



Steppingstone Newsletter



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

October, 2025

Invite Others!



Speaker on Longevity

Thursday, Oct. 9 (details on page 5)
Coffee Plus: 9:30am / Program 10:00am



Music Festival & Auction

Saturday, Oct. 11 (details on page 7)
11:00am - 2:30pm



OWL's Lunch at Carbone's Pizzeria

Thursday, Oct. 16 (details on page 5)
11:30am



Trunk or Treat

Friday, Oct. 24 (details on page 5)
6:00-7:30pm



Fools for Christ Fall Dinner Theater

Friday & Saturday, Oct. 24 & 25 (details on page 6)
Appetizers: 6:00pm / Showtime: 6:30pm



Tanzania Travelogue

Sunday, Oct. 26 (details on page 6)
10:45am

CHURCH MATTERS

Casting a Vision For the Church

Yehiel Curry to serve as fifth presiding bishop of the ELCA

When Yehiel Curry considers his vision for the future of the church, he sees an important distinction. “Part of the work is naming it,” he said, “but that next phase is embodying it.”

“When we’re talking about casting a vision, I think people want to be part of a vision because they want to share in the process. But they typically will also share in the burdens as well. So part of my vision is [about] those things we’ve lifted up as a church that we said we need to do, we’re going to do, and find a way to bring more people to the table so that we might embody that work instead of it just being a written document.”



Curry, who was elected July 30 to serve a six-year term as ELCA presiding bishop, knows something about embodying a vision and discerning a call.

Before he became a pastor, then a bishop, then the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and now presiding bishop-elect, he was a social worker, then a teacher, then in sales. “I went from being a social worker to a teacher in the same community where I was helping those families, and in both cases, what I learned is passion is very important. And if you can align a person’s passion with a need, then it doesn’t feel like work sometimes.

“It wasn’t until I was in the church that I said, ‘I could do this for the rest of my life.’”

Curry wrestled with the passion he feels for his current ministry as he discerned his new call in the days leading up to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. “I take my role [as bishop of] the Metropolitan Chicago Synod very seriously,” he said. “And I started the process of thinking about what the next six months would look like, even the next year. And some people discern differently. I didn’t have some voice saying to me, ‘Here’s what you ought to do.’ But last Friday, what started to happen was the calls of family, friends and mentors—the nudging, the text messages, the emails—served as a form of discernment for me.”

“I only arrived at this place Friday or Saturday where I felt like maybe this is something I should do,” he said of being considered for presiding bishop.

Now that Curry has been elected the fifth presiding bishop of the ELCA—and the first of African descent—how does he feel? “That reality hasn’t really set in,” he said. “Even at this moment, I’m feeling a certain kind of way in understanding the weight and the impact.

“I’m hopeful that, if presence matters, me being here does something for allowing others to consider, ‘Someone who looks like me, or is from my community, or speaks with an accent, or their mother tongue isn’t English [could take on a similar role].’ Hopefully that’s what that means.”

(continued...)

CHURCH MATTERS

A return on investment

An immediate answer comes to mind for Curry when asked about what he believes should be among the ELCA's top priorities. "I think there's this unique opportunity around lay equipping and lay education," he said. "The ethos and the structures of many of our congregations are changing. In some cases, they've gone from full-time pastors to part-time pastors; we have leaders who are serving two-and three-point congregations.

"Our lay leaders are being asked to do more. And in many cases, they're saying, 'Yes, I want the education—as long as you're not trying to steer me and tell me I need to be a pastor or a deacon. Tell me how to be a better leader in my community, in my context.'"

Curry's passion for, and awareness of, equipping lay leaders stems from his own ministry beginnings.

He was a Chicago Public Schools teacher when he first visited Shekinah Chapel, then a synod-authorized worshipping community. "I didn't even realize it was Lutheran," he said. "I was invited by a friend." What drew him to Shekinah was Safe in My Brother's Arms (SIMBA), a mentoring program there sponsored by the ELCA. "I had these unique students," he said. "And I was interested in services for them. ... There was a worship service I stayed for. And I loved it."

Curry went home and told his wife, LaShonda, about the great experience he had had there, and they returned together the following weekend. "We came back and joined," he said. "And we didn't understand the organizations of the Lutheran church. We just saw a home, we saw a community."

Eventually, the community, and the synod staff, asked Curry to consider being a lay mission developer. He was unsure. "I knew I had this thing in my heart, but I didn't have the right vocabulary for it," he said. "I didn't know that I was actively discerning and that I was being called into this ministry."

After becoming mission developer, Curry enrolled in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries program at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and received his ordination certification in 2009. In 2012, when Shekinah became an official ELCA congregation, it called Curry to be its pastor. He served in that role until he was elected bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod in 2019.

"This was a process I was honored to be involved in, because I didn't think many people knew who I was," he said. "I was working in poverty ministry in the outskirts of Chicago. So it was an honor to have my name lifted up and to ultimately be elected bishop." In 2024, he was elected chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops.

Curry recalled his ministry trajectory, and the initial hesitation he felt in accepting that first role, when he addressed the 2025 Churchwide Assembly following his election.

"I'm what a return on your investment looks like," he told the assembly. "Perhaps I'm out there in one of you. I never saw myself as good enough, so for two years, I said no. I finally said yes. When I said yes, your support, this church's support, of that ministry meant everything. So if you want to know what your benevolence dollars look like, it looks like me. And I want to say thank you. Thank you for your investment."

Curry will be installed Oct. 4 at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES



Informal Women's Golf League

Contact Judy Ruth at 612-802-0369 if you are interesting in joining an informal women's golf league. There may be good weather to play in October, but if not, we will start up in 2026!

Food Shelf Donations (10/1, 10/5)

Feel free to take a green bag home and return it on the first Wednesday or Sunday of the month! Food donations go to the White Bear Area Emergency Food Shelf.



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; walk-ins are welcome.

Contact Judee Bramscher (651-269-6122) with any questions.

Confirmation Schedule 2025

- ◆ 10/1 Why is There an Old and New Testament?
- ◆ 10/15 Fellowship Event (time/location TBD)
- ◆ 10/29 The Nature of God
- ◆ 11/5 Is God Active Today?
- ◆ 11/19 Catholicism and Other Faiths
- ◆ 12/3 Was Jesus God?
- ◆ 12/17 Fellowship Event, Sam's Christmas Village, and Homework



Wednesday Worship & Community Meals

Join us each Wednesday for our Community meal (5:15-6:00pm) and casual Grace & Praise (GAP) service (6:00-6:45pm). This is a great opportunity to **INVITE OTHERS!**

Cook for 25 on a Wednesday!

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



Sing, Sing, Sing - Join the Choir!

The Senior Choir is singing on Sundays: 10/12, 11/2, 12/14, 4/5 (Easter), and 5/10. Wednesdays: 11/26 (at Redeemer), 12/24 (Christmas Eve), 2/18 (Ash Wednesday), 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, and 4/1 during Lent. Also on 4/3 (Good Friday). Members are invited to join us on Wednesdays (7:00-8:00pm) for practice. If you wish to participate or have any questions, contact Kari at ballatahosmer@gmail.com



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).

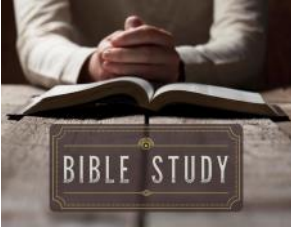


Auction Drop-off Deadline (10/5)

Please drop off items for this year's Music Festival & Auction, which is to be on Saturday, October 11th, **by October 5th!** Visit the church if you need an empty basket to get started!



HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES



Pastor-led Bible Study RESUMES

Pastor James leads this Bible Study in the library on Mondays (10:00-11:00am). Please feel free to join us (walk-in's are welcomed). This is a great opportunity to invite others!

Retiree's Breakfast (10/9)

All retirees are invited to join other retirees from church for breakfast on Thursday (9:00-10:00am) at Perkins in Maplewood on County Rd D.



The Science & Art of Longevity (10/9)



Kelly Nygard, owner of *Live 2 B Healthy* – St. Croix Valley, is passionate about helping adults live not only longer, but healthier and more fulfilling lives. She will share insights from Dr. Peter Attia's bestselling book *Outlive* to explore the difference

between lifespan and healthspan, and how thoughtful choices today can enhance the quality of our future years. This is a FREE community event; please invite others! Thursday, October 9. Coffee Plus: 9:30am. Program begins promptly at 10:00am.

Parent's Night Out (10/17)

Attention Families with Children! Do you need an evening for yourself? We have the answer for you. On Friday, October 17, we are offering the wider community FREE childcare (5:00-8:00pm). The children will receive dinner and enjoy fun activities. Group size is limited. We can accommodate children ages 2 through 9 (no infants or children under 2). Pre-registration is necessary - please call 651-777-1107 to sign up. (This is one of three upcoming events for families: Mom's Morning Out 11/15 and Christmas Party for Kids 12/20.)

Monthly Hymn Sing at Dubliner Pub (10/20)



Lutherland's most acclaimed Bluegrass Band "Fleshspots of Egypt" 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>)

OWL's Event:

Carbone's Pizzeria & Pub (10/16)

Older wiser Lutherans are invited to join us for lunch on Thursday, October 16th at Carbone's Pizzeria & Pub (1350 Hwy 96 E) at 11:30am. Please sign up in the narthex.



Lefse Making (10/20)



Join us for one day of making Lefse to sell at the Holly Boutique and Bake Sale. Meeting at 9:00am in the kitchen at St. Stephen. Feel free to bring your own Lefse equipment. All are welcome!

Trunk or Treat (10/24) at Mariner Middle School Parking Lot

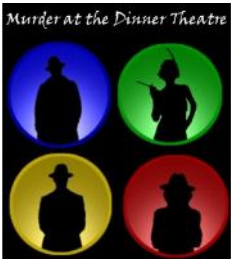


- ♦ Set-up (5:00-6:00pm)
- ♦ Event (6:00-7:30pm)
- ♦ Clean-up (7:30-8:00pm)

This year, the Trunk or Treat event will be held in the parking lot of Mariner Middle School (3551 McKnight Rd N, White Bear Lake) on **FRIDAY**, October 24th and open to the wider community for a safe place for trick-or-treaters. Please consider signing up to help... decorate your trunk, provide treats, and invite others! Contact: mwhitman@redeemerwhitebear.org

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Fools for Christ Fall Dinner Theater (10/24 & 10/25)



This year, we celebrate 18 years of dinner theater plays! The Fools for Christ Fall Dinner Theater production of "Murder at the Dinner Theater" will be on Friday and Saturday, October 24-25 at St. Stephen.

Get ready to help figure out "whodunit". Dress in your best "gangster" outfit. You also have the option to be given a role to play (character tickets are \$35). Enjoy delicious pre-show appetizers, a 4-course meal throughout the play, and wonderful desserts. Doors open at 6:00pm. Show starts at 6:30pm. This is a great opportunity to INVITE OTHERS!

Purchase TICKETS (\$25) online at foolsdrama.com or in the church office
Mon-Thurs 9:00am-3:00pm.

Tanzania Travelogue (10/26)

Come see Tanzania through the eyes and pictures of our recent mission team travelers. We'll be sharing the beauties, the challenges and the realities of life in this country and in the



village of our partner congregation. We will also be highlighting the difference our congregation has made, and continues to make in their lives! The group who went on the mission trip to Tanzania will be giving an adult education presentation on Sunday, October 26th (10:45am) in the Fellowship Hall.



Christian Singles Lunch Bunch (10/28)

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 October 28, we will be gathering at Johnny Kitchen & Bar (1900 East County Rd D in Maplewood). RSVP by 10/26.

Holly Boutique & Bake Sale

Saturday, Nov. 8
(10:00am-1:00pm)

*Holly Boutique
& Bake Sale*



Crafters & Bakers...

We are in need of: homemade crafts, quilted or crocheted items, artwork, homemade soaps and lotions, woodcraft items, jam and jellies, lightly-used Christmas decorations, freshly baked breads, rolls, cookies, and sweets.

Proceeds to Benefit... The Tubman Alliance, White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf, Lutheran Social Services (for homeless teens), and projects at St. Stephen.

How to Donate... Leave craft items, beginning now, in the church office marked "Holly Boutique". Please fill out the Contribution Sheet, available in the office, to help us out when marking items.

Other Ways to Help...

- 1) BAKE desserts (pie, cake, bars, cookies) to sell the day of the event. Baked items may be dropped off up until the boutique begins. Wrap and seal items and indicate if nuts are used in your baking.
- 2) Join us on COOKIE BAKING DAY, Wed., **Nov. 5** (9:00am)
- 3) Help us SET-UP and pack cookies on Friday, **Nov. 7** (9:00am-12noon).
- 4) WORK A SHIFT during the boutique on Saturday, **Nov. 8** (9:30-11:00am or 10:45am-1:15pm).
- 5) Help with CLEAN-UP on Monday, **Nov. 10** (9:00am).
- 6) Come and shop, have lunch, enjoy the music, and INVITE OTHERS!

Crafts Needed

We are accepting hand-made crafts **NOW** and hope you consider donating for our sale!

HAPPENINGS & OPPORTUNITES

34th Annual Music Festival and Auction

Saturday, October 11, 2025
(11:00am—2:30pm)

Get ready for our 34th annual Music Festival and Auction.
All proceeds raised by this event will be used to reduce
St. Stephen's budget deficit.

**Auction Donations
&
Volunteers Needed!**



Schedule of Events:

Live Music (11:00am-12:45pm)
Food for Sale (11:00am-2:30pm)
Silent Auction (11:00am-1:30pm)
Live Auction Begins (1:00pm)

Ideas for Auction Donations:

- ◆ Sporting event tickets
- ◆ Weekend (or longer) retreat at your cabin
- ◆ New or gently used items (NO clothing)
- ◆ Your services to someone in need or to promote your business (examples: website creation, computer work, auto work, raking leaves, washing windows, snow plowing, lawn mowing, yard work, electrical work, carpentry, painting, house cleaning, plumbing, etc.)
- ◆ Home-made items (such as arts & crafts items, edible items, you name it!)
- ◆ Donate your hobby time to create something with that lucky winner (make jelly, sew, quilt, photography, bake, give singing or instrument lessons, etc.)
- ◆ Provide themed dinner in your home for a group of lucky winners
- ◆ Make soup or dessert every month for 6 or 12 months (you pick the number of months)
- ◆ Themed Gift Baskets

Donation Instructions:

- ◆ Have some extra baskets? Please donate them to be used for our gift baskets.
- ◆ Please leave items in the church office and mark "Auction" on them.
- ◆ **You may begin dropping off items AT ANY TIME STARTING NOW!**
- ◆ Start thinking now about that "special" item or service you would like to donate.
- ◆ FIRM deadline for dropping off items: **Sunday, October 5.**

Volunteer Needs:

- ◆ Solicit items or services from local businesses (please talk with Betsy Clark)
- ◆ Making desserts to sell day of event, set-up of tables and auction items, volunteer shifts the day of the event, clean-up, and more.
- ◆ If you have volunteered in the past to assist with the auction, you may be contacted in September.

**Please contact Betsy Clark at 612-554-3925 or at
eaclark001@comcast.net if you have any questions, and thank you!**

APPRECIATION

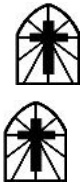
- ◆ **Church Painting...** Thank you to Ted Field for his most recent painting of the church!
- ◆ **Children's Ministry Billboards...** Thank you to Sue Lemon for her wonderful creativity in making the Children's Ministry billboards (picture 1: State Fair theme, picture 2: Can you find the word that is NOT in the Bible?).
- ◆ **Summer B.L.A.S.T. ...** Thank you to the volunteers and chaperones who helped Melissa Whitman with the events this summer for our Summer B.L.A.S.T. (Believe. Love. Act. Serve.).
- ◆ **Tanzania Mission Trip Prayer Partners...** Thank you to all those who prayed for our Tanzania Mission Team while they were away in August.
- ◆ **God's Work Our Hands...** Thank you to all who attended our God's Work Our Hands service project on September 7th—bagging lunches for the Union Gospel Mission. We are grateful for the Thrivent Action Team grant that paid for the food and to Jackie Colaizy and Kathy Anderson for organizing this event.
- ◆ **Food Collection...** Thank you for your food shelf donations of pet and people food and to John Strand for delivering everything to the White Bear Area Food Shelf.
- ◆ **Garage Sale...** Thank you to everyone who helped set up the Fellowship Hall, set out and price all the items for our first indoor Garage Sale in September!



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



Prayer Request (add or remove from the Prayer List)

ADD _____

This person is... ☐ Member ☐ Family ☐ Friend ☐ Self

Your name _____

Reason for prayer _____

May we share this with the congregation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

REMOVE _____

Update _____

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



Prayer Request Cards

Feel free to cut out and place your prayer request card (located on this page to the left) in an offering plate or basket, drop into the church office door mail slot, or mail to the church. Please keep us updated on those you have asked us to add to our prayer list.

Christ in Our Home

Devotional Booklets for Oct/Nov/Dec are available in info racks near both entrances. Please feel free to take as many as you like and offer them to others who may find comfort in reading them.

"Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible." — Corrie ten Boom

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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

Getting Events onto the 2026 Calendar

Please contact Tami in the church office at office@ststephenwbl.org or 651-777-1107 to get all special events, gatherings, meetings, groups, etc. onto the church's 2026 calendar.

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.

APPRECIATION

Rally Day... Thank you to everyone who helped with set-up, food prep, cooking, baking, family games, tear-down, clean-up, attended and invited others to join us on this fun day! Thank you to the PCC choir for singing for us! Click on the following link to see a video of them singing: <https://www.facebook.com/andy.amborn/videos/805326078613536>



GENERAL INFORMATION

In This Issue

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Happenings & Opportunities (4-7)
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Calendar (back cover)

The Steppingstone Newsletter...

Is distributed monthly. If you have any items for the **November** issue, please send them to office@ststephenwbl.org by Friday, Oct. 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

Worship Service 9:30am
(In person, live-streamed, and online)
Faith Ed: 9:45am

Wednesdays

Grace & Praise (GAP) 6:00pm
(Community Meal at 5:15pm, \$5/pp)
Faith Ed: 5:00pm/6:00pm/7:00pm

October Calendar Highlights (weekly events listed in blue print)

- 10/1 Food Shelf Collection (Wed)
- 10/1 Fellowship Group (Wed/10:30am) *also on 8, 15, 22, 29*
- 10/1 Pre-Confirmation (Wed/5:00-5:45pm) *also on 8, 22*
- 10/1 **Community Meal (Wed/5:15pm)** *also on 8, 15, 22, 29*
- 10/1 **GAP Worship (Wed/6:00pm)** *also on 8, 15, 22, 29*
- 10/1 **Choir Rehearsal (Wed/7:00-8:00pm)** *also on 8, 15, 22, 29*
- 10/1 KICK'in It! (Wed/5:00-5:45pm) *also on 8, 22*
- 10/1 Frolic Nursery (Wed/6:00-6:50pm) *also on 8, 22*
- 10/1 Confirmation BEGINS (Wed/7:00-8:30) *also on 29*
- 10/2 **Bible Discussion (Thurs/1:00pm)** *also on 9, 16, 23, 30*
- 10/2 Worship & Music Ministry (Thurs/6:00-7:00pm)
- 10/5 **Sunday Worship (9:30am)** *also on 12, 19, 26*
- 10/5 Auction Items Drop-off Deadline (Sun)
- 10/5 Food Shelf Collection (Sun)
- 10/6 **Bible Study RESUMES (Mon/10:00-11:00am)** *also on 13, 20, 27*
- 10/8 Youth Group (Wed/7:00-8:00pm) *also on 22*
- 10/9 Retiree's Breakfast (Thurs/9:00-10:00am)
- 10/9 Speaker on "The Science & Art of Longevity" (Thurs/9:30am)
- 10/10 Content deadline for November Steppingstone (Fri)
- 10/10 Auction SET-UP (Fri/9:00am-9:00pm)
- 10/11 Music Festival & Auction (Sat/11:00am-2:30pm)
- 10/13 Living Nativity Planning Meeting (Mon/10:00am)
- 10/13 Church Council Meeting (Mon/6:00-7:30pm)
- 10/15 MEA, Wednesday Faith Ed **ON BREAK**
- 10/15 Youth Fellowship Event (TBD)
- 10/16 OWL's Event: Lunch at Carbones Pizzeria (Thurs/11:30am)
- 10/17 Parent's Night Out (Fri/5:00-8:00pm)
- 10/20 Monthly Hymn Sing at Dubliner Pub (Mon/7:00-9:00pm)
- 10/20 Lefse Making (Mon/9:00am-12noon)
- 10/23 Steppingstone Distribution Day (Thurs)
- 10/23 FFCFDT SET-UP (Thurs/9:00am-8:00pm)
- 10/23 FFCFDT Dress Rehearsal (Thurs/8:00pm)
- 10/24 Trunk or Treat SET-UP (Fri/5:00-6:00pm)
- 10/24 Trunk or Treat at Mariner Middle School (Fri/6:00-7:30pm)
- 10/24 Trunk or Treat CLEAN-UP (Fri/7:30-8:00pm)
- 10/24 Fools for Christ Fall Dinner Theater (Fri/6:00pm)
- 10/25 Fools for Christ Fall Dinner Theater (Sat/6:00pm)
- 10/26 Tanzania Travelogue (Sun/10:45-11:30am)
- 10/28 Christian Singles Lunch Bunch at Johnny Kitchen (Tues/11:30am)
- 10/29 Pre-Confirmation, KICK'in It!, and Frolic Nursery **ON BREAK**