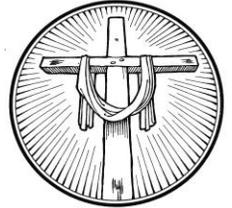




St. Stephen's Newsletter

April-May 2022



Devotional Thought

I Know That My Redeemer Lives...

I'd guess that is everybody's favorite Easter hymn. I've got a couple memories connected with it.

The first is sitting in church with my grandpa when I was about eight years old, singing that hymn on Easter Sunday. About eight years after that, he saw the reality of the words he sang:

**...he lives my mansion to prepare;
he lives to bring me safely there.**
(CW 441:7)

The second memory of that hymn is from a funeral many years ago. Our AAL/Thrivent agent passed away. He had a daughter who was deaf, and there was a sign language interpreter at the funeral. I

remember watching the interpreter when the words were sung, **"He lives and grants me daily breath; he lives and I shall conquer death."** The sign for "conquer" was a downward sweep, almost like someone thrusting and twisting a spear downward. A Reformation era artist painted the risen Christ making the same motion conquering death. (We'll



see if our copiers can reproduce the picture!)

Easter is about both of those. The promise of Jesus, and his power to keep the promise. *"I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2) and *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (John 11:25). This is what the *empty tomb* means. It means our graves won't hold us forever. It means I'll sit next to Grandpa again, not singing together about a living Savior, but seeing Jesus together with our own eyes. It means that we will rejoice around our conquering Hero--not with expectation, *"He will wipe away every tear from our eyes..."* (Revelation 21:4) but

with fulfillment, *"dwelling in his house forever"* (Psalm 23:6).

That is our Easter song. Our Redeemer lives, and shares his victory over death with us. The hidden triumph of Good Friday over sin, Satan and death is hidden no more. If Jesus can conquer those big things, everything else is under his control, too. What are your fears? What are your tears? Jesus *"...lives to silence all my fears; he lives to wipe away my tears."* His power and promise are for you.

The Lord is risen! **He is risen indeed!**

Pastor Stratman

Worship Opportunities

Service Times

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday, April 10

8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m. **Communion**

Holy Week Tuesday, April 12

3:30 p.m.

Holy (Maundy) Thursday, April 14

3:30 & 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday, April 15

1:30 p.m.

7:00 p.m. (Tenebrae service)

Easter Services, April 17

6:30a.m. & 10:00am (Festival services)

8:00 am (Communion service)

(Easter Breakfast 7:00am - 9:30am)

Evangelism Update

Victory! That word has a tremendous ring to it, doesn't it? In our life we celebrate the small victories. We have overcome a health problem. Relationships are tested but come out stronger. We receive a passing grade in school.

On the world stage we see others fighting for even bigger victories. Our thoughts and prayers go to the people of Ukraine, who are battling for victory. Natural disasters strike people down, but they continue to fight to restore their livelihoods. So many people seek victories to get back on their feet.

Easter gives us the opportunity to see our greatest victory. Jesus overcame sin, death, and hell for us. Celebrate this victory. Enjoy this victory. Share this victory with others.

Our community will soon receive a mailing inviting our neighbors to church for this Easter celebration. This might open up doors for you to witness. Look for ways to invite someone to church, so they may hear of the wonderful victory for them.

Confirmation

This year 16 young men and women will profess their faith in their confirmation vows. The examination service with pictures will take place on **Friday, April 29, at 6:30 PM**. The confirmation service along with their first communion will be on **Sunday, May 1, at the 10:00 AM** service.



Ascension Day

Our **Ascension Day Worship** will be **Thursday, May 26 at 6:30 p.m.**

Christian Education Opportunities

For all adults...

Our Monday and Wednesday classes continue through the book of Joshua. In this book we hear the phrase, "Be strong and courageous," repeated. The Israelites had to remain strong in the Lord and his promises. Those words come to us as well. As we face our troubles and trials, we must remain strong and courageous. Join us for this study of the book of Joshua.



Sunday Morning Educational Time

Our Sunday morning Bible Class is currently studying various Psalms. Join us on Sunday mornings from 9:10 AM-9:45 AM, as we investigate these important Psalms and their meaning for our daily life. On the first Sundays of the month, we take off from Bible Class to enjoy a relaxed fellowship time with coffee, juice, and donuts.

Our youth are invited to Sunday School which meets from 9:10 AM-9:45 AM, to learn more about

their Savior. Each week they go through a Bible story.

These two opportunities give families a wonderful way to grow in their faith. Please join us on Sunday mornings!

Fellowship Opportunities

Beaver Dam Area OWLS



Our area OWLS (Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors) have begun meeting monthly again.

After taking a break during winter months we met in March at Friedens-Randolph for potluck lunch and a presentation by Pastor Joel Gaertner about Jesus Cares Ministries. No April gathering since our regular meeting date falls during Holy Week. **Tuesday, May 10** we meet at noon at St. Stephen's for our potluck, devotion, and a presentation by Becky Weidner on craft projects.

Our group is for members of our area WELS churches age 50 and up. Friends are welcome, too. We've had some nice gatherings of 30-40 folks of late. Please join us for some Christian fellowship!

Lutheran Teens

This summer 8 teens and 2 chaperones will be heading to Knoxville, TN, for the 2022 WELS International Youth Rally. This is a four-day event where over 2,000 teens come for worship, workshops, fun, and fellowship. This is an exciting time for our youth as they attend this rally.



The Lutheran Teens are also planning a bowling outing for April. Please keep an eye out for further announcements.

Service Opportunities

St. Stephen's Ladies Aid Society

Our Mission – To assist the congregation in maintaining and furthering the program of the Kingdom of our Lord and to grow spiritually in our Christian faith and life.

During the first quarter of 2022, we have:

1. Added 6 women to our membership list.
2. Purchased crosses as a keepsake for our confirmands. The crosses will be given to each student on their Confirmation day. In

the gift box, we include a personal bookmark with each child's name and their Confirmation verse.

3. Participated in setup/cleanup for Sunday bible study/fellowship. Coffee, water, juice, and snacks are provided every Sunday by the Evangelism Committee.
4. In the process of updating our philanthropic gifts by reviewing recipients or learning of new opportunities.
5. Items of church memorabilia are displayed in the glass case located in the basement. The flower committee updates the display on a seasonal basis.

In May, we will host our annual Spring Banquet as a "Thank You" to our pastors and their wives, our church secretary, and our custodial help and their spouses for their service to Ladies Aid as we carry out our duties. We also invite all our men and women who volunteer their time to serve and clean up for funeral meals. Thank you for your service.

Anyone who is interested in serving the congregation through volunteering for funeral help may fill out a pew card with your name and phone number. Please mark the card, "funeral volunteer". Your information will be added to our list of volunteers. If you are unable to work a funeral when called, you may respond with a "no"; we just go to the next name on the list. If you have any questions, please call Bonnie Wagner at 920-557-1973.

We meet the first Thursday of every month at 1:30 in the church basement, except the May Banquet which is at noon. We do not meet during the summer months. Please join us for bible study, business meeting, food, and fellowship.

We work, we laugh, we sing, we enjoy, and we would love to see you!

"Christ died for me. He made his righteousness mine and made my sin his own; and if he made my sin his own then I do not have it and I am free". Martin Luther

St. Stephen's Radio Service

Since 1973 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. This service provides the opportunity to hear God's precious word and to sing with fellow Christians the hymns of the faith. **It airs every Sunday at 9:30am on WBEV (1430 AM).**

These services involve many people – our pastors, organist, and very importantly a volunteer congregation. We record two half-hour services on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month (September – March). 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! **Recording has concluded for this year. We resume Tuesday, September 13.**

Another way to support this ministry, if you can't participate, is with an offering. Each half-hour Sunday service on WBEV costs about \$75. You can listen to our radio services over the internet. Go to our [Radio Service Page and listen by streaming audio.](#)

School News

Foundational Principles of Christian Education--

This is where we stand as a church and school that preaches God's Word:

#1 WELS schools proclaim Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls

1 John 4:9 – *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.*

#2 WELS schools proclaim Jesus Christ to equip children for lives of Gospel-motivated service.

Ephesians 2:10 – *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

#3 WELS schools partner with parents and with the congregation.

Psalms 78:4 – *We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.*

#4 WELS schools are concerned with the quality of and care for called workers.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 – *So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.*

#5 WELS schools conduct all aspects of their ministry to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 – *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

To conclude, we pray with the Psalmist: *May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands.* (Psalm 90:16-17)

We have so many things to be thankful for in our lives. Christian education is one that we need to keep secured in our churches for many years to come. We will continue to face many of the devil's forces in this world moving forward. We need to raise up young men and women who are prepared to take a stand and defend the Word of God in their lives. Utilizing the school at St. Stephen's, Lakeside Lutheran High School, and Luther Preparatory School helps this to be done. Let us, as parents, use our schools to raise up God fearing young men and women that will continue to share God's Word to future generations.

Kindergarten Round Up Follow-up:

Kindergarten Round-Up was held in early February. We had a large number of families show up and express interest in our Kindergarten program and our school. Registration information was sent to families that have email addresses on file. **If you know of any families that are interested in Christian education, please refer them to Mr. Schulz.**

Updates:

We do not have school on April 15 or 18 due to the Easter Holiday. After the break on Monday the 18th, there will be 6 weeks left of school. Please continue to keep your students focused and engaged in their learning as we wind down this year.

The 8th Grade students will be traveling to Kentucky the week after Easter. This trip is to the Creation Museum and the Ark Encounter. There

will be other activities as well. Thank you to all who supported the fundraising efforts held earlier in the year.

The registration window for the 2022-23 school year has opened. All families need to visit FastDirect and fill out information for your students. **Returning families** need to log in with their current credentials and enter new students or mark returning students.

New families please visit

www.fastdir.com/saintstephens

Click on the Registration tab on the left menu and follow the prompts given.

Children and families of children in grades 7 and 8 of the school have been asked to help out at this year's Easter Breakfast. This will be the last year the Weitzke family will volunteer to host this event. If there is anyone willing to step in and learn the ropes of this task, please reach out to a member of the church council. Without a great cast of volunteers, the Easter breakfast in its current form will possibly not happen. Please consider where you can best use your gifts in our congregation.

Upcoming Events:

- April 2-3 Lakeside Lutheran Fine Arts Festival
 - April 29: Public Confirmation Examination
 - May 1: Confirmation
 - May 27: Last Day of School.
- Graduation Service at 5:00pm**

Help Our School by Saving Labels and Boxtops

We collect:

- Boxtops for Education--this is done via an app.
- Our Family UPC (proof of purchase labels). Please cut off the proof of purchase bar code and place it in the slot for St. Stephen's at Recheck's Food Pride or bring them directly to the school. The bar code # should key in with the #70253. Only Our Family Bar codes can be accepted.
- For all you Amazon.com shoppers out there, please go to: www.smile.amazon.com When you sign in with your credentials, and select Saint Stephen's Lutheran Church, Beaver Dam, as the benefactor. Every purchase will generate 0.5% to benefit our school. It may not seem like much, but every little bit helps our school.