



**512 McClellan Street
Wausau, WI 54403-4882**

Phone: 715-845-7858

Website: www.sslcwausau.com

Email address:
information@sslcwausau.com

Office Hours:

Mondays and Thursdays
from 8am—3pm

Office Closed:

Monday, May 26th in observance of
Memorial Day

Deadlines:

Bulletin: Wednesday by 8:00 a.m.
Newsletter: 4th 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.

DATE: MAY 2025
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THE DEACON'S SPIRIT

The newsletter of St. Stephen Lutheran Church



Mother's Day Slide Show

We will be having a slide show honoring mothers on Mother's Day which is Sunday, May 11th, during the announcements. Please submit your favorite photo of you and your mother and/or a photo of you and your children/grandchildren. Please, no more than one photo from each category. All photos (submitted electronically) must be to Nancy Henke by Wednesday, May 7th. If you would like to submit a photo electronically, email to nhenke@sslcwausau.com. It would be preferable to have electronic submissions in a jpg. format. Please include the names of the people in the photos with your submissions. **IF YOU SUBMITTED A PHOTO LAST YEAR, THAT PHOTO WILL BE USED.** If you have questions, contact Nancy at 715-845-7858.

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

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is Risen indeed!

Happy Easter! Easter is so much more than a single day. The season of Easter lasts 50 days after Easter Sunday until we celebrate the Holy Spirit and beginning of the Church on Pentecost. Notice that Easter is 10 days *longer* than lent! Also, every Sunday and every time we gather to celebrate the resurrection is a mini Easter!



Resurrection is all around us. Spring is springing! My eyes are so excited to see the budding of trees, the blossoming of flowers, and the greening of the grass (though my nose is less excited by the pollen that accompanies this phenomenon). In the Church we have a lot of fresh starts to celebrate as well. We celebrated the milestone of First Communion on Maundy Thursday with 3 young people, 2 from Good Shepherd and 1 from St. Stephen. Congratulations Samuel, Brandt, and Layton! Soon we will celebrate the Affirmation of Baptism with 6 young people from 3 congregations. Congratulations Elizabeth, Kyiah, Addison, Henry, Ava, and Andrew! It is exciting to see the deep faith of all of these young people and to see how it will continue to grow and change!

There is another sort of resurrection happening in Wausau, this time as an outgrowth of some endings and struggles. How we address homelessness in our area has long been an issue and how to best reach and support our neighbors. There have been numerous organizations and individuals who have gotten involved in serving and addressing the issue. Sadly, Catholic Charities has had to revert to a previous shelter model and will be closing the Good Shepherd Shelter at the Community Partners Campus from May-November, which leaves no overnight shelter in the area. This is due to logistics, not due to lack of need. In fact the need is increasing. This crisis has added fuel to ecumenical conversations about how congregations across denominations can work together to address these needs. The Wausau Police Department is opening a temporary shelter at First United Methodist Wausau to give space for longer term decisions to be made. St. Stephen, Good Stewards, and especially Shauna are deeply involved in conversations about how to faithfully act. This is the beginning of a new and exciting project! There are lots of ways to get involved, from volunteering to helping with a meal, to joining a conversation. Please pray for your church, your community, and your neighbors as we seek to do a new thing!

Pastor Karoline

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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St. Stephen Calendar of Events							May 2025	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
				1 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon	2	3 9:00 Stephen's Angels		
4 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	5 11:00 Staff Mtg. 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 Bell Choir 6:30 Grief Share	6 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 St. Stephen Task Force Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	7 9:00 Hand Bell Tuning 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Choir Practice	8 8:30 Quilting 10:00 Worship Comm. Mtg. 6:00 AI-Anon	9 Peplinski/Wideman Rehearsal	10 Peplinski/Wideman Wedding		
11 Mother's Day 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	12 1:00 St. Stephen Grief Group 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 6:30 Grief Share	13 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Thrivent Webinar at SSLC 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	14 11:30 Women's Luncheon at the Palms Supper Club w/Bible Study following at church 5:30 Confirmation 6:30 Choir Practice	15 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon 6:00 Council President's Mtg. 6:00 Special Olympics	16	17		
18 Confirmation 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 6:30 Property Comm. Mtg. MEMORIAL DEADLINE FOR MAY	20 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:00 Joint Task Force Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	21	22 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AI-Anon NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	23 NO SCHOOL	24		
25 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	26 Memorial Day 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED	27 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	28 DCE HIGH GRADUATION	29 6:00 AI-Anon	30	31 EAST HIGH GRADUATION WEST HIGH GRADUATION		

ANNIVERSARIES & BIRTHDAYS



Anniversaries

The following couples are celebrating their May Wedding Anniversaries.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

May 4th

Ben & Peggy Roble

May 5th

Allen & Susan Brouchous

Nick & Becky Hebda

May 20th

Gregory & Kim Grau

Elroy & Faye Schalow

May 22nd

Christopher & Beth Eiden

May 25th

John & Connie Schneider

May 29th

Joseph & Jessica Strand

May 30th

Edward & Shirley Schwede

May 31st

Everett & Bev Schmidt



Birthday Blessings

The following people are celebrating May Birthdays

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

May 2nd

Jerelyn Weinke

Seth Wiskow

May 3rd

Allen Seymour

May 4th

Raymond Schirmer

May 5th

Elizabeth Lenoble

John Seehafer

May 7th

Matthew Otradovec

Rachel Tordsen

May 9th

Patricia Pippenger

Jessica Strand

May 10th

Sylvia Seiler

May 13th

Jessica Dabler

May 14th

Jennifer Burish

Jane Seubert

May 15th

Susan Flaker-Johnson

Amy Robinson

Randy Van Natta

May 17th

Davis Kole

Terry Lyon

May 18th

Pastor Karoline

May 19th

Debra Zahrt

May 21st

Joan Ninnemann

Gary Tilkens

May 22nd

Julie Cheyka-Sawyer

May 23rd

Shane Woller

May 28th

Melissa Peters

May 30th

Alexander Mohr

May 31st

Andrew Nielson

Thomas Utech



Funeral

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

Grace Luetschwager ~ March 29, 2025



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.

Capital Improvement/Mission Investment Loan

In 2024, St. Stephen borrowed **\$121,000** from the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA to finance building improvements. Beginning in early 2025, we began making monthly payments, with the goal of paying the loan off in 5 years' time. As of April 1st, our current balance is **\$119,600**. Our goal, with your support, is to pay the loan off in 5 years' time. Thank you to those who have already met your 2025 commitment amount and those who are paying on a regular basis. If you have not yet paid your commitment amount, please consider payment sooner than later as earlier payments reduce the principal more quickly. If you need a reminder on your pledge amount, please contact the office and Mary Beth will provide you with your pledge amount. Thank you! – Capital Committee: Jeff Blomquist, Dick Holster, Sue Holster, Randy Van Natta, and Pastor Karoline

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.

Estate Planning Seminar

On Tuesday, May 13th from 5:30pm to 7pm, St. Stephen Lutheran Church will be holding an Estate Planning Seminar hosted by Mandy Roberts, Eric Bilger, and James Bilger from Thrivent Financial. Dinner will be provided. Please RSVP by Monday, May 12th by calling Jen Johnson at 715-470-1303 or emailing jen.m.johnson@thrivent.com. Our church team is committed to helping you plan for your future and the future of those that you care most about. Better prepare yourself for the "what-ifs" in life by joining us as we address: essential estate preservation documents you should have, what is the purpose of a will, estate taxes and annual gifting limits, what is the probate process, advantages of naming beneficiaries on your accounts, the Secure Act 2.0 and how it impacts your family, concerns about how to protect your assets, long-term care (costs and options), and effects of income taxation upon death. This educational event is designed for those planning their estates and their adult beneficiaries to help address their concerns about aging parents. We encourage you to invite any or all of your beneficiaries to attend.

Benevolence

Through your support of St. Stephen in the month of March 2025, we were able to contribute to the following ministry:

ELCA National & Synod Support \$604

This is the third 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 \$18,927 for March.

St. Stephen Family Checkbook

For the month of March 2025 and the year to date, the St. Stephen family checkbook looked like this:

March 1—31, 2025

What we received.....	\$20,579.
What we spent.....	(\$23,312.)
Our balance.....	(\$ 2,733.)

January 1—March 31, 2025

What we received.....	\$61,383.
What we spent.....	(\$70,580.)
Our balance.....	(\$ 9,197.)

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.

Graduates

Are you or a member of your family graduating? Please let us know so St. Stephen can help you celebrate this milestone during our worship service on Sunday, June 1st! Photos of graduates will be in the announcements before the service. Please notify Pastor Karoline, prkaroline@sslcwausau.com

Little Free Pantry

The Good Stewards Committee is asking for donations of unperishable food items for the Little Free Pantry outside of the church. Nothing in glass containers or anything containing carbonation. There are two plastic containers in the chapel area labeled for donations. Questions, reach out to Shauna Robinson or anyone on the Good Stewards Committee. Thank you!

Office Hours

The office will be open on Mondays and Thursdays during the months of May through August. Nancy Henke will be working from home on Wednesdays and checking the church voicemail and her email. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time, please call Pastor Karoline Schwantes at 715-370-5514.

Plant Sale

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will be holding a Plant Sale on Saturday, May 17 from 8am until 1pm and Sunday, May 18th from 10:15am until noon. Flowers, annuals, herbs, vegetables, and many varieties of tomatoes!

Summer Youth Trip Meeting

You and your student(s) are invited to an informational meeting on Wednesday, May 21st, 5:30 pm at Good Shepherd Church, where we will present details about a couple upcoming high school summer trips. The ELCA's next National Youth Gathering is the summer of 2027. That's a great opportunity to gather with thousands of youth from across the country for learning, service and awesome programming. For summer 2026, I would love to get a group going on a week-long mission trip, which includes lots of service to others plus tons of faith building. We regularly participated on summer trips like these until Covid shut them down. If we can get enough interest, through our partnership with other ELCA congregations in the area, we would start fundraising this fall and be ready for summer 2026. These trips are open to students just completing 8th through 12th grades. So the 2026 trip would be for today's 7th to 11th graders and the 2027 trip would cover today's 6th to 10th graders. They each are great and stand on their own; you don't have to commit or be eligible for both trips to join us. Please come learn more about these two awesome opportunities to continue your faith journey. We won't be asking for the commitment on May 21st, just starting the conversation. In person is ideal, but if you absolutely can't make it and want to listen in, I can set up a Zoom meeting. Any questions, feel free to email, text or call me, Tim Holcomb, at alissasdad03@gmail.com or 715-212-3633.

Thank You

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who helped with the Community Dinner on Sunday, April 27th! It was a huge success. We served 116 guests and turned no one away! I greatly appreciate all of the people that assisted in purchasing the requested items, baking cookies, assembling the meals, and adapting to the new location. A special THANKS to a congregation member for applying for a Thrivent grant to help cover some of the cost. I feel very blessed to be working with such a great congregation! — Shauna Robinson

Wausau Marathon County Shelter

The new WMC (Wausau Marathon County) shelter is open. The Good Stewards Committee will be hosting guests at the new shelter site at First United Methodist church from 6pm to 9pm on Monday May 19th. We will assist guests coming in to change clothes, store personal belongings, provide a meal, and settle in for the night. We are in need of a donation of cookies, bars, or dessert for 60 people. You can drop off your donations on Sunday, May 18th when you come to church, or if you are volunteering at the shelter you can bring them with you the night of. The main meal has been covered by Good Shepherd. Breakfast will be provided by the shelter. We have committed to every 3rd Monday of the month until the end of the year. We have folks who can't do all of them and that's OK! If we have enough interest we can look at taking on another Monday as well. Please contact Shauna Robinson at 608-514-4504 if you are available to help so your name can be shared with the scheduler at the shelter or contact her if you have any questions.

Women's Bible Study Luncheon

The Women's Bible Study Group will meet at the Palms Supper Club on Wednesday, May 14th at 11:30am for a luncheon. There will be a Bible Study after lunch at the church. Any women in the congregation who would like to attend are WELCOME! Please call Jane Seubert to RSVP at 715-675-3644 by Monday, May 12th. Thank you!

APRIL 2025 MEMORIALS

Capital Campaign

In loving memory of Chuck Deffner –
Lynn Deffner

In loving memory of Joyce (Larson) DelPino –
Sarah Lonsdorf

In loving memory of Cliff Prigge –
Karen Prigge

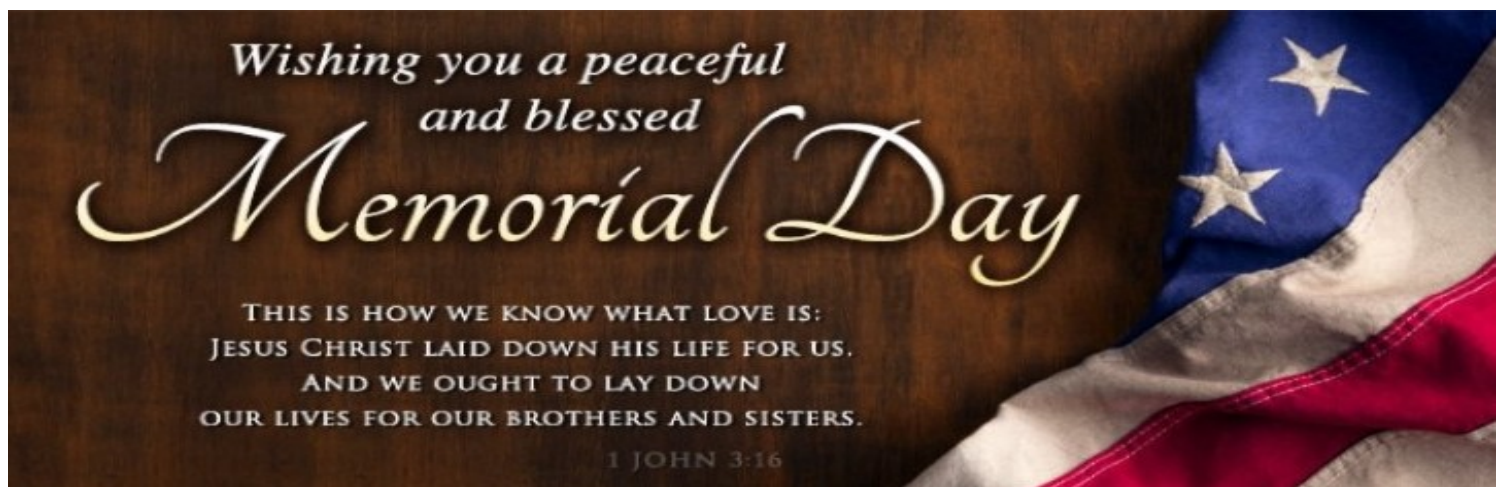
Choir Fund

In loving memory of family members that have passed on –
Kay Preller

Library Fund

In loving memory of Angie Ninnemann –
Tim Gritzmacher

If you would like a memorial placed in the May bulletins and June newsletter, it needs to be to the office by Monday, May 19th. Thank you!



COUNCIL MINUTES ~ APRIL 8, 2025

Present: Dick Holster, Vicki Romang, Jim Von Rueden, Betsy Utecht, Pastor Karoline, Shauna Robinson, Jeff Blomquist, Sarah Lonsdorf, Darrin Koehler, Nancy Prigge, and Sue Holster.

Absent: Jacque Schremp and Nelda Hettinga.

Council Minutes for March 11, 2025: A motion was made and carried to accept the minutes without changes.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Karoline provided a written report.

Treasurer's Report: The General Fund total is \$18,454.73 and the total capital is \$9,257.30.

A motion was made and carried to accept these reports.

Committee Reports:

Good Stewards: A written report was provided. Tracy Rieger requested funding for rental assistance for a couple. In the future, representatives from Good Stewards will make decisions regarding these requests using funds from the Community Outreach Fund without needing Council approval.

Property: A written report was provided. The Property Committee will work toward labeling doors and windows at St. Stephen for safety purposes. A safety walkthrough may be performed by Wausau police in the future.

Trust Fund: A written report was provided from the April 6, 2025 committee meeting.

Worship: A written report was provided from the March 13, 2025 committee meeting.

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:

- Invoice Approval—The total amount of invoices paid in March was \$29,724.39.
- **A motion was made and carried to approve the paid invoices.**
- Noisy Offering—April 20th
- Donations from the noisy offerings will continue to be added to the Community Outreach Fund.
- Capital Campaign—A reminder to fulfill pledges will be announced in church and placed in the Deacon's Spirit.
- Task Force—The Task Force will meet in May and will then take a hiatus before regrouping at a later date. The focus at this point is on continuing our shared ministry.
- Confirmation Approval—Confirmation will take place on May 18th at Good Shepherd.
- **A motion was made and carried to approve Elizabeth Lenoble as a confirmed member of St. Stephen.**
- First Communion—One student from St. Stephen will be participating in First Communion education on April 12th, along with students from Good Shepherd. First Communion will take place on Maundy Thursday.
- Lockers for the Homeless—The Marathon County Community Outreach Task Force has made a request to place four to six lockers outside of St. Stephen near the dumpsters, as a place for unhoused individuals to store their belongings.
- **A motion was made and carried to approve the request for placement of the lockers, pending a check with St. Stephen's insurance carrier.**
- Thrivent Webinar: Estate Preservation for the Next Generation—May 13th at 5:30 pm.
- Hosted at St. Stephen by Mandy Roberts from Thrivent. A meal will be provided.
- Synod Assembly—June 7th in Green Bay; two lay voting members are needed.
- Jim Von Rueden will attend staff meetings as Council representative.
- Goals for 2025—Review Constitution & Bylaws; review memorial funds; update membership list.

The next Council meeting will be on Tuesday, June 10, at 5:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Utecht, Council Secretary