

New Spirit Newsletter



St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church New Kingstown, PA

December 2017 through February 2018

We are a community of faith inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim boldly the Good News of God's loving and saving presence in the world.



Endings and beginnings

By Pastor Matthew Best



As we approach the end of the year, it's appropriate to look back and ahead. We have many things to be thankful for here at St. Stephen. The biggest thing I am grateful for are all the wonderful disciples that I get to work with as we are invited to participate together in the unfolding of God's kingdom right here in our community. In the five months that I have been here I have learned how welcoming everyone is, how generous God's people are, and how ready you all are to do ministry.

As we look ahead, I am truly excited by all the possibilities. One change that is coming is to this newsletter. We'll be changing the way it looks and its content as well. Since we believe that an encounter with Jesus changes lives, we're going to be highlighting the stories of lives that have been changed. The newsletter has the potential to be something that can help tell our Christian story to others we encounter – an evangelism tool. The newsletter will shift to a quarterly narrative, rich in story, and with more pictures of people whose lives have changed. This edition serves as a transition document; running through February 2018.

As we continue into 2018, we'll be looking at potential new ministries – serving the homeless population in the surrounding area, looking at how we do social ministry with people we don't have an established relationship with, developing a discipleship formation process, and more. We'll also be making efforts to maximize our database program to improve efficiency and effectiveness so that it can be a true support of our ministries. We'll also be looking at how we communicate the Good News to people both inside the church and to those who aren't a part of our community yet.

Maybe I'm being overly ambitious – that's certainly possible. But even if we only begin to implement half of these things in 2018, it will be moving us in the right direction.

God has big plans for St. Stephen Lutheran Church. Our church community's mission base is situated within the fastest growing township in Pennsylvania, just a couple miles down the road from I-81 and the Turnpike. From here, God is calling us to step outside of the church and into the surrounding area to make God's presence known. God is calling us to proclaim boldly the Good News of God's loving and saving presence in the world – and especially here along the Route 11 corridor and the surrounding area.

I can't wait to see how God is at work throughout 2018 here at St. Stephen.

Leadership Ledger

The Saint Stephen Congregational Council met for its regular monthly meeting at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, November 13, 2017.

The minutes of the October Congregational Council meeting were officially approved and accepted, and the payment of October's bills was ratified.

In his monthly report, Pastor Matthew Best commented upon the first "Topology" event held on November 5, 2017, at Desperate Times Brewery in Carlisle. In cooperation with St. Paul Lutheran, Carlisle, this program will continue on December 5, 2017, and throughout 2018. He also raised the matter of having an identified process to engage visitors to St. Stephen and to involve them in a membership program.

The monthly committee reports highlighted the following matters:

Educational Ministry - A book study of Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian* beginning in January.

Evangelism - The committee will try the "Trunk or Treat" event again next year, perhaps in conjunction with Trinity United Methodist.

Property - Bowers Tree Experts will remove the diseased Norway Maple tree beside the pavilion free of charge.

Worship and Music - The Christmas service schedule is:

December 24 - one worship service at 9:00 A.M.

Christmas Eve Services at 5:00, 7:00, and 11:00 P.M.

December 25 - Pastor Matthew will post a Christmas reflection on the church website for members to use for personal devotion on Christmas Day

Nomination - Council Member election ballots were approved

Under Unfinished Business Council complete the following actions:

Ratified the revised Youth and Family Ministry Director's job description;

Ratified the hiring of Abby Best as Director of Music and Organist;

Ratified the revised Mission Support Plan with the YFMD position reinstated;

Approved Pastor Matthew's motion that parish committees meet at the same time, the first Tuesday of each month, beginning in January 2, 2018.

New Business for the Council members included the approval of a Credit Card Use Policy and Agreement as presented by the Finance Committee; having a parish credit card will obviate staff members (and others on a limited, as needed basis) using their personal credit cards for parish purchases and having to seek reimbursement.

The next Congregational Council meeting will be held on Monday, December 11, 2017, at 7:00 P.M. Newly elected members of the Council will participate in this session at which parish officers for 2018 will be determined.

The meeting concluded with prayers and the extinguishing of the Christ Candle.

Addendum. The Congregation nominated the following disciples to serve on the Council for the period January 2018 through December 2020:

Paulette Krewson
Carol Clelland
Mike Kulikauskas

Congratulations!!!

Your 2017 Congregational Council

Lloyd Sheaffer, Pres.	Marty Baim
Paulette Krewson, VP	Lela Ewell
Tina Gordon, Sec.	Julie Grove
Matt Schroeder, Treas.	Rose Hlavac
Rev. Matthew Best, Pr	Sara Houser
Crystal Houser	
Cheryl Neidig	

GENERAL UPDATE ON NEW SALVADORAN SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS

We had the privilege to meet and get acquainted with several new scholarship students in November. Our two new in-country coordinators are doing a fantastic job for us. They are handling the application, interview, and selection process, coordinating the costs, distributing the money, reviewing their grades, and so much more.

On this trip we discovered that Christian and Jessica meet with the students on a monthly basis beginning in prayer, catching up with the events of their lives, and are meeting with their parents every two months. They have approached City Hall where they received approval to pay for transportation costs for these rural students to get bus fare into the city to attend classes.

In addition, they plan to begin a book club with the students to develop a habit of reading, a habit not often valued in rural communities, with the added benefit of learning better grammar, while also building group rapport. It is wonderful to hear the ambitious and impressive plans happening while each of these coordinators has so much going on in his/her own individual life!

Here is a group photo of some of the students and coordinators. We were particularly touched that one of the students asked her university professor for permission to re-schedule a final exam today in order to come meet us!

The students each expressed a profound gratefulness for the opportunity our scholarship program offers them. Thank you for your contributions



Education

Church Library

With the time change and the long, dark evenings, do you need something new to read this winter? Be sure to check out all the resources we have in the church library!

We have a large selection of books on a variety of issues such as faith, dealing with grief, stress, evangelism and being a caregiver. We've also purchased a number of books about Martin Luther and the Reformation this year. We have books for all levels of understanding.

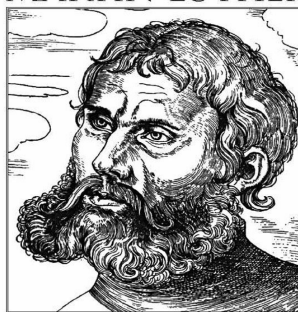
To borrow a book, sign and date the card in the back of the book and place it in the purple bin on the shelf between the windows. When you return a book, please place it on the same shelf as the check-out bin.

A big thank you to Pat Seiple, our Librarian!



Come join the **Winter book study!** Starting Jan. 10 we'll be exploring *Freedom of a Christian* by Martin Luther. We'll gather each Wednesday from Jan. 10 until Feb. 7. The 10:30 book study will gather in the parlor and the 7pm group will gather in the café of Wegmans. All are welcome to join in for lively conversation.

MARTIN LUTHER



**ON THE FREEDOM
OF A CHRISTIAN**
WITH RELATED TEXTS

Edited and Translated, with an Introduction, by
TRYNTJE HELFFERICH

Want in on the action? Perhaps you have noticed the growing assortment of animals that adorn the hallway leading into fellowship hall. The **Educational Ministry committee** collects offerings every year through our Sunday Church School program to be distributed for an ear-marked purpose. This year the money will be donated to the ELCA's campaign in the hopes that our church can buy a farm that will sustain a struggling family in need

world. Social matching all the can double our 3-Dec. 25 there tree on the stage turing animals. "buy" an animal

ELCA
GOOD
GIFTS

Go tail it on
the mountain.

Pig **\$30**

SHOP NOW



somewhere in the Ministry will be funds raised so we donation. From Dec. will be a Christmas with ornaments pic- If you would like to and help the farm

grow, please put your money in the envelope attached and drop it in the offering plate (you may keep the ornament as a thank-you). Be sure to attend the intergenerational event unveiling how many animals we are able to purchase on **Dec. 31 at 9:30** in fellowship hall.

Stewardship 101

Make a year-end contribution to your church

In the Advent and Christmas seasons, we celebrate the new beginning that God gives us in the birth of Jesus – the son of God who came to give us salvation, reveal the heart of God, and set us free from the powers of the world that turn us from God and teach us how to live.

But in the excitement and busyness of celebrating the new beginning, we may forget to plan for an important ending – the close of the year. There are **two things** to remember about the end of the year:

December 31 is when most congregations close their financial books for the fiscal year.

December 31 is the IRS deadline for important tax filings.

First, the congregational books: It's not just your church treasurer and financial secretary who love it when the congregation ends the year "in the black." When income matches expenses, everybody breathes easier and celebrates not only God's abundance but also the generosity of God's people. We all begin the next year dreaming of the ministry before us.

By contrast, anxiety and tension rise when a congregation ends the year "in the red" and must use savings to make up the difference. People focus on scarcity -- what they (and the congregation) lack, rather than what God provides in abundance. Rather than dream-

ing of what God may do among them, folks entertain nightmare scenarios of budget cuts and curtailed ministry.

Your year-end contribution helps your congregation begin the year with optimism, joy, and a stronger belief in God's mission for your community.

Now the IRS deadlines: There's a bottom-line benefit to you for making a sizeable contribution before the end of the year. Charitable giving is tax-deductible, but you must give before the year's end in order to claim the deduction for 2017.

A cash gift is always the easiest and most welcome way to contribute to your congregation, but it's not the only way. Talk to your financial advisor about giving in appreciated stocks or securities, which can help you avoid capital gains taxes. Or, if you are more than 70 ½ years old, your financial advisor can help you make a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA:

Last but not least! The year-end contribution you make to your church is also a spiritual gift to yourself. How? Giving generously is the spiritual discipline that helps us to develop generous hearts. It's true! Just ask anyone who tithes. By giving we fully understand the joy and delight that comes from generosity.

In this season, when we celebrate the generosity and love that God has for us, it's a great lesson to learn.

--Rob Blezard


Tidbits



Decorating the Church for Christmas

It's time to "deck the halls..." Please join us on Saturday, December 2, 2017 to decorate the Church from 10 am to noon. Bring the family, for decorating, Christmas music, games and pizza. See you there!

Christmas Caroling in the Community —Everyone is invited and encouraged to come and spread the Spirit throughout our village and surrounding area. We will meet at the church at **3 pm on Sunday, December 17**, walk and carol and invite onlookers to join us then and also at our Christmas Eve services. Following we will have a light Christmas supper back at the church.



Worship Assistants for December

	December 3		December 10		December 17		December 24		December 31	
	8:00 am	10:45 am	8:00 am	10:45 am	8:00 am	10:45 am	8:00 am	10:45 am	8:00 am	10:45 am
Acolyte	David Herb	Randy Neidig	Sara Houser	David Herb	David Herb	Liana Grove	David Herb	Drayce Grove	David Herb	David Herb
Lector	Melinda Bailey	Carol Clelland	Sue Rodgers	Greg John	Laura Wills	Pat Gilmore-Lee	Beth Lengel	Kathy Burson	Sue Rodgers	Julie Grove
Cantor	Beth Lengel	Art Grove	Paulette Krewson	Greg John	Lynne Immell	Kathy Burson	Maxine Montgomery	Matt Schroeder	Maxine Montgomery	
Assisting Minister	Sara Houser	Steve Read	Beth Lengel	Tina Gordon	Crystal Houser	Julie Grove	Lynne Immell	Julie Grove	Sara Houser	Steve Read
Communion	Alan Gamble	Kathy Burson	Ja 'net Grey	Tom Burson	Daryl Gochenauer	Art Grove	Lloyd Sheaffer	Carol Clelland	Bill Wills	Greg John
Ushers	Daryl Gochenauer* Ja 'net Grey	Frank Roberto* Steve Read Julie Read	Daryl Gochenauer* Ja 'net Grey	Frank Roberto* Steve Read Julie Read	Daryl Gochenauer* Ja 'net Grey	Frank Roberto* Steve Read Julie Read	Daryl Gochenauer* Ja 'net Grey	Frank Roberto* Steve Read Julie Read	Daryl Gochenauer* Ja 'net Grey	Frank Roberto* Steve Read Julie Read
Greeter	Dan Lebo	Frank & June Roberto	Bey Caley Stephanie Sauve	Steve & Judy Read	Dolores Lebo	Ken & Carol Clelland	Alan & Dawn Gamble		Dan Lebo	Frank & June Roberto
Altar Guild	John & Maxine Montgomery		Sue Rodgers				Cheryl Neidig			
Counters	Art & Julie Grove; Cheryl Neidig		Art & Julie Grove; Cheryl Neidig		Art & Julie Grove; Cheryl Neidig		Art & Julie Grove; Cheryl Neidig		Art & Julie Grove; Cheryl Neidig	

December 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 7:00p Resurrected Youth Group	2 10:00a Hanging of the Greens
3 8:00a Worship 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Worship 2:00p Dulcimers practice 5:00p Tapology	4 6:00p Boy Scouts	5	6 6:00p Advent Dinner Church	7	8	9 9:30a 4-H Creative Expressions Club
10 8:00a Worship 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Worship 4:00p Rejoicing Spirits	11 6:00p Boy Scouts 7:00p Congregation Council Meeting	12 4:30p Social Ministries Committee Meeting	13 6:00p Advent Dinner Church	14	15 7:00p Resurrected Youth Group	16 8:00a Men's Breakfast 5:00p Dinner With Friends 6:30p Family Christmas Party
17 8:00a Worship 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Worship 3:00p Christmas Caroling	18 6:00p Boy Scouts 7:00p Evangelism Committee Meeting	19	20 6:00p Advent Dinner Church	21	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 9:00a Worship Christmas Eve Service 7:00p Christmas Eve Service 11:00p Christmas Eve Service	25 Merry Christmas	26 9:00a The Breakfast Club Education Committee Meeting 7:00p	27	28	29	30
31 8:00a Worship 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Worship						

Special Occasions

BIRTHDAYS



Carol Scheffer	1-Dec	Stephanie Sauve	20-Dec
Bill McCormick III	6-Dec	Garrett Treaster	20-Dec
Amber Fabian	9-Dec	Nikolaus Lewis	22-Dec
Glenn Foxx	19-Dec	Benjamin Burson III	23-Dec
Marcia Lamp	19-Dec	Peggy Weigel	23-Dec
Jay Livingston	20-Dec	Kaitlyn Treaster	26-Dec

Matt & Stacy Schroeder	4-Dec	Lee & Ginny Buzilow	12-Dec
Randy & Cheryl Neidig	6-Dec	Leo & Kitty Smith	21-Dec
		Frank & June Roberto	27-Dec

ANNIVERSARIES



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
 P. O. Box 266
 New Kingstown, PA 17072
 Phone: 766-2168
www.StStephenLC.org

Pastor: *Reverend Matthew Best*
pastor@ststephenlc.org

Parish Office Manager: *Kevin Stafford*
office@ststephenlc.org

Organist & Choir Director: *Abby Best*
music@ststephenlc.org

Custodian: *Michael Wogan*



If you would like to be added to the email prayer chain list (to receive notifications of prayer requests throughout the week), you can sign up with Mike Kulikauskas, or by emailing office@ststephenlc.org. At any time, you can send prayer requests to prayer@ststephenlc.org

Bob Lamp	Alzheimer's disease	Michael Smith	Cancer
Hen Yohn	Health issues	Darlene	Friend of Michael
LyNette Clements	Very Weak		

Hospital Admissions



Pastoral Care in Times of Emergency or Crisis. If you need emergency pastoral care, please call the St. Stephen office at 766-2168 (leave a voice mail if necessary), or call Pastor Matthew at 717-805-7598.