

**Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World**



# The Evangel



**ST. STEPHEN'S**  
united methodist church





# We are all, without exception, beloved children of God

## From the Senior Pastor

### New Service, New Times, Back to School Extravaganza!

Hello Everyone! I hope your summer has been restful and that your air conditioners have kept up with the madness. If you take a look in this newsletter, you'll see that our summer was absolutely packed with all sorts of Family Ministries activities, from VBS to U.M. ARMY to Fine Arts Camp and all sorts of other on and off-campus activities for children, youth, and everyone who loves them. The pictures in this newsletter fill my heart with joy!

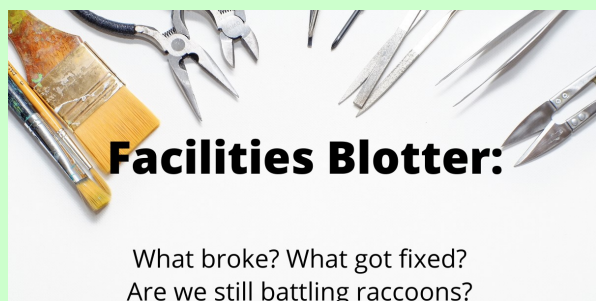
Hard to believe it, but Fall is right around the corner, and we have some big changes and celebrations coming up. We hope that they'll be changes which bring more opportunities for discipleship and worship to more people, as well as allowing everyone to have an even better Sunday! Starting August 21 and continuing throughout the fall, Sunday School will move to 9:15 and traditional worship will begin at 10:30. On August 21 and the second Sundays of September–December, we'll have a Messy Church inspired Family Worship Service with communion in the Fellowship Hall from 9:15–10:15. Additionally on those Sundays, we'll have a community breakfast open to all from 8:30–10.

If you'd like to help make our Community Breakfast and/or our Family Worship Service happen, visit [stshtx.org/events](https://stshtx.org/events) to sign up! Also, make sure and mark your calendars for a back to school weekend celebration. There are 3 opportunities to join in back-to-school fun that weekend:

- Blessing of the backpacks in our Family Worship Service and our Traditional Service on Aug. 21.
- A back-to-school blessing with other community churches at 10 a.m. on Saturday Aug. 20 in the lawn in front of Hope Episcopal Church near Black Middle School.

Changing worship times is a big change in routine, so make sure and mark your calendars and make your plans! Thank you for being a church willing to try new things to reach and love our neighbors.

Paz,  
Nathan



Fellowship Hall



Education Building  
(near nursery)

### Thirsty? Bring a bottle!

While the story of the woman at the well reminds us that Jesus gives us living water and we'll never thirst again (John 4:13–14)...we still get thirsty for regular water. We're installing new bottle filler water fountains in the Education Building and the Fellowship Hall with help from a grant JMS received. So when you're on campus, bring a bottle!

Cover photo: UM ARMY Team 2022

Please submit dates, pictures and information for the  
September 2022 Evangel by August 22nd to  
[info@stsumc.org](mailto:info@stsumc.org).

THE EVANGEL Vol. 27 Issue 8, August 2022



# The church does not belong to us

## Youth and Family News

**Combined UMYF** - On Sunday, August 7th, St. Stephen's will be hosting combined UMYF with St. Mark's, Westbury, St. Matthew's and Grace UMC. This event will be a Serve, Eat, Play event. We'll start off with a service project at 4 PM, eat dinner together at 5:30 PM, and we have booked two escape rooms to conclude our evening with. Space is limited for the escape rooms. You can register and find more information at [stshtx.org/events](https://stshtx.org/events)

**Blessing of the Backpacks** - Sunday, August 21st during the pilot of our Family Worship service, we'll have a Blessing of the Backpacks for students, and educators from all of our area school districts. In addition to receiving a blessing for the upcoming school year, participants will also take home a new backpack tag.

**Back to School Pool Party** - Later in the afternoon on August 21st, we'll have a Back to School Pool Party at the Lowe's house for incoming 6-12th graders. Try and fail to beat the heat in the pool and enjoy food straight off the grill!

### Summer Recap

Wow! What a bumper summer we had at St. Stephen's. It all started out on June 13th as nine of our students, and three adults travelled to Lakeview Summer Camp. While there they swam, danced, crafted, ate LOTS of snacks, worshipped, competed, nerfed, played, and more. When our group returned they were eager for two things. Rest and to go back again next summer. And we will. Stay tuned.

Our VBS had 108 children registered and was a wonderful week learning about how God loves us and provides for our needs. We enjoyed our Food Truck Party with crafts, games, songs, dances, stories, snacks, and a trip to the ever popular Bible Village. A big word of thanks to the over fifty volunteers who were so talented and bring VBS to life in the most amazing way.

UM ARMY came next with the St. Stephen's group 32 strong. All of the youth and adults who travelled to Crockett worked in the most difficult of conditions with no break from the relentless heat. We had AC problems, storms that knocked out the power, and supply issues (because we bought all of the deck boards in the county) and yet, it was the hardest working group in recent memory and they did not complain. The Crockett camp built over 180 feet of wheelchair ramps, constructed 9 elevated porches, helped preserve the structure of a nearly 200 year old church, and so much more. Most of all, they left Crockett a better place than when they arrived and gave hope to some deserving folks.

High Voltage Rock Camp in their tenth year held their camp in Oak Forest for the first time at St. Stephen's and broke their all time attendance record. The kids who registered were put into bands and by the end of the week had come up with band names, logos, t-shirts, and during the live concert in our Fellowship Hall on Friday night, performed a cover of a famous song and debuted an original song composed and written that week! Seeing talented kids do the things that they are talented at is always a joy and it's even better when it happens here at St. Stephen's

Fine Arts Camp returned to our summer schedule for the first time since 2019 and 18 K-6th graders took part in art, music, dance, and drama classes. At the end of the camp, they performed their musical, dance, and drama pieces, and had their artwork exhibited around the sanctuary.

Family Ministries also held events with Westbury and St. Mark's doing a service project for a food pantry. We joined our friends at St. Matthew's for an afternoon of bowling. And we partnered with Terrace UMC to assist one another in our summer VBS.

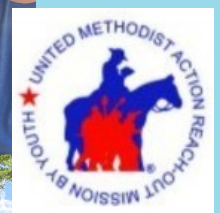
And if all of that wasn't enough, Julie Osterman's Musical Theater Camp is back for its second year starting on August 8th!

Phew, I'm tired all over again just reading that.

**Steven Fisher**  
Family Ministries Director



# Photo Gallery



## August 2022 Highlights

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Worship Times</b> <b>Sunday School— 9:30 am*</b> , Education Bldg <b>*9:15am—New time beginning August 21</b> <b>Traditional Service—11:00 am*</b> , Sanctuary <b>*10:30am—New time beginning August 21</b> <b>Virtual Service—11:00 am*</b> , Facebook, YouTube <b>*10:30am—New time beginning August 21</b>			This calendar features highlights from our church schedule of events. For a more detailed calendar or to learn more about our church visit <a href="http://stshtx.org">stshtx.org</a> or call the church office.  <u><b>For a list of recurring events, please see the next page.</b></u> <b>*Register for events at <a href="http://stshtx.org">stshtx.org</a></b>			
<b>Blessing of the Backpacks August 21</b> 	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 9am-5pm—Harris County COVID Vaccine Clinic, FH 	<b>4</b> 3pm—Most Thursdays, Great Heights Brewing Co. 	<b>5</b> 2pm—Memorial Service for Noni Ray 3pm—Reception -Fellowship Hall 	<b>6</b>
<b>7 Communion Sunday</b> 9:30am—Sunday School 11am—Worship 4pm—Kingdom Story, 101 4pm—Combined UMYF	<b>8</b> 10am—The Gathering Place, FH 1pm—Musical Theater Camp-FH, 201, 209	<b>9</b> 1pm—Musical Theater Camp-FH, 201, 209	<b>10</b> 1pm—Musical Theater Camp-FH, 201, 209 7pm—Board of Stewards Mtg	<b>11</b> 1pm—Musical Theater Camp-FH, 201, 209 3pm—Most Thursdays, Great Heights	<b>12</b> 1pm—Musical Theater Camp-FH, 201, 209	<b>13</b> 11:30am—Red Hats Luncheon, BB's Tex-Orleans Restaurant 
<b>14</b> 9:30am—Sunday School 11am—Worship 4pm—Kingdom Story Fellowship, 101	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 6pm—GriefShare Special Session: "Loss of a Spouse", 101 	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 3pm—Most Thursdays, Great Heights Brewing Co. 	<b>19</b> 	<b>20</b> 10am—Back to School Blessing, Hope Episcopal Church 
<b>21 Back to School Sunday</b> 8:30am—Community Breakfast *9:15—Family Worship, Adult Sunday School *10:30am—Traditional Worship 4pm—Kingdom Story Fellowship UMYF Pool Party	<b>22 HISD 1st Day of School</b>  September Newsletter Deadline 	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 3pm—Most Thursdays, Great Heights Brewing Co. 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> *9:15am—Sunday School *10:30am—Worship 4pm—Kingdom Story, 101	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 6pm—New GriefShare Grief Support Group Begins, 101 	<b>31</b>	 <b>*Please note new Sunday School and worship times above beginning August 21.</b>		





# God is in our neighborhood and not just in our building

## Get Involved

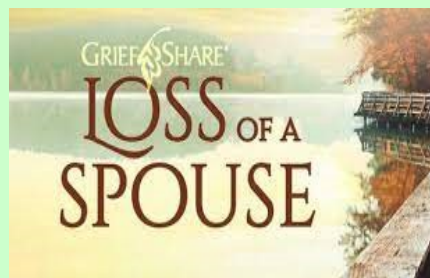
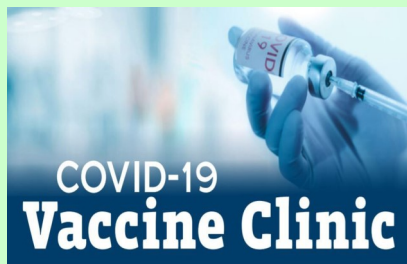
**Free COVID Vaccine Event** - Harris County Public Health will host a free COVID vaccine event in the fellowship hall at St. Stephen's Wednesday, August 3, from 9am to 5pm, offering all COVID-19 recommended vaccines and boosters (Pfizer, Moderna & J&J) for everyone 6 months of age and older. No ID, insurance or citizenship status is required. Appointments are preferred, but walk-ins will also be welcome. Schedule a vaccine appointment at [vacstrac.hctx.net](http://vacstrac.hctx.net) or call 832-927-8787. Please spread the word to your neighbors and friends in the community who might be interested.

**Board of Stewards Meeting** - You are welcome to join us for our board meeting this month, or any month! Our next meeting is Wednesday, August 10, at 7 pm. If you'd like to join us, we ask that you let us know ahead of time, so that we can group all personnel matters together to ensure those discussions remain confidential. Please RSVP to Nathan at [nathan@stshtx.org](mailto:nathan@stshtx.org) or our chair, Emily Leffler, at [emilybarra@yahoo.com](mailto:emilybarra@yahoo.com).

**Red Hats Luncheon** - The Rambling Reds of St. Stephen's welcome women of all ages to join us for our monthly luncheon Saturday, August 13, at 11:30 am. This month, we'll be meeting at BB's Tex-Orleans Restaurant, located at 1737 West 34th St at Ella Blvd. Please RSVP to August hostess, Loree Vernon, at 713-680-2379 or [loreemvernon@gmail.com](mailto:loreemvernon@gmail.com) by August 11.

**GriefShare** - A special GriefShare seminar, "Loss of a Spouse" will be held August 16 at 6pm in Room 101. The seminar will include a 35-minute video with encouraging, practical advice from pastors, counselors, and widowed men and women, followed by a time of sharing with others who have lost a spouse. Everyone who attends will receive a booklet with more than 30 short readings on how to live with grief and eventually rebuild your life.

GriefShare is a weekly seminar and support group for people who are grieving the death of someone close to them. Each session includes a video teaching on grief recovery followed by a time of sharing in a small group setting. Sessions will begin Tuesday, August 30, at 6pm in Room 101. No fee is required, but a donation of \$20 is suggested to cover the cost of a workbook. Please call the office at 713-686-8241 or email [maryellen@stshtx.org](mailto:maryellen@stshtx.org) if you plan to attend so that we can ensure we have sufficient materials.



## What's on at St. Stephen's

### WEEKLY EVENTS

**Sunday School**—Sun., \*9:30am, Educational Bldg  
**\*Changes to 9:15am beginning August 21**  
**Traditional Worship**—Sun., \*11am, Sanctuary & Online  
**\*Changes to 10:30am beginning August 21**  
**Kingdom Story Fellowship**—Sun., 4pm, 101 & Toddler Room  
**Narcotics Anonymous**—Mon. & Wed., noon; Thurs., 8pm; Saturday, 8pm, FH  
**Boy Scouts Troop 604**—Mon., 7pm, FH  
**Zoom Bible Study**—Tues., 3pm  
**Line Dancing Class**—Tues & Fri, 9:30 am, FH  
**Staff Meeting**—Tues., 1pm, Church Office  
**Sea Scouts Ship 24**—Tues., 7:30pm, FH  
**GriefShare**—Tues., 6pm, 101 (begins Aug. 30)  
**Senior Games**—Wed., 9:30am, Café  
**Prayer Shawl Ministry**—Thurs., 10am, Rm 112  
**\*\*Most Thursdays**—(see church calendar)  
 Thursdays, 3-5pm, Great Heights Brewing Company, 938 Wakefield Dr.  
 Next meeting: August 4  
**\*\*Summer Event**

### BI-MONTHLY EVENTS

**UMYF** (United Methodist Youth Fellowship) Sunday, 5pm  
 August Meetings:  
 8/7 —Combined UMYF, begins at 4pm  
 8/21—UMYF Pool Party (contact Steven Fisher for time)

### MONTHLY EVENTS

**Community Breakfast**—second Sunday, 8:30-10:10am, FH  
**Family Worship**—second Sunday, 9:15am, FH  
**The Gathering Place**—second Monday, 10am, FH (a ministry for persons with Alzheimer's & their caregivers)  
 Next Gathering: August 8  
**Red Hats Luncheon**—1st or 2nd Saturday, Next meeting: August 13, 11:30 am, at BB's Tex-Orleans Restaurant, 1737 West 34th St at Ella Blvd (in corner of center) Please RSVP to Loree Vernon at 713-680-2379 or [loreemvernon@gmail.com](mailto:loreemvernon@gmail.com) by August 11.

### OTHER RECURRING EVENTS

**Harris County Parent/Child Visitation**—1st, 3rd & 5th Saturday, 8am-2pm, FH (with a few variations during the year)

FH=Fellowship Hall CR=Choir Room  
 Sanc=Sanctuary SH=Scout House



# Worship connects us with God and with each other

## Welcome to Our Newest Baptized Member!

**Preston Hartman St. Lawrence**, son of Justin and Lauren St. Lawrence, was baptized Sunday, June 5, 2022, by Rev. Nathan Lonsdale Bledsoe.

Preston is the grandson of Roland and Cindy St. Lawrence.



## Worship Attendance

	In Person	Virtual (Registered)	YouTube Views	Facebook Views
Sun., July 3	67	12	46	63
Sun., July 10	79	18	142	68
Sun., July 17	63	11	58	38
Sun., July 24	65	13	37	43

## Communion Offering for August

Our Communion offering for the month of August will go to Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM), located in Spring Branch at 1625 Blalock.



MAM's "Back to School" program provides clothes for 5,000 local kids! Shopping vouchers are distributed to local schools for children in need of school clothes. Learn how you can participate in this program during the Mission Moment in the worship service on Communion Sunday, August 7.

## Family Worship

Second Sundays this Fall  
9:15 at St. Stephen's UMC

Free Breakfast • Crafts  
Music • Communion • Jesus





# The stories of scripture transform our own stories

## Welcome, Little One!

We welcome our newest little member, **Weston Joel Paulk**, son of Glenn Paulk, Jr. and Kelsey Paulk, who arrived on the 4th of July! At birth, Weston weighed in at 8 pounds, 7 ounces, and was 21 inches long. Brenda Paulk is Weston's proud grandmother. Lola Hensley, his great-grandmother, is awfully proud of him, too!



## In Memory

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of two of our dear members.

**Dian Parker** passed away peacefully on Sunday, July 24, 2022, after losing a courageous eight-year battle with cancer. A memorial service will be held for Dian on Saturday, July 30, at 10:00 am at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church. A celebration of her life was held following the service at the Spaghetti Western Italian Cafe'.



**Noni Ray** suffered a massive stroke July 21st and passed away peacefully Tuesday, July 26, 2022, due to the damage she sustained as a result of the stroke. A memorial service will be held for Noni at St. Stephen's at 2:00 pm on Friday, August 5. A celebration of her life with her family will be held following the service in the fellowship hall at St. Stephen's. Light refreshments will be served. The family is requesting that we wait until her service and life celebration on August 5 to express personal condolences to her husband, Milton, due to health issues which make it difficult for him to communicate over the phone.

## Prayer Concerns

Debra Akin, Dwight Allen, John & Dorothy Artz, Betty Beyer, Peggy & Tommy Bickel, Anita Bishop and daughters, Jeanie & Janya; Hilda Bluett (Steven Fisher's grandmother), Florence Bowman & family, Mary Brennan, Phyllis Burnette, Arlene Caler, Frank & Kathy Chambers, the Collins family, Brayden Corson, Janet Cummins, Angela Earl, Allen Ebelt, Kayla Ebelt, Maurice Ebelt, Mary Gail Ellis, Megan Eyre, Irene Fallen, Blaine Fernandez, Gael Golden, Tricia Halley, Bert & Charm Hensley, and Daniel Hernandez; Lola Hensley, Tyler & Evy Hicks, Gina & Jacqueline Kouma, Dorrie Jackson, Carter Kotzur, Dot Lockhart, Penny Loy, William Martin, Marsha Massey, Brittany & Lacey McCullough, Ed Mills, Shirley Moan, Carol Owens, the family of Dian Parker, Doris Parr, Brenda Paulk, Weston Paulk, Eddie Pollard, Milton Ray & family, Jane Roberts, the Sandt family, Barbara Smith, Meranda Soto, Hazel Swearingen, Preston Taylor, Linda Warren, Paul Wieting, Dale Wilson, Todd Wilson, Richard & Linda Wren, David Wright, Rick Yarbrough, Judy Zanelli

Social Justice Prayers: The sin of racism and its effects on all of us; Members of the CITGO6: Tomeu Vadell, Alirio Zambrano, Jose Luis Zambrano, Jose Angel Pereira; and all who are imprisoned or persecuted unjustly

**In the Military** Allen Clutter

**In Hospital**





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**The Evangelist**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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## Readings

If you'd like to read along with the Scriptures we'll use in worship during the month of August, follow this reading guide:






**8/7:** Isaiah 1:1, 10-20; Luke 12:32-40

**8/14:** Isaiah 5:1-7; Luke 12:49-56

**8/21:** Jeremiah 1:4-10; Luke 13:10-17

**8/28:** Jeremiah 2:4-13; Luke 14:1, 7-14

## Our Vision

-  We are all, without exception, beloved children of God
-  The church does not belong to us
-  God is in our neighborhood and not just in our building
-  Worship connects us with God and with each other
-  The stories of scripture transform our own stories