

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

White Bear Lake, Minnesota

the steppingstone

Pastors: James Woodruff, Larry Johnson

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September 25, 2007

Animal Blessing

Saturday, October 13th, 10:00 a.m.

18th Annual Music Festival & Auction

Saturday, October 13th - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Auction, Silent Auction, Games,
Great Music & Great Food

Sign up on Sundays to donate food and to volunteer.

Contact person: Nicole Ternus – 651-762-8676

Thrivent Financial will match up to \$1600 in congregational matching funds through our local chapter #30093.

PASTOR LARRY'S LAST SUNDAY – SEPTEMBER 30TH

Join us as we say goodbye and God's Blessings to Pastor Larry.

There will be a reception between services in the narthex.

**Remember – 1st Sunday of the Month (October 7th)
is First Family Worship**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am grateful to God for 32+ years of pastoral ministry. I have truly been blessed—not only by those who brought joy into my life but also by those who exasperated me. It has been an honor and privilege to be invited into the lives of others. We have shared laughter and tears, accomplishments and failures, exhilaration and disappointment. Through it all, God has been a faithful, guiding presence—sometimes goading me into action and other times encouraging me to “be still and know that I am God”. I do not know exactly what form ministry will take for me in the future; I know only that it will be different. As Dag Hammarskjold once wrote: “For all that has been—Thanks! For all that will be—Yes!”

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me!” Thank you for welcoming me as your interim pastor and for sharing with me in ministry. It has been an honor and privilege to be with you at St. Stephen the last 14 months. You will continue to be in my thoughts and prayers.

Construction on our house is proceeding nicely. The house is framed; the windows are in; the cement has been poured in the basement; the electrician, the plumber, and cabinetmaker have begun their work. The flooring has been determined and the light fixtures will be picked out the first week of October.

Our temporary living quarters (the cabin—ette) has a new roof and we will finish the soffits in early October. We hope to have electricity in it soon—but we have no plans for running water. It will become my workshop when we move into the house and until a bigger shop can be built. We are planning to plant over 5,000 trees next spring, build housing for some chickens, expand the garden, and so much more. We shall see.

If you come to visit, be sure to give a call (we don't yet have a phone number but it will be available from the church office when we do) or e-mail (LARCJOHN@aol.com) to get directions and to make sure we will be home.

Thank you for the many acts of kindness shown to me—for the cards and gifts. Your thoughtfulness and generosity is deeply appreciated. I look forward to the time when our paths will cross again—take care and peace be with you.

Your brother in Christ and partner in ministry,

Pastor Larry Johnson (retired from active service)

Our prayers and condolences go to the family of Anna Kohout who passed away on September 16th; to Paul Schultz on the death of his grandmother; to Joyce Alexander on the death of her uncle; and to the Peck family on the death of Grant Peck, son, father and grandfather.

WE NEED YOUR RECIPES!!

We need your recipes for the Holly Boutique Cookbook, "CASSEROLES AND BREADS". Please drop off your recipes in the recipe box located in the church office. Many more are needed. Please help us to fill our cookbook. Thank you.

ATTENTION CRAFTERS & BAKERS

The Holly Boutique & Bake Sale will be held Saturday, November 10th, and we need your contributions. We need home-made/handmade crafts for this fund raising event. Please consider making and donating some crafts. Here are a few ideas!

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|-------------------|-------------|
| Afghans | Fudge |
| Baby Clothes | Foods |
| Breads | Hats |
| Candles | Jellies |
| Christmas cards | Needlepoint |
| Christmas items | Pillows |
| Doll clothes | Quilts |
| Dishtowels | Tote bags |
| Embroidered items | Towels |

The next Steppingstone will go out on October 9th. Articles need to be turned in to the church office by Thursday, October 4th.

NEW MEMBERS

We will be receiving new members on Sunday, October 14th. There will be an Orientation & Dessert for new members on Monday, October 8th, from 7 to 8 p.m. If you are interested in becoming a member of St. Stephen, please talk with Pastor Jim.

ADULT FORUM

Sunday mornings at 9:00

September 30

"South Africa: Stories of Faith and Reconciliation" – How do Christians deal with the legacy of the past? God's presence in the midst of social challenges. – Led by Linde Getahun.

October 7

Stewardship Key Leader Program "Freed for Mission" – Anyone interested in finding out more or wanting to help with this program, please join Ted Field.

October 14

"Discerning Your Vocation" – presented by Michael Sherer, editor of the Metro Lutheran.

October 21

Katie Luther, A Bold Woman of the Reformation, stories discovered while on a journey to Lutherland. How did Katie finance the Luther household and provide for the many students who frequented the Luther home? Escape – in a herring barrel? And other anecdotes and photos from Katie's life – presented by Lorna Peck.

Animal Blessing

Saturday, October 13th - 10:00 a.m.

All those who crawl, run, bark, swim, hop, meow, leap, squeak, or fly are invited to St. Stephen for the Annual Animal Blessing. Animals are invited to bring their owners and friends as well.

Music Festival & Auction

Saturday, October 13th

We would like to make this year's auction a huge success, and to do that we need your help! We are challenging each member to either donate an item for the auction or to volunteer a bit of their time. If you're really up to the challenge you can do both! Right now we are low on volunteers, so please consider helping out. The most important volunteer we still need is someone to do business solicitation for us. We specifically need people to help with dessert sales, run games, & do kitchen & general clean up & someone. Also, if anyone out there is good at design, we could use someone to help design an advertisement to put in the White Bear Press. To donate items or your helping hands, please contact Nicole Ternus @ 651-762-8676.

FALL MEETING

WIM Cluster Meeting

Thursday, October 25

6:30 p.m. Registration (\$3) Dessert

7:00 p.m. Business/Program

at St. Paul Lutheran

609 South 5th Street, Stillwater

(see WIM bulletin board for more details)

The TIM Team (Teens in Mission) is being reenergized!

In August, 2007 the TIM Team created a Covenant during their week at Camp Wapogasset. They are interested in spreading the Good News through service! On September 12th, the team had its first meeting with advisers Kate Spencer and Lydia Peterson.

All 10th-12th grade students are welcome to join the fun. 10th grade Confirmands will become official "Teamers" after their October Confirmation but are highly encouraged to attend our next meeting on Wednesday, October 3rd, from 8-9 p.m. Please meet in the Sanctuary.

The TIM Team gratefully asks the St. Stephen congregation for prayers and support as they once again provide teen ministry within the church and community.

Thank you!



HAUNTED

HALLOWEEN

Saturday, October 13th

6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Cost is \$15.00

Sign up on the Youth Bulletin Board.

Children's Ministry Calendar

- October 7 – First Family Worship
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
(Sunday School Worship in the Sanctuary)
– First Food Shelf Sunday
– Bible Sunday (2nd Grade)
- October 28 – 9:00 Reformation Sunday
– 10:30 Rite of Confirmation

Bible Sunday

**Second
Grade
Students
Receive
Bibles**



**Sunday
October
7**

We invite the congregation to share this important milestone in the lives of our second grade students.

P.S. Please contact the church office if you know of a second grade student who has not received an invitational letter or of a student in third through fifth grade who has not previously receive an Adventure Bible.

In response to a request by a congregational member, Children's Ministry will periodically list opportunities to donate items as a need arises. At this time we would appreciate donations of:

Needed: **Donations of Carpet Squares**

P.S. Children's Ministry always appreciates requests or suggestions from anyone who cares to contribute to the ministry.

Children's Ministry Opportunities

In response to a request for specific opportunities to share talents and time, some opportunities include: file coloring sheets and/or lesson sheets; file request for payment vouchers; make copies; help plan service or social opportunities for Sunday School families and classes, perhaps make contact with potential sites (We have some sites already identified.); play guitar or piano, or lead singing or actions, for opening on Sunday morning or Wednesday evening; weigh food shelf donations; help place food shelf items in a basket to be brought to the altar during offering; promote food shelf collection projects; write an article for, or edit, a children's ministry newsletter; prepare crafts or projects or pull supplies from the supply room; purchase food items (you can be reimbursed.); Change the bulletin board (provided for you or you may design your own.); assemble the Christmas tree for the Hat & Mitten Tree; box up donations; mail or deliver donations; hang seasonal decorations and posters; teach Sunday School on a part time basis or team teach with another teacher. These opportunities allow for various levels of time commitment, some quite minimal. You may arrange to volunteer seasonally, monthly, weekly, or as you are able. **You do not have to volunteer on a weekly basis.** Please pray for discernment as to whether God is calling you to serve on the Children's Ministry Team. Please contact Deb Nelson, Children's Ministry Director, at 651-777-1107 for further information.

Wednesday Evening

First Grade through Sixth Grade students are invited to join us on Wednesday evenings, from **7:00 pm to 8:15 pm, in the Fellowship Hall** at FaithWeaver Friends. Primary students gather as a large group to participate in a skit. Then we will break into smaller groups for projects, games, snacks, or other activities and surprises. We will also take time to reflect how the weeks' Bible topic affects us in our lives. There is also an opportunity to earn a key chain and charms through out the year. **Three-year-old, Four-year-old, Five-year-old and Kindergarten students** are invited to join us from **7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in classroom K.** The children participate in an opening story. Then they participate in one or two activities in their classroom and rotate through one or two activity stations. Lastly, they return to their classroom where parents pick them up after their closing. **ALL AGES: SUNDAY SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS ARE WELCOME AS THE WEDNESDAY PROGRAM DOES NOT DUPLICATE OUR SUNDAY PROGRAM. We look forward to welcoming you at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, October 3.** Parents should plan to stay a few minutes as they will be required to complete a registration form.

P.S. We welcome any interested parents, grandparents, or other youth, or adults in the congregation to join our Wednesday evening children's ministry team. We have a wonderful time sharing in this children's fellowship opportunity.

Minnesota Food Shelf

Thank you for your continued donations to the food shelf. We will bring our food shelf donations to the altar in offering on the first Sunday of every month beginning October 7. Families are invited to participate in this act of service by letting your Sunday School teacher know if you are interested in participating.

First Family Worship

We value children at St. Stephen and look forward to welcoming children and their families as we worship as a complete, multi-generational family of God on Sunday, October 7. We are committed to teaching children about "worship" and as part of that commitment we want to help them learn how to worship. Children may not understand some of what happens or is spoken so we ask congregational members to please be tolerant as questions arise so that children will know that the sanctuary is a place where they are welcomed and loved. Non-parents, please take a moment to personally welcome children and their families into worship. Some suggestions for including children in worship include: arrive early enough to sit near the front so that they can see what is happening; let children follow along in the hymnal; look up lessons and/or the gospel in the Bible; hand offering plates to children, not over them; invite children and families to sit with you if you are a non-parent; let children use the "children's worship bulletins" during the sermon. The Children's Ministry Team hopes that everyone is looking forward to the enthusiasm and energy that including children in worship will bring.

Council report from September 10, 2007

The most difficult problem facing the congregation of St. Stephen is the budget deficit, which currently stands at \$52,000. We have never been this far behind. The deficit is due primarily to members not keeping up on their pledges. The current offerings are not enough to support two full time pastors. The Call Committee is meeting with the Synod to discuss this situation and will be reporting to the congregation on September 23.

Ministry Team Night was adopted by the Council at the August meeting. It was decided to alternate nights. All Ministry Teams will meet on the third Monday of even numbered months, and on the third Tuesday of odd numbered months. The next Ministry Team night is Tuesday, September 18. In October, it will be Monday, October 15.

Ministry Teams will be reminded that all requests to run fund-raisers in 2008 must be submitted to the Stewardship Ministry Team by October 30. Please put written requests in their post box.

The Stewardship Key Leader program will be implemented the weekend of October 6-7, with Commitment Sunday planned for November 11th.

Other actions by the Council:

- The Council reluctantly accepted the resignation of Pastor Larry Johnson to begin his retirement. The Council will host a reception between services on September 30th to thank Pastor Larry for his hard work and dedication these past months at St. Stephen's.
- We welcomed Brian Johnson as the new Children's Choir Director, as well as Phyllis Ballata and Dana Ashley as interim Senior Choir Director and Accompanist while Sandy Knutson and Brenda Drimmel take a short leave of absence.
- The congregation began using the new hymnals on Rally Sunday.
- The date for the Music Festival and Auction was set for Saturday, October 13.
- The Council voted not to fill the Council seat vacated after the resignation of Andrew Mendez until the regular Congregational meeting in January.

Special Congregational Meeting

At the request of the Call Committee, a special meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday, September 19th. At that meeting, the Call Committee reviewed a history of the call process to date and reported on their discussion with Susan Miller, our liaison with the Saint Paul Area Synod. The Call Committee had requested that she interview past candidates who had withdrawn from the process after the committee had interviewed them. Two issues were identified by the candidates as major concerns. First were our expectations of the candidate as outlined in the job description. The candidates felt we were expecting more of the associate pastor than one person could do. Second was a financial concern. This was expressed in terms of concern over our current budget deficit of \$52,000; whether we would be able to assure continuation of the position in light of the deficit; and that we were proposing to pay less than Synod guidelines.

In light of these concerns, the Council unanimously recommends that the Congregation approve the following motion at a specially called congregational meeting at 1:00 p.m., Sunday, October 14:

That the call process be put on hold until the congregation has resolved the stewardship issues reflected by the deficit and has met the minimal salary guidelines for pastors and lay staff established by the synod.

That at the annual meeting in January, the congregation review our progress to date on addressing these concerns and reconsider it's decision to put the call process on hold.

That in the interim the Council put together a plan to hire qualified individuals to assist Pastor Jim on a part time basis with Sunday services and with visitation.

This is an important issue for the congregation and we look for broad participation in the discussion of the motion. Please discuss this with any Council or Call Committee member.

Sunday, September 30

8, 9 & 10:30 am WORSHIP
9 & 10:30 am Sunday School
9:00 am Adult Forum

Monday, October 1

9:15 am Bible Study
11:30 am Weight Watchers
12:30 pm Ruth Circle -
Library
7:30 pm Youth Com Mtg

Tuesday, October 2

6:45 pm Rachel Circle
at church

Wednesday, October 3

10:00 am AIAnon
10:00 am Bible Study
5-6:30 pm Meal
5:30 pm Captured Spirit
5:30 pm Bell Choir
6:15 pm WORSHIP
6:15 pm Confirmation
6:15 pm Children's Choir
7:00 pm Faithweaver Friends
7:00 pm Senior Choir

Friday, October 5

12:00 noon Sarah Circle

Sunday, October 7

8, 9 & 10:30 am WORSHIP
9:00 First Family Worship
9:00 am Adult Forum

Monday, October 8

9:15 am Bible Study
11:30 am Weight Watchers
7:00 pm Council Meeting

Wednesday, October 10

10:00 am AIAnon
10:00 am Bible Study
5-6:30 pm Meal
5:30 pm Captured Spirit
5:30 pm Bell Choir
6:15 pm WORSHIP
6:15 pm Confirmation
6:15 pm Children's Choir
7:00 pm Faithweaver Friends
7:00 pm Senior Choir

Thursday, October 11

9 am Retiree Breakfast

Saturday, October 13

8 am Men's Breakfast
10 am Pet Blessing
11 am – 4 pm MUSIC
FESTIVAL & AUCTION
6:30 pm Haunted Halloween

Sunday, October 14

8, 9 & 10:30 am WORSHIP
9 & 10:30 am Sunday School
9:00 am Adult Forum

Monday, October 15

9:15 am Bible Study
11:30 am Weight Watchers
7 pm Adult Learning
7 pm All Ministry Team Night
7 pm Simple Living Group