



The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

August 2023



HOME

Hopefully you all have had an enjoyable summer! If you're anything like me though, you're also looking forward to the resumption of routines that the start of school heralds. It's wonderful to travel and experience new things in the summer; it's great to enjoy sunny days and late nights too. But we find a good deal of comfort in our routines and in being home, don't we? There's something warm and safe feeling about being home.

I would imagine that is one of the most devastating parts of losing one's home – the loss of that sense of safety and security. According to the NIH "a homeless life may cause and perpetuate emotional problems...becoming homeless is a psychologically traumatic event that commonly is accompanied by symptoms of anxiety and depression, sleeplessness, and loss of appetite."¹

In my June newsletter article I asked you to be on the look-out for experiences of hospitality during your summer travels. I hope you were able to have those! I also asked you to look for opportunities in which you would be welcoming to others too. Now, as we look forward to the next months of routine and normalcy, I want to challenge you to think about welcome and hospitality on a larger scale.

Hearing Christ's call to the nations in Matthew 25 to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and welcome the stranger; how can we make these principles a larger part of our communities? How do we show welcome and hospitality to the person

experiencing homelessness? Do we care about welcoming the stranger in our midst? Is our society concerned with comforting the sick and imprisoned or would we prefer to overlook their pain? Are we content with addressing the symptoms of hunger and ignoring the root causes? I understand that these are tough questions, but they are questions that Christians are called to face and wrestle with.

I'm not going to pretend to have the answers to these difficult questions, though I wish I did! But I do feel that a part of my calling to ministry is to echo the words of the prophets and of Christ in raising these challenging questions. In our baptismal promises we agree to "care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace." So let's be about that important and holy work!

Revelation 21:3-4 states "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'"

We can look forward to that great time when we will have a perfect home of comfort and safety, warmth and love, for eternity with God. But in the meantime, Christ invites us to be working toward that vision in the here and now. As you go out into the world of routines and daily life I give you this Franciscan blessing:

¹ Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Health Care for Homeless People. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1988.

God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in the world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

In Christ,
Pastor Jon Nelson

CONGREGATION COUNCIL



The Congregation Council did not meet in July.

SECURITY UPGRADES



On July 27 we completed the installation of the new security upgrades that were implemented in the security plan that the SSLC Congregation Council adopted in 2020. We are having cameras placed above all outdoor entrances and **we have moved from a key-code door system to a key-fob door system for the Office and Preschool doors.** We have plenty of key-fobs available!

Please contact the church office if you would like a key-fob. However, please be aware that your key-fob will be associated with your name and the church office will have access to a log of which key fobs are used when. This also means that the key-fobs can be managed remotely (if you lose your key-fob we can deactivate it).



An Update from Rehema, Godparents for Tanzania Student

St. Stephen Social Ministries Coordinating Committee received a recent update on Rehema, the Godparents for Tanzania student we support, from Kristin Westermann, Executive Director of G4TZ. Kristin saw Rehema in mid-June and reports that our student is doing very well! She is in the second semester of her second year at St. Augustine University of Tanzania in Mwanza, a Roman Catholic university and one of the best in Tanzania. Rehema is studying to teach secondary school history and Swahili and is hoping to return to her old school, Vunjo Secondary, a Lutheran boarding school in Kilimanjaro, to do her student teaching in the fall. Rehema loves school and her GPA is solid evidence – a 3.5 out of 4.0.

Rehema is taking education, Swahili and history courses and says that she has enjoyed learning the history of her tribe, the Iraqw, one of 120 tribes in Tanzania (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqw_people). Kristin reports, “it has been a joy to watch Rehema grow into a confident and caring young woman.” Rehema also participates in the college’s Environmental Club and plays netball, her favorite sport (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netball>). Rehema will graduate with her Bachelor’s degree in November 2024 and hopes to be employed soon after graduation.

In a separate letter, Rehema wrote to St. Stephen: “I greet you in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, hope that you are fine . . . [The] aim of this letter is to thank you for your support since I started my studies until now . . . I have nothing to pay you for what you have done [for] me but our Lord in heaven bless you and give you more than what you have . . . Please pass my greeting to families of St. Stephen. I love you all and stay blessed. Your faithful Rehema.”

Look for Rehema’s photos on the monitors in the Gathering Space soon!

Nancy Egloff
Social Ministries Coordinating Committee



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

IT'S SUMER CAMP TIME!

Art Camp was a success. We studied a different artist each day. Some of our favorites were Picasso and Georgia O'Keeffe.



Off to the Races! Alina Dabel was our student helper and we enjoyed many Olympic games and art activities.



Holly Ready, Preschool Director



MUSIC NOTES

SINGING TOGETHER

Have you ever tried singing a familiar text to a totally different tune? Here is an example. Try singing the text of “Amazing Grace” using the Christmas tune of “Joy to the World.” Pretty *amazing*, right? Okay, now try that same “Amazing Grace” text to the tune of “Gilligan’s Island.” Admit it, you sang both these tunes as you were reading this paragraph, and it was kind of fun. Guess what, you just auditioned for choir, and you’re in!

Summer Sundays are ending. Hasn’t the singing been glorious with our one Sunday morning worship service? Many folks joining together to sing the church’s song is really a congregational choir. However, a new “season” is approaching. We are returning to our two-service worship schedule with church choir leadership. This does not mean you do not need to sing anymore in the pews – this means we need your leadership more than ever in the choir or in the pews (but preferably in the choir). Our incredible Parish Nurse Diana Tiller-Dichtel has explained all the wonderful health benefits to singing, and singing in the pews this summer, you, too have experienced the wonderful spirit that arises from communal singing. There is no denying the social benefits of being a part of a choir. As with any club or group, membership not only enhances your circle of friends but also your social life.

We have not one, but two intergenerational singing choirs that lead our music for worship on Sunday mornings as well as other “festival” occasions. Membership does not have to be solely “adults.”

Younger voices are welcome and encouraged to join the fun. We might separate those young voices out for some special Christmas pageants and Chime Time, but we welcome all ages in our music ministry. So, what’s your excuse?

- **I can’t read music.** Many folks are in that category, but they usually have good ears and good tonal memory. There are creative solutions – Karen can record your part, send audio recordings via email, meet outside the

regular rehearsal time, have sectional rehearsals – just to name a few.

- **I’m scared of auditions.** That’s an easy one. Walk through the door and you’re in. There are no auditions. All are welcome!
- **I cannot come every week.** Attendance is on an “as possible” basis. It is important to have a sense of commitment, but allowances are made for real life.
- **I’ve never sung anywhere but the shower.** This is like singing in the shower, except for the water and being alone. And it’s tons more fun to sing with others.
- **I can’t take direction.** Yes, you can!

Matins Choir – Musical leadership at the 8:30 AM worship service

- Rehearsals Sunday mornings 9:45-10:30 AM (Warm-ups at 8:00 AM Sunday morning)
- First Rehearsal – Sunday, August 20 (No Sunday morning warm-up this day, just rehearsal between worship services.)

Chancel Choir – Musical leadership at the 11:00 AM worship service

- Rehearsals Wednesday evenings 7:00-8:30 PM (Warm-ups at 10:30 AM Sunday morning)
- First Rehearsal – Wednesday, August 23

Soli Deo Gloria
(Glory to God Alone)

Karen Ives, Music Director



MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- **August 1** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** of this month.
- **August 3** – 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.

STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



We Need God and Each Other More Than Ever!

Living in the world is confusing and discouraging these days. To begin with, it seems like the world is about to burn up! We have record temperatures, tornadoes, torrential rains, droughts, and floods on a scale we have never seen before.

Secondly, mass shootings are more than a daily occurrence in our country and there is no foreseeable legislative solution coming our way.

Thirdly, what we had assumed were established human rights are being eroded by courts or legislatures and some of our loved ones are, in effect, becoming second class citizens, with impacts on their health care or the way they participate in society or live their lives.

Fourth, the world superpowers are changing and lining up head-to-head. Are we heading into a third world war?

Finally, we as a society are more divided than we have been in over 150 years. We cannot sit in the same room with some of our neighbors and discuss the above problems without a brawl breaking out and we often cannot come to agreement even about the most basic facts about some of the important issues.

We truly need the lessons of Jesus to “love thy neighbor” and to reach out as was done by the Good Samaritan. We need to learn the skills of compassionate listening, not surrendering our beliefs, but listening and processing beliefs of others that may counter beliefs that we hold and try to find common ground. That kind of reaching out,

open discussion, thoughtful listening, and displays of kindness in the midst of disagreement are likely the only ways to make inroads into our current societal predicaments.

Along with all of this, too, come the questions of...

- How do I protect my children as they go to school in this environment?
- How do I remain open-minded in this polarized society?
- How can I keep my faith strong in this demoralizing situation?
- How can I continue to best serve the Lord?

I have often been told that growing old is not easy, but I often feel that it's my children and grandchildren that have the difficult part to play. They are the ones who have to solve a lot of these problems going on in the world today! Sometimes I feel guilty that we have not left them a better world to carry on in but I do have faith that God will watch after them!

And with all of this, I am really spoiled! I am not plagued by personal or family health problems. I am not struggling with difficult finances. I do not have family members who are ill, struggling or otherwise in distress. So honestly, I am grateful for all of the personal blessings that I continue to receive. Let those of us who can reach out to others who do have struggles do just that and help settle their emotional or personal issues as we are able.

The Stephen Ministers are available to help those in the Church who are undergoing personal or emotional struggles on any level. We provide confidential, thoughtful listening and lay counseling services to those in need in our congregation. Contact Pastor Jon Nelson or Stephen Leader Bill Dichtel if you feel that you would benefit from being assigned a Stephen Minister.

Bill Dichtel, Stephen Leader
Bill.dichtel@gmail.com
Cell phone: (757) 232-5334



AUGUST

Pat Fretz is celebrating her 92nd birthday on August 8.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Bonnie Raquet | |
| 4 | Beth Grant | |
| 5 | Heidi Flatin | Elizabeth Geier |
| 6 | Forrest Fenstermaker | |
| 7 | Kristen Carter | JR Lyons |
| 8 | Pat Fretz | Claire White |
| 9 | Doug Moore | |
| 10 | Klara Cave | |
| 11 | Josiah Hallman | Micah Maris-Wolf |
| | Thom Recktenwald | |
| 12 | Dave Clark | |
| 14 | Norm Fashing | Dave Joppa |
| 17 | Bethany Brisson | |
| 18 | Rachel Martin | |
| 20 | Lana Olson | |
| 22 | Jeane Moore | |
| 24 | Evelyn Judy | |
| 25 | Aaren Battle | |
| 26 | Nancy Canny | |
| 28 | Ellen Weidman | Jane Wills |
| | Ann Booth Young | |
| 29 | Rich Brown | Linda Vonderheide |
| | Joe Yancey | |
| 31 | Paul Kristiansen | |



SINGING FOR YOUR HEALTH

I chose August to write this article as the choirs at St. Stephen will start back after a break for the summer. I think it is interesting all the benefits singing provides our bodies. Maybe you will as well.

Singing begins by improving your posture, improving the muscles that we use to breathe and decreasing muscle tension. It can help to relieve pain by causing the body to release endorphins, those same ones that are

produced after an intense workout. Singing helps to boost the immune system by reducing the release of cortisol (stress hormone) and boosting Immunoglobulin A antibody.

Singing can help patients who have dementia such as Alzheimer’s disease. The pleasure from singing activates the brains reward system (dopamine) causing them to sing more because they feel better. Music, particularly singing, has been used by some grief therapists as well. This is an effect of the dopamine that is released during singing.

Singing in a group helps to forge social bonds. Studies involving schoolchildren and adults have shown that singing in a choir has produced a strong sense of community and social inclusion. It also promoted a sense of well-being and increased the neurochemical oxytocin, also known as the love hormone.

Singing helps to improve speaking abilities which has been shown in studies to help people who have autism, Parkinson’s disease, aphasia following a stroke, and stuttering. This is because singing activates multiple areas of the brain at the same time. New pathways are created to form words and speak better.

Singing improves lung function by improved posture, having to take deep breaths and controlling the release of air to sing. This benefits people who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, cystic fibrosis, and multiple sclerosis just to name a few. It has also been shown that fewer choir members snore. This also applies to those who play wind instruments. These are good muscle strengtheners.

So, perhaps we should all sing more and maybe, even join the choir.

Diana Tiller-Dichtel, Parish Nurse





AUGUST 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

- | | | |
|----|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Dan Shoenfelt | |
| 2 | Laura Bergh | Edith Haecker |
| 5 | Linda Baumgarten | |
| 17 | Sara Martin | |
| 25 | Alison Carney | Evelyn Judy |
| 26 | James Ogborn | |
| 28 | Brian Crittenden | |
| 29 | Sandra Witt | |
| 31 | Randy PUNCHARD | |

Others who were baptized in August:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Amber Jansson | Carla Javier |
| Christina Nelson | |

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

Thank You



Thank you for thinking of the clinic and the patients we serve. Your thoughtful and generous donation of \$750 is greatly appreciated and allows us to continue to provide free primary medical care to those in need. Especially in these very uncertain times, God bless you all for loving and blessing us.

Jeanne and Jeff Black
Angels of Mercy Medical Clinic

PRAYERS



Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for **Joe Beene, Ed Brown, Kristin Carter, Karen Einarsen, Bob Harman, Jack Harris, Sharon Jacobs, Marilyn Johnson, Evelyn Kernan, Jim Mayfield, and Linda Reuben.**

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

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Dawn Allen, Donald and Carol Baum, Rose Baumgarten, Sally Blackburn, Nelson Blish, Mary Bloom, The Brantley family, Jerry & Elijah Connor, Judy Craun, Doug Crinklaw, Judy Drezek, Eberhart friends and family, Derald Edwards, Joan and Frank Goodhart, Deanna Harbison, William Harbison, Tom Hay, Bradley Kim Joan and Laurie Heintzelman, Char Henry, Zac and Jen Holtzman and family, Brian Johnson, Mason Jones, Sean Kelley, The Kennedy family, Bob Lamoureux, Ron Luchetti, Julia Mahony, Marnah Lund, Doug Mayes, Laura MCGOLIN, Detra Michaels, Bob Myers, Gina Peterson, Paula Rega, Betty Roth, Naomi Schmidt, Inge Seiter, David Shoberg, Kelsey Slay, Vasili Soultoukis, Chad Strausbaugh, Charley Underdahl, and Caleb Winig.



Virginia Lutherans

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Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



**St. Stephen Lutheran Church
612 Jamestown Road
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