

Our Stewardship of Attendance last week: (8:30) 110 (11:00) 91
Wednesday Eucharist Service: (12:30) 36

General Offering Totals for 2021: \$574,604.03
Expenses to date 2021: \$597,721.76

Freedom to Imagine Campaign: Pledged: \$1,039,288.19 from 129 Families
Received: \$252,588.28
Loan Balance: \$1,047,000.00

Our weekly offerings are about returning back to God a portion of what he has first given us. We are able to be generous givers when God is at work in our hearts. St. Stephen's Activities for this week include:

TODAY	8:30AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary & Online) 9:45AM: Sunday School for All Ages New Members Class (Sanctuary) 11:00AM: Worship Services (Sanctuary) 12:30PM: Worship and Music 2PM: J-Crew (JC Bowling)
Monday	9AM: Preschool 12:30PM: AA Meeting (Social Hall)
Tuesday	9AM: Preschool 6:30PM: Women's Bible Study (Sr. High Room)
Wednesday	9AM: Preschool 10:30AM: Women's Bible Study (Sr. High Room) 11:45AM: Wednesday Lunch (Social Hall) 12:30PM: Eucharist Service (Sanctuary & Online) 5:15PM: WNL Dinner 6PM: Confirmation Orientation (Gym); Adult Bible Study (Social Hall); Cherub Choir; Children's Choir; Tone Chimes; Adult Handbells (Balcony) 7PM: Wings of Worship (Gym Stage) 7:30PM: AA/AI-Anon meetings (Social Hall/Parlor)
Thursday	9AM: Preschool 7PM: AA Meeting (Social Hall)
Friday	5:30PM: Gym Reserved
Saturday	
Sunday	8:30AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary & Online) – New Member Sunday 9:45AM: Sunday School for All Ages 11:00AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary) 12:30PM: First Communion Class (Social Hall) 3PM: Blessing of the Animals

The Spirit of St. Stephen's Weekly for September 26 – October 3, 2021

Congregation Council approves causes to be featured monthly. **September: Music Program Scholarship Fund.** The Music Program Scholarship was founded in 2010 as an incentive to encourage St. Stephen's youth to participate in our various choirs. The scholarship is available to all high school aged members who participate in one of our adult choirs or adult handbells. Participants are required to be present for at least 75% of all rehearsals and performances, and they are awarded \$50 for each year of participation. The full amount that each student earns will be collected and given to them upon their graduation from high school. Love offering donations in September will go towards continuing these scholarships into the future.

Join us for the Wednesday, September 29th Eucharist Service held at 12:30PM in the sanctuary to enhance your weekly worship experience and to share God's Word in a unique, shortened, but spiritual time of worship. Lunch will be served at 11:45am in the social hall.

Christian Sympathy is extended to Randal Ford upon the death of his mother, Mary Katherine Ford. May the peace and comfort of God's Word be with him and his family assuring them of the knowledge and truth of the Resurrection.

Principle Payment Reduction Lunches are BACK! These luncheons are held once a month September – May. All proceeds go directly to retire the debt. Meals are ready for take-out or eat-in after the 8:30 & 11:00 services. A **BIG** thank you to our church council, especially Craig McFarland and Jessica Maxheimer, who prepared an excellent meal last Sunday. Thank you to everyone who participated! Mark your calendars now for the Agape Sunday School Class meal next month on October 17th.

First Communion Class will be offered by Pastor Jason next Sunday at 12:30pm. We will eat lunch and then delve into the day's curriculum and activities! If you plan to attend please RSVP to the church office or Pastor Jason no later than Thursday, September 30th so that we can know how many to expect for lunch. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Jason!

Blessing of the Animals next Sunday, Oct. 3rd at 3:00 PM on the front lawn at the corner of Butler Street and N. Church Street. All types of animals are welcome!

Mission Lexington: Our Easter to Reformation food drive continues with 7,940 lbs. toward a goal of 5,000 lbs. between now and Reformation Sunday. Food total for the year is 11,831 lbs. Our goal for the year is 15,000 lbs. Please place your food donations and plastic or paper bags in the food barrel next to the elevator in the admin wing or in the box in front of the men's class room. The following items are the most needed: Canned Fruit, Beef Stew, Canned Chicken, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Mac & Cheese, Canned Vegetables, Chili, Pork & Beans, Canned Soups, Rice, Grits, Sugar, Flour, Oatmeal, Applesauce, Cereals, Coffee, Dog & Cat Food. Remember even one can of food will feed someone who is hungry. Thanks again for your support! Ron Redd Cell 803-360-0241 Rredd7848@gmail.com.

Bereavement Meals and Refreshments: As many of you know, WELCA Circles provide a tremendous ministry to bereaved families by preparing a meal or refreshments after a funeral. Over the past few years, we have seen a decline in Circle growth and an increase in funerals. If you are not involved in a Circle, but would be willing to help out with meals/refreshments, please reach out to Kelley Mintz, Bereavement Coordinator, at kelly.mintzsc@gmail.com or (803) 609-4971. Your help would be greatly appreciated!!

J-Crew: All 1st-5th graders are invited to go bowling TODAY! We will meet at the JC's bowling alley at 2pm to bowl a couple of games. The church will pay for bowling and shoes. If you want something from the concession area you will need to bring your own spending money. We should finish up around 3:30pm. Parents are encouraged to stick around during the event to help chaperone.

Committee of 100: How would you like to be a part of bringing Jesus Christ into someone's life? Actually it could be really simple – by becoming a part of the Committee of 100 which is composed of members who contribute a special \$100.00 in a given year to help support newly organized mission churches in the SC Synod as they struggle to become self-supporting. St. Stephen's has led the way in this program since 1980 – having 79 members in 2020. Please consider this stewardship opportunity. Over \$19,000.00 was distributed to mission churches in 2020. The Make your check to: Committee of 100 – drop it in the offering plate or give it to Ron Redd and he will handle the details. Ron Redd 803-360-0241 Rredd7848@gmail.com.

St. Stephen's 101: For New and Prospective Members (and Seasoned Ones Too!): The Pastors and Staff at St. Stephen's will be offering a class for new members and anyone else who would like to attend. Classes will be held at 9:45 in the Sanctuary.

***TODAY – Getting Plugged In**

Mrs. Shannon, Mrs. Tonya, and Mrs. Bailey will team together to introduce you to all the basics of being a member of St. Stephen's and all the different opportunities you will find to be "People of Christ Making a Difference" within and outside the walls of our congregation.

***Sunday, October 3rd – Welcoming of New Members at both services**

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, Oct. 6: Blood Drive

Sunday, Oct. 17: Debt Retirement Meal

Monday, Oct. 18: Lutheran Men

Thursday, Oct. 21 Chat-N-Chew

Wednesday, Oct. 27: Trick or Treat Trail

Sunday, Oct. 31: Reformation Sunday

Sunday, Nov. 14: WELCA Sunday

Sunday, Nov. 28: First Sunday in Advent

Tuesday, Nov. 30: Holden Evening Prayer