

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World

The Evangel

August 2026 Edition



ST. STEPHEN'S
united methodist church



We are all, without exception, beloved children of God

A Bro in the Wilderness

I had a truly wild experience on the Blue Ridge Parkway. As part of our annual road trip to the East Coast, I had the brilliant plan of driving as much of the Blue Ridge Parkway as possible. It's an absolute national treasure. I like driving. This sounded perfect. As we drove through Great Smokey Mountain National Park to pick up the start of the Parkway, an issue began to set in – visibility. Cloud had descended on the first 50-60 miles. We drove through what resembled damp pea soup using only the lines on the side of the road as a guide for direction. Pilots would describe this as instrument flying.

As we drove, mired in fog and rain, I rounded a particularly blind corner, and a whole group of what can only be described as “bros” stood just on the side of the road yelling, waving, and trying to flag us down. For maybe the first time in my adult life, I was treating the speed limit as something more than guidelines, so I did not hit the bros. I did think that this is how horror movies start. Lone station wagon stops in the middle of nowhere, in the rain, because some strangers flagged them down felt to me like the start of something that would later get a movie entitled, “The Blue Ridge Incident” or “Highway to Death.” I pushed these thoughts out of mind, stopped, and rolled my window.

Turns out, the bros were worried about one of their bros, who because of the unexpected cold and wet, was showing signs of hypothermia. They didn't have any cell signal to call for help, so they stopped us. We didn't have signal either, and as my family could never be accused of packing light, we had exactly one Griswald family worth of stuff in the station wagon. We couldn't call. We couldn't carry him. We made a promise to try and find help and kept driving.

What felt like an hour later, but what upon later investigation turned out to only be 12 miles, we came upon a miraculous hotel with a restaurant, stopped, and told the front desk about the stranded, hypothermic bro. They sprang into action. The front desk lady told the manager. The manager called the police. The police called mountain rescue. I'm familiar with this series of events because I kept getting called out of the restaurant to talk to each new character as they entered the scene.

I don't actually know how this story ends. After my conversation with mountain rescue, I finally got to finish my crab cakes, which were being served at the top of a mountain in Tennessee, loaded the Comstock-Foster crew back into our Griswald-mobile, and ventured onward through the pea soup.

I've been thinking about it ever since. Nobody knew each other in this situation. I thought the bros could be slasher movie villains. Yet, the bros risked their lives to try and flag down help in the fog. The front desk lady, manager, cop, and mountain rescue immediately jumped into rescue mode for an underprepared stranger. I seemed to be the only person in this scenario with any kind of hesitation, everyone else just wanted to help the hypothermic bro, whether that bro was their bro or just some random bro stuck somewhere up a mountain in need of help.

What played out is a superpower that the Holy Spirit gives us. To be created in the image of God, in part, means that we can come together in remarkable ways purely for the sake of our fellow humans. We can shift into a mode where we can care and do whatever it takes even for a freezing, 20-something tourist.

As we get fully going again for another back to school season, as we get back to the business of Messy Church, Family Worship, and Bible Study, I will be celebrating our long tradition of blessing the people who come through our doors, and thinking about how we can care even more for our own community, where we've been planted for over 75 years.

Vaya con Dios,
Pastor Trey



Cover photo: Images of Summer 2026



The church does not belong to us

Youth and Family News

August Messy Church — Messy Church has returned from its short July break, and we're kicking off the fall season with a Back to School-themed night. The Bible has a lot to say about learning and the importance of children, and you'll have a chance to take part in eight craft and activity stations to learn all about it.

We'll also have dinner for the whole family included, too - all free of charge. Join us August 11th from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. in our Fellowship Hall.



Family Worship Service—Our August Family Worship service will happen on Sunday, August 16th. We'll start with a community breakfast at 8:30 a.m. and the service itself begins at 9:15 a.m.

What is Family Worship? Well, the service features contemporary music from a live band (the Early Byrds) and two craft stations for children. We also celebrate communion each time too. During the sermon, children have the option of staying in the room or going down the hall for an additional craft and children's lesson on that week's scripture. There's space to move, dance, and wiggle. Kids are encouraged to be themselves in a non-judgmental environment.



Blessing of the Backpacks—We'll be blessing backpacks, work bags, water bottles, and more during our annual Blessing of the Backpack services on Sunday, August 16th. The blessing will take place during Family Worship at 9:15 a.m. and Traditional Worship at 10:30 a.m. We'll say a prayer over all of our folks involved in education and the school year ahead.



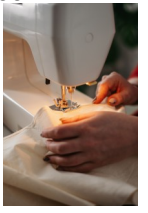
No registration is required and all participants will take home this year's backpack tag design. Open to all students, educators, support staff, and administrators.

UMYF—Our youth group (UMYF) has already met twice in the month of August but there is still time to get involved this month. Join us at St. Stephen's on Sunday, August 16th from 5-7 p.m. for our youth group for 6th—12th graders. Each youth group meeting includes big group games, a Bible study, and dinner for everyone involved all at no charge. You do not have to be a member of St. Stephen's or any church to attend our youth group.

Earlier this month we held our annual back to school bash at Activate Katy—an indoor interactive game room center. Our group was ten strong and we navigated all kinds of challenging cooperative and competitive games.



August 2026 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						8
9 10:30am- Traditional Worship (with Communion) (Sanc)	10 The Gathering Place—10 a.m. (FH) 	11 Messy Church 5:30-7 p.m. (FH) 	12 Bible study every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. (Room 101) 	13 National Left Handers Day 	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— Tuesdays 9:30 a.m. (FH) 	19 Senior Games— Wednesdays 9:30 a.m. 	20 Prayer Shawl Ministry. —Thursdays 10 am. Room 112 	21	22 Community Shredding Day 
23 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (Sanc)	24 Houston Philatelic Society Meeting 7 p.m. (FH) 	25 New to Special Ed— 6:30 p.m. (FH) 	26 Newsletter Article Deadline 	27	28 Parents Night Out 6-9 p.m. (FH) 	29 Sewing Circle 10 a.m.— noon 
30 9:15am- Sunday School 10:30am- Traditional Worship (Sanc)	31					
						20 26



God is in our neighborhood and not just in our building

What's On at St. Stephen's

Shredding Day—The community is invited to come to St. Stephen's UMC on Saturday, August 15th for a shredding day. The hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to noon.



Do you have documents that you no longer need but shouldn't throw out or recycle? Then shredding is for you. We'll have an industrial-sized shredder ready to help you declutter. There is no registration required but there may be lines so we recommend arriving early.

Thank you to our sponsors Capp Electric and Pat H. Foley & Company.

Parents' Night Out— Parents Night Out returns on Friday, August 28th at 6 p.m.

Children 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). While at St. Stephen's, your child (ren) will enjoy dinner, snacks, games, crafts, a movie, and more.



Be sure to send your children with something comfortable to lay on.

The cost is \$35 for your first child and \$15 per sibling. Registration can be found at stshtx.org/events.

Community Conversations—Our community conversations series is back and begins with a timely talk for parents and guardians who are navigating special education.



Join us on Tuesday, August 25th at 6 p.m. in the St. Stephen's Fellowship Hall for a talk led by special education teachers, and speech therapists aimed at informing you of what to expect, your options, and rights in Texas public schools.

There is no fee to attend and no registration required.

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
Bible Study—Thurs., 6:30pm
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)
Great Heights Bible Study—2nd and 4th Sundays at 5 p.m. at Great Heights Brewing Co
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)

Debra Akin, John & Dorothy Artz, Betty Beyer, Peggy Bickel, Tommy Bickel, Gloria Collins, 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, Carol Luce, Renita Majors, Marsha Massey, Michelle Maurizi, Audrey Mayfield and family, Clint McCray, Ben Newton, Nancy Piercefield, Gladys Reeve, 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

August Communion Offering

August's communion offering will go towards Memorial Assistance Ministries' (MAM) Back to School program.

This program helps parents to shop for new school uniforms for their children ensure they are confident and ready for the new school year. MAM provides gift cards for families to buy these necessary supplies. Providing gift cards allows children to see their parents as the provider as opposed to simply handing out clothing.



If you can support MAM this month, you can do so by marking any offering as "Communion" or leaving any gift on the altar rails on Sunday mornings

St. Stephen's Serves at the Houston Food Bank— A group of fifteen represented St. Stephen's in doing some good in our city. A big thank you to the families and individuals who showed up to the Houston Food Bank on Saturday, July 25th at our latest iteration of St. Stephen's Serves.

Thank you to Chris Barcus for being our point man on communication for this ministry opportunity and for volunteering at the Food Bank on a regular basis already



Worship Attendance

	In Person	Virtual (Registered)	YouTube Views	Facebook Views
Sunday, July 5th	96	9	60	N/A
6 Sunday, July 12th	104	5	57	N/A
Sunday, July 19th	87	2	67	61
Sunday, July 26th	90	8	57	49



The stories of scripture transform our own stories

More of What's On at St. Stephen's

JMS Update and New Fellowship Hall Faucets—The JMS article will be back next month ahead of JMS returning on September 10th but the staff at the school has been busy this summer. The JMS board approved repairs to the toy storage shed outside on the playground and installed new chalkboard flowers for the students to use.

Joyfully, the school is both fully staffed with amazing teachers and fully enrolled with eager students.

JMS also contributed towards the cost of new faucets in the Fellowship Hall bathrooms. The previous faucets were automatic but would occasionally need their batteries replaced which would cause costly and frustrating delays. The new faucets are mechanical and stay on temporarily once pushed in solving the two problems of dead batteries and children leaving the water running. Thanks to JMS for their continued support.

Great Heights Bible Study—Our second and fourth Sunday of the month Bible Study is back at Great Heights Brewing Co. from 5-7 p.m. Join Pastor Trey, some church members, and friends from our community as we go in depth on that morning's scripture and talk a little bit about life too.

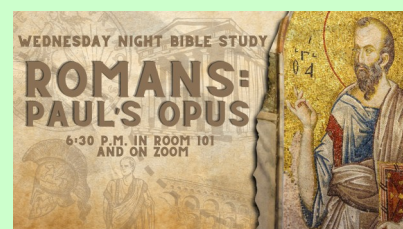
Interns—You may have noticed some new content on our social media platforms. Thanks to our two social media interns Adielle Cano and Phoenix Cave, St. Stephen's is venturing into new frontiers with our digital footprints. Phoenix will be returning back to the University of Arkansas but we're pleased to announce that she will be continuing some of her work remotely. Adielle (Adi) attends the University of Houston and is our communications intern for the rest of the fall so if you see her around the campus, be sure to say hi.

We appreciate the work that our interns do and we were happy to celebrate them both on national intern day, Thursday, July 30th.

St. Stephen's on TikTok—You can now follow us on tiktok. Search "stshtx"

Wednesday Night Bible Study—Thursday Night Bible study has a new night—Wednesday! Even though the weekday has changed, the study itself will follow a similar format to the previous Pastor led studies. Starting on Wednesday, August 12th at 6:30 p.m. (and then at the same time on subsequent Wednesdays) we'll be studying "Romans: Paul's Opus" Each week we'll aim to cover two of the chapters in the book of Paul's letter to the church in Rome.

This study will also be available weekly on ZOOM. Check out our social media pages @stshtx for ZOOM links every Wednesday afternoon.



Loom Band Ministry

Congratulations to Madelyn Finnegan (L) and Rachel Fisher (R) for hitting their Loom Band Ministry goal.

Both girls enjoy making loom band bracelets and an idea was created in which they could sell the bands for a small amount and give all of the proceeds back to the church.

The girls set a lofty goal of \$100 and we are pleased to announce that not only did they meet their goal, but they beat their goal by some distance and they are still going. Oh, and they did it in less than a month.

Great job on the new ministry Madelyn and Rachel





ST. STEPHEN'S
united methodist church

The Evangelist

2003 W. 43rd St.
Houston, TX 77018
(713) 686-8241
stshtx.org



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Readings

August bridges two different sermon series. At the beginning of the month we are rounding out our series called "The Unnoticed God". A new series called "The Good In Us" will start on Sunday, August 16th. You can get a head start on the scripture readings with the references below:

8/2/26 — "The Unnoticed Good"
[Matthew 14:13-21](#)

8/9/26 — "The Unnoticed Path"
[Genesis 37:1-4; 12-28](#)

8/16/26 - "Not What We Consume"
[Matthew 15:\(10-20\), 21-28](#)

8/23/26— "What God Has Given Us"
[Romans 12:1-8](#)

8/30/26— "Where We Choose to Stand"
[Romans 12:9-21](#)

August Fun Fact

The first ever sandwich was ordered by John Montagu (the 4th Earl of Sandwich) on August 6th, 1762. He wanted to eat his salted beef and asked for it to be placed between two pieces of toasted bread so he didn't get grease on his cards while he gambled.

What's Inside

Page 2: From the Senior Pastor
Page 3: Youth and Family News
Page 4: August Calendar Highlights
Page 5: What's on at St. Stephen's
Page 6: Worship information and prayer requests
Page 7: More of what's on at St. Stephen's
Page 8: Readings, Fun Facts, your name and address.

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