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Church Office Hours  
By Appointment

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*Address Service Requested*



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



*“We see here how Christ, as it were, takes our birth from us and absorbs it in his birth, and grants us his, that in it we might become pure and holy, as if it were our own, so that every Christian may rejoice and glory in Christ’s birth as much as if he had himself been born of Mary as was Christ.”*

**—Martin Luther**



# DECEMBER 2020

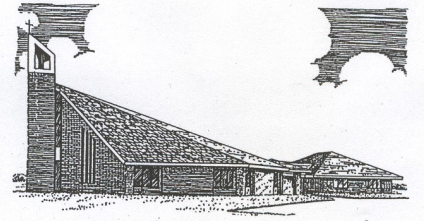
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●930 am – 230 pm Red Cross Blood Drive</li> <li>●11:30 am Second Harvest</li> <li>●6 pm Adult Children of Alcoholics</li> </ul>	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●12 pm 12@12</li> <li>●5:30 pm Confirmation</li> <li>●7:30 CIA/Sr. Youth</li> </ul>	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●10 am Worship on Studio1</li> <li>●5:30 pm Women's Recovery</li> </ul>	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●6:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous</li> <li>●7 pm Worship on Studio1</li> </ul>	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●9:30 am Karen 7th Day Adventist Service</li> </ul>
6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●8:30 am Worship</li> <li>●9:30 am Worship</li> </ul>	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●7 pm Alanon</li> </ul>	8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●6 pm Adult Children of Alcoholics</li> </ul>	9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●12 pm 12@12</li> <li>●5:30 pm Confirmation</li> <li>●7:30 CIA/Sr. Youth</li> </ul>	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●10 am Worship on Studio1</li> <li>●5:30 pm Women's Recovery</li> </ul>	11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●6:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous</li> <li>●7 pm Worship on Studio1</li> </ul>	14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●9:30 am Karen 7th Day Adventist Service</li> </ul>
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20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●8:30 am Worship</li> <li>●9:30 am Worship</li> </ul>	21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●7 pm Alanon</li> <li>●8 pm Monday Night Fellowship at Brau Brothers</li> </ul>	22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●6 pm Adult Children of Alcoholics</li> </ul>	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●12 pm 12@12</li> </ul>	24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●10 am Worship on Studio1</li> <li>●3:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship</li> <li>●5:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship &amp; Live Stream</li> <li>●7:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship</li> </ul>	25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●6:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous</li> <li>●7 pm Worship on Studio1</li> </ul>	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●9:30 am Karen 7th Day Adventist Service</li> </ul>
27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●8:30 am Worship</li> <li>●9:30 am Worship</li> </ul>	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●12pm - 8pm Red Cross Blood Drive</li> <li>●7 pm Alanon</li> <li>●8 pm Monday Night Fellowship at Brau Brothers</li> </ul>	29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●12 pm - 6pm Red Cross Blood Drive</li> <li>●6 pm Adult Children of Alcoholics</li> </ul>	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●12 pm 12@12</li> </ul>	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●10 am Worship on Studio1</li> <li>●5:30 pm Women's Recovery</li> </ul>		

December 2020



**St. Stephen**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

*proclaiming and serving Jesus Christ*



**Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup> 3:30 pm, 5:00 pm, and 7:30 pm**  
**All-Congregation Livestream at 5:00 pm**



### **From the Pastor's Desk...**

*"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."*

**Romans 8:28**

The Plecostomus is quite the fish. If you've ever had a freshwater aquarium, you've probably had one. If you didn't have one, you should have. They have a very specific job in the world of fish. Their job is to clean up the bottom of the aquarium. In other words, they eat the poop of all of the other fish.

That's right. The waste, the junk, the remnants of things that are bad for other fish are good for the Plecostomus. It's a win-win situation for the whole aquarium.



When someone inquires about what it's like to be a pastor, I often will tell them it's a lot like being a Plecostomus. You take the waste and junk of the world, and turn it around and make the

aquarium better for everyone else. It's a win-win for the whole congregation!

Often times when someone asks me how I am doing, I answer "Terrific, spectacular, or wonderful." When I respond in these ways, it's not an act or a fake answer. I truly do have an amazing amount of joy in my heart. I get mad on average once per year. On occasion I have a down day, but I get past it pretty quickly.

A few weeks ago, I had a rough couple of weeks. The joy I normally have, as evidenced by my aquarium poop eating smile, was gone. Instead of getting mad once per year, I've gotten angry and short a number of times. Now, I don't write this for sympathy or understanding, really, I'm back to the bottom of the tank feeding again. I'm back to that joy! I write about this for one simple reason - to write about the state of the aquarium. See, if I, a Plecostomus, had a rough go, it makes me think the rest of the aquarium is really, really not doing well. And that concerns me greatly.

2020 has been a year that has really taken the cake. During this time the verse that has kept my joy intact has been Romans 8:28. It's at the beginning of this newsletter article.

**"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."**

When Paul was writing to the church in Rome, it was during an ancient equivalent of 2020. The big difference is this rough time was stretched out for like 40 years. For those of us who believe in Christ, in the end, our 2020 will be okay - even when it seems like it won't.

May you find peace in what the Apostle Paul says, that in the end, for those of us who believe, our 2020 will work together for good.

Your Plecostomus In Christ,

+Pastor Lyle Snyder



## Staff

- Rev. Lyle Snyder, Pastor
- Seth Boerboom, Parish Associate
- Lauren Winn, Financial Assistant
- Judy DeCramer, Organist
- Gunvar Dombek, Organist
- Mary Hauschild, Organist
- Seth Boerboom, Pianist
- Judy Hoeft, Pianist
- Melinda Grohs, Preschool Director
- Lisa Rosenboom, Assistant Teacher
- Melissa Doose, Assistant Teacher

## Congregation Council

- Daren Kesteloot, President (term ends Jan. 2021)
- Jasmine Steffen, Vice President (term ends Jan. 2021)
- Josh Allerson, Treasurer (term ends Jan. 2022)
- Paula Petersen-Giles, Secretary (term ends Jan. 2021)
- Jennifer Marty (term ends Jan. 2022)
- Bill Cowden (term ends Jan. 2022)
- Abby Dubs (term ends Jan. 2021)
- Carlton Johnson (term ends Jan. 2022)

## Stories of Covid-19 at St. Stephen Lutheran Church

We've now had a sizeable portion of our membership at St. Stephen test positive for Covid-19. By my estimate out of roughly 1100 members, I'd ballpark somewhere around 50-75 members that have tested positive, and perhaps many more I don't know about. I've asked a few folks if they'd write about their experience, mainly to take away the stigma attached. And believe me - there is stigma. Think of it as entire communities all across the world walking on eggshells. Sharing an experience in a

public way is a way to overcome that stigma. It's a way to have something in common and put light out there in the darkness.

I am very thankful for our council president, Daren Kesteloot, who chose not to be anonymous when writing about his experience. It is on the next page.

From my perch, Daren's experience with Covid is a lot like most members of St. Stephen who've tested positive, with a couple of exceptions. Our membership is largely young and healthy, and not vulnerable. At the

same time, most of our people are deeply concerned for others, and especially do not want to spread the virus to others who are vulnerable. While you all may experience out there a world that is fighting about masks and shutdowns, I see a great amount of hope and love for each other. I've experienced many, many St. Stephen members who aren't fighting about masks and shutdowns, but instead are considerate, concerned, and express a lot of love for others.

+Pastor Lyle

### *My Experience with Covid, by Daren Kesteloot, St. Stephen Council President*

I am writing this a day after my quarantine is over. I tested positive 11 days ago and boy has there been some interesting days in between. First off, I just want to say that my experience with COVID 19 has not been bad at all. I woke up on Saturday morning to get ready to go to work, I had a stuffed up nose and my head was kind of pounding. I didn't think much of it until I ate something for breakfast and I couldn't taste or smell any of

it. Oh no, that's not good! So I called in sick to work and waited a little bit and went into the clinic to get tested at noon. I separated myself from my wife and daughter so not to infect them, realizing that it was probably already too late.

I never had any other symptoms like fever, body aches, or breathing issues. I feel very fortunate because I have heard of other people that have had a lot worse time than me with this virus.

On day 2, 3, and 4 the only other symptom that I had was a lack of energy, and not able to get motivated to do much. It was not like sleeping all day. It was that I just wanted to lie on the couch. When I went in and had my test, the one thing the doctor told me when he stopped in to check me over was, try to get out and get as much fresh air as you can, it will help heal you. I was quarantined to my garage/man cave where I have pretty much

everything I needed to survive for a week or so. After day 4 I started to feel pretty much normal other than no taste or smell yet. I would go outside and luckily the weather was pretty nice out, I got to finish up some of my outside projects that need to get done and I hadn't had time to do them yet. It sure beats being stuck inside the whole time. By day 6 my taste and smell was starting to come back and that was great. I have never experienced anything like losing my taste before. You take a bite of something and you are expecting it to taste like the last 100 times you ate it before, but no there is nothing there for taste. It's like you have stuff in your mouth and it tastes like nothing. I even made a pizza and put a bunch of hot sauce on it to

see what it was like, and nothing other than a burn in my throat from the sauce. Day 7 was the next Saturday, I was feeling good and so far my wife and daughter had had no symptoms. Then about 10:45 am I got a text from my daughter saying "uh oh - I lost my taste and smell." She woke up and her nose was stuffy and no smell or taste, so back to clinic I go with her to get tested. There still was no symptoms for my wife. I'm not going to lie to you, it was kind of nice to be able to ride together and talk. This whole time my daughter was separated from my wife and lived in the basement by herself, and my wife had the whole main floor to herself so they were not together at all. It had been a long quiet week only communicating through

windows or texting. I can't even imagine how it has been for those people that have loved ones in the hospital or in the nursing home and they haven't been able to visit in person for months, my prayers go out to them. I realize that my experience with this virus has been pretty mild and that of my family has been also, compared to what some people are either going through or have gone through. I think about it every day and we all need to keep those who are having difficulty and are going through a tough time with this in our prayers. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas to all and remember we will get through all of this together!

Daren Kesteloot  
Council President

## **Christ-United Presbyterian-St. Stephen Merger Update**

Back at the beginning of the pandemic, the St. Stephen Council postponed discussions of merging with Christ-United Presbyterian Church. We've received word that their Presbytery (their equivalent of our Synod) postponed the conversation on their side until after the pandemic. We now plan on starting the conversation over in 2022.

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## Worship Update!

- Beginning Sunday December 6th, we're moving to two services. Our worship numbers are low and three services are not needed.
- 8:30 a.m. will be traditional.
- 9:30 a.m. will be contemporary. When Sunday School resumed in the future, it'll be moved back to 10:30 a.m.
- Strongly encouraging the elderly or those with vulnerable health to attend at 8:30 a.m., as the least amount of people will likely attend 8:30 a.m.
- We ask that those medically not able to wear a mask, refrain from attending the 8:30 a.m. service.
- Our pews will be labeled for 8:30 & 9:30 eliminating the need to clean immediately after use.
- We encourage everyone to follow the mask mandate in accordance with state law.
- We encourage everyone to offer grace and understanding to those not wearing masks.
- We will not have coffee or fellowship during this time.
- Sunday School will be at home lessons until Church Council re-evaluates.
- Method of communion will be prepackaged cups with juice.

## St. Stephen November Happenings!

*On November 22nd, Kaden Coens, the son of Brandon & Shelby Coens was baptized! His sponsors are Darren Coens, Nikki Jaeger, Dan & Leah De-Bates, and Alicia Widmer. Welcome to the Lord's family Kaden!*



## Financials Through October 2020

<b>Oct</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>B/(W) Budget</b>
Giving/Income	28,384.33	27,526.00	858.33
Expenses	25,224.92	26,997.50	1,772.58
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>3,159.41</b>	<b>528.50</b>	<b>2,630.91</b>
<b>Oct YTD</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>B/(W) Budget</b>
Giving/Income	280,814.67	275,760.00	5,054.67
Expenses	229,230.39	269,945.00	40,714.61
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>51,584.28</b>	<b>5,815.00</b>	<b>45,769.28</b>

## Ministry Teams

<b>Date</b>	<b>Cameras/Live Stream</b>
12/6 - 9:30 am	Tory Kepler
12/13 - 9:30 am	Craig Holland
12/20 - 9:30 am	Troy Kepler
12/24 - 5:00 pm	John DeCramer
12/27 - 9:30 am	Craig Holland



## Preschool Happenings



We've met our goal for milk jugs! 400 of them! We no longer are in need of them. Thank you so much for your dedication, effort, and love. Stay tuned for the project we are making with them!

## HyVee Gift Cards

The preschool will continue selling HyVee Gift Cards this year. We will not have them on hand at the church but if you would like to order some contact Melinda @ [melinda.grohs@ststephenmarshall.org](mailto:melinda.grohs@ststephenmarshall.org) or at (507) 537-1516.

Thank You for supporting St. Stephen Preschool!

**December 2020**



14 Keeley Island Drive  
Slayton, MN 56172  
507-763-3567  
camp@shetek.org  
www.shetek.org

**Shetek Lutheran Ministries Where Christ Renews and Empowers**



As part of our “Building on the Foundation” campaign facility improvements, we are upgrading our water treatment facility. Construction began on Nov. 4 for our new building to house the water treatment equipment. Stay tuned!

**CAMP COMES TO DAYCARES!**

Katie Chapman, our Environmental Education Director, will bring a program to your daycare! Looking for something unique? Katie will bring some of our camp animals to your daycare and provide a short program – contact her at [katie@shetek.org](mailto:katie@shetek.org)

Help send kids to Camp...Become a Pelican Club or Timber Society member today. Pelican Club members support the ministry with a gift of \$100 - \$499 a year and Timber Society members give \$500 or more a year. Thanks for your support!

**Events at camp!**

(Go to [shetek.org](http://shetek.org) for more info.)

**December 6, Sunday, “Scandinavian Drive Through Meal”** – Instead of our Lutefisk Dinner, you’re invited to come out to camp and get your meal to go!

**December 6, Shetek Annual Meeting, 4pm.** Join us virtually for our annual meeting – *Note it won't be in Feb. next year.* On Facebook Live or contact [marv@shetek.org](mailto:marv@shetek.org) for the Zoom link.

**December 13, Sunday, Winter Nature Craft for Kids, 3-4:30pm,** Come out and join Katie for a fun afternoon for families.

**December 27, Sunday, Family Ski/Snowshoe Day, 3-5pm,** Whether you’re an expert or not, come to camp for a fun time.

**Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!**

Our donors and congregations have been so supportive during this time. We continue to need your help to finish 2020 in the best shape we can in order to continue serving campers well in 2021.

Our “Building on the Foundation” capital campaign is slowly starting again. So far, we’ve raised \$1,045,000 in gifts/pledges towards our \$1,500,000 goal! Watch for more information about our progress as we move into 2021.

