



The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

December 2019



FINDING CHRISTMAS

What does Christmas look like? We envision nicely browned turkeys on the tables, and gravy with no lumps. Our family will be sitting around the dinner table, light-hearted and laughing. Our presents will be neatly wrapped under a tree speckled with evenly spaced ornaments. We dream of a peaceful Christmas, of drinking hot chocolate in front of the fire, and of holding hands while standing around the tree singing Christmas carols.

Our reality can be different. We find heavy traffic and self-absorbed drivers, crowds that suck the breath out of our lungs, and children whose Christmas lists are longer than our pocketbook is deep. We are reminded that we aren't speaking to "those people" who live next door. And as for sitting around the dinner table laughing, someone once wrote, "The worst part of Christmas is dinner with the family, when you realize how truly mutated and crippled is the gene stock from which you sprang." There is so much expected of us at this time of year. Christmas can be so draining!

Christmas can drain not just our energy, but our bank accounts. It's been said that "Christmas begins about the first of December with an office party and ends when you finally realize what you spent, around April fifteenth of the next year...."

The Christmas we dream of and the Christmas we get are not always the same. If we are lucky, we've had Christmases full of the smell of fresh cut pine trees and warm pecan pies. We remember wading through piles of torn up wrapping paper that covered the floors. We

see again Aunt Sue and Uncle Joe kissing under the mistletoe. For some of us, though, Christmas brings with it dreams of what could have been, or should be. It brings with it the realities of Christmases we'd soon forget – that year without a job, and the gifts that weren't under the tree. Or maybe this Christmas reminds us that there will be an empty chair at the table.

The birth of Christ is for those of us who long for what was, or what could be, for those who hope for the best. What happens at Christmas is more than what we could hope for because anything that we could possibly hope for would be a human thing. If we were to choose our Savior, we would have someone who would crush our enemies and rule with unbeatable power. We would crown him king with gold and jewels, put him in a palace to sleep in silk sheets and cashmere blankets. It is into this, our fleshy mess, our distorted values, and our sinfulness, that God chooses to come as a baby.

God, in God's wisdom, did not leave the choice of a savior up to us. What happens at Christmas is a God thing. No longer can we view God as an all-powerful force that remains up in the heavens, distant from us. The gift of Christmas is God in the form of a baby. Emmanuel, God with us. In these frazzled and holy days of preparation, take moments to breathe in the Holy Spirit. Where you find love, kindness, justice and forgiveness, you have found Christ.

Pastor Cheryl Ann Griffin

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP



Behold Our Light for Advent

Our Advent theme is Preparing in Christ's Presence. Our Worship and Music Committee members have chosen a beautiful liturgy, *Behold Our Light*, by Aaron David Miller, for our worship on Advent Wednesday evenings. This is the same liturgy we used last Advent.

This liturgy includes sections that will be used in the Sunday morning liturgy during Advent as well. This will provide a nice link between our morning and evening worship during this season of preparation and anticipation leading up to Christmas.

We will gather at **7:00 PM** on these **Wednesdays** in Advent:

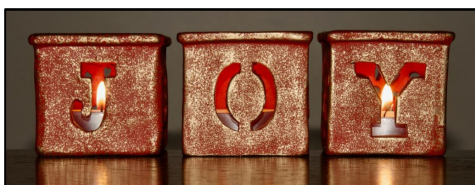
December 4	Make Time for God
December 11	Experience Wonder
December 18	Hold on to Hope



Christmas Caroling to Homebound Folks

Here's a chance to visit, to bring the presence of our congregation, and to sing! (Even if you don't think you sing well, those we visit will be cheered by your presence.)

- We'll gather at **4:00 PM** on **Sunday, December 15** in the Fellowship Hall.
- We'll return by **6:00 PM** to share a meal together. Bring a pot of chili and/or cornbread to share.



Christmas Eve (all services with candle light and Holy Communion) – **Bring bells for the Gloria!**

- 5:00 PM:** **Worship** featuring the children and youth of our congregation and Preschool
- 7:15 PM:** Handbells in the Gathering Space
- 7:30 PM:** **Worship** featuring sermon and choir
- 9:45 PM:** Handbells in the Gathering Space
- 10:00 PM:** Worship featuring sermon and choir

Christmas Day worship will be at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, at **10:00 AM**



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.



Jean Gulesian – new email

Karen West – new phone

Barbara Morris

Contact the Church Office for new contact information.

GIVING OPTION - REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION

As we are approaching the end of 2019, the decision was made by the Finance Committee to use the date of **Sunday, December 29, 2019** as the last day to receive donations to St. Stephen for 2019.



If you are over 70½ and have an IRA, you are required to take a yearly Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) which is treated for tax purposes as regular income. You have the option of contributing part or all of your RMD to any tax exempt organization. This contribution is called a QCD or Qualified Charitable Distribution and must go directly from the financial institution that holds your IRA to the charity. It counts as your RMD, you do not count it as regular income, but you cannot claim the donation as a charitable contribution.

In the past during the last quarter of the year, many IRA donations have been given to St. Stephen. Please ask your financial advisor to prepare the paperwork indicating your name on the check or check stub, reference QCD or IRA, designate 2019 or 2020, and forward your contribution to the church office **no later than the second week in December**.

If you give a QCD to St. Stephen, you can earmark the donation for Current Giving, the Building Fund, Endowment Fund or any special ministry that is important to you; such as, Godparents for Tanzania, Homeless Ministry, Campus Ministry, Preschool, etc.

If you have questions, please contact **Linda Vonderheide** or **Jane deSolms**.

MONETARY GIFTS TO CHURCH STAFF: TAXABLE OR TAX-FREE?



On occasion, church members chose to give monetary or noncash gifts to their pastors or other church staff. It's important to consider the tax implications of these heart-felt gestures – not all gifts to pastors or other church employees are tax-free. Depending on the process used to collect and distribute

the fund the recipient may need to report these gifts to the IRS as taxable income. In general, the more the church helps to organize the gift – and the bigger the gift – the more likely it is to be taxable.

How the Gift was Given Matters.

Gift collections done by congregation leaders, including cash, checks, or gift cards, also may be ruled as taxable compensation. The amount must be included in Box 1 of the Form W-2 and on Form 1040. Based on this IRS ruling, the Congregation Council will not be collecting a Christmas gift for the staff.

If you, as a member of the congregation, present a gift directly to the pastor or staff member, such as a gift card, prepaid debit card, or personal check, then the amount may be considered non-taxable.

Rules to Remember

- The pastor and church could be held liable in an audit for incorrect reporting of taxable income.
- These rules apply to all church employees, not just pastors.

For additional information, check the following:

<https://www.ministryworks.com/resources/articles/pa-yrroll-and-tax-filing-resources/cash-gifts-to-ministry-staff-could-be-wrapped-up-in-reporting-requirements/>

David Wills, President, Congregation Council

YEAR-END GIVING



As you're contemplating your year-end 2019 giving to our congregation, the Finance Committee has set **Sunday morning December 29** as the last day for receiving contributions that will be credited on the 2019 giving statement. Gifts that come in after December 29 will be credited to 2020. This includes cash, personal checks, checks from financial institutions, and stock. If you are doing an IRA for 2019, please ask your financial adviser to mail the check no later than the second week in December. If you have questions, please contact **Linda Vonderheide** (gandl525@cox.net or 757-645-4059).

STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



“Christ caring • for people • through people”

One (of many) reasons that talking about Stephen Ministry is important

You may have noticed that The Quill and our Sunday bulletin routinely include brief announcements and longer articles about Stephen Ministry. For several months after coming to St. Stephen I read them – but did not prayerfully consider what I read. So I was not truly mindful about Stephen Ministry until I heard dear friends mention Stephen Ministry, talking about how the ministry works in our congregation. I asked questions and learned more from them, finding that this ministry serves all of us.

How grateful I am for these friends! Their sharing about Stephen Ministry made it relatable.

My steps into Stephen Ministry

I am a new Lutheran. Though a life-long believer and church-goer, I am not well-versed in scripture. Yet I felt drawn to the Stephen Ministry purpose of faithfully serving others through presence, prayer, listening and Christian caring.

Starting with what I learned from my friends, I began to read more about this ministry (I also felt some Holy nudges). Later I talked with one of our Stephen Leaders, and after prayerful consideration I committed to the training.

When I joined my Stephen Ministry training team, I was one of 14 representatives from four Williamsburg area congregations (St. Stephen Lutheran, King of Glory Lutheran, Williamsburg United Methodist and Williamsburg Community Chapel). During training we met weekly as brothers and sisters in Christ; we learned together from gifted Stephen Ministry instructors, as well as from occasional guest speakers and other subject matter experts.

The instructors and guest speakers earned our trust and respect – their faith, wisdom, humility, experiences and perspectives resonate with me to this day. They

provided us with thorough training materials, instruction, and prayerful leadership and support, all with an emphasis on confidentiality and compassionate, faithful service. On the training team, we faced doubts and challenges together, shared stories and laughter, prayed together and for one another, brought food for each other, connected with prayer partners, read chapters between training sessions and discussed many case studies. We became a community.

Upon completing our training we were blessed to become new Stephen Ministers, each one of us equipped to be a confidential caregiver and ready to be matched with a care receiver.

Who is a care receiver?

Stephen Ministers serve care receivers – those going through troubling times. **All of us** face life challenges; each one of us experiences these in our own unique way, needing varying degrees of support. I am thankful St. Stephen is committed to Stephen Ministry so those of us needing it can receive prayerful, compassionate, caring support; through this ministry we each have access to a trained, caring Christian who listens, prays, supports and encourages.

Who is a care receiver? It could be you.

Maybe you are going through a dark period of loneliness or discouragement; have lost a loved one; face separation/divorce; are experiencing a career crisis or job loss; suffer miscarriage or experience infertility; suffer chronic or terminal illness, or are hospitalized; struggle as a parent of a child or teen, or as a caregiver for an elder, or are in the midst of a spiritual crisis. Perhaps you are losing hope after an accident or tragedy, or seek a new normal after a birth, a relocation or other life change.

A Stephen Minister walks with you – the care receiver – through these and other life difficulties; as a caring Christian, that Stephen Minister is there for you. Moreover, it is God who heals you, gives you strength and courage, lifts you up and enfolds you in the everlasting light of Christ.

Some relationship features to consider

In Stephen Ministry caring relationships, a male care receiver is matched with a male caregiver. A female

care receiver is matched with a female caregiver. Both the identity of those receiving care and what takes place in each caring relationship remain private. A caring relationship may last months, a year and sometimes longer, coming to a close when mutually determined by caregiver and care receiver.

How to become – or receive care from – a Stephen Minister

Whether you may be interested in how to become – or receive care from – a Stephen Minister, or simply want to learn more, reach out to Stephen Leaders **Bill Dichtel** or **Jane Wills**, or **Pastor Cheryl Ann Griffin**. In addition, ask any of our Stephen Ministers and we will help you learn more about this important ministry.

Alison Carney, Stephen Minister

*“So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you.
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

Isaiah 41:10

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2

CONGREGATION COUNCIL



The Congregation Council met on November 12. Present at the meeting were **Pastor**

Griffin, Bob Achenbach, David Allen, Amy Bergh, Ellie Bergh, Sandy Croushore, Dave Gamble, Jeanne Garrison, Corey Knestrick, Linda Hite, Carol Wiers and David Wills. The following items were discussed and/or approved:

- As St. Stephen moves towards selecting a new pastor, the Council approved a list of candidates to serve on the MSP (Ministry Site Profile) and Call committees. The MSP committee (**Ina Berkey, Jane deSolms, Keith Egloff, Heidi Flatin, Sandy Peterkin and Sherry Phipps**) will define the position to be filled by the new pastor. The Call committee

will select the candidate that will best fill this position.

- A Public Affairs committee has been created in order to increase St. Stephen’s visibility in the community. Work has already begun on updating the website. Other venues such as Twitter, Facebook and local newspapers will be investigated as possible ways of sharing St. Stephen’s mission with our neighbors.
- The Council approved the proposal to increase the Music Director’s position to a full time position. The Council feels this is a better reflection of the duties of the position.
- Thank you to all who attended the Preschool’s costume pancake supper in October! The event raised \$600 for the Preschool, and this amount was matched by a congregation member. Be sure to watch for the next fundraising event, which will be held at Sal’s.
- Congratulations to **Ellie Bergh** and **Jeffery Berry!** Ellie has been chosen to serve on the planning committee for Winter Celebration and Jeffery will serve on the planning committee for the 7th Day retreat. These positions require a great deal of responsibility and dedication from the participants. The members of the Council are proud to have two young members of our congregation chosen to serve on these committees.

David Wills, President, Congregation Council



Philip Arnold

Frederich and Frances Holt
Birgit McCormick
Mirjam K. Tuovila
Karen West

William K. Holstein

Kurt and Jennie Holstein

ANDREW BALLENTINE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Keith and Nancy Egloff
Ralph and Marilyn Johnson
Evelyn Kernan



WOMEN'S RETREAT- SAVE THE DATE

What: St. Stephen 2020 Women's Retreat
Who: All St. Stephen Women
When: Saturday, March 14, 2020
Where: St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Why: Faith, fellowship, friendship, learning, laughing, worshipping, praying, singing, serving, sharing.

- Join your sisters in Christ – and bring a friend – for this one-day gathering being held at St. Stephen.
- Strengthen connections and continue conversations during a post-retreat social (also at St. Stephen) including snacks and beverages.
- Several choices of breakout activities/sessions

We are pleased to welcome our presenter, the Rev. Dr. Mary Williams Anderson, a Columbia, SC native and Lutheran pastor of 36 years. Pastor Anderson has a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching and loves to share God's Word in writings and sermons. She has been active in issues of racial reconciliation, homelessness and supporting public education. Dr. Anderson serves at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as Coordinator for Contextual Education. (Want to get to know Pastor Anderson prior to the retreat? Subscribe to her devotional blog, Ponder Anew: www.ponderanewpma.com)

Details for this one-day retreat will follow soon. Registration begins in January 2020.



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL



Thank you for your support of our Spirit Night at Sal's by Victor Italian Restaurant. We had a tremendous response from both Preschool parents and

Church members. Sal's was extremely generous with their gift to us for our evening spent with them.

Our teachers are so creative in engaging our students in projects and activities – please check out our Preschool's Facebook page. Pictures are regularly added to show how much activity there is in our Preschool.



We are excited to participate in the Reverse Advent Calendar with members of St. Stephen. Our parents are following the calendar and collecting food items for FISH. Each year, they are so generous in supporting this food bank in our community.

Our children will help Pastor Griffin tell the Christmas story for their parents on December 19 and 20. Music teacher Patty Ballentine taught the children songs and Art teacher Kelly Kirkpatrick designed some costuming. Nina Simone, a Preschool parent and faith educator, will speak with parents on how to help their children connect the activities of this season to faith. We will celebrate Christmas with a special luncheon buffet and birthday cake for the baby Jesus.

Thank you for supporting our school in so many ways. We often need items like baby wipes, yogurt cups, etc. and so many of you are generous with your gifts. Thank you for thinking of us!

Sandy Peterkin, Administrator



PROPOSED BUDGET CHANGES FOR 2020

The Finance Committee has started the budget process for 2020, and we want to make you aware of the proposed changes to be voted on in January at our annual Congregation Meeting. Please read through these changes carefully. Should you have questions, speak with Finance Chair **Russ White** or **Jane deSolms**. The Finance Committee and Congregation Council endeavor to ensure that our proposals meet our current needs, and also be sustainable in the future.

This new year will be one of many changes for which we need to plan. In order to accomplish this, some assumptions had to be made. First, the consensus from the workshop with Pastor John Wertz, our Virginia Synod Assistant to the Bishop, was that we call an additional pastor to St. Stephen. That process takes a while, but, hopefully, this will be completed sometime in 2020. For budget purposes, we are assuming that we will have a new pastor by July 2020. In order to calculate benefits, we need to make assumptions about this new pastor's age and family. We will assume that the new pastor is 35 years old with ten years experience and a family, and he/she will be here for half a year. Using the synod guidelines for compensation and the Board of Pensions calculations for benefits we have generated hypothetical numbers for this new pastor. Also, funding is needed for the call process, i.e. travel and other expenses for the candidate and the committee, potential moving expenses.

We will not be getting an interim pastor. Therefore, Pastor Griffin will be carrying the extra duties and responsibilities until a new pastor is hired. The council has approved and Pastor Griffin has received additional compensation (\$2000 per month) for the last five months of 2018. The personnel committee has proposed that she continue to receive this bonus compensation until we get a second pastor. In our 2020 scenario that would be for six months. As long as we have only one pastor, we will be utilizing supply pastors to help with the preaching load. Therefore, we will increase the budget for supply pastors in 2020.

In addition, since our music director, Karen Ives, has done such an outstanding job including adding a new handbell choir, participating in worship planning, organizing the choir sheet music, the Music & Worship committee recommended that our Music Director position be upgraded to full time (30 hours per week) which then increases our portion of medical benefits to 80% and pension contribution to 10%. The personnel committee has recommended compensation commensurate with this job description change.

Our Parish Administrator/Preschool Director has done a yeoman's job in building up and maintaining our outstanding preschool while continuing to have all the responsibilities involved with the administration of our congregation. Although volunteers have helped relieve some of those duties, the council felt it was critical to provide additional paid help to pick up some of the duties. They are proposing an office assistant position for ten hours a week at \$15 per hour, and have determined that whomever is hired should not be a member of our congregation.

Also determined in the workshop with Pastor Wertz is the critical need for St. Stephen to maintain its digital presence as well as its image in the community. The council feels that it is important to strengthen our marketing under the Evangelism umbrella. The council is establishing a volunteer committee to fulfill this need. To allow for any marketing needs to accomplish this, we have increased our budget for Evangelism. This additional funding will be partially supported by the preschool.

Finally, after at least 15 years, the finance committee feels that we no longer need to move money from the building fund to the operating account to help pay for the mortgage. This will allow us to build up a reserve in the building fund for non-budgeted property expenses; it may also allow us to pay down the principal on our mortgage periodically.

Jane deSolms, Finance Committee



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A passion for justice —and Jesus

A simple pot of rice and beans originally brought Eidas Rivas to Santuario Luterano, Waltham, Mass. Rivas, who is 34, made them at her mother's request for a potluck following evening worship. She hadn't planned on getting involved at Santuario; her intention was to "just come that Sunday and be done with it."

But it was the way the community embraced her three children—all with special needs—that kept Rivas coming back. Today she's deeply invested in the new ELCA congregation and so are her children, who serve as acolytes there.

For Rivas, belonging to Santuario is important because "we do a lot of social justice." This passion for service is a common thread among the congregation's young Latino membership, said Ángel Marrero, pastor and mission developer there.

Members lead a variety of outreach efforts, including a free food pantry, GED classes and more. Last fall, in the wake of Hurricane Maria, Rivas and two other young adults at Santuario organized a donation drive for Puerto Rican families whose lives were devastated by the disaster.

Rivas remembers the constant flow of people and donations and calling Marrero to announce that a 24-foot truck had arrived—full of canned food for the people on the island.

"I was expecting 10 boxes," Marrero said of the effort. "We filled two airplanes (of donations) out of this mission church!"

He said the event was a turning point in his ministry with Santuario. New young people had found the congregation through it and asked him: "What's keeping you all together?"

STORIES
OF FAITH
IN ACTION
2018 • 2019

Marrero answered,
"We do this
because of Jesus."

Now 78 people—and counting—are involved in Santuario's life and ministry, a reality that wouldn't be possible, Marrero said, without Mission Support.

Mission Support from the ELCA New England Synod and the ELCA churchwide organization fund Marrero's work with Santuario, which shares space and a partnership with First Lutheran Church of Waltham.

"The dollars you put in your offering ... is what allows me the freedom to work in Waltham [with the Latino community]," Marrero said. "Through the partnership with the larger church, it is possible to do ministry among them."





Thank you for your recent, and very kind, donation of \$1,000. We will use that money wisely in providing food, clothing, and household items for those families and individuals who come to us for assistance. It is comforting to know that we have the money to supplement our supply of food and clothing, as well as being able to support the other efforts in our community to feed the children in need with the nutritious food they so deserve, not only during the school year, but also during the summer months.

John Bunyan once said, "You have not lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."

Although our clients will not be able to repay you, they will feel your kindness. Through your generous donation you have made a real difference in many lives, and the Board of FISH wants to thank you for thinking of us and for helping us in our quest to help those who are in need. Thank you for being one of our caring supporters. We are truly blessed to have you in our Community.

Helen Scharfenberger, Representing the Board of FISH



On behalf of the Olde Towne Medical & Dental Center and the patients we serve, we would like to

thank you for your generous contribution of \$1,500 to support our mission.

Last year was a significant milestone for Olde Towne as we celebrated our 25th anniversary. Now in our twenty-six year, we have provided quality medical and dental care to more than 105,000 citizens living and working in the greater Williamsburg community.

Like you, we have seen many changes in our community and at Olde Towne. Our building has been renovated, the practice of medicine/dentistry has improved yet unfortunately more of our hard working

citizens are uninsured and/or underinsured. That is why, with your ongoing support, Olde Towne continues to provide the medical and dental services needed by our neighbors, yes our neighbors – your bank teller, carpenter, electrician, plumber, groundskeeper and so many more.

Our mission remains steadfast and will be for the years ahead, whether we care for a newborn or a senior citizen. No one coming through our doors will ever be turned away. Your gift is the key that will keep our doors open.

We can't begin to express the significance of your gift and the difference it will make to our patients. All of us at Olde Towne are thankful for your support and most importantly, our patients as you have given them the greatest gift of all – the gift of health.

William J. Mann, Jr., M.D., Executive Medical Director



I would like to personally thank you for partnering with Williamsburg House of Mercy this past fiscal year. Through your support, we were able to provide hundreds of services to families in need.

Your support of our mission allows us to minister to these needs and move toward our overall goal of a return to permanent housing and stability for all people. We are very grateful to you for this partnership that enables us to protect and support the dignity of all human life.

Shannon Woloszynowski, Executive Director,



Thank you for your recent endowment gift of \$1,000. Your faithful generosity makes a life-changing, life-saving difference. Thank you.

Endowment gifts are managed by the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust and make a real difference in the lives of others. Thanks to your generosity, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a church at work in the world, doing God's work with our hands, proclaiming Christ's redeeming love to all. I pray that you will find great joy in knowing what your gift makes possible in the lives of others.

As the ELCA, we do more together than we ever could do alone. We are a church that rolls up its sleeves and solves problems – doing God’s work in the world. Thank you for your support.

Annette C. Shoemaker, Executive Vice President, ELCA Foundation



Thank you for your generous gift of \$100. Your contribution makes it possible for Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg (HHSCW) to care for people at the end of life, comfort the bereaved, and empower others to do the same.

HHSCW does not charge a fee for our service to individuals and families, nor do we receive reimbursement from insurance, Medicare or Medicaid. Your gift directly supports the individuals, families, and communities we serve.

On behalf of the thousands of families who have been supported by HHSCW services and programs through the years, and those we will serve in the future, thank you again for your support of this important work. We just couldn’t do it without you.

Audrey B. Smith, Executive Director

Dear Reception Committee,

Thank you very much for preparing, presenting, and serving the wonderful refreshments at my husband's memorial service. Our friends and family are all in agreement that "it could not have been nicer." Many heartfelt thanks for your time and talents, and mostly your caring friendship.

Trudi Arnold

happy birthday

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 | Gisela Fashing | Peter Geier |
| 4 | Mitchell Stauffer | Sarah Toler |
| 6 | Chandler Reubush | Suzie Walker |
| 7 | Delaynie Wilkins | |
| 9 | Beatrice Ehrhardt | |
| 12 | Jean Gulesian | Barb Youngk |
| 13 | Birdie Burton | Marj Gottschalk-Trone |
| | Lori Harms | |
| 14 | Hannalore Herion | |
| 15 | Carla Javier | |
| 16 | Diane McCurry | |
| 20 | Kathryn Ogborn | Tom Peterkin |
| 21 | Casey Toler | Robert Voigt |
| 24 | Amy Bergh | Jan MacQueston |
| 27 | Karen Arledge | |
| 30 | Rosalie Frey | |



THE CHURCH MOUSE HEARS

. . . that Paul Reier was named James City Volunteer Rescue Squad Person of the Year for 2019.



Reverse Advent Calendar

With a "normal" **Advent calendar**, you open a door each day to see a picture, take out a chocolate or get some other prize. With a **reverse advent calendar**, you begin with an empty cardboard box. Every day for 24 days, you add one item. After 24 days, at the end of the Advent season, when the box is full, we will collect them and donate them to FISH, our local food pantry.

The Social Ministries Coordinating Committee at St. Stephen is asking church members to join with our Preschool families to promote this easy way of giving to the community.

Not only is this a fun thing for the whole family to do together – picking the items to go into the box – more meaningfully, it teaches children (and adults) the importance of helping others, especially at Christmas time.

We will collect items in the Preschool and in the Gathering Space. Together we can make a huge impact on our local food pantry.

A copy of the Reverse Advent Calendar is attached. Please contact Sandy Peterkin (229-6688) if you have any questions.

Reverse Advent Calendar

DECEMBER 2019						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Box of Cereal	2 Peanut Butter (plastic)	3 Stuffins mix	4 Instant Potatoes	5 Boxed Macaroni + Cheese	6 Canned Fruit	7 Canned Tomatoes
8 Canned Tuna	9 Dessert mix (Jello, brownie)	10 Applesauce (plastic)	11 Canned Sweet Potatoes	12 Canned Cranberry Sauce	13 Canned Beans	14 Box of Crackers
15 Rice	16 Oatmeal	17 Pasta	18 Spaghetti Sauce (leaner plastic)	19 Chicken Noodle Soup	20 Tomato Soup	21 Canned Corn
22 Canned Mixed Vegetables	23 Canned Carrots	24 Canned Green Beans	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



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 Cheryl Ann Griffin

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 3 | Soni York | |
| 6 | Klara Cave | |
| 10 | Sandy Brust | |
| 11 | Linda Laity Hite | Linda Vonderheide |
| 16 | Billy Miller | |
| 17 | Pam Groman | Kara Meermans |
| 19 | Chuck Frey | |
| 26 | Ursula Recktenwald | |
| 27 | Terry Hughes | |
| 28 | Sonja Cave | |
| 29 | Jayme Lawson | |

Others who were baptized in December:

Erika Geier

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

PRAYERS



God has blessed Martin Bleck with 90 years of life; **Jo Schumacher** with 98 years of life; and **Don Nelson** with 94 years of life! Remember them by sending a card!

Pray God's blessings on Pastor Jennifer Tillman and the people of Apostle's Lutheran Church in Gloucester as they begin ministry together!

Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for **Brian Agor, Joe Beene, Jack Behlendorf, Leonard Bosworth, Ward Bourn, Kristin Carter, Art Dorsey, Jeanne Garrison, Joel Gillespie, Dianne Harris, Lynn Knestrick, Reed Nester, Sarah Phillips, Randy Punchard, Paul Reier, Linda Reuben, Laura Spencer, and Mitchell Stauffer.**

Pray God's blessings on **Sara Harms** and **Ray Beatty** and **Christina** and **David Johnson** as they wait for the birth of their babies. Christina is the teachers' aide in our Preschool.

Pray God's blessings on those in our community who **have no permanent home** and on those serving through the Community of Faith Mission.

Pray for those unable to come to worship: Doris Bass, Martin Bleck, Preston and Birdie Burton, Gene and Martha Clements, Bob and Angie Groom, Mary Jamerson, Billie Jo Purse, Dick Reeves, Jessie Schmitthenner, Jo Schumacher, Jean Shivel, Joanne Shue, Jerry Trone, Ladonna Wiederholt

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Gary Abrams, Brian Anchondo, Mary Ann Arnold, Jane Ayers, Gary Baumgarten, Rose Baumgarten, Laurie Berger, Eliza Bicknell, Tom and Bea Black, Blume family, Julie Boardman, Lou Byers, Jr., Terri Byers, Marla Canny, Elaine Cari, Rosemarie Cristofolo, Robin Daniel, Graham Darnell, Karen Deperini, Michael Dorsey, Will Draughton, Nancy Ely, NeYSa Ely, Inge Felbier, Mary Fitzgerald, Pinkie Ford, Betty Frazee, Steven Friend, Hollis Fulton, David Gamble, Jr., Robert Gay, Carole Gilman, Laurie Giner, Andrea Gonzalez, Bill Gottschalk, Edward & Barbara Granlund, Kara Gustafsson, Barbara Harvel, Nick Havola, Sharon Hegland, Emily Holdredge, Terry Holland, Will Hosey, Marian Hunt, Robin Jones, Thornton Kennedy, Fran Kibler, Chris Kinney, Art Kirk, John Knestrick, Rebecca Krueger, Torri Larson, Christopher Lee, Devin Lee, Mildred Lindblad, Jackie Lohr, Julia Lopac, Bill Macdonald, Patrick and Kristin McGraw, Brittney McQuaga, Al Meyer, Eric Nelson, Janet Overdorf, Mike Overdorf, Dino Polizois, Jenny Rice, Edith Roberts, RoseAnn Roberts, Shann Rufer, Marion Seidl, Inge Seiter, Patricia Simpson, James Smith, Sharon Smith, Evelyn Spear, Charley Underdahl, Tate Walker, Tim White, Nancy Wiers, John Wilson, Curtis Wikins, Donna Wood, and Aaron Zabell.

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Vice President	Amy Bergh	566-4557
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Parish Nurse	Diana Tiller-Dichtel	Parishnurse@
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