

FAITH MATTERS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH



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PASTOR

REMOTE WORSHIP

UPCOMING EVENTS

LETTER FROM PR. MARK

Jesus said: No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

Dear Friends in Christ:

You have probably heard the above phrase from the Bible at funerals. It is in response to Thomas' question: How can we know the way? Jesus responds: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." It reminds us that on one can come into God the Father's eternal presence except through the merits of the Son, Jesus Christ. In other words, we cannot *earn* ourselves into eternal blessedness; it is only through the merits of Jesus Christ, and what he did for us on the cross, that we shall stand

in righteousness before God. We take on Jesus' righteousness because of the cross. Like the apostle Paul says, "we are justified by grace through faith, and not by any works of the law."

Does this sound too easy? This received righteousness does not mean we act immoral or that we intentionally commit sins. But we strive to love neighbor as ourselves because Jesus has already made us worthy. We practice righteous behaviour because Jesus has already made us righteous! To love one's neighbor completely is

difficult. We try and we fail. But we always have forgiveness when we turn to God in Jesus Christ.

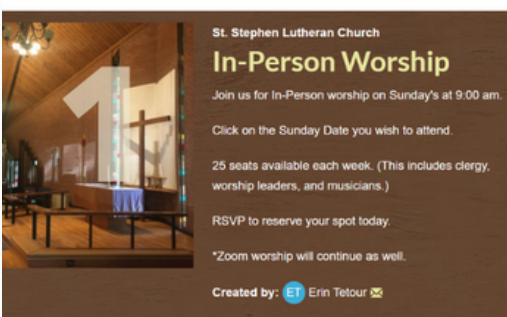
Repentance is a turning to God, a returning to God -- nothing more than that. Repentance is not a "I can do better" experience, it is a "I can't- I need your help" experience. It is returning to our right relationship with God, who is always loving and forgiving.

A few words about my relationship

(cont. on pg 3)

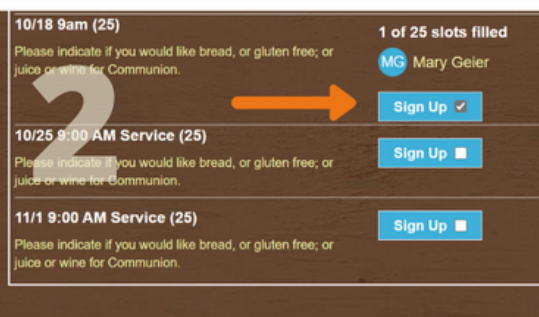
SIGN UP GENIUS

How To RSVP for In-Person Worship



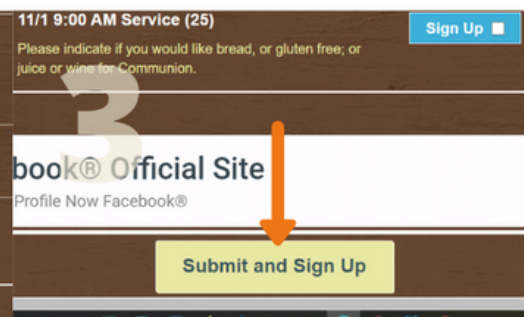
CLICK ON LINK

A click on the link found in the email from church.



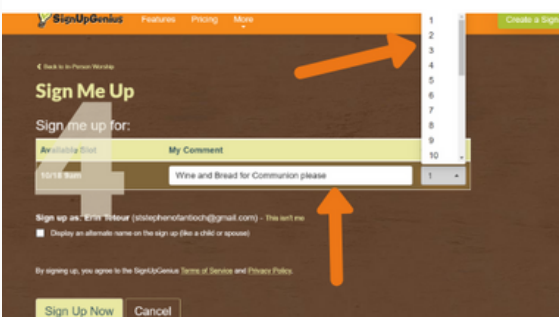
CHOOSE THE DATE

Scroll to the Sunday date for which you wish to RSVP. Click the box.



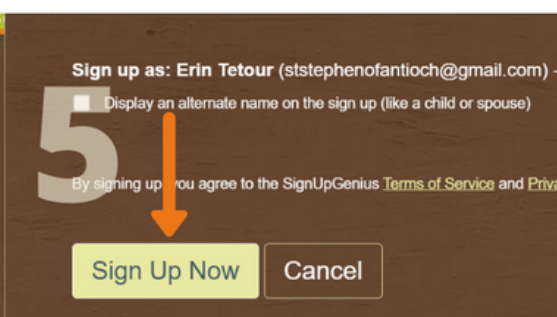
SCROLL DOWN & CLICK

Scroll to the bottom of the same page, and click on the Submit and Sign Up button.



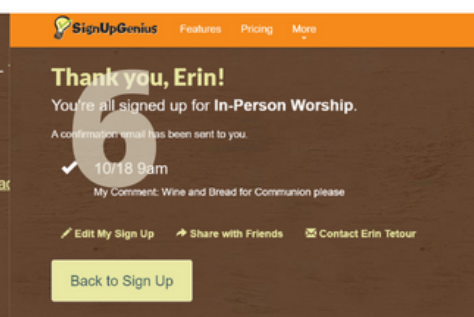
ENTER COMMUNION PREFERENCE

Type in the "comment" what preference you have for communion. And Select # of attendees. *Also add any additional attendees names in the comment box.



CLICK TO SIGN UP

This app will ask for your email address, and you will need to put in your comment (regarding communion and additional attendees) in order to save your RSVP.



CONFIRMATION

Once you see the "Thank You" screen, you are all set! Your RSVP has been received. If you need to make any changes, just email the church office.

PR. MARK (CONT)

with you. I am your *interim* pastor. I will be with you half time through, at least, mid 2021. I am available for pastoral concerns. I will be leading worship every Sunday. I want to get to know you all; it is really difficult, however, at this time with this pandemic around us. I will try my best!

I am not your *called* pastor, as Pastor Rebecca Gordon was, and as your future permanent pastor will be. I will be with you in this time of transition between your *called* pastors. Other than that, I will be functioning as a regular pastor.

Please keep me in your prayers. Keep in prayers, also, the process of calling a new pastor, which the call committee is working on.

In Christian Service,
Pastor Mark Sundberg

SOCIAL DISTANCE MAKING ROOM FOR OTHERS

With each week that the pandemic rolls on, we continue to worship in the safest manner possible for our congregants. With the synod, and major healthcare agencies setting limits for spaces, our council has decided that 25 congregants per Sunday is the safest possible maximum for us. So - this means RSVPs are needed EACH week if you plan to attend. We ask that RSVPs be submitted by Saturday afternoon. Also, we kindly ask that RSVPs not be reserved weeks/months in advance. Only RSVP if you are (for sure) able to attend, so that others have a chance to worship in our space. Thank you.

MIDWEEK CONNECTIONS

Are you feeling disconnected? Missing people from church? Wanting to connect to God's Word in more meaningful ways right now? Join us on Wednesdays by Zoom for a midweek connection with each other, our faith community, and with God's Word. We'll share with each about the highs and lows of this time, share discussion around Bible passages, and pray for one another. Look for a Zoom link in your email on Wednesdays for a 10am and 6:30pm connection! Please email Ardy Lange at bjorlange@yahoo.com with questions.

WORSHIP GUIDELINES

HEALTHY WORSHIP HOW-TO



1 25 PEOPLE MAX

Attendance will be limited to 25 worshippers in addition to worship leaders, tech crew, musicians, and ushers. Attendees will be asked to make a reservation via on-line, or by calling/emailing the church. Zoom services will continue as well.



2 FOLLOW THE SIGNS / USHERS

Be sure to follow all signs and ushers. Entry and exit of the church will be through the main doors only. The doors will be propped open. A welcome station will be located at the entrance for people to check in, have their temperature taken, and offered hand sanitizer. Any persons with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will not be admitted.



3 MASK UP

Masks are required at all times when in the building, AND when within 6 feet of parishioners outdoors.



4 PASS THE PEACE = PASS THE VIRUS

Sharing the Peace will not be offered in person, and we will not leave our seats. When sharing the Peace, we will wave, and offer each other signs of Peace from a distance.



5 COMMUNION TO-GO

We will follow the guidance of the ELCA synod regarding distribution of Communion by using pre-packaged contactless Communion elements.

6 DONT MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

Singing creates a "super spreader" danger. A cantor and musicians will provide music during face to face worship, but there will be no congregational singing.



7 SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Group recitation, or saying responses together as a worshipping community creates a "super spreader" danger. Please say the responses, prayers, and creeds silently.

8 GO GREEN! NO PAPER OR BOOKS

Bulletins, Hymnals, and Bibles have been removed from the sanctuary. Liturgy will be made available for printing at home prior to service, and will be projected on the screen for those in attendance. People can also bring printed copies of worship materials from home.



9 OFFERING DROP

A plate will be provided at the rear of the sanctuary to deposit your offering. Other options include mailing in your offering, or giving electronically.



by: St. Stephen Lutheran Church
1155 Hillside Ave. Antioch IL 60002
847-395-3359.



MORTGAGE REDUCTION CHALLENGE

BY DONAL BARLOW

From 2 Corinthians 9: "God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you're ready for anything and everything... This most generous God... is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away... so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God."

We have been challenged! Will we raise \$15,000 between now and November 15th? If we do, we will reduce the mortgage by \$30,000! That's right!

On Sunday, October 11, the 2020 Mortgage Reduction Matching Challenge was announced by Dennis Friedle; we have a sponsor to match dollar for dollar all contributions to reduce our mortgage principle, between Sunday October 11 and Sunday November 15 up to \$15,000.

In one week's time, \$1,050 has been given, which, when matched, becomes \$2100. Dennis told us about his blessings, his receiving a

stimulus check which he and his wife do not need in order to have a home, clothing, food; he suggested that's one way for us to look at what we might give to this matching challenge. Look for others to speak about the Biblical perspective of giving and personal ways to view this challenge in the coming days.

These matching challenge donations should be in addition to your regular giving and not meant to replace your regular giving.

Our matching challenge last year was very successful in reducing our principle on the mortgage by \$20,000 which resulted being able to pay off the mortgage within 8 years. If we can be successful again this year it means we could pay off our mortgage in fewer years. What does this mean for our church? Of course, it would be awesome to have no debt! Of course, that would mean more certainty for having a pastor and maintaining our property. Even more than these things, it means that we can

contribute more to our ELCA mission for the Synod's world projects and help to our community. It would give all of us more of a chance to dream and hope for being God's hands

“God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:1

in our community and in the world in even bigger ways! Please contact any of the committee members with any questions or comments. Keep watching the newsletter and the announcements during Sunday service for updates.

Treasurer's Update - September 2020

	Aug 2020	Year to Date
Tithes/Offerings (Operating Funds)	\$11,068.67	\$100,280.51
Operating Expenses	\$14,984.11	\$116,612.16
Funds Transferred to Reserve Funds	\$100.00	\$5,659.60
Mortgage Reduction	\$615.00	\$2,326.19



The Altar Guild

Your Gifts Needed Here

Our Altar Guild sets the stage for our beautiful in-person worship. Dressing the altar, hanging tapestries, arranging flowers, gathering candles-- all of these play an integral part of our worship experience. Remembering Christmases and Easters past, the altar guild fills our senses with fresh greenery, poinsettias, Easter flowers, advent wreaths, and great hanging linens.

And now, our altar guild needs you. Additional volunteers are needed to help with setting up Sunday services and special events. Do you have a monthly day you can help out? Or can you help out twice a year? "Many hands make light work", so help lighten the work load of a team of amazing parishioners. Call Sharon Gregory at 847-721-0309 to let her know how you can help out this amazing team. Help keep our worship beautiful, and be a part of something wonderful.

Giving's New Normal

Updates on Giving

The continued financial support of St. Stephen Lutheran Church during this time of pandemic has truly been a blessing. With in-person worship starting back up, it is important to note the new ways to give.

Envelopes will continue to be mailed to the members' addresses. (If you don't have envelopes and would like some, please email the office.) Mailed to the church, these monetary gifts will be discretely and confidentially processed. Additionally, E-giving (giving online) is available through the church website at ststephenofantioch.org, and can be set up as a one time fit, or a continual donation.

Our newest method of giving to the church is at in-person worship. There will be an offering plate in the narthex, outside the sanctuary, near the pews. Any envelopes can be

dropped in this plate prior to the service starting (or at its conclusion). For health and safety reasons, we will not be passing the plate - as that could end up endangering our church family. If you have any questions, please let the office know. And know that your gifts are truly appreciated, and help us to keep our beacon lit.

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The continued financial support... has truly been a blessing.



The Christian Wellness Ministry

CWM INFORMATION AND EVENTS

The Christian Wellness Ministry (CWM) is a tri-parish group of volunteers that organize health based activities for local residents. The CWM focuses on physical, emotional/mental, social and spiritual health. The mission of the CWM is to nurture the human spirit through health education, spiritual support, and linking the needs of the whole person to resources within the congregation, community, and healthcare system.

Services provided by CWM include: patient visits, health classes, wellness walks, medical transportation, support groups, prayer groups, telephone calls, and remote activities. Once it is safe to do so, the CWM will resume holding in-person social events like luncheons, speakers, classes, and craft groups. Would you like more information for you or a loved one? Reach out to Carol Frazier, RN: 630-399-0089.



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**"The mission of the
 CWM is to nurture the
 human spirit"**
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Go-to Meeting site:
global.gotomeeting.com/join/261771629

Or by phone: 786-535-3211
 Access code: 261-771-629

Mondays & Tuesdays in November – 10 am – Bingocize

November 4th @ 2 pm – Flu & COVID-19 – Presentation by Rosalind Franklin University Health Systems will present on flu, COVID and the importance of flu vaccines

November 5th @ 1 pm – Thanksgiving Crafts to do with your grandkids – get crafting ideas to do with grandkids around Thanksgiving

November 6th @ 1 pm – Virtual Book Club – Book: Dark Side of the Road by Simon Green. Read ahead and join in for a discussion

November 12th @ 10 am – Explore Africam – Let's watch some live animal cameras around the world

November 13th @ 2 pm – Legal Presentation: You're Dead...What's Next – In the spirit of Friday the 13th, our legal topic is on what happens after someone dies.

Items discussed: funeral planning, notifying Social Security, handling credit cards, etc

November 13th @ 10 am – Isolation in 2020 – Willow House will be presenting on the impact of social isolation and how it is affecting people



Remembering Our Sister, Melanie

Melanie Fuhrmann, music director and a leader in our midst at St. Stephen, left us far too soon. The worship team, church leadership, parish musicians, and leaders throughout our community will mourn her loss. She touched many lives, engaged philanthropically with many causes, and was an incredibly talented musician. We will miss her deeply.

Please be sure to stop by her guestbook via the website at Strang Funeral Home:
<https://www.strangfh.com/guestbook/melanie-fuhrmann>

Sign, share a story, and read about the amazing life of one of our own. Melanie, you will be greatly missed.



Pastor Hours:

Pr. Mark Sundberg

Hello, I am the interim pastor for St. Stephen. I am engaged half-time here. I will be at the church on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am until 3pm. On the second Monday of the month, I will be working the same hours, 10am - 3pm instead of Tuesday for that week. I am available at all times for urgent matters by phone (224-659-0091). I will *not* be returning emails, however, on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Please call or text me if you need me on those days. Saturdays I will be preparing for Sundays - working from home. I will, of course, be working more than office hours, working from home in Lake Zurich. Thank you!



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