

News, Notes, and Prayers

from St. Stephen Lutheran Church

April 2024

Who We Are

St. Stephen Lutheran Church is God's people in The Plainfields, Piscataway, and Edison.

Staff

Pastor Frantisek Janak pastor@ststephenspnj.org
Jeanne Elmuccio, office secretary secretary@ststephenspnj.org

Congregational Council

Trecia Benjamin
Bill Cochran (President)
Jim Deene
Randy Gerling
Frank Gianneschi
Effil Hemmings
Donna Hussey
Patricia Klatt
Bob Merring
Eloise Newton (Secretary)
Rich Newton Jr. (Vice President)
Audrey Oddman

Office

3145 Park Ave., South Plainfield, NJ 07080
908-757-4474

What's Happening

Sundays, April, 7, 14, 21, 28

10:30 a.m. + Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, April 7

11:30 a.m. Worship and Music Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 16

7:30 p.m. Council Meeting

Wednesday, April 17

5:00 p.m. + St. Stephen's Pop-Up Food Pantry

Sunday, April 28

11:30 a.m. Coffee and Refreshments Following Worship



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

3145 Park Avenue
South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080
908-757-4474

Address Correction Requested

Pastor's Letter



Dear beloved community,

Another month has passed, and we are almost at the end of Lent! My gratitude goes out to all of you for actively participating in our Lenten activities, including prayer partnerships and our Wednesday Zoom studies. I am also delighted that we were able to hold our Mid-Lenten Prayer service, with many attendees joining online. The most important aspect was that we had an opportunity to pray together and provide encouragement to one another.

As you receive this newsletter, Holy Week will be upon us. Our church will observe the week with an evening Maundy Thursday service, a noon and an evening Good Friday service, and conclude with an ecumenical Easter sunrise service at the gazebo in

Spring Lake Park, followed by our regular morning service at the church. For specific times and dates, please refer to the Holy Week flyer. Apart from the sunrise service, all events will have in-person and streaming options for those who prefer to join remotely.

In early April, I will be taking a few days to visit a friend in North Carolina. This trip will not affect Sunday worship. On April 7th, we look forward to welcoming two new members into our church family. April 21st will be a special day as we celebrate the baptism of my daughter, Lily. Finally, the last week of April will see me traveling to New York state for a First Call Theological Education retreat. I will provide more details and emergency pastoral care coverage announcements in due time.

May blessings be upon you all,

The Rev. František Janák
Pastor

Typical Pastor's work days:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays

(Emergency pastoral care as needed: please text or call at 331-248-3084)

Schedule a meeting or visit with Pastor František:

<https://bit.ly/schedule-with-rev-janak>

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Greetings!

If you have not heard, last Sunday St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jersey City voted to call me as their pastor, and we can't be happier. This comes to us as an answered prayer!

Lauren and I are very excited to move to Jersey City, yet we are saddened to leave you.

Thank you for being such a great faith community to us, in times of transition. We have enjoyed greatly getting to know each one of you, and to share a common space for worship and praise.

We leave and take you in our hearts, our dear former members of St. Luke's, as well as the whole St. Stephen's family. You welcomed us, and made us feel as part of you, and our waiting time was so much better because of you, your prayers and your support.

As soon as we have a date for the installation service, we will share it and hope that you can all come.

Please remember:

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, siblings, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy— think about such things.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.”
Philippians 4:4-8, 23

In Christ's Love,
Lauren & Pastor D





From the Treasurer

	General Fund Income	Budget Expenses	Over/Short
January 2024	11,784.00	12,874.41	(1,090.41)
February 2024	12,598.00	14,104.19	(1,506.19)
YTD	24,382.00	26,978.60	(2,596.60)



From the Discipleship Committee

When this newsletter comes out, there will be two weeks left in Lent. How are you doing with your Lenten plans/intentions? If you started off with a bang and sort of petered out, or if you never really got started at all, welcome to the club. But it is not too late to take advantage of the next two weeks to grow closer to God. But, remember, it is not about what we do, but about what God does.

Joel 2: 12-13. "Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, for I am gracious and merciful." Our Lord is just waiting to work in us if we will only make room in our hearts and lives for the Spirit.

Why not clear some time each of the next two weeks to just sit with the Lord and enjoy His Love? You won't regret it.

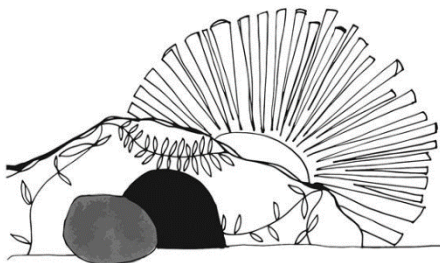
Psalm 81: 13,16. The Lord says, "If only my people would listen to me and....walk in my ways, I would feed them with the finest wheat, and with honey from the rock I would fill them."



Remember - All contributions to Society of St. Andrew made by Easter will be doubled by an anonymous donor.

Coming next month:

Thinking about our 2024 Words of Intention. Please submit any ideas you have about this subject to the committee for inclusion in the discussion.



**A JOYOUS AND BLESSED
EASTER TO ALL!**

POP-UP PANTRY



Thanks to all who donated this month.
Suggestions to donate for this month are:

- **Rice**
- **Ramen**
- **Raisins**

We thank everyone for their continued support.

Judy Ziccardi





Holy Week

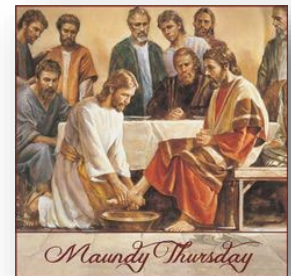


Sunday, March 24, 2024

10:30 AM - Palm Sunday Worship

Thursday, March 28, 2024

7:30 PM - Maundy Thursday Service



Good Friday, March, 29, 2024

12:00 PM - Seven Last Words

7:30 PM - Tenebrae Service

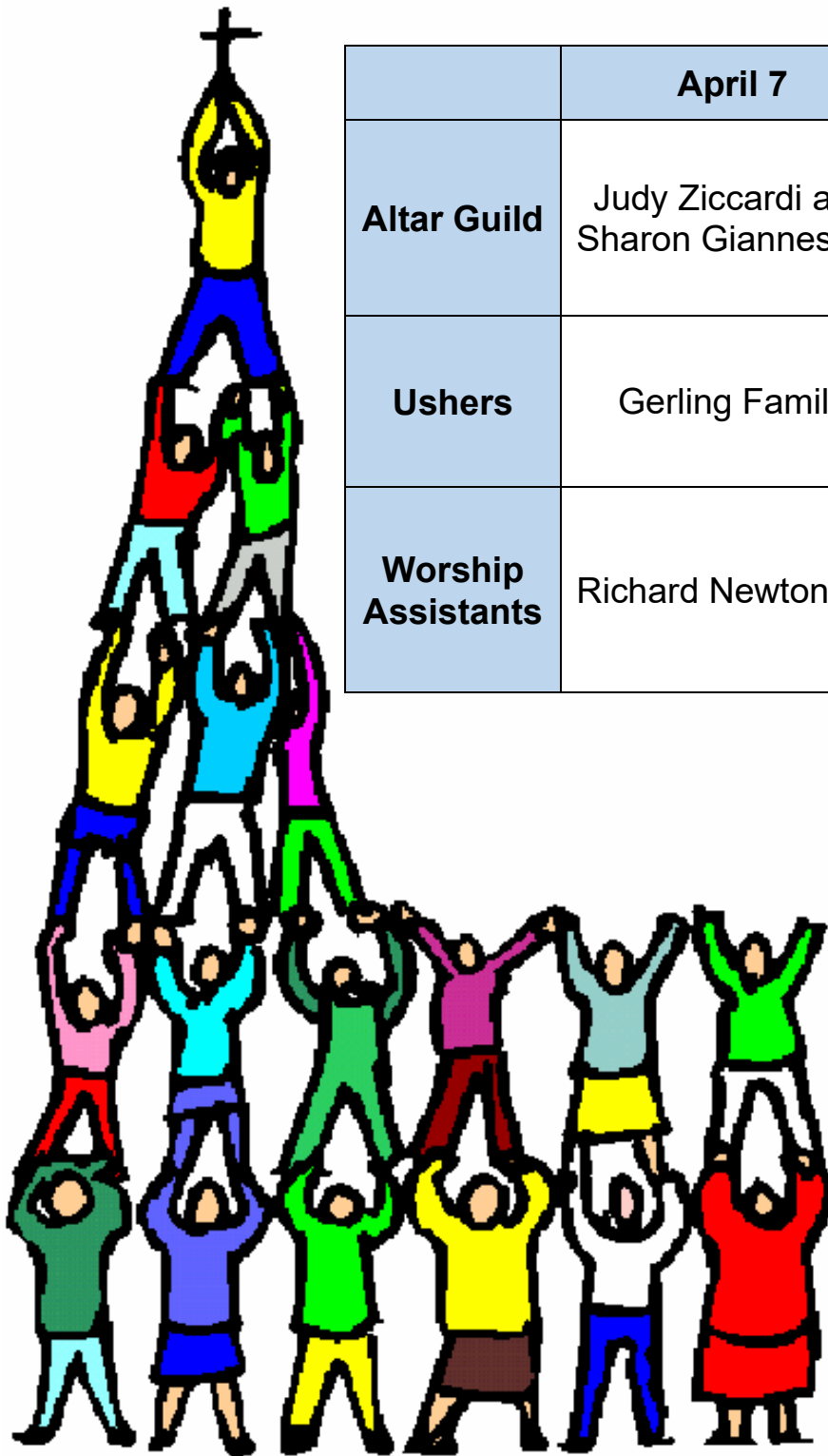
Sunday, March 31, 2024

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service

*6:30 am - at the gazebo in the Spring Lake Park
In case of inclement weather, the service moves to 7:00 am
at Wesley UMC, 1500 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield*

10:30 AM - Easter Worship at St. Stephen





	April 7	April 14	April 21	April 28
Altar Guild	Judy Ziccardi and Sharon Gianneschi	Bob and Cathy Newman	Donna Hussey and Audrey Oddman	Mary Flannary and Patty Newton
Ushers	Gerling Family	Swartz Family	Merring Family	Yao Family
Worship Assistants	Richard Newton, Jr.	Effil Hemmings	Pat Klatt	Linda Nietman

April Servant Leaders

Offering Counters:

- 1st Sunday of the Month - Pat Klatt/Judy Ziccardi
- 2nd Sunday of the Month - Bob Newman/Randy Gerling
- 3rd Sunday of the Month - Linda Nietman/Linda Hansen
- 4th Sunday of the Month - Miriam Skrzypczak/Frank Gianneschi
- 5th Sunday of the Month - Craig and Jane Busch



Blessings and Godspeed
For Jim Horan




**You are invited!
Come and join us for the annual
Growing in Faith Gathering.**




Our theme this year is Living our Christian Faith in the World. Our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Sara Lilja, Executive Director, LEAM-NJ. Breakout sessions will include: Good Government conducted by Sandy Matsen, League of Women Voters; Christian Nationalism conducted by Sara Lilja; and Housing conducted by Hannah Peterson, LEAM-NJ. Everyone is invited to join us for the program.

The program will take place at St. Mark, Hamilton on **Saturday, April 13 from 9:00 - 3:30**. The cost of the program is \$35 which includes lunch. Please email Ellen Lindemann at ellen.lindemann@rارانval.edu to register or for more information.




African Descent Lutheran Association
New Jersey ADLA
invites you to a celebration of



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
Thursday, March 21 at 7:00 pm

Keynote speaker
Bishop Patricia Ann Curtis Davenport
Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Topic: NJADLA Woman History Month Program

Zoom Meeting login details
 Meeting ID : 853 0305 3979 Passcode : 533453

**NJADLA invites you
to celebrate
Women's History Month**

Thursday, March 21 at 7:00 pm
via Zoom with Keynote speaker Bishop
Patricia Ann Curtis Davenport of the
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (ELCA).

Zoom Meeting ID:853 0305 3979
Passcode: 532453



UPCOMING EVENTS AT CROSS ROADS

WEDNESDAYS AWAY

Once per month, please see our website for exact dates.

Join us for Wednesdays Away, a time of spiritual renewal hosted by Cross Roads throughout the year. Our time together includes prayer and conversation, led by a spiritual director and focusing on a different spiritual practice or theme each month. These retreats are open to all people interested in exploring new faith practices. Attend one or attend all—and be sure to invite friends to join you.

Learn more and register at: www.crossroadsretreat.com/wednesdays-away/

OPEN HOUSES

May 4th, 2024 and June 8th, 2024

Come and visit Cross Roads Camp & Retreat Center for one of our open houses this spring! Learn all about our summer and year-round opportunities. Take a tour of camp, hear stories about summer camp, ask questions of our staff, and finish with a delicious lunch in the dining hall.

These are especially great opportunities for families interested in sending their children to camp for the first time (or attending Family Camp together) or for retreat leaders interested in one of our many buildings that are open year-round. These tours start at 10:30 am from the Lodge and conclude after lunch at noon. Please register by the Monday before the date attending.

Learn more and register at: <https://www.crossroadsretreat.com/open-houses/>

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<h1>APRIL 2024</h1>			3 10:00am ACC recording	4	5 5:00pm ACC	6 10:00am IESDAC
			7 10:30am Worship with Holy Communion 11:30am Worship and Music Meeting 5:00pm ACC	8	9	10 10:00am ACC recording
14 10:30am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30am Newsletter Items Due 5:00pm ACC	15	16 7:30pm Congregation Council Meeting	17 10:00am ACC recording 5:00pm Pop-Up Food Pantry	18 	19 5:00pm ACC	20 10:00am IESDAC
21 10:30am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30am Newsletter distributed 5:00pm ACC	22	23	24 10:00am ACC recording	25	26 5:00pm ACC	27 10:00am IESDAC
28 10:30am Worship with Holy Communion 11:30am Coffee and Refreshments 5:00pm ACC	29	30				