

St. Stephanus Lutheran Church

Preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ for 130 Years

C • O • N • N • E • C • T • I • N • G



with Jesus Christ and Each Other

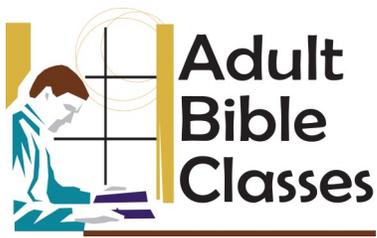
August 16, 2020

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost

Although we won't have weekly services at church for the foreseeable future, there will still be a stream of regular Sunday worship available on Sunday morning! Please visit our website www.saintstephanus.org for more details. Here is a direct link to the "Sermons & Worship" links: <http://www.saintstephanus.org/sermons-2020>

John Wesley (1703-1791) is considered the father of Methodism, and his brother **Charles Wesley** (1797-1788) is called the father of Methodist congregational singing, with over six thousand hymns attributed to him. Charles celebrated his birthday each year by writing a hymn of praise. On the first anniversary of his conversion, his spiritual birthday, Wesley wrote one of his more popular hymns, "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing". When Charles Wesley was converted he had been ill and bedridden for quite some time and the fear of death was looming. One day his brother and some friends came into his room and sang a hymn, then when they left Charles prayed alone for some time. He wrote in his journal, "I was composing myself to sleep in quietness and peace when I heard one come in and say, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities.' The words struck me to the heart. I lay musing and trembling. With a strange palpitation of the heart, I said, yet feared to say, 'I believe, I believe!'" This experience led directly to the third verse of the hymn, "Jesus! The name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease; 'tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace." The tune, AZMON, was composed by Carl G. Gläser (1784-1829), a German composer and contemporary of Beethoven, which was rearranged by Lowell Mason (1792-1872) into the version we use today. A setting of this hymn tune can be seen by clicking the link here: <https://youtu.be/oUBsP1mZ-ew>

~The Organ Bench~



Pastor Thompson has **Bible Study on Sunday morning** at 11am. A link to Bible Study can be found on the website at www.saintstephanus.org/adult , along with worship services and other information. We are using Zoom, which is easy to use. You don't need to be able to speak or have video, you can just come listen in. Let us Shelter in the Word together in this time.

Pastor will be on VACATION starting August 16 (after the service) and will be returning to the office on August 31. **There will be NO Bible study on August 23 & 30!**

Prayers for Worship

As we've been gathering together for Worship we've been collecting prayers through our YouTube comments to use in worship. We recognize that not everyone is logged in or likes to have the comment section up during worship. If there are prayers you'd like us to include that week we invite you to submit them using this form: <https://forms.gle/JLDCstjFWRbu25PT7>



Technology Matching Fund – To date we have raised almost \$4,500 toward our goal of \$9,000 for an investment in technology that will allow us to live stream worship services on a permanent basis. There is still \$2,000 available in matching funds. Here is an opportunity to double your gift! This equipment will allow us to reach shut-ins, those unable to attend due to illness, members on vacation, student away at college, former members who have moved, and those who continue to stay away from large gatherings due to COVID-19 concerns. With this equipment you won't miss large gatherings due to bad weather. Folks can sign in and watch while safe at home. Just imagine sharing the Christmas program, confirmation, weddings, baptisms and other special events with grandparents and family who aren't able to attend. Currently we are borrowing equipment and want to make online services a permanent part of our ministry. Thank you for considering a donation to this technology ministry. Please reference "Technology Fund" on additional contributions.

Ronald McDonald House Update – Over a year ago the Women's Connecting Group undertook a project to provide one meal a month for a year at the Ronald McDonald House in honor of Simon Caquelin. The St. Stephanus Endowment Fund provided grant money to support this effort as did many other donors and volunteers. The project was so successful and so rewarding that it was decided to continue it into 2020. With the arrival of COVID-19, volunteers are not able to provide meals on site even though the need to feed and support families of patients continues. Working with Ronald McDonald House a list of items needed was identified. On August 1st, a drive-by Pantry Party was held which resulted in cash and groceries donations valued at more than \$1,700. Ronald McDonald Houses serve over 6,700 families a year. We will continue to look for ways to support their efforts. The good work of St. Stephanus continues even while we are apart.



On the third Sunday of each month, our church collects your pocket change for “mites for missions”. If you need a mite box please contact the church office and let me know how many boxes you would like. **If your mite box is full and you would like to drop it off or if you need a new mite box mailed to you please contact the church office to arrange a time.** These mites are important and go towards mission projects as well as provide aid to those seeking a Lutheran High School education, assisting seminary students with food/clothing, or help expand outreach to ethnic women and families to name just a few ways that your mites help the LWML reach the world. Thank you for your support.

State Fair Month! Like many things our beloved Minnesota State Fair is having to take a break this year in light of the Pandemic. We are hoping the events and activities we have planned this month will help ease the sadness a bit and help you bring some of the fair fun into your own homes! We've built these activities around some of the favorites you said you'd miss. Hopefully there's something for everyone! Visit our website to learn more! saintstephanus.org/state-fair-month .

Thrivent Grants! Did you know, that each Thrivent member has the ability to apply for a \$250 grant that is used for education, service, or fundraising events or programs, and depending on what type of member you are, you might even be eligible for 2 grants! These grants help us to offset our budget at SSLC, find new ways to serve our community, and congregation, and help us in our ministry here. In the past we've used these to help fundraise for our youth trips and programming, fund Vacation Bible School, purchase supplies for community service projects, and so much more. Currently we are looking for 3 grants for the Fall, if you're interested in supporting any of the below needs please connect with Megan at youth@saintstephanus.org !

- Grant Need #1:** Be the Bridge Youth Curriculum. This will be used for a small group of youth that will meet outside our usual youth group time. The curriculum looks at the topic of racial reconciliation through a gospel focused lens.
- Grant Need #2:** Used to purchase copies of "Spiritually Vibrant Homes." This will be used for a small group geared towards parents interested in learning together how to build in faith developing habits into their daily lives as families.
- Grant Need #3:** Sunday School Supply Kits. This will obviously look a little different this year. We're hoping to supply each family with some basic things that will help them in our remote Sunday School classes.

It's Survey Time! We have been at this distanced-church thing for about four months now. We've tried some new things, we've picked up some old things (hello snail mail), and we've done a lot of wondering if we're doing it right and praying for guidance and wisdom. So we figured it's time to touch base with you all and see where you're at with what's been happening, get your thoughts on what's working and not working, and see how you're doing. Please take time over the next two weeks to complete this survey. It should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. We do ask that you do it in the most complete and honest way - it will help us get a better picture of where we're at as a congregation. If you have questions or need help please contact Megan Hoffman at youth@saintstephanus.org . You can find the survey here: <https://forms.gle/gBiiSrjzs1dV4Zx7> . (If you'd rather have a paper copy and return envelope mailed to you please let us know). Thank you!

Fellowship Group Meets via Zoom— If you are missing conversation and connections we had at church before the pandemic, you might be interested in joining the small group meetings that happen on the **1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:30 P.M.** via ZOOM. Every meeting has time for sharing life updates, reading a part of scripture together, talking about what the passage meant in history and what they mean to us today, sharing prayer requests and praying together. **Our next meeting is August 20th.** Contact Sheila Schlechte at sheilaschlechte@yahoo.com if you would like to be sent the zoom information to attend. All are welcome.

Gospel Support Groups meeting via video conferencing— Do you see brokenness, weariness, or anxiousness around you (and sometimes even within you)? Do you have moments of joy and peace that do not reflect your outward circumstances? Do you find yourself flip flopping between those states? How is God's light shining through you to others? Is it easy to give reason why you have hope? Does your heart break when you see the pain of brokenness in your neighbor?

Gospel means good news and God desires to bring us wholeness in Him. How great it is when I have conversations with others about how the Holy Spirit is at work. Sometimes I need to hear someone encourage me when I feel weary from helping others, sometimes I need to be reminded that God is at work in the situation (God isn't asking me to be the superhero), sometimes I need others to pray with me for discernment because I am at a loss how to respond to my neighbor. Wouldn't it be great to have a time and place to receive and give that intentional support and encouragement?

Please contact Sheila Schlechte at sheilaschlechte@yahoo.com if you are interested in participating in a Gospel support group. Meetings will be held via video conferencing during the pandemic. Gatherings can happen twice a month and would depend on schedules of those interested.

Food Notes:

The impact of our food distribution continues. In July, we served 325 Households and 1,389 people, over half of them from our surrounding area, and almost all within 55104, 55103, and 55117. Through our partnership with Second Harvest, a farm in Wisconsin and Feeding the Dream— St. Paul, that was 16.5 pounds per person, Thank you for your help and support!

We have partnered with our brothers and sisters at St. Paul Fellowship through the work of Delinia Parris/ Feeding the Dream— St. Paul and started a second distribution there on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month (ours here at St. Stephanus are on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays). Pray for the family of Christ at St. Paul Fellowship and their work here in the city and the blessing they are able to be in this partnership.

As part of our partnership with Feeding the Dream-St. Paul, we will feature a brief conversation with myself (Pastor) and Delinia during one of our worship streams in the near future. If you are interested in financially supporting Feeding the Dream and the procurement and distribution of basic needs/staples, please consider an additional contribution payable to St. Stephanus along with a note that it is for **"Feeding the Dream-St. Paul"**.

Interested in Serving at a food distribution? Contact Lynn Thompson at goodluna07@gmail.com

Your abundant generosity is making our ministry of compassion happen and leaving a mark in the lives of our community. Thank you!

