



**ST. STEPHEN**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church

Congregational Communication

Reverend Joel Petruschke

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

Date: July 3, 2024

Sunday, July 7

**11:00am** – Worship Service (Hybrid),  
light lunch to follow.

Monday, July 8

**7:00pm** – Boy Scouts

Monday, July 8

**7:00pm** – Council Meeting

### **Pastor's Perch**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This is my last article for the weekly communications. I will be concluding my time with you as your interim pastor this Sunday, July 7<sup>th</sup>. I began serving as your interim back on March 21, 2023. So it has been a year and a couple of months that we have been serving the Gospel together. And it has been a blessing and a joy to do ministry alongside you.

You may be wondering, "What happens next?" Well, there will be supply pastors serving you the next couple of weeks in July. And there will be local pastors (pastors from the Cumberland Conference) handling any pastoral emergencies. If an emergency should arise, please contact the church office or Carol Clelland on off hours.

Furthermore, your council leadership is in the process of securing another pastor to serve as your interim. The hope is that this pastor would lead worship on Sunday morning as well as attend to the needs of the ministry at St. Stephen during the week. However, due to scheduling conflicts, it may be that this pastor can only provide for the ministry throughout the week and supply pastor(s) would lead Sunday worship.

In the meantime, your council leadership has been meeting with the council leadership from Mt. Zion in Churchtown to continue to work on the Articles of Agreement for the sharing of pastoral resources. The work on these Articles of Agreement appears to be just about completed. The next step is to create a Call Committee consisting of members from both Mt. Zion and St. Stephen. This Call Committee would need to create a Congregational Profile for Mt. Zion and a Congregational Profile for St. Stephen. Once these documents are completed, they are shared with potential candidates for the position of called pastor to Mt. Zion and St. Stephen. So there is more work to be done, but it is moving forward efficiently.

Additionally, your council leadership has been discerning what to do with the land assets of St. Stephen. In particular, St. Stephen owns the parcel of land adjacent to the church parking lot beyond the pavilion looking west along Carlisle Pike. Does St. Stephen sell this land outright? Does St. Stephen lease the land to a builder and collect rent once units are built on it? And what kind of units might they be—perhaps, socially conscious units for lower income families? Council has a lot to decide and their research is ongoing.

What can you do? Above everything else, please pray. Pray that God will continue to reveal the path forward for St. Stephen. Pray that the ministry of the Gospel is faithfully served with respect to the many moving pieces during this time. Pray for your council leadership. Pray for the congregation as a whole. Pray for Mt. Zion. And please, I do ask for your continued prayers for me and for Our Saviour as we continue our own discernment process.

One of the things I have learned during my time with you is this. That when it comes to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are all in this together. We all lean on one another. We all need one another. Like the sea anemone's and hermit crab's symbiotic relationship which I mentioned in the sermon last Sunday, we are stronger when we partner with one another.

Thanks again for the opportunity to serve with you. God's blessings to you all as we proclaim together the Good News of Jesus Christ. God is good. All the time.

In Christ,

*Pastor Joel Petruschke*



## **Council Update**

This is Pastor Joel's last week with St. Stephen as our interim minister. We will surely miss him, as he has endeared himself to our congregation in so many ways. Please join us in a reception with a light lunch this Sunday, July 7, after worship service to celebrate and honor his service to us.

Council has been busy on several fronts this summer. First, as Pastor Joel has written, we will have supply Pastors for the rest of July with pastoral coverage for emergencies. Please call the church office (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9 a.m. -2 p.m.) or Carol Clelland (717-798-5948) on off hours for assistance. We are making plans for another interim pastor, hopefully by August or September.

Meanwhile, the executive council members of Mt. Zion and St. Stephen have been meeting to work on Articles of Agreement to share pastoral services. Our desire is to call an ordained minister who is willing to shepherd two congregations as we share the fiscal responsibilities. We will be working on the call process by having members from each congregation on the call committee.

Presently our finances are being stable with income matching expenses with many, many thanks for your generosity and faith in our exciting future.

Finally, the council has been investigating options for the land assets that we have. We have had realtors present options for use and sale of the property -- specifically the field beside the pavilion and possibly the land above the parking lot. In an effort to be socially conscious, as well as, have some control over what is developed on the land, we also had a presentation by Scott Shewell of Safe Harbour. This is an organization that "provides a continuum of housing and supportive services for homeless and nearly homeless individuals and families in our communities." They provide low-cost affordable housing in several places, including property that they are developing primarily around the Carlisle area. Please pray for us as we continue to research what will be best for this land asset. Also, don't hesitate to talk with council members about option ideas you may have.

With gratitude and blessings,  
*Carol Clelland*, Vice President



## **Youth Corner**

We are on our last bin for accepting donations of small, mixed Legos for our upcoming Lessons and Legos community program! We are so close to starting to develop some after school programming for the local kids. Our first program will be the monthly, Lessons and Legos program, where kiddos will listen to a brief story and then build a Lego creation around the theme of that story to be displayed for that month, inside the church. If you haven't donated any Lego's yet, please consider donating just 5 lbs. to help fill the last tub on the stage in the Fellowship Hall. We will take care of the sanitation, just dump your Legos in the tubs! Contact Mrs. B with questions.

**Nawakwa/Kirchenwald Summer Camp registrations** are out and can be found in the pocket under the **Communication Board** in the **Fellowship Hall**. Scholarships available. Contact the church office with scholarship questions.

Reminder that our sister church St. Mark (Mechanicsburg) is holding their free summer program!

## SUMMER DAY CAMP RETURNING

Day Camp at St. Mark will return this summer for kids from K- 5th grade. Those who are older are encouraged to come and help during camp this summer. We plan to learn about creation and God's renewal of creation from **July 30- August 1 from 8:00 am-5:00 pm**. This **FREE** camp is a great way for our youth and youth in our community to grow in their faith!

Pick up a flyer in the church or talk to Mrs. B if you need help getting connected to the program!

Attention Families! St. Stephen Church, New Kingstown, will be holding their **Fuse Meetings** on the **3rd Sunday of each month, at 1PM**. A lunch meal is always served. Bring a side dish to share! This meeting is for kids of any age, 0-18, and the adult spiritual influencers in their life, in whatever form that is (parents, grandparents, neighbors, friends, older siblings, extended family, etc.). You don't need to attend St. Stephen Church to attend Fuse! Anyone is welcome! We will have a meal, do some activities and learn a lesson. So come Fuse with us!

Our **Annual Congregational Day at Cherry Crest Farms** is coming up, **September 14!** A typical day at Cherry Crest has a lot to offer. There's a corn maze that covers 5 acres (2.5 miles of paths) that can be done through easy, medium, and ultimate challenge levels. In addition to the maze there are other activities including many food eatery sites, pedal cars, apple blasters, paintball shooters, rope making, battle zone (think Nerf balls from a pressurized air guns), various strength tests, mat slides, bouncy pillows (child and adult sized), pig races, climbing area/playground areas.

For those that enjoy a slower pace, there is shopping, live shows, you can take a tour on the Stroudsburg Railroad (extra cost) takes you on a ride about 45 minutes, back to Stroudsburg station and then off into town on a guided history tour before bringing you back to where you got on.

There is also a winery and brewery on site, a petting zoo, chick hatchery, discovery barn- that teaches the history of farm equipment, life size board games, and a wagon tour. For the little kiddies, there is also Sproutsville, which is an entire town build in miniature for the little ones to play, sitting areas for resting, hanging air chairs to relax and enjoy the views, as well as other activities. You can see most of the activities at <https://www.cherrycrestfarm.com/attractions>.

We'll be meeting at the gate at **12:30PM**. We'll rent a campfire location again this year, for dinner at 5:30PM. Hotdogs, sides, and drinks provided. Fireworks will be set off at 8:30PM for those that want to stay. Cost to participate is only **\$20**, with the church covering the other half of the ticket price. Monies maybe paid to the St Stephen Church office. Scholarships available to those in need. **Sign up by August 31**, to participate at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9DVN7BL>.

ALiVE is our annual synod middle-school retreat. **Our annual fall retreat is scheduled for September 27-29, 2024, at Camp Nawakwa.** Congregations from across our synod gather with their adult advisors and youth for this traditionally early fall weekend that includes large group gatherings with singing led by our ALiVE Alumni Band, theme-centered videos and stories, and games, interspersed with small group gatherings, where youth gather with peers and a small group leader, to converse about the theme and its impact in their lives of faith. It's a great event for your Confirmation students and classes.

The weekend also includes crafts, games, campfires, free-time, and community-building that allows youth and their adult counterparts time to deepen existing friendships, and create new ones. Plus, inspiring outdoor worship often highlights our last morning together at Nawakwa's famous Upper Temple!

This year's theme is: 'Fingerprints'- You are a unique gift from God, marked by God with gifts that make you truly special. As a disciple of Jesus, how are you leaving a mark of Jesus' love, grace, and forgiveness on the world around you?

+ This event is for 6th through 8th graders in the fall of 2024!

+ **Event cost: \$139.00/person** Monies may be paid to St. Stephen office. Scholarships available to families in need. Contact Mrs. B for details.

Register at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/BKOS7S6](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BKOS7S6) Registration deadline is September 6th!!!

We will be participating in trunk-or-treat this year to hand out candy and grilled hotdogs to the trick-or-treaters in New Kingstown on trick-or-treat night! Start planning your decorative trunks now!



**Sunday worship begins at 11:00am.** 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=b31Ea2hnbmtxU2kvYVhxUGN6ZWdoUT09>  
**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](http://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	Counters
7/7/24		Lynne Immell	Roger Immell	Jadam Smith	Maxine/ Carol	Cheryl Neidig Randy Neidig	Roger Immell Cheryl Neidig
7/14/24		Jadam Smith	Carol Clelland	Lynne Emmell	Maxine/ Carol	Cheryl Neidig Randy Neidig	Chery Neidig Sue Rodgers
7/21/24		Lynne Immell	Pat Seiple	Jadam Smith	Sue Rodgers	Cheryl Neidig Randy Neidig	Lela Ewell Roger Immell
7/28/24		Jadam Smith	Pat Gilmore Lee	Lynne Emmell	Maxine/ Carol	Cheryl Neidig Randy Neidig	Cheryl Neidig Roger Immell

**Prayer Requests**

Date	Name	Connection	Request
Chronic or Long-Term Requests			
1/17/24	Tom Burson		Please pray for Tom and Kathy Burson. Tom is at Country Meadows Center continuing to recover.
Temporary Requests			
6/26/24	Art & Julie Grove		Julie is home, temporarily. She will return to the hospital July 1 for further treatment, and to determine if further surgery/stay is necessary.
6/26/24	Doreen Pavlakovich		Doreen is now recovering at Vibra Life in Mechanicsburg. Visitors welcome (best on Tuesdays, Thursdays, & weekends).
6/9/24	Roger Mvers		Undergoing cancer treatment.



**Thank You, Pastor Joel**

