

Our Stewardship of Attendance last week: (8:30) 63 (9:45) 16 (11:00) 61
Wednesday Service: (12:30) 39

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: \$191,055.41

General Offering Totals for 2020 \$747,458.94
Expenses to date 2020 \$783,851.13

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:

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| TODAY | 8:30AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary & Online: Singing) 9:30AM: Family, Faith, and the Father Sunday School (Social Hall) 9:45AM: Worship Service (Gym: No Singing) 10:15AM: Family, Faith, and the Father Sunday School (Social Hall) 11:00AM: Worship Services (Sanctuary: Singing) 12:30PM: Council Meeting (Hybrid and Social Hall) 3PM: Blue Christmas Service (Sanctuary) 4:30PM: Family Caroling |
| Monday | 12:30PM: AA meeting (Social Hall) |
| Tuesday | 6PM: Holden Evening Prayer (Sanctuary) |
| Wednesday | 12:30PM: Wednesday Worship Service (Sanctuary & Online: No Singing) 7:30PM: AA/AI-Anon meetings (Social Hall/Parlor) |
| Thursday | 9AM: Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary & Online: Singing) 11AM: Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary: Singing) 1PM: Christmas Eve Service (Gym: No Singing) 1PM: Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary: Singing) 3PM: Christmas Eve Family Service (Sanctuary & Online: Singing) 5PM: Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary & Online: Singing) 7PM: Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary: Singing) 7PM: AA Meeting (Social Hall) |
| Friday | MERRY CHRISTMAS/OFFICE CLOSED |
| Saturday | |
| Sunday | 8:30AM: Worship Service (Sanctuary & Online: Singing) 9:30AM: No Sunday School 9:45AM: Worship Service (Gym: No Singing) 10:15AM: No Sunday School 11:00AM: Worship Services (Sanctuary: Singing) |

The Spirit of St. Stephen's Weekly for December 20 – December 27, 2020

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, Wellmore

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 23rd "We Have All Become Nicodemus"**

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 **TODAY 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

Holden Evening Prayer Service: Tuesday, Dec. 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 **2,913.5 lbs.** of food donated. We have exceeded our goal of 2,500lbs between Reformation and Dec. 31st! Our food donations for this year total **11,735 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: TODAY 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 will be asking you to carol from the front yard and also deliver a craft! Let's spread some cheer this holiday season!

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 18th, 19th and early 20th 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

Our 2021 Flower Calendar is available for sign up. Please find the calendar outside the Men's Sunday School Classroom

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

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 24th!

*****On Monday, you should receive an email showing the seating chart correlating to the service you signed up for. This will allow you to know where you will sit on Christmas Eve. Please know the staff has done its best to create the seating chart and we appreciate your flexibility in understanding the need for this as we navigate this unprecedented Christmas season.***