

# Vision of St. Stephen

## February & March 2024



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

Pastor: Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson  
[sslcpastor@buckeye-express.com](mailto:sslcpastor@buckeye-express.com)

Our Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday with these words of truth spoken to each individual: “You are dust and to dust you shall return”. During the Lenten season, our Sunday morning gospel readings move us through Jesus’s temptation, his predictions of his death and his reflection on how a grain of wheat must die to produce a harvest. This year, our mid-week worship opportunities will also center around the human experience of death and dying. Together with the congregations and clergy of Grace, Hope and Olivet we will join together in an hour of song, guest presentations, prayer and small group discussion. To accommodate various congregational schedules there are 3 options for participation.

Wednesdays (February 21-March 20) at Hope Lutheran, 2201 Secor, Toledo  
11:30 Soup meal, 12-1:00p.m. Round table worship, guest presenter in person, small group discussion

Thursdays in Lent (Feb 22-March 21) at Olivet Lutheran, 5840 Monroe, Sylvania  
11:30 meal, 12-1:00 p.m. Round table worship, guest presenter on video, small group discussion

Virtual option

A video of the presenter, music, and prayer will be available to view through a link provided by St. Stephen.

Topics:

Week 1: How do we define death? How does the medical field define it?

Week 2: What to do after a diagnosis?

Week 3: Mourning and Grief

Week 4: How to plan a funeral—funeral home decisions and church funeral services

Week 5: Advance directives—what are they and what do they do?

We’d love to have you join in for any and all of these opportunities to share and learn during this Lenten season.

God’s peace to you,

*Beth Ferne Johnson, pastor*

### February & March Contents

Spiritual Growth	2
Lent, Holy Week & Easter	3
Youth & Family	4
Prairie Update	4
Outreach	5
Church Finances	6
Administrative News	6
Prayer	7
Fun	7
Council	8
Steve’s Bulletin Board	9
Celebrations	10
Calendar	11

# Spiritual Growth

## **GATHERING SPACE**

Dave Haddix will continue leading our Sunday 9:15 education focus on the Old Testament reigns of David and Solomon. The books of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 King contain some fascinating stories of God's guidance and provision. Come and learn together—no prior experience needed! Class will not be held on February 18, Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday.

## **WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

We're continuing our study of the wisdom found in Proverbs during our 11:00 a.m. Wednesday Bible study. We'll complete our study on or before Ash Wednesday and then begin a new topic after Easter.

## **CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE**

During worship on February 11<sup>th</sup>, we'll be honoring those couples who, between Feb 2023 and Feb 2024, have celebrated an anniversary in 5 year increments, as well as everyone who is celebrating more than 50 years together. Couples are also invited to come forward during our worship and receive a blessing on their years together. On Saturday, these folks will receive a "porch present"! Thank you to our bakers and delivery crew for making those possible!

## **MEN'S GROUP BRUNCH**

Our men's group will be regrouping, meeting on Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. at Scrambler Marie's on Central. As we enjoy a meal together, we'll share a brief devotion together.

## **JOY Lunch**

Meeting for lunch on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, the "Just Older Youth" group of women enjoys catching up and exploring area restaurants. You're invited to join in at 12 noon on February 20<sup>th</sup> at Mancy's Italian on 5453 Monroe street and March 19<sup>th</sup> at Scrambler Marie's on Central Ave. A sign up sheet is available in the narthex.

## **BOOK GROUP**

Do you love to read? Do you wish you had others to talk with about a great read? Our book group has been enjoying a variety of novels. We'll be meeting at 7:00 p.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month to discuss the following: February 22 The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store and on March 21 The Berry Pickers.

## **FELLOWSHIP MEAL IN MARCH**

Looking to share an evening meal with others? Our March fellowship meal will be on Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. We'll enjoy a bowl of soup and a "question of the night" to guide our conversation. In January, our question was sharing a favorite winter memory.

## **SANCTUARY CLEANING DAY—MARCH 23!**

Our sanctuary needs a little sprucing up before Easter. You're invited to join the crew on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:30 til noonish. On the agenda is to dust the book holders of the sanctuary chairs, remove Christmas eve wax drippings, and give the cloth a quick vacuum. Other jobs are to use Murphy's wood oil on the wood of the altar, baptismal font, and ambo/pulpit as well as general dusting and straightening up.

# Lent, Holy Week & Easter

## ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Hearing the words, “You are dust, and to dust you shall return”, as a cross of ashes is placed on your forehead is a focus of our annual Ash Wednesday worship. We’ll be worshipping together on February 14th at 12 noon and 7:00 p.m. While communion and ashes will be available at both services, the noon service will be spoken, without music. For many folks, this is their favorite worship service of the year. If you’ve never experienced it, please consider coming this year for worship. Our Fellowship Meal (2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month) will be held at 6:30 p.m. with soup and bread.

## LENTEN WORSHIP

Please see the front page of the newsletter for this info!

## HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. At our 10:30 worship, we’ll gather in the narthex and with, palms waving, walk into the sanctuary as we sing together. During that 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 a part of Jesus, Peter, the High Priest, and others during our narrative reading, please sign up on the bulletin board.

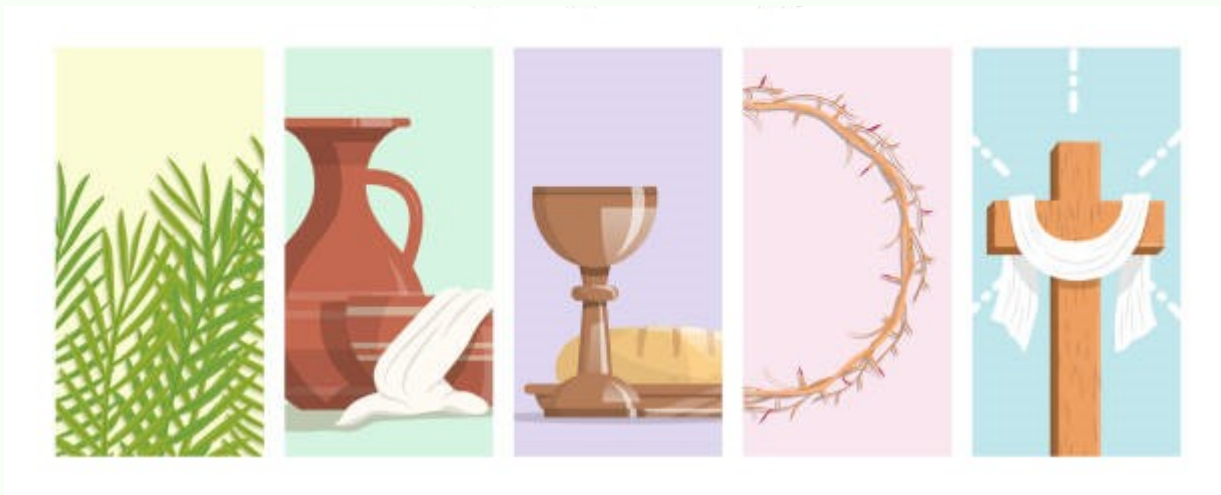
During our 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday worship, we’ll focus on Jesus sharing his last supper with the disciples in the upper room before his arrest and trial.

On Good Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, we have two different worship opportunities. At noon, Sylvania First United Methodist hosts our annual Good Friday worship with our neighboring congregations of Sylvania UCC and St. Stephen. At 7:00 p.m., we’ll have our service of deepening darkness as we hear Jesus’ last words from the cross.

## EASTER EVENTS

On Easter Sunday, 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/classroom area—youth will be invited to truly “search” for these eggs and receive a bag of candy! (Candy donations are accepted during Lent).

At 10:30 a.m., we’ll sing “Alleluia” as we celebrate Jesus’s resurrection from the dead and the news that God has triumphed, and we too share in this promise of resurrected life!



# Youth and Family

## YOUTH EVENT

Our youth will be having an evening of crafts, movies, food and games on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> from 7-10 p.m. Youth and friends in grades 5-12 are invited to come!

Our Catechism youth will be attending a seder meal sponsored by Lourdes Lifelong Learning/Jewish Federation on Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> from 4-6 p.m. The community is invited to this event, but registrations are requested. Contact Sherry M at (419)724-0351 if you too would like to participate.

## Prairie Update

On Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup> a group of about 25/30 people gathered for prayer and began to sow our pollinator seeds! Our seed mixture was purchased from the Ohio Prairie Nursey in Ada, Ohio— it is their pollinator mix and has 30 plants native to this part of Ohio that will grow in our sometimes wet clay soil. We added 3 different native grasses, which will add some winter interest. We were mildly surprised when all the seeds were dispersed in about 35 minutes! The rain and snow and freezing temperatures are helping provide the cold stratification that some of these seeds need to sprout in the spring! Once spring comes, we can expect to see some flowers and growth—but keep in mind that our native plants are using this first year of growth to work on their root structure. Some of these plants have roots that go 6 feet into the soil—which helps sustain them during drought and also helps to aerate the soil. We should start to see insects and some birds flitting around the plants this spring—but that activity will grow exponentially by the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> summer of growth! Sometime in the late summer, we plan to map out a walking path through the prairie and begin to mow that path, adding a bench or two, for people to meditate on the beauty of creation and to offer up prayers. For photos of the day, take a look at our Facebook page and the 3 ring binder in the narthex. The binder also includes the full list of plants included in our seed mixture.



*Planting Day December 30, 2023*

# Outreach

## Souper Bowl

We'll be gathering cans of soup and financial gifts for the Lutheran Social Services Food Pantry in the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl. You're invited to bring in cans of soup and set them up in the narthex or to write a check (made out to St. Stephen, with LSS in the memo line) or put some cash in the soup pot on the 11<sup>th</sup> itself! On the 11th we'll gather for lunch in the fellowship hall after worship. If you would like to bring a soup, bread or dessert to share there is a sign up list on the Narthex bulletin board, or call the church office. However you chose to participate, it's the hungry families in our community that win!



## March Macaroni Madness

During the month of March, we'll be collecting boxes of Mac and Cheese for the Lutheran Social Services Food pantry! Can we top our best year when we collected a huge pyramid of boxes! Time will tell! We'll be sending our donations down to LSS during the first week of April.

## Game Nights

Euchre anyone? Did you get a great board game for Christmas? Please bring games and cards to our time of fun and fellowship on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> and April 12<sup>th</sup> from 7-9. Food will be provided!



## 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!

# 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!

## **2023 GIVING STATEMENTS**

The year end giving statements will be available for pick up in the Narthex starting on February 4! Please review your statement, and if there are any issues don't hesitate to contact Janell in the office! If you need your statement mailed to you, please contact Janell as well.

## **NEW TREASURER**

Thank you to Bob Housel for all his service as our congregational treasurer. We welcome Kathie Tefft as our new treasurer. Thank you Kathie!

# Administrative News

## **WINTER WEATHER**

A reminder that if Lucas County would happen to be at a Level 3 snow emergency on a Sunday morning, we will not meet for worship. Instead, Pastor Beth will attempt to livestream her sermon on Facebook from home. In case of a Level 1 or 2, we will hold worship and if our tech people can get here, we will livestream as well—but feel free to watch from home!

## **SECRETARY OUT OF OFFICE**

Janell will be out of the office February 16-20. On February 16 she will be going in for a surgery. Please keep these dates in mind and any prayers are appreciated!

## **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **April 2024** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by March 12.**



# Prayer

## A Prayer for Lenten Grace

Loving God,  
During the sacred season of Lent, bring me closer to you.  
Prepare a place in my home and heart for silence and solitude, so that I may re-discover the grace of a prayer-full life.  
Help me to fast from those things that threaten the well-being of body and soul and remind me of the grace of simplicity.  
Enlarge my heart so that I give to those in need and, in so doing, re-discover the grace of gratitude and generosity.  
May this season be a grace-filled time to rekindle my love for and faith in you.  
Amen.



## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

*Carrie—Healing*  
*Alice—Healing & Comfort*  
*Chris—Peace & Comfort*  
*Those with Cancer—Healing*  
*Greg—Healing & Comfort*  
*Olivia—Healing & Comfort*  
*Shannon—Comfort & Peace*  
*Dave—Healing & Comfort*  
*Victims of Gun Violence*  
*Wolf—Stomach Cancer*  
*Jessica—Surgery recovery*  
*Nancy—Healing*  
*Jettie—Healing*  
*Sean—Guidance & Healing*  
*Archer—Healing & Comfort*  
*Tom—Healing*  
*All victims of trauma and war*

# Fun

## ALL IN GOOD FUN

- ◆ Lent is the best time of year to run a marathon, because that's when you fast!
- ◆ I was going to give up lunch meat for Lent...but I couldn't quit cold turkey!
- ◆ I'm giving up negativity for Lent. We'll see how long that lasts!

## BIBLE QUIZ

Purple is the color associated with the Lenten season. What other church season is associated with purple?

(Answer page 8)

- A. Epiphany
- B. Christmas
- C. Pentecost
- D. Advent

## 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

## 2024 Council Members

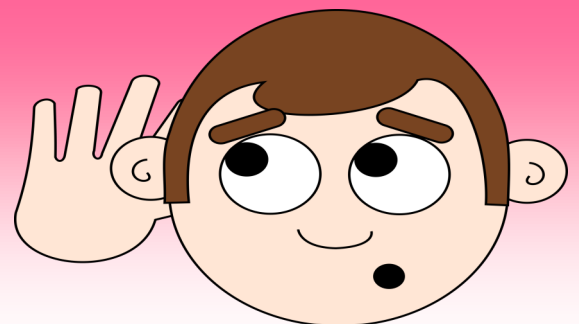
<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Secretary</i>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Treasurer</i>	Kathie Tefft

## 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>	
<i>Technology</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Youth &amp; 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



Please feel free to pick up your Lenten devotionals from the Narthex!

## BAG RECYCLING

Recycling Bags- Have you noticed a big box in the narthex for recycling bags? Our local Lion's Club is collecting 500 pounds of plastic bags (many types of plastic bags are accepted: grocery and shopping bags, plastic envelopes from on-line shopping etc.). The bags will be made into a Trex bench (recycled plastic "wood") placed at Sylvania Area Family Services and at the Sight Center. Each bench is made up of 500 pounds of plastic bags! Merry and Mike Cook are helping to take the bags to a collection center.



## Easter Flowers



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

Bible Quiz Answer:

D. Advent

# February Celebrations

## Baptismal Birthdays

2/1 Jim Boldt  
2/8 Kathie Tefft  
2/8 Lynn Tefft  
2/19 Amber Bartolet  
2/22 Richie Johnson

## Birthdays

2/2 Mollie McCoy  
2/3 Dave Aldrich  
2/5 Nancy Pfau  
2/19 John Lock  
2/23 Tricia Kunkel  
2/25 Joan Paxton  
2/28 Jeremy Hopkins



# 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

3/3 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

# February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
4 9:15AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 Altar Angels	5 1:00 Needler's	6 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	7 11:00 AM Bible Study	8	9	10 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
11 <b>Souper Bowl Sunday Celebration of Marriage</b> 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Soup Lunch After Worship	12	13 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	14 11:00 AM Bible Study 12:00 PM Ash Wed. Worship 6:30 Fellowship Meal 7:00 PM Ash Wed. Worship	15	16	17 9:30 Coffee and Conversation 11:00 Men's Group Lunch
18 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 Worship Committee 6:00 Catechism	19 1:00 Needler's 6:00 PM Council Meeting	20 12:00 PM Joy Lunch 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	21 12:00 Lent @ Hope	22 12:00 Lent @ Olivet 7:00 Book Group	23	24 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
25 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	26	27 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	28 12:00 Lent @ Hope	29 12:00 Lent @ Olivet		

# March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 7:00 Game Night	2 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
3 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 6:00 Catechism	4 1:00 Needler's	5 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	6 12:00 Lent @ Hope	7 12:00 Lent @ Olivet	8 7:00 Youth Event	9 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
10 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	11	12 <b>Newsletter Deadline</b> 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	13 12:00 Lent @ Hope 6:30 Fellowship Meal	14 12:00 Lent @ Olivet	15	16 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
17 9:15AM Gathering Space 10:30AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 6:00 Catechism	18 1:00 Needler's 6:00 PM Council Meeting	19 12:00 PM Joy Lunch 3:00 PM Walk Up Communion	20 12:00 Lent @ Hope	21 12:00 Lent @ Olivet 7:00 Book Group	22	23 9:30 Coffee and Conversation 10:30 Sanctuary Cleaning
24 <b>Palm Sunday</b> 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	25	26	27	28 7:00 Maundy Thursday Worship	29 12:00 Good Friday @ Sylvania First 7:00 Tenebrae Worship	30 9:30 Coffee and Conversation
31 <b>Easter</b> 9:15 AM Easter Breakfast 9:45 AM Easter Egg Hunt 10:30AM In Sanctuary/Online Worship						