

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2023

Volume 223 • Issue 223

THE DEACON'S SPIRIT

The newsletter of St. Stephen Lutheran Church



"God's work. Our hands."



Sunday, September 10, 2023

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Office Hours:
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays
from 8:00am—3:00pm

Office Closed:
Labor Day—Monday, September 4th

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
Spectrum channel 980/TDS channel 17
on Sundays at 12pm (this is the previous
Sundays' service), Mondays at 3pm, and
Tuesdays at 10am and 10:30pm.

This year, as part of God's Work, Our Hands, we will be serving those less fortunate than ourselves. We will gather after worship on Sunday, September 10th to grill burgers and hot dogs, make salads, and prepare desserts. Then we will deliver and serve them in the lower parking lot of the Whitewater Music Hall. Look for sign-up sheets on the bulletin board outside the church office to volunteer. For those unable to stay and serve that day, we will be asking for donations of various items to host the meal. A list will be posted on the board. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Shauna Robinson.

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



"There is no way to measure relationship." These wise words were shared by Pastor Dara with our Council as she shared with us the results of the Vitality Survey in which St. Stephen recently participated. Pastor Dara serves as the Director for Evangelical Mission for the East Central Synod of Wisconsin and met with the Council to help us interpret the data compiled from the survey. The results confirmed our thoughts, St. Stephen is a vital congregation, but we are facing significant challenges and need to discern potential changes to increase our vitality.

Results of the self-assessment show that St. Stephen's biggest strength is the proclamation of the Gospel. This is good news! The Gospel is a firm foundation of who we are, whose we are, and what we are being called to do. Another large strength is our leadership culture. This is reflected in strong lay leaders whose faith is reflected in the way they serve. The survey also revealed several growth areas: opportunities to "practice curiosity" and wonder where God is calling us.

Join us for "Coffee and Conversation" about the survey results on Sunday, September 17th following worship. Council will present results from the survey and we will share in conversation and holy wonderings together!

Pastor Karoline

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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St. Stephen Calendar of Events						September 2023	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
3 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	4 Labor Day 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED	5 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 4:30 Executive Comm. Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	6 6:30 Combined Choir	7 8:30 Quilting 6:00 Al-Anon	1 NO SCHOOL	2	
10 God's Work Our Hands 9:00 Worship 10:00 Trust Fund Comm. Mtg. 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS	11 10:00 Staff Mtg. 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball	12 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Council Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	13 1:00 Women's Bible Study 6:30 Combined Choir	14 8:30 Quilting 6:00 Al-Anon	15	16	
17 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	18 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:00 Good Stewards Comm. Mtg. 5:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Property Comm. Mtg. 7:00 Dartball MEMORIAL DEADLINE	19 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	20 6:30 Combined Choir	21 8:30 LWR Work Day 6:00 Al-Anon 6:00 Special Olympics NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	22	23	
24 Blessing of the Quilts 9:00 Worship/Blessing of the Quilts 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	25 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball	26 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	27 6:30 Combined Choir	28 8:30 Quilting 6:00 Al-Anon	29	30	

ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS/AUGUST MEMORIALS



Anniversaries

The following people are celebrating September Anniversaries.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

September 2nd

Mark & Laurie Heuser
Allen & Carol Seymour

September 3rd

Robert & Bonnie Pils

September 8th

Chad & Ashley Kumm

September 10th

Mathew & Jennifer Burish

September 11th

William & Penny Windorski

September 14th

Cliff & Karen Prigge
Randy & Kari Van Natta

September 16th

Jay & Patty Pippenger

September 19th

Roger & Pam Hackbart
Terry & Gloria Lyon

September 20th

Carl & Sandy Stuhr

September 24th

Chuck & Lynn Deffner

September 26th

Greg & Lisa Koch

September 27th

Jeff & Rhonda Will

September 28th

Gerald & Elaine Hoppe



Birthday Blessings

The following people are celebrating September Birthdays.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

September 1st

Lucas Kasten

September 3rd

William Grau

Marjorie Krahn

September 5th

Lori Napstad

September 8th

Kessel Deffner

September 10th

Kathy Robinson

September 12th

Jennifer Shidell

September 13th

John Erickson

September 14th

Beth Eiden

September 15th

Shauna Robinson

Peggy Roble

September 16th

Harold Dabler

Ethyn Kroeplin

Bruce Weinke

September 17th

Lisa Marcott

September 18th

Abigail Hannes

September 19th

Eleanor Schneider

John Schneider

September 21st

Hudson Haiker

September 22nd

Daryl Christian

Sarah Lonsdorf

Elroy Schalow

September 23rd

Crystal Nielson

Mary Beth Tolley

Hudson Haiker

September 24th

Debra Gleason

September 25th

LuAnn Theis

September 28th

Erin Hall

Ashley Lenoble

September 29th

Holly Jorgensen

September 30th

Tonette Tilkens



Funeral

"...in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to almighty God..."

Carolyn Schirmer
July 23, 2023

AUGUST 2023 MEMORIALS

Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund

In memory of my loving Husband, Mike Eberhardy, who left us 5 years ago –
Carla Eberhardy

Organ Repair and Maintenance Fund

In loving memory of departed family and friends –
Kelly Brown

Coats for Kids

Coats, jackets, hooded sweatshirts, mittens, hats, scarves, snow pants, sweatpants, and socks/ underwear (new in package) will be needed again for the change in weather entering our fall and winter seasons. The Good Stewards Committee is looking for donations of these items starting September 4th to be donated to the Wausau and DC Everest School Districts. There will be a table in the lounge area where you can place clean, gently used, or new items. All sizes are needed (including adult sizes for the older kids). We appreciate anything you are able to donate. Questions, please contact Shauna Robinson or Nancy Prigge. Thank you!

Community Dinner

THANK YOU to EVERYONE who helped with the August 20th Community Dinner whether it was donating items, baking, preparing meals, or serving, it was all appreciated and was a great success! We served approximately 80 meals. The meal was perfect for a hot day! Our guests enjoyed a brat, watermelon, carrots, chips, cookies, and a Capri Sun.

Confirmation

Confirmation begins on Wednesday, October 4th from 5:30pm until 7pm. We're planning on a similar model as last year, meeting every other week from 5:30pm until 7pm at St. Stephen, and during Advent and Lent meeting weekly at Good Shepherd for worship. If you have a student ready for confirmation, please contact Pastor Karoline.

Lay School

Interested in learning more about the Bible, the Church, and your faith? Ready to make new friends and community? Wondering about how to be equipped to serve in familiar and new ways? Lay School is for you! Check out more information at <https://ecswlaysiachool.org/>. Students can participate in a variety of ways: the Core Program consists of eight core classes, four are taught each year, and Continuing Education classes that include unique topics of study each year. Classes meet once a month on a Friday evening and Saturday morning. Dip your toe in and take just one class or dive in and sign up for more!

Lutheran World Relief

It's time to watch for sales on Lutheran World Relief Kit items! A Personal Care Kit includes: a light-weight bath towel (Wal-Mart brand works), 2 bars of soap, and a nail clipper. A School Kit includes: 70-80 sheet spiral notebook (wide or college ruled), a pencil sharpener, #2 pencils UNSHARPENED, blue or black ballpoint pens (no gel), crayons (16 or 24 count), and an eraser. If you have questions, ask a quilter. Donated items can be left in the Quilting Room (Nursery). Thanks for your help!

Saturday Crafternoons

Mark your calendars, Saturday Crafternoons are back! Bring a craft to work on and have some fellowship on a Saturday afternoon from 1-4pm, September 9th, October 14th, November 18th, and December 16th.

Women's Bible Study

The Women of St. Stephen will have a Bible Study on Wednesday, September 13th at 1pm in the Conference Room. All women of the church are welcome to attend!

Benevolence

Through your support of St. Stephen in the month of July 2023, we were able to contribute to the following ministry:

ELCA National & Synod Support \$647

This is the fifth 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 \$13,485 for July.

St. Stephen Family Checkbook

For the month of July 2023 and the year to date, the St. Stephen family checkbook looked like this:

July 1—31, 2023

What we received.....	\$18,873.
What we spent.....	(\$19,350.)
Our balance.....	(\$ 477.)

January 1— July 31, 2023

What we received.....	\$137,171.
What we spent.....	(\$152,338.)
Our balance.....	(\$ 15,167.)

Order of Importance of Memorials and Other Special Offerings

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

COUNCIL MINUTES ~ AUGUST 13, 2023

These are the minutes from a special Council Meeting that was held on Sunday, August 13th following the Worship Service.

Present: Pastor Karoline Schwantes, Kathy Robinson, Sue Holster, Vicki Romang, Lloyd Zimmer, Shauna Robinson, Jim Von Rueden, Sarah Lonsdorf, and Lynn Deffner.

Absent: Verlyn Oelke, Pam Hackbart, and Jacque Schremp.

At the request of Dick Holster, a special Congregational Council Meeting was held immediately following the worship service on Sunday, August 13, 2023.

The meeting opened at 10:20 am once it was determined that everyone possible was present.

Dick Holster presented two issues that the Council needed to be made aware of.

The first issue was that Phil Mohs, owner of Little Scholars Preschool, had approached him to request some financial assistance paying for the new fence for Little Scholars playground. He had been counting on government funding, but that was cut, and he was having difficulty paying for the upgrade to the playground in one payment.

Phil asked if St. Stephen would pay the remaining amount due, and he would pay back that amount to St. Stephen, in monthly payments, with interest. The amount that he would like us to pay (and would be amortized with his rental contract) is \$6500. This amount is in addition to the \$6900 that St. Stephen agreed to pay for the demolition of the garage, with repayment from Phil.

It was noted that Phil was not having financial difficulties and would be able to repay the amount requested over time. The difficulty Phil was having was that he was short of cash on hand, due to the cut in government funding that he anticipated receiving.

After discussion, **a motion was made and passed** (by unanimous vote) that St. Stephen would pay the remainder of the fence cost (Phil has already paid half), and his rental contract over the next four years will include repayment of the amount paid with an additional 6 % interest.

The second issue was that the owners of the Air BNB business that are currently renting the parsonage will be terminating their lease at the end of August. In May 2023, they had asked for a renewal of the contract for a 5-year period, and this was voted on and passed during the May Council meeting. Because the new contract had not been signed, they were not obligated to continue as tenants.

Dick Holster has begun discussions with another Air BNB owner (Maricio (?) Peterson) that is interested in renting the parsonage from St. Stephen, to use for one of his Air BNB locations. Mr. Peterson is from LaCrosse and has many other Air BNBs around the state, and this was seen as a positive venture.

The only downside to this issue is that there may be a short period of vacancy (perhaps 2 months) between renters.

After discussion, the Council agreed to have Dick Holster negotiate a contract with Mr. Peterson for the parsonage rental.

The Council would like to thank Dick Holster for his work with St. Stephen, and for keeping the Council apprised of these situations.

Our next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 22, with Pastor Dara providing the results of our Vitality Survey.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Robinson
Council President

COUNCIL MINUTES ~ AUGUST 22, 2023

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Present: Pastor Karoline Schwantes, Kathy Robinson, Sue Holster, Vicki Romang, Pam Hackbart, Shauna Robinson, Jim Von Rueden, Sarah Lonsdorf, and Lynn Deffner.

Absent: Verlyn Oelke, Lloyd Zimmer, and Jacque Schremp.

Guest: Pastor Dara, Director for Evangelical Mission for the East Central Synod of Wisconsin.

The meeting opened at 5:30 pm.

A motion was made and passed to accept the July 12, 2023 Council minutes.

Pastor's Report: A written report was provided.

President's Report: No written report was provided.

Treasurer's Report: A written report was provided. The Balance sheet was reviewed. There is a balance of \$6,999 in the General Fund.

A motion was made and carried to accept these reports.

Committee Reports:

Good Stewards: A written report was provided.

Property: No written report was provided. Progress is being made on the kitchenette. The Council had a chance to view the work being done.

Worship: No written report was provided. The committee did not meet.

Trust Fund: No written report was provided. The committee did not meet.

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. Current Expenses moves to number one, Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund is number two, and Sustainability Trust Fund is number three. Member roster review has been tabled until September.

New Business:

A motion was made and carried to approve July bills.

We will discuss the results of the Vitality Survey after worship on Sunday, September 17th during Coffee Hour.

Our next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 5:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Robinson
Council President