



The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

December 2024



A LUTHERAN PRIMER, 3

Okay, it's the last month of the year. So I thought I'd wrap up the Lutheran primer I've been doing over the last couple of months. I hope you have enjoyed these summaries of Lutheran concepts, and I hope you have a very blessed Advent and Christmas season!

Christology: There have been countless books written on this particular topic! "Christology" describes our attempts to understand the nature of Jesus Christ. More specifically what do we mean when we say that Jesus is fully human and fully divine? Luther did not deviate much from the common theological understanding of his time, and we still today accept that the divine and human are "inseparably joined" in the person of Jesus Christ; though what exactly **that** means can often be an interesting topic of conversation and lead to some tough questions: Did the divine die on the cross? Is it even possible for the divine to die? Etc.

New Obedience: If we are justified solely by faith, then what of good works? Well, Luther understood that faith yields good works and that "a person must do such good works as God has commanded for God's sake but not place trust in them as if thereby to earn grace before God."

The Church: Luther believed, and we confess that there is one holy, Christian church. And that it is "the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is preached...and the sacraments are administered in conformity with the divine Word." Luther also understood that it is not necessary that uniform ceremonies and traditions be observed everywhere.

Confession and Repentance: Luther was a fan of private confession and absolution, though he did not believe it necessary to list all one's sins or that it was a requirement for communion. And just FYI: I am quite capable of offering private confession and absolution if any would find it helpful in dealing with something that lies heavy on their heart. Regarding repentance, it is the act of a truly contrite heart and leads to the understanding that through Christ we have forgiveness and grace.

Church Governance: Luther understood that no one should preach, teach or administer the sacraments without a "proper [public] call." We also understand that church governance is aimed at providing good order within the church and has nothing to do with salvation or grace. Church governance and traditions can be helpful, but we are not to "burden [our] consciences with them as if such things were necessary for salvation." Things like fasting and vows of silence, celibacy, poverty, etc. can be helpful as spiritual disciplines, but they do nothing with regards to salvation.

Concerning the Power of Bishops: This one might get me in some trouble, so I will skirt the finer points of the Office of Bishop that caused debate back in 1999 with CCM and stick with the basics. Holding the "office of the keys" the power of the Bishop is to "preach the gospel, to forgive sin, to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel and to exclude from the Christian community the ungodly..." and that "parishioners and churches owe obedience to bishops." But whenever Bishops teach or institute something to the contrary of the gospel we have God's command not to be obedient any longer. Luther also expressly stated

that the power of the Bishop ought not to be secular and that it is confined to the church.

And remember that these are simple summaries of often complex concepts; so please don't hesitate to ask any questions they might have inspired. All of the quotes are taken from the Augsburg Confession (Kolb/Wengert translation).

In Christ,
Pastor Jon

CONGREGATION COUNCIL



Our November meeting was held on November 12, 2024.

In attendance: Pastor Jon Nelson, Nancy Egloff, Paul Reier, J.R. Lyons, Sandy Croushore, Roberta Sulouff, Beth Grant, Terri Larsen, Bill Dichtel, Alison Carney.

- HVAC Replacement/New Flat Roof - We are waiting on HVAC equipment for construction to begin. Council will consider a possible preventive maintenance/replacement project of a section of roof at the time of rooftop HVAC work.
- Automatic Door Opener - Council approved expenditure of \$6,500 in contract with Virginia Security Co. for an automatic/accessible front door opener and associated electrical work.
- Technology - We are recruiting new volunteers to run equipment for live streaming of second service.
- 2025 Budget - Council reviewed \$596,552 initial draft budget for 2025.
- Staff Bonuses - Council approved staff bonuses, with payment to each staff member to include the appropriate amount to cover respective income tax. Council approved Parish Administrator's family healthcare coverage from 50/50 to 70/30 as part of St. Stephen's employment agreement with her.
- We welcome new members to the congregation on November 17.
- Several building security changes are underway or completed in advance of an insurance-required lock-down drill.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for December 10.

Alison Carney, Secretary, Congregation Council



CHRISTMAS AND ADVENT SERVICES

December 1, 8:30 and 11:00 am

First Sunday of Advent

December 4, 7:00 pm

Wednesdays in Advent "Restore Our Hope"

December 8, 8:30 and 11:00 am

Second Sunday of Advent

December 11, 7:00 pm

Wednesdays in Advent "Restore Our Hope"

December 15, 8:30 and 11:00 am

Third Sunday of Advent

Children's Christmas Program at 11:00 am Service

December 18, 7:00 pm

Wednesdays in Advent "Restore Our Hope"

December 22, 8:30 and 11:00 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Caroling meet at church at 3:00pm-5:00pm (meet at church at 2:30)

December 24, 7:30 pm

Worship featuring sermon, choirs and Holy Communion. Come at 7:00 pm for preservice music from our singing choirs and the St. Stephen ringers.

December 24, 10:00 pm

Contemplative Worship Service with Holy Communion.

December 29, 9:45 am

Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion

Thank You



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

Thank you for your gift
of \$6,574 to ELCA
World Hunger.

"Jesus said,] 'Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' [The lawyer] said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

(Luke 10:36-37)

As a church, we are freed by the transformative life of Christ, and this freedom emboldens us to love and serve our neighbors just as Christ has shown us. Your gifts to the ministries of the ELCA help people around the world feel the power of God's love.

Your generosity is getting at the root causes of hunger and poverty in over 60 countries, including the United States. It provides access to clean water, health care, agriculture, livestock and education, and it advances peace and justice. Through your gifts you join the whole church in working toward a just world where all are fed.

Thank you for your gracious gifts. The glory of God shines through you.

The Rev. Daniel Rift; Director, Giving, Service and Justice
ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response



Thank you for your in-kind donation of 13 pounds of food to the Williamsburg House of Mercy. On average we receive 18,000 pounds of in-kind donations per month and rely on these to supplement our costs in providing to the most vulnerable in our community. Thank you for your contribution.



On behalf of the Board of Directors and 200+ Volunteers of FISH, THANK YOU so much to St. Stephen Lutheran Church for your contribution of five bags of food. Many local families in need will be helped by your generous contribution.

FISH is serving many more struggling people these days, including over 721 households new to FISH so far in 2024. In the last several months, we have provided groceries for more than 354,081 meals and over 14,000 outfits of clothing.

Linda A. Stanzione, FISH Volunteer

NEW MONTHLY WOMEN'S GROUP BEGINNING IN JANUARY



We are kicking off a new monthly Women's Group in January! Momentum from our fall St. Stephen Women's Retreat inspired this path forward. The group's emphasis is to

nurture one another on our faith journeys, continuing to explore and learn through spiritual development, study, discussion, and growth.

Facilitated by St. Stephen member **Sandy Johnson** and using a shared leadership model, the group sessions will be on the second Thursday of each month. To best accommodate as many interested folks as possible, we will offer both an afternoon and an evening session.

First Session: **Thursday, January 9, 2025**

Location: St. Stephen library

Choice of Times: **12:30-2:00 pm** or **7:00-8:30 pm**

No registration required. Just come and bring a friend!

If you want to join the new group but foresee a barrier to accessibility keeping you from doing so, please let us know and we will do our best to support your participation. Questions? Reach out to **Ina Berkey** (ina.berkey@cox.net).



NOTES FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

All donations for 2024 must be received by **Sunday, December 29**. Any donations that come in after that date will be credited to 2025. If you have any questions about donations you can reach me at finsec@saintstephenlutheran.net or 757-869-2949.

Karen Nester, Financial Secretary



MUSIC NOTES

ADVENT LITURGY

On December 1, we begin a new church year. Our first church season is Advent, and our Advent journey begins with a change in mood and color from festival white to royal blue; from a rousing and victorious celebration of Christ the King on our last Sunday of Pentecost to a penitential preparation for the newborn King in Advent; and from using our Evangelical Lutheran Worship Liturgical Setting 1 to a musical liturgy taken from the *Deutsche Messe-German Mass* by the late Classical/early Romantic Period Viennese composer Franz Peter Schubert. Although he wrote in most genres, Schubert wrote more lieder (songs and song cycles) than anything else. Probably the one you know best is his "Ave Maria."

Written in 1827, near the end of Schubert's short life (he died at age 31), the *German Mass* is the most popular and enduring of the Austrian/German 'low masses', masses in which the congregation sang German hymns while the priest intoned the Latin mass. The singing of German hymns during the mass started in Austria in the twelfth century, and by 1260 there was a complete set of German hymns corresponding to the sung parts of the mass. The 'low mass' movement flourished during the reign of Kaiser Joseph II, who outlawed the performance of orchestral Latin masses. The Catholic Church did NOT approve of low masses (or of Kaiser Joseph II!).

Johann Phillip Neumann, who wrote the texts of the nine movements of the *Deutsche Messe*, commissioned Schubert to write simple, homophonic music that would be easy for an entire congregation to sing. Just to be clear, homophonic music is when the melody aligns with the harmonies below it, a block-chordal style – think our traditional chorale hymnody. (Polyphony is the opposite of homophony – I think of polyphony as each part, soprano-alto-tenor-bass, doing their own thing and rarely "lining" up with the other parts.) The *Deutsche Messe* is an odd work as it was originally neither a mass setting nor strictly speaking, German. Instead, it is a song cycle of eight non-liturgical poems written and intended to be sung during a Mass either in its entirety or partially.

Although intended for a Catholic service, the work was banned because it was an "unauthorized" German translation of the Mass.

In 1979, Richard Proulx* (1937-2010) adapted the mass for modern congregational use. The lengthy, flowery, romantic Neumann poems were replaced with the modern English church-approved words of the mass, and the movements were reduced to the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Lord's Prayer, and Agnus Dei. The Kyrie ("Lord Have Mercy"), Sanctus ("Holy, Holy, Holy"), and Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God") are included as additional service music in our Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal, and these are the liturgical musical pieces we will use the four Sundays of this Advent season.

Judging by the large number of YouTube videos, the original form of the *Deutsche Mass* continues to be performed often.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5txGKtJfWkQ>

Karen Ives, Music Director

*Richard Proulx (pronounced "Prew") has more than 300 published works, including congregational music in every form, sacred and secular choral works, song cycles, two operas, and instrumental and organ music. He served as a consultant on several Episcopal, United Methodist, and Roman Catholic hymnals. His anthem *We Adore You, O Christ* received the Raabe Prize for Excellence in Sacred Composition, endowed for the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians by William and [Nancy Raabe](#).



MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- **December 3** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** of this month.
- **December 5** – Men are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Thursday** of this month.

Both gatherings take place at **8:00 am** at the Colonial Pancake House, at the corner of Page Street and Penniman Road, Williamsburg, VA. The get-togethers promote conversation and friendship in a casual setting.



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

The good times just keep coming at St. Stephen Lutheran Preschool! We ended October with school pictures from Sara Harris Photography, the cutest Halloween Parade as our students trick-or-treated throughout the church, and bubbles in Chapel with Pastor Jon as our littles identified what brings them joy!

A HUGE thank you to Randy Punched, George Bass, and Pastor Jon who helped us spread six yards of mulch to ensure the playground remain safe for our students – we were a small but mighty crew!

November continued the fun with our 4/5's (the Frog, Hippo and Bear classes) field trip to Jamestown Settlement, more monthly laughs and literacy with Mr. Chris from the Williamsburg Regional Library, more new music learned with Mr. Anthony from ECMS (Early Childhood Music School), thoughtful lessons about sharing with our very own Pastor Jon, some great parent/teacher conferences, and two successful FUNdraisers (Original Works and Blaze Pizza).

Thank you all for supporting our Blaze Pizza spirit night. Look out for information about our next fundraiser with River Mutt Ice Cream where you can purchase delicious pints of ice cream in time to a la mode your holiday pies and pick it up right here at the church on December 19 and 20. All funds raised go to provide scholarships to local families that would otherwise not be able to send their children to preschool.

Jessica Kimball, Preschool Director



STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



Think About Becoming a Stephen Minister!

A few weeks ago, on All Saints Sunday, Pastor Jon announced that there will be classes for Stephen Ministers starting soon. You really should give some thought to taking the classes and joining our Stephen Ministry group at Saint Stephen! Stephen Ministers are lay Christian counselors who help individuals in the church who are going through personal a crisis such as death of a loved one or family member, medical crisis, divorce, financial set-back, depression or any number of other problems. Male Stephen Ministers attend to men and female Stephen Ministers attend to women. Stephen Ministers usually meet with their “care receivers” on a weekly basis for about an hour each week and ministries may last from a few months to a year or more.

The training in Williamsburg is conducted by our Stephen Ministry group and those from five other churches that take part in putting on an excellent course. This coming year, the course will be held at the Williamsburg Community Chapel. Most years, the course has been offered on Tuesday evenings with one Saturday session. This coming year, it appears that the sessions will be on Monday evenings with one Saturday session. The evening sessions last 2½ hours. The schedule will run from the third week in January until mid-May 2025. Sessions are taught by the Stephen Leaders and some of the Stephen Ministers in Williamsburg. There are weekly reading assignments for those attending the course. You could expect lectures, discussions of the readings, Bible study, study of crises that we all may experience, and play-acting situations to get comfortable in difficult counseling situations. The course is outstanding and is helpful not only in Stephen Ministry but in all life situations. Many of us who have taken it have said that, in retrospect, we only wish we had done it earlier so that we had the perspective it provides earlier in our lives.

There is no charge for taking the course and books are provided. It is expected, however, that anyone participating in the course serve the church as a Stephen

Minister for at least two years after their training (unless they move away in which case they could continue to serve at their new church if it is also a Stephen Ministry congregation).

Prayerfully consider signing up if you have the time and any desire to serve others in this way. Talk to any of our Stephen Ministers to gain perspective from them on their experiences. The ministries are totally confidential but the personal rewards they have experienced by serving are theirs to share. Feel free to call or e-mail me for more information or details. We would love to have you join us.

Bill Dichtel, Stephen Minister

Cell phone: (757) 232-5334

Email: bill.dichtel@gmail.com



DECEMBER

2	Russ Dabel Peter Geier	Gisela Fashing
4	Aidan Jansson Sarah Toler	Mitchell Stauffer
6	Gerry Johnson	
9	Beatrice Ehrhardt	
12	Jean Gulesian	Barb Youngk
13	Birdie Burton Lori Harms	Marj Gottschalk-Trone
15	Carla Javier	Sonya Lim
16	Lori Janke Tracie Powers	Diane McCurry
20	Kathryn Ogborn	Tom Peterkin
21	Casey Toler	Robert Voigt
24	Amy Bergh	Jan MacQuestion
25	Ann Powers	
27	Karen Arledge	
30	Rosalie Frey	



DECEMBER BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

The significance of baptism, Luther teaches in the *Small Catechism*, is “that the old creature in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily contrition and repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.”

Your baptismal anniversary is an opportunity to light a baptismal candle and to give some prayer time to reflecting on your experiences during the past year on your journey in faith!

Pastor Jon Nelson

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 3 | Soni York | |
| 6 | Klara Cave | |
| 10 | Sandy Brust | |
| 11 | Linda Vonderheide | |
| 17 | Pam Groman | |
| 19 | Chuck Frey | Magnolia Sulouff |
| | Penelope Sulouff | Sebastian Sulouff |
| 21 | Liam Janke | |
| 24 | Ethan Jansson | |
| 26 | Ursula Recktenwald | |
| 28 | Ailene Bartlett | Sonja Cave |

Others who were baptized in December:
Helen Allen Erika Geier

Were you baptized in December but your name isn't on the list above? Let us know!

BOOK AND MOVIE STUDY



Starting the week of February 5 Pastor Jon will be leading a five-week book study on “[Killers of the Flower Moon](#)” by David Grann. There will be two options to meet for discussion: **Mondays at 7:00 pm** or **Tuesdays at 1:30 pm**. If you would like a copy of the book (\$20.00 each), please sign up on the bulletin insert and send your payment to the church marked “Book Study.” Once we have read and discussed the book, we will also host a viewing and discussion of the recent [movie adaptation](#) on **March 8 at 2:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall.

PRAYERS



Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for **Karen Arledge, Ed Brown, Kristin Carter, Marcie Clark, Bob Cummings, Pat Fretz, Jack Harris, Sharon Jacobs, Donna Kittelson, Paul Kristiansen, Jim Mayfield, Carole Meyer, and George Vonderheide.**

Pray for those unable to come to worship: **Martin Bleck, Ed Brown, Birdie Burton, York Doerr, Bob and Angie Groom, Pat Janot, Marilyn Johnson, Jeanne Nelson, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff.**

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Susan, Alyssa Atkinson and family, Charles Baugh, Donald and Carol Baum, Eleftheria Beck, Tom Beck, Sally Blackburn, June Brantley, Sharon Brown, Linda Bonfiglio, Mary Bloom, Amy Carl, Karin Cavanaugh, Chris Clarke, Amaree Cluff, Ruth Ann Coski, Judy Craun, Judy Drezek, Becky Drury, Darrin and Rosemary Dunn, Time Ebel, David Gade, Joel Gillespie, Greg Gildner, Joan and John Goodhart, Sue Hassan and family, Andy Havola, Nick Havola, Bradley Kim Joan and Laurie Heintzelman, Lisa Hill, Jaxon Ireland, Claudia Jacobik, Brian Johnson, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, The Kennedy family, Marnah Lund, Trish and Sara and Matthew Macerelli, Keara Mahony, Laura Margolin, Jack Mayfield, Doug MacKenzie, The Keith Meins family, Liz Montalvo, Ed Moninger, Mya Moore, Kim Morris, Bob Myers, Coral Pumley, Kurt Recktenwald, Lou Schuster, Inge Seiter, Pamela Sharp, Monika Stern, Chad Strausbaugh, Michael Sweeney and family, Charley Underdahl, Brenda Webster, Caleb Winig, Elaine Wrich and Warren Wright.



CHRISTMAS BAKING TRADITIONS

Join us in the Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, December 8 from 3:00-4:00 pm** to share in one another's Christmas treat traditions. Bring your dough or batter and any special tools and share your traditions with others! The church ovens will also be available for baking. Not a baker? Come for conversation and to try some treats! Rides available, contact Pastor Jon.



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
612 Jamestown Road
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The Quill www.saintstephenlutheran.net December 2024

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<i>Financial Secretary</i>	Karen Nester	757-869-2949
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<i>Congregational Secretary</i>	Alison Carney	703-819-6607

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