



St. Stephen's Newsletter

December 2021-January 2022



Devotional Thought

Christmas happens every December 25. Long before that day even arrives, people plan what they want to give as gifts to family and friends. Stores compete with each other to gain our business. Black Friday used to be the beginning of all the big sales. All that has changed. Sales happen earlier and earlier. People want to get a jump on buying whatever the new hot item will be for the year. Even though Christmas always comes on December 25, so much changes from year to year.

With so much changing around this time, so much stays the same. Families celebrate with their own traditions. Certain decorations hang in the same place every year. Certain cookies need to be baked. The same staples cover the table for Christmas dinner. After all the festivities are done, a movie, which we know all the lines by heart, finishes the day.

Does the message we hear at church become mundane for our ears? The same hymns...same lessons...even the sermons start to sound all the same. The message can easily become old hat. We think to ourselves that we celebrate Jesus so many other times in the year, maybe we can just skip this night? We think we won't miss much, we have heard it before, so why come? We can save so much time for other things, since we will just hear the same old message again.

That excuse does not hold any water. The wonderful, amazing message of Christmas never gets old. We gather around God's Word on this special day, because we marvel at what took place. Our God took on human flesh. The God of all creation was born as a baby. The God of all power was held by his mother who placed him in a manger.

The Christmas message transcends all time. A Savior has been born for us. Did you notice who this news was for? It is for us. Jesus came for us. We need to hear that message all the time. For we know the entire reason it happened. Jesus came to save us from our sins. Christmas happened for us.

God sent his Son into the world for us. We needed that little baby to be born so that we might receive new life. Our sins separated us from God. God promised our first parents, Adam and Eve, that he would crush the head of our ancient foe, the Devil. He would do so by sending his Son into the world to save us from our sins.

That little baby lying in the manger was there for us. The angels announced his birth by singing peace came to

earth. Peace only a perfect Savior

could bring. Jesus lived for us. He kept all the commands for us without a single fault to be found. He did it for us.

He also died for us. At a person's birth, not much thought is given about death. Instead everyone thinks about the life in front of that person. At Jesus' birth people thought of death. Mary knew the entire reason for Jesus' coming into the world. Simeon prophesied about Jesus' death when his parents brought him to the temple to be circumcised. Jesus would die to bring forgiveness to the whole world. His death would save us from eternal death.

The result is the same for us. **"And this is love: that we walk according to his commands. This is the command: Just as you have heard from the beginning, keep on walking in it" (II John 6).** Our love for Jesus keeps us going. We listen to those wonderful words of the Christmas message. We take them to heart. We continue to marvel at the great mystery of Christmas. We praise God for sending his Son to us.

This Christmas season let us come with a cheerful heart to hear this wonderful message. Bring a family member or friend who maybe has not been to church lately. Let them be reacquainted with this wonderful message. If you haven't been to church in a while, we look forward to welcoming you once more. We have a wonderful message waiting for you. Your Lord is waiting with open arms to welcome you back. He wants you to hear of his great love for you.

The message will never become mundane. We will rejoice as we hear it. Let us come with our brothers and sisters in the faith to marvel...to praise...to worship. With this wonderful message, we will never be disappointed.

Pastor Dorn

Worship Opportunities

Joint Advent Service with Good Shepherd and St. John's Juneau-Horicon-Lowell, Wednesday, December 1, 6:30 P.M. at St. Stephen's

Our sixth annual joint Advent service with St. John's of Juneau/Horicon/Lowell and Good Shepherd will take place in our sanctuary. There will be devotions by the pastors, and special music by the choirs of all churches. **Please join us for this special service of preparation for Christ's coming.**

Christmas Worship

Our schedule for Christmas and New Year's services returns to "normal" this year.

- Lutheran Elementary School Children's Service, December 24th at 6:00 p.m.
- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, December 24, at 10:00 p.m.
- Christmas Day Worship, December 25, at 10:00 a.m.

Christmas: STILL A Time to Reach Out!

Since its beginning, we've tried to use our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service as the service to which to invite people who don't know Jesus to come and meet their Savior. This service will be held at **10:00 P.M. on Christmas Eve**. Though some may be hesitant about gathering due to the ongoing health situation, we can still extend the invitation, and perhaps let them know that the service is available through their computer. Direct them to our website (www.ssbdwels.com) to find our YouTube channel or to our Facebook page.

We can still make this season a time for sharing the news that "a Savior has been born for you; he is Christ the Lord".. Here's how:

- Identify people in your circle of acquaintances who need the good news of Jesus. Pray for them.
- Ask God to give you opportunities to talk to them about Jesus.
- Encourage them to watch the service on YouTube or Facebook; or invite them to join you at one of the in-person services.

New Year's Worship

New Year's Worship will be **New Year's Eve, December 31 at 6:30 p.m.** There will be no service New Year's Day.

Christian Education Opportunities

For all adults...

Our Monday and Wednesday classes continue after Thanksgiving with a new study: "Timely Topics - God's Answers". How would you respond to some of the things going on in the world? Does God have things to say about what affects our life of faith? This class will look at some of those issues confronting Christians, and how God answers those various issues. Join us **Mondays at 7:00pm or Wednesdays at 11:00am..**



For Couples—Annual Marriage Seminar

Our annual Marriage Seminar will be **Saturday, February 26, 9:00am-1:00pm**. This is a review of what the Bible teaches about the blessings of marriage, both for couples who plan to be married, and for married couples who want a refresher course on the basics of marriage.

For Children...

Our Sunday School meets during our education hour on Sunday mornings from 9:10 AM-9:50 AM. All children are invited to attend. It is not too late. Parents feel free to bring your children to Sunday School, while you partake of our adult Bible Class in the church basement. We look forward to seeing you there.

Fellowship Opportunities

Beaver Dam Area OWLS



St. Stephen's OWLS (Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors) has "expanded" to be Beaver Dam Area

OWLS. During the Fall, we met monthly (2nd Tuesdays), alternating between St. Stephen's and Friedens in Randolph, enjoying delicious potluck lunches and interesting presentations. We had nice sized groups, ranging from 30 to 50! Due primarily to possible bad weather and difficult driving, we will take a break until February or March. During that break the leadership will meet to set up a program schedule for the Spring. OWLS is open to all members of our WELS churches ages 50+. We'd love to have more for this spiritual growth and fellowship opportunity.

Lutheran Teens

We are looking for families of teens to help take the "Cans for Kids" trailer to be recycled. The Teens receive this money to help with various expenses. Any families that volunteer to help with this will get discounts on our activities. If you would like to be put on a list to volunteer, please speak with Pastor Dorn.

The Teens will be going tubing at Sunburst in Kewaskum on January 22. Times and costs are still being worked out. More information will be out in the bulletin and sent through emails.

WELS International Youth Rally

June 28-July 1, 2022, marks the dates for the Youth Rally held in Knoxville, TN, on the University of Tennessee campus. At this event over 2000 teens gather from all over the world to learn about Jesus, grow in their faith, and form friendships with other Christians.

Teens will attend workshops, worship, entertainment, and various other activities during those days. Registration starts soon! If you have any questions or would like more information, please speak with Pastor Dorn.

Footsteps of Paul Tour

Pastor Dorn will be leading a tour, with four other pastors, to various sites in Greece, June 13-22, 2022. This will be an incredible opportunity for us to walk where Paul traveled on his missionary journeys. As we visit these sites, those sections of Scripture will become all the more vivid. This trip is open for members, family, and friends. Anyone is welcome to come and see these amazing Biblical sites. We are hoping to get 100 people between the five pastors, so the more the merrier.

If anyone is interested, please speak with Pastor Dorn. Informational brochures are available in the back of the church as well.

Service Opportunities

Ladies' Aid

In October, we had a membership drive with a luncheon served by our members. After a short devotion by Pastor Heyer, varied officers and committee chairwomen gave a brief description to our guests of the many ways in which we are an active group as we focus on the theme: Gather, Grow, and Go. The following info will give you an awareness of how we serve St. Stephen's congregation and school with ministry projects.

Each month, a member of the Society volunteers to supervise special events held in the church basement. For funeral lunches, she works with a family member to plan the meal and makes calls for volunteers to set up, serve, and clean up the day of the event. Supervising the kitchen is also needed when used for bridal showers, wedding receptions, baby showers, baptism, etc.

With donations from services provided, we:

- Maintain the church kitchen and its equipment.
- Purchase kitchen equipment and supplies.
- Provide funds to church groups upon request.
- Donate annually to WELS organizations.
- Send cards and monetary gifts to college students and military men and women.
- Collect monetary gifts for LWMS Spring and Fall projects for our Beaver Dam circuit.
- Send birthday greetings to our 85 and older congregation members.
- Visit elderly congregation members who are hospitalized or in rehab.

- Give special crosses and personalized bookmarks to our confirmands.
- Assist with items needed for our Busy Bags for children to use during worship.
- Prepare table decor for special events.
- Maintain and update basement display case.
- Host the Mission Festival potluck prior to the program.
- Host a Thank You Spring Banquet and Christmas gathering.

On December 2nd, we will once again host a Christmas gathering with a lunch at noon and program by our Junior Choir at 1:00 as part of our thank you to our pastors, office, and custodial staff.

Regular meetings are on the 1st Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. in the church basement. We welcome women of our congregation to visit one of our upcoming meetings and consider joining our Ladies Aid group as we continue our mission to further the work of the kingdom of the Lord in the many ways we are able. We begin with prayer and a bible study/devotion by one of our pastors. Our meeting is followed by some Christian fellowship time. The first meeting for 2022 will be on January 6th. Join us if you can. We'd love to increase our membership in order to be able to continue to serve as noted in the list above. For more information please call President Bonnie Wagner at 920-326-5872.

Senior Choir Singing Again!

Senior Choir is singing again! Looking forward, we are preparing music for Christmas. In January, the choir will begin preparations for Lent, as well as learning music from the new hymnal. We are delighted to be meeting again, and we always welcome new voices. If you would like information about Senior Choir, contact Pastor Stratman or Mr. Barnett.

St. Stephen's Radio Service

For 49 years St. Stephen's has provided a half-hour radio worship service primarily for our members who are homebound and in nursing homes, but also as a tool to share God's Word with many others. **It airs every Sunday at 9:30am on WBEV (1430 AM).**

We record two half-hour services on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month (September – May). We start at **7:00pm and finish around 8:10.** It's a simple and pleasant way to serve Jesus and his people. We record in the church. The Maple Ave, church office, and ramp entrances will be open. Please join us!

You can listen to our radio services over the internet. Go to our [Radio Service Page and listen by streaming audio.](#)



School News

Advent---what a season to think about. The coming of Christ, not only as a child in Bethlehem, but also as our Redeemer at the end of time. During this time of year, we prepare our hearts and minds for Christ. As was with John, the predecessor of Christ, we focus on repentance. Our lives are filled with temptation and sin every step of the way here on earth until we reach our goal in heaven. We need to see the sin and ugliness of our lives, but we also need to see Jesus our Savior as we navigate this life. Advent puts us in this mindset for preparation. Christ is coming and the message is clear. Our Lord wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Prepare your hearts and minds this Advent season and set your attention on Christ.

There are multiple opportunities in December to see the gifts God has given to our students here at St. Stephen's, both musically and athletically:

- The annual piano recital, that showcases Mrs. Welch's students will take place on December 20 in the church sanctuary.
- The annual Winter band concert, that showcases Mr. Johnson's students will take place on December 21 in the gymnasium.
- Sports for this year have been successful and entertaining. The volleyball team took second at the conference tournament. The cross country team had small success as times improved throughout the season.
- We are looking forward to a full basketball season with numerous home games and tournaments. Lord willing we will be able to finish with minimal issues.

Christmas Eve Service

The Children's Christmas Eve service this year is called, "Who Is He?", a children's service that chronicles the unfolding of God's plan of salvation as it was revealed in more and more detail throughout history. God has made certain in his Word that there is no question about his love for humans and who our Savior from sin is. The service will begin at 6:00 on December 24. We look forward to seeing all members of our congregation there.

Christmas Vacation

Christmas vacation begins after school on December 23. Vacation will run through January 2. School will start again on Monday, January 3. Let us always remember that this may be a vacation from our studies at school, but not a vacation from our Lord and His Word.

A few thank yous:

Again this year, we received a hefty donation of supplies from Wal-mart. We are thankful that they are able to do this to help our school out.

Thank you to all the parents and members for the support as we navigate our school year. Supportive parents are always a positive and we pray the Lord continues to give us families that support Christian Education.

Thank you to all volunteer coaches who helped out during the volleyball and cross country seasons. All your help is greatly appreciated.

From the Church Office

Stewardship and Finance Update

The following financial information is from the first 10 months of the year, January through October.

General Fund Receipts:	\$1,095,686.80
General Fund Expenses:	\$1,003,224.68
Balance:	\$ 92,462.12

Remember that, since we now operate on a "unified ministry spending plan (budget)", our commitment to WELS and Lakeside Lutheran High School are included in these amounts. The "positive balance" is a result of being blessed with some special gifts back in the Spring.

The encouragement regarding offerings to our Savior God remains the same: Christians do not give offerings to a "budget"; they give to our Savior God in response to our God's amazing grace to us. At this Thanksgiving time, may we each reflect on how blessed we are eternally and now, and then regularly bringing to our Lord offerings that express our love and thanks to him!

Another aspect of our stewardship is the use of our abilities and time. In the next month and a half our Nominating Committee will be asking some of our men to consider serving Jesus and our congregation by serving on an elected board. Gentlemen, if asked, please give the invitation serious and prayerful consideration. Other of our service groups also need people to help carry out their service tasks - Altar Guild, Ushers, Ladies Aid, Choirs, etc. You don't have to wait to be asked. Talk to a Pastor or a leader of those groups about how to get involved.

2022 Offering Envelopes

2022 offering envelopes will be available beginning with the Thanksgiving holiday. This year we are still assigning envelopes to most communicant members. But if you have been using the on-line giving option for bringing your thank offerings to our Lord and do not need envelopes, let us know so we can make appropriate orders for envelopes next year.

As we enter the harvest / Thanksgiving time of the year, may each of us be filled with a thankful generosity as we consider all of our God's spiritual, eternal, and physical blessings!