

MARTYR MONTHLY

APRIL 2026



Look at the birds of the air:
they neither sow nor reap
nor gather into barns, and
yet your heavenly Father
feeds them. Are you not of
more value than they?
Matthew 6:26

Worship at St. Stephen the Martyr

Saturday 5:00pm

Sunday 9:30am*

Sunday School 9:30am

The Easter Vigil - Saturday, April 4th at 5:00pm

Easter Sunday, April 5th -

Sunrise Worship in the Prayer Garden at 7:00am and

Worship at 9:30am*

Easter Breakfast at 8:15am

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

Pastor's Page



Dear SSM Faith Community,
In our *Living Compass* Lenten devotional, I found *the “Gift of Tears”* message insightful. With all that is happening in our world—war, illness, loss, grief, uncertainty, and injustice—it is easy to find ourselves moved to tears.

The devotion invites us to see tears not as something to apologize for, but as a gift. As spiritual writer Macrina Wiederkehr reminds us: *“We tend to apologize for them, but actually they are jewels in the crown of human feelings. They express what is inexpressible in words. Tears reveal our innermost wounds.”*

Tears can be deeply healing. When we carry emotional or spiritual pain, allowing ourselves to cry can release some of what we’ve been holding inside and open our hearts to God’s loving presence. Even Jesus wept—at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35) and in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). His tears remind us that expressing sorrow is not weakness, but part of being fully human.

In times of pain or grief, finding a safe place to let our tears flow freely—without judgment or shame—is an act of deep kindness and self-compassion. As the psalmist writes, “You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book” (Psalm 56:8). God cherishes every tear we shed, holding us with boundless love through it all.

Often, we feel pressure to hold back our tears, fearing they might be seen as a sign of weakness or a lack of faith. Yet tears are a natural and necessary part of who we are. They help us process and release intense emotions, cleansing our hearts, minds, and spirits so that healing can begin. When we give ourselves—and one another—permission to cry, we open the way to deeper connection with ourselves, with each other, and with God.

Let us remember that it is okay to cry. God joins us and is present in our tears and in our joys.

Peace, Pastor Brian



Easter and Holy Week Worship Schedule

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 2nd at 6:30pm

Good Friday, April 3rd

Cross Walk 2:00pm, beginning at St. Luke's in the Village

Ecumenical Worship 3:00pm at St. Lukes in the Village

(6705 Northway, Greendale)

Good Friday Tenebrae 6:30pm at SSM

Saturday, April 4th

The Easter Vigil at 5:00pm

Easter Sunday, April 5th

Prayer Garden Sunrise Worship at 7:00am

Easter Breakfast at 8:15am

Worship at 9:30am



Human Concerns - April Calendar

HUMAN CONCERNS -AT A GLANCE- APRIL2026			
Dates	Ministry	Details	Contact Person
April 1-30	Monthly Food Ministry Collection: Unity	Place items in collection bins or use envelope from Giving Board for monetary donations	Nancy Payne
Wed. April 1	Unity Soup Lunch- volunteers	Sign-up sheet on office bulletin board. Assist with baking at 1 PM or serve and clean-up 5:30-7 PM	Shelly Rosenstock
Wed.. April 8	Unity To-Go Bag Lunches- volunteers	Sign-up sheet on office bulletin board. Assist with food prep and assembly at 1 PM	Shelly Rosenstock
Wed. April 15	Unity Hot Meal- volunteers	Sign-up sheet on office bulletin board. Assist with serving and clean-up 6-7 PM	Shelly Rosenstock
April 1-30	Unity- donate items for guests	The Unity clothing closet is always in need of new men's underwear and socks (any size) and hygiene items, such as soap, deodorant, toothpaste and brushes, shaving supplies, toilet paper, wipes, etc.	Shelly Rosenstock

Heads up for a summer food pantry focus! –

When you see a couple of kiddie pools in the entryway and the coat room this June, July and August, think KIDS! and their need for food when they are away from meal programs at school. We will create a list of suggested items that will be kid friendly and easy to make. Each of our food pantry partners will receive one month of the kid-friendly items.



Special Envelopes

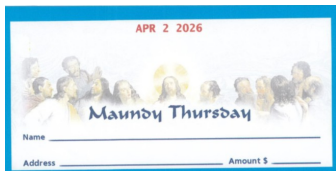


Easter envelope offerings (60%) are directed to our Tanzanian partner congregation Mbaaseny (which includes sub-parishes Ca-

naan and Jericho). Your support will be welcomed. Asante sana!

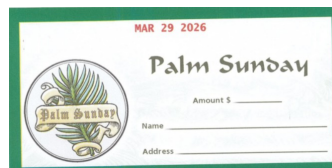


Good Friday envelope offerings (60%) are directed to the Bread of Healing Clinic at Cross Lutheran. This is a free medical clinic designed to serve low-income people who experience barriers to accessing ongoing health care.



Maundy Thursday offerings (60%) are directed to ELCA World Hunger. Your gifts fund clinics, microloans, clean water, livestock, meals and advocacy —sustainable solutions that address root causes of hunger.

Palm Sunday envelope offerings (60%) are directed to Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. LSS works to provide affordable housing, help for children and families, connections to community resources, assistance with mental health and substance abuse and life skill development.



Thank You



to all who supplied food, money, and much needed items for the Winter Warming Shelter at Tippecanoe.

They do have a need for next year that we can think about already. Chaperones who stay over night, Innkeeper who does not stay over night but organizes the evening, and chaperones who stay until about 10 pm. More about this in our September newsletter. Any questions you can contact Nancy Mineau.



Attend the Synod Assembly

Congregations throughout the Greater Milwaukee Synod will gather at the annual Synod Assembly in May. Each year, SSM sends two lay (non-pastoral) voting members to the assembly. Would you like to serve your congregation in this way?

The focus for this year's assembly will be on the fourth of our synod's core values - collaboration.

The event is scheduled for Friday, May 29, 4:00-8:30 pm and Saturday, May 30, 8:30 am-4:00 pm at the Brookfield Conference Center. The agenda includes stirring speakers, meals and fellowship, discussions of church business, and an inspirational worship service. For more information, check out the event website at milwaukeeesynd.org/event/synod-assembly-2026.

Registration costs are covered by SSM. If you are interested in representing SSM at this transformational event, please talk with Pastor Brian or Denise Sanders.

And the Best Chili Is



Diane Moraza brought Carol's Ranch Chicken Chili - here is the recipe - serves 6-8

- 1.5 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast (or thighs)
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 1 cup frozen corn (or more to taste)
- 15 oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 15 oz can white beans, drained and rinsed (or great northern beans)
- 10 oz can Rotel diced tomatoes with green chilies, NOT drained
- 8 oz package cream cheese (light ok but NOT fat free)
- 1 package ranch dressing & dip Mix
- 14 tablespoon chili Powder (more or less to taste)
- ½ tablespoon lime chili powder seasoning – or the seasoning you like
- 2 teaspoons vegetable bouillon soup base or chicken bouillon cubes
- 1 cup water

Add ALL ingredients into crockpot. (I put chicken on bottom)). Cook on low for 4 hours, use fork to pull apart Chicken into a "Shredded" consistency. Stir Shredded chicken back in and make sure cream cheese lumps dissolved.

Add optional *cilantro if desired or use as topping. Serve with toppings of choice.

Stewardship

“Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee.” ELW 685
Yes, my friends God wants the “whole enchilada”. It seems like a big order.
And infect, it is. The hymn continues,
“Take my hands and let them move, at the impulse of thy love . . .”
“Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold. . . .”
“Take my voice. . .” “Take my will and make it thine. . . .”
“Take my feet . . . Take my intellect. . . Take my lips. . . Take my heart. . .”

God wants all of us, and why not? He made us from nothing and when the divine plan went wrong, he gave Jesus’ life for the world that we might have life. It sounds like a lot but look what God has given in return, not only eternal life, but life in fellowship with people who love us and walk with through life’s darkest moment and brightest joy. God continues to pour out abundance that spreads even farther through the gifts that we share. What we give has exponential value in caring for God’s world.



Thanks be to God for the goodness that we receive daily.

In Jesus Christ, Rev. Dr. Kipp W. Zimmermann

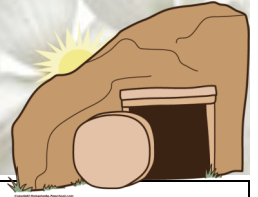
“Can” It Be Opening Season?



The Baseball Season is opening and it is also opening season for aluminum cans at SSM. Bring your winter collection of cans to the door of the SSM garage. They will then be taken and redeemed for money for our food pantries. The food pantries really need it! The money is used to fill in with perishables and other items for which there is great demand when donations fall short.

Karen and Bob Rasmussen -

April 2026



Wednesday, 4/1	9:30am	Men's Bible Study
	5:30pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
<i>Holy Week</i>		
Thursday, 4/2	1:00pm	Quilting - Cut & Sew - until 3:00pm
Maundy Thursday	6:30pm	Worship
Friday, 4/3 Good Friday	2:00pm	Cross Walk beginning at St. Luke's Greendale
	3:00pm	Ecumenical Worship at St. Luke's Greendale
	6:30pm	Worship
<i>Easter Weekend</i>		
Saturday, 4/4	5:00pm	Easter Vigil Worship
Sunday, 4/5	7:00am	Easter Prayer Garden Sunrise Worship
	8:15am	Easter Breakfast
	9:30am	Easter Worship
Wednesday, 4/8	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
Thursday, 4/9	6:30pm	Confirmation Class
<i>Second Weekend of Easter</i>		
Saturday, 4/11	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 4/12	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School

Tuesday, 4/14	6:30pm	Mega Meeting
	7:00pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 4/15	9:30am	Men's Bible Study
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Friday, 4/17	6:30pm	Game Night/Pot Luck
<i>Third Weekend of Easter</i>		
Saturday, 4/18	5:00pm	Worship
	6:30pm	Youth Gathering at St Suke's in the Village
Sunday, 4/19	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
	10:45am	Coffee Hour
Monday, 4/20	1:00pm	Quilting - Layering - until 3:00pm
	6:00pm	Memorial Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 4/22	10:15am	Women's Bible Study
	12:00pm	Loose Ends Lunch
	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, 4/23	6:30pm	Confirmation Class
<i>Fourth Weekend of Easter</i>		
Saturday, 4/25	5:00pm	Worship
Sunday, 4/26	9:30am	Worship
		Sunday School
Wednesday, 4/29	5:45pm	Handbell Rehearsal
	7:00pm	Choir Rehearsal

Pot Luck /Game Night



Friday, April 17th at 6:30pm bring your favorite board game and a dish to share for the official St. Stephen the Martyr Pot Luck Game Night. A great time for fellowship and good food for the entire family. Bring games for all age groups, play the game you bring or get introduced to something new.

High School Youth Group

Saturday, April 18th middle and high school youth are invited to St. Luke's in Greendale (6705 Northway in the Village) for a night of service and fun. We will be making sandwiches for Milwaukee Guest House after which we will be playing some games and just having fun.



Getting Ready for the Youth Trip



Several get-togethers have been planned for the youth going to Montgomery in June. This will be a great chance for groups from both churches to get to know each other before traveling together

- Sunday, April 19th - Cookout at St. Luke's 12pm (300 Carroll St, Waukesha,)
- Saturday, May 16th - Pizza Party 6:30pm at Pastor Hooper's house (12740 W Veron Dr, New Berlin)
- Thursday, June 18th - Trip Blessing/Send Off at SSM 6:30pm
- Saturday June 20th - Trip Blessing/Send Off St. Lukes 5:00pm



**Mark Your Calendars Now
For Vacation Bible School 2026
Monday, June 22nd to
Thursday, June 25th
"Weird Animals,
Where Jesus' Love
is one-of-a kind"**

**Open to all kids 5K to 6th grade
If a child is under 4 or not potty trained
we ask that a guardian remain on site.**





		Jerry Seroka	12
		Sue Stasiewski	12
		Abi Dollar	12
		Fred Ankebrant	14
		Kyle Gorecki	15
		Chelsea Gagliano	18
		Charlie Krauske	18
		Ben Hooper	18
Nancy Schneider	01	Molly Myszkowski	19
Shelley Burns	01	Al Behling	20
Kurt Koeff	01	Maggy Hanna	20
Mara Dean	01	Dennis Lucchesi	21
Julane Sebastian	02	Philip Morgan	22
LaVerne Morgan	04	David Salas	22
Dave Simley	05	Bob Gleason	23
Carolyn Kahl	05	Emily Reinholz	23
Judy Lehman	05	Jacob Malinowski	23
Reese Ceku	05	Kristy Knipple	24
Vance Ceku	05	Bonnie Zimmermann	26
Zola Reinholz	05	Andy Stockland	26
Michael Onsager	06	Tom Payne	28
Hans Tanke	06	Andrea Woerpel	28
Montana Bruckner	07	Terri Larson	29
Gordon Flohr	08	Richard Sontvedt	30
Karen Miller	11	Jason Covert	30
Andrew Wassweiler	11		
Christy Zoske	11		



Christian Children's Theatre Pics



Saturday, March 21

There is Still Time to Sign Up to 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; and 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.

Loose Ends Lunch

Loose Ends Lunch will meet at El Beso Mexican Restaurant for lunch on Wednesday, April 22nd at noon. El Beso is located at 5030 S 74th Street in Greenfield. Please let Julane Sebastin know if you plan to attend.



Council Minutes, February 10

Present: D Sanders, S Wesolowski, K Zimmermann, E Sanders, J Starks, C Jackett, J Covert, L Stasiewski, Pastor Brian Hooper, L Schuchardt, K Whitmore, K Knipple, A Dollar, J Miller

Called to order by D Sanders at 7:20 pm. Devotion by Jason. February minutes approved as amended.

Financial Reports: Financial Secretary's Report Some members have given their 2026 full pledges, so we are ahead of expectations. All else is normal. Treasurer's report Some expenses from December 2025, (the pizza party and evangelism efforts) were assigned to the 2026 budget. Deposits for the youth funds will be reduced when paid for the youth trip. Took advantage of a 5-month CD promotion at National Bank at the end of January. Cash accounts are inflated because of large 2026 donations made in full at the start of the year. Financial reports approved.

Pastor's Time: Wedding Renewal service scheduled for Valentines Day, Feb. 14, 2026. February 22, 2026, Wild Church Pastor Larry Harpster and his group will be attending Sunday worship. The group will attend the chili cook-off and have a meeting to celebrate the 6-month anniversary. There will be a joint dialogue during the service that will help our congregation understand what is meant by the "Wild Church". Saturday, March 21 the Children's Christian Theater will present the program "Tell Me the Truth" at the 5:00 pm service. High school youth group (13 participants) with St. Lukes held a pizza party. March 7 there will be a mini-golf outing at 6:30 p.m. Cards were sent to Minneapolis churches in support because of immigration and ICE activities. Took part in a training session held by Wisconsin Council of Churches: "When ICE comes to Town: What Clergy Needs to Know".

Action Items: Annual Meeting Review/Wrap-up Annual meeting went very well. Next year look at using a different sound and microphone system to improve zoom communications. Set-up of a pre-budget meeting the week prior was helpful and should be continued. Reflection on Together in Mission Attended – Pastor Brian, Denise, Eric, and Bonnie Z. Everyone went to different sessions including those on Wild Church, Welcoming immigrant neighbors, LGBTQ focus. Microaggressions on what to avoid and how to respond, Conflict Resolution session, Church property resource – long- and short-range plans, electing people for committees, and the creation of Church murals. One idea is to have lunch or dinner worship services. Is that something we might consider doing? All attendees encouraged others to take part in this informative experience in the future. Review of Position Descriptions Denise suggested we look at all position descriptions to review and update the responsibilities, qualifications, time commitments, and length of service. At each meeting, we will review two council positions. Denise will send out current description to be reviewed by the individuals currently filling roles. Denise will also send a schedule of what month each position will be reviewed. Discussion was held on the property and stewardship positions. That discussion to continue at a future meeting.

Council Minutes, Continued

Living our RIC identity Discussion where we should go from here with RIC? Would it be helpful to have a representative attend ELCA RIC meetings? Should we increase communications on what it means to be a RIC Church? Should more books on RIC be added to the church library? Should a rainbow be added to the outdoor front sign to communicate to the neighborhood that we are an RIC church? Reminder the March newsletter articles are due February 15, 2026

Council Retreat: scheduled for August 15, 2026. The offsite location decided later.

Committee Reports: Human Concerns \$1,500 food pantry funds disbursed. A chart showing activities for the upcoming month will be created for the newsletter. Christian Education Chili cook off is Feb. 22 after Sunday worship, free will offering, proceeds to go to youth trip this summer to Montgomery, Alabama. Trip to the Black Holocaust meeting planned in March. Youth and Family Easter egg hunt for this year canceled. Goody bags for food pantry at St. Paul's will be filled by the Sunday school. 8 youth attended the overnight Lutherdale outing, had an exciting and fun time. Evangelism Keeping up with everything on all the different social media sites. Fellowship Rummage/lemonade/brat fry planned for mid to late April. Date is to be decided. Volunteers and donors are needed. To decide the interest, signup sheets are on the bulletin board. Fundraising event is scheduled at Billy Simms BBQ restaurant (7358 W Rawson Ave, Franklin Wi) Tuesday, March 24. 10% of all restaurant receipts for that day will go toward the SSM youth trip this summer to Montgomery, Alabama. Music and Worship Summer services in the Garden begin on June 11 and continue until September 3. Saturday services resume on September 12. Rally day Sunday, September 13. Finance Counting will continue the second and fourth Sundays of the month with some changes because of five Sundays in the upcoming months. Stewardship Looking at adding more members to the committee. Discussing doing a "Time and Talent" survey. The last one, which takes considerable time, was done many years ago. Property Looking at starting basement lighting upgrades. Security service is coming to give quote on adding two cameras to lower parking lot. ARG Electric fixing lighting in Luther Room storage room at a cost of \$350. ARG will upgrade outdoor light located above the stained-glass window and replace five sanctuary LED lights, will be \$250 and will be billed after the work is finished.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm. Pastor Brian offered a closing prayer. Next Mega/Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Jackett, Secretary



He is Risen

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

EASTER WORSHIP
THE EASTER VIGIL
SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH AT 5:00PM

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH -
PRAYER GARDEN WORSHIP AT 7:00AM
AND WORSHIP AT 9:30AM*
EASTER BREAKFAST AT 8:15AM

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



St Stephen the Martyr ELCA
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Greendale WI 53129
(414) 421-3543

April 2026



Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others