



St. Stephen Lutheran Church

AUGUST 2026

News & Notes

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



Starting August 9, Pastor Rachel Mithelman will return as Interim Worship Leader.

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

Genesis 1:31

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but on thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

Chief Seattle, 1786-1866

Beginning in worship on Sunday, August 9, we will take an exit off the “Sundays after Pentecost” highway for the rest of the month to explore an optional season of the church year – **The Season of Creation**.

Christian denominations around the globe have long celebrated such a season under various names but with the same intent – to challenge us to rediscover our intimate connections with creation and with Christ and the Spirit in creation. Theologian David Rhodes writes of the Season, “We return to see ourselves again as part of the very Earth from which we are made.”

We will sing creation hymns, confess our neglect of our “kin” – the rivers and prairies and creatures great and small – and through Scripture and preaching focus on a different domain of creation each week. Sunday, August 9 will be **“Wilderness Sunday,”** with worship leadership shared with the youth of St. Stephen reflecting on their time in the wilderness of the Apostle Islands. Sunday, August 16, will be **“Forest Sunday,”** followed by **“Storm Sunday”** on the 23rd. And we will complete the series with **“River Sunday”** on the 30th .

The quote attributed to Chief Seattle above reminds us of our relationship with all that God has made. Human beings are part of the great web of life, not separate from it, and our task has always been to join our “kin” in praise of the Creator and to live in harmony with all of creation.

-- Pastor Rachel

A Season of Creation

Wilderness Sunday



A Season of Creation

Storm Sunday



A Season of Creation

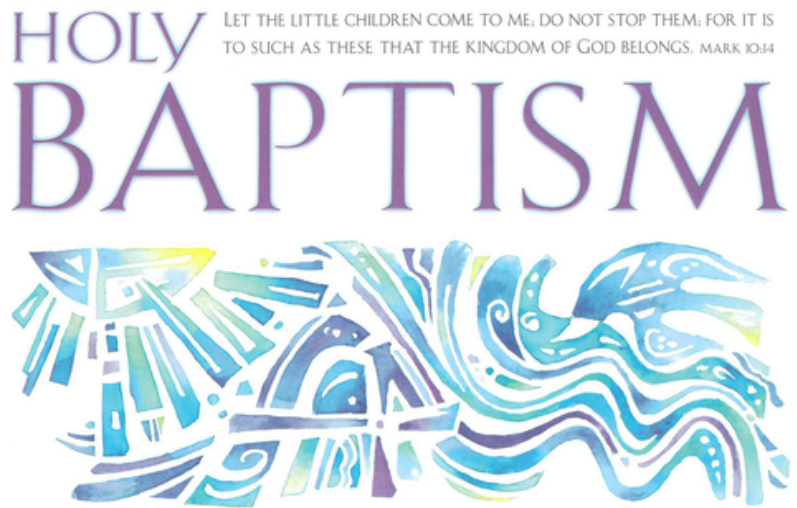
Forest Sunday



A Season of Creation

River Sunday

Around the Church



As you bring a
you are entrusted
with him among
to the word of
the Lord's Prayer
Commandment
scriptures, and
that he may lead



Welcome Archie

Archie Arens was baptized at St. Stephen on June 28. Archie is the son of Greg and Andrea Arens and the grandson of Dave and Marsha Arens.



Welcome Hadley

Hadley Trunnel was baptized at St. Stephen on July 12. Hadley is the daughter of Benjamin and Katie (Twedt) Trunnel and granddaughter of James and Penny Twedt.

Around the Church (continued)

Summer Music Featuring Ducharme-Jones

St. Stephen's second annual summer music event took place June 25. Around 60 people enjoyed music and cool weather. We look forward to expanding upon this event next year.



Thank you, Tarra!

Tarra Sander was recognized July 19 for serving as office manager since 2024. Tarra has transitioned to part time accounting work for the church.



News & Events

Recognition for Pastor Mark Holmes

Please join us **Sunday, August 2** when we will celebrate Pastor Mark Holmes as he leads us in worship on his last Sunday as Interim Pastor!



August Hymn Sings 2nd & 4th Sundays

Please Join us for a Hymn sing prior worship on **August 9 and 23**. We will gather at **9:50 a.m.** when you can request to sing your favorite hymns from the ELW.

Youth Sunday - August 9

Our high school youth will be leading worship on Sunday, August 9. They will have just returned from a trip to the Apostle Islands located in Lake Superior and will be sharing their experiences. We hope you can join us!

Property Day Saturday, August 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 August 15 for any special instructions. If Saturday morning doesn't work, contact Jerry Strawman for an alternative time.



Celebrate the New School Year with a Special Blessing!

As we prepare for a new school year, we invite students of all ages, teachers, administrators, school staff, and education professionals to join us for a special **Blessing of the Backpacks and Bags** during worship on **Sunday, August 23**.

Bring your **backpack, briefcase, laptop bag, or school tote** as we pray for God's guidance, protection, wisdom, and encouragement in the year ahead. Whether you're learning, teaching, leading, or supporting others in a school, we want to celebrate this new beginning with you.

We look forward to blessing you and your school year!



Prayers for Healing Sunday, August 23

News and Events (continued)

July Council Meeting Highlights

- Website update: A new homepage has been developed and a new website should go live sometime in August.
- A committee is researching options to improve the acoustics in the Gathering Area. Acoustical testing will be done to determine our needs.
- HVAC update: Bell Brothers is prioritizing which air conditioning units need to be updated or replaced. A new thermostat was installed to bring a dormant unit back online.
- The Stewardship committee has received materials for the fall campaign.
- Discussion to determine interest in participating in the 4th of July in 2027 parade and the possibility of hosting a pancake breakfast in July as well.
- Interest in "Wonder On the Go" education series has increased as churches are beginning to look at fall programming. A similar promotion about our past Christmas program will be shared with congregations this fall.

Redeemed Fellowship Center Partnership Highlights

- This August will mark the end of our third year as partners. The partnership has been successful and all look forward to continuing it for as long as it benefits both congregations.
- Discussion about property budget and expenses and if RFC would consider an increased contribution.
- RFC identified that the time needed for the Community Room each Saturday is 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. which is different than what is in the partnership agreement. All agreed the change was okay.
- The Fall Kick-Off which takes place September 13 was shared with RFC.
- RFC is in the process of getting desks for their new office space and they will furnish and equip the office.

Hymn Sing at the Gift Farm

Sunday, August 30, 6:30 p.m.

25137 250th St.

Dallas Center, IA 50063

Hosted by Bill and Marilyn Gift

Bring a lawn chair and beverage

Watermelon and ingredients for s'mores provided



**NO AUGUST
SUPPER CLUB**

Gift Farm Driving Directions Option 1

- Go west through Grimes on Hwy 44 to the west edge of Dallas Center
- Turn south (left) on Kellogg to the "T" intersection (Linden)
- Turn west (right) on Linden and south past the ball field
- Turn west (right) at the first corner - 250th St to the second farm on the right

Gift Farm Driving Directions Option 2

- Go west on Hickman Rd (Hwy 6) through Waukee to R Ave
- Turn north (right) to 260 th St. Brenton Arboretum sign
- Go west on 260th ½ mile & turn north on Quinlan Ave
- Turn west on 250th St. to the 2nd farm on the right

Outreach

Social Ministry Report



Food Pantry - June Collection

Boxed Cereal:	7
Box of Crackers:	1
Boxed Potatoes:	5
Soup:	3
Canned Tuna:	1
Miscellaneous Items:	5
Toothbrushes:	32
Travel size: toothpaste, lotion, soap, etc.:	<u>170</u>

Total Items Donated: 224 Items weighing 40 pounds

August Food Pantry Collection Items:

- Rice
- Hamburger Helper (beef & tuna)
- Nuts
- Juice (100% & shelf stable)
- Dish soap

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 in 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 after-hours donations.



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

Outreach - Tracy's Journey

How YOU Can Be a Part of This Story

As I prepare for my journey to Ghana in October, I have an invitation to share.

As part of this mission with Self-Help International, I am working to raise more than \$10,000 to support programs that empower women, girls, and families in Ghana. My hope is that these funds will help create more stories like Najaahat's—a young girl who received education, encouragement, and practical support that ultimately changed the course of her life. Today, she is a teacher investing in the next generation because someone invested in her. Read more about her here. [Najaahat's Journey](#)



Tracy at her motorcycle safety class.

One of the most exciting parts of this trip is that we will be riding three-wheeled motorcycles, or trikes, through the communities we visit. These aren't simply our mode of transportation—they represent one of Self-Help International's innovative microcredit program.

In fact, to be able to ride these trikes, I had to earn my motorcycle endorsement! Last weekend, I spent two full days taking a motorcycle safety course—on a three-wheeled motorcycle, of course. That was a hoot! I never imagined I'd be learning to ride a motorcycle at this stage of my life, but it's all part of preparing for this incredible adventure. It reminded me that God is always inviting us to step outside our comfort zones, learn something new, and trust where the journey leads. After our journey, these trikes remain in Ghana and become part of a microcredit loan program. Entrepreneurs (women like Elizabeth, who you can read about here (<https://selfhelpinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Elizabeth.pdf>)) can receive a loan to purchase and operate a trike, using it to transport crops to market, deliver goods, or provide transportation for others. The income they earn helps support their families while also allowing them to repay the loan, creating opportunities that continue long after our trip has ended.

Each trike costs approximately \$2,500, and I would love to help fund more than one of these life-changing vehicles. Imagine the impact: one trike can become a business, provide steady income for a family, strengthen a community, and create hope for years to come.

If you have been wondering how you can make a difference, I invite you to partner with me. My overall fundraising goal is more than \$10,000. Every gift—whether it helps purchase a sanitary kit for a girl, supports educational opportunities like those that changed Najaahat's life, or contributes toward a trike that provides a family's livelihood—makes a lasting difference.

Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and your generosity. I can't wait to share the stories of hope, resilience, and faith that we will encounter together.

Ghana - Did you know?

- In 1957, Ghana became the first sub-saharan country to gain independence from European colonial rule.
- 69% of Ghana's land is used for agricultural purposes.
- Ghana is among the world's leading producers of cocoa and is known for the high-grade quality of its sun-dried (rather than mechanically dried) cocoa.
- Lake Volta stretches across eastern Ghana and is the world's largest artificial lake by surface area (approx. 3,275 square miles).
- The famous Kente cloth originates from the Ashanti people of Ghana. Kente comes from the name "kenten" which means "basket" because of the cloths unique woven design. Weavers use vibrant colors and complex designs. Long ago, only kings and queens and high leaders wore kente cloth for ceremonial events and special occasions.
- Mole National Park is Ghana's first, largest and most prestigious protected area which is homes to hundreds of plant, bird and mammal, and butterfly species. The park's mission is to sustainably manage the wildlife resources, increase revenue, and generate economic activities around the park with a view to contribute towards local socio-economic development.



Sources: Britannica.com, multicultural.web.baylor.edu, molenationalpark.org



You can read updates from Pastor Andrea and Ronald at caringbridge.org after creating a free account. Pastor Andrea treasures every comment posted there. Andrea's email address: revandreamyers@gmail.com



August Office Hours

During the summer, the church office will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (not T/W/F), 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Office: (515) 276-4628



August Calendar

Saturday, August 1

- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship**
Rehearsals, 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 2

10th Sunday after Pentecost

- ☐ **Holy Communion**, 10:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Coffee and Donuts Fellowship**, 11:30 a.m.
- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship Center**
Worship, 12:00 & 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 5

- ☐ **Life of Faith Team Meeting**, 11:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Brown Bag**, 11:30 a.m.
- ☐ **Trust Fund Committee Meeting**, 6:00 p.m.
- ☐ **SSLC Praise Band Rehearsal**, 6:15 p.m.
- ☐ **Grief Ministry Group**, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 6

- ☐ **AA Meeting**, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 8

- ☐ **St. Stephen Crafters**, 10:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship**
Rehearsals, 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 9

11th Sunday after Pentecost

- ☐ **Hymn Sing**, 9:50 a.m.
- ☐ **Holy Communion**, 10:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Coffee and Donuts Fellowship**, 11:30 a.m.
- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship Center**
Worship, 12:00 & 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 11

- ☐ **Executive Committee Meeting**, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 12

- ☐ **Life of Faith Team Meeting**, 11:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Brown Bag**, 11:30 a.m.
- ☐ **SSLC Praise Band Rehearsal**, 6:15 p.m.
- ☐ **Grief Ministry Group**, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 13

- ☐ **AA Meeting**, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 15

- ☐ **Property Committee**, 8:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship**
Rehearsals, 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 16

12th Sunday after Pentecost

- ☐ **Holy Communion**, 10:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Coffee and Donuts Fellowship**, 11:30 a.m.
- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship Center**
Worship, 12:00 & 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 19

- ☐ **Brown Bag**, 11:30 a.m.
- ☐ **SSLC Band Rehearsal**, 6:15 p.m.

Thursday, August 20

- ☐ **AA Meeting**, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 22

- ☐ **Private Event**, 11:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship**
Rehearsals, 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 23

13th Sunday after Pentecost

- ☐ **Hymn Sing** 9:50 a.m.
- ☐ **Holy Communion (with Healing Prayers)**, 11:30 a.m.
- ☐ **Coffee and Donuts Fellowship**, 6:15 p.m.
- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship Center**
Worship, 12:00 & 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 25

- ☐ **AA Meeting**, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 26

- ☐ **Brown Bag**, 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, August 27

- ☐ **AA Meeting**, 6:30 p.m.
- ☐ **Church Council Meeting**, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 29

- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship**
Rehearsals, 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 30

14th Sunday after Pentecost

- ☐ **Holy Communion**, 10:00 a.m.
- ☐ **Coffee and Donuts Fellowship**, 11:30 a.m.
- ☐ **Redeemed Fellowship Center**
Worship, 12:00 & 5:00 p.m.

August Celebrations

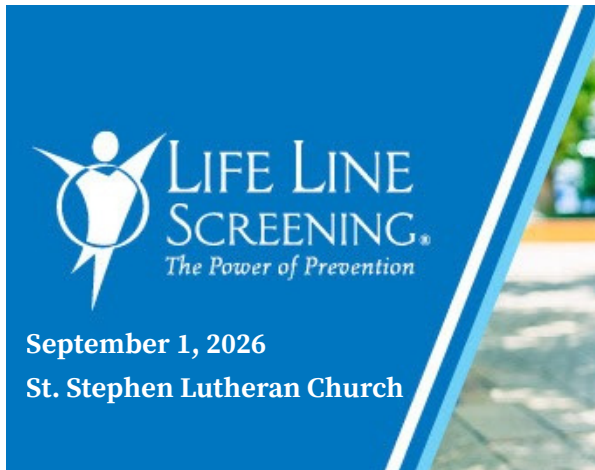
Birthdays

Bill Freeman	08/01	Charlotte Monson	08/18
Tracy Hersom	08/05	Daphne Monson	08/18
Emilia Amundson	08/09	Keith Jaben	08/19
Marcia Klint	08/09	Caleb Acaley	08/20
Dave Amundson	08/11	Griffin Craig-Huey	08/21
Loney Baugher	08/12	Art Gustafson	08/21
Rosalie Baugher	08/12	Carol Mahlendorf	08/23
Allen Reiman	08/12	Robert Lydon	08/24
Brad Edmondson	08/13	Tom Bailey	08/25
Gina Moriarty	08/13	Lila Ewing	08/27
Kay Riel	08/14	Alec Drown	08/28
Lanny Benishek	08/15	Leo Freeman	08/29
Kris Shay	08/15	Celeste Minick-Gude	08/29
Carey Boysen	08/17	Sandra Jacoby	08/31
Adelaide Kruse	08/18	Melissa Stole	08/31

Anniversaries

Doug & Kathy Winger (18)	08/02
Jeff & Julie Lorenz (37)	08/05
Ben & Sarah Tomjack (15)	08/06
Terry & Bev Lantz (55)	08/07
Don & Karen Rumelhart (60)	08/07
Harlan & Julie Bohnsack (51)	08/09
Dan & Pam Walck (46)	08/09
Bill & Marilyn Gift (63)	08/10
Larry & Connie Richman (63)	08/10
Cory & Michelle Weinberger (25)	08/11
Mark & Shelly Anderson (26)	08/12
Greg & Leslie Dahm (43)	08/13
Brad & Cathy Edmondson (33)	08/14
Aaron & Kristen Walck (18)	08/16
Ron & Mary Hintz (52)	08/17
Ronald & Andrea Myers (20)	08/19
Tim & Gina Moriarty (17)	08/29
Jim & Kelsey Walker (26)	08/31

Looking Ahead - September



Life line screening is the premier provider of stroke and cardiovascular disease risk screenings since 1993.

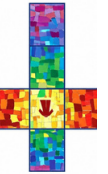
St. Stephen members can receive a discounted offer which will identify your risk level for the following diseases:

- Carotid Artery Disease
- Peripheral Arterial Disease
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm
- Atrial Fibrillation

Visit www.llsa.social/habc or call 800-324-9458 to schedule an appointment.



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



Save the Date!

Fall Kick-off

Outdoor Worship & Potluck

September 13, 2026

10:00 a.m.

