

MARTYR MONTHLY

MARCH 2025

THE SEASON OF LENT



WORSHIP AT SSM

SATURDAY AT 5:00PM

SUNDAY AT 9:30AM*

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30AM

ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5TH AT 11:00AM & 6:30PM

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT - HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER AT 6:30PM

MARCH 12, 19, 26, APRIL 2, 9

**INDICATES WORSHIP SERVICES STREAMED ON ZOOM,
FOR ZOOM INFORMATION PLEASE
CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE.*



Pastor's Page

Dear SSM Community and Friends,

In March, we begin the church season of Lent. Lent is the period of 40 days that precedes Easter, and has its origins in the early days of the Church. Converts seeking to become Christian spent several years in study and preparation. Then they went through a final period of purification and enlightenment for the 40 days before their baptism at Easter. The rest of the church began to observe this season of Lent in solidarity with these newest Christians. It became an opportunity to recall and renew the commitment of their own baptism.

Today we consider Lent to be a time of reflection. On Ash Wednesday we hear this invitation:

*As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil, and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and Neighbor. **I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent-self examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love-strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament.** Let us continue our journey through these 40 days to the great Three Days of Jesus death and resurrection. -ELW*

Some people might fast or give something up for Lent. Perhaps instead of giving up something for Lent this year, we can strive to be more intentional about taking on some new spiritual practices during these 40 days that may turn us back toward God and be more present to the gifts of God that surround us.

- Go for a walk and give thanks for the gifts of creation you notice along the way.
- Try a new food that's healthier for you or the environment.
- Fast from complaining or gossiping
- Write a letter to someone you love and tell them why.
- Give money and/or volunteer with an agency that helps the poor.
- Pray for your enemies. Don't have enemies? Pray for someone who annoys you.
- Commit to regular worship attendance, especially during Holy Week.
- Tell someone else why your faith is important to you.

During Lent there will be midweek worship services on Wednesdays at 6:30pm. We will sing the familiar *Holden Evening Prayer* and have reflections on Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

Peace, Pastor Brian



Ash Wednesday Worship
March 5th
11:00am and 6:30pm

Holden Evening Prayer
Wednesdays during Lent at 6:30pm
March 12, 19, 26
April 2, 9



Passion/Palm Weekend

Saturday, April 12 at 5:00pm

Sunday, April 13, 9:30am

Maundy Thursday - April 17

At the Greendale Community Church 6:00pm

(6015 Clover Ln, Greendale, WI 53129)

Good Friday - April 18

Cross Walk beg. at St. Thomas of Canterbury 2:00pm

Ecumenical service at St. Alphonsus 3:00pm

Tenebrae 6:30pm

Easter Vigil - April 19 5:00pm

Easter Sunday - April 20

Sunrise Prayer Garden Worship 7:00am

Easter Worship - 9:30am

Updates from the Annual Meeting

Reconciling in Christ Congregation



The congregation recently voted to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation. In addition to a public declaration of our welcome statement (approved June 2024), a partnership with ReconcilingWorks involves the following:

SSM will be listed on the national public website found at www.ReconcilingWorks.org/FindRIC.

Our worship community will continue to set milestones to deepen and expand our welcome.

SSM will have access to additional resources tailored to support our ministry.

We will make an annual contribution to support the national program. Watch for more information and ways you can support this important part of the SSM ministry.

Pastor Brian on Leave, May 15 to August 7

At the church's annual meeting in January, the congregation approved a sabbatical leave for Pastor Brian Hooper. The purpose of a sabbatical is for personal and spiritual growth, knowledge and skill development, renewal, revitalization, and enrichment. Pastor Brian's sabbatical will include time for travel, education, and listening, as he explores a deeper sense of connectedness with God and creation. Various activities include studying Celtic spirituality, exploring new ideas for outdoor worship, focusing on the power of listening, further development of coaching skills, prayer, reading, and more. Pastor Brian will be on sabbatical leave from May 15 through August 7 (12 weeks). During this time, pastoral needs of the congregation will be covered by a variety of rostered ministers and lay leaders. Pastor Brian, Council President Denise Sanders, and Ministry Assistant Bonnie Zimmermann are currently planning for these pastoral needs. Please reach out if you have any questions.



More SSM Updates

Developing a Church Photo Directory

There is some interest in creating a photo directory during this year, but at present there is no one to lead this effort. Does this sound like something you could do? Let Bonnie Zimmermann or Denise Sanders know if you are interested in learning more.



Hearing Assistance is Available

The church's new sound system includes several options for hearing assistance. If you have any difficulty hearing during worship services, ask the ushers for instructions on our hearing assistance options, which include:

- Connecting your Bluetooth hearing aids and your own device directly to the sound system, or
- Connecting T-coil hearing aids with an SSM device, or
- Using an SSM device and earpiece

Church Rummage Sale

Mark your calendars for the 2025 SSM Church rummage sale. The rummage will take place on Friday April 4th from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and Saturday April 5th from 9:00am to 3:00 pm. in the fellowship hall with some items outside, weather permitting. Items can be dropped off at church the Wednesday or Thursday before the event. For planning purposes people wishing to donate items will need to submit a list of those items by March 24th. Proceeds from the event will be go to the church and charities yet to be determined. Look for a short informational donor sheet to come out soon. In order to make this event a success we will need plenty of donors and volunteers. Stay tuned for donor sheets, a volunteer sign-up sheet and another planning date to be announced soon. So start making your list! Remember, to make this event a success it will take a little help from everyone who is able to chip in.

**RUMMAGE
SALE**

Youth and Family

Lutherdale Youth Retreat

On Feb. 8th a group of 3rd and 4th graders from SSM embarked on a fun 24 hour youth retreat at Lutherdale Camp in Elkhorn, WI. We all had a WONDERFUL time diving into the weekend theme of “Praises and Prayer”! We praised God for his wonderful creations and learned how to pray in different ways with 40 others from all over WI and IL. Our youth walked away repeating that this was the “best weekend ever!!” and that “Lutherdale sure knows how to make a kid like church!”. **THANK YOU** for your support and approval of our Youth & Family budget - we are able to bring unforgettable memories like this to our SSM youth!



SAVE THE DATE: Community Easter Egg Hunt at SSM Saturday, April 12 1-2:30

Mark your calendars for our 3rd annual Community Easter Egg Hunt! There will be crafts, cookie decorating, games, and an EGG HUNT all inside SSM. Invite your friends and neighbors - all are welcome! 3-4 other adults are needed to help monitor stations and clean up. **Reach out to Alex Dollar** if you're interested in helping make this event another success!

Human Concerns

Non-perishable, non-expired food items such as canned fruits and vegetables, tuna, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter and jelly, pasta and pasta sauce are always in demand. Your generous donations of food items or money in support of those who are experiencing food insecurities is greatly appreciated. Checks can be made payable to *St. Stephen the Martyr* and placed in the offering. Be sure to indicate that your donation is for *Food Ministries*. Thank you!



There is a special colorful envelope in your box of envelopes for each special service throughout the year. Funds received in these envelopes - or funds marked for these special collections - are shared with a ministry or program as selected each year by the Human Concerns Committee. 60% of these funds are shared and 40% go into the SSM general fund. This year the designations are as follows:

- Ash Wednesday - ELCA Disaster Response
- Lent (1 for each Wednesday in Lent) - Outreach for Hope
- Palm Sunday - Lutheran Social Services
- Maundy Thursday - ELCA World Hunger
- Good Friday - Bread of Healing Clinic (Cross Lutheran)
- Easter - Mbaaseny Parish
- Thanksgiving - Hunger Task Force
- Christmas - half to Unity Food Ministries
- Christmas - half to Faith Sante Fe Food Ministries

MARCH 2025

<i>Transfiguration of Our Lord</i>		
Saturday, 3/1	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 3/2	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	By Heart: Conversations with Luther's Small Catechism Study Coffee Hour
Tuesday, 3/4	6:30pm	Mega Meeting
Wednesday, 3/5	9:30am	Men's Bible Study
	11:00am	Ash Wednesday Worship
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	6:30pm	Ash Wednesday Worship
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, 3/6	1:00pm	Quilting - Cut & Sew - until 3pm
	6:30pm	Confirmation Class
<i>1st Weekend of Lent</i>		
Saturday, 3/8	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 3/9	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	By Heart: Conversations with Luther's Small Catechism Study
Tuesday, 3/11	6:30pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 3/12	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
	12noon	Loose Ends Lunch - Open Flame
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	6:30pm	Holden Evening Prayer
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal

<i>2nd Weekend of Lent</i>		
Saturday, 3/15	5:00pm	Worship - Children's Christian Theatre
Sunday, 3/16	9:30am	Youth Led Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	By Heart: Conversations with Luther's Small Catechism Study
		Coffee Hour
Monday, 3/17	1:00pm	Quilting, - Layering - until 3pm
Wednesday, 3/19	9:30am	Men's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	6:30pm	Holden Evening Prayer
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, 3/20	6:30pm	Confirmation Class
<i>3rd Week of Lent</i>		
Saturday, 3/22	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 3/23	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	By Heart: Conversations with Luther's Small Catechism Study
Wednesday, 3/26	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	6:30pm	Holden Evening Prayer
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
<i>4th Weekend of Lent</i>		
Saturday, 3/29	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 3/30	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	By Heart: Conversations with Luther's Small Catechism Study
		Coffee Hour



The Ulster Project An Exciting Opportunity

Adam Mildren	02
Pat Schroeder	03
Shirley Lieske	07
Orlando Dean	10
Marc Manning	13
Jennifer Myszkowski	15
Peyton Weber	15
Amy Ashmore	18
Sally Kowalewski	19
Phoebe Mildren	20
Delaney Stuedemann	21
Keri Whitmore	22
Nicole Manning	22
Anika Tanke	26
Hannah Tanke	27
Betty Kroll	28
Pamela Rothwell	28
Mike Wholean	29
Joan Schroeder	30
Eleanor Salb	30
Sherry Magner	30
Alexis Jajtner	30

The Ulster Project is an international peace leadership and justice experience that promotes peacemaking, conflict resolution and empowerment. For the past 48 years over 30,000 American and Northern Irish teens (ages 14-16) have participated in The Ulster Project sowing seeds of change.

The Ulster Project is currently looking for a few families in Southeast Wisconsin willing to host a Northern Irish teen for the month of July. They are also interested in hearing from

freshman or sophomore teens who might be interested in participating. For more information, please see the bulletin board between the offices.



Sunday Education Hour



Beginning on March 2, we will dust off Luther's Small Catechism and wrestle with his ever-relevant question "What does this mean?" We will explore the ten commandments, the sacraments, the creed, the Lord's Prayer, and how they connect with us today.

Come for discussion on Sunday mornings from 10:45am-11:45am. We will be exploring the book: **"By Heart: Conversations with Martin Luther's Small Catechism"**. There are copies of the book available in the church office for \$15. Come for one or all sessions on Sundays March 2-April 6. You can also purchase the book on Amazon for about \$17.00 or from Augsburg Fortress for \$17.99 plus shipping.

Children's Christian Theatre Returning

Returning this month - the Children's Christian Theatre production company. On Saturday, March 15th they will present "A Not So Terrible Parable" during our 5:00pm worship service. Please come and watch this group of very talented kids present the Good News.



Cookie Sale - Thank You

Once again the Christmas Cookie Sale was a great success, raising over \$1,000. The funds that were raised were split evenly between:

- The SSM Sound System fund**
- Courage MKE**, which provides services, support and resources to LGBTQ+ youth across the state of Wisconsin.
- Global Refuge**, which was formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.
- Mbaaseny Parish**, for their continued ministry.

Thank you to all who brought cookies and all who bought cookies. We look forward to doing this again. Out next sale will be December 13th & 14th, 2025.

Do you enjoy the Easter Breakfast at SSM?

We need your help to host this event in 2025. A team of 2-3 people is needed to organize the event, determine the menu, and communicate with the volunteers. If you can serve on this team, please connect with Lorin Schuchardt, Fellowship Chair, and/or Bonnie Zimmermann, Ministry Assistant.



Event volunteers are needed for the following:

- grocery shopping, between 4/16 and 4/18 (2-3 people)
- room set-up, Friday, April 18, 6-7:30 pm (6-8 people)
- decorating and table setting, Saturday, April 19, 9-10:30 am (5-8 people)
- food preparation, Sunday, April 20, 6:30-8 am (5-7 people)
- clean-up, Sunday, April 20, 9:15-9:30, 10:30-11:30 (4-6 people)
- food donations (more info to come)

Volunteer sign-up sheets are available in the gathering space. There is also a sign up for attending the breakfast - please indicate your interest so that we can get an estimate.

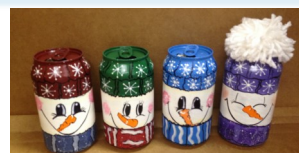


Have a Little Time?

If you have a few hours once a month and would like a little project at church, we are looking for someone who can help keep the sanctuary stocked and in order. Duties would be making sure hymnals are in place, visitor cards and pew envelopes are stocked and pew pencils sharpened. This would be a great help. Contact the office if you are interested.

Can News for Winter

Keep storing those aluminum beverage cans from the winter --- When the March winds stop blowing, on April 1st the collection/sale of aluminum cans will resume. The funds from the sale of the cans help our food pantries and we are also helping the environment. Just place the cans at the door to the church garage and they will be moved inside until there is enough for a car full. Bob and Karen Rasmussen



Thank You Sunday School

The Sunday before Valentines Day the Sunday School spent their time making Valentines Day Cards to send to our members of a certain age. They prepared and mailed 64 valentines to 88 people. Each child prepared several cards and signed their name. Many of the recipients got word to the office that the cards meant a lot to them and wanted to express their thanks to the child who signed their card and to the entire Sunday School, children and staff. Here is one example:



To: SSM Sunday School Children,
Many, many thanks for the lovely Valentine's Day card. Ours was made by Charlotte (or any other SS child). Thank you all so very much 😊

Loose Ends Lunch



The March Loose Ends Lunch will take place on Wednesday, March 12th at noon. Meet at Open Flame Restaurant located at 5081 S 108th St, Hales Corners, WI 53130. Please let Karen Hoffman know if you plan to attend so that appropriate reservations can be made.

Passing of Robert Mitchell

It is with great sadness that we have been informed of the passing of former member Robert Mitchell, who was an active member here for many years. Many of you may remember the part he played in planning the beautiful stained glass window that dresses the front of our sanctuary. He died in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where he had been living, on January 30, 2025. He is survived by his wife Susan.



Council Minutes - January 7

Present: Denise Sanders, Lorin Schuchardt, John Muroi. Sandy Wesolowski, Kristy Knipple, Kipp Zimmermann, Eric Sanders, Jane Miller, Keri Whitmore, Pastor Brian Hooper, Shelly Rosenstock, Alex Dollar, Carol Jackett

The meeting was called to order by Denise Sanders at 6:30 pm., Carol shared a devotion

December Meeting Minutes Review: Reviewed and approved as amended.

Financial Reports: Jane reported that the 2024 General donations of \$242,593 were 99.4% of what was budgeted and the 2024 Building donations of \$17,159 were 85.8% of the budgeted amount. John reported that the Old National CD matured on 12/27/24. John suggested looking into another CD, probably for something less than the amount of the maturing CD and maybe a separate CD for the mission endowment fund. John will be ending his time on the Council after 9 years of service. The Council thanked John for his years of service, his many contributions and sharing his expertise with the Council. A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial reports.

Pastor Brian's Report: A community prayer service will be held on January 19, 2025. A Neuroscience Workshop is planned for after the service on Sunday, February 16, 2025. Confirmation classes are being held. Several Pastoral visits were made in the community. SSM will be celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2025. Pastor Brian will be asking for feedback on how the church has been and continues to be part of your life.

Current Action Items: **Sabbatical Policy** – The Sabbatical Policy was reviewed and approved and is ready to be presented at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

Laptop – A laptop was purchased and will be used primarily for bible study.

Electrical work – to eliminate electrical cords running across the aisle some electrical work needs to be scheduled. . This work is estimated to cost \$800.

The Council approved this activity. What to do with the old sound system equipment needs to be decided.

Annual Meeting – Denise will send the final agenda for the annual meeting scheduled for January 26, 2025. The agenda so far will include the following: Election of a new Treasurer, Presentation of the Sabbatical Leave for approval, Sabbatical Leave proposal for Pastor Brian, RIC presentation and voting to approve becoming a RIC Church. (Note: Both the Sabbatical Leave for Pastor Brian and becoming a RIC congregation will be voted on by paper ballot.)

Council Minutes Continued

New Business:

The heat in Bonnie's office is not working. Total Mechanical has been contacted to provide an estimate to replace a valve in the office which will cost around \$1000. A motion was made and approved for the work and expense.

Pastor Brian's Sabbatical Request.: 12 weeks between May 15 and August 7, 2025. Will require covering 2 services every week when gone. Costs and backup resources need to be finalized. A motion was made and approved to present the Sabbatical Leave request at the annual meeting on January 26th.

Budget Review and Discussion: Eric presented the final budget information for 2024 and projected budget for 2025. The budget information was approved as submitted for presentation at the annual meeting. Eric will put together summary slides. Prior to the annual meeting there will be a budget review after the Sunday service on January 19th. That will provide the congregation with an opportunity to ask questions and give input before the annual meeting on January 26.

Committee Reports:

Music and Worship – We are starting to prepare for Easter services. Christian Education - the Sunday School children presented a very good Christmas concert. Evangelism - nothing to report Fellowship – in the early planning stages for a spring rummage sale. A date will be selected, and planning will begin.

Stewardship – The pledges have been completed. If anyone has not yet made a pledge there is still an opportunity to do so. Finance – Budget summary for 2024 and proposed budget numbers for 2025 are ready for presentation at the annual meeting. John Muroi will be leaving the Council after 9 years of service as Treasurer. A replacement will be elected at the annual meeting.

Youth and Family – Pajama Day was well attended, and everyone had a great time. There is an overnight event planned for February at Lutherdale that the Dollar family will be chaperoning. If interested talk to Alex for more information. Human Concerns – Food donations for February will benefit the Bay View Community Center. There has been great response and support for all activities during 2024.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer Pastor Brian led in a closing prayer, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm. Next Council Meeting is Saturday, February 8, 2025, during the Council Retreat.

Respectfully Submitted: Carol Jackett, Secretary

OFFICE HOURS

9:00-2:00 Mon - Th

9:00-12:00 Fri

SSM STAFF

Brian Hooper, Pastor

pastorbrianhooper@gmail.com

Tabitha Moldenhauer, Music Director

Mark Breutzmann, Saturday Musician

Jim Hennessy, Church Maintenance

Bonnie Zimmermann, Ministry
Assistant

SSM Website: www.ssmelca.org

Facebook:

<https://m.facebook.com/SSMELCA/>

Email: office@ssmelca.org

Phone: 414-421-3543

Sunday School email:

sundayschool@ssmelca.org

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St Stephen the Martyr ELCA

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(414) 421-3543

MARCH 2025



Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others