

ST. STEPHEN THE MARTYR LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA



THE MARTYR MONTHLY

JANUARY 2019

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT SSM

Saturday 5:00 PM

Sunday 9:30 am

Sunday School 9:30 am

Monday Bible Study: 01/07 @ 1:00 pm

Men's Bible Study: 01/02 & 01/16 @ 9:00 am

Women's Bible Study: 01/09 & 01/23 @ 10:15 am

PASTOR'S PAGE

Dear SSM Faith Family,

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 15: 13

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Each of us has a faith story to tell. I love to hear stories of faith and share my journey of faith. Did you know I wanted to become a pastor in 4th grade? While we are not always comfortable in sharing our faith journeys, it is through our experiences and faith stories that we pass on the faith. In this New Year may we be bold to share our faith journeys together.

I enjoy hearing stories about the life of our congregation, and what it has meant to people over the years. There is a common thread that runs through these stories, and it is the idea that no matter how long ago you joined, there is a deep sense of community connecting all of us who call SSM our church home. We have three-generation families who worship here. We have single adults, also. No matter the family context, however, there is a sense that here is a place where faith can be nourished, and where it is possible to put down roots.

What that means in practical terms is that we have been called together by the Holy Spirit to worship together and to witness to a world that needs to know Jesus Christ. This is our time and our opportunity to do that in new and exciting ways. This is our time and our opportunity to lift each other up in prayer and to proclaim the hope and joy that comes through Jesus. This is our time and opportunity to model a faith that can be seen by the children of our congregation as a sign that the love of Jesus is in our midst—a love that can be trusted and called upon during the challenges we will face in life.

The connection between us comes from the love God has for each one of us. As we begin this new year, will you take time to greet the people you meet here at SSM, and as you come to know them, please give God thanks for the gifts and talents they bring to this community. Take time to encourage each other with kind words or a pat on the back. And pray regularly for those of us who sometimes frustrate you in your comings and goings.

In all of this, may your hope and love for our community of faith overflow in such a way as to bring you even more peace and joy in this new year.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Brian

STEWARDSHIP

***BECAUSE OF GOD'S
GREAT MERCY***



Helping Our Children Respond To Sharing God's Blessings

Times are changing. So is the opportunity to change our approach in helping our children and grandchildren respond to sharing God's blessings.

In the early 1940's a loaf of bread was 25 cents; the price of a movie ticket was about the same; a double-decker ice cream cone with chocolate sprinkles was 5 cents! So, an allowance of 4 nickels was huge! Still, placing one of the nickels in a small blue children's envelope and dropping it in the usher's basket during offertory felt like the right thing to do. Simply, it was a given every Sunday for me to share God's blessings.

Sadly, some emerging millennials are reluctant to give back or share their abundant blessing. One major reason for this behavior is the fact billions of youth targeted advertising dollars promote the "I gotta have it now" message directed daily by multi-media marketing engines. Indeed, it is hard, if not almost impossible, to counter these escalating spending pressures on our children coupled with peer pressure. Still, recent marketing research shows the good news: today's children feel a genuine need to give of their time and money to a *specific cause*. If they can *visualize* it, research shows they give generous of their limited time and money.

As parents and grandparents of our amazing emerging millennials, we can do a lot to help them connect to a stewardship cause focused on the Word of God in scripture. Simply, we can counter the attitude, "It's my (money/time). I know best how to use it!" Instead, we can show, by our example, the truth from the Word that all we have is due to God's blessings and love for us. Accepting this fact, it is easier for children to understand the reality that God knows best how to use His blessings.

The New Year is an opportune time to *identify your family cause* in responding to God's love. Consider making a family poster to add to the refrigerator door. Begin by listing who will give what and the reason for sharing God's gifts through St. Stephen the Martyr in 2019. Next, draw or cut out pictures to illustrate the specific cause. Here are just two examples: Johnny's cause is sharing X-cents from his allowance to buy school supplies for a child in need. Johnny may want to draw a specific school supply.

(Continue on next page)

STEWARDSHIP CONT.

Daddy's cause is sharing one hour each month helping at Unity meal program. He may choose to take a selfie helping prepare a meal. And, even the youngest child can join in by offering a smile and hand of friendship during fellowship time. "What you visualize you actualize!"

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had." Acts 4:32 | NIV.

Thank you for your awesome continuing response to God's blessings.

Praying that your New Year will be abundantly blessed with joy in God's love for you.

Marion Walton

MUSIC & WORSHIP

In January, we continue to look toward new beginnings, following the celebration of the birth of Christ just days ago. Our church colors remain white for purity and light as we remember the Magi following the star to Bethlehem (Epiphany). The following weekend, we will commemorate Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. The church colors will then change to green, a symbol of our growth in Christ, during the time after Epiphany.

As our committee looks toward a new year, we realize that many of our long time volunteers are in need of respite. We value their many contributions to the work of the church and want to thank them by supporting them and the activities they hold dear. We will be approaching the congregation throughout the year, asking all to prayerfully consider giving a few more hours in service of the church.

YOUTH & FAMILY

Thank you to the youths that helped bake and decorate cookies for care packages. Our college students enjoyed the treats sent by the congregation.

Planning is underway for a couple winter activities. Who wants to go bowling and snow tubing in January? Watch the Youth and Family kiosk and weekly bulletins in January for details.

We need youth assistance setting and cleaning lunch for the annual meeting on January 27th, please sign-up on the Youth and Family Kiosk.

MUSIC NOTES

From Music Director



After a dedicated search process from our choir director search committee, We are happy to share with you that Tabitha Moldenhauer will be our new organist and choir director. Tabitha will begin serving at SSM on January 8th. Let us welcome Tabitha.

"Tabitha Moldenhauer has 18 years' experience in church music as an organist, choral director, and educator, most recently serving as Music Director and Organist at the Episcopal parish, Church of the Holy Family, in Park Forest, IL. She is also Program Director for Chicago International Organ Academy, which provides education for organists of all ages and abilities around the world. She, her husband, Aaron, and their two daughters recently relocated to the Milwaukee area due to Aaron accepting a position as Assistant Professor of Theology at Concordia University Wisconsin."

HUMAN CONCERNS

A big thank you to everyone who donated gifts for the Bay View Community Center Christmas gift donations for children and seniors.

Our first Tippecanoe meal for the homeless was December 7th. Our next meal will be Friday, January 4th. Watch for the sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside the office.

Tippecanoe and Unity's clothing room are always in need of warm sweaters, sweat-shirts, hand warmers, socks, long underwear and sweatpants. If you are donating coats, sizes large and extra large are in demand as warm clothing is layered beneath them. But, ALL sizes are welcome.

Please consider volunteering to helping to serve at Unity's Meal on the 4th Wednesday of the month. You can come to set up at 3:30, serve at 5 pm or clean up at 6:30.

Many thanks, the Human Concerns Committee

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

This committee met on October 27th, 2018. Attending were Sandra Petricek, chairperson, Dick Kroll, Julie Herman, Carol Birk, Stephanie Falksen, Pastor Brian and myself.

Signage over the memorial tree in the narthex has been installed with Thank you to Mark Winter.

Donation updates and fund balances were discussed.

New sanctuary communion tables have been constructed, stained and varnished. They are made of oak and were funded by Diane Moraza and Julie Starks. Additional pieces for our intinction set were received and are in use with funds given in memory of Cathy De Vries' parents.

Motion made and seconded to purchase 12 new lightweight banquet tables for general use. Discussion as to donation to Unity of the current tables. The Krolls donated 4 tall chairs for funeral and the choir use. Suggestion made to add benches with backs to Garden.

Motion to purchase a dolly for the piano in the classroom area made and seconded. Item being researched as to size and type.

Thank you notes written for the last quarter by Mimi and Sandy.

As always, anyone interested in this group can contact any of the members and/or sit in for a session. Next session is January 12th, 2019 at 9:30am.

Respectfully submitted

Faith N. O'Connell

MERU PARTNERSHIP NEWS

Scholarship Renewal – A year ago, individuals from SSM contributed to the secondary schooling for a student from our partner parish, Mbaaseny. Baraka Goodwin attends a Diocese of Meru sponsored boarding school in the Northern District. Tuition costs equal just over \$600 for a year which begins in January. Donations are welcome in any amount! **We have received and sent \$400 in the November wire transfer. Please consider contributing towards the remaining \$200 which can be sent in early January.** Include “Baraka Scholarship” in the memo line of checks made out to St. Stephen the Martyr.



Asante sana! (Thank-you very much!)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Have you ever wondered why there are so many Christian Denominations if we all believe in Jesus? Have you ever wondered what your Baptist, Presbyterians, Episcopal, Methodist and Roman Catholic neighbors believe that is different than what we believe as Lutherans? Beginning February 3rd and leading up to Lent there will be an opportunity to seek answers to these questions, and probably more. Sessions will be held after service on Sunday mornings for 6 weeks. Each week will cover a church body so you need not commit yourself to every Sunday.

Our other Christian Education opportunities continue with the New Year as well. The Men's Group continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 9. The Women's Group will begin looking at the Gospel of Luke and meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 10:15. Our First Monday Group continues to meet at 1pm monthly.

Take advantage of one of these exciting opportunities to enrich your spiritual life and strengthen your relationship with our Lord.

Happy New Year,

Bonnie Zimmermann

MORE NEWS & NOTES

SSM LOGO CLOTHING

We have 2 items that were ordered, not worn and are available for purchase by members.

Item 1 is a Ladies micro fleece vest, sz M in White.

Item 2 is a Red Crewneck sweatshirt, sz XL.

Please contact Julie Starks, 414-254-2533, jstarks@earthlink.net if you are interested in either item. If you have an unworn item you would like to make available, please let me know.

ALL CONGREGATION MEMBERS

Church Council will be holding information sessions in January regarding the planned hiring of a part-time Associate Pastor and the impact to our 2019 budget. Please attend one of the meetings to be held in the Fellowship Hall following worship service: Sunday, January 13th, Saturday, January 19th, or Sunday, January 20th. If you have any questions, please contact Jason Covert.

CONDENSED MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 12.11.2018

After having a Council picture taken, President Jason Covert called the meeting to order at 6:39 P.M.

Council members present were: J. Covert, B. Daleness, B. Fritschel, J. Konop, P. Nelson, A. Matusiak, J. Muroi, N. Mineau, D. Sanders, J. Schultz, L. Sweet, A. Woerpel and B. Zimmermann. Pastor Brian was also in attendance.

November council minutes were approved with one correction.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S AND TREASURER'S REPORTS:

J. Schultz is researching non pledged donations.

J. Muroi indicated that all bills are paid up to date. Benevolence and checking account reports were reviewed.

Treasurer's report was approved.

PASTOR'S TIME:

Pastor indicated his retreat in Arizona was very beneficial. Discussed practical learning skills and how to improve collaboration among other topics. He has already met with our new Music Director and chosen hymns for the first part of the new year. He is contemplating some kind of youth mission trip this summer (something local). New members will probably be received sometime in January.

NEW BUSINESS:

Council approved some additional benevolence disbursements for a total of \$3250.00, including support to Unity, Lutherdale, the Hunger Task Force, food pantries, and for our two seminarians.

Budget for 2019 – A draft of the 2019 budgets was reviewed and discussed. With the addition of the salary and benefits for a part time Associate Pastor, there is a considerable shortfall. Council decided to conduct some congregational meetings in January to discuss this position so that the congregation will better be able to discuss and vote on the budget at the annual meeting January 27. These meetings are tentatively planned for after worship services on January 13th, 19th and 20th.

Annual Meeting – Committee reports are due to Denise Sanders by 1/3/19. Slides for Jason's presentation are due to Jason by 1/14/19.

New Snow Plowing Firm – There were some issues with our snowfall in December where the parking lot was quite slippery. The new firm has been contacted and is aware of our expectations.

CONDENSED MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING CONT.

OLD BUSINESS

Music Director Search – A new Music Director has been hired. Tabitha Moldenhauer will begin on January 8.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

FINANCE:

L. Sweet indicated that new counters will be needed. Several individuals have asked to be relieved of their commitment.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

B. Zimmermann will be meeting with Pastor to discuss some adult education classes for the new year.

WORSHIP & MUSIC:

The committee will be looking to obtain new volunteers next year and to retrain some current volunteers. Christmas decorations will come down after the Epiphany service on January 6.

There will be no MegaMeeting in January, 2019.

Next Council Meeting will be Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Daleness

Council Secretary



*Have a
Blessed 2019!*

