

The Evangel

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Justified by grace, we are a Community of Servants who follow Jesus' example by living lives of service to others.

December 2018

Volume 59, Issue 12

Inside this issue:

Finance Matters; Poinsettia Orders; Birthdays & Anniversaries **2**

Faith Book Group; Pub Theology Group; Advent House Ministries; Thank You Note **3**

New Adult Study; Paper Gator; Personal Needs; Food Bank Sunday; Book Swap **4**

Congregation Finances **5**

Daily Lectionary Readings **6**

Lay Minister Schedule **7**

Important Dates & Events **8**

From the Pastor...

Dear Members and Friends of St. Stephen,

The season of Advent begins on Sunday, December 2. Advent is that wonderful time of the church year in which the church awaits Christ's coming, not only in his birth at Christmas, but also in his Second Coming at the end of the age, and in the midst of our lives today. Jesus Christ is the "One Who Comes" with love, healing and hope. The church during Advent waits with hope, trust and expectation for our Lord's coming. One of my favorite Advent/Christmas readings is from *Letters and Papers from Prison* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was a German theologian and pastor who was imprisoned for his resistance to the Nazi regime from April 1943 until he was put to death on April 9, 1945. I had the opportunity to visit Tegel Prison in Berlin on a Bonhoeffer study tour in 1995 and saw the prison cell where Bonhoeffer lived for a year and a half and wrote his letters. Here is a segment from a letter to his parents dated December 17, 1943:

For a Christian there is nothing particularly difficult about Christmas in a prison cell. I daresay it will have more meaning and will be observed with greater sincerity here in this prison than in places where all that survives of the feast is its name. That misery, suffering, poverty, loneliness, helplessness and guilt look very different to the eyes of God from what they do to man, that God should come down to the very place which men abhor, that Christ was born in a stable because there was no room for him in the inn—these are the things which a prisoner can understand better than anyone else. For the prisoner the Christmas story is glad tidings in a very real sense. And that faith gives the prisoner a part in the communion of saints, a fellowship transcending the bounds of time and space and reducing the months of confinement here to insignificance. On Christmas Eve I shall be thinking of you all very much, and I want you to believe that I too shall have a few hours of real joy and that I am not allowing my troubles to get the better of me... It will certainly be a quiet Christmas for everybody, and the children will look back on it for long afterwards. But the first time, perhaps, many will learn the true meaning of Christmas.

These words speak to me in this Advent season of the profound depth of love, joy and hope that is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord. God's peace be with you all and fill your hearts this Advent and Christmas.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Erick Johnson

Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it is in the heart of man.

-Unknown



CHRIST
THE SAVIOR
is BORN!

Finance Matters

Thanksgiving Baskets

Thank you for generously supporting our second offering in October designated Thanksgiving Baskets. Your gifts in October totaled \$677. We provided 20 households with the items needed for a traditional Thanksgiving meal. THANK YOU!

MSU Safe Place

During the month of December, our second offering supports MSU Safe Place. The primary purpose of MSU Safe Place is to ensure the personal safety, welfare, and dignity of those who experience relationship violence and stalking within the MSU and greater Lansing communities. Goals include:

1. Providing temporary and safe shelter, advocacy, support and referrals for MSU students, staff, faculty, or their partners, as well as greater Lansing community members, including the minor children of those who are victimized.
2. Increasing community awareness about relationship violence and stalking to improve prevention efforts and community responsiveness.
3. Offering a learning environment for members of the community through volunteer and internship opportunities.

Poinsettia Orders



If you are interested in ordering a poinsettia to help decorate our altar for the Christmas season, please fill out the green form found in the pews and place it in the offering plate with your payment. Orders are due to the church office by December 13.



27 Jim & Renee Dixon
31 John & Bonnie V'Soske



2	Ryan Dixon	20	Lynn Kriser
4	Diane Singletary		Tara Busha
5	Kari Storm		Samantha Soulard
8	Reva Ferguson	22	Heath Buckley
12	Amy Bucht	23	Cory Carpenter
17	Brian Yusten	27	Connie Carpenter
		28	Holly Lefanty
		29	Bradley Gaudard

Faith Book Group

The Faith Book Group will not meet in December, but will resume in January on Thursday, January 24. The book the group will read will be announced at a later date. As always, new members are welcome!



Pub Theology Group



Pub Theology Group will meet on Thursday, December 20, at 7:00 pm at Dimes Brewhouse in Dimondale (145 Bridge Street). The discussion questions will be emailed and posted on the website (www.StStephenOnline.org) as the date nears. If you are not on the church email list and would like to be, please contact the church office, 517-321-2244 or Office@StStephenOnline.org.

Advent House Ministries

St. Stephen continues its long tradition of providing lunch at Advent House Ministries on fifth Sundays. You can help prepare and serve on December 30 and/or bring one dozen hard boiled eggs. Return the boiled eggs to their carton, label the carton "Advent House" and place in the refrigerator in our kitchen before worship that day. Contact Jay Bennett at jayb118@gmail.com or 517-402-6760.

Jim and I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and hugs through the difficult time of losing Jim's younger brother so unexpectedly. Having our church friends and family means the world to us. Love and hugs to all! - Renee & Jim Dixon



New Adult Study

We will begin a new adult study, *Way of Life*, which will meet on Sundays at 9:00 am in the library and will also be held on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 am starting in January. This four-session study is based on *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian*, by Brian McLaren.

A Better Way to Be Christian
 From a System of Beliefs to a Way of Life
 Toward a Loving God of Liberation
 For the Common Good

We'll probably spend two weeks on each session. It will be helpful if you have the book by McLaren. Class leaders are Lynn Kriser and Pastor Erick. All are welcome.

Please Help Feed Our PaperGator

Audits by the PaperGator program are made to determine locations that do not meet the average minimum for hosting a PaperGator. Our collections over the past year fell below this level so we are in danger of losing our bin. We all need to spread the word about feeding our PaperGator so we can continue to not only earn funds for our church, but also to keep us from having to PAY to have our recycling picked up. Recycle all of your newspapers, catalogs/magazines, junk mail, phone books, office/school paper, and hard and soft cover books. Please **do not** include plastic, metal, trash, glass, cardboard, or paperboard (grocery item boxes). Thank you for your continued support of this important fundraising effort.



Personal Needs

Claudia Cameron, Coordinator

Remember those
 who are less
 fortunate



When doing your Christmas shopping, please consider a gift(s) to donate to the PERSONAL NEEDS CLOSET. Cold weather is upon us so let's warm the hearts of God's people in need. Bath tissue, kleenex, bar soap, hand lotion, and other such items may be placed in personal needs box located in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you for your support of this important ministry.

Food Bank Sunday

Just a reminder that Sunday, December 2, is a Food Bank Sunday. (Food Bank Sundays are the first Sunday of each month.) Please place food items in the Food Bank shopping cart in the fellowship hall. Much needed items are: canned tuna (lots of requests for this item), cooking oil, coffee, hot chocolate, boxed potatoes, syrup, canned fruits & vegetables. Thank you for your help with this important ministry.

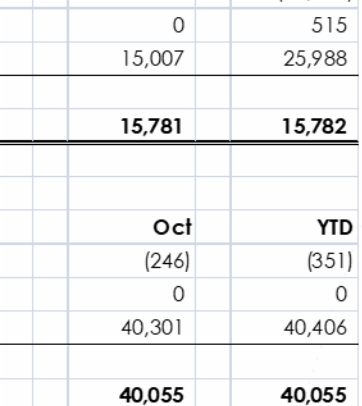
Book Swap

In light of the success and popularity of our puzzle exchange, we have launched a BOOK SWAP. Bring a few books you think others may enjoy, and take one or two home to read and return. The books are located in the bookshelf in the fellowship hall marked "book swap."



St Stephen Lutheran Church, Lansing MI
Congregation Finances as of October 31, 2018

	Oct	YTD
General Fund Revenue		
Envelopes	10,013	112,073
Rent	1,400	14,000
Other	206	4,316
Total General Fund Revenue	11,619	130,390
General Fund Expenses		
Leadership	2,666	26,212
Welcome/Nourish/Serve	476	3,636
Staff	3,695	35,736
Building/Facilities	2,627	28,074
Administration	757	5,812
Mission Support	1,162	13,039
Total General Fund Expenses	11,383	112,509
Revenue less expenses	237	17,881
Transfers to / from restricted funds	0	(296)
Fund balance at beginning of month / year	8,412	(8,936)
General (unrestricted) fund balance at October 31, 2018	8,648	8,649
	Oct	YTD
Temporarily-restricted fund revenue	949	9,864
Temporarily-restricted fund expenses	175	20,585
Revenue less expenses	774	(10,721)
Transfers to / from restricted funds	0	515
Fund balance at beginning of month / year	15,007	25,988
Temporarily-restricted fund balance at October 31, 2018	15,781	15,782
	Oct	YTD
Permanently-restricted fund (endowment principle) value change	(246)	(351)
Transfers to / from restricted funds	0	0
Fund balance at beginning of month / year	40,301	40,406
Permanently-restricted fund (endowment principle) balance at October 31, 2018	40,055	40,055



NARRATIVE LECTIONARY READINGS for December

Saturday, December 1, Jeremiah 11:1-17, *Israel and Judah Have Broken the Covenant*

Sunday, December 2, Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; 3:[3b-6], 17-19

Monday, December 3, Habakkuk 1:5-11, *The Prophet's Complaint*

Tuesday, December 4, Habakkuk 1:12—2:1, *The Prophet's Complaint*

Wednesday, December 5, Habakkuk 2:5-14, *The Woes of the Wicked*

Thursday, December 6, Habakkuk 2:15-20, *The Woes of the Wicked*

Friday, December 7, Habakkuk 3:1-7, *The Woes of the Wicked*

Saturday, December 8, Habakkuk 3:8-16, *The Woes of the Wicked*



Sunday, December 9, Esther 4:1-17

Monday, December 10, Esther 1:1-22, *King Ahasuerus Deposes Queen Vashti*

Tuesday, December 11, Esther 2:1-23, *Esther Becomes Queen*

Wednesday, December 12, Esther 3:1-15, *Haman Undertakes to Destroy the Jews*

Thursday, December 13, Esther 5:1-14, *Esther's Banquet, Haman's Plans*

Friday, December 14, Esther 6:1-14, *The King Honors Mordecai*

Saturday, December 15, Esther 7:1—8:17, *Esther Saves the Jews*



**Bible
Readings for the Month**

Sunday, December 16, Isaiah 42:1-9

Monday, December 17, Isaiah 42:10-20, *A Hymn of Praise*

Tuesday, December 18, Isaiah 42:21-25, *Israel's Disobedience*

Wednesday, December 19, Isaiah 43:1-7, *Restoration and Protection Promised*

Thursday, December 20, Isaiah 43:8-21, *Restoration and Protection Promised*

Friday, December 21, Isaiah 43:22-28, *Restoration and Protection Promised*

Saturday, December 22, Isaiah 44:1-8, *God's Blessing on Israel*

Sunday, December 23, Matthew 1:18-25

Monday, December 24, Luke 2:1-14, [15-20], *Birth of Jesus*

Tuesday, December 25, Luke 2:8-20, *Shepherds Visit*

Wednesday, December 26, Genesis 15:1-21, *God's Covenant with Abram*

Thursday, December 27, Isaiah 7:10-17, *A Sign of Immanuel*

Friday, December 28, Isaiah 7:18-25, *A Sign of Immanuel*

Saturday, December 29, Acts 13:38-39, *Jesus Frees*

Sunday, December 30, Matthew 1:1-17

Monday, Genesis 25:1-34, *Abraham's Descendants*



The Narrative Lectionary readings will also be listed in each Sunday's announcements, posted on the St. Stephen website (www.StStepheonOnline.org), and found in the online version of *The Evangel*.



LAY MINISTER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Council Meeting
 Sunday, December 16
 11:30 am

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
 2900 North Waverly Road, Lansing, MI 48906
 Phone: 517-321-2244 Fax: 517-321-2632
 Email: office@StStephenOnline.org | Website: StStephenOnline.org
 Worship: Sundays at 10:00 am
 Sunday School Class: Sundays at 9:00 am (Sept – May)
 Bible Study: Sundays 9:00 -9:50 am
 Church Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Staff Members

Erick Johnson, Pastor
 Renee Dixon, Office Manager
 Rebecca Bossenbroek, Director of Worship

erickj74@gmail.com
office@ststephenonline.org
rebeccabossenbroek@comcast.net

Council Members

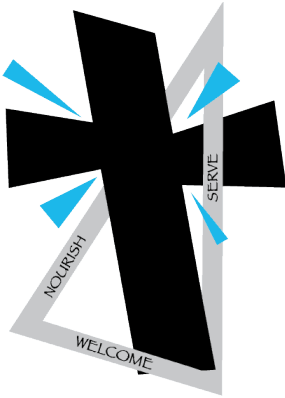
Jackie Williams-Armstrong, President
 Margaret Sheffer, Recording Secretary
 Don Sheffer, Facility Development Team Leader
 Amber McPherson, Financial Development
 Bob Cameron, Endowment Fund Team Leader
 Position Open Leadership Development Team Leader
 Gary Hansen, WELCOME Ministry Development
 Julie Dartt, NOURISH Ministry Development
 Claudia Cameron, SERVE Ministry Development

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mcpherson613@gmail.com
cameron6216@sbcglobal.net

garyandjune@gmail.com
juliedartt@gmail.com
cameronw6216@sbcglobal.net



	Dec 2	Dec 9	Dec 16	Dec 23	Dec 24 7 pm	Dec 30
ALTAR FLOWERS	_____	Cindy Jenks	The Larkins Family	_____	_____	_____
ASSISTING MINISTERS (Paulette Piirainen)	Brian Yusten	Paulette Piirainen	Diane Singletary	Paulette Piirainen	Margaret Sheffer	Cindy Jenks
USHERS	Bucht Family	Paulette Piirainen	Heath Buckley	Cindy Jenks	Terry Greiner	_____
ALTAR CARE (Claudia Cameron)	Margaret Sheffer for entire month.					
COFFEE HOUR	Potluck w/a Purpose	Margaret Sheffer	Mary Dartt	_____	_____	_____
GREETERS	Char Seifert	Mary Dartt	_____	_____	_____	_____
OFFERING COUNTERS	Angie Bennett Gladys Collison Gloria Kandle	Bob Cameron June Hansen Erin Wenger	Bob Cameron Ruth Gaudard	Jackie Williams-Armstrong June Hansen/Lynn Kriser Erin Wenger	Amber McPherson Gladys Collison Gloria Kandle	



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

2900 N. Waverly Rd.
Lansing, MI 48906

Phone: 517-321-2244

Fax: 517-321-2632

Email: Office@StStephenOnline.org

Website: StStephenOnline.org

DATED MATERIAL

OR CURRENT OCCUPANT



Sunday, December 2, 11:30am
Potluck with a Purpose (Advent Theme)

Sunday, December 9
Guest Preacher: Rev. David E. Sprang
Director for Evangelical Mission
Assistant to the Bishop

Sunday, December 16
Children's Christmas Message during worship
Budget meeting following worship

Monday, December 24, 7pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight
Bishop Satterlee preaching and presiding

Sunday, December 30
NO Sunday School
Service of Lessons and Carols
Serve lunch at Advent House Ministries

Sunday, January 6
Potluck with a Purpose (An Epiphany Event)

