

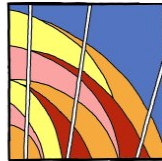


St. Stephen the Martyr, ELCA

We come together in Word and Sacrament that we might go to live and serve in the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



the MARTYR MONTHLY

February 2011 Newsletter



St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church, ELCA

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Office Hours

Monday 9 AM - 1 PM
Tue - Thur 9 AM - 2 PM
Fri 9 AM - 12 PM

SSM Staff

Gail Brodersen-Heins, Pastor
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Bob Brownell, Maintenance
Bob De Frank, Sunday School Superintendent
Janet Snyder, Organist



inside this issue:

Caregivers Meeting

Sharing Our Christian Love
February 12, 2011

For all those who have any interest in visiting homebound members or members who may be in the hospital, please attend this meeting.

If you attend, you are not obligated. Come and find out more details on Saturday, February 12 at 9:30 a.m.

- From Pastor's Desk
- Family Ministries
- Fellowship Ministries
- Human Concerns
- Music & Worship
- Stewardship
- Women's Ministries
- Other Notes

From Pastor's Desk

Signs of Light and Hope in Winter

After all the rush-rush of the Christmas season, I took a few drives through neighborhoods to enjoy the beautiful lights on many homes. It was really enjoyable and several times as I was driving, I said "thank you" to those who were bringing joy to others. I was glad to see that some of the decorations stayed up even past Twelfth Night—January 6th.

One evening, I took a short detour on my way to church because some lights on a side street caught my eye. Sure enough, bright lights and decorations at two houses were so cheery, that on impulse, I stopped my car and got out and rang the bell at the second house. I said to the man who came to the door: "You may think this is weird, but I just want to thank you for bringing cheer to me and to your neighbors!" Well, he brightened with a big smile in appreciation... We had a nice short chat, even talking about our respective churches. I was glad I did it!

It's a dark time of year, that's for sure. But just because it's dark outside doesn't mean that we can't know the light of Christ in our lives. In February, many people send Valentines. Think about sending one to someone who lives alone, or someone who just wouldn't expect to receive one from you.

Bring a RED non-perishable food item to our food pantry bins. Call someone with whom you've not been on the best of terms lately. Say out loud ten things you're thankful for today. Do it again another day. Forgive someone. Take a risk and show appreciation.

Find something to celebrate this month. For Packer backers, there's a lot to celebrate—(no matter how the NFC Championship game turns out!) For winter sports lovers, there's lots of snow. For those yearning for spring, it's coming; it always does!

Christians celebrate the light of Christ. We have experienced His coming into the world at Christmas. We experience His light and His love when we worship. And when life is difficult, and it's even hard to pray, ask others to pray for you and with you. We can be here for each other, reflecting the light of Christ for those who need us.

Where have you shined lately? Where have you seen the light of Christ shining for you?

A smile or a laugh is good in February, too. So I leave you with two church signs seen recently:

A sign seen in St. Charles, MD—"The Lord is seeking righteous fruit, not religious nuts."

And a sign seen outside the Lighthouse Baptist Church in St. Louis—"If you're looking for a sign from God, this is it."

It's good to smile in winter. It keeps your face from freezing.

The letter to the Hebrews says to us "Do not neglect to meet together..."

So—see you at worship! God bless your February!

P.S. LENT IS LATE THIS YEAR, but it's coming. Mark your calendars. Ash Wednesday is March 9th. We will continue the Wednesdays in Lent with more "Faith Stories", Holden Evening Prayer, Soup suppers and Bible Study. Watch for details!

Family Ministry News

Upcoming Events		
Feb 6	after church	Souper Bowl Sunday —Youth-led Project
Feb 13	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Valentine's Dance at Holy Cross Lutheran
Mar 5	6:00 PM	Family Ministry Gathering @ SSM

THE NEXT FAMILY GATHERING will be held in the Fellowship Hall at St. Stephen the Martyr on March 5th, 2011, at 6pm. We will be discussing some of our goals and activities for 2011. Come join us for Fellowship, Faith, Family, Food and Fun!! Contact Char Guilliani at 801-7349 for further information.

Valentine's Dance—Feb. 13, 6-8 pm

Holy Cross Lutheran of Menomonee Falls is holding a Valentine's Day dance for High School Youth on Sunday, February 13th, 2011 from 6pm-8pm. The entry fee is \$2.00 which will go directly to the Holy Cross food

pantry. Contact Char Guilliani at 801-7349 for further information.

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

We are holding the Souper Bowl of Caring on Super Bowl Sunday, February 6th, 2011. In an attempt to tackle hunger in 2011, our youth will be outside the Sanctuary doors collecting donations in soup pots. Until then,

there is a soup pot located in the Narthex with the Souper Bowl of Caring logo where donations may be given. 100% of all donations will be sent to COULD YOU PLEASE INSERT THE NAME OF THE LUTHERAN HUNGER ORGANIZATION?

THE ELCA IS RETURNING TO NEW ORLEANS FOR THE 2012 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

Any youth that will be entering 9th grade in the fall of 2012 or just graduated from high school in the spring of 2012 and is interested in attending this event please contact Char Guiliani (minizmom@yahoo.com) or Tim Falksen (tfalksen@gmail.com). More information regarding this event can be found at <http://www.elca.org/Gathering>

Through the Eyes of a Child

Deliver us...

A child was watching his mother sift through and delete a long list of junk E-mail on the computer screen.

"This reminds me of the Lord's Prayer," the child said.

"What do you mean?" the mother asked.

"You know. That part about 'deliver us from E-mail.'"

A Bible Story

A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned to salt."

His son asked, "What happened to the flea?"

To Save A Life

If you haven't seen the movie "To Save a Life," trust me, you have to check it out at your local video store today!

Teens today are facing challenges like never before. We see it in our local schools, clubs, teams, and youth groups. That's why Jim Britts, an experienced youth worker, wrote the screenplay.

To Save A Life doesn't shy away from tough topics. It deals with social divisions, school violence, cutting, suicide, teen pregnancy and divorce in a way that is authentic to many teens' real lives.

Use your discretion. It is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association due to some mature thematic elements.

SHEPHERD'S CORNER LIBRARY NEWS

Baby it's cold outside! What better time to cuddle up with a good book!

New books in the Shepherd's Corner Library are ready for you to check out!

New Books For Children:

Not new, but new to SSM, these books by Joy Berry teach kids the importance of good virtues and social skills. Great titles like "Being Selfish," "Being Careless," "Complaining," and more. Your kids will love 'em!

Great Books For Adults:

The Hidden Flame, by Jeanette Oke & D.Bunn; What if Jesus Hand Never Been Born? by D.James Kennedy, Faith Matters, David Wolpe; , Oliver & Warner; Finding God in the Story of Amazing Grace, Bruner & Ware; Over What Hill, & Older But Wilder, by Effie L. Wilder; The Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman.

Check a book out today!

Contact our Council Chair for Family Ministries

Char Guliani

minizmom@yahoo.com & on Facebook

Fellowship

CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY AT THE FIRST FRIDAY POTLUCK!

Join the First Friday Potluck Bunch on Friday, February 4th at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

The main dish is a delicious baked ham, and all are asked to bring a side dish to compliment, bread or rolls, or a dessert.

Very important: Since we'll celebrate Valentine's Day this month, bring one valentine, signed, to go to another guest. If possible, place a joke in the card, which will be read by the recipient!

A donation of \$1 is asked for the ham, and you are welcome to bring one or more RED non-perishable food items for the food pantries.

Sign up on the bulletin board, indicating what you'll bring. All are welcome, especially those who live alone.

Human concerns

Next meeting is Feb. 1st at 6:30 p.m. Call Pam Gustafson with questions: 817-3290.

Thanks to all who participated in the Human Concerns Holiday Projects. The pile of gifts for Bayview and the 200 socks on the tree were just another indication of the generosity of the members of St. Stephen the Martyr.

At the same time we collected extra for the holidays we continued our normal food donations. Central City distributed more than 350,00 pounds of food last year to 15,000 families. Outside of the 8 congregations who run the food pantry, St Stephen was the number one contributor to, donating both food and money. Members of St. Stephen, through our weekly offerings, contributed \$4,543.41 to the two food pantries in 2010.

The Human Concerns committee is kicking off a fundraising project. We would like to purchase a defibrillator to be available in the Narthex. This device can be used to assist a member if their heart stops beating, saving precious time before the rest of the body is affected. The funds raised will cover the cost of the equipment, a cabinet, training and maintaining the equipment.

PICK 'N SAVE WE CARE PROGRAM

We have been informed by Roundy's that they are discontinuing the WE CARE program. Thanks to all who have faithfully shopped at Pick and Save to contribute money to this fund.

STAFF OF LIFE FOOD PANTRY

We will collect food for Central City Food Pantry for February.

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

Happy Valentine's—Love, God

When we think of love, it's tempting to focus only on romantic love, but let us be reminded of God's most awesome love for us, in that, while we were sinning against God, He loved us still, by sending His son to die for us.

And of course, keep in mind the commandment for us to love our neighbors. By reflecting on God's love, may we be inspired to love our friends and family a bit more, and maybe even learn to love our enemies as Christ taught.

"God loves each of us as if there were only one of us."

St. Augustine

Music & Worship

The next Music & Worship Meeting is February 2 @ 6 p.m.

Come and join us for an hour of discussion and planning of worship for 2011. We have set our plans/goals for 2011 at the SSM annual meeting held on January 30th.

Now we are planning the Lenten season which starts on March 9th with Ash Wednesday. Easter is not until April 24th this year.

Lent lasts forty days. The word Lent comes from the "lengthening" of daylight hours as we progress from the darkness of winter to the new light of spring. But some languages have a name for this season that is derived

from the word for forty. It is the season of the forty days (not including Sundays), because Jesus fasted forty days in the wilderness.

Purple is the liturgical color of Lent. It is a time of preparation, prayer, and quiet reflection. Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, begins the season with a call to repentance and prayer. A medieval custom that once again has become popular in some churches is using ashes to make a mark of the cross on the forehead of each worshipper. 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.

Modern Hymns from Keith & Kristyn Getty

Looking for some good listening? Keith and Kristyn have been at the forefront of the modern hymn movement over the past decade demonstrating the ability to successfully bridge the gap between the traditional and contemporary.

'Awaken the Dawn', is a collection of hymns that takes you on a lyrical journey of grace and hope for all the nations. This follows their first collection of hymns, the successful 2006 release 'In Christ Alone'. Keith says, "I was challenged by a pastor in Belfast to perhaps try and bring some of what the old hymns of the faith had brought to the Church through the centuries to the contemporary Church," Keith remembers. "I didn't set out to create the modern hymn. I wanted to write songs that contemporary, traditional and liturgical churches could all use." Find their music in local Christian Stores or online: www.gettymusic.com

"Remember that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return."

Ash Wednesday: March 9th

7 pm Communion Service with Imposition of Ashes

BILL BRAVENER, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ASSOCIATE IN MINISTRY

On February 6 our Senior Choir and Handbell Choir will be providing music for the 10:15 a.m. worship service at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, and I will also be their guest organist that day. For the past several months I have been serving as a music ministry consultant to Capitol Drive Lutheran as they make plans for their future music ministry. It is exciting to have our choirs invited there, and through my contacts there several other musical exchanges may be possible in the future.

Please keep all of the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod in your prayers. I appreciate your prayers. See you at worship.

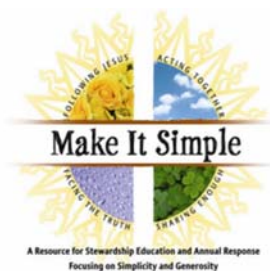
- Bill

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, or bring your flowers in on the Friday morning before, during office hours, or at 4:30 pm before the Saturday evening service. Gracious thank yous!

Stewardship



Giving God His Due

The central message of Stewardship is recognizing that all we are and all that we have comes as gifts from God. God has called us to be good and faithful stewards of the Gospel, the earth, our lives, our relationships, our time, our property, our talents, and our money.

How much should we give to God through our church? The bottom line is that the amount of money you give, and the quality and the quantity of your time and talent offerings are very personal decisions. These decisions are based on your intimate relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and your sense of accountability to the people of God for the many gifts and blessings you have received.

Here at St. Stephen the Martyr we have a lot of folks doing a lot of things for our church and the community and it is great to be able to recognize them through our Steward of the Month Program.

The church's web site is www.St.StephenTheMartyr.com. Click on "Stewardship" and see who has been recognized so far. If you would like to nominate someone please let us know. We encourage all members to make a nomination for the Steward/s of the Month Program. Nominations can be emailed to the Stewardship Chair, Jason Covert, at jcovert1@wi.rr.com or placed in his church mailbox.

A little humor for your day.

A little boy opened the big old family Bible with fascination and looked at the old pages as he turned them. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf that had been pressed between the pages. "Momma look what I found," the little boy called out. "What have you found dear?" His mother asked. With astonishment in the young boy's voice he answered, "I think it's Adam's suit."

Your Stewardship Committee

Next Stewardship Meeting is:

February 1st, 6:30 p.m.



2011 COMING EVENTS FOR THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA at ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR

April 2: Joint Cluster Meeting/at Luther Manor/Wauwatosa

May 14: Women of the ELCA Spring Retreat/Ascension Lutheran /Theme-Body and Soul

July 12-14: Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention/Spokane, Washington

July 14-16: Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering/Spokane, Washington

August 19-21: Pine Lake Women's Retreat/Location near Waupaca, WI

September 24-25: Thankoffering Weekend at SSM

October 7-8: W-ELCA Greater Milwaukee Convention/St. John Lutheran, Brookfield

December 3-4: Loose Ends Bake and Craft Sale

Women's Bible Study: 2nd & 4th Wednesday of every month, beginning at 10:15 a.m.

Loose Ends Luncheons: 2nd Wednesday of every month, following the Bible Study

Piecemakers Quilting: 3rd Monday of every month, beginning at 6:15 p.m.

Details of each event will be further described to you as we get nearer to the event itself. Registration for the Triennial Convention and Gathering is now open. Please contact Carole Ropel (262-523-4130) for information.

Get Out Your Knitting Needles and Crochet Hooks and Create a Prayer Shawl...

In July, 2011 the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will gather in Spokane, Washington for the Eighth Triennial Convention and Gathering. This is a great opportunity for all women and men, whether attending the Triennial or not.

The shawls will be given to ministries in our host synod, the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod. Work alone or join our Knit Wits group who has already committed to creating a few prayer shawls.

For patterns, check out www.shawlministry.com or any of the many books on the topic available at your local library. Use the following prayers as you begin and finish a prayer shawl. You can prepare a label and attach it to your shawl. (See the kiosk for suggestions.) Shawls will be collected at St. Stephen's in May and sent to Spokane. Our goal will be 12-15 Prayer Shawls.

A PRAYER OF DEDICATION UPON BEGINNING A PRAYER SHAWL:

Blessed are you, Creator God, for you wrap your creation in the warmth of your loving kindness. As I take up my yarn and my tools to begin this shawl, I ask you to bless my hands and my heart. Let my small skill and compassion be a hint of your own as I craft this yarn into a tangible prayer of healing, peace and comfort. I dedicate the work of my hands to your service, loving God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER OF BLESSING UPON THE COMPLETION OF A SHAWL:

Blessed are you, compassionate God, for you wrap your creation in the softness of your loving kindness. May the prayers for healing, peace and comfort I have worked into every stitch rise to you and come back to the shawl's recipient a hundredfold. I ask you to bless the recipient of this shawl and all your children with your peace, which passes all understanding. I make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Other Notes

In the Event of Inclement Weather...

SSM's closings will air on Today's TMJ4 and posted on their website (www.todaystmj4.com). You can also find closing information on FOX 6 & (MyFoxMilwaukee.com)

We will also post the information on our website as quickly as possible.

Life has a way of throwing us Surprises

"My mom just went into a nursing home, and then my husband got a job offer in another state! We just don't know what to do."

What can you do when you need help and direction? The Bible gives us an example. One day King Hezekiah got a threatening message. It was from the Assyrians, a powerful army that had given him grief before.

What did Hezekiah do? His response is awesome! We read it in 2 Kings 19:14-15: "Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD."

What crisis are you facing today? Why not "spread it out" before the Lord? Find some tangible symbol of the problem—a picture, a checkbook, a letter, or a journal entry. Lay it before the Lord and ask Him to give you wisdom. God loves and cares for you, and He will answer! Check out these promises from the Book:

Jeremiah 29:12... "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you."

Isa 65:24... "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are speaking I will hear."

Recycling Aluminum Cans Pays

Thanks to the many members of St. Stephen the Martyr Church who donate their empty aluminum cans; \$310.27 was earned in 2010. This money was given to the food pantries of Central City at 30th and Wisconsin Ave. in Milwaukee, and to the Bay View Community Center.

Everyone who saved and brought in cans can be proud that they helped people who needed food in their time of emergency.

We would like to continue this effort to turn "cans into cash into food," throughout 2011. How you can help: Save your aluminum cans, crush them if possible, place in a strong plastic bag and drop off at the garage door of church in the lower parking lot.

Remember—ONLY aluminum cans! NO steel cans, pie tins, aluminum foil "balls," no plastic or glass bottles mixed in—just simply 100% pure aluminum cans. That is all the salvage yard wants. For this they pay 70¢ per pound at present, and 28 to 30 cans equals one pound. Keep them coming!

- Bob Rasmussen, Coordinator

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