



Steppingstone Newsletter



June, 2024

Highlights



Nordic Walking

Tuesdays (7:00-8:00pm), Details on page 6



GAP Summer & Community BBQ's

Each Wednesday (BBQ: 5:15pm, Service: 6:00pm)



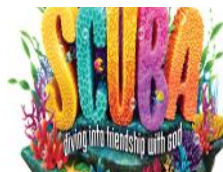
Retiree's Breakfast

Thurs., June 13 (9:00-10:00am) at Maplewood Perkins



Fools for Christ "Mary Poppins"

June 13-16, Details on page 5



Vacation Bible School

June 24-28, Details on page 6



Christian Singles Lunch Bunch

June 25 (Last Tuesday of each month 11:30am)

CHURCH MATTERS

Pastor Karri's Message "Blessings in Community"

A friend of mine had a quote scrolling across her computer screen a few years back that said: *"How many times do we miss God's blessings because they are not packaged as we expected?"* That quote has stuck with me over the years and I have found that it helps to remember it when I'm feeling busy or overwhelmed. It seems that too often when I'm busy I forget to slow down and take time to look around me and see the blessings that God continually grants.



Soon we will be thrown into the middle of another summer...and with it come the joys of sunshine, family vacations, freedom celebrations and no school! We try to find time for extra rounds of golf, family gatherings, trips to the beach or afternoons in the garden. We enjoy bright sunshine, cool evening breezes and a summer's rain shower. In a time that most people associate with vacations and relaxation, we can also find ourselves the busiest; arranging child care for kids who are out of school, endless planning for vacations, packing the car for a weekend at the beach or preparing meals for large groups of people as we take advantage of gathering during the short months of Minnesota summers. As we move into the summer months our Call Committee will continue meeting to accomplish their task as well. All of these things demand our time, energy and attention.

In the midst of all of this, we must find time to pause and recognize the blessings that are all around us. One of the greatest blessings we have is the gift of community. In Genesis 2 we see God's intention for creation to be in community. God, looking over creation, said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." The only thing in all of creation that was not good was Adam's solitude. Through the creation of Eve, another human being, God created the first true community. In this we can see God's intention for all of us...and that need for community remains today.

Community is a foundational part of God's design for all of us. It follows, then, that it is also foundational to the church. Throughout the New Testament we hear of Jesus' teachings to love *one another*, honor *one another*, live in harmony with *one another*, and to accept *one another*. The church is the culmination of all of God's plans for us. Our church allows us to come together as a community, bound by a shared history and identity in Christ, to worship, to share fellowship and to serve our neighbors.

My prayer is that we will all find time in the busy-ness of this coming summer for church – for our community; to worship on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings, to gather in fellowship and for discovering what God is calling St. Stephen to for the future. Let us use this time to discover and celebrate the blessings in community that God has showered upon us.

Blessings, Pastor Karri



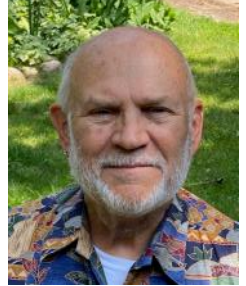
Pastor Karri Anderson's Good-Bye Reception (6/16)

Let's show our appreciation and offer our well-wishes to Pastor Karri Anderson on her final day at St. Stephen. On Sunday, June 16, she will be preaching for the last time. Immediately following the service, we will have a "Good-Bye Reception".

CHURCH MATTERS

President's Message

We are active in our church life for a variety of reasons. We are people of faith who like to worship together regularly. As church members we find opportunities to help others and use our talents to make a difference in the world. We enjoy the fellowship of people who believe as we do. If asked by a non-church goer why we are active members of St. Stephen, those are some of the answers we would give.



We watch what is happening in the world and in our surrounding community. The ranks of non-believers is growing. An estimated 40 million people have stopped going to church in the past 25 years. Many among them would give as reasons churches are irrelevant, or they are too judgmental, or they offer nothing to make their lives better. But they are likely to miss an important point, which is that church is a community and it is vitally important for all people—believers and non-believers alike— to be part of a community that is not their immediate families.

The emphasis on community should never be overlooked. It's never been as important as it is now. We live in an age of declining face-to-face socialization. People are less civically engaged and feel less satisfied with their social life. They have a hard time finding places for collective life. As people push themselves away from a church, they choose non-communal replacements, relying on technology like smartphones to find purpose in life, missing the point that to stare into a piece of glass in our hands is to be removed from our bodies. It's a solitary engagement.

Our religious rituals are the opposite of this in almost every respect. They put us in our body. Many of them require movement that is devotional, like when we kneel at the communion altar, or stand in the pews to sing together or share peace greetings with others around us. Together, we speak creeds and psalms aloud. The rituals require us to set aside time each week for prayer, reflection, or worship gathering. We don't complain, but rather appreciate that our rituals force us to separate ourselves from our daily habits and take a scheduled break from our digital devices.

But, most importantly, we find community in our life at St. Stephen. We make contact with the sacred in the presence of other people, whether in church or over a dinner-table prayer. Our religious rituals are embodied and collective.

Everyone needs community in their lives and St. Stephen provides needed community for us. Our mission statement reminds us of that. We are a Christian *community*. We don't bring God's love to the world as individuals. And at a time when socialization is on a decline, our rituals create the collective life we badly need.

If asked by a non-church goer, "*why do you attend church?*" our first answer should be to do good as part of a community, and the good for us happens to be God's work. Then, we should ask, "*What's your community?*"

Council Update

From our May 13 Meeting:

- ♦ Voted on lease agreement with the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon
- ♦ Discussed holding a concert by Century Jazz Ensemble
- ♦ Discussed parking lot issues as well as outdoor grounds maintenance
- ♦ Reviewed budget cuts
- ♦ Summer's interim pastoral coverage is in place

CHURCH MATTERS

Pastoral Transition Update



Call Committee Updates

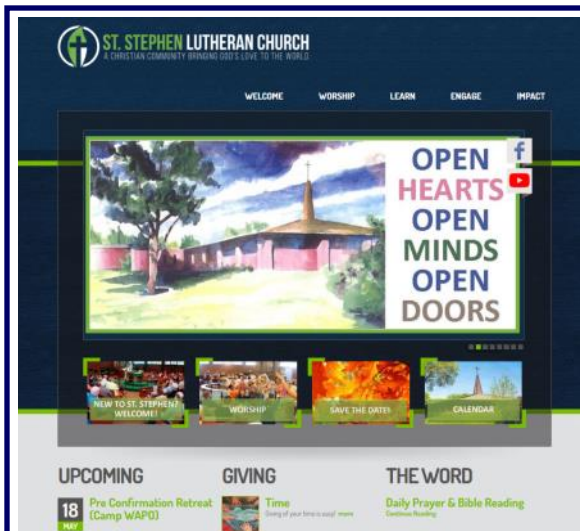
We are now on our second round of interviews. There were 2 pastoral candidates interviewed. The committee really liked both candidates, so they reached out to both for second interviews. These interviews will take place in the next week or so. Second interviews will be more formal and will last around 2-3 hours.

Your Call Committee

Karen, Kathy, Deb, Robin, Marla, Ted, Lee, Brad and Mike

Synod Assembly Report

Pastors Karri and Juli, Ted Field, Marla Amborn, and Denise Ashley attended the St Paul Area Synod Assembly May 10 and 11. A few brief notes: The worship was amazing. Musicians and choirs from around the synod led amazing music and singing; the liturgy was beautiful, the speakers were inspiring. This was truly a highlight. Pastor Juli attended the discussion of the proposed social statement on civic life. It was lively and well worth attending. Many different issues were raised, and many different viewpoints represented. The draft statement is still available online ([https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Civic Life and Faith Draft.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Civic%20Life%20and%20Faith%20Draft.pdf)) and feedback is welcome via email until September 30. More information is available (<https://elca.org/civicsandfaith>). The Synod welcomed a new congregation, Eternal Flame, with great celebration. This is a vibrant and growing community of predominantly Hmong ethnicity. The Synod shared the progress in the Planting Hope project. In this endeavor, the Synod has committed to involvement in a neighborhood on the East Side of St Paul, offering partnership, funding, and other investments. Lutheran Social Services announced that the Family Center has grown into a full pre-school and early learning center. There is now enough money for paid summer internships for five years. More information is available (<https://spas-elca.org/planting-hope/>). Finally, there was a very large and vibrant Mission Fair, showing off all kinds of organizations doing good work in the community. Expect to hear more about these in coming months; we are inviting some to come and speak at St Stephen in the coming year. One of these organizations is Lutheran Social Services – they asked that everyone come out to their inaugural “LSS Night with the Loons.” Register to attend a MN United Soccer game at the information desk in the lobby, or by calling the church office.



Our Website.. If you haven't done so in a while, visit our website at www.StStephenWBL.org! From our website, you can click onto the little red box with the white arrow inside to connect to **Youtube** and view past worship services. You can click onto the small “f” to connect to **Facebook**. Some scrolling banners can be clicked onto and linked to printable event fliers. Other links on the site include **“New to St. Stephen? Welcome!”** which accesses worship times and a printable welcome brochure. **“Worship”** links you to worship service dates and times and previous worship services. **“Save the Date”** links you to dates for all the events and services for the year. **“Calendar”** links you to any date you choose to check out what's happening.

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

June Food Shelf Donations

The White Bear Area Food Shelf is opening a new location (2446 County Road F East) in addition to the location at 1884 Whitaker St. For this reason, we are re-structuring the way we work with the food shelf. Each month, the food shelf lists their "most wanted" items. **In June, they are asking for canned tuna or canned chicken.** Thank you for your continued support by placing your food donations into the shopping cart (located in the narthex) on the first Sunday and first Wednesday of each month.



Lutheran Night at Allianz Field (6/8)

Lutheran Social Services and MN United Soccer

Team are having Lutheran Night on June 8. Tickets will be available at the synod assembly on May 10-11. Spread the word! Details here: <https://pa.exchange/marketplace/f4879f1a-ccf8-11ee-8353-1bcfda885c52/storefront/f487a082-ccf8-11ee-ab01-e355bd789cfe>

Israel and Gaza – A Discussion Series (6/2 & 6/9)

Members of St. Stephen, like many others across the country, have been upset and concerned by events in Israel and Gaza. The ELCA has put together a series of videos to help facilitate a discussion. Pastor Karri and Pastor Juli are presenting the videos June 2 and 9. Grab some coffee and treats and join us in the library.



God's Word

God's Word Bible discussion group, led by Phyllis Ballata, continues throughout the summer. Join us on Thursdays (1:00-2:00pm) in the library.



Summer GAP Worship & Community BBQ'S BEGIN (6/12)

Join us (and invite others) to attend our Wednesday Community BBQ (5:15-6:00pm) and casual, outdoor Grace & Praise (GAP) worship service (6:00-6:45pm). The meal and worship service will continue to be inside until June 12th as we allow time for our new grass on the north lawn to grow. On June 12th, we will begin our BBQ's! Throughout the summer, help is needed with meals. Please sign up in the kitchen if you are able to assist.



Fools for Christ "Mary Poppins" (6/13-6/16)

Based on the stories of P.L. Travers and the Walt Disney Film, **Mary Poppins** is a classic tale of how a spoonful of sugar and a healthy dose of love can raise the Banks family out of their despair and restore their family relationships. Join the Fools for Christ as we examine the effect fear and despair can wreak on a family... and how powerful a force strong, unwavering love can be in restoring it. **Location:** Liberty Classical Academy (3878 Highland Ave., White Bear Lake). **Cost:** \$18 for Adults. \$12 for Children 12 and under. **Shows:** Thurs, Fri, & Sat, June 13, 14, & 15 (7:00-9:30pm) and Sun, June 16 (2:00-4:30pm). **Tickets:** Three ways to purchase:

- 1) Paul Schultz after worship services,
- 2) Tami in the church weekdays during office hours (9am-3pm), or
- 3) online at www.foolsdrama.com/tickets.

If you purchase through Paul or Tami at church, we need your name, email address, and event date. Flyers are located in the narthex. Make checks payable to Fools for Christ.



Retiree's Breakfast (6/13)

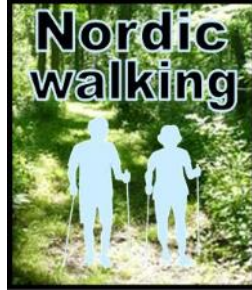
Attention all retirees! You are invited to join other retirees from church for breakfast (Thurs/9:00-10:00am) at Perkins in Maplewood on County Road D.



HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Nordic Walking Club

Please sign up on the Welcome Desk in the narthex if you are interested in joining our Nordic Walking club. All ages welcome. Dogs are welcome too. We meet Tuesdays (7:00-8:00pm) at different locations. Season dates: April 30 - August 27. Flyers (with schedule and directions) are available on the Welcome Desk or here: [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcqlclefindmkaj/https://www.ststephenwbl.org/Nordic_Walking_Schedule_2024_1.pdf](https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcqlclefindmkaj/https://www.ststephenwbl.org/Nordic_Walking_Schedule_2024_1.pdf)



- ◆ June 13 – Crystal Caves in Spring Valley Wisconsin
- ◆ June 20 – Gibb's Farm in St. Paul
- ◆ July 3 – Cedar Lake East Beach in Minneapolis
- ◆ July 11 – Bicycles & Brake Bread Bakery in St. Paul
- ◆ July 25 – Cupcake Decorating w/350 Degrees Bakery in White Bear Lake
- ◆ August 1 – Minnesota History Center and State Capital Tour in St. Paul
- ◆ August 7 – Valleyfair (grades 1-12) in Shakopee

Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (5/28, 6/25)

Please feel free to join our group for lunch on the last Tuesday of each month (11:30am). RSVP (required) on Sunday before event by contacting Judee Bramscher at 651-269-6122. On May 28th, we gather at TGI Fridays (3087 White Bear Ave, in Maplewood). RSVP by 5/26. On June 25, we are going to the Blacksmith Lounge & Broaster (17205 Forest Blvd N, Hugo, MN 55038). RSVP by 6/23.



Be a Chaperone

Can you commit to driving/chaperoning once or twice this summer for our 1st through 6th grade activities "Boredom Busters". We will pay for your admissions and if needed your mileage (but we love when people can "donate" their mileage!). Please contact Melissa (651-429-5411 ex 24 or mwhitman@RedeemerWhiteBear.org) if you might be available:



Vacation Bible School (6/24-28)

VBS will be at Redeemer Lutheran Church this year. Take kids deep into an amazing undersea adventure where they'll experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. At Scuba VBS, kids will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about!

Adult Volunteers Needed!

We are anticipating a large turnout for Vacation Bible School this year and we cannot run this program without you! If you would like to volunteer, please click on this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0948ACA829A2F4C07-47185133-vacation#/>

To Register Children Online:

<https://vbspro.events/p/events/545597>

Questions?

Melissa: mwhitman@redeemerwhitebear.org
Paul Schultz: childrenmin@ststephenwbl.org

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES



Lutheran Night at the Twins (8/12)

You are invited to join us at Lutheran Night at the Twins against the Kansas City Royals on Monday, August 12. Tickets are \$38 (payable to St. Stephen). Transportation (gas) and parking costs are included for carpoolers and volunteer drivers. If you wish to carpool, arrive to the church by 4:00pm (we will be leaving at 4:15pm). Seats are in the 200 level. Sign up NOW! Private tour starts promptly at 5:30pm inside Target Field at Gate 14. Please arrive 15 minutes early. The tour is NOT wheelchair accessible. First pitch is at 6:40pm. This is a fellowship event for St. Stephen and Redeemer Lutheran Churches!

Save the Date!

The Fools for Christ Fall Dinner Theater will be on Friday and Saturday, October 25-26. Details coming soon.

Fellowship Group

All are invited to gather (10:30am) in the narthex on Wednesdays to share news, lift each other up with encouragement, and simply just visit! This is an informal group and walk-ins are welcome. Contact Judee Bramscher (651-269-6122) if you have questions.



APPRECIATION



Quilts...

Thank you to all the ladies who made 86 beautiful quilts and to the folks who support this ministry with donations of fabric, sheets, etc. Thank you to the folks who purchased quilts. Unsold quilts were donated to area shelters.



From Gerrit Lamain...

The folks at St. Stephen (White Bear) are so nice! I am so grateful for their prayers and well wishes! My hand is slowly getting better!

APPRECIATION

The Generosity Challenge... Thanks to all who have given so generously to the Generosity Challenge to improve our finances. We have now achieved and exceeded our \$30,000 goal for a total of \$30,385. We did it!

North Lawn... Thank you to Ron, Mike, Ted, Walt, Ken, Chad, Justin, and Beckham (photo below).

Spring Church Clean-up Day... Thank you Kathy & Milt Anderson, Pastor G. Thomas Dowie, Ron Johnson, Tom Scott, Anita Schreader, Diane & Paul Swanson for cleaning the inside of the church (it was raining) on Saturday, May 4th.

Progressive Dinner... Thank you to Pam Prokosch for organizing and all those who participated in the French-themed dinner on May 4!

Synod Assembly... Thank you to the church members and pastors who attended the 2024 Saint Paul Area Synod Assembly May 10-11 to be entertained, consider resolutions, elect people to leadership roles, and experience being part of a wider church.

Flower Cups... Thank you Sue Lemon and Sunday school kids for the Mother's Day flower cups!

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Volunteers...

Thank you to all who came together to honor all the volunteers who keep Neighbors Helping Neighbors the best little clothing thrift store around! You make a big difference in the community!



PRAYERS

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



APPRECIATION

From Rev. Grimm...

Thank you! Because of the mission support your congregation shared in the first quarter we are delighted that we have received \$422,888 in mission support. When we work together we can do so much more than we do alone. One of the ways we are doing



more is supporting Eternal Flame, our newest congregation, with more than 350 people who have signed their charter and now they are an organized congregation. Eternal Flame is one of our nine mission developments and redevelopments in our synod. These new and restarted congregations are doing amazing work in proclaiming the Gospel. Again, none of this can happen without your support. It is good to be church together! - Rev. Justin A. Grimm, Director for Evangelical Mission/Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Vitality.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Please let the church office know if your birthday is not listed so that we may correct the database.



GENERAL INFORMATION

In This Issue

Church Matters (2-4)
Happenings & Opportunities (5-7)
Appreciation (7-9)
Prayers (9)
Announcements (10)
General Information (11)
Calendar (back cover)

The Steppingstone Newsletter...

Is distributed monthly. If you have any items for the **July** issue, please send them to office@ststephenwbl.org by Monday, June 10.

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

Council & Leadership

Church Office Hours

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

What's Happening

Sundays

Worship (with band, organ, or piano)
9:30am **IN-PERSON**

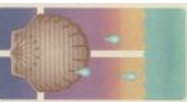
(Services are live-streamed and online) (Community Meal at 5:15pm; \$5/pp)

Wednesdays

Grace & Praise (GAP) Worship
6:00pm **IN-PERSON**

Calendar Highlights

- 6/2 Israel & Gaza—Discussion Series (Sun/10:30am)
- 6/2 Food Shelf Collection (Sun)
- 6/5 Food Shelf Collection (Wed)
- 6/6 Worship & Music Meeting (Thurs/6:00-7:00pm)
- 6/8 Lutheran Night at Allianz Field (Sat/7:30pm)
- 6/9 Israel & Gaza—Discussion Series (Sun/10:30am)
- 6/10 Content Deadline for June Steppingstone (Mon)
- 6/10 Church Council Meeting (Mon/7:00-9:00pm)
- 6/12 GAP Summer & Community BBQ (Wed/5:15pm) **BEGINS**
- 6/12 Baptism: Hartley Woodruff (Wed/6:00pm)
- 6/13 Retiree's Breakfast (Thurs/9:00-10:00am)
- 6/13 Boredom Buster—Crystal Caves (Thurs)
- 6/13 Fools for Christ Play: "Mary Poppins" at Liberty (*thru June 16*)
- 6/16 Pastor Karri's Good-Bye Reception (Sun/10:30am)
- 6/20 July Steppingstone Distribution Day (Thurs/9:15am)
- 6/20 Boredom Buster—Gibb's Farm (Thurs)
- 6/24 (VBS) Vacation Bible School (9:00am-12noon) **BEGINS**
(Continues through Friday, June 28 at Redeemer)
- 6/25 Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (Tues/11:30am)



Do You Wish to Be Baptized?

If you wish to be (or have your child) baptized,
please contact the church office at

office@ststephenwbl.org



ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH
A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BRINGING GOD'S LOVE TO THE WORLD.

www.StStephenWBL.org ♦ office@ststephenwbl.org ♦ 651-777-1107

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