

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World

The Evangel

October 2025 Edition: 75th Anniversary Special



1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020 2025

YOU ARE
HERE



ST. STEPHEN'S
united methodist church

75th Anniversary
1950-2025



We are all, without exception, beloved children of God

Rhyming with History

I have my own inherent biases. I love history. I love to collect objects with history. As I write this in my studio at home, I'm surrounded by technology from every decade starting from the 1950s with an 8mm camera. From the 1960s, I have an IBM electric typewriter. From the 1970s, I have a Magnavox Odyssey 2 and a Ti-99(4a). From the 1980s and 1990s, I have a good representation of video game systems from each decade: Commodore 64, Sega Genesis, and Super Nintendo from the 1980s, Sony PlayStation, Virtual Boy, Sega CD from the 1990s. From the 2000s forward is where my actual production equipment comes from. My office at the church is no different with books from the 1800s and two manual typewriters. I spend my off time in museums of art and history and have an Audible library filled with books on increasing arcane historical moments. The only high school academic award that I ever won was in AP American History. I attended a college with deep historical roots, studied at Oxford and walked the Camino de Santiago for similar reasons, passed the dark days of my tween years watching the History Channel back when it showed things about history, and married a history major. That last one may be unrelated, but it probably explains why she's tolerated some of my eccentricities.



It's more than a hobby. I believe the study of history to be legitimately important. To quote Mark Twain, "History doesn't repeat itself, but often rhymes." In learning where we came from, we don't just gain insight into why things are the way that they are, but we see the patterns of human behavior across time. This helps us to discern where we might be headed. The Spanish philosopher, George Santayana, summed this up so well that it's become an adage, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

I hope that we learned the right lessons from our last 75 years.

We had a wonderful time celebrating our 75th anniversary over the weekend. I enjoyed the community festival, and Sunday was a truly special day. I'm deeply thankful to Susan Barcus and her team for their massive efforts and for Lucy Cain bringing it all together. We are deeply blessed as congregation to have such talented people and that they're willing to deploy such talents in the service of the church.

The open mic time will stick with me the longest from this weekend. During the celebratory luncheon, we opened up the opportunity for people to share what St. Stephen's meant to them or a pleasant memory. That's always a risk. You never know what you'll get. What we got was profound. People in their 20s shared. People in their 90s shared. Many reflected on the power of the St. Stephen's youth group and JMS. Others remembered the welcome that they received, when St. Timothy's closed. It was long timers and short timers and everything in between. It was the folks that we see every week and folks who came back especially for the event. We heard stories of support (emotional, spiritual, and tangible), of community, and of acceptance. We saw glimpses of who we can be, when we are at our best.

To me, that's the lesson of our history. It's how we got here. We made it 75 years by being a place where people found support, community, and acceptance. St. Stephen's started because a small group of people were passionate about reaching Oak Forest and its surrounding areas.

My prayer is that our future rhymes pretty well with our past.

Vaya con Dios,
Pastor Trey

Cover photo: Congregations through the years



The church does not belong to us

Youth and Family News

Messy Church — Thank you to everyone for being so flexible with the date change last month. We are now officially back on schedule and will have Messy Church on the second Tuesday of the month through the rest of the year.

October's theme is "This Little light of Mine" and we'll have eight craft and activity stations about goodness and light (two of which will be fright free Halloween crafts).

Join us for a night of crafting, and fun, and we'll throw in dinner for the whole family too. What's not to like? See you Tuesday, October 14th at 5:30 p.m.



Family Worship Service—Family Worship returns on Sunday, October 19th. We kick off with a community breakfast at 8:45 a.m. and then worship begins at 9:15 a.m. Family worship has a live band playing contemporary music, two craft tables for children, and space to get wiggles out. During our sermon, the children will have the choice to go and do a third craft in our Sunday school room and hear a child tailored version of the sermon.



Parent's Night Out—Our next Parents Night Out takes place on October 24th at 6 p.m. Children aged 3-10 years old can be left at St. Stephen's under the care of experienced and licensed childcare professionals (and employees of our very own Johnson Memorial School).

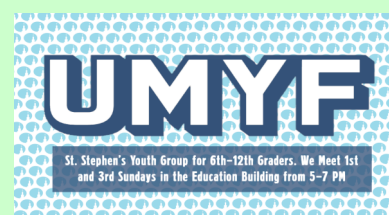
The cost is \$30 for your first child and \$10 per sibling. Registration is open now and can be found at stshtx.org/events.



UMYF—Our youth group will meet twice in October. Students 6th-12th grade are invited to join us on Sunday, October 5th, and October 19th.

At youth group we play group games, take part in a short devotional study, and eat dinner together—all free of charge. You don't have to be a member of St. Stephen's or any church for that matter to take part.

If you have any questions about our youth group or programs, please email Steven Fisher at steven@stshtx.org



Trunk or Treat—Back for its eight year (and sadly the first time without the Astros being in the playoffs), Trunk or Treat returns on Saturday, October 25th from 5-7 p.m.

We're starting the event a little later than usual so that it will be a little cooler and because we will have dinner for sale in the Fellowship Hall.

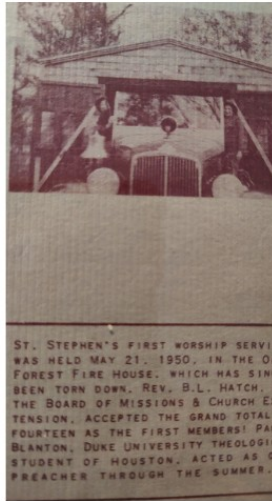
All of your favorites will return including bounce houses, decorated trunks, candy, and allergy free options.

We need trunks too! If you are able to provide a trunk we would love you to do so. You can register at stshtx.org/events. Please keep frightening decorations to a minimum as we want to be a fun place for the whole family and children of all ages.

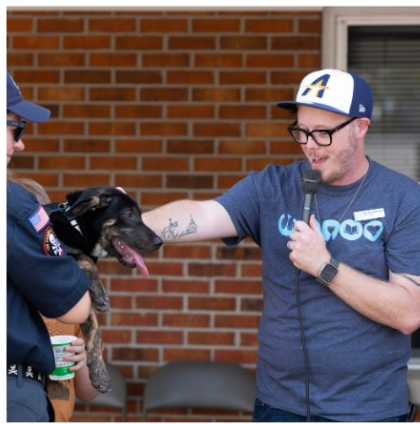


October 2025 Highlights

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Worship Times Sunday School—9:15 am, Education Bldg Traditional Service—10:30 am, Sanctuary Virtual Service—10:30 am, Facebook & YouTube Family Worship Service—Third Sunday of the Month at 9:15 am, Fellowship Hall This calendar features highlights from our church schedule of events. For a more detailed calendar or to learn more about our church visit stshtx.org or call the church office. <u>For a list of recurring events, please see the next page.</u> *Register for events at stshtx.org CR=Choir Room FH=Fellowship Hall Sanc=Sanctuary						
			1 Senior Games. Wednesdays at 10 a.m.	2	3	4 75th Anniversary Carnival 2-5pm
5 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (with Communion) (Sanc)	6 The Gathering Place—10a.m. FH	7 Line Dancing Every Tuesday and Friday 9:30 a.m. (FH)	8 JMS Blessing of the Stuffed Animals	9 Yoga classes every Thursday 6:15 and 7:15 (201)	10	11 Houston Woodworkers Association. 9-2:00 p.m. (FH)
12 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (Sanc)	13	14 Messy Church 5:30-7:00 p.m. (FH)	15 Wills and Probate Community Conversation 6pm	16 Prayer Shawl group. Thursdays at 10	17	18
19 8:30am - Community Breakfast 9:15am- Family Worship Service (FH) 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am Traditional Worship (Sanc)	20 Houston Philatelic Society Meeting (FH) 7p.m.	21	22	23 Newsletter Article Deadline	24 Parents Night Out. 6p.m. (FH)	25 8th annual Trunk or Treat 5-7 p.m.
26 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (Sanc)	27	28	29 World Internet Day	30	31	









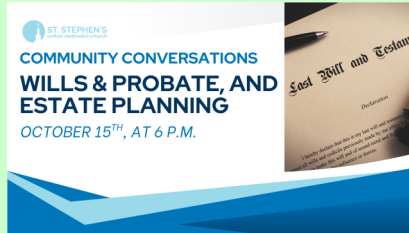


God is in our neighborhood and not just in our building

What's on at St. Stephen's

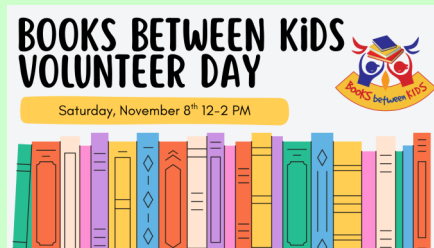
Wills & Probate, And Estate Planning

Less than half of the people in America have a will. One day in the future our possessions will no longer be ours and often, loved ones are left deciphering where everything should go and who our things belong to. You're invited to an informative community conversation about the importance of a will and the methods needed to get one.



Attorney Jana McCreary will lead the conversation on October 15th at 6 p.m. in our Fellowship Hall. There is no cost to attend.

Books Between Kids — If you are looking for a service opportunity, Patricia Williams has set up a time for St. Stephen's members to help out at our community partner, Books Between Kids.



Visit stshtx.org/events to register for a spot on November 8th from 12-2 p.m..

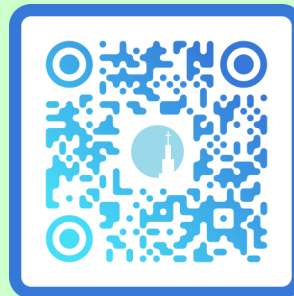
Anyone eight years old and above can take part. Spots are limited and the registration is open so don't delay if you would like to be a part of this.

Great Heights Bible Study—Our Bible Study at Great Heights Brewing Co. will happen twice in the month of October. We'll meet from 5-7 p.m. on the 12th and 26th.



Anyone can attend regardless of where you are in your faith journey.

75th Anniversary Fund— Our first seventy-five years have come to a close but now we take the first few steps on the path that will lead us on the next seventy-five years. There is much to look forward to in the life and ministries of our church. We couldn't possibly predict in what ways we will love God and our neighbors in the coming decades but, we do know some ways we want to do that now.



Please consider supporting the 75th anniversary fund through the QR code on the right or by marking cash and check donations at "75th Anniversary Fund". Half of the money raised will go towards improving our campus and the other half will be used for direct impacts in our community.

Yoga—There are now weekly yoga classes on Thursday evenings. There is no cost to attend but you will need to bring your own mat. Childcare is provided for those who would need



What's on at St. Stephen's

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday School—Sun., 9:15 am, Educational Bldg
Traditional Worship—Sun., 10:30 am, Sanctuary & Online
Narcotics Anonymous—Mon. & Wed., noon; Thurs., 7pm; Saturday, 8pm, FH
Boy Scouts Troop 604—Mon., 7pm, FH
Zoom Bible Study—Tues., 3pm
 Email Susan Barcus at sjbarcus@comcast.net for the latest information.
Line Dancing Class—Tues & Fri, 9:30 am, FH
Staff Meeting—Wed., 1:30 pm, Church Office
Sea Scouts Ship 24—Tues., 7:30pm, FH
Senior Games—Wed., 9:30am, Café & 112
Prayer Shawl Ministry—Thurs., 10am, Rm 112

BI-MONTHLY EVENTS

UMYF—United Methodist Youth Fellowship
 1st & 3rd Sundays, 5pm (unless stated otherwise)
Girl Scouts Juniors/Cadettes—Monday (varies), 10am, 201
Girl Scouts Daisies—1st & 3rd Tues., 6pm
Girl Scouts Daisies—2nd & 4th Thurs., 6pm

MONTHLY EVENTS

Community Breakfast—8:30 am on Third Sundays
Family Worship—Third Sunday of the month at 9:15 am
The Gathering Place—second Monday, 10am, FH (a ministry for persons with Alzheimer's or other memory loss & their caregivers)

OTHER RECURRING EVENTS

Harris County Parent/Child Visitation—1st, 3rd & 5th Saturday, 8am-2pm, FH (with a few variations during the year)
Houston Woodworkers Association—2nd Saturdays 8 am—4 pm

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

For more information, visit stshtx.org.



Worship connects us with God and with each other

Prayer Requests (Please update the office if you no longer need to be on this list)

Greg Albert, Debra Akin, John & Dorothy Artz, Betty Beyer, Peggy Bickel, Tommy Bickel, Gloria Collins, Brayden Corson, Janet Cummins, the Dickson family, Allen Ebelt, Maurice Ebelt, Mary Gail Ellis, Frieda (Cindy Tindol's sister) and Bob (Cindy's friend), Mary Kay Glenn, Phyllis Greene, Lori Gossett, Megan Eyre, Elsie Haley, Tricia Wright Halley, Shirley Hammonds, Bert & Charm Hensley, and Daniel Hernandez; Lola Hensley, Tripp Hensley, Elizabeth Hickerson, Betsy & Wesley Hill, Dustin James, Joe (Shirley Moan's brother), Cathy Johnson, Dot Lockhart, Carol Luce, Renita Majors, Marsha Massey, Michelle Maurizi, Audrey Mayfield and family, Clint McCray, Ben Newton, Nancy Piercefield, Gladys Reeve, Jane Roberts, Debby Roznovsky, Kim S., Barbara Smith, Meranda Soto, Michael Stuart, Preston Taylor, Charles Turner, Paul Wieting, Patricia Williams, Howard & Cindy Wright, Judy Zanelli

In the Military: Keegan Ferrell

October Communion Offering

October's communion offering will benefit the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC).

HAWC exists to ultimately put an end to domestic and sexual violence directed towards women and children but in the meantime, they aim their efforts and resources at getting women and children away from violent situations. If you are reading this and are in need of assistance, help IS available. You can visit HAWC or call 713.528.6798



Any offering you mark as communion in October (or any offering left on the Altar rails) will go towards their work.

Memorial Area Ministries (MAM) Activities coming up in September/October

MAM will have another Shred Day on 10/25 and again is requesting a \$10 donation for whatever volume you bring. MAM's next online prayer breakfast will be 10/29 from 9 to 10 AM. The Quarterly Half-off Sale will be at the Blalock store Nov 7th-8th, and they have a request for volunteer restockers on Nov 9th. For more information, check out the MAM webpage at MAMHouston.org or contact Jamie Etherton.



Worship Attendance

	In Person	Virtual (Registered)	YouTube Views	Facebook Views
Sunday, September 7th	105	9	67	22
Sunday, September 14th	94	7	106	23
Tuesday, September 16th (Messy Church)	53			
Sunday, September 21st (Family Worship)	55			
6 Sunday, September 21st (Traditional Worship)	71	4	62	23
Sunday, September 28th	96	4	50	29
Sunday, October 5th	154	13	75	24



The stories of scripture transform our own stories

Johnson Memorial School News—November Update

Candice Croker—JMS Director

JMS Updates

JMS is now one full month into it's 58th school year at St. Stephen's! We're so proud of our 57 students (full capacity!) because drop-off seems to be getting easier for everyone at both entry points. We are seeing big smiles in our hallways and kids adjusting to the routines better and better each day.

The focus in September was entirely on adjusting to our group learning environment; the students focus on listening to their teacher, using gentle hands when asking a friend for a toy they would like to borrow, controlling their body when sitting on the class rug during story-time, and learning how to quietly transition from their classroom to music, lunch and recess. We can see significant growth in them even after such a short time.

Mr. Steven came to each lunchroom to bless the students' lunchboxes (since we do not use backpacks) and they were thrilled to receive "God's got your back" bag-tags. Our traditional scavenger hunt around the church building was a big success; this gives our students the opportunity to learn who else works in the church building and what the sanctuary looks like before our first chapel time takes place, all while searching for one of their favorite book characters, Clifford the big red dog.

Gardening preparations are under way for the class veggie beds - cleaning up, repositioning them for suitable sun now that our shade structure is complete, and lining them with repurposed materials. We are thankful for a newly-formed gardening committee full of amazing JMS parents who will be planting vegetables, herbs and flowers with the kids during recess in the coming weeks.

After-school enrichment classes started the week of October 7. JMS offers dance and soccer on Tuesdays, Stay 'n Play on Wednesdays, and gymnastics plus music on Thursdays. Students enjoy learning and playing alongside friends in other classes and parents enjoy the exposure to something new without having to drive across town.

The community helper unit over the course of October is such a popular one in any preschool. Who doesn't love to meet the Constable's K9 unit, climb into a fire truck, and spray a fire hose?! We've stayed busy at JMS making these special memories and learning how to be respectful listeners when visitors come to teach us about their profession. Luck was on our side during the K9 visit as we met four of their nine dogs - apparently they love Chick Fil A snacks, can run up to 35mph, live with their officer, and all come from Europe since the training there for bomb squad dogs is exceptional.

Questions about JMS? Please reach out to the Director, Candice Croker at JMS@stshsx.org





ST. STEPHEN'S
united methodist church

The Evangel

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stshtx.org



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Readings

For those of you who like to get a head start on the scriptures our new sermon series “Let Us Prayer” begins on October 12th. The planned scriptures for each Sunday can be found below.

If you’re reading the digital Evangel you can click on the scriptures to be taken to a page where you can read them.

October 5th: “A Legacy to Continue”.

[2 Timothy 1:1-14](#)

October 12th: “By Giving Thanks”

[Luke 17:11-19](#)

October 19th: “TBD”

[Luke 18:1-8](#)

October 26th: “From the Heart”

[Luke 18:9-14](#)

Fun Fact

October is the only month in the year where you can buy 10lbs of candy for yourself but tell everyone else “it’s for the kids” and no one bats an eye.

Happy Halloween everyone.

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Our Vision



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