

# The Scroll

Advent 2022

RECEIVE, REFLECT, AND RELAY CHRIST



*Celebrate  
hope, joy, peace*

From Pastor Spencer

## HAPPY NEW YEAR! (...kind of)

Most of us know that our year ends on December 31 and the New Year begins on January 1, at least when talking about our regular calendar. Some companies and institutions run their budgets on a different calendar, a fiscal year, from July 1 to June 30. Many other cultures even have their own ways of marking time. The Christian church (speaking beyond denominations) does as well, and we call it the liturgical calendar. Our Christian calendar year begins on the first Sunday of Advent and concludes after Christ the King Sunday. So you might say that Nov 27, 2022, begins a new year.

This way of marking time helps us to not rush through or skip over essential elements of our faith.

The liturgical calendar leads us through the many seasons of Christ's life as well as many themes of our faith as covered in the Old and New Testaments. We start the year by getting ready for the birth of Jesus and end the year reflecting on the fullness of His rule and reign.

At the end of the year, we get ready for his return, which is called the Second Coming. This way of marking time helps us to not rush through or skip over essential elements of our faith. Our inclination is to jump from big moment to big moment, over looking the smaller, yet significant, seasons of faith. Advent does that for us. Rather than jumping into Christmas with both feet, we slow it down a little to anticipate and appreciate the fullness of the Coming of Christ. While many others are focused on presents and Santa, we pause to consider the reason behind the season. More than considering the birth of Jesus, but also why God sends us the Messiah. In the midst of the "holly jolly" and the "hustle and bustle", remember to take the time to consider the reason behind the season.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*

*"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.*

~ John 3:16-17

Sing the carols. Go to the parties. Wrap the presents. However, prepare your heart for the babe in a manger, who is destined to be King of all creation.

Have a blessed Advent season!

Pastor Spencer

## ADVENT HAPPENINGS

### Advent Festival- Saturday, December 3rd, 2-5 PM

Join your St. Stephen's family and members of the community to celebrate the coming of Christ.

- 2:00 pm: Maranatha singers
- 2:45 pm: Christmas Sing-Along led by Tim Anderson
- 3:15 pm: Pop-Up Christmas Pageant will begin at 3:15. Those wanting to participate in the Nativity performance will need to arrive at 2:45 to get a costume.
- 3:30 pm: Advent Wreath making, crafts, activities, and refreshments.

### Living Nativity - Sunday, December 18, 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM



### Chocolate Eclair Torte

- 2 small boxes instant vanilla pudding
- 3 1/4 cups milk
- 1 (8 or 9 oz) container of Cool Whip. Don't overdo. It dilutes pudding.
- 1 box of graham crackers

Mix pudding with 3 1/4 cups milk till well blended. Let set 10-15 minutes. Then add the Cool Whip. Grease a 9x13 in pan with butter and line bottom with graham crackers. Layer with pudding, then a layer of crackers, the remainder of the pudding and a final layer of crackers Top with frosting. Refrigerate. It can be made a day early.

Frosting: Melt 1 square of unsweetened chocolate (I use Bakers brand) and the squares are small so I use four, add 3 tbsp melted butter, 1 tsp vanilla. Slowly add to chocolate mixture 1 1/2 cups of powdered sugar (sifted to be sure there are no lumps) and 2 tbsp milk. Stir until smooth. Frost over the top layer of graham crackers. Refrigerate until time to serve. Yum!!!

*Our family is a little finicky about dessert but everyone likes this one. It isn't original with me. Many military wives I know have been sharing the recipe for years.*

*- Barbara Bair*

## Manger Ministry: Your Gift that Gives all Year

As we have done for the past 7 years, St. Stephen's is dedicating the Christmas Eve offering to helping those who are homeless find a home. We call this offering our Manger Ministry because when Jesus was born, his family was homeless too. This is a gift that gives so much.

With funds raised through the Manger Ministry, St. Stephen's work with the nonprofit organization, Homestretch, to cover the costs of providing one to two homeless families with housing as they go through Homestretch's two-year program. Homestretch aims to empower homeless families to move from crisis to long-term stability and financial independence. During their time with Homestretch, parents work at a job and pay a percentage of their rent so that they can complete the program with an affordable home and savings in the bank. Homestretch helps with transportation and child care costs and provides education in financial, vocational, and parenting skills.

In the past 7 years, St. Stephen's has sponsored a number of families who have gone on to complete the Homestretch program and move into successful jobs and housing. We give out of our love for God; we give as a gift for Jesus; we give to grow in our relationship with God and one another. Please join us by donating on Christmas Eve using the special Manger Ministry envelope provided or by sending in a donation to Manger Ministry. Your gift will certainly multiply love in our community and beyond.

## Do You Have a Gift for Welcoming People?

First Impressions Team (FIT) works towards making good first impressions to all people at our church. We welcome you on Sunday mornings at our church doors, Welcome Desk, and church events. We are seeking Welcome Desk and Greeters at our Sunday services. Please contact Jaraby for details at jaraby987@gmail.com.

### Coffeehouse Concert

*to benefit Saint Stephen's  
Hypothermia program*

Please join us in the Welcome Center for a concert of favorites on Saturday, February 4, 2023, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Featuring Sonja Tussing on vocals, this coffeehouse is to support the Hypothermia Shelter that St Stephens will be hosting in March 2023. All donations (for example, Metro passes, restaurant gift cards, monetary contributions) will go to aid our homeless guests when St Stephen's provides housing and meals this winter.

Please join us for an evening of music, fellowship and refreshments. Please bring a friend.

### Mom's Molasses Cookies

- 3/4 cup shortening (I prefer butter)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1 egg
- 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp ginger
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg (optional, I omit)
- Sugar for rolling dough in (I like raw sugar but white works)

Cream shortening and sugar. Add molasses and egg and beat well. Sift together all dry ingredients. Add dry mixture to first mixture and mix together. Chill (at least several hours or overnight)

Form into balls and roll in sugar; bake on greased cookie sheet @ 375 degrees for 8-10 min (bake less for chewy, more for snap like crunch).

- Lori Broce

## Christmas at Grace Ministries

Thanks to the “extravagant generosity” (one of St. Stephen’s guiding principles) of the St. Stephen’s UMC community and friends, in 2021 we gave more than 840 children from nearly 300 families wrapped, age-appropriate Christmas gifts. Their families received shelf-stable groceries, produce and diapers. With your help, we hope to do the same this year.

There will also be a Giving Tree in the Gathering Space, with tags by specific age groups. We ask you to wrap gifts (although we will wrap for you if need be) and label them by age and gender if applicable. Please be sure to include batteries if the gift requires them. We also appreciate donations of wrapping paper, tape and Christmas labels.

Packages can be dropped off at church during regular office hours, when attending services or meetings, and during the Saturday, December 3, Advent Festival, which will include a fair trade gift market (also open during 12/4 Sunday services). Our deadline is December 15.

Thank you so much; Grace Ministries and our families appreciate your support.

### Suggested Gifts for Most Age

**Groups:** Books; sports balls; puzzles; art supplies; science and craft kits; board/card games

**Infant to 3:** Attachable mobiles; plush animals/dolls; pull toys; bath toys; picture books

**3 to 5:** Musical toys; play sets (farm, first responders, garage, medical, cooking, dinos, jungle); coloring books and crayons/markers/stickers; play vehicles

**5 to 7:** Action figures/dolls; costume headgear (firefighter, construction, jungle animal, decorated hairbands, superhero); Etch A Sketch; chalkboard and chalk; musical toys; puppets; bean bag sets

**7 to 9:** Motorized land/air/sea craft; plant grow kits; building sets; science, craft and baking kits

**9 to 11:** Science, model-building, craft kits; personal journals and pens; art supplies; LED gloves; scrapbooks

**12 to 14:** Advanced science and craft kits; nailcare kits; bracelets; sports gloves; frisbees; decorative items

**15 to 17:** Personal journals; dart boards; men’s travel/shave kits; makeup sets; wallets/purses; entertainment gift certificates; decorative boxes.

## Tembleque

*(Puerto Rican Christmas dessert-coconut custard)*

- 2 cups coconut milk
- 1/3 cup cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon orange blossom water (optional-found at middle eastern grocery stores)

Combine and dissolve all the ingredients in a medium sized saucepan that is not on the stove.

Choose 2 -3 small/medium bowl or mold. Rinse bowl/molds in cold water. Place them in the fridge for 30-60 mins.

Place saucepan on medium heat, stir constantly until mixture bubbles (5 minutes). Pour mixture into molds. Place in the fridge for 3 hours. Invert mold onto a serving platter. sprinkle with cinnamon on top. Slice and serve.

- *Jaraby Camargo*

**THE ALTAR FLOWER CALENDAR FOR 2023** has been posted across from the church office near the coat closet. Please sign up for a specific date to donate flowers for Sunday morning worship. Then, pickup a blue registration form from the table below the calendar. Submit the completed form with your check for payment to the church office. The cost of flowers is \$40-50 and you can make a special dedication which will be printed in the bulletin. You can also sign up by sending an email to [altarflowers@ststephensfairfax.org](mailto:altarflowers@ststephensfairfax.org) with the date you are interested in and you will receive a reply with confirmation of the date and additional instructions.

# Music at St. Stephen's

## The Voices of Christmas

Dec. 11, both 9:00 am and 11:00 am services. In this special music Sunday, we will combine narration and music in the ringing of bells, the singing of children, and the echo of treasured carols as we affirm the hope found in Jesus' birth.

### Notes from Tammy

Christmas music connects us all. Music is always a connector between people, but Christmas music brings all kinds of things with it: memories, yes, but also joy, peace, and comfort. Music Ministry needs you! Come join us in these great opportunities to share the love of Christ with others. Come sing or play an instrument. Let me know of your interest, and I will make sure there are opportunities for you to share.

*Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.*  
- Psalm 96, vs. 1-2

*Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!*  
- Psalm 47:6

### Choral opportunities:

- **St. Stephen's Choir** – This choir for all voices (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) meets on Sundays at 12:00p.m. after the 11:00 service. We will rehearse for about 45 minutes and have you out of there before 1:00 p.m. We are working on Advent and Christmas music and would love to have you in the choir.
- **Maranatha Singers** – This treble ensemble of sopranos and altos meets on Tuesday mornings at 9:30. They sing about once a month at the 11:00 service.
- **Small choral ensembles** – If you do have some experience in choral singing, and can hold your own part, we've got you covered. I would LOVE to put together some special pieces for Christmas with you.



### Instrumental opportunities:

- **Genesis Bells** – This handbell ensemble is brand new – the perfect time to join! It's designed for beginners, so bring the whole family. Meets on Sunday afternoons at 1:30pm.
- **Mighty Peals of Joy** – This handbell ensemble is for our more experienced players. They meet on the Thursday before their scheduled Sunday sharing and they play at the 11:00 service.
- **Instrumental ensembles or solos** – Would you like to be sharing your music with others? Then let's put together some groups for Advent and Christmas!

# Children's Ministries

## Children's Ministries Had a Ball This Fall!

Join us this winter for more fun as we continue to grow with God.

### Children's Sunday School is in full swing!

Sunday School is offered to children ages 3 years through 6th grade weekly at 10 AM. Children worship with music, scripture and games led by an amazing group of volunteers who enjoy sharing the love of Jesus with our young Christians.

Shout out to our wonderful Sunday School Team (those with us every Sunday and those willing to fill-in at a moment's notice)!

Tim Anderson  
Lori Broce  
Julie Bryant  
Ken Bryant  
Andrea Catala

Shannon Czzowitz  
Betsy Jones  
Jeff Jones  
Johnnie Lawton  
Lorac Lawton

Leighanne Ludington  
Larry Miller  
Teryl Pomeroy  
Melissa Chong Stoltz  
Kate Theodore



### 3rd Grade Bible Dedication

Bibles were dedicated to Marc Theodore and David Lee in October. It is a tradition at St. Stephen's to offer Bibles to our 3rd graders to help them develop daily spiritual practices as they grow into disciples of Christ.

### We Hosted out First Trunk or Treat!

God blessed us with a wonderful Saturday afternoon and fun was had by all! Children collected candy and played lawn games and the adults had the opportunity to enjoy the company of their church family. 30 families from the community joined us for refreshments and fellowship. This event is happening next year, plan your trunk design.

**2022 Trunk Design Winner:** Kathy Hoffman (with the help of her daughter, Chrisy Vaughn)

Thank you to everyone who brought their trunk and candy to distribute. Special Thanks to the Fellowship Committee for the wonderful refreshment stand.



## UPCOMING: United Women in Faith

**December:** At the **Advent Festival**, "Welcome home" the guests coming to hear the music, which will include Maranatha Singers, a singalong, and a Children's pageant. Our home kitchen will be set up again alongside the PHOTO-READY CHRISTMAS TREE AREA. Then the crowd goes to the Fellowship area to make wreaths and crafts and enjoy cookies. SIGN UP to help at the welcome, or craft area, or give out cookies; or to bring cookies for the event!



United  
Women  
in Faith

**Advent Ornament Exchange** – the tradition continues where we bring an ornament and take one, finding the name of our new Prayer Pal on the back. **Dec 3 at the Advent Festival:** bring your ornament, or let someone know who can make the exchange for you.

**January: United Women in Faith Day** at St. Stephen's. Also, still known as UMW will host the two services and the Fellowship after. Our women will call to worship, serve as ushers, announce the Recipients of the Special Mission and Outstanding Service awards for 2022. After the services, all can visit the display tables for the Circles and Groups in the UWF to see what been happening in mission and ministry and fun AND what ideas are in the works for 2023!

**Spring:** Last year, 51 women attended a full-day **Spring Women's Retreat**. We will see what's in store! Let us know your ideas!

**Contact:** Patti Keppler ([pattikeppler@gmail.com](mailto:pattikeppler@gmail.com)) or your group leader to give some ideas.

## Endowment Fund Opportunity

**The Permanent Endowment Committee** is pleased to inform our congregation that the income of \$4623 earned in 2021 from the Endowment Fund will be distributed for Moving Expenses for our new pastors. Our current balance is around \$100,000. Thanks to those who have contributed to this fund.

People often wonder how they can provide a legacy to St. Stephen's that will benefit those who will follow them in serving the ministries of the church. Making a gift to the St. Stephen's Permanent Endowment Fund will provide funds in the years to come for the many ministries of the church. This can be done through monetary gifts and other estate planning instruments such as wills, insurance policies, and annuities.

Those with IRA's and other retirement investments can give Qualified Charitable Distributions directly to the St. Stephen's Permanent Endowment Fund which can qualify for income tax deductions.

Additional information is available on the St. Stephen's website or contact Jim Allison, Chair of the Permanent Endowment Committee (703-323-8132).

## Christmas Purse

As in past years, we are collecting a Christmas Purse for the pastors and staff as an expression of appreciation for their work throughout this year. This traditional gift is a wonderful opportunity for the congregation to express its gratitude and holiday wishes.

Contributions should be made payable to St. Stephen's UMC and your check clearly marked for Staff Purse. There will be special envelopes available starting December 4. If you are giving electronically on the church's Online Giving page, you can select the Staff Purse option. Contributions should be made by Sunday, December 18. Thank you for your support!