



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church ELCA

– – *The Friendly Visitor* – –
2026



October

**SSELCA: A congregation called to feed our community
physically and spiritually.**

† To the Congregation †

Thank You



Dear church family of Loyd and Sylvia Hoke, thank you for being supportive of them through the last few years. Your stewardship, caring, and concern was noticed and appreciated. The funeral service recently held for both of them showed the respect the church had for them. Thank you also for the food and fellowship after each service. This time allowed our family to reminisce, smile with each other, and share some precious moments with you and our families.
In gratitude, Joel & Martha Barham.

Thank You

I would like to thank everyone for your prayers, cards, and phone calls during my recovery. It is comforting to know what a great faith family I have here at St. Stephen's. — Phil Barton



Social Ministry will sponsor a **Food Drive** to support our **Food Pantry** for the months of **October, November and December**. There will be a donation table set up in the sanctuary by the door beginning in October.

** Needed items for October: Pineapple Chunks, Canned Beef Stew and Boxes of Cereal. **

Thank you for your help! Social Ministry Committee



Social Ministry will be sponsoring a **Blanket Drive** for the months of **October and November**. Please donate a New Warm Blanket so these can be given to the Homeless for Christmas. There will be Donation Boxes in the hallway by the Church Office.

Thank you in advance for your donations. Social Ministry Committee



Via de Cristo, "The Way of Christ," is a highly structured three-day weekend retreat designed to strengthen and renew the faith of Christians and bring them to a deeper awareness of living in God's grace.

The retreat begins on Thursday evening and ends Sunday afternoon. It includes Christian fellowship, worship, and instruction led by lay people and clergy, with a focus on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ and the spiritual renewal of the church, family, and community. The next Via de Cristo weekends will be held this fall at Bethelwoods Camp and Conference Center near York, S.C.

Members of St. Stephens Lutheran Church are invited to prayerfully consider attending this grace-filled weekend for spiritual renewal and a closer walk with Christ. You may also speak with **Brent or Carol Talley** for more information. The cost for first-time attendees is \$125.

Upcoming Retreat Dates: October 1-4 (Women) & October 8-11 (Men and Women)

† To the Congregation †



Senior
SAINTS



Senior Saints will meet October 1st at 11AM with a light lunch and carpool to Hickory Aviation Museum. Free admission. If you are not a part of this group, but would like to attend, let Vickie Eckard or Cathy Ollis know.

Sisters in Christ Fall Gathering

We would love to invite all women and girls to join us for **Sisters in Christ—Fall Gathering** on **Saturday, October 10th at 3PM** in the fellowship hall! There will be refreshments served by the Men's Ministry Group and Pastor Michael Collins will provide fun musical entertainment. Tickets will go on sale **September 13th** for \$5 for women and 10 years and younger are free. All proceeds will go to Safe Harbor. If you would like to purchase a ticket(s) you may reach out to Deborah Sullivan at (828)244-4276 or Emily in the church office. Dress is casual. We hope to see all you ladies there and bring your family, friends, and neighbors to join us!



Join us for our next **Community Hymn Sing** on **Saturday, October 17th from 4-6PM** out at our Picnic Shelter! Come out and enjoy hot dogs, experience uplifting live music and fellowship, sing beloved songs together. This joyful event welcomes all ages, so bring your loved ones and make it even more memorable! *Be sure to bring your favorite lawn chair!!*



Be sure to mark your calendars for our next **Trunk-or-Treat** on **Saturday, October 31st from 3-5PM** in the lower parking lot! Contributions like decorating your car, helping serve/making popcorn and nachos, or donating candy is very much appreciated. Look for a sign-up sheet by the church office in October if you would like to decorate your car!



"Death Be Never Last: An All Saints Choral Collaboration." It will be a program of anthems, hymns, instrumental music, and Scripture at Mt. Zion Lutheran Church in Conover, NC on Sunday, November 1st at 5:00pm. The program will be free and open to the public.

† Mission & Outreach †

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We WILL host a Community Meal in the month of October, on the 4th.

Our Food Pantry provided an outstanding 121 households with non-perishable food items in the month of September.

Our Outdoor Homeless Meal fed 45 people in our local homeless community last month in September!



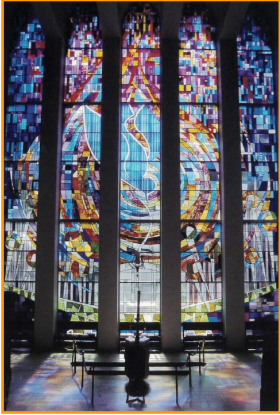
American Red Cross

The next Blood Drive will be Monday, October 19th from 2-6PM. Currently 5 have signed up to help meet our goal of 22.
Walk ins are welcome!
Please help spread the word!

Pictures from September's Outdoor Homeless Meal Ministry. Thanks to all who volunteer and make a lasting impact on our community!



✦ Mission & Outreach ✦



Saint Stephens Lutheran Church, Thank you for your generosity and support of the LTSS community. We all enjoyed the yummy baked potato bar you brought to us as we gathered over first week. Your connection with the seminary is such a blessing to us as we continue our journey and ministry alongside the greater Hickory community! With gratitude, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Students, Faculty, & Staff.

Last month Southern Seminary (LR) asked for local congregations to host a meal for approx. 50 students for First Week Aug. 24-26. Council approved and we volunteered to serve baked potatoes, salad, cheese sauce, veggies, etc. on August 26th at 5:30PM. Below are some pictures from the meal.



† Fellowship on the Go! †

There's always something fun happening when our church family gets together! Our Senior Saints, Good Cheer Group, and fellow SSELCA members have been hitting the road, enjoying new experiences, sharing plenty of smiles, and making wonderful memories along the way.

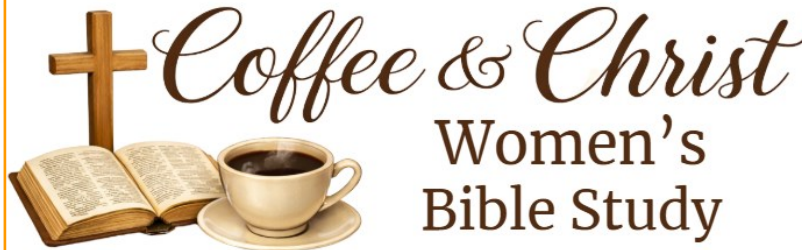


↑ The above picture is the trip to Blowing Rock.

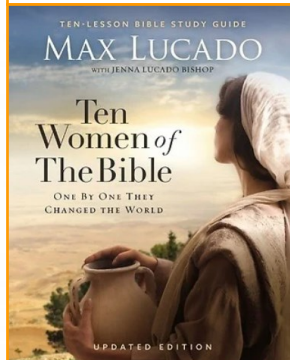
↓ Pictured below is the trip to the Hickory Aviation Museum.



† Bible Studies & Ministry Group News †



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



Our *Women's Bible Study* will begin meeting again on *Tuesday, September 15th at 9:30AM*, and we invite all women to come and join us on a 10 week journey of learning, fellowship, and growing in faith together. We will be studying *Max Lucado's Ten Women of the Bible*, a 10-lesson study that looks at the lives and faith of ten women from Scripture. Please let Vickie Eckard know if you are interested in attending..



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

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, Oct. 7th

- ♦ Isaiah 25:1-9
- ♦ Psalm 23
- ♦ Philippians 4:1-9
- ♦ Matthew 22:1-14

Wednesday, Oct. 14th

- ♦ Isaiah 45:1-7
- ♦ Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]
- ♦ 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
- ♦ Matthew 22:15-22

Wednesday, Oct. 21st

- ♦ Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18
- ♦ Psalm 1
- ♦ 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
- ♦ Matthew 22:34-46

Wednesday, Oct. 28th

- ♦ Revelation 7:9-17
- ♦ Psalm 34:1-10, 22
- ♦ 1 John 3:1-3
- ♦ Matthew 5:1-12

St. Stephens ELCA

September Council Meeting Minutes

Sept 13, 2026

Meeting called to order by President Dee Fry.

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

Devotions by Kim Long

August minutes were approved by email.

Treasurer's Report– Report for August

Pastor's report– Report for Aug– no written report. Will be gone Sept 20th: Dr. Kristin Teague CLP will fill in. Gone Sept 27th: Dawn Schafer fill in.

Ministry Team Reports

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

Old Business

Nominating Committee is to start working on Council nominees.

New Business

Budget sheets are to be turned in by Sept 27 so Finance can prepare budget.

Motion by Robert Ollis to set annual meeting for Nov. 15. Seconded by Kim Frankel. Approved.

Motion to accept Sharp copier lease agreement for five years by Bonnie Rushing, seconded by Robert Ollis. Approved.

Motion to accept revised MSP (bullet points removed and stories added) by Dee Fry, seconded by Sandy Barton. Approved.

Motion to adjourn by Corky Miller.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next Meeting October 11th. Steve Baker 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 Village– (*Hickory*) Lois Stine #202,

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, Tami Elmore, Melissa Zarou, Ted Chandler, Greg Deitz, Kathy Powell, Candy Sexton, Amani Dior Mull, Gene Frye, Kevin Eckard, David Crump, Bill Hill, Vickie Kerby, Susan Jones, Phil Barton, Rufus McCrary, Marlon Short, Tonda Cable, Frank Stooks, Phyllis Schrage, Bruce Godfrey, Kenn Phillips, Brenndan Korsas, Lane Fulbright, Pat Chadwick, Steve Baker, Roger Cornett, Joyce Stinson, and Linda Zarou

Bereavement: The Family of Sylvia Hoke and The Family of Frank Wells

Armed Forces:

U.S. Navy: IS2 Chris Powell

Army Basic Training: Kolvin Walker

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 of Israel, The People affected by Hurricane Helene, The People affected by the flash flooding in Texas, and The People of Palestine, The people affected by the flash flooding in Nepal–Tibet

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



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TO FIND
OUT MORE!

INSPIRATION FROM ABOVE
WORSHIP THAT'S DOWN TO EARTH

✝ Scan QR Code below with
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to SSELCA ✝



SCAN ME

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- Monday-Friday -

8:30AM-1:30PM