

Vision of St. Stephen

December/January 2024/2025



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
7800 Erie St. • Sylvania, OH
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www.ststephenlutheran.church

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Home....

Where is home for you?

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, we're encouraged to think about going "home for the holidays". Maybe home is the house where you grew up, your college dorm, a family vacation destination, your grandparents' house, or even the place where you live now.

Maybe a snippet of song, or a certain smell, a particular plant, or even a color reminds you of "home". Maybe you feel home in that place between sleeping and waking. Or maybe you find yourself still waiting to find that "home".

Our society tries to persuade us that "home" can be achieved by decorating—whether it's the gingerbread person theme, or the Santa theme, or the coastal Christmas theme—if we would just have everything looking just so, we would create this perfect home.

As we seek to create the perfect home— sometimes think what we are truly trying to create is that feeling of being perfectly at peace, perfectly seen and understood, perfectly loved. That when these things come together, even imperfectly, we feel that we are "home".

Maybe what we sometimes fail to realize (and I succumb to this too) is that the feeling of "home" is not necessarily a place.

St. Augustine writes, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee".

Perhaps this "home" we're trying to create has already been made for us—that home is resting on God's grace, cradled by God's love, knowing that we are forgiven and loved....to the ends of the earth and back...no matter what else happens. Nothing and no one can take this from us.

God creates "home" for us in Jesus—and in the birth of this tiny baby—invites us to come home, welcoming this baby Savior into the world, and working to make everywhere in this world feel like "home" for all of us, God's beloved children.

May this sense of God's love surround you during this Advent and Christmas season.

God's shalom to you,
Pastor Beth

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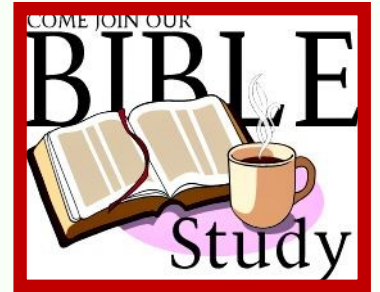
Spiritual Growth

Gathering Space Returns

Dave Haddix is continuing to lead a look at those little known kings in Israel's history, as well as the prophets Elijah and Elisha. We'll be having class sessions through December 22nd at 9:15 a.m. In February, Nancy Pfau will begin a new topic! If there are ideas or things you would like to have as a focus for Gathering Space, please write them down and put them in the black offering envelope box. Pastor Beth will be leading some of the sessions in January.

Wednesday Bible Study

Our Wednesday Bible study continues to look at Paul's letter for the church in Corinth. In these early days of the church, the congregation was figuring out what it meant to be a Christian in the community of Christ. Paul has heard of some of these troubles and is writing to offer some help. Our group meets at 11:00 a.m. for conversation on this (and occasionally other topics!). You're welcome to join in—prior experience or expertise is not necessary!



The Chosen

The Chosen Bible study will begin meeting on Tuesday, January 14th at 6:30 p.m. We'll begin watching and discussing the 2nd season of this program. All are welcome to come for this opportunity---some current attendee's have talked about how it has expanded their understanding of Jesus' humanity as he laughs and chats with the disciples.

Youth Catechism/Fun Friday

Our catechism group will be meeting on Sundays, December 8th and 15th, after our morning worship. Currently, they're looking at the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. A Fun Friday (though on a Thursday) is scheduled for Thursday, December 19th from 7:30-10 p.m. Our January class dates are yet to be scheduled, but the group will be attending the annual Martin Luther King Day worship at Glenwood Lutheran on Sunday, January 19th at 3:00 p.m.



Leader's Retreat

Pastor Beth will be away at the Ohio Rostered Minister's Gathering from January 21-23. This year, the event is being held in Columbus on the campus of Capital University. The theme is "The Rostered Minister and Congregation in a Secular Age".

Advent & Christmas Events

Art and Faith at the Toledo Museum of Art

Would you like to go on a guided meditative tour of art works that depict events surrounding Jesus' birth? Pastors Brenda Peconge and Chris Hanley are leading a tour on Friday, December 6th. You're welcome to park for free at Glenwood Lutheran—the tour departs the museum lobby at 6:30 p.m. Sign up our bulletin board!

Decorate/Undecorate

You're invited to help decorate the narthex, putting up the large Christmas tree with the Christmon ornaments, on Saturday, December 7th at 10:00 a.m. We'll be undecorating on Thursday, January 9th, also at 10:00 a.m., to make space for our Euchre/Puzzle night on Friday, January 10th.

Cookie Exchange

Enjoy tasting different kinds of homemade Christmas cookies? You're invited to a cookie exchange here at St. Stephen on Sunday, Dec. 8th at 11:30 a.m. Here's how it works: Bring a dozen of your favorite kind to make, take a dozen home with you! (We'd also welcome some extra cookies for sampling that day as well!). If you have a container to take cookies home in, that would be helpful, but not necessary. Any questions--please contact Lin McKelvey by text.

Christmas Flowers for the Altar

Sue Kahl is using a Thrivent grant to purchase Christmas flowers, which will then be distributed to our members at home. If you'd like to have a loved one recognized in the Christmas eve bulletin, you're invited to "pay" for the flowers by bringing in a nonperishable food item for the LSS food pantry. Look for the box in the narthex after November 1st where you can fill out a form noting that this is given "in memory/in honor of" people. Any funds remaining from the Thrivent grant will be used to purchase additional food for LSS. Please bring in all contributions by December 15th.

Advent Wednesdays

Calling All Angels! A Christmas study of fearlessness and strength will be our theme as we gather for Advent worship on Wednesday at either 12:05 or 7:00. This half hour service gives us space to focus on getting ready for Jesus' birth. We will gather on December 4, 11 & 18.

Christmas Eve

We'll gather on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24th for worship with candlelight, carols and communion at 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. Our nursery will be staffed for the 4:00 service and this service will be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube as well. Please join us for this celebration of Jesus' birth.

Fun & Fellowship

JOY Club

In December, JOY club will be changing things up a bit. We'll be attending a Christmas tea at St. Paul Lutheran, 428 N. Erie Street, and touring their Nativity Festival. If you're interested in going (suggested donation \$25), please call (419)242-4214 to make a reservation, which is likely to sell out soon. In January, we'll return to our typical pattern of the 3rd Tuesday and head to Olive's on Main street in Sylvania on January 21st at noon.

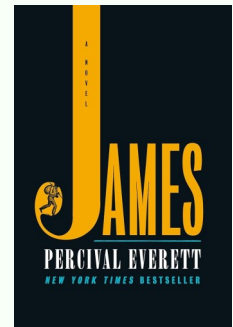
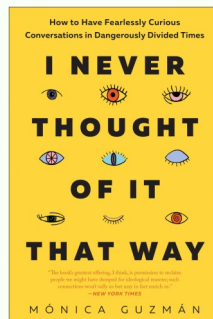
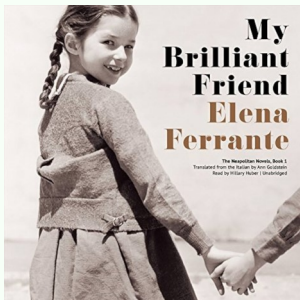
If you'd like to visit the Nativity Festival on your own, and even attend a concert with your walk through the nativities, visit <https://www.heartgalleryandstudios.com/team-1-1> for more information.

Euchre/Puzzle Night

On Friday, January 10th, we'll be gathering for euchre at 7:00 p.m. If you're not a euchre player, but love puzzles, we'll have a table devoted to assembling one! If neither of those options appeal to you, bring a board game you love, and we'll try it out. Mark your calendars for our upcoming Euchre/puzzle nights of March 14 and April 11.

Book Group

We've chosen our books for the next few months, so if one sounds particularly appealing and you haven't been part of the conversation, please join us! We typically print off a list of book club discussion questions from the internet and discuss them together. We're meeting on the 4th Thursday of the month (omitting December) at 7:00 p.m. Here are our upcoming selections: January 23, My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante; February 27, I never thought of it that way, by Monica Guzman, March 27th, James by Percival Everett.



Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar!

Walleye Game—stay tuned for more info on dates and prices

Lutheran Social Services Servant event—Saturday, Feb. 22

Ash Wednesday worship—March 5

Outreach

Sylvania Area Family Services

St. Stephen has a history of working with Sylvania Area Family Services to provide food for Thanksgiving, Christmas and gift cards for Christmas presents. This year, we helped 4 families of 4, 16 people in total from our community. Our goal was \$1,600 and we raised \$2,180! The additional money was sent to SAFS to help additional community members with gifts/food for the holidays. Thank you to everyone for your generosity this holiday season!



Warm Clothing Drive

The warm winter clothing is here: We are gathering warm winter clothing to share with others in the area. SAFS and the Family House have requested good clean items for all ages such as coats, hats, scarves, boots, leggings, sweats, and sweaters. Twin blankets and fleece throws are welcome. Thank you!

Christmas Caroling By Phone

Would you like to spread some Christmas joy to those at home? We'll be gathering around a phone here at church, calling folks, singing 3-4 songs together, and reading the Christmas story to them. We'll be "phone caroling" on Sunday, December 15th at 1:00 p.m. Sign up on the bulletin board!



Christmas Gifts for Members At Home

Would you like to provide some practical gifts for our members at home or in nursing care centers? We'll be collecting lip balms, non-scented lotions, tissues, sanitizers, large print activity books, socks, and sugar-free hard candy beginning after Thanksgiving through Saturday, December 14th. We'll assemble these care packages and deliver them to folks before Christmas. Any extra items will be shared with Salem Lutheran's personal needs pantry!



David Lock Obituary

David Elliot Lock was born Feb. 20, 1939, in Erie, Pa. As a child of Salvation Army officer parents, David lived in several locations growing up including Newark, Paterson and Atlantic City, N.J., and Buffalo, N.Y.

David was a talented musician, playing the piano and singing in several choral groups. David used those talents to fulfill his great passion for the theater. David performed many roles in local theater companies but discovered that he loved directing the most. He directed numerous productions for different theater companies in Portland, ME and mostly in the Lewiston/Auburn area.

David spent many years working at the Poland Spring Inn both at the desk and directing shows performed there. He was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award from Community Little Theater in Lewiston/Auburn.

David was a very friendly and outgoing individual who became well known by many in the Lewiston/Auburn area especially in the many dining establishments that he would frequent. David is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, John W. and Annette Lock of Buffalo, N.Y.; grandsons Nicholas Lock of Groton, Conn., and Jordan Lock (Anna Lock); and great granddaughter Lucy of Medina, Ohio; niece and nephew Dorothy Kuhl of Greenville, S.C., and John D. Lock of Sylvania, Ohio.

David was predeceased by his brother and sister-in-law Richard and Betty Lock of Sylvania, Ohio, both of whom showed great kindness and love for David and had a very special place in David's heart. David's memorial service will be held at St. Stephen on December 14th.

Thank You!

Heat Tape

Thank you to Evin McCoy and Marty McKelvey who laid heat tape on our flat roof and downspouts by our main entry—this tape melts the ice and prevents our downspouts (embedded in the brick columns) from freezing! Our old heat tape had stopped working after many years of service!

Council Change

Marilyn Scuralli is stepping down from her role as church council president, having served in that capacity for many years! She is continuing to serve on the council. We are grateful for her many years of service! Thank you!

Isaiah 117 House

On November 10th, at our chili cook-off, we had a freewill offering for Isaiah 117, changing the way foster care begins, that generated \$121.59! Together with other congregations in our synod, we as a larger group collected \$3,896.59 with some congregations yet to post their gift. Genacross Lutheran Services has donated .5 acre of land on their campus in Oregon, Ohio for the house's location. For more information, check out isaiah117house.com.

Church Finances

KROGER REWARDS

We have received the Kroger Community Rewards from August 1-October 31, 2024 with 26 households participating. Total rewards to St. Stephen were \$89.23 Thank you to all who participated! We will be using these funds to support SAFS! If you would like to sign up your household, please check on the bulletin board in the Narthex, or our website for more information!

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 have any questions, please contact the church office!

Administrative News



NEW YEAR, NEW PRAYER LIST

Our list of people in our prayers for Sunday morning may not be current. In an attempt to refresh it, all names on the prayer list will be suspended, beginning January 5th. Please let Pastor Beth know if the person you named continues to be in need of prayer and she will gladly add it back on our Sunday morning prayer list.

OFFICE CLOSED

Due to Christmas and New Year's falling on Wednesdays this season, the office will be closed on those Wednesdays for the holidays!

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

If you have something that you want to include in the February Newsletter please submit your article to sslcsecretary@buckeye-express.com by January 14th. Thank you!



A Year in Review

- Adult Gathering Space
- Advent Worship Services
- Baptisms
- Back to Church Sunday
- Bible Studies / The Chosen
- Bonfire Get Together
- Bread Collection
- Canned Fruit Collection
- Celebration of Marriage
- Chili Cookoff
- Christmas Donations & Gift Cards
- Church Magnets / Marketing
- Church Indoor Picnic
- Confirmations / Catechism
- Cookie Exchange
- Donuts for Dad
- Easter Breakfast / Egg Hunt
- Friends & Family Day / Picnic
- Fruit Collection
- Game Nights
- Gathering Space
- Helping Hands Group
- In House & Online Worship Sessions
- Inquirer's Class / New Members
- Joy Group Events
- Knitting/Crochet Group
- LPGA Parking
- Lenten Lunch & Soup Supper Services
- Little Miracles All Day Program
- LSS Volunteer Cleaning Events
- March Madness Mac & Cheese Collection
- Membership / Welcoming Committee Formed
- Men's Group Brunch
- Monthly Fellowship Meals
- Mudhens Game
- Muffins for Mom
- Noisy Offerings
- Pentecost Potluck Meal
- Pet Blessing
- Prairie Seeding & Growth
- QR Code Established
- Quilting & Dedication
- Salem Personal Care Collections
- Saturday Morning Coffee Group
- Scholarship Distributions
- Scott Ballard Concert
- Shepherd Team / Postcards
- Soup Collection
- Soup Luncheons
- Staff Gifts
- Synod Assembly
- Technology Improvements
- Thanksgiving Food Gifts
- Toledo Pride Parade
- Warm Clothing Drive
- Youth Fun Events



ST. STEPHEN
Welcome. Worship. Serve. Grow.

7800 Erie Street | Sylvania, Ohio | 43560419.885.1551 | sslsecretary@buckeye-express.com

Prayer

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Tracey—Healing

Wolf—Stomach Cancer

Richard—Healing

Dave—Comfort & Healing

Gary—Stroke & Recovery

Tre—Healing

Laura—Healing & Comfort

Ann—Healing & Comfort

Irina—Healing & Comfort

Steve—Healing & Comfort

Frank—Healing & Comfort

Alice—Comfort & Peace

Joe —Recovery

Carrie—Healing

Diana—Comfort & Answers

Terrie—Healing

Nancy—Healing

Tony—Healing & Comfort

Ali—Guidance & Comfort

Beth—Healing & Recovery

Jettie—Healing & Recovery

Cathy—Healing & Insight

The Highland Community

Hurricane Helene Victims

All victims of trauma and war

A Short Christmas Blessing:

May the blessing of joy
abide within you;

May the blessing of peace
rest upon you;

May the blessing of love
flow out through you;

May all the blessings of the Lord
be yours at Christmas
and in the new year.

~ Author Unknown

Homemade
GIFTS MADE EASY

Fun

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



Thanks to Wilma Melendez (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-24-2010

THIS IS LIKE TOTALLY THE COOLEST THING
THAT HAS EVEN HAPPENED IN THIS STABLE!

BIBLE QUIZ

What other biblical person was born in
Bethlehem?

(Answer page 10)

- A. John the Baptist
- B. King David
- C. Judas
- D. Queen Esther

Steve's Bulletin Board



Advent Devotionals

The Advent devotionals are set out and able to be taken home by anyone who would like one!

Chili Cook-Off

Congrats to our winners!

1st—Kathie Tefft

2nd—Carol Turvey

3rd—Sharon Mason

Fan Favorite—Kathy Aldrich



ELCA Good Gifts

Looking for the perfect gift for someone who has everything already? How about a sheep, cow, or some honeybees? Hard to keep in Sylvania? Well, never fear....ELCA Good Gifts provides these animals to help people become self-sustaining. You can find more information at goodgifts.elca.org or check out our display in the Narthex!



Bible Quiz Answer:

B. King David

December Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

12/1	Jalen Ballard
12/5	Patrick McCoy
12/19	Michelle Ballard
12/21	Ashley Senci
12/23	Ashley Huffman
12/24	Kristin Huffman
12/28	Kay Bork

Birthdays

12/5	Sarah McCoy
12/4	Rich Cornell
12/5	Sandy Brown
12/6	Kay Bork
12/12	Becky Henderson
12/18	David Aldrich
12/18	Michaela Dennis
12/19	Andrea Bogdan
12/24	Wade Dennis
12/31	Ray Hendricks

Anniversaries

12/15	Marty & Lin McKelvey
12/17	Ken & Sue Marvin



January Celebrations

Baptismal Birthdays

1/1	Rich Cornell
1/1	Tom Davis
1/1	Wade Dennis
1/1	Dave Haddix
1/1	Herb Hoehing
1/1	Pat Hoehing
1/1	Nancy Pfau
1/1	Tom Pfau
1/1	Jettie Sansbury
1/3	Elliott Huddleston
1/22	Libby Boldt
1/31	Michaela Dennis

Birthdays

1/3	Elliott Huddleston
1/5	Libby Boldt
1/9	Megan Cook
1/12	Kathy Ziegler
1/14	Dave Davis
1/25	Richard Johnson
1/26	Jim Boldt
1/26	Craig Scholl
1/29	Lila Dennis
1/30	Barb Davis
1/30	Sandy Markin
1/31	Brianna Schuppenies

Anniversaries

1/18	John & Debbie Lock
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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>	Beth Madden
<i>Vice President</i>	Tom Dangelo
<i>Secretary</i>	Marilyn Scuralli
<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>	Lin McKelvey
<i>Social Ministry</i>	Joan Haddox

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	2 1:00 Needler's 2:00 PM Luther 101	3 3:00 Walk Up Communion	4 11:00 Bible Study 12:05 PM Advent Service 7:00 PM Advent Service	5	6 6:30 PM Art & Faith @ TMA	7 10:00 AM Greening of the Church
8 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Cookie Exchange 11:30 AM Catechism	9 5:30 PM Council	10 3:00 Walk Up Communion	11 11:00 Bible Study 12:05 PM Advent Service 7:00 PM Advent Service	12	13	14 11:00 AM David Lock Memorial Last Day for MAH Donations
15 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship 11:30 AM Catechism 1:00 PM Phone Caroling Last Day for Flower Donations	16 1:00 Needler's	17 3:00 Walk Up Communion	18 11:00 Bible Study 12:05 PM Advent Service 7:00 PM Advent Service	19 JOY @ St. Paul 7:30 Fun Friday on Thursday	20	21
22 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	23	24 Christmas Eve Day 4:00 PM Worship 7:00 PM Worship	25 	26	27	28
29 10:30 AM In-Sanctuary/Online Worship	30 3:00 Walk Up Communion	31 New Year's Eve				

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2	3	4
5 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	6 1:00 Needler's	7 3:00 Walk Up Communion	8 11:00 AM Bible Study	9 10:00 AM Undeco- rating	10 7:00 PM Euchre Night	11 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
12 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	13	14 Newsletter Deadline 3:00 Walk Up Communion 6:30 PM Chosen	15 11:00 AM Bible Study	16	17	18 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
19 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship 3:00 PM Catechism MLKJ Worship @ Glen- wood	20 1:00 Needler's Council	21 12:00 PM JOY Club 6:30 PM Chosen	22	23 7:00 PM Book Group	24	25 9:30 AM Coffee & Conversation
		Pastor Beth's Sawmill Retreat				
26 9:15 AM Gathering Space 10:30 AM Online/In Sanctuary Worship	27 LWR Quilting	28 6:30 PM Chosen	29 11:00 AM Bible Study	30	31	