



DATE: JANUARY 2024  
Volume 227 • Issue 227

# THE DEACON'S SPIRIT

The newsletter of St. Stephen Lutheran Church

## TAKE TIME

Take time to gaze at a sunset sky  
Where colors blaze to dazzle the eye.  
Take time to watch a moonlit sea  
And look in awe at a towering tree.  
Take time to look in the heart of a flower  
Adorned with diamonds from a gentle shower.  
Take time to view a mountain high  
With snowy peak 'gainst bluest sky  
Take time to listen to the song of birds  
A paean of joy without need of words.



Take time to tell your closest friend  
Your love and loyalty will never end.  
Take time to stop and stand and stare  
At wonders round you everywhere.

Author ~ Unknown

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

**Office Closed:**  
Monday, January 1st, New Year's Day

**Deadlines:**  
Bulletin: Wednesday by 8:00 a.m.  
Newsletter: 2nd 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.

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

Happy New Year!

As the Christmas décor gets packed away, New Year's gatherings come and go, and resolutions get made. January often feels like a time of new beginnings. The days start to get a wee bit longer and the sun even seems brighter.



In the church, our liturgical year begins in Advent, and in early January, we are still in the Christmas season. This year for Advent and the Christmas, we have focused on the theme, "How Does a Weary World Rejoice?" On January 7th, we move into the new year by wrapping up our theme, "we trust our belovedness" celebrating the Baptism of the Lord Sunday. We hear in Jesus' baptism a turning point, a new beginning. The heavens open, the Spirit descends, and a holy voice is heard. "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" Luke 3:22. Other translations read, "In you, I find happiness and delight." God's celebration of this moment and claiming of Jesus as God's Incarnate Son shows God's great love and claim of us as beloved as well.

Luke 3:23a, the next verse after the baptism reads, "Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry." His response to the claiming of God is to get to work in the world. It shows God's response to our weary cries and reminds us that God is near and God is here, with us. Even in our weariness and the multitude of our emotions, God claims us as beloved. In the sacrament of baptism, we recognize our belovedness.

As we begin a new year, let's celebrate who we are called to be, beloved children of God. No matter what transitions we may face, what resolutions we may break, or the ways in which it might feel like nothing has changed, we are loved and claimed by God in our baptisms. Trust in our belovedness!

P.S. An abundance of thanks to everyone that helped prepare for our Advent worship season, especially for the Choral Service. Thank you to Thrivent for the Action Team grant to print and display the artwork from A Sanctified Art. Thank you to the Worship Committee, Hymn Selection Committee, Altar Guild, and Tech Team. Thank you to Delores, Jim, and Darlene, as well as our fabulous musicians.

*Pastor Karoline*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

St. Stephen Calendar of Events						January 2024	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
	<b>1 New Year's Day</b> 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum <b>NO SCHOOL</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>2</b> 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	<b>3</b> 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Combined Choir	<b>4</b> 8:30 Quilting 4:00 Worship Comm. Mtg. 6:00 AI-Anon	<b>5</b>	<b>6 Epiphany</b> 9:00 Stephen's Angels	
<b>7 Baptism of Our Lord</b> 9:00 Worship 10:15 Trust Fund Comm. Mtg. 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	<b>8</b> 11:00 Staff Mtg. 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball	<b>9</b> 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 4:30 Executive Comm. Mtg. 5:30 Council Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	<b>10</b> 1:00 Women's Bible Study 6:30 Combined Choir	<b>11</b> 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	
<b>14</b> 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	<b>15 MLK Day</b> 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Property Comm. Mtg. 7:00 Dartball <b>MEMORIAL DEADLINE FOR JANUARY</b>	<b>16</b> 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	<b>17</b> 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Combined Choir	<b>18</b> 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon 6:00 Special Olympics <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>	<b>19</b> <b>NO ELEMENTARY CLASSES PM</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>21</b> 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	<b>22</b> 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball	<b>23</b> 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	<b>24</b> 6:30 Combined Choir	<b>25</b> 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	
<b>28</b> 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	<b>29</b> 9:00 Worship 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 7:00 Dartball	<b>30</b> 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	<b>31</b> 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Combined Choir				



# ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS



## Birthday Blessings

The following people are celebrating January Birthdays.

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!**

### January 1st

Chuck Johnson

### January 2nd

Darleen Fust

Penny Windorski

### January 3rd

Travis Teske

Noel Tordsen

### January 4th

Connie Schneider

### January 6th

Michael Zahrt

### January 7th

Anna Dodds

Cecil Wold

Duane Wolfe

### January 9th

Isaac Stuhr

### January 11th

Norma Bandoek

Roger Hackbart

Bennett Korpela

### January 12th

Nancy Prigge

### January 14th

Violet Hackbart

### January 15th

Ashley Kumm

Rebecca Hebda

### January 17th

Amy Korpela

Shirley Schwede

Andrew Wiskow

### January 18th

Ruth Grell

### January 20th

Dawn Felch

### January 22nd

Russell Post

Brad Smith

### January 24th

Jeff Busha

### January 25th

Chad Deffner

Kathy Oakland

### January 26th

Nancy Henke

### January 30th

Jim Sekaney

*Glory to God  
in the highest,*



*and on earth peace,  
goodwill toward men!  
Luke 2:14*

## Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of St. Stephen Lutheran Church will be held on Sunday, February 11th, 2024, immediately following worship. Each committee/group will need to turn in an individual report to be included in the Annual Report. The deadline is Monday, January 8, 2024.

## Council Members Needed

The 2024 Council is looking for candidates for the following positions: President/Vice President, Property Elder, Trust Fund member (this is a 3 year term) and Members-at-Large (up to 3).

## Hygiene Drive

The Angels are hosting a Hygiene Drive in January for the Bridge Street Mission. This is a residential Christian discipleship program providing the support and skills needed to live addiction free and also to live a productive life. They provide recovery support groups to help maintain the sobriety of the men enrolled. They encourage healthy relationships, they help find jobs with job training and support, and they provide financial literacy for those needing help. Items needed: men's deodorant (travel or regular size), body wash, shaving cream and razors, toothbrushes and toothpaste, fingernail clippers, combs, body lotion, chap stick, and Q-Tips. Let's help our neighbors!

## January Memorials

If you would like a memorial placed in the January bulletins and February newsletter, it needs to be to the office by Monday, January 15th.

## Now Hiring

St. Stephen Lutheran Church is looking for a part-time bookkeeper (8-10 hours/week). Please contact the office at 715-845-7858 if you are interested.

## Thank You!

**Eucharistic Ministers**—Thank you to everyone who brings communion to our homebound congregation members and to those that are in assisted living facilities and nursing homes. This is such an important part of church ministry. I am sure that our members who are unable to attend church cherish your visits—Nancy Henke.

**Worship Assistants**—I want to thank everyone who served as Assisting Ministers, Communion Assistants, Lectors, and Projection/Video Assistants. You are an integral part of Sunday morning worship—Nancy Henke.

And a special thank you to Shirley Kasten, who faithfully comes in every week to print and collate the bulletins.

## Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study Group will meet on Wednesday, January 10th at 1pm 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 November 2023, we were able to contribute to the following ministry:

ELCA National & Synod Support \$544

This is the tenth 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 \$12,094 for November.

## St. Stephen Family Checkbook

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

### November 1—30, 2023

What we received.....\$20,595.  
What we spent.....(\$18,430.)  
Our balance.....\$ 2,165.

### January 1— November 30, 2023

What we received.....\$208,052.  
What we spent.....(\$226,156.)  
Our balance.....(\$ 18,104.)

## 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.

## DECEMBER 2023 MEMORIALS

**In loving memory of Rodney “Butch” Bliese**  
 Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund -- \$400  
 Current Expense Fund -- \$200  
 Family & Friends

### **Adopt-A-Family**

In loving memory of Jodie Anna Gaulke – Pat Erdman

### **Bell Choir**

In loving memory of Butch Bliese – Sarah Lonsdorf

In loving memory of Jerry Preller – Kay Preller

### **Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund**

In loving memory of my Brother, Ken Prieve and Niece, Melissa Prieve Fleming – Mary Beth Tolley

In loving memory of Butch Bliese – Jim & Bonnie Von Rueden

### **Choir Fund**

In loving memory of Jerry Preller – Kay Preller

### **Current Expense Fund**

In loving memory of Butch Bliese – Sharon Hopp

In loving memory of Butch Bliese – Chuck & Susie Johnson

In loving memory of Butch Bliese – Shirley Kasten

In loving memory of Butch Bliese – Don & Karen Kromrei

In loving memory of Jerry Preller – Kay Preller

In loving memory of our Parents, Earl & Jean Lodholz and Ben & Edna Roble – Ben & Peggy Roble

In loving memory of Ginny Seymour – Dale Seymour

### **Organ Fund**

In loving memory of my Parents, Pat & Iris Brown – Kelly Brown

### **Quilting Fund**

In loving memory of my Grandparents, Alfred & Suzanne Zillman – Kelly Brown

### **Seidel Meyer Pastoral Ministry Fund**

In loving memory of Harold & Sue Kratwell, Kenneth & Sadie Borth, and Norman & Bertha Zietlow –  
 Sandy & Ron Borth and Family

# COUNCIL MINUTES ~ DECEMBER 12, 2023

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**Present:** Pastor Karoline, Kathy Robinson, Lynn Deffner, Pam Hackbart, Sarah Lonsdorf, Verlyn Oelke, Jim Von Rueden, Shauna Robinson, Sue Holster, Lloyd Zimmel, Jeff Blomquist, and Vicki Romang.

**Absent:** Jacque Schremp

**The meeting opened at 5:30 pm following the Executive Council meeting.**

An update to the November minutes was requested concerning Little Scholars future plans. **A motion was made and passed to accept the November 14, 2023 Council minutes.**

**Pastor's Report:** A written report was provided. New Beginnings is an organization assisting immigrants on their journey to begin a new life in the United States. This organization is looking for space to rent for classes, storage, and office space. The classes are held weekly on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for approximately 1 ½ hours each day. They currently have 20-30 students.

**President's Report:** No written report was provided.

**Treasurer's Report:** Our general fund currently has a balance of \$4,061.

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

## **Committee Reports:**

**Good Stewards:** No written report was provided. Shauna Robinson gave an update on the committee's activities. There were 72 meals provided for the November Community Dinner, and the Adopt-A-Family program is on target to provide gifts for families this holiday season.

**Property:** A written report was provided. We received a positive inspection on the elevator.

**Worship:** A written report was provided.

**Trust Fund:** A written report was provided. This has been a good year for the Trust Fund Committee providing funds for different projects such as Good Stewards Adopt-A-Family program, Property Committee projects, and Hagar House.

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

## **Old Business:**

- Memorial Fund – No change to the order this month.

## **New Business:**

- **A motion was made and passed** to approve November bills.
- Gift certificates will be purchased for current staff in gratitude for their hard work throughout 2023.
- A budget meeting was held on Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. Verlyn presented a worksheet indicating all recommendations made at Tuesday's meeting for the 2024 budget. **The 2024 budget was approved.**
- The Annual Meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2024.
- The Council will be requesting volunteers for the following positions: President/Vice President, Property Elder, Trust Fund (this is a 3 year term), and Members at Large (up to 3).
- The Council Retreat will be discussed during January's meeting.
- Phil Mohs, the owner of Little Scholars, is looking at plans for 2024. The preschool is looking to expand, which will mean the hiring of more staff and bringing in more students. The partnership with Little Scholars has been a great fit for St. Stephen to continue our ministry. Dick Holster will clarify with Little Scholars to fully understand their needs and how we can assist them and not interfere with the activities of the church.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2024 at 5:30pm following the Executive Council meeting which is at 4:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Romang, Council Secretary