



ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

PEOPLE OF CHRIST MAKING A DIFFERENCE

December 2021 Newsletter

St. Stephen's Advent/Christmas Worship Schedule

Sundays in Advent - Dec. 5, 12, and 19

Holden Evening Prayer - Tuesday Dec. 7*, 14*, and 21*

Wednesday Eucharist - Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29

The Nativity of our Lord / Christmas Eve - December 24

12 PM*, 3 PM (Children/Family Service), 5 PM, 7 PM, and 11 PM

The 12 PM and 11 PM services will be more like our traditional Sunday morning worship with Carols, Candlelight, and Holy Communion.

The 5 PM and 7 PM services will be our Lessons and Carols services with Candlelight and Holy Communion.

(*Incense will be used at this service)

*** (Please RSVP for the service you plan to attend. This will give us a better idea of how many to prepare for when it comes to Communion and Bulletins)***

You can use this link or contact Shannon Burnett and she can get you signed up:

[Christmas Eve Services \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)

We would like to invite you all for **Caroling and Cocoa** on Sunday, December 5th at 5 PM (after the 3 PM Lexington Christmas Parade). Come enjoy the parade, stay for caroling, and enjoy some cocoa as we gather at the Nativity on Main St.!



Holden Evening Prayer Services

**Tuesdays, Dec. 7, 14, and 21
6pm in the Sanctuary**

Holden Evening Prayer is a beautiful, contemporary vespers service that was written by Marty Haugen in 1985-86 while at Holden Village, a Lutheran retreat center in Washington State. The service includes a short reading and homily, this year entitled "Advent...finding Grace, Hope, Peace, and Joy!" We hope you will join us for what is destined to become one of your favorite services of the whole church year.

Christmas Bingo:

Whether you have been naughty or nice **EVERYONE** is invited to come play!! Please join us in the gym on Thursday, Dec. 2nd at 6pm. Snacks, drinks, and plenty of Christmas cheer will be provided! Please email Tonya (Tonya@sslc.org) and let her know you are coming so that we have enough prizes!!



It that time of year again!
The Angel Tree is in place and we are asking that you prayerfully consider taking an angel (or two) from the tree, record your name next to the corresponding number on the log, and then purchase a gift card for the recipient. We are collecting gift cards for those that are served through Lutheran Family Services. We are also asking that you provide a box of candy to go with your angel so that each resident can get a sweet treat and a gift card!

All gift cards should be returned by December 12th!
Thank you in advance for your assistance!



A light lunch is offered in the Social Hall at 11:45 AM.
The cost of the lunch is \$5. Enjoy lunch and then worship with us at our 12:30 Eucharist Service.



Incense Usage At St. Stephens

Periodically throughout the year on Holy Days and Holden Evening Prayer services, you may notice the smell of something fragrant during our worship services. What you are seeing, and smelling is incense.

Incense is carried in processions in a Thurible (container with chains) and unburned incense is held in a Boat (yes, it looks like a small lifeboat). The Thurible is opened by the pulling of a chain and inside is live fire coal that burns the incense. The incense that we use is actual Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. Yes, gold flakes are burned inside the Thurible. Our incense is produced by the Three Kings Company and are obtained from gum trees in Africa and Asia. The granules have been washed in perfume oils. Tradition tells us these are the regions where the Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh came from that were given to Jesus.

Incense was first introduced to St. Stephen's in 2017 at the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation during the celebration of Martin Luther's German Mass. Two years later Mr. Glenn Neeley gifted the church with a Thurible and a Boat and hence the usage of Incense has continued.

Incense usage is not something new to the Lutheran Church. It has its origins in Judaism and was used during Jesus' time in the temple, and before that from the burnt offerings often referenced in the Old Testament. There are many biblical references to incense. In our Holden Evening Prayer Services, we hear Psalm 141 read "Let my prayer rise like incense before you; the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." In Luke's Gospel, Zechariah is in the temple during the time of the incense offering when an angel tells him his wife will bear a son that he should name John. More popular, the Wisemen gave Jesus Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. In Revelation 5, the vision of Heaven shows elders holding bowls of incense described as the prayers of the saints. Martin Luther was big on the usage of incense in the church. Its usage is described as a cloud that represents cleansing and purification and Christ's robe of righteousness that covers our sin, offering a sweet fragrance offering to God. Martin Luther also believed that all five senses should be used in worship and this practice covers the smell sense.

At St. Stephen's incense usage comes with the number three. When it is used, the number three representation of the Trinity is carried out a lot. The Thurible is fastened with three chains. Incense is used three times during the service (Processions, Gospel Reading, and Holy Communion) When the Thurifer (person carrying the thurible) goes up the aisle they swing the Thurible in a triangle shape from the right to the left and back again to their body. The triangle symbolizes the Trinity. When the Thurifer enters the chancel, the boat is swung in three circles, symbolizing the entrance to a Holy area. At the altar, the Thurible is swung three times over the middle of the Altar, then three circles to the right and three circles to the left. During a Gospel Procession, it is swung three times at the announcement of the Gospel. During Communion the Thurible is swung during the Sanctus and then three times at the elevation of the bread and the wine. All these acts symbolize the marking of the objects and acts as Holy.

At St. Stephen's, it has been decided that Incense will be used at least at one service on Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Reformation and all Vesper/Holden Evening Prayer services. So, the next time, that you see the Thurifer coming up and down the aisle you will have a better understanding of why we use incense in our services.

THANK YOU:

A big thank you to my church family! I appreciate the cards, phone calls, and food received after my hip surgery. It is great to be a member of such a "caring spirited" church.

Roscoe Caughman

SSLC Blue Christmas Worship

Sunday, December 19th

Christmas can be a painful time for some. The constant refrain on the radio and television, in shopping malls and churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost or never had. If you have suffered the anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation, the loss of a loved one, or anything else that makes this holiday season difficult, St. Stephen's invites you to a special Blue Christmas service on Sunday, December 19th at 3pm in the Sanctuary to give space and time to acknowledge your sadness and to let you know that you are not alone. Come out, and join with us in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture, and acknowledgment that God's presence is for those who mourn, for those who struggle - and that God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness.



O Come, O Come,
EMMANUEL



MISSION LEXINGTON UPDATE

Our end of the year food drive is underway with 1,481 lbs. Our goal is 5,000 lbs. between now and the end of the year. Food total for the year is 15,335 lbs. Our goal for the year is 15,000 lbs.

Please place your food donations in the food barrel next across from the elevator in the admin wing or in the container outside the Men's Sunday School Classroom.

All food items and pet food are being accepted.

Mission Lexington is also in urgent need of plastic bags. Bring your used plastic or paper bags to the church and Mr. Ron will deliver to Mission Lexington.

If you prefer to make a monetary donation toward the purchase of food, please make your check payable to St. Stephen's. In the remarks section write for Food purchase Mission Lexington.

Remember even one can of food will feed someone who is hungry

Thank you again for your support.
Point of contact:

Ron Redd 803-360-0241
Rredd7848@gmail.com.

Needed items:

Canned Fruit
Canned Chicken
Beef Stew
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Mac & Cheese
Pork & beans
Chili
Canned Vegetables
Rice
Canned Soups
Coffee
Oatmeal
Grits
Dog food/Cat food
Sealed silverware sets
(from carryout)


**Mission
Lexington**

Lutheran Men

Please join us Monday,
December 20, 2021, at 7:00 in the
social hall for a meal, fellowship, and a
program presented by Robin Bowers of
Mission Lexington.

Committee of 100: How would you like to be a part of bringing Jesus Christ into someone's life? Actually it could be really simple – by becoming a part of the Committee of 100 which is composed of members who contribute a special \$100.00 in a given year to help support newly organized mission churches in the SC Synod as they struggle to become self-supporting. St. Stephen's has led the way in this program since 1980 – having 79 members in 2020. Please consider this stewardship opportunity. The Make your check to: Committee of 100 – drop it in the offering plate or give it to Ron Redd and he will handle the details.
POC Ron Redd 803-360-0241
Rredd7848@gmail.com.

Via De Cristo:

Congratulations to Ron Redd on being selected Lay Director for South Carolina Via De Cristo. Our Next Via De Cristo Weekend is scheduled for May 12-15 at the Gunter Camp and Conference Center in Batesburg Leesville SC.
For more information, contact
Mr. Ron at 803-360-0241 or
Rredd7848@gmail.com.





We have resumed our Prime Time Luncheons each month. Since lunch is being prepared each Wednesday before the WE! Service, we are going to meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month!

Join us Tuesday, December 21st for a Christmas celebration catered by our own Andy Marchant!

Please sign up on the Prime Time bulletin board so we know how many folks to expect.



Join us Saturday, Dec. 4th for a trip across the dam to Harbison Theater at Midland's Technical College. After a two-year hiatus, a holiday favorite *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical* is back by popular demand! Join the entire Herdman clan as they crash, bash, smash, and sing their way to the true meaning of Christmas. We hope you will join us for this on-stage holiday classic. We plan to leave the church at 2:45 PM and enjoy the 3:30 PM show!

20 tickets have been purchased. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you are interested in going! Price is \$18

Holiday Hams and Turkeys for Mission Lexington

Nurture and Outreach is seeking donations to purchase turkeys and hams to donate to MISSION LEXINGTON during the Christmas Holiday period. Please prayerfully consider donating \$20.00 toward the purchase of hams and turkeys. Write a check to St. Stephen's and in the remarks section of your check, please mark it for Ham and Turkey purchase and place it in the offering plate. We will make a ham and turkey purchase close to Christmas.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

Point of Contact-Ron Redd: 803-360-0241
Rredd7848@gmail.com.



JCREW. Jr. and Sr. Youth

Caroling

It's time to bring Christmas joy to those we love! Join us for caroling on Sunday, Dec. 19th at 4 PM. We would love for families - not just youth - to contact Pastor Jason or Shannon by Sunday, December 12th if you are interested in caroling. If only the youth want to carol then we will make that happen too! Don't let anything stop you from participating in this event! Once we know how many folks are willing to participate, we will form groups that will travel to member's houses and sing. Let's spread some cheer this holiday season!



Jr. Youth (6th-8th grade)

December 5th -

Mrs. Shannon needs your help! Plan to stay after the 11:00 service on Sunday, Dec. 5th. We will walk to Groucho's to get lunch and then come back to the church to paint sun catchers for the folks that we will be caroling for. Stay for the Lexington Christmas Parade (3PM) and/or Cocoa and Carols (5PM)! RSVP by Dec. 2nd!

December 12th -

Come get in the Christmas spirit and see the live production of *Jesus is His Name*. This is a two-hour program that takes you on a journey through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The show starts at 6 in South Congaree. We will plan to leave the church at 4 PM and get an early dinner. Parents are welcome! RSVP by Dec. 9th!

Community Groups:

6th grade:

We will reconvene in January since December is a pretty busy month! Merry Christmas!!

Shannon Burnett (Shannon@sslc.org)

7th and 8th grade/9th and 10th

These community groups will be taking a break for the time being. We are going to focus on getting these groups to youth events and then possibly break out into Community Groups once everyone has a stronger connection!

11th and 12th:

We will reconvene in January since December is a pretty busy month! Merry Christmas!!

Tonya Reynolds (tonya@sslc.org) and Julie Tworzyanski (jtworzyanski@windstream.net)

Sr. Youth (9th-12th)

December 5th - Mrs. Shannon needs your help!

Plan to stay after the 11:00 service on Sunday, Dec. 5th. We will walk to Groucho's to get lunch and then come back to the church to paint sun catchers for the folks that we will be caroling for. Stay for the Lexington Christmas Parade (3PM) and/or Cocoa and Carols (5PM)! RSVP by Dec. 2nd!

December 19th - After caroling, we will go get dinner and we hope you will plan to stay for a lock-in! We will celebrate the beginning of Christmas Break! Bring a snack and a 2L drink and a \$10 gift for a White Elephant Gift exchange! We will watch Christmas movies and enjoy a fun night together! Pick-up will be at 8 AM Monday morning. Pastor Jason and Mrs. Shannon have to go to work! Please RSVP by Thursday, Dec. 16th if you plan to attend the lock-in!

Advent and Christmas Materials in the Church Library –

Looking for information about Advent symbols, the Christmas story, Christmas traditions, the history of Christmas carols, devotions, family activities or books to read with your children? Stop by the Church Library located on the 2nd floor of the Educational Building down from the Balcony choir to see the large selection of Advent and Christmas books for both children and adults. The library is open on Sundays from 9:30-11:00 or by appointment. For questions or to reserve a book, please contact Sharon Mackintosh (359-2407).

Saints and Sinners Sunday School Class

The Saints and Sinners Class encompasses adults of all ages. There is no regular curriculum. Instead we watch movies, read books, and engage in open conversation about any number of topics. Don't have a Sunday School class that feels like home? We'd love to have YOU with us! Our schedule is as follows:

Sunday, December 5th – Frankie San – Chapters 13

Sunday, December 12th – Frankie San – Chapters 14

Sunday, December 19st – Frankie San – Chapters 15

Sunday, December 26th – No Class

We are currently doing a book study about the life, mission, and ministry of Frankie San.

Thanks to the generosity of Tom O'Brien the books for the book study have already been purchased and are ready for pickup. You can pick up your copy from the church office or get it during class.

Here's a synopsis of the book: **This is Frankie San's story.** Born in Tokyo to a Buddhist family, Frankie San's childhood was marked by sickness and quarantine, parental divorce, and fighting for Japan in WWII at 14 years of age. Experiencing major depression, he tried to end his life – but God had a better plan.

Light filled Frankie San's heart and soul after an American missionary introduced him to Jesus Christ. Through miraculously opened doors, Frankie San traveled to the United States to attend seminary. He overcame cultural and language barriers and prayed for direction for his future. Direction came in the form of busses filled with prisoners.

When Frankie learned where the busses took their prisoners, he surprised the director with his request to visit the prison and perplexed him when he wanted to remain. What happened next was incredible love confirmed by action, as Frankie literally believed and followed through on those famous words from Scripture: *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me* (Matthew 25:40).

Frankie San's life and testimony is unique, heartwarming, and inspiring. You'll be challenged to love those who can give nothing back, to truly trust Christ as you follow Him, and to persevere despite overwhelming odds. If it's not too late for prisoners on death row, it's not too late for you and me. *Follow me, said Jesus, and I will make you fishers of men.*

SSLC Living Faith Group

This group is comprised of anyone who would consider themselves a "young adult". The definition of "young adult" is broadly defined and within the group encompasses folks of varying ages and family contexts. In short, if you want to join a group of folks that enjoy fellowship, living out their faith, and being active with other members of the congregation please come and join us!

Christmas Party – Saturday, Dec 4th from 6-9pm at the Stafford's Home

Brittany and Chas Stafford have invited everyone to their home (128 Brighton Court, Lexington, SC 29072) for our 7th Annual Living Faith Christmas party on Saturday, December 4th from 6-9pm! We really appreciate them offering to host this fun and festive evening! Dinner will be provided. Everyone is asked to bring three things: 1) your own beverage, 2) a dessert to share, and 3) a Mission Lexington food donation. Hope everyone will mark their calendars and plan to be there!



Family Christmas Caroling – Sunday, December 19th at 4 pm



Last year we changed the look of our Christmas caroling by asking families to participate together and it was a great experience! So we're going to do it like that again this year! We are asking families (doesn't have to be mom and dad—just someone who can drive) to contact Pastor Jason or Shannon by Sunday, December 12th if your family is interested in caroling. Once we know how many families are willing to participate, we will form groups (2-3 families) that will travel to member's houses and sing. We will be asking you to carol from the front yard and also deliver a gift from the congregation! Hope you and yours will come and help spread some cheer this holiday season!

Chat N Chew for December

Date: December 16th

Time: 5:30 social, eat at 6:00

Restaurant: Bellis House of Pizza

100 Old Cherokee Road, Lexington SC

Host: Glenn and Jeannette Neeley

Come join your church family with good food and fellowship! Please sign up on the church's bulletin board!



Order of St. Stephen's

	8:30 AM Service	11:00 Service
December 5th	A – Bia Oxley	A – HELP NEEDED
	C – Kaidyn Glover	C – HELP NEEDED
	BB – Drake Glover	BB – Abby Burnett
December 12th	A – Ryan Kennedy	A – Susannah Howell
	C – Jack Kennedy	C – Sullivan Hayes
December 19th	A – Jaime Wessinger	A – Mary Beth Stafford
	C – Katie Dawkins	C – Emery Jones
December 26th	A – Weston Hill	A – Aaron Head
	C – Cameron Moore	C – Zachary Head

December Love Offering:

Lutheran Services Carolinas

With the help of thousands of volunteers, donors, and faith partners, LSC helps veterans and others transition from homelessness to dignity; protects children at risk of abuse and neglect with foster care; improves the lives of those battling severe and persistent mental illness through innovative programs; encourages growth and independence for those with developmental disabilities; places children in loving adoptive homes; provides warmth and welcome to refugees seeking sanctuary; and enables many men and women with varying life challenges or disabilities to live proudly and independently with residential or supportive services. Please consider supporting this worthy organization and its cause with your love offering donations during the month of December.

Congregation Council Members:

Class of 2021

Paulette Shealy (803) 465-0942
 Steve Fowler (803) 360-5605
 Ivan Black (803) 513-7486
 Sandy Dawkins (803) 606-1072
 Mary Elizabeth Windham (803) 351-6572

Class of 2022

Craig McFarland (803) 360-7310
 Evelyn Temple (706) 436-3052
 Brian Paeth (803) 529-6117
 Stephanie Jones (803) 606-3814
 Mike Brittingham (803) 760-3219

Class of 2023

Michael Jebaily (843) 617-3147
 Allison Van Cleef (803) 447-3002
 Brian Lackore (803) 351-2585
 Mike Burgess (803) 238-7426
 Jessica Maxheimer (803) 422-5747

Youth Representatives:

Abby Burnett and Carlee Tworzyanski

 Mary Keisler, Treasurer (803) 960-9155
 Bill Mathias, Treasurer Emeritus

Flowers for December

5	
12	
19	Poinsettias
26	Poinsettias

*Our 2021 Flower Chart disappeared! If you or a loved one signed up for flowers on Dec. 5th or 12th please reach out to Tonya and let her know!
The 2022 Flower Chart is in the narthex and ready for sign-ups!*

Ushers for December **December 5th and 19th**

8:30 - Eric Wessinger, Ivan Black, Pat Bowen, Bill Carroll, Aaron Rawl,
Otis Rawl, Vernon Hester

11:00 - Randy Huber, Alon Cox, James Renwick, Roy Welch

December 12th and 26th

8:30 - Sandy Shealy, Reuben Eargle, Ron Redd, Steve Fowler

11:00 - Roy Welch, Rick Swaffield, Brian Paeth, Doug Harper

Lay readers

	8:30 AM Service	11:00 AM Service
Dec. 5 th	Bill Carroll	Gay Clark
Dec. 12 th	Children's Christmas Program	Children's Christmas Program
Dec. 19 th	Brant Taylor	Cathy Mathias
Dec. 26 th	Eric Dickey	Myra Strock

Communion Assistants

	8:30 AM Service	11:00 AM Service
Dec. 5th	Steve Fowler	Cathy Mathias
Dec. 12th	Jane Kennedy	Jamie Early
Dec. 19th	Neil Brown	Peggy Sherman
Dec. 26th	Craig Wheatley	Myra Strock

Office Hours:

8 AM-4 PM Monday - Thursday

To Reach us:

Phone: 803-359-6562
FAX: 803-951-0738
Crisis Care Line: 803-808-6471
Website: www.sslc.org

Pastor

Jason T. Antley Jason@ssl.org

Pastor for Welcome & Visitation

Dennis R. Bolton retrev61@gmail.com

Director of Family Life Ministries-

Shannon Burnett Shannon@ssl.org
359-4175

Parish Administrator

Tonya Reynolds Tonya@ssl.org
359-6562/808-6489

Director of Music

Bailey Parker Bailey@ssl.org

**Assistant Director of Music/
Organist**

Tyler Meade Young Tyler@ssl.org

Preschool Director

Beth Haggard Beth@ssl.org
803-359-4369

Sexton

Eric Abramson Eric@ssl.org

Organist Emeritus

Sylvia Looney

Congregation Council Officers

President - Mike Brittingham
Vice President - Steve Fowler
Secretary - Allison Van Cleef
Treasurer - Mary Keisler
Treasurer Emeritus - Bill Mathias

Mission Statement:

Gathering all generations to nurture
Christ-like discipleship

Our Vision:

To be a place of hope

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

119 North Church Street

Lexington, SC 29072

place

stamp

here

"Return Service Requested"

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For our guests our Ministry includes. . .

Sunday School: Classes for Nursery age-adults; meets at 9:45 each Sunday

Wednesday Night Live! (WNL!): Intermediate Ringers (6th-12th grade) meet at 5 PM; meal at 5:15PM; Confirmation class, Adult class, Cherub and Children's Choirs meet at 6 PM; Tone Chimes meet at 6:30 PM

The Balcony Choir: Rehearsal on Wednesday at 7:00PM

Handbell Choir: Rehearses on Wednesday at 6 PM in the balcony

Wings of Worship: Our liturgical dance group meets at 7:00 PM on Wednesdays

Prime Time Adults: Adults 55 and older meet monthly for food, fellowship and fun. This group is a wonderful mix of people who also travel for day and overnight trips.

Junior High (6th, 7th & 8th grades) & Senior High Youth (9th - 12th grades): meet regularly for planned activities

J-Crew: (1st - 5th graders) meet monthly for planned activities

Lutheran Men: Meet on the 3rd Monday each month at 7:00PM in Social Hall for a meal and informative speaker

WELCA: Various groups of women meet monthly, commit themselves to grow in faith, affirm their gifts, and support one another in ministry and action.

Preschool: An extension of our ministry for our church & the community for children 12 months to 4 years of age. Class hours are 9:00AM - 12:00Noon with extended care 12:00 Noon to 2:00PM. Early bird drop-off is also available Contact Beth Haggard.

Living Faith: This group is comprised of folks somewhere between our Sr. High Youth and our Crossroads group, encompassing people of varying ages and family contexts. Activities alternate between adult only and family friendly.