

THE DEACON'S SPIRIT

The newsletter of St. Stephen Lutheran Church



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

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

"Is January a bit of a break for you and the church now that the "busy season" (Christmas) is over?" I've been asked versions of this question many times in the early parts of this year and I have to laugh. Christmas is just the beginning of things, a prelude of sorts!



The days have been getting slightly longer, in spite of the cold, and our office staff has been working diligently to complete and compile annual reports and year-end financials. I am grateful for our staff! Nancy does a wonderful job of keeping everything running smoothly. And Bill has been working hard, in spite of his recent retirement. We celebrate with him, but he will certainly be missed!

This year, Lent is early. It begins on February 14th with Ash Wednesday (as well as Valentine's Day), which means that a lot of planning is being put in by our worship team, as well as by our partners in ministry at both Pilgrim and Good Shepherd. Midweek services and "Lent Lunch Church" will be back! This year we plan on collaborating for our Lenten worship, with Pilgrim hosting Ash Wednesday and Good Shepherd hosting Maundy Thursday. We at St. Stephen will host Good Friday worship. Further details are here in the newsletter.

I am also excited to share that we will be using another theme from, A Sanctified Art, in Lent. Wandering Heart: Figuring Out Faith with Peter, follows the disciple's path of walking with Jesus. The theme shares, "By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out – just like the rest of us." Poetry, art, and music will all enhance our journey as we learn what it means to wander in our faith, all the while being rooted in the love of God.

It has been a busy month indeed, but it has also been fun and valuable time. A note about "busy." Another comment I hear a lot is how busy I must be and a reluctance to take up my time. I want to assure you that I am grateful when you do reach out to me. It is truly an honor to walk with you in your celebrations, in grief, and in all of the little things in between. Even if there is a lot "to do," relationships and connection helps us remember the reason we do it. God created us to be in community, to be the body of believers in the world. I am grateful for the relationships formed and the time we share!

Pastor Karoline

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

St. Stephen Calendar of Events					February 2024	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 8:30 Quilting 4:00 Worship Comm. Mtg. 6:00 AI-Anon	2	3 9:00 Stephen's Angels
4 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	5 11:00 Staff Mtg. 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball	6 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 4:30 Executive Comm. Mtg. 5:30 Task Force Comm. Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	7 6:30 Combined Choir	8 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	9	10
11 Annual Meeting 9:00 Worship 10:15 Annual Mtg. 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	12 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:00 Good Stewards Comm. Mtg. 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball MEMORIAL DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY	13 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 4:30 Executive Comm. Mtg. 5:30 Council Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	14 Ash Wednesday Valentine's Day 1:00 Women's Bible Study 6:30 Ash Wednesday Service at Pilgrim Lutheran 7:00 Combined Choir	15 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon 6:00 Special Olympics NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	16	17 9:00am—4:00pm Saturday Crafternoon
18 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	19 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 4:00 Lenten Art Journaling Bible Study at SSLC 5:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Property Comm. Mtg. 7:00 Dartball	20 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	21 12:15 Mid-week Lenten Soup Service at SSLC 5:30 Soup Supper at Pilgrim 5:30 Mid-week Lenten Service at Good Shepherd 6:00 Soup Supper at Good Shepherd 6:30 Mid-week Lenten Service at Pilgrim 7:00 Combined Choir	22 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	23	24
25 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	26 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 4:00 Lenten Art Journaling Bible Study at SSLC 5:30 Bell Choir 7:00 Dartball	27 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	28 12:15 Mid-week Lenten Soup Service at SSLC 5:30 Soup Supper at Pilgrim 5:30 Mid-week Lenten Service at Good Shepherd 6:00 Soup Supper at Good Shepherd 6:30 Mid-week Lenten Service at Pilgrim 7:00 Combined Choir	29 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon		



Anniversaries

The following couples are celebrating their February Wedding Anniversaries.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

February 6th

Ray & Jane Stotmeister

February 9th

Chris & Gina Travis

February 23rd

Caleb & Jennifer Deffner

February 28th

Dan & Melissa Peters



Birthday Blessings

The following people are celebrating February Birthdays

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

February 1st

Elizabeth Beilke

Bev Schmidt

February 2nd

Caroline Kuehl

Kristine Mohr

February 4th

Jeff Blomquist

Carol Sekaney

February 5th

Adain Martin

February 6th

Sandra Schilling

February 8th

Tammy Kromrei

February 9th

Matthew Christian

Harold Peterson

February 15th

Chuck Kershaw

Marjorie Zweck

February 17th

Pat Lonsdorf

February 19th

Ryan Matter

February 20th

Julianna Strand

February 22nd

Marjorie Nimz

February 23rd

Nan Froseth

February 25th

Kaleb Holster

Jim Lee

February 27th

Tim Gritzmacher

Ethan Schmidt

February 28th

Caleb Deffner



Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of St. Stephen Lutheran Church will be held on Sunday, February 11th, 2024, immediately following worship. Reports are available in the back of the church.

Art Journaling

Pastor Karoline will be leading a Lenten Art Journaling Bible Study on Mondays at 4pm on February 19th and 26th, and March 4th, 11th, and 18th. Come participate in a reflective study on discipleship that follows the Lenten theme, Wandering Heart. You will create a small journal to keep. Materials will be provided. No experience necessary!

Aspirus Lifeline Services

Aspirus Lifeline services are back to being installed in area households. Lifeline is an easy-to-use, 24-hour service that provides quick assistance whenever it's needed. Subscribers are able to live more independent, active lives at home because Lifeline's professional staff is ready to provide assistance if needed. Subscribers are free to go about their daily activities with more confidence and less worry, even if they live alone. Aspirus Lifeline also offers Auto Alert, which is advanced technology and provides an added layer of protection: 1) Offers access to help with or without the push of a button if a fall is detected 2) Is an easy-to-wear pendant-style button that is comfortable and waterproof 3) Is the ONLY medical alert pendant with breakthrough technology that, if it detects a fall, will automatically call for help even if you can't push the help button or are unable to ask for help. Learn more by going to: www.aspirus.org/lifeline or call 715-847-2781.

Dine to Donate Sundays

Want an easy way to donate money to St. Stephen Lutheran Church? Just eat at Texas Roadhouse in Wausau on Sundays!!! This is how it works: dine at Texas Roadhouse on Sunday and present our church bulletin for 10% of your food bill (not including alcohol, taxes, or gratuity) to be donated back to our church. Not valid with any other offers or on holidays. Dine in ONLY. One per table, per visit. This is a weekly, on-going program that takes place EVERY Sunday. A check will be sent to the church once a month. It's that simple!!! So, go enjoy a great meal and give back to St. Stephen.

Faith In Action

Faith in Action is a Non-Profit Organization which offers quality services at NO COST, for seniors to live in their homes, as long as feasibly possible. All services are provided regardless of income, religious belief, or ethnic background. If you or a neighbor needs help getting transportation for medical appointments, grocery shopping, or running any other errands please call Faith in Action at 715-848-8783 Monday thru Thursday from 9 am to 2 pm. Their office is located here in Wausau at 630 Adams Street.

Food Drive

For the month of February, the Angels will be holding a food drive to help the Food Pantry at First Presbyterian Church (a couple of blocks north of us). This local pantry helps 70-80 family units (twice a week) every month. The items that are most needed include: peanut butter (16 oz.), cans of fruit or vegetables, Tuna Helper (no Hamburger Helper), baked beans (15 oz.), cans of spaghetti sauce, and any type of pasta. Remember, no glass containers. The table at the entrance to the sanctuary will be available for food donations. Let's help a local pantry and our neighbors in need.

Benevolence

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

ELCA National & Synod Support \$823

This is the eleventh 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 \$18,290 for December.

St. Stephen Family Checkbook

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

December 1—31, 2023

What we received.....	\$30,179.
What we spent.....	(\$19,969.)
Our balance.....	\$10,210.

January 1— December 31, 2023

What we received.....	\$238, 232.
What we spent.....	(\$246,126.)
Our balance.....	(\$ 7,894.)

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.

Lenten/Holy Week Worship Opportunities

There are several opportunities for Midweek Lenten Services this year. St. Stephen will be having Lenten Soup Lunch Services on the following Wednesdays: February 21st and 28th, and March 6th, 13th, and 20th. These services will be held in our Downstairs Auditorium at 12:15pm. Soup will be served beginning at noon. Lenten Soup Suppers will be held at Pilgrim at 5:30pm with a service to follow at 6:30pm. Lenten Services will be held at Good Shepherd at 5:30pm with a Soup Supper to follow. St. Stephen members are invited to attend any or all of the services.

St. Stephen, Pilgrim, and Good Shepherd Lutheran Churches are sharing services for Holy Week this year. Each congregation will plan the service held at their location. Ash Wednesday will be held at Pilgrim on February 14th at 6:30pm, Maundy Thursday will be held at Good Shepherd on March 28th at 6:30pm, and Good Friday will be held at St. Stephen on March 29th at 6:30pm. Each congregation will have their own Easter Sunday Service. St. Stephen's Easter Service will be held at 10:30am this year.

Lenten Soup Lunches

The Midweek Lenten Soup Lunch Services are returning for 2024! Stephen's Angels will provide soup for the first two services (February 21st & 28th). There will be a sign-up sheet on the front counter starting on February 1st for anyone interested in bringing a soup, bread, or dessert or helping with set-up and/or clean-up.

Little Free Pantry

The Good Stewards Committee is asking for food donations for the little free pantry outside of the church. We can use things like canned meat, peanut butter, pasta, hamburger helper, cereal, etc. We just ask that it not be in a glass container or contain carbonation. There are two plastic containers in the chapel area labeled for food donations. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to Shauna Robinson or anyone else on the Good Stewards Committee. Thank you!

St. Stephen Trust Fund

St. Stephen Lutheran Church established a Trust Fund in 1988 as an investment in our future. There are two funds invested through Financial First Advisors in Wausau. The Trust Fund Committee is responsible for these funds and uses only a percentage of the earnings for the designated projects. The Wider Mission Fund is to support the wider mission of the Church in our community and globally. Examples would include: The Neighbors' Place, Faith in Action, Open Door, the Wausau Warming Center, Homeless Kids Fund, Lutheran World Relief, and others. The Building Preservation Fund is for the preservation of our church buildings. In the past this has included fixing the elevator, parsonage updates, and organ repair as well as other repair projects. St. Stephen is known for its generosity. Because only the interest earned on each fund is used in our outreach missions, it is important to maintain a solid investment balance. Please keep the St. Stephen Trust Fund in mind when doing your estate planning. You can designate a specific fund or project, or make a general reference to the Trust Fund.

Saturday "Crafternoons"

Saturday "Crafternoons" will be held from 9am until 4pm on the following dates: February 17th (with a Gelliprinting tutorial beginning at 1pm), March 9th, and April 13th. Come for the morning, the afternoon, or both!

Thank You

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! We were able to assist a total of three families consisting of 10 children (ages 2-11) for Adopt-A-Family. The kids were all able to get "a wish and a need" (an example is a wish for fishing stuff but a need for pants) thanks to your generosity. This would not have been possible without all your help and support! Good Stewards wants to thank you for all your support and generosity throughout 2023. Please keep an eye out for 2024 events that will be happening and posted soon!

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study Group will meet on Wednesday, February 14th at 1pm in the Conference Room. Any women in the congregation who would like to attend are WELCOME!

St. Stephen Lutheran Church,

It is a great honor to receive your generous financial gift that is helping fund the expenses of my books at Wartburg Theological Seminary. I am most grateful for your belief in me, and I would like to thank you for your financial support.

I have successfully completed my first semester of studies, in the Master of Divinity program. I have loved all the classes that I have taken and have received wonderful scores in those classes (even Greek, which was my concern!). I am looking forward to my Systematics of Theology class, beginning next week, which will help me to understand and engage in topics in response to my faith, the relationship between faith and culture, and the relationship between faith and current-day topics.

For the “J Term” class (a short term each January), I traveled to Tanzania, Africa to learn about the impact of Lutheran theology on the formation of the Christian church and society in that country. I have always wanted to travel to Africa, and going as part of the seminary student group was the perfect opportunity to not only see Africa for myself but will also allow me to witness firsthand African Christianity!

Receiving the donation from St. Stephen Lutheran Church is allowing me to continue to chase my dreams and assist me in becoming an ordained pastor when I have completed my courses at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

Blessings for the upcoming Lenten season and the new year ahead.

Thank you again for your generous and thoughtful gift.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Robinson

JANUARY 2024 MEMORIALS

Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund

In loving memory of Roger Grell (Ruth Grell's Son) –
Kathleen Grell

In loving memory of our Son, Brandon Pippenger –
Jay & Patty Pippenger

Current Expense Fund

In loving memory of our Parents, Alvin & Betty Deffner –
Chuck & Lynn Deffner

In loving memory of our Parents, James Schumacher and Garnett Schumacher Schenzel –
Chuck & Lynn Deffner

In memory of loved ones –
Darleen Fust

In loving memory of my Friend, Virginia Tabaka –
Jane Seubert

In loving memory of my Brother-in-law and Sister, Merritt & Shirley Gleason –
Mary Beth Tolley

Library Fund

In loving memory of Lillian Gritzmacher –
Tim Gritzmacher

In loving memory of Angie Ninnemann –
Tim Gritzmacher

Organ Fund

In loving memory of Butch Bliese –
Beth Lind

Seidel Meyer Pastoral Ministry Fund

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

If you would like a memorial placed in the February bulletins and March newsletter, it needs to be to the office by Monday, February 12th. Thank you!

COUNCIL MINUTES ~ JANUARY 9, 2024

Present: Pastor Karoline, Pam Hackbart, Sarah Lonsdorf, Verlyn Oelke, Jim Von Rueden, Shauna Robinson, Sue Holster, Jacque Schremp, Lloyd Zimmel, and Vicki Romang.

Absent: Kathy Robinson, Lynn Deffner, and Jeff Blomquist.

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

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

Pastor's Report: No written report was provided. Pastor Karoline discussed the possibility of sharing some space in the basement with a group called New Beginnings. Discussions are in the process to coordinate Lenten services between St. Stephen, Good Shepherd, and Pilgrim. A noon service will be held at St. Stephen and evening services will be held at Good Shepherd and Pilgrim. St. Stephen will hold an Easter service.

President's Report: No written report was provided. Kathy is in Africa.

Treasurer's Report: Our general fund currently has a balance of \$22,165.

A motion was made and passed to accept these reports.

Committee Reports:

Good Stewards: No written report was provided. The Adopt-A-Family project went well. All families involved received a gift. The hygiene project is being utilized so well by the community that it is hard to keep the pantry stocked. Contact Shauna Robinson if you would like to donate towards this project.

Property: No written report was provided. An estimate was received to repair the church roof. The overall estimate for repairs comes in at \$140,000.

Worship: A written report was provided.

Trust Fund: A written report was provided.

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 December bills.
- An Agenda for the Annual Meeting was written and approved. The meeting will be held on Sunday, February 11th following worship.
- Nominating Committee Vacancies: Vice President, Trust Fund Member, and Member at Large.
- Audit Committee Members: A committee was created to complete the annual audit of the church. The members are Dick Holster, Cathy Teske, and Pam Hackbart.
- **A motion was made and passed** to accept Tom Newell into membership. Welcome to the St. Stephen family, Tom!

The next Council meeting is scheduled for February 13, 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