



# The Quill

## THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

June 2023



### HOSPITALITY

If you're like a lot of people you will likely be doing some traveling this month. Those travels may take you far away, or you may stay nearer by. Either way, I pray your travels are safe and your homecoming joyous! I also pray that wherever you go you may find hospitality and welcome. We can be truly blessed by the people around us, whether they are friend, family, or even strangers!

Hospitality and welcome play a large role in Scripture, but perhaps the most succinct point on the topic comes from Hebrews 13:2, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." This could be a reference to a variety of stories that the author of Hebrews knew of, but it is most likely a comment on Abraham's encounter in Genesis 18. There we find Abraham providing extravagant hospitality to three strangers who we later discover were sent by God. In contrast to Abraham's great welcome, when these same strangers later visit Sodom they are not shown any welcome or hospitality and God's judgement is rained down upon that city because of it! Hospitality was very important in Abraham's day!

In many cultures today the sanctity of welcome and hospitality remains. I know from personal experience how important hospitality is in Zulu culture. Christina and I were both amazed at the (sometimes over-the-top feeling) welcome we received whenever we visited a new church in South Africa when we went there in 2017. In an online course I've taken (admittedly aimed at business travelers not clergy), I learned that in the Arab

culture: "a person has the right to be a guest for three days before the host can ask them to leave," and "treating guests well is traditionally a way of gaining honour."<sup>1</sup> Japanese culture has the concept of "omotenashi" – "omote" means public face – an image you wish to present to outsiders; "nashi" means nothing. Combining them means every act is from the bottom of the heart – honest, no hiding, no pretending.

Our own culture places stress on being welcoming and hospitable as well. These are evident most clearly in our rules of etiquette. In American culture it is generally expected that a host will greet people at the door and do whatever they can to make a person feel at home. This, in my experience, typically revolves around food. Being welcoming often includes offering coffee and goodies, sometimes even a full meal. Hospitality and welcome is a value that is prized the world over and we even have a Biblical mandate for it!

I find that Jesus often teaches us things that God knows we need to learn for our own wellbeing. Having been made in the image of God, we **need** relationship and community; we were made by God, to engage with the people around us. It's no wonder that Matthew 25 teaches us to "welcome the stranger" and in so-doing welcome Christ! God knows that hospitality and welcome is often the beginning of relationship and the cornerstone of community! And by seeing Christ in the people we welcome, that potential relationship is on solid footing. So wherever you go this summer, take a moment to appreciate the welcome and hospitality you

<sup>1</sup> Commisceo Global, "Online Middle East & Arab Cultural Awareness Training" materials

are shown. And then look for ways in which you can show welcome and hospitality to the people you encounter, near or far. For by so doing you engage in holy and powerful work!

I will leave you with this, the Celtic Rune of hospitality:

*I saw a stranger today.  
I put food for him in the eating-place  
And drink in the drinking-place  
And music in the listening-place.*

*In the Holy name of the Trinity  
He blessed myself and my family.  
And the lark said in her warble  
Often, often, often  
Goes Christ in the stranger's guise.  
O, oft and oft and oft,  
Goes Christ in the stranger's guise.*

In Christ,

**Pastor Jon Nelson**

## CONGREGATION COUNCIL



Our May meeting was held on May 9, 2023.

In Attendance: Pastor Nelson, Lou Rossiter, Susan Kaufman, Corey Knestruck, Pam Buckley, Nancy Egloff, JR Lyons, Alison Carney, Julie Meeks, Jeffery Berry, Sandy Croushore, Roberta Sulouff.

- Shared Ministry: Members of both congregations met to discuss compensation. It has been decided that for the remainder of the 2023 Saint Stephen will split Pastor Alex's salary 50/50 with Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. In the fall, when budget discussions start, we will reevaluate those percentages in the hopes of getting Pastor Alex closer to the Synod Guidelines.
- Implementation of Ministry Plan: Several ideas are in the works to build community and move closer to where we see ourselves as a congregation. Some of these ideas include:
  - Holding a monthly tea for those that have limited contact outside of their home.
  - Shared meals between groups of members.
  - Gathering resources for community members or organizations

- Council members contacting all church members to check in with them.
- Security: We have reached out to Kamco for quotes on security upgrades. We are interested in installing cameras on the outside perimeter of the building, including one that will point directly at the playground. We are also interested in an intercom system that would allow Hollie to see who is at the door and let them in remotely.
- Sacred Spaces Grant: We will be hearing soon, if we have made it to the second round of the grant process. If we do move onto the second round, we will need to work quickly to get quotes to repair/replace the HVAC units.
- Pulpit Swap: We will do a pulpit swap on **June 4**. Pastor Jon will preach at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church and Pastor Alex will be at Saint Stephen. After church at **1:00 PM** both congregations will gather at Freedom Park for a picnic. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Burgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers and drinks will be provided. Please indicate on the green sheet if you will attend.
- **Diana Tiller-Dichtel** has been selected as a recipient of the 2023 Serving Boldly Award. The award, created by the Virginia Synod Council in October 2020, is given to a lay leader who embodies and demonstrates a commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ in their congregation and/or their community. We are so grateful to Diana and all she does for our congregation! Congratulations!
- On June 18 **Pastor Nelson** will celebrate his 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination!

**Julie Meeks, Secretary, Congregation Council**

## SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Starting **Sunday, June 25**, we will be moving to one worship service for eight Sundays, ending August 13. We will have coffee at **9:00 AM** and worship at **9:45 AM** on these eight Sundays. This worship service will be live-streamed as well. We hope that this joint service will help foster connections between "8:30 folk" and "11:00 folk" as well as give our worship leaders a lighter Sunday morning for these weeks of summer.



## ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

What an amazing school year it has been! Thank you for your support and prayers as we continued to share Christ's love with our children!

We have an exceptional Preschool staff and have been blessed with talented and dedicated teachers for years! In March, **Patty Ballentine** announced she would be retiring after over 30 years of teaching music. Mrs. Ballentine has been sharing her love of music to our preschoolers since 2007. **Julie Philipoom**, who joined the Preschool Teaching Team in the 4s program in 2017, announced her retirement this April, but will continue to assist as a Substitute Teacher. She will also be welcoming her first grandchild this summer! **Susan Reese** will be leaving at the end of this school year after being on the Teaching Team since 2017. She, with the assistance of **Rachel Maris-Wolf**, has fostered incredible growth in her three-year-old class this year, getting them ready to move up to the 4s!

We are pleased to report that **Susan Berry-Ruane**, **Kelly Kirkpatrick**, **Rachel Maris-Wolf** and **Lindsey Napier** will be returning next year. We are welcoming new teachers to join them on our St. Stephen Preschool Teaching Team: **Kelly Ann Kelly** will be our incoming 4s Koala Teacher, **Melissa Reeves** will be our incoming 3s Giraffe Teacher, and **Anthony Williams** will be our incoming Music Teacher. We give thanks for **Pastor Jon** in sharing God's love during his weekly Chapel for our children. Lastly, **Karen Ives** was a Godsend as she filled in as one of our Friday Extended Day teachers and as a Substitute Teacher as needed throughout the year.

The Preschool Committee has been invaluable to me this past year and I cannot thank them enough for their ongoing support (and patience!). Led by Committee Chair, **George Bass**, the committee members are **Pam Buckley** (Council Liaison), **Jeanne Garrison**, **Jane Gingerich**, **Pastor Jon**, **Stan York**, and me.

Please continue to hold our Preschool in your prayers as I sign off as your Director and **Holly Ready** begins her journey as the Preschool Director of our fabulous St. Stephen Preschool.

**Kristie Kelley, Preschool Director**





## MUSIC NOTES



The Chime Timers and the Cherub Choir from the Sunday, May 14 worship service. The Chime Timers played the centering music and accompanied the "Cherubs" on "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" at the 11:00 service.

**Karen Ives, Music Director**



I am so grateful for the contribution of \$600 from you and your congregation. Your support brings the priceless gift of care, comfort, and compassion to guests of Hospice House

and their loved one as they share their final days together.

We do not charge a fee for our services to individuals and families, so we thank you for helping remove that burden from those we serve. Your gift also allows loved ones to be just that – loved ones – without also having to be caretakers.

Having served our community for the past 40 years, we are appreciative of the support from individuals like you. Thank you again for your generous contribution.

Brandon Randall, Executive Director

### *Thank You from the Parish Nurse*

Thank you all for the wonderful celebration on May 5. This is a ministry dear to my heart. The work I do would not be possible without the support of the congregation, leadership and staff at the church. I appreciate you all so very much.

Also Thank you to Lou Rossiter for writing the article for the May Quill. I forgot to give the proper credit when I submitted the article. If others have ideas for articles, please feel free to contact me.

**Diana Tiller-Dichtel**

## STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



Stephen Ministry training is so interesting. The list of topics that we go through is quite straightforward. You could probably go through the step-by-step instructions of how to be a Stephen Minister in a one-hour meeting. And yet it takes us five months to really dive into these instructions and get comfortable enough to do them. Take, for instance, offering the gift of silence.

Often when we are called to be with someone in their suffering, we can get stuck or uncomfortable. Most of the time, we don't know what to say. Words fail us. You may be familiar with some of the more common platitudes that habitually come out of people's mouths when speaking to someone who has suffered a great loss: "Everything happens for a reason." "God has a plan." "It could be worse." These sorts of sayings have come under a lot of public scrutiny, and rightly so. These are not only unhelpful to the people suffering but can be downright harmful to them.

It's no wonder the words we try to find when we are sitting with someone in their deepest distress and pain can cause more harm than good. Whether we realize it or not, those words are meant to make us feel better, not the person suffering. We are the ones who cannot handle the silence. Silence takes away our control. Silence brings up all our insecurities. Silence draws up thoughts and emotions that we'd rather not address. Silence offers no simple, easy to follow solution to anything. Silence is a very difficult gift to give.

Yet as Stephen Ministers, we spend a lot of our time with our care receiver offering this very gift. We accompany our care receivers in their pain and in their silence because it is crucial for healing. In the deep silence, they can fully embrace and comprehend the reality of their pain. They need that time and space and silence to process. It is the only way to eventually move forward from their

pain into a new hope filled reality. What a gift it is to have someone with them in that silent space to provide patience, understanding and companionship. That's what a Stephen Minister offers. We hold space for our care receivers, often in silence. For that precious hour a week, we don't allow them to run from their pain or get stuck there forever. We guide them through it with love. It is so simple, but it is so difficult to do.

Our world today is so full of noise. How often do you experience silence nowadays? Personally, I struggle with it a lot. Most days, the second Jon and the kids leave the house, I have turned on a podcast or music. I will listen almost nonstop until somebody gets home. I can excuse this by spouting all the benefits of music or the great things I learn from my podcasts. But the reality is, I am running from the silence. I don't want to be alone with my thoughts. I fear the possible despair it could bring. Yet as a Stephen Minister, I offer that very thing to a person in need. I routinely offer the silence I refuse to give myself.

I wonder how our capacity for patience, empathy, and compassion for each other could change if we all tried to get more comfortable with silence. If we were willing to sit in our own silence, we could face those difficult thoughts and feelings within us. We could all learn to sit with one another in each other's pain and in silence and be okay with our words failing us. Maybe, if we practiced long enough, we would remember that we don't sit there alone. We would remember that God is there in the silence with us. God is always in the silence as the ultimate care giver. What could our world become if we remembered something so important?

So, this month I leave you with a challenge. Can you find five minutes a day to sit in silence? Allow whatever comes up for you to come up but hold fast to the silence. Trust in the promise that God is there with you. And maybe the next time you are called to sit with someone else the silence won't feel quite so scary.

**Christina Nelson**



## JUNE

1	Mollie Teague	
2	Karen Chenault	Sara Osborn
	Tim Weidman	
3	Leonard Bosworth	
	Rosa Parks	
4	Denny Krieger	
	Stephanie West	
6	Jack Harris	Brad Leek
7	York Doerr	
8	Ron Harris	
9	Ethan Jansson	Rita Kristiansen
10	Charles Osborn	
11	Randy Punchard	
12	Christina Nelson	Peter Raquet
14	Terry Hinders	Sandy Reed-Bryant
15	Ruth Fenstermaker	Susie Yancey
16	Greta Zimbauer	Jon Nelson
20	Joshua Egloff	Lou Rossiter
21	Michael Powell	
22	Carol Harman	Audrey Root
23	Brandon Cave	Brian Crittenden
	Alaina Dabel	
25	Carrie Bailey	Jeri Meermans
	Zhou Hui Stauffer	
26	Susan Britcher	Christine Drake
27	Donna VanDuyse	
29	Sherry Phipps	
30	Lisa Fisher	Linda Olson



## JUNE IS SCOLIOSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Scoliosis is the most common abnormality of the spine. It affects two to three percent of the U.S. population, or an estimated seven million Americans. Scoliosis causes the spine to abnormally curve sideways into an “S” or “C” shape more than 10 degrees. It impacts all age groups with the primary age of onset being between the ages of 10 and 15. It affects men and women alike, but women are more likely to have curve progression and require treatment. 85% of those diagnosed will have no known cause of the disease.

Adults may find that symptoms are intensified as they age. It can develop in adults as children and worsen as people age or it can have its onset as an adult. This is known as degenerative scoliosis. Symptoms for both can include numbness, back pain, shooting pain in the legs and fatigue from strain on the muscles of the lower back. Diagnosis is made by x-ray or MRI tests.

Treatment can include over-the-counter pain relievers, exercises to strengthen the back, braces to provide relief and epidurals or nerve blocks for more severe pain. Surgical options are also available for those who have failed conservative treatment or have severely restricted function or quality of life.

More information is available at [srs.org](http://srs.org). As always let me know if you have further questions.

**Diana Tiller-Dichtel, Parish Nurse**



## MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- **June 1** – Men are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Thursday** of this month.
- **June 6** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** 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.



Congratulations to **Diana Tiller-Dichtel** who will be awarded with the **2023 Serving Boldly Award** at this year's Virginia Synod Assembly in June. This award is given to a lay leader who demonstrates a commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the congregation and their community. Diana is one of five recipients in the Virginia Synod. Nominated by numerous members of St. Stephen, she is the award winner for the Coastal Partnership Region.



## JUNE 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

4	Amanda Buckley	Melissa Buckley
6	Alan Balma Danya Zimbauer	
8	Hollie Jones	
12	Doug Moore	Art Nelsen
13	Rachael Wiers	
15	Jenni Punchard	
16	Jane deSolms	
17	Ethan Owens	
18	Sarah Harms	Reed Nester
21	Jessica Harms	Erich Zimbauer
25	Karl Zimbauer	
28	Terri Larsen	

Others who were baptized in June:

Bill Arnold	Pete Davis
Brad Leek	Jon Lund
Julie Philipoom	Sandy Reed-Bryant

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

## JUNE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

We will hold our June business meeting on **Sunday, June 25**. Our June meeting typically includes elections, a midyear review and update, and a report from the Preschool regarding the completed program year. To that annual list we will also be voting on the agreement to share a pastor with Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. The agenda and supporting documents for the meeting will be shared soon.

## PRAYERS



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

**Pray for those unable to come to worship:** **Joyce Behlendorf, 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, Roberta Barbour, Rose Baumgarten, Sally Blackburn, Nelson Blish, Mary Bloom, Jerry and Elijah Connor, Doug Crinklaw, Mike, Katie and Sophia Czajkowski, Don and Judy Drezek, Derald Edwards, Char Henry, Sue Ivey, The Kennedy family, Bob Lamoureux, Ron Luchetti, Marnah Lund, Doug Mayes, Detra Michaels, Gina Peterson, Paula Rega, Betty Roth, Joe Scheub, David Shoberg, Kelsey Slay, Vasili Soultoukis, Chad Strausbaugh, Charley Underdahl, Caleb Winig, Linda Wright, The Graduating Class of 2023 and The Children of the Ukraine.



### Bill Garcia

Edith Haecker (Homeless Ministry)

### Jerry Trone

William and Karla Bentz (Music Fund)  
Ward C. Bourn  
Marilyn Johnson (Music Fund)



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