



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church ELCA

- - *The Friendly Visitor* - -

2026



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

† Call Committee Corner †

May 2026

To the St. Stephens Church Family:

We would like to update you as to where the call committee is in the process of looking for our next pastor. We have completed the MSP (Ministry Site Profile). This was done by compiling all the information that was given at our congregational meeting in January. The MSP report is being submitted to the church council and after their approval, it will be sent to the synod. Hopefully, these steps will be completed by the first of May. The synod will set up a planning retreat for the call committee. Based on the schedule of the synod staff liaison, we anticipate the retreat happening sometime in May or June. With the completion of the planning retreat, we will then start the process of having discernment conversations with candidates for our next pastor.

We ask all members of St. Stephens to keep the call committee in your prayers. Please remember that this is a multi-step process so it is important that everyone be patient. The call committee is constantly seeking and praying for God's guidance to direct us in this process. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

May God's blessings and peace fill your hearts.

The next page shows a chart that lists the key steps in the call process and a brief description on what they entail.

A check mark indicate that step has been complete and an X at which step the Call Committee is at.

This chart will be made to poster size and posted by the church office and labeled such as the one shown to keep the congregation up to date.

NORTH CAROLINA SYNOD CALL PROCESS OVERVIEW

CONGREGATION		<i>This is a brief list of key steps in the call process.</i>	STAFF
KEY LEADER(S)			KEY LEADER(S)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rostered Minister		A rostered minister transition occurs or a new staff member is needed.	Bishop Call Process Coordinator
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council President		Congregation council president contacts synod staff.	Call Process Coordinator
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council President		Synod staff helps to arrange supplies and an interim.	Supply and Interim Coordinator
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council President		Synod staff schedules an initial meeting with the congregation council.	Staff Liaison
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council MSP Writing Team		A date for a study is scheduled. A team is formed to create the ministry site profile (MSP). A call committee is formed based on the constitution.	Staff Liaison
Call Committee		The call committee goes through a planning retreat to learn about acting as a discernment team for their call process.	Call Process Coordinator
Call Committee		The call committee begins having discernment conversations with candidates.	Staff Liaison
Call Committee		The call committee narrows it down to a primary candidate and send that name to the congregation council.	Staff Liaison
Council		The congregation council meets with the primary candidate and votes.	Staff Liaison Administrative Support
Congregation		The primary candidate does a meet-and-greet with the entire congregation. Soon after, the congregation votes.	Staff Liaison
Congregation		The primary candidate becomes the newly elected rostered minister.	Staff Liaison
Council President		The newly elected rostered minister is installed by the conference dean.	Staff Liaison

† To the Congregation †



St. Stephens Lutheran church members,

Our team would like to express our gratitude for you all allowing us to borrow your trailer to transport our teams parts and robot to competitions. We could not have made this happen nearly as smoothly without your help and support. We have been blessed to have such a kind group of people willing to lend a helping hand in a big factor of transportation and competition planning the last 3 years, so thank you so much for that.

We would also like to share that we managed to compete well at our first 2 competitions ranking us 44th out of 90 NC teams! This meant we qualified to go compete at the NC state championships with the top 50 teams in the state. At that competition we faced some hard matches and many machine issues, but were able to overcome. We were asked to be apart of an alliances semi-finals match in playoffs because one of their 3 robots on their alliance broke down. We gladly jumped in to help them play the match. After some hard fought game play we won that match and we moved to finals, where we faced the top 2 ranking teams at the competition and their 3rd robot was ranked 16th out of the 50 teams there, so we knew the odds weren't in our favor. Despite the unlikely chances we put out our best game on the field and managed to win both finals matches, which qualified us for World Championships in Houston, TX.

We are trying to raise money to help get our team to Houston, if you are interested we are having a spirit night at El Paso in Conover on Monday 4/27 and we have a published gofundme to help raise money for our trip and we have almost met our goal. Finally, We could not have gotten this far without your support and are extremely thankful for everything you have helped us achieve.

Thank you! – Team 6639 The Mechanical Minds

Thank You

The family of Guy Miller expresses deep appreciation to St. Stephens ELCA's Pastor Michael Collins, the staff, and congregation for the coordination and all efforts required in giving our dad a beautiful celebration of life service on March 15th. The kindness and hospitality of your church will never be forgotten. We also thank you for preparing a delicious meal for our family to enjoy after the service.

– Sincerely, The Guy Miller Family

† To the Congregation †



A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made our Spring Sing such a joyful and memorable event! We are so grateful for the volunteers who cooked, prepared, and served delicious food, the talented musicians who led us in song, and all who came out to support and share in the fun. Your time, gifts, and presence made the day truly special!

The Raleigh Ringers



Mt. Zion is thrilled to be hosting the internationally acclaimed handbell choir, *The Raleigh Ringers*, on Sunday, *May 17th at 4:00 PM*. Tickets can be purchased using the QR code for \$20 by 5/16. Tickets will be \$25 at the door, Children 10 + \$5, 9 and under are free.

FRIENDS  of FAITH

Friends of Faith will NOT meet in May at this time. If you have any questions, please reach out to Betty Ann Crump at (828)217-3584 or crumpfamily@charter.net.



Scan QR Code to Register!



This year, we're teaming up with Mt. Zion, Mt. Olive, and Bethlehem Lutheran Churches for *VBS Camp Firelight*, an outdoor adventure focused on trusting God. It runs from *July 19th to 23rd, 5:30 to 7:45 PM*. Open to kids aged 4 through 5th grade, with an adult class too. Registration is open—scan the QR code for details and invite others!



Stick around after worship on *Sunday, May 3rd* for our *Community Meal*! Enjoy BLTs, macaroni salad, potato salad, desserts, and refreshments. Everyone in the community is welcome from 1:00–2:30 PM—help us spread the word!

† Mission & Outreach †

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

50 Men, women, and children were fed at our April Easter Breakfast!

Our Food Pantry provided an outstanding 108 households with non-perishable food items in the month of April. Thanks to you all for the continued support to such an important community cause!

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

thank you

With grateful hearts, we thank God for each of you who supports our outreach ministries through your time, gifts, and prayers. Your generosity is a true reflection of Christ's love in action.

As the Gospel reminds us, "whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for me." Through your faithful and never-wavering support, you are living out this calling and making a meaningful difference in our community.

Because of you, needs are met, hope is shared, and lives are touched. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ. May God bless you for the blessing you are to others.

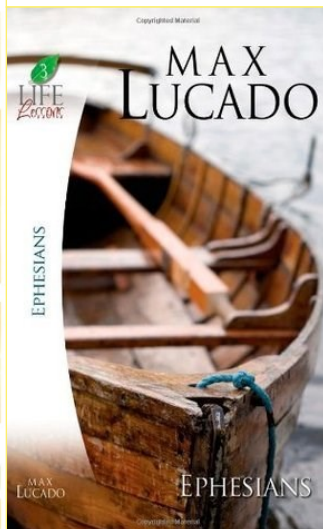
THANK YOU

We deeply appreciate everyone presence and support during the Blood Drive. Thanks to your efforts, we nearly reached our goal, coming within just one pint! Your generosity makes a significant, life-saving impact. Thank you for being a compassionate congregation!

† Bible Studies & Ministry Group News †



Women, Coffee, & Jesus Tuesday's at 9:30AM in the Bible Study Room



The Coffee & Christ Tuesday Women's Bible Study will begin a new series with Max Lucado's "Life Lessons: The Book of Ephesians," provided to each participant.

This book emphasizes the beauty of the church and how Jesus longs for unity with it. Paul's letter offers insights into living a Christian life and highlights our belonging in God's family through salvation. The series features twelve engaging lessons with thought-provoking questions, storytelling, reflections, and space for journaling, making it a popular choice for small groups and individuals.

Deeply Rooted Lectionary Bible Study Wednesday's at 10:30AM in the Bible Study

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

Wednesday, May 6th

- ◆ Acts 17:22-31
- ◆ Psalm 66:8-20
- ◆ 1 Peter 3:13-22
- ◆ John 14:15-21

Wednesday, May 13th

- ◆ Acts 1:6-14
- ◆ Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
- ◆ 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
- ◆ John 17:1-11

Wednesday, May 20th

- ◆ Acts 2:1-21
- ◆ Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
- ◆ 1 Corinthians 13:3b-13
- ◆ John 20:19-23

Wednesday, May 27th

- ◆ Genesis 1:1—2:4a
- ◆ Psalm 8
- ◆ 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
- ◆ Matthew 28:16-20

St. Stephens ELCA

March Council Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2026

Meeting called to order by President Dee Fry.

Attendance– Pastor Michael Collins, Dee Fry, Sandra Barton, Robert Ollis, Phil Barton, Corky Miller, Kim Long, Bonnie Rushing , Bill Duncan, Steve Baker and Kim Frankel.

Devotions by Kim Frankel

January minutes were approved by email. There was no meeting in February.

Treasurer's Report– Report for February. Audit has been completed. Report on file.

Pastor's report– Report for February

Ministry Team Reports

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

Old Business

Staff Support Team needs a volunteer for a 3 yr. term. Pat Patton has agreed to serve. Motion made by Dee Fry and seconded by Robert Ollis to accept. Approved.

Council social event will be put off until April.

New Business

Easter breakfast will be served by the Men's group at 8:15

Robotics Team has asked to borrow our trailer 2nd and 4th weekends in March and 2nd weekend in April. Motion made by Corky Miller and seconded by Robert Ollis to allow. Approved.

Motion to adjourn by Robert Ollis and seconded by Corky Miller

Closed with Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting April 12th after service. Robert Ollis has devotions.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Fry, President

Sandra Barton, Secretary

Remember in Prayer



Nursing Homes:

Brookdale Hickory- (*Hickory*) Margaret Yount #17

Brookdale Lenoir- (*Lenoir*) Angie Asherbraner #28'

Trinity Ridge- (*Mountain View*) Tammie Falcone #714

Trinity Village- (*Hickory*) Mary Alice Punch #409A, Lois Stine #202,

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

At Home: Ramona Baker, Hilda Eckard, Lorene Fox, Glenda Kanupp,
Carl Baker, and Doris Jones

Family and Friends: Dylan Godfrey, Ben Godfrey, Janet Stinson, Tim Hollar, Andrea Keast, June Yount, Tami Elmore, David Crump, Mark Ewing, Richard Powell, Bill Hill, Kim Johnson, Krystal Sharpe, Sydney Wilson, Billie Roth, Melissa Zarou, Gene Gibson, Roger Brittain, Gray Standfield, Cindy Powell, Lauren Eckard, Roxanne Duncan, Scarlet Creech, Owen Ferguson, Ted Chandler, Margaret Yount, Carl Baker, Lee Wagner & His Family, Greg Deitz, Lori Greathouse, Marshall Bumgarner, Steve Baker, Teddy & Diane Hefner, Tara Walker, Tammy Powell, Lynne Hill, Lorene Fox, David & Sarah Cline, Heather Rushing, Paul Caldwell, Travis Greer, Kathy Powell, Bill Mackie, Marty Mackie, Bobbly Clark, and Cindy Boyd, Lisa Bullard, Jimmy Barber, Bonnie Arney, Derrick O'Brien, Lois Stine, Ute Huckabee, Jeff Matthews, D (Damaris' Brother), Kathy Thun, Patty Shook, Janie Ward, Blaise Canipe, Candy Sexton, and Gene Putnam

Bereavement:

Armed Forces:

U.S. Navy: IS2 Chris Powell

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, The People affected by the flash flooding in Texas, and The People of Palestine

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

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, E.L.C.A.

2259 12th Avenue NE Hickory, North Carolina 28601

Telephone #828-322-3211 Fax #828-322-8311

Email: office@sselcahy.org Website: www.sselca.org

Radio Station: 94.3FM

Office Hours:

- Monday-Friday -

8:30AM-1:30PM