



# The Quill

## THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

March 2024



### COVENANTS

The Sundays in Lent this year have a decided theme which can be found in the First Readings appointed for each Sunday. These readings focus on five covenants that God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures:

1. Genesis 9:8-17, in which God makes a covenant with "all living flesh" that there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.
2. Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16, in which God makes an everlasting covenant with Abram that he will be the ancestor of a multitude of nations.
3. Exodus 20:1-17, in which God gives Israel the gift of the Law and covenants with Israel that "I am the LORD your God."
4. Numbers 21:4-9, in which God provides food and water in the desert, punishes Israel for their sin, and promises to heal them through a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.
5. Jeremiah 31:31-34, where God promises Jeremiah a "new covenant" that will allow Israel to know God in an intimate and eternal way.

As we can see, God is in the habit of making covenants with all sorts of groups and people. And, while people often fail to live up to their side of the covenant, God always remains faithful to them. I'd like to examine this concept of covenant with you.

One of the primary things to understand regarding covenants is that in the Hebrew Scriptures they were typically one-sided affairs; despite having all the power in the relationship, God does most of the promising in these covenants. How often does that happen today, I wonder? It seems to me that most agreements made in

our culture tend to favor the one with the greater power. Not so with God. God has all the power and yet gives and gives and gives.

God is also the source of these covenants. While there are all sorts of examples of people in scripture initiating all sorts of things with God (Abraham, for instance, loved to initiate bartering sessions with God), we never find Israel or any one person initiating a covenant with God. As God is the source of all things, so too is God the source of these sacred promises so necessary to the life of Israel (and later on, all of humanity).

So as we move through this season of Lent, I would invite you to reflect on the nature of God's covenants with Israel, with humanity, and with you. What does it mean that our powerful God willingly enters into covenants with us? What does it mean that God remains faithful to God's promises even in the face of our unfaithfulness? What does it mean that God is the source of these relationships and promises?

I would also invite you to reflect on the covenant that God has entered into with you through Jesus Christ. Most powerfully expressed through the promises you have from God in the waters of your Baptism. Hear again, and reflect on, the words of your baptismal covenant from God:

"God, who is rich in mercy and love, gives us a new birth into a living hope through the sacrament of baptism. By water and the Word God delivers us from sin and death and raises us to new life in Jesus Christ. We are united with all the baptized in the one body of Christ, anointed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and joined in God's mission for the life of the world."

“We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your daughters and sons new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life.”

“Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life.”

In Christ,  
**Pastor Jon**

## CONGREGATION COUNCIL



Our February meeting was held on February 18, 2024 at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church. The St.

Stephen Council meeting was immediately following a joint meeting of the councils of Our Saviour’s and St. Stephen.

### Joint Council Meeting:

The joint meeting of the two Councils was a warm and productive time, with introductions and sharing, reflections on what is working and what needs improvement for our shared ministry, and review of planned joint activities and worship.

- Joint Holy week services: Maundy Thursday at St. Stephen; Good Friday at Our Saviour’s
- Hosted Holy week services: St. Stephen hosting Easter Vigil; Our Savior’s hosting Easter Sunrise 6:30 a.m.
- Cinco de Mayo Picnic, May 5, 1:30-4:30 pm
- Vacation Bible School
- Joint Service Project to be determined

The next joint Council meeting is planned for August 13 at St. Stephen.

### St. Stephen Council Meeting:

In attendance: Sandy Croushore, Julie Meeks, Jeffery Berry, Susan Kauffman, Pam Buckley, Paul Reier, J.R. Lyons, Corey Knestrick, Lou Rossiter, Brandon Cave, Roberta Sulouff, Alison Carney, and Brian Agor.

- Continued discussions about need for HVAC replacement and path forward.
- Reviewed upcoming opportunities for connections among the congregation, including

the new round of dining groups, a spring social, and a women’s retreat.

- Reviewed and discussed property committee approval process.
- Noted three major anticipated projects with financial impacts: HVAC replacement, mortgage refinancing, and summer playground renovation.

The next St. Stephen Council meeting is scheduled for March 12.

**Alison Carney, Secretary, Congregation Council**



**Wednesday evenings in Lent: March 6, 13 and 20 at St. Stephen:**

- 6:00 pm:** Soup and Bread supper in the Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 pm:** Holden Evening Prayer

## HOLY WEEK



**Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion, March 24, 8:30 am and 11:00 am** – Holy Communion.

**Thursday, March 28, 7:00 pm** – Maundy Thursday worship **at St. Stephen**. Holy Communion with Stripping of the Altar.

**Friday, March 29, 7:00 pm** – Good Friday worship **at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, 7479 Richmond Road, Norge, VA**. The service will include a reading of the Passion of Jesus.

**Saturday, March 30, 8:00 pm** – The Easter Vigil **at St. Stephen**. The First Eucharist of Easter.

**Easter Sunday, March 31, 8:30 am and 11:00 am** – Festival Worship.



## **MUSIC NOTES**

### **Come Share the Feast – Easter Vigil**

If you could only attend one worship service during the course of the year, what service would you select? I might wager that many of you would elect Christmas Eve, or perhaps, Easter Sunday morning. Maybe some of you might even think Pentecost, the birth of the church, would be the worship gathering that would be the best and most important one to choose. I cannot say what the most important worship service is, however, for me, I would select the Easter Vigil for my once-a-year attendance. I am not suggesting such a practice, but I am commending to you to take part in this once-a-year extraordinary liturgy.

Nighttime gatherings are always unique. At the beginning of the Jewish Seder meal, the youngest child asks, “Why is this night different from all other nights?” In the Jewish tradition, a day really begins the night before. We understand this easily as we ourselves begin our own Christmas celebrations with our Christmas Eve service. The Triduum (pronounced **trid**-yoo-uhm), that fancy Latin word for our celebration of the Three Days in Holy Week (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil) carries on this ancient tradition by celebrating the great Vigil of Easter at night, on Easter Eve. The word “vigil” connotes a time of waiting, however the Easter Vigil is not waiting for Jesus’ resurrection – the Easter Vigil is celebrating Jesus’ rising from the tomb.

The Easter Vigil is the culmination of a three-day liturgy that began on Maundy Thursday. Four “actions” take place on Maundy Thursday. The first is the laying on of hands for individual absolution of our sins. The second is foot washing, which is a practice of the church since the seventh century and signifies our service to one another. We celebrate the holy supper Christ gave the church to reveal his unfailing love for the human family in our third “action.” Our final action is the stripping of the altar – linens, paraments, ornaments, and candles. This action is symbolic of Jesus humiliation at the soldiers’ hands.

Our service continues the next day, Good Friday. On this day, we pray a Bidding Prayer – a prayer for everyone – believers and nonbelievers – a prayer for every imaginable event – even a Pandemic. Each of these prayers, or bids, draws us out of ourselves and often focuses on how we have been complicit in failing to live

as resurrection people. We leave with no blessing and no final prayer – the service continues the next day.

Gail Ramshaw in her book *The Three Day Feast* (Augsburg Fortress, 2004) describes this final liturgy of the Triduum thus:

*At this third of the Three Days, Christians experience together the story of salvation. It is a long story that has continued through the ages, and thus many biblical readings and lots of activities are called for. Perhaps it is not useful to think of the Vigil as “just a bit longer” than a Sunday service. It is a great deal longer, and like an anniversary party that goes on and on into the night, with stories galore and celebrations of various kinds, the Vigil lasts as long as it must, in order to get everything done. What “gets done” is everything the church must do in light of the resurrection: hear the stories of faith, sing the songs of the tradition, baptize the newcomers, share the bread and wine, and so be joined together with Christ as the light of the world.*

The Easter Vigil is a four-part service that begins outside with the Service of Light. The darkness for this service symbolizes Christ’s tomb. As light came into the darkness at creation, the paschal candle is lit from the new fire – a new light to dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds. The Service of Light continues with the procession of candles into the darkened sanctuary, like the children of Israel led by a pillar of fire from slavery to freedom in the Promised Land. We sing the *Exultet* - the Easter Proclamation.

The second part of the Vigil centers on the Old Testament stories of creation and exodus. These are the beloved stories of the faith ending with the Romans New Testament reading whereby we join Christ through our baptism in his death and resurrection. Our Gospel reading is the most beloved and detailed story of all when the disciples find the tomb empty and Mary Magdalene encounters the risen Lord in the garden. As we sing the Gospel acclamation, the sanctuary now makes the dramatic transition from darkness into full illumination, and the altar is vested for the first Eucharist of Easter.

The third and fourth parts of the Easter Vigil continue with the sacraments of our faith: Affirmation of our Baptism into Christ and the Service of Holy Communion.

Come share and keep the Feast. **Our Easter Vigil Service is 8:00 pm on Saturday, March 30.**

**Karen Ives, Music Director**

# Christian Nationalism and a Lutheran Perspective

## The 2024 St. Stephen Lutheran Church Theologian in Residence

March 2 and 3, 2024

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

“...subject to the governing authorities...”  
Romans 13

...believers “may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”  
Timothy 2

### James G. Cobb, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination

- Parish Pastor (including First Lutheran, Norfolk), Associate Dean Gettysburg Seminary
- Member, first ELCA National Church Council
- ELCA Delegate, Lutheran World Federation Assembly
- Author of (New!) Cross Connections, Reformation’s Rib, Sermonic City Sidewalks,
- Lutheran DNA: Testing the Augsburg Confession, and New Parish New Pastor.

### Saturday Morning Session, March 2

- Gather (9:30 am)
- Presentation (10:00 - 10:50 am)
- Presentation Continued (11:00 - 11:50 am)
- Pot-Luck Lunch (Noon - 12:45 pm)
- Questions and Discussion (12:45 - 1:30 pm)

### Sunday Morning Worship Services, March 3

- Preach at 8:30 am Worship Service
- Coffee in the College Room (10:00 am)
- Preach at 11:00 am Worship Service

### Reference Reading for lectures on “Christian Nationalism:”

“The Psychology of Christian Nationalism,” Pamela Cooper White

“Christians Against Christianity,” Obery M. Hendricks, Jr.

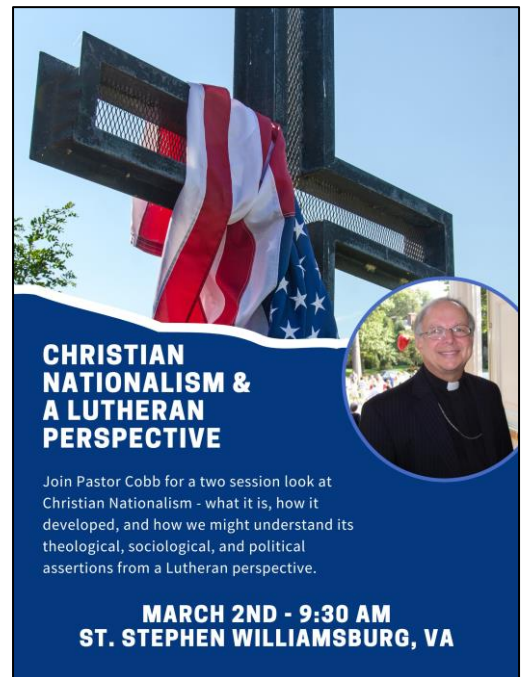
“Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the U.S.” Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry

“American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers and the Making of a Nation,” John Meacham

“The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory: American Evangelicals in an age of extremism,” Tim Alberta

“Introduction to Lutheranism,” Eric Gritsch

“A Compendium of Luther’s Theology,” Hugh Thomson Kerr, Jr.



**CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM & A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE**

Join Pastor Cobb for a two session look at Christian Nationalism - what it is, how it developed, and how we might understand its theological, sociological, and political assertions from a Lutheran perspective.

**MARCH 2ND - 9:30 AM  
ST. STEPHEN WILLIAMSBURG, VA**



## COLORECTAL CANCER

March is National Colorectal Cancer Month. Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in the United States. The good news is that it is more preventable due to screening. There may be no symptoms with colorectal cancer. However, some of the symptoms to be aware of are changes in bowel habits, persistent abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, weakness, fatigue, or unexplained weight loss.

There are now different ways of screening. The “Gold Standard” remains the colonoscopy. This is the best option if you have any symptoms, a family history of colorectal cancer, a personal history of cancer or bowel disorders such as ulcerative colitis, Crohn’s disease, or IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome). There are also some tests you can perform at home and mail in. These are best used for people who are not in the above risk groups.

There has been an uptick in the number of cases of colorectal cancer in younger adults. There is also some disparity among races. This may be, in part, because of lack of testing or limited access to screening.

Treatment can involve surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and even clinical trials. All of these are based on location and severity of the disease. As with any disease, prevention is the best way to help yourself. Some things you can do to prevent getting colon cancer are to eat well. Limit your intake of red meat and processed foods. A diet heavy in fruits and vegetables not only helps to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer but can help with prevention of other conditions.

Just increasing your exercise can reduce the risk of developing colorectal cancer by 30 to 40%. The recommendation is 30 to 60 minutes of vigorous physical activity per day. This not only helps reduce your risk of disease but also can help maintain a healthy weight and reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease. As always, check with your doctor before starting an exercise program if you have been inactive for a long period of time.

Use alcohol in moderation if at all. If you smoke, you should stop. There are programs available to help you stop smoking. Also, know your family health history. Here’s to your good health and happiness. Go get screened if you have not already done so. Let me know if you have any questions.

**Diana Tiller-Dichtel, Parish Nurse**



### MARCH

- |    |                    |                 |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|
| 3  | Sarah Harms        | Janice Mayfield |
| 4  | Shelley Delehanty  | Christine White |
| 5  | Dave Gamble        | Reed Nester     |
| 6  | Jennifer Martin    |                 |
| 7  | Gary Chenault      |                 |
| 8  | Janet Higgs        |                 |
| 9  | John McCurry       |                 |
| 10 | Marilyn Mallue     |                 |
| 11 | James Wiers        |                 |
| 12 | Alexander Stauffer | Rachael Wiers   |
| 13 | Preston Burton     |                 |
| 14 | Susan Kauffman     | Brody Wood      |
| 16 | Pam Buckley        | Jeanne Garrison |
| 17 | Karen Einarsen     | Pat Gamble      |
| 18 | Hans Tiefel        |                 |
| 19 | Ina Berkey         |                 |
| 20 | Carol Gabram       |                 |
| 21 | Jane deSolms       |                 |
| 22 | Matthias Hallman   |                 |
| 24 | Julian Jefferson   |                 |
| 26 | Stew Fretz         |                 |
| 27 | Bill Arnold        |                 |
| 28 | Erik McKenna       | John Watson     |
| 31 | Margaret Steel     |                 |

# Thank You

GREATER WILLIAMSBURG  
OUTREACH MISSION

A Coalition of Faith Groups United to Serve the Homeless



The Greater Williamsburg Outreach Ministry Board of Directors would like to thank you for your ongoing support of our work focusing on the unmet needs of the homeless and others with insecure food sources. We appreciate your generous financial support of \$1,000.

One of our current missions, Crockpot Meals continues to make a difference to families living in area motels by providing healthy meals and support as well as information about available housing and other services. We continue to partner with From His Hands and Meals on Wheels to provide summer lunches to WICC families who live in low-income neighborhoods.

We concluded the pilot phase of Community of Care Network in 2023, during which our trained volunteers helped newly housed families and individuals build stability and grow their support network. We are excited to continue providing related educational events to the community in 2024.

We are currently working on a new program that would assist qualified neighbors in our community with car repairs, as transportation is a challenge for many families in our area.

GWOM is driven by our common belief in the dignity of the individual and seeks to restore those elements required for human decency - starting with food, shelter, clothing, employment, health care and education. Your assistance with that funding is most appreciated.

Leah Dowling, Co-chair, Board of Directors



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

Thank you for faithfully supporting the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a monthly partner in 2023. Your 2023 gifts to the ELCA total \$9,600.

In the last year we have faced new challenges, and your gifts brought much-needed joy and hope to the world.

You have sustained the work of this church month after month. In just this past year you supported refugees fleeing war and conflict, helped feed the growing number of people impacted by hunger and poverty, lifted up leaders here at home and in our global companion churches around the world, provided shelter and hope to those impacted by natural disasters, invigorated new communities of faith and so much more. Amid the struggles of the world, your support and God's grace has allowed us to share peace and hope with those who need it most.

Through your monthly support you have shown the love of Christ to a world seeking a brighter future. Thank you for empowering this church to share the good news near and far.

Rachel Wind, Executive for Development



The Board of Directors and Staff of Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center gratefully acknowledge a contribution of \$1,500 to our ministry of counseling. We sincerely appreciate your support

Rebecca E. Glass, Executive Director



## MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- **March 5** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** of this month.
- **March 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.

# BOOK STUDY LED BY PASTOR ALEX

## **Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians**

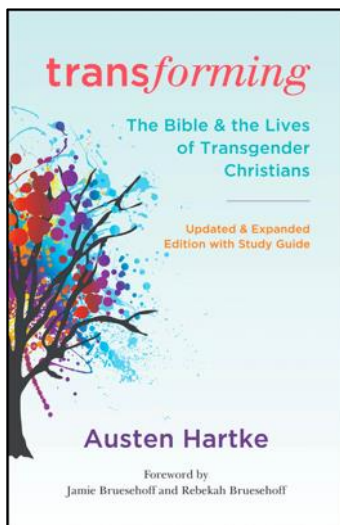
Austen Hartke  
(© 2023 - updated edition)

**Mondays at 7:00 pm –March 11, 18, 25**

**Tuesdays at 1:30pm - March 5, 12, 19**

**Location: Conference Room.**

- Session 5: Ch 8: All the Best Disciples are Eunuchs  
Ch 9: Nothing Can Prevent Me
- Session 6: Ch 10: Even Jesus Had a Body  
Ch 11: Life Beyond Apologetics
- Session 7: Ch 12: Does Gender Matter
- Conclusion: The Trans-Affirming Toolbox



There's still time to join us for the book study! The book seeks to engage Christians in a thoughtful conversation about transgender experiences. Hartke's book advocates for a trans-affirming Christian stance, deeply rooted in scripture and in faith. He challenges Christians to expand their understanding of God's creative and redemptive work in the world,

inviting us to join in fostering a more loving and inclusive world.

Alongside Hartke's work, I will be drawing upon a second book from a social-science perspective - *Life Isn't Binary: On Being Both, Beyond, and In-Between* by Meg-John Barker and Alex Lantaffi. You are welcome to add it to your reading, if you would like! It is certainly not expected. A word of caution: there are matter-of-fact statements that discuss various sexual activities that may be uncomfortable.

## CAMPUS MINISTRY



The Spring Semester for the Lutheran Student Association is off to a fantastic start! We're thrilled to have such a great group of students who join us on Sunday mornings and/or for dinners on Sunday evenings.

**Students** – if you're interested in the "adopt-a-student" program and you aren't already signed up, it isn't too late. Please feel free to reach out to Pastor Alex or Nancy Egloff, and we'll get you connected.

**SSLC folks** - WOW!! Thank you so much for signing up to host dinners. We've had just a fantastic response so far this fall. If you'd still like to host, there are still a few spots left.

### LSA Calendar of Events

- **March 9-17:** Spring Break
- **April 14:** LSA Sunday
- **May 5:** Senior Recognition/last LSA Dinner
- **May 16-18:** Commencement
- **May 17:** Spiritual Celebration

Peace,  
**Pastor Alex**

**SUPPORT RIP MEDICAL DEBT.** Once again our Social Ministry Coordinating Committee would like to invite the congregation to support **RIP Medical Debt** during this season of Lent. If you would like to help relieve medical debt you can send a donation to the church marked "RIP Medical Debt." Last Lent we raised a little over \$5,000 which meant the forgiveness of ~\$500,000 in medical debt. Can we beat our previous fundraising total?



## STEWARDSHIP ESSENTIALS

If you have spent more than a few minutes in faith-centered conversation with me, you have likely heard me use the phrase “blessed to be a blessing.” I truly believe that God blesses us not just because God enjoys blessing us and all Creation (though that is most certainly so!), but because God intends that we also experience God’s joy in blessing others.

The book of Genesis devotes a dozen chapters to telling the story of Abraham (originally named Abram until God renames him). On four separate occasions in the span of those chapters, Abraham receives God’s promises and blessings, reiterated and emphasized slightly differently each time, but essentially unchanged from the first telling in chapter 12:

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (NRSV text)

Two things are clear to me in this passage. First, God blesses Abram/Abraham so that he, Abram, will bless others. And second, Abram’s blessing is not to be just for a few others, but is to be extended to all the families of the earth!

Now, it would be an easy thing to say, “Okay. That’s fine for Abraham, but how does that concern us?” My answer is to say that God chose Abraham as the first of many who would be chosen and blessed in order to be a blessing. As Genesis continues the story, Abraham’s offspring become the twelve “tribes” of Israel, each acknowledging the call of God and claiming God’s blessing. It becomes clear that the people of Israel exist

in order to bring the gentiles into the household of God where God’s blessings abound. And the New Testament makes clear that the Church inherits Abraham through its roots in Judaism and the teachings of Jesus.

So, we, like Abraham, are blessed in order that we bless others. This is why we offer a preschool at Saint Stephen, in order to share God’s blessings with families, especially the little ones in those families. This is why we work with Housing Partnership to build handicap ramps in the community. This is why we support FISH and House of Mercy and Grove Christian Outreach Center and all the other ministries we uphold with our dollars, our time and our prayers. This is why we are Church together, worshiping and serving our Lord as we seek to live into the reality of God’s Kingdom on earth.

Yes, we really are blessed to be a blessing. Thanks be to God!

Your brother in Christ,  
**Jim Larsen**



**Rumi Friendship Association**  
Building Bridges Through Dialogue

## **RUMI FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION and HISTORIC AREA RELIGIONS TOGETHER**

Invite you to join us for an Iftar Dinner  
**March 14, 6:00 pm at St. Stephen Lutheran Church**  
Please RSVP as we have limited seating:  
<http://tinyurl.com/2vm4vp5y>





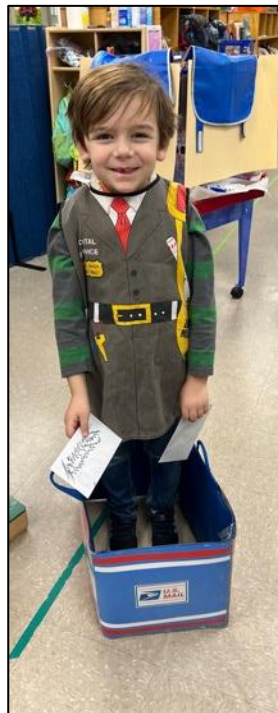
## ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

February was filled with love and our kids were busy working to write and send letters to their loved ones. The post office was bustling, but our postal workers were able to keep up with all the mail. Valentine's Day was a special time for our students to show their love for each other and their families. We also celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school! Our kiddos are 100 days happier and we couldn't be more proud of them and all they have accomplished this year.

As we eagerly wait for the warm weather we are gearing up for a busy month of March. We are starting off March celebrating our love for reading and Dr. Seuss with a whole week of spirit. Crazy hats, silly socks, and Wacky Wednesday are just a few ways we are honoring Dr. Seuss and all his amazing stories. Take a look at the schedule and feel free to pop by the preschool with silly socks, a crazy hat or crazy hair. We are also gearing up for another Father's Night on March 11. Before we even know it, we will be planning for our End of Year celebration, but for now we are soaking up all the fun we are having together this year!

In celebration of **Dr. Seuss's birthday** (Saturday, March 2), we will hold a school-wide Spirit Week during this week. Students are invited to wear Seuss-themed clothing and accessories each day:

- **Monday, March 4** – Crazy hair day! Show off a new and wild style!
- **Tuesday, March 5** – *The Cat in the Hat* - wear a crazy hat!
- **Wednesday, March 6** – Wacky Wednesday – the sky's the limit! Mismatched clothes, neon colors, clothes worn inside out or backwards...be as wacky as you wish.
- **Thursday, March 7** – *Fox in Socks* – silly socks day!
- **Friday, March 8** – 1 Fish, 2 Fish ~ Red and Blue dress! Let's all wear red and blue clothes today.



Holly Ready, Preschool Director

## STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



### The Personal Impact of the Stephen Ministry Program

Six years ago, when I came to St. Stephen Lutheran Church, I was newly remarried and had just moved across the country. My new wife and I had both visited Williamsburg on vacations in the past and felt this would be a good place to settle. What I did not grasp was the challenges on the road ahead with my wife's disability and my own health issues.

The Pastors at the time recognized I was quickly becoming overwhelmed and suggested I have the services of a Stephen Minister. I knew nothing of the program, but when I received a call from the man who would become my Stephen Minister, I felt that this program could help.

We met for nearly a year, once a week over coffee and during those meetings I felt I could express my serious concerns and worries without any criticism or trite statements to "trust in God and things will improve." In a caring conversation I could be honest about my fears and concerns. Being able to sound these out, I could face them and work on solutions to help me and my wife.

The key takeaway here is that I learned to face these situations myself and to trust that I would make the best choices available. There was no pressure to follow an arbitrary set of rules. Also, there was no judgements made about my choices or my feelings of the problems I was facing. The most important fact for me was that my Stephen Minister was not part of my circle of friends at the time, and that he was not judgmental toward my beliefs or my fears.

About a year after we completed our sessions, I was asked to consider taking the training to become a Stephen Minister. I was doubtful that I could succeed but felt that the training could only help me to understand myself. As I worked in the Stephen Ministry program, the ability to help others helped me as much as it did for my care receivers. I actually have two care receivers now in the family, and I could not succeed in caring for them without the Stephen Ministry training and the encouragement of the active Stephen Ministry group here at St. Stephen.

If you are facing difficulties with your health or problems in your life, consider asking for help from one of the Stephen Minister's in the parish. **Pastor Jon Nelson** or our Stephen Leader, **Bill Dichtel** will assess your situation and provide you with the best person to help you face whatever difficulties are affecting your life. You definitely won't regret your decision to move forward.

**Pete Davis, Stephen Minister**



**St. Stephen Orchestral Band at the Transfiguration Sunday Festival Worship, February 11**

Back row: Ingrid Brown, violin; Jeffery Berry, clarinet; Bill Dichtel, clarinet; Jennifer Dabel, trombone; Theo Bergh, euphonium; Jim Larsen, trumpet.

Front row: John Joe Shoенfelt, violin; Sonja Cave, flute; Erika Cave, bass clarinet; Marie Nelson, cello; Rich Brown, French horn; Linda Baumgarten, bassoon.



## MARCH 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

- 3 Marj Gottschalk-Trone
- 9 Greta Zimbauer
- 11 Mira Powell
- 16 Tom Witt
- 18 Janice Mayfield
- 28 Ruby Umberger

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

**Join your prayers for healing** with God's desires for **Aaren Battle, Ed Brown, Kristin Carter, Jack Harris, Sharon Jacobs, Marilyn Johnson, Evelyn Kernan, Jim Mayfield, Carole Meyer, Martha Reier, 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, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff.**

**Pray for these loved ones of our congregation:** John, Marty, Benita, Paula Battle, Donald and Carol Baum, Rose Baumgarten, Sally Blackburn, Linda Bonfiglio, Mary Bloom, Ann Bunn, Amy Carl, Jerry & Elijah Connor, Judy Craun, Doug Crinklaw, Sophia Czajkowski, Judy Drezek, Ginny Mauney Fox, Joel Gillespie, Joan and Frank Goodhart, Deanna Harbison, Nick Havola, Bradley Kim Joan and Laurie Heintzeman, Char Henry, Lisa Hill, Jaxon Ireland, The Jacobs Family, Brian Johnson, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, The Kennedy family, Laura & Fred Kienle, Marnah Lund, David Maris, Laura Margolin, Doug Mayes, Jack Mayfield, Becky Murphy, Ed Moninger, John and Pollie Morison, Bob Myers, Silvana Oderisi, Lori Ogborn, Shary Raske, Paula Rega, Mark Punchard, Marci Ries, Sharon Rogers, Betty Roth, Lou Schuster, Inge Seiter, Kelsey Slay, Brant Smith, Vasili Soultoukis, Chad Strausbaugh, Charley Underdahl, and Caleb Winig.



**FAITHFUL + BOLD + SERVING**

*Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*



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

**The Quill      www.saintstephenlutheran.net      March 2024**

**Congregational Officers:**

<i>President</i>	<b>Julie Meeks</b>	804-432-5149
<i>Vice President</i>	<b>J.R. Lyons</b>	757-920-5355
<i>Treasurer</i>	<b>Pete Davis</b>	757-345-0596
<i>Financial Secretary</i>	<b>Karen Nester</b>	757-869-2949
	email	Finsec@
<i>Congregational Secretary</i>	<b>Alison Carney</b>	703-819-6607

**Church Office:** Phone: (757) 229-6688  
 email: All email addresses are:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ @saintstephenlutheran.net

**Church Staff:**

<i>Pastor</i>	<b>Jon Nelson</b>	320-295-8861
	email	Pastorjn@
	<b>Alex Sheppard-Witt</b>	717-434-5037
	email	Pastorasw@
<i>Parish Administrator</i>	<b>Hollie Jones</b>	Office@
<i>Director of Music</i>	<b>Karen Ives</b>	MusicDir@
<i>Parish Nurse</i>	<b>Diana Tiller-Dichtel</b>	Parishnurse@
<i>Preschool Director</i>	<b>Holly Ready</b>	Preschool@

**Congregation Council:**

Jeffery Berry (Youth Member)	804-432-5149
Pam Buckley	757-707-4564
Alison Carney	703-819-6607
Brandon Cave	816-510-9409
Sandy Croushore	757-476-5789
Nancy Egloff	757-293-8547
Susan Kauffman	757-903-2669
Corey Knestrick	757-367-9904
J.R. Lyons	757-920-5355
Julie Meeks	804-432-5149
Paul Reier	757-566-0092
Lou Rossiter	757-345-6206
Roberta Sulouff	978-854-2085

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**Editor:** Reed Nester  
 reednester@gmail.com

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