



THE MARTYR MONTHLY

**St. Stephen the Martyr
Lutheran Church, ELCA**

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**Worship With Us—All Are Welcome!
Sunday – 8:00 am & 9:30 am
Saturday - 5 pm**

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

January 1—New Year's Day

January 6 @ 6 pm Epiphany/Potluck for Those Who Live Alone

January 5—7th/8th Grade Confirmation at SSM begins

January 16—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 15-22—Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 29 @ 10:40 a.m.—Annual Congregational Meeting.

A brunch will be served afterward by the Youth Group.



From the Pastor

President's Page/Annual Meeting

Souper Bowl of Caring

Beyond New Year's Resolutions

Youth & Family News

Knit Wits/Confirmation

Calendar

First Friday Potlucks—NEW!

Music & Worship/Unity Week

WELCA Bible Study—Loose Ends

Stewardship/Avenue Needs Help

Thank yous

Condensed Minutes of Dec. Mtg.

SSM COOKBOOKS

Cookbooks are still available for sale in the narthex. They make great gifts for special occasions. The books are filled with wonderful recipes from SSM members and the cost is only \$10.00.

**Hunger Banks can be returned
January 7 or 8.**

*He who is kind to the poor lends to the
LORD,
and He will repay him for his deed.*

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back
with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

~ Howard Thurman

These words form the essence of our life with God and with others in the season of Epiphany. "Epiphany" comes from a Greek word which means revealing, or "showing" or manifestation. The season of Epiphany celebrates the "showing" of the Christ Child to other people and nations besides His own people, the Jews.

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of the Magi (the wise and mysterious ones) who come from the East, bearing gifts for the newborn King. In some mysterious way, they are led by a star and it is revealed to them that this Child will be Lord of all the world. They return home, and we do not know if they shared this great Good News. We hope they did!

And so we hope and pray that we, too, will share this great Good News! We want to share it even and especially in the dark days of winter. We cannot forget that after Christmas, there are still hungry and homeless people, there are still lonely and grieving folks, there are still children and other vulnerable ones who need us. And of course, there is still GOD, leading us, guiding us, showing us the way!

The season of Epiphany has been designated a season of mission for the Church. Remember to pray for our ELCA missionaries in other countries, especially Peter and Sarah Grow-Hanson and their boys. Pray for our partners at Cristo Rey and in the Meru Diocese of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Observe your mission to the world as you invite others to worship with you, as you reach out to those in need, remembering the gifts of the Magi to the Christ Child.

May the light of Christ shine on you and in you all during the days of Christmas and Epiphany!

***"The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)***

Thanking you once again for your love, support, cards, and prayers in this difficult time,

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Notice of Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will be held in the fellowship hall on Sunday January 29th 2006 at 11:00 am. This is an important meeting for every confirmed member of our Church. We will be approving the work of our committees as well as discussing and approving an operating budget for the New Year.

Your Council needs your input at this meeting. We will be sharing ideas of many ways in which we can build our Church, our own Christian lives and how we can better impact our community and the world in which we live. We will be discussing and voting on new initiatives that will affect the future of our Church.

Our annual meeting will immediately follow the specially called congregational meeting to vote on the establishment of a Mission Endowment Fund.

As is our custom, a brunch will be served by our youth.

It is important that all confirmed members of St Stephen the Martyr attend and vote at this annual meeting. It is your opportunity to have a voice in the future of our Church.

Notice of Special Congregational Meeting

St Stephen the Martyr will hold a special congregational meeting for the purpose of discussing and voting to establish a Mission Endowment Fund. This meeting will convene in the fellowship hall on Sunday, January 29, 2006 at 10:45 am. It will be held in conjunction with SSM's annual congregational meeting.

Our congregation has long held the dream of establishing an endowment fund to support the long-term ministry of our Church. This meeting is an important step in that direction.

Our annual Meeting will be held on the same morning. Please mark your calendars and join us for these important meetings.



- Bill Gray

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

CATCH THE SPIRIT!

Share your caring spirit with thousands of others across our globe on

“Souper Bowl” Weekend February 4-5, 2005

The Youth will be standing at the doors of the sanctuary with soup pots at the end of each worship service to collect a dollar from each parishioner. Every dollar dropped in a soup pot helps people in need feel the power of God’s love. That is something to cheer about.

In 1990, Pastor Brad Smith, of S. Carolina, gave birth to an idea that has since spread across the country. “Why not ask parishioners to give one dollar each for the needy as they leave worship on Super Bowl Weekend?” Since its inception, over \$28 million has been generated to soup kitchens, food banks, and other charities across our world.

The monies collected at SSM will go to the ELCA World Hunger program. Let’s glorify God and help the needy be transforming Super Bowl weekend into a time of caring and unity!

Deuteronomy 15:11 “Since there will never cease to be some need on earth, I therefore command you, “Open your hand to the poor and needy in your land. ”

A RESOLUTION YOU CAN KEEP!

You don’t have to join a gym, go on a diet or give up chocolate to keep this New Year’s resolution – it’s low calorie and offers immediate gratification! Just offer a ride or make a compassionate call and put a smile on an older person’s face. Volunteers for Southwest Interfaith Neighborhood Outreach Program can provide transportation, light housekeeping and companionship to help keep older adults independent and in their own homes. New volunteers are especially needed in the winter as some of our regular volunteers go south on vacation or to second homes. For a resolution you can keep, call the Southwest Interfaith office at 421-3678 for more information.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM—A Blessed and Enjoyable Evening!

The children, from smallest to the oldest, all did a wonderful job! Thanks to all who participated and helped make it a successful and blessed event. The Sunday School children will discuss and vote to use the offering for the animal(s) they would like to have purchased through the Heifer Project. Thank you to all who attended the program, and for your kind generosity.

SOME GREAT TIPS FOR NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS

Below is a wonderful poem Audrey Hepburn wrote when asked to share her “beauty tips.” It was read at her funeral years later.

For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.

For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.

For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.

For beautiful hair, let a child run his/her fingers through it once a day.

For poise, walk with the knowledge that you never walk alone.

People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone. Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you will find one at the end of each of your arms. As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands; one for helping yourself, and the other for helping others.

Submitted by Tim Falksen

BEYOND NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:9-10).

Jonathan Edwards, an 18th-century preacher, sat down at age 17 and penned 21 resolutions by which he would live his life. Throughout his lifetime he would add to this list until, by his death, he had 70 resolutions.

He put at the top of his list: "Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat Him by His grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions. ... and remember to read over these Resolutions once a week."

Edwards didn't casually make New Year's resolutions with an expectation of eventually breaking them. Each week he did a "self-check." He regularly summed up how he was doing and sought God's help in the process.

Christ calls us to commit to actively work at becoming conformed to His image. This coming year resolve to be come a person committed to a godly transformation. If you faithfully do this, you will see your life begin to focus on the spiritual rather than on the passing, material world.

KNIT WITS **CELEBRATING ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY!**

WE are 1-YEAR old this month!!! So we'd like to share our progress with you. We are a group of 15 or so ladies, who meet once a month here at church to knit and crochet "CHEMO CAPS" (caps/hats for persons receiving chemotherapy treatments with hair loss). We have made and distributed over 150 caps to local cancer centers thus far; the caps come with a little SSM "knit-wit" note offering healing prayers to the recipient. We have already expanded "our line" to many useful items, which we sold at the December Craft & Bake Sale. Thank you for supporting our mission by your purchases! We thank you for the yarn donations too!! We truly enjoy our time of learning new things, having fun, and being in Christian fellowship together along with the ministry we provide. We are looking forward to 2006, as we have found some new organizations that need our help. As the leader of these great "knit-wits", I want to publicly **THANK** them for all their time, efforts, and the God-giving spirits they possess. We open an invitation for any one to join us!! **WE** meet the first Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at church. Any questions call me. Sincerely Diane Moraza 281-8677

Next meeting: January 2, 2006 6:30pm



CONFIRMATION STUDENTS, PARENTS AND MENTORS

A reminder that 7th and 8th grade classes resume again on Thursday, Jan. 5th at St. Stephen the Martyr!

Don't forget to continue working on those "Mentor-Student Packets on Worship", including a visit to another church. The second packet will be handed out in the middle of January.

Lent begins Wednesday, March 1st with Ash Wednesday services. Students will attend services for six Wednesdays, instead of Thursday classes until the week after Easter which is April 16th this year.

FIRST FRIDAY IN JANUARY—POTLUCK!



Something new is coming to St. Stephen the Martyr for those who would like to enjoy some food and the fellowship of other members. **A potluck is on the agenda for Friday, January 6th at 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Lasagna will be served. All other menu items will be needed, except coffee and soda which will be provided.**

While all members are welcome, **those who live alone are especially invited.** All ages are welcome to eat together and enjoy conversation. A simple observance of Epiphany—the traditional arrival of the “Three Kings” will follow the meal.

Discussion of possible future ‘First Fridays’ will also be on the agenda, if participants would enjoy getting together again.

Please sign up for this meal on the bulletin board next to the church office door.

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry—two which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

“One of these days is Yesterday, with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control.

“All the money in the world cannot bring back Yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said.

“The other day we should not worry about is Tomorrow, with its possible adversaries, its burdens, its large and poor performance. Tomorrow is also beyond our immediate control.

“This leaves only one day... Today. Any person can fight the battle of just one day. It is only when you and I add the Yesterday and Tomorrow that we break down.

“It is not the experience of Today that drives people mad— it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened Yesterday and the dread of what Tomorrow may bring. Let us, therefore, live but one day at a time!” - *author unknown*

SIGNS AND WONDERS

When a restaurant put out a large sign declaring, “Open Sundays,” the church across the street put out its own sign with the message, “We are open on Sundays, too.” (from Sarasota, FL)



WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

JANUARY 15TH—21ST

The Clergy of the Green Corners will celebrate the Week of Prayer for Unity with a “Pulpit Exchange” as we have done for several years. I will preach at our congregation on Saturday night, Jan. 14th, but I will be preaching on Sunday Jan. 15th at Christ United Methodist Church on S. 48th in Greenfield, and Pastor Deborah Thompson from that congregation will preach at the 8 and 9:30 services at SSM.

Pastor Thompson has served churches in Detroit, Chicago, and several places in Wisconsin since her ordination in 1977. She was called to serve Christ United Methodist in July of 2005. Please welcome her warmly!

Other congregations participating in this exchange are St. Alphonsus and St. Mary Catholic Churches, St. Luke’s, Adoration, and Whitnall Park Lutheran; and Greendale Community Church.

- Pastor Gail

MUSIC & WORSHIP NOTES



With the year 2006 dawning we have numerous opportunities for you to serve SSM. Please consider starting the new year by volunteering to serve SSM as a communion helper, usher, greeter or lay reader. Help is always needed and appreciated!

If you would be interested in serving on the Music and Worship Committee call Karen Rasmussen at 421-5170 .



The new Flower Chart is posted on the office door Please sign up if you are willing to donate flowers or a month of Eternal Flame Candles. Eternal candles are \$25 for the month. You can place your check in an envelope, mark it "eternal candle" and put it in the offering for that month.

WHY DO PARAMENT COLORS CHANGE?

Continuing the series...

The color for the twelve days of Christmas (Dec. 25-Jan. 5) is white, symbolizing the light and purity of Christ.

The season of Epiphany, the coming of the kings to Bethlehem begins January 6th and continues to Lent (March 1 in 2005). The first and last Sundays in this season are festivals and white is a reminder of the light of Christ. The second through the eighth Sundays after the Epiphany use green paraments as a symbol of our growth in knowing Jesus as Savior of all the world's people. With the start of Lent, the paraments will be purple.



WOMEN
of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

THANK YOU FROM "LOOSE ENDS"

A big **THANK YOU** to everyone who donated baked goods or crafts to the Loose Ends Bake & Craft Sale that was held on December 3rd and 4th. If you made purchases, we certainly say "**THANKS**" to you too. We had a very successful sale.

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to "Water Means Life", an ELCA ministry that helps to dig wells, dams and river diversions to bring water to people and animals in need, to Broom Tree Ministries, a non-profit public foundation that offers Pastors an opportunity to spend time alone with God in a retreat type setting & to The Sojourner Truth House, a safe refuge for women and children in the Milwaukee area. At St. Stephen the Martyr, money will be provided for storage cabinets for use by the Knit Wits and for redecorating the lower level bathroom(s). The ladies are also looking into the ordering of pew cushions for the pews that were recently moved into the sanctuary. Toni Wilson, Donna Carver, Karen Miller & Jean Switala were the organizers/leaders for this years event and we say to them:

"THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL YOUR TIME & EFFORT."

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

January 11 & 25 @ 10:15 a.m. SSM women & friends, you are invited to join us for a Daytime Bible Study. The study is based on the reading for the following weekend worship service. Come to discuss and share your thoughts on the most important book of all, the Holy Bible! *Join us on the Second and Fourth Wednesday of each month at 10:15 a.m.*



LOOSE ENDS LUNCHEON

January 11 @ 11:45 a.m. at the Olive Garden on South 76th Street (*meet at church at 11:30 if you want to carpool—let us know if you need a ride*). Sign up sheet is on the kiosk in the narthex.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

Thanks to all that have fulfilled their 2005 financial commitment and those that have pledged their support for 2006. Through your commitments, St. Stephen the Martyr can help support nearly 300 ELCA missionaries and volunteers in 47 countries. As an example, it supports the work of medical missionaries in Papua New Guinea. A church-supported hospital there provides affordable care to poor, rural patients. Recently one 10-year-old girl's life was saved. After a poisonous snakebite, her family rushed her to the hospital for the lifesaving antivenom. At \$385 a dose, they could never have afforded it. But thanks to your support, they paid only \$2. We really can make a difference!! God Bless you.

URGENT NEEDS OF THE AVENUE STORE

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH, 631 N. 19TH ST.

MEN: Winter coats, jeans and other heavy duty pants, warm shirts, gloves, hats, socks, shoes and boots

CHILDREN: Winter outerwear, pants, warm shirts, gloves, hats, scarves, boots

WOMEN: Coats, gloves, hats, scarves, socks, boots

PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS: Blankets, lotion, lip balm

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS: For new socks and underwear

Also needed: plastic bags—grocery store size & larger

Thank you in advance for whatever you are able to give. With the cold weather, we are seeing many more people in need of protection from the winter weather. God bless you for your generosity. Bring your donations to St. Stephen the Martyr and place in the coat room. Someone will deliver them.

THANKS TO OUR MANY VOLUNTEERS!

Jay Chadwick for building a candle platform for the Advent Wreath & raised inserts for the altar candle holders.

Vic & Sandy Peterson for having the Ciborium (vessel for communion wafers) re-silver plated.

Vic Peterson & Bob Rasmussen for hanging the outdoor nativity & wreaths, & for bringing down the Christmas boxes.

Bob Rasmussen for recruiting ushers for the special holiday services.

The Eric Sundquist Family for the donation of the sanctuary evergreen trees.

Eric Sundquist, Dave Simley & Matt Devecka for putting up the sanctuary trees.

The Robert Brownell Family for the donation of the Chrismon tree, & to the Sundquist's for putting it up.

The David Salas Family & Eric Sanders, for decorating the Chrismon tree in the narthex.

Bob DeFrank & helpers for hanging the garland in the narthex.

All members of SSM who contributed aluminum cans whose proceeds paid for many things, including candy for the children at the Sunday School Program, & Bob and Rose Ann Dieck for handling the distribution.

Pam Lukitsch & Cathy Peterson for arranging the poinsettia plants.

Bob Rasmussen for watering the poinsettias & all our green plants, year round.

Bob & Karen Rasmussen for the chili supper & the carolers who visited shut-ins on 12/20.

Sue Jarchow for the set up & use of her nativity in the narthex.

Sue Jarchow & her helpers for preparing the candles for the candlelight services.

George & Sam Jacobsen for setting up the staging for the live nativity.

Bob Brownell for all the extra clean-up that so many activities entail.

Rose Ann Dieck, Cathy Peterson, Sue Jarchow & Bob DeFrank for the Usher, Communion, & Lay Reader Schedules for the New Year. **To the ushers who were recruited for the special services on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. And to the Counters for all the special services.**

To all those who braved the cold & shovel the snow!

All who donated to Bay View Community Center and the House of Corrections—Bay View is always amazed at the wonderful outpouring of gifts they receive from our church. Thank you all!

Bob DeFrank Sue DeFrank for their tireless work with our Sunday School Children and to all our faithful Sunday School teachers.

Christopher Owen for His musical leadership & to Jan Snyder for her musical talents on Saturday nights.

Lynda Shadd for her patience & diligence in performing so many varied tasks for St Stephen's, & Wendy Trudell and Nancy Hoffman for helping her in the office. To Louise Becker, Jean Brownell, Donna Carver, Lisa Caze, Jean Dahms, Phyllis Dommroes, Mary Frieburger, Joanne Hoeft, Sue Jarchow, Evon Konkel, Jean Kurowski, Judy Merritt, Jean Ott, Sandy Peterson, Shirley Rau, Lori Salas, Sue Stasiewski, Angie Thrane, Toni Wilson & Mike & Bonnie Zgola for their help with bulletins, newsletter and other mailings.

Pastor Gail for shepherding the SSM flock throughout 2005 into 2006.

Our Council members, committee members & the many volunteers who make up the body of Christ at SSM. To all who have given so generously of time & talent and resources to SSM in 2005! Your service to our Lord will not go unnoticed by Him. You are a blessing to the body of Christ!



CONDENSED MINUTES OF COUNCIL MTG.—DECEMBER 13, 2005

(A complete set of Minutes can be found on the Bulletin Board in the Narthex.)

All Council members were present except S. Lieske. Kevan Penvose, Youth & Family Ministries was unable to attend. J. Chadwick, Chair of the 40 Projects for 40 Years effort distributed the names of SSM members who signed up for various projects to Committee chairs for follow-up. Jay asked that the information be reviewed, the status marked and one copy returned to him before the end-of-the-year. **Approvals:** The Secretary's minutes from the November 8, 2005 meeting were approved as written. The November Financial Secretary's report was reviewed. J. Bugajski reported giving numbers look very good. The Loose Ends Bake/Craft sale earned over \$2,600. The church does have the \$6,000 to begin paying down the mortgage. However, it was recommended that instead the Council consider putting that money in a 4.6% interest paying Certificate of Deposit to be used later to lower a future expenditure of a building project. Since our mortgage interest rate is lower than 4.6% it was moved, seconded & approved to put the \$6,000 into a one year C.D. This does not change our efforts to prepare for a future building project; it is merely a different way of doing it. It was moved, seconded & approved to accept the Treasurer's report. **Pastor's Time:** Thanks to the Rasmussen's & the Music & Worship Committee for their help & support in this Advent Season. Thanks also to greeters, ushers, lectors, communion assistants, Advent Candle lighters & all who agreed to stand at the doors after worship. Thanks to Christopher Owen & all musicians for the excellent Advent/Christmas Concert on December 11th and to T. Falksen, K. Penvose, the Winter's & the youth for the chicken dinner that followed the concert. K. Penvose will preach at all services the weekend of December 17-18. Pastor Jon Jacobs from Ascension Lutheran Church will be the liturgist & preach on Christmas Day. Only one service, each at 9:30, will be held on Christmas Day & New Year's Day. L. Shadd's health requires her to cut her workweek to three days. N. Hoffman will replace her on Mondays & Wendy Trudell on Fridays thru February. Nancy Lenten has transferred from SSM to St. Luke's in Greendale. **Old Action Items:** The proposed **2006 Budget** was reviewed by the Council. Income is anticipated to be \$292,200. Lengthily discussion took place. Each Committees expenditures were reviewed. Stepping up the Mortgage Reduction from \$6,000 to \$9,000 was discussed. This thinking is the same as last year; if we don't have the money it won't be spent...it is a goal. A motion was made, seconded and approved (with one nay) to approve the Budget with a variance not to exceed \$15,200. The **Annual Meeting** takes place on January 29 at 10:45 a.m. The proposed Endowment Fund will be explained and voted on. Deadline for Committee Reports is January 6. T. Falksen will set-up the PowerPoint presentation. Three accomplishments & 3 goals should be prepared & sent to Tim by January 6. The Youth will organize the luncheon. **New Action Items:** the **Handicapped Parking** area will be expanded to include all parking slots on the south end of the upper parking lot. It was moved, seconded & approved to increase SSM's **year-end benevolence** giving up to an additional \$2,000 pending final recommendation by the Treasurer. Disbursement determination will be given to Pastor Gail & the Human Concerns Committee. A motion was made, seconded and approved to take a 5-Year lease on a **new copy machine** for the church office. The current one is already 5 years old. **Miscellaneous & Adjournment:** \$775 was earned by the Youth from the Chicken Dinner on December 11th. Adjournment at 9:45 p.m. Next meeting on January 10, 2006.

Respectfully submitted: Carole Ropel, Council Secretary