



Steppingstone Newsletter



*A Christian
community bringing
God's love to the world.*

April, 2023

Easter Sunday

April 9, 2023

Easter Sunrise Service / 8:00am

Easter Celebration Service / 9:30am



CHURCH MATTERS

We give to see a change in the World...

ONLINE GIVING THROUGH CHURCH WEBSITE:

*Click on the donation button on our home page at www.ststephenwbl.org
(donations accepted via check, credit card, or debit card)*

ONLINE GIVING FROM YOUR CELL PHONE:

If you wish to scan our QR code to make donations online, follow these simple steps:

1) Open the Play or App Store on your Android or iPhone. 2) Search for a FREE QR Code reader. 3) Tap [INSTALL]. 4) Tap [ACCEPT]. 5) Open the app and line up the camera frame with the QR code to scan. 6) Open the link to our donation site (St Stephen Lutheran Church). 7) You can set up donations from your checking, savings, or credit/debit card. 8) You can choose the frequency of your donations: One time, Weekly, or Monthly. 9) You will have to set up a profile with your name, address, phone, email, card or routing number, etc. and create a password.



Go to: <http://www.ststephenwbl.org/impact/giving.cfm>

DROP OFF:

In outside drop box, into office door mail slot, or during worship.

MAIL:

*St. Stephen Lutheran Church,
1965 East County Road E., White Bear Lake, MN 55110*

LEGACY GIFTS

*Help sustain and protect St. Stephen legacy by making a contribution to our endowment fund!
Have questions? Contact the Endowment Committee through the church office.
Gifts of all kinds are accepted.*

SIMPLY GIVING:

*This program enables you to give automatically through
Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) through your checking account.
For more information please contact Brad Wilm, at RuthaBradj@gmail.com*

ELECTRONIC BILL PAY:

Easy and paperless—sign up with your bank

THRIVENT CHOICE:

*Thrivent financial charitable fund. If you have investments or insurance with Thrivent Financial, through the Thrivent Choice outreach program, you can direct funds to go to St. Stephen at no cost to you! For more information and sign up, go to Thrivent Financial's website and click on Membership and Benefits. <https://www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice/> or call 1-800-847-4836 and ask for: Thrivent Choice. (Must be done annually.)
At Thrivent, giving back has always been important to our members. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has provided more than \$170 million through the Thrivent Choice®*

COUNCIL CONNECTION

Pastoral Transition Update

What's going on with Pastor Jim's retirement and the plan to call a new pastor?

During the time of a pastoral transition the synod office works closely with congregations. Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer, an Assistant to the Bishop, has been assigned to work with St. Stephen throughout our transition process. He has worked with Christ the King WBL and Redeemer for their recent call processes as both have called new pastors. Rolf lives in White Bear Lake, so he has a particular interest in our community.

Rolf met with our Church Council in February and outlined the four-step transition process. Those steps are:

- 1) Leave taking
- 2) Ministry exploration at St. Stephen
- 3) Call process
- 4) Begin new chapter with new pastor

The timeframe for this entire process is typically 15-24 months. For us, that time started in January when Pastor Jim announced his plans to retire. So, we anticipate calling a new pastor sometime during 2024.

There are three main goals of the leave taking time that we are in:

Celebrate – First, we need to take the time to celebrate Jim's 30 years of service to St. Stephen. It's an incredible tenure! This is the time to eat cake, to share memories, be grateful, to laugh together and cry together, and pay attention to Jim and each other. We have a retirement celebration planned for the afternoon of Sunday, May 21. Pastor Jim's last worship service will be the evening of Wednesday, May 31, and there will be a special celebratory meal and GAP worship that night. Put those dates on your calendar and plan to be part of it.

Interim Pastor – The St. Paul Area Synod has a cadre of 22 interim pastors who are experienced and especially trained to lead congregations through interim processes. Key considerations are fit and availability. Rolf is looking to find a couple of interim pastor candidates who are available when we need them and a good fit for our needs. He plans to give us names by the end of March so that the Executive Committee can meet with them in April. We expect that by late April or early

May we should be able to announce to the congregation the name of the interim pastor who will serve St. Stephen starting on June 1.

Exit Interview – There will be an exit interview in late April or early May with Pastor Jim, council members and Rolf. It will be a time of looking back and reflecting on what worked well, what challenges we faced, and envisioning what the future might look like.

We will provide regular updates throughout the pastoral transition process. If you have questions or suggestions, talk with council members about it. Also, please pray that God is at work as we walk together through this time of transition, guiding us and caring for us each step along the way, leading us into the hopeful future God has planned for St. Stephen.

Council Highlights

Synod delegates were selected to represent St. Stephen at St. Paul Area Synod Assembly May 12-13: Denise Ashley and Scott Zieman along with Pastor Jim and Pastor Juli.

The "Evergreen Team" that had been appointed by the council is investigating ways to close the gap between income and expenses in a sustainable way. This team is working in tandem with the Finance Committee and Stewardship Committee. Some team members reported on initial brainstormed ideas. If you have suggestions, contact team members: Ted Field, Patsy Olson, Ken Smith, Kathy Stickler, Randy Amborn, Marla Amborn or Pastor Jim.

We received an update on the pastoral transition process. We should have names for possible interim pastor candidates by the end of March.

The council reviewed transcribed items from the February 18 Visioning Retreat. Results will be used as part of the pastoral transition process, especially during the Ministry Exploration phase that will start in June.

John Rohr regrettably resigned his council position due to health issues. The Nominating Committee will be asked to identify someone to complete the remaining time of John's term of service (the rest of 2023 and 2024).

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (3/28, 4/25)

We have changed the WW (Widows and Widowers) Lunch Bunch to Christian Singles Lunch Bunch. Please feel free to join our group for lunch on the last Tuesday of each month (11:30am). RSVP Contact: Judee Bramscher (651-269-6122).

- ♦ **March 28** - we will gather at the Little Village Pub (2670 Co Rd E East, White Bear Lake, MN 55110). RSVP (required by Sunday, March 26).
- ♦ **April 25** - we will be meeting at Olive Garden (1749 Beam Ave, Maplewood, MN 55109). RSVP (required by Sun., April 23).

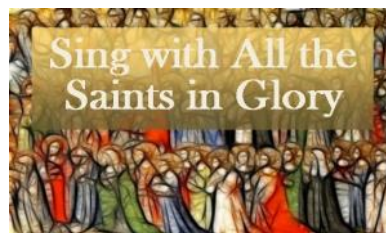
First Communion Class (3/29)

If you have a child who would like to receive their First Communion at the 7:00pm service on Maundy Thursday, please make sure they attend our preparatory First Communion Class on Wednesday, March 29 (7:00-7:30pm).

Bookkeeper/Treasurer Needed

Patsy is retiring therefore we are seeking someone to fill this role. Duties of the Bookkeeper:

processes bills, vouchers, assigns expenses to accounts, designated fund accounts entries, makes checks, payroll, and opens emails (usually bills). Duties of the Treasurer: prepares all financial and designated fund account reports, prepares and maintains budget, monitors church's cash flow, proofs ledger entries, prepares for audits, and reports to Church Council. If you are interested in volunteering as the Church Bookkeeper/Treasurer, please contact Patsy Olson at treasurer@ststephenwbl.org



Lenten Lunch/Mal & Services (3/29)

Join us for our final Lenten Wednesday as we prepare for the glorious good news of Easter. This is a great opportunity to invite others!

**Lenten Service (noon) & Lunch (12:30)
Meal (5:30) & Worship (6:00)**

Braided Bread Pick-up (4/1)

For those who purchased Braided Bread during our Tanzania Fundraiser, your bread is available for pick-up on Saturday, April 1st

(10:00am-12noon) at the home of Ken & Karen Smith (1817 Richard Ct.).



Minnesota Wild Night (4/3)



For those who purchased tickets, this is a reminder that the Minnesota Wild Night against the Las Vegas Golden Knights is on Monday, April 3 at 7pm (tickets are \$38). Contact Melissa at

whitman@redeemerwhitebear.org if you have any questions.

Pastor-led Bible Study

Led by Pastor Jim each Wednesday (9:00-10:00am) in the library. We're studying the book of Romans.



Worship and Community Meal—On Break (4/5)

On Wed., April 5, GAP Worship Service and the Community Meal are on break.

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Faith Ed - On Break (4/5, 4/9)

Faith Ed is ON BREAK on
Wed., April 5 and Sun., April 9,

Christ in Our Home



Devotional Booklets for
April/May/June are now
available in the narthex in the
info racks. Please feel free to
take as many as you like and
offer them to others who may
find comfort in reading them.

God's Word

God's Word Bible discussion group, led by
Phyllis Ballata meets in the Library on
Thursdays (1:00-2:00pm). We are ON
BREAK on April 6th.



Becoming a Certified Driver for New Trax

Benefit: Use their busses for a very low cost
for church events and for people
unable to drive to church on
mornings. Training sessions take place at
Redeemer (10000 Lakeview Ave.) in
Maplewood (9:00am-4:00pm), Wed-
-4/12 (9:00am-4:00pm), Thurs-4/13 (11am-
5pm). You must attend all sessions. If you
have a current CPR certification, the April
13th class is not required. Contact Melissa
Whitman with any questions at
mwhitman@redeemerwhitebear.org

CANCELLED

GAP Worship & Community Meal - RESUMES (4/12)

Join us (and invite others) to attend our
Wednesday casual Grace & Praise (GAP)
worship service (6:00-6:45pm) and
Community Meal (5:30-6:00pm).

Wednesday Meal Assistants

We are in need of volunteers to help prepare,
cook, and serve our Wednesday evening
community meals - **assisting Primary Cook
Jodie Millard**. Mealtime is 5:30-6:00pm
before our Grace & Praise (GAP) Worship
Service. Choose one or as many Wednesdays
as you like. Please sign up in the kitchen or
contact Tami in the church office
(651-777-1107, office@ststephenwbl.org) to get
onto the schedule.

Retiree's Breakfast (4/13)

Attention all retirees! You are invited to join
other retirees from church for breakfast
(Thurs/9:00-10:00am) at Perkins in Maplewood
on County Road D.

Faith Ed—Confirmation (4/15)

Confirmation is at Redeemer on Saturday,
April 15 (9:00am-4:00noon).

Paul Swanson's 21st Anniversary Reception (4/16)

Please join us for a reception
following the worship service on
Sunday, April 16 as we honor our
church member / custodian.



Wendy Peterson's Memorial (4/22)

On Saturday, April 22, a service
will be held at St. Stephen at
11:00am for Wendy Peterson,
who died on February 27th.
(Visitation-10:00am;
Luncheon-12noon).

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

FREE

Vacation Bible School

August 7-11 (9am-noon)

Invite Friends & Neighbors!

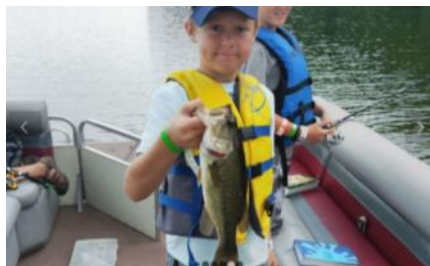
Open to children who turned three by 9/1/22 (and potty trained) through children who completed the 6th grade this school year

(((Click here for registration form)))



Register NOW for Camp WAPO


If you're planning on attending camp this summer at Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp (WAPO), NOW is the time to register your child/youth for camp - online at www.lakewapo.org. WAPO is filling up fast. St. Stephen has Seeds Summer Camp (completed Grades 1 – 3) June 16 – 18 and WAPO Youth Camp (completed Grades 4 – 8) June 18 – 23. If these dates don't work for you or the week fills up other dates can be attended. St. Stephen has camperships available; \$100.00 for Seeds weekend camp and \$225.00 for Youth week long camp. We'll also be doing a Rural Route 1 Popcorn fundraiser in April and other financial help is available. Money concerns will not prevent your child from enjoying summer Bible Camp. Any questions, concerns, need help or assistance see or talk to Paul Schultz (651-238-0610). Sign-up NOW!



APPRECIATION

- ♦ Thank you to all who made lunches and meals on Wednesdays throughout Lent.
- ♦ Thank you to all who donate their time to decorate, prepare, cook/bake, serve, and clean-up for funeral luncheons. In March, we had quite a few and we appreciate your dedication.
- ♦ Thank you to all who supported our Tanzania Mission by purchasing braided bread.
- ♦ Thank you to our Hospitality Committee for all they do to help us celebrate special events.
- ♦ Thank you to ALL of our church committees for your valuable input, time, and planning.

WORSHIP



**Casual
IN-PERSON
Worship**
**Wednesdays
6:00PM**

grace and praise

Join us and **INVITE OTHERS** for a Community Meal (5:30pm)

April 2, 2023

9:30am

(In person & Online)

**Service with
Communion**



Maundy Thursday

**Service of Scriptures & Songs
w/ Communion
(12noon)**

**Service w/Fools for Christ Drama
and First Communion
(7:00pm)**

April 6, 2022



Good Friday

April 7, 2022



"Seven Last Words"

12noon (at St. Stephen)

"The Passion of the Christ"
(Combined Choirs & Reader's Theater)

7pm (at Redeemer)

Redeemer and St. Stephen Lutheran Churches invite you to join us in remembering the Passion of our Lord at a service with Combined Choirs and a Reader's Theater presentation

from the Gospels.

Redeemer

3770 Bellaire Ave.

White Bear Lake



Help Needed on Good Friday

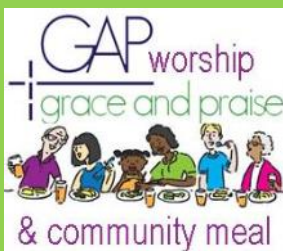
In addition to our church choir, we need nine volunteers to help lead worship on April 7th for the Good Friday Worship Service (7:00pm) at Redeemer.

4 people for greeters/ushers

5 readers

If you are interested in helping, please contact Pastor Jim and/or the church office.

There will be one rehearsal for readers on Wed., April 5 (6:00pm) at Redeemer.



GAP Worship & Community Meal RESUMES (4/12)

Join us (and invite others) to attend our Wednesday casual Grace & Praise (GAP) worship service (6:00-6:45pm) and Community Meal (5:30-6:00pm).

PRAYERS

Prayers Have Been Requested For the Following...



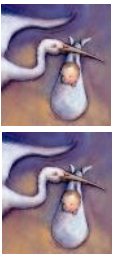
Help Keep Us Informed

Please help keep us informed of any concerns that you would like our congregation to be praying about, including those serving in the military and any deaths among family members, by contacting the church office at 651-777-1107 or office@StStephenWBL.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS



APRIL Birthdays



Sunday, May 21

Pastor Jim's 30th Anniversary Celebration & Retirement Party

9:30am Worship Service

12:30pm Meet & Greet

1pm Catered Luncheon

2pm Program

(Menu: Donatelli's Baked Mostaccioli with Meat Sauce, Tortellini
Carbonara, Caesar Salad, and Garlic Bread. Dessert.

Tickets (\$20) go on sale April 10th.



Wednesday, May 31

Pastor Jim's Last Day—Farewell GAP Service & Picnic

5pm Picnic (freewill offering), 6pm Service (bring a lawn chair)

Do You Have Any Special Pictures of Pastor Jim?

We are in the process of preparing for Pastor Jim's retirement party and wish

to gather any special pictures of him. If you have any, please either email photos to Tami at

office@ststephenwbl.org

or bring them into the church office so we can scan them before April 23rd.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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The Steppingstone Newsletter...

Is distributed monthly. If you have any items for the **May** issue, please send them to office@ststephenwbl.org by Mon., April 10th. Newsletters are also available in the narthex information racks or via email. Please let us know if you have a change of address so that we can update our mailing list.

Staff

Lead Pastor • James Woodruff
jamesawoodruff@ststephenwbl.org

Visitation Pastor • Juli Thompson
visitation@ststephenwbl.org

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**Children & Families Ministry Director** • Paul Schultz  
[childrenmin@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:childrenmin@ststephenwbl.org)

**Communication & Administrative Coordinator** • Tami Heart  
[office@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:office@ststephenwbl.org)

**Custodian** • Paul Swanson

**Digital Ministry Director** • Zach VanDyke  
[zrv10000@gmail.com](mailto:zrv10000@gmail.com)

**GAP Worship Director** • Justin Woodruff  
[jwoodruff@homfurniture.com](mailto:jwoodruff@homfurniture.com)

**Nursery Caregiver** • Lisa Klingbeil

**Organist** • Cindy Bittner  
[cynthia.k.bittner@gmail.com](mailto:cynthia.k.bittner@gmail.com)

**Senior Choir Accompanist** • Cindy Bittner  
[cynthia.k.bittner@gmail.com](mailto:cynthia.k.bittner@gmail.com)

**Senior Choir Director** • Kari Ballata  
[ballatahosmer@yahoo.com](mailto:ballatahosmer@yahoo.com)

**Wedding Coordinator** • Missy Kneip  
[mothergoose2954@yahoo.com](mailto:mothergoose2954@yahoo.com)

**Youth & Families Ministry Director** • Melissa Whitman  
[mwhitman@redeemerwhitebear.org](mailto:mwhitman@redeemerwhitebear.org)

### Council & Leadership

**President and Staff Relations**  
Marla Amborn—[MarlaAmborn@gmail.com](mailto:MarlaAmborn@gmail.com)

**Vice President, Finance & Stewardship**  
Ted Field—[FieldJackson@msn.com](mailto:FieldJackson@msn.com)

**Previous President and Church Council Secretary**  
Betsy Clark—[eaclark001@comcast.net](mailto:eaclark001@comcast.net)

**Adult Learning**  
Scott Ziemann—[scott.ziemann@century.edu](mailto:scott.ziemann@century.edu)

**Children & Families**—OPEN

**Congregational & Community Care**  
Phyllis Ballata—[pballata@msn.com](mailto:pballata@msn.com)

**Evangelism**—OPEN

**Fellowship**  
Cheryl Skrypez—[cskrypez@gmail.com](mailto:cskrypez@gmail.com)

**Financial Secretary**  
Brad Wilm—[RuthaBrad@gmail.com](mailto:RuthaBrad@gmail.com)

**Mission and Benevolence**  
Pastor Jim Woodruff—  
[jamesawoodruff@ststephenwbl.org](mailto:jamesawoodruff@ststephenwbl.org)

**Property**  
Kathy Stickler—[kstickler23@gmail.com](mailto:kstickler23@gmail.com)

**Treasurer**  
Patsy Olson—[joellyo@netscape.net](mailto:joellyo@netscape.net)

**Worship & Music**  
Denise Ashley—[deniseashley1@yahoo.com](mailto:deniseashley1@yahoo.com)

**Youth & Families**  
Bethany Zenner—[bethanyzenner@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanyzenner@hotmail.com)

### Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9am-3pm; Friday 9am-Noon

St Stephen Lutheran Church  
1965 East County Rd E  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

# What's Happening

## Sundays

Blended Worship Service  
& Faith Ed **9:30am IN-PERSON**  
(Services are live-streamed and online)

## Wednesdays

Grace & Praise Casual Worship  
& Faith Ed **6:00pm IN-PERSON**  
(Community Meal at 5:30pm, \$5/pp)

## Calendar Highlights

- 3/28 Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (Tues/11:30am)
- 3/29 Lent Service (Wed/12:00pm) & Lenten Lunch (12:30pm)
- 3/29 Lenten Meal (Wed/5:30pm) & Lent Worship (6:00pm)
- 3/29 First Communion Class (Wed/7:00-7:45pm)
- 4/1 Fools for Christ "Joseph" Callbacks (Sat)
- 4/1 Braided Bread Pick-up at the Smith's (Sat/10:00am-12noon)
- 4/2 Palm Sunday Worship Service (9:30am)
- 4/3 Minnesota Wild Game (Mon/7:00pm)
- 4/5 Fellowship Group (Wed/10:30am) *also 12, 19, & 26th*
- 4/6 Maundy Thursday Service w/Communion (12noon)
- 4/6 Maundy Thursday Service w/Fools Drama (7:00pm)
- 4/6 First Communion (Thurs/7:00pm)
- 4/7 Good Friday Service (12noon)
- 4/7 Good Friday Service w/Joint Choirs at Redeemer (7:00pm)
- 4/9 Easter Sunrise Service (Sun/8:00am)
- 4/9 Easter Festival Service w/Choir Singing (Sun/9:30am)
- 4/10 Content Deadline for May Steppingstone (Mon)
- 4/10 Ticket Sales Begin for Pastor Jim's Retirement Party
- 4/12 Pastor's Bible Study (Wed/9:00am) *also 19 & 26th*
- 4/12 Community Meal **RESUMES** (Wed/5:30pm)
- 4/12 Grace & Praise (GAP) Worship **RESUMES** (Wed/6:00pm)
- 4/13 Retiree's Breakfast (Thurs/9:00-10:00am)
- 4/13 Worship & Music Meeting (Online, Thurs/7:00-8:00pm)
- 4/15 Faith Ed: Confirmation (Redeemer, Sat/9:00am-4:00pm)
- 4/16 Baptism: Nora Dee Baligrodzki (Sun/9:30am)
- 4/16 Paul Swanson's 21st Anniversary Reception (Sun/10:15am)
- 4/17 Church Council Meeting (Mon/7:00-9:00pm)
- 4/20 May Steppingstone Distribution Day (Thurs/10:00am)
- 4/20 Quilting Group (Thurs/9:00am-3:00pm) *also 27th*
- 4/21 Quilting Group (Fri/9:00am-3:00pm) *also 28th*
- 4/22 Wendy Peterson's Memorial Service (Sat/11:00am);  
Visitation (10:00am); and, Luncheon (12noon)
- 4/25 Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (Tues/11:30am)