

Vision of St. Stephen

September 2023

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens.
Ecclesiastes 3:1



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*To everything, turn, turn, turn,
There is a season, turn, turn, turn,
And a time for every purpose under heaven.
Lyrics by The Byrds, inspired by Ecclesiastes 3:1*

New beginnings....

Even though New Year's Day is typically seen as a time for fresh starts, for me the beginning of the new school year always seemed like more of a "new" season. A new teacher, new classroom, new groupings of students, new things to learn, new notebooks and pencils, new school clothes.... All of this added up, in my mind, to a fresh beginning, a new start.

For me, this particular fall is truly something new, as I have become an empty nester. It's a time, I'm hoping to "reset", to have time to focus on some things I've been needing to do for like reshuffling things in the basement and getting my backyard in better shape! Being a mom has shaped much of my life - now I'm entering a different phase of that relationship with my kids. I'm wondering what that will look like in the months and years to come.

For you, too, perhaps this fall marks some fresh starts in your own life—or reminds you of new beginnings you've experienced. The cool thing about life and about our faith is that we're always in process...in the process of growing and changing, of responding to new and different events in our own lives and in the wider world as well.

So, what is happening in your life? Is fall a time for a fresh start? What is God up to in your life? Where are you spending your time and energy? What intrigues you in this season?

During September, we're in the season of re-covenanting. During the Sundays in September, you're invited to bring forward your covenant of membership—recommitting yourself to St. Stephen during this season of your life. I find it very moving to see you all, Sunday after Sunday, bring forward these papers and place them in the basket on the altar.

And so, I invite you, as you receive those covenants, to prayerfully consider this season of your life. What is new? What are your hopes? What are your plans? Where is God inviting you to be present?

September Contents

Spiritual Growth	2
Youth & Family	3
LDR: Maui	3
Outreach	4
Building Update	5
Administrative News	5
Prayer	6
Fun	6
Council	7
Steve's Bulletin Board	8
Celebrations	8
Calendar	9

Peace, Pastor Beth

Spiritual Growth

RECOVENANTING

Throughout the month of September you'll have the opportunity to return the covenant of membership during our worship service or by dropping it off at the office. Extra covenants can be found on the card table with the bulletins in the narthex.

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

This fall we'll be looking at two different sections of the Bible. Beginning September 6, we'll look at the Old Testament book of Lamentations. This book comes out of the exile experience of the Jewish people in Babylon after Jerusalem is destroyed. In these 5 chapters, the people struggle with their grief and what to do when it feels like God has abandoned them. After 3 or so sessions in the Old Testament, we'll be turning to Paul's letter to the Galatians. In this letter, the early church is working through what one must do to be a Christian. This book has many grace filled passages including Galatians 3:28, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus", as well as a listing of the gifts of the spirit in 5:22. Our Galatians focus will begin on or around September 27th. We meet at 11:00 a.m.—no prior Bible knowledge or experience is expected!

GATHERING SPACE

Our education hour returns at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 10th. Nancy Pfau will be leading a new topic. All are welcome to this time of learning, growing, and questioning in our faith journey! Coffee and treats are available, as well!

MEN'S GROUP

All men are invited to stop by for breakfast at Scrambler Marie's on September 12 and 26, the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays in September. We gather at 9:00 for food and conversation together!

JOY CLUB

All women are invited to come out for lunch with the JOY group! We'll be eating at Shorty's BBQ, 5111 Monroe Street, on Tuesday, September 19th at 12 noon. Ruth Moeller is our host for the month, so please sign up on the narthex bulletin board or let her know to add your name to the group.

TOLEDO LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

St. Stephen will be hosting the Toledo Lutheran Conference group of area pastors on Thursday, September 21st from 9-11:30 a.m. Clergy will gather for a fellowship hour, followed by worship and a presentation. The group usually adjourns for lunch at a local eatery. St. Stephen is one of 37 congregations in our synod's Toledo Conference.

BOOK GROUP

Do you love books? Do you enjoy hearing other people's insights into them and sharing your own as well? If so, please join in the discussion of *The Nickel Boys*, by Colson Whitehead, on Thursday, September 28th at 7:00 p.m. In this book, we meet Elwood Curtis, growing up in Florida, who is unfairly sentenced to a juvenile reformatory. There his friendship with another boy shapes their futures. This book is based on a real story of a reform school that operated for 111 years and adversely affected the lives of countless children.

Youth and Family

CATECHISM

Catechism classes for our late elementary/junior high students will be beginning this fall. Please let Pastor Beth know if you have a student in this age group who would be part of this experience!



GIRL'S FUN NIGHT

Our junior and senior high girls will be having a "back to school" retreat on Friday, September 8th from 7-10:30 p.m. We'll focus on conversation, games, Bible learning, and a craft during our evening together.

Lutheran Disaster Response: Maui

If you'd like to contribute to help the people of Maui as they recover from the devastating wildfires, please consider supporting Lutheran Disaster Response. Our August 27th picnic featured a good-will donation to help with this disaster. LDR is also active across the United States and abroad, helping people and communities build back stronger. Gifts can be made online or through St. Stephen, by writing LDR on the memo line of your check.



Outreach

Prairie Update

As we consider establishing an urban prairie here at St. Stephen, the prairie group is working to gather bids to transform the area of grass into an area for planting seed. The best time to plant prairie seed is in late November/early December after the growing season has ended. The committee will be displaying some information about plants and the prairie this month in the narthex. Take a look!



Music on the Lawn

Know someone who loves music? Invite them to our September concert! Scott Ballard will be playing various selections for us in the front yard of the church on Saturday, September 16th! Bring your bag chair for the 7:00 p.m. music and we'll provide an ice cream treat to share!

Needler's

Our knit/crochet group has selected a new name! We're working on a variety of projects, from prayer shawls to afghans, as we chat together. We have all levels of ability, including people who are learning these skills. You're invited to join in with your own personal project or to work on something to share with others. Since the 1st Monday is Labor Day in September, we'll only be meeting once—on September 18th at 1:00 p.m.



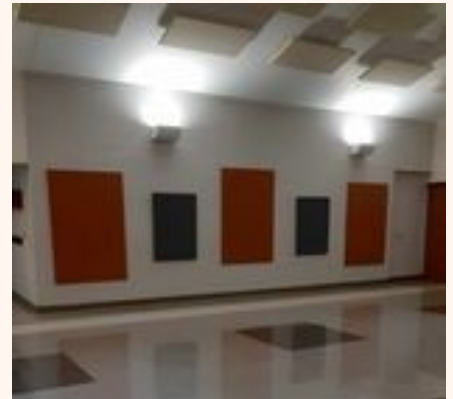
Movie Matinee

What does grief look like? How does grief shape us? A recent Marvel superhero movie deals with these topics as a nation grieves the loss of their leader and looks to the future and their own survival as well. For the movie title, please see the sign in the narthex, or call the church office. The movie starts at 3:00 on Sunday, September 24th—popcorn will be available!

Building Updates

SUMMER IMPROVEMENTS

Some improvements have been made over the summer to our building! First, we received new acoustic boards to hang in the fellowship hall. These help to keep noise levels down. The red boards were getting worn and have been replaced with the gray boards thanks to Tom Schmidt, Marty McKelvey and Tom Dangelo! Herb Hoehing has also been reviewing the heating and air conditioning usage and systems in order to make sure we are keeping electricity usage and costs down! We now have a new thermostat in the fellowship hall which can be programmed to increase efficiency. Thanks Herb!



Administrative News

LITTLE MIRACLES

Little Miracle is now back in the building with a before (6-9AM) and after school (3-6PM) program during the week!

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

We received the Kroger community rewards from May 1 to July 31, 2023. 25 households participated. Total rewards to St. Stephen were \$106.69 Thank you to all who participated. Operation Christmas Child will be receiving the money from this quarterly reward!

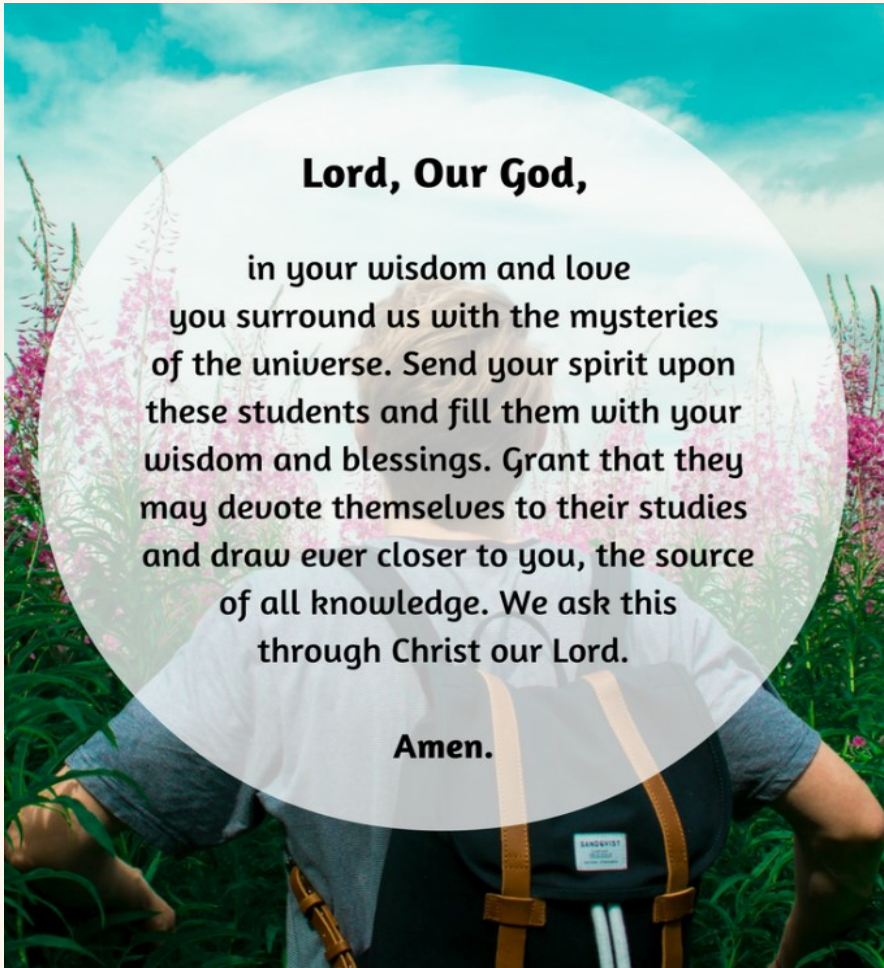
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

As always our newsletter deadline for anything you want to be added is the 2nd Tuesday in the month. So for **October 2023** Newsletter please have all your **items submitted by September 12.**



Prayer

SEPTEMBER PRAYER NOTES



Lord, Our God,

in your wisdom and love
you surround us with the mysteries
of the universe. Send your spirit upon
these students and fill them with your
wisdom and blessings. Grant that they
may devote themselves to their studies
and draw ever closer to you, the source
of all knowledge. We ask this
through Christ our Lord.

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
Afghanistan Refugees
Victims of Gun Violence
Rieck Family—Comfort & Peace
Jim S.—Healing & Comfort

Fun

ALL IN GOOD FUN

After explaining the commandment to honor your father and mother, a Sunday School teacher asked her class if there was a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters.

One boy, the oldest in his family, immediately answered, "Thou shalt not kill."

BIBLE QUIZ

How many days was Lazarus buried in his tomb before Jesus resurrected him?

(Answer page 10)

- A. 1
- B. 4
- C. 6
- D. 14

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

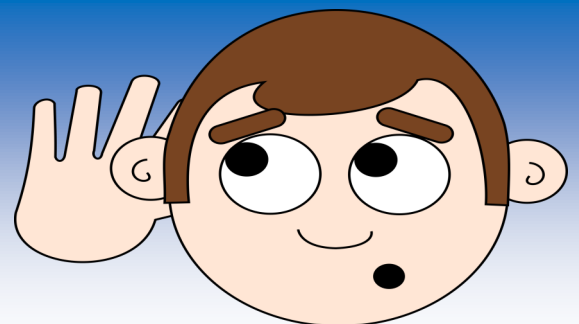
<i>President</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<i>Vice President</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Secretary</i>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Treasurer</i>	Bob Housel

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

Volunteer Sign Up Sheet

If you would like to help with worship, a new volunteer sign up is available in the Narthex on the bulletin board! Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE

October 7: Pet Blessing

October 8: LWR Quilt Blessing

October 29: Operation Christmas Child packing party

November 12: Annual meeting and Meal

Thank you to Kay Bork for helping to add additional prayer requests to our "Praying for the Congregation" booklet. Copies are available in the Narthex, and if you would like one mailed to you please contact the office!

Bible Quiz Answer:

B. 4

September Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

9/1 Marty McKelvey
9/17 Marilyn Scuralli
9/28 Joan Haddox
9/30 Niel Johnson

Birthdays

9/2 Darrell Staup
9/5 Patrick McCoy
9/12 Clare Sommerville
9/14 Lisa Hopkins
9/22 Aaron Ziegler
9/25 Ruth Moeller
9/28 Jackie Cornell

Anniversaries

9/2 T & J Dangelo
9/6 L&K Tefft
9/8 S&A Senci
9/9 S & M Ballard
9/14 J&K Bork
9/27 S&K Ziegler

September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
3 Re-covenanting 10:30 AM In Sanctuary/ Online Worship	4 Labor Day— Office Closed	5 3:00-3:30 Walk-Up Communion	6 11:00 AM Bible Study (Lamentations)	7 7:00 Prairie Meeting (if needed)	8 7:00 Girl's Night	9 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation
10 Re-covenanting 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In Sanctuary/ Online Worship	11	12 Newsletter Deadline 9:00 AM Men's Group 3:00 Walk-Up Communion	13 11:00 AM Bible Study	14	15	16 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation 7:00 PM Music on the Lawn
17 Re-covenanting 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In Sanctuary/ Online Worship	18 1:00 PM Needler's 6:00 PM Council Meeting	19 12:00 PM JOY Club 3:00 Walk-Up Communion	20 11:00 AM Bible Study	21 9:00 AM Toledo Lutheran Conference	22	23 9:30 AM Coffee and Conversation *Hall Rental
24 Re-covenanting 9:00 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In Sanctuary/ Online Worship 3:00 PM Movie Matinee	25 LWR Quilting	26 9:00 AM Men's Group	27 11:00 AM Bible Study (Galatians)	28 7:00PM Book Group	29	30