



THE DEACON'S SPIRIT

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2025

Volume 247 • Issue 247

The newsletter of St. Stephen Lutheran Church

God's work. Our hands.



**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, September 1st
in observance of Labor Day

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.

Sunday, September 14th

God's Work Our Hands is Sunday, September 14th
at the Marty Bus. We will be providing a meal for
those who are less fortunate than us. We are looking
for donations of individual bags of chips, wrapped
individual sweet treats, cans of baked beans, water
flavoring packets, onions, pickles, and buns! We are
anticipating a high turn out and whatever is leftover we
will be taking to the WMC Shelter for dinner that
evening! There will be a sign-up outside the office.
If you are able to help that would be greatly
appreciated. All items should be to church by Sunday,
September 7th, or talk to Shauna Robinson as items
that are not donated will need to be picked up the
week before the event.

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

"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert"
Isaiah 43:19



Three years ago, I shared this Bible verse with you in one of my first newsletter articles as your pastor. I've been continually blessed to be called to be your pastor and to be in ministry together with you.

We've experienced a lot of these new things in the past few years and God has been faithfully present through it all! New relationships have been formed and shared ministry has been practiced. We've experienced loss and explored where God shows up in our grief.

I share this verse again as God continues to show up and make ways in what might have once felt like wilderness! Our neighbor congregation, Immanuel, is celebrating Holy Closure and a merger with St. John's Village of Maine, through which their legacy of faith will continue to live in. In our community, both First English and Saint Andrew have called new pastors. The south side ELCA congregations are working together to create a new multi-point "River of Hope Parish." And we at St. Stephen continue to work with Good Shepherd for our confirmation and youth programming, as well as continue to work with Pilgrim towards a potential merger.

As we move into the fall, there is a lot happening that feels new. There is the renewed energy of groups gathering after summer breaks for Bible Study, quilting, and service. There are new ways to get involved and to share your skills in ministry, whether it is by joining a counting team or a new work group or signing up to be an assisting minister. Come be a part of the new things that God is up to among us!

Pastor Karoline

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

3

St. Stephen Calendar of Events						September 2025	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
	1 Labor Day 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum NO SCHOOL OFFICE CLOSED	2 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:00 Good Stewards Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	3 6:30 Choir Practice	4 8:30 Quilting 6:00 Al-Anon	5	6	
7 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	8 11:00 Staff Mtg. 1:00 St. Stephen Grief Group 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 Bell Choir 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	9 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Council Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	10 1:00 Women's Bible Study 3:00 Worship Comm. Mtg. 6:30 Choir Practice	11 8:30 Quilting 6:00 Al-Anon	12	13 9:00 Stephen's Angels	
14 God's Work Our Hands 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	15 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 Bell Choir 6:30 Grief Share 6:30 Property Comm. Mtg. 7:00 Dartball MEMORIAL DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER	16 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	17 6:30 Choir Practice	18 8:30 Quilting 6:00 Al-Anon 6:00 Special Olympics NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	19	20 3:00pm—10pm Candlelight Concert	
21 9:00 Worship 10:15 Special Congregational Mtg. 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	22 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 Bell Choir 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	23 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	24 6:30 Choir Practice	25 8:30 LWR Work Day 6:00 Al-Anon	26	27	
28 Blessing of the Quilts 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	29 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 Bell Choir 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	30 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum					



Anniversaries

The following couples are celebrating their September Wedding Anniversaries.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

September 2nd

Mark & Laurie Heuser
Allen & Carol Seymour

September 3rd

Robert & Bonnie Pils

September 8th

Chad & Ashley Kumm

September 10th

Mathew & Jennifer Burish

September 11th

William & Penny Windorski

September 14th

Randy & Kari Van Natta

September 16th

Jay & Patty Pippenger

September 19th

Roger & Pam Hackbart

Terry & Gloria Lyon

September 20th

Carl & Sandy Stuhr

September 23rd

Brett & Rachel Zastrow

September 26th

Greg & Lisa Koch

September 27th

Jeffrey & Rhonda Will



Birthday Blessings

The following people are celebrating September Birthdays

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

September 1st

Lucas Kasten

September 3rd

William Grau
Marjorie Krahn

September 5th

Lori Napstad
Simon Utecht

September 8th

Kessel Deffner

September 10th

Kathy Robinson

September 12th

Jennifer Shidell

September 13th

John Erickson

September 14th

Beth Eiden

September 15th

Shauna Robinson

Peggy Roble

Betsy Utecht

September 16th

Harold Dabler

Ethyn Kroeplin

Bruce Weinke

September 17th

Lisa Marcott

September 18th

Abigail Hannes

September 19th

Eleanor Schneider

John Schneider

September 21st

Hudson Haiker

September 22nd

Daryl Christian

Sarah Lonsdorf

Elroy Schalow

September 23rd

Crystal Nielson

Mary Beth Tolley

September 24th

Deb Gleason

September 25th

LuAnn Theis

September 28th

Erin Hall

Ashley Lenoble

September 29th

Holly Jorgensen

September 30th

Tonette Tilkens



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.

Coats for Kids

A table has been set up in our coffee hour area for Coats for Kids. You can start bringing in items starting now, until Wednesday, October, 29th. Nancy Prigge will get these items to the Wausau School District for them to distribute to schools/individuals in need. Gently used or new, kids to adult, all sizes are needed. Coats, jackets, sweatpants, snow pants, hooded sweatshirts, hats, gloves, mittens, boots, socks and underwear (must be new in package). Email nancyprigge@yahoo.com or call 715-432-6893 if you have any questions.

Confirmation Kickoff

Confirmation begins Wednesday, October 1st! You are invited! Parents or grandparents please plan on attending the first week with your student as we will go over expectations and get to know each other. Confirmation is a 3 year program for students beginning in 6th grade with confirmation in May of 8th grade. It is a combined program of youth from Good Shepherd, Pilgrim, and St. Stephen. We meet Wednesday nights from 5:30-6:30pm at St. Stephen. During Advent and Lent, we meet at Good Shepherd with an adapted schedule that includes a meal and helping with midweek worship. A detailed calendar will be presented at the first meeting

Counting Groups/Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to help count the weekly offerings and deposit it into our account at Marathon Savings Bank. This typically takes about an hour per week and we are looking to create 4 teams of 3-4 people, so you would serve once per month. We discontinued this during COVID but would like to restart these teams as a good practice moving forward

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.

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 9am-2pm.

Benevolence

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

ELCA National & Synod Support \$796

This is the seventh 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 \$17,679 for July.

St. Stephen Family Checkbook

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

July 1—31, 2025

What we received.....	\$23,741.
What we spent.....	(\$19,540.)
Our balance.....	\$ 4,201.

January 1—July 31, 2025

What we received.....	\$149,515.
What we spent.....	(\$149,124.)
Our balance.....	\$ 391.

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.

Grief Seminars

There are two different Grief Seminars taking place at Holiday Inn & Suites in Rothschild. The first, "How Death Changes a Family through Grief, Loss, and New Beginnings", will be held on Monday, September 8th from 6:30-8:00pm. This seminar will examine transitions and what brings them about, the wisdom that comes from exploring our "dark emotions", relearning our world, and will provide strategies to help families and friends who try to cope with the opportunities and struggles in the "journeys of transition". This seminar is FREE and registration is NOT required. The second, "Helping Individuals and Families Move from Coping and Surviving, to Being Transformed and Thriving", will be held on Tuesday, September 9th from 10am until noon. Registration IS required and there is a fee of \$40. You can register online at: wingsgrief.org. This seminar will provide counselors, therapists, clergy, and educators, as well as strategies and clinical interventions to help individuals and families. For more information, contact Nan Zastrow at 715-845-4159 or email nanwings1@gmail.com

Grief Share

Grief Share is a 13 week DVD-based course designed to support and help move people through the grief process. A new session will be starting on Mondays from 6:30 until 8:30pm in the St. Stephen conference room facilitated by Shirley Ostrem and Lynn Deffner. This session will run from September 8th through December 1st. There is no cost to participate and you are welcome to join at any time during the season. For more information, please contact Shirley Ostrem at 715-359-5531 or email: sjostrem2113@outlook.com or visit www.griefshare.org/groups/265484

HELP Closet

HELP Closet is a local Health Equipment Lending Program. Items usually available are: hospital beds, wheelchairs, commodes, shower seats, standard walkers, canes, and crutches. There is a minimal charge to use an item from this closet. The closet is located at 1106 Fifth Street in Wausau, 715-843-5985.

Lay School

Registration is OPEN!!! Don't miss your chance to deepen your faith and understanding. You can find detailed class descriptions and register directly on the Lay School website: www.layschool.ecsw.org Classes are capped at 25 participants, so register early to ensure your spot.

Lutheran World Relief

We are still in need of lightweight bath towels (20"x40" to 52"x27") and spiral notebooks (70-80 sheet). We will be meeting to assemble kits on Thursday, September 25th at 8:30am. Feel free to come and help. The LWR Ingathering will take place on Saturday, October 4th from 8am until noon. We are looking for volunteers to help with packing. Please save the date for helping this great cause. Questions? Contact Verlyn Oelke at 715 551-0546.

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, Open Door, the Wausau Warming Center, 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.

WMC Shelter

We are looking for shelter volunteers and meal providers for the shelter. The Good Stewards Committee of St. Stephen and Good Shepherd provide volunteers and meals for the shelter on the first and third Mondays of each month. If you are able to help out, please sign up on the bulletin board across from the office or talk to Shauna Robinson, 608-514-4504. Volunteer shifts run from 5:45-9:00pm. If you would like to contribute to the meal monetarily please talk to Shauna as she is arranging and ordering the meal. Every little bit helps! We have 3 more Mondays to provide meals so please consider helping out in the upcoming months as well. You can cook the meal and someone else can serve it if you prefer; you are not required to be there. The current needs of the shelter are: shampoo/conditioner, body wash, sanitizer wipes, coffee, creamer, sugar, cases of water, aloe vera, band-aids, medical tape/co-band, instant ice packs, and size small (5/6) women's underwear. If you have items that you would like to donate, bring them to church. If you'd prefer to do a monetary donation make a memo on your check or a note that states it's for WMC supplies.

Women's Bible Study

The Women of St. Stephen will have a Bible Study on Wednesday, September 10th at 1pm in the Conference Room. All women of the church are welcome to attend!

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, September 21st following worship to vote to move forward with planning a potential merger with Pilgrim Lutheran Church.

For the last couple years, St. Stephen has been exploring shared ministry with our neighboring ELCA congregations. A task force, made up of several of our faithful congregation members, has been meeting with similar task forces from Good Shepherd and Pilgrim Lutheran Churches wondering prayerfully where God is leading us in the future.

Over the summer we were approached by leaders from Pilgrim proposing that they as a congregation merge into St. Stephen. In August we met with synod leadership in order to discuss next steps and a plan for moving forward. The first step of this plan is for both congregations to make a formal resolution to move forward with intention to merge. There will be congregational meetings at both congregations on September 21st to vote on this resolution.

With approval, we will move forward with the following steps:

- **Combined Congregational Retreat for Mission and Vision on October 26th:** Our day will begin with combined worship and will continue in a day long retreat for both Pilgrim and St. Stephen. Pastor Dara, Director of Evangelical Mission for the ECSW, will lead us through activities and conversation that will help us to create a clear statement of our identity and goals.
- **Work Groups:** A merger makes it important that we plan ahead for how best to welcome both members from Pilgrim as well as newcomers from the community. It will be essential to evaluate every aspect of our congregation. We will be creating Work Groups to help lead us in this work. Small teams will be made of 4-6 people (2 or 3 from St. Stephen and 2 or 3 from Pilgrim) to go over topics ranging from policies & procedures, staffing models, finances & stewardship, legal & real estate, ministry, constitution, and a celebration team. These teams will not be primarily made up of council members and will need input and support from all members of the congregation. Please consider being a part of one of these groups!
- **Evaluation of Congregational Properties:** We will work with local real estate professionals to assess the property resources of the congregations. *This is not a plan to sell any of the property at this time*, but for an awareness of the value and resources for the moving forward of a potential merger. This will also help us in the step of discerning future ministry opportunities.
- **Consultation with Legal Services:** As constitutional organizations, we will be working with lawyers to ensure that the potential merger is done in the smoothest and best way possible.
- **Prayer:** This is our first step and our every step. At all levels of this transition, we ask for prayer and support as we discern where and how God is calling us! We commit to approaching this process with openness and clear communication. This is a wonderful and exciting opportunity for evangelism and to welcome our newcomers to our congregation.

AUGUST 2025 MEMORIALS

Capital Campaign

In loving memory of Natalie Streveler –
Kelly Brown

In loving memory of Ruth Grell and Charlie Fromfeld –
Susan & Chuck Johnson

In loving memory of Richard Kasten who passed away on August 13, 2013 –
Shirley Kasten

In loving memory of my Mother, Loretta Lodholz and Brother, Patrick Prieve in celebration of their Birthday Anniversaries on August 3rd and August 26th –
Mary Beth Tolley

Current Expenses

In memory of loved ones –
Kay Preller

Sustainability Trust Fund

In grateful thanks for the blessings we have received in the first 50 years of our marriage –
Verlyn & Kathy Oelke

