



Steppingstone Newsletter



April, 2025



Wednesdays During Lent

- ♦ March 12 - April 9
- ♦ Worship & Lunch (12noon) at St. Stephen
- ♦ Worship & Dinner (6pm) at Redeemer



Palm Sunday

- ♦ April 13 (9:30am)
- ♦ We celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem with palm branches as we enter Holy Week



Maundy Thursday

- ♦ April 14 (7pm)
- ♦ We remember Christ's last meal with his disciples and the promises embodied in it



Good Friday

- ♦ April 18
- ♦ Worship (12noon) at St. Stephen
- ♦ Worship (7pm) w/combined choirs at Redeemer



Easter Sunday

- ♦ April 20
- ♦ Sunrise Service (8am)
- ♦ Festival Service (9:30am) w/Senior Choir

WORSHIP



The Season of Lent

These forty days called Lent are like no other. It is our opportune time to return to the God who rescues, to receive the gifts of God's grace, to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth the wonder of God's love in Jesus, and to resist temptation at every turn. This is no small pilgrimage on which we have just embarked. It is a struggle Jesus knew. It is a struggle Jesus shares. The nearness of the Lord, in bread and wine, water and word, will uphold and sustain us.



Palm Sunday

Today we follow Christ from triumphal entry to the cross, each waypoint of the journey marked by Jesus' compassion for those who would betray, mock, accuse, or do violence to him. Though persecuted and beaten, Jesus the Son of God is not disgraced; instead, he asks forgiveness for those who put him to death. We have walked the Lenten pathway these forty days, each of us invited through baptism to "let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." We enter this holy week accompanying Jesus to the cross with both grief and thanksgiving in our hearts, trusting in God's redeeming love.



Maundy Thursday

This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we gather with Christians around the world to celebrate the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. Tonight we remember Christ's last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in this meal. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another. Formed into a new body in Christ through this holy meal, we are transformed by the mercy we have received and carry it into the world. Departing worship in solemn silence, we anticipate the coming days.



Good Friday

Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In John's passion account, Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we pray for the whole world in the ancient bidding prayer, as Christ's death offers life to all. We gather in solemn devotion, but always with the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life. We depart silently, and we anticipate the culmination of the Three Days in the Easter Vigil.



Easter Sunday

"The last enemy to be destroyed is death," Paul writes. Today Christ is risen, and we gather together with astonishment and joy. Christ is risen, and we have been set free from the bonds of death. Christ is risen, and we are forgiven. Christ is risen, and with the women at the tomb and Peter, we are amazed. Let us rejoice: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Power of an INVITE!

Results from a study conducted by churchtrainer.com:

QUESTION: What brought you to church?

RESPONSE: 70-85% Invited by a relative or friend!



CHURCH MATTERS

Church Council Reflection

First, I'd like to thank Ted Field for the amazing job he did as Church Council President. He had quite the challenge in 2024 as we continued our journey through the call process to find a pastor. He went above and beyond to fill any gaps and kept us well informed. I can't say enough about his leadership and willingness to help us move forward in so many new and positive ways.

The church council met on Monday, March 10th, and discussed the following:

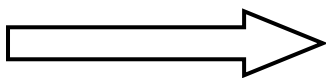


- ◆ Our net revenue through February was a positive \$6087. Ted Field reported on behalf of Mary Beth Skunes that this is a result of our ask for more early giving.
- ◆ Worship and Music is working through how we can achieve better sound engineering in our sanctuary especially for live streams.
- ◆ Evangelism is looking to change the name of their ministry and is working through strategies for outreach which includes a marketing plan and new member class.
- ◆ The Church Council retreat will be held on March 29th. Our theme will be centered on Outreach and Partnership. The outcome will be provided to the Evangelism committee for input and further refinement.
- ◆ We have a new standing agenda item "On the Radar". This is your opportunity to bring us topics that are on your mind. Our current list includes:
 1. Committee transparency - making sure we all know the various committees, what they do and how to reach out to them.
 2. Policies and procedures as we are a resource for the community.
 3. Thrivent opportunities.
 4. CPR/ AED training.
 5. Evening bible study.

Also, a big thank you to our outgoing council members, Marla Amborn, Denise Ashley and Phyllis Ballata.

Welcome to our new council members: Robin Eberlein, Karen Smith, and Mike Trenda.

Our Ministry Team Liaison lineup:



Submitted by Kathy Sticker,
Church Council President

Ministry Team	Ministry Chair	Council Liaison
Worship & Music	Brenda Steady, Anne Jackson	Ted Field
Fellowship	Betsy Clark	Jackie Colaizy
Finance	Nancy Finley	Nancy Finley
Stewardship	Ted Field	Ted Field
Adult Learning	No committee currently	Scott Zieman
Children, Youth, Family	Melissa Whitman	Susan Lemon
Congregational & Community Care	Isaiah (Dan Streeper, Juli Thompson), no St. Stephen committee currently	Robin Eberlein
Property	Ken Smith	Mike Trenda
Staff Relations	No chair, contact Ted Field or Ken Smith	Kathy Stickler
Mission & Benevolence	No chair, contact Ken Smith	Pastor James
Evangelism	Marla Amborn	Karen Smith

FEATURES & SPOTLIGHTS

Students Supported through St. Stephen Scholarships

Here is an update on scholarship students supported by St. Stephen (names, schools and photos). Ken Smith copied the available Lukani student photos from the Google shared album shared by Bega Kwa Bega. St Stephen has pledged about \$4000 in secondary school scholarship funds for Lukani students in calendar 2025. These funds come from a combination of benevolence funding and individual gifts.



First Name	Last Name	Sex	Parish	School	Level
Angaza	Lubava	M	Lukani	Image	Form VI
Anna	Bundala	F	Lukani	Pommern	Form I
Debora	Luhwago	F	Lukani	Namabengo Secondary	Form VI
Elisha	Ludege	M	Lukani	Pommern	Form I
Ereness	Munyi	F	Lukani	Pommern	Form VI
Harison	Mheluka	M	Lukani	Pommern	Form I
Jenifa	Msuva	F	Lukani	Pommern	Form I
Mariam	Mbingamno	F	Lukani	Pommern	W (Form IV)
Samwel	Kikoti	M	Lukani	Pommern	Form II

APPRECIATION

Memorial Luncheon Helpers... Thank you to all who prepare, cook, serve, and clean up for memorial luncheons.

Hospitality Committee... Thank you for all the times you make sure we have great treats and refreshments, ex: Pastor Juli's 25th Ordination Anniversary Reception. We appreciate all you do!

Communion Servers... Thank you for your help with serving Communion and being an important part of ministry discipleship.

Braided Bread... Thank you to all who purchased braided bread; supporting our Tanzania mission projects.

Food... Thank you to all who donate food on the first Sundays and Wednesdays of each month and to our member who delivers them to the WB Area Food Shelf.

Quilters... Thank you to our wonderful quilters who have been very busy making quilts for area shelters.

Lenten Lunches & Meals... Thank you to all who made lunches and meals on Wednesdays throughout Lent.

Property Team... Thank you for your commitment to keeping the building and grounds in shape.

All Committees... Thank you for your valuable input, time, and planning.

Annual Meeting... Thank you to all who submitted reports, prepared for, brought desserts, and attended our annual meeting!

Financial Secretary... Thank you for all that you do with getting out our quarterly statements! Your behind-the-scenes work is appreciated!

Cards from Church... Thank you to our members who devotedly sends out cards on behalf of the church to folks who are ill or whom we wish to thank. We appreciate your caring for our church family in this way.

Counters... Thank you to our counters, who each week, keep accurate accounting of the donations coming into the church.

Bookkeeper & Treasurer... Thank you for being good stewards of the church's finances! We appreciate your time and talent!

Closet and Storage... Thank you to those who cleaned out the old Fools closet and the Fellowship Hall classroom, then transferred items to our new storage room. We appreciate all the hard work!

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Easter Garden Orders DUE (3/30)

Please fill out an Easter Flower Garden order form, along with your payment, and put into the office door mail slot by Sunday, March 30 if you wish to have your dedication (in memory, honor, or celebration) in the bulletin on Easter. The flowers you order will decorate the altar and may be taken home after the 9:30am service on Easter Sunday. If you choose to donate them, they will be delivered to our home-bound members.



2025 EcoFaith Summit of the Upper Midwest (4/5)



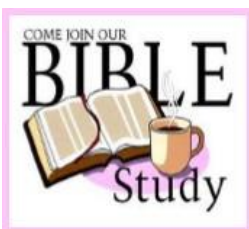
Join us on Saturday, April 5, 9:30am - 5:00pm, First Lutheran Church in Duluth and Online. St. Paul Area Synod's Care of Creation Work Group in collaboration with the EcoFaith Network invites you to participate. The day

includes impactful speakers, action-oriented engagement sessions, vibrant worship, inspiring art, table exhibits, and networking time to equip disciples in congregations, camps, campuses and communities to respond to God's call in the cries of Creation. To register and for more information including a carpool discount, free registration under age 30 and free childcare provided:

<https://www.ecofaithnetwork.org/ecofaith-summit-2025>

Monday Pastor-Led Bible Study

Join us (*and invite others*) Mondays in the library (10:00-11:00am) for Bible Study (led by Pastor James Muske). Walk-ins are welcome. In April, we meet on the 7th, are on break the 14th and 21st, and resume on the 28th.



Retiree's Breakfast (4/10)

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.



Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser & Easter Egg Hunt (4/12)

All are invited to attend an Easter Egg Hunt and Scouts Pancake Fundraiser Breakfast at Redeemer Lutheran Church (3770 Bellaire Avenue) on Saturday, April 12 (9-11am).



Pick Up Your Braided Bread (4/12)



For those who purchased braided bread during our Tanzania Fundraiser, please pick up your bread on Saturday, April 12 (10am-12noon) at Ken and Karen Smith's house (1817 Richard Ct., WBL). Thank you for supporting this important mission!

Quilting for a Cause (4/17, 4/18, 4/24, 4/25)

Please join us in making quilts for battered women shelters, homeless shelters, the Holly Boutique, and to support this important ministry. We meet in the A-B Room (9:00am-3:00pm) on the following dates in April: Thurs-4/17, Fri-4/18, Thurs-4/24, Fri-4/25.



Quilters Need Sheets

The quilting group will be gathering in the A-B Room to work on quilts and are in need of top sheets of all sizes. Please drop sheets (new and like new) off at the church office. Thank you for your donations!

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES



Free Yarn

We have amassed quite a collection of yarn over the years and wish to share it with those who could use it.

Please contact Anita

(alschreader@gmail.com) or Kathy

(kathleen856@q.com) if you are interested in acrylic, worsted yarn (in a variety of colors).

Church Office Closed (4/21)

The church office is closed on Easter Monday.

Regular office hours are Monday-Thursday 9:00am-3:00pm and Friday 9:00am-12:00pm.

Monthly Hymn Sing at Dubliner Pub (4/21)



Fleashpots of Egypt (Lutherland's Most Acclaimed Bluegrass Band) leads this hymn sing (7:00-9:00pm) on the **THIRD** Monday of every month at Dubliner Pub (2162 University Ave., St. Paul, 55114) at University and Vandalia. Get there early (6:30pm) to get a table. Beer and pizza available and/or bring your own snacks. More info at:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/PKH9NJufre7PSWsk/?mibextid=JRoKGi>

Fellowship Group Resumes (4/23)

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; walk-ins are welcome. Contact Judee Bramscher (651-269-6122) with any questions.



GAP Worship & Community Meal - Resumes (4/23)

On Wed., April 2, 9, and 16, GAP Worship and the Community Meal are on break, resuming on April 23.



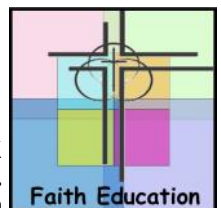
Wednesday is a perfect time to invite family members or friends to join you at our community meal (5:15pm) and GAP (Grace & Praise) casual worship service (6:00pm) in the sanctuary. There are many people who say they would go to church if they were invited!

Cooks Needed (April & May) for Wednesday Meals

We are in need of volunteers to prepare, cook, and serve (FOR 25 PEOPLE) Wednesday evening community meals. Get reimbursed for up to \$50. Mealtime is 5:15-6:00pm before our Grace & Praise (GAP) Worship Service. Choose one or as many Wednesdays as you like (April through May of 2024). Sign up in the kitchen or contact the church office at 651-777-1107 or office@ststephenwbl.org to get onto the schedule.

Faith Ed SCHEDULE

Children's Wednesday School, Pre-confirmation, Confirmation, and Youth Group are on break April 16th during Holy Week. Sunday school is on break April 20th for Easter. Wednesday Faith Ed resumes April 23rd and Sunday Faith Ed resumes on April 27th.

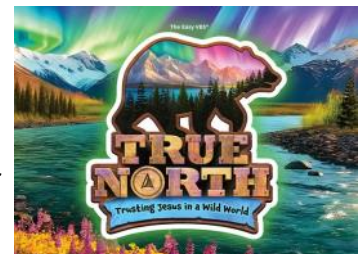


Vacation Bible School (VBS) Registration & Volunteering

VBS will be held at Redeemer Lutheran Church this year (June 23-27). Adults are needed to help run the program. To register or volunteer, contact

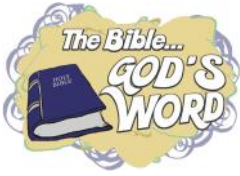
Melissa at

mwhitman@redeemerwhitebear.org



HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

God's Word – Bible Discussion Group



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

Sleep In Heavenly Peace—Outreach Event (4/26)

Join us in the church parking lot on Saturday April 26 (9am-1pm) to construct 20



beds for children in our area who have no bed. We need 20 volunteers. Tools and materials will be provided. This is a family-friendly event, children must be eight years old and up and have a parent or guardian with them. Quilters from St. Stephen and Redeemer are donating hand-made quilts for each bed. Please sign up at the Welcome Desk. Envelopes are available for those who wish to donate. Questions, contact John King at 651-263-1285.

Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (4/29)



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 April 29, we are meeting at Jimmy's (1132 Co Rd E East, Vadnais Heights). RSVP by 4/27.

Lost & Found

We currently have rings, hats, scarves, and coats. Please contact Tami in the church office if you are looking for something you lost.

Communion Kits Available for At-Home Worshippers

Please contact Pastor Juli at julia.a.thompson@gmail.com if you are not able to attend worship services in person and wish to participate in communion at home. She can deliver pre-filled communion cups (with wafers) to you so you can self-serve as you follow along online.

Sponsor Altar Flowers... If you wish to sponsor flowers, please sign up in the narthex or contact Tami in the church office at office@ststephenwbl.org or 651-777-1107 and let us know the date (any Sunday) and your dedication (in memory, celebration, or in honor, etc.). The cost is \$20 per bouquet. Simply mail in (1965 East County Road E, White Bear Lake, MN 55110) or drop off your payment.

Snack Sponsor Sign-Up... If you wish to sponsor snacks for Sunday, please sign up in the narthex. If you wish to bring your own snacks (ex: cookies, bars, fruit, donuts, muffins, etc.), indicate that on the sign-up sheet by checking the yellow box and fill out a small reminder for yourself. If you wish for the church to provide snacks, please use a snack envelope. The cost is \$20. Fill out an envelope with your name, let us know what your dedication is, the date you wish to sponsor, and drop the envelope with your \$20 into the office door mail slot.

Be a Worship Disciple: Lector... We are in need of Lectors to read the scripture lessons during Sunday services. We welcome any age. No experience necessary. Individuals or pairs are encouraged to volunteer. Please choose any Sunday, sign up in the narthex, and fill out a reminder card for yourself.

Be a Greeter on Sunday... Sign up in the narthex or let Judee Bramscher know if you would like to be a greeter on any Sunday. Simply be here around 9:00am to say "hello" to folks entering the church.

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Sign Up Now! - Nordic Walking Club (4/29-8/26)

Let the Forest Be With You!

St Stephen Nordic Walking begins Tuesday, April 29th at 7pm and is held every Tuesday evening this summer until August 26th.

What is Nordic Walking? It's an hour of walking as a group with the optional use of poles similar to poles Nordic skiers use, poles that can make walking easier on soft surfaces particularly when going uphill or downhill.

Each week we walk 2-1/2 to 2-3/4 miles, never longer than an hour, sometimes on paths that are out-and-back and sometimes on looped trails. One of our popular routes is the paved path on Lake Avenue in White Bear Lake, out and back starting at Kowalski's. But most of our walks are at local city or regional parks that include some dirt paths. Tamarack in WBL and Katherine Abbott in Mahtomedi are two favorite places for us to walk, with opportunities to see wildlife, flowers, and other natural features.

We observe "group compaction" while we walk, which means if we get spread out we adjust pace to keep everyone together.

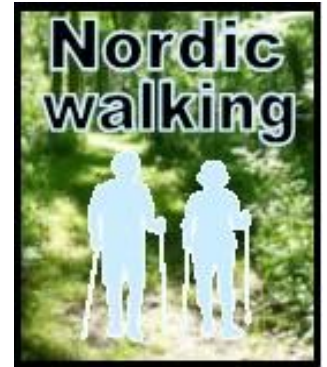
All ages and conditions are welcome. Some parks we visit allow dogs. Each week walkers get advice regarding use of bug repellent, sunscreen, poles, etc, as well as a description of the upcoming walk. All routes we choose have restroom facilities at either the start of the walk or along the way.

A sign-up sheet is located on the Welcome Desk so that all walkers can get their names placed on a mailing list for weekly updates and information about the upcoming walk.

Come for the exercise, the fellowship, and pleasure of a summer evening spent in the trees. Contact Ted Field if you have questions.

Please visit the Welcome Desk for more information, including a detailed description of walking locations, and to SIGN UP!

Ted Field
Head Walker

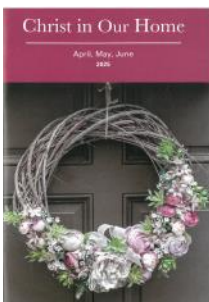


PRAYERS



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



Christ in Our Home

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

Lenten Devotional Booklets

Our Lenten theme, "Everything In Between," invites us to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. Each weekly sub-theme explores two supposed binaries, like "faith & works," "lost & found," or "stranger & neighbor." Devotional booklets are located on the Welcome Desk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAVE THESE DATES!



Progressive Dinner (5/3)

Come and join us in the Narthex on Saturday, May 3, 2025 (5:00pm), for tasty appetizers, before we continue our evening of great food and wonderful company as we "progress" to dinner and dessert. It's a fun way to get to know people from St. Stephen. Although mostly couples attend, singles are welcome. Sign-up Sundays in April in the Narthex. Any questions, call Pam Prokosch at (651) 253-0537.

Twins Game at Target Field (8/14)

We've purchased a block of reduced-price Twins tickets for the game on Lutheran Night at Target Field, Thursday, August 14th. We're teaming with Redeemer to share transportation costs. More information to follow. Time will be approximately 6:00pm.



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 Thurs., April 10. Newsletters are also available in information racks near both entrances 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

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

What's Happening

Sundays

9:30am Worship Service
9:30am Faith Ed
(Services are live-streamed and online)

Wednesdays

5:15pm Community Meal (\$5/pp)
5:30pm Faith Ed
6:00pm Grace & Praise Worship

Calendar Highlights

- 4/2 Lenten Service & Lunch (Wed/12noon) *also on 9*
- 4/2 Lenten Service & Dinner at Redeemer (Wed/6:00pm) *also on 9*
- 4/2 Food Shelf Collection (Wed)
- 4/3 Worship & Music Meeting (Thurs/6:00-7:00pm)
- 4/5 EcoFaith Summit in Duluth (Sat/9:30am-5:00pm)
- 4/6 Food Shelf Collection (Sun)
- 4/10 Content Deadline for May Steppingstone (Thurs)
- 4/10 Retiree's Breakfast (Thurs/9:00-10:00am) *at Maplewood Perkins*
- 4/12 Easter Egg Hunt & Scout Fundraiser Breakfast
(Sat/9:00-11:00am) *at Redeemer*
- 4/12 Braided Bread PICK-UP (10:00am-12noon) *at Smith's home*
- 4/13 Palm Sunday Worship Service (9:30am)
- 4/14 Church Council Meeting (Mon/7:00-9:00pm)
- 4/17 Quilting Group (Thurs/9:00am-3:00pm) *also on 4/24*
- 4/17 Maundy Thursday Service (7:00pm)
- 4/18 Quilting Group (Fri/9:00am-3:00pm) *also on 4/25*
- 4/18 Good Friday Service (12noon)
- 4/18 Good Friday w/Combined Choirs (7:00pm) *at Redeemer*
- 4/20 Easter Sunrise Service (Sun/8:00am)
- 4/20 Easter Festival Service w/Choir Singing (Sun/9:30am)
- 4/21 Easter Monday—Church office CLOSED
- 4/21 Monthly Hymn Sing (Mon/7:00-9:00pm) *at Dubliner Pub*
- 4/23 Fellowship Group **RESUMES** (Wed/10:30am)
- 4/23 Faith Ed **RESUMES** (Wed)
- 4/23 Community Meal **RESUMES** (Wed/5:15pm)
- 4/23 Grace & Praise (GAP) Worship **RESUMES** (Wed/6:00pm)
- 4/24 May Steppingstone Distribution Day (Thurs/9:15am)
- 4/26 Sleep In Heavenly Peace (Sat/9:00am-1:00pm)
- 4/27 Faith Ed **RESUMES** (Sun)
- 4/28 Bible Study **RESUMES** (Mon/10:00am)
- 4/29 Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (Tues/11:30am)
- 4/29 Nordic Walking **BEGINS** (Tues/7:00-8:00pm)