



September 30, 2026

Dear St. Stephen Family,

What is abundance? What do you picture when you hear that word? Maybe your mind races to something like an "abundant harvest." It's an apt metaphor. When we experience abundance, we do so instinctively. No one needs to explain the feeling of plenty or overflowing fullness — we just know it when it happens.

The abundant harvest also comes from some place. It has a source: farmers toil all season long to ensure a plentiful harvest. For Christians, our abundant life also has a source: our close relationship with God. From the very beginning of creation it has been God's desire for us to live an abundant life. And from our founding as a church community almost 60 years ago, we have labored together to provide an abundant life for members of this faith family and all the people in our broader community.

We can do this work together because of the collective personal commitments we make during each autumn's stewardship season. The goal for this year's stewardship campaign is \$1,100,000 — a very modest 2.3% increase over last year's goal. Will you join us in helping to ensure an abundant harvest at St. Stephen in this season and for many seasons to come?

God continues to graciously provide an abundant church life here at St. Stephen as we welcome new people and families every Sunday. Through much prayer and discernment, and thanks to your continued gifts, we recently announced a new role for our Associate Pastor, Jesse. His new role as Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Engagement will complement all of the love and resources we are pouring into the areas where we are seeing the most creative energy and need, like:

- A third straight year of at-capacity Vacation Bible School with more than 100 children most of whose families are not affiliated with St. Stephen
- Increasing numbers of guests and members with more than 170 invited to Brunch with the Pastors since February 2024
- New and growing small groups like Foundations for young adults and Faith & Practice for newcomers
- More than two years of Common Table — evangelism that reaches beyond our four walls and has now touched the lives of over 200 people as we begin to see the Spirit moving members of that community toward kingdom leadership

If you've given before, we hope you'll renew your annual commitment. If you're new or have not made an annual commitment or pledge before, we welcome your faithful giving. As part of a financial commitment, we also encourage you to make additional commitments in your daily prayer life and in the life of this church: praying daily for your

fellow church members, regularly attending worship, or committing to serve in some area like our kids ministry, youth ministry, or missions. You will find these new commitments on this year's commitment card, which is included in this mailing. **On Sunday, October 25, we invite you to bring your completed commitment card to either the traditional or the modern worship service and participate in an act of commitment and offering during worship.** More details will be available soon. Of course, **we also encourage you to make your commitment online as soon as you are able.** Please see the web address and QR code at the bottom of this letter.

The rich soil of our ministry has been deeply nourished by your past giving. We have already begun gathering a bountiful yield resulting from your faithful commitments. More people are seeking the nourishment this church provides — families and children waiting to be welcomed, many unchurched and faith-seeking neighbors searching for the Bread of Life, and many committed disciples just like you eager to be equipped in our shared ministry of service and worship. With your help and God's clear direction, St. Stephen will continue being a living vineyard where the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus Christ directly nourish the lives of people on our campus, in our neighborhood, and in Charlotte and beyond.

In Christ,



Rev. Ken Curtis
Senior Pastor

Fred Thompson
Chair, Stewardship Team

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR COMMITMENT FOR 2027:

Included with this letter, you will find a Commitment Card. Take a few moments over these next several days to prayerfully consider how you might continue or increase your commitment in 2027.

There are **three easy ways** to submit your confidential Commitment Card:

1. **At the church:** Bring your completed Commitment Card to either traditional or modern worship **on Sunday, October 25** as we all participate in an act of offering and commitment during worship.
2. **By mail:** to St. Stephen United Methodist Church, 6800 Sardis Rd., Charlotte, NC 28270. Please remember to include your full name and address on the card, as well as your return address and stamp on the envelope!
3. **Online (*Highly Encouraged*):** If making a financial commitment, submit your pledge online by scanning the QR code or visiting **ststephenumc.net/commitment**



Have questions about this year's stewardship campaign? Check out our frequently asked questions at ststephenumc.net/commitment