

DATE: FEBRUARY 2025
Volume 240 • Issue 240

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: 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 14
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

Dear St. Stephen friends,

I've decided on my word of intention for 2025: Explore.

I am writing you for this "February newsletter" on a cold day near the beginning of January. Tomorrow I fly to Greece and Turkey for a continuing education opportunity. I'm actually tagging along on one of Kathy Robinson's (our resident seminarian) classes. We will be traveling to many of the places in Paul's Epistles in the New Testament, Thessaloniki, Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus, as well as Athens and Istanbul. We will be exploring ancient places to learn deeply about the contexts that formed early Christianity and the spread of the Gospel.

Exploring ancient contexts and new places is exciting and fun. And exploring will continue long after I arrive home again. Exploration is an ongoing adventure as the Church. We get to listen deeply for where the Holy Spirit is calling us. We get to listen deeply with our ministry partners in the Gospel to meet the need in the world. The fruit of one of these explorations will begin in February. As we discerned the need for responding to grief, we have the opportunity to become a Grief Share site. There will be 13 sessions on Monday nights beginning February 3rd from 6:30-8:30. Help us spread the word as we launch this new ministry here.

I am deeply thankful for the faith to know that God is with us wherever we travel and in all of our explorations.

I will be holding you all in prayer! Many of you have assured me that you will be praying for me as I travel, and I give thanks to God for you all.

Peace,

Pastor Karoline



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

St. Stephen Calendar of Events					February 2025	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	3 11:00 Staff Mtg. 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	4 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 SSLC Task Force Mtg 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	5 5:30 Bell Choir 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Choir Practice	6 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	1	8 9:00 Stephen's Angels
9 Annual Meeting Start of Comm. On Call Week 9:00 Worship 10:15 Annual Mtg. 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	10 1:00 St. Stephen Grief Group 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	11 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Council Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	12 1:00 Women's Bible Study 5:30 Bell Choir 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Choir Practice	13 8:30 Quilting 9:30 Worship Comm. Mtg. 6:00 AI-Anon	14 Valentine's Day 3:00pm—10:00pm Candlelight Concert	15 End of Comm. On Call Week
16 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	17 Presidents' Day 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 6:30 Grief Share 6:30 Property Comm. Mtg. 7:00 Dartball MEMORIAL DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY NO SCHOOL	18 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:00 Joint Task Force Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	19 5:30 Bell Choir 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Choir Practice	20 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon 6:00 Special Olympics NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21	22
23 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	24 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	25 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	26 5:30 Bell Choir 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Choir Practice	27 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	28	



Anniversaries

The following couples are celebrating their February Wedding Anniversaries.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

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

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 25th

Kaleb Holster

Jim Lee

February 27th

Tim Gritzmacher

Ethan Schmidt

February 28th

Caleb Deffner



Funeral

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

Judith Joanne Spear ~ January 4, 2025



Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of St. Stephen Lutheran Church will be held on Sunday, February 9th, 2025, 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 13, 2025.

Community On Call

We have partnered with Good Shepherd in hosting a Community on Call week at Good Shepherd. We are signed up for the week of February 9th thru the 15th. We need volunteers who are willing to stay overnight if it is activated. It could potentially be done in two shifts, but they need people to make it happen. You MUST be 18 years old to volunteer; this is not our rule but the Wausau Police Department for the safety of all involved. It is not a guaranteed need but if you are willing to help and be a body either on call or you can commit, please talk to Shauna Robinson or see the sign-up sheet at the front desk. There will be a training session prior to the on-call week.

Food Drive

For the month of February, the Angels are hosting a food drive to help refill the food pantry at First Presbyterian Church (located a couple blocks away). Their pantry is open to the public 3 times a week and serves many in our community. Canned spaghetti sauce and pasta, stuffing mix, instant potatoes, and baked beans are some of the suggested items. They are always in need of canned meats, veggies, and fruit. Thank you for your support!

Grief Share

A new Grief Share Group will be starting at St. Stephen on February 3rd from 6:30 to 8:30 pm facilitated by Shirley Ostrem and Jane Seubert. Grief Share is a 13 week DVD-based course designed to support and help move people through the grief process. For more information, please contact Shirley Ostrem at 715-359-5531 or email sjostrem2113@outlook.com.

Homeless Hygiene Drive

We will hold a Homeless Hygiene Drive February 23rd thru March 16th and will be collecting items such as: toilet paper, paper towel, laundry soap, dish soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothbrushes/toothpaste, etc. A more detailed list will be posted when it gets closer, but if you're a bargain hunter and see a good deal, we will be collecting and distributing the items to Community Center for Hope, Granite House, Open Door, and The Neighbors' Place here in Marathon County. If you'd prefer to make a monetary donation, please talk to Shauna Robinson.

Marty Bus

The Marty Bus is in need of men's size 3x long sleeve shirts, 5x short and long sleeve shirts, and LG, XL and 3X sweatpants and/or thermals. If you can assist in purchasing any of these items or if you have them to donate, please talk to Shauna Robinson. If you would like to make a monetary donation towards purchasing these items, please put a note in the memo line of your check as well as talk to Shauna so the money gets put towards Good Stewards Fund. Thank you!

Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study Group will meet on Wednesday, February 12th 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 December 2024, we were able to contribute to the following ministry:

ELCA National & Synod Support \$869

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 \$19,309 for December.

St. Stephen Family Checkbook

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

December 1—31, 2024

What we received.....\$19,309.
What we spent.....(\$21,837.)
Our balance.....(\$ 2,528.)

January 1— December 31, 2024

What we received.....\$251,054.
What we spent.....(\$245,051.)
Our balance.....\$ 6,003.

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.

JANUARY 2025 MEMORIALS**Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund**

In loving memory of Caroline Kuehl –
Family & Friends

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

Capital Campaign

In loving memory of Jerry Hoppe and Ralph Kohnhorst –
Kelly Brown

In memory of loved ones –
Charlie & Joyce Fromfeld

In loving memory of Merritt & Shirley Gleason whose Wedding
Anniversary would be on January 28th –
Deb Gleason

In loving memory of my Cousin, Jeff Markstrum –
Mary Beth Tolley

Current Expense Fund

In loving memory of Caroline Kuehl –
Family & Friends

If you would like a memorial placed in the February bulletins and March newsletter, it needs to be to the office by Monday, February 17th. Thank you!

Present: Sue Holster, Dick Holster, Verlyn Oelke, Vicki Romang, Jeff Blomquist, Sarah Lonsdorf, Shauna Robinson, Darrin Koehler, and Jacque Schremp.

Absent: Pastor Karoline, Kathy Robinson, Nancy Prigge, and Lynn Deffner.

Council Minutes for December 10, 2024: A motion was made and carried to accept the minutes without changes.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Karoline was not able to attend. However, a written report was provided. Confirmation classes are being received well with young people from Good Shepherd and St. Stephen. A Sanctified Art theme was used for Advent and Christmas. Pilgrim, Good Shepherd, and St. Stephen were invited to write prayers on pieces of colored paper which were assembled into paper prayer quilt squares.

President's Report: No written report was provided.

Treasurer's Report: Our General Fund total is \$14,271 and the total capital is \$20,275. The payments for the rental for both Little Scholars and the Parsonage are up to date through December.

A motion was made and carried to accept these reports.

Committee Reports:

Good Stewards: A written report was provided. St. Stephen and Good Shepherd will partner for the Community on Call program, February 9th thru the 15th. This event will be held at Good Shepherd. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, there is a sign-up sheet on the board across from the office. Details were discussed at the last Good Stewards meeting. The Committee also discussed the Homeless Hygiene Drive to be held from February 23rd through March 16th. Donations will be given to the Community Center for Hope, Granite House, Open Door, and The Neighbors' Place. A drive for Coats for Kids will be held again this year starting August 31st and ending on October 26th. The Noisy Offering in January will be given to the Women's Community.

Property: A written report was provided. The heat failed on the second floor. This issue was fixed.

Trust Fund: A written report was provided. Distributions in the month of December totaled \$1,500. Recipients were Stephen's Angels for the Community Food Drive, Bridge Street Mission Hygiene Drive, Catholics Charities Warming Center (January through March), and Peyton's Place.

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

A motion was made and carried to accept these reports.

Old Business:

- Memorial Fund Order – No change to the order this month. Current Expense Fund is number one, Building Improvement and Maintenance Fund is number two, and Sustainability Trust Fund is number three.

New Business:

- The total amount of invoices paid in December was \$39,776.81.
- Capital Campaign – Reminder to congregation contributors of pledges made.
- Audit Committee – A committee has been assembled for 2024 audits.
- Candlelight Services – The Candlelight services brought many people to our church. There were many good comments made. The group is asking to rent a very small area within the building in order to store their candles.
- Door Labeling – A suggestion was made to label the doors throughout the property to provide direction for people that come to attend events in our building.
- Nominating Committee – Dick Holster has found volunteers for all open Council positions. Great job, Dick!
- Annual Budget – The Agenda for the Annual Meeting was discussed including the budget, election of officers, and reporting.

The next Council meeting will be on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 5:30pm.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Romang, Council Secretary