

Our Stewardship of Attendance last week: (8:30am) 152 (11am) 113
Wednesday Service: (12:30pm) 71

General Offering Total for 2026: \$728,331.91
Total Expenses for 2026: \$775,631.63

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 11:AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary) 12:15PM: Jr. Youth (Social Hall) 12:30PM: First Communion Class (Office Conference Room) 3PM: Blessing of the Animals (Corner of N. Church St. & Butler St.) 5PM: Lexington Community Service (Icehouse Amphitheater)
Monday	8AM: Preschool 12:30PM: AA Meeting (Social Hall) 6:30PM: Adult Handbells (Choir Room)
Tuesday	8AM: Preschool 9:05AM: Men's Bible (Social Hall)
Wednesday	8AM: Preschool 10AM: Women's Bible (Sr. High Room) 11:45AM: Lunch (Social Hall) 12:30PM: Wednesday Eucharistic Service (Sanctuary-Online) 5PM: Dinner (Social Hall); Cherub Choir (Choir Room) 5:30PM: Carol & Treble Choirs (Choir Room); Jr. High Youth (Jr. High Room) 6PM: Adult Bible Study (Agape Classroom); Confirmation Class (Saints and Sinners Classroom) 6:10PM: Choir Chimes (Choir Room) 6:45PM: Wings of Worship (Gym) 7PM: Adult Choir (Choir Room) 7:30PM: AA/AI-Anon meetings (Social Hall/Parlor)
Thursday	8AM: Preschool 5:30PM: Preschool Fall Family Night (Gym) 7PM: AA Meeting (Social Hall)
Friday	9AM: Preschool Friday Friends
Saturday	4:30PM: Lackore (Gym)
Sunday	8AM: Living Faith Leaving for Lutheridge (Butler St. parking lot) 8:30AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary-Online) 9:45AM: Sunday School for all ages 11AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary) 2PM: Corley (Social Hall)

The Spirit of St. Stephen's Weekly for September 27 – October 4, 2026

Congregational Council approves causes to be featured monthly. **September -Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)** shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the US and around the world. Domestically, LDR uses a model of collaboration that is grounded in the principle of accompaniment, working in coordination with local synods, ecumenical partners, tribal nations and community-based organizations to provide disaster and crisis support through the disaster cycle. Internationally, LDR works at the request of and in coordination with local partners to connect companion churches, the Lutheran World Federation, and other ecumenical partners to strengthen communities' ability to respond and recover. A donation to LDR, designated for a specific response, will be used entirely (100%) for those whose lives have been impacted by natural disasters, famine, war or violence.

Christian Sympathy is extended to Doris Jean Harris upon the death of her mother, Mary Sue Burns. May the peace and comfort of God's Word be with her and her family assuring them of the knowledge and truth of the Resurrection.

Join us for our Wednesday Eucharistic Service, September 30th 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.

First Communion Class will be offered by Pastor Jason and Pastor Ralph **TODAY** at 12:30pm. We will eat some pizza together and then delve into the day's curriculum and activities! If you have any questions, please contact one of the pastors!

The Blessing of the Animals is **TODAY** at 3pm. All animals are welcome! If you can't bring your pet, bring a picture! Please bring dog or cat food to donate to Mission Lexington!

Second Annual Community Worship Service will be held at the Lexington Amphitheater **TODAY** at 5:00pm. All are invited. We will gather with Scripture, singing, and a special message. St. Stephen's and Lexington United Methodist churches will help. Offering collected will support Mission Lexington.

Mission Lexington: Our Easter to Reformation food drive is underway with 3,597 lbs. of food collected toward a goal of 5,000 lbs. of food between now and Reformation Sunday, October 25. Our yearly donations are 5,172 lbs. toward a goal of 8,000 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), laundry detergent, 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

Lutheran Men will meet Monday, October 19 at 6:30pm in the social hall. Please join us for a meal and a presentation by Historian Mike Burgess. The topic of his presentation will be "Strike the Tent: The Last Years of Robert E. Lee". Ron Redd - Rredd7848@gmail.com 803-360-0241.

Music: Our **children's choirs** began with a lot of energy and enthusiasm. It's not too late for your child to join us. **Cherub Choir** is for 2–4-year-olds and they meet from 5:00-5:30pm. **Carol and Treble Choirs** meet from 5:30-6:10pm. These choirs are for children in K-5th grade. **Choir chimes** meet on Wednesdays as well from 6:10-6:40pm and is for children in 1st-5th grade. For more information contact susan@sslc.org. It's not too early to save the date for the December music coming up! The **children's choirs** will present their annual Christmas program on Sunday, December 13 at 3:00pm. The **Adult Choir** will present their music of the season on December 20 at both services. **Women of the Adult Choir** will gather for dinner on Thursday, October 15 at 6:00pm. Please see Susan to make reservations. The **handbell choir** rehearsals now begin at 6:15pm on Monday evenings in the adult choir room.

Lutheridge Worship, Picnic, and Apple Picking: On Sunday, October 4th the Living Faith Group will gather at Lutheridge at 11am for a worship service with Holy Communion and then a picnic (both will be held under a pavilion awning that has chairs and picnic tables). If you would like to follow the group up meet in the church Butler St. parking lot at 8am. Afterwards we'll head to a local apple farm. Please RSVP to Pastor Jason by Wednesday, September 30th if you are planning to come. Folks that attend are asked to bring their own picnic lunch, chairs, blankets, etc. that you'll need for your family to be most comfortable. If you are interested in traveling up to the Asheville area on Saturday and reserving a room at Lutheridge for Saturday evening, please let Pastor Jason know at your earliest convenience.

Jr. High Youth: Plan to gather TODAY in the social hall at 12:15pm. We will have a light lunch and then jump into learning how to make 4-5 afterschool snacks that will keep the hunger at bay until dinner time! Pick-up will be at 2:30pm.

Sr. High Youth - If your child is interested in going on the ski trip, please let Mrs. Shannon know by **TODAY**.

Crossroads: Join us October 1 at 6:30pm at the Mediterranean Café (327 W. Main). Look for the sign-up sheet just outside the narthex. Contact Pastor Ralph with any questions.

8th -12th Graders: ELCA Youth Gathering 2027 (June 28 - July 2, 2027): Every three years, thousands of high schoolers and their adult leaders from across the ELCA come together for the ELCA Youth Gathering. It's not just an event but a movement in which faith ignites and community comes alive. Through inspiring speakers, experiential learning and transformative connections, young people experience the church in bold, unforgettable ways. Each night, participants share a unique faith experience through high-energy worship and powerful storytelling. The Gathering is an opportunity to ask big questions, grow in faith and be part of something bigger than yourself. Youth participants must be in 8th to 12th grade at time of registration (Fall 2026). If you have someone that wants to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering, please see Mrs. Shannon to get the interest form and return that form with \$100 to secure your spot. ****All interest forms must be returned by Oct. 4.** This is earlier than originally stated in the packet!

Actors and Actresses Needed: Plans are underway for our Easter season production of The Living Last Supper. There is a need for two men to portray Disciples and two or three more men for minor roles. We also have a need for two additional actress roles. No experience is necessary for any role. If interested please contact Jim Nantz, 803-315-9003, or any cast member.

Prime Time:

- In honor of Oktoberfest, join us on October 8 for a fun outing to Julia's German Stammtisch in Columbia. When you visit Julia's German Stammtisch, you're in for a treat. This family owned and operated business has a reputation for serving the best schnitzel you will ever get, short of going to Germany! Experience the wonderful flavors of German Cuisine. We will leave the church at 11am.
- Join us as we head to Flatrock Playhouse to see Sister Act on Thursday, Oct. 22nd. We will leave the church at 10:45am as the show begins at 2pm. Please bring a sandwich/lunch to eat along the way. We will have dinner after the show at Blue Ocean Seafood in Clinton. Total cost is \$75 per person. This covers your show ticket and transportation. The meal after the show is not included. 15 tickets have been reserved so sign up (and pay) as soon as you know you want to go! This is open to all church members!

Meal Ministry is a ministry designed to provide meals for individuals and families in our church who may be experiencing a season when a little extra help would mean so much. A meal may seem like a small thing, but when someone is tired, recovering, or adjusting to a new baby, that meal can communicate something much bigger. You are loved. You are remembered. Your church family is here for you. Meals can be homemade or purchased. If you are interested in helping please contact Kelley Mintz at 803-609-4971 or Kelley.mintzsc@gmail.com

Upcoming Events:

October 14: Blood Drive
October 18: Building Maintenance Lunch-WELCA
October 24: SC Bishop Installation
October 28: Trunk or Treat
December 1: Holden Evening Prayer Service