



September 30, 2025

Dear St. Stephen family members,

Autumn comes each year with similar sights and sounds. The days begin to grow shorter. The moon seems to loom larger in the sky. The rustling of falling leaves becomes a daily soundtrack. These are all sure signs of a changing season, reminding us that nothing in life ever stays static. The world is always changing. We are always being transformed. This is the third year we've chosen "Investing for Life" as our theme for stewardship season. Twice now, we've written and asked you to make an investment in both your personal spiritual life and your collective life here as a part of the community of St. Stephen. You, and many others, have done just that, and your investments have made a real difference. Thank you. Together, we have planted the seeds and we've grown the first fruits.

Like the cyclical nature of our changing seasons, we're writing to you again, asking you to join us as we plant and sow anew. This year's stewardship goal is \$1,075,000, only a 3.37% increase over last year's goal. Will you join us as we strive boldly for a greater harvest this season? 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.

Your continued support will build upon all the ways we've collectively invested in the life of this faith community over the past three years. God has graciously supported St. Stephen through continued and sustained growth. Our worship services continue to see growth. New families continue to find a home here. Each Sunday, we welcome new guests who take essential next steps in their faith journeys.

With God's continued blessings and your investments in our church life, we have continued to pour love and resources into the areas where we are seeing the most creative energy and need, like:

- Another year of at-capacity Vacation Bible School, with more than 100 children most of whose families are not affiliated with St. Stephen
- Increased engagement opportunities to reach those families, like our joint fall festival with the preschool and our Disney family movie nights (our most recent attracted more people than ever — some 50 or more children and parents!)
- Sustained adult discipleship programs, small groups, and mission opportunities, like this fall's smorgasbord of more than a dozen individual offerings
- More than a solid year and a half of Common Table — evangelism that reaches beyond our four walls and has now touched the lives of over 150 people

These seeds, and many more, were planted with your past giving. We've had the benefit of enjoying some of the fruits of this labor, like our associate pastor Jesse's recent transition from half-time to full-time. But we still have more to harvest — more individuals, families, and children to reach, more unchurched and church-curious folks to encourage, more disciples like you to equip.

The investments we've made year over year are bearing good fruit — a testament to your own commitment and belief in this special place. It is our hope that you will be inspired to join us in this season of harvest again, as we prepare to enter 2026 for more planting, more sowing, more growing toward Christ and his kingdom "on earth as it is in heaven." With your help and God's direction, St. Stephen will continue to be a church where the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus Christ are felt directly in the lives of people on our campus, in our neighborhood, throughout the city of Charlotte, and beyond.

In Christ,



Rev. Ken Curtis
Senior Pastor

Susi Robinson
Chair, Investing for Life - Stewardship Team

How to submit your estimate of giving for 2026:

Included with this letter, you will find an Annual Estimate of Giving card. Take a few moments over these next several days to prayerfully consider how you might continue or increase your giving in 2026.

There are **three easy ways** to submit your confidential Annual Estimate of Giving card:

1. **At the church:** Drop the giving card in the offering plate during worship or at the office anytime during regular church hours now and through Oct. 26.
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 the return address on the envelope, and a stamp!
3. **Online (*Highly Encouraged*):** Submit your pledge online by scanning the QR code or visit **ststephenmc.net/invest**



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

Your commitment can be returned confidentially any time before Oct. 26.
