

# Martyr Monthly

December 2022



## **St Stephen the Martyr**

**Lutheran Church ELCA**

### **WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

**Saturday 5:00 pm**

**Sunday 9:30 am**

**Sunday School 9:30 am**

**Advent/Christmas Concert**

**December 18th 9:30am**

*Featuring SSM's Musical Groups*

**Christmas Eve Sat. Dec, 24 4:00pm & 9:00pm**

**Christmas Day Sun. Dec. 25 9:30am**



## Pastor's Page

Dear Community of Faith,  
During the season of Advent we pray, “Come Lord Jesus,” yet he is already here. The short four-week liturgical season is more than a preparation for the birth of baby Jesus. During this beautiful, quiet, contemplative season we wait in hope for Christ to come among us now in our hurting world.

Walter Brueggemann says Advent begins with a “*community of hurt.*” This community of hurt trusts in Christ who comes among us and becomes a “*community of hope.*”

That’s one reason I like Advent so much. When everything around me seems to shout “Be happy! Buy this! You’re not good enough unless you have this thing or do that task!” the season of Advent gives us some breathing space.

Writer Sarah Bessey shares an invitation for Advent that that we might connect with. She wonders, “How we can cozy up to Christmas when the world and our country are in such a broken state. Or, when perhaps “we are lonely or bored or tired or sick or broke or afraid? When we are grieving and sad?”

But here’s the thing, she says, we enter Advent precisely because we are paying attention to the brokenness around us. It is because everything hurts that we enter Advent--because we’ve stood in hospital rooms and grave sites that we lay out candles and matches for the Advent wreath to shine light in the midst of our grief. We don’t get to have hope without having grief. Hope dares to admit that not everything is as it should be.

“Advent matters, because it's our way of keeping our eyes and our hearts and our arms all wide open even in the midst of our grief and longing. The weary world is still waiting in so many ways, in so many hearts, in so many places, for the fullness of the Kin-dom of God to come. Advent is for the ones who know longing.”

So we say, Come Lord Jesus, even as we know Jesus is already here, breaking in among us. Over these long winter nights, we light candles and wait, knowing that love, peace, joy and hope are possible and real. Thank goodness for Advent, the church’s way of observing and remembering and marking the truth we believe that God came to be with us once, remains with us now, and is coming again.

Peace, Pastor Brian



# Equipping the Saints

The Greater Milwaukee Synod of the ELCA has a bold plan to renew our life together in mission. The Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal is a campaign that seeks to raise \$2.3 million to support Innovation, Collaboration, and Leadership across the synod. Fund initiatives include congregational grants to fund innovative ministries, Outreach for Hope collaboration grants to expand partnerships with central city congregations and ministries, and more. The Leadership initiative will include training for Campus Ministry leaders to build a sustainable endowment and engage alumni, hiring an organizer for racial equity within the synod, investing in rostered ministers, and more.



*“Equipping the saints for the work of ministry; Building up the Body of Christ”*

Ephesians 4:12

You will have the opportunity to learn more about the Equipping the Saints campaign over the next few months. For more information, including videos and stories of impact, go to <https://www.equippingthesaintsgms.org/>. Questions within the SSM congregation can be directed to Denise Sanders.

# Music and Worship



The season of Advent begins on November 27. We adorn the sanctuary in blue, symbolizing hope. A few centuries ago in Germany, the Advent wreath was developed as a sign of the waiting and hopeful expectation of the return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The wreath itself is a circle, representing the eternal victory over death through Jesus Christ.

December is a busy time in the church. Let us take time during this busy season to prepare our hearts for Christ’s arrival. Join us in worship at any or all of our special services and events to celebrate the birth of our Lord.

# Reconciling in Christ

## **Greetings Faith Family,**

During this year's Council Retreat held on October 15, a lengthy discussion took place regarding St. Stephen the Martyr (SSM) becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) church. Some may recall that we started this journey during the summer of 2019, when a team was assembled to learn and explore more about this initiative. Several meetings were held and during the January 2020 annual meeting, an opinion card was distributed that many members completed. The COVID-19 pandemic stopped these meetings and paused this journey for the past two years.

## **When was the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program started and why?**

Beginning in 1983, the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program recognizes Lutheran congregations, synods, organizations, colleges, and seminaries that welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The RIC roster provides a list of Lutheran communities where LGBTQIA+ people can find safe, nurturing, and affirming settings in which to worship and learn.

Many LGBTQIA+ people have learned by experience that they are not welcome in faith communities, even in those that state, "All are welcome here!" A general statement of welcome is often heard as meaning "everybody but me," so it can take a special effort to communicate an authentic welcome to LGBTQIA+ people.

## **What does this mean for SSM?**

I plan to very soon begin reaching out to past members of the RIC team and invite all of our members to consider joining this team to explore ways to build an openly inclusive, affirming, and welcoming faith community. Our journey will focus on ways to publicly declare our welcome to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. This may involve difficult conversations and I encourage everyone to open their hearts to hear what God is calling us to achieve.

**Jason Covert, Council President**



# Stewardship

This month we must learn to wait. We wait for the birth of Jesus. It reminds me of the old and weather-beaten cliché: good things really do come for those who wait. Mark Thibodeaux said, “We must learn that getting there can be half the fun. Each moment of aching anticipation can be a celebration of the miracle of this new life springing forth (however slowly!) In prayer we must learn to sit quietly and place our spiritual ear beside the womb of God. And if we’re quiet enough, we will feel the kick and hear the heartbeat of something new.”



We wait to see what this Christmas season will bring, with hope and faith. St. Stephen the Martyr will be our spiritual home, perhaps now more than ever our faith community will be able to come together. The good news is that the foundation of this home is strong and its people are resilient and generous. It is — *we are* — as vibrant as ever. It’s just a little harder to see over Zoom.

We are called to keep that vibrancy going. To continue service to our community and each other. To provide ourselves with the resources to plan for new challenges and adapt to new opportunities. The best way to do this is to reflect on the past year and appreciate how we all have been blessed and how we can continue to grow the ministries here at St. Stephen the Martyr.

Christmas is a great time to spend on your faith. This reminds me of a story I heard. Have you ever wondered how the Innkeeper felt after learning that the Messiah was born in the manger. The Innkeeper probably thought he had a good excuse for not finding a room for Jesus in his inn and for sending Mary, who was in labor, to go into the cave with the animals to have her baby (Luke 2:7) And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them at the Inn.

At least he provided the cave. And yet, we can imagine that when he heard that the newborn child was the Messiah, he probably regretted that he wasn’t more hospitable to him! Perhaps you can relate to the Innkeeper’s predicament: your schedule is overcrowded, and you don’t have enough room to give the time and attention to Christ that he deserves (and that you need!)? How could you make generous space in your schedule and your heart for Christ this Christmas season? Talk to the Lord about your schedule this Advent... Let it shine! Shine through all the commercialism and running around.

The Stewardship Team would like to wish you a Blessed Christmas Season. We hope to see you in person or on Zoom this Advent. If you feel so inclined a year end gift will go a long way to continue the ministries at St. Stephen the Martyr in 2023.

Jeremy Hann, Stewardship Chair

## Sound System Upgrade



You may have noticed issues with our current sound system in the church building. In recent months, we have experienced problems with microphones not working correctly, as well as issues with balancing sound between the sanctuary, gathering space, and our online worship.

A small team is investigating upgrades and/or replacement of our current system, which is nearly 20 years old. The team has met with three system providers to learn more about how we might improve our sound delivery and the financial costs of various options. Current estimates are between \$20-\$40,000. More information will be shared with the congregation as we develop a more definitive plan, including seeking congregational approval and funding. If you would like to participate in this process, contact Denise Sanders.

## SSM WELCA Christmas Fund Raiser

The women of SSM will have a Christmas Cookie/Candy Sale on December 10 and 11th. All proceeds will go to local and international charities. We are asking families in the congregation to donate a batch of their favorite Christmas cookies or candies. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. You do not need to decide what you are making in order to sign up. We will be collecting your donations on Friday December 9 from 9 to 12 and Saturday December 10 from 9 to 11. Do not package them for sale as we will be creating assortments of different cookies/candies to sell. Thanks in advance for your help with this worthy cause.

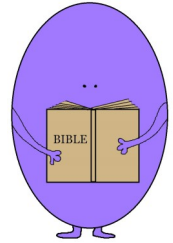


On Saturday December 10th and Sunday December 11th you will have the opportunity to purchase variety boxes of a dozen cookies/candies for \$6 or three boxes for \$15. These will be great for entertaining, hostess gifts or just for your own enjoyment. - Thank you.



## Christian Education

All of the Bible Studies are moving along. The men, who meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 9:30am, continue to look at Hebrews. The women, who meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 10:15am, are looking at the letters in the Bible not written by Paul. There is never a bad time to join either group either in person or via zoom. Contact the church office or Kipp or Bonnie Zimmermann for the link.



The Monthly group continues to meet on the 1st Monday of each month at 1:00pm. They are discussing growing older and wiser using the scriptures as a guide. This group meets in person around the fireplace.

Sunday School continues to grow. We are blessed with a group of wonderful and dedicated teachers. Sunday School begins in the 9:30am worship service and the students break into their classes after the children's message.

Join a group or suggest another group or topic by talking Bonnie Zimmermann, Christian Education Chair or by putting a note in her box.

## Bay View Christmas Gifts

Once again we are helping with the Bay View Community Center Christmas Outreach Program. We will provide gifts to 20 children and 10 seniors. If you have not already done so, take a card and purchase the item(s) requested - or if you cannot find the exact item substitute something similar.




Gifts must be returned to SSM by Sunday, December 11th with the card attached. Please do not wrap the gifts, gift bags are OK. Thank you in advance for once again making this Christmas a merry one for the folks associated with the Bay View Community Center, many of whom would not otherwise receive any gifts.



# DECEMBER



## 2022

Saturday, 3rd	5:00pm	Worship, 2nd Weekend of Advent
Sunday, 4th	9:30am	Worship, 2nd Weekend of Advent Welcoming of New Members
		Sunday School
Monday, 5th	1:00pm	Bible Study
Tuesday, 6th St. Nicholas Day	6:30pm	Mega Meeting 
Wednesday, 7th	9:30am	Men's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, 10th	5:00pm	Worship, 3rd Weekend of Advent
Sunday, 11th	9:30am	Worship, 3rd Weekend of Advent Sunday School
	10:45am	Confirmation Class
Tuesday, 13th	6:30pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 14th	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal







Saturday, 17th	5:00pm	Worship, 4th Weekend of Advent
Sunday, 18th	9:30am	Worship, 4th Weekend of Advent Christmas Choir Concert
	10:45am	Post Concert Reception
	10:45am	Confirmation Class
Wednesday, 21st	9:30am	Men's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, 24th	4:00pm	Worship, Nativity of Our Lord
	9:00pm	Worship, Nativity of Our Lord
Sunday, 25th	9:30am	Worship, Christmas Day
Saturday, 31st	5:00pm	Worship, Lessons and Carols
Sunday, January 1	9:30am	Worship, Lessons and Carols

## Important December Information

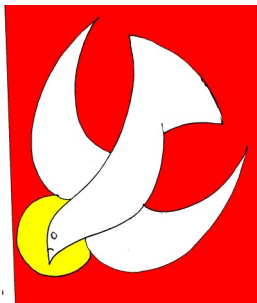
- ★ No Loose Ends Lunch in December
- ★ No Women's Bible Study December 28th
- ★ No Handbell Rehearsal December 28th
- ★ No Choir Rehearsal December 28th
- ★ No Sunday School December 25th or January 1st



# Confirmation



On October 30th, Reformation Sunday, Jonah Miller, Mya Kling and Vincent Ortega Affirmed their Baptisms. Congratulations





# Bonfire November 12th



## Youth & Family



Thank you to everyone who helped us stock the shelves at Bay View Community Center and build an amazing tower of supplies all November long!! Those items will be brought in this month and are sure to put a smile on a lot of faces.

Join us after service on Sunday December 18 for a post Choir Christmas Concert reception! Adults can enjoy fellowship over coffee, donuts, and kringle (O&H!) while the youth partake in Advent themed scavenger hunt, craft, and games.

## Amazon Smiles Program

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support SSM every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to SSM. To shop at AmazonSmile, simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) on your web browser or activate AmazonSmile on your Amazon Shopping app on your iOS or Android phone (found under settings on your app).

To sign up for Amazon Smile visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

1. Sign in with the same account you use for Amazon.com
2. Select your charity (St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church)

**Start shopping! Remember to checkout at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to generate donations. Tip: Add a bookmark to make it easier to shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com).**

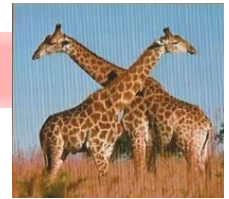


## Mobile Numbers Needed

It is almost 2023 -and we have decided that it is about time we utilize our ability to text members with important notifications. In order to do that we need to have as many cell phone numbers as possible. If you would like to be part of this communication chain, and your phone can receive text messages please get your cell phone number to Bonnie in the office. You can leave a note in the office mail box, email the information or call it in. It is possible that we have your cell number but do not know that it is your cell and not a land line. Thanks for your help with this.



## Travel to Meru



The SSM group will travel to the Diocese of Meru in Tanzania during early September of 2023.

There is still time to join us! Our next meeting will be in January. If you are interested please contact Julie Starks, [jastarks39@gmail.com](mailto:jastarks39@gmail.com).

## Human Concerns



This is a busy time of the year for Human Concerns. First, we would like to thank Alex and the Youth and Family Committee for partnering with us during November to gather food for our food pantry partners.

We continue to gather coats for Bay View Community Center, Thank you for your coat donations but please no other articles of clothing. Our partners have no room to store items other than coats.

Once again we are providing Christmas gifts to 30 folks, youth and seniors, at Bay View Community Center who would otherwise not have Christmas gifts. Please select a card (or 2), purchase the item on the card - or something similar if you can't find the actual item - and return it to church **unwrapped** with the card attached no later than December 11th. This project has been a great success in the past and the people at BVCC are very appreciative.

Soon we will begin collecting socks, underwear, gloves, scarves and other warm items for the homeless mission at Tippecanoe. These items should be new and all sizes, men and women, are appreciated.

Mostly, at this celebratory time of year the Human Concerns Committee wishes to thank all of the people of St. Stephen the Martyr for your generosity and the love you show to all of those people described by Jesus as our neighbors.





## Memorial Committee Report

Rae Gifford	01
John Muroi	05
Faith O'Connell	08
Tom Raasch	10
Marg Muroi	11
Karen Palasz	11
Bonnie Court	13
Russ Mayer	16
Jennifer Ortega	16
Dolores Dowling	17
Regan Kunesh	17
Shirley Rau	18
Breleigh Kopplin	19
Charlotte Knipple	21
Bonnie Daleness	22
JoAnn Soderstrom	23
Larry Stasiewski	26
Paul Heins	27
Bob Brownell	28
Bonnie Zgola	28
Abigail Hanna	29
Larry Petricek	29
Dan Davies	30
Lillian Mildren	31



The committee met on October 15, 2022. Attending were Sandra Petricek, chairperson, Julie Herman, and me. Sandy has agreed to remain chairperson, Julie will do secretarial duties. We could use some more members especially for fund record keeping. Donation updates and fund balances were discussed. Multiple thank you notes written by Bonnie in the office. Items on the wish list and tabled projects were discussed. A wireless digital sign would be preferred if costs are reasonable. Looking for vendors and suggestions. As always, anyone interested in this group can contact any of the members and/or sit in for a session. The next session will be announced as needed. Respectfully submitted Faith N. O'Connell





# Council Minutes November 8, 2022

Attending: J. Covert; J. Miller; D. Sanders; J. Hanna; S. Rosenstock; J. Muroi; B. Zimmermann; A. Dollar; E. Sanders; K. Zimmermann; J. Muroi; Pastor Hooper; L. Schuchardt; K. Knipple; J. Dose

Meeting called to order at 6:31pm

Pastor led affirmations of the council retreat.

October Minutes were approved with corrections.



Financial -J. Miller – giving has continued well. J. Muroi sent principal reduction of \$3500 to the Organ lender. Checks have been sent from Human Concerns to our assigned charities as budgeted. An additional \$1500 is available from Thrivent Choice to the Human Concerns. An audit of the Treasurers records has been suggested prior to the annual meeting. Financial reports approved.

Pastor's Time -Confirmants Maya Kling, Jonah Miller, and Vincent Ortega Affirmed their Baptisms. Pastor is continuing to work with the Greendale Health department. New Member class was held welcoming new members late November or early December. Pastor will be away for Continuing Education Nov. 14 – 20. Pastor Monte from St. Luke's will cover.

Current Action -Eric began the budget procedures for next year. Annual Meeting will be January 29<sup>th</sup>. Newsletter due November 15. Next Council Meeting will be December 10, 2022 to work on the budget for next year. Sound System – Denise and her team met two consultants for the sound system. One bid was very large, and second has not turned in a bid. The committee will put the information out in time for end of year giving.

Old Action -Equipping the Saints – the presentation for appeal will be given to the congregation February 26 through March 26.

## Committee Comments

Education – Sunday School is progressing well Men's Women's Bible studies are active.

Monday afternoon Bible study has picked up with new members.

Youth and Family – the pot luck will be put off to the near future.

Stewardship – a presentation will be made on Sunday November 13 and giving cards will be mailed for return on November 20.

Building and Grounds – Leak in the sprinkler system was repaired. The five-year inspection was done and found a problem with the rest of the pipes. More to follow.

Music and Worship – Christmas Contort – will be a Sunday morning December 18 at worship. Youth and Family will host a reception with Kids activities.

Adjourned 8:36pm

Pastor closed with Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Kipp W. Zimmermann, Secretary

*Martyr Monthly—St. Stephen the Martyr*



## OFFICE HOURS

9:00-2:00 M-Th

9:00-12:00 F

## SSM STAFF

Brian Hooper, Pastor

[pastorbrianhooper@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbrianhooper@gmail.com)

Tabatha Moldenhauer, Music Director

Mark Breutzmann, Saturday Musician

Jim Hennessy, Church Maintenance

Bonnie Zimmermann, Ministry Assistant

SSM Website: [www.ssmelca.org](http://www.ssmelca.org)

Email: [office@ssmelca.org](mailto:office@ssmelca.org)

Phone: 414-421-3543

Sunday School email:

[sundayschool@ssmelca.org](mailto:sundayschool@ssmelca.org)

## WORSHIP AT SSM

SATURDAY AT 5:00 PM

SUNDAY AT 9:30 AM\*

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30AM

## ADVENT/CHRISTMAS CONCERT

DECEMBER 18, 9:30AM\*

## CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP, DECEMBER 24

4:00PM & 9:00PM\*

## CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP, DECEMBER 25

9:00AM\*

\*INDICATES THAT SERVICES ARE IN PERSON  
AND STREAMED VIA ZOOM, FOR ZOOM  
INFORMATION CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE

## St Stephen the Martyr ELCA

6101 S. 51st Street

Greendale WI 53129

(414) 421-3543



## December 2022 Martyr Monthly



*Welcome to St. Stephen the Martyr*

*Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others*