

The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

September 2025

BAPTISM

As we prepare for the upcoming program year and all the excitement and busy-ness that entails, let's take a moment to remember why we do much of what we do. Our baptismal promises; or, more accurately, our baptismal identity. We engage in faith formation, in worship, in ministry, in education, in outreach, in proclamation, in advocacy, and in so much more. And why? It's our identity. It's who God created us to be. People putting faith into action. So let's revisit the promises that help shape our baptismal identity.

"to live among God's faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.

to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth..." (ELW Rite of Baptism)

Quite the promises we are making! And they are powerful and foundational promises too. When we place these promises at the center of our lives, at the center of our communities, at the center of our faith life; we live as God created us to live. But it can be awfully easy to forget, overlook, or minimize these promises. Not to mention the numerous distractions that call us to live in unrighteous ways. We can be forever thankful that God's grace comes to us in each and every moment, calling us back to the Way, back to these promises, when we go astray.

As we start our program year, full of fun and exciting opportunities for growth and connection, let's place our baptismal promises at the center of our communal life. As we prepare for faith formation, the Women's Retreat, our Theologian in Residence program, choir practices

and all sorts of other ministries, let's be drawn back to where our faith journeys all began, the waters and promises of baptism.

We commit to living in faith communities, seeking to participate in some small fashion, in the Kingdom (or Kin-dom) of God in the here-and-now. We commit to engaging with the Word of God, whether through personal study, education opportunities, or sermons, we take scripture seriously. We commit to regularly encountering the grace of God through the sacraments, those earthly reminders and signs to which our faith can cling. We commit to proclaiming the radical and revolutionary Gospel in word and in deed; grounding our actions in the teachings of Jesus Christ. We commit to meeting people where they are and accepting them as who they are, as Christ himself did; being radically inclusive, even to those society tells us to reject. We commit to striving for justice and peace...God's justice and peace...in all the earth.

These are no easy tasks! But we can give thanks not only for God's continual grace, but also for the Holy Spirit who accompanies us and works in us and through us to keep these promises. And there is perhaps no greater way in which the Holy Spirit keeps us on the Way than through the support of our community. This is a big part of why the Rite of Baptism includes promises made by the congregation as well: "People of God, do you promise to support and pray for one another in your life in Christ?" For we cannot keep these promises on our own! We need the Holy Spirit and the community the Spirit gathers us into.

With these guiding promises we can be certain our efforts this year will be Kingdom and Kin-dom building! I leave you with the closing prayer of the Baptismal Rite: "We give you thanks, O God, that through water

and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Stir up in your people the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence both now and forever. Amen."

In Christ,
Pastor Jon

CONGREGATION COUNCIL



Our August Meeting was held on August 12, 2025.

In attendance were Pastor Jon Nelson, Paul Reier, Jonathan Hallman, Bill Dichtel, Jane deSolms, Terri Larsen, Nancy Egloff, J.R. Lyons, Julie Meeks, Sandy Croushore, Roberta Sulouff, and Russ Dabel.

- Council Officers were elected. Sandy Croushore will serve as President, Russ Dabel as Vice President, and Jonathan Hallman as Secretary.
- Jane deSolms was approved to fill the vacant seat on Council, pending confirmation at the next Congregation meeting.
- After additional delays, completion of the HVAC replacement is now expected in September.
- The part-time Campus Minister position has been offered to Jerry Johnson.
- Quotes are being sought for the website update.
- With nominations completed for the Call Committee, Council approved the appointment of Jennifer Dabel, Heidi Flatin, Julie Meeks, Mike Powell, Paul Reier and Chris Turner to the Call Committee.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2025.

Jonathan Hallman, Secretary, Congregation Council

AFGHAN FAMILY NEWS

Ahmad Wais Khorooti has received a generous scholarship from the Raymond A. Mason School of Business at William & Mary to pursue a full-time MBA.

His undergraduate degree is in business and he has several years of experience, which are pre-requisites for admission. August 11 kicked off a week of Orientation for the Class of 2027. There are 95 in the class. The new students met their Executive Partners. Each student is assigned two retired Williamsburg executives who counsel them throughout the MBA journey. Ahmad Wais said "support from you and entire church community means a great deal to me and my family as I begin this new chapter."

Lou Rossiter

DINING SMALL GROUPS BRING MORE JOY



The next round of small dining groups will run mid-September 2025 through the end of January 2026.

"Science confirms that dining together leads to more joy, better health, and stronger social bonds," according to a 2025 Food & Wine (digital) magazine article. Sign up now for our next round of dining small groups to experience the joy and other benefits! Consisting of about seven to nine people, each dining group will set its own "approach" for meals, such as: dinner out, brunch or lunch at a group member's house, potluck after Sunday worship, take-out, etc. Do whatever works best for the group! Sign up on the bulletin insert or call the church office. Each group to meet three times between September and the end of January. Of course, you are free to meet more often if that works for your group.

God's work. Our hands.



September 7, 2025

Sunday, September 7 is the ELCA's annual day of service called "God's Work. Our Hands" Sunday. Between services you will be invited to write and decorate notes and cards of encouragement. That afternoon we will be leading a hymn-sing at

Williamsburg Landing, starting at 3:00 p.m., after which we will deliver our cards to the residents there.
3

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Presents:

Theologian in Residence Program

Featuring The Rev. Dr. Leah D. Schade

Speaker, Author, Preacher, Professor

Date: September 20-21, 2025

Location: St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Williamsburg, VA



The Church & the Public Square: Pathways for Putting Faith into Action

What is the role of the church in politics? How do we discern our engagement in the public square as believers and citizens? Join us for a transformative weekend with Rev. Dr. Leah D. Schade, an acclaimed theologian, preacher, and author, as we explore how faith communities can respond to today's challenges with wisdom, courage, and action.

Program Highlights:

- Discover approaches for church engagement: Gentle, Invitational, or Robust
- Learn practical tools for resistance and resilience
- Ground your action in biblical, theological, and ethical foundations
- Engage in meaningful dialogue and discernment

Program Schedule:

Saturday Morning, September 20:

- Workshop/Program led by Professor Schade
 - Topic: The Church & the Public Square
 - Audience: Church members and Lutheran Student Association
 - Attendance: Open to All

Sunday Services (8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.), September 21: Sermon by Professor Schade

About Rev. Dr. Leah D. Schade:

- Ordained ELCA minister for 25 years
- Author of Preaching and Social Issues (2025), Preaching in the Purple Zone (2019), Creation-Crisis Preaching (2015), and more
- Director of a \$1.25 million Lilly Foundation grant for "Compelling Preaching for a Climate-Changed World"
- Leader in research on ministry, preaching, and social issues

All are welcome! Come be inspired, equipped, and empowered to put your faith into action.

The Theologian in Residence Program is funded by the SSLC Endowment Fund

MUSIC NOTES

This month's Quill Article is "written" by our choir members. The question was asked:

"Why do I sing in the church choir?"

And here are the Matins and Chancel Choir responses:

- I joined initially as an excuse to avoid teaching faith formation. ;-) I stayed because I love singing in harmony. Paula Agor
- Choir is a great way to improve vocal technique, music theory, and even confidence.
 Lou Rossiter
- Singing in the choir is a great way to keep crazy tunes from becoming ear worms. I having anthems share my head space! – Jeane Moore
- Choir is a great way to meet welcoming, talented people. – Linda Baumgarten
- Been doing it for 65 years. Can't seem to quit! Terri Larsen
- I love to make joyful noise! Music is the most important part of worship. Jane deSolms
- Except when living in Georgia, I have sung in a church choir all my long life. Ringing bells just doesn't do it for me. – Susan Britcher
- Ruth Fenstermaker, who retired from choir a few years ago, asked me to join. I was fairly new at St. Stephen and happened to sit near her one time. – Jeanne Garrison
- When married to another singer, it promotes domestic tranquility. – Jim Larsen
- When the music director says we need basses (tightening the screws) at the early service...you join. – Paul Reier
- I have sung in choirs most of my life, starting with Girl Scout choirs in fourth grade. – Sandy Croushore
- I have sung in church choirs my whole life and enjoy being part of a group that enhances the worship experience for everyone. – Bev Hoyer
- Great music! Great people! Great director!
 And it keeps my mind sharp and hopefully helps by failing hearing. Keith Egloff
- I love singing in church choirs because I enjoy the group effort required to learn and present

- beautiful music with important meanings for all to enjoy! *Dave Hoyer*
- Why I sing in the choir is not only to help bring some possible harmony to my other choir members, but to help the congregation make a "joyful noise." – Randy Punchard
- I never would have thought I would sing in the choir. But one Sunday when Paul and I were sitting on the back row while he was doing the sound board you (Karen) said to me – come just sing. Even though I cannot read music, it is really fun! – Martha Reier
- I love to sing, anywhere, any time. Singing is a
 way to use my talents to share praising God
 with others in the congregation. Marj
 Gottschalk-Trone
- What can I say? Choir has been a part of my life since I was 12 years old. Life is just a bit duller without it. I also love the variety of music Karen gives us to learn. – Christina Nelson
- I was invited to join the choir by a former choir member (Forrest Fenstermaker) soon after becoming a member at St. Stephen. However, having joined several years later, I will always remember how welcoming choir folk can be, both "then and now". Rich Brown
- Why wouldn't you want to sing in the choir? It is the BEST THING EVER - especially when you have such a great Choir Director!! - Karen Shobera
- I sing in the choir because Karen Shoberg said I had to. – Jon Hallman
- Want to increase your choral skills? Want to get to know better some cool people who are around St. Stephen a lot? Join Choir! – Marie Nelson
- I have been singing in my church choir since I was old enough to read words on the page.
 Reading music came much later. Singing was an important part of my family and church life as a child and still is. Ellen Bushman

Well, there you have it -22 of the best reasons ever to sing in the choir. I would like to add one more motivation to sing in the choir - often attributed to St. Augustine:

He who sings Prays twice!

Come make a joyful noise with your fellow parishioners.

Chancel Choir – Wednesdays 7:00 p.m. Matins Choir – Sundays 9:45 a.m.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Karen Ives, Music Director

FOLLOW YOUR MONEY!!



When you contribute to St. Stephen, either through weekly envelopes, by cash or loose check, automatic deposit, or Qualified Charitable Distribution

(QCD) from your IRA, your contribution is counted and recorded weekly by our tellers. After checking for accuracy the Financial Secretary posts this information, as you have designated, in our Church Windows software program. Your financial statements are generated from this data.

- St. Stephen's finances consist of assets (bank and investment accounts) and liabilities (mortgage). Our assets are divided into funds which include the General Operating Fund and other funds set up for specific purposes.
 - The General Operating Fund is governed by the budget that is approved by the congregation every January. The detailed budget for 2025 can be found in the Annual Report. The treasurer pays all bills from this fund for our day-to-day ministries including staff compensation, office expenses, utilities, mortgage payments, all program expenses (Faith Formation, Youth, Worship & Music, etc.), and Synod and local benevolences that are budgeted. A monthly report of all these transactions is provided to the Council for their approval.
 - The <u>Building Fund</u> is funded through the yellow Building Fund envelopes, automatic deposits and QCD's and may be used to pay part of our current mortgage payments on our church building and to pay for major unbudgeted building projects.
 - The <u>HVAC Project Fund</u> was set up for the recent renovation of our HVAC system in 2024. Whatever money that has accumulated in this fund after July 2027 will be used to pay down

- principal on our mortgage, and the fund will be closed.
- The <u>Memorial Fund</u> receives contributions in memory or in honor of individuals. This money is used for specific items like altar linens, hymnals, choir robes, as a need arises or as directed by the donor.
- The Endowment Fund receives all bequests from wills and estates as well as outright contributions. It was established in 2006 in order to be able to finance, on a continuing basis, activities beyond the scope of St. Stephen's ordinary operations. A designated percentage of the income generated can be used for a number of purposes such as the Theologian in Residence program, outreach programs, scholarships, or seed money for new ministry programs.
- Additional funds include the Ballentine Scholarship Fund, the Preschool Endowment Fund, the Jean Kuhn Social Ministry Fund, the Homeless Ministry Fund, the Music Fund, and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Contributions can be made to any of these funds at any time. In addition, all contributions designated for specific campaigns such as Godparents for Tanzania, World Hunger, United Lutheran Appeal, Grove, Avalon, FISH, etc., flow through St. Stephen by the process described in the first paragraph and are directed to their designated recipients.

Jane deSolms



JOIN US FOR A CAREGIVERS' COFFEE

Who: For those who are caregivers.

When: Thursday, September 18, 10:30 a.m. Where: Panera Bread, 5218 Monticello Avenue Why: To share the mutual joys and frustrations of caregiving – OR just to drink coffee with friends.

SEE YOU THEN
For further info contact Ina Berkey:
Ina.berkey@cox.net or 757-603-6643

STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN

"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." – Isaiah 43:19

Friends, there is much to grieve this year. Many in our congregation experienced loss of loved ones, employment, health, or relationships this year. For the rest of us, there is the nonstop crisis of neighbors abducted by ICE agents, LGBTQ people, people of color, and women losing their rights, and all of us facing the loss of Medicare and other social services. At times, the sorrow seems never-ending.

Yet, as followers of the way of Christ, we believe in the promise of the resurrection. I believe that goes beyond a life after physical death. I think our God is constantly creating new life if only we are ready to perceive it.

For Stephen Ministers, we see this in the possible paths of healing after a crisis. Those who take time to work through and honor their loss with a loving companion – like a Stephen Minister – can indeed find a greater sense of healing and wholeness. Some care receivers report greater joy than even before their crisis began.

To be clear — I'm not suggesting anyone's suffering and loss is a "part of God's plan" or something that "had to happen." Tragedy is often senseless, and God never puts it on us intentionally. Period. I am suggesting that God is Love and will do whatever it takes to create a new, joyous life for you. Our role as Stephen Ministers is to keep our eye on that new life God is making and to hold you in love until you can perceive it too.

Christina Nelson, Stephen Minister



The family of Forrest Fenstermaker wishes to thank the St. Stephen Social Committee for the reception following Forrest's funeral on August 9. We are so grateful for the fine attendance at the funeral and the reception.

Ruth Fenstermaker and daughters Susan, Judy and Mary

20 YEARS OF SNEAKERS FOR GROVE!



Many thanks to all of you in our caring St. Stephen community for your 20 years of assisting the children of the Grove community to

start a brand-new school year well-shod! In August the Egloffs delivered your donations of 36 pairs of shoes and 20 pairs of crew socks to the Grove Christian Outreach Center. In addition, because of your generous financial gifts, we sent a check for \$3,560, allowing Grove staff to purchase more shoes and other items that the kids can use to start their school year. Your generosity is always amazing and such a blessing!

Nancy Egloff, Social Ministry Coordinating Committee



Outreach Center, with Keith and Nancy Egloff



FAITHFUL + BOLD + SERVING

Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

The summer was incredibly busy at the church and preschool. HAVC work

continued, the new playground was finished (new mulch, sand, and fences), floors were refinished, and all of the preschool walls, plus some cabinets and furniture, were freshly painted. This happened all the while running seven full and fun summer camps and providing tours to incoming preschool families.

Another huge THANK YOU to the grounds team and all of the amazing volunteers that have helped us get it all done this summer!

Looking forward to our first ever Summer Carnival where we plan to kick off our 60^{th} Anniversary Year. Please check the online calendar for a list and details of all the wonderful events coming up this year in celebration.

Pictures of the first days of school coming soon! In the meantime, please enjoy these cute pics from our summer camp friends enjoying the new playground.

Jessica Kimball, Preschool Director









ALL COMMITTEE MEETING

The Church Council is requesting all committees to gather for a potluck lunch and meeting following the 11:00 a.m. service on Rally Sunday, September 14. We look forward to good conversation and brainstorming together as we look ahead to the 2025-26 program year.

CALL COMMITTEE SURVEY

The Call Committee will be sending out a survey (via email and in the Gathering Space) beginning September 14 and due back by September 30. This survey will help shape our call process, so we hope you will prayerfully complete it when you have the opportunity.



Jim Ogborn Jr.

- 7 Diana Lyons
- 8 Joe Beene

1

2

5

- 9 Ailene Bartlett
- 10 David Allen Erika Cave
- 11 Ed Brown (94 Years Old!)
- 13 Kendall Delehanty
- 14 Bob Achenbach Jonathan Hallman
- Karen Ives
- 16 Stan York
- 17 Mallory Spencer
- 19 Daniel Owens
- 20 Charlene Smith Rushton White
- 22 Jim Kittelson
- 23 George Martin Philip McKenna
- 24 Phyllis Spencer
- 26 Sandy Croushore Bob Harman
- 28 Hannah Wiers
- 30 Mark Hinders



Forrest Fenstermaker

Susan Britcher (Endowment Fund)
Louis E. Daehnke (Endowment Fund)
Jane deSolms (Endowment Fund)
Rosalie and Chuck Frey (Endowment Fund)
Paul and Rita Kristiansen (Endowment Fund)
Harlan and Anne Schone (Endowment Fund)

Jack Harris

Barry Harte and Mike McCormick (Endowment Fund)

Linda Vonderheide

Bob Hanny (Endowment Fund)



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN WOMEN'S RETREAT - 2025 SAVE THE DATE for the 2025 St. Stephen Women's Retreat! September 26, 27, and 28, 2025 at St. Stephen, with retreat leadership by Rev. Dr. Mary Anderson. Friday evening pizza social, Saturday program including lunch, and Sunday morning sermon by Pastor Anderson. Registration \$40, with scholarships available. Plan to come and bring a friend! Contact Ina Berkey or Alison Carney with questions.



Please scan the QR code to fill out the Interest form.

Our service projects for the Women's Retreat will benefit children locally and globally. Items may be placed in the labeled containers in the Gathering Space. Cash donations are welcome!

A **DIAPER DRIVE** will benefit local partner agencies (FISH, Grove, House of Mercy). Any size!

We are assembling **BABY CARE KITS** for Lutheran World Relief. Clothing items should be in sizes 6 - 24 months.

Each CARE KIT will include the following:

- TWO lightweight cotton t-shirts (no Onesies ®)
- TWO long- or short-sleeved gowns or sleepers (without feet)
- TWO receiving blankets, medium-weight cotton or flannel, or crocheted or knitted with lightweight yarn, between 36" and 52" square -NO FLEECE!
- FOUR cloth diapers, flat fold preferred
- ONE jacket, sweater or sweatshirt with a hood, or include a baby cap
- TWO pairs of socks
- ONE hand towel, dark color recommended
- TWO or three bath-size bars of gentle soap equaling eight to nine ounces, any brand, in original wrapping; no mini or hotel size bars
- TWO diaper pins or large safety pins



SEPTEMBER 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

2	Heidi Flatin	George Vonderheide
11	Karen Schlicht	
12	Jeane Moore	
14	Thom Recktenwald	
18	Susan Britcher	
20	Ann McAteer	
21	Josiah Hallman	
23	Erika Cave	

Others who were baptized in September: Marcie Clark

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



MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

➤ **September 2** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** of this month.

September 4 – Men are invited to join together for breakfast the first Thursday of this month.

Both gatherings take place at **8:00 a.m.** at the *Capitol Pancake House, 802 Capitol Landing Road* (note the location change - Colonial Pancake House is closed this week). The get-togethers promote conversation and friendship in a casual setting.

PRAYERS



Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for Ina Berkey, Preston Burton, Kristin Carter, Bob and Ginny Cummings, Edith Haecker, Sharon Jacobs, Jim Mayfield, Carole Meyer, Traci Powers, Carl and Mitchell Stauffer, and George Vonderheide.

<u>Pray for those unable to come to worship</u>: Ailene Bartlett, Ed Brown, Bob and Angie Groom, Pat Janot, Marilyn Johnson, Jeanne Nelson, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff.

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Jerry, Kay C., Susan, Rosa, Celeste, and Isaac, Sam Areheart, Randy Altona, Mary Anderson, Phyllis Andrews, Charles Baugh, Donald and Carol Baum, Robi Bayard, June Brantley, Carol Bergh, Mary Bloom, Doug Bolick, Kay Braman, Bob Britcher, Tim Brown, Raymond Bunn, Cagel Family, Karin Cavanaugh, Amaree Cluff, Ruth Ann Coski, Marie Davito, Pat D'Orazio, Judy Drezek, Becky Drury, Darrin and Rosemary Dunn, Josh Egloff, Kay Flatin, Tanya Fritz, Joel Gillespie, Joan Goodhart, Mason Griffin, Jonathan Hallman, Charee Hampton, Sue Hassan and family, Andy Havola, Nick Havola, Bradley, Kim, Joan and Laurie Heintzelman, Lisa Hill, Doris Hillenbrand, Nancy Hodge, Jaxon Ireland, Lynn Isenburg, Claudia Jacobik, Brian Johnson, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, The Kennedy family, Jenn Kramer, Elaine Lane, Jeff Laub, Pat Layton, Marnah Lund, Keara Mahony, Trish Macerelli, Laura Margolin, Jack Mayfield, Jackie Mazzone, Tom Mifflin, Jimmy Mitchell, Liz Montalvo, Ed Moninger, Kim Morris, Bob Myers, Jeanette Osborn, Coral Pumley, Kurt Recktenwald, Brian Ritter, Lou Schuster, Pamela Sharp, Vasili Soultoukis, Kenneth and Laura Spencer, Chad Strausbaugh, Al Stern, Monika Stern, Janis Stevenson, George and Jewel Thomas, Karli Wallace Thompson, Charley Underdahl, Brenda Webster, Pat Whelan, Roselee Williams, Caleb Winig, Elaine Wrich and Lynda Wright.



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

The Quill www.saintstephenlutheran.net September 2025

Congregational Officers:

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Treasurer	Brian Agor	757-561-5889
Financial Secretary	Karen Nester	757-869-2949
	email	Finsec@
Congregational		_

Congregational

Secretary Jonathan Hallman 757-566-1686

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Article deadline: Fifteenth of the month.

Congregation Council:

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The Quill is published monthly by St. Stephen Lutheran Church 612 Jamestown Road Williamsburg, VA 23185

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