



Congregational Communication
November 15, 2023
Rev. Joel Petruschke

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

Thursday, November 16

4:30pm – Community Assistance Meal

Sunday, November 19

9:30am – Sunday School

11:00am – Worship (hybrid)

12:15pm – Annual Congregational Meeting

Monday, November 20

7:00pm – Boy Scouts

7:00pm – Harvest Hosts Stay

Pastor's Perch:

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Last Sunday, I mentioned Martin Luther's "Two Kingdom Theory" in the Children's Message. I thought I would elaborate a little more on this important concept. Luther taught that there are two "kingdoms" or "realities" happening at the same time in our world. There is the one reality (The Kingdom on the Left, as Luther calls it) whereby we have Laws and Government, Police and Military, to give order and structure to society. Without such things, society would devolve into chaos with everyone doing whatever they wanted to do. God gives us Laws and Government, and the means to preserve them, as a gift to community.

The other reality (The Kingdom on the Right), however, is that of the Church. In addition to the Kingdom on the Left, God has given the world the Church. The Church exists to teach people to live by the love of Christ. The hope is that our world would come to embrace the love of Christ (The Kingdom on the Right), and so then there would be no need for Laws and Government, Police and Military (The Kingdom on the Left). If everyone lived by the example of Christ's love, no one would harm the neighbor in any way. But short of this idyllic vision, we still need Laws and Government, Police and Military to provide a "check" upon the behavior of people.

This then is Martin Luther's explanation of the "Two Kingdom Theory." How does the Kingdom on the Right come to fruition? Well, Luther said that the laws of the Kingdom on the Left reveal our sinfulness and drive us then toward the mercy and forgiveness of Christ. In other words, we see our helplessness in the face of sin, such that we need the love of Christ.

How does the Law reveal our sinfulness? Well, if I tell you, "Don't think of pink elephants. Don't think of pink elephants. Whatever you do, don't think of pink elephants. What are you thinking of?" Pink elephants. The Law tells us what we are NOT supposed to do, but it is those very things then that we feel compelled to do. The Law then reveals our sinfulness and drives us toward Christ that we may be forgiven. And that is how we then come to embrace the Kingdom on the Right.

In addition, what I find so powerful about Luther's Two Kingdom Theory is the way in which the Two Kingdom Theory opens our eyes to the workings of the world. God has this world of ours in His good hands. God provides for the world in the way of checks and balances. When one means of caring for the world falls short, the other is there...almost like the checks and balances in government. To give an example, many people tend to gripe about paying taxes, right? But, I like to remind folks that taxes, at least in part, are meant to supplement what the Church is meant to do, but sometimes fails to do. The Welfare Programs in government help people who are in need. But, if the citizens of our country were moved by the love of Christ as proclaimed in Church, then the citizens of our country would provide out of their compassion for people in need, and thus we wouldn't even need government Welfare Programs. So, again, God provides checks and balances in our society, as exemplified in the Two Kingdom Theory.

In Christ, Pastor Joel Petruschke

Youth Corner

As I "bounce" between churches, I'd like to invite you to "bounce" with me! Experience new ways of doing worship, new perspectives, ideas, and ways of doing things! You might even see something you want to bring back home to try! St Paul has 2 services. An 8:00AM traditional service, similar in worship to ours, and a 10:45AM contemporary service, that uses a live Praise Band, instead of an organ. Join me, and feel free to sit with me or on your own. Enjoy the conversation, fellowship, and food between, or I can even take you on a tour of the church, between services, if you like!

Youth Families: The first **Fuse Family Youth Group Meeting**, will meet at **St Paul**, on **November 19, at 3:00pm**. A meal will be served. Bring a side dish to share. This meeting is for youth of any age and their caretakers, in whatever form that is (parents, grandparents, neighbors, extended family, etc.) **Please note that the time for this meeting has been changed to avoid conflict with the Congregational Meeting!!**

Congregations: **Secret Santa** signups have started! Sign up fast at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RWJ7LZB>. Deadline is **December 1st!** *But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. -Matthew 6:2-4.* Choose or make a gift (up to a \$20 value), and wrap it up brightly. Leave it on their doorstep or mail it to them. It's that simple! Be the cause of someone else's joy this season and help lift their spirits!

Youth Families: **Winterfest** is coming fast! Any **youth in grades 9-12 and college students**, are eligible to attend **Winterfest** this year from **January 5th-7th**. The signup link is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P525X8Q> and the deadline to signup, is **December 1st !!** There is a **\$50/person** deposit for this event. Please see Jenny if you need to discuss a scholarship,

Congregational Event for both congregations of all ages! **December 2, 3pm-6pm, 14 E North St, Carlisle, PA 17013**. Come join my son and I, at **The Green Door** in Carlisle, for one of our hobbies, some East Coast Swing! It starts with an hour of basic lesson, designed for those that have never danced before. Followed by two hours of social time to mingle, practice what you learned, meet new people, enjoy the music, and explore new moves! Cover charge paid for by the church, so come out and enjoy yourselves! Partners not needed. Come dressed as you are (though we recommend dressing lightly as you'll work up a sweat quickly!). Closed shoes/ no flipflops. Parking is on-street or in the back. Entrance is out front only.

Youth Families: Any youth, going into **grades 9-12** for the 24-25 school year, or just graduating in 2024, are eligible for the **Youth Gathering** trip to New Orleans, from **July 13 - July 20, 2024**. Registrations are taking place. Please email me **immediately**, if you think there is any possibility that you may want to attend: yfmd@ststephenlc.org.

Annual Congregational Meeting - The annual congregational meeting is scheduled for **today** following worship.

How should St. Stephen use our Memorial Funds? St. Stephen has been blessed with several Memorial donations in remembrance of loved ones. Council desires to use some of the proceeds from these donations in and around the church and is seeking congregation input. Please put your thoughts to paper and place the paper in the "suggestion box," located on the table near the sanctuary entrance.

Many folks have asked how to help Social Ministry with the COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE MEALS. Here is a list of items we routinely use that can be donated in any amount that is compatible with your budget. In addition, cash donations handled by Kevin have assisted with food purchases. As always if unable to help in this way, we ask for your prayers that God will guide us in reaching out to those in need among our church family as well as in the community while we keep in mind our mission feed those who hunger in body, mind and spirit.

Zip Loc Bags...Any size, any brand

Divided partitioned carry out (Styrofoam) containers...Sam's Club

Square sandwich carry out (Styrofoam) containers...Sam's Club

Foods:

Boxed Scalloped Potatoes

Boxed Mashed Instant Potatoes. Idahoan Brand are best

Boxed Mac n Cheese

Spaghetti, Ziti, Lasagna Noodles

Egg Noodles

Jars of Pasta Sauces

Pound(s) unsalted butter

Desserts

Prepackaged fruit cups

Quarts 2% milk

Frozen Meatballs. John Gross has a very large bag

Homemade soups/chili (white and red).

Vinyl, latex free, powder free gloves...like doctor's exam gloves

Plastic leftover containers w lids for freezer; various sizes

Gift cards: Giant, Aldi, Walmart, John Gross Marketplace

Help set up, clean up and/or box leftovers

We plan for 60 meals, but any amount you can swing is appreciated. Come join us for the eat-in meal, fellowship and communion with Pastor Joel at which several members attend. We joke, we laugh, we share.

If you have questions, see or call Lynne Immell 717-462-8625 or Maxine Montgomery 717-571-4113.

It's time to plan for Christmas celebrations! Here is a listing of events at our church for your participation:

Back by popular request is the beautiful **Holden Evening Prayer Service** which will be held in our sanctuary on the three **Advent Wednesdays (December 6, 13, and 20)**. Pastor Joel Petruschke will lead these services with Lynne Immell accompanying on piano.

The services will begin at 7 p.m. and are preceded by a soup supper in Fellowship Hall at 6:30 p.m. Plan to join us for these opportunities to take the time during this busy season for fellowship and to reflect, revive, and remember the joy of our Savior's birth.

Saturday, December 9, 9.a.m. – We will be **decorating** the church and raising our Christmas trees. Please come and help make our church look festive and beautiful.

Sunday, December 17, 2 p.m.- We'll meet at the church to go **Christmas caroling** and deliver goodies to our homebound members. Car pools will be arranged so that everyone can join in together. Dinner and a party for carolers will follow.

Sunday, December 24 -Christmas Eve- 5 p.m.- Candlelight service with carols and communion. (Regular Sunday morning worship at 11 a.m. and SCS at 9:30 a.m. continues this Sunday as well)

Monday, December 25- Christmas morning - Open our website (StStephenLC.org) for a **Christmas message** delivered by Pastor Joel Petruschke.

Sunday, December 31- The First Sunday of Christmas – 11 a.m., we will be having a "Singing Through the Year" worship service.

It is that time of the year to decorate the sanctuary with Poinsettia Flowers!



If you would like to purchase a plant in honor or memory of a loved one, please complete the attached Poinsettia order form and submit to the church office, along with \$10.00 per plant, by: **Tuesday, November 28.**

Sunday worship begins at 11am. This is hybrid worship, meaning that we worship both in person and online at the same time. If you worship online, please introduce yourself to others online and greet other folks that you aren't familiar with. We also invite those worshipping online to provide their own elements of bread and wine/grape juice in order to participate in communion.

Accessing worship online - You can attend online worship by clicking this link - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/410597064?pwd=b3lEa2hnbmtxU2kvYVhxUGN6ZWdoUT09>

You can also call 1-929-205-6099. Once connected, just enter the Meeting ID - 410 597 064 and the password – 779080. You can also find the direct link for this on our church webpage – www.ststephenlc.org. Scroll halfway down to the link that says, "Join us online." Click the link and you'll be connected to the Zoom session.

Worship Assistants

Date	Usher Greeter	Cantor	Lector	Assisting Minister	Altar Guild	AV Support
11/19/23		Kathy Burson	Carol Clelland	Kathy Burson	Maxine/Carol	Tom Burson Cheryl Neidig
11/26/23		Lynne Immell	Pat Seiple	Jadam Smith	Sue Rodgers	Tom Burson Cheryl Neidig
12/3/23		Kathy Burson	Pat Gilmore-Lee	Lynne Immell	Maxine/Carol	Tom Burson Cheryl Neidig
12/10/23		Lynne Immell	Jadam Smith	Kathy Burson	Maxine/Carol	Tom Burson Cheryl Neidig