

The Spirit



St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church
65 E. Street Road, Feasterville, Pa. 19053
215.357.8138
October 2020

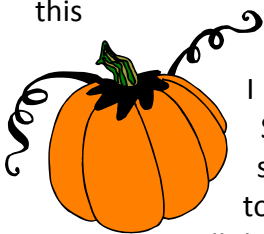


For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:...Ecclesiastes 3:1

Time, elusive, yet steady; distant, yet close at hand. Time is too slow for those who wait, too fast for those who are busy. As I look around me I notice that the days are getting shorter, the nights longer, the evenings cooler, the leaves are changing from vibrant greens to deep yellows, reds, oranges and russet in color. All are signs of a changing season, the passage of time. This first Sunday in October we will celebrate the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi and "Bless the Animals". Those creatures God put in our care, many of whom have become members of our family. This month we will also commemorate five hundred plus years since the beginning of the protestant Reformation and the renewal of the church. Yes, time passes and seasons change, but some things remain constant in the midst of change.

This is true for St. Stephen's, Feasterville, PA., as well. Even in the midst of a Global Pandemic, during this time of transition, worship will continue in our sanctuary and on Zoom, and it is our hope that soon we will gather to share a meal together at the Lords table. We will still come together as people of God and pray for the church, the world, and all people in need. We will support those in need through our Outreach Ministries and serve those who are some of the food insecure persons found in God's vineyard through our Food Bank/Pantry. Invariably, there will be some changes that will be made during this time. Some born out of necessity and others inspired by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And yet, in the midst of transition transformation may occur. God is already changing and transforming us. May we remain open to the nudging's of the Spirit.

I wonder how God will change some of your colors, renew your hearts, an open this congregation to even greater possibilities for ministry and community outreach. Yes seasons change, but God is a steady presence, light, and force in our lives. God's love is unconditional. God will not abandon us. God will journey with us in this season of change and challenge.



I invite you to be a part of the wonder, hope, and challenge of this season in the life of St. Stephen's. Come, worship and share in this ministry. There will always be the changing of seasons. I encourage you to look for God in the midst and trust God to guide us. I continue to invite your prayers for us all in the midst of this transition process. Remember, God is good, all the time! All the time, God is good!

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Gwen, Interim Pastor

President's Report

In the last couple of months we have continued with zoom broadcasts of worship service in addition to in person services in the sanctuary. We are averaging 35 attending in person and 40+ contacts on zoom and phone. We have required face coverings, temperature monitoring, hand sanitizing, 6 foot distancing and contact tracking in the sanctuary. Those attending have been compliant with regulations including no congregational singing or vocal choir. We do need volunteers to assist with the service...technicians for computer and camera, ushers, greeters to take temperatures and sign in guests. Anyone who is interested will be trained. Please contact the office if you can assist. We will need additional help for Thanksgiving and Christmas eve worship.

The Covid task force and executive council drafted a procedure for funeral services at St. Stephen's. No viewings will be held in the building at the present time. 40 guests as designated by the family will be welcome in the sanctuary for a service with the same procedures as for all in person gatherings.

Meetings are being held in the narthex for church committees and bible study. No outside agencies are meeting in the church with the exception of the blood bank.

Plans are being made for Christmas services.

The Transition team is meeting.

A Task force is working on cleaning procedures such as purchase of a fogger and with help from worship and music the distribution of communion.

The contract for the interim pastor is being extended for 6 months. The initial contract expires on January 6, 2021.

Respectfully submitted
Carol Merchiere, Council President



OPERATION SHOE BOX

It's the time of year for Operation Christmas Child. SHOE BOXES will be in the Narthex Sunday, Oct. 25th and Nov. 8th. Filled boxes may be returned on or before Nov. 15th. They will be placed on the chancel to be blessed before being shipped throughout the world to delight the heart of a child.

Last year our St. Stephen's family filled 213 shoe boxes. If you invite your family, friends and neighbors to share in this wonderful project our fifth year will be our best.

On behalf of the children THANK YOU for sharing God's love.

Charlotte Koch, Chairman
Mission Outreach

October is Stewardship Month

Please pray – hard - about what you can offer to St. Stephen's – your church – in the coming year.

In addition to your financial support there are many opportunities to volunteer your time and skills as we resume activities and uphold our transition needs. Please see any committee member to offer your assistance.

*"Mask yourself for others as you would
have them mask for you"*

Susan R. Bailey, M.D.
175th President AMA

A Message From The Transition Team

Greetings from the Transition Team! There are five members on the St Stephen's transition team: Charlotte Koch, Julie Leinhauser, Ray Shipley, Mark Tiger and Ron Wos, with discussion facilitated by Pastor Gwen King. The six of us have gathered three times now, since late August to begin to discuss the transition of our church leadership and the direction in which the church is headed.

The work of the Transition Team will culminate in the creation of a document called the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) which will tell the story of St. Stephen's and will be submitted to the SEPA Synod. This profile will reflect on five focus points:

1. Heritage- Reviewing how St Stephen's has been shaped and formed
2. Leadership- Reviewing the membership needs and its ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership
3. Mission- defining and redefining our sense of purpose and direction
4. Connections- discovering all the relationships the faith community of St Stephen's builds outside its membership
5. Future- developing congregational and pastoral profiles

The MSP will also help answer the questions – Who are we? Who is our neighbor? What is God calling us to be and do?

Sunday School News

Hopefully, we will see our children attending in-person services soon with their families. Meanwhile, a packet of weekly lessons and a Bible has been delivered to each student's home. An e-mail with worksheets will be sent out each week to families interested in continuing on zoom.

We pray for help and guidance in these trying and changing times.

In our first few meetings we discussed who we Team members are personally, and who we are in the church. With that information established, the Team began to discuss who we are as a congregation.

We have begun by discussing heritage and leadership. In order to find out where we are going, the transition team is studying what our church has done in the past 50+ years. It is only in reflecting on the past that we are able to learn from our successes and oversights.

In writing this article, we reflect on the text of a hymn recently sung during worship, "Lead me, guide me along the way, For if you lead me I cannot stray. Lord, let me walk each day with Thee. Lead me, oh Lord lead me." Every step of the way the Transition Team is looking to be guided by God, and searching for God's will and direction for our congregation. Please keep the Transition Team and our congregation in your prayers .

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the future of our congregations please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of the Transition Team.
Peace,

- St. Stephen's Transition Team

Youth Group

***We had a great time at Zoom Game Night!
Stay tuned for more to come!***



*Just a Thought
by Charlotte Koch*

**A good compromise is one where everybody
makes a contribution.
Angela Merkel**

Hope Lodge Update

Hope Lodge is currently closed. However the Lodge is raising funds. Anyone interested in participating should call Jenn Schneider for details.

Lunch Bunch Update

Lunch Bunch activities remain suspended with plans to resume in the Spring. Call Elaine Bohanan with comments and suggestions.

MARTHA CIRCLE

We're back! We'll be meeting in the Narthex on Wednesday, October 14th at 12:00 PM. We've been in touch with Caring for Friends and they'll be happy to receive our Breakfast Bags again...so that's what we'll do. Join us. All Welcome!!

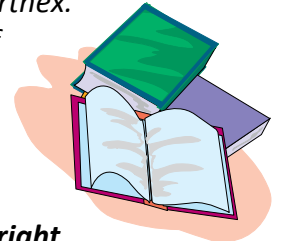
BIBLE STUDY

We're excited to be meeting again on Tuesday mornings in the Narthex. We've finished our Lenten objective, *A Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren and will begin an analysis of the "Red Hymnal" highlighting differences between the red and the green. Thank you, Tess, for leading this group. We're so happy to be together again.

Our Advent Project will be a biblical approach to *It's a Wonderful Life*. It should be fun! We'd love to have you with us each Tuesday at 9:30 AM!

Book Club

New members are always welcome to join our Book Club. Even if you have not read the featured book, we invite you to join us for devotions and discussion.. We ask that you secure the featured book at a library or a book store. One copy of each book is available in the church library. Our group meets at 11 a.m. in the Narthex. Thank you for your support of our book club.



Joan Bowman, Facilitator

October 1, 2020: Long Bright River by Liz Moore

December 3, 2020 The Dearly Beloved by Cara Wall

February 4, 2021: Becoming by Michelle Obama

April 1, 2021: The Orphan Keeper by Cameron Wright

June 3, 2021: The Book Women of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson

Reminder: Everyone is welcome to borrow from the church library but PLEASE remember to complete the card for the borrowed book.

***Reading gives us someplace
to go when we have to stay
where we are.***

Mason Cooley

Where Do You Go?

By Edith Witzel

My dear little wren
Where do you go?
When our pretty green lawns
Are covered with snow?

All winter long I think of your song,
As you perched on my deck,
And sang all day long.

You were always busy
Building your nest
In the bird house I hang
For my little guest.

And as your babies began to hatch,
You'd fly back and forth
With all you would catch.

In no time at all,
The babies were grown,
And they'd leave the nest
To travel back home.

I wish I knew
Where all of you go
But wherever that is
You'll be back, I know.

So dear little wrens
Come Spring, I will wait
For your sweet little songs
And that's a date!



A plain brown bird with an effervescent voice, the House Wren is a common backyard bird over nearly the entire Western Hemisphere. Listen for its

rush-and-jumble song in summer and you'll find this species zipping through shrubs and low tree branches, snatching at insects. House Wrens will gladly use nestboxes, or you may find their twig-filled nests in old cans, boots, or boxes lying around in your garage.

Remembering



Fran Scarpello

October 3, 1934 –
August 31, 2020



Edith Zocholl

March 2, 1929 –
March 13, 2020

*I*n the hope of the Resurrection and the assurance of eternal life we remember, Fran and Edith who went home to Glory. Our prayers are with the Scarpello and Zocholl families for God's loving comfort and strength during this time of loss.



*Making it all
work*

A **Huge Thank You**

To those who entered our living
rooms each and every Sunday.

Blessings to you all.

Thank You Zoom!!!



**Keeping
us
humming**



**Zoom
meister**



Designated Worshippers



Special Appearance by -



'Recent' events at St. Stephen's (a la corona)

**"Peace Be with you" Our last service
before shut-down. (Who Knew?)**

Our Food Bank remains available.



**Drive-by
Greetings**



**Zoom Palm
Sunday
(Without Palms)**

Zoom Easter

Zoom Pentecost

**Welcome to the
ice cream social**

