

**Our Stewardship of Attendance last week:** (8:30) 70 (9:45) 25 (11:00) 40  
Wednesday Service: (12:30) 31

**The Spirit of St. Stephen's Weekly for December 13 – December 20, 2020**

**Our Stewardship of Offerings for 2020 and Debt Retirement:**

**Total Owed on Principal: \$1,742,000.00**  
Amount Paid on Principal for 2020: \$290,000.00  
Total Received Building Fund 2020: \$184,398.74

General Offering Totals for 2020 \$734,664.94  
Expenses to date 2020 \$759,792.83

**Our weekly offerings are about returning back to God a portion of what he has first given us. We are able to be generous givers when God is at work in our hearts. St. Stephen's Activities for this week include:**

TODAY	<b>8:30AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary &amp; Online: Singing)</b> 9:30AM: Family, Faith, and the Father Sunday School (Social Hall) <b>9:45AM: Worship Service (Gym: No Singing)</b> 10:15AM: Family, Faith, and the Father Sunday School (Social Hall) <b>11:00AM: Worship Services (Sanctuary: Singing)</b> 2PM: Grief Group (Office Conference Room); 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Comm. Group (Social Hall) 2:45PM: 11 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Comm. Group (Gym)
Monday	9-12PM: Preschool 12:30PM: AA meeting (Social Hall)
Tuesday	9-12PM: Preschool <b>6PM: Holden Evening Prayer (Sanctuary)</b> 7PM: Finance Meeting (Social Hall)
Wednesday	9-12PM: Preschool <b>12:30PM: Wednesday Worship Service (Sanctuary &amp; Online: No Singing)</b> 6PM: Adult Class (Gym) 7:30PM: AA/AI-Anon meetings (Social Hall/Parlor)
Thursday	9-12PM: Preschool 7PM: AA Meeting (Social Hall)
Friday	
Saturday	6PM: Living Faith Christmas Party (DAM House)
Sunday	<b>8:30AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary &amp; Online: Singing)</b> 9:30AM: Family, Faith, and the Father Sunday School (Social Hall) <b>9:45AM: Worship Service (Gym: No Singing)</b> 10:15AM: Family, Faith, and the Father Sunday School (Social Hall) <b>11:00AM: Worship Services (Sanctuary: Singing)</b> 12:30PM: Council Meeting (Hybrid and Social Hall) <b>3PM: Blue Christmas Service (Sanctuary)</b> 4:30PM: Family Caroling

Congregation Council approves causes to be featured monthly. **December: 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.

**Hospitalized:** Sam McCuen, Lexington Medical; Ben Stogner, Home

**Christian Sympathy** is extended to Mary Ives and family upon the death of her husband, Gerald Ives. May the peace and comfort of God's Word be with her and her family assuring them of the knowledge and truth of the Resurrection.

**Join us for the Wednesday Eucharist Service** held at 12:30PM in the sanctuary to enhance your weekly worship experience and to share God's Word in a unique, shortened, but spiritual time of worship. **Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> "Be Near, Ye Faithful"**

**Holden Evening Prayer Services:** Tuesdays, Dec. 15 and 22 at 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 focusing on monologues from significant characters in the Christmas story leading up to Jesus' birth. We hope you will join us for what is destined to become one of your favorite services of the whole church year.

**Mission Lexington:** Our end of the year food drive continues with **2,524.5 lbs.** of food donated. We have exceeded our goal of 2,500lbs between Reformation and Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>! Our food donations for this year total **11,446.0 lbs.** We have surpassed our donations for last year. THANK YOU! Please place your food donations and plastic or paper bags in the food barrel next to the elevator in the admin wing. The following items are the most needed: Canned Fruit, Beef Stew, Canned Chicken, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Mac & Cheese, Green Beans, Corn, Chili, Pork & beans, Canned Soups, Rice, Dog & Cat Food. Holiday items include stuffing mix, instant potatoes, canned sweet potatoes, cornbread mix, cranberry sauce, candied yams, and broth. **Holiday Hams and Turkeys:** 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, write ham and turkey purchase and place it in the offering plate. Thank you again for your support. Ron Redd Cell 803-360-0241 Rredd7848@gmail.com.

**JCREW, Jr., & Sr. Youth: Sunday, Dec. 20th at 4:30PM Family Caroling Extravaganza**

We are not going to let COVID stop our annual caroling! It will look different this year, but we want to spread joy to everyone who needs it -but do so safely, so we don't spread germs! We are asking families (doesn't have to be mom and dad—just someone who can drive) to contact Pastor Jason or Shannon by **TODAY** 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 craft! Let's spread some cheer this holiday season!

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Community Group:** Join Ms. Shannon **TODAY** in the Social Hall at 2 PM. We will make edible Christmas trees, have some popcorn and watch a Christmas movie! Pick up will be at 3:30 PM.

**9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Community Group:** We will be having dinner and gift exchange at Sonic (near the church) on Wednesday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. All you need to bring is a desire for a jolly good time and a \$5-\$10 gift IF YOU WANT to participate in the gift exchange. The gift should be fun and something you would be happy to receive. Please email Mrs. Julie jtworzyanski@windstream.net and let her know if you plan to attend.

**11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Community Group:** We will be partnering with The Town of Lexington Police Department **TODAY** to help distribute food boxes and wrap Christmas gifts for a needy family. We will meet in the church parking lot on Butler St. at 2:45 and take the bus to the Police Dept. The family we will be wrapping gifts for hasn't been fully adopted. If you would like to bring toiletries, cleaning supplies, canned food, nonperishable items, or paper goods for the family that would be great! We should be done by 4:30 and head back to the church for hotdogs!

**Lutheran Men:** Mr. J. R. Fennel from the Lexington County Museum will be our guest speaker Monday, December 21, 2020 at 7:00. He will speak on how Christmas was celebrated in Lexington in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Come join us as we socially distance 2 people per table. No meal or dessert will be served. Ron Redd 803-360-0241 Rredd7848@gmail.com

**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 69 members in 2019. Please consider this stewardship opportunity. Over \$19,000.00 was distributed to mission churches in 2019. 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. Ron Redd 803-360-0241 Rredd7848@gmail.com.

**Blue Christmas Worship Service:** 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 next **Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> 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

**Christmas Eve Services:** You should have received an email from SignUpGenius where you were able to sign up for the Christmas Eve service your family plans to attend. If you didn't, please email Shannon. Please only sign up for whatever service you plan to be at! We are limited to 80 people in the Sanctuary and 120 in the Family Life Center so when these spaces are full, that service will be considered full. We are planning to have overflow seating in the gym for all services except the 1pm service. There will not be a sign-up for overflow seating. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any of the staff. We know that not everyone has access to the internet so we are here to help however we can. Please pass this information along to everyone you know, especially folks that don't have email. We don't want this to be a surprise to anyone on December 24<sup>th</sup>!