



**St. Stephen's Lutheran Church ELCA**

***– – The Friendly Visitor – –  
2025***



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



## *A Note From the Pastor*

*"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

*(2 Corinthians 5:20-21)*

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

Dear St. Stephen's Family:

My prayer is that this letter finds you well and joyous as we begin to enter into the season of Lent and journey with Jesus to the Cross. I hope that if you are able, you will participate in the many activities that we have planned in these coming weeks to experience Christ in new and profound ways.

Our journey begins on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> with our Pancake Supper. This year we plan to 'put away' the Alleluias as we solemnly walk with Jesus.

On Wednesday, you have two opportunities to receive the impositions of the ashes – 12:30PM or 7:00PM.

Why do we do this? And why is this important?

The ashes that we receive on our forehead on Ash Wednesday are to serve as a powerful visual and reminder of our mortality. We are only dust and one day – to dust we shall return.

We all have a choice in life...We can either return to the dust of the earth without a connection to God or we can return to the dust of the earth with a connection to God.

There is only one way to have a connection to God – And that is to be reconciled to God – To be right (righteous) before God...

And that is through *repentance*. Repentance comes from a change of heart and mind that involves turning away from sin and turning towards God for forgiveness. Repentance is motivated by love for God and a desire to obey his commandments.

In this Lenten journey, together we will confront our sin and acknowledge our inability to live up to all God has created us to be and our need to be forgiven. No matter how far we have become in our spiritual journeys, each of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

And when we experience God's amazing grace so profoundly, through our witness we become ambassadors for Jesus Christ, *'so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.'* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

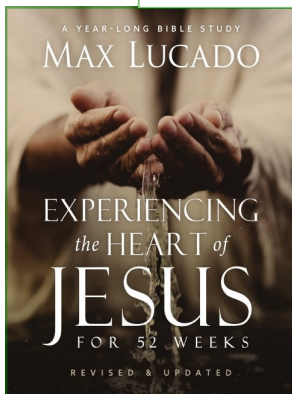
I hope to see you as we journey to Jerusalem!

+ *Pastor Terri*



# † Bible Studies & Ministry Group News †

## Women, Coffee, & Jesus Tuesday's at 9:30AM at Parkway House



Would you like to join the Tuesday Women's Bible Study? ALL women are invited and happily welcomed to come and jump in the discussing of 'Experiencing the Heart of Jesus' by Max Lucado. In this Study, Although Jesus is familiar, and we know details of his life, could we consider him a companion or dear friend? Do his mannerisms and habits rub off on us because we spend so much time with him? *Experiencing the Heart of Jesus for 52 Weeks* is about walking with Jesus so closely that we become like him, that we imitate him. This may be purchased at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

**Tuesday, Mar. 4<sup>th</sup>**  
Week 28: The  
Heaviness of Hatred  
♦ Luke 7:36-47  
♦ 1 John 2:1-6

**Tuesday, Mar. 11<sup>th</sup>**  
Week 29: A Love Worth  
Giving  
♦ 1 Corinthians  
13:1-8  
♦ 1 John 4:19-21

**Tuesday, Mar. 18<sup>th</sup>**  
Week 30: What We  
Really Want to Know  
♦ Romans 8:31-35  
♦ Isaiah 49:14-19

**Tuesday, Mar. 25<sup>th</sup>**  
Week 31: Everyone  
Needs a Miracle  
♦ Mark 5:21-36  
♦ Hebrews 11:1-3

## Pastor's Lectionary Bible Study Wednesday's at 10:30AM in the Bible Study Room

Engage in thought-provoking discussions on readings from the Old Testament to the New Testament at our inclusive weekly Bible Study. Join us as we explore the teachings of God's Word together!

**Wednesday, Mar. 5<sup>th</sup>**  
♦ Deuteronomy  
26:1-11  
♦ Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16  
♦ Romans 10:8b-13  
♦ Luke 4:1-13

**Wednesday, Mar. 12<sup>th</sup>**  
♦ Genesis 15:1-12,  
17-18  
♦ Psalm 27  
♦ Philippians  
3:17-4:1  
♦ Luke 13:31-35

**Wednesday, Mar. 19<sup>th</sup>**  
♦ Isaiah 55:1-9  
♦ Psalm 63:1-8  
♦ 1 Corinthians  
10:1-13  
♦ Luke 13:1-9

**Wednesday, Mar. 26<sup>th</sup>**  
♦ Joshua 5:9-13  
♦ Psalm 32  
♦ 2 Corinthians  
5:16-21  
♦ Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

# † To the Congregation †



*Join us for Shrove Tuesday and Pancake Supper this Tuesday from 5-6:30PM! As we begin our Lenten Season, we will put away – lock-up our “Alleluias” to remind us to be a part of our family of faith even in the darkest times. Come and experience the ‘locking up’ of the Alleluias!’*

*Experience Lent BENEATH THE CROSS OF JESUS  
Shrove Tuesday is only the beginning of our Lenten Journey!*

*Ash Wednesday and the imposition of the Ashes: This Wednesday,  
March 5th 12:30 and 7:00PM*

*Lent Worship and Dinner on Wednesdays: Dinner at 5:00PM Worship at 6:00PM. Please be sure to R.S.V.P. if you are planning to attend to help make sure we have enough, but not too much left over. These can be found by both main entrances and given to an Usher, or call the church office.*

*+Holy Week details are to come!+*

Betty Eckard has moved to room #113 at Trinity Village.



Margie Isenhour has moved to Brookdale Falling Creek: 910 29th Ave. NE RM #404, Hickory, NC 28601. If you would be able to provide Mrs. Isenhour of a ride to church on Sunday's it would be greatly appreciated to please be sure to let Pastor Terri or Emily know before hand if you would like to pick her up for church.



Just a reminder that in order to help reduce our deficit in the General Fund, Council has decided we will begin funding the Food Pantry, Community Meals, and once a month Saturday homeless lunch with proceeds from our Endowment Fund and Thrivent Grants. We ask that you begin giving any monies you have been donating to these important ministries to the General Fun (left side of the envelope). Doing this , along with any other increase you can make in your offerings, will reduce and hopefully eliminate the deficits we are experiencing. Thank you.



# † To the Congregation †



DEAR CHURCH FAMILY  
THANK YOU FOR ALL  
THE PRAYERS AND CARDS  
THAT I HAVE RECEIVED  
YOU HAVE BEEN VERY  
THOUGHTFUL.  
LOVE YOU ALL  
SUE VAN HORN



We are excited to invite our congregation and the community to the 'soft' opening of our Senior Activity Center on Thurs., March 13th, from 1 to 3 PM! Enjoy light refreshments as you explore what we have in store for those aged 50 and above. We eagerly look forward to starting this journey together!



**WELCOME TO THE PASTOR'S TABLE!**  
Pastor Terri and Bob will be having dinner at Davinci's on Thursday, March 13th at 6:00PM.  
If you are interested in joining us for a relaxed and informal conversation and to get to know one another in a casual environment, please let Pastor know by Wednesday, March 12th. Participation will be limited to no more than 8 people, (includes the pastor and Bob). Meals are Dutch.



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed by providing gift cards, cooking, serving, volunteering, and showing up in support of our first Community Event for 2025. YOU are the reason these events thrive and foster connections within our community! **THANK YOU!!**

What an AMAZING turnout we experienced! It was a wonderful sight to see 70 of our church and community members of all ages and backgrounds coming together to enjoy each other's company, dine, and share in fellowship. This could not have happened without Our Lord and Savior, and this vibrant congregation!



# ✦ Mission & Outreach ✦

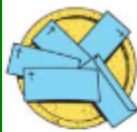
## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

77 households were provided with non-perishable food items in the month of February.

*(Please note that the Food Pantry was closed Wed., Feb. 19th due to inclement weather.)*

In February we fed 90 men, women, and children were served in at our Community Meal!

Our Outdoor Homeless Meal fed 65 people in our local homeless community last month in February!



### Little Something Extra



All of the offerings dedicated to Little Something Extra in March will go to support activities for The Senior Saints Center.



Join us TODAY for the March Community Meal featuring loaded baked potatoes, salad, refreshments, and dessert! All members and visitors are welcome after worship, from 1-2:30 PM, open to the entire community.



# St. Stephens ELCA

## January Council Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2025

Meeting was called to order by President Barry Sullivan.

**Attendance:** Pastor Terri Landers, Barry Sullivan, Dee Fry, Kim Frankel, Steve Baker, Robert Ollis, Deborah Pruitt, Corky Miller, Bill Duncan, Donald Bumgarner, Phil Barton  
Devotions by Barry Sullivan.

**Treasurer's report:** Report for December 2024

**Pastor's report:** Report for December 2024

### Ministry Team Reports

Christian Ed/ Evangelism/Youth	Report on file
Congregational Life	Report on file
Property	Report on file
Social Ministry	No meeting
Stewardship/Finance	No meeting
Worship & Music	No meeting

### Old Business:

All year end committee reports should be submitted by 1/31/25.

### New Business:

The annual Council retreat will be Saturday February 8 from 9AM until 2PM.

The NC Synod meeting is May 29-31 in Greensboro. Let Barry know if you would like to attend.

A motion to dispose of documents following ELCA guidelines was made by Robert Ollis and seconded by Donald Bumgarner. Approved.

Motion to adjourn by Robert Ollis and seconded by Corky Miller.

Closed with Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is February 9, 2025 at 6PM. Corky Miller has devotions.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barry Sullivan, President  
Kim Frankel, Secretary

## Remember in Prayer



### **Nursing Homes:**

**Brookdale Lenoir**– Angie Asherbraner #16

**Brookdale Falling Creek**– (Hickory) Margie Isenhour #404

**Graceview Retirement Home**– Guy Miller #3

**Rock Barn**– (Claremont) Pat Hedrick #207

**TerraBella**– (Newton) Loyd Hoke #C16

**Trinity Ridge**– (Mountain View) Tammy Falcone #714

**Trinity Village**– (Springs Road) Mary Alice Punch # 504, Lois Stine #202,  
Betty Eckard #113

**Wilkes Assisted Living**– (North Wilkesboro) Sylvia Hoke #206

**At Home:** Jenny Eckard, Leon & Ramona Baker

**Family and Friends:** Dylan Godfrey, Ben Godfrey, Robby Patton, Guy Miller, Janet Stinson, Tim Hollar, David Pruett, Teddy Hefner, Bob Landers, Andrea Keast, Roxanne Duncan, Margie Isenhour, June Yount, Diedre, Tami Elmore, Helen Miller, David Crump, Mark Ewing, Derrick O'Brien, Loyd & Sylvia Hoke, Jeff Matthews, Richard Powell, Robin Hefner, Lois Stine, Danielle Scott, Bobby Elmore, Bill Hill, Dale Pope, Tim Wilkins, Alan Pruitt, Gwen Lafone, Mary Willis, Kim Johnson, Linda Bumgarner, Melvin George, Seth Owens, Ron Barton, Charlie Bock, Gilda Pennell, Ron Williams, Donald Hefner, Jackie Meadows, Carson Tyre Hall, Lynn & Danny Delancey, Sue Van Horn, Doris Jones, Michael Yount, Krystal Sharpe, Debbie Strange, Imogene Opdahl, Penny McMartin, Greg Deitz, Sydney Wilson, Heather Rushing, Barbara Earley, Waylon Crouse, Greyson Hall, Sue Van Horn, and Carl Baker.

### **Bereavement:**

**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 People of Israel. The People affected by Hurricane Helene.

### **Armed Forces:**

**U.S. Navy:** IS2 Chris Powell;

**U.S. Marines:** Maj. John Teague;

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





SCAN ME  
TO FIND  
OUT MORE!

*INSPIRATION FROM ABOVE*  
**WORSHIP THAT'S DOWN TO EARTH**

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



SCAN ME

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The Rev. Terri Landers (828) 228-9887 (cell)

[pastorterri@sselcahky.org](mailto:pastorterri@sselcahky.org) (email)

Radio Station: 94.3FM

**Office Hours:**

- Monday-Friday -

8:30AM-1:30PM