



# THE DEACON'S SPIRIT

DATE: DECEMBER 2022  
Volume 214 • Issue 214

The newsletter of St. Stephen Lutheran Church



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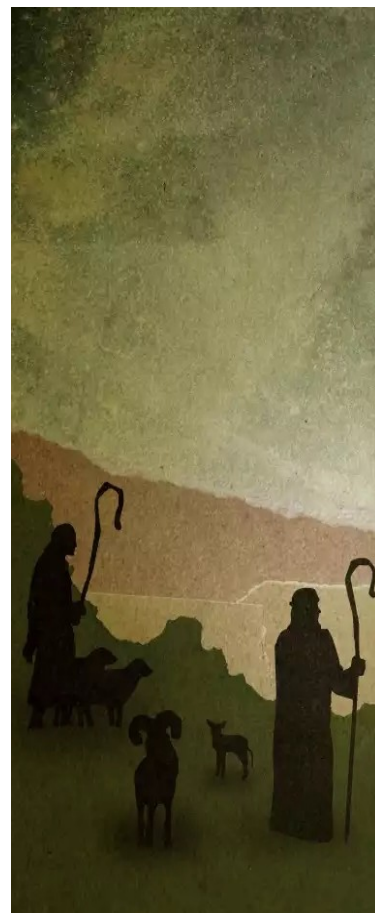
**Office Hours:**  
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays  
from 8am—3pm

**Office Closed:**  
Friday, December 23rd and  
Monday, December 26th for  
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

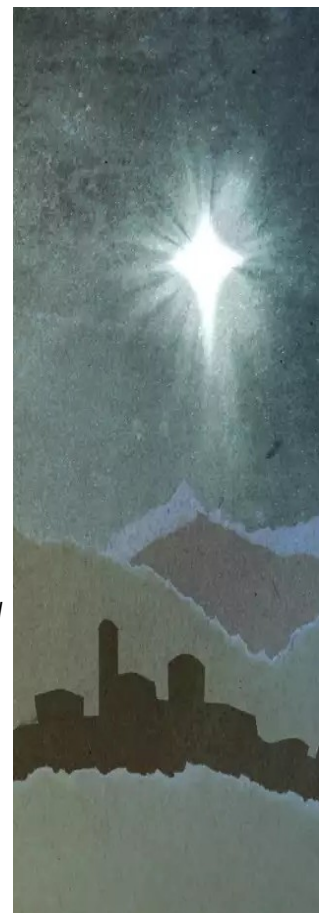
**Deadlines:**  
Bulletin: Wednesday by 8:00 a.m.  
Newsletter: 3rd Thursday of the month.

**Facebook:**  
Join us to watch a livestream service  
every Sunday at 9am at  
<https://www.facebook.com/wausausslc>

**Worship Telecast:**  
Our Worship Services are telecast on  
cable channel 980 on Sundays at 12pm  
(this is the previous Sundays' service),  
Mondays at 3pm, and Tuesdays at  
10am and 10:30pm.



*Now there were  
in the same country  
shepherds living  
out in the fields,  
keeping watch over  
their flock by night.  
And behold,  
an angel of the Lord  
stood before them,  
and the glory of the Lord  
shone around them, and  
they were greatly afraid.  
Then the angel  
said to them,  
“Do not be afraid,  
for behold, I bring you  
good tidings of great joy  
which will be to all people.  
For there is born to you  
this day in the city of David  
a Savior, who  
is Christ the Lord.  
And this will be  
the sign to you:  
You will find a Babe  
wrapped in  
swaddling cloths,  
lying in a manger.”  
**Luke 2:8-12***



Pastor Karoline Schwantes/Phone: 715-370-5514/Email: prkaroline@sslwausau.com

*<sup>42</sup>Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." Matthew 24:42*

Christmas is coming! The day we celebrate Jesus's birth, Christ's coming, the arrival of Emmanuel, God with us!

Then why are our Advent readings full of messages telling us that we don't know when? We know. It's on the calendar. It's in this newsletter.



Christmas comes December 25th, this year with Sunday worship at 9:00 am. We will worship and celebrate Christ's birth on Christmas Eve, December 24th at 4:00 pm. This is of course following 4 Sundays of Advent preparation. We've been getting ready for weeks. And for the more organized of us, months already! The Combined Choir and the Bell Choir have been practicing music, getting ready for the Choral Service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent. Christmas trees will be put up and decorated, feasts prepared, presents bought and made and wrapped, cards written (perhaps at the crafting day on Saturday, December 3?). December is all about getting ready!

Why do the Advent readings always feel so heavy? In Advent we hold space for this time of waiting, of anticipation. As Lutheran Christians, we live in a world of both/and, of now AND not yet. We proclaim the risen Christ, the presence of our Lord as "was, is, and yet to come." Our Choral Service in December will deeply explore this rich theme of waiting in exile, of living in a time when it feels like the promises of God are far away. Some of us are not ready for Christmas, a time when grief might feel more oppressive than at other times. Some anticipate the first (or fortieth) hard Christmas without their loved one present. Some of us may be struggling with all of the extra expenses this time of year. Some of us may be just hoping for things to finally, maybe seem like they are getting back to normal. Others of us may be anticipating baby's first Christmas, a renewal of old traditions, and experiencing their favorite time of year.

No matter where the timing of Christmas finds you this year, remember God's promise for you! Christ is coming! God with Us is here! Hope is real!

*Pastor Karoline*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

St. Stephen Calendar of Events					December 2022	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 9:00 Stephen's Angels 1:00 Saturday "Crafternoon"  FLEECE BLANKET DEADLINE
<b>4 Blessing of the Blankets</b> 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 7:00 AA	<b>5</b> 10:00 Staff Mtg. 3:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball	<b>6</b> 10:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 4:30 Executive Committee Mtg. 10:30 Worship Tele. Ch. 980	<b>7</b> 6:30 Combined Choir	<b>8</b> 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11 Choral Service @ SSLC</b> 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 7:00 AA	<b>12</b> 3:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball	<b>13</b> 10:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 5:30 Council Mtg. 10:30 Worship Tele. Ch. 980	<b>14</b> 11:30 Women's Bible Study Lunch at 2510 1:00 Women's Bible Study 6:30 Combined Choir	<b>15</b> 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon 6:00 Special Olympics  NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18 Choral Service @ Pilgrim</b> 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 7:00 AA	<b>19</b> 3:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 5:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Property Comm. Mtg. 7:00 Dartball	<b>20</b> 10:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 10:30 Worship Tele. Ch. 980	<b>21</b> 6:30 Combined Choir	<b>22</b> 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	<b>23</b> WAUSAU SCHOOL DISTRICT WINTER BREAK BEGINS OFFICE CLOSED	<b>24 Christmas Eve</b> 4:00 Worship
<b>25 Christmas Day</b> 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 7:00 AA	<b>26</b> 3:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980  OFFICE CLOSED	<b>27</b> 10:00 Worship Tele. Ch. 980 10:30 Worship Tele. Ch. 980	<b>28</b> 6:30 Combined Choir	<b>29</b> 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	<b>30</b>	<b>31 New Year's Eve</b>



# ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS



## Birthday Blessings

The following people are celebrating December Birthdays.

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!**

### December 2nd

Sharon Lohrey

### December 6th

Cathy Bandock

Grace Luetschwager

### December 9th

Briana Gutowski

Paul Oestreich

### December 10th

Thomas Harry

John Teske

Herb Yolitz

### December 11th

Dimitri den Otter

### December 13th

Josslyn Phillips

### December 17th

Michael Meuret

### December 18th

Isaac Fischer

Troy Sekaney

### December 20th

Allen Brouchous

Dan Peters

### December 24th

Shirley Kasten

Rachel Kromrei

### December 26th

Heather Matter

### December 30th

Cheryl Lonsdorf

### December 31st

Mike Korpela



*Advent Choral Service*  
*Sunday, December 14th at 9am*



## Anniversaries

The following couples are celebrating their December Wedding Anniversaries.

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!**

### December 3rd

William & Sandra Moss

### December 7th

Joe & Heather Matter



*Christmas Eve Service*  
*Saturday, December 24th*  
*at 4pm*



*Be Still*  
and know that I  
am God.  
Psalm 46:10



*Christmas Day Service*  
*Sunday, December 25th at 9am*

## Choral Service

On Sunday, December 11th, the Combined Choirs of Pilgrim and St. Stephen, as well as the Bell Choir, will be leading us in a musical Advent Worship Service. Join us at 9am as we anticipate Christ's coming through a special Choral Service. Cookies and treats will follow. This will be televised and livestreamed on Facebook.

## Coats for Kids

The Coats for Kids Drive has started at St. Stephen. If you have any gently worn coats or other winter apparel such as: hats, mittens, snow pants, scarves, etc. that you do not need, please consider donating them to the Coats for Kids Drive. All sizes of clothing are needed. Bring your winter apparel to church and place your donations on the designated table in the chapel. Committee members will transport items to Coats for Kids collection centers. This drive will continue through the first week of December. Thank you for your consideration.

## Council Members Needed

As we enter a new chapter in our church's history, please prayerfully consider becoming a part of our family's leadership team. The 2023 Council is looking for candidates for the following positions: Vice President/President Elect, Secretary, Good Stewards Elder, Property Elder, Members-at-large, and 2 Trust Fund Committee members.

## December Memorials

If you would like a memorial in the December 25th bulletin, it needs to be to the church office by 8am on Monday, December 12th. Thank you! Poinsettia memorials will be in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

## Office Closed

The office will be closed starting Friday, December 16th until Wednesday, January 4th as Nancy Henke will be on vacation. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time, please call Pastor Karoline Schwantes at 715-370-5514.

## Saturday "Crafternoon"

Join Pastor Karoline for an afternoon of crafting on Saturday, December 3rd from 1pm to 5pm. Bring whatever craft you're working on, whether it's card making, scrapbooking, crocheting, knitting, or even addressing your Christmas cards! We'll meet in the Conference Room.

## Women's Bible Study

On Wednesday, December 14th, the Women's Bible Study group will meet at 2510 Restaurant at 11:30 am for a Christmas celebration. Each person will order off of the menu, and pay their own way. If you wish to attend, please let Jane Seubert know so she can make reservations. Following lunch, we will have at Bible Study at church in the Conference Room. Any women in the congregation who would like to attend are WELCOME!

## Benevolence

Through your support of St. Stephen in the month of October 2022, we were able to contribute to the following ministry:

ELCA National & Synod Support \$580

This is the ninth month of our unified budget in which we now give four and one half percent (4.5%) of our current expense receipts and loose plate offerings for benevolence. The above amount is based on the income of \$12,894 for October.

## St. Stephen Family Checkbook

For the month of October 2022 and the year to date, the St. Stephen family checkbook looked like this:

### October 1—31, 2022

What we received.....	\$18,027.
What we spent.....	(\$23,305.)
Our balance.....	(\$ 5,278.)

### January 1— October 31, 2022

What we received.....	\$168,929.
What we spent.....	(\$168,128.)
Our balance.....	\$ 801.

## Order of Importance of Memorials and Other Special Offerings

Primary Funds: Building Improvement/Maintenance Fund, Current Expense Receipts, and Sustainability Trust Fund.

Secondary Funds: Bell Choir Fund, Brick Maintenance (tuck pointing), Choral Fund, ELCA Scholarship Fund, Good Neighbor Fund, Library Fund, Organ Fund, Quilters Memorial Fund, Parish House Alarm, Technology Fund, and WELCA Clean Water Fund.

Other Funds: Confirmation/National Youth Gathering, Faith Enrichment Fund, Major Church Improvement, Missionary Sponsorship, Rooted in Faith (Crossways Capital Improvement) Fund, Seidel/Meyer Scholarship, Seminary Scholarship, and World Hunger.

# PROPERTY COMMITTEE LIST

The Property Committee has completed over 20 of the original projects this year, so the chart below reflects the remaining projects that are longer term or cost prohibitive right now. We will continue to work on the list as funds are available.

One of the more important items on this list, is the repair of the north basement wall of the church that is bowing in. This will be discussed at the Annual Meeting. We will be talking about our current overgrown landscaping that is too close to the foundation and needs to be redone, and we will also be talking about digging down to the foundation and putting drain tile around the church basement as well as repairing current walls that are failing.

ST. STEPHEN NEEDS/WANTS	Cost DIY	Cost Hired out
	Estimate	Estimate
Thermostat control All thermostats EACH 7 currently	L	
Locks on all church interior basement doors to secure sanctuary		M
Light over door by dumpsters	L	
Rekey all locks		M
Repair north church basement wall		H
Door closer for elevator	M	H
Repair windows north side of church	L	
Refinish main doors on south side of church	L	
Parsonage dryer outlet repair	L	
Light bulb replacement in sanctuary	L	
Church tuck pointing		H
Church roof		H
Church interior wall replastering		H
Back stairwell roof repair		H
Basement air handler/heat exchanger/air conditioner upgrade		H
Asbestos removal from area around air handler		H
Should we put the carpet in the great room downstairs		H
Refinish interior doors in parish house	L	
Move banner room and swap areas with Little Scholars	None	
Repair alleyway blacktop after north basement wall repair		H
Front steps carpet		L
Replace the inside door in the women's main restroom for easier access	L	M
Replace toilet in women's main restroom to 1.6 gallon flush		M
1. Replace the inside door in the men's main restroom for easier access	L	M
2a. Rehab men's main restroom floor		H
2b. Rehab men's main restroom sink	M	M
3. Replace the toilet with 1.6 gallon flush		M
Replace screen door by deck in parsonage	L	
Refinish inside door by deck in parsonage	L	
Rehab conference room kitchen	M	H
Replacement/2nd coffee maker for conference room	M	
Repair upper oven Pilot light won't stay lit	L	L
Replace 4' flouresent tubes with LED tubes as needed	M	
<b>Low cost \$0 - \$300</b>		
<b>Medium cost \$300 - \$1000</b>		
<b>High cost over \$1000</b>		



## Christmas Symbols

### The Star Of Bethlehem



The Star of Bethlehem is a symbol of hope and miracles. When Jesus Christ was born, the Star of Bethlehem guided the Three Wise Men to Jesus. For Christians, it is a reminder of the hope that Jesus brings to the world.

### Bells

Bells are often used as Christmas symbols because they represent joy and happiness. They can also symbolize the ringing in of the New Year. Bells are often used in holiday decorations, such as wreaths and garlands. They are also a common motif in Christmas music.



### The Nativity Scene



The Nativity scene is a popular Christmas symbol that represents the birth of Jesus Christ. It typically features a baby Jesus in a manger, surrounded by Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and animals. The scene is meant to remind us of the humble beginnings of Christ and the true meaning of Christmas.

### The Christmas Tree

When we look at the Christmas tree, we are reminded of the hope and joy that the holiday brings. The evergreen tree is a symbol of life and growth, which reminds us that Christmas is a time to celebrate new beginnings. The lights on the tree represent Jesus Christ, who is the "light of the world"



### The Christmas Wreath



The Christmas wreath is a symbol of hope, love, and joy. It is traditionally made from evergreen branches, which represent eternal life. The wreath is often decorated with items such as berries, ribbons, and holly. It is typically hung on doors or walls as a decoration.

### Candy Canes

Candy canes are a popular Christmas treat that also has symbolic meaning. The shape of the candy cane is said to represent the shepherd's staff, and the red and white stripes are meant to represent the blood and purity of Jesus Christ. Candy canes are also often used as decoration, hung on Christmas trees or in wreaths.





## KEEPING CHRISTMAS

by Dr. Henry Van Dyke

It is a good thing to observe Christmas Day.

The mere marking of times and seasons,  
when men agree to stop work and make merry together,  
is a wise and wholesome custom.

It reminds a man to set his own little watch, now and then,  
by the great clock of humanity, which runs on sun time.

But there is a better thing than the observance of Christmas Day,  
and that is, keeping Christmas.

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people,  
and to remember what other people have done for you;  
to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world;  
to see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are,  
and to try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy;

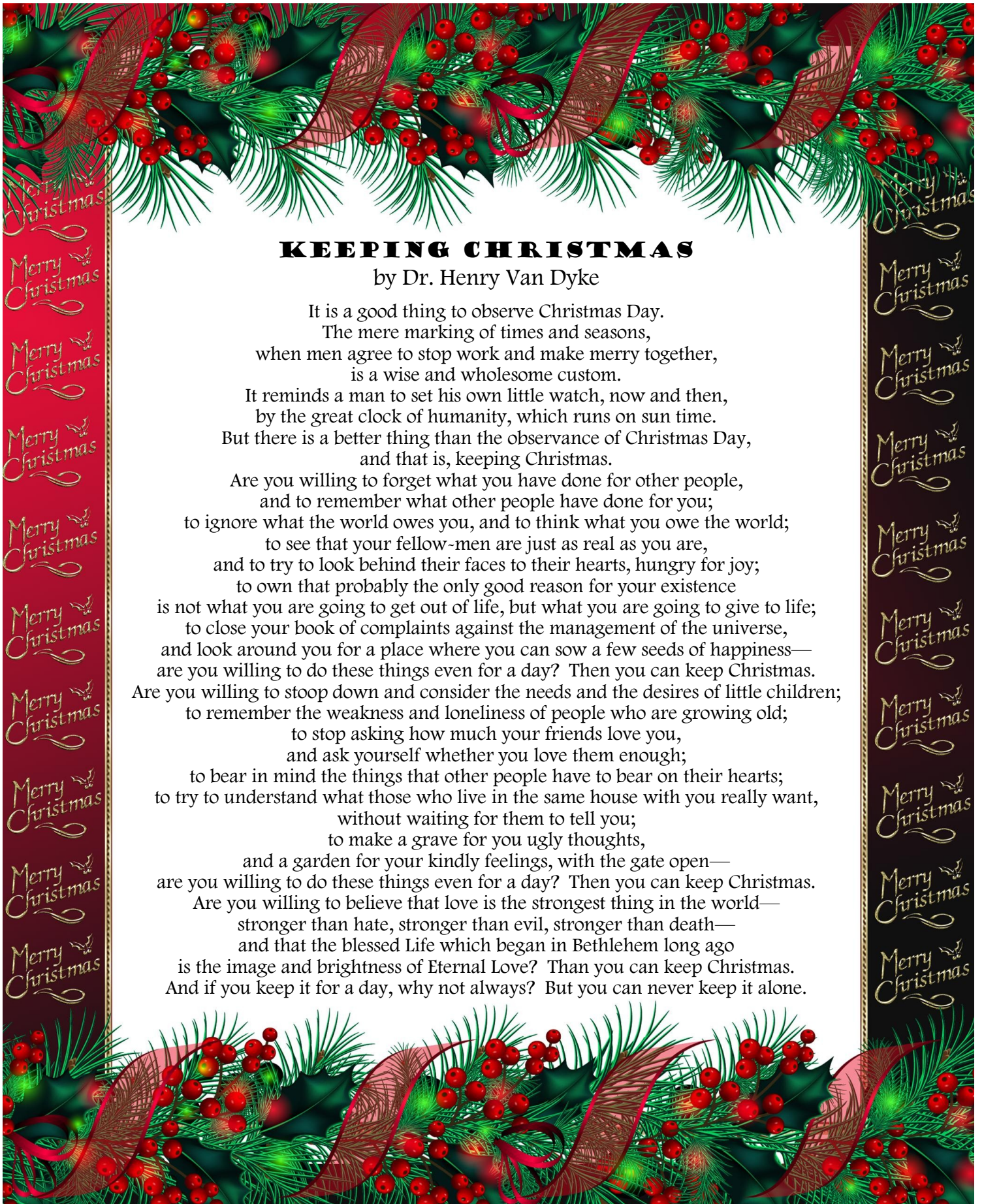
to own that probably the only good reason for your existence  
is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life;  
to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe,  
and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—  
are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and the desires of little children;  
to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old;  
to stop asking how much your friends love you,  
and ask yourself whether you love them enough;

to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts;  
to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want,  
without waiting for them to tell you;  
to make a grave for you ugly thoughts,

and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—  
are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—  
stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—  
and that the blessed Life which began in Bethlehem long ago  
is the image and brightness of Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.  
And if you keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.





# IMPORTANT TAX INFORMATION

Checks and money must be delivered by hand or mail, and postmarked on or before December 31, 2022 in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2022. Checks that are placed in the church offering at the first service of January 2023, **WILL NOT QUALIFY FOR A CHARITABLE DEDUCTION IN 2022**, even if the check was dated for 2022, or was actually written in 2021.

To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, please do not file your 2022 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgment of your contributions from the church. You may lose a deduction for some contributions if you file your tax return before receiving a written acknowledgment.

Below is a form requesting your year end tax statement. Forms will also be available in the back of the church and on the counter by the church office. If you prefer, you can email Bill Dunker at [bdunker@sslcwausau.com](mailto:bdunker@sslcwausau.com) and give him the following information:

Envelope Number (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I will pick up at the back of the church in January

\_\_\_ Mail it to me

\_\_\_ Email it to me – Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not have email, you can call the church office at 715-845-7858 leave your name, and indicate that you want a tax statement, and a form will be filled out for you and given to Bill Dunker.

Otherwise, completed forms can be placed in the brown box in the back of the church, mailed in, dropped off at the office, or put in with the offering. Statements will be ready by January 15, 2023.

If you have questions, you may call the church office at 715-845-7858.

# COUNCIL MINUTES ~ NOVEMBER 8, 2022

**Present:** Pastor Karoline, Sarah Lonsdorf, Kelly Brown, Lloyd Zimmel, Pat Erdman, Verlyn Oelke, Jim Von Rueden, Jeff Blomquist, Kathy Robinson, and Shauna Robinson. Chuck Johnson attended via ZOOM.

The meeting opened at 5:30 pm with devotions by Kathy Robinson.

**A motion was made and passed to accept the October 11, 2022 Council minutes.**

**Pastor's Report:** A written report was provided.

**President's Report:** A written report was provided.

**Treasurer's Report:** A written report was provided. We have \$22,707 in our General Fund. Verlyn gave a brief update on our finances. The air conditioning bill has been paid; we will wait to take the funds from our investment account until a more opportune time.

**A motion was made and carried to accept these reports.**

## **Committee Reports:**

**Education/Youth:** Education Elder is on a one year substitution by Member at Large.

**Good Stewards:** Kelly said things are going well.

**Property:** A lengthy written report was provided outlining all the needed repairs at St. Stephen. Jim recapped some of the items on the to-do list, many have been done, but there are still many on the list. We have closed out 20 of the 53 projects! Yay! We will start using the electronic door codes on December 1<sup>st</sup>. If you require a code or key card/fob to enter the building, please contact Roger Hackbart.

**Worship:** A written report was provided. They will be meeting Thursday again.

**Trust Fund:** A written report was provided. Our earnings have gone up this month, but we are down year-to-date. The audit bill has been paid, and funds have been dispersed to some local charities.

**A motion was made and carried to accept these reports.**

## **Old Business:**

- Memorial Fund Review – There **will be** a change to the priority order this month. The Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund is now number one, Current Expense is number two, and Sustainability Trust Fund is number three.
- We are working on our Wedding Policy updates.
- We have started getting some names for next year's Council, but are still looking for some volunteers. Our Constitution requires that we fill many spots on the Council. **PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING.**
- The 2023 Budget Meeting will be next Tuesday, November 15th at 5:30 pm. Verlyn distributed preliminary numbers to Council which will continue to evolve as the process continues. We will focus on expenses at next week's meeting.
- We are training more people for running the Sunday video equipment.

## **New Business:**

- **A motion was made and carried** to approve October bills.
- Kathy Robinson shared that she is going to pursue a degree from Wartburg Seminary to become an ordained minister. There is a \$600 candidacy fee required to begin the process, oftentimes it is covered by a candidate's congregation. **A motion was made to use the Seminary Scholarship Fund to sponsor this fee. The motion passed, with Kathy abstaining from the vote.**
- Crossways Camping is looking for delegates from congregations to attend a meeting in December. If you are interested in representing St. Stephen, please contact Nancy.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 13th at 5:30 pm, with Pam providing devotions.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pat Erdman, Council Secretary





## **ORDER YOUR POINSETTIAS**

If you would like to place a poinsettia in church for Christmas, please complete this form and either mail it in or bring it to the church office.

**DEADLINE FOR ORDERS IS MONDAY, DECEMBER 5TH, 2022**

Given in memory of

---

Given in honor of

---

Given by

---

How many?

*We are only offering Traditional Red this year.*

Each plant is in a 6 ½" pot.

**Cost of each plant is \$ 12**

Call Nancy Henke @ 715-845-7858 with any questions.

**Please include your payment with this form.**

**Make check payable to: *St. Stephen Lutheran Church.***

*Thanks!*



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