

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World

The Evangel

November 2025 Edition



ST. STEPHEN'S
united methodist church



We are all, without exception, beloved children of God

A Never-Ending Story – Chiseled in Stone

In the 8th century BC, King Hezekiah had a problem. The ascendant Assyrian Empire didn't appreciate his rebellion. Hezekiah's father, the less than faithful King Ahaz, had given the Assyrians everything that they had wanted including compromising how God's people worshiped God. Good King Hezekiah understood that godly kings don't compromise such things. However, now, one of the superpowers of his time, having completed a project of consolidating power to the northeast, could focus their sole attention on punishing Judah for daring to rebel.

A siege of Jerusalem was coming.

This presents an additional problem for King Hezekiah. The spring of Gihon serves as the water supply for Jerusalem. Although outside the main fortifications, ancient Canaanites had fortified and secured the spring a thousand years earlier. However, the excess water from the spring runs off into the Kidron Valley, where it would also feed the Assyrian army. So, Hezekiah and his engineers hatch a plan to dig a third of a mile long tunnel deep in the limestone bedrock to capture the additional waters from Gihon and feed them back into the city, at the Pool of Siloam. One team of diggers would start at the pool and another at the spring with the hope that they would meet in the middle.

Modern archeologists do not know how they pulled off this feat – digging relatively straight, that far underground, staying on course, and meeting in the middle. Yet, they did. When the Assyrians inevitably rolled up, they lacked a ready water supply – enabling God's people to hold out for longer. Assyrian and Biblical sources disagree on the exact nature of the battle, but Hezekiah and his forces eventually succumbed to the much superior Assyrian army. The siege itself went better than it could have, but a tiny mountain nation cannot overcome a mighty empire.

So, what's the lesson? Well, from the authors of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah (who each record the building of the tunnel) want history to know that godly rulers don't cave in and compromise how God is worshipped – even under impossible odds and certain defeat. To truly follow God, there are occasional hills worth dying on. We cannot always just go with the easy flow. Sometimes, you dig the impossible tunnel to attempt hold out in an impossible battle.

For us as modern Christians living in 2025, there's an additional layer. This tunnel most likely still exists. I have been in it. It runs under the modern Arabic Quarter of Jerusalem. It still carries water from the spring of Gihon to the Pool of Siloam. For a few Shekels (and a few more Shekels to knock off Crocs at the gift shop), one can wade up to their chest through an ancient water tunnel that Hezekiah commissioned as a siege weapon against the Assyrians. You can run your hand along the wall and feel the tool marks from ancient chisels.

As I journeyed through the tunnel, I felt two distinct emotions. I felt profound relief that I had thought to purchase water tolerant footwear in the gift shop, and I experienced an even more profound sense of connection to the craftsman who made the tunnel, the king who commissioned it, and the people of God who needed it. They are a part of our story, and we are a part of theirs. We share a faith in God and desire for God to lead our lives. Across 2,700 years, we all live as players in a single divine epic. In November, we have two opportunities to reflect. On All Saints Day, we remember those who have passed on, in part by reflecting on and celebrating the ways that they brought us to where we are. On Thanksgiving, we pause, gather, and consider the many ways that God has blessed us. At both of them, we can see and celebrate our place in God's never-ending story.

Vaya con Dios,
Pastor Trey



Cover photo: "Table" or Treat at St. Stephen's



The church does not belong to us

Youth and Family News

Messy Church — Our next Messy Church will take place on Tuesday, November 11th at 5:30-7 p.m. and our theme is “Appreciation”. Our eight craft and activity stations will focus on an appreciation and gratitude for the blessings God has given us. With it being November too, we’ll also have a Thanksgiving craft or two that the kids can take to their family gatherings later this month.

Messy Church is designed for toddlers, pre-k students, elementary-aged children, and their families. All of our Messy Church evenings include dinner for the whole family too. Come and be a part of our community.



Family Worship Service—Our Family worship Sunday this month will take place on Sunday, November 16th. We’ll kick off with a free 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 for kids to express themselves.

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 Winter Break—As we approach Thanksgiving and Christmas, school holidays and family gatherings, scheduling Parents Night Out gets a lot trickier. As a result, Parents Night Out will be taking a winter break for the next two months.

This has proved a popular monthly program and it will return at the beginning of 2026. We want to thank all of the families who have participated thus far and look forward to welcoming you all back.

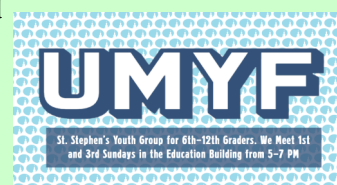


UMYF—Our youth group will meet twice in November. Students 6th-12th grade are invited to join us on Sunday, November 2nd, and Sunday, November 19th.

Our youth group nights take place between 5-7 p.m.

At youth group we play group games, take part in a 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



Stevens Elementary Christmas Baskets—We will once again be providing food, clothing, and gifts for families at Stevens Elementary. The need is perhaps greater than ever and we are primed to help many families in need identified by the school. Details are still being set for this ministry but if you would like to be a part of this decades long meaningful ministry, email our Family Ministries Director, Steven Fisher at steven@stshtx.org



Garden Oaks Christmas Ministry—Another school that we partner with every Christmas time is Garden Oaks Montessori school. Similar to our work with Stevens, the school provides us with families in need and participants in this ministry will buy and wrap gifts for these families. If this is something you would be interested in taking part in, please contact the office to be connected to the leaders of this ministry at info@stshtx.org



November 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
2 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (with Communion) (Sanc)	3	4 Election Day 	5 Senior Games. Wednesdays at 10 a.m. 	6	7	8 Books Between Kids Volunteer Day 
9 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (Sanc)	10 The Gathering Place—10a.m. FH 	11 Messy Church 5:30p.m. (FH) 	12	13 Prayer Shawl group. Thursdays at 10 	14	15 Houston Woodworkers Association. 9-2:00 p.m. (FH) 
16 8:30am - Community Breakfast 9:15am- Family Worship Service (FH) 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am Traditional Worship (Sanc)	17	18 Line Dancing every Tuesday 9:30 a.m (FH) 	19 JMS Thanksgiving Chapel (Sanc) 11 a.m. and Luncheon (FH) 11:30 a.m. 	20 Yoga classes every Thursday 6:15 and 7:15 (201) 	21	22
23 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (Sanc)	24 Houston Philatelic Society Meeting (FH) 7p.m. 	25 Newsletter Article Deadline 	26	27 Happy Thanksgiving 	28 Black Friday 	29 Holiday Artisan Market (West Lot) 9-3 p.m. 
30 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (Sanc)	 ★ Veteran's Day ★ November 11th <i>Psst....</i> Advent is Coming Begins November 30th					



God is in our neighborhood and not just in our building

What's on at St. Stephen's

Great Heights Bible Study—Our Bible Study at Great Heights Brewing Co. will happen twice in the month of November. We'll meet from 5-7 p.m. on the 9th and 23rd.

Open to all. Join us at Great Heights Brewing Co 938 Wakefield.



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.



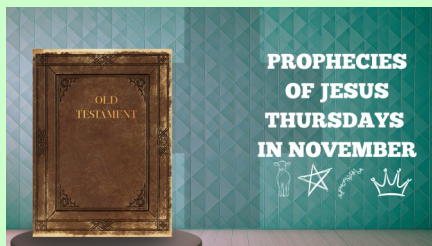
Holiday Artisan Market—For the last decade on Small Business Saturday, St. Stephen's has hosted an Artisan Market benefitting area non-profit The Animal Justice League. This year the market will be on November 29th from 9-3 p.m. in our west parking lot. Shop local and get a head start on your Christmas list as dozens of vendors stop by for the day to display their wares.



St. Stephen's Town Hall Meeting — Our next Town Hall meeting will follow worship on Sunday, November 16th. All are welcome to stick around and hear about the state of the church and our future plans.



Thursday Night Bible Study—We all have plans for how we prepare our homes for Christmas and how to get the gifts under the tree. Take time to prepare yourself spiritually for the arrival of Christ by digging deep into what the Old Testament Prophets have to say about the coming Messiah.



Join Pastor Trey either in person or online for this journey of expectation and joy, Thursdays (excluding Thanksgiving), 11/13 to 12/18, 6:30pm in Room 101.

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 ststhtx.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

November Communion Offering

November's communion offering will benefit the Christmas gift ministry for Garden Oaks Elementary. St. Stephen's has spent many years as a ministry partner of Garden Oaks Elementary and each year, the school identifies students and families who are in need of a little help at Christmas.

If you would like to be a shopper, a gift-wrapper, or a volunteer in any way, please contact the church office and we will get you in touch with the right people. If you would prefer to financially support this ministry, you can do so all this month.

Any offering you mark as communion in November (or any offering left on the Altar rails) will go towards this ministry of St. Stephen's.



Memorial Area Ministries (MAM) Activities coming up in November

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 between 1-4 PM. For more information, check out the MAM webpage at MAMHouston.org or contact Jamie Etherton.

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Worship Attendance

	In Person	Virtual (Registered)	YouTube Views	Facebook Views
Sunday, October 5th	154	13	75	24
Sunday, October 12th	81	6	33	76
Tuesday, October 14th (Messy Church)	65			
Sunday, October 19th (Family Worship)	49			
6 Sunday, October 19th (Traditional Worship)	63	8	18	78
Sunday, October 26th	103	13	49	100
Sunday, November 2nd	108	7	26	86



The stories of scripture transform our own stories

Johnson Memorial School News—November Update

Candice Croker—JMS Director

October was so special (and busy!) at JMS! For our Community Helper unit study, we walked with all five classes to HFD station 13 for a visit. We were very lucky that we were able to depart on time and the fire-fighters were not called away. Everyone had the chance to climb through the firetruck, spray the firehose, tour the inside of the station and learn all about the tools on their truck. Did you know that the captain's helmet is a different color (red) than the rest of the crew (black)? The new coffee maker and the snacks that were donated to the station on behalf of our JMS families were so well-received. The 19yo fire-fighter who showed us around and explained all about his job, his tools and what to do in emergency situations had only been in this role for 4mos! We are very



appreciative for our 15 parent chaperones across the five classes who helped us keep all students safe on this trip.

Blessing of ALL the animals is a great fall tradition at JMS thanks to the help of Steven Fisher, St. Stephen's Family Ministries Director and Pastor Trey. Each student held up their special stuffed animal and a prayer was said over them that also extended to the pets we have at home. **Precinct One's K-9 unit** comes to JMS every year and we learn so much - Quelle (who used to be the fastest dog in the state at 35mph), Jesse, Mara and their friend came to see us and their handlers answered all sorts of questions from our students. We got so lucky to have four out of their nine dogs in attendance. Everyone who was willing also had the opportunity to pet them gently on their back.

All four of these Belgian Malinois female dogs were born in Hungary and trained in Europe. Where do they work (downtown Houston)? She kept the explanation for their duties on the bomb/explosive squad very age-appropriate for the students. Where do they live (with their officer - some sleep next to them and some in a kennel)? What is their favorite snack (ask your child this!). How much do they cost (\$10-15k per dog)?

Vegetables, seeds, flowers, herbs - wow!! So much was planted in each class veggie bed by our students with wonderful parent volunteers last week when the temperatures finally cooled down. The new handprinted pavers also look amazing - kudos to Nicole Felice and Gina Johnston for coordinating the effort and the many

parent volunteers who made it happen with the students during recess (and put their clothing at risk with "real" paint!). Go check it out on the JMS playground!

The month wrapped up with our favorite Halloween tradition - so many adorable and creative costumes were displayed while we paraded around the parking lot for the cheering JMS parents and grandparents. We love having **Wild Bird**

Adventures visit us each year at JMS! Ms. Mary Anne is wonderful at engaging with students of this age by making her session very interactive. During her time with us last Thursday, we learned all about her very different owls that she takes care of because they are no longer able to live in the wild due to injuries:

Using her speaker, Ms. Mary Anne was able to play the sounds of how they interact with one another when communicating at night (since they are nocturnal animals). We also learned about how owls have 14 bones in their neck which is twice as many as humans; this allows them to rotate their neck 3/4 of the way around to help with hunting. She wrapped up by reading a story about an owl named Rocky who was found in New York's Rockefeller tree (true story!).

Questions about JMS? Reach out to the Director, Candice Croker at JMS@stshstx.org





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The Evangel

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Readings

For those of you who like to get a head start on the scriptures our sermon series “Let Us Pray” continues until Advent on November 30th.

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

November 2nd “For All the Saints”
[Ephesians 1:11-23](#)

November 9th: “In God’s Goodness”
[Luke 18:1-8](#)

November 16th: “With Hope”
[Isaiah 65:17-25](#)

November 23rd: “For Forgiveness”
[Luke 23:33-43](#)

Fun Fact

November is the month when your outfit must be ready for all four seasons — sometimes all in the same day. Sweater in the morning, T-shirt at noon, and a coat that could survive the Arctic by evening.

What’s Inside

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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