



The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

May 2023



PENTECOST

May in Virginia is dominated by the season of spring, as such it is quite fitting that we will spend most of May still in the church season of Easter. Easter and spring both draw us into the contemplation new life and new beginnings; both of which we have in our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. That being said, however, I want to focus on the last Sunday of May instead, being Pentecost Sunday.

I have said before that though we celebrate Easter only once a year, and the Easter season for only seven Sundays, we **always** live in the Easter light and good news; and Pentecost is exactly how we live in that Easter light and good news. The Good News is given: Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, indeed! Alleluia! And Pentecost marks the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Christ and the beginning of the spreading of that Good News, the beginnings of the church, the beginnings of Christian evangelism, and the beginnings of the wildfire spread of Christianity throughout the world.

Luther speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit in one of his Pentecost sermons, saying: "Observe here, the Holy Spirit descends and fills the hearts of the disciples sitting in fear and sorrow. The Holy Spirit renders their tongues fiery and cloven, and inflames them with love unto boldness in preaching Christ – unto free and fearless utterance. Plainly, then, it is not the office of the Spirit to write books or to institute laws. The Holy Spirit writes in the hearts of all, creating a new heart, so that all may rejoice before God, filled with love for God and ready, in consequence, to serve others gladly." (Martin Luther: The Gift of the Holy Spirit—Commentary on Acts 2:1-13)

Pentecost frees us to speak of God's love for, and activity in, all of creation. Even in fear and sorrow the Holy Spirit works, filling us to overflowing and inflaming us with love. What an appropriate word Luther uses in this sermon, "inflames them," for this is exactly what the Holy Spirit does, "inflames" us to boldness in proclaiming Christ and readying us to serve God and our neighbor. The Holy Spirit does not inflame us to silence or to simply feeling good about ourselves. Rather, the Holy Spirit inflames us to go out into the world, go out into relationships with others in order to preach, love, and serve.

Everything about our Parish needs to be "inflamed": our programs, our meetings, our preschool, our faith formation, our bible studies, our service work, and perhaps most importantly our worship. Everything about our worship ought to be aimed at this "inflaming." Rather than getting caught up in how worship makes us feel, or the nitty-gritty of how our worship happens, we need to pay attention to how our worship "inflames" us to rejoice in God, "inflames" us to be filled to overflowing with God's love, "inflames" us to preach our Risen Lord to the world, and "inflames" us to serve God and neighbor.

Despite what season our church calendar says it is, every Sunday of the church year we celebrate Easter. And every Sunday of the church year we ought to be reminded of how we celebrate Easter, through Pentecost. As we enjoy the changing of the seasons, as we gear up for summer vacations, planting, and all the things that will fill our lives June through August; let us be ever mindful of our "inflaming" by the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Jon Nelson

CONGREGATION COUNCIL



Our April meeting was held on April 11, 2023.

In Attendance: Pastor Nelson, Julie Meeks, Susan Kaufman, Pam Buckley, Lou Rossiter, Alison Carney, Nancy Egloff, Brandon Cave, Sandy Croushore, Jeffery Berry

- Nominations for the two members of the Endowment Committee that will be leaving have been made. Members will be voted on in the June Meeting as well as any nominees from the floor.
- Sandy Croushore, Roberta Sulouff, and Julie Meeks, the three council members whose terms are ending, would like to continue for a second term.
- The Executive Committee as well as Roberta Sulouff and JR Lyons will meet with Our Savior's Lutheran Church members and Pastor to further discuss our Shared Ministry Plans. The meeting is scheduled for April 17 at Our Savior's.
- A motion to approve the hiring of the new Preschool Director, Holly Ready, was made and passed unanimously. Holly has a Bachelor of Psychology and a Master in Educational Leadership. She has a child that is already enrolled in our preschool.
- LSA members are tentatively scheduled to be lead worship on April 30
- Council discussed ways that we can implement our Ministry Plan, some ideas include:
 - ◆ Initiate a "Dinner club," sometimes called "Tables of 8," where a variety of members would group together and rotate food and fellowship.
 - ◆ Create a social opportunity for members that are homebound or don't travel well to have interaction more often than communion and pastoral home visits.
 - ◆ Create a group of parents that are dealing with children that have mental health issues.
 - ◆ Combine efforts to reach out to members that have not been to church in a while and

ask how they are doing, and do they need anything.

- ◆ Create a prayer ministry that meets every week and prays for a small section of the congregation.
 - ◆ Attend activities of the congregation's children and families
- Have another great idea? Please let a council member know!

Julie Meeks, Secretary, Congregation Council



ON MEDICAID?

MAKE SURE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION IS UP TO DATE

Beginning this month (May), and continuing for about one year, Virginia Medicaid will be redetermining if people with Medicaid coverage are still eligible. Medicaid is the federal-state program that provides health coverage for low-income families, children and persons with disabilities. Most people who have been on Medicaid since before the pandemic are likely to be enrolled automatically and will receive a notice that their coverage will continue. But if someone became eligible during the pandemic, and/or their income changed, they might no longer be eligible.

If you or someone you know is on Medicaid, an up-to-date mailing address and phone number are needed. You can check your information or report changes:

- Online at commonhelp.virginia.gov
- Call Cover Virginia at 1 855-242-8282
- Call local [Department of Social Services](#)
- Contacting your Medicaid Managed Care Organization (Medicaid Health Plan)

Federal rules during the pandemic instructed states to stop redetermining Medicaid eligibility and allow anyone who qualified to remain continuously enrolled. This was to protect the access for care for those individuals and to protect the broader community during a time of widespread infectious disease. The pandemic has been declared over, thus the redeterminations for coverage begin again.

If someone no longer qualifies for Medicaid and does not have access to employer-provided health coverage, the next best option is signing up the [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov), the Affordable Care Act coverage. Four in five customers will be able to find coverage for \$10 or less per month after subsidies.

Learn more at enrollva.org or 1-888-392-5132 or contact a local health insurance agent. Learn more at: www.healthcare.gov/find-assistance.

Diana Tiller-Dichtel, Parish Nurse



STEWARDSHIP ESSENTIALS

Stewardship of God's Creation

*This is my Father's world, and to my list'ning ears
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the
spheres. ELW #824*

Those who know me well know that I love nature. A single hour spent walking through College Woods restores my hope for the future. Standing and watching a sunrise or sunset unfold in all its splendor is almost as good as dying and going to heaven. Plop me down in the middle of Yosemite or the Grand Canyon and I could ask for nothing better. And heavens, there is nothing that can leave me so awestruck as the Milky Way spread across the dark night time sky of the desert Southwest! This part of God's Creation which we know is so awesome! As God is awesome!

I truly love my experience of the world God has made. Yet, my joy in it is tinged with sorrow these days. Even deep in the woods the sounds of nature are often interrupted by the sounds of traffic intruding into the quiet. Even in a place as remote as the Grand Canyon, sunrises and sunsets are routinely smudged by the smog and haze that are a by-product of our industrial society.

Yosemite has lost over a quarter of its trees in recent years due to the stresses of years of drought that are part of the global warming caused by seven billion people pumping forty billion tons of carbon dioxide into our atmosphere each year. And it's even a challenge to find someplace to view the heavens without their glory being diminished by the spillover of excess lighting from cities and towns.

All of this comes to me as I consider Earth Day, which as I write this is less than a week away (and as you read this is already a week or more past). Personally, I think Earth Day is worthy of recognition within the Church. Our holy scriptures are full of references to the glory and the goodness of God's Creation. We live in the world God made, but it is not our world. God honors us by making us a part of it and tasking us with its care. Yet all too often we make decisions as though we have no responsibility to God or to the generations who come after us. And doing so leads only to greater suffering for ourselves and for our sisters and brothers in God's extensive human family.

As God's children, we are stewards of the earth, which God has entrusted to our care. It is my great hope that we will rise to meet the challenges of our day. We can live the good life without polluting this good earth. We can provide for the lives of our children and grandchildren without unbalancing the web of life that surrounds us. We can make changes in our way of life that lead to healing in the world around us. In doing this, we can be an inspiration to others to make like changes in their living. And together we can grow as God's Stewards of Creation.

Blessings to you, my fellow Stewards and beloved Children of God!

Jim Larsen



THE CHURCH MOUSE HEARS

... that congratulations are in order for Rich Wilkins as he was awarded the 2023 EMT Provider of the year in New Kent County "In recognition of his faithful and dedicated support to the citizens of New Kent, Virginia."



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

The school year is somehow coming to an end – where did the time go?! Time sure flies when you are having fun.

The teachers and I want to give a huge **THANK YOU** to our mulching crew that came out on April 1! We once again had a fabulous group of volunteers - **Jeff Bushmire, Justin Holbrook with Riley and Reagan, Ted & Rachel Maris-Wolf with Micah and Matthew, Randy Punchard, Dan Runfola with Faye and Tessa, Dan Shoenfelt with Noah and John Jo, Andrew Teague with Mollie, Walker, Sara and Armie, and Jim Weilmunster.** Thank you for helping us spread and make it fun. We sincerely appreciate you all.



Our children are eagerly awaiting their caterpillars to turn into butterflies this month. This science experiment continues to amaze both the students and teachers alike year after year. The butterflies will be released in the Meditation Garden and is sure to be an enchanting experience.

Our school year will end the year with two celebrations here at St. Stephen. Our three-year-olds and their families will gather on **Tuesday, May 30** and our four- and five-year olds and their families will gather on **Wednesday, May 31.**

We are preparing for our Summer Camps and have had a great response in enrollment. We offer eight weeks of camp – four in June, two in July and two in August. Summer Camp is a great opportunity for our graduating students to wind down their year and our incoming students who are beginning in the fall to get a taste of what to expect.

Holly Ready will serve as the new Director of the St. Stephen Lutheran Preschool for the upcoming school year. She will introduce herself in next month's newsletter. As many of you are aware, I will be stepping back in order to focus on my family but will remain on the Preschool Committee, serve as a Substitute Teacher and volunteer for the various events that support the preschool throughout the year. It has been an absolute pleasure to serve as your Director for the Preschool this past year and I have thoroughly enjoyed the position. Thank you for your continuing prayers and support of our Preschool.

Kristie Kelley, Preschool Director



Thanks



We are so grateful for your support – thank you.

On January 26, our case workers participated in the nationwide Point-in-Time count through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This annual count provides a snapshot of the individuals and families experiencing homelessness in a geographical area. We participate to raise community awareness, to understand homeless trends, and to advocate for local and federal funding to help aid us in our mission of helping the most vulnerable in our community. We are hopeful that together we can help engage our community and country in helping to end homelessness.

We are looking forward to warmer days ahead, but are remaining vigilant in assisting our neighbors in need. In 2022, we moved 92 individuals into permanent housing. Your generosity makes all the difference in allowing us to provide everything from a home application to bed linens to our clients in their new homes. Currently we have several clients that we are assisting through the process of securing permanent housing. Please keep them and our work in your thoughts and prayers.

Liz Buckley, Director of Development



Thank you for your gifts of \$2,000 to ELCA World Hunger and \$3,000 to Lutheran Disaster Response.

*Bring us, O Christ, to share the fullness of your joy;
baptize us in the risen life that death cannot
destroy. -ELW 328*

This is a season of reflection and sacrifice but also a season of hope. As we walk the 40-day journey of Lent, we know that we are walking toward Easter and the promise of renewal. Your gifts to the ministries of the

ELCA are bringing that promise and hope to your neighbors around the world.

Your generosity is getting at the root causes of hunger and poverty in over 60 countries, including the United States. It is providing access to clean water, health care, agriculture, livestock, education, and peace and justice. Through your gifts you join with the whole church as we work toward a just world where all are fed.

You are creating new beginnings. Thank you for sharing the hope of new life and the fullness of Christ's joy.

Amanda White, Director, Congregational Generosity



Thank you for helping me provide free medical care to those in need.

Jeanne Black, Angels of Mercy Medical Clinic



Thank you very much for your congregation's gift to Avalon of \$700.00. We appreciate your continuing support and would like to welcome you to the Advocate level of giving for 2023. Your support is important.

For over 43 years, Avalon has been there to answer the calls for help and offered comprehensive services for many thousands of survivors and their children. We have been there, only because of the generosity of our community and people like you. At Avalon, we envision an aware and engaged community that works together to promote healthy relationships and to end domestic and sexual violence. Thank you for being a part of that vision!

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to be more involved. There are many ways to volunteer! We are happy to provide more information, schedule a speaker for your group, or arrange a private tour. Thanks again for your support!

Mary S. Hard Development Coordinator



AFTER FOUR YEARS, A SUCCESSFUL RETREAT!

The women of St. Stephen last held a retreat in the spring of 2019. Our plans for 2020 ground to a halt thanks to (you guessed it!) COVID 19. Three years ago we were looking forward to having Dr. Mary Anderson as our guest speaker, who was on her way out the door when the retreat was cancelled. We were so pleased and excited that she was available to come this year! Her presentations provoked any number of conversations about *Sewing New Wineskins to Fit a New Generation*. We will surely remember her emphasizing that “the mission of the church has not changed, but the methods must.”

We began with a fabulous social on Friday night, March 24 – yes, there was wine, pizza, and song (thank you, Karen Ives!). Continuing with a full day on Saturday, March 25, the 40 attendees enjoyed sessions with Dr. Mary as well as small breakout groups. The planning committee, ably led by Ina Berkey, assembled a program designed to appeal to a variety of interests. Our thanks for leading these groups go to **Dr. Mary** – Retreat theme; **Jeane Moore** – Prayer bracelets; **Christina Nelson** – Introduction to Enneagram; and **Kristin Berkey-Abbott** – Labyrinth.

Our service project was coordinated by Pam Buckley and Jeanne Moore. Busy hands assembled over 240 care packs for No Shame. Period. Support from the congregation and a grant from Thrivent helped to purchase the items needed. The importance of raising awareness for helping young girls was strongly felt by all participants. We appreciate Pastor Nelson offering a blessing for this project during worship on Sunday morning.

The planning committee is eagerly accepting ideas – and assistance! – for next year’s retreat. Anyone interested?

Ina Berkey, Terri Larsen, Pam Buckley, Christina Nelson, Alison Carney, Sandy Peterkin





MUSIC NOTES

Music Ministry Joins Other Ministries of the Church



Women's Retreat Choir sings "Dem Bones" for worship with The Rev. Dr. Mary Anderson, retreat leader and preacher, Sunday, March 26



Ina Berkey shares our organ with our Faith Formation class

Karen Ives, Music Director

STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



IF I'M FEELING LONELY, SHOULD I ARRANGE TO GET A STEPHEN MINISTER?

That's a very reasonable question to ask and one that is not as far off base as some of you may think. Certainly, loneliness is a universal emotion. We all have felt alone at some times in our lives, and loneliness can lead to significant depression if it persists for a long time or if there does not appear to be any relief in sight.

The first thing to do if you are sitting around feeling lonely is to do some simple analysis. What has changed in your life to make these feelings of loneliness come on?

- Have you lost your best friend? Has he or she lost interest in your friendship, moved away, or even passed away? Well, with such a loss leading to your loneliness, having a thoughtful, caring Stephen Minister to talk with could prove invaluable.
- Has your routine changed? For example, a lot of us experienced loneliness with the changes brought on by the isolation of the Covid Pandemic and while telephone calls helped bridge the gap, they were not true replacements for face-to-face visits!
- Do you feel like your friends' interests have changed and no longer match what interests you? That can erode friendships and lead to loneliness. In such situations, you probably don't need a Stephen Minister, you just need to make a point of getting out into the congregation or other social groups, meeting others, and finding others with common interests. Sometimes that takes some work on your part, but it definitely pays off!

The great news is that we are a congregation full of outgoing and friendly parishioners who are easy to talk to: It is generally quite easy to strike up a conversation and meet people before and after church. Before you know it, that can become a friendly meeting or two at a coffee shop and often the feelings of loneliness will

quickly dissipate. Just calling up a church acquaintance for phone talk can be an ice breaker as well.

Sometimes, the loneliness is deeper than that and is actually covering feelings of depression. The reasons for those feelings are sometimes clear and obvious. However, they sometimes are hidden from our conscious thinking. Sometimes, the feelings are too hidden, too laden with emotion or too painful for us to truly register. In such cases, getting a Stephen Minister assigned who can serve as a thoughtful and careful listener and guide in eliciting deeper thoughts and feelings can be invaluable.

In summary, we all experience loneliness at times: It is a part of the human experience. However, if simple and available remedies are not helping, reach out. Getting assistance from a Stephen Minister could be a big help! If you feel you may benefit from a Stephen Minister, talk to **Pastor Nelson** or call **Bill Dichtel**, Leader of our Stephen Ministry group.

Bill Dichtel, Stephen Leader



MAY

- | | | |
|----|------------------|---|
| 1 | Jessica Harms | |
| 4 | Dorothy Hinders | |
| 5 | Lindsey Fisher | |
| 6 | Lisa Bushmire | Karen West |
| 8 | Jim Larsen | |
| 11 | Jon Lund | |
| 13 | Brian Agor | |
| 14 | Alex Ogborn | |
| 15 | Laura Bergh | |
| 17 | Ward Bourn | (HAPPY 92nd BIRTHDAY) |
| 20 | John Olson | Kylen Saunders |
| 22 | Theo Bergh | Henry Lawson |
| | Julie Philipoom | |
| 23 | Jim Weilmuenster | |
| 24 | Regina Root | |
| 25 | Benjamin Yancey | |
| 30 | Tim Crittenden | |
| 31 | Sonja Cave | |



MAY 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	Benjamin Berry	Jeffery Berry
2	Anne Schone	
6	Walker Beatty	
8	Jean Gulesian	
12	Marilyn Mallue	Sue Voigt
14	Jan MacQueston	Chris Punchard
18	Julie Meeks	
19	Helen Nelsen	
25	Mathias Hallman	
26	Nash Napier	
28	Jennifer Dabel	
29	Ellen LaPlace	

Others who were baptized in May:

Trudi Arnold	David Gamble
Patricia Gamble	Mary Swanson

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



MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- **May 2** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** of this month.
- **May 4** – 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.

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, Linda Reuben and James Wiers.**

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, Ken Casilhas, Doug Crinklaw, Jerris and Tony DeKievit, Judy Drezek, Derald Edwards, Barbara Flatin, Dan Flatin, Joan and Frank Goodhart, Sue Ivey, Hilda Janke, The Kennedy family, Ron Luchetti, Marnah Lund, Doug Mayes, Detra Michaels, Gina Peterson, Betty Roth, David Shoberg, Kelsey Slay, Vasili Soultoukis, Chad Strausbaugh, Charley Underdahl, Caleb Wing and The Children of the Ukraine.



Virginia Lutherans

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<i>Preschool Director</i>	Kristie Kelley	Preschool@

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