



News & Notes

3510 72nd Street • Urbandale, IA 50322 • 515-276-4628 • office@ststephenlutheran.org

From the Pastor

As we come to the end of another school year, we think especially of those graduating high school, college, trade school... and those beginning a new chapter in their lives. Regardless of what is next, the question we might ask ourselves is, "Can I go out and make a difference in the world?"

And we ask that question, knowing full well that it will not be easy. We might be saying to ourselves, "Surely there are other people who are more qualified or talented! What can I do to make this world a better place?"

It is then that we need to take a look at the first disciples. They were called by Jesus to go about doing good, to share the Good News, and to make this world a better place. Don't you think they might have felt inadequate to the task? They had already failed the Lord on more than one occasion. They were not in any way superior to those to whom they had been sent. Do you think it was easy for them to accept such a challenge? They encountered opposition, ridicule, and even persecution in response to all the good things that they did.

Today, God calls us to get involved. He asks us

to go about doing good and to share the old, old story of Jesus and His love. You CAN make the world a better place; but you have to get involved. It is an awesome call; and you will find many ways to be busy with other things. But don't get

sidetracked; because you will discover many rewards as you do unto the least of these, our brothers and sisters.

God calls each and every one of us to love and serve; and that will always demand a higher price from each of us. For He says to us, "If anyone would come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever would lose his life for my sake and the Gospels will save it."

And so, whatever your fears, whatever your limitations, whatever your doubts, whatever the hardships, JUST DO IT! Go out into the world to love and to serve, trusting and believing that God goes with you; and that He will guide and direct you in all that you do!

Pastor Mark

“ You CAN make the world a better place; but you have to get involved. It is an awesome call ... ”

What is *Wonder on the Go*?



Wonder on the Go is a flexible, easy-to-use curriculum designed for churches that may not have the time, volunteers, or budget to run a traditional Sunday School — but still deeply value sharing faith with children.

Each week, I create and record a Bible story that follows the lectionary calendar (the gospel lesson we hear each Sunday)! Alongside that, we provide a simple, one-page leader guide that any volunteer can pick up and use with confidence. The guide includes helpful background on the story, conversation prompts for engaging kids of all ages, and ideas for games or crafts to bring the lesson to life.

One of the best parts of Wonder on the Go is its flexibility. Over the past year, seven churches have used this curriculum—and each one adapted it to fit their unique setting. Some use it during worship, others as a short breakout time, and others in completely creative ways.

As we begin expanding across the Midwest, we've been grateful for the growing interest and thoughtful questions. You might be wondering, *how can I help?* A few simple ways:

- Share Wonder on the Go with friends and family,
- Follow and engage with us on Facebook and Instagram,
- Or, if you're a grandparent, aunt, or uncle, consider gifting it to a child in your life.

I'd love to connect with you—come talk to me anytime!

You'll also find a Wonder on the Go display in the Gathering Area, where you can explore sample lessons and get a feel for the curriculum. There's even a space to share something you're wondering about right now — I hope you'll write it down and add it to our Wonder Board.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to those who have helped bring this to life:

John Dieseth for his incredible video production and marketing insight,

Leslie Dahm for her work on the leader guides,

Becky Zieman for her creativity in designing the Wonder display, and

Dave Arens for being such a thoughtful sounding board along the way.

Tracy Sabus

Wonder on the Go Facebook Page

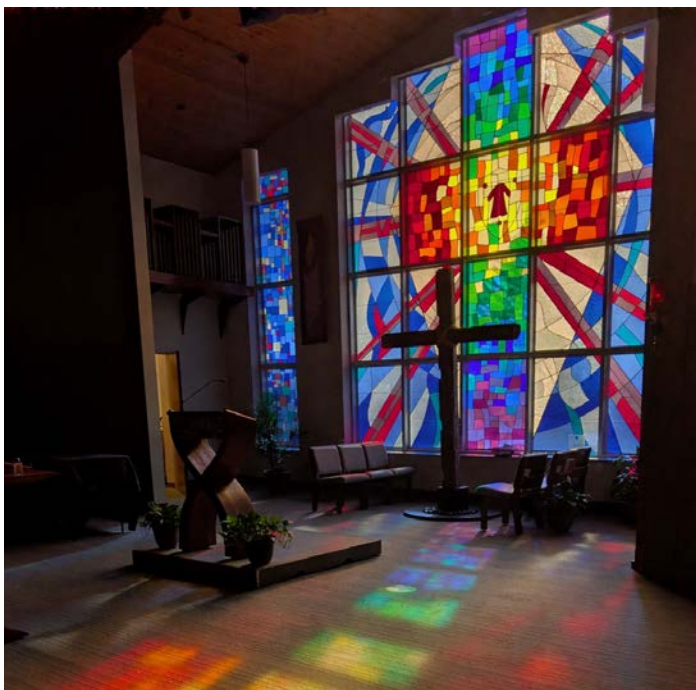


Wonder on the Go Instagram Page

Artist's Statement — Kevin Shay

St. Stephen has been our family's faith home for 40 years. This wall of 28 windows in the sanctuary is dedicated to the members of this church with whom we have celebrated and worshipped over the years. For me, it's a powerful expression of the hope we have in the grace of God.

The stained glass was created over three phases. In 2004, the windows on the west side of the sanctuary had been clear glass, and part of the narthex before it was remodeled. I made the large cross in the middle, including the coat of Saint Stephen complete with three stones, for the 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of this church. Phase 2, completed in 2020, consisted of the addition of 14 windows around the central cross and featured circles and rays of light. Phase 3 has just been completed in 2026, adding the final four windows on each side of the stained glass cross/rays.



A variety of complementary colored glass as well as textures was used in the project. The pieces are held together with lead came and solder, and each large panel is reinforced with steel bars for rigidity. The panels have been installed with L-shaped aluminum molding.

I would like to thank everyone for indulging me with my contemporary design. I wish to acknowledge The Stained Glass Store in Grimes for their design and installation assistance, and my wife for construction assistance.



My hope is that this colorful wall of the sanctuary provides a moment of wonder, joy, and reflection for our congregation as we worship together.

Blessings to you all,

Kevin Shay

See page 4 for information on our dedication service for the windows.

News & Events

Stained Glass Dedication

Sunday, May 31

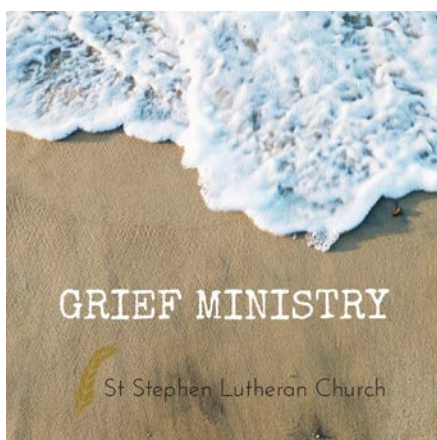
We will be dedicating our new stained glass windows on **Sunday, May 31** during Worship. A reception will follow in the Gathering Area.



Please see page 3 for Kevin Shay's artist's statement on our beautiful new addition to the Sanctuary.

Friends on the Fifth!

May 31 is also the fifth Sunday of the month, and we invite you to bring a friend or family member to worship!

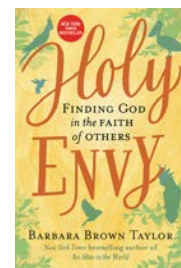


Grief Ministry Begins May 6

We have all been touched by grief at one time or another. Whether it's the loss of a loved one, loss of a job, or maybe some unresolved issue, we will all face it. But we don't have to face it alone. Comfort can be found in shared experiences and by talking about the pain we feel. We invite you to join us as we work through a resource called *Life Recovery Workbook for Grief*. This book will guide our discussion and ask some questions for us to consider. Please join us on **Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Gathering Area (note revised location) beginning on May 6**. In order to have enough books for all, we ask that you sign up (there is a clipboard in the Gathering area) or contact Pastor Chris (clang001@luthersem.edu) or Pastor Mark (therevmjh@aol.com).

Brown Bag Book Club

The book club gathers each Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. in the office Conference Room. The next book is *Holy Envy* by Barbara Brown Taylor and discussion will begin **May 6**. Brown Bag will meet in the Gathering Area on **Wednesday, May 13**. We are replacing carpet in the offices and conference room that week.



Graduate Sunday, May 10

On **Sunday, May 10**, we will celebrate and recognize Lucy Thomas, our high school graduate from the Class of 2026, offering her our blessings and support as she steps into this next chapter of her life. It has been a joy to watch her grow, and we are deeply grateful for the ways she has enriched our congregation and community. As she moves forward, we pray Lucy will continue living out her faith and shining her light everywhere she goes.

Supper Club

Friday, May 15, 6:30 p.m.

Please join us for Supper Club! Supper Club provides once per month informal socializing in someone's home. Open to any adult – with hosting not required. Just bring an appetizer to share and your beverage of choice. Please let our hosts, Ardie and Jerry Strawman (aestrawman@yahoo.com), know that you will be attending.

News & Events (continued)

Property Day Saturday, May 16, 8 a.m.

We need your help to maintain and beautify our church. We typically work for 2-3 hours as needed. **Please check the Friday email on May 15 for any special instructions.** If Saturday morning doesn't work, contact Jerry Strawman for an alternative time.



Prayers for Healing, Sunday, May 17

Once each month, Sunday worship includes an opportunity for individual prayer for healing and anointing (the sign of the cross placed on your forehead in oil). If you wish to receive this ministry, simply proceed to one of the healing ministers once you've received communion.



2026 SOUTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

PEACE BE WITH YOU

2026 Assembly for the Southeastern Iowa Synod

The 2026 Assembly for the Southeastern Iowa Synod will take place **May 16-17** at First Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids. This year's assembly will be centered around the theme "Peace be with you" (John 20:19), inviting all participants to reflect on Christ's gift of peace and to carry that peace into our communities and ministries. In addition to worship, workshops, and fellowship, the 2026 Assembly will include the election of the Synod Bishop. Please pray for those who will attend the synod assembly on behalf of St. Stephen: voting member **Krista Brittain-Dial and Pastor Mark Holmes.**

Thanks to everyone who donated a prayer shawl for the assembly!



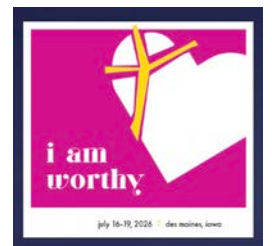
2026 ELCA Triennial Gathering — All Women of the ELCA are Invited!

Join us at the 2026 Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa!
July 16-19, 2026

From the website (www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page):

The theme for the 2026 Triennial Gathering is "I Am Worthy," based on Psalm 139:14: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." This statement serves as a reminder of God's promise to be with us, even in times of devastation and division. By repeating the phrase "I am worthy," we can recognize the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives. This practice of self-affirmation opens up opportunities for healing and restoration within ourselves, our church, society, and the world. When we declare, "I am worthy," we align ourselves with God's promises. There is great power in our resolve.

Scan the QR code for more information and to register.



YOU ARE INVITED TO



Register
Here!

ARCTIC ANIMALS

CARE FOR CREATION

VBS

June 7-10
5:30-7:30 p.m.
food, stories, crafts,
songs, and games!

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
3510 72nd St
Urbandale, IA
ststephenlutheran.org
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News & Events (continued)

Bible Presentation

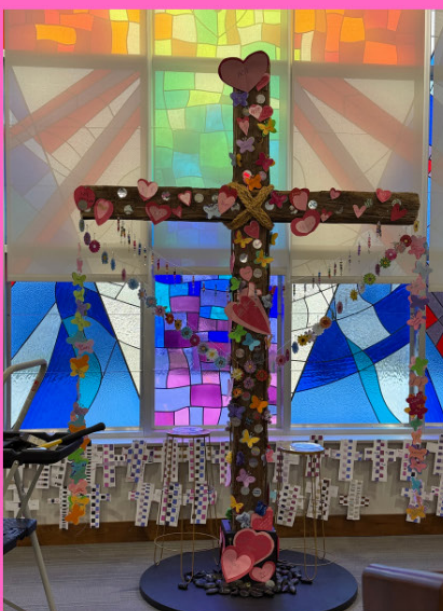
Our annual Bible Presentation was held on **Sunday, April 19**. Receiving their bible this year were Amelia DeVries, Britta Dial and Lewis Taylor. The Spark Sunday School children also sang during worship with the SSLC Praise Band.



Maundy Thursday & Good Friday



Easter Egg Hunt and Decorating of the Cross



Palm Sunday & Easter Sunday



Outreach

“Tour de Ghana” by Tracy Sabus

I am excited to share some meaningful news with you. This October, I have been invited to participate in Self-Help International’s mission experience in Ghana — a journey called “Tour de Ghana.” I’ll come back to that title in a moment, but first, a bit of context.

I’m an Iowa girl — born and raised in Parkersburg, a graduate of Iowa State University. I raised my family in Urbandale where I continue to live. I’ve been blessed with a good and comfortable life.

Over the past few years, though, I’ve felt a quiet but persistent nudge from the Holy Spirit — an invitation to step beyond what is familiar and safe, and to experience something that stretches me. This sense of calling has been part of my prayers, my questions, and my listening as I’ve tried to discern what God might be asking of me next.

As unexpected as it may sound, a mission trip to Ghana has become that next Holy-Spirit-Step.

This journey is an opportunity to witness and support work that strengthens communities through partnerships in food security, education, and health. It’s also an invitation to build relationships — listening with open hearts, honoring the dignity of God’s beloved children, and learning from people whose lives and experiences are very different from my own. The program that has caught my attention

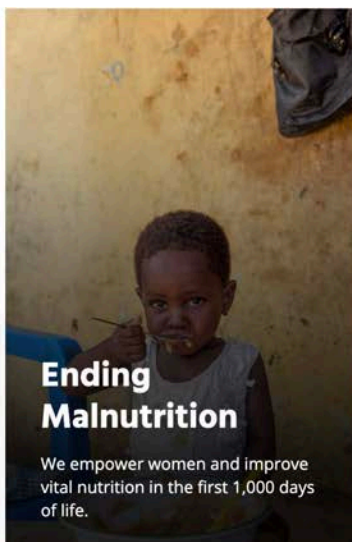
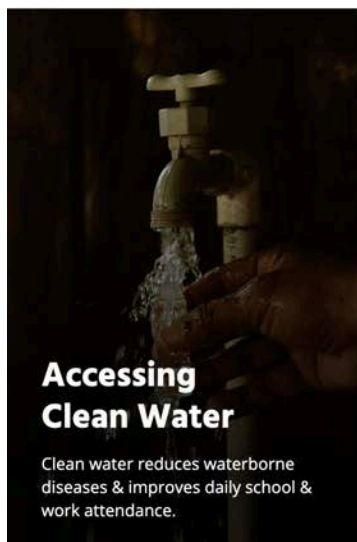


the most is the work of empowering women and girls, and yes — part of this experience includes me driving a three-wheeled motorcycle across the country...hence, “Tour de Ghana.”

This fall, our confirmation students will be exploring a powerful baptismal promise: to serve all people, following the example of Jesus. As I prepare for this journey, I’m reminded that this calling isn’t just something we talk about — it’s something we live. Serving like Jesus often leads us beyond our comfort zones. It calls us to show up with humility, to recognize the gifts and strengths in others, and to understand that this work is not about “us helping them,” but about participating together in what God is already doing in the world.

My hope is that this journey will not only shape me, but also shape my ministry here at St. Stephen as we grow in knowing more clearly that God’s love knows no boundaries, and that we are all invited into something bigger than ourselves.

I look forward to sharing more in the months ahead. I welcome your prayers, and if you feel called, your support as I prepare for this journey.



Outreach (continued)

Social Ministry Report for April, 2026

Committee members: Jane Dieseth, Tracy Sabus, Sue Koch, Leslie Dahm

Urbandale Food Pantry Collection

For the month of **March**, we collected:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 17 canned tuna & chicken | 1 bag of chips |
| 13 beans | 1 bread |
| 6 canned vegetables | 2 pkg of wipes |
| 3 Hamburger & Tuna Helper | 5 toothbrushes & toothpaste |
| 5 canned fruit | 4 miscellaneous |
| 1 Velveeta Cheese | TOTAL: 63 items weighing, 51 lbs. |
| 2 tea & cocoa | |



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Urbandale Food Pantry Collection for May, 2026

In **May** we will gather **canned protein, canned fruit, pancake syrup, pancake mix deodorant for men & women.** Please place items for the Urbandale Food Pantry in the shopping carts (Gathering Area). Financial gifts marked “food pantry” are always welcome, and can be shared in worship or sent to the church office.



Free Little Pantry

Donate “dry goods” groceries by placing them in the Free Little Pantry itself. If there’s not enough room in the Little Pantry, overflow can be placed in the designated tote inside the Office Entry door. Please be sure to close and latch the pantry door to keep weather and critters out.



Free Little Library--

Donate books for all age groups by placing them in the designated tote inside the Office Entry door. Contact the church office for assistance with an after-hours donation.



For assistance with the Free Little Pantry or Free Little Library, please contact our team: Sarah Tomjack, Krista Dial, and Janet Davis.

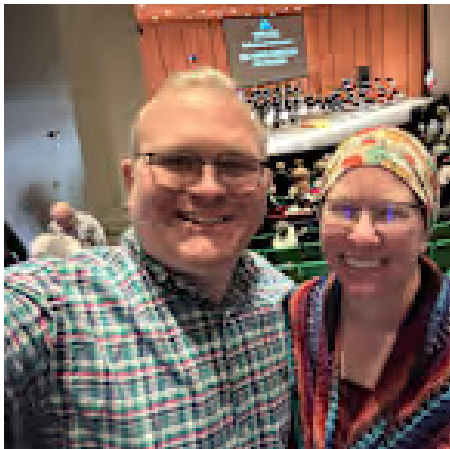
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God’s Work Our Hands

During Lent we had a Clothing Drive for Valerius Elementary School. **We collected a total of 331 items.** Many thanks to all those who donated!

Supporting Pastors Andrea and Ronald Myers

Below is Pastor Andrea Myers' Most Recent Post on CaringBridge (April 25)



The Home Stretch

We are in the home stretch!

Today is Day 94 since my bone marrow transplant. It's 103 days since we arrived in Rochester on January 12. Now, we are less than a week from going home!

We had a taste of home last weekend when our provider team okayed a 2-night "leave" so we could attend the Des Moines Symphony on April 19. We are season ticket holders but missed out on many of this season's performances. We didn't want to miss this one, which featured some of our favorite works (Aaron Copeland's "Appalachian Spring" and George Gershwin's "American in Paris"). So we drove home Saturday, attended the concert on Sunday, and drove north again on Monday. That performance was lovely!

It's difficult to describe the strange feeling of walking into my own house after 3 months away. Everything was tidy and where it should be, but the air felt

stale. It was HOME, and yet it felt slightly foreign. Nevertheless, it felt good to sit in our comfortable sunroom and soak up the sights of our blooming yard and thriving plants. Ronald squeezed in a morning of yardwork before we had to leave, just long enough to mow the grass and remove the winter debris to uncover most of his flower beds.

One funny story: When we moved into this house (2022) we found that the light switch for the powder room was outside the door, rather than inside. (There was a switch inside, but it was the vestige of an exhaust fan long removed by prior owners.) The outside switch was a quirky feature that flummoxed our guests, but after four years we were used to it! During the flurry of "get the house ready" tasks after Christmas, we had an electrician on hand to switch things around. However, there wasn't much time to reset old habits ... something I realized last weekend when I kept reaching for a blank switch plate when I needed to turn off the light! It's a good reminder of the power of habits, and how many things we hardly think about from day to day.

To everything there is a season, and as this "100 Days" season comes to a close, I'm mindful of the various habits we'll leave behind as we move out of Gift of Life. I'm also wrapping my mind around this next transitional season. It will be several more months before I'm able to return

to work at St. Stephen. There will be new habits and rhythms to learn as we adjust to life at home and as I continue to recover and heal. We will make regular visits to Rochester for the next several months, which may include brief stays at Gift of Life, but this long stretch will have concluded!

In the meantime, I have more than a dozen appointments coming up this week. These include some new "Day 100" baseline tests like lung function and bone density. I had another bone marrow biopsy yesterday. On Wednesday we meet with someone from Infectious Disease to discuss my immunization schedule. (Having a "newborn baby" immune system means I need to re-do all of my childhood vaccinations.) Finally, we will meet with my transplant doctor, Dr. Hefazi, to review everything and find out what my follow-up care will look like during the next phase.

My last appointment of the week will be the removal of my Hickman line (port) on Thursday morning. That's officially Day 100, and it's the day we expect to head home! Hooray!

Supporting Pastors Andrea and Ronald Myers

Ongoing Support for Pastors Andrea and Ronald Myers

Pastor Andrea deeply appreciates the continued prayers and support of the congregation as she recovers from her bone marrow transplant—an arduous and truly miraculous process that offers her the best hope for long-term remission from leukemia. Pastor Andrea and Pastor Ronald will be returning home from Rochester on May 1, but will continue to be closely monitored through appointments at the Mayo Clinic.

We give thanks to God for their time at the Gift of Life House. As they transition back home, MealTrain can be used once a week (on Sundays) to schedule a prepared meal to be delivered. Scan the QR code to schedule a meal or give gift cards or cash donations.



CaringBridge Updates: You can read updates from Pastor Andrea and Ronald at [caringbridge.org](https://www.caringbridge.org) after creating a free account. Pastor Andrea treasures every comment posted there! Andrea’s email address: revandreamyers@gmail.com

Around the Church

Baptism on Sunday, April 26

On Sunday, April 26 we celebrated the baptism of Hilde Daisy Hewins. Hilde’s parents are Daniel and Jessie Hewins. Her sponsors were Marshall Hagen and Richard Hewins.



Count Me In! Volunteer at St. Stephen

There are so many ways to get involved at St. Stephen! Each Sunday worship service requires anywhere from 8-12 volunteers. Outside of worship, there are opportunities in hospitality & fellowship, faith formation, music, service & care. Please complete the form at this QR code and someone from the staff will reach out to you!



Around the Church

Carpet Installation: Week of May 11

We will be installing new carpet in the offices, nursery and conference room **the week of May 11**. The office will be closed during this week. Contact Pastor Mark, Tracy or Jana to make an appointment if needed.

Please Help if You are Able! We will be boxing up and moving equipment after Worship on **Sunday, May 10. Friday, May 15** at 1:00 p.m. we will be moving equipment back following carpet installation.

Capital Campaign Update

April and May are big months for capital improvement projects! Work commenced on both the roof and the elevator – two of the largest projects on the list. The center section of the church (above the foyer, restrooms, banner room) was re-roofed to address water leaks. In addition to keeping the water out, the improvements will allow us to continue converting the banner room into an office space for Redeemed Fellowship Center. The elevator is also undergoing necessary updates to its components and is out-of-commission through May 15. The committee will revisit the project list after these significant projects are complete.

Job Opening at St. Stephen Lutheran Church: Office Manager Job Posting

St. Stephen has an opening for a part-time office manager. Applicants must have excellent organizational skills, a personal disposition and strictly adhere to confidentiality expectations. The ideal candidate will be flexible while handling various day-to-day administrative duties as well as exhibiting strong creative writing skills in order to facilitate marketing, website and social media presence. This is a 20 hour/week position.

Required skills and qualifications may also include:

- Communications degree or related experience
- Administrative experience, preferably in a church or nonprofit setting
- Light accounting skills
- Familiarity with congregation ministry
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office and Google Office Suite
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Ability to lift 20 lbs.



Scan for job description.

Please submit your resume and description of qualifications to jobs@ststephenlutheran.org by **May 15, 2026**.

May Celebrations

May Birthdays

May 2 Barb Huey
 May 4 Tanya Kruse, Andrea Myers, Michele Weinberger
 May 5 Mike Newell
 May 8 Lyle Pohlman
 May 12 Amandine Habben
 May 14 Don Rumelhart
 May 16 Steve Quam, Ann Waddell
 May 19 Larry Hunt
 May 20 Maxine Andrews, Ken Goering, Julia Hoeger
 May 24 Kathy Codner, Marybeth Lytle, Allen Rappold
 May 26 Marlys Maahs, Donna Schroeder
 May 27 Noah Harding, Ryan Walker

May 28 Gavin Freeman
 May 29 Ronald Myers
 May 30 Brent Arntzen

May Anniversaries

May 12 Missy & Brett Boerner
 May 16 Audrey & Curtis Jones
 May 17 Marlys & Steve Ruth
 May 21 Deb & Chris Nelsen
 May 25 Krista & Nick Brittain-Dial
 May 27 Andrea & Greg Arens, Gayle & Bob Johnson
 May 31 Krista & Gentry Cairo

May Calendar

Friday, May 1

Church Office Closed

Elevator Repairs

Private Event, 2 p.m.

Saturday, May 2

Elevator Repairs

Redeemed Fellowship Center, 4 p.m.

Sunday, May 3

Elevator Repairs

Spark Sunday School, 9 a.m. (*final Sunday for the season*)

Breakfast Club, 9 a.m. (6th-8th grade) (*final Sunday for the season*)

Holy Communion, 10 a.m.

Coffee and Donuts Fellowship, 11 a.m.

RFC Worship, 12 & 5 p.m.

Wednesday, May 6 (*last Wednesday Night Activities for the season*)

Elevator Repairs

Brown Bag Book Club, 11:30 a.m.

Supper at The Table, 5:15 p.m.

Worship at the Table, 6 p.m.

Grief Ministry Group, 6:30 p.m.

EMERGE, 6:30 p.m.

SSLC Band Rehearsal, 6:30 p.m.

ELES, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 7

Elevator Repairs

AA Meeting, 6:30 a.m.

Friday, May 8

Elevator Repairs

Church Office Closed

Saturday, May 9

Elevator Repairs

St. Stephen Crafters, 10 a.m.

Redeemed Fellowship Rehearsal, 1 p.m.

Redeemed Fellowship Center, 4 p.m.

Sunday, May 10, *Graduate Sunday*

Elevator Repairs

Holy Communion, 10 a.m.

Coffee and Donuts Fellowship, 11 a.m.

RFC Worship, 12 & 5 p.m.

Tuesday, May 12

Church Office Closed — Carpet Installation

Elevator Repairs

Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 13

Church Office Closed — Carpet Installation

Elevator Repairs

Brown Bag Book Club, 11:30 a.m. (*Meet in Gathering Area*)

Grief Ministry Group, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 14

Church Office Closed — Carpet Installation

Elevator Repairs

AA Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, May 15

2026 Assembly for the Southeastern Iowa Synod

Church Office Closed — Carpet Installation

Elevator Repairs

Saturday, May 16

2026 Assembly for the Southeastern Iowa Synod

Property Committee, 8 a.m.

SSLC Praise Band rehearsal, 8:30 a.m.

Redeemed Fellowship Rehearsal, 1 p.m.

Redeemed Fellowship Center, 4 p.m.

Sunday, May 17

Holy Communion & Healing Prayers, 10 a.m.

Coffee and Donuts Fellowship, 11 a.m.

RFC Worship, 12 & 5 p.m.

Monday, May 18, *Summer Hours Begin: Tuesday,*

Wednesday, Thursday 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 20

Brown Bag Book Club, 11:30 a.m.

Grief Ministry Group, 6:30 p.m.

SSLC Band Rehearsal, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 21

Care Companions, 4:00 p.m.

AA Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 23

Redeemed Fellowship Rehearsal, 1 p.m.

Redeemed Fellowship Center, 4 p.m.

Sunday, May 24

Holy Communion, 10 a.m.

Coffee and Donuts Fellowship, 11 a.m.

RFC Worship, 12 & 5 p.m.

Tuesday, May 26

Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 27

Brown Bag Book Club, 11:30 a.m.

SSLC Band Rehearsal, 6:15 p.m.

Grief Ministry Group, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 28

AA Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 30

Redeemed Fellowship Rehearsal, 1 p.m.

Redeemed Fellowship Center, 4 p.m.

Sunday, May 31, *Stained Glass Dedication*

Holy Communion, 10 a.m.

Coffee and Donuts Fellowship, 11 a.m.

RFC Worship, 12 & 5 p.m.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
3510 72nd St.
Urbandale, IA 50322
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Mark Your Calendars!

Office Closure Dates

First three Fridays in May

Entire week of May 11

Last Day of Spark Sunday School and Breakfast Club is **Sunday, May 3**

Supper & Worship at the Table, ELES & Emerge conclude **Wednesday, May 6**

Summer Office Hours begin week of **May 18:**
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

