



# MISSION CONNECTION

VOLUME 25

ISSUE 1

February—April 2026

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**ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN  
YOUTH MINISTRY**



## CHILI COOK-OFF

and **DESSERT AUCTION**

**March 8, 2026 | 12-2pm**

**Sample a variety of chilis and vote for the peoples choice then bid on a dessert to sweeten the heat.**



Do you have a favorite chili recipe or a favorite desert? Consider entering the chili-cookoff or making a desert for the auction.

**\$10**

**to sample  
the chilis**

For information  
contact  
Randall Cline  
[rcline@sslcms.org](mailto:rcline@sslcms.org)

Proceeds from the event  
benefits St. Stephens  
Lutheran Youth Ministry.

**How much  
are you  
willing to  
pay for  
that dessert?**

## Finish Strong to Start Strong!

We finished 2025 in remarkably healthy financial shape. Your generosity makes a great difference as we carry out God's mission for us of "Connecting People with Jesus". What was so remarkable? In the midst of our "Building a Firm Foundation" capital campaign (see more below), you also gave the most in the 128 year history of St. Stephens to support the daily mission of the congregation. In fact, we exceeded the Church's budget, which hasn't happened in many decades!

We finished strong for the year - **thank you, and God be praised!** But God is just beginning a new phase of our life together as St. Stephens. He is not finished, so neither are we! Yes, we have a bit of a buffer left from 2025, but we also have new challenges - so we need to start strong in 2026. Already, we have faced the challenge of weather disruption. Special thanks to those who give online, or to those who have made an extra effort to give your offerings even during the storms. We were, however already \$24,000 behind budget at the end of January, and since then we have missed another Sunday.

**By starting strong in 2026**, we can carry the mission of "Connecting People with Jesus" forward without hesitation. I pray that you have been blessed with our introduction of the book "Joining Jesus on His Mission". I know that I have enjoyed being more intentional in my conversations and prayers. It is exciting to consider that we are on a journey **with** Jesus! To that end, our new Mission & Ministry Center will serve as a hub for growing together in Christ and then being sent out to "live as everyday missionaries"!

Let me give you brief construction and funding update on our new building. The expected occupancy date has slipped a bit due to the weather and supply issues, but I think that everyone will love the new entryway with its very nice restrooms and hospitality features. The Fellowship Hall and various meeting spaces and Bible study rooms will be an excellent place for discipleship and service. A new entry into the school office will provide greater security for our students, and the new offices will serve staff, members and volunteers well. While access has been limited during construction, those who have seen the extent of the building have all remarked that it is a very good design - and the best is yet to be completed!

To put it simply, we are getting a wonderful facility for a decent price! Yes, it is still expensive, but much has been donated in terms of building design, interior design and construction management. We have some very talented members who have donated furniture and used their contacts in the industry to secure significant discounts on items to furnish the building. And, of course, we have had 223 families or individuals who have contributed financially. **To date over \$3 million has already been given** toward the approved building cost of \$4.4 million. That remaining gap is why we need to continue to be strong in our stewardship together, both in controlling costs and in giving.

**So how can we "finish strong" in funding our Mission and Ministry Center, so that we may then "start strong"** as we begin to use this facility to serve God's purposes? Let me share some financial data using \$1 million in debt (which is low) to simplify the illustration.

(continued on next page)

If we were to pay on that for the full term of the loan (20 years @ 6.13%) it would add more than \$736,000 in interest. With all due respect to People's Bank, we don't want that -- and historically St. Stephens doesn't do long term indebtedness.

But even paying down a \$1 million dollar debt (and remember it is likely to be a higher amount) over just a 5 year period still means accruing over \$163,000 in interest! Many people have sacrificed to raise the equivalent of \$1M/year for the last three years. Let's keep it going since this Mission & Ministry Center will benefit everyone associated with St. Stephens in one way (or in many ways!). If you are able to begin or continue your support, please do. Every gift, whether it be financial, material or spiritual, **makes a difference!** So, pray for God to do "immeasurably more than we ask or even imagine" (Eph. 3:20) as He works in, among and through each one of us!

I can imagine that we have fully funded this new facility **before the end of 2027** because it is a "Firm Foundation" for everything that comes next in our Journey with Jesus. To Him be all the glory!

We are Blessed!

Pastor Dave

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## Wanna Go?

In December, 43 folks boarded a Burke Christian Tours bus and headed out to Narrowway Christian Dinner Theatre in Fort Mill, SC. The group enjoyed a wonderful turkey dinner and great seats for *The Real Christmas Story*, an original holiday musical. The show blended many beloved holiday songs and traditions with the message of Jesus, the greatest gift we've all ever received.





Join us for an evening at Narrowway  
Christian Dinner Theater,  
Fort Mill, SC

### Wanna Go?

**Sunday, March 29**  
**5:00pm**  
(bus leaves SSLC at 3pm)

**Cost: \$75**  
(Ticket, dinner, & transportation)

RSVP by Feb. 28 to Kristy at  
[ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)

A deposit of  
\$25 is  
required to  
reserve your  
seat.

On **Sunday, March 29th** (Palm Sunday), we will take another trip to Narrowway to enjoy *The 4th Cross*, an original Easter story. We will leave the church at 3pm for the 5:00 dinner and show. The dinner offering is a roast beef meal with all the trimmings. Cost is \$75 per person and includes everything: bus, meal, show, and driver gratuity. Contact Kristy Smith at [ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org) to make your reservation soon!

## Ladies, wanna have fun?

Every once in a while, several ladies from within and outside of the St. Stephens community take a little adventure called a Church Lady Field Trip.

There have been treks to Trader Joe's, car pools to Black Mountain (for fairy hair and lunch), and thrifting trips. These field trips are a great way to get connected to other ladies while enjoying fellowship, food and fun

If you think you might like to go along sometime, please contact Kristy Smith at [ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org) to add your name to the list. All are welcome!



### Connecting People With Jesus

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Volume 25 Issue 1

## Comfort Dog Ministry



Hi friends! It's me—Faith, your favorite Comfort Dog—and guess what? My birthday is coming up! To celebrate, we're turning all of February into "Faith Month" and I couldn't be more excited to share it with you.

Faith Month is all about celebrating comfort, community, and the love of Jesus as we continue this amazing ministry together. We have some fun (and very special) things planned, and I hope you'll come celebrate with me!

Here's what's happening in February:



### February 8

We'll be sharing a special video from LCC, and you're invited to trade a Valentine with me!

Give Faith a Valentine, and I'll give one right back to you.

### February 15 – My Birthday Party!

It's party time! Join us for cake and a photo booth in the gym.

Come get your picture taken with the birthday girl—I promise my best smile.



### February 22

Missed your chance for a photo? No worries! This is your second chance to have your picture taken with me.

While we're celebrating, our ministry doesn't slow down. We'll still have a full schedule, continuing to share comfort, care, and the love of Jesus with everyone we meet. We're also excited to say that we'll be encouraging Ride-a-Longs again this year, so more friends can join us on visits and experience this ministry firsthand.

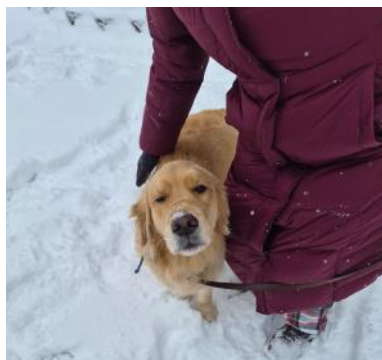


We're also excited to host our annual plant sale fundraiser on Saturday, April 25, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Geranium presales will begin on March 28 and will be available before and after all church services. Prices are \$9 for 6-inch plants and \$17 for 10-inch plants.

We're always looking for ministry partners to attend visits with us. If you feel called to be part of this work and walk alongside us as we serve others, we would love to hear from you. Please contact our Top Dog, Sandy Matthews: [comfortdog@sslcms.org](mailto:comfortdog@sslcms.org) for more information.



Thank you for celebrating with me, supporting this ministry, and being part of the comfort I get to share every day. I can't wait to see you during Faith Month!



# Lutheran Women's Missionary League

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LWML Carolinas District Convention  
Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2  
Location: St. Peters Lutheran Church— Conover

All women are invited to attend the LWML (Lutheran Women Mission LLeague) Carolinas District Convention.

Why should You attend the Carolinas District LWML Convention?

- It's a gathering of other LWML sisters in Christ
- To participate in Worship and Communion to honor our God
- To participate in Bible Studies by Pastor Luke Self, St. John's Conover
- To hear and vote for the Mission Grants. (LWML stands for Lutheran Women in Mission, which was the initial purpose in organizing the Lutheran women.)
- To enjoy fellowship and singing, always singing to honor our God
- To bring offerings for Gifts of the Heart to help others in need
- To "Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!" [Psalm 100:2](#)

Please put **May 1st and 2nd, 2026** on your calendar in **PURPLE**. It's an event you will not want to miss!

Come connect with your LWML sisters from all across NC and SC in this worship filled event. You may find more information and a link to register at:

[https://lwmlcarolinas.org/lwml\\_carolinas\\_district\\_convention\\_central\\_2026](https://lwmlcarolinas.org/lwml_carolinas_district_convention_central_2026).

Registration opens February 1.

T-Shirts for the convention can be ordered at:

<https://carolinasdistrictconventionshirts.itemorder.com/shop/home/>

T-shirts may be picked up at the convention.

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St. Stephens Lutheran Church LWML Quarterly meetings will be held on **March 1, June 7, and September 13, 2026**. All meetings will be at **3 PM** in the fellowship hall. Please watch the bulletin for more information closer to those dates. Mark your calendars now so that you can join us for an afternoon of Christian fellowship.



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Stay tuned to the weekly church bulletin for more information about our annual Salad Luncheon date!

If you would like more information on the LWML, please visit the website ([www.sslcms.org/lwml](http://www.sslcms.org/lwml)) or contact Regina Propst or Teresa Ritchie.



In anticipation of the cross Jesus took three of His disciples and retreated to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. This Lent we will join Jesus in the Garden. We will look in all four Gospels to see His prayer, His teaching and His betrayal, as we prepare to celebrate His death and resurrection. In this season of solemn remembrance and repentance, we are going to slow down and spend five weeks with Jesus in the Garden. Come and join us each Wednesday at 10:30am or 6:30pm.

## Finance and Facility Board Report

	<u>Church Income Oct thru Dec</u>		<u>Church Income Year to Date</u>	
	<u>Given</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Given</u>	<u>Total Budgeted</u>
Offerings	\$466,748.00	\$374,993.00	\$1,544,565.00	\$1,471,959.00
Other Income	\$5,586.00	\$4,125.00	\$23,920.00	\$16,500.00
Total Income	\$472,334.00	\$379,118.00	\$1,568,485.00	\$1,488,459.00

	<u>Church Expenses Oct thru Dec</u>		<u>Church Expenses Year to Date</u>	
	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Spent</u>	<u>Total Budgeted</u>
Less expenses	\$367,553.00	\$371,201.00	\$1,460,186.00	\$1,488,459.00
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$104,781.00</b>		<b>\$108,299.00</b>	

	<u>School's Financials</u>	
	<u>Jan thru Dec</u>	<u>Total Budget</u>
Income*	\$2,136,318.68	\$2,215,962.25
Expenses	\$2,136,318.68	\$2,215,962.25
Balance	\$0.00	\$0.00

### Church Expansion Fund as of January, 2026

Needed: \$4.4 Million  
 Account Balance: \$1,029,084.09  
 Bills Paid So Far: \$2,130,804.73

\*Income line includes \$59,026.58 from School Endowment and using \$63,586.86 from the School Fundraiser Reserve Line. This is \$11,888.81 more than budgeted for the School Fundraiser Reserve Line.



## Feb./March/April Birthdays Of The Homebound and Seasoned Citizens (80 & older)

### February

James Bradshaw-2/1  
 Lorna Bradshaw-2/5  
 Ruth Willis-2/9  
 Katharine Crawley-2/12  
 Glynnis, Poovey-2/21  
 Ann Bowman-2/21  
 Betty Bostain-2/22  
 Dean Cline-2/28

### March

Maxine Flowers-3/2  
 Betty Baker-3/9  
 Toby Laws-3/12  
 Lynwood Miller-3/16  
 Pat Wilson-3/17  
 Judy Campbell-3/21  
 Allene Eads-3/27

### April

Barbara Flowers-4/3  
 Arlene Deal-4/3  
 Betty Shook 4/12  
 Linda McNeely-4/16  
 Larry Fox-4/16  
 Judy Bowman-4/20  
 Angela Frederick-4/28  
 Linda Bolick-4/28  
 Carolyn Garren-4/28  
 Jack Hovis-4/3  
 Carolyn Mann-4/30

## Celebrate the Family



### Weddings

**Holly Barringer** and **Kevin Markham** were married on November 22, Holly is the daughter of Chris & Melissa Barringer and the granddaughter of Willine Austin.

### Births

**Scott Rayford Flinchum**, born on October 29, 2025. Son of Damon & Caitlin. Scott is the grandson of David & Sandra McCrary

**Cooper Alan Binns**, born on November 16, 2025 to Carson & Heather, Cooper is the grandson of Keith & Sue Binns and great grandson of Ethel Baldwin.

**Ezra Marshall Adams**, born on December 8, 2025. Son of Trevor Adams & Addison Enci. Ezra is the grandson of John & Amity Enci, great grandson of Lavonne Golden and nephew to Logan.

**Bo Patten Fletcher**, born on December 18, 2025 to Jason & Jaqueline. Bo is a grandson to Mark & Sharon Radke, great grandson to Martha Killian.

**Wesley Scott**, born January 15, 2026. Son of Evan Clontz & Karsen Schiffel. Wesley is the grandson of Scott & Katie Clontz, great grandson of David & Vickie Clontz and great great-grandson of Harold and Elaine Kent. Wesley is also the nephew to Jenna, Addie and Hannah.

**Maeleigh Bleu Willis** born January 25, 2026. Maeleigh is the daughter of Cody Willis & Makenah Melvin and granddaughter of Cory and Candice Gurganious and niece to Sophia and Koty.

### Baptisms

**Sarah Ruth Butler**, baptized on December 7, 2025. Daughter of Garry & Jessica, Sister to Clara Jane, Anna, Samuel, Nathan, and Caroline. Her sponsors are Daniel & Lisa Hassler

**Micah Russell Jones**, baptized on September 28. Son of Vicar Tristan & Carolyn. His sponsors are Kyle & Kate Hoffman.

**Annie Loretta Bolling**, baptized on October 12. Daughter of Corey & Kristin. Her sponsors are Caitlin Flinchum and Garrett Bolling.

### Eternal Glory

**Brenda Cazire**—April 18, 1942—October 28, 2025. Wife of Ralph Cazire

**Carrol Shook**—December 8, 1938—November 2, 2025. Husband of Betty and father of Darin

**Virginia Caldwell**—August 16, 1926—November 8, 2025

**Danny Lay**— April 17, 1952—November 28, 2025. Husband to Vickie

**Robyn Boleman**— March 16, 1965—November 29, 2025. Wife to Tommy, mother to Josh. Niece to Mike & Terry Drum.

**Doris Hollar**—February 5, 1935—December 13, 2025. Mother to Sheila Dyson, sister-in-law to Bob Hollar

**Jerry Fisher**— October 4, 1963 - January 27, 2026. Husband to Tashia, father to Anthony

**Sherry Norris**—July 31, 1949 - February 4, 2026. Wife of Clark, mother of Dawn Mullen

### Contact Information

**St. Stephens Lutheran Church & School—MS**

2304 Springs Rd.

Hickory, NC 28601

Phone: 828-256-9865

[www.sslcms.org](http://www.sslcms.org)

### School

Phone: 828-256-2166

[www.sslswarriors.org](http://www.sslswarriors.org)

### Staff

**David Ziehr, Pastor**

[dziehr@sslcms.org](mailto:dziehr@sslcms.org)

**Shea Pennington, Pastor**

[spennington@sslcms.org](mailto:spennington@sslcms.org)

**David Guelzow, Visitation Pastor**

[dguelzow@sslcms.org](mailto:dguelzow@sslcms.org)

**Tristan Jones, Vicar**

[tjones@sslcms.org](mailto:tjones@sslcms.org)

**Randall Cline, Director of Youth Ministry**

[rccline@sslcms.org](mailto:rccline@sslcms.org)

**Jadi Gurganious, Mission Facilitator**

[jgurganious@sslcms.org](mailto:jgurganious@sslcms.org)

**Savannah Lee, Communication Coord.**

[slee@sslcms.org](mailto:slee@sslcms.org)

**Donna Lee, Children's Ministry**

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**Robert Smith, Traditional Music**

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**Sharon Maynor, Administrator**

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**Tashia Fisher, Admin. Asst.**

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**Tiffany Sigmon, Visitor Engagement Coord.**

[tsigmon@sslcms.org](mailto:tsigmon@sslcms.org)

**Kristy Smith, New Member Coordinator**

[ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)

**Brandon Buff, Tech. & Facilities**

[bbuff@sslcms.org](mailto:bbuff@sslcms.org)

**Ross Chiles, Principal**

[rchiles@sslcms.org](mailto:rchiles@sslcms.org)

**Debbi Becker, Admin. Asst.**

[dbecker@sslcms.org](mailto:dbecker@sslcms.org)

## Devotional Exchange

Have a devotional that you have loved?  
Looking for one to dig into this year?

Join us for a  
**Devotional Exchange**  
with fellowship and refreshments

**Sunday, February 15**  
following the 10:30 service



RSVP by Feb. 12 to Kristy at [ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)

*"Study His word continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do."* Joshua 1:8

Have a devotional that you have loved? Looking for one to dig into this year?

Join us for a devotional exchange on **Sunday, February 15th**, immediately following the 10:30 service, for an opportunity to share your old devotional (s) and/or pick up a new one for next year. Bonus: fellowship and light refreshments!

All are welcome; however, RSVPs are super helpful!

Let Kristy Smith ([ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)) know if you will be attending.

## After the Boxes

New to the area? Know someone new? Feeling new?  
Experiencing a life change in career, empty nest or relationship?

St. Stephens Lutheran Church MS is offering After the Boxes are Unpacked: Moving on After Moving In, a faith-based, 10-week program designed for women new to the area or experiencing a major life change. This ministry of Focus on the Family offers encouragement and practical advice for surviving, even thriving, in a move to a new place or during a season of change.

The next session will begin on **Monday, March 16th at 6PM** in the conference room at St. Stephens.

Suggested donation of \$10 to cover the cost of your book. Membership or attendance at SSLC-MS is not necessary but registration is required as space may be limited. Interested? Contact Kristy Smith by email at [ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org).

**Ladies! Are you new to the area?**

**Join us for a Women's Newcomer Group starting Monday, March 16 6:30pm**

**Register TODAY with Kristy at [ksmith@sslcms.org](mailto:ksmith@sslcms.org)**

Do not need to be a member of the church to attend.

thank you!

David Pingel, Cory Westby, Billy Beard, DuWayne Westby Ken Tilley, Bob Watson, James Bradshaw for changing filters and oiling statues in the church and school.

# St Stephens Youth Ministry

*“Building relationships in Christ to develop and strengthen faithful followers for life.”*

## WHAT WE’VE BEEN UP TO

### ✨ HangTimes + U\_Matter Series

We spent time hanging out and digging into what it means to know your worth in Christ. Real talk, real laughs, real community.

### 📦 Serving Our Community

We packed backpacks for the Corner Table Backpack Program and shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child—showing love in practical ways.

### 🎄 Christmas Season Fun

From Merry Market fundraising to Christmas shopping, checking out the lights at Tanglewood Park, and our youth Christmas parties—December was packed with joy, generosity, and memories.

### 🏃 Manhunt Madness

High-energy chaos in the best way. If you know, you know.

### 🎉 New Year’s Eve Lock-In

We rang in the new year together with games, food, laughs, and zero sleep. Totally worth it.

### 🧗 Cliff Hangers Climbing Gym

We faced fears, pushed limits, and cheered each other on—huge W for courage and community.

❄️ *Some events were snowed out—but we’re not slowing down. We’re just getting warmed up.*

## WHAT’S COMING UP

### 🏔️ Ski Trip @ Sugar Mountain

Fresh powder, big views, and unforgettable memories.

### 🛷 Snow Tubing @ Jonas Ridge

Fast lanes, loud laughs, and a whole lot of hype.

### 📦 Packing Backpacks (Corner Table)

More chances to serve and make a real impact in our community.

### 🔥 HangTimes: You Live It Series

Real-life faith. Real conversations. Real challenges—learning how to live our faith beyond church walls.

### 🌶️ Youth Chili Cookoff + Dessert Auction

Food. Fun. Friendly competition. Fundraising for what’s ahead.

### 🏠 SED Middle School Retreat

A weekend to grow in faith, build friendships, and make memories that stick.

- Bring a friend (it’s better together)
- Watch for sign-ups
- Show up ready to have fun, serve, and grow

## 🌐 Stay Connected

Find photos, updates, and event details online!

📱 **Facebook & Instagram:** @St Stephens Lutheran Church & School Youth or @ssleyouth on the gram

💻 **Website:** [sslcms.org/youth](https://sslcms.org/youth)

**St. Stephens Youth = Faith that’s real. Friends that feel like family. Fun that you don’t want to miss.**

## School News

The month of January has brought delays, cancellations, and rescheduling of events all due to weather. It also seems no matter how much you prepare for severe weather you're never really ready. I often think about a son and a dad sitting down and having a discussion about nothing and the son says to the dad, "Dad I got something I need to tell you." The son begins to unload a bunch of information about something his dad did not even know about. His dad was not prepared, he was surprised, and it took him time to regroup and respond in the best way he could. It's nice to know there are no surprises for God and that is a comfort for sure.

As we begin 2026, we think about the plans God has for us. We continue to forge ahead with our strategic plan. Some large items in our plan are facility needs and upgrades, school facility growth, and program growth. Our S.T.E.A.M. program that encompasses the entire school is in its second year of a three-year full implementation; this program has been well-received by all (especially the students) and continues to take hold in our daily routine. Our safety and security assessment is just about complete (waiting on the completion of our Mission and Ministry Center to include that as well). This will be invaluable as our student body and staff continue to grow. Our school is growing and we will soon need more space and more programs. To help us in determining how best to handle our blessings, Lutheran Schools Consulting Service is working with us on a feasibility study. They are working through surveys, looking at demographics, and will be on site for interviews and a campus survey. We look forward to their findings. Finally, we are upgrading our school management system and our website. This has been a year in the making and it is going to be fabulous (once we get it all figured out).

God has prepared a path for us in 2026 and there will be some surprises along the way, but with God there are no surprises. To God be the Glory.

Please continue to pray for our school ministry.

*Ross Chiles, Principal*



### SCHOOL STAFF

Ross Chiles, Principal  
 Debbi Becker, Admin Asst.  
 Deb Anderson, Family & Community Liaison  
 Tiffany Sigmon, Receptionist

Kathryn Fisher, Kindergarten  
 Taylor Bosley, Kindergarten  
 Rebecca Flowers, 1st Grade  
 Devon Payne, 2nd Grade  
 Natasha Whitaker, 3rd Grade  
 Kelly Hooper, 4th Grade  
 Rachel Wilson, 5th Grade  
 Kelli Butler, 6th grade Homeroom  
 April Drake, 7th grade Homeroom  
 Cheryl Stiles, 8th grade Homeroom/  
 Religion  
 Laura Frank  
 Donna Lee, Art  
 Rae Fritz, Health/PE  
 Krystal Travis, Athletic Dir.  
 Amity Enci, Lunch Room Head  
 Sheila Poovey, Lunch Room  
 Renee Stiles, Lunch Room  
 Rose Drake, Lunch Room  
 Kristin Priola, Resource Teacher  
 Amber Boston, Music  
 Beverly Fagan, Opener  
 Nora Shaver, Afterschool  
 Jane Guelzow, Afterschool  
 Karla Martinz, Afterschool  
 Renee Stiles, Afterschool

### Preschool Staff

Angela Parlier, Director  
 Karen Ly, PS3  
 Cassie Todd, PS3  
 Amy Trudel, PS4  
 Glenda Setzer, PS4  
 Bethany Kahill, TK

## School Endowment Report

### Quarter Ending 12/31/25

Investment Category	12/31/2024	12/31/2025
Cash	\$616,010.48	\$618,873.09
Bond Funds	\$0.00	\$0.00
Savings Account (Thrivent)	\$241,636.86	\$248,885.96
Stock Mutual Funds	\$724,925.57	\$797,866.59
Stocks	\$161,779.72	\$210,296.45
Real Estate	\$223,200.00	\$223,200.00
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b>\$1,967,552.63</b>	<b>\$2,099,122.09</b>

# Children's & Family Ministry

SPRING 2026



Connecting Families to Christ

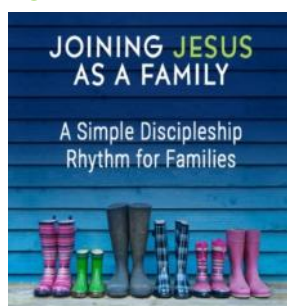
GO TO [SSLCMS.ORG](https://sslcms.org) FOR A FULL CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CALENDAR

## Opportunities to serve in our Children's Ministry:

- Childcare Team
- Classroom Leader
- Classroom Assistant
- Children's Worship
- Hospitality/ Snacks
- Special Events



**FAMILY BIBLE HOUR**  
**Sunday Mornings 9:15-10:15am**  
**PS & Kinders/ Little Lambs**  
Education Wing- Riser Room  
**Grades 1 & 2/ Enduring Faith**  
Education Wing #222  
**Grades 3-5/ Enduring Faith**  
Education Wing #220



## COMING SOON.... JOINING JESUS AS A FAMILY

This book & video curriculum by [Greg and Susan Finke](#) is designed to help parents raise children to be lifelong followers of Jesus by actively participating in His mission in their daily lives. Join us during the month of April to watch the video as a group and discuss. Discover what joining Jesus looks like for your family. **RSVP to receive the book and learn more.**



[RSVP HERE](#)



**Sunday March, 1**

Lunch Provided following worship  
All Ages Welcome.

2nd Grade and younger children must be accompanied by an adult.

Check out the registration link for more

[JONAS RIDGE SIGN UP](#)



**Seeking Creatives & Organizers!** Are you the person who loves planning, organizing, or decorating? Are you looking for a way to use your talents to share the Gospel and love of God with families in our community? Join the VBS Planning Team to help plan this year's Vacation Bible School. Impact the next generation! Let's make VBS 2026 amazing together. **Contact Donna Lee @ 828-381-5391**

**Saturday, April 4 10 am-12 noon**  
**Rain or Shine**

Crafts, Activities & Egg Hunt (preschool-5th Grade)  
Volunteers needed. Contact Donna Lee to learn more.  
Donations accepted. Candy or toy filled eggs.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE AND OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS CHECK OUT [sslcms.org/children](https://sslcms.org/children)

**Children's Ministry Director, Donna Lee at 381-5391 or [dlee@sslcms.org](mailto:dlee@sslcms.org).**

## Mission Connection

## Past

Thank you to all that came out to Merry Market and supported local artist in our community. Merry Market is one of our most attended event each year. It is always great to see old friends connect, new friends connect and the joy of the season here at St. Stephens Lutheran. We are looking forward to November 2026.



Thank you for bringing comfort and joy to 50 residents of Trinity Village and 30 hygiene kits to the homeless through our Operation Elf event in December.



## Current

For 2026, Alaska Mission for Christ has chosen the theme **Steadfast Service** because it beautifully reflects both our calling and God's promise to those who serve Him. In 1 Corinthians 15:58, the Apostle Paul encourages believers to *"stand firm... always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."* That assurance is at the heart of everything we do.

Ministry in Alaska often requires perseverance - long distances, changing conditions, and faithful service in small and remote communities. **Steadfast Service** reminds us that what may feel unseen or ordinary is never wasted in God's hands. Every Vacation Bible School, every servant event, every act of love offered in Jesus' name is part of His eternal work.

This theme calls our volunteers, staff, and supporters to remain rooted in Christ, unwavering in purpose, and confident that God is using their faithfulness to bring hope, healing, and the Gospel to people across Alaska. Even when the work is hard, His promise stands: our labor in the Lord is never in vain. [www.amc-ak.org](http://www.amc-ak.org)

2026  
MINISTRY  
THEME



## Future

St. Stephens Lutheran Church & School presents a Mystery Theater & Dinner



Sunday, March 22 4pm

Climb aboard the luxury ship - *Grand Jubilation!* As you set sail, you'll enjoy a spectacular meal. Plus, you'll be introduced to some unique characters that are traveling among you. After an incredible evening of drama, interaction, and laughter, you'll discover that one of the passengers has resorted to crime! Your assistance will be needed to discover: Who did it? How? And why? Will you win a fabulous prize by being deemed the "Sleuth of the Night?"

Invite others to enjoy great food, fun, and prizes!

COST: \$25 adults / \$10 (K-HS)

Proceeds will benefit the Alaska Mission team

ST. STEPHENS LUTHERAN CHURCH—MS  
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Web-site address: sslcms.org

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# HOLY WEEK

## **Palm Saturday - March 28th**

5:30pm - Contemporary Worship with Holy Communion

## **Palm Sunday - March 29th**

8am - Traditional Worship

10:30am - Contemporary Worship with Holy Communion

## **Maundy Thursday - April 2nd**

10:30am - Traditional Worship with Holy Communion

6:30pm - Traditional Worship with Holy Communion

## **Good Friday - April 3rd**

10:30am - Traditional Worship

6:30pm - Traditional Worship

## **Easter Saturday - April 4th**

10am - Eggstravaganza

5:30pm - Contemporary Worship with Holy Communion

## **Easter Sunday - April 5th**

7am - Traditional Worship with Holy Communion

10:30am - Contemporary Worship with Holy Communion