



St. Stephen's Newsletter

August-September 2025

Devotional Thought

How can I be happy *and* pure?

"Blessed are the pure in heart." Matthew 5:8

Wash your hands. Wash your hands! So often we are reminded of the need to wash our hands. After using the restroom, before eating, after eating, before cooking, after cooking. It's so hard to keep them clean.

And that's just our hands! Try keeping our hearts clean, and we have an impossible task! How hard it is to have perfectly pure motives! When I cut that little section of grass between my neighbor's house and mine, the good deed is spoiled with the self-serving intent that maybe he'll let me borrow his edger. I give some money to a worthy charitable cause, but only because I don't want to disappoint the sincere person asking.

We may be able to hide our impure motives from others, but not from God. The Bible says, *"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7). We can't fool God. There is no covering false notions or hidden deception. God looks right through the outward act and inspects the inner motivation. He is looking for the pure in heart.

What is the measure for that kind of inner purity? God holds us up to his perfect will and measures us against it. The conclusion is that all of us have sinned and fall short of the sinless standard that God has set for us. Under God's inspection, our hearts are not pure.

What's the solution? Our hearts need to be washed. But how? We can't wash them on our own, so Jesus did it for us. The Bible says, *"The blood of Jesus, [God's] Son, purifies us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). By his death for us, Jesus washed our hearts clean; he has cleansed us of sin's stain. Through him all our sins are forgiven, and our hearts are now pure in God's sight.

The forgiveness of sins and purity of heart that we have received freely from Jesus powerfully motivates us to stay away from anything dirty. We'll not want to dirty our hearts again with sinful things. Rather, we'll be happy to strive to live according to the pure way that God teaches and thereby indicate our great appreciation for the sacrifice that Jesus made to wash our hearts clean.

adapted from WELS Evangelism

Worship Opportunities

Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.

Fridays at 1:30 p.m. (abbreviated; no singing)

Sundays at 8:00 & 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday Christian Education
(Sunday School/Bible Class)**

and Fellowship Time is 9:10 - 9:50 a.m.

**Lord's Supper is celebrated the 2nd, 4th, & 5th
Sundays of the month
(also the Thursdays & Fridays before those
Sundays).**

**Let's make worship of our Savior God
with brothers and sisters in Christ a
priority in our weekly schedules!**

Christian Education Sunday and Church Picnic– September 7

Christian Education is meant for all ages! God has blessed us with numerous opportunities to grow in our understanding of his love and activity in our lives, earthly and eternal. We have Good Shepherd Lutheran Preschool, and our very own St. Stephen's Lutheran School. We offer Bible classes for all to attend. Please join us on this special Christian Education Sunday to give thanks to God for all the opportunities we have for Christian Education, and to be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities!

This year, we are planning our Christian Education Sunday and Church Picnic for Sunday, September 7, with worship at Lakeview Park, and special music from the children of St. Stephen's School. There will be only one service that day - at 10:00 a.m.
(More details below in *Fellowship Opportunities*.)

Recommitment of Teachers – At our Christian Education Sunday worship service our returning teachers will recommit to the promises they made when first installed as teachers at St. Stephen's - to be faithful to God's Word in their teaching and to be faithful in the use of their abilities in serving the Lord as they teach his lambs in their care. Our Sunday Bible Class meets between Sunday morning worship services, 9:10 - 9:50 a.m.

St. Stephen's 150th Anniversary: Special Festival Services

2025 marks St. Stephen's 150th anniversary as a congregation. We will celebrate this with **two festival services**:

The first will be **Sunday, October 5 at 3:00 p.m.** Pastor Kevin Westra, a son of St. Stephen's congregation, will be the guest preacher. Fellowship and a meal will follow.

The second will be "Founding Day," remembering the first service of St. Stephen's on the Second Sunday of Advent in 1875. Festival services will be in **the regular 8:00 & 10:00 a.m. Sunday services on December 7.** Pastor Leon Ehlert will be the guest speaker.

There will be more details in the October-November Newsletter.

Christian Education Opportunities

Sunday School

Our Sunday School is open to **ALL** children from age 3 through 8th grade. We meet on Sunday mornings, 9:10 - 9:50 a.m.

Students will go through a Bible lesson every week. This year our focus will be on the life of Jesus.

The first day of Sunday School will be September 14. There is no need to register beforehand. Simply come to the lower level of the school, and we will have forms to fill out and directions on where to go from there. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Stratman or the church office.

Catechism / Confirmation Classes Begin

- **7th & 8th Grade Public School Catechism Classes** will again be conducted together with Good Shepherd. They will meet **Wednesdays, 3:30-4:45 p.m. at Good Shepherd.** Classes begin **Wednesday, September 3.** A letter with more information will be sent out in August.

- **5th-6th Grade Public School Catechism** classes will also begin **September 3, 3:30-4:45 p.m. at St. Stephen's.** This class introduces students to Bible History with some Catechism connections in preparation for the 7th-

8th grade confirmation years. Watch for a letter in August regarding this class as well.

- Questions? Call Pastor Reis.
- If a student has special needs and would benefit with individual classes, the pastors are more than willing to arrange a schedule that works for everyone. Please feel free to contact one of the pastors for more information.

For all adults...

Sunday Bible Class

Our Sunday Bible Class meets between Sunday morning worship services, 9:10am - 9:50am. It is held every Sunday, except the first Sunday of each month when we have our Coffee Fellowship Hour. This summer we have been studying miracles, parables, and "dramatic statements" of Jesus through a study called "19 (or more) Minutes with the Messiah". This will continue at least through August when we may again resume "adult" studies of the lessons children study in Sunday School or some other study. Please join us for growth in faith, Bible knowledge, and for fellowship over some coffee, juice and small treats!

Monday / Wednesday Bible Study

We will resume our weekday (Monday nights / Wednesday mornings) Bible Class after Labor Day, beginning **September 8 & 10. We will meet Mondays at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.** (same lesson at each) **in the church basement.**

We will take some time beginning in September to walk through the book of Galatians as we see the blessings and freedoms God gives us "**By Faith Alone.**" Join us on Mondays or Wednesdays to dig into God's Word and see how God continues to bless us!

For Seekers

Our pastors love to take people through the Bible and answer questions they may have. Beginning **Thursday, September 4,** we will offer a class to present the basic teachings of the Bible. These classes are aimed toward those who have questions or are seeking membership in the church. However, they also serve as a refresher course for even the most seasoned Christian.

We offer two times for these classes each **Thursday - 11:00am or 7:30pm** (same class just different times). Simply come to the church

basement. Invite someone to this class. Better yet, come to the class with them. Your pastors are also more than willing to talk to anyone interested in these classes. Please give their contact information to a pastor who will follow up with them. We will also do all we can to accommodate schedules that don't fit the "formal" class times.

Education Grants Awarded

St. Stephen's is blessed to be able to award financial grants to our members attending Lakeside Lutheran High School (LLHS) in Lake Mills, WI, Luther Preparatory School (LPS) in Watertown, WI, Martin Luther College (MLC) in New Ulm, MN, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) in Mequon, WI.

Neuendorf Scholarship

This scholarship was started in 1992 by Mr. Eugene Neuendorf in memory of his parents. Scholarships are given to all students considering and studying for the public ministry at Luther Prep or Martin Luther College. The following scholarships were awarded for this coming school year:

- Austin Yerges (Senior at LPS) \$1,200
- Wyatt Yerges (Freshman at LPS) \$1,200

Christ Estate Scholarship Fund

This fund uses the interest earned from a trust that has been set up to help all Martin Luther College students and male students at Luther Prep.

- Austin Yerges (LPS) \$ 400
- Wyatt Yerges (LPS) \$400

Lakeside Lutheran Assistance Fund

This fund helps students who are attending Lakeside Lutheran High School.

- Bryce Tasker (Senior) - \$1,200
- Liliana Balleza (Sophomore) - \$1,200

Lakeside Lutheran High School also participates in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP), which is benefiting several St. Stephen's students. The state awards vouchers to families meeting certain income requirements. These vouchers allow students to attend Lakeside and pay no tuition.

Seminary Student Fund

This fund helps men completing the last four years of their training to become pastors. There was no one eligible for the scholarship this year.

Congratulations to all these students. May God continue to be with you in your studies! We thank God that we are able to help support these students.

For us to continue to offer these scholarships, we need generous donors. Anybody can donate to the Neuendorf Scholarship Fund, Lakeside Lutheran Student Assistance Fund, or Seminary Assistance. If you would like to donate to these funds, please speak with Pastor Reis or contact the church office.

Fellowship Opportunities

WELS Seniors

Area WELS Seniors are invited to our next get-together on **Tuesday, August 12** here at St. Stephen's. Our potluck meal starts at 12:00 noon in the church basement. After the meal, we will take time for a Bible devotion, followed by a presentation on the Indian Effigy Mounds in Dodge County by Dodge County Historical Museum Curator Kurt Sampson.

Our **September 9** gathering will be at noon at Friedens in Randolph. Pastor Straseske will present "The Friedens Parsonage Raids of 1918", a part of the U.S. government's "investigations" into certain German Lutheran Pastors during World War I.

Looking further ahead ... our area WELS Seniors group will host the national WELS Seniors' Convention in October in Oshkosh under the theme "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me", picking up on Oshkosh being the home of the Experimental Aircraft Association and it's annual Fly-In Convention. Presentations will be made by Veronica & Jacob Schultz of St. Stephen's on life as a Christian in Muslim Indonesia, by Dr. Kari (Lathrop) Capaul on the importance of advance medical directives, by Pastor John Hildebrandt of Friesland on coins of Bible times, and by Peter Moll, a WELS member from Oshkosh who is on staff of the EAA (Pastor Heyer served his Vicar year of Seminary under his father in one of our Oshkosh WELS churches). If attending the convention appeals to you, talk with Carol Lathrop about how to register.

Over 50? Come join us, and bring a friend! Not over 50? We'll let you in, too!!!

Mark Your Calendars!!

Church Picnic – September 7

Our annual church picnic will be on **Sunday, September 7**, starting with **our church service at Lakeview Park at 10:00am**, followed by lunch starting shortly after the service. Meat and drinks will be provided. We ask that everyone would please bring a dish to pass and lawn chairs.

We have plenty of activities planned. There will be bingo with prizes and other games. Make plans to join us! If inclement weather happens on that day, we will move the picnic to the church basement. **Join us for this time of fellowship!**

Want to help? If you can help or have questions, please call the office at 920-885-3309.

Lutheran Teens

Lutheran Teens is open to anyone in 7th-12th grade, friends are also welcome! We join together for various activities and Bible studies. In the past we have done bowling, laser tag, a corn maze, and many other fun activities. We also serve the congregation by helping with a Lenten Supper and serving donuts during a Sunday coffee fellowship. Please keep an eye out for announcements in the bulletin about any future events or service opportunities.



This group is in a transition phase from the vacancy. Pastor Reis will be meeting soon with those who are interested in helping guide the schedule and helping to lead the events and those who have helped in the past. If you wish to help with this group and have not previously helped, please contact Pastor Reis. All ideas and help are welcome.

Members of the Lutheran Teens also help recycle the aluminum cans from the trailer in the church's parking lot. Money collected from these cans help support the Teens activities to keep costs down for different events. About once every two months we drop off the cans to the recycle center. If you would like to help our "can man" get cans to the recycle site, talk with Pastor Reis.

Service Opportunities

Ladies Aid

Our Ladies' Aid is a service organization within our congregation. In recent years, our major service activity has been to coordinate meals and activities involving the church basement and

kitchen, mostly funeral luncheons, and the occasional Baptism or Confirmation lunch or wedding or baby shower. We are thankful to the many "non-Ladies' Aid members" (both men and women) who help us with the task of serving funeral lunches. If you would like to be added to that volunteer list, please contact Carol Lathrop at (920) 887-7250. We realize that there are times that you might not be available, but it is always helpful to add names to be on this call list when needed. Ladies' Aid has also given assistance or donations to St. Stephen's church and school as well as to other WELS groups to support their ministry. We welcome any ladies of our congregation to contact us for our schedule if you'd like to visit a meeting or for additional information if you might be interested in becoming a member of this organization. We meet the first Thursday of each month, except January, June, July, and August.

After a Summer recess we will meet on **Thursday, September 4**, at 1:30 in the Church basement. We begin with Bible study, followed by a short meeting to keep us organized for our service activities, and then some fellowship over refreshments. We hope many women of the congregation can join us and share in this service to our Lord and his Church.

Hand Bell Choir

The Hand Bell Choir will be starting practices **September 10**. Our practices are Wednesday evenings at 7:15pm until about 8:30pm in the church balcony. We play in church about seven times a year and also at Advent by Candlelight. Please call the office if you are interested in joining!

Senior Choir

St. Stephen's Senior Choir is about to begin another year of praising the Lord in song! Senior Choir is an opportunity for all confirmed members of our church who enjoy music to enjoy fellowship, sing beautiful choral music, and glorify our God. Senior Choir rehearses every Thursday during the school year from 7:30-8:30pm. We primarily sing at church festivals, such as Reformation, Christmas, Holy Week, and Ascension. If you cannot make every rehearsal, or if you only want to participate during a certain part of the year (only Christmastime, only Lent, etc.), you are still welcome and encouraged to join us.

Our first rehearsal is **Thursday, September 4, at 7:30pm in the school Choir Room**. If you want to participate in Senior Choir at any point this year **but cannot make the first rehearsal, please contact Mr. Barnett** so that a music folder can be prepared for you. There is no commitment, and latecomers are welcome at any point in the year. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Mr. Barnett at jbarnett@saintstephen.org or 262-234-2981.

St. Stephen's Radio Service

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 (95.3 FM).**

Volunteers record two half-hour services on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, September through March. We start at **6:30 pm and finish around 7:40**. It's a simple and pleasant way to serve Jesus and his people by singing hymns and speaking other service sections. Our first recording sessions will be **Tuesday, September 9**. We record in the church. The Maple Ave, church office, and ramp entrances will be open. Please join us! Another way to support this ministry is with an offering. Each half-hour Sunday service on WBEV costs about \$75.

You can listen to our radio services over the internet. On our website (www.ssbdwels.com), go to our [Radio Service Page and listen by streaming audio](#).

Good Shepherd's Vacation Bible School

Will take place on August 4th-8th from 1:00-3:00pm for ages 3 - 6th grade. This year's theme is "From Raindrops to Rainbows" Check our website and Facebook page for more information. Sign up online, call 920-885-6482, or email gsbdoffice@gmail.com. Any questions, please contact Kim Steinberg.

Financial Stewardship Report

The following report is for the fiscal year ended June 30, our second year operating on a fiscal calendar. Here are the numbers as we close our 2024-25 books and enter the '25-'26 cycle.

General Fund Checkbook Balance: \$ 42,877
Income: \$ 1,084,065
Expenses: \$ 1,130,335 - \$ 46,270

Dedicated Funds Balance: \$ 612,323.50

The largest Dedicated Funds held locally are:

Restoration Fund: \$ 59,208

Special Improvement: \$ 16,997*

Playground Structure: \$ 58,974

Outside Digital Sign: \$ 20,860

We were "running short on cash" as we moved into the new fiscal year, due somewhat to our "insurance issue" (cancelled by Church Mutual and signing on with Cincinnati Insurance), which necessitated borrowing \$15,000* from our Special Improvement Fund. God grant each of us a willingness to be generous in our offerings TO HIM that our Gospel ministry continues to be fully supported, especially as we are now "fully staffed" in our Church and School!

School News

Pursue

Our theme for the next 2 school years will follow what Lakeside Lutheran High school is doing. The core focus is "Pursue". This year we will look at four terms to help us through this theme. We will turn our attention towards Pursue, Prioritize, Preserve, Persevere. In our Christian walk, we are called to press on towards the high calling in Christ, not because we have already achieved perfection, but because He first took hold of us. Just as Jesus came to seek and save the lost, we are to prioritize His kingdom and righteousness above all earthly concerns, trusting that God knows and will provide for our needs. This journey requires us to persevere with endurance, shedding anything that hinders us, and keeping our focus firmly fixed on Jesus, our ultimate example of enduring faith and joy. May the Lord walk with us each day through the school year.

It's that time again! – Back to School

Registration packets were mailed out in the middle of July as we continue to shift our summer connections to parents. We will continue to do a parent/teacher/pastor/organization orientation/registration combination. We ask that parents remember to fill out the forms and have them completed when you come to the orientation day. If you've lost yours, or if you have any questions, please contact Mr. Schulz (920-885-6484 or principal@saintstephen.org). The times of this orientation are specific and we ask that all parents make a time commitment. We will be discussing

changes in the handbook. There will be presentations by various leaders in the school/church. After the presentations, parents will be asked to go to specific classrooms to talk with teachers. That later part of the time frame is when parents will also drop off registration materials/payments to specific teachers throughout the building.

Orientation Days @ St. Stephen's

Sunday August 10, 2025, 3:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Monday, August 11, 2025, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Please make every effort to attend one of the two listed orientation times. If you are not able to attend, please contact Mr. Schulz as soon as possible to make arrangements.

The complete school calendar is on the school website: www.ssbdwels.com/school.

All Parents with Elementary School Age Children

St. Stephen's Lutheran School is an affordable, quality, Christian education for your children. There is no tuition charge. We have a book fee of only \$1,150.00 per child, per year to cover technology and consumable materials.

If you have not enrolled your children in the past because you felt the cost would be too much, please reconsider. A quality, Christian education is affordable for about \$6.92 a day. Members of our congregation generously support the church and school so that the children can be taught the precious message of Jesus each day.

For more information about the school please check out the website at www.ssbdwels.com/school.

You can also call the school principal at 920-885-6484 and we will gladly discuss the school with you.

First Day of School

Tuesday, August 26, 8:00am.

This start time accommodates the correct number of instructional hours we need to be compliant with state guidelines. Our year will begin with a worship service at 8:05 a.m. **All are welcome!**

Singing Schedule

The singing schedule has been placed on our website. There are numerous dates for each group to sing at church. Please be sure to have your children present as they sing praises to the Lord. We will continue to have instrumentalists perform throughout the year as we did last year.

Opportunities to help

Throughout the next school year, there will be opportunities to help out. Keep your eyes open for these opportunities. They could range from reading to children to helping at sporting events.

The school is continuing to look at the replacement of two bigger items on the property. The school play structure is over 20 years old and has started to deteriorate. It is looking like the current structure would be replaced in the middle to end part of August. We would need to have the existing site prepared by August 12. If you, or someone you know would like to help in this cause, please let Mr. Schulz know.

The second is the replacement of the bleachers in the gym. The safety reports for the bleachers indicate that replacement would also be the best course of action. Cost of materials have risen since our initial quote. The estimated replacement costs will be \$35,000. We currently have just under \$20,000 set to the side for this project.

Thank you to all who helped with raising funds throughout the past year.

St. Stephen's Sports:

Keep your eyes open for opportunities to come watch sporting events. The Lord has given many gifts to the students of our school.

Our 2025-2026 Faculty

Kindergarten: Mrs. Kendra Barnett

Kindergarten (Maternity leave):

Mrs. Rachel Reichert

1st Grade: Mrs. Brittany Trimmer

2nd Grade: Miss Amber Wenman

3rd Grade: Mrs. Katrina Reis

4th Grade: Mrs. Karen Cooper

5-8 Music/Social Studies, Church music:

Mr. Joshua Barnett

5th-6th homeroom/5-8 ELA & P.E.,

Athletic Director: Mr. Tom Zuberbier

(ELA = English / Language Arts)

7th-8th homeroom/5-8 Math & Art, Jr. Choir,

Principal: Mr. David Schulz

May the Lord continue to bless the work of our faculty here at St. Stephen's as we teach the Lord's little ones the truth and grace of his Word.