



The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

November 2024



A LUTHERAN PRIMER, 2

We continue with our look into key terms and ideas in Lutheran theology. And I hope you all have a Spirit-filled Reformation Sunday this month; and in honor of that occasion, we will examine some of Martin Luther's favorite Latin phrases!

Ecclesia semper reformanda est: This Latin phrase translates as "the church must always be reforming." This phrase is sometimes shortened to *semper reformanda* which simply means, "always reforming." This was one of the basic tenets of the Reformation; and it refers to the belief that the church must continually re-examine itself in order to maintain purity of doctrine and practice.

Sola fide: This phrase translates as "Faith alone," and it may sound familiar to you as I have referenced in both preaching and teaching. But it is of such great import to Lutheran theology that it can't hurt to cover it again! Against the teaching of his day that the righteous acts of believers are performed in cooperation with God, Luther wrote that Christians receive such righteousness entirely from outside themselves; that righteousness not only comes from Christ but actually is the righteousness of Christ, imputed to Christians (rather than infused into them) through faith. Faith, for Luther, was a gift from God; the experience of being justified by faith was "as though I had been born again."

Sola gratia: This translates as "Grace alone," and once again, you've likely heard me speak of this before, but repetition is a useful tool for learning. This phrase is closely linked to the previous one, *sola fide*. Grace alone emphasizes that salvation is entirely God's act of free grace. It also emphasizes how undeserving of God's gifts

humanity is. A gift of grace is experienced entirely as something completely unearned.

Sola scriptura: This means "Scripture alone," and refers to the Reformers' understanding that the Bible is the only inspired and authoritative word of God. As such it is the only source for Christian doctrine and should be made accessible to all. *Sola scriptura* is the source and norm of the above mentioned *sola fide* and *sola gratia*. That is to say that the Gospel is received by *sola fide* and *sola gratia*. Scripture is the instrument of God which reveals our means of salvation through faith in/of Christ.

Solus Christus: This principle, "Christ alone," teaches that Christ is the sole mediator between God and man; and that there is salvation through no other. It was this principle that led to Luther's understanding of the "general priesthood of the baptized" (aka "priesthood of all believers"). Since Luther believed in *solus Christus* he rejected the Roman Catholic teaching of the time that there were no sacraments in the church without the services of ordained priests under the authority and auspices of the pope.

Soli Deo gloria: Translates as "glory to God alone," and refers to the teaching that all glory is to be due to God alone, since salvation is accomplished solely through God's will and action. The reformers believed that human beings (even really good ones like the saints) are not worthy of the glory that was often accorded them. This is to say that one should not exalt such humans for their good works, but rather praise and give glory to God who is the author and sanctifier of these people and their good works.

I think this is enough for you all to digest this month, I will continue with this sort-of Lutheran primer in my next article(s).

In Christ,
Pastor Jon

CONGREGATION COUNCIL



Our October meeting was held on October 15, 2024

In attendance: Pastor Jon Nelson, Julie Meeks, Nancy Egloff, Paul Reier, J.R. Lyons, Sandy Croushore, Brandon Cave, Beth Grant, Terri Larsen, Bill Dichtel, Alison Carney, and Nancy Carter (Technology committee)

- HVAC replacement project team is waiting on equipment availability/delivery in the coming months, with project to begin subsequently.
- Council is working on staffing needs, developing a position description, and making a recommendation in coming months.
- Property committee is reviewing automatic door opener estimates and making a recommendation.
- Council supports adding a live stream of the 11:00 worship service to St. Stephen's social media, requiring volunteers who will be trained on the sound board.
- Finance anticipates having the first budget draft to Council this week. Council and the Finance committee will continue to refine the budget to attain a final recommendation for a January congregational vote.
- Council supports Pastor Jon's time in pre-marital counseling of couples.
- St. Stephen Preschool is applying for several grants.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for November 10.

Alison Carney, Secretary, Congregation Council



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

STEWARDSHIP: BECAUSE OF GOD'S GREAT MERCY

At our Sunday services we have been sharing the many and various ways that St. Stephen stewards the resources of our members and guests share with us.

You may be receiving a letter from the Stewardship Committee along with an Estimate of Giving Card. We ask that you prayerfully consider how you might support St. Stephen's mission and ministry in 2025. Please fill out your Estimate of Giving Card and return it to church in the next two weeks. You can place it in the offering plate on Sunday or mail it back to us. Be sure to indicate if you would like any of your giving to be directed to the Building Fund. We use your Estimate of Giving Cards in planning our upcoming budget and we appreciate your response a great deal!

We have some exciting near-term and long-term plans and celebrations that we hope you will join us in supporting. We are tackling important infrastructure needs like a new HVAC system and an ADA compliant front door. We are exploring new possibilities around staffing our program. Our Preschool ministry will be celebrating its 60th year of operation in the 2025/26 school year. And the church's 70th Anniversary is right around the corner as well, in 2026.

We are able to plan all of this because of your support and Because of God's Great Mercy!

Pastor Jon





STEWARDSHIP ESSENTIALS

November's stewardship focus is the shelter and homeless ministries. In our congregation, these consist of our support to the Motel Ministry, the Greater Williamsburg Outreach Ministry, the Crockpot Ministry and the Community of Faith Mission ministry. On Sunday, November 10, Betsy Liljeberg from the Synod World Hunger Team will be with us to talk about hunger ministries.

The Motel Ministry consists of a monthly meal furnished to long term motel residents. At present we prepare a meal for the Zuma and Howard Johnson motels. We often add breakfast items, seasonal treats and microwave meals to this. The motels give us the number of adults and children in each room. Yes, entire families – usually working families, sometimes including pets, are living in a motel room due to the lack of affordable housing in our community. We rotate with other congregations through the From His Hands organization. Each congregation furnishes a meal once or twice in a month. **Randy Punchard** coordinates this ministry.

The Community of Faith Mission sets up moving homeless shelters in various locations from November through March. On our week we help provide meals and volunteers for homeless people who are housed in another church. We are partnering with Williamsburg United Methodist Church, February 17-23. St. Stephen will staff and feed two nights and mornings of that week. We also help with holiday weeks when the organization rents motel rooms for the homeless. One can volunteer to help during our week or ongoing with the Community of Faith organization. For example, I volunteered a few times to do computer job searches with the shelter residents – a very easy donation of an hour of time. **Jim Ivey** co-coordinates this ministry along with **Jeanne Garrison**.

The Crockpot Ministry supplies ingredients for crockpot meals for needy residents. **Jane Gingrich** and **Susan Neidlinger** coordinate.

Although we live in a rather affluent community, there is still much need and homelessness in our local area. A medical bill, a family disaster or other circumstances force many people out of their homes. We can and should try to ease their plight. Jesus fed the hungry and we can follow His example.

Susan Williamson



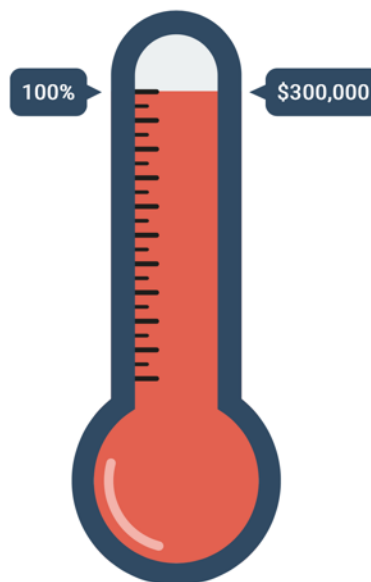
HEATING VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM (HVAC)

HVAC PROJECT PLEDGE DRIVE UPDATE

To date we have received \$300,000 (100%) in pledges or other contributions toward the goal of \$300,000.

Karen Nester, Financial Secretary

GOAL: \$300,000



thank you

WILLIAMSBURG AREA MEALS ON WHEELS

Today, because of you, our neighbors in need in Williamsburg, James City County and the Bruton District of York can continue to age in their homes, living independently and with dignity without currently having to be put on a wait list. Your gift will help us to continue to carry out our mission to prepare and deliver meals to individuals who for a physical, psychological, or for economic reasons are unable to provide nutritious meals for themselves.

Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels continues to serve as an invaluable resource to residents in our community. Your generosity ensures they receive a hot, nutritious meal each weekday afternoon and just as importantly, a visit and a smile with the support from a friendly volunteer who checks on them.

We deeply appreciate your gift of \$3,500 for the Summer Kids Program. With rising food and gas prices, I am humbled and grateful for the outpour of donations to eliminate a waiting list to food our neighbors in need. I thank you for supporting your community and the Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels. Together, we can work to bring food and human connection to our neighbors who are living with hunger in silence.

Catherine Upton, Executive Director



On behalf of Olde Towne Medical & Dental Center and the patients we serve, I would like to thank you for your contribution of \$1,500 to support our mission. We appreciate your trust in our mission and in our services.

For the past 30 years, Olde Towne has provided quality medical and dental care to more than 10,000 citizens

living and working in the greater Williamsburg area. Together, with your support, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of the children and adults we serve with limited means to access quality healthcare. We at Olde Towne serve to meet that need.

Our mission remains steadfast: "To assure access to quality health and wellness care to the residents and workforce of the greater Williamsburg community." We turn no one away. We see your gift as a truly vital component to our continued success of serving our community. Your gift is the gift of health.

Your support is deeply appreciated. May I take this opportunity to simply say, "Thank you."

Aaron L. Thompson, MBA, CRHCP, CMR, Executive Director



The Williamsburg Volunteer Fire Department would like to thank you for your donation of \$100. Without your generosity, we would not be able to provide the high-quality services necessary for the citizens of Williamsburg.

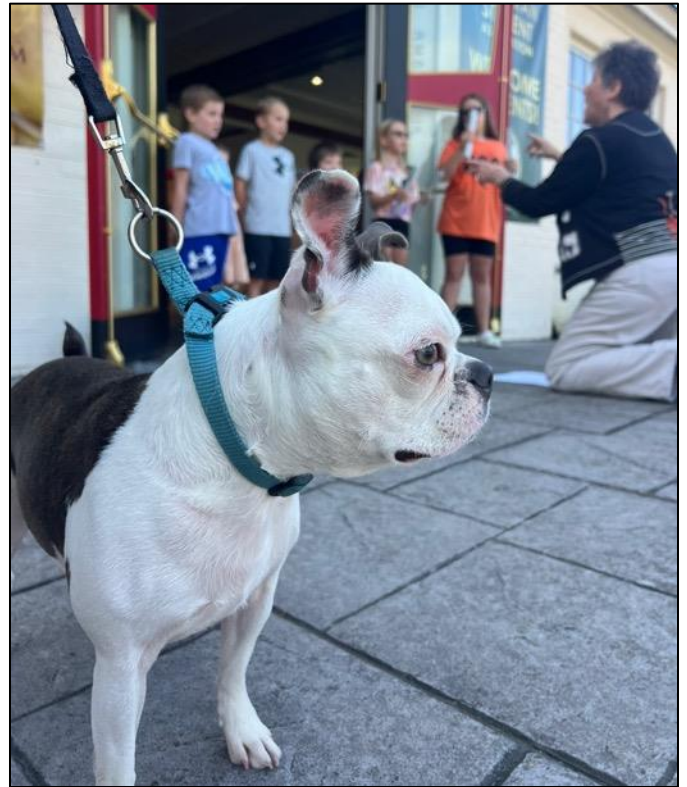
Williamsburg Volunteer Fire Department





MUSIC NOTES

Blessing of the Animals Service, October 3



Listening intently to our Children's Choir



Singing the Gathering Songs



Passing the Peace with a furry friend

Karen Ives, Music Director



ST. STEPHEN WOMEN'S RETREAT

The St. Stephen Women's Retreat, "Walking the Spiritual Journey," was a beautiful and uplifting gathering on September 27 and 28. Friday evening festivities included social time, pizza and salad, and song. Saturday's program featured a spiritual focus, with the main sessions led by **Christina Nelson**. We also had two breakout groups and a hands-on outreach project.

Christina walked us through the steps in the spiritual development process, connected us with the teachings of historical and contemporary spiritual leaders, taught us spiritual practices, and shared personal experiences, stories, and resources. Participants were able to explore ways to become more intentional in their spiritual growth.

"Relevant and encouraging. Also a challenge as God invites me to find my purpose."

"Interesting and thought provoking."

"Just what I needed. . . Your presentations exceptionally conveyed the information."

Janice Mayfield led spiritual yoga groups in the gathering space, which were popular and appreciated.

"Nice stretching/movement to break up the day."

"Felt very good! Loved [the] pace."

"More exercise experienced in a chair [than] I ever imagined."

Kristen Berkey-Abbott, who was slated to lead breakout groups on spiritual journaling and to preach during Sunday worship, was unfortunately unable to travel from Asheville, NC, because of Hurricane Helene. Thankfully, she is safe. **Ina Berkey** stepped up and filled Kristen's times on Saturday's agenda, leading hymnody, teaching small groups the history of selected hymns, and accompanying them in song.

"Learned so much new info on hymnals and loved singing!"

"I love to sing and Ina is so talented and wise."

"Great job. . . interesting information."

Pam Buckley led our "School Kits for Lutheran World Relief" outreach project, which resulted in 90 completed kits! Generous church members and retreat participants donated school supplies and cash, and a Thrivent grant helped purchase school backpacks, notebooks, pencils, erasers, pens, scissors, crayons, etc. Participants assembled

the school kits throughout the retreat, and **Pastor Jon Nelson** blessed the kits Sunday morning and prayed for those who would receive them.

"A joy knowing the kits will go to the children in need."

"Loved to take part in purchasing supplies and putting the kits together."

"Excellent project."

The retreat closed with contemplative worship, incorporating several different spiritual practices. This women's retreat provided a much-appreciated opportunity for connection and community. It was a gift to have dedicated time together, sharing meals, listening, learning, serving, laughing, singing, and worshipping. Much gratitude to the planning committee and all those who participated in making the retreat a meaningful experience. Special thanks to **Ina Berkey, Christina Nelson, Pam Buckley, Terri Larsen, Hollie Jones, Karen Ives, and Alison Carney**.



Ina Berkey our emcee



Pam Buckley master decorator



All attendees received prayer cloths and handmade bracelets



Completed school kits for Lutheran World Relief

UPCOMING SHARED MINISTRY EVENTS FOR WOMEN

An All-Lutheran Women's Retreat is planned for **November 7-9, 2024** in Glen Allen, VA. The retreat leader will be Author Jacqueline Bussie. I will post a flyer for anyone interested.

Pam Buckley

ELCA FACT SURVEY

Our congregation has the unique opportunity to participate in a national study of worship attenders. The study is being conducted by Faith Communities Today (FACT), a research partner of the ELCA. Since 2000, FACT has conducted research that provides religious leaders of all traditions with critical information about the changing nature of congregational life and how to respond effectively. **Anyone 18 or older who is a regular participant at St. Stephen can complete the survey. It should take between 12 to 15 minutes.**

To take the survey, please click the link below:

https://covidreligionstudy.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9GYI89a3NMOwuFw?congregation=20164

Please complete the survey by **Friday, Nov. 22**. If you are interested in learning more about this study, please visit: <https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/attender-survey/>

VOLUNTEERS FOR FISH, INC.



November is the month St. Stephen volunteers at FISH. Once again, they have asked us to size clothing. The dates are each **Tuesday, Nov. 5, 12, 19, and 26, from 10:00 am to Noon**. We need four persons each Tuesday. Thank you for signing up on the poster in the Gathering Space.



MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- **November 5** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** of this month.
- **November 7** – 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 preschool has had a VERY full couple of months. In September we had our first Spirit Night at Shoofly Dairy Bar and raised \$286 for the preschool scholarship fund! Our families and students had a great time mingling and connecting for a good cause. Thank you to every one of you who showed up. We have been able to help seven families with eight students this year, which is such a blessing. Many families have come upon hard times and this community continues to step up in support of them each year – we are full of gratitude! Please stay tuned for more opportunities to support our fundraising effort for the scholarship fund or reach out to Jessica Kimball directly if you'd like to make a donation.



We visited Holly Fork Farm for our annual pumpkin patch field trip and it was a blast! The students learned about animal adaptations, picked pumpkins, explored the farm via a tractor ride, and got to play in the corn pit and tire playground.

The Williamsburg Fire Department came out to visit us during Fire Prevention Week. Captain Andy and his team were just wonderful; teaching the students how to stay safe if there is smoke in the house, talking about the plan their family should have in place, allowing them to touch and see the fireman's safety gear up close, getting on the fire truck, and ending the visit with a surprise guest, Sparky the fire dog!

Pastor Jon, Mr. Anthony from the Early Childhood Music School, and Mr. Chris from Williamsburg Regional Library continue to be our regular visitors that make our days extra special and fun.

Jessica Kimball, Preschool Director



STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



"Fellowship means among other things that we are ready to receive of Christ from others. Other believers minister Christ to me, and I am ready to receive." – Watchman Nee

When was the last time you engaged in true fellowship? I don't mean just showing up for a social group. I mean fellowship as defined by Chinese preacher Watchman Nee. When was the last time you joined where people gathered ready to witness and receive Christ in each other? When was the last time you felt safe to be your full authentic self in a group? When was the last time you took off the mask of perfection and allowed someone to hold you in prayer and love through your deepest sin and sorrows?

Perhaps for some of you, you can think of a recent example. For many of us though, the answer is probably not for a long time. Maybe some of us have never felt this sense of true fellowship. We are not alone. Our country is starving for connection. In May 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released an advisory on the healing effects of social connection and community. He called this document "Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation." Our lack of authentic community, relationships and sense of fellowship has such catastrophic effects on our physical and mental health that the Surgeon General calls it an epidemic. You can find the 80-page pdf here:

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>.

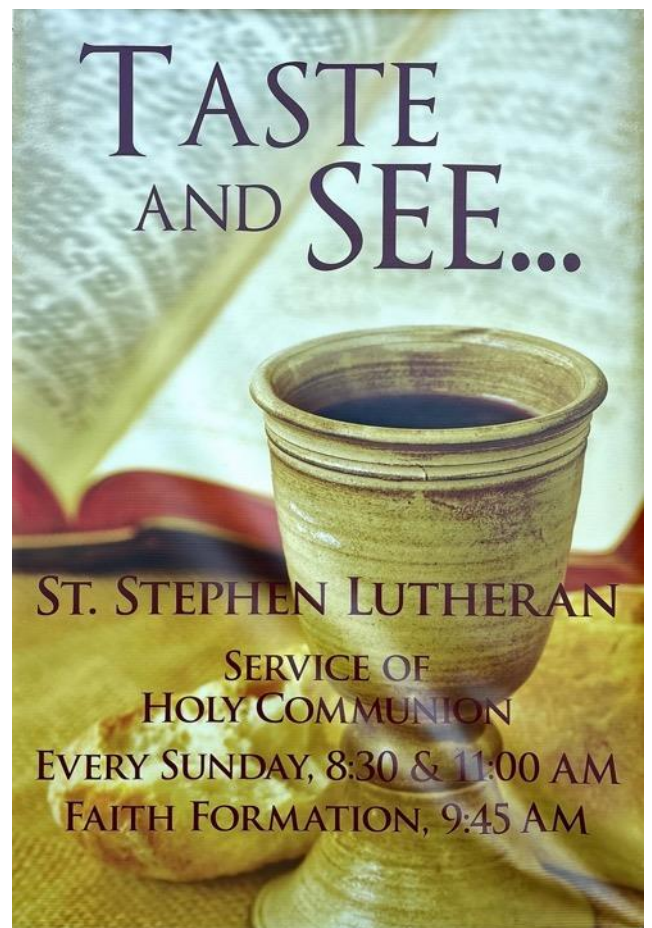
I highly recommend it. This is why Pastor Jon is increasing our opportunities for fellowship and community at St. Stephen. It's a primary objective for his ministry this year.

What does this have to do with Stephen Ministry? A lot, actually. I have witnessed powerful moments of fellowship at St. Stephen this past year. I am not discounting that. I have also witnessed many of our beloved siblings in Christ continue to turn inward and isolate in response to the crisis, suffering and stresses of life. The time when people need others to lift them up the most, they turn away. There is something holding them back. The reason we are rebuilding fellowship and

authentic community is to have a safe space to turn to when we are in need. We need fellowship at St. Stephen in order to hold and lift each other up. I worry that too many of us have lost that sense of connection to each other. I worry that our fears of judgment, shame and becoming burdensome keep us from seeking love and compassion from each other. This road of loneliness and isolation is how we go from a caring community to a group of hurt people that hurt people.

Beloveds, I don't want that for us! I want us to be the beautiful church community that accepts each other as they are and supports one another in our real, messy lives. I know you still want that too. Beloveds, the work starts with you. If someone reaches out to you in their pain, be a safe, listening ear. Offer love, compassion and care. If you are in pain, I pray you find the courage to tell someone. We say it every month. We Stephen Ministers want to be there for you. We want to walk with you. We want to love the authentic you.

Christina Nelson, Stephen Minister



KITCHEN KEEPERS



Over the years there has been a group of mostly ladies who have serviced behind the scenes, keeping the kitchen clean, organized and stocked with supplies for all the church groups.

Our kitchen is used to feed hungry college students, to feed the homeless in the rotating winter shelter, to feed those living in motels, and to feed those in the congregation throughout the year as we celebrate and mourn together in community. While each of these groups certainly cleans up after they have used the kitchen, things still need a thorough cleaning periodically just like at home. We clean out and wipe down in the refrigerator, freezer and oven. We give the coffee makers in the Gathering Space and Library a wipe down as well. We organize the drawers and cabinets, and make the shopping list of needed supplies for the Costco run.

We are going to try having regular cleaning days on the first Tuesday and the third Thursday of the month at 2:30 pm. Anyone who is available to help would be welcome. We are hoping that having a regular day and time will make putting it on your calendar easier. The list of cleaning tasks and a list of supplies will be posted on the kitchen bulletin board.

Our first cleaning day will be **Tuesday November 5 at 2:30 pm**. Questions? Call **Chris PUNCHARD** 757-880-3347, or email christinepunchard@gmail.com



NOVEMBER

4	Erika Geier Soni York	Stephanie Judy
8	Paul Black	Sammi Crittenden
9	Joyce Beene	
10	Helen Allen	Martin Bleck
11	Steven Harms	
16	Linda Reuben Carol Wiers	
17	Debi Austin	
23	Marcie Clark	
24	Stephanie Leek	Karen Nester
25	Marilyn Asprey Susan Voigt	Benjamin Berry
26	Diana Krieger	
29	Ursula Recktenwald	
30	Bob Hanny	





NOVEMBER BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES



PRAYERS

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

- 1 Barbara Morris
- 10 Carolyn McKenna
- 11 Hannah Wiers
- 16 Ilianna Ogborn Hunter Ogborn
- 22 Jim Weilmuenster
- 30 Julian Jefferson

Others who were baptized in November:
Audrey Root

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

Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for Karen Bailey, Ed Brown, Kristin Carter, Marcie Clark, Bob Cummings, Jack Harris, Sharon Jacobs, Jim Mayfield, Carole Meyer and Helen Nelsen.

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, George Vonderheide and Kay Wasaff.

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Charles Baugh, Donald and Carol Baum, Eleftheria Beck, Sally Blackburn, June Brantley, Sharon Brown, Linda Bonfiglio, Mary Bloom, Amy Carl, Karin Cavanaugh, Amaree Cluff, Ruth Ann Coski, Judy Craun, Judy Drezek, Becky Drury, Darrin and Rosemary Dunn, David Gade, Joel Gillespie, Greg Gildner, Joan and John Goodhart, Sue Hassan and family, Andy Havola, Nick Havola, Bradley Kim Joan and Laurie Heintzeman, Char Henry, Lisa Hill, Jaxon Ireland, Claudia Jacobik, Brian Johnson, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, The Kennedy family, Chantal Lacroix, 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, Silvana Oderisi, Coral Pumley, Kurt Recktenwald, Kurtis Schultz, Lou Schuster, Inge Seiter, Chad Strausbaugh, Charley Underdahl, Brenda Webster, Caleb Winig and Elaine Wrich.



FAITHFUL + BOLD + SERVING

Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



**St. Stephen Lutheran Church
612 Jamestown Road
Williamsburg, VA 23185**

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<i>Treasurer</i>	Brian Agor	757-561-5889
<i>Financial Secretary</i>	Karen Nester	757-869-2949
	email	Finsec@
<i>Congregational Secretary</i>	Alison Carney	703-819-6607

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	email	Pastorjn@
<i>Parish Administrator</i>	Hollie Jones	Office@
<i>Director of Music</i>	Karen Ives	MusicDir@
<i>Preschool Director</i>	Jessica Kimball	Preschool@

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Sandy Croushore	757-476-5789
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The Quill is published monthly by
 St. Stephen Lutheran Church
 612 Jamestown Road
 Williamsburg, VA 23185

Editor: Reed Nester
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Article deadline: Fifteenth of the month.