

MARTYR MONTHLY

JANUARY 2025



WORSHIP AT SSM
SATURDAY AT 5:00PM
SUNDAY AT 9:30AM*
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30AM

**INDICATES WORSHIP SERVICES STREAMED ON ZOOM,
FOR ZOOM INFORMATION PLEASE
CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE.*



Pastor's Page



Dear SSM Faith Family,
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The birth of a child is a happy event. With two teenagers in our home, it seems like it was a long time ago since we had a baby at home. But the birth of a child changes us. We all know that a birth is only the beginning. Little babies have a way of getting our attention. They can totally change our lives with midnight feedings, cries that demand our attention, diaper changes, and those cute little smiles that make us want to pick them up and hug them! We soon learn to rethink how we spend our time. Even when the baby gets older, they demand much of us. Bringing a newborn child into our homes changes us forever.

We just celebrated the birth of our Savior. Christmas gives us hope, peace, joy and love. But we might feel shortchanged. We did the baking, we did the shopping, we sang the carols, but the change did not come. We may even feel less joyful after all is said and done. Parents of a newborn might feel the same way at times...more exhausted than excited. But parents learn to think in terms of an ongoing relationship. So too, we as faithful disciples, must learn to think in terms of an ongoing relationship.

If Christ's birth is to bring us any lasting hope, peace, joy, or love, then we must engage ourselves in a deeper relationship with the Christ child. God did not send us an answer to a test question. God sent us a child. A child always demands our attention. How are you paying attention to Christ and neighbor in the New Year?

Paying close attention to our relationship with Christ and others sounds like work. And it is. But relationships are a lot of work. It's only when we invest in them do we get anything out of them. For us to experience God's hope, peace, joy and love, we need to invest time in the relationship. Where do you want to spend time with Christ this New Year? Don't be stingy with your time. The more you give, the more you get.

May the peace of the Christ Child fill your heart.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Brian

P.S. Thanks for all your Christmas greetings, cards and gifts.

News from Meru

The Greater Milwaukee Synod Meru Partnership Committee meets monthly to share information about needs, accomplishments and updates. Julie Starks attends these meetings sharing the following from the December 14th meeting:

The Education sub-committee lifts up the need for textbooks in the Diocese schools. Currently schools average 1 textbook for each 10 students.

The Medical Support sub-committee is working on replacing the hospital generator.

Nkoaranga Hospital just dedicated a new maternity wing and is building an outpatient and ER building all financed by a group from Germany. Anande Pre & Primary School (near our partner parish Mbaaseny) is in need of a 2nd van to get students to and from school.

Pastor Nnko shared greetings from our partner parish Mbbanseny. They held a joint service with all 3 parishes (Canaan, Jericho and Mbaaseny) on Dec. 22 to pray for St. Stephen the Martyr and our partnership, sing jointly in praise and celebration.

We now have contribution envelopes, located on the kiosk, for our Meru Partnership where you can check off/indicate how to direct your donation. A wire transfer is sent from the Greater Milwaukee Synod to the Diocese of Meru every other month beginning in January. Make checks out to St. Stephen the Martyr before the end of the month. Funds need to be to the Greater Milwaukee Synod office by the 5th of the month. Please contact Julie Starks with any questions about our partnership with Meru including directing donations. Asante sana!



Stewardship



There appeared in the sky above the place where Jesus was born a star. Three Wisemen, Magi, traveled from the East to follow the star, and it led them to Bethlehem, and there they found the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, and they offered their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh

These three from the East, also call Magi, were very likely Zoroastrians, following a religion of Persia call Zoroastrianism. It was a faith that looked to the heavens and read the stars seeking signs from the universe of a great universal event that was to take place that would change the world and usher in wisdom. They saw the star and came searching to see what the universe was bringing. They found the baby, his mother, his father and the star sent as a sign of the times. What they found was a baby worthy of greatness and they offered gifts to the infant. They recognized that the universe had opened up and brought forth an epiphany. A divine revelation lighted the way for all the world.

They presented gifts to the one who was the Gift from God to the whole world. Their actions began a tradition cherished through the ages, a tradition of gift giving. The gift that God gave meant life through darkness, pain, and even death. The gifts we give can mean live and health in dark places: the animals and various items given through our donations to Good Gifts that mean sustenance to those in difficult places; the presence sent to children at Bay View Community center; the gifts of food spread throughout the area food banks; and yes, the pledges that we share with St Stephen the Martyr which continue to share the ministry of the Gospel in the community and farther.

Thank you for your generosity in this year's pledge period. You're grateful giving serves many people and brings the joy of the Lord Jesus Christ to potentially dark needy places. God has blessed us an we continue to be a blessing to the families of the world.

Merry Christmas! And Happy New Year!
Rev. Kipp W. Zimmermann, Stewardship

Meru Coffee

The Greater Milwaukee Synod (GMS) and the Diocese of Meru are celebrating 25 years of partnership. In May 1998, Bishop Paulo Akyoo asked the visiting GMS contingent a simple question: **"We grow coffee; you drink coffee; would you buy coffee from us?"** At that time, international coffee buyers were treating farmers unfairly, coffee prices had fallen drastically, farmer co-ops were closing and the local farming economy in Meru was in trouble. The formation of the Coffee Committee for Dio-



ocese of Meru took place in May 1999 and St. Stephen the Martyr has the distinction of being one of 27

"Cornerstone" congregations to support this partnership. The first import to the US was in 2002. Imports have grown over the years and the Mt. Meru Coffee Project now imports on average more than 24,000 lbs. of beans per year. Thank you for supporting families, growing futures, and changing lives with your purchase of Mt. Meru Coffee.



Human Concerns

Food donations for January will benefit Unity Lutheran Church. We will be collecting non-perishable food items throughout the month. If you prefer, a monetary donation given to St. Stephen the Martyr and designated for *Food Pantries* can be made. Your continued support of our food pantry collections is greatly appreciated. Thank you.



Thank you to everyone who supported the Hyman Concerns holiday drives. We collected plenty of **winter coats** during November, which have been delivered. Donations to **ELCA Good Gifts** were plentiful and the children associated with the **Bay View Community Center** had plenty of gifts thanks to your generosity.

Martyr Monthly—St. Stephen the Martyr

Meet Our Newest Members

Hello, my name is Mara. I have gained peace in my life that I have never had through my sobriety all because of the deep and personal relationship with God. I am the proud mother of Nathaniel, Andre and Orlando. Becoming a member of St. Stephen the Martyr I hope to gain fellowship and friendship with others in our congregation. It is very important for me to have a



My name is Pam Lange. I am an ordained minister of the ELCA, having served in our Greater Milwaukee Synod until my retirement in 2023. I am blessed to have my three children and their families (including seven grandchildren) living nearby so that 'Gramma time' is a frequent and favorite activity. Beyond that, my time is filled with reading, collecting old things, din-



ing with friends or sitting curled up with my two pups. After retiring, I went looking for a lively faith community with relevant preaching, inspirational music and a heart for serving others. I'm so grateful to have found all of that here at SSM!

Pr. Richard is a native of NJ He served congregations in NJ, IN, and MI – then into the VA Chaplaincy first in Ann Arbor, MI then at Zablocki VA. He is an avid Packers fan, enjoys music of all kinds, cars, electronic experimenting and “gadgets”! Beverly was born in Omaha, and grew-up in suburban Minneapolis. Prior to motherhood, she did administrative work, later she graduated from college, worked as a Director of Christian Ed and later in administration at Alverno College. Avid reader, she enjoys crosswords and quilting. They find SSM members friendly and welcoming and appreciate Pr. Brian's messages and many ministerial gifts. Beverly enjoys the Women's Bible Study. They have two adult daughters, Gail, and Barbara, who has adopted three daughters: Anna (Ukraine); Elena (Guatemala); and Jane (Haiti).



SSM Budget Review Meeting

Sunday, January 19

SSM Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 26th

*Meetings will take place in the Fellowship Hall
immediately following worship*

The Annual Meeting will be in person and streamed on Zoom

For Zoom information please call the office



Wednesday, 1/1	New Year's Day Office Closed	
Thursday, 1/2	6:30pm	Confirmation Class
Epiphany		
Saturday, 1/4	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 1/5	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
Monday, 1/6	1:00pm	Bible Study
Tuesday, 1/7	6:30pm	Council Meeting - No January Mega Meeting
Wednesday, 1/8	9:30am	Men's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, 1/9	1:00pm	Quilting - Cut & Sew - until 3pm
Baptism of Our Lord		
Saturday, 1/11	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 1/12	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
Wednesday, 1/15	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
	12 noon	Loose Ends Lunch
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, 1/16	6:30pm	Confirmation Class

2nd Weekend of Epiphany		
Saturday, 1/18	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 1/19	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	Budget Review Meeting
	4:00pm	A Community Prayer Service for Peace and Unity
Monday, 1/20	1:00pm	Quilting - Layering - until 3pm
Wednesday, 1/22	9:30am	Men's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
3rd Weekend of Epiphany		
Saturday, 1/25	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 1/26	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	Annual Congregational Meeting
Wednesday, 1/29	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal

Dates to Remember



Sunday, January 19th at 4:00pm - A Community Prayer Service for Peace and Unity, supported by the Green Corners group, will take place. This date is inauguration day eve, and also the day before MLK day. All are welcome.





		Hanna Billman	13
		Sarah Billman	13
		Billy Burns	14
		Sara Jacobsen	20
		Travis Lisiecki	20
		Mason Zoske	21
		Charlene Weller	22
		Keira Revers	22
Kipp Zimmermann	01	Kyle Julseth	23
Jenny Koeff	01	Vivian Whitmore	23
Grant Gillespie	01	Bill Andersen	24
Kessia Andersen	01	Josh Stuedemann	24
Jay Chadwick	04	Debra Onsager	25
Bob Rasmussen	05	Stephanie Rodenkirch	25
Sally Chadwick	06	Kaelyn Bourne	25
Karen Rasmussen	07	Sandy Petricek	26
Michael Mayer	07	Melissa Cooper	26
Nancy Payne	10	Julia Suchy	27
Travis Nehring	10	Amanda Chadwick	27
Caryl Chmielewski	12	Leigha Andersen	27
Kyle Krauske	13	Christopher Dollar	28
Charlie Billman	13	Jack Kalman	29



Aluminum Can Report

We are happy to report that 174 pounds of cans were sold for the year 2024. The cans sold yielded \$144, money earned was given to the food pantries that SSM supported during this past year.

In 2025 please save your cans at home until collection begins again around April 1st. After this, bring your cans to the church garage and they will be moved inside. This will allow us to continue to support food challenged people in our community and help the environment as well. Thank you!

Bob and Karen Rasmussen - Can Coordinators



Loose Ends Lunch



The January Loose Ends Luncheon will be held at El Beso in the shopping center at Edgerton and 74th Street in Greenfield, 5030 S 74th Street. Pat Schroeder will be the contact person. Please contact Pat if you are planning on attending. Note that because New Year's Day is the first Wednesday of January, the January schedule has been

changed and the Loose Ends Lunch ladies will meet on January

18th at noon, this is the 3rd Wednesday in January.



Pics

Advent Christmas Concert

December 22





Council Minutes - Nov. 12

Present: Denise Sanders, Lorin Schuchardt, John Muroi, Sandy Wesowski, Kristy Knipple, Kipp Zimmermann, Eric Sanders, Jane Miller, Keri Whitmore, Pastor Brian Hooper, Carol Jackett, Shelly Rosenstock
Excused: Alex Dollar

The meeting was called to order by Denise Sanders at 6:35 pm.
Jane shared a devotion.



The October meeting minutes were approved as amended.

Financial Reports: The monthly Financial Reports were presented and reviewed. No concerns or issues were discussed. John M. will be completing his term as Treasurer at the end of the year. Nomination and vote will take place for a new Treasurer at the annual meeting in January.

Pastor Brian's Report: Attended "Leading Well" retreat in Arizona from November 14th to November 21st. Attended the Synod's "Healthy Boundaries Workshop for rostered Ministers" on 11/7. Attended conference for Reconciling in Christ (RIC). The conference will focus on stories and support. Looking for a graphic designer for postcards to be sent to local surrounding communities. 1st Communion and Confirmation held. Attended the Greater Milwaukee Synod Conference on 10/22. A session for new members is scheduled for Nov. 24, 2024.

Current Action Items:

Sabbatical Leave Policy Review. The last two sections of the proposed Sabbatical Leave Policy were reviewed – Church Council Responsibilities and Pastoral Covenant. The review has been completed and final changes will be reviewed and approved at the Dec. Council Meeting. The policy is on track to be presented to the congregation for approval at the Annual Congregational meeting in January.

Budget Discussion. Eric Sanders presented and reviewed information on the current budget and future projections. By Dec. 1st Eric will be sending all Council Members a draft with updates of the January budget numbers and any additional information on the budget. The chair of each committee should review the information sent by Eric and decide on their requests and needs for 2025 in preparation for the budget discussion at the Dec. Council Meeting.

Annual Meeting Dates The January 7th Council meeting will review and finalize the 2025 budget proposal. The date for the Annual Meeting is scheduled for the last Sunday in January after the Sunday morning service - January 26, 2024. The agenda is as follows”

2025 budget review and approval

Reconciling in Christ (RIC)

Treasurer election

Review and approval of Sabbatical Leave Policy

Additional Agenda Item Discussed Fund Raising– Council discussed fund raising for church program. Ideas included the creation of a calendar. No decisions were made.

Committee Reports

Music and Worship Preparations are underway for the Christmas season activities.

Christian Education Sunday School is doing very good.

Evangelism The committee is looking at sending mailers out to local communities to promote SSM. The best time for mailers may be around Easter. A conversation was held with a graphic designer to develop a mailer that can be sent to promote SSM. The cost of mailing is a consideration. Where to mail for the best impact is another consideration. Keri will investigate other publications that could also be utilized to communicate information.

Fellowship There is interest in a rummage sale that could be used as a fund raiser. A good time would be in spring around the beginning of April.

Finance Finance Report was covered in budget discussion.

Human Concerns The Bay View Community Center is collecting gently used or new winter coats in all sizes. The need is great.

Property – Vacant

Stewardship Continue to remind the congregation to complete and turn in pledge cards.

Youth Family Nothing to report currently

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Pastor Brian led in a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Jackett, Secretary



OFFICE HOURS

9:00-2:00 Mon - Th

9:00-12:00 Fri

SSM STAFF

Brian Hooper, Pastor

pastorbrianhooper@gmail.com

Tabitha Moldenhauer, Music Director

Mark Breutzmann, Saturday Musician

Jim Hennessy, Church Maintenance

Bonnie Zimmermann, Ministry Assistant

SSM Website: www.ssmelca.org

Facebook:

<https://m.facebook.com/SSMELCA/>

Email: office@ssmelca.org

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Sunday School email:

sundayschool@ssmelca.org

WORSHIP AT SSM
SATURDAY AT 5:00PM
SUNDAY AT 9:30AM*
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30AM

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St Stephen the Martyr ELCA

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JANUARY 2025



Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others