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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.

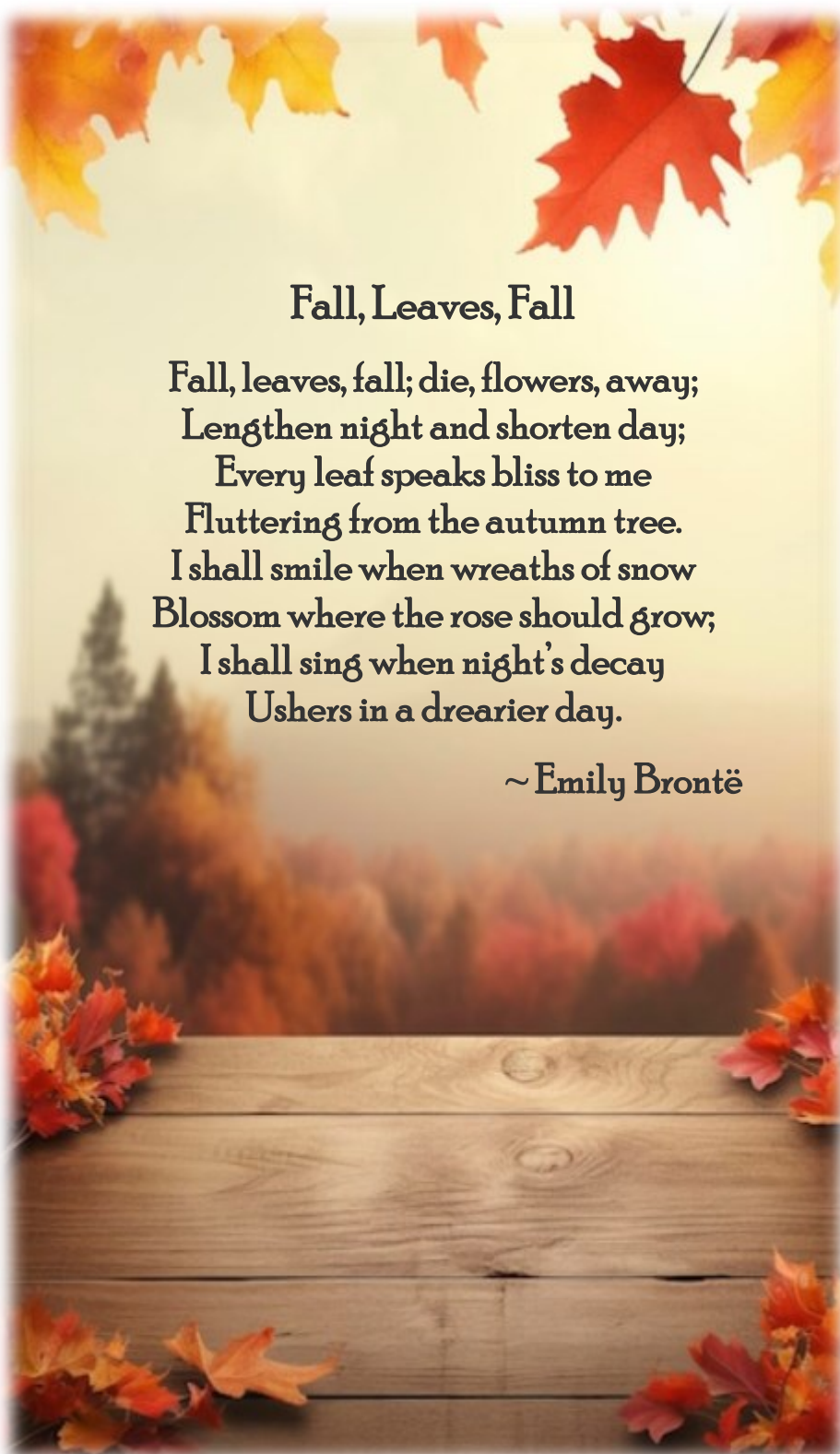
Facebook:
Join us to watch a livestream service
every Sunday at 9am at
<https://www.facebook.com/wausausslc>

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.

Fall, Leaves, Fall

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.

~Emily Brontë



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

Every fall, creation demonstrates to us in stunning color that transition can be beautiful! As we look for the changes of the season, the air is a little bit crisper and the trees begin to show off. All of a sudden there are pumpkin stands by the side of the road, aisles of costumes and candy appear in the stores, and pumpkin spice flavored everything shows up on menus everywhere!



Around St. Stephen, there are signs of the changing season as well. We plan for trunk or treating and visits from the preschoolers upstairs. And last week, we held a congregational meeting to vote on moving forward with Pilgrim to create formal plans for a merger. We have been praying and listening deeply for guidance from the Holy Spirit as we live in this time of so many transitions. God has been with us through it all, is present with us and through us, and will continue to be. Consider ways that you can be a part of our faithful next steps! Ask about our work teams. Join us for the congregational retreat on Sunday, October 26th from 11am until 2pm as we dream and vision and wonder together about who God is calling us to be!

Pastor Karoline

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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St. Stephen Calendar of Events					October 2025	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	6 11:00 Staff Mtg. 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 Bell Choir 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	7 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:00 Good Stewards Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	8 1:00 Women's Bible Study 5:00 Trust Fund Mtg. 5:30 Confirmation Class 6:30 Choir Practice	9 8:30 Quilting 1:00 Worship Comm. Mtg. 6:00 AL-Anon	10	11 3:00pm—10pm Candlelight Concert
12 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	13 Columbus Day 1:00 St. Stephen Grief Group 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 Bell Choir 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	14 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:30 Council Mtg. 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	15 5:30 Confirmation Class 6:30 Choir Practice	16 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AL-Anon 6:00 Special Olympics	17	18
19 Community Dinner Silent Auction Begins 9:00 Worship 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	20 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 OCTOBER	21 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	22 5:30 Confirmation Class 6:30 Choir Practice	23 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AL-Anon NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	24	25 3:00pm—10pm Candlelight Concert
26 Reformation Silent Auction Ends 9:00 Combined Worship w/Pilgrim Lutheran Church 10:15 Mission and Vision Retreat w/Pilgrim Lutheran Church 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 12:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 14/TDS 7:00 AA	27 3:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 5:15 Bell Choir 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 Dartball	28 10:00 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum 10:30 Worship Telecast Ch. 980/Spectrum	29 5:30 Confirmation Class 6:30 Choir Practice	30 8:30 Quilting 6:00 AL-Anon	31 Halloween 4:00pm—7:00pm Trunk or Treat at Good Shepherd	



Anniversaries

The following couples are celebrating their October Wedding Anniversaries.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

October 3rd

Robert & Tamara Pusheck

October 10th

Don & Gail Wolfe

October 17th

Roger & Marjorie Zweck

October 18th

Lloyd & Wendy Zimmer

October 19th

Wally & Carmel Lewitzke

October 23rd

Kasey & Danielle Schneider



Birthday Blessings

The following people are celebrating October Birthdays

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

October 1st

Ethan Holster

Pam Kohnhorst

October 4th

Leila Whitmore

October 7th

Jacquelyn Schremp

October 13th

Cameron Pflanzner

October 14th

Judy Kort

October 16th

John Peterson

October 19th

Kay Preller

Eli Schuett

October 20th

Ronald Dustan

Don Kromrei

October 22nd

Kelly Brown

October 28th

Nancy Pijan

October 29th

Kaitlyn Koehler

October 30th

Kasey Schneider

Give
thanks
to the Lord,
for he is
good! His
faithful
love
endures
forever.

Psalm 118:1

Adopt-A-Family

Can you believe there's only 91 days until Christmas? Yikes! In the past, we adopted families in collaboration with other local ELCA churches. This year we will be adopting a total of 20 kids (unsure how many families that will equal out to). Please watch for a table to be set up in the back of the church in mid-November. We will also be collecting monetary donations for these gifts as well. If you would like to donate towards Adopt-A-Family BEFORE the table is set up, please make a note in the memo line of your check and we will use the money accordingly. Let's help the kids feel the magic of Christmas this year.

Advent Invite

Our theme this year for Advent and Christmas is, "What Do You Fear: Insisting on Hope this Advent." If you are interested in helping us prepare, decorate, or create art to help with the theme, please contact Pastor Karoline.

Christmas Cantata

Invitation to all who love to sing! St. Andrew will hold their Christmas Cantata, "The Winter Rose", on Sunday, December 21st at 2pm and 7pm. The rehearsal schedule is set. There will be 3 options available each week: Wednesdays beginning October 8th from 7:30-8:30pm (NO REHEARSAL ON OCTOBER 15TH), Sundays beginning October 12th from 9-10am, and Mondays beginning October 13th from 6:30-8pm. You do not need to attend every rehearsal each week, just what will fit into your schedule. If you plan to participate, fill out the form at: <https://tinyurl.com/2025Cantata>.

Coats for Kids

A table has been set up in our coffee hour area for Coats for Kids. You can bring in items until Wednesday, October, 29th. Nancy Prigge will get these items to the Wausau School District for distribution to schools and 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.

Community Dinner

St. Stephen will be hosting the Community Dinner on Sunday, October 19th. We will be meeting at 2pm at First United Methodist Church to assemble the meals. We are looking for donations of cookies/bars, chips, and drinks! We are planning to serve roughly 125 meals as the need has continued to grow. There will be a sign-up sheet on the board outside the church office.

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.

Benevolence

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

ELCA National & Synod Support \$659

This is the eighth 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 \$14,636 for August.

St. Stephen Family Checkbook

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

August 1—31, 2025

What we received.....	\$19,394.
What we spent.....	(\$18,669.)
Our balance.....	\$ 725.

January 1—August 31, 2025

What we received.....	\$168,660.
What we spent.....	(\$167,913.)
Our balance.....	\$ 747.

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.

Faithful Vessel Project

There will be a Vessel Painting Event at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church on Sunday, October 19th from 11am until 1pm. Join in creating vessels of hope to support and bring attention to humanitarian relief efforts in Gaza. All are welcome to paint a vessel, share a small meal, and contribute to a cause that matters. Suggested donation of \$20. Painted vessels in a bundle with broth and bread will be sold at the GSLC Women's Bazaar on Saturday, November 8th with all proceeds supporting humanitarian relief efforts in Gaza.

God's Work Our Hands

THANK YOU to all who helped plan, prepare and serve at the Marty Bus for God's Work Our Hands this past Sunday. It took a lot but it was the best year yet! We served roughly 150-170 meals (some were duplicate), we were still serving items as we were cleaning up, nobody was turned away! It was a blessing to have the to go containers once again as we sent some of the meals out with people. With the leftover food we had I will be serving it at the shelter this week. Everyone at the shelter has been talking about it the past few days. I heard there were many great conversations and community with those we served. They all really appreciated the live music, a full belly, and more seasonally appropriate clothing, backpacks, shoes, sleeping bags, etc. I know it's hard to believe, but 21 totes of clothing items were given away on Sunday! 2025 was a HUGE SUCCESS and I can't wait to see what 2026 brings—Shauna Robinson.

Little Scholars Trick or Treat

St. Stephen will be hosting a Trick or Treat for the kids from Little Scholars on Friday, October 31st. We will be setting up stations around the church for the kids to Trick or Treat at. If you would like to see the kids in their Halloween costumes and help hand out candy at one of the stations, contact Pastor Karoline.

Lutheran World Relief Ingathering

The LWR Ingathering will take place on Saturday, October 4th from 8am until noon. We are looking for volunteers to help with packing. Please plan ahead and save the date for helping this great cause. Many hands do make light work! Questions? Contact Verlyn Oelke at 715 551-0546.

Marty Bus

The Marty Bus is in search of FOUR size 6X men's winter coats. If you would like to purchase one or if you are able to help monetarily, please indicate it on the memo line of your check. I know it's not quite coat season yet; however it is heading that way and it would be nice to get the coats sooner than later to help these individuals stay warm and safe this year. Thank you!

Mid-Week Worship

Pilgrim Lutheran Church has midweek services on Thursdays at 6:30pm. These services are intended to reach those who cannot attend on Sunday. Services last about a half an hour. There are 5-7 people that regularly attend. Pilgrim is extending an invitation to any St. Stephen members that are interested.

Sending for Mary Beth Tolley

Our Assistant Treasurer, Mary Beth, will be moving out of state to be closer to family. We will miss her a lot, and we send her with our support and prayers! On Sunday, October 19th we plan on recognizing Mary Beth during worship and celebrate her sending during our fellowship hour. Help us send her off! Please consider writing a card or note with prayers and encouragement that we can include in a small care package to send with her, as well as other tokens of appreciation. You can drop these off at church by Sunday, October 19th. If you prefer, you can e-mail your note to Pastor Karoline (prkaroline@sslcwausau.com) and we will include it in the care package!

Silent Auction

The Angels will once again be hosting a basket auction on Sunday, October 19th. The proceeds will go towards the expenditures accrued by the Property Committee as they continue with maintenance projects throughout the building. Then on Sunday, October 26th, the Angels will host a coffee hour with the final bidding on the baskets. You do not have to be present to win. If you would like to donate a basket, please drop it off at the church no later than Friday, October 17th. Thank you for your support!

Women's Bible Study

The Women of St. Stephen will have a Bible Study on Wednesday, October 8th at 1pm in the Conference Room. All women of the church are welcome to attend!

SEPTEMBER 2025 MEMORIALS

Capital Campaign

In loving memory of my Mother, Shirley Gleason on her September 19th Birthday Anniversary and my Brother, Brian Gleason on his September 26th Birthday Anniversary –

Deb Gleason

In loving memory of my Sister, Shirley Gleason on her September 19th Birthday Anniversary and my Nephew, Brian Gleason on his September 26th Birthday Anniversary –

Mary Beth Tolley

In loving memory of my Brother, Pat Prieve who passed away on September 25, 2016 and my Nephew, Kevin Prieve, whose Birthday Anniversary is September 30th –

Mary Beth Tolley

Community Outreach Fund

In thanks to God for his many blessings –

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Current Expenses

In memory of loved ones –

Joyce Fromfeld

In loving memory of my Husband, Jerry and my Brothers, Denny, Ricky, and Ronny –

Kay Preller

Seidel-Meyer Pastoral Ministry Fund

In loving memory of our Fathers, Harold Kratwell and Kenneth Borth –

Sandy & Ron Borth and Family

Sustainability Trust Fund

In loving memory of Roger Fust who passed away on September 16, 2011 –

Darleen Fust

COUNCIL MINUTES ~ SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

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

Absent: Sue Holster, Nelda Hettinga, and Jacque Schremp.

Council Minutes for June 10, 2025: A motion was made and carried to accept the minutes without changes.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Karoline provided a written report. Mary Beth Tolley will be moving to Tennessee at the end of October. There will be a reception in her honor following worship on October 19th.

Treasurer's Report: The General Fund total is \$20,603.52 and the total capital is \$21,349.71.

A motion was made and carried to accept these reports.

Committee Reports:

Good Stewards: A written report was provided. Immanuel has contributed \$1,000 to the Community Outreach Fund. There is a desire to purchase wheeled laundry carts to separate donations intended for different initiatives.

Property: Written reports were provided from June and August.

Worship: A written report was provided from the August 4, 2025 committee meeting.

Trust Fund: A written report was provided from the September 7, 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 was \$6,967.66 in June, \$9,522.21 in July, and \$8,110.19 in August.
A motion was made and carried to approve the paid invoices.
- Noisy Offering—Sunday, September 21, 2025. Donations from the noisy offerings will continue to be added to the Community Outreach Fund.
- Capital Campaign—St. Stephen is continuing to make double payments.
- Task Force—The Task Force will meet on Tuesday, September 30th at St. Andrew Lutheran Church.
- Wausau Area ELCA Church Presidents' Meeting—The September meeting was postponed until October.
- Candlelight—Six concerts are scheduled for Fall and Winter 2025.
- **A motion was made and carried to approve the Trust's transfer in June of \$4,000 to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund from the Wider Mission Fund.**
- **A motion was made and carried to transfer \$4,000 from the Memorial Reserve Fund to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.**
- Special Congregational Meeting—September 21, 2025. **A motion was made and carried to approve the language of a resolution for inclusion on the ballot at the September 21, 2025 special congregational meeting.**
- Combined Congregational Retreat—October 26, 2025 at St. Stephen. All congregation members from Pilgrim and St. Stephen are invited to participate.
- Goals for 2025—Review Constitution & Bylaws; review memorial funds; update membership list
- **A motion was made and carried to approve the transfer of Everett, Beverly, Nathaniel and Ethan Schmidt to St. John Lutheran Church in the Village of Maine.**
- **A motion made and carried to approve the transfer of Jeff, Janet, and Harmony Gosch to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Wausau.**
- **A motion was made and carried to remove members who have requested removal from the roster.**

The next Council meeting will be on Tuesday, October 14, at 5:30 pm.

A motion was made and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Utecht, Council Secretary

SPECIAL MTG. MINUTES ~ SEPTEMBER 21, 2025⁹

RE: Potential Merger of Pilgrim Lutheran Church into St. Stephen Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by Dick Holster, Council President.

The meeting was held in the sanctuary after church with 45 voting members in attendance, which was a quorum.

The following resolution was presented to the congregation:

Whereas, a merger of Pilgrim Lutheran Church ELCA, 709 Weston Avenue, Wausau, Wisconsin into St. Stephen Lutheran Church ELCA, 512 McClellan Street, Wausau, WI appears to be an avenue that would serve the needs of both congregations and strengthen the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America presence in Wausau, WI and Marathon County, WI, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED: That the St. Stephen Lutheran congregation invites Pilgrim Lutheran congregation to enter into conversations to investigate the wisdom of a merger of the two congregations and be it further

RESOLVED: That the two congregations direct their transition teams to develop a merger plan to offer to each congregation for study and decision, and be it further

RESOLVED: That in this and all matters we ask God's blessing upon our efforts, plans and decisions.

Following discussion, a motion was made and seconded to adopt the resolution as written.

Paper ballots were distributed for voting and were counted by Vicki Romang and Betsy Utecht. The voting result was 43 "Yes" votes in favor of adopting the resolution, 1 "No" vote, and 1 "Abstain."

After the vote, next steps were discussed, including a combined congregational retreat at St. Stephen on Sunday, October 26, 2025, the formation of work groups to address various aspects of the potential merger, and the possible extension of council members' terms until an ultimate decision regarding a merger is made.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Utecht, Council Secretary