



the MARTYR MONTHLY

Worship opportunities at SSM

Sunday ZOOM online service 9:30 am

Ash Wednesday service on ZOOM 2/17 @ 7:00 pm

Men's ZOOM online Bible Study: 2/3 & 17 @ 9:00 am

Women's ZOOM online Bible Study: 2/10 & 24 @ 10:15 am

Confirmation ZOOM online Class: 2/3 & 17 @ 7:00 pm

Thursday Nights ZOOM Soup Supper: 6:30 pm @ 7:00pm

****Annual Congregational Meeting February 28th, 2021***

FEBRUARY 2021

Lent.
A Time to Renew

Lent is a 40 day period (excluding Sundays) leading up to Easter.
It's one of the most important times of year
for many Christians around the world.
Lent begins with Ash Wednesday.
The purpose of Lent is a time of preparation for Easter.

St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church_{ELCA}

6101 S. 51st Street., Greendale, WI 53129; (414) 421-3543 www.ssmelca.org

Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others



Pastor's Page

Dear Faith Community,

It's January, and we are already thinking about Lent. Yes, the church season of Lent begins this year with Ash Wednesday on February 17. Historically, Lent was a time when new Christians prepared themselves for baptism on Easter Sunday.

Today, Lent more often is a time when Christians prepare themselves for Easter and are invited to deeper faith, stronger community, and a closer connection to God. This preparation happens through an emphasis on a few basic faith practices: worship, prayer, generosity, self-denial, and service to others. Lent is also thought of as a season of change, for turning things around, for getting back on the right path, what we sometimes call, "repentance." It lasts for 40 days (not counting Sundays).



Some people might fast or give something up for Lent. Perhaps instead of giving up something for Lent this year, we can strive to be more intentional about taking on some new spiritual practices during the 40 days that may turn us back toward God and be more present to the gifts of God that surround us.

1. Go for a walk and give thanks for the gifts of creation you notice along the way.
2. Try a new food that's healthier for you or the environment.
3. Fast from complaining or gossiping.
4. Write a letter to someone you love and tell them why.
5. Support an agency that helps the poor.
6. Pray for your enemies. Don't have enemies? Pray for someone who annoys you.
7. Commit to regular Zoom worship attendance.
8. Tell someone else why your faith is important to you.

I am excited about a new resource that we will be sharing together during Lent. This year we will explore *Living Well Through Lent: Listening with all your Heart, Soul, Strength and Mind*. A paper copy of this resource will be available at church at our February Drive-thru event. Daily devotions are included in the resource.

On Thursday evenings we will have a virtual soup supper via Zoom at 6:30pm. Some soup recipes will be available at our drive-thru event and also emailed. At 7pm there will be a reflection and discussion time. Also, there will be emails that include video devotions and *Hold-en Evening Prayer*. If you are not receiving links to our online zoom opportunities, please contact the church office.

Lent 2021

February 17: Ash Wednesday Zoom service at 7pm

Thursday Reflections on Zoom at 7pm: February 25, March 4, March 11, March 18, March 25

Peace, Pastor Brian

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Stewardship - Walk with Jesus



Walking with Jesus! This is a very pleasant thought, especially in these very perplexing and fearful times. We want to know that Jesus is walking with us. We want to feel safe and secure. We want to know that whatever befalls us in times of trouble that Jesus has our back, that we have a way through all the confusion and fear. We have been well schooled in fear. We've been taught to fear those who are different, especially if they wear those items of clothing that look Muslim. We've been taught to fear boys who have dark skin. We've been taught that foreigners are potential danger if they're from one of the banned countries, or from Mexico. We've been taught about those people standing on the corners begging, that they make \$30,000 a week, and get in their Cadillac at the end of the day. We've been taught that people pull up to grocery stores in their big cars and wear their fur coats while using food stamps. We have been taught to distrust, because we are terrified of being sucked in and have been taught that it is shameful to support "those who can take care of themselves" despite the fact that we can't know whether they can in fact take care of themselves. So yes! We want to walk with Jesus.

Do we know what that means? Walking with Jesus is what discipleship is and was all about. Jesus always instructed his disciples in *discipleship* yet it was not always about the disciples. More often he taught about connection with Him. Who could possibly imagine being told "take up your cross" when we want Jesus to rescue us from all those uncomfortable feelings of danger and vulnerability? How could we possibly welcome Jesus' teaching about seeking the lowest position, being the least or the last, and the lost when we somehow have come to believe that God should be giving everything that we ask for, and making us feel all warm, fuzzy and secure.

Walking with Jesus is about heading into the difficult places and circumstances of life with the confidence that Jesus goes with us into the mix without skirting the issues; that Jesus leads us into love of neighbor despite the color of their skin, the place of origin. Jesus leads us into the ways of life that build relationships and bridges with those who we are often uncomfortable with instead of distancing or of walling ourselves off. Jesus stays with us walking the ways of the cross that can and will lead to a security that a border wall and that distancing and segregation will never provide.

Stewardship is about so much more than our money. It delves into our entire lives and calls upon us to use God's resources to provide for us and those around us with the necessities of life, peace, and security. Sometimes walking with Jesus requires the simplicity of a deep breath and a prayer of surrender, "Help me Jesus." Jesus will always that prayer.

In Christ Jesus,
Rev. Dr. Kipp W. Zimmermann



Christian Education

As we continue to meet virtually our patience may be running out, but we can take this opportunity to spend more time in prayer and Bible study. At least until the end of February all of our offerings will be via Zoom. Don't forget that you can call into zoom as well, even if you do not have a cell phone. The number to call is 312-626-6733, then when prompted you enter the zoom meeting number. Contact the people listed below by each offering to get the correct meeting number. While you cannot see the rest of the participants over the phone you can hear and participate in the discussion.

Sunday School staff continues to use their creativity to produce short videos for each weekly lesson which reflect the lessons from the Sunday service. If you are a Sunday School parent and do not have the materials that are being used you can contact the office and arrange a time to pick up a packet. A new packet will be available soon for the next set of lessons. Watch for the next drive-through event.

The Thursday evening group will continue weekly check-in. Sometimes this time is used for a book discussion or another study, but it is always an opportunity to check-in with other SSM members. If you want to be included in this group call Pastor or Mimi. If you would like the link information sent to you just give the office a call or send an email to office@ssmelca.org.

The Men's Bible Study continues to meet via Zoom at 9:30 am on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month. They continue to look at the book of Genesis. If you would like the link information to this study, and are currently not getting it, give Kipp Zimmermann a call or text at 917-805-5998 or send him an email at kippzee@gmail.com. (If texting be sure to include your name.)

The Women's Bible Study meets via Zoom on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 10:15 am. They are also studying Genesis, which is full of interesting stories, many of which you did not hear in Sunday School. If you are not currently on the list to receive the link to this meeting call or text Bonnie Zimmermann at 917-805-5994 or send an email to bonniezimmermann426@gmail.com. (If texting be sure to include your name.)

The Monthly Monday group is reading **Making Sense of Martin Luther** by David J. Lose. This is a cleverly written, easy to read book written in question and answer format which has led to some interesting discussion. When this group can begin again meetings are the first Monday of each month at 1 pm. Watch for additional announcements regarding later dates.

At this time the plan is to have VBS sometime during the summer of 2021, if it is safe to do so. Dates have not been determined, but watch the newsletter for additional information. The theme will be *Rocky Railway, Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through*.

Stay safe -
Bonnie Zimmermann for Christian Education

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February Drive Thru Event



Thursday, February 11, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 13, 9:00-10:00 a.m.

We hope you will join us for a February drive-thru event at SSM. This event will include:

Food Drive

Bring non-perishable food items and/or monetary donations. These donations will be distributed to the Bay View Food Pantry, Unity, and Faith/Santa Fe.

Collection of Items for the Homeless

Donations of men's underwear and socks are needed at this time. Monetary donations are also accepted and appreciated.

Sunday School Materials

The next set of materials for Sunday School families will be available for pick up.

Living Well Through Lent 2021

Everyone who participates in this event will receive a Lenten devotional, *Living Well Through Lent 2021: Listening With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind*.

Distribution of Holy Communion Kits

Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the sacrament of Holy Communion during the online, Zoom worship services on February 14 (Transfiguration) and March 28 (Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday). During this event, you will be able to pick up individual, pre-filled communion cups with wafers for both of these dates. Pastor Brian will consecrate the cups prior to distribution and a note will be included with a prayer and words for home distribution if you are not able to participate in the Zoom service(s).

Distribution of the 2020 SSM Annual Report

Primary distribution of the report will be electronically through email. However, if you want a printed copy, they will be available at this event.

How to Participate

Drive into the SSM parking lot any time between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 11 or between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 13 and pull up under the canopy. You will not need to get out of your car. If you prefer, we can remove and/or place items in your trunk to reduce contact. Please wear your mask for interacting with the volunteers.

Thank you for your generous spirit.



Mbaaseny Partnership

Greetings from Mbaaseny



Pastor Mbise (center, dark shirt) introduces their new Evangelist, Nelson Nanyaro who will work with parishioners at Canaan (a sub-parish of Mbaaseny). The group is also looking at the photo card I sent to them via Lynn Hooper (from Racine) who just traveled to Meru and will be there for 1 month. The photos show our drive thru event in December, how our worship space looks for video work and how our service looks from my laptop.

Pastor Mbise shares “We will stay all time in keeping you, our friends, in prayers. Our year key words from Jeremiah 32:27, See, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything so hard that I am unable to do it?”

Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others



Human Concerns

Our Drive Thru events have been so successful thanks to our supportive congregation. Your generosity helps to feed hungry families and your generous donations of adult and children's winter coats, hats and gloves will help keep them warm.

Human Concerns will continue to focus on food pantries at this difficult time for so many people thru out the year.

Many thanks,

Human Concerns Committee

Nancy Mineau, chair - Carol Birk, second chair

Shirley Lieski, Carol Manning, Diane Moraza, Julie Starks, Bonnie Zimmermann

Thrivent Members!

During this last Giving Parade our Thrivent Agent helped us acquire money that is available to every member. For information a member is anyone who has insurance, or an IRA or other instrument of saving through Thrivent. Each of those members has at their disposal the potential for Thrivent to donate \$500 a year in charitable contributions. We were able to donate \$1000 to the combination of Santa Fe, Bay View Community Center, and Unity Food Ministry.

Each project application provided \$250 that could be sent to these organizations for the direct disbursement.

We applied in minutes on the Thrivent website and reported the results of the Giving Parade also online. It was not hard and made a difference to the recipient programs.

If you have questions you can call your Thrivent agent or me and I can help you set it up.

Kipp Zimmermann
917 805-5998
kippzee@gmail.com



Serving God through Service to the Church

Many of the people who attend SSM are involved in volunteer activities and serving this church. Please know that your service is greatly appreciated by the Church Council and SSM's members.

As we look toward the future of the church, toward renewing and strengthening connections, we are calling on you to help the church carry out our mission through the coming years. One need that we currently have is the replacement of a number of council positions. Are you willing to serve? Can you recommend someone with the talent to serve in one of these positions?

Generally council positions begin and end in May, however with the pandemic, we were unable to organize an election this past spring and several members were generous enough to continue through the challenges of 2020 and we have more members whose terms are soon ending. Now is the time for us to grant these disciples an end to their council service.

The following positions are in need of new leadership. The *Council Secretary* takes minutes at all council and congregational meetings, assists with congregational communications, and serves as a member of the executive team. The *Evangelism Committee Chair* coordinates community outreach, including the church's website and Facebook page. The *Fellowship Committee Chair* is responsible for activities and programs (generally social in nature) that enhance a sense of belonging in the life of SSM. The *Finance Committee Chair* leads a team responsible for preparing the church's annual budget, overseeing the financial affairs of the congregation, and recruiting and training counting teams. The *Stewardship Committee Chair* encourages members to contribute their time, talent, and treasure towards the ministry of SSM, in part by educating the membership of the congregation's local, national, and worldwide ministries. The *Youth & Family Ministries Chair* organizes programs and activities for youth and their families to promote growth in relationships to the church, community, friends, and self.

If you are interested in serving in one of these positions or if there is someone you would like to recommend for a position, please contact President Jason Covert or Vice President Denise Sanders. All recommendations will be contacted to determine interest and availability.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

News and Notes



THRIVENT FINANCIAL MEMBERS : A Reminder

If you hold Thrivent products such as Life Insurance, Long-term Care Insurance, or Annuities, you have “earned” Thrivent Choice Dollars this past year. These dollars are not yours to spend on yourself, but are valuable to direct to a charity of your choice. St. Stephen the Martyr could be one of those recipients. Last year SSM received thousands of dollars in real money from choice dollars given to our church by our Thrivent members. The deadline to direct your 2020 dollars to SSM is March 31, 2021. Choice dollars from 2021 can be donated as you earn them throughout the year.

If you have forgotten how to direct your choice dollars, be reminded you may do so in one of two ways.

By PC or other electronic device:

1. Visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice
2. Log in and enter your user ID and password, and answer the security question, if asked.
3. (If you haven’t yet registered on Thrivent.com, click “Register for account access” to do so.)
4. Click on Membership Overview
5. See the number of Choice Dollars available to direct. Click on direct choice dollars.
6. Follow the prompts...Finally click “Direct All” or enter a specific number and click “Direct now”. Finish by again following the prompts.

By phone:

1. Call 1-800-847-4836
2. From the Menu: press 5 which should be the number for Member Benefits and programs.
3. Listen for Thrivent Choice (you will need your phone no. and date of birth)
4. A representative will work with you to direct your Choice Dollars.

Thank you for doing this. Bob Rasmussen, Coordinator

THANK YOU NOTE

The family of Tom Hoffman would like to thank you for your prayers, cards and sharing memories after Tom’s sudden death shortly after Thanksgiving.

Nancy, Scott and Beth Hoffman



Condensed Minutes, Council Meeting

Minutes of January 12, 2021 Council Meeting

President Jason Covert called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

Council members present were: J. Covert, B. Daleness, J. Dose, B. Fritschel, A. Matusiak, J. Miller, N. Mineau, J. Muroi, P. Nelson, D. Sanders, L. Sweet and B. Zimmermann. Pastor Brian also attended.

Secretary minutes were reviewed and approved with corrections.

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Financial Secretary – Year end reports show that 103% of dollars pledged for the operational budget were received in 2020. Building fund pledges were slightly under budget. Large donations to Food Pantries were collected in 2020. Special service donations were down due to no in person worship services for most of the year.

Treasurers Report – Reviewed reports. SSM has a healthy balance sheet.

Treasurer's report was approved.

PASTOR'S TIME:

Positive feedback was received on the virtual Christmas services and the special music. Plans are underway for Lent and Ash Wednesday services. Pastor officiated at three funerals in the last few weeks.

CURRENT ACTION ITEMS

Opening the Church – Council decided that it is too soon to determine if the church can open after the end of February. We will evaluate in early February.

Annual Meeting – The annual meeting will be held via Zoom Sunday, February 28, 2021. Committee reports are due to D. Sanders by January 15 and a letter will go out to the congregation by February 10. Annual Reports will be available electronically. Printed copies will also be available for pick up at the church.

Another drive through event will be held at the church on February 11 and 13th. More information will be provided in the Newsletter but communion kits will be distributed.

Condensed Minutes Council cont.



2021 Budget – Budget was discussed and reviewed. Council approved a deficit of no greater than \$16,000. A congregational budget review will be held via Zoom on February 21.

There will be a special virtual Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly on January 23. Jason, Denise and Pastor Brian will attend.

Council positions that have expired or will expire in 2021 will be listed in the Newsletter. Volunteers are needed to fill these positions. Please forward names to Jason or Denise.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

Several families who have watched the video presentations in the Sunday School packets have been very pleased with them.

MUSIC AND WORSHIP:

There will be an Ash Wednesday Zoom service. Options are still being considered for the weekly Lenten services.

PROPERTY:

The roof repair is in process.

HUMAN CONCERNS:

The Coat Drive is going very well. Donations for Food Pantries has exceeded expectations and many eyeglasses were sent to New Eyes for the Needy.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie Daleness
Council Secretary