



The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

August 2026



THE TRUE TREASURES OF THE CHURCH

August is a month caught between two seasons. We spend these weeks clinging to the final, restful days of summer while preparing for the busy routines of autumn. But before we rush headlong into the fall, the church calendar provides a meaningful opportunity to pause and reflect on what and whom we value most.

On August 10, the church commemorates St. Lawrence, a deacon of the early church in third-century Rome. In 258 CE, Emperor Valerian ordered the fierce persecution of Christians. When the Roman prefect demanded that Lawrence hand over all the church's wealth, Lawrence asked for three days to compile the inventory.

When the deadline arrived, Lawrence did not present gold, silver, or fine vessels. Instead, he brought forward the city's poor, the crippled, the blind, and the orphaned; the people he served daily as a deacon. Presenting them to the Roman prefect, Lawrence famously declared, "Here are the true treasures of the Church."

For this act of defiance, Lawrence was martyred. He understood that the Roman Empire measured wealth in currency and power, but the Kingdom of God measures wealth in people; specifically those the world casts aside.

This radical definition of value is echoed perfectly in the Gospel text assigned for the final Sunday of this month. On August 30 (Proper 17), our lectionary brings us to Matthew 16. Jesus plainly tells his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer, and be killed. When Peter recoils

at this idea, Jesus offers a challenging definition of what it means to follow him:

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 16:24-25)

Like St. Lawrence, Jesus flips our earthly understanding of success and security completely upside down. To the world, losing your life (or giving away your riches) is foolishness. But in the upside-down economy of the Kingdom, true life is found entirely in what we are willing to give away.

As we look toward a new season of ministry, Sunday school, and community outreach this fall, these August texts invite us to ask a difficult question: **How do we measure our wealth as a congregation?**

It is easy to find security in a balanced budget, a well-maintained building, or comfortable routines. But St. Lawrence and Jesus both remind us that our truest treasures are found in the margins. Our wealth is measured by how we welcome the stranger, how we care for the vulnerable among us, and how willingly we sacrifice our own comfort for the sake of the Gospel.

As the summer fades, may we have the courage of St. Lawrence to look at the people around us, especially those who are hurting, lonely, or struggling, and recognize them as our greatest treasure. And may we have the faith to take up our cross, knowing that in giving ourselves away, we finally find our true lives.

In Christ,
Pastor Jon



STEWARDSHIP ESSENTIALS

Each fall, we emphasize stewardship and support of the church. This year's campaign will center around the call for a second pastor, on how we as a congregation can better fulfill our ministries, and our mission with additional staff and the judicious use of our own time and talents.

The church council has determined the budget could support a half-time pastor, but looking at the needs and opportunities around us, is considering the call for a full-time second pastor. A ten percent increase, or \$50,000 total increase in our budget would support such a call. We know the harvest is great and the laborers few. Pastoral care, youth programs and work in the community would all benefit from additional staff.

And if every member commits his or her own talent and time to support these ministries, along with financial support, we will reap great harvests.

A time and talent survey will be distributed soon via email and hard copy. We ask that you prayerfully consider this, indicate where you can serve, and we will each, individually, offer this commitment at the altar to God and the church.

In a recent sermon, Pastor Jon asked us to use our vision to go beyond the simple act of kindness – yes, we help to feed the hungry, but why are they hungry? Can we fix that? Can we envision a commercial kitchen where food safety and cooking classes could lead to the opportunity to create and sell value added products, such as breads or jams or pickles? Can we work on creative solutions, not as the giver, but together with those who need solutions, as enablers?

Susan Williamson

STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



When You Receive Your Diagnosis...

You knew when you went to your physician's office that there may be something to be concerned about. But human nature is always hopeful that there is really nothing seriously wrong.

When you do hear the words, "your tests and X-rays show that you have something to be concerned about." Followed by the encouraging words that there is a surgical procedure available or medications that will help you back to wellness.

Despite the encouraging words after the diagnosis, all that you understand is that you have a serious illness or condition. The discussion that follows just fades into the background. Do you hope that the physician is wrong? Has God abandoned you? What will happen to my family?

These questions and concerns are perfectly normal. No person can absorb bad news without feeling confused or cold and very, very alone.

There is a better way to respond to difficult news. You do not have to face your concerns alone. Someone is available to meet with you privately and confidentially. The Stephen Ministry program trains Stephen Ministers to listen and understand your concerns, calm your fears and help you work through the issues dealing with your diagnosis and treatment.

Stephen Ministers are not therapists or clinicians but can guide you to sources to help you understand the impact of the recommended treatment on your family. They may also guide you to other professionals or organizations that can provide additional help or support.

If you are facing a difficult diagnosis or other serious illness, please consider using the services of a Stephen Minister. Contact **Stephen Leader Bill Dichtel** or **Pastor Jon Nelson**. All referrals are strictly confidential. Do not walk through your fears alone!

Pete Davis, Stephen Minister

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH, WILLIAMSBURG

2026 Theologian in Residence

Featured Speaker: Kimberly Knowle-Zeller

Writer, pastor, and author exploring faith, creation, and everyday wonder.



Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026

God of the Cosmos: How God Walks with Us in Our Everyday Lives

- 9:30 a.m. Gather
- 10:00 a.m. Presentation
- 11:50 a.m. Pot-luck lunch
- 12:45 p.m. Questions & discussion

Sunday, Sept. 27, 2026

Helping Your Children Grow Through Change

- 8:30 a.m. Preach early service
- 10:00 a.m. Dialogue in the College Room
- 11:00 a.m. Preach late service

Location

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

Theme

Faith, creation, everyday wonder and blessings

The speaker's Living Lutheran reflection invites families to marvel at creation through the night sky, prayer, and everyday wonder. Her newest book is "Small Steps: Blessings to Lift Your Soul on the Pilgrimage of Life."



MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- **August 4** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** of this month.
- **August 6** – 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 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.

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

We have moved to one worship service for the summer. We will have coffee at **9:00 a.m.** and worship at **9:45 a.m.** on these 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.

Our final joint service will be on **September 6**.

SAVE THE DATE! NOVEMBER 6-7, 2026 FALL WOMEN'S WORKSHOP



The St. Stephen Fall Women's Workshop is being planned as a one-day event at St. Stephen on **Saturday, November 7**, with a Friday evening social the evening before, **November 6**. The

Saturday workshop sessions will have spiritual themes and highlight relevancies to women's daily lives, and the schedule is designed to allow for longer breaks (thanks to feedback from last fall).

Plan to come and bring a friend for the day Saturday, or Friday evening, or better yet – both! Details will be shared as planning progresses. Thanks to **Sandy Johnson** and the planning team for their preparations. (Note: This annual St. Stephen women's event was formerly known as the Fall Women's Retreat; the planning team has renamed it the Fall Women's Workshop to better reflect its format.)

Alison Carney



THE CHURCH MOUSE HEARS

... that Randy Punchard was recognized by the Colonial National Historical Park as the inaugural recipient of the Superintendent's Excellence in Volunteer Service Award. The Park Service said that "as head of the Mobile Maintenance Team, Randy strengthens park operations, inspires fellow volunteers, and helps create welcoming, meaningful experiences for visitors. His enthusiasm and service truly embody the mission of the National Park Service. Thank you, Randy!"



SUMMER FILM SERIES



All summer films will take place on the **second and fourth Sundays of the month at 2:00 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. Light snacks will be provided. There will be an optional discussion for those who stay afterwards. Each

month the movies have a theme: August - Faith on Film. Any questions/suggestions contact Elara Strand at elaram@mac.com.

August 9 2:00 – *Rain* (1932) Unrated

Come for: A young Joan Crawford and Walter Huston face off in a film based on a Somerset Maugham play. Walter Huston is a conflicted missionary who tries to force Crawford's former prostitute to adopt his faith and values but his own self-righteous standards gradually decay until the tables are turned. Trigger Warning: A completely offscreen rape and suicide (not of the same person) occur.

Stay for: A discussion on how religion can be used and abused, particularly against women (although welcome to widen this to other groups), how a woman's sexual history can be weaponized against her, how other women participate in this, generally how religion can be a tool of the patriarchy. We'll also discuss what we can do about it.

August 23 2:00 – *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) Unrated

Come for: The flip version of *Rain*. Here it's a woman of faith and the men around her try to take her down. The story of Joan of Arc is familiar but this Danish silent film is regarded as one of the finest films ever made anywhere, anytime, with one of the best performances ever by a lead actor. The photography, the staging, the production, everything is extraordinary, and, since it's silent, you don't have to worry about having trouble understanding the sound, only the music!

Stay for: A discussion of silent films, their art and what the changeover to sound did. Plus a continuation of our discussion of women and faith, this time on the strength faith can give in the face of unending pressure.

Upcoming Attractions:

September 13 – Monty Python's Life of Brian

September 27 – O Brother Where Art Thou?

SCHOOL SNEAKERS FOR GROVE 2026



Our St. Stephen community is beginning our **THIRD** decade of providing new sneakers for students in the Grove community to start school in style. We began supporting the program under Marilyn Johnson's guidance in 2005 and we can't stop now! As in past years, if you like to shop, please buy **GIRLS** sneakers in any size from **6 to 11**, or **BOYS** sneakers any size from **6 to 12**, including half sizes for both – these are the most needed sizes. Shoes will be collected in the Gathering Space until **Sunday, August 2**. If you prefer to make a monetary donation, please write the check to St. Stephen Lutheran Church with **SHOES FOR GROVE** on the memo line. Cash is also accepted but please indicate that it is for Grove on the envelope. Please put envelopes with checks or cash in the offering plate, or in the mailbox outside the church (along the paved loop near the side door) by **Sunday, July 26**. If you have any questions, please contact **Nancy Egloff**.

From His Hands



Summer Meals for Kids volunteer slots are open and ready to be filled! We estimate 250+ lunches plus breakfast items daily being prepared at **WISC, 5700 Warhill Trail**. Like last year, From His Hands, Delta Kappa Gamma, Daybreak Church and Wellspring UMC are working together to fill all the **TUESDAY** slots. Please sign up on the Sign-Up Genius link: [Summer Meals for Kids 2025](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040449ADA82EA20-summer#/)

Or copy this into your browser:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040449ADA82EA20-summer#/>

In addition to the sign-up opportunities for making lunches and providing cookies, you can help by donating the following items: 100% juice boxes, no sugar added fruit cups and fruit snacks, granola bars, cheese crackers,

snack sized cookies, crackers, chips, pretzels and Rice Krispy Treats. These can be dropped off at **WISC between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon, Monday – Friday** or ordered from Amazon and delivered directly to WISC through this link:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2BGFBFPCR21ZT/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_2.

If you can feed a child for a week, please contribute \$25. If you can feed a child for the whole summer, please contribute \$250. Checks may be written to Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels, P.O. Box 709, Williamsburg, VA 23187; subject line: Summer Meals for Kids. Thank you for helping to relieve food deficiencies for the children in our community!

Social Ministry Coordinating Committee

WMOW
WILLIAMSBURG AREA
MEALS ON WHEELS

SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS

NOURISHING KIDS. STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY.

OUR MISSION
Provide meals to school aged children who, during the academic year rely on their school meals for the bulk of their nutrition.

WMOW needs your help with funding this ten week program. We provide lunches and snacks each weekday for children who are under served in our community. We hope to serve approximately **300 children**.
Volunteers will help with preparation, assembly and delivery of the meals – meeting families where they live in our community.
Each meal costs approx \$5.

CAN YOU HELP?

- It only takes **\$5** to feed a child a meal.
- Can you donate **\$25** to feed one child a meal for an entire week this summer?
- Or, feed one child all summer long for just **\$250?**

USE THIS QR CODE

to join us in our effort to feed our community's children this summer.

QUESTIONS?
Contact Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels
757-229-9250 | summerkidsmeals@gmail.com

Together, we can ensure no child goes hungry this summer. ♥



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

Though we have been busy emptying our classrooms in preparation for our floors being refinished, summer camp has been in full swing. Our July camp themes included *Safari*, *Space*, and *Nature*, providing plenty of opportunities for creativity, discovery, and hands-on learning.

We have also been fortunate to have Mr. Anthony join us once each week throughout the summer, bringing music, movement, and fun to our campers. A special thank you also goes to two of our wonderful preschool moms and substitute teachers, who stepped in to help lead a few of our camps this summer. Their enthusiasm and support helped make each week a success!

As we continue preparing for the new school year, we are excited to welcome back our staff and families. We hope you'll join us for the **installation of our preschool staff** with Pastor Jon on **Tuesday, August 25, at 12:00 p.m.**, with light refreshments to follow.

Save the Date! Our annual **Summer Carnival** will be held on **Saturday, August 29, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** We'll have Dominion Dogs serving lunch, along with an ice cream truck operated by the wonderful Mrs. Washington, a teacher at Stonehouse Elementary, and her husband. More details will be shared soon – we hope you'll join us for an afternoon of food, fun, and fellowship!

We continue to be grateful for the many members of the St. Stephen congregation whose encouragement, generosity, and support make our preschool community so special. We hope you are enjoying the summer, and we look forward to another wonderful year of learning, laughter, and growing together!

Jessica Kimball, Preschool Director





Thank you for your gift of \$2,000 to Lutheran Disaster Response. "From [Christ's] fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."-John 1:16

As a church, we are empowered to love and serve our neighbors as Christ first loved us. Your gifts to the ministries of the ELCA help people around the world feel the power and hope that flow from God's full, boundless love. Drawn together and guided by the Holy Spirit, we accomplish together what none of us could do alone, grace upon grace.

Your Spirit-filled generosity helps families and communities reeling from disasters, in the immediate aftermath and far into the future. No matter the disaster, no matter the need, your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response enable people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Thank you for your gracious gifts. You make God's love real.

The Rev. Daniel Rift, Director, Congregational Generosity



On behalf of Housing Partnerships, Inc., I would like to thank you for your \$1,000 donation. We are delighted to have your support, and through your donation, we will be able to keep our neighbors safe, warm, and dry.

Once again, thank you, and know that your generosity will make a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors.

Brandie V. Weiler, MBA, Executive Director



The people of Christ Ascension Lutheran Church thank you for the generous gift of handbell cases. Ours are quite smelly of mold, and you have saved us. (Well, not "saved" in the ultimate way, but each time we open the bell cases.) Thank you and blessings in this season of green growth.

Katherine Reier, Lead Musician (and Paul Reier's sister)
Christ Ascension Lutheran Church, Philadelphia



AUGUST

1	Bonnie Raquet	
4	Beth Grant	
5	Heidi Flatin	
7	Kristen Carter	JR Lyons
8	Pat Fretz (95!)	Claire White
9	Doug Moore	
11	Josiah Hallman	Thom Recktenwald
12	Dave Clark	
14	Norm Fashing	Dave Joppa
20	Lana Olson	
22	Jeane Moore	
24	Evelyn Judy	
26	Nancy Canny	
28	Ellen Weidman	Jane Wills
29	Rich Brown	
31	Paul Kristiansen	



MUSIC NOTES

YOUR VOICE COUNTS

I usually struggle with my Quill articles. What do people want to know? What will pique a congregant's interest, especially with the music ministry? How can I "advertise" something – a worship service, a musical group, a festival – that will be inviting? In this month's Quill, I just decided to randomly ramble about some thoughts I was having recently. A few days ago, I was an attendee at the Virginia Synod's event *Power in the Spirit*. First, thank you to this congregation for supporting me and our staff in these continuing education occasions. These opportunities are important not only from a learning perspective, but also from an enthusiasm aspect. I come back from church music camps and clinics with a renewed spirit, fresh ideas, and of course, some new music for our handbell and adult singing choirs, as well as music selections for our Orchaband and our Faith Formation musicians. These are also the times when I can rejoice and commiserate with my fellow church musicians, and sometimes I am able to steal their wonderful creative ideas to enhance our worship experience.

Power in the Spirit was an opportunity to meet and listen to our brand new ELCA Presiding Bishop, the Reverend Yehiel Curry. A "Fireside Chat" with the entire assembly, a workshop just for laity folk like me, and his preaching for the Friday evening communion worship were wonderful highlights for me. One particular theme Reverend Curry iterated was "support your synod." In supporting the Virginia Synod, you are supporting the churchwide mission. Every church's gift(s) to the synod is important, no matter the size of the church or its gift(s). In the church, we have various groups that support our worship, learn, care, and give ministries. We have acolytes, mowing teams, greeters, choir singers, bread bakers, and the list goes on and on – every voice in those ministries is important and valued. We hear this message in other areas of our lives, too, do we not? For example, in the political arena, we hear "Every vote counts." In some non-profit organizations, we hear "Every dollar counts."

This summer we have been having "pop-up" choirs on the fourth Sunday of each month. These are inter-

generational chances to sing together messages of faith and hope. When I ask some folks about joining us, a few respond "oh, you do not want to hear me sing." You are wrong about that – I absolutely do want to hear you sing. I want to hear everybody sing. The collective nature of singing is a wonderful thing. Every voice counts in singing praises to the Lord.

Later this month (August 30), we will have a handbell "retreat/workshop." Yes, I could say this is a "recruitment" effort; however, it is more of a social gathering, and yes, every ringer (ringing "voice") counts. This, too, is an intergenerational event. And no, you do not need to read music to participate. This is a free music lesson where you learn some basic music reading skills and some basic bell ringing skills. And if after attending, you think your ringing "voice" might want to participate in our St. Stephen Ringers group, we will find a place for your voice.

There is a great children's Sunday School (we do not call it that anymore, I know) song that sums up sharing your "voice" with your St. Stephen congregation: *A Place in the Choir* by Bill Staines.

Refrain *All God's critters got a place in the choir, some sing low, some sing higher, some sing out loud on the telephone wire, and some just clap their hands, or paws, or anything they got now.*

1. *Listen to the bass, it's the one on the bottom where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus moans and groans with a big t'do, and the old cow just goes "Moo."* **Refrain**
2. *The dogs and the cats take up the middle while the honey bee hums and the cricket fiddles, the donkey brays and the pony neighs and the old coyote howls.* **Refrain**
3. *Listen to the top where the little birds sing on the melodies with the high notes ringing. The hoot owl hollers over ev'rything and the jaybird disagrees.* **Refrain**
4. *Singing in the night-time, singing in the day, the little duck quacks, then he's on his way. The possum ain't got much to say, and the porcupine talks to himself.* **Refrain**
5. *It's a simple song of living sung ev'rywhere by the ox and the fox and the grizzly bear, the grumpy alligator and the hawk above, the sly raccoon and the turtle dove.* **Refrain**

MUSICAL DATES TO REMEMBER:

Saturday, August 8, 11:00 a.m. Orchaband Rehearsal
(Instrumental "voices" wanted!)

Sunday, August 9, 9:45 a.m. Orchaband plays for worship

Sunday, August 23, 9:15 a.m. Pop-up Choir Rehearsal for 9:45
worship

Wednesday, August 26. First Chancel Choir Rehearsal **7:00
p.m.** (This choir serves the 11:00 a.m. worship service when
we get back to two services.)

Sunday, August 30, 8:30 a.m. First Matins Choir Rehearsal
(This choir serves the 8:30 a.m. service when we return to two
services and normal rehearsals will be from **9:45-10:15 a.m.**
on Sunday mornings)

Sunday, August 30, 2:00-4:00 p.m. Handbell Retreat
(Sanctuary)

Sunday, September 6. Outdoor Worship and picnic

Sunday, September 13. Return to the two service schedule at
8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Karen Ives, Music Director



AUGUST BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

The significance of baptism, Luther teaches in the *Small Catechism*, is "that the old creature in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily contrition and repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

Your baptismal anniversary is an opportunity to light a baptismal candle and to give some prayer time to reflecting on your experiences during the past year on your journey in faith!

Pastor Jon Nelson

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Kristine Eichelberger | |
| 2 | Laura Bergh | |
| 5 | Linda Baumgarten | |
| 25 | Alison Carney | Evelyn Judy |
| 26 | James Ogborn | |
| 28 | Brian Crittenden | |
| 29 | Sandra Witt | |
| 31 | Randy Punchard | |

Others who were baptized in August

Amber Jansson	Carla Javier
Christina Nelson	

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

PRAYERS



Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for
**Kristin Carter, Ginny Cummings, Craig Eichfeld, Edith
Haecker, Dave Hoyer, Jim Ivey, Sharon Jacobs, Marilyn
Johnson, Donna Kittelson, Terri Larsen, and Carole
Meyer.**

Pray for those unable to come to worship: **Ailene
Bartlett, Ed Brown, Pat Janot, Marilyn Johnson, Jon
Lund, Darlene Simon, and Kay Wasaff.**

Pray for these loved ones of our congregation: Bob Alt,
Thomas Alt, Randy Altona, Phyllis Andrews, Sam
Areheart, Kristin Carter, Philip Baker, Bob Bastian, Carol
Baum, Robi Bayard, Lila Bradley, Carol Bergh, Mary
Bloom, Doug Bolick, Robert Bunn, David Carr, John
Coski, Amaree Cluff, Ronnie Dodson, Pat D'Orazio, Dru
Dowdy, Judy Drezek, Danny Gass, Keith and Debbie
Glenn, Joan Goodhart, Charee Hampton, Sue Hassan and
family, Andy Havola, Nick Havola, Bradley, Kim, Joan and
Laurie Heintzelman, Char Henry, Lisa Hill, Doris
Hillenbrand, Bob Hirsch, Michelle Holdsworth, Jaxon
Ireland, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, Jenn Kramer,
Bob Loubach, Pat Layton, Marnah Lund, Keara Mahony,
Trish Macerelli, Laura Margolin, Barry and Mabel Martin,
Ellen Martin, Mabel Mater, Jackie Mazzone, Jimmy
Mitchell, Carolyn Moneymaker Marian Mongelli, Liz
Montalvo, Chuckie Moore, Bob Myers, Jeanette Osborn,
Rodger Osborn, Maricel Paulin, Dima Pavlenko, Coral
Pumley, Scott Radley, Kurt Recktenwald, Paula Rega,
Carol Sue Repass, Brian Ritter, Ruth Sandoval, Lou
Schuster, Pamela Sharp, Kelsey Slay, Valerie Smith, Vasili
Souloukis, Laura Spencer, Charlie Stayton, Chad
Strausbaugh, Al Stern, Monika Stern, Lara Templin,
Lenora Thomas, Karli Wallace Thompson, Betty Lou
Tulloh, Elaine Wrich, Lynda Wright, and Bev Utrich.



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

612 Jamestown Road Williamsburg, VA 23185

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www.saintstephenlutheran.net

August 2026

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