



Congregational Communication
September 20, 2023
Rev. Joel Petruschke

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

Thursday, September 21

4:30pm – Community Assistance Meal

Saturday, September 23

9:00am – Church autumn clean up

Sunday, September 24

9:30am – Sunday School

11:00am – Worship (hybrid)

5:00pm – Harvest Hosts guests (2 campers)

Tuesday, September 26

5:00pm – Harvest Host guest

Saturday, September 30

9:00am – AED/CPR Training

Pastor's Perch:

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Recently, I have been thinking a lot about why people like to travel. That seems to be what so many of us like to do. It is the “thing to do,” if we have the time and the resources. We want to go to new places and see new things. It is almost an obsession in our culture, wouldn't you agree? Why? Why is that the case? I understand that traveling is not for everyone, but our culture does indeed seem to put a premium on travel. I guess I find that interesting about human beings. And as I said, I have been wondering why that is the case.

And then, I was listening to an interview on the radio not long ago, and the interviewee talked about this very thing—why it is our culture, indeed why it is people in general, seem to love to travel. And he said something very interesting. He said that travel provides a “contrast” to our ordinary, everyday life. And he said that the experience of travel is as much about the “contrast” as it is about the specific places to which we travel. It is the “contrast” that really is what makes us “happy” in our travels. For he noted that without contrast in life there no differentiation between the same-old, same-old, and that which is new and different. In other words, how can we know what it is to be “happy” or “sad” or any other emotion, unless we have something to contrast with our regular humdrum emotions of the day. How can we know what it is to be “happy” if we constantly, always feel a base-line emotion of “blah.” It is an interesting thought.

That makes we wonder then. Will there be travel in eternity? And if so, where do we travel or take vacations to? Will there be “contrast” in eternity? What does happiness and joy truly look like in heaven if there is no more sadness, no more tears, such that there is no more “contrast”? These are things that make me go “huh?”

My vision of heaven, or at least part of my hope for life in eternity, that is besides getting to worship God with all the saints in the presence of God...my hope is that we somehow get to explore the vast universe, that we get to “vacation” around the cosmos, that we get to marvel at the handiwork of God throughout the heavens. I don't know what that would look like, or how that would happen, but I trust God could make it possible for us.

In this life, in this world, humans are fortunate if they get to travel around the world and see various destinations. My hope is that, for those who desire, in the life to come, we can travel everywhere and anywhere by the grace of God. That is at least part of my vision of life in eternity.

In Christ, Pastor Joel Petruschke

Youth Corner

Thank you to all who participated in our Congregational Cherry Crest Day! We had 14 people participate in the day. It was a day with beautiful weather, filled with fun activities and great company! The link to pictures of our adventures, should be coming out future Youth Corners, so keep an eye out for it!

Youth Families: Be on the lookout for the registration link for Nawakwa Fall Days coming soon!

Upcoming Events:

October 22- Nawakwa Fall Days- 1:00PM- 6:00PM

October (TBD)- Halloween Party- All youth families

December 1- Secret Santa Begins!

January 5-7- Winterfest- grades 9-12

January 17-21- ELCA Youth Worker Extravaganza-New Orleans

July 13-20- (2024)- ELCA Youth Gathering- grades 9-12

(Re)new Sunday School Class! - Beginning October 1, 2023, during the Sunday School hour, a class examining the Book of Psalms will be offered; it will be led by Lloyd Sheaffer. In the class participants will not only study individual psalms but also will delve into the history of these poems, learn about techniques used by the various psalmists, and discover how The Psalms can become an active part of a person's prayer life.

This 12-week study is open to all adults, young and not-so-young, in the community. Participants are encouraged to invite others to this class.

Come to this class and discover why Martin Luther said "[The Psalms] could well be entitled a 'Little Bible' since everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended, and compacted into...a Manual."

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.

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
9/24/23			Carol Clelland		Maxine/ Carol	Tom Burson Cheryl Neidig
10/1/23		Lynne Immell	Jadam Smith	Lynne Immell	Sue Rodgers	Tom Burson Cheryl Neidig
10/8/23		Lynne Immell	Roger Immell	Kathy Burson	Maxine/ Carol	Tom Burson Cheryl Neidig
10/15/23		Lynne Immell	Carol Clelland	Jadam Smith	Maxine/ Carol	Tom Burson Cheryl Neidig