



## ***Office Restructuring Moves Forward***

I am delighted to introduce our new Office Administrator, **Sherry Mercil**. Sherry comes to us with a successful history of working in diverse sectors of the economy: the Linn-Mar School District (1990-1999), Transamerica (1999-2010), and Horizons (2010-2017). After her position as an intake/insurance/credentialing specialist at Horizons was outsourced, Sherry accepted a position with Williams & Dunnigan, Associates in Counseling and Consulting as their part-time office manager, working four mornings a week.

***Sherry's availability in the afternoons and on Fridays means that we can now extend our office hours.*** You will find Sherry in the church office Monday-Thursday from 1:30-4:00pm and Fridays from 9:00am-3:00pm.

You can reach her in the office at 319-364-2637 or via email at [office@ssluth.com](mailto:office@ssluth.com).



As our Office Administrator, Sherry will coordinate all operations of the church office, and provide administrative support for the pastor, program staff, and congregational leaders. Her primary responsibilities include producing our weekly print and digital worship materials, maintaining our master calendar, on-line database, member directories, mailing lists and prayer lists, and collaborating with our new **Communications Coordinator** in the production of congregational resources such as the monthly Messenger, Splash newsletters, stewardship and endowment brochures, the annual report and other materials as needed.

The creation of the new **Communications Coordinator** position maximizes the gifts and talents of our staff and resources, and moves our strategic plan forward. ***Reallocating financial resources in the administration budget for a part-time (8 hours/week) Communications Coordinator addresses Goal # 3 — Inviting Others to Join our Story by developing a comprehensive web and social media outreach program.*** ***Mark Howland, our Youth and Young Adult Minister, has agreed to expand his duties.*** As our Communications Coordinator he will be responsible for curating our web site, social media platforms, the weekly eNews and other relevant media with the goal of sharing our story with members and inviting those who are not yet members to join our story. You will be hearing more from Mark about all the ways you can participate in sharing our story with your family, friends and neighbors in the weeks ahead. To connect with Mark in his role as Communications Coordinator you can email him at [sslcommcoord@gmail.com](mailto:sslcommcoord@gmail.com) or call/text him at 515-988-5183.

Please welcome Sherry to our staff, Mark in his new role, and pray that God will bless and prosper our work together on behalf of St. Stephen's.

Blessings,

*Pastor Ritva*



This month our youth participate in an annual fundraising event which has become a tradition at St Stephen's and among friends of our families, the Apple Pie Fundraiser. The monies which we are able to raise through this fundraiser have a very strong

impact upon what we are able to do in this ministry. So let me share a couple of important pieces of information with you.

- All monies raised through any of our fundraisers go into a special fund which is used for large trips such as the ELCA Youth Gathering. In addition these funds are used for mission trips (ROOTED) and special events such as going to the waterpark.
- Ten percent of all funds raised are set aside for the youth to determine special benevolent projects which they choose to support.

Since next year we will be attending the ELCA Youth Gathering, I wanted to give you an understanding of what this event is about.

“Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and their adult leaders from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gather for a week of faith formation known as the Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.” - *ELCA Youth Gathering Handbook*

I hope that this helps you understand why your support of our youth fundraisers is so important. Thank you for this continued support!

Blessings,

**Mark Howland**

Youth & Young Adult Minister



Death, dying, and end of life issues are usually not topics that are at the top of anyone's conversation list. Generally, we tend to avoid these issues at all costs and push them back into the deep corners of our mind until we are forced to face

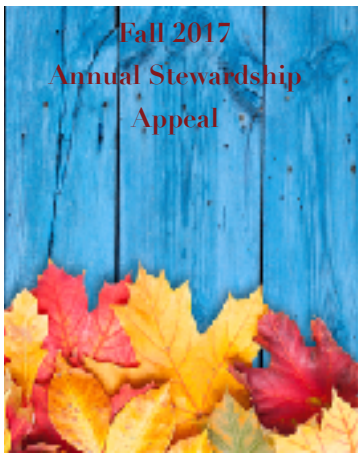
them. We don't like to think about our or our loved ones' final days. Medical care in a crisis or during a prolonged illness can be overwhelming and confusing, and we often don't know how to navigate these stressful and fear filled times or how to utilize the resources that are offered to us.

But what would happen if we faced our fears and engaged in these conversations? What would happen if we sat down with those around us and spoke openly about what overwhelms us? What would happen if we took a little time to think about our quality of life and what makes our lives good? What would happen if we came together to talk about what we don't want to talk about; death, dying, and end of life issues. Maybe in doing these things, *together*, we can find a little peace and comfort.

Join me on **November 5**, All Saints Sunday, during the education hour to engage in this conversation. We'll talk a bit about our own experiences with these issues and how we've navigated them along with how we can think about these issues in light of our faith and maybe a few other things as well.

God's peace,

**Vicar Mikayla Kopp**



*Thank you! Eucharisto! Toda! Gracias! Merci! Danke!*

Your Pastor, your Council and your Stewardship Team wish to express their thanks to the 43 families who submitted commitment cards on or before October 15. Your names were entered into a drawing for a fabulous prize of Luther themed wall art. The winners were Ev & Terri Petersen!

If you have not yet made your financial commitment, please do so as soon as possible. Our Stewardship Team is challenging us to increase our giving by \$18/month/household — 57 cents/day — to continue providing quality youth and young adult ministry, maintain our internship program, increase our mission support to the wider church, and begin planning our kitchen and bathroom renovations.

Your commitments are the building blocks our Finance Committee assembles into a realistic budget that will guide our ministry priorities for 2018. Commitment cards were mailed to every household, and can be found in the narthex at church. This year, for the first time, an on-line commitment form is available on our website [www.ssluth.com](http://www.ssluth.com).

We also want to express our gratitude to everyone here at St. Stephen's who gives so generously of your time and energy, talents and skills, resources and money to move Christ's mission forward in this small corner of Cedar Rapids. We honor you for "honoring God with all that you have — give God the first and the best" (Proverbs 3:9).

**L.O.A.F. MINISTRY UPDATE**

HACAP tells us that homelessness affects 21,000 Iowans of all walks of life. We have seen this first hand. This summer L.O.A.F. has assisted:

- a **well-educated woman** who was wrongfully dismissed secure temporary housing.
- an **Iraq war veteran** avoid losing his apartment in between jobs.
- a **disabled woman** move from temporary shelter to more secure rental housing.

*The cost to us was \$665.* The difference we have made in these persons' lives is too great to calculate. *Please help us continue making a difference in the lives of our neighbors by making a gift to L.O.A.F. today!*



# Practice Discipleship in Daily Life

Join us as we explore the seven faith practices that are the foundation for following Jesus in daily life: *Worship, Prayer, Encourage, Study, Give, Invite, Serve.*

## WORSHIP

**Sunday Fall Worship Schedule, 8:00 and 10:30am.**

**Wednesday Worship** is at 6:30pm according to the following schedule:

- 1st Wednesday ... Taize-Style Worship
- 2nd Wednesday ... Interactive Worship
- 3rd Wednesday ... Healing Service
- 4th Wednesday ... Interactive Worship
- 5th Wednesday ... Youth-Led Worship

**Would you like to sing with us?** Join us Wednesday nights following worship at 7:15-8:15pm. **Childcare is provided during rehearsals.**

## STUDY

**Sunday Morning Children's Time at 9:15 am.**

*Spark Lectionary Curriculum* for ages 3-5 and 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grades. Gather in the Children's Place (lower level).

*Music with David Haas:* the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month, after opening devotions in the Children's Place (lower level), the children come up to the sanctuary to learn a song they can offer during the 2nd service.

**Sunday morning High School Youth Discussion:** (Youth Room) - see website for topics.

**Life Long Learning 9:15am** (Fellowship Hall) see Sunday bulletin insert for topics.

**Bring Your Bible to Brunch the 1st & 3rd Sundays each month, at Lion Bridge, 59 16th Ave.** Join Pastor Ritva and John as they explore the lectionary readings for the following Sunday.

**Men's Coffee & Study Group (Mondays at 8am) at Mr. Beans** in Marion.

**Women's Bible Study (Tuesdays at 10am)** studying Wm. Paul Young's book, *Lies We Believe about God.* You can order it from Amazon (\$10.97 paperback; \$10.99 Kindle) or Barnes & Noble (\$14.35 hard cover; \$10.99 Nook). Copies of assigned chapters are also available each Sunday in the narthex.

**Wednesday Evening Confirmation Program** for Middle School Youth (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades) in Room 9. Contact Pastor Ritva or YYAM Mark Howland for more information.

## INVITE

**WomenWineWisdom – Thursday November 9, 6pm at Best Western Long Branch Hotel and Convention Center, 90 Twixt Town Road NE.** RSVP Amy at [amykuhn2@aol.com](mailto:amykuhn2@aol.com) or 270-6365. Childcare and rides can be arranged.

**Women 50+ Luncheon - Tuesday, November 14, 11:30 in the Fellowship Hall.** For information, RSVP Ardell Begalske at [reb4724@imonmail.com](mailto:reb4724@imonmail.com) or 319-393-7073.

## SERVE

**Operation Turkey Sandwich.** Help prepare and/or deliver a turkey sandwich sack lunch to those who have to work on Thanksgiving. Join the youth at 7:15pm on Wednesday, November 22 to prepare the lunches. You can also assist in the deliver off the lunches at 10:30am on Thursday, November 23. For more information, contact Mark Howland, Youth & Young Adult Minister.

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**Quilting Ministry: Contact Barbara Kusler – 319-826-3794 (home).**

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**Operation Backpack - Wednesdays at 7:15pm in the Narthex.**

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**Hospitality Hosts - Sundays at 9:00am in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall.** Each Sunday you have the opportunity to provide refreshments for guests and members. This creates a welcome atmosphere and the development of relationships. For more information or to sign up, contact Amy Kuhn or Nicole Brooks, Hospitality Team.

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## GIVE

**Opportunities to Sign Up for Altar Flowers –** Sponsoring flowers for the altar is a nice way to honor a loved one's birthday, anniversary, or other special date. Sign up is easy! Go through Signup Genius <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050b45aaad2da20-flowers>.

The cost is \$25. You can place a check in the offering with "flowers" on the memo line or pay online. Take your flowers home after the second service or leave them to be shared with a member who cannot attend services.

# LORD Hear Our Prayers



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### Members

Steve Thomas  
Mick Butz  
Pete Hansen  
Joan Petersen  
Toni Lee  
Judy Nye  
Harriet Hemphill  
Elfriede Hansen  
Ann Kleman

### Relatives

Trent Rosberg  
Dave Goepfert  
Mary Rose Barnotes  
Gertrude Lee  
John Rosentreter  
James Williams  
Jenni Beck  
Ella Bartles

### Friends

Pat Schnitzel  
Glenna Houtz  
Michelle Stafford  
Jerime Mitchell  
Martha Handley  
Rachel Hollingshead  
Rev. Liliana Stahlberg

### Family & Friends of:

Bill Martin (friend of  
Debbie Ackerman)  
who died 10.5.17.  
Berdella Pitz (aunt of  
Brenda Moore) who  
died 10.8.17.  
Florian Bangert (uncle  
of Dave Coates) who  
died 10.18.17.  
Sydney Brooks (niece  
of Amy & Brian Kuhn)  
who died 10.25.17.

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### Serving in the military and/or overseas

Alex Grafft, Army National Guard

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*Please contact the office or use a Prayer Request card (in your pew rack) to place your loved one's name on this list for two weeks and/or request prayer of the pastoral staff. If your loved one desires a pastoral visit, please contact Pastor Ritva by voice or text at 319-693-2087 or by email at [pastorritva@gmail.com](mailto:pastorritva@gmail.com).*



We are now into a new school year which means Operation Backpack is assisting with the needs of food insecure elementary students. Our congregation for a number of years has filled sacks of food for Grant Wood Elementary as a part of this community-wide program. We are excited to announce that this fall we have also partnered with Erskine Elementary! This provides another opportunity to serve in the fight against hunger.

So here are the details of our efforts:

- We fill two sets of 115 bags every two weeks on Wednesday evening, starting immediately after Wednesday worship, between 7 and 7:15pm.
- We have moved the operation up to the Narthex.
- Food is picked up from HACAP and delivered to the church every two weeks on Tuesday.
- The filled bags of food are delivered to Grant Wood and Erskine Elementary every two weeks on Thursday. The counselor and staff at the school then distributes them weekly.

Here are the current and ongoing needs for this ministry:

- Individuals to help fill the bags.
- Individuals to pick up the food from HACAP.
- Individuals to set up the tables and set out the food before Wednesday evening.
- Individuals to deliver the food to the schools on Thursday.

This ministry is possible only by the number of volunteers so please consider becoming a part today! For more information, contact Jeanne Towell ([thetowells@msn.com](mailto:thetowells@msn.com), 319-929-5842) or Melanie Ostmo ([melanieostmo@mac.com](mailto:melanieostmo@mac.com), 319-431-9731).

## It's Apple Pie Time!!!!

Fall is here and with it brings delicious apple pies made by our youth! We will be making apple pies on Saturday, November 11 - just in time for Thanksgiving and Christmas! You may pick up your pie at the church between 11am and 1pm on Saturday, or Sunday, November 12 from 9am to 12:30pm. Delivery can also be arranged.

To order your apple pie, you may contact one of the middle school or high school youth at church or at their home. You are also able to complete a form by stopping by the church office.

Checks should be made out to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church.

If you have any questions, contact Mark Howland at 515-988-5183 or [mhowland1983@gmail.com](mailto:mhowland1983@gmail.com).





## National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month, and LSI is proud to announce our newest service, LSI Foster Care and Adoption. Through this new service, LSI recruits, supports, and empowers foster and adoptive families across western Iowa.

Nationally, there are more than 101,000 youth waiting to be adopted from foster care, and thousands of teens age out of foster care every year without a permanent family. We know there are no unwanted children, only unfound families! To learn how you or someone you know can make a difference, visit [LSIowa.org/Foster](http://LSIowa.org/Foster), or contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at 563-676-2065 or [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org).

*Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [www.LSIowa.org](http://www.LSIowa.org) and [www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa](http://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).*

## Opening Your Heart and Home

Phillip and Ruth remember the day they decided they wanted to adopt.

It was the late 1950s, and the couple was shocked to learn abandoned babies in a local hospital were being neglected, didn't receive the attention or care they needed, and were not developing properly because of it. Phil and Ruth knew they wanted to do something.

"We decided we would adopt as soon as we could," Ruth says.

Phil and Ruth became adoptive parents through what was then called Lutheran Social Services of Iowa (LSS). The couple already had three biological children, Carol, Eric, and Peter, but they had more room in their home and in their hearts. They were ready for a fourth child. That's when baby Rachel entered their lives.

A few years later, the couple adopted 4-year old girl, Paula, and their family was complete. The seven traveled the country for work and vacations, went camping everywhere, and remained a close-knit family even as each child left home for college.

Now, all of Phil and Ruth's children have lives of their own, and Phil and Ruth have added grandchildren and great-grandchildren to their legacy.

Paula graduated from the Naval Academy, received her Ph.D. in Computer Science, and now works for the IRS. Rachel, a graduate of Luther College and the University of Wisconsin Medical School, became a doctor and practices in New Orleans, Louisiana. She has a weekly syndicated health tips show on her local ABC television station, and has been awarded two regional Emmys.

Through it all, Phil and Ruth have been advocates and supporters of adoption in Iowa. For them, it was a way to make a difference in the world, one child at a time. Today, Phil and Ruth continue to support vulnerable children in Iowa as faithful donors to LSI.

"Not everyone can adopt," Phil says, "but everyone can afford to support LSI. Even a small amount, given monthly and automatically, is remarkably helpful."

# Serving by walking....



*A New Princess and Prince in the Kingdom of God...*



*Princess June - Baptized September 10  
Parents - Ross and Sarah*



*Prince Cameron - Baptized October 22  
Parents - Chris and Sally*



# Fun and fellowship during October...



## Trunk or Treat October 25



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, ELCA  
610 31st St. SE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403-3021

**ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED**



### Staff Directory

Pastor  
Youth & Young Adult Minister  
Pastoral Intern  
Office Manager  
Music Director  
Piano Accompanist  
Premises Keeper  
Council President  
Communication Coordinator

Rev. Dr. Ritva Williams  
Mark Howland  
Mikayla Kopp  
Sherry Mercil  
David Haas  
Leslie Hyland  
Debbie Polk  
Jeanne Towell  
Mark Howland

pastorritva@gmail.com  
mhowland1983@gmail.com  
kopp.mikayla@gmail.com  
office@ssluth.com  
music@ssluth.com  
lesliehyland@gmail.com  
(319) 329-7655  
thetowells@msn.com  
sslcommcoord@gmail.com

### Sunday Morning Schedule

8:00am First Worship Service  
9:00am Coffee & Fellowship  
9:15am Education Hour  
*Through August 20:*  
10:00am Second Worship Service  
*Beginning August 27:*  
10:30am Second Worship Service

### Wednesday Evening Schedule

6:30pm Worship



**St. Stephen's  
Lutheran Church, ELCA**

*To Know, Live, and Share Christ.*

ssluth.com • 319-364-2637

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a **Reconciling in Christ** congregation that welcomes diversity, which enriches, nurtures, and challenges our life and ministry.

***Come and join us as  
we know, live, and  
share Christ  
together in love.***

