared her heart through children's sermons, organizing the holiday meal program, kids' night and the children's Christmas program. She was never too busy to give back, and she loved in a way that taught everyone around her what it truly means to be "God's love" in the flesh.

Peggy is preceded in death by her mother, Margaret Normoore; her father, Harold Bontz; and her brothers, Raymond Ayala, Joseph Moore, and John Moore.

Her legacy of love continues through her husband, Craig; her sons, John Michael (Melissa) and Karl (Sara); and her beloved granddaughters, Eleanor, Veda, and Willow. She is also survived by her sister-in-law, Debbie (Roger), and her nieces and nephews, Trisha, Craig, Brad, Lisa, Jodi, Jill, and Jenna, all of whom she loved dearly.

In her final years, Peggy fought a valiant and courageous 12-year battle with Alzheimer's. Even as the disease sought to dim her world, she remained a profound inspiration to everyone around her. She faced her struggle with a quiet dignity and a resilience that moved those who cared for her, proving that while the illness could cloud the mind, it could never touch the brilliant essence of her soul. Her journey was a final lesson in grace, showing us, all that God's light shines brightest in the most difficult of seasons. We take comfort in knowing her light and love remains undimmed in the hearts of those she touched. Her family would like to extend a special thanks to the entire staff at Memory Lane Care Services along with the Hospice of Northwest Ohio for their service and grace to support us and so many in this battle. They were a consistent source of love and care, providing another community in love for Peggy to share her joy, light, and love.

In Loving Memory



Steven Pfau

Steven Leonard Pfau, affectionately known as "Bub", age 41, passed away unexpectedly at his residence in Jefferson, Wisconsin, on December 3, 2025. He was born December 31, 1983, in Toledo, Ohio, to Thomas and Nancy (nee: Whitcomb) Pfau.

Steven was a 2002 graduate of Sylvania Northview High School, where he was actively involved in orchestra, baseball, and German language classes. Following his graduation, he backpacked through Europe before beginning his studies at the University of Cincinnati, where he pursued a degree in international business. In his free time, he enjoyed cooking and frisbee golf. After ten years in Cincinnati, Steven spent time living in Colorado, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

Steven is survived by his daughter, Julia Veronica Pfau, and her mother, Alison Pfau; his parents, Thomas and Nancy Pfau; his sisters, Shannon (Brian) Miles and Stacey (Kevin) Hoffman; and his niece and nephew, Katherine and James Hoffman. He is also survived by several aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Prayer

Burdens Into Blessings

A Poem By Karen Wicker

God,
Let me cry a million tears
yet never look away
until I see what I might do
to help somebody today,
then turn my focus onto you
and have you lead the way.
Let me feel such deep heartache
and choose to keep it there
until I've done all I can do
to show someone I care
by reaching out with peace and
hope,
your gracious love to share.
Let me lie awake at night
in depths of angst and feat
until I open up my heart

to trust that you are near;
until I sense your hand in mine,
your whisper in my ear.
Let me find impetus
within this dark despair,
to stand and speak and write
about
what's true and just and fair,
and as your faithful servant,
spread
your goodness everywhere.
Let me hold these burdens, God,
until my heart is sure
to follow where you lead me
and with your held, endure;
for in my deep uncertainty
in you I'm held secure.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Wolf—Stomach Cancer
Laura—Healing & Comfort
Ali—Guidance & Comfort
Diane—Healing & Comfort
Libby—Healing & Comfort
Julie R.—Breast Cancer
Mandy—Comfort & Peace
Larry W.—Healing & Comfort
Diana—Healing
Tim—Peace & Healing
Don—Healing & Comfort
Lisa—Healing
Brenda—Healing
Libby—Healing & Comfort
Julie R.—Breast Cancer
Ella—Healing & Comfort
Leslie & Donny—Healing
Tim—Peace & Healing
Matt—Recovery
Noah—Healing & Comfort

All Victims of Trauma and War

Baptism Celebration



On Sunday, February 1, Elyse Marie, daughter of Michael Gouchenour and Jennifer Davis, was baptized. Her sponsors are her parents and her uncles, Andrew and Matthew Davis!



Celebration of Marriage

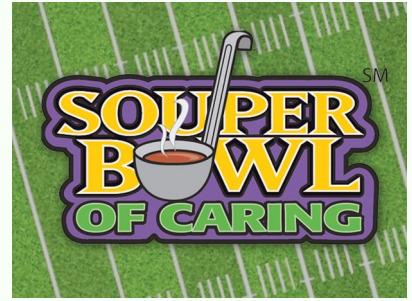
On February 14th volunteers helped to deliver flowers and donated cookies to the couples of St. Stephen celebrating special anniversaries! On February 15th we had several couples renew their vows during the worship service! Thank you to everyone who helped make our annual celebration so special!



Outreach

“Souper” Bowl Win!

Our Souper Bowl lunch generated \$456 in contributions to the Lutheran Social Services food pantry! We also gathered 222 cans of soup; some were provided through a \$250 Thrivent action team! Many thanks to all who helped make this event a success by helping set up, bringing soup to share for lunch, giving money and/or canned soup for food pantry!



March Macaroni Madness

From now until Easter, we'll be gathering donations of Macaroni and Cheese for the LSS Food pantry! All donations are welcome, but the food pantry finds that the boxes of Mac and Cheese that don't require added ingredients (of milk and butter) are the most requested.

Game Nights

Did someone say Euchre? We have 2 upcoming opportunities to play euchre together! Mark your calendar for Fridays, March 20 and April 17th, from 7-9! If you'd like to bring along a board game to play, you're welcome to do that as well. Snacks and drinks will be provided.



Thank You For Helping Our Neighbors!

Thank you for your warm clothing donations as well! During those super cold days, we took a load to Grace Lutheran Church on Monroe Street—they were opening up parts of their building as a warming center and were so pleased to have clothing items to share! Other loads were taken to King's Closet at the Seventh Day Adventist church on Sylvania Avenue. Our warm clothing drive has come to an end for this year.

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 would prefer online giving without an app, use this link: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z8XP>. If you have any questions please contact the church office!

KROGER REWARDS

Do you shop at Kroger? Did you know that you can earn dollars for our church's outreach merely by shopping as you normally do? There is a link on our website for you to register your Kroger card, once there, sign up to have your Community Rewards directed to St. Stephen! Kroger reward money during the 1st quarter of the year supports the work of our LWR quilters, providing money to whatever is currently needed which could include thread, sheets, and batting.

2025 GIVING STATEMENTS

The year end giving statements have been sent out into the mail. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your statement, please call the office during business hours to speak with Janell.

Administrative News

SCAM ALERT

If you get an email or a text message claiming to be from Pastor Beth, asking you to provide gift cards, this is a scam. Please block, delete, and ignore any messages like this. If you want to double check, please call the office or contact Pastor Beth.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **May 2026** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by April 8.**



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:

Christian Education

Finance

Prayer, Praise, Worship

Property

Staff Support

Stewardship/Evangelism

Technology

Youth & Family Ministry

Social Ministry

Thank you to all the members of our council:

Pastor Beth, Marilyn Scuralli, Tom Schmidt, Beth Madden, Tom Dangelo, Joan Haddox, Kathy Aldrich, and 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

Remember to set your
clocks forward by 1 hour
Saturday night to Spring
forward on March 8!



Easter Candy Collection!

If you would like to donate individually wrapped candies to our Easter Egg Hunt, the white basket will be put out in the Narthex above the coat racks during the first week of March!



Easter Flowers



Please be on the look out for more info in the "This Week" pamphlet as we get closer and closer to Easter.

March Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

3/1 Jim Bork
3/1 Linda McDonough
3/12 Chase Mercer
3/13 Craig Scholl
3/17 Ken Marvin
3/24 Beth Madden
3/31 Sally Goetz

Birthdays

3/2 Grace Wagner
3/3 Annetta Schmidt
3/4 Chase Mercer
3/5 Caylee Schuppenies
3/6 Jessica Klimesh
3/8 Sharon Mason
3/9 Jim Bork
3/9 Sally Goetz
3/14 Sue Kahl
3/25 Kathy Aldrich
3/25 Beth Ferne Johnson
3/28 Garry Ward
3/29 Beth Madden

Anniversaries

3/23 Patrick & Angela McCoy



April Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

4/1 Jake Bogdan
4/1 Barb Davis
4/1 Tricia Kunkel
4/1 Sandy Markin
4/1 Sharon Mason
4/6 John Lock
4/14 Lila Dennis
4/17 Bill Markin
4/22 Marsha Grouls

Birthdays

4/1 April Mercer
4/2 Mike Bogdan
4/3 Tom Dangelo
4/7 Pat Hoehing
4/10 Tom Davis
4/11 Cathy Gustafson
4/12 Tom Pfau
4/19 Larry Golba
4/21 Joanne Johnson
4/26 Amber Mercer
4/29 Jenny Troutman

Anniversaries

4/4 Dan & Marsha Noe
4/21 Mike & Karen Bogdan

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Choir	2	3 6:30 PM "The Chosen"	4 11:00 AM Bible Study 12:00 Lent Worship 7:00 Lent Wor- ship	5	6 7:00 Fun Friday	7 *Time Change
8 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Choir	9	10	11 11:00 AM Bible Study 12:00 Lent Worship 7:00 Lent Wor- ship	12	13	14
15 9:15AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Choir	16 5:30 PM Coun- cil Meeting	17 12:00 PM Joy Lunch "	18 11:00 AM Bible Study 12:00 Lent Worship 7:00 Lent Wor- ship	19	20 7:00 Euchre/ Game Night	21 10:00 LSS Clean- ing
22 9:15AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Choir 3:00 PM "Hello Dolly" at Epiphany Lutheran	23 LWR Quilting	24 6:30 PM "The Chosen"	25 11:00 AM Bible Study 12:00 Lent Worship 7:00 Lent Wor- ship	26 7:00 Book Group	27	28 9:30 Coffee and Conversation 3:30 PM Sanctu- ary Cleaning *Via Di Cristo
29 Palm Sunday 9:15AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Choir	30	31 6:30 PM "The Chosen"				

April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 7:00 Maundy Thursday Worship	3 12:00 PM Good Friday Worship@ Sylvania First 7:00 PM Good Friday Worship	4
5 Easter Sunday 9:30 AM Breakfast 9:45 AM Egg Hunt 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	6	7 6:30 PM "The Chosen"	8 11:00 AM Bible Study	9	10	11
12 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	13	14 Newsletter Deadline	15 11:00 AM Bible Study	16	17 7:00 PM Eucharist/Game Night	18
19 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Inquirer's Class	20 5:30 PM Council Meeting	21 12:00 PM JOY Club	22 11:00 AM Bible Study	23 7:00 Book Group	24	25 9:30 Coffee and Conversation 2:00 PM Chidester Lecture @ UCC
26 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	27 LWR Quilting	28	29 11:00 AM Bible Study	30		