



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church ELCA


-- The Friendly Visitor --

2024



FEBRUARY

***SSELCA: A Family that together prays, teaches, loves, and serves
God and our neighbors.***



A Note From the Pastor

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

(1 Corinthians 13: 4-7)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Happy Valentine’s Day St. Stephen’s!

Not only is Valentine’s Day on February 14th, but also it is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lent Season. And as I ponder St. Paul’s meaning of “love,” I cannot think of any better time for this day of Valentine’s to be celebrated.

St. Paul states to the Corinth congregation, “Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

This “Love” that Paul refers to only means the quality of love that we see on the cross. It is a love for the utterly unworthy. A kind of love that no one can earn or deserves. It is a love that proceeds from a God who is love. It is a love that is lavished on others without thought of whether or not they or worthy. It proceeds from the nature of the lover, who is God – not from any attractiveness in the beloved.

The one who has experienced God’s love, while yet him or herself is a still a sinner – but has been transformed by that experience. And because of that experience, that person can see people as those for whom Jesus Christ died on the cross for. That person who has received and experienced God’s love so profoundly lives out their life to practice that love and seeks nothing for themselves, but only the good of those they love.

This is the kind of love that Jesus gives to each one of us. And I like to call it grace. We can’t earn it. And we certainly do not deserve it. I wonder what it would like if only we could treat one another – *love* one another as Jesus has loved us? Is it possible to give each other the grace (the love) to others who have hurt us, shamed us, embarrassed us, belittled us, condescended us, whatever the case may be...and forgive them – give them grace....Love them the same way Jesus Christ has loved each one of us?

As we come to receive ashes on our foreheads on Wednesday, February 14th (either at Noon or 7: 00PM), remember who you are – a human being who messes up – a lot...and who Jesus Christ is – the Son of God who will be walking to that cross on your behalf to give you the gift of grace, which his love will be poured out for you. You don’t have to earn it and you don’t have to do anything to deserve it. But it is your salvation!

So, Happy Valentine’s Day!

Love,
Pastor Terri

St. Stephen's News



Dear Church family,
Thank you for the cards, the calls, the food, and the prayers during our recent illness. It is a blessing to have such an amazing Church family!
May the grace of the Lord be with you all.
-Ken & Janice

Vickie, thank you for your devotion and steadfast as President of our Church for the past two years. Your hard work and attention to detail were obvious, during this time. We are fortunate to have had you in this role of leadership as St. Stephen's continued in service to Our Lord. God's continued blessings for you in 2024. With much love, Gene

THANK YOU



We would like to thank the Good Cheer Group for all the happiness they bring and they do for the Church!

Everyone is invited to join the Group, they would love to have you! Their next meeting is Tuesday, Feb 13th at 10AM!

Easter Lilies are available to purchase, if you would like to please fill out a form located by either of the main entrances and give to an Usher, or contact the Church Office!

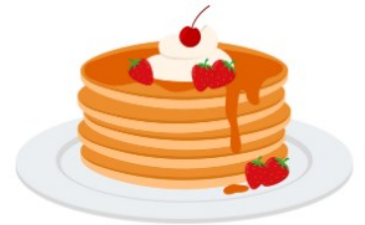


Worship News



In need of a deeper healing?
Experience healing! Come join in our 2nd healing
service for the laying of Hands and the
anointing of oil.
Wednesday, Feb. 7th, located in the Chapel at
12:30pm following Bible Study.

*Join with us for a pancake meal for Shrove Tuesday
on Feb. 13th from 5-6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall!*



Let us join together on Sunday, Feb. 18th at 4:30pm
beginning our journey through this Lent Season! Let
us prepare our hearts for Jesus' sacrifice for our sins!

*We will be having 2 Ash Wednesday Services to make
sure all have an opportunity to embrace the next
season coming, Lent! Worship times on Wed. Feb. 14:
- 12pm & 7pm -*



✚ Scan QR Code below with
camera phone to give Offering
to SSELCA ✚



SCAN ME



SCAN ME
TO FIND
OUT MORE!

INSPIRATION FROM ABOVE
WORSHIP THAT'S DOWN TO EARTH

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, E.L.C.A.
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The Rev. Terri Landers (828) 228-9887 (cell)
pastorterri@sselcahy.org (email)
Radio Station: 94.3FM
Office Hours:
- Monday-Friday -
8:30AM-1:30PM

Bible Study Groups

† NEW RADICAL BIBLE STUDY †

What do you think? We have redefined Christianity. We have given in to the dangerous temptation to take the Jesus of the Bible and twist Him into a version of Jesus we're comfortable with. It's a Jesus who's OK with our materialism, fine with nominal devotion that doesn't require any sacrifice, and pleased with a brand of faith that required attendance on Sunday but no real commitment in day-to-day life.

But wonder if I could help you push through the haze of self-justification and ask a simple question as we study the words of Christ:

What if He was actually Serious?

RADICAL, by David Platt. Join us for a 6-Week Bible Study beginning Monday, February 19th @ 6:30Pm -8:00PM.

Women's Bible Study

9:30AM on Tuesday's at Parkway House

<u>Tuesday, Feb. 6th</u>	<u>Tuesday, Feb. 13th</u>	<u>Tuesday, Feb. 20th</u>	<u>Tuesday, Feb. 27th</u>
<i>Week 52</i>	<i>- No Bible Study -</i>	<i>Lesson 1</i>	<i>Lesson 2</i>
<i>-Day 1: Revelation 1-3</i>		<i>-Genesis 1:26-31</i>	<i>-Genesis 12:10-20</i>
<i>-Day 2: Revelation 4-7</i>		<i>-Genesis 2:15-25</i>	<i>-Genesis 15:1-6</i>
<i>-Day 3: Revelation 8-11</i>		<i>-Genesis 3:1-3:19</i>	<i>-Genesis 16:1-6</i>
<i>-Day 4: Revelation 12-15</i>		<i>-Genesis 3:20-24</i>	<i>-Genesis 17:1-8, 15-19</i>
<i>-Day 5: Revelation 16-19</i>			<i>-Genesis 18:10-15</i>
<i>-Day 6: Revelation 20-22</i>			<i>-Genesis 21:1-7</i>

Pastor's Bible Study

10:30AM on Wednesday's at SSELCA

<u>Wednesday, Feb. 7th</u>	<u>Wednesday, Feb. 14th</u>	<u>Wednesday, Feb. 21st</u>	<u>Wednesday, Feb. 28th</u>
<i>Readings</i>	<i>- No Bible Study -</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Readings</i>
<i>-2 Kings 2:1-12</i>		<i>-Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16</i>	<i>-Exodus 20:1-17</i>
<i>-Psalm 50:1-6</i>		<i>-Psalm 22:23-31</i>	<i>-Psalm 19</i>
<i>-2 Corinthians 4:3-6</i>		<i>-Romans 4:13-25</i>	<i>-1 Corinthians 1:18-25</i>
<i>-Mark 9:2-9</i>		<i>-Mark 8:31-38</i>	<i>-John 2:13-22</i>



MISSION &



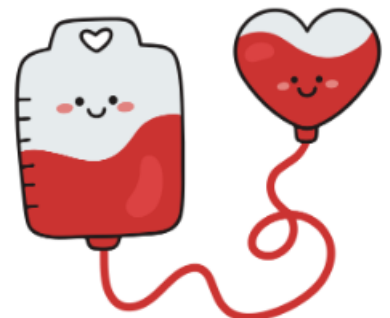
We would like to say a thank you to the Miller Family—who in memory of Max Miller and in honor of Graceview Homes in Newton, donated drawstring backpacks with hygiene products to give to our Downtown Hickory Homeless Meal! What a blessing these will be to the community! Thank you!!!

During the first 3 months of 2024 your monetary donations to Little Something Extra will be used for Pastor Terri's discretionary fund. We will plan to purchase Wendy's and Sheetz cards for her to have on hand for those needing help that present to the church office. The need is great! Thank you for your donations! – Social Ministry Team



Social Ministries fills meal bags for the Hickory Soup Kitchen every other month and delivers them on Friday for lunch on Saturday. Our months are February, April, June, August, October, and December. If you would like to help with this ministry please contact Sharon or Corky Miller.

We want to express our gratitude to everyone who came out last month and donated blood to the Red Cross! Thanks to your support, the organization was able to collect a total of 23 pints! Every pint counts! Thank you all!!!



OUTREACH



A big and special thank you to Lincoln Charter School in Lincolnnton whose awesome 5th grade class came for 6 weeks to volunteer assisting our workers in the Food Pantry! Here are some pictures of the children helping! The children really got involved in helping bag, cart out, and speak with those that came into the Food Pantry.



In January we prepared and took 110 sandwiches to the Homeless in Downtown Hickory.

This past month the Food Pantry supplied 99 families and individuals with canned and dry food items.

We fed 71 men, women, and children during our Community Soup Kitchen Meal in January.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the selfless volunteers at St. Stephen's. Your generous contributions, whether through monetary donations or volunteering your time, have been instrumental in the success of our ministries. We truly appreciate the unwavering support and growth you have provided to these causes. We thank you!

St. Stephens ELCA

December Council Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2023

Meeting called to order by President Vickie Eckard.

Attendance–Vickie Eckard, Cathy Baker, Pastor Terri Landers, Donna Specht, Sandra Barton, Hayden Huhn, Barry Sullivan, Deborah Pruitt, Kathy Smith, Robert Ollis, Phil Barton, Regina Reece and Donald Bumgarner. New members: Dee Fry, Corky Miller. Absent: Kim Frankel

Devotions by Regina Reese

Motion to approve November Council Meeting minutes made by Barry Sullivan, seconded by Robert Ollis. Approved.

Motion to approve Annual Congregation Meeting minutes made by Robert Ollis, seconded by Barry Sullivan. Approved.

Treasurer's Report– Report for November

Pastor's report– Report for November

Ministry Team Reports

Christian Education	Report on file
Congregational Life	No Meeting
Evangelism	Report on file
Property	No Meeting
Social Ministry	Report on file
Stewardship– Finance	No Meeting
Worship & Music	Report on file
Youth	No Meeting

Old Business

Vickie is working on contacting families about bequests money.

New Business

Daniel and Mindy Michael made a presentation on a proposed high school. A motion to move forward in investigating the feasibility made by Hayden Huhn, seconded by Regina Reese. Approved.

Treasurer reported that new envelopes are ready for pick up. Recommended that pew pads be discontinued as attendance is no longer needed to be recorded. Visitor cards will be placed in holders. Motion made by Kathy Smith and seconded by Donald Bumgarner to give permission to find better pricing on phone system and computer support company and to give staff bonuses of \$250 each. Approved.

Evangelism brought a proposal of \$12,520 for an electric sign. Vickie Eckard made a motion and Robert Ollis seconded to move forward with purchase. Approved with 4 “No” votes.

Robert Ollis brought a motion from Property to replace downstairs classroom lights with LED bulbs at a cost of \$5000. Motion seconded by Hayden Huhn. Approved.

Outgoing members and new incoming members were recognized.

Motion to extend meeting by 15 minutes made by Barry Sullivan and seconded by Kathy Smith. Approved.

Jim Edwards was appointed as Trustee for Endowment Fund for a second 3 year term.

Annual reports due from each committee and all groups by January 9th.

Election of officers for next year: Barry Sullivan, President; Dee Fry, Vice President; Sandy Barton, Secretary.

Committee liaison assignment sheets handed out.

Motion to adjourn by Barry Sullivan and seconded by Vickie Eckard

Closed with Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting January 14 at 6:00 pm. Barry Sullivan has devotions.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie Eckard, President
Sandra Barton, Secretary

Remember in Prayer

Nursing Homes:

Brookdale Lenoir - Angie Asherbraner- #39

Rock Barn- Frank & Pat Hedrick - #207

Trinity Village-(Springs Road)-Mary Alice Punch

504, Inez Gilbert - #508, Lois Stine - #219, Harold Eckard- #209, Ruth Dietz - #109

Trinity Ridge- (Mountain View) Tammy Falcone - #714

Graceview Retirement Home- Guy Miller

At Home: Betty Eckard, Jenny Eckard, Sylvia Hoke, Leon & Ramona Baker



Family and Friends: Janet Stinson, Susan Hoke Lee, Loyd Hoke, Aidan Cox, Dylan Godfrey, Ben Godfrey, Phyllis Gilbert, Eric Deitz, Heather Brooks, David Crump, June Yount, Linda Zarou, Shari Dezern, Kay and Bill Barton, Kim Ramsey, Robby Patton, Kadence Yount, Paul Talbert, Gene Crump, Michael Yount, Jo Lang, Norris Tessnar, Toby & Kim Hemphill, Ronald Harris, Melinda Chapman, Dawn Good, Martha Killian, Teddy Hefner, Michelle Roll, Amber Reese, Betty Eckard, Guy Miller, Tim Hollar, Dennis Knapp, Kay Spencer, David Pruett, Lanie McGee, Kate Marler, Kay Hatch, Audra Bolick, Pat Waters, Ken & Linda Abernathy, Chad Hemphill, Grace Priest, J.R. Yelton, James McGee and Family, Ingrid & Eric Peake, Gerald Williams, Nancy Alexander, Martha Yoder, Roxanne Duncan, Jo-Ann Stafford, Kyle Huffman, Vicki Stanfield, Jeff Matthews, Debbie Wike, Jimmy Barber, Wayne Eckard, Betty Schuman, and Dennis McGee.

Bereavement: The Family of Boyd Cook, The Family of Paul Wilson, The Family of Judy Carpenter, The Family of Jackie Pruett, The Family of Joyce Travis, The Family of Kisha Kever, and The Family of Aaron Winter.

Others: First responders and health care workers who take care of us. All who are hungry. All who are homeless. All those affected by storms. All those affected by the violence in our country and abroad. The People of Ukraine and Russia. The People of Turkey and Syria. The People affected by the wildfires in Maui. The earthquake victims of Morocco.

Armed Forces:

U.S. Navy: E5 Logan Miller; IS2 Chris Powell;

U.S. Marines: Maj. John Teague; Staff Sgt. Justin Curl

U.S Army: Maj. Matthew Helton Ft Bragg, NC

Please contact the church office to make changes to this list.