

SUMMER 2022 ..... Issue No. 19  
*Stories of God at work in our lives*

ANASTASIS | ἀνάστασις

[Greek for 'Resurrection' or 'Rising Up']





PHOTO CREDITS: Cover—Aaron Burden, This page—Joshua Sukoff, Next page—Jan Willhelm, all for UNSPLASH.



**ST. STEPHEN**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church

..... *Anastasis is a quarterly publication of* .....

**ST STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH**

30 West Main St (PO Box 266), New Kingstown, PA 17072

717-766-2168

StStephenLC.org

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Our congregation responds to Christ's love by feeding those who hunger in body, mind, and spirit. The stories in this issue are examples of times we have experienced God in our lives. We invite you to encounter Jesus each Sunday morning in worship (both online and onsite following social distancing protocols) or through any other of the programs and events listed throughout this publication.

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God works through each of us and uses  
us to help each other.



There's more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!

**THIS ISSUE'S SCRIPTURE FOCUS:**  
**Romans 5:3-5 (the Message)**



# *a time to ...* **GROW**

This issue's theme is "a time to grow." Often, we have this idea that growth is this magical, wonderful thing full of joy and smiles. But if we are honest, growth is not usually pleasant. Sometimes, it can be painful. This is why there is often resistance to growth and change.

I heard a story some years back about a man who, when he was a boy, had legs that were different lengths. For a long time, the family had special shoes made where one shoe had a very thick sole to compensate for the leg difference. But this was not a good solution. As you might imagine, the boy was treated harshly by his classmates because of his situation.

A revolutionary procedure was proposed for the boy. The family was hesitant but the boy was more than willing. The pain of the ridicule by his peers was far greater than the possibility of failure of the procedure and the accompanying pain it would cause.

The procedure involved the breaking of his shorter leg and, using poles attached to that leg, stretching it to the length of the other, leaving a large gap where there was no

bone. The human body is so incredible that the doctors who figured out this procedure learned that the body would grow new bone where it was missing. It was painful but it worked! The boy now had two legs that were the same length.

Growth can be wonderful but it can be painful as well. As the man who told the story said, sometimes you have to be broken and pulled in order for growth to take place.

As Christians, we are called to growth. Growth in following Jesus. Growth in serving our neighbor. Growth in loving one another. Growth in so many ways. Sometimes growth can be painful.

But it's worth it.

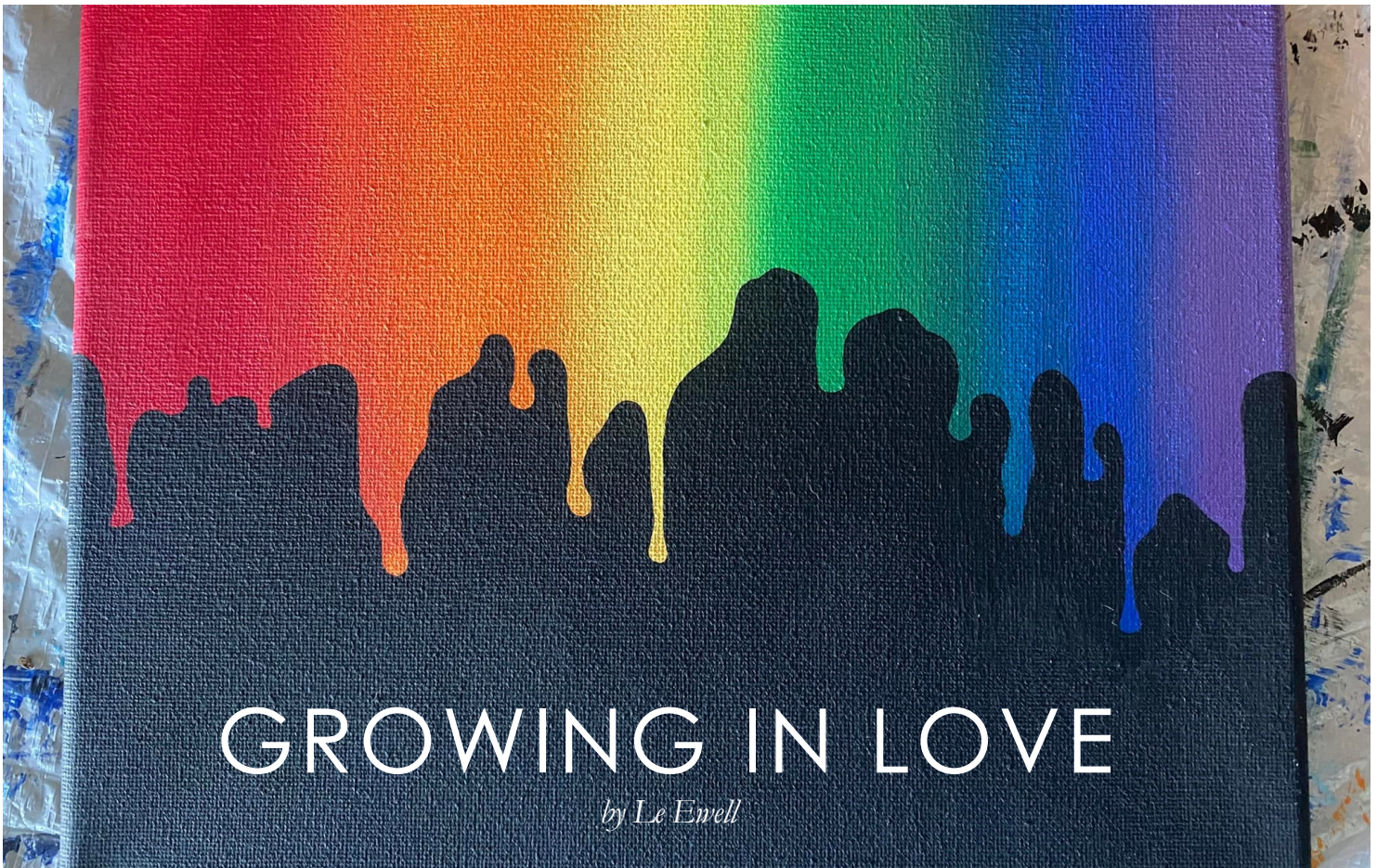
In this edition, you'll read stories of growth. Some are happy and pleasant. Others are full of pain. But they all have a common theme – growth. Living things grow; they do not stay stagnant.

Our faith is a living thing.



Pastor Matthew Best





When I was young, my family used such words as faggot, queer, gay, and homosexual; I had no idea what they meant but I did know that I didn't want to be them, whatever they were. Those terms were used with great negative connotation and disgust.

When I grew into a young adult, I married a man whose brother Tommy and sister Star were gay. I didn't understand how this sister could be his favorite, because surely ... something was wrong with her.

Once we stayed overnight with Star and her girlfriend; I was *so* uncomfortable. When it came time to put our daughter Brandi to bed, Star suggested that she could stay in her room since it was the biggest. My husband Jim agreed right away; I almost had a heart attack. There was no

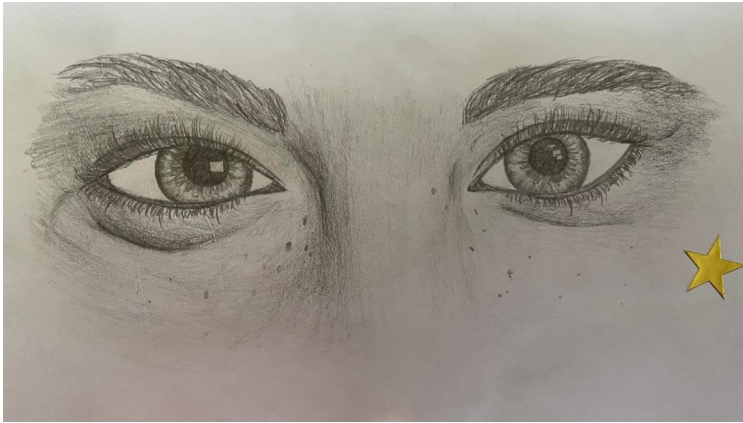
way my baby girl was going to stay in a room, behind closed doors, with two gay women! It just wasn't going to happen ...

Years later, I came to Harrisburg and landed an accounting position in the old Water Works Building right on the Susquehanna River. As it turned out, two gay men owned the business. I started to notice there were many openly gay people in this area (not at all what I was accustomed to in Buffalo, NY). I shied away from these people because now I knew what faggot, queer, gay, and homosexual meant. I still didn't want to be that *or* associate with them.

I ended up working for that company for twenty years. It was by far the best job I've ever had. Today, I can tell you that I *love* those men; they are great people who afforded me wonderful opportunities. Today, I call them friends.

Camp Nawakwa is a wonderful place. It was there, about five years ago, while sitting on the





rock wall by the basketball court, that my grandchild (who now uses they/theirs pronouns) out of the blue first declared “I like girls.” Not understanding, I replied, “I like girls, too.” They tried again, emphasizing, “I am *attracted* to girls.”

I was in shock. I didn’t know what to say and I didn’t know what *not* to say so ... without skipping a beat, I spoke the only truth I knew at that moment. “It doesn’t matter to me who you are attracted to. You are my grandchild and I love you.”

And then we talked.

A couple of years ago, another grandchild called me at work and said, “Grammy, I have something to tell you ...”

“What is it?” I asked. He took a deep breath and blurted it out, “I am trans.” I now felt experienced in this realm and so right away replied, “It doesn’t matter to me what you are. You are my grandchild and I love you.”

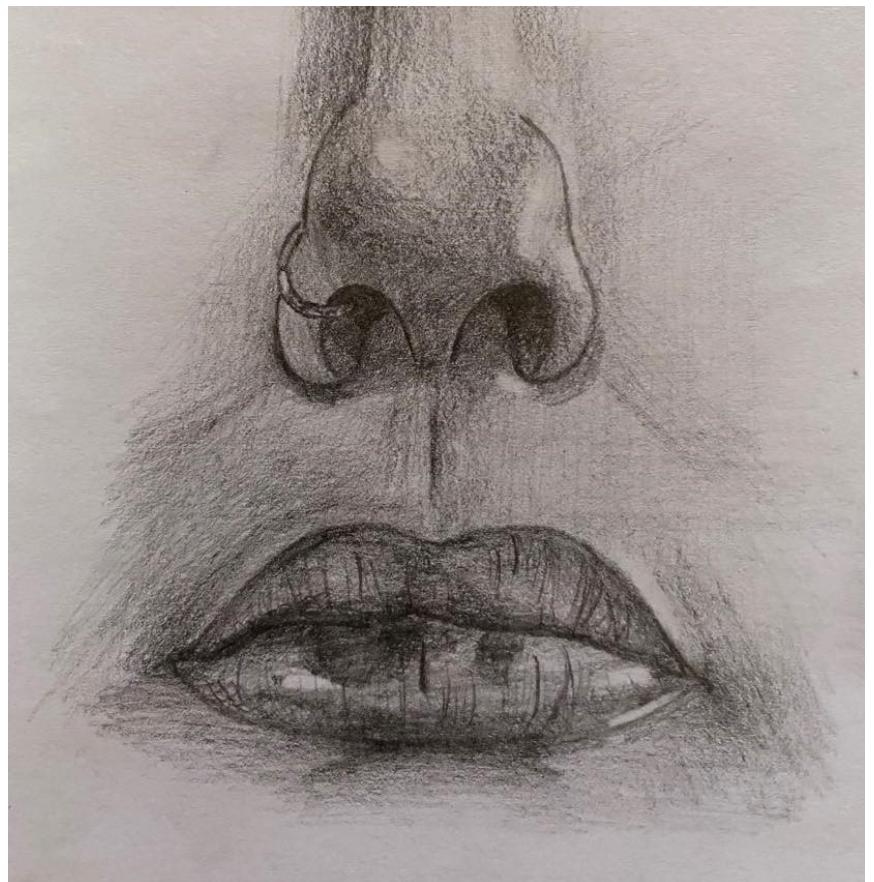
And then we talked.

I have been richly blessed with eight grandchildren who are my pure joy. There isn’t a thing I wouldn’t do for them. I will even change for them, though it might make me feel uncomfortable.

In today’s world, we struggle with sexuality and gender. I see online posts putting down individuals who claim an identity or a gender that does not match with what they were assigned at birth. We struggle with such terms as non-binary, transgender, gender-queer, and asexual; we have she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs; there are even neo-pronouns but I’m not advanced enough at this stage to explain them!

I’m still learning and I’m still growing. I still call my grandchildren by their given names instead of their preferred names; I say “she” instead of “they;” I forget what terms mean and I have to be reminded constantly. I slip up all the time. They are open, and forgiving, and appreciate that I try.

They are my grandchildren and I love them. †







# FOR A TIME SUCH AS THIS

*by Rev. Matthew Best*

PHOTO CREDIT: This page—Connor Gan for UNSPLASH.



*“And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” – Romans 5:3-5*

I sit and write this on the day after the horror of yet another school shooting in this country, one in which nineteen students and two teachers died. I don’t even know what to think. I don’t know what to do.

I received a phone call from a colleague this morning who is the same boat. The phrase that came out was “I’m so tired.”

I told him I was too. The world is exhausting. I told him it is designed that way. Evil wants you to quit, to give up. Evil systems are designed to make you suffer and to exhaust you. And these systems do not take a sabbath rest because they know that, if they ever stopped, they would be ended.

We are a suffering society. Often times, we suffer needlessly. We are just unwilling to do anything to prevent further suffering, preferring excuses and telling ourselves that we are powerless to make a difference.

Why do I keep going? Because giving up is exactly what evil wants us to do. It’s hoping that the burden it throws on us is too much for us to bear. And it is, if we think we have to bear this alone.

Faith wasn’t given to us for the good times. You know those times ... times in which everything is going great, when the waters are smooth. Times when we have plenty of money and energy. Times when our relationships are strong and healthy. Times when the news isn’t devastating or sounding like a dystopian novel come to life. Nope, we don’t need faith in those moments.

Instead, we need faith for a time like now, when a school shooting claims the lives of nineteen children and two teachers and there is an unwillingness to do anything at all to prevent the next shooting. (I certainly hope I’ve been proven wrong about that by the time you read this.)

We need faith for a time like now, when the partisan division is palpable and there are people who openly talk about civil war without the slightest idea of the complete and utter chaos and devastation that it would cause. We need faith for a time like now, when poverty and homelessness are wreaking havoc over the lives of so many people in so many ways.

As of the end of May, there were 125 students in Cumberland Valley School District who fit the Department of Education’s definition of experiencing homelessness. 125. Right here. Our neighbors.

We need faith for a time like now, when a war is waging in a foreign land with the prospects of it expanding – or the use of nuclear weapons – is real.

We need faith for a time like now, when a contagious virus continues to infect and kill numerous people yet the main concern for many is fighting over mitigation efforts – because they are somehow political, rather than about the general welfare of society.

We need faith for a time like now, for a whole host of additional reasons too numerous to list here.

Paul’s letter to the Roman church, from which this issue’s scripture focus is drawn, is written during a similar time. It comes after a great persecution of Jews that included Jewish Christians as well. Many were forced to leave the capital of the empire due to persecution. Paul wrote to a congregation he did not establish and had not visited, meaning he did not have an existing relationship with them. The letter is written in a time of great tension in the church – of great uncertainty in the world – in an empire that abused, exploited, and caused death and destruction on those it deemed barbarians (less than human for Roman standards).

Paul’s message is simple for these believers who are in the very heart of the empire and are a community that represents the exact opposite of what that empire is all about.

Empires want to wear down anyone who does not comply. They persecute in order to get compliance and cleanse those who do not conform. Empires exhaust their enemies, never stopping. The only option they offer is submission to them and their ways.

As the Lutheran Study Bible states the summation of Paul’s message, “The gospel is God’s power of salvation for individuals, for the church, and for all of creation too.” Not for Rome. But that message becomes far more real and difficult when you are in the midst of chaos and being worn down and exhausted because of what is happening.

And so let us hear Paul’s message anew. It is written for a time such as this, for a people who are tired, exhausted, and unsure of how to go forward. It wasn’t written to us but Paul’s message is just as much for us as it was for those first hearers of his words.

*“And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” – Romans 5:3-5 †*



# GROWING SPIRITUALLY

by Caroline Sheaffer

As long as I can remember, I've had an insatiable case of wanderlust. Whether it is a weekend away, a six-week trip in a pop-up camper, or a first-class flight to the other side of the world – thanks to a son-in-law previously employed by United Airlines – I never tire of travel with family or friends.

Visiting new places is more than sightseeing. It is essential to growing as a person and becoming open-minded, tolerant, and accepting of others who are different. It means learning about different cultures, races, religions, lifestyles, and people. It means forming my own opinions versus accepting what I hear or read.

Two of the things I am drawn to do when traveling are visiting places of worship and attending the worship services. Worshipping within a sanctuary grounds my faith; coming to the Communion rail spiritually connects me to God in a manner I cannot do in any other way. Learning about the religions in a new area helps me grow in my faith journey. How are the beliefs of others similar or different from my own Lutheran religious doctrines or church practices?

Priceless also art abounds in many churches – Renaissance paintings and sculptures. You simply can't miss Michelangelo's jaw-dropping sculptures of The Pieta, Moses, or the Sistine Chapel frescoes – or paintings by Rafael and other masters – all in churches.

It's been a privilege to visit Buddhist and Taoist temples in China, Islamic mosques in Egypt and Turkey, a half-bombed church in Berlin, Jewish synagogues such as in Prague, sod-roofed Icelandic churches, Salvadoran churches, underground cave churches in Cappadocia, and great cathedrals around the world. We climbed to the top of St. Peter's Dome and stood beside statues of the apostles overlooking Vatican City; we ascended the "Scala Sancta" (Holy Steps, believed to be the steps Christ climbed going to Pontius Pilate) on our knees as a sign of reverence in Rome. My traveling companions mostly



tolerate my church-visiting obsession but, after the knee climb, a very young voice pleaded, “Gram, do we *have* to go in any more churches?”

Europe is filled with Christian relics – a head, or foot, or finger in various churches. Although a bit gory, if you happen to be in the city, you can't help but be a bit curious, so yes, we have observed a few of the many relics in Rome – St. Paul's chains and a part of Christ's manger; we've seen Paris' Crown of Thorns which they managed to rush out of Notre Dame



Cathedral before the big fire, and the vial of Christ's blood in Bruges, Belgium.

On our recent trip to the southern United States, one of my big goals in planning the trip was to be sure to visit Charleston's 1687 Huguenot Church, located in the French quarter of the city, the oldest French quarter in America. This is the only active Huguenot Church in the western hemisphere. My maternal grandmother proudly bragged about our Huguenot ancestors who left the Alsace-Lorraine area in France and came to Philadelphia fleeing religious persecution. I wanted to attend that worship service, have a tour, and share a bit of my own history by taking some of the documentation of my heritage with me. I had mixed feelings about the experience but will share a few tidbits of interest. On either side of the altar in the front of the sanctuary are the Ten Commandments – five on each side. They are recited at the beginning of each service. The choir's opening hymn is sung in French as a reminder of the persecution they once faced. They do not refer to the Old and New Testaments but rather to the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. Communion is offered once a month and we were fortunate the Sunday we attended was Communion Sunday. The sending hymn for each and every service is "My Country 'Tis of Thee." I have to admit getting a bit emotional at that point. I don't think I've sung that song since elementary school, for one thing; and, second, as the staggering slaughter of Ukrainians is currently happening and millions have fled to Poland and other nearby countries who welcome these refugees, I thought about the U.S. welcoming my own ancestors when they needed a place of refuge. On non-Communion Sundays a "collation," a French word related to community, is held outside the church; it is a fellowship time of refreshments. When we arrived home, I found an email waiting for me from the head elder inviting us to attend their April 15 service in French commemorating the adoption of the Edict of Nantes.

We also attended a Savannah Anglican Church for its short Compline service at 8 p.m. I had read what a lovely service it is and again arranged our itinerary to be sure to catch it. Quiet and meditative without any congregational interaction, this candlelit service truly fed my spirit and was just what I needed at the end of a busy day of sight-seeing and hearing about the city's history. The choir processed quietly down the aisle to the rear of the sanctuary and up to the balcony where they sang the entire service in Gregorian chant. The blending voices were sublime as they covered the liturgy, thanksgiving, prayers, and confes-



sion. A pastor gave a short homily of perhaps five minutes from the front of the church. After the Nunc Dimittis, the choir quietly filed out the way they came in and worshippers quietly left. A basket for donations was outside the door. If you wished to stay for prayers or questions after the service, you were invited to do so.

Most churches in historic Savannah and Charleston were open, including the Unitarian Church and the nearby Circular Church. Knowledgeable members of each church were present to show visitors around and answer questions about their facilities built in the 1700s and we took advantage by walking inside many. Each was unique and each one was prettier than the next. In each, I was driven to ask two questions: *Are your members returning since COVID-19?* and *What are your outreach ministries?* Every single church we visited in both Savannah and Charleston said - and we witnessed firsthand - that yes, members were overjoyed to be returning to in-person worship; we never saw a single mask, attendance at the first church was bursting at the seams, and it wasn't even a special Sunday; and yes, outreach ministries never stopped during COVID and continue now. We saw bags of items piled in the back of virtually every sanctuary for various donations but we also read about specific donations for things like mattress pad covers at missions, food banks, and churches working together in a consortium to provide larger items such as medical vans complete with X-ray machines to go into rural communities for the poor without transportation to get into the city. Each church valued its in-person worship services as well as opportunities for outreach ministries.

Traveling allows me a time to grow spiritually, to learn about other faiths and churches, and learn how each chooses to serve those in need. †





# GLIMPSES OF GOD

*Peeks of God at work in our congregation and community*



## Neighborhood Collection

A few months ago, I was asked to help round up supplies to send to the traumatized people of Ukraine. After considering how best to do this, I decided to see if my local neighborhood would like to be involved. I sent out an email,

giving suggestions of items to donate, and said that people could drop things off on our front porch. Every time I heard a rustle outside or detected a car door closing, I rushed to the kitchen window to see what might be out there!

Within a matter of a week and a half, our whole nine-foot-wide window seat was filled with 97 toothbrushes, 36 large tubes of toothpaste, 130 bars of soap, 32 pairs of socks, 35 hand towels, 70 wash cloths, 12 bath towels, 16 large containers of body wash and hand sanitizer, five sleeping bags, four boxes of clothing, four packs of diaper wipes, and almost 1000 diapers! My favorite donated items were the 53 sweet handmade cards made by neighborhood children to send as well.



PHOTO CREDITS: Top—Elias Null for UNSPLASH; Additional photos—Sally John.

As some of you may remember, 29 years ago our congregation helped to settle a Ukrainian family here in our area. The young son Ruslan, who is now grown and graying at the temples, is the one who came to pick up our stash. When his family moved here, he said he had no idea what to expect — he was afraid they would have to live in a cardboard box. He credits our congregation with being a crucial link in allowing them to transition here as smoothly as they did.

Ruslan still has many relatives and friends in the Odessa area and he was greatly worried for their safety. He was appreciative of receiving actual items as opposed to monetary donations, saying that at that time Ukrainians were having a hard

time purchasing supplies locally. He expressed deep gratitude for our help and was amazed that a neighborhood was able to collect all these things.

When the collection was over, I doubled back in an email with results of the donations. People responded by saying how grateful they were to be given an opportunity to help and asked if I would again reach out if more assistance was needed. How wonderful to see the presence of



God's hands at work outside of a church environment, right in my own neighborhood!  
— *Sally John*

## Family Connections

Many years ago, my husband John and I, who had been going through fertility testing, decided to try to be foster parents. We called both sets of our parents to let them know. When we called John's parents, his aunt was there and, when she heard what we were going to do, said she knew of a doctor looking for parents for a baby to be born in six weeks. Of



course, we called and, after consulting our lawyer, were accepted for the private adoption. The doctor suggested we send a letter to Meg, the baby's birth mother, telling her what the adop-

tion would mean to us, which we did. Our beautiful daughter Elizabeth was born while we were on vacation. What a wonderful way to end a lovely week!

Five years later, Elizabeth was having health issues so we reached out to the doctor again. It turned out that Meg was there that same day and had just been diagnosed with the same health issue. She asked for a picture of Elizabeth since she had never seen her. We sent a picture and another letter.

Forty-two years later, Elizabeth was able to contact Meg after Meg's son bought her an Ancestry kit. So far, all communication has been long distance. Meg and I have talked as well. Elizabeth found out Meg still has those two letters taped to her bedroom dresser.

Rewind to the summer of 1985. It was the start of Vacation Bible School; my friend and I were co-leading VBS. The first day, the teacher for the five-year-olds could not attend so I stepped in. That day's lesson was the story of Hannah and how she wanted a child and prayed for a son. The main idea was that God knows what you really want so you should be honest and pray for it.

That Saturday, John and I were hosting a cookout and then watching a movie with neighbors. For some reason, I went inside just as the phone rang. It was that same doctor, who asked "Do you want a son?" John walked into the room and we both said *yes!* The doctor asked us to come see him the next day. I told him we would come right after our VBS presentation in church. At church the next morning, we told

everybody we were going to pick up our son. What a great answer to my prayers!

About fifteen years ago, we were able to meet Jonathan's birth mother and grandmother. His grandma passed away some time later; we just got word that his birth mother passed away earlier this year as well. It is a sad time for Jonathan and his family. I am so glad he was able to meet her and spend a little time with her.

God has blessed us with two wonderful children, a great son-in-law and daughter-in-law, and five fabulous granddaughters. This was and is and will always be our blessing and the answer to our prayers. — *Maxine Montgomery*

## Sharing Food as a Sign of Friendship

It was a pleasant surprise when the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community sent a tray of cookies to our congregation during our outdoor Christmas Eve service last December.

This year at the beginning of Ramadan in early April, Imam Daanyal Qureshi then invited me to attend an evening iftar meal that ended their day of fasting. It started with a time of prayer and a sermon. I had a wonderful conversation with a gentleman named Mohammed who emigrated from India. (Many of the community are from India originally.) He asked me questions about Christianity and I asked him questions about Islam. It was enlightening and theological as well.

Below is a picture of the fruit tray we sent to the community at the end of Ramadan as thanks for the gift of Christmas Eve cookies as well as my invitation to the iftar meal. Carol and Ken Clelland kindly delivered them while I was recovering from COVID-19. They said that, like me, the Imam was also pleasantly surprised. — *Pastor Matthew Best*



PHOTO CREDITS: Left column—provided by Maxine Montgomery;  
Above—provided by Matthew Best.



# Longsdorf Cemetery

201 N. Locust Point Rd, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050



PHOTO CREDITS: Tom Burson

## LOTS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

Contact custodian Guy Eckert at 717-795-9107

Interested in serving on the cemetery board? Contact St. Stephen Lutheran Church at 717-766-2168.

*St Stephen is affiliated with this historical local cemetery, est. in 1771.*

*(Longsdorf was the original name of our church prior to 1844.)*

**MONDAYS @ 10 a.m.**

**Stroll  
Through  
Scripture**

**Preview next Sunday's  
scripture readings with  
Pastor Matthew Best**

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## CONGREGATIONAL DAY OUT at Cherry Crest Farm

**Saturday, September 17 from 2-10 p.m.**

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Come for the afternoon, the evening, or the whole day. St. Stephen will provide an evening campfire and picnic.

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Learn more about the farm at [cherrycrestfarm.com](http://cherrycrestfarm.com).

Tickets: \$20 if paid in full *by* August 15; \$36.95 *after* August 15. To pay, contact the church office M-Th from 9-3 at 717-766-2168 / [office@ststephenlc.org](mailto:office@ststephenlc.org).



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**ENTERTAINMENT:**

*June 18 — Nashville studio musician Mark Mateya*

*July 16 — BINGO*

*Aug 20 & Sept 17 — Check in later this summer to find out!*



**ST. STEPHEN**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church

## DINNER WITH FRIENDS

FREE COMMUNITY MEALS  
THIRD SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
5:30 p.m.





# GREENING & GROWING

*by Greg John*

With the growing season in North America well underway, I find it difficult to look at the preponderance of greening and flowering around me and not think of growth. Musings about plant maturation transcend into thoughts of food – especially of that which comes fresh from local gardens and farms. These ponderings in turn whet my appetite and make me hungry. I am reminded of the well-known opening lyrics from Matthias Claudius' 1782 hymn "All Good Gifts."

*We plough the fields and scatter  
The good seed on the land,  
But it is fed and watered  
By God's almighty hand.*

These few words firmly establish the connection between the physical and the spiritual. Fully satiating hunger for me is impossible without a similar appetite for spiritual nourishment – something not as easy to obtain. Looking at the growing season within which we find ourselves, I simply cannot divorce the concept of growth as I *see* it and growth as I *feel* it deep in my soul. On one hand, I can observe the maturation of peppers and potatoes, corn and carrots, beans and beets, peaches and plums. The miracle that turns small seeds into the raw

material for satisfying food, and God's work in accomplishing that miracle, is a fairly easy concept to understand.

*He only is the Maker  
Of all things near and far;  
He paints the wayside flower,  
He lights the evening star;  
The winds and waves obey him,  
By him the birds are fed;  
Much more to us, his children,  
He gives our daily bread.*

On the other hand, satisfying spiritual hunger involves so much more than putting daily bread in one's mouth and is much harder to grasp. Spiritual enrichment requires greater discipline than just gobbling up some words as we sit at a table (or in a pew) waiting to be fed. This time of year is ripe for taking advantage of abundant spiritual opportunities to observe the greening of the world around us. We can set aside time to contemplate God's role in this greening and the nexus between that growth and the spiritual growth to which God calls each and every one of us.

Yes, Christian education involves Sunday Church School but it is so much bigger. A faith-filled education most certainly



should involve more than one day in seven. The practice and process need not only take place in a classroom. Certainly, you are invited to join us on Sunday mornings; we would welcome your participation and find joy in your company. As a way of enhancing that, though, seek out opportunities in this fabulous season of growth to deepen your knowledge and understanding about the relationship between God, His people, and the rest of His creation.

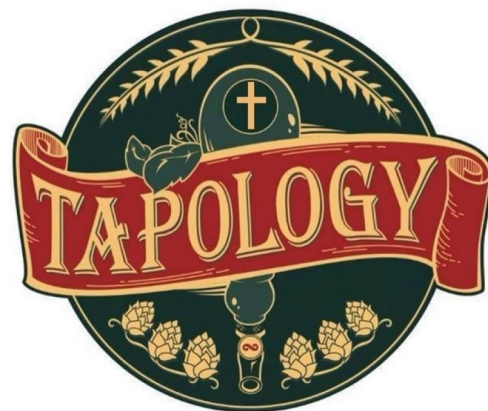
Warm weather and beautiful, natural scenery give us the means to expand this opportunity of education during other times throughout the week. We can sit beside a bubbling brook and observe God at work as the water – which can both satisfy thirst and transport valuable nutrients – tumbles down a waterfall. We can allow our minds to then venture forth from that physical image and contemplate the spiritual relationship between tumbling water and our baptism.

Relaxing in that same spot, we can read from a variety of books that further explore the relationship between the Creator and creation.

We can take along one or more friends and spend some time together discussing that Creator/creation relationship. Discussing diverse opinions leads to “ah-ha” moments and the casting aside of tenets found to be no longer valid. These natural surroundings, readings, and conversations can only serve to bolster Sunday morning learnings, which can then lead to even deeper spiritual growth – ah yes, Christian education at its finest. †



PHOTO CREDITS: This page—Greg John, Previous page—Andrew Welch for UNSPLASH



Come to **TAPOLOGY**, where we talk about theology and issues that matter over some cold drinks. All are welcome.

**FIRST SUNDAYS 5-7 p.m.**



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1201 CARLISLE SPRINGS RD  
CARLISLE, PA 17013**

*Tapology was founded in 2017 by two local churches: St. Paul Lutheran Church in Carlisle and St. Stephen Lutheran Church in New Kingstown. Since then, more and more people have joined to enjoy food, alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, friendship, and fellowship. Each month, we discuss a different topic related to faith. We invite the questioners, the doubters, the believers, and all people from all walks of life, denominations, and faith traditions to join for this monthly event. Find details about upcoming events and more at:*

**[Facebook.com/TapologyCarlisle](https://www.facebook.com/TapologyCarlisle)**





# A PERFECT WORLD

by Julie Grove

A perfect world. How many of us have ever thought about what it would be like to live in a perfect world?

A world with no war, poverty, sickness, or hunger. A world where no one is exposed to gun violence or has even heard of it. Yes! We all would love to live in such a world, for sure.

This past year was not an easy year for the Grove household. The passing of brothers and a sister from both sides of our family in addition to continuing health issues for other family members nudged Art and me into a different mindset, including about things we have always talked about doing but have never have done for a whole host of reasons. So we did something Art has wanted to do since he was a child: we put up his train platform. This 4'-x-8' platform took a lot of hard work to bring together. Art built and wired it for lights and then I worked on the painting, landscaping, and detailing and placing of the figurines. It took us almost a whole year of work, on and off, to complete. Our grandchildren love looking at it and I have written a whole story to go with it.

Today, I had a conversation with my daughter Jennifer, St. Stephen's Youth and Family Ministry Director. We were talking about an upcoming event she has planned for the senior youth in August. With what is going on in the world today – all the gun violence and killing – now more than ever we need to involve our youth in God's world.

We at St. Stephen can help with this by volunteering for all stages of learning about God. We all have some kind of God-given talent that we can use to guide children to God. It is our duty as disciples of God to pass on our talents and gifts to the next generation of disciples.

We need to encourage young people to come to church and give them a place to feel welcome and loved. The kind of love that we implant in them these days is what may carry them through in life. We need to teach them that, when the world is in turmoil, God is still here. They need to know that

God's love is for everyone, from the youngest to the oldest of us. They need to know that they are never without God; God will always be there when God is needed.

After my conversation with Jennifer, I walked into my house and our train platform caught my eye. I stopped and stared at it. When will all the violence in our world stop? It was easy for Art and I to put together a perfect little town and pretend it is in a perfect world. But how are we at St. Stephen doing our part in our living world? Are we teaching the next generation how to live and cope with all the things going on in their present world? Everyone wants to hear Pastor Matthew preach about God's saving grace (and I think he does a wonderful job), but how are *we* being God's hands? Are we bringing our children to church? Are we making time to help guide our youth? Are we looking for ways to help our youth find a way to God, so they too can turn to Him for the help they will need when dealing with events going on in the world today?

I know I have to stop and ask myself these very questions. So I am going to make a pledge. I pledge that I will try harder to help more with the youth, alongside other members of the church. There are many things I haven't been given a talent to do. However, I am going to take what God *has* given me and try to put it to use with some of the youth.

Please join me. Reach deep in your commitment to God and answer God's call. Maybe you know how to sew, knit, work with wood, or teach basic car maintenance. These are all talents we could and should teach our young people, things they can look back on and remember they learned about through the church. And, underneath those skills, they are learning that church is a safe place where they can meet and be shown what being a disciple of God is all about.

I have heard in recent years that most children do not go to church on a regular basis. They might go once in a while, maybe on a holiday or something. They do not like being dragged in to church on Sundays; they just want to sleep in or stay home and play video games; they may have things that they feel are more important.

As I child, I felt the same way. I did not see the importance of going to church though my parents took us all to church



every Sunday. Now, I am so glad that they brought God into my life. Even if I did not understand the true love of God when I was a child, I could not live without God now. Church is not just some place where I sit in a pew for an hour and then say to myself, “All right, I put in my hour so that makes me a Christian.” Being Christian is a way of life where we all learn how to cope with what life has going on around us. We find hope and love in God’s ways.

Have you ever looked at the young people of today and wondered what is wrong with them? Maybe you should really be asking yourself “What have I done today to help them learn about God?”

Soon our younger youth will be going to Vacation Bible School. If you are not able to teach, maybe you could bake cookies or help with the opening meal or in some other way. I am sure VBS director Cheryl Neidig would love your help. Learning about God’s love starts when they are young and should continue all of their lives. Don’t let it stop here.

Jennifer, our Youth and Family Ministry Director, has been working with Pastor Matthew to host many wonderful events for our youth of all ages but they need our help. Are we going to let it all slip

away? Or are we going to help our youth continue to learn the true meaning of God’s love and compassion?

That day, as I stood looking at the church I had on the train platform, I noticed I only had one figurine sitting on the step. Other than that, it was just the pastor and his wife walking up to the building. I realized that is *not* the way I want my perfect world to be (and I don’t want that for St. Stephen either). Now there are many people going to that model church. People camping out in the back lot, with kids playing on the parking lot. People hiking with some of the children and learning about God’s love and the world he given us to live in.

Let us make the world a more perfect place for the youth and young people of our community! Join me in my pledge to get more involved. You will be surprised at all the love you will receive in return.

Remember, we are all God’s disciples and it is all of our responsibility (not just that of the pastor or youth and family ministry director) to help spread God’s love. We show a lot more with our own actions than any of us realize. Let us show our youth of all ages that we care! †







ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH, 30 W. MAIN ST, NEW KINGSTOWN, PA

## SENIOR HIGH SUMMER CAMP

**AUGUST 7-12, 2022**

Cost: \$50 for the entire week (partial/full scholarships available)

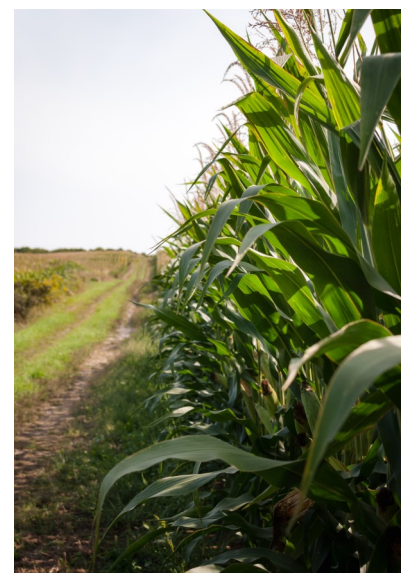
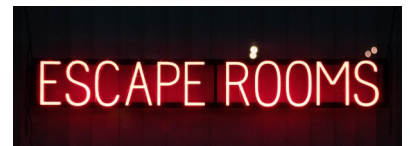
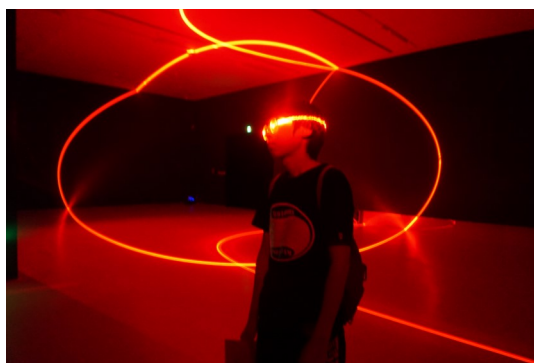
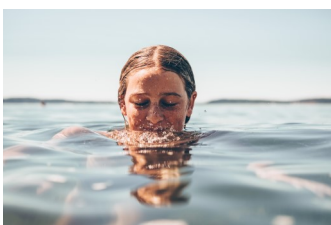
*For teens entering grades 9-12 this fall*

This week-long overnight camp will be based at St. Stephen. Throughout the week, we will focus on the theme *Mystery Around God*. Camp will kick off Sunday evening at 5 p.m. with a picnic for registered youth and their families before the youth embark on their own journey of excitement and perplexities. Throughout the week, we will travel to various locations to explore, solve, and complete activities full of puzzles, intrigue, and mystery. Camp ends at 5 p.m. on Friday. Youth will look forward to exploring new daily swimming locations as well as a corn maze, escape room, laser maze with tag, dinner murder mystery theater, and even a trip into God's natural wonder-filled creation. In addition, we'll be camping in tents for the week and having themed studies, games, campfires, and onsite activities.

Register by July 8 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PZKLSDT>

Questions? Contact Jenny Batcheler at [YFMD@ststephenlc.org](mailto:YFMD@ststephenlc.org)

PHOTO CREDITS: Top, left to right: Simon Maage, Gavin Van Wagoner; Bottom, clockwise from top left—Jessica Delp, Laura Pluth, Zachary Keimig, Banna Morrissy, Hsinshu Lee, and Erik Dungan, all for UNSPLASH.







**ST. STEPHEN**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JULY 17-21 FROM 5:30-8 P.M.

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

July 17-21 from 5:30-8 p.m.

St. Stephen Church Pavilion

30 West Main St, New Kingstown, PA 17072

For this year's VBS, we will meet outside at St. Stephen's pavilion for a light dinner followed by activities. Children ages 3 through grade 5 are invited to participate. For more details and to register, contact the church office at (717) 766-2168/office@StStephenLC.org.

## TRINITY FARMER'S MARKET

Thursdays 3-7 p.m. during July and August 2022

Parking lot of Trinity United Methodist Church

4 West Main St, New Kingstown, PA 17072

A fun new local farmer's market is being organized by our neighbor, Trinity UMC, and St. Stephen and other community groups are taking part.

If you want to get involved, contact:

- Vendor information: (717) 579-8822
- St. Stephen volunteers: Nicole at cn5groves@yahoo.com

Follow Trinity's Market on Facebook:  
Facebook.com/Trinity-Farmers-Market-105304992133299







# CLOSING PRAYER

*Please pray with me.*

God of growth, you walk with us in the midst of joy and tragedy. You walk with us in the midst of delight and pain. You reach out to us, always coming to us so that we can follow your lead, so that we can grow. Be with us in that growth so that we can be more like you, for the world and for the people around us.

AMEN.

PHOTO CREDIT: Karen Hendricks







## A FEW WAYS TO RECEIVE & RESPOND

1

You can hold our ministries and those who work in these ministries in prayer. In need of prayer yourself? We pray at every gathering and also have an electronic prayer list that goes out regularly with specific requests. If you would like people to pray for you, please call 717-766-2168 or send a message to [prayer@StStephenLC.org](mailto:prayer@StStephenLC.org).

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2

You are invited to worship and engage in the life of ministry. Our worship services and other gatherings are listed throughout this magazine and our website. There are many opportunities to learn and participate as well as to volunteer your time and skills. For more info, contact Pastor Matthew at 717-766-2168 or [pastor@StStephenLC.org](mailto:pastor@StStephenLC.org).

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3

You may also contribute financially in any of the following ways (all are tax-deductible). Thank you for your generosity!

- Cash or check
- Go to [StStephenLC.org](https://StStephenLC.org) and click on the DONATE button (or go to the Giving tab for more options)
- Text the dollar amount to 717-685-6947
- Via Engage: Go to the <https://engage.suran.com/sslc/>. Select giving fund(s) and enter amount(s). Furnish any additional information in "Gift Memo" box on the Submit screen. Undesignated gifts will go to our General Fund.
- Via PayPal: Enter [PayPal@StStephenLC.org](mailto:PayPal@StStephenLC.org) as the destination, choose your amount, and use "Add a note" to provide designation. Undesignated gifts will go to our General Fund.



Engage QR code



PayPal QR code





## ST. STEPHEN

Evangelical Lutheran Church

30 W. MAIN ST,  
NEW KINGSTOWN, PA 17072

YOU ARE INVITED TO WORSHIP



All are welcome  
for Sunday worship!  
9 a.m.  
Online or in-person

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

If you are hungry or in need, please contact our church office at 717-766-2168 / [office@StStephenLC.org](mailto:office@StStephenLC.org). We have meals, gift cards, personal hygiene kits, and more to share.

We respond to  
**Christ's love**  
by feeding those  
who hunger  
in body,  
mind,  
and spirit.