

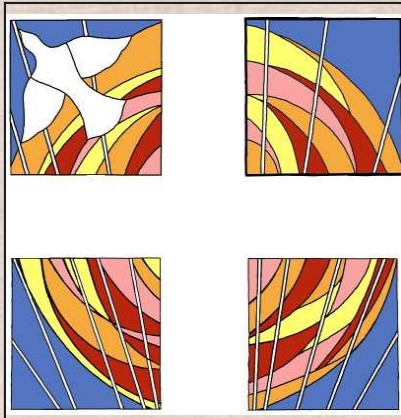


St. Stephen the Martyr, ELCA

*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

May 2012 Newsletter

St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church, ELCA

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Office Hours

Mon-Thur 9 AM - 1 PM
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SSM Staff

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Bob De Frank, Sunday School Superintendent
Janet Snyder, Organist

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 13th

The Loose Ends Ladies Group will give a special gift to all mothers following all services. At the 9:30 am service the Youth Chime Choir and Children's Choir will perform special music. Bring YOUR mother, grandmother, aunt, or a special woman who gives you love and nurturing!



inside this issue:

Pentecost Festival Worship Services

With Holy Communion
Saturday, May 26th 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 27th 8 & 9:30 a.m.

"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

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From Pastor's Desk

I'm looking forward to the beautiful month of May. It's more of the same that we have enjoyed in April-- blooming trees and flowers, green, green grass. May brings delight to the eye and ear and nose. Our Creator has blessed us with beauty all around. Stop and thank God for the gift of new life and the promise of what's in store for us this spring and summer.

We celebrate MOTHER'S DAY on Sunday, May 13, as our children sing and we give thanks to God for the special gift of mothers and all who give motherly care to us and to others. How will you express your thanks to God for them?

On the weekend of May 26-27, we observe the birthday of the Church in the celebration of PENTECOST. On the first Pentecost, Jesus' followers and others were together in Jerusalem and the Spirit arrived just as Jesus had promised. Coming as wind and fire, the Spirit moved among the believers--both out-of-towners and local folks. And barriers were broken down as people were able to understand and talk with one another. They shared the news of the risen Lord and they spoke and acted in unity and love. The apostle Peter, full of the Spirit's power, preached to them and 3000 were baptized that day. What a miracle! What joy! And we will celebrate that joy as well. Wear something red and be prepared for the Spirit blowing among us. On that weekend, MEMORIAL weekend, we will also give thanks for those who have served their country and made the sacrifice of their lives for it. We'll remember them in prayer.

Speaking of the Spirit, I want to thank all who demonstrated God's Spirit by contributing to our joyful and meaningful Lent, Holy Week and Easter worship and activities. Thank you to ALL our musicians, to Bill Bravener, to our hard-working Music & Worship Committee, to Bob Rasmussen, J.P. Maschke and all who prepared for and served a delicious Easter breakfast, and to ALL who assisted at worship in so many ways. THANK YOU and GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

By the time you read this, we will have welcomed into our fellowship THIRTEEN NEW MEMBERS. Please wear your name tags and get to know them. Invite them to activities or just to sit down over coffee and ask them about themselves. They and you will be glad you did. And God will be glad, too.

A blessed Pentecost and a beautiful May to you!

See you at worship.

Family Ministry News

The next family gathering will be held on May 5th at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall.
Other 2012 dates to add to your calendar:
July 7th, September 8th & November 10th

B.Y.G.

SSM's BYG (Beginning Youth Group) has had a great year! We've had five events so far and over 20 students have attended at least one event. The group's purpose is to bring together students in 3rd-6th grade for fun and fellowship; building relationships for the future.

The next event is Sunday, May 20th, 6:00-7:30 p.m. at SSM. Dinner will be provided. This will be last event for this school year! We will start back up in September.

For more information on BYG, please contact Denise Sanders (the.family.sanders@gmail.com).

THE 50/50 "THIS IS NOT A RAFFLE" IS STILL IN PROGRESS!

We are nearing the goal for the Milwaukee Synod to sell 6,000 tickets, but we need your help to hit our target! 50% of the proceeds will go toward sending youth to the ELCA National Youth Gathering this July and three names from the "this is not a raffle" ticket sales will be drawn at synod assembly and the winners will decide where the remaining 50% goes.

In an effort to support the youth and future leaders of our church we are selling "non-raffle" tickets for \$10 each. Each donation is tax deductible.

Please see Char for additional information and non-raffle tickets.

Vacation Bible School is Coming!—June 25-29, 2012

Registration forms are available on the Sunday School Bulletin Board or you can get registration forms online at: www.ststephenthemartyr.com

Hey Kids!

There will be a Bake Sale to raise funds for VBS on Mother's Day weekend.

Buy a treat for your mother!

WHEN: June 25-29

TIME: 4:45 pm to 8:15 pm

COST: \$20 per child or \$40 per family

FOR: Ages 3 thru completed 5th grade
 Dinner is included!
 Please put completed forms in Sue DeFrank's mailbox.



Crew Leaders Wanted! Sign up sheets are on the Sunday School bulletin board for helpers who love kids and want to make this a wonderful VBS for our kids!
 The VBS Kids will sing at the 9:30 service on July 1st.

Library Notes

We have plenty of good books and videos in our Shepherd's Corner Library! Check out some of our new items this summer.

Keeping you engaged in quality reading!

Overdue Books!

Just a reminder to all who have taken out library materials, you are welcome to use them at your leisure, as we are thrilled to be able to provide good quality books and videos for you and your family, but remember to return them in a reasonable timeframe, so others can enjoy them. Thank you!

VBS Kick-Off!

On Mother's Day we will have our VBS kick-off and fundraiser. Over 135 children and volunteers join us for the five days of Vacation Bible School. We have many expenses, including numerous supplies, dinner & snacks, and more. Can you partner with us with your prayers and monetary gifts to help teach children more about our Lord?

For our bake sale fundraiser, we will be selling tasty treats: sunshine cookies, chocolate cloud pops, peas & carrots cupcakes and candy airplanes on May 12th & 13th after services. Buy some sweet treats for Mom!

Contact our Council Chair for Family Ministries

Char Guliani

minizmom@yahoo.com & on Facebook

Fellowship

FIRST FRIDAY POTLUCK

MAY 4th @ 6:00 PM

Come Celebrate Summer!

Join us in the Fellowship Hall and celebrate the coming of summer! Our chefs, Carol and John Drover along with Karen and John Hoffman, will light up the grills for us. Hot off the grill will be brats and hamburgers. A donation of \$2 is asked for the meat. You bring the salads or other side dishes: buns, condiments, or desserts. Please sign up on the bulletin board near the office and indicate what you will bring to enhance our cookout! Please also bring one or two nonperishable food items for the food pantries.

And...bring a summertime joke or two, a summer story or humorous vacation story to share. All members and friends are welcome!

- Sue Jarchow

Human concerns

The Next Human Concerns Meeting will be Tuesday, May 1st, 2012 6:30 pm

FOOD PANTRY NEWS

We will collect food for Central City Food Pantry for the month of May.
 “Anyone who gives generously will be blessed, because they share their food with those who are poor.”
 Proverbs 22:9

CEREAL SUNDAY!

Just what is Cereal Sunday?! The need for cereal especially for the children of our partner church, Santa Fe Lutheran, was brought to our attention and we want to do what we can to help.
 Cereal is difficult to get at the Hunger Task Force Food Center, so, the Human Concerns Committee is sponsoring “Cereal Sunday(s)” for the Month of May.
 We are asking that a box of cereal be brought to church by our members on at least one Sunday during May—more if you are able.
 Thank you for your Christian love and support for needy children in our community!
 - Nancy Mineau

BEAUTIFUL GARDEN STONES

Jerry Seroka, along with Linda Chaplock and Debbie Perl, have designed some very attractive Garden Stones made of concrete and colored stones. There are many designs to choose from - flowers, leaf imprints, golf, frog, crosses, fish, plant holders and many other colorful designs.
 Are you looking for that unusual gift for Mother’s Day? These stones will be for sale on May 4th & 5th at SSM following the services on Saturday and Sunday. They would make a great gift for a mother’s garden. The cost will be between \$10 and \$20. There are 50 available and orders can also be taken.
 The Prayer Garden committee will also be selling herb plants on May 19th and 20th along with the garden stones.
 Look for the groundbreaking of the Prayer Garden to take place in April or May. Phase II will involve fundraising for the stone pathway and circles in the garden. We thank you for the continuing support you have given us in our fundraising activities.
 - Sandy Petricek

Music & Worship

Music & Worship Meeting is May 2nd at 6 p.m. Please come and join us to plan, share ideas for summer and perhaps join our committee.

New communion assistant, greeter and usher schedules will be in your mailboxes soon. Please check them over and if you cannot be there on one of your scheduled times, please contact another member to replace yourself, and let the office know for the bulletin listings.

We will be celebrating Pentecost on the weekend of May 26th and 27th. The color for the weekend is red, symbolizing the fire of the Holy Spirit. Be sure to wear something red that day!
 We focus on the ministries and teachings of Jesus. It is a season of growth for the church, as the people of God listen to the call of the Holy Spirit and respond in faith. The liturgical colors during the days of Pentecost is green, symbolizing this time of church growth.

The Music and Worship Committee would like to extend a great big thank you to all the musicians, communion servers and set-up, greeters, readers and ushers during the Lenten & Easter Services. Let’s also give a hand to those who blessed us with their decorating skills in the sanctuary and narthex. Thank you to Bill Bravener for leading the music and to Pastor Gail for leading us in the Lenten & Easter Journey.
 Sue Jarchow, Music and Worship Co-chair

Music Notes from Bill Bravener

Director of Music/Associate in Ministry

Thank you for your thoughts and prayers and expressions of sympathy on the death of my mother. I truly felt your support, and I appreciate your kindness.

Our choir season is coming to an end this month. As always, I express my thanks and appreciation to all of our choir members for their dedication and willingness to share their talent. On May 27, the day of Pentecost, at the 9:30 a.m. worship service our Handbell Choir and Chime Choir will be joining together to play a piece which

will include over twenty participants in the combined choir.

See you at worship.

- Bill

Pentecost—the texture of eternity

On the Jewish holiday of Shavu'ot, the Feast of Weeks—50 days after Passover (Pentecost)—Jews would bring the first fruits of the recent harvest into the Temple. The first fruits of Christ's harvest were brought in by the apostles on that first Pentecost of the Christian church, (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit was poured out in the upper room. About 3,000 were converted that day. Christ continues to send out his disciples as workers in the harvest. Jesus said in John 4:35, "You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest." May we be faithful workers in His fields.

Stewardship

God Shapes Our Lives by What We Give

Have you given much thought to what it is that shapes your life? Is it your DNA or the environment? Is it your physical health or your mental capacity? Is it luck or fate, coincidence or God incidence? In reality, we could say it is much of the above and so much more.

Recently, I've been pondering a statement seen in an Amish country store. God shapes our lives by what we give. It isn't so much what we have or who we are, it is what we give. If we give only what's left over, we reveal so much about ourselves. What's left after we've taken care of all our needs and wants, what's left when we've done everything for ourselves, clearly says "me first; it's all about me, my and mine!"

When I was a child, I was given a Barbie Doll and all kinds of clothes and accessories. It was one of my favorite toys. Many years later when I came home from college for the summer, my mother informed me that she'd given all my Barbie stuff to some family friends going through a financial rough patch. They had two young daughters and my mom thought they would enjoy playing with the dolls. I was incensed that my stuff had been given away without my permission and I'm embarrassed to admit that I threw a bit of a temper tantrum. My mother wasn't impressed by my claim of infringement on my property. She'd finally had enough and blurted out that I was acting like a selfish, spoiled brat. "You don't even want to share your cast offs!"

She continued, "I thought you were a caring person, but I guess not. I'll remember never to touch your stuff again. Apparently you've forgotten that all of the Barbie paraphernalia was given to you! Why can't you share it with two poor little girls?" Well, she nailed it on the head. I had revealed my selfishness in all its glory.

God shapes our lives by what we give, because in our giving or lack of it we reveal our real heart. Just as in God's giving Jesus for us—God's heart of love and mercy is revealed. We are blessed with such abundance of grace and mercy, we have homes and food in the cupboard, we have family and friends and... and... and... Our lives are shaped by God, and a heart of generosity will shape us in profound ways that we can't even imagine! May God shape you to be the beautiful person God wants you to be.

Article submitted by Shirley Rau

From Star Newsletter, NE Iowa Synod, Author Pastor Nancy Larson, Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop



The Women's Bible Study will meet on Wednesday, May 9 & May 23 @ 10:15 am. All are invited to come as we study the following Sunday's Scripture texts.

LOOSE ENDS LUNCHEON

Where: Green Tea Garden 7236 S. 76th St (& Rawson)

When: Wednesday, May 9th

Time: 11:45 a.m.

Please sign up by May 8th. The form is posted on the kiosk in the narthex. Indicate 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. Questions: Call Karen Miller: 761-1455.

JOIN US AT THE 2012 WOMEN OF THE ELCA SPRING RETREAT...

Date: May 18-19 (You may choose to attend only on Saturday)

Place: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 211-213 North 9th Street, Watertown WI 53094

Date/Time: May 18 Friday, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

May 19, Saturday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cost: \$12

Overnight housing is available at the Super 8 in Watertown. Cost \$63.79. Call 1-920-261-1188 to make your reservation. Tell them you are with the Women of the ELCA Event.

Registration deadline: May 10, 2012.

The Greater Milwaukee Synod and the South Central Wisconsin Synod of the Women of the ELCA have joined together for this retreat. The theme is "What's Your Story?" Our keynote speaker is the Rev. Jason Chesnut, a master storyteller. His style is entertaining and engaging. Also highlighting this event will be a skit put on by three St. Stephen the Martyr members, Ruth Urdahl, Bob DeFrank and Ron Ropel. SSM members will not want to miss that performance! There will be music, worship with communion and other activities as we tell and hear the stories that make us bold Women of the ELCA in today's world. Dress is casual.

Registration forms are on the kiosk. Carpool with other friends for the easy drive to Watertown. Questions can be referred to Carole Ropel - 262-523-4130.

SIGN UP AND BE PART OF OUR "HELPING HANDS" TEAM...

The Women of the ELCA at SSM encourage both our men and women to be part of our Helping Hands Team. The three part responsibilities are listed here. You can choose one or all three of the tasks.

Set-up, serve food and clean-up for gatherings for funeral lunches, or perhaps other special events at SSM. This group will be activated only as needed. One or two individuals, designated as crew leaders, will be asked to contact our volunteers when the need arises.

Prepare food such as casseroles, salads or desserts for a funeral luncheon for our SSM members, if requested by the family. By giving us your name and telephone number, you will be called only as needed.

Assist in helping to keep our SSM kitchen in good order. We envision this would include wiping cabinets, wiping the stove and microwave, the refrigerators, and other general cleaning. It is anticipated that this will be done every six weeks, either on a Saturday morning or on any date chosen by the volunteers.

You have already received a copy of the sign-up form in your weekend Bulletins. Additional forms are posted on the kiosk, under Women of the ELCA. Please refer your questions to Carole Ropel - 262-523-4130.

OTHER COMING EVENTS:

August 17-19, 2012 Pine Lake, Waupaca - Women's Retreat Weekend.

October 12-13, 2012 Women of the ELCA - 25th Anniversary Convention at Grace Lutheran Church in Thiensville

November 17, 2012 Joint Cluster Meeting, Martin Luther Church. Bible Study & DVD of "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" featuring Nobel Peace Prize winner, Leymah Gbowee.

July 24-27, 2014

Women of the ELCA Triennial in Charlotte, North Carolina

Other Notes**CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN,**

celebrated May 17th, 2012

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the foundation truth of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:13-19). For that reason, occasionally the "resurrection" narrative has overshadowed the "ascension" record. But the ascension of our Lord is of great significance.

Prophetically Announced

A thousand years before the Savior's birth, David prophesied the ascension of Jesus when he announced the Lord's enthronement at the Father's right hand (Psalm 110:1). No other psalm is so frequently quoted in the New Testament - an indication of the importance of the event. Though the disciples struggled with the concept of Jesus' death, he told them plainly that he was going back to the Father (John 14:12). And, while on trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin, Jesus announced to the high priest that presently he would be "sitting at the right hand of Power" (Matthew 26:64). His "ascension" was one of the tests of Christ's prophetic credibility. Effected by God

Five times New Testament writers employ the Greek term *analambano* (to take up) of the Lord's ascension (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:2, 11, 22; 1 Timothy 3:16). Each time the verb is in the passive, he "was taken up." The passive voice represents the subject of the verb as being acted upon, thus, in this instance, indicating that the "taking up" was empowered from above, namely by God.

Historical Reality

The ascension of Christ presents a problem for the opponents of Christianity. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, or if he somehow survived the ordeal of Calvary and died later, surely the Lord's enemies would have vigorously sought to reclaim his body, thus nullifying the "resurrection" story. With such a "trophy," Christianity could have been crushed in its infancy. Those efforts, however, if they occurred, were in vain, indirectly supporting the record of the ascension - there was no earthly corpse.

The apostles themselves witnessed the Savior's ascension (Acts 1:9-11). Mark (16:19) who wrote under the tutelage of Peter (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 2.15), also took note of the ascension, and the event was taken for granted in much of the New Testament (Acts 2:33; Ephesians 4:8-10; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:1; 1

Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 3:22). At the time of his martyrdom, Stephen was permitted to actually see the ascended Christ (Acts 7:55-60). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was implemented by the ascended Christ (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:33). This awesome event authenticated the fact that the circumstances of that day, resulting in the establishment of the church of Christ, were divinely orchestrated. The conclusion... Christian religion is from God, not humanity.

A SIMPLE THANK YOU!

Thank you to all of the members and friends of St Stephen the Martyr congregation who enjoyed another grand Easter Breakfast. Whether you simply enjoyed the meal or you did one of the many tasks you participated in a great celebratory Christian tradition. We thank the following teams: food shoppers, set up crew, table and egg decorators, bakery makers, egg cookers, ham preparers, servers and clean-up folks. Again Bob Rasmussen made everything flow easily through his diligent guidance and behind the scene management. We are grateful to Thrivent and will report their matching of funds for this event in the Sunday bulletin and the May church council meeting.

- JP Maschke and Bob Rasmussen

SPRING BOOK OF FAITH PROGRAM: GALATIANS

May 11th & 12th

6:30-9 Friday,

8:45-11:15 Saturday

Come together this spring for a retreat-style study of the book of Galatians--a thought provoking study exploring what it means to live as a Christian in today's world! Plan to set aside some time for your own spiritual learning and growth this spring. In Paul's letter to the Galatians he provides us with a clear confession of the Christian faith. This 4-session Bible study explores Galatians through four key questions. Take a look at the guidebook and get all the details on the poster in the narthex. Cost is \$5 for the study, payable at the first class.

Register now and help us plan our materials and food, so sign up today!

Contact Heidi Mayer for more details.

TWO SSM MEMBERS ARE NEEDED

to be VOTING MEMBERS at the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly Thurs. evening, May 31st through Sat. noon, June 2nd. Past attendees have said they enjoyed the vibrant worship services, the plenary or business sessions, the fellowship and learning from other church members in our Synod.

Join Pastor Gail and Bill Bravener for an exciting two days at the Country Springs Inn, Waukesha. Car pooling will be arranged. See Pastor Gail if you are interested.

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