

The Sounds of St. Stephen's

St. Stephen's United Church of Christ

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February 2021

From the PASTOR'S DESK...

Again and again. This year's Lenten theme invites us to consider the cycle of our spiritual journey and themes such as wilderness travels, mountaintop visions, divine promises and renewal; and how these themes visit us over and over in our daily living.

In just a few weeks, we will have been on this pandemic journey for a full year. It is hard to believe. Yet I, for one, have said more than once that it feels like we are in a spinning hamster wheel of sorts where the days blend together and days and weeks seem to repeat.

Similar to the themes of Lent, our daily and weekly living follows a cycle of growth, loss, renewal, blessings, sorrows and resets. Some of these are big, like the changes of relationships or the loss of loved ones; some of them are small—like our personal struggles in daily living or running out of milk when you need it the most.

As we enter into this holy season yet again, we as a people of faith are invited to take a daily personal inventory of the status of our faith amid the experiences of life and daily living. We journey together, and individually, and are accompanied on our way by the teachings of Christ and the hope of the Easter cross.

This year our Lenten journey begins virtually and, hopefully, will end with the opportunity to celebrate the resurrection in worship together. However, the circumstances of the pandemic and other factors will have to be taken into play when that time comes.

Until then, I pray this Lenten journey is a meaningful one for you personally, and for us together. May we be open for reflection, inspiration, renewal, surprise, and God's blessings!

See you on the journey,

Pastor Jeff

WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS at ST. STEPHEN'S



LENT 2021:

In Lent, we're reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again. Again and again, the story of Jesus on the cross repeats—every time lives are taken unjustly, every time the powerful choose corruption and violence, every time individuals forget how to love. With exacerbation we exclaim, “Again?! How long, O God?” And yet, in the midst of the motion blur chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: “I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair.” Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.

This theme provides a clear invitation in a time when much is unclear. Even if worshipping apart, we come to God again and again with our prayers, our dreams, our hopes, and our doubts. Even if from a distance, we will continue to be community to one another—especially when it's hard—by choosing each other over and over again. We will continue to love God with the same persistence God chooses and claims us. Our sub-theme, *A Lenten Refrain*, speaks to the ways God can make music of our lives. “Refrain” also reminds us that Lent is a season of abstaining from certain practices in order to take on new rhythms and habits.

In this season, we need rituals—both old and new—to remember and be transformed. Embodied practice builds muscle memory. Repetition helps retrain our neural pathways. We need the 46 days of Lent because this season shapes us into more faithful disciples. Join us this Lent as again and again, we bring all of who we are to God and trust that God will meet us, time and again, along the way.

Lenten Calendar Daily Devotional---Digital

A Digital Calendar for Daily Devotion in the style of an Advent Calendar. Each day a new reflection unlocks for daily devotion through this holy season. Compiled by the Rev. Stephanie Anne Thompson from source material by Sarah Are and Sanctified Art, this calendar creates a meaningful and faith-driven tool for spiritual development in these days. Watch for more information via the weekly emails and Facebook.



Midweek Visio Divina Study

Join us each week as we are drawn into two works of art amid prayer and scripture and seek to grow in our faith as the Spirit speaks to us Again and Again.

We will gather via ZOOM. Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

	WEEK	ARTISITIC WORKS
Lent 1: 2/24	I Delight in You	In Our Hands
Lent 2: 3/3	Transfiguration	Sleep Unborn
Lent 3: 3/10	Overturn	The Cross Remains
Lent 4: 3/17	Light Wave	Prevenient
Lent 5: 3/24	Drawn to Love	Written on Our Hearts

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Ash Wednesday, February 17 at 7 pm

We're Invited In. (Join with Ottsville)

A Virtual Service of Communion and Confession

Lent 1: Sunday, February 21

God Meets Us Mk 1: 9-15, Genesis 9:8-17

Bowed and Rainbowed: Journeys of Faith

Lent 2: Sunday, February 28

We Are Called To Listen Mk 8:31-9:8, Psalm 22: 22-31

Divine Vision: The View from the Mountaintop

Lent 3: Sunday, March 7

We Are Shown the Way John 2: 13-22, I Corinthians 1: 18-25

Casting Down and Building Blocks

Lent 4: Sunday, March 14

God Loves First John 3: 14-21, Ephesians 2: 1-10

Lifted in Love

Lent 5: Sunday, March 21

We Are Reformed John 12: 20-33, Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Prophetic Redemption

HOLY WEEK 2021

Palm Sunday: March 28

We Draw On Courage: *John 12: 1-19*

Maundy Thursday: April 1

We Are Held Together *John 13: 1-17, 31b-35*

Good Friday: April 2

We Find Ourselves Here *John 19:1-30*

Easter Sunday: April 3

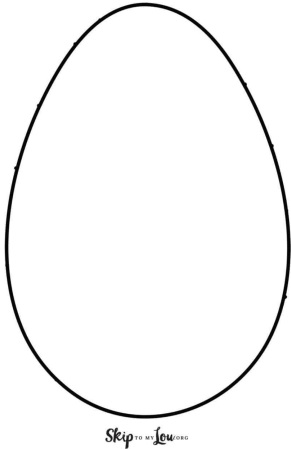
The Sun Rises *Mark 16: 1-8*

One Great Hour of Sharing . . .

St. Stephen's will take a special collection during the worship service on March 14th for One Great Hour of Sharing. The funds are used to provide education to girls and boys worldwide, empowering communities through vocational training, providing people with the skills to support themselves and their neighbors. With our help lives are changed and Sharing Brings Joy to US, to others and to God. Mark your check and/or envelope for One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). Please be generous in your giving.

LENTEN MISSION: Pennridge FISH needs Freezer Space!

FISH receives many donations requiring freezer space and does not have enough space to store, organize and distribute efficiently. Unfortunately, this means that the donations aren't always going where they are most needed - or donations have to be moved around multiple times through the many small freezers. The estimated cost of acquiring a large walk-in commercial freezer is around \$28,000. Our Lenten Mission Project is to collect donations towards the FISH Freezer throughout the six weeks of Lent (from February 17th to April 4th). Please clearly mark any donations FISH freezer. Your generosity may help to provide safe healthy food to families in need.



AN EGG-SPRESSIVE Lent and Easter!

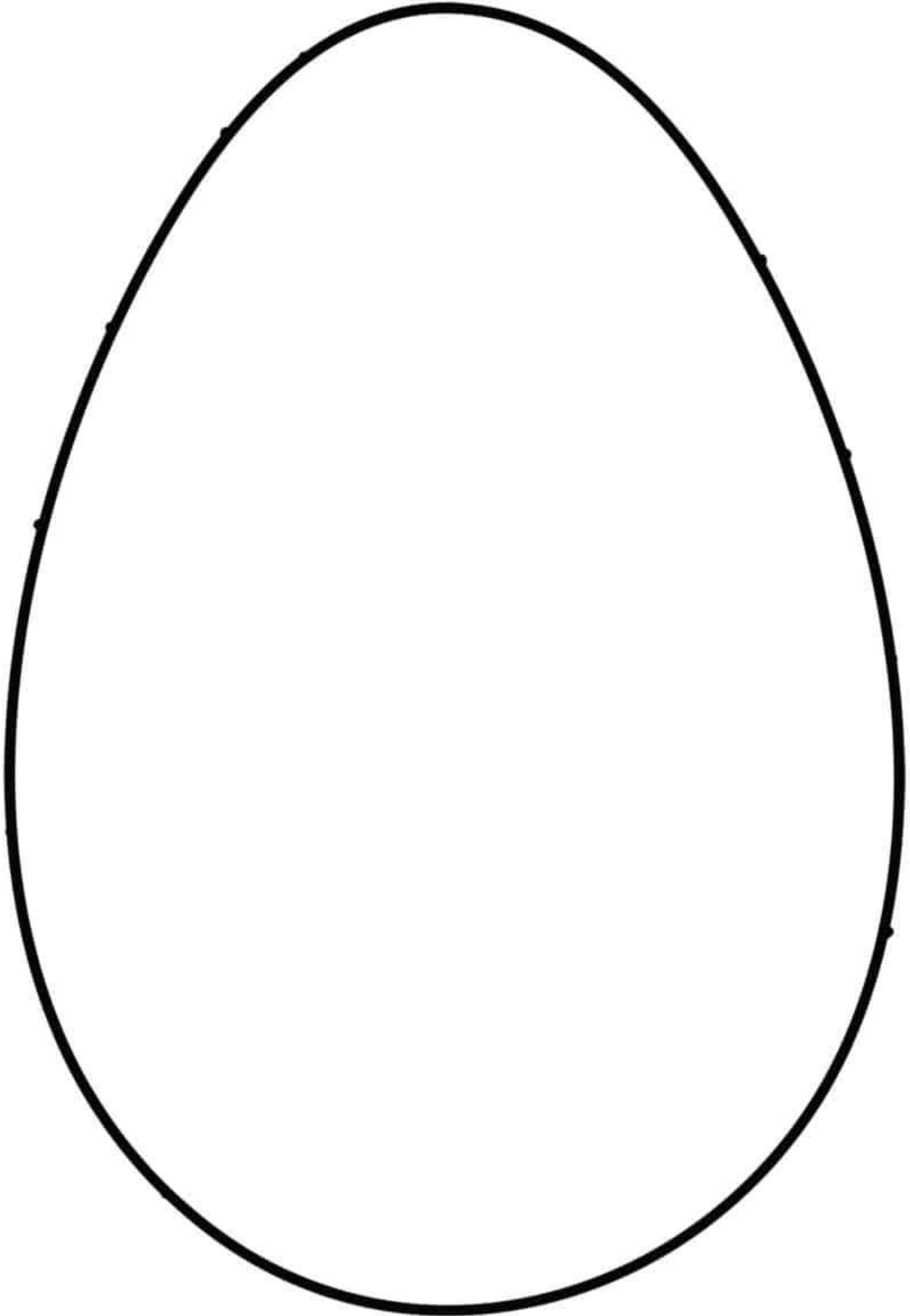
A year or so back, we invited you to join us on a journey with FLAT JESUS by taking him on your daily living and summer travels and taking pictures with him.

In a similar vein, this Lent/Easter, we are inviting you to create an Egg of your own design and then take it on the journey with you. Dress it up, give it a name, take pictures of it on its journey, and then send them to Pastor Jeff.

Be creative. Give your egg personality. Why not make it a person even? Just a little something to bring a smile.

All are welcome to participate!

(EGG PATTERN can be found on the next page, or cut a large one out of cardboard if you wish).



Our Church Family

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

02/12 Fred Schaffner Jr
02/15 Wendy Bosco
02/16 Eric Nogami, Brooke Alexander
02/19 Aidan Wimmer
02/21 Jordan Rimmer
02/22 Brenda Hibbs
02/23 Krista Bodkin
02/24 Lisa Hager
02/25 Ruth Dietrich, Dawn Hager
02/26 Jeffrey Strohm
02/27 James Klotz, Christopher Erdman
02/28 Kevin Argue

***Happy Birthday and
God's Blessings***

February 2021

February 2021							March 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	8	9	10	11	12	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
28							21	22	23	24	25	26	27
							28	29	30	31			

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Jan 31	Feb 1	2 7:00pm Christian Ed. Zoom Meeting	3	4	5	6
7 9:30am Facebook Cyber Worship	8	9 7:00pm Stewardship ZOOM Meeting	10	11	12	13
14 9:30am Facebook Cyber Worship	15 Presidents' Day	16 7:00pm Consistory ZOOM Meeting	17 7:00pm Ash Wednesday - A Virtual Service of Communion and Confession	18	19	20
21 9:30am Facebook Cyber Worship	22	23	24 6:30pm Lent 1 via Zoom	25 7:00pm Facilities ZOOM Meeting	26	27
28 9:30am Facebook Cyber Worship	Mar 1	2	3	4	5	6

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Return Service Requested

Time Sensitive Materials

Mailed:

Please visit our [website](http://www.thessperkasie.org) at **www.thessperkasie.org**
for the latest information from St. Stephen's UCC.

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