

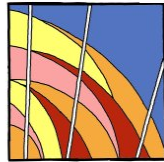
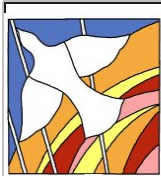


St. Stephen the Martyr, ELCA

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

December 2009 Newsletter

St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church, ELCA

6101 South 51st Street
Greendale, WI 53129
PHONE & FAX: 421-3543
E-MAIL: ssm@ststephenthemartyr.com
www.StStephenTheMartyr.com

Office Hours

Mon-Thur 9 AM - 1 PM
Fri 9 AM - 12 PM

SSM Staff

Gail Brodersen-Heins, Pastor
pastorgail@ststephenthemartyr.com
Bill Bravener, Music Director
bbravener@ststephenthemartyr.com
Kevan Penvose, Discipleship Coach for Family Ministries
stillerz7@yahoo.com
Lynda Shadd, Office Administrator
ssm@ststephenthemartyr.com
Bob Brownell, Maintenance
Bob De Frank, Sunday School Superintendent
Janet Snyder, Organist

2009 Advent & Christmas Schedule

Sat/Sunday, December 5th & 6th after services
Loose Ends Christmas Craft & Bake Sale

Saturday, December 12th - 5:00 PM
CHRISTMAS CONCERT—CANDLES & CAROLS
with Senior & Children's Choir, Handbell Choir, & Soloists
followed by Desserts & Hors D'oeuvres

Monday, December 14th—5:00 PM
Caroling to Shut-Ins followed by chili supper in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 20th - 6:30 PM
Sunday School Children's Christmas Program

Thursday, December 24th
5:00 PM—Christmas Eve Family Worship
Service of Carols, & Readings
10:30 PM—Christmas Eve Holy Communion Worship
Service of Carols, Readings and Special Music

Friday, December 25th - 9:30 AM



inside this issue:

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

Worship with Holy Communion &
Special Music

Thursday, December 31st - 5:00 PM

New Year's Eve Service

Joint Worship at St. Luke's Lutheran in Greendale—Holy
Communion

Blessings of the Season from Pastor Gail

Advent greetings to all! Advent is a strange season: it's a time of watching and waiting and counting the days. There are many lovely Advent traditions centering around marking time, getting ready. We set up Advent wreaths in our homes and churches, we enjoy turning back the doors on our Advent calendars, we sing and pray with our children in a special way at Advent.

Yet, even these lovely customs lose their meaning if we don't re-examine them regularly. We need to be ready in our hearts. . . .

Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament (Hebrew Scripture) says: "Behold, the days are coming...the Lord will suddenly return." Jesus warned: "The day will come upon you suddenly...but watch at all times."

So believers are reminded that this beautiful season is about three comings of the Lord: His first coming in a humble birth in Bethlehem; his second coming to reign over all at the end of time; and his daily and weekly presence among us in Word and the Sacrament.

Rejoice, then! Wait with hope and expectation! Yes, it's important that we do wait, that we don't get so wrapped up in the way the world observes Christmas: with frenzy, anxiety and stress. Take time for quiet thoughts about the true meaning of Christ's coming. Take time with your family and friends to share thoughts, ideas and plans for His coming. Take time to welcome Christ into your heart. Don't say "I have no time!" Make time, whether it's while preparing dinner you ask the kids read their Bible to you, or when you are holding hands in prayer around the table, or when you are driving with a prayer on your lips for the needs of the world, or when you lay your head on your pillow at night--RENEW YOUR GOD RELATIONSHIP. EACH DAY, WELCOME THE SAVIOR.

I look forward to seeing you all at worship these Advent weekends, at our wonderful Advent/Christmas Choirs Concert Dec. 12th, at the Sunday School Christmas Program, and at Christmas Eve and Day services.

Watch, wait, and welcome Christ. We look forward in hope, because He is our Savior.

Blessings to you this Advent and Christmas Season!

Pastor Gail

Family Ministry News

Upcoming Events

Dec 12	9:00 AM	Sunday School Program Rehearsal
Dec 19	9:00 AM	Sunday School Program Rehearsal
	9 AM - 1 PM	Parents Day Out Parents! Looking for some adult time to go shopping without the kids? There will be activities for the kids with lunch after rehearsal is over with for \$5 per child. Pick up will be at 1 PM

A Letter From the Penvose Family

As many of you know, Kevan has been in a process of being called as a pastor to a congregation. At the time of this newsletter's printing, a congregation in Milwaukee was set to have a vote to call Kevan on November 22. By the time you read this letter, more information will have been made known to SSM. While we plan to say our 'good byes' in person at church in December, we'd also like to extend our gratitude publicly to all the people of SSM.

St. Stephen the Martyr is a gifted church, who knows how to extend a warm welcome, give generously, and serve passionately (just to name a few wonderful gifts). Our family has been so blessed by being a part of this congregation. While it will be difficult no longer to be involved in the daily life and ministry of SSM, our transition is made easier by the confidence we have that SSM will continue to share these many gifts with new families and neighboring communities. In particular, Family Ministries is taking off to new heights with great leadership by Char Guilliani and a talented team of adult mentors, parents, and youth. If you haven't already experienced the good things Jesus is doing through these people in this ministry, now is the time to get

involved!

In Christ, 'good bye' is never the last word, but rather it is more accurate to say 'until we meet again . . ."

Hopefully, that occasion will be rather soon, as we'd like to invite you to Kevan's ordination, to share in one more milestone in our faith journey that you have accompanied with God's grace.

Shalom!

Kevan & Karen, Maya & Zeke Penvose

Christmas In a Box-Sunday School Christmas Program

This year's Sunday School Christmas Program will be on **Sunday, December 20th at 6:30PM**. The children have been busy practicing their lines and music. We are excited!

Our Saturday morning practices are December 5th, for the speaking and acting parts only. December 12th & 19th are for all Sunday School students. Rehearsals will begin at 9AM sharp in the sanctuary.

We will meet for warm-ups at 5:45 PM in the Luther Room on Sunday December 20th. (Handchimes will meet at 5:15 in the Sanctuary) As in years past we ask that children please bring child sized winter hats, mittens, etc. (wrapped in tissue paper as A Gift for the Christ Child) and a dozen cookies-for refreshments after the program.

NOTE: The children are also performing during the Sr. Choir Christmas Concert once again this year on Saturday December 12th during the 5PM service. *Please have children to church on December 12th at 4:30 for warm-ups in the Luther Room.*

If you have any questions please contact me soon as possible. As always thank you for your support in making this year's program great!

God Bless!

Stephanie Gordon

Contact our Council Chair for Family Ministries

Char Guliani

minizmom@yahoo.com & on Facebook

Fellowship

FESTIVE FIRST FRIDAY POTLUCK-December 5th

Members and friends are invited to our Holiday First Friday Potluck at 6:00 p.m. on December 4th in the Fellowship Hall! Please bring a main dish, salad, vegetable, rolls, or dessert. We'll sing some carols, play a couple of simple Christmas games, and tell a holiday story or two. Please also bring some non-perishable food items for those who are hungry. We'll bring the Food Pantry bin close by, and pray for the needs of others as we begin our meal.

The sign-up is on the bulletin board next to the office. All are welcome, especially those who live alone. Come join the fun!

Hors d'oeuvres & Dessert Reception

The annual Hors d'oeuvres and Dessert reception will be held following the Christmas Concert on Saturday, December 12th. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Please let us know if you plan on attending, how many will be attending and if you are able to provide either an hors d'oeuvre or dessert to share.

Human concerns

Our next meeting will be
December 1st at 6:30 p.m.

All are welcome to join us!

Advent ELCA World Hunger Appeal Hunger is on the Rise & We Need Your Help

After decades of good progress to reduce hunger around the globe, hunger is steadily on the rise. The World Food Program estimates that the number of chronically hungry will exceed 1 billion people this year. This is a historic high.

The facts are sobering. But there is hope.

There is hope in Zimbabwe, where a bountiful harvest is now taking place after months of food shortages.

There is hope in the slums of Maputo, Mozambique, where those who have been ostracized by their communities because they are HIV positive are finding care and support.

Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger help our church bring hope to people in more than 50 countries around the world. Because ELCA World Hunger supports the work of Lutheran World Relief, the Lutheran World Federation, and our companion churches, your gifts go farther than they could by supporting one organization alone.

To bring hope to the millions more who are going hungry this year, we need your help. Our congregation can make a difference. We will have ELCA World Hunger envelopes and boxes available beginning November 29th. Please consider this as part of your Advent journey.

The Human Concerns Committee

Mt. Meru Coffee Project

We have Mt. Meru coffee available for you to purchase or order for your holiday giving.

Also, a few of the Mt. Meru gift packs will be available in the narthex. The gift packs consist of a bag of regular drip coffee and a Mt. Meru tote bag at the cost of \$19.00.

Thank for your continued support of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project.

- Carol Birk

The Heifer Project

Each year at Christmas, SSM participates in the Heifer project. The Heifer Project provides high-quality livestock, training & related support to families & communities to assist with food security & improve livelihoods.

Heifer provides training & extension services so families can improve animal housing, management, breeding, nutrition & veterinary health.

Animals receive humane handling & protection while providing food, wool, honey & draft power. Animals become a vital part of family activities without causing a burden on farm resources & are integrated into the community.

One half of the collection received at Christmas will be given to the Heifer Project. On a Sunday after Christmas the Sunday school children will meet and decide how to spend the money. They will then give a report to the congregation on how the money is spent.

This is truly a way for SSM congregation to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate. The smiles on the faces of the children as they discuss & report their decisions is priceless.

Thank you & God bless you!

- Barb Czerwinski

Make the Recycling of Aluminum Cans Your New Year's Resolution!

Over the past year the aluminum cans that have been brought to SSM have resulted in \$183.73 when redeemed at the salvage yard. This money has gone almost entirely to the Central City and Bay View Community Center Food Pantries. Because of the influx of new people due to job loss, these pantries are very much in distress and were extremely grateful for the help SSM provided. Keep up your efforts!!!

Bags of cans maybe left near the side door to the garage. Remember that only aluminum cans are redeemable. Crushing the cans is also helpful in making more fit in the car when transporting them.

CROP Walk Thank-Yous

This year's Greater Milwaukee CROP Walk on October 11th was a great success! Thank you to everyone who participated by walking, sponsoring a walker or donating food to help those who have to walk everyday just to survive. Our final tally shows SSM walkers raised \$1,325!

Walkers for SSM were Pastor Gail, Alexandra Covert, Tracy Covert, Tim Falksen, Stephanie Gordon, Kyle Kriewaldt and friend Marshall, Terry Larson, Karen Miller, Tracy Plicka, Jessica Ramintho, Lauryn Ramintho, Reyna Ramintho, Kelly Sachse, Amanda Salas, Julie Starks, Nick Stawicki and friend Mitch, and Mike Wholean, with fundraising help from Melissa Stevens. We hope you'll consider joining us next year!

- Kelly Sachse



Next Music & Worship Meeting: Wednesday, December 2nd at 6 pm

Volunteers Are Needed!

The Music and Worship committee is looking for volunteers to be: ushers, lay readers, communion set up, communion servers, greeters for the new year.

We are also looking for members to join the Music and Worship committee in the new year. Help is always needed and welcomed.

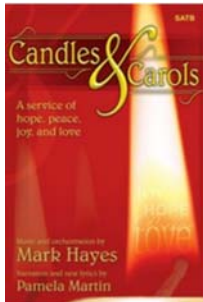
Please call Cathy Peterson (325-6628).

Join us for our next Music & Worship meeting December 2nd. We welcome all members to this meeting.

Parament Color Changes

As we begin the new church season with Advent, the colors of the church change. Royal blue is the color of hope and anticipation. It marks the season of waiting and preparation for the arrival of Christ. The Advent Wreath is also present in the sanctuary. The wreath originated in Europe for home use after the Reformation in the 1500's. The Advent wreath marks the four weeks in Advent. The wreath contains four candles, the first one being lit on the first Sunday in Advent. An additional candle is then lit each week and on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, all four candles will be burning brightly. The parament color will change to white for Christmas, with white symbolizing the light and purity of Christ and joy at His birth.

Music Notes from Bill Bravener, Director of Music/ Associate in Ministry



Please join us on Saturday, December 12 at 5:00 p.m. for the annual Advent/Christmas Concert. Participating in this year's concert will be Senior Choir, Handbell Choir, Children's Choir, Chime Choir, and instrumentalists and soloists.

A portion of the concert will be "Candles and Carols" by Mark Hayes and Pamela Martin.

"Candles and Carols" is a candlelight Advent journey that celebrates the traditional themes of hope, peace, joy and love. The talents of Mark Hayes and Pamela Martin have created a cantata which relates the wisdom of ancient scripture to our lives as 21st century worshipers. Six beautiful carol settings are presented for choir and congregation.

Join us in the fellowship hall for the hors d'oeuvre and dessert reception following the concert.

Thank you for your prayers during my recent hospitalization and surgery. I am doing well and give thanks to God for all of you.

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you. See you at worship.

- Bill

Caroling to Our Shut-ins

On Monday, December 14th, all are welcome to gather and carol to our shut-ins. We gather at SSM at 5:30PM for a light snack and then at 6:00PM, car pool from SSM to the shut-ins. After the singing, we return to church for a nice hot chili supper.

The sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

Stewardship

Excerpts from "Giving to God: the Bible's Good News About Living a Generous Life."

By Mark Allen Powell from Luther Seminary web-site review

"Is tithing a helpful guide in determining how much you ought to give?" Mark states, "I suggest that we think of tithing as a traditional guideline for Christian giving; a standard that many Christians find to be appropriate and attainable. Not a realistic goal for everyone-never to be presented as a sort of timeless requirement expressing what God wants of all people everywhere."

"The Bible contains more promises regarding stewardship than requirements. The best question to ask is not, "do I have to give 10 percent of my income to the church?" A better question may be, "would I like to be the sort of person who is spiritually and financially able to give 10 percent of my income to the church? If your answer is YES then there is a good chance that tithing is for you after all."

The final sentence of the book reflects a Gospel attitude. "You can be a generous person and live in this joy as one who knows God, loves God, pleases God and benefits others. I invite you to accept God's invitation to generosity, to love as one who belongs to God and gives as one for whom giving is both duty and a delight."

- Your Stewardship Committee

Each person should give what they have decided in their heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion,

*for God loves a cheerful giver.
(2 Corinthians 9:7)*

A Huge Thank You from Jim Hennessy

Many thanks go out to all who participated in the 2009-10 Pictorial Directory. We had a great turn out with 78% of our members getting photographed.

Thank you also to all those volunteers who helped check people in, make phone calls, send reminders, get pictures for our activity pages and more. Thanks for a super effort. I think everyone will be pleased with the new directory. Look for it sometime early in the new year.

-Your Pictorial Committee

Jim Hennessy, Coordinator

Diane Moraza, Mike & Tracy Wholean, Chuck Marotske, & Lynda Shadd



Annual Christmas Bake & Craft Sale

December 5th & 6th Before & Following All Services

The ladies of Loose Ends have been busy preparing for the Christmas Bake & Craft Sale. Stop by the display tables in the Fellowship Hall and the Narthex and choose some baked goods or other special Christmas treats. Or, you may find something on your Christmas shopping list from the variety of items made by our talented SSM crafters and sewers.

One very special Silent Auction item will be offered this year. It is a two-story Log Cabin style doll house that was handmade by the husband of one of our church members. Hours and hours of work were put into this doll house that will make a wonderful, lifelong gift for some lucky little girl. A picture of this Auction item is on the poster board advertising the Bake & Craft Sale.

Donations to the Bake Sale are very much needed. Please let us know that you will be making and donating items by signing your name on the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board outside of the church office. You can bring your bakery to church on Saturday morning after 9 a.m. and before noon, or again on Saturday after 4 p.m. through 6:15 p.m. If you cannot get to church until Sunday, please bring your items in as early on Sunday as possible, beginning at 7:30 a.m.

Women's Bible Study

December 9th will be the only Women's Bible Study held in the month of December, beginning at 10:15 a.m.

Join us as we study the scripture texts for the following weekend.

Our next Bible Study will be held on Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 10:15 a.m.

The monthly luncheon of the Loose Ends ladies will resume following this January Bible Study. Watch the weekend Bulletins for the place and time.

Loose Ends Baking & Pricing Day

Wednesday, December 2, at 9 a.m.

We will be making candy and goodies to be sold at the annual Bake & Craft Sales. This is going to be a busy day and we will need YOUR help! We will also begin pricing items for sale and setting up tables so there are jobs for all. Please save the date and join us in the Fellowship Hall.

Other Notes

Memorial Prayer Garden

The Memorial Committee, with the help of Julie Starks and Doug Winter, is exploring the installation of a Memorial Prayer Garden. The site is behind the Church and the lower parking lot where a small playground used to be located. The committee envisions this as a place for individuals or small groups to spend time meditating, praying, studying the Bible and/or having a class (Sunday school, youth or adult).

We have met with two landscape designers to get ideas on what may be possible for this project. There is some money in the Memorial Fund that can be dedicated toward this garden space.

We expect to see initial plans from the designers by the end of 2009. At that point, look for these plans to be on display for congregation feedback and comments. Of course, contributions are very welcome!

Shepherd's Corner Library News

We have Christmas books & videos for you!

If you have any library books which are overdue, please return them to the library soon. Thank you!

A Letter of Thanks...

Dear members of St. Stephen the Martyr:

Thank you for your gift of \$968 to the ministries of Women of the ELCA. The churchwide women's organization is pleased to be a partner with you in supporting women at home and around the world.

During the fall season, we come together as individuals and congregations to celebrate our long tradition of Thankofferings. Among early Christians, when a bountiful harvest was completed or a child returned home safely from war, women would gather in worship to thank God for these blessings and collect an offering. Our current understanding of Thankofferings is that there are moments in each day when we should stop and offer thanks to God. These moments can be significant or ordinary: recovering from an illness or landing a new job to seeing your child off to school or returning home safely from a trip. When these moments happen, we give God thanks. Connecting our moment of thankfulness with a prayer and an offering gives us tangible reminders of these blessings.

Supported by your Thankofferings, the churchwide expression of Women of the ELCA can serve you and your ministries in several ways, including worship and prayer resources, leadership tools for congregational and synodical leaders and event and stewardship materials.

We are grateful for your continued financial support to the Women of the ELCA.

Sincerely,

Linda Post Bushkofsky,

Executive Director

Council Meeting Notes

Condensed Minutes of the Church Council Meeting held November 10th, 2009

President Muroni called meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Council members present were: J. Arneson, J. Bugajski, J. Covert, C. Guiliani, S. Lieske, S. Lubus, J. Miller, J. Muroni, C. Peterson, S. Rosenstock & E. Sanders. Pastor Gail Brodersen-Heins and K. Penvose also present. J. Hennessy & S. Jarchow absent.

J. Miller led the devotion.

Approvals: Secretary's minutes from October 17th, 2009 (retreat) meeting approved as written. The Financial Secretary's Report was reviewed. The Treasurer's Report was discussed. We are currently \$14,621.00 short as of November 8th, 2009. The Treasurer's Report was approved.

Guest Speakers: J. Starks and F. O'Connell spoke on behalf of the Memorial Committee. J. Starks presented idea of a Peace Garden, dedicated to her late husband P. Eklund. Committee has reviewed plans from two landscapers and from those plans. It would be available for everyone to use, not just SSM members. The ideal location would be where the old jungle gym play area was behind the church. Minimum cost about \$10,000/high end \$20,000, depending on how elaborate. In addition to using monies from the P. Eklund Memorial, there would also be a fund-raising campaign.

Pastor's Time: Pastor thanked J. Koeff, J. Rech, E. Arneson and J. Starks for helping make new members feel welcome on November 1st. Also thanked J. Muroni and J. Hennessy for helping with the orientation. Pastor Gail thanked S. Rosenstock and all those that helped make Reformation Pot luck another successful event. Five adult leaders and 23 confirmation/high school students attended a faith-filled two day event at Lutherdale Bible Camp. She thanked K. Penvose and T. Falksen for helping with the event. Within the last month Pastor conducted three funerals - P. Janicki on 10/27, J. Lingen on 10/27 and R. Manning on 11/2. Pastor reported that J. Peter died on Monday, 11/9/09. She presided at the wedding of B. Luker and G. Kunesh on 11/7 and at one baptism for A. Peters on 11/7/09. Pastor, C. Guiliani and S. Lubus are attending forums to listen to candidates for Synod's new bishop. To read about the candidates, visit the www.milwaukee.synod website. B. Brownell will have surgery on 11/17 - In his absence, J. Rosiewski will be employed.

Old Action Items:

Council Retreat Follow-up -Muroni thanked all Council members that attended.

New Action Items:

Racial Diversity Training - S. Lubus will chair an ad hoc committee to come up with ideas on how to present racial diversity training to SSM members.

2010 Budget Review - Council spent a considerable amount of time going over the proposed budget for 2010 prepared by J. Miller. Council is expected to take action on proposals at December meeting.

Committee Reports:

Family and Youth Ministries - C. Guiliani reported the youth and families are involved in an upcoming chili

dump on 11/14, a Christmas bell ringing day on 11/28 & a Parent's Day Out on 12/19/09.

Fellowship: S. Rosenstock said the next big event would be the reception after the holiday concert scheduled for 12/12/09.

Christian Education: E. Sanders reported the holiday program put on by the SSM children is progressing and 10 people are involved in Book of Faith study.

Property: J. Arneson reported that his committee has approved a storage shed be built by the north side of the church. The shed would house all of our snow removal equipment, making it much easier to access this equipment.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm. The next Council meeting will be on Tuesday, 12/8/09

- Shellee Lubus,

Church Council Secretary

[About Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Contact Us](#)

PHONE 414-421-3543 • FAX 414-421-3543 • 6101 S 51st St, Greendale, WI 53129 • SSM@ststephenthemartyr.com