

# St. Stephen's United Church of Christ

## 2025 JANUARY NEWSLETTER

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A special thanks to Virginia Fulginiti and Jay for this new church photo.

## [Church Calendar](#)

When clicking the link above you will be directed to our church calendar. Maria will be maintaining the calendar of all church activities. Please notify her of events that you would like posted and/or any revisions needed. Remember, schedules remain a moving target so always check for current updates. Thanks, Maria.

You can reach Maria at [saintstephensucc@gmail.com](mailto:saintstephensucc@gmail.com)

## Updates of Current Church Activities

### END OF DECEMBER REMINDERS...

**Tuesday, December 24 @ 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service**

**Sunday, December 29th @ 10:30 a.m. Fifth Sunday** will be a Champagne Brunch. Anyone who is inclined is asked to bring a covered dish to share. Of course, all are welcome.

### JANUARY EVENTS

- **Communion Sunday**, January 5th @ 10:30
- **Youth Sunday School**, January 5th and January 19th @ 9:00 a.m.
- **Annual Reports Due**, January 15th please furnish reports to Maria at [saintstephens@gmail.com](mailto:saintstephens@gmail.com)
- **Council Meeting**, January 19th @ 9:30 a.m.
- **Community Lunch**, Saturday, January 25 @ 10:30 a.m.

# Update & Schedule of Mission Outreach Projects

Please mark your calendars and become a part of the joy of giving. Contact DD Dawson with questions and opportunities in which to serve or contribute; [dddawson63@gmail.com](mailto:dddawson63@gmail.com)

**Saturday, January 25th, 2025** (*this was changed from the original date of January 4th*) - Community Lunch at our church. Hot meal being served at 10:30

A look ahead for Community Lunches being served at St. Stephen's Church are currently scheduled for **Saturday, April 5th** and **Saturday, June 7th**.

## Prayers, Concerns and Praises



Let us continue to offer our prayers and well wishes to the following people in our church family and those associated with members of our church:

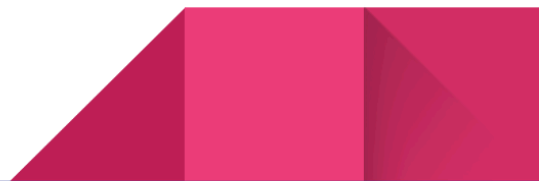
Eric Ruple, Howard Pratt, Ray Clary, Scott Zane Smith, Justin Smith, and Bobby Deyton.

*Psalm 56:8* says, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book" (NLT). These are beautiful words written by David when he was undergoing a dark time in his life.

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The following information is an update from Sarah regarding her communication with Scott Zane Smith. He writes, "I remain about the same - lots of fatigue and severe joint pain....I definitely have an autoimmune illness. I am testing positive for Reiter's Syndrome but they have not ruled out Lupus. I am getting needle injections into joints on Wednesday hoping for some relief of pain for the holiday season. I welcome prayer and I love cards. 2024 has been a rough year for me. I miss "my fan club" from church. You all always made me feel so welcome." Scott's address is:

128 South Peak Drive, McGaheysville, VA 22840



## January Birthdays

Kaede Giddens - 5	Terri Denton - 8	Marilyn Heishman - 20
Sandy Kreider - 20	Reagan Eshleman - 21	Lacey Starick Stajduhar - 31



## News from the Christian Education Committee...

### Women of the Bible – A One Day Study – Saturday, February 1

A DAY OF  
EXPLORATION  
**WOMEN OF  
THE BIBLE**

ST. STEPHEN'S UCC  
358 S MAIN ST,  
HARRISONBURG VA

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1  
9:30AM-4:00PM**

**FOOD PROVIDED**

**REGISTER NOW**

FACILITATOR: DR. KATIE LOW,  
PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES & UNIVERSITY  
CHAPLAIN, MARY BALDWIN  
UNIVERSITY

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, February 1, 2025 (snow date February 8) for a one day study on Women of the Bible. The facilitator will be Dr. Katie Low, Professor of Religious Studies & University Chaplain at Mary Baldwin University. Registration is \$10.00 per person. A continental breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack will be provided.



The tentative schedule for the day:

9:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

10:00 a.m. Lecture / Seminar #1

10:50 a.m. Short Break

11:10 a.m. Lecture / Seminar #2

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Reflection Walk (around the block  
weather permitting)

1:20 p.m. Lecture / Seminar #3

2:10 p.m. Short Break

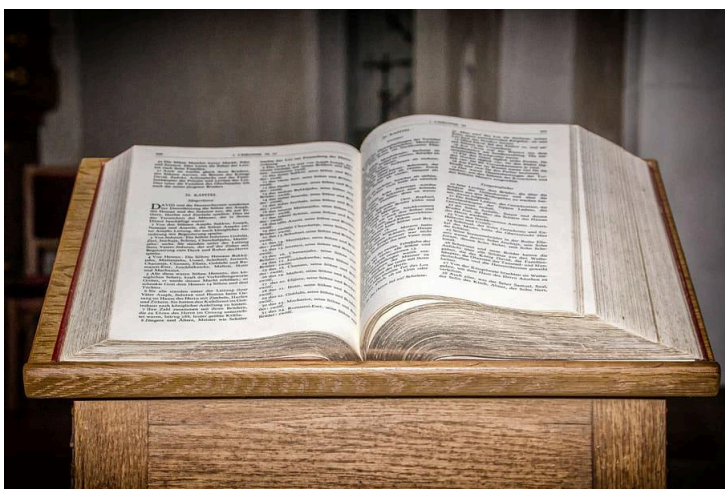
2:30 p.m. Lecture / Seminar #4

3:20 p.m. Theological Reflection

3:30 p.m. Conclusion

Coming shortly will be a registration form to save your seat. Don't miss this exciting premier format of a Bible Study. Looking forward to seeing you!

**Lenten study** will begin the first Sunday of Lent, March 9th . More to come closer to the event.



## Missions at St. Stephen's

At the core of the Christian faith is the call of Jesus to be servants in the service of others. At Saint Stephen's, our mission outreach extends to the community we call home. Among our missional efforts, there are several ministries to which we focus our attention.

Patchwork Pantry - <https://www.patchworkpantry.org/>

Alcoholic Anonymous - <https://harrisonburgaa.org/>

Community Counseling Center - <https://hbccc.org/>

Habitat for Humanity - <https://www.habitat.org/>

Open Doors - <https://www.valleyopendoors.org/>

People Helping People - <https://phpharrisonburg.org/>

## "Rerun" A Thin Slice of Joy

The Christmas season at St. Stephen's was made special by many people, but one who quietly shines in the shadows is our devoted Jane Garber. Jane performs many duties behind the scenes, as well as many tasks associated with the life of our church. As we close 2024, and enter the excitement of 2025, the family of St. Stephen's Church wishes to extend our heartfelt thanks to our beloved Janie.



## Grace & Truth: A Pastor's Perspective

12/2024

My Dearest Saint Stephen's United Church of Christ,

In the warm glow from my Christmas tree, I'm thinking about an upcoming sermon, the promise of Christ's light, the needs of our congregation, and the meaning of this season, and I'm thinking about and praying for you!

I want to thank you for the profound gift you give to me: the freedom to serve as the pastor and person God called me to be. I am filled with gratitude for your generosity and hospitality to create a sacred space where authenticity is welcomed and cherished.

Relationships thrive when we can be fully ourselves, when we are seen, known, and loved for just who we are. At Saint Stephens UCC, I am blessed to receive this gift of grace with joy! You allow me to preach, teach, and minister in ways that align with who I am. Your trust and confidence is an encouraging gift.

Thank you for being a congregation that values authenticity, embraces one another's gifts, and walks together in mutual love, respect, and unity. May we always be a place where everybody can bring their whole selves and find belonging. And may Christ dwell among us and guide us into a New Year filled with hope, peace, joy, and love.

With gratitude,  
Rev. Craig A. Jamney

P. S. from Pastor Craig's December message includes the remainder of our Advent meditations... "Each day from December 1st through January 6th, you will find a short prompt designed to deepen your faith, spark gratitude, and prepare your heart for the coming of Christ Jesus. These daily prompts will also be delivered to your email inbox, providing you the opportunity to pause, reflect, and center yourself in the hope, peace, joy, and love of the holidays."

## ADVENT TO EPIPHANY (REMAINDER OF SEASON)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>22</b> Swaddle in a quiet, comfy space. Listen for the breath of God.	<b>23</b> Make a slow-mo or fast-mo video with your phone. What do you notice?	<b>24</b> Go to church tonight and avail yourself to God speaking to you.	<b>25</b> Savor the grace of God-with-skin in every flesh-pressing hug and handshake.	<b>26</b> Pick up and put away just 5 things and stop. Five is enough for today.	<b>27</b> Do a little God-job today. Give, love, forgive, mend, heal, or reconcile.	<b>28</b> Make a list of 3 times things got worse before it got better. Brace with grace.
<b>29</b> Pray for a young person in your life. See them with God's eyes and rejoice!	<b>30</b> Go to be a half-hour early tonight. Rest easy; let God care for you.	<b>31</b> Go outside and stare at the stars tonight. Pay attention to their beauty.	<b>01</b> Look at baby pictures today. Slowly let the images speak to you.	<b>02</b> Spend 5 minutes today kneeling (literally, if you can) in adoration and praise.	<b>03</b> It's still Christmastide! Sing "Joy to the World" at the top of your lungs!	<b>03</b> Take 10 slow, deep breaths. Ask what your body knows that you don't realize.
<b>05</b> Wrap the word "grace" in a gift box and leave it for a stranger to find in public.	<b>06</b> Be like the magi. Give someone a happy gift to show your love.					<i>These daily prompts were adapted from the work of Molly Baskette and Quinn Caldwell.</i>





## “Tell me something Good...”

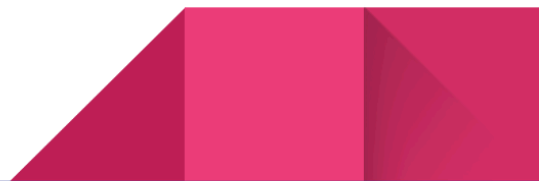
Tell Me Something Good is kindly shared, herein, by DD & Tom Dawson.

Rescuing animals has always been something we’ve been passionate about. Our dogs and cats and even our horses and donkey all came to us from owner surrenders, rescue organizations or



“friends of friends” needing to find homes for pets. Our house is full ... and when we say full, we mean full of animals ... and their hair! We can give donations to different pet rescue organizations, but we wondered what we could do where we could interact with more dogs and more people, and frankly see our efforts help the animal(s) in need. Enter I-81 Transports Facebook Group. The I-81 Transport Team is an ALL VOLUNTEER group that transport dogs (and even some cats) from a shelter or humane society, where the animal was either seized or surrendered,

to a rescue/adoption organization, foster home, or adoption placement home. The transports are segmented into approximately one-hour “legs,” and drivers sign up to transport and meet other drivers at designated spots to get the animals to their final destination. When we signed up, we indicated we could drive from Lexington, VA to Winchester, VA on I-81. Since March of 2022, we have transported 65 dogs. Most of our transports are single dogs. We have had some, however, that are multiple dogs on one trip – either all from the same home, a mother dog and puppies, or just coming from the same shelter. We’ve had large dogs and very, very small



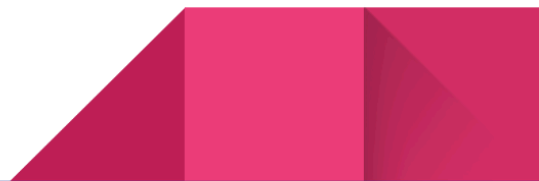
dogs. One time, we even had a Great Pyrenees and a Chihuahua in the same transport! One of our favorite transports was a black and tan coon dog in November of 2022 that was picked up as a hunting stray in Flatwoods, West Virginia and heading to the Black and Tan Coon Hound Rescue organization that will make sure he finds a good home. Tom really liked sweet Cooper and apparently Cooper really liked Tom. One of our transport friends took this picture of Tom and Cooper when we met them in Lexington, VA for our pickup.



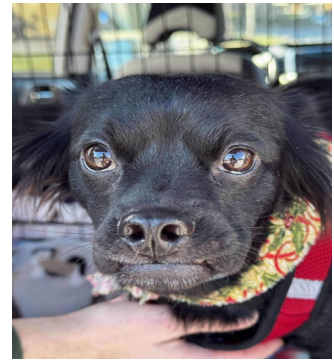
In December of 2022, we transported sweet Bella from Charlottesville, VA to Verona, VA. She was owner surrendered in Raleigh, NC and heading to Osceola Mills, PA, where she would be fostered. She



was a sweet English Setter, who was traveling with her bed, her toys, several pretty collars, a heart-shaped tag with her name on it, and some grooming brushes. Apparently, her person took a job out of the country and could not take her beloved pup. She was so very sweet and timid. We loved her so much, and even applied to adopt her after the transport. Unfortunately we were not selected, but we are sure her new family loves her so much. Here is a picture of DD wishing her well on the next leg of her journey.



The latest transport we did was for sweet Bosley. His person passed away and no family members could take him. He had the cutest underbite, and we are sure he will be adopted very quickly and loved beyond compare. Godspeed sweet Bosley.



Transport of these animals would not be possible without the coordinators who set up the transport, identifying the route and the legs of the trip as well as posting about the transport and soliciting for drivers. Once we sign up for a transport, we are in constant communication with the transport coordinator and other drivers via Facebook Messenger. That way we know if there are traffic delays or change in transfer locations for some reason.

In March of 2023, we were transporting Lenny from Harrisonburg to Winchester. He was coming from Charleston, WV and heading to New Jersey. Lenny would not leave the vehicle when it arrived here at Eagle Carpet from Lexington. Here is what our transport coordinator, Cliff Bethke, wrote on Facebook in the I-81 Transports Group: "When an animal is in need, you never know where help will come from. On today's transport, poor Lenny became afraid, overwhelmed and refused to exit his driver's car for transfer in Harrisonburg VA. The folks at Eagle Carpet offered the use of their indoor warehouse so he could be safely convinced to move. Betty, Michelle and Denise (DD) got the job done, and Lenny will spend a few days with Kari to decompress before finishing his trip to One Love Animal Rescue Group Inc. in New Jersey." The animal and his/her needs always come first.

We are always happy to talk about our transports, and we try to do at least one every month – and we often take pictures of the sweet pups we transport. We meet the very nicest people that share our love for animals. If you are ever interested in learning more about this organization or even want to try your first transport, we'll be happy to tell you about it and even accompany you on your first transport! Once you do your first transport, you'll become a transport junkie! It truly is something good!!



I wish to extend my sincere thanks to DD for her patience and continued help in making this newsletter better each month.

***Message to All:***

We invite you to share your personal activities/events/joys/memories under the 'Tell Me Something Good' section. Please send it to me, at [kay.acker@comcast.net](mailto:kay.acker@comcast.net) in an email.

Pictures are welcomed but need to be in a jpeg or png format.

To unsubscribe from this newsletter, please contact Maria at [saintstephensucc@gmail.com](mailto:saintstephensucc@gmail.com); or respond accordingly to this email.

**Serving St. Stephen's UCC in 2025 ...**

- Kay Acker, President
- Hunter Woodard, Vice President
- Jane Garber, Secretary
- DD Dawson, Financial Secretary
- Patti King
- James McHone, Treasurer
- Craig A. Janney, Pastor
- Maria Blair, Church Secretary



We wish to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to ***Nancy Cornwell*** and ***Tom Dawson*** (pictured) who have generously served on the Council for the past three years; and a warm welcome to DD Dawson and Hunter Woodard for their upcoming service on Council.

Minutes of Council Meetings can be found posted in the Garrison Room. (Current Minutes are subject to approval and acceptance at the following Council meeting)

**Rejoice, our Redeemer Lives!**

