

Our Stewardship of Attendance last week: (8:30am) 119 (11am) 128
Wednesday Service: (12:30pm) 61

General Offering Total for 2025: \$606,388.14
Expenses Total for 2025: \$672,840.13

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 11AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary)
Monday	No Preschool/Office Closed-Labor Day 12:30PM: AA Meeting (Social Hall)
Tuesday	8AM: Preschool 9:05AM: Men’s Bible (Social Hall) 6PM: Lackore (Gym) 6:30PM: Organ Task Force Meeting (Office Conference Room); Ladies Bible (Sr. High Room)
Wednesday	8AM: Preschool 10:15AM: Ladies Bible (Sr. High Room) 11:45AM: Wednesday Lunch (Social Hall) 12:30PM: Wednesday Eucharist Service (Sanctuary-Online) 5PM: WNL Dinner (Social Hall); Cherub Choir (Children’s Choir Room) 5:25PM: Carol Choir (Children’s Choir Room) 6PM: Adult Bible Study (Agape Classroom); Confirmation Orientation Class (Social Hall) 6:10PM: Choir Chimes (Children’s Choir Room) 6:45PM: Wings of Worship (Gym) 7:30PM: AA/AI-Anon meetings (Social Hall/Parlor)
Thursday	8AM: Preschool 6PM: Lackore (Gym) 6:30PM: Crossroads (Mediterranean Café) 7PM: AA Meeting (Social Hall)
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	8:30AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary-Online) 9:45AM: Sunday School for all ages; Order of St. Stephen’s (Sanctuary) 11AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary) 2PM: Sr. Youth (Sr. High Room) 3:30PM: Jr. Youth (Jr. High Room)

The Spirit of St. Stephen's Weekly for August 31 – September 7, 2025

Congregational Council approves causes to be featured monthly. **August - Lutheran Campus Ministry** is a Lutheran ministry for students, faculty, staff, and others on college campuses around the nation, not just a ministry for Lutherans. Its mission is to invite people in academic settings to engage more deeply with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the community that bears his name, so that they can discover and fulfill their vocation as disciples. In South Carolina we have 17 ministry sites that reach out to over 20 different colleges and universities. In recent years funding for Lutheran Campus Ministry has declined substantially and they could use our support to help them continue their important mission.

Hospitalized: Rhett Sharpe, Lexington Medical

Join us for our Wednesday Eucharist Service, September 3rd at 12:30pm in the sanctuary to enhance your weekly worship experience and to share God's Word. Lunch will be served at 11:45am in the social hall.

Our WNL! Programs are resuming WEDNESDAY!

- 5:00pm: Dinner in the social hall
- 5:00pm – 5:30pm: Cherub Choir – 2-year-olds–4-year-olds
- 5:25pm – 6:10pm: Carol Choir – 5-year-olds-2nd grade
- 5:25pm – 6:10pm: Treble Choir – 3rd-5th grade
- 5:45pm - 6:30pm: Jr. High Youth (6th-8th grade beginning September 10th)
- 6:00pm: Adult Bible Study; Confirmation meeting with parents and youth
- 6:10pm – 6:40pm: Choir Chimes – 1st -6th Graders
- 6:30pm -7:30pm: Confirmation (7th and 8th grade beginning September 10th)
- 6:45pm – 7:30pm: Wings of Worship
- 7:00pm: Adult Choir (beginning September 10th)

God’s Work Our Hands Service Day: This day has been reserved to participate in the ELCA’s Annual “God’s Work Our Hands” Day. On Sunday, September 14th we will be working as a congregation to do some much-needed cleaning up in the basement. Volunteers are asked to meet in the social hall at 12:30pm with their own bag lunch. We will eat together before heading downstairs. If you would like to participate, please let Pastor Jason know by Sunday, September 7th so we can get organized.

First Responder Breakfast: The 2nd annual St. Stephen’s Lutheran Men First Responder Breakfast will be held Friday, September 12th from 6:30am-10am. If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Ron Redd 803-360-0241 Rredd7848@gmail.com.

Mission Lexington: Our Easter to Reformation food drive is underway with 2,404 lbs. collected towards the 6,000 lb. goal. Our year to date total collected is 4,474 lbs. Mission Lexington needs the following items: **Please No Glass Jars** – laundry detergent, canned fruit, beef stew, canned chicken, peanut butter & jelly, mac & cheese, chili, pork & beans, canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned soups, rice, coffee, grits, sugar, flour, oatmeal, applesauce, breakfast cereals, dog & cat Food (Dry & Wet), chicken/ turkey/beef broth, and pasta. If you prefer to make a monetary donation toward the purchase of food, please make your check payable to St. Stephen's and in the remark section put Mission Lexington. Thank you again for your support. Ron Redd 803-360-0241 Rredd7848@gmail.com

Crossroads Kick-off: Join Pastor Ralph on Thursday, September 4 at 6:30pm at the Mediterranean Café as we return for a new year together! Join us each month on the first Thursday for get-to-know discussions, a devotion and connection over a great meal (Dutch treat). Crossroads is comprised of folks in their 50s-70s. Contact Pastor Ralph with any questions. Sign up near the narthex.

Lutheran Men: Please join us in the social hall at 6:30pm on Monday, September 15th for a meal and presentation by Amy Reeves, Executive Director of Mission Lexington. Ron Redd Rredd7848@gmail.com 803-360-0241.

Committee of 100: How would you like to be a part of bringing Jesus Christ into someone's life? It could be really simple – by becoming a part of the Committee of 100 which is composed of members who contribute \$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 82 members in 2024. All contributions are welcome. Please consider this stewardship opportunity. Over \$17,000.00 was distributed to mission churches in 2024. Please make your check to: Committee of 100 – place 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.

Weekly Men's Bible Study will return on Tuesday, September 2 at 9:05am in the social hall. Pastor Ralph will lead a discussion time of "Table Talk" as we gather around the table to read and interpret together the Scripture from the previous Sunday's lessons. Bring your bulletin & Bible. Refreshments will be served.

Operation Christmas Child, which is part of the Samaritan's Purse organization and a wonderful way to provide gifts for children in need, is now accepting donations! In November, we will have our annual packing party and now is a great time to bring in items that can go in these shoeboxes that will be delivered to children all over the world. Not only will they receive a shoebox, but they will also learn about the Gospel of Jesus, and you can help make this happen! This month we are asking for school supplies such as pens, pencils (with sharpener), notepads, journals, composition books, markers, crayons, coloring books etc! You can drop off all donations in the bin outside the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Ashely Lackore at ashlackore@yahoo.com.

Music: Today we welcome **Matthew Jones**, percussionist, as our guest musician. Children's Choirs begin this coming Wednesday. If you haven't registered yet, no worries. Just bring your child and we will have registration forms available. **Cherub Choir** for our 2-4-year-olds will rehearse on Wednesdays from 5:00pm-5:30pm. The **Carol Choir** for children ages 5-2nd grade rehearses from 5:25pm-6:10pm. The **Treble Choir** for 3rd-5th graders rehearses from 5:25pm-6:10pm as well. **Choir chimes** for children in 1st grade through 6th grade rehearses from 6:10pm-6:40pm. **Wings of Worship**, under the direction of Mrs. Rhonda Marchant, will return this fall, taking place on Wednesday evenings from 6:45pm -7:30pm beginning September 3. This liturgical dance group is for children in grades 1-6. For more information, reach out to Susan Wilson or Rhonda Marchant. An adult beginner's handbell/choir chime ensemble will form this fall for those who are interested in making music and learning about handbells/choir chimes. The group will rehearse during the daytime, with a time and day selected by those interested in playing. Contact Susan to sign up. **Romeo's** will meet on Tuesday, September 16 at 12:30pm at Carolina Wings.

WELCA Joint Business Meeting: All women of St. Stephen's are members of WELCA, and you are warmly invited to the annual joint meeting on Tuesday, September 9, at 6:30pm in the social hall. While we'll take care of some business items, most of our time together will be spent in fellowship and planning for the year ahead. And yes—there will be food! Please bring your favorite salad or dessert to share. If you have questions about this gathering or about WELCA, feel free to reach out to Marty Nantz (no.1mimi@yahoo.com) or Lenna Young (lenna.c.young@gmail.com).

Calling all Confirmands! St. Stephen's Confirmation Orientation is this Wednesday, September 3rd at 6:00pm. If your child is a rising 7th or 8th grader, we'd love to include them in our plans for our Confirmation ministry this year! To make sure that we have an awesome start to the year please plan on attending an orientation for all parents and students. Our gathering will take place in the social hall at 6pm. If you have questions about whether your youth should be participating or any other questions about the program, please contact Pastor Jason.

WNL Adult Class begins on September 3 from 6:00pm-7:00pm in the Agape Classroom. Join Pastor Ralph as we spend the Fall nurturing our faith through the study of Biblical books, characters, and themes using resources from The Bible Project. We will also use our time together to include topical faith challenges we see and experience as individuals and as a faith community. Our goal is to explore and engage through conversation regarding our relationship with God and highlight how faith through Christ transforms our life view. Hope to see you there!

A new Sunday School opportunity: Women Digging Deeper: This Sunday school class for women will begin September 7th. We will gather and discuss the scripture readings for that day. We will meet in the parlor. This class will be a group think for facilitating and discussing. Our hope is the Word will sink in deeper as we dig deeper in the Word!

All women are invited to a new bible study "Live Free: A Study of Galatians" by Elizabeth Woodson. Learn to gain freedom from sin and freedom to have true peace! It is an 8-week study on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm and offering the same session on Wednesday mornings at 10:15am. Contact Kerri Brittingham for more information. 803-318-4599.