

WELCOME TO *St. Stephen the Martyr, ELCA*

Service Times: Saturday - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:00 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.



the **MARTYR MONTHLY**
MAY 2008 NEWSLETTER

St. Stephen the Martyr
Lutheran Church, ELCA

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inside this issue:

- [From Pastor's Desk](#)
- [Stewardship](#)
- [Women's Ministries](#)
- [Fellowship](#)
- [Family Ministries](#)
- [Music & Worship](#)
- [Human Concerns](#)
- [Forward Planning](#)
- [Other Notes](#)
- [Condensed Council Notes](#)

COMING IN MAY...

Pentecost Festival Worship Services

With Holy Communion and Special Music

"But you shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you: and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

5 pm Saturday, May 10 & 8 & 9:30 a.m. Sunday, May 11

Also celebrating Mother's Day! The Loose Ends Ladies Group will give a special gift to all mothers at the end of each service.

Bring YOUR mother!

SSM Sunday School Children along with the Senior Choir
Present,

WE'RE GOIN' FISHIN'

5 pm Saturday, May 17, & 9:30 am Sunday, May 18th

A musical about fishing for people, God's way.

PASTOR GAIL'S COMPUTER NOTES...

"Blessed to be a Blessing!"

A member of the Men's Bible Study asked me whether we are going to talk about the "Economic Stimulus Package" and what our Milwaukee Synod Bishop Paul Stumme-Diers has suggested we do in response. I said "Of course!"

You know by now about the checks going out to most citizens this spring to help our economy regain some health. You may also have read the article featuring Bishop Paul regarding what we as Christians can do. I heartily concur with our Bishop that this is a great opportunity to give a tithe—10%, or more of that rebate to people in great need. I will do so. And I urge each of you to prayerfully commit

yourself to take up that opportunity! Discuss it as a family, and include your kids in the discussion. In our congregation, we have participated in many ministries in the community and beyond that seek to help people living in poverty. Unbelievably, there are many children in Milwaukee who go to bed hungry. There is a growing food shortage in many areas of the world. I pray that you'll respond as you have in the past, and stretch your giving this time. I realize that some need these funds to help with family expenses, and that is a necessary responsibility. But most of us can consider giving a portion of the rebate.

If you have never done so, this is an opportunity to 'try a tithe' and see how good it feels! In response to my report, our president, John Muroi, challenged our council to give just that-- 10% of their rebates. Don't stop there; if you can give more, you'll be glad you did.

With the Human Concerns Committee, we will decide where our funds will go. If you would like to help with the decision, see me.

Bishop Stumme-Diers and I suggest these:

ELCA World Hunger Appeal

Greater Milwaukee Synod Outreach for Hope Fund

Lutheran Disaster Response (ELCA)

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services

Lutheran Social Services

I would also add: the local food pantries to which St. Stephen contributes regularly. Again, please see me or Human Concerns Co-chairs Shirley Lieske and Carol Birk.

These funds can be included in your regular giving and the amount noted on your envelope on the third line marked 'Other'. Write 'Rebate' or 'Rebate Tithe' on the line.

Thank you for all you do and will do in the name and for the sake of our crucified and risen Lord.

There are lots of exciting things going on at SSM this spring. See you at worship!

Pastor Gail

Stewardship

Tough times never last; tough people do.

For some, these are difficult times financially -higher gasoline prices; higher food and living costs; loss of over-time or worry of job loss. Yet, as Christians, we have abiding faith that God will see us through.

We know, for example, when Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered with confidence, "You are the Messiah" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus praised Peter for his faith. Yet it would soon become obvious that Peter had not completely realized what it means to follow Jesus.

There were tough times for Peter as there are now for many followers of Jesus. We are reminded that Peter, and other followers of Jesus, remained faithful. As good stewards, they gave of their time and talents knowing that God is never outdone in generosity. We need to follow Peter's example.

Like Peter, when we say "Yes" to Jesus -when we promise to live and give faithfully, none of us understands all that we're getting ourselves into. And yet, as Jesus provided for Peter, so too will God take care of us. He will see us through life's difficult moments and shower us with blessings too numerous to count. Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is the Saviour of all who believe in him. And, when we acknowledge these beliefs, even when times are tough, we commend ourselves to the care of the one who promises to provide for us.

As followers of Jesus, and as his faithful stewards, we know that tough times never last; tough people do!

~ The Stewardship Committee

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WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY & LOOSE ENDS

The Women's Bible Study will meet on Wednesday, May 14 & May 28 at 10:15 a.m. All are invited to come as we study the following Sunday's Scripture texts.

LOOSE ENDS LUNCHEON

This month's "Loose Ends" luncheon will be held at Arizona Grill, 8950 S. 27th St. (south of Puetz) at 11:45 a.m. on May 14th. If you will be attending, please sign up on the form posted on the kiosk in the narthex by May 11th, indicating if you will need a ride from your home or if you want to car-pool from

church. We will leave church around 11:30 a.m. Please call Karen Miller with any questions (761-1455).

THE 'PIECE MAKERS' INVITE YOU TO JOIN THEM

By Carole Ropel

It is just one year since a group of SSM women formed a quilting group and began making quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We meet on the third Monday of every month at 6:30 and work together for a couple of hours. There is prep work that can be done in-between meetings. For instance, some of our ladies buy twin size flat sheets from Wal-Mart, rip out all the stitching from the edges of the sheets, wash and iron them and bring them to the next quilting meeting. These sheets are then used for backing of the quilts. No sewing involved. At the meetings you can learn how to pin the backing, batting, and top together, you may learn how to cut the squares from donated material that then serves as the front of the quilts or you may learn to do the tying. Unfortunately our numbers have dwindled from the 19 that originally began coming to the meetings. We invite you to join us so that we can continue this valuable ministry. Any questions, call Betty Kroll at 414-421-0651 or Carole Ropel at 262-523-4130.

PINE LAKE WOMEN'S RETREAT - WAUPACA WI

August 15-17, 2008

"Justice" is the theme for the Women's Pine Lake Retreat being held August 15-17, 2008, near Waupaca Wisconsin. It is truly God's county-a time for reflection, prayer, fellowship, fun and getting in touch with God. Some of the events of the weekend include bible study, a Saturday program, worship/communion, sunset sing with meditation, Taize worship and the wonderful fellowship with other women. The weekend starts with a light supper on Friday and ends with lunch on Sunday. The cost for the weekend is \$80. Don't miss this opportunity to take some time for yourself.....you'll be glad you did. Registration forms are on the kiosk. The registration deadline is August 5th. Call Sue Jarchow at 414-421-9031 or Carole Ropel 262-523-4130 with questions.



SECOND FRIDAY POTLUCK THIS MONTH!

This month the Friday Potluck will be on May 9th due to a youth overnighter at the church, which will be an exciting event but we'll pass on that!

Do come for grilled hamburgers and hot dogs and a spring atmosphere. Bring a side dish to compliment these or a dessert. The suggested donation for the meat is \$2. We'll tell jokes, warm weather stories and maybe have a surprise or two. Sign up on the office bulletin board.

We're always looking for new friends to join us! Bring your smile, your dish, and a joke to share. See you there on the 9th at 6:00p.m. Questions? See Pastor Gail or Sue Jarchow.

SOFTBALL SEASON IS HERE!

Our SSM Softball team will begin competition Mondays in May (exact date to be determined) , at Juneau Field, 6500 W. Mount Vernon Ave, one block south of Bluemound Road. Our schedule will be posted on the bulletin board in the narthex and also in the calendar of the weekly bulletin. All Confirmed Male Members are encouraged to join the team and enjoy the Christian Fellowship and Competition. Everyone plays! All interested members should call Tom Winter 414-421-8640.

MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 11TH

God bless our mothers, those with us and those who have gone on before, those mothers who bore us, and those who have mothered us emotionally and/or spiritually. We honor you this day.

I regard no man as poor who has a Godly mother.

-- Abraham Lincoln

Education commences at the mother's knee, and every word spoken within hearsay of little children tends toward the formation of character.

-- Hosea Ballou

"Her children arise up and call her blessed..." Psalm 31:28

Family Ministry News

UPCOMING EVENTS		
Thursady, May 1st	6:15 PM	Ascension Worship for Confirmation Students
Friday-Saturday May 2-3	5:00PM-	30-Hour Famine Lock-in
Thursday, May 8th	6:00 PM	Parent, Youth and Volunteer Meeting
Sunday, May 18th	7:00 PM	Revolution!

ATTENTION PARENTS AND ADULTS! TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION TRIP

We've been saving the dates on our calendars all year -
(August 10 - 15)

Now we can start making plans and getting ready for our week at Imago Dei Village in Clintonville to do service projects in the community, worship and study scripture, play and relax.

Please see the mission trip display set up in the narthex to pick up a registration form, and then let Kevan know you are definitely coming on the trip (or even if you're still thinking about coming).

Remember, children entering sixth grade or younger may come with their families. Students entering grade seven through this year's high school graduates may come without an adult to form their own youth "family" group with their own counselors. And likewise, adults without children are encouraged to come and stay with friends.

PARENT, YOUTH, AND VOLUNTEER MEETING

On Thursday May 8th, please plan on attending this important meeting with Pastor Gail and Kevan. In continuing our church's process of hopes and dreams in cottage meetings to learn God's vision for the future of our mission, at this meeting parents, youth in grades 7 through 12, and sharing our adults who would like to volunteer to work with youth will have the opportunity to give feedback and look ahead to becoming the family ministry God intends for us. We'll begin in the Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m., serving pizza for dinner. Please be as prompt as possible, because we'll have to wrap up by 7 for confirmation to begin. Thanks for your vital leadership in making disciples.

KIDS! DON'T DELAY... SIGN UP FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL TODAY!



DATE: June 16-20, 2008
TIME: 4:45 pm to 8:10 pm
COST: \$20 per child or \$40 per family
 For ages 3—completed 5th grade
 Dinner is included!
 VBS Kids Singing June 22nd @ 9:30 a.m.
REGISTRATION FORMS AVAILABLE ON SUNDAY SCHOOL BULLETIN BOARD



STATION HELPERS NEEDED: Adults & Youth, we can use your help. Especially needed: crafts leaders/helpers—Get Plugged-In! Sign up TODAY!

3-4-5 PASSING ON THE FAITH

(from Frogs without Legs Can't Hear by David W. Anderson & Paul Hill)

DEVOTIONS

This time we are looking at the next of the four principles. Devotions. This is time for us to thank God for the blessings that we have. Some of the best times for having devotions are during the beginning of the meal, upon rising or before going to bed. I like to have some of my devotional time early in the morning before I head out to work. This gives me time to quietly reflect on God's Word, study devotional teachings that are available from many good sources, and to listen to what God has planned for me. It is also a good way to start the day. It gives me a feeling of calm and understanding before heading out into the sometimes crazy and chaotic life that we have.

The Word of God, the Holy Bible, is of course the best devotional. There are also many devotional books and series out there to help in our understanding. We have two different books available at the church, Christ in our Home and Our Daily Bread. There are also other ways of getting devotions, like in an email. I receive a couple of different ones which I find to be very good. They almost always seem to be saying what I need to hear at the time in my life that I need it most. Isn't God just like that?

Until next time, Tim Falksen

Contact our Discipleship Coach, Kevan Penvose: 414-258-0858 stillerz7@yahoo.com



MUSIC AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Meeting: May 7th @ 6:00 pm

By Karen Rasmussen, Chairperson

With Easter being as early as possible this year, we also have another unusual occurrence, Pentecost and Mother's Day are the same day, May 11th.

On the 11th, the church will be ablaze with Red as we celebrate the fire of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Wear red to worship May 10/11th.

May 17/18th is Trinity Weekend (white). The Sunday Church School children will present a multi-generational musical program, "We're Goin' Fishin'", along with the Senior Choir.

May 24/25 which is Memorial Day Weekend there will be only one Sunday service at 9:30AM along with the regular Saturday service at 5PM.

June 1st is the beginning of the Summer Worship Schedule of Saturday worship at 5PM and only the 9:30AM service on Sunday. This will be the final meeting of the Church School until Rally Day, Sept. 7th.

EASTER BREAKFAST - A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER!

By Bob Rasmussen - Breakfast Coordinator

As promised in the April newsletter, it is now possible to report on the fundraising success of the Easter Breakfast recently held at SSM. Due to the generosity of all who attended, a total of \$1,062.50 was donated. This is the greatest sum ever given at this traditional meal in our church history! Wonderful!

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, our longtime partner in fundraising activities, will grant our congregation \$800 for our efforts, bringing our total to \$1,862.50. Wow!

This sum will be divided equally to help fund the Summer mission trip, help defray our church's Vacation Bible Time expenses, and to enrich the Parking Lot fund which has been started for replacement of the upper lot as more money is secured.

Again, a sincere "thank you" to every person who worked so faithfully to produce the breakfast, and to all who attended - some 140 persons - , and to all who gave so generously.

NEW SCHEDULES FOR THE SUMMER

During May the new schedules for ushers, greeters, lay readers and communion set up/serve are made for the months of June, July, August thru Labor Day.

If you have an interest in any of these areas please call...

Karen Rasmussen, Music and Worship, chair (414) 421-5170 or

Ushers - Bob Rasmussen (414) 421-5170

Greeters - John Rech - (414) 546-1576

Lay Readers - Bob DeFrank - (414) 761-2165

Communion Set up/Serve - Sue Jarchow - (414) 421-9031 or Cathy Peterson - (414) 325-6628

Human concerns

Next meeting is
May 12th at 6:30 pm
By Shirley Lieske, Chairperson

HUMAN CONCERNS PROJECT FOR MAY SOME BIG PANTS TO FILL

Human Concerns is again collecting items for the men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Donation of these items will provide comfort for the men and women so far from home.

Below are listed items needed:

Gum

Candy (no chocolate-it melts)

Summer Sausage

Crackers

Other Snacks & Treats

Double A Batteries

Sports Magazines

Comic Books

Handi Wipes

Cartridges of Mach 3 Razors

This campaign will run through the month of May. Items can be dropped into the big pants in the Narthex. Personal hand written letters are also much appreciated. Please take the time to write a personal note when you donate your items.

If you have names and addresses of persons you would like to receive a care package, please forward the names to the Human Concerns Committee. Thank you.

STAFF OF LIFE—FOOD PANTRY

We will collect food for Central City Food Pantry for the month of May. Look for details about what kinds of foods to buy on the bulletin board outside the office.

"Anyone who gives generously will be blessed, because they share their food with those who are poor."
Proverbs 22:9

A MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

May 30, 2008 (actual date)

Memorial Day is the time for Americans to reconnect with their history and core values by honoring those who gave their lives for the ideals we cherish.

More than a million American service members died in the wars and conflicts this nation fought since the first colonial soldiers took up arms in 1775 to fight for independence. Each person who died during those conflicts was a loved one cherished by family and friends. Each was a loss to the community and the nation.

As Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

By observing Memorial Day, you are doing an important thing, making a difference. You are not forgetting the sacrifices of our soldiers, not forgetting that our freedom is not free.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD

By Barb Czerwinski, Human Concerns

As members of Bread for the World, St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church participates in an Offering of Letters each year. In 2007, Bread for the World members urged Congress to reform the US Farm Bill in order to make the commodity programs a more equitable safety net for all our nation's farmers, and shift additional resources into nutrition, conservation and rural development programs.

The legislation is still pending at this time:

*Congress should increase its funding for poverty-fighting efforts by at least \$5 billion a year, starting this coming year.

*Congress should improve US assistance to ensure the maximum benefit reaches those in greatest need. A first step would be to pass the Global Poverty Act now in Congress.

The Global Poverty Act would:

-Make the first Millennium Development Goal (to cut in half the number of people who are hungry and

the number of people living on less than \$1 a day) a official part of US policy
-Require a coordinated strategy to achieve the goal through US aid, dept. relief, and trade policies.
The strategy would emphasize cooperation with other countries, international institutions, faith-based groups, and the private sector.

SOME CHRISTIAN WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS

"Never borrow from the future.

If you worry about what may happen tomorrow and it doesn't happen, you have worried in vain."

PRAY & PRAISE! Slow down, listen to God's gentle voice. Praise Him-even if you don't feel like it! Soon your heart will be singing. (Philippians 4:4, Psalm 9:1-4, Psalm 13:6)

Get up on time so you can start the day unrushed & go to bed on time, too. (Psalm 3:5 and Psalm 4:8)

Simplify and unclutter your life; get organized! ("But godliness with contentment is great gain." I Tim. 6:6)

Take one day at a time. Tomorrow has enough troubles of its own. (Matthew 6:34)

Separate worries from concerns. If a situation is a concern, find out what God would have you do and let go of the anxiety. ("Be anxious for nothing"... Philippians 4:6)

Live within your budget; don't use credit cards for ordinary purchases. (Matthew 6:25; Romans 13:8)

The joy of the Lord is our strength—be joyful! (Nehemiah 8:10)

Be forever forgiving; always thankful; humble and think pure, and happy thoughts. (Philippians 4:8)

Read from your Bible every day. Keep favorite scriptures written down, and close at hand!

(II Timothy 3:16)

These are only a few suggestions. Remember Philippians 4:13—"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."



FORWARD PLANNING

From Your Forward Planning Committee

Many, many thanks to all who participated in the recent cottage meetings. Your prayerful and reflective input provided a host of thoughtful and diverse responses to the proposed questions. In the coming weeks, the committee will be reviewing the data and ideas brought forth, with the intent of compiling a summary of findings and making recommendations to the Church Council relative to pursuing a course of action for St. Stephen the Martyr that is reflective of our church mission statement.

Thanks also to the numerous families who volunteered to host the various cottage meetings.

OTHER NOTES

SSM MEMBER MIKE YEUTTER ELECTED LSM REGIONAL PRESIDENT

We have very exciting news to share about Mike Yeutter, who is a proud member of St. Stephen the Martyr and currently a student at the UW-Madison. On Dec. 24th, 2007, Mike was elected regional president for Lutheran Student Movement (LSM). His region consists of Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Upper Michigan. Along with that, Mike is also serving as regional representative on the LSM national council.

Lutheran Student Movement is a student led, Christ-driven organization that connects university and college students nationally, regionally, and locally. LSM gives students the opportunity to grow together in Christ through worship, learning opportunities, service projects, and community building. As a united body, they provide a voice for university and college students to the larger church, and develop students to be future leaders of the church. LSM encourages students to meet new people and grow strong friendships and relationships.

Mike feels very blessed and honored to have been given this amazing opportunity. This new journey has allowed Mike to meet many people throughout the country. At the beginning of the semester, Mike went to Chicago for the LSM National Council meeting, where he worked with other leaders from around the country to set up goals and assign responsibilities for the work to be done during the year. Mike is very excited for the upcoming year, and he hopes to make a positive impact in the church.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE NEWS

By Faith O'Connell, Committee Member

The Memorial Committee met on March 1, 2008. We approved the expenditures for the new Easter paraments, designed by Pastor Gail and Karen Rasmussen. The white and gold pieces were assembled by Gaspard's in Brookfield, monies from the Cathy DeVries' fund were used to purchase them. They make a fine addition to our collection.

We have created a Loaves & Fishes fund to give Pastor discretionary powers to help struggling

households. It is a confidential vehicle to share our abundance with families in need. You may contribute to it at any time, just designate Memorial Fund -Loaves and Fishes.

Speaking of the riches in our lives, a notion of "tithing" a portion of our economic stimulus check would be an excellent way to invigorate SSM's economy. Please prayerfully consider giving a portion of your check to the Memorial Fund, Loaves & Fishes, the Piano fund, etc. Our special giving brochure has been updated; see if anything there appeals especially to you!

The next meeting of the committee will be June 7th, 2008. Your committee members are: Sandy Petricek, Pastor Gail, Dick Kroll, Shirley Rau, Carol Birk, Marge Muroi, Karen Hoffman and me...

CONDENSED MINUTES— APRIL 8, 2008

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

All Council members were present except S. Larson, and C. Malinowski. Pastor Gail Brodersen-Heins and K. Penvose were also present. E. Arneson led the devotion.

Approvals: The Secretary's minutes from the March 11th, 2008 were reviewed. The following change was made under Pastor's Time - "Pastor stated that 13 new members would join on April 6th, and five of those 13 would be confirmed on that day. The minutes were accepted with that correction. The Financial Secretary's Report was reviewed. The Treasurer's Report was discussed and approved. J. Bugajski reported that as of 4/6/08 our budgeted offerings were \$77,072.66 reflecting 93.5% of the total budget. Highlights from the Treasurer's Report are the Easter breakfast donations were \$1,062 and donations to the Somali family are over \$4,000. The bad winter has had an impact on the budget as our gas bill is 60% over budget and we are \$1,000 over in plowing and salting.

Pastor's Time: SSM had a meaningful Holy Week and Easter. She was grateful, that even though we had tough snowy conditions to deal with we still had Good Friday service, and four services on Holy Saturday and Easter morning. She expressed her thanks to Worship and Music, the musicians, and all of the hard workers who help prepare and serve a wonderful Easter morning breakfast. Pastor thanked Evangelism chair, E. Arneson, J and C. Koeff, J. Rech and J. Starks who helped welcome 13 new members on Sunday, April 6th. She presided at one baptism for M. Zoske on Saturday, April 5th. Between the baptism and the new members last weekend, we had over 300 people in church. Bishop Stumme-Diers distributed a letter urging pastors and lay leaders to encourage members to give 10% of their economic stimulus check from the government. Several worthy charities were discussed. Pastor is going to revive the Caregiver's ministry, with an invitation to members to join her in visitation, phone calls with members in nursing homes and those that are home bound.

Old Action Items: E. Sanders reported that the Nominating Committee that K. Peterson and S. Jarchow would co chair Music and Worship. J. Muroi announced that S. Larson is resigning as the Youth Committee chair.

New Action Items: J. Muroi discussed the safety deposit box and the need to have the current Executive Committee on record as being able to access the safety deposit box. E. Arneson agreed to draft a letter authorizing signatures and take it to the bank. K. Rasmussen distributed an example of a postcard that would be mailed to those members that donated to the Somali family.

Committee Reports: **Human Concerns** - S. Lieske reported that her committee is currently gathering hygiene items for Hope House. **Fellowship:** S. Rosenstock stated over 60 volunteers worked on the Easter breakfast and that 140 people attended the event. She especially acknowledged R. Rasmussen for of his help on this year's project. She stated that her committee would be partnering with Evangelism to sponsor an ice cream social or a pot-luck at a member's home in the near future. **Youth:** K. Giesenschlag reported that the youth would be involved in the 30 hour famine event the weekend of May 2nd and May 3rd. **Christian Education:** E. Sanders stated that the 4th, 5th and 6th grad Sunday school children participated in one of the cottage meetings. On May 4th, the Sunday School children will be part of the service with reading and usher responsibilities. **Rosy, Mursal, Barake Family Update:** J. Bugajski thanked all those that had contributed to the family fund. He stated that Omar had been accepted at Marquette University and in the summer Omar will be participating in a fast track type program at Marquette.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 P.M. The next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 13th, 2008. Respectfully Submitted,

Shellee Lubus,
Council Secretary