

WELCOME TO *St. Stephen the Martyr, ELCA*

Service Times: Saturday - 5:00 p.m. Sunday - 8:00 & 9:30 a.m.



the **MARTYR MONTHLY** FEBRUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

St. Stephen the Martyr *Lutheran Church, ELCA*

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OFFICE HOURS:
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SSM STAFF

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Bob De Frank, Sunday School
Superintendent
Janet Snyder, Organist

LENTEN SERVICES

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

7:00 p.m.
February 25, 2009
Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

March 4, 11, 18, 25 & April 1
6:00 p.m. - Small Group Bible Study (50 minutes) & Soup Supper
7:00 p.m. - HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER Worship
7:30 p.m. - Small Group Bible Study (50 minutes)

There will be a sign up for a small group
Bible Study in the narthex soon!
Bring your Bible each week.

Make Bible Study and weekly worship a priority this Lent!



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PASTOR GAIL'S COMPUTER NOTES...

"REDISCOVERING THE BOOK OF FAITH" is the theme of a Friday night and Saturday morning Bible Study Retreat at St. Stephen the Martyr February 27th and 28th. I invite and urge all members to consider signing up, especially those of you who would like your knowledge of the Bible AND your faith to grow! Through this study, I can guarantee it will!

This three-session study explores how the Bible came to be our Book of Faith and what it means for our lives today. You will learn how, why, when, and where the Old and New Testaments were created, explore how the Bible was put together, and re-examine our Lutheran understanding of God's gift of grace.

"The Bible is the written Word of God that creates and nurtures faith as the Holy Spirit works in people and points us to Christ, the living Word of God and center of our faith." --from the "Book of Faith initiative" written by and for the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America--our Church!

The Bible invites us into a relationship with God. As we hear the stories of people living their faith and study the life of Jesus, we too are formed as God's people of faith. And an added bonus is the fellowship and joy of studying with and getting to know fellow members and friends and growing in faith together!

This study is for adults and teens, members and friends and neighbors. No prior knowledge of the Bible is necessary. No one will be forced to speak, and no tests will be given.

The format of the sessions will use power-point, discussion, and music. A small fee for class book is requested. Bring your Bible. All are welcome!

SCHEDULE:

Fri, Feb. 27	6:00	Meal and Fellowship
	6:45	Session I "Rediscovering the Family Album of God's People"
	8:15—8:30	Good night!
Sat, Feb. 28	8:45	Coffee & rolls
	9:00	Session II "Rediscovering the Good News of Jesus"
	10:30	Break
	10:45	Session III "Rediscovering God's Gift of Grace"
	12:15-12:30	Closing Prayer

A sign-up poster will be in the narthex. If you have questions, see me, Parish Education Chair Eric Sanders, Bill Bravener, or Pastor Paul Bauman. This study is only the beginning. See Pastor Paul Bauman's article in this newsletter about another Bible Course: "Opening the Book of Faith" which will be available at various times during Lent. Both of these studies reflect one of the important VISION GOALS of the Forward Plan for SSM: "Deepening our Faith". I cordially invite you to consider one or both. You'll be glad you did!

Your partner in the Gospel,

Pastor Gail

Family Ministry News

Upcoming Events		
Feb 8	6:30 PM	SMASH @ St. Luke's (4 HS Students)
Feb		Service Projects in Lent for confirmation students and all who would like to serve . . . Stay tuned for more details!

Thank You, Parents!

A special thank you to all who attended our Parents' meeting for Family Ministries in January. If you were unable to attend but would like to help grow our ministry, then please contact either Pastor Gail, Tim Falksen, or Kevan Penvose. For Family Ministries to thrive in building up the faith of our youth and in guiding their lives, we need all parents to be active partners.



Spread the word to all the High School students you know. On the second Sunday of each month we get together with students from other Lutheran Churches in Greendale and Greenfield. It's an informal, relaxing time for hanging out with friends and meeting new people . . . all while growing deeper in our faith.

Hope to see you there!

Spirituality,
Music,
Activities (and)
Snacks (for)
High Schoolers

NOLA '09 - Building Hope

On January 1st - 36 people, 26 young adults and 10 adult leaders, left Vernon Lutheran Church in Mukwonago for a 1,010 mile trip to Gethsemane Lutheran in Chalmette, LA. We were on a mission to help with the devastation still left from Hurricane Katarina.

Forty months after the storm tore through the New Orleans area there are still devastated places that have been not been touched after that disastrous day. We saw the water lines in walls and on glass where the sea had risen and stayed for several days. We saw homes that were destroyed by wind and water and homes and businesses that were ruined from the storm—some unable to be restored.

After a few days of moving, getting organized and seeing some of the culture that is New Orleans, we got to work. We helped move 300 plus boxes so work could begin on an area of the main county government building. We worked at chipping tiles, glued to a basement floor & hanging drywall on the ceiling, so owners who bought a home two weeks before the storm, could open a daycare for their

neighborhood. Working at another home, we put in insulation and painted part of the owners 'dream home' in the colors "Honey", "Welcome Sunshine" and "Navajo White." Helping to clean up a yard, or as those of us who toiled on it called it, 'The Jungle', with vines growing up the side of the house and across the lawn and trees growing up through the deck and in the driveway, we ended up with 48 bags of yard waste, so the owner could get permits to start rebuilding her home.



As we worked we talked with the owners and listened to their stories of what happened during the storm and afterward when they were able to come home. To hear them talk about coming back to what used to be their home and then listening to them talk about watching all of their possessions, everything that they owned, thrown out on the curb to get picked up with the trash, was heartbreaking. But all the while, we saw the hope in their eyes as they worked with us to rebuild their homes. People we weren't even helping, walked up to us to say, "Thank you—thank you for coming back to help when everyone else has forgotten about us."

I was moved by the hope they cling to and cannot wait to go back to help again.

- Tim Falksen

Contact our Discipleship Coach, Kevan Penvose: H:414-258-0858 C:414-702-2346
stillierz7@yahoo.com

Fellowship

FIRST FRIDAY POTLUCK!

February 6, 2009

6 pm

On Friday, February 6th join the members of SSM for the First Friday Potluck. We will be having Sloppy Joes as our main dish. Please bring a dish to compliment. Bring a salad, vegetable, buns, or a dessert. A \$1.00 donation is requested.

Sign up on the office bulletin board. Please also bring a funny story or a joke or two to share in the laughter of the group. Bring a friend along! As always, all are welcome, especially those who live alone.

Lenten Soup Supper Fellowships

Beginning Wednesday, March 4 and for each of the following four Wednesdays, Lenten Soup Suppers will again be served before Lenten services. Supper begins at approximately 5:45 p.m. (but you may arrive later!) Sign-up sheets will be posted outside the church office where you can indicate if you plan on attending (so we can plan on the correct amount of soup) and if you would like to provide soup, salad, or bread (not required).

We are looking for people who are willing to pick a week to "host" a supper. You would need to arrive at church at approximately 4:45/5:00 p.m. to make the coffee and set tables. Please contact Julie Starks at jastarks@earthlink.net or Shelly Rosenstock at 769-7067 if you are interested.

Human concerns

Next meeting is Feb. 5th at 6:30 p.m. Call Shirley Lieske with questions: 761-0734.



Mt. Meru Coffee

The Mt. Meru Coffee Project has sent us some year end totals for 2008. although Greater Milwaukee Synod sales were down somewhat in 2008, non-synod sales and commercial sales were up, so that the total sales in 2008 were \$15,729.47.

Over 2,000 farmers and contributing to the coffee harvest. The project pays the farmers \$2.20 per pound as a fair price for high quality Mt. Meru Tanzanian Coffee. This \$2.20 amount is often two to four times more than the prices paid by commercial buyers and in many cases 25% to 50% more than other fair trade coffee programs. In addition, in the 8 years of operation, the Mt. Meru Coffee Project has provided the coffee farmers and their communities with funding of about \$50,000 to maintain and improve the sustainability of the project.

We thank all of you for helping to make this program a success. If you have not yet purchased Mt. Meru Coffee, give it a try!

There is coffee available on the table in the narthex or there is an order sheet available for special orders. The cost is \$9.00 per bag. We have bean, drip and decaf.

Asante Sana—Thank you!

The Human Concerns Committee

2009 SPECIAL OFFERINGS

ASH WEDNESDAY—El Salvador Fund, Greater Milw. Synod—See article below

LENT AND PALM SUNDAY—Outreach for Hope Fund of the Greater Milw. Synod ELCA

MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY—Family Treatment Fund of Uganda

EASTER SUNDAY—1/2 Repairers of the Breach, 1/2 Lutheran Church/Schools in Jordan & the Holy Land (ELCJHL)

THANKSGIVING—Hunger Task Force

ADVENT—ELCA World Hunger Appeal

CHRISTMAS—1/2 Heifer Project, 1/2 Meru Diocese, Tanzania

PICK 'N SAVE HELPS THE COMMUNITY

Please help SSM benefit from 1% of YOUR Pick 'N Save purchases! Register at the Customer Service Desk and designate St. Stephen the Martyr as your charity.

Our #: 813560.

FOOD PANTRY NEWS

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

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



SAVE YOUR SHOES!

During Lent, SSM will hold a collection drive for new and gently worn shoes of all types. Collected shoes will be shipped to a warehouse run by Soles4Souls and then distributed to those in need throughout the US and also Internationally.

More information will be available soon. To learn more about this organization please go to www.soles4souls.org. To join in on this project please contact Julie Starks, jastarks@earthlink.net.

The Human Concerns Committee has designated the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod Endowment Fund as the recipient of a portion of our Ash Wednesday offering. Please read a portion of a letter from Rev. Walter Baires of the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod below.

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

May the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always. I am writing on behalf of the Salvadoran Lutheran church requesting your support.

The church in El Salvador is facing its most difficult economic situation since the end of the civil war. Some programs are in the process of being terminated and the pastoral ministry that is funded primarily by the international support is at risk due to decreasing funds. Because the membership of Lutheran congregations in El Salvador is made up of families living in extreme poverty, it is impossible for the congregations to cover the pastors' salaries. Historically the church in El Salvador has been in the front line working for peace and justice. Now more than ever, our church needs your support to continue serving the most vulnerable of the Salvadoran people.

The Hope for the Salvadoran Lutheran Church lies with partners like you in the global body of Christ. I encourage you to pray and consider participating in the Endowment Fund which is entirely used for the salaries of the pastors.

In Christ,

Rev. Walter Baires, Salvadoran Lutheran Synod

Note from Pastor Gail: On my recent trip to El Salvador, I saw the dedication of the Lutheran people and their pastors and I encourage your on-going generosity as well as for the Ash Wednesday offering.

Music & Worship

The next Music & Worship Meeting is March 4 @ 6 p.m.

The Music and Worship committee would like to once again extend a big thanks to all SSM members who assisted with the Christmas holidays in decorating, set-ups, serving communion, set up of communion, ushering, lay reading, and greeting. You are all wonderful. We especially want to say THANK YOU to Bob and Karen Rasmussen for their continued guidance throughout the Christmas season.

We are now preparing for Lent. Ash Wednesday on February 25th will be observed at 7:00 pm with the traditional imposition of ashes and communion. This first day of Lent, begins with a call to repentance and prayer. A medieval custom that has become popular with the using of ashes to make a mark of the cross on the forehead of each worshiper. While applying this sign of mortality, purification and blessing, the pastor says, "For dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). It is from this tradition that Ash Wednesday got its name.

The colors of Lent will change to purple, the color of penitence.

The following weeks on Wednesday evenings, we will be starting with our traditional Soup Suppers at 6 pm, then Bible Study before and after the evening service. We will be using the Holden Evening Prayer service each week at 7:00 pm.

Taken from the Feb. 2009 Joyful Noise-letter...

A stressed out man in a big hurry was tailgating a woman's car when she slowed down and stopped for a yellow light. The man blew his horn and shouted at the woman driver.

A police officer came by, arrested the man, and took him to the local jail.

A few hours later, the officer came by and released the man. "I'm very sorry for this mistake," the officer said. "You see, I was right behind your car while you were blowing your horn and yelling and cursing the woman in front of you. I notice your "Choose Life" license plate, the "What Would Jesus Do?" bumper sticker, and the 'fish' emblem on the trunk. Naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car."

If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

MUSIC NOTES FROM BILL BRAVENER, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ASSOCIATE IN MINISTRY

You are invited to attend an organ recital I will present at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 300 Carroll Street, Waukesha on Sunday, February 15 at 4:00 p.m. This will be a concert of 2009 commemorations and will feature organ works in honor of the 350th birthday of Henry Purcell, the 250th anniversary of the deaths of Karl Heinrich Graun and George Frideric Handel, the 200th anniversary of the death of Franz Joseph Haydn, the 200th birthday of Felix Mendelssohn, the 100th birthday of Jan Bender, and the 100th anniversary of the death of hymn writer Will Thompson. A reception will follow the concert.

Please check out the information regarding the upcoming Bible studies Rediscovering the Book of Faith and Opening the Book of Faith. I am thrilled to be a part of the leadership team of these studies and encourage your participation.

See you at worship.—Bill

Stewardship

A Prayer for Christian Stewardship

Loving Father,

You are the Lord of our history: our yesterdays, today's, and tomorrow's. We join all of creation in giving you praise and glory for the year behind us and for the days you give us in the year ahead.

Forgive us any misuse of the days passed and help us in this new year to use Your gift of days in a more loving and generous way.

Give us the strength to be less fearful and anxious, but to find our hope in the Good News brought about by the gift of Your Son.

Show us to face adversity with Your grace and only the peace You can provide, and to see challenges as opportunities to draw closer to you.

Fill us with Your compassion, that we may do our part to bring about a more just and non-violent world, and to care for the most vulnerable among us.

We thank you for the gift of this year and ask that you bless it, and help us be good stewards of the time You have so graciously entrusted to us.

We ask this through you Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One god forever and ever.

Amen.



2009 COMING EVENTS FOR THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA at ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR

February 11	10:15 a.m.	Bible Study in Fellowship Hall
	11:45 a.m.	Luncheon at local restaurant, organized by Loose Ends
February 15		"Taste & See" Fund Raiser for Lutheran Campus Ministries in Milwaukee. (See information in article below)
February 17	6:15 p.m.	Piece Makers Quilting Group
February 18	7 p.m.	Bible Study
February 25	10:15 a.m.	Bible Study
March 14	9 a.m.	Cluster Meeting at Luther Manor/ Acacia Theatre performance with Bible Study.
May 16		Gr. Milwaukee Women's Spring Retreat/Luther Manor
May 20-21		Bible Study from Lutheran Women Today magazine, Held at Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa
June 20		Ladies Spring Luncheon at SSM, sponsored by Loose Ends. Bible Study and "The First Ladies of Fashion" presented by Goodwill Industries of SE WI.
August 21-23		Pine Lake Women's Retreat, Waupaca, WI
September 26-27		Thankoffering Service at SSM
October 9-10		Greater Milwaukee Women of the ELCA Convention Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, WI
December 5-6		Loose Ends Bake/Craft Sale at SSM

TASTE & SEE

A Fund Raiser for Lutheran Campus Ministries in Milwaukee

Date: Sun., February 15th

Place: Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, 12012 West North Avenue, Wauwatosa, WI

Time: 2 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Purpose: To support the ministries at Marquette University and UW-Milw.

Cost: \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for kids

Organize a team to prepare a dish made from a list of ingredients common to the kitchen of college students. Or, sample a variety of cook-off dishes, vote on your favorite dish, or bid on Silent Auction items. Our Bishop Paul Stumme-Diers will compete in the college trivia contest. Join us in support of our Lutheran Campus Ministries in Greater Milwaukee. See Carole Ropel for more detail and with any questions you may have-262-523-4130.

WOMEN OF THE ELCA—LOOSE ENDS BAKE & CRAFT SALE

We are grateful to all who participated by bringing baked goods or crafts to the Sale, for the many women involved with the preparations and clean-up of the Sale and to those of you who made purchases. Your generosity will help many as shown below.

Determined by the Steering Committee of the Women of the ELCA at St. Stephen the Martyr, proceeds from the Loose Ends 2008 Bake and Craft Sale will be distributed as follows:

\$200 God's Global Barnyard- ELCA Good Gifts (goats and chicks)

\$150 Solar Cooker's Project for the Women of Darfur, a region of Sudan

\$150 Community Projects for Seniors-Milwaukee (provides meals for seniors)

\$350 Lutheran Campus Ministries: \$150 UW-Madison- \$200 UW-M & Marquette (for hymnals)

\$200 Omar Mursal (for fall college expenses)

\$160 Scholarships for 2 SSM women to attend August Women of ELCA Pine Lake Women's Retreat

\$500 Lutheran Church of El Salvador-Office of Children's & Youth Ministries

Money was also set aside to help with expenses for the Women's Luncheon being held on June 20, for flowers to be distributed on Mother's Day, for scholarships to other Women of the ELCA events taking place during the year, and for a one year subscription to the Lutheran Woman Today magazine, offered to all new female members of SSM. Thank you again for helping us help others.

OTHER NOTES

OPEN THE BOOK OF LOVE IN NEW WAYS THIS MONTH

February brings the day of love, Valentine's Day, and as Christians we have the great book of love, THE BIBLE, which shares the story of God's great love for us and all humankind fully revealed in Jesus. This month will provide a unique opportunity to open this book at St. Stephen the Martyr as part of an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America emphasis called Book of Faith.

There will be several exciting ways to do this. Book of Faith is a 5-year venture authorized at the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. The resolution passed then had this vision: 'That the whole church become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people RENEWED, ENLIVENED, EMPOWERED, AND SENT by the Word.' A number of resources have been produced to help make this possible within congregations of our church. Three will be made available this month.

The first will be REDISCOVERING THE BOOK OF FAITH on a Friday evening and Saturday morning, February 27-28, described in Pastor's notes of this newsletter. The second will be the chance to sign up for OPENING THE BOOK OF FAITH, a minimum five-session sharing and growing experience offered on Lenten Wednesday evenings or Sunday mornings in March and April. The third will be to order a soft or hard cover LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE, available in early March with over a 30% discount. OPENING THE BOOK OF FAITH will be available on Wednesdays before or after Lenten worship and on Sundays after the 9:30 worship. It will have 3 sessions on Lutheran insights for Bible study and 2 devoted to applying these on an Old Testament and then a New Testament section. As with REDISCOVERING THE BOOK OF FAITH, special visuals will be used and no tests given! It will begin Wednesday, March 4 and Sunday, March 8. Signup for one of three opportunities. If you miss a Wednesday night, come the following Sunday, or if you can't make a Sunday, be there the following Wednesday before or after worship. Open the book, your Bible, and join the conversation. Your cost for the \$12 course book will be a minimum of \$5.

The LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE, which can be ordered this month, will use the New Revised Standard Version text, the source of our Sunday worship bulletin scripture readings. It will feature introductions, notes, and articles by over 60 Lutheran pastors and teaching theologians. It is designed to be reader-friendly, inviting and engaging, providing historical, cultural, and geographic background for particular Biblical passages, explain key words or themes in the context of other parts of scripture, highlight Lutheran theological insights and catechetical connections, and with a section called "Faith Reflections" provide commentary and questions for life application. Cost will be \$18 for the soft cover and \$25 for the hard cover. Regular prices, without shipping, would be \$25 and \$35. Members of the planning group for this emphasis, Eric Sanders, Paul Bauman, Bill Bravener, and Pastor Gail, will be involved with REDISCOVERING and OPENING THE BOOK OF FAITH.

Starting this month and beyond open the book, join the conversation, and become more fluent with this first language of faith. As Pastor Gail noted elsewhere, this emphasis helps fulfill the "Deepening our faith" strategic direction of our SSM FORWARD PLAN.

Not only can you be part of this with other SSM members and friends, but with other ELCA congregation members who are called, renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Word living in Jesus.

Join us!

~ Paul Bauman

Looking Forward With Our Missionaries in 2009

Thank you for your continued support of our ministry here in Senegal. We enjoyed visiting friends, family, and sponsoring congregations during our third Home Assignment this summer.

Peter's job transitioned more fully during 2008, and as of September he is now working full-time with the Lutheran Church of Senegal (ELS) in theological education and leadership development. Sarah had 22 students in the spring and 17 in the fall as the Dakar SIT study abroad program continues to flourish. This remains the same, she loves her job!

We pray for a renewed sense of mutual respect between the US and its global neighbors with new leadership in Washington.

We look forward to visits from Peter's mom and a group led by former missionary Deb Byrum (both in March). Our guest room is open the rest of the time—any other visitors?

Peter & Sarah Grow-Hanson, Elijah & Simon


FLOWERS TO BEAUTIFY OUR SANCTUARY

If you desire to adorn our worship with flowers from a floral shop or a bouquet of your own making, please write your name on the Flower Chart on the office door and specify the month and week that you will be providing flowers.

Please state whether the offering is in memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special occasion in the family. You can have them delivered bring your flowers in or on the Friday morning before, during office hours, or at 4:30 pm before the Saturday evening service.

PEOPLE OF SSM...you have raised \$289.25 in 2008 through the collection of aluminum cans. So far in 2009, \$18.20... Keep up the good work!

- Karen & Bob R.



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