

DATE: MARCH 2024
Volume 229 • Issue 229

THE DEACON'S SPIRIT

The newsletter of St. Stephen Lutheran Church



*PALM SUNDAY
MARCH 24TH
WORSHIP AT
ST. STEPHEN
AT 9 AM*

*Maundy Thursday
March 28th
Worship at
Good Shepherd
At 6:30 pm*



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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.



*Good Friday
March 29th
Worship at
St. Stephen
at 6:30 pm*

EASTER SUNDAY

*March 31st
Worship at
St. Stephen
at 10:30 am*



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



I write this on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, a day that is simultaneously Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday. By the time you read this, Lent will be well underway. The ashes will have long been rubbed from our foreheads. Lent Lunch Church and other midweek services will have begun. Spring may be on its way or winter might have decided to make an appearance this year. And through it all, God loves us.

Lent is that very special time of year where we contemplate stepping into the wilderness in faith. It can be a time of deep questions and sometimes somber reflection. This year we focus on the Peter and his path to discipleship, stories of deep faith as well as sin, foolishness, and the messy reality of being human. We also learn how the person of Jesus of Nazareth stepped into his reality and changed his world – changing our world. We learn and experience God's incarnation even in the midst of the wilderness. And through it all, God loves us.

As you move through March this year, into Holy Week and into Easter, how is Lent working on you? How will your path of discipleship change? Where is God showing up in the midst of your story? Remember that through it all, God loves you.

Pastor Karoline

ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS



Anniversaries

The following couples are celebrating their March Wedding Anniversaries.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

March 4th

Michael & Dianne Meuret

March 11th

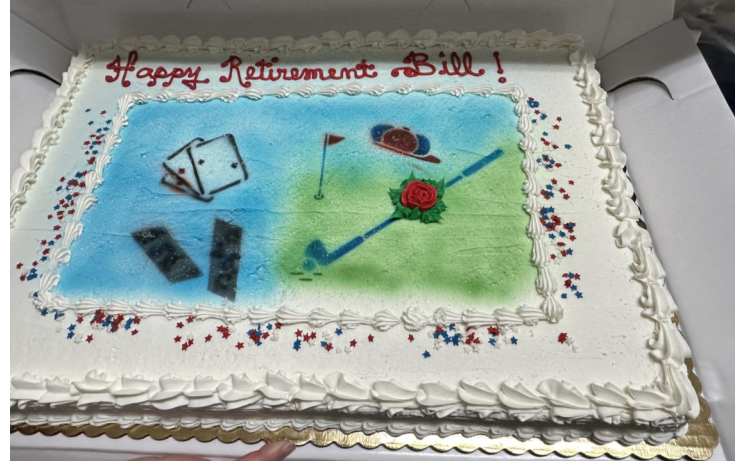
Daryl & Roxanne Christian

March 26th

Darrin & Vanessa Koehler

March 31st

Michael & Leah Holster



HAPPY RETIREMENT BILL!!!



Birthday Blessings

The following people are celebrating March Birthdays

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

March 1st

Theresa Kole

March 2nd

Jay Pippenger

March 4th

Joslyn Strand

March 5th

Ron Felch

March 7th

Candi den Otter

Nathaniel Lenoble

March 8th

Derek Koehler

March 9th

Vallory Haiker

March 10th

Phil Giese

March 13th

Luke den Otter

Ben Kasten

Dennis Lohrey

Brenda Prieve

Shirlee Shaw

March 14th

Darlene Zietlow

March 19th

Lucille Bedish

March 20th

Darlene Johnson

March 25th

Nelda Hettinga

March 26th

Darrin Koehler

March 27th

Dale Seymour

Jeanette Wiskow

March 30th

Noah Weinke

March 31st

Susan Brooks



On Sunday, March 10th
Daylight Saving Time Begins



DAYLIGHT
SAVING
TIME

Spring
FORWARD



Funeral

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

Phyliss Ament ~ February 3, 2024

Remember to set your clocks
forward one hour before bed on
Saturday, March 9th.

Angels Church Retreat

The Angels are hosting a Church Retreat on Sunday, April 7th. It involves lunch (provided by the Angels), fellowship with your church family, different games (cribbage, Uno, dominoes), jigsaw puzzles, and an art project (led by Pastor Karoline). All are invited---no height requirement, no age restriction. The retreat will begin after church and will go until 2:30 or 3pm. We hope you can join us (no reservation required).

Art Journaling

Pastor Karoline will be leading a Lenten Art Journaling Bible Study on Mondays at 4pm on 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!

Hygiene Drive

The Good Stewards Committee is helping to collect items for 88.5FM The Family Radio Network's Help for the Homeless Hygiene Drive. We will be collecting items from February 11th through March 3rd. For February 25th, A-M bring in toilet paper and N-Z bring in paper towel. For March 3rd, A-M bring in dish soap and N-Z bring in laundry soap. If you have any questions or if you would prefer to make a monetary donation, please contact Shauna Robinson. The items collected here at St. Stephen will stay in the Wausau area. We will be collecting for four local agencies: Community Center for Hope, Granite House, The Neighbors' Place, and Open Door. A donation bin will be placed by the bulletin board across from the church office.

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: March 6th, 13th, and 20th. These services will be held in our Downstairs Auditorium at 12:15pm. Soup will be served beginning at noon. There is a sign-up sheet on the front counter if you are interested in bringing soup, bread, or dessert or helping with set-up and/or clean-up. 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. 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.

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, canned vegetables, canned fruit, peanut butter, pasta, hamburger helper, ramen noodles, oatmeal, cereal, crackers, etc. We just ask that it not be in a glass container or contain carbonation. There is a donation bin in the chapel area labeled for food donations. If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, feel free to do so, but please label it for "Good Stewards/Little Free Pantry" and someone from the Good Stewards Committee will go purchase needed items.

Benevolence

Through your support of St. Stephen in the month of January 2024, we were able to contribute to the following ministry:

ELCA National & Synod Support \$594

This is the twelfth 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 \$13,195 for January.

St. Stephen Family Checkbook

For the month of January 2024 and the year to date, the St. Stephen family checkbook looked like this:

January 1—31, 2024

What we received.....	\$24,125.
What we spent.....	(\$21,699.)
Our balance.....	\$ 2,426.

January 1—31, 2024

What we received.....	\$24,125.
What we spent.....	(\$21,699.)
Our balance.....	\$ 2,426.

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.

Quilting Supplies Needed

The quilters are in need of the flat sheets, any size or color (preferably not white), clean, free of stains, and no holes, for Lutheran World Relief Quilting. If you have sheets that you would like to bring to church, you may place them in the Nursery (at the end of the hall; last door on left). Thank you!

Rummage Sale

The Angels Annual Church Rummage Sale is scheduled for April 27 & 28 but don't wait until April to start going through your closets and basement. You can drop items off anytime by taking the elevator down to the basement level and leaving the items by the stairs going up to the dartball room and youth room. As in previous years, please no TVs, computers, VCRs, lawn mowers, tires, or large furniture. We do accept bedside tables, lamps, card tables, lawn chairs (that are in working order), and ladders. Popular items include books, puzzles, games, children's toys, and bedding (clean please). Also popular are items such as wrenches, hammers, coolers, usable paint brushes, and crafting supplies. Please no clothes or shoes. This year we will again be having a baked good sale along with the rummage sale. Thank you for your support.

Safety Committee

We are forming a Safety Committee to assess the safety of St. Stephen Lutheran Church. We will be looking at how safe our building is, how safe our current practices are, and how we can improve in these areas. If you would like to be on this committee, please reach out to Kathy Robinson.

Saturday "Crafternoons"

Saturday "Crafternoons" will be held from 9am until 4pm on the following dates: March 9th, and April 13th. Come for the morning, the afternoon, or both!

Sponsorship Needed

Sponsorship is needed for Palm Sunday bulletin covers—\$12. Please contact Nancy Henke in the church office if you are interested.

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study Group will meet on Wednesday, March 13th at 1pm in the Conference Room. Any women in the congregation who would like to attend are WELCOME!

H A P P Y E A S T E R

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION





EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORM

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

DEADLINE FOR ORDERS IS MONDAY, MARCH 4TH, 2024

Given in memory of

Given in honor of

Given by

Easter Lilies – \$15 each (6" pot)

Quantity: _____

**PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR PAYMENT WITH THIS FORM.
Make check payable to St. Stephen Lutheran Church.**

Thank You!



FEBRUARY 2024 MEMORIALS**Choir Fund**

In loving memory of William “Bill” Lewitzke whose Birthday Anniversary is January 22nd –
Joanne Lewitzke, Family, and Friends

Current Expense Fund

In loving memory of Jerry Preller –
Perry Barr

In loving memory of my Husband, Delbert “Pete” Peterson –
Doris Peterson

In loving memory of Jerry Preller –
Kay Preller

In loving memory of Butch Bliese on his February 14th Birthday Anniversary –
Mary Beth Tolley

In loving memory of our departed members with thankfulness for their faith –
The Women of the Church

Quilting

In loving memory of Phyliss Ament –
Kathy Seidel

Stephen’s Angels

In loving memory of Audrey Ruechel –
Bert & Ron Ruechel

If you would like a memorial placed in the March bulletins and April newsletter, it needs to be to the office by Monday, March 18th. Thank you!

COUNCIL MINUTES ~ FEBRUARY 13, 2024

Present: Pastor Karoline, Sarah Lonsdorf, Verlyn Oelke, Shauna Robinson, Sue Holster, Kathy Robinson, Jeff Blomquist, Nancy Prigge, and Vicki Romang.

Absent: Lynn Deffner and Jacque Schremp.

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

A motion was made and passed to accept the January 19, 2024 Council minutes.

Pastor's Report: A written report was provided. A suggestion was made by Pastor Karoline to think of some ways to welcome more youth into the church.

President's Report: No written report was provided.

Treasurer's Report: Our general fund has a balance of \$14,272. Payment was received from Little Scholars for February's rent, an amount towards the loan for the playground expansion and an amount for prior amount owed.

A motion was made and passed to accept these reports.

Committee Reports:

Good Stewards: A written report was provided. Shauna Robinson was contacted to coordinate a Hygiene Drive for four different locations in our community. A box is set up in the reception area for donations.

Property: A written report was provided. With the resolutions passed during the Annual Meeting, Krause Konstruction was contracted to start work on roof repairs. The payment for repairs is due upon completion of the project.

Worship: A written report was provided. Stephen's Angels are holding a Game Day on April 7th at 10:30am.

Trust Fund: No meeting was held this month.

A motion was made and passed to accept these reports.

Old Business:

- Memorial Fund Order – Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund is number one, Current Expense Fund is number two, and Sustainability Trust Fund is number three.

New Business:

- **A motion was made and passed** to approve January bills.
- We will talk with Little Scholars to find out what their needs are and how they can expand in the future. Several options were discussed.
- Safety concerns have been voiced regarding people walking into the church after hours when St. Stephen staff and Little Scholars children/staff are still in the building. Several ideas have been suggested. A Safety Committee has been created to resolve any safety issues.
- A Council Retreat is being planned for Sunday, February 25th. Sue Holster has volunteered to provide lunch with assistance from Sarah Lonsdorf and Vicki Romang.
- The Taskforce Committee discussed what our vision is and what the vision is of the other ELCA churches in the area. What values do we offer? These other churches are interested in forming a taskforce like the one established at St. Stephen.
- The new Council will be installed during worship on Sunday, February 25th.
- **A motion was made and passed** to approve the hiring of Mary Beth Tolley as the new Assistant Treasurer.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for March 12, 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