



The Quill

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Williamsburg, Virginia

March 2026



WALKING WET

This Lent, our congregation is invited to embark on a journey titled **“Walking Wet: Living Our Baptismal Promises in Daily Life.”** Developed by the Northeastern Pennsylvania and Virginia Synods, this series shifts our focus toward the five promises made at baptism. Far from being a one-time event from our past, these promises are meant to “drench” us daily in God’s love and grace, providing a practical guide for living as children of God in a complex world.

Why "Walking Wet"? The title serves as a reminder that the water of baptism never truly dries. Throughout the six weeks of Lent, we will explore how these ancient commitments shape our modern lives; from how we listen to others to how we strive for justice. Each week, we will focus on a specific baptismal promise, supported by a "Watchword" to serve as a meditative lens for our contemplative waiting.

Our Lenten path is structured around the five baptismal promises found in the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnal (page 228):

- Week 1 and Ash Wednesday | Promise: Promises Made | Watchword: Listen
- Week 2 | Promise: Live among God’s Faithful People | Watchword: Community
- Week 3 | Promise: Hear the Word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper | Watchword: Sacrament
- Week 4 | Promise: Proclaim the Good News...through Word and Deed | Watchword: Story
- Week 5 | Promise: Serve all people, following the example of Jesus | Watchword: Compassion

To help us "soak" in these promises, the series offers several ways to participate:

- **Worship and Prayer:** Each week features specific scriptures and prayers designed to enliven the story of Jesus and help us perceive God around us. These will be utilized amidst our Wednesday evening Prayer around the Cross.
- **Daily Practices:** You are encouraged to try one new faith practice each week: such as spiritual journaling, community prayer walks, or even baking bread for communion. These will be shared at our Wednesday services.
- **Small Group Reflection:** We will use the Small Catechism to deepen our understanding of the Lord’s Prayer, the Creeds, and the Sacraments. These conversation/reflection questions will be shared both Wednesdays and Sundays during Lent.

Lent is often seen as a season of "giving up," but "Walking Wet" invites us to take up a life of active discipleship. By aligning our "treasures with our hearts," we move from being passive observers to active participants in God’s mission of mercy and love.

As we begin on Ash Wednesday, we ask: Which promise will inspire you? Which will challenge you? Join us as we learn what it means to truly walk wet into the light of Easter.

In Christ,
Pastor Jon

CONGREGATION COUNCIL



What's Happening at Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met on Tuesday evening, February 10, for its regular monthly meeting. It was two days after the Semi-annual Congregational Meeting which had been delayed from January because of the storms. We discussed that meeting initially and it was the consensus of Council that that meeting had gone very well and was effective in communicating with and from the Congregation.

We reviewed the recent deaths of Joe Beene and Bob Cummings, both long-time members of the Congregation, and noted that there have been multiple members of the congregation who have undergone surgical procedures within the last six to eight weeks.

We went over a number of points of **old business** including:

- The day after the Council meeting is supposed to be the final meeting with the HVAC contractor (All have fingers crossed!).
- Council has a committee planning an updated website for St. Stephen and they will have their first meeting some time after Shrove Tuesday.
- The Call Committee continues to meet. Their next task is to put together a Ministry Site Profile and then compile financial information to support these efforts.

Several points of **new business** were also discussed by the group including:

- Pastor Nelson and Pastor Gerry Johnson who works with the LSA Ministry have had discussions about possibly offering a stipend and housing support for an LSA student as a Summer Intern to help run a summer camp experience for children. That is in the early discussion stages at this point.
- Nancy Egloff and Julie Meeks have been acting on the issue identified at the Council Retreat in January of a good number of individuals and couples not seen at services for some time. A list has been compiled, and a committee has been formed to make contact with those individuals and couples and see how we can best support their needs.

- The All Committee Meeting has been moved to Sunday, March 1 after the 11:00 a.m. service. Roberta Sulouff suggested that it be called the "All Committee Fair" to encourage new members to join committees and that was felt to be a good idea.

No other business was brought before Council, and after prayer, the meeting was adjourned.

Bill Dichtel

Lent



Wednesdays in Lent

Wednesday evenings in Lent: March 4, 11, 18, and 26,
at St. Stephen:

5:30 p.m.: Soup and bread supper in the Fellowship Hall

6:30 p.m.: Evening Prayer

HOLY WEEK



Thursday, April 2, 7:00 p.m. – Maundy Thursday worship *at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 1333 Jamestown Road.*

Friday, April 3, 7:00 p.m. – Good Friday worship *at St. Stephen.*

Saturday, April 4, 7:00 pm – The Easter Vigil *at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 1333 Jamestown Road.*

Easter Sunday, April 5, 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. – Festival Easter Worship.



MUSIC NOTES

OUR LENTEN LITURGY

Since we began this new liturgical year (way back on November 30, 2025 with the first Sunday of Advent), I have intentionally selected our liturgical music from sources other than the 10 orders of worship presented in our *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) hymnbook. As a refresher, our ELW hymnal has 10 Liturgy Settings found in the front of the book and 893 “hymns” in the back portion of the book. However, not all are really hymns – the first 150 numbers are those of the Psalms from the Bible, and then starting with 151 through 238, we have “Service Music,” pieces that may be included in our sung liturgy: Kyrie, Hymn of Praise, Gospel Acclamation, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Nunc Dimittis. But that’s not all – some of the “Service Music” are prayer responses, Baptismal refrains, Offertory pieces, Evening prayer pieces, Magnificats, and more. Check it out for yourselves ... those cranberry books are still in our pews.

In Advent, we used a chant-like liturgy: hymn 156 for the Kyrie, hymn 168 for the Gospel Acclamation, and hymn 194 for the Lamb of God. I did cheat and use one of the 10 liturgical Settings in the front of the hymnal for our “Holy, Holy,” – Setting 5 – as there really was not a chant-like version of the Sanctus in the Service Music portion of ELW.

In Epiphany, all the liturgy selections came from our hymnal supplement – *All Creation Sings*. Last month’s article talked about our Global liturgy that included a Haitian Kyrie, a Syrian Acclamation, an Argentinian “Holy, Holy,” and a Finnish “Lamb of God.”

So now we are in the midst of our Lenten journey continuing through the end of March. All the selections are again from the “Service Music” of our ELW, and they are all by contemporary composers – living composers.

The **Kyrie** comes from Marty Haugen’s 1990 liturgy *Now the Feast and Celebration*. You know Haugen’s work from his Holden Evening Prayer, and hymns *Gather Us In*, *Healer of Our Every Ill*, and *All Are Welcome* to name a few. *Now the Feast and Celebration* was a liturgy commissioned by the campus ministry of Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA. From the introduction of the keyboard score, Haugen states it “is an alternative musical setting for eucharist employing language which attempts to be inclusive and

contemporary while retaining a Christo-centered theology and a form which respects traditional practice.”

Retired ELCA Lutheran pastor and musician Robert Buckley Farlee composed our **Lenten Acclamation**. His ministry includes 40 years as a pastor and cantor at Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis, MN. He also served on the worship editorial staff at Augsburg Fortress Publishers and was deeply involved in the development of our ELW hymnal and was a past president (2004–2007) of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM).

You might recall the composer of our **Sanctus**, Paul Weber, who presented his new hymnary, *So Great a Cloud of Witnesses*, right here in our worship space September of 2023. Weber is Professor Emeritus of Church Music at Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, NC. He founded and coordinated that university’s Sacred Music Program.

Weber presently conducts the Chamber Choir for *Bach Around the Clock* in Staunton, Virginia. In retirement he also serves as supply clergy for Episcopal and Lutheran parishes.

Our **Lamb of God** comes from the *Bread of Life* liturgy by Jeremy Young. This musical setting was in a former Lutheran supplement, *With One Voice*. Remember those blue books? Young hails from the Washington, DC area having served as music director of the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament. He is known for a popular Catholic hymn “*We Shall Rise Again*” and for his work in children’s theater (Blue Sky Puppet Theater).

Lastly, as our “Sending” hymn for all the Sundays of Lent we are singing a “Nunc Dimittis.” This is a version of the traditional “Now, Lord, You let your servant go in peace” that Simeon proclaimed seeing Jesus presented at the temple by his parents. The composer of our “**Now, Lord**” is Russell Schulz-Widmar, retired professor of liturgical music at the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest and former Director of Music at University United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, all in Austin, TX. Educated in Valparaiso University, Union Theological Seminary, University of Texas and the Royal School of Church Music, Schulz-Widmar has more than a hundred pieces of music in publication mostly for choir or organ and spends much of his retirement time in Berlin, Germany.

Karen Ives, Music Director

STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. STEPHEN



ENDOWMENT FUND AT WORK IN 2025

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A STEPHEN MINISTER?

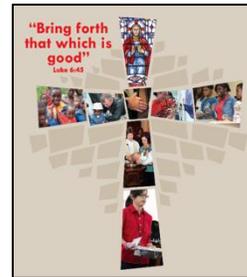
You may ask, what is it like to be a Stephen Minister? I can tell you from my experience but know that it is different for every Stephen Minister and changes with every care receiver. However, the overall experience is one that leaves me feeling humble. It is hard to find the words to describe what you feel when you stand with and beside someone who is in a tough situation or having a challenging time. It is not being a counselor. It is more than being a friend. It is providing a safe space for that person to say what they feel without fear of judgement. It is listening and helping them to give light to feelings on which they have been holding. The most amazing thing happens when you speak feelings or thoughts aloud. The care receiver and you begin to understand that it more than just that feeling or thought. The air and light that surrounds those strong feelings can help to see them anew. There are sometimes changes in our bodies when we hold in feelings. When you say or write them, there is a release that happens.

What is said when meeting with your care receiver is confidential. You never repeat anything you told to you. You never reveal your care receiver identity. All of this provides a safe and caring environment for your care receiver.

Being a Stephen Minister is a humbling experience. Your care receiver trusts you with the things they do not tell others. It is truly a view into the Christianity Jesus tells us about and the care Jesus instructs us to give to each other.

Do you have questions? Do you need a Stephen Minister? Are you interested in becoming a Stephen Minister? If you can answer yes to any of these questions, please reach out to **Pastor Jon Nelson** or **Stephen Leader Bill Dichtel**.

Diana Tiller-Dichtel, Stephen Minister



The St. Stephen Lutheran Church Endowment Fund continued to support meaningful ministry and outreach in 2025, with total assets growing to more than \$812,000 by year's end. Guided by its mission to enhance the outreach and ministry of St.

Stephen Lutheran Church, the Endowment Fund Committee approved **\$21,000 in disbursements** during the year to support both local and global needs.

Disbursements in 2025 included **\$10,000 for Afghan refugee relief** for the Kharooti family and **\$5,000 in tuition support** for Wais Kharooti at the William & Mary Business School. The Fund also supported important church needs, including **security system upgrades**, a **new sanctuary camera**, **handbell cases**, and a contribution to the **Williamsburg/James City County Summer Feeding Program**. These grants reflect the Endowment Fund's dual commitment to compassion beyond our walls and care for the ministries within them.

Members of St. Stephen are encouraged to remember that **anyone in the congregation may submit a request** for Endowment Fund support. Eligible projects include outreach into the community or synod; scholarships for seminarians, candidates for directors of church education, and church musicians; support for the Theologian-in-Residence program; large unbudgeted maintenance projects; or causes and programs – locally or elsewhere – that enhance the outreach and ministry of St. Stephen Lutheran Church. Request forms and procedures are available in the church office, and the Endowment Fund Committee welcomes ideas that strengthen our shared ministry.

Paula Agor, Chair, Endowment Fund Committee



SHROVE TUESDAY

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner on February 17 was well attended and everyone had a great time. The dinner raised \$1,572 as part of our continuing support of the Kharooti family (Afghan Refugee Relief).



MARCH

| | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|
| 3 | Sarah Harms | Janice Mayfield |
| 4 | Shelley Delehanty | Christine White |
| | David Hoyer | |
| 5 | Dave Gamble | Reed Nester |
| 6 | Jennifer Martin | |
| 7 | Gary Chenault | |
| 8 | Janet Higgs | |
| 9 | John McCurry | Ingrid Squires |
| 10 | Marilyn Mallue | |
| 11 | James Wiers | |
| 12 | Alexander Stauffer | Rachael Wiers |
| 13 | Preston Burton | |
| 14 | Susan Kauffman | |
| 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 | |
| 28 | Erik McKenna | John Watson |
| 31 | Margaret Steel | |



Thank You!

I want to thank the Prayer Shawl Ministries folks for these beautiful shawls that were delivered to me by **Chris Punchard** during the recent ice/snow storm. My husband is currently in a home hospice program with congestive heart failure. His condition is stable but slowly deteriorating, so he cannot get out of the house and needs all the comfort he can get inside. He has used his shawl several times while taking a nap. I have also used mine in the evening when the sun goes down. These shawls are beautiful and, being a knitter/crocheter myself, I know how much time and skill it takes to create something like this. We feel blessed. Thank you!



Theresa Scovill



Thank you for faithfully supporting the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a monthly partner in 2025. Your gifts were a hopeful and joyous response to new challenges and opportunities. They are a commitment to the good work we do together in the name of Jesus.

In 2025, you empowered leaders here at home and in our companion churches around the world, supported refugees fleeing war and conflict, provided shelter and hope to those impacted by natural disasters, strengthened communities of faith, equipped people to overcome hunger and poverty, and so much more. Through your support and God's grace, together we are bringing hope amid despair and spreading the peace of Christ throughout the world.

Your support shows the love of Christ to the world. Thank you for empowering this church in its mission to be the hands and feet of Jesus. We are grateful for your partnership in this life-changing work!

Rachel Wind, Executive for Development



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

Our friends have truly enjoyed celebrating love and community helpers (featuring our own post office) over the past month! From creative art projects to joyful songs and meaningful chapel lessons, our students have been learning positive ways to manage big emotions, the importance of their choices, and how they can make a positive impact on others.

It was wonderful to see some of our preschool families at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner, and we were grateful to have a preschool family and staff members participate in Ash Wednesday with Pastor Jon. Our preschool community continues to connect with the congregation in meaningful ways, and we are hopeful that these relationships will continue to grow in the future.

We are also excited to share that the preschool has received its religious non-exempt licensure for the 2026-2027 school year and already has a waitlist for next year! In addition, registration for our summer camps is now open. We invite you to share this opportunity with anyone who may be interested.

We look forward to sharing pictures from our Winter Carnival, Read Across America Spirit Week, and St. Patrick's Day celebrations next month.

Jessica Kimball, Preschool Director





STEWARDSHIP ESSENTIALS

The March stewardship focus will be Grace Inside, the nonprofit which supports prison ministries. On March 15, Rev. Aaron Brittain will be on hand to talk about the ministry between services.

According to the Grace Inside website, www.graceinside.org, the organization is Virginia's prison chaplain service provider, sent by the church to nurture faith and hope among those incarcerated. The charity provides licensed or ordained ministers to lead worship services, provide one-on-one pastoral care, coordinate volunteers, support prison staff and oversee all religious programming.

Currently, Virginia has a prison population of 23,000 in 37 facilities served by 32 chaplains. The website lists partner organizations and links to apply as a prison volunteer.

Hebrews 13:3 A, "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison."

Susan Williamson



**2026 WOMEN'S
RETREAT RECEIVES
ENDOWMENT GRANT**

St. Stephen's Endowment Fund Committee made a generous and much-appreciated grant for use by the Spring 2026 Women's Retreat planning team to cover the cost of the retreat venue rental in Sandbridge, VA. As a result of the grant, the planning team is grateful to be able to offer retreat participants extremely reasonable pricing for the March 20-22 retreat: \$20 for Saturday day-only participation, or \$50 total including Friday and/or Saturday overnight stays. The intention for the weekend length of the spring retreat is to facilitate

relaxed conversations, deeper sharing and participation, and development of stronger relationships.

The retreat program centers on the book *Gifts from the Sea*, by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, and will be led by members of the planning team. The retreat venue is a large beach house with elevator, offering the retreat participants a variety of sleeping accommodations, plenty of bathrooms for sharing, full kitchen for meal preparation, and space for the group's program sessions and other gathering time.

Simple continental breakfasts and an easy Saturday lunch are being provided, while the menus for dinners are borrowed from St. Stephen's motel ministry. The planning team selected motel ministry menus for the dinners to bring to mind those we serve through that ministry, and as an example to encourage reflection on how we can use our gifts to help others in need.

The retreat planning team also applied for and received a \$250 Thrivent Action Team grant, which is being used to cover the cost of retreat materials and service project items. For our service project, we are preparing period packs for No shame. Period., a Williamsburg-based nonprofit that works with school nurses, staff, and volunteers to ensure menstruating students have what they need to be comfortable and confident, with no shame, while staying in class. No shame. Period. says that the period packs are "everything a student needs to let them know that this is ok, it's normal and natural and they can get cleaned up, changed, and back to class comfortably and confidently."

Many thanks to St. Stephen and the Endowment Funds Committee for supporting the spring 2026 women's retreat in such a significant way!

Alison Carney

**Giving Statements for 2025
are available for pick-up in
the Gathering Space or at
the Church Office.**



MARCH 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

- 3 Marj Gottschalk-Trone
- 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!



MEN'S & WOMEN'S BREAKFASTS

- **March 3** – Women are invited to join together for breakfast the first **Tuesday** of this month.
- **March 5** – 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.

PRAYERS



Join your prayers for healing with God's desires for **Preston Burton, Kristin Carter, Ginny Cummings, Craig Eichfeld, Edith Haecker, Sharon Jacobs, Rita Kristiansen, Terri Larsen, Jim Mayfield, Carole Meyer, Jim Ogborn, Carl and Mitchell Stauffer, and George Vonderheide.**

Pray for those unable to come to worship: **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: Sam Areheart, Randy Altona, Phyllis Andrews, Lori Bardey and family, Charles Baugh, Donald and Carol Baum, Robi Bayard, Jeffrey Berry, Sr., Lila Bradley, June Brantley, Carol Bergh, Mary Bloom, Doug Bolick, Kay Braman, Bob Britcher, Raymond Bunn, Ruth Ann Coski, Amaree Cluff, Dru Dowdy, Judy Drezek, The family of Scott Hadly, Charee Hampton, Sue Hassan and family, Andy Havola, Nick Havola, Kim, Joan and Laurie Heintzeman, Lisa Hill, Doris Hillenbrand, Michelle Holdsworth, Jaxon Ireland, Don Johnson, Connie Kendrick, The Kennedy family, Pat Layton, Marnah Lund, Keara Mahony, Trish Macerelli, Laura Margolin, Barry and Mabel Martin, Ellen Martin, Mabel Mater, Jackie Mazzone, Tom Mifflin, Jimmy Mitchell, Liz Montalvo, Bob Myers, Jeanette Osborn, Maricel Paulin, The Peterson family, Janet Popelas, Coral Pumley, Scott Radley, Kurt Recktenwald, Carol Sue Repass, Brian Ritter, Lou Schuster, Pamela Sharp, Kelsey Slay, Valerie Smith, Helen Soultoukis, Vasili Soultoukis, Kenneth and Laura Spencer, Chad Strausbaugh, Al Stern, Monika Stern, Janis Stevenson, Lara Templin, George and Jewel Thomas, Karli Wallace Thompson, Jenn Tyson, Matt Weilmuenster, Elaine Wrich, and Lynda Wright.



Virginia Lutherans

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 2026

Congregational Officers:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| <i>President</i> | Sandy Croushore | 757-476-5789 |
| <i>Vice President</i> | Russ Dabel | 719-645-9510 |
| <i>Treasurer</i> | Brian Agor | 757-561-5889 |
| <i>Financial Secretary</i> | Karen Nester | 757-869-2949 |
| | email | Finsec@ |
| <i>Congregational Secretary</i> | Jonathan Hallman | 757-566-1686 |

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

Church Staff:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Pastor</i> | Jon Nelson | 320-295-8861 |
| | email | Pastorjn@ |
| <i>Parish Administrator</i> | Hollie Jones | Office@ |
| <i>Director of Music</i> | Karen Ives | MusicDir@ |
| <i>Preschool Director</i> | Jessica Kimball | Preschool@ |
| <i>LSA Pastor</i> | Gerry Johnson | 703-209-3599 |
| | email | Pastorgfj@ |

Congregation Council:

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Jeffery Berry (Youth Member) | 804-432-5149 |
| Sandy Croushore | 757-476-5789 |
| Russ Dabel | 719-645-9510 |
| Jane deSolms | 757-565-5646 |
| Bill Dichtel | 757-232-5334 |
| Nancy Egloff | 757-293-8547 |
| Beth Grant | 703-447-8685 |
| Jonathan Hallman | 757-566-1686 |
| Terri Larsen | 804-815-9489 |
| J.R. Lyons | 757-920-5355 |
| Julie Meeks | 804-432-5149 |
| Paul Reier | 757-566-0092 |
| Roberta Sulouff | 978-854-2085 |

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

Editor: Reed Nester
 reednester@gmail.com

Article deadline: Fifteenth of the month.