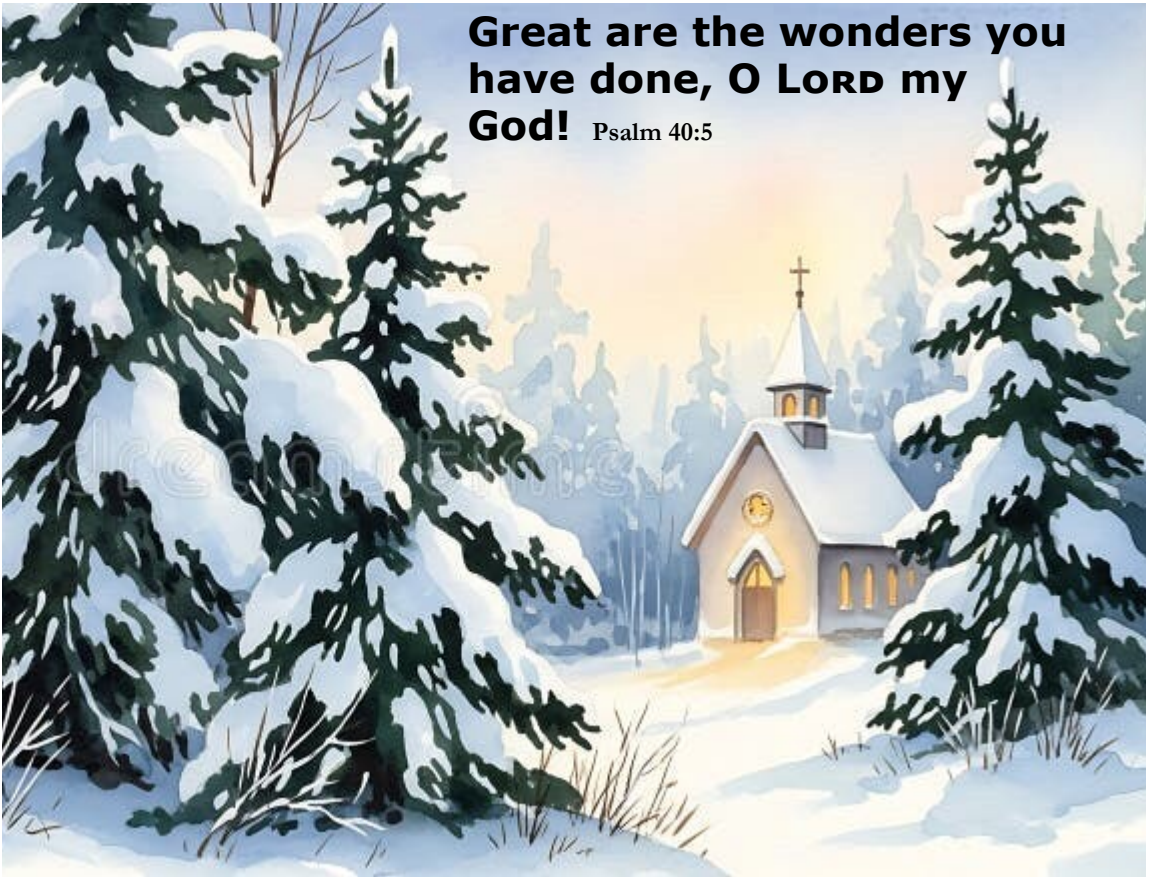


MARTYR MONTHLY

JANUARY 2026

**Great are the wonders you
have done, O LORD my
God!** Psalm 40:5



Worship at St. Stephen the Martyr
Saturday 5:00pm
Sunday 9:30am*
Sunday School 9:30am

**Indicates worship services streamed on Zoom,
for Zoom information please contact the church office.*

Pastor's Page

“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.” – Isaiah 60:1

Dear SSM Faith Community,

As we turn the calendar to a new year, we cross the threshold from the past into the new with hope, gratitude, and anticipation. In January we enter the church season called Epiphany. We are invited to continue to look for the ways God's light continues to break into our world... sometimes boldly, and sometimes in small, quiet moments that we might otherwise overlook.



Like the magi who followed the star that led them to the Christ child, we too are called to pay attention to the signs of God's presence around us. In a world often filled with noise, worry, and division, the light of Christ offers direction, comfort, and courage. Epiphany reminds us that Jesus did not come only for a few but for the whole world, drawing all people into God's abundant grace.

As we begin a new year, perhaps this a good time to think about our congregation mission of

Welcoming All, Worshiping God, Serving others.

In the new year, how will we continue to live into this, and share Christ's light to all the communities that we live in and serve? Together may we renew our commitment to:

Worship with gratitude and open hearts

Serve neighbors with compassion and justice

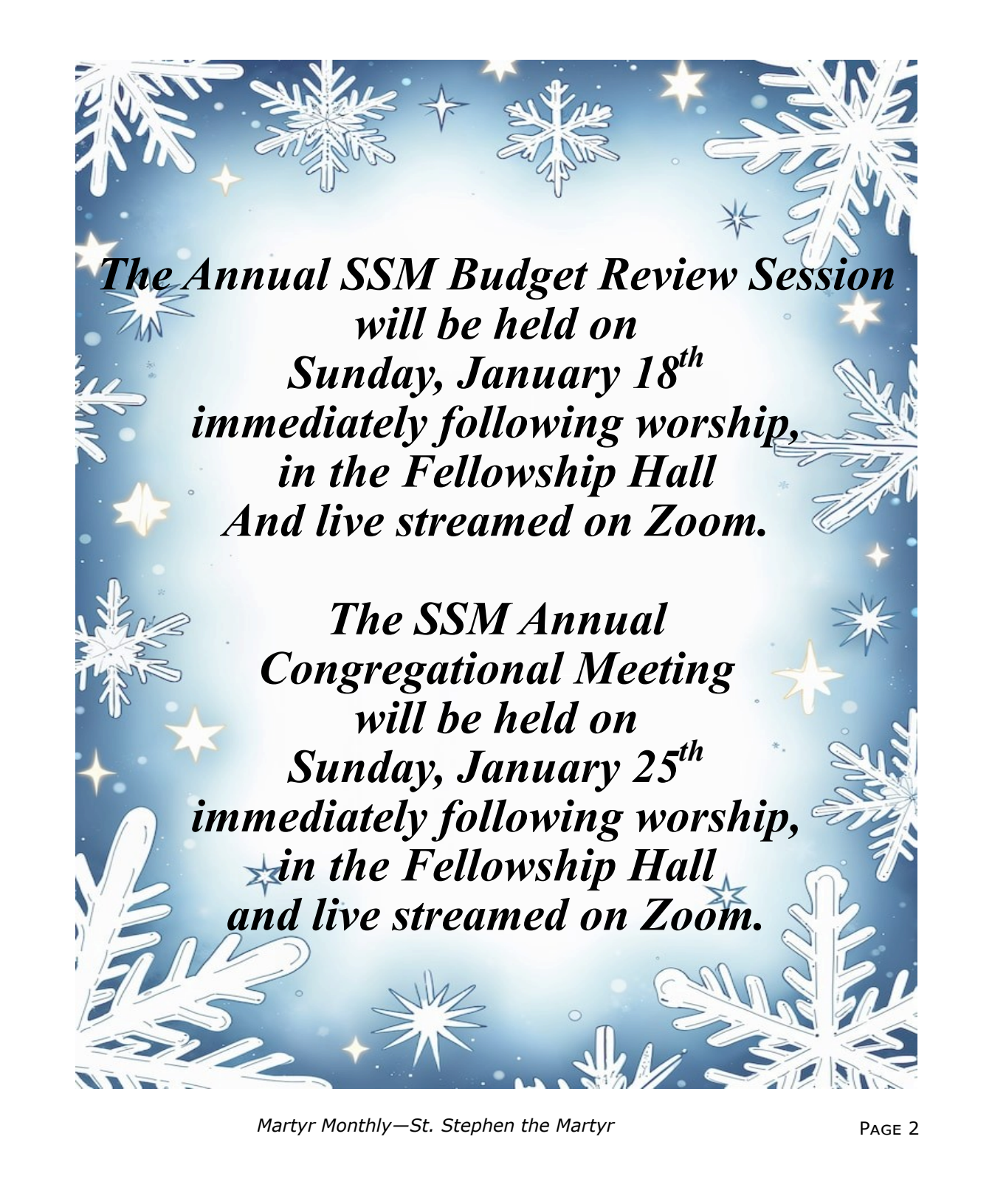
Learn and grow in faith through scripture, prayer, and conversation

Welcome every person as a beloved child of God

Signs of God's light and love all are around us. Live with open eyes, hearts and minds, and let your light shine. Thank you for your generosity. Together let us be beacons of hope to our world.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Peace, Pastor Brian



***The Annual SSM Budget Review Session
will be held on
Sunday, January 18th
immediately following worship,
in the Fellowship Hall
And live streamed on Zoom.***

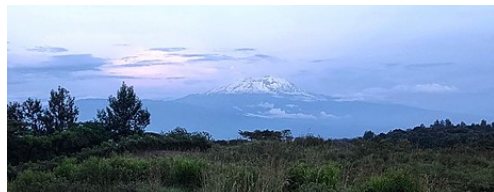
***The SSM Annual
Congregational Meeting
will be held on
Sunday, January 25th
immediately following worship,
in the Fellowship Hall
and live streamed on Zoom.***

Human Concerns

Faith Santa Fe Christmas bins – Collected food was delivered to Faith Santa Fe on Dec. 15 along with a check for \$1,600. The Human Concerns Committee assisted with filling the bins on Friday morning, Dec. 19 before that evening's celebration and party. Thank-you SSM for your generosity!



Mbaaseny and Meru contribution – SSM forwarded \$800 to our Tanzanian partners in December. The funds will be wire transferred in January via our Synod Office. \$700 was directed to our partner congregation's education fund and \$100 was directed to the Diocese of Meru to use as needed. These were budgeted funds from the 2025 Human Concerns budget.



Food For Thought



healing with
food+love

Our food ministry partner for January is Unity **Lutheran Church**. Items that are in big demand are canned pasta, tuna, white rice, condiments (12-14 oz. size ketchup was an example), canned Great Northern or navy beans, canned peaches, Knorr rice or pasta sides, and jelly. They receive a lot of peanut butter, but very little jelly. As always, a monetary donation is also appreciated and allows them to purchase what they need at a reduced cost. You can either mark your donation “Food Ministry” or use a “Food Ministry”

envelope found on the Giving Station board outside of the sanctuary.

Thank you for your generosity.

Unity also has several volunteer opportunities. The first Wednesday of the month they are looking for helpers to bake cornbread and cookies from approximately 9 to 11 a.m. They also need helpers to serve, dine and clean-up between 5:30 and 7 p.m. **The third Wednesday of the month** they serve their evening hot meal. Clean-up help is needed between 6 and 7 p.m. You are welcome to come early to join the guests in food and fellowship. If you are interested in volunteering, please see Shelly Rosenstock.

VOLUNTEERING



Our first SSM for the unhoused at **Tippecanoe** was held on December 5. There were about 15 guests and 7 chaperones plus JP Maschke and myself. Our next meal will be Friday, January 9. If you would like to sign up to donate parts of the meal, the sign up sheet will be outside the office the last week of December. See Nancy Mineau for more details.

Other Ways to Be of Help

Aluminum Can Report 2025



We are happy to report that more cans were collected in 2025 than 2024. The total for 2025 was 273 pounds resulting in \$218 for our food pantries. You may also remember that a generous donor matched that dollar amount, doing even more good in a time of such great need.

In 2026 please save your cans at home until collection begins again April 1st. After the winter, you can bring your cans to the church garage and they will be moved inside. This will allow us to continue to support food challenged people in our community and help the environment as well. Thank you! Bob and Karen Rasmussen - Can Coordinators

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Direct your
Thrivent Choice
Dollars
Today!



A New Year and time to be sure you have forwarded your Choice Dollars from 2025. If you have not yet done this it is not too late. At this time you may want to designate any Choice Dollars that you have to SSM, your community, or charities that deal with hunger and homelessness. You can direct your Choice Dollars on the internet or by calling 1-800-847-4836. Please be reminded that it is not necessary to wait until the end of the year to donate Choice Dollars to SSM or other charities. These dollars can be donated throughout the year as they are earned.

Community Prayer Service for Peace and Unity



Supported by the Green Corners group, a Community Service of Prayer for Peace and Unity will take place at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church (3722 S 58th St, Milwaukee) on Sunday afternoon January 18th at 3pm. All are welcome.

Youth Events



High School Youth Group: We had fun during our first gathering with friends from St. Luke's Lutheran church. We are planning on meeting on the second Saturday of each month. We will meet on January 10 at SSM at 6pm. The plan is to make pizzas at church and play some hide and seek.



High School trip to Montgomery, AL This summer we will be doing a service/learning experience in Montgomery, AL. We will be working with Youth-Works, and partner with Pastor Maren's church for this experience, June 22-26 (plus travel day on both ends) - The high school Mission Trip is open to all current and incoming 8th - 12th grade youth (incoming 9th graders to graduating seniors.) The deadline to register will be 12/31. Please let Pastor Brian know of any questions and if you would like to take part in this adventure.

Explore the Journey of Martin Luther in Germany

Plans are coming together for our trip to Germany, scheduled for **October 13–23, 2026**. This adventure will take us through key locations connected to Martin Luther's ministry in the early 1500s while also showcasing the beauty and culture of Germany.

Highlights include:

- A scenic **cruise on the Rhine**.
- A visit to **Nuremberg** and **Berlin**, visiting castles and cathedrals along the way.
- A stop in **Eisenach**, where Luther spent his exile translating the New Testament from Greek into German.
- A visit to **Wittenberg** to see the famous Castle Church door.

Printed itineraries and brochures are available at the church.

For more information please contact Pastor Brian Hooper at: pastorbrianhooper@gmail.com or 414-421-3543.





JANUARY



Thursday, 1/1	<i>New Year's Day - Office Closed</i>	
<i>Celebration of Epiphany</i>		
Saturday, 1/3	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 1/4	9:30am	Worship
		Sundy School
Wednesday, 1/7	12:30pm	Men's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Thursday 1/8	1:00pm	Quilting - Cut & Sew - until 3pm
	6:30pm	Confirmation class
<i>Baptism of Our Lord</i>		
Saturday, 1/10	5:00pm	Worship
	6:00pm	High School Youth
Sunday, 1/11	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
Wednesday, 1/14	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal



<i>2nd Weekend after Epiphany</i>		
Saturday, 1/17	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 1/18	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	Budget Review Meeting
	3:00pm	Community Prayer Service for Peace and Unity at Lady of Lourdes
Monday, 1/19	1:00pm	Quilting - Layering - until 3pm
Wednesday, 1/21	12:30pm	Men's Bible Study
Thursday, 1/22	6:30pm	Confirmation Class
<i>3rd Weekend after Epiphany</i>		
Saturday, 1/24	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 1/25	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	Annual Congregational Meeting
Wednesday, 1/28	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
	12 noon	Loose Ends Lunch
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
<i>4th Weekend after Epiphany</i>		
Saturday, 1/31	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 2/1	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School

Worship Service Cancellations

In the event that SSM needs to cancel a worship service (for inclement weather or another emergency), notification will be made via an email sent to all on the announcement list, updates on Facebook, and on the website (www.ssmelca.org). If you are unsure, call the church at 414-421-3543 to learn the status of the service.



SSM Pics

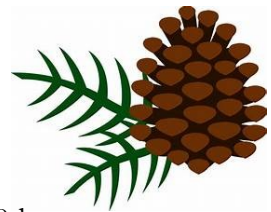


John the Baptist paid a visit to bring his message in person. December 7th

Santa's Helpers decorating the Narthex Christmas Tree on December 13th



SSM Women preparing for the Annual Cookie Sale on December 13th & 14th



Faith Sante Fe Los Posadas December 19th



Advent Christmas Concert, December 21st





		Hannah Billman	13
		Sarah Billman	13
		Billy Burns	14
		Faith Bulson	14
		Sara Jacobsen	20
		Travis Lisiecki	20
		Mason Zoske	21
		Charlene Weller	22
		Keira Revers	22
		Karen Krosnicki	23
		Kyle Julseth	23
		Vivian Whitmore	23
		Bill Andersen	24
		Josh Stuedemann	24
		Debra Onsager	25
		Stephanie Rodenkirch	25
		Kaelyn Bourne	25
		Sandy Petricek	26
		Julia Suchy	27
		Amanda Chadwick	27
		Leigha Andersen	27
		Christopher Dollar	28
		Jack Kalman	29
Kipp Zimmermann	01		
Jay Kopplin	01		
Jenny Goeff	01		
Grant Gillespie	01		
Kessia Andersen	01		
Jay Chadwick	04		
Bob Rasmussen	05		
Sally Chadwick	06		
Karen Rasmussen	07		
Michael Mayer	07		
Nancy Payne	08		
Travis Nehring	10		
Caryl Chmielewski	12		
Kyle Krauske	13		
Charlie Billman	13		

Loose Ends Lunch

The January Loose Ends Lunch will be held on Wednesday, January 28th at noon at the Outback Steak House located on Layton Ave. in the 84 South Shopping Center. Please let Pat Schroeder know if you plan to attend.





What is Epiphany?

Epiphany, January 6th is sometimes called Little Christmas or Three Kings Day. It is often celebrated on the weekend nearest to the 6th. The word “Epiphany” means manifestation or revelation, it is the day we celebrate God revealing God’s Son, the Messiah to the world. When Christ was born, his birth was first revealed to the shepherds who were Jewish and next to the magi, who were gentiles, thus signaling that Jesus came to all people.

Scripture, only in the book of Matthew, tells us that the magi came from the east by following a star. The magi were probably astronomers who paid attention to the stars. The rest of what we are familiar with comes from tradition. Commonly they are thought to be Caspar, often depicted as a young man and sometimes as representing the continent of Europe; Melchior, traditionally portrayed as an older man, sometimes with a white beard, and representing Asia; and Balthazar, frequently depicted as a middle-aged man of African descent, symbolizing Africa. Although the Bible does not specify three magi, this has been assumed because three gifts were presented.

All three gifts are ordinary offerings and gifts given to a king. Myrrh being commonly used as an anointing oil, frankincense as a perfume, and gold as a gift of valuable. The three gifts had a spiritual meaning as well: gold as a symbol of kingship on earth, frankincense (an incense) as a symbol of deity, and myrrh (an embalming oil) as a symbol of death.

While we often picture the Wise Men as part of our nativity scenes, it is not actually known how long after Jesus’ birth the magi visited him. There is thought that it may have been up to two years after his birth. The idea being that if the star, which they followed first appeared at Jesus’ birth it would have taken them that long to travel from their homes. The fact that after they visited Herod on their way to Jesus, Herod ordered the slaughter of infants in the area two years old and under out of fear of this new king, might support this idea.

This does not mean that you have to change your nativity scene. When he was visited does not matter, the fact that he came to all of humanity is the point.

Council Minutes, November 11

Present: Denise Sanders, Sandy Wesolowski, Kipp Zimmermann, Eric Sanders, Julie Starks, Carol Jackett, Jason Covert, Larry Stasiewski, Pastor Brian Hooper, Lorin Schuchardt, Keri Whitmore, Kristy Knipple, Alex Dollar, Jane Miller, Excused Julie Starks.

The meeting was called to order by Denise Sanders at 7:20. The devotion was given by Loren. The October meeting minutes were approved as amended.

Financial Reports: Financial Secretary's Report While General Fund donations were under budget for October, we continue to meet budgeted income for the year (YTD 102% of budget for General Fund). Building Fund donations were over budget for October as we also continue to meet budgeted income for the year (YTD 104% over budget). **Treasurer's Report** Getting into renewal season for subscriptions with expected increases. The cash account is not in bad shape, but it's moving backwards. Still working on getting things into the correct accounts for the budget file. No receipts for wine and wafers were shown in the first version, but this will be corrected. Let Jason know if things should be moved to different accounts or if there are any questions.

The November financial reports were approved.

Pastor's Report Confirmation classes are being held. On December 4, the confirmation class and others will be Christmas caroling at Harbor Village. There will be a Blue Christmas service on Saturday, Dec. 20 at 5:00.

Current Action Items 2026 Meeting Dates The annual meeting is Sunday, Jan 25. The budget meeting is Jan. 18. Annual reports are due to Bonnie by Dec. 19 so they can be printed in time for the annual meeting. We still need to set a date for the Council's annual retreat. **Donation** A member of the congregation made a large donation of \$25,000 that the council distributed according to the following: \$20,000 Capital Funds, \$4,000 Prayer Garden, \$1,000 Food Ministries

Fellowship Hall Lighting A new lighting contractor has submitted a bid that is lower than previously received. This bid is less than \$5k and includes more lights. The new bid will replace all ballast lights with LED lights for everything on the first level of the building. The work will likely begin in late November.

Fire cabinets When the freezer is removed there will be room for the fire/chemical cabinets. We still need to find a place to donate the freezer.

Budget Planning The Council reviewed preliminary 2026 budget information. The 2026 congregation budget meeting is scheduled for January 18. The goal is to have the information ready two weeks before the annual meeting. All committees need to review their needs for planning for 2026.

Council Minutes, Continued

Committee Reports

Music and Worship - Sandy is coordinating activities for Christmas services. The Christmas tree will be up by Dec. 14 and ready to be decorated after Sunday service. All interested in decorating the tree are welcome, including children. At the Sunday service on December 7, we will try going around the altar for communion. Pre-filled cups will be used. The frequency of doing communion around the altar will be determined. On Dec. 13 there will be a private recital at SSM. There will be a Blue Christmas service on Saturday Dec. 20 at 5:00.

Fellowship - Permit has been received and everything is set for the bonfire. Hot chocolate and smores will be served. The rummage group is meeting to decide if there should be another one held and if so when should it be scheduled.

Christian Education - No report

Evangelism - Postcards are being developed for mailing to the congregation and neighbors on the Christmas activities. Post cards will be mailed sometime in early December.

Finance - Counting twice a month is very successful. Starting to get ready for budget planning. The last counting in Nov. is on the fourth Sunday, Nov. 23.

Youth and Family - There will be a Children's Christmas celebration on Dec.14, after Sunday service. Pizza, snacks, and beverages will be served. Older children can be dropped off, and younger ones can attend with a parent or guardian.

Stewardship - Many have submitted their pledge cards. Reminding others to get them submitted.

Human Concerns - Gifts are not being collected for the Bay View Community Center this year. Holiday donations are being collected for our partner congregation at Unity Lutheran Church and Tippecanoe.

Property - Reported above

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25. A closing prayer was given by Pastor Brian
The next Mega Plus meeting is Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Jackett - Secretary



OFFICE HOURS

9:00-2:00 Monday - Thursday

9:00-12:00 Friday

SSM STAFF

Brian Hooper, Pastor

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

**WORSHIP AT SSM
SATURDAY AT 5:00PM
SUNDAY AT 9:30AM***

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30AM

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



**St Stephen the Martyr ELCA
6101 S. 51st Street
Greendale WI 53129
(414) 421-3543**

JANUARY 2026



Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others