



St. Stephen's Newsletter

February-March 2026

I Need More...FAITHFUL FRIENDS

A friend is someone who knows all about me and likes me anyway. Have you heard that description of a friend? How would you define what a friend is? Are you happy with the friends you have? Do you wish you had more friends or different kinds of friends? That your friendships were healthier or more helpful?

People might define friends in various ways, but one thing is certain. God designed people with a need for friendship. When he created the first man, he offered this observation: *"It is not good for the man to be alone"* (Genesis 2:18). We naturally feel the need that God observed, but faithful friends might be hard to come by.

In the internet world, friends often call each other BFF's—Best Friends Forever. But those same friends often turn on each other and end up more as enemies than as friends. No matter how well someone knows and likes you, there really is no friend who knows all about you. Your innermost secrets remain locked within you, and there are deeper feelings than anyone could ever understand.

God wants you to know what you might have suspected all along. He does know all about you. He observes that you need someone to whom you can pour out your heart, and he is willing to be that one.

But do you want God to be a BFF, when deep down you know what he knows about you? As his own Word says, *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves"* (1 John 1:8). Few of us would make such a claim, but the good news is that God still wants to claim us as friends, despite our shortcomings.

That is why Jesus Christ, God's Son, came into the world long ago. He came to do what only the best of friends would do—he came to lay down his life for you. He came to stand in for you and take whatever punishment God's justice demanded for your sins. And God accepted his own Son's sacrifice to wipe out the guilt of your sin.

That is why God invites you to see him as your best friend. He knows all about you and everything that you need. He extends his love to you without conditions, for the sake of his Son's death on the cross.

You will not find a more faithful friend than God. Look to the living God and learn more about his faithfulness

and love. The more you learn, the more you will find that he is a true Friend that you can always trust.

WELS Evangelism

Worship Opportunities

Regular Worship Times

Our regular worship times are **Sunday at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m., Thursday at 6:30 p.m., and Fridays at 1:30 p.m.** During the season of Lent, there will be no Thursday services. Instead we will have special midweek services on Wednesdays.



Lenten Midweek Services

"It Is Finished" is the theme of our midweek worship for the 2025 Lenten Season. This Lenten series takes worshipers through ten of Zechariah's prophecies, particularly as they relate to the events of

Jesus' Holy Week passion, death, and resurrection, and what Jesus' fulfillment of those prophecies means for God's people—now and in eternity.. Our pastors will be preaching in rotation with the pastors of St. John's in Juneau, St. John's in Fox Lake and Good Shepherd in Beaver Dam.

Lent begins Ash Wednesday, February 18. Worship services for Ash Wednesday will be at **3:45pm and 6:30pm.** Holy Communion will be served at each Ash Wednesday service.

Weekly Wednesday Lenten services following will also be at **3:45pm and 6:30pm.**

Feb 18	Pastor Heyer
Return to Me!	Zechariah 1:1-6
Feb 25	Pastor Reichert
Look at the One Who Was Pierced	Zechariah 12:10-13
Mar 4	Pastor Reis
What's He Worth to You	Zechariah 11:7-13
Mar 11	Pastor Stratman
The Kingly Priest	Zechariah 6:9-13
Mar 18	Pastor Prell
The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth	Zechariah 8:14-17
Mar 25	Pastor Mount
Scattered Sheep	Zechariah 13:7-9

Christian Education Opportunities



For all adults (confirmed)...

Sunday Bible Class

Our Sunday Morning Bible Class takes a look at lessons from the life of Christ.

Monday & Wednesday Bible Class

Mondays at 7:00pm & Wednesdays at 11:00am.

Monday and Wednesdays we are finishing their study of the creeds in late January or early February. After the study on the creeds is finished, the Monday and Wednesday Bible Class will take a look at the book of Lamentations. Here is a little introduction to the course: Would you rather be happy or sad? We would rather be happy, of course! But as long as we are on earth, we won't escape hurt and heartache. It is an unfortunate part of living in a sinful world. The Old Testament book of Lamentations teaches us how to handle sorrow in a healthy God-pleasing way. Consider joining the Monday or Wednesday Bible Class as we consider how to practice **Good Grief**.

Bible Information Class (BIC)

Do you know someone who has questions about the Bible and faith? Is your neighbor searching for a church home? Would you like a review of the basic teachings of the Bible? If you answered yes to these questions, we have an opportunity for you.

The pastors are starting another Bible Information Class. This class focuses on sharing the teachings of the Bible for those who have questions or want a review. It also serves as a means for a person to become a member of our congregation.

Invite a friend, neighbor, relative, or acquaintance to this class or give their name and number to one of the pastors.

For Children...

Sunday School

Our God tells us in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 tells us this: "These words that I am commanding you today are to be on your heart. Teach them diligently to your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you get up." These words encourage parents to make Jesus and his Word the center of our homes. In an effort to help our families with this very important responsibility, St. Stephen's not only operates an elementary school, but also a Sunday School for ages 3-8th grade. During Sunday School, the children walk through important events in Scripture at their age level and learn more about those important teachings. This is combined with engaging activities

connected to what they are learning. Here is the upcoming schedule in February and March:

February 1–Jesus Rides into Jerusalem

February 8–A Trusting Widow

February 15–Forever Food–The Lord's Supper

February 22–Betrayed and Arrested

March 1–Standing Trial

March 8–Jesus' Death and Resurrection

March 15–No Sunday School

March 22–Jesus Appears to Thomas

March 29–Jesus Appears in Galilee

Service Opportunities

St. Stephen's Radio Service



Since 1973 (53 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. 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).**

These services involve many people – our pastors, organists, and very importantly a volunteer congregation. **Radio recording is on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, starting at 7:00 p.m.. If there are no weather cancellations, recording will continue through the end of April.** You can support this ministry with an offering. Each half-hour Sunday service on WBEV costs about \$85.

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

Lutheran Teens

The Lutheran Teens will be enjoying the winter weather on Saturday, February 7. They will be going tubing at Sunburst Ski Hill in Kewaskum, WI. We will meet for pizza in the church basement at 3:30 pm and leave for Sunburst at 4:15 pm. Please enter through the ramp door. Tubing will be from 5:30-8:30, with estimated time of return to the church at 9:45. Cost is \$30 and will be paid online ahead of time to Sunburst along with a waiver form. The waiver form and payment can be made at www.skisunburst.com. Concessions are available at Sunburst, but they are credit card payment only. It is **important to contact Jayme Roll** and let him know that you are going to this event so we can make sure that you are going. (920)-342-4291 or jaymeroll@gmail.com.

School News

A Beginning thought

"Be still, and know that I am God."

— Psalm 46:10

In a school building, "stillness" is often a rare commodity. Between bells, lessons, and recess, our halls are a whirlwind of energy. However, Lent offers our students a sacred "pause button." By leaning into the wisdom of the Psalmist, we look at ways of incorporating moments of silence and prayer to help students find peace amidst their busy schedules. We invite all members of our church family to join us in this intentionality. As our students learn to quiet their surroundings to better hear God's voice, may we all find our own moments of stillness in the weeks leading up to Easter.

Sports

As we enter the new year, we're excited to reflect on the progress our basketball teams have made at St. Stephen's. With two-thirds of the season behind us, all teams have been performing admirably. As we approach the tournament season in February, we are eager to see what our athletes can achieve. Let's continue to support and encourage one another as we finish the season strong!

Missions

Our school has joined with the other schools in the Lakeside Federation to support mission causes. In the 1st quarter, we supported LLHS OpGo Trips. Our school support was \$500.20. 2nd quarter missions totaled \$588.90 in support of the WELS mission in Australia. 3rd quarter missions will go to help the home mission church exploration in Madison, Wisconsin. The 4th quarter missions will help WELS Christian Aid and Relief programs.

Kindergarten Round Up

St. Stephen's Lutheran School will be hosting Kindergarten Round-Up on February 23rd from 6pm until 7pm. There will be a short meeting allowing parents the opportunity to get inside our classroom, meet the teacher, and get to know other possible parents and students. Mrs. Barnett has been doing a wonderful job getting things

ready for this evening and looks forward to meeting all the new families.

If you have a child ready for Kindergarten this upcoming 2026-2027 school year, feel free to stop by and collect some information, meet some friendly folks and maybe enjoy a cookie or two.

If you know families with children in this age range, we encourage you to invite them to join us on this evening. Our congregation members and families are the most powerful means of outreach. Let us trust in the Lord to guide us as we encourage the youth of our church and community to embrace Christ-centered education.

If one cannot attend the meeting, please reach out to Mrs. Barnett for more information. She can be reached at kbarnett@saintstephen.org

Accreditation News

It has been almost one year since St. Stephen's finished the accreditation process. We continually thank everyone who worked on this process with the faculty of the school. It was a long road to get there, but the benefits of the process will lead us into the future with trust in the Lord's power to guide us. We have about 9 to 10 things to work on every year over the course of the next 5 years. The faculty is the core to this work, but there may be times when help is needed. Please do not hesitate to step up and help your school.

Upcoming events:

Feb 19-20 No School-WWDTC

Feb 23 Kindergarten Round up

Mar 6 End of Quarter 3

Mar 16-20 Spring Break

Keep up with what's going on

Stay informed with the latest school news by visiting our website at www.ssbdwels.com/school.

Simply click on "School News" to stay updated on everything happening each week. St. Stephen's School serves as an important outreach tool and there's always plenty of news to explore!

January 25, 2026 Annual Meeting Summary

The Annual Meeting of the Voters of our congregation was held Sunday, January 25.

1. **Treasurer David Stange explained our finances.** Our internal borrowing from our own funds has been repaid. Endowment fund is near \$300,000.
2. **Elections for open positions on our Council and Boards were held.**

Elected to the Council were:

- Church Council: Steve Seim and Timothy Welch were reelected to second terms, Steven Gentz and Mark Masche were elected to their first terms. Mark will be filling a two-year term.
- New officers will be elected to specific positions at the February Council meeting.
- David Schumann completed a term of service. We thank him for his time and efforts serving on the Council.

2025 Council Members (+*Departing officers*):

Timothy Welch- President

Richard Nedow – VP

Jesse Benike – Secretary

+*David Schumann* – District Elder Chairman

+*Gary Tietz*– Bd of Property Maintenance Chairman (Gary was appointed to fill a vacancy for 2025-2026.)

Erv Loest – Bd. of Education Chairman

Travis Bowe – Chairman of Finance Committee

Donald Schultz – Insurance Liaison

Steve Seim –Chair of Outreach and Media Committee

- Board of Education: Mark Schumann was reelected to his second term. Joel Scott was elected to a first term.

2025 Board of Education Members:

Erv Loest – Chairman

Mark Schuman

+*Jacob Schultz*

Jason Runke

Andy Estervig

Duane Ohland – Good Shepherd Representative

- Board of Property Maintenance: Greg Rodewald was elected.

2025 Board of Property Maintenance

Members:

+*Gary Tietz* – Chairman

Don Cigelske

Shaun Bradley

+*Jim Szopinski*

4. **Special written reports were reviewed:**
 - Approval of membership actions of 2025.
 - Other reports were also reviewed.
5. **Old Business**
 - **Sanctuary Restoration Committee.** Some of the additional projects have been completed: painting of stairwells and narthex, and a new sound and video recording system. Some touch up painting needs to be done. Some additional switches will be added. A committee is being gathered to discuss renovations in the church basement.
 - **Board of Education** reported that we are proceeding with replacing the bleachers in the gymnasium.
 - **Maintenance.** Some work has been done on the boilers recently. Parsonage roofs will be evaluated early in 2026.
 - **May Street Parsonage.** Gene Nimmer gave a report on the restoration of the May Street parsonage after the water leak damage. We received around \$190,000 from insurance. We were very pleased with the work done by Kellmann Restoration.
6. **New Business**
 - The Ministry Spending Plan (Budget) was adjusted up \$17,174 for the health insurance of our called workers.