



for all the SAINTS

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Homecoming!

St. Stephen's Church
Old-fashioned Picnic 2011

Worship at 10:00

Potluck & Fair to
Follow

All are Welcome!
(see pg. 3 for more info)

“So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe--the best one--and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.” (Luke 15:20-24)

Homecoming!

When I first became aware of the importance of the word homecoming, I was in high school. Back in my ancient past, we didn’t start high school until 10th grade and it was the first year we had moved to a new community. In small town, rural Minnesota, homecoming was a big deal! We even got out of school early to have a parade down Main Street. All of the classes decorated hay racks and class officers road them in the parade. The marching band marched and various town dignitaries rode in cars. It was a grand festival! Since it was a small town, just about everybody turned out for the parade and then the BIG FOOTBALL GAME that took place that evening, followed by the dance. It was a big deal! School was officially back in session.

St. Stephen’s has a tradition called homecoming, too. While we don’t have a parade or marching bands, or even floats, we do mark a transition to a new programmatic year with a special day. It is one of two Sundays during the year when we routinely gather together as one worshipping congregation and celebrate our community. It is an opportunity to get re-acquainted with each other after the summer, and to get to meet others we have never met before. It is a welcome home time for us as a community of faith and it is a welcome to St. Stephen’s time for visitors among us. These kinds of events are important in the life of a congregation. They offer a chance to be reminded of the breadth and scope of ministry that we offer in this place. They offer a great opportunity to become invitational with your neighbors and friends – people who you know are searching for some purpose or meaning or even community.

That’s what is so fun about our HOME-COMING! Celebration and return are important parts of the ebb and flow of our life’s journey. We are faithful and yet we sin. We jump in and are active and then we fall away. Our faith centers us in the day-to-day activities of life and then we simply get caught up in the minutia and we forget about God’s presence, mercy and love. It is about rhythm. It is about confession and forgiveness. Forgiveness is what God is about. Clearly, throughout the gospels we are told parable after parable about the

From Our Pastor

Home!

importance of being forgiven and being forgiving people. This is another sign of God's love and God's mercy.

So Homecoming is a time for us to jump back in the journey of St. Stephen's. We have lots of activities planned for the fall. We are still in the midst of developing a vision plan for where God is leading us, and we look forward to those conversations together. The halls of the church are filled with music and laughter, Alex's fantastic organ music, and it is all good!

So welcome home fellow saints!
Welcome to: HOMECOMING WEEKEND!

We welcome singer-songwriter **Richard Bruxvoort Colligan** this weekend. Richard is a full-time musician, composer and teller of bad jokes from Strawberry Point, Iowa. He is a husband to Trish, a daddy to Sam and student of the Psalms. When he is not writing songs, you'll find him enjoying a walk, eating pizza or watching movies with his family. Listen to his songs for free at RiversVoice.com and Worldmaking.net.

Richard will be offering a family concert on Saturday at 6 p.m.! Richard's acoustic guitar work accompanies his storyteller's voice with a spirit of welcome. Think James Taylor, Paul Simon and David Wilcox, and you're close. He'll treat us to original songs and some songs you know. Come for a relaxed evening of music and

laughter for all ages. We will gather in Agape for popcorn and refreshments and join in the fun of music and singing!

On Sunday morning, Richard will help give shape to our worship, along with the other musical groups at St. Stephen's as we gather as a community of faith around Word and Sacrament.

Finally, we will join together after worship for an old-fashioned church potluck on the south lawn, with lots of games for children, balloons, face-painting, entertained by the music of Steadfast, and lots of good food! Mark your calendars! Be sure to sign up for the potluck and invite your neighbors and friends.

Welcome Home!



Pastor Tim

Our Life Together

The Stone Soup Kitchen

We Nourish, Teach & Serve

Panzanella is a wonderful Italian salad made from the bounty of the late summer garden. It's also a great way to use up day-old bread! The salad usually combines fresh cucumbers, tomatoes and basil with bread and vinaigrette. This recipe also utilizes all those wonderful sweet peppers September's gardens bring. Serve as an entree or with seafood and a glass of Italian wine and it's almost like taking a vacation.

Ingredients

3 tablespoons good olive oil
1 loaf French or Italian bread, cut into 1-inch cubes (6 cups). Day-old bread is desirable.
1 teaspoon kosher salt
2 large, ripe tomatoes, seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes (or ~2 cups)
1 cucumber, unpeeled, seeded, and sliced 1/2-inch thick
1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes
1/2 red onion, cut in half and thinly sliced
20 large basil leaves, coarsely chopped
3 tablespoons capers, drained

Vinaigrette— Whisk the following ingredients together until mixed well. Refrigerates for up to 2 weeks.

1 teaspoon finely minced garlic	1/2 cup good olive oil
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard	1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
3 tablespoons Champagne vinegar (or your favorite)	1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Directions— Toss together cubed bread, olive oil and salt and toast in a 400°F oven for 20 min. (or until nicely browned). Turn bread after 10 minutes and add more olive oil if necessary.

In a large bowl, mix the tomatoes, cucumber, red pepper, yellow pepper, red onion, basil, and capers. Add the bread cubes and toss with the vinaigrette. Season liberally with salt and pepper. Serve, or allow the salad to sit for about 15 minutes for the flavors to blend.

Koats for Kids



Donate your gently-worn coats, hats, and mittens at Klinke Cleaners Sept. 12 to Oct. 8. Special needs for infant, toddler, larger teen, and XXXL adult. In 25 years, over 260,000 coats have been given to those who need some warmth!

Our Life Together

Women's Spiritual Formation

This women's group meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 4:00-5:30 p.m. in the church library. Women of all ages are invited to draw closer to God as we pray and meditate together on God's Word.

Lutheran Women Today

On the 3rd Thursday each month, beginning Sept. 15, join other women for the Lutheran Woman Today Bible Study at 1 p.m. in the Fireside Room. This year's topic is Mark, the earliest of the Gospels and a source for Matthew and Luke. Contact Jane Dohler at 222-3794 for more information.

Men's Bible Study

Don't forget Men's Bible Study each month at Tully's II on Monona Dr. We meet at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 8th for some laid-back conversation.

Remember Your Baptism!

Women, join us on Tues., Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. for the kickoff of our Bold Café year! Our baptismal waters are storied waters. We will reflect on our baptisms and how it changed our lives and our faith. Please bring a photo or a keepsake of your baptism (or your childrens'...). You may read the discussion at www.boldcafe.org, the hot topic for Sept. 2011. Our offering item will be dish soap for the Road Home. New participants are always welcome.

Women's Kayaking Trip!

We are planning a great women's event for next summer — an Apostle Islands sea kayaking trip! Join us Aug. 17-20, 2012 in exploring sea caves, sandy beaches, and historic lighthouses in addition to spending time with awesome women. This trip is great for beginners and experienced paddlers alike. Brochures are available. Your deposit of \$110 is due by Nov. 30. Space is limited to 10-16 kayakers. If you have questions after reading a brochure, please call Lisa Hansen at 838-7929.

Apostle Islands Snapshot

Thinking about the women's kayaking trip next summer but just not sure? Join us on Thur., Sept. 8 at 8 p.m. for a great chance to learn all about it from someone who has experienced the exact same trip. Lynn Helmke, daughter of St. Stephen's members, Rod & Lorrie Helmke, will be with us to talk about and show pictures of her church's recent trip to the Apostle Islands. Registration info will be available and kayak-friendly snacks will be served.

Spirits and Holy Ghosts

Wednesday Morning Bible Study, each week 9:00-10:00, resumes on Sept. 14. To start the year, we'll be looking at all the spirits in the Bible.

Crochet/Knit Ministry

Because of a wedding on Sept. 4, we will not be meeting on the traditional 1st Sunday of the month but we will plan to meet on Sept. 18, the 3rd Sunday of the month. For info, call Karen Baier (279-5648).

Our Life Together

Energy Fair Is Sept. 18

Get to know the St. Stephen's Green Team and find out how you can "green" your home at the Energy Fair on Sun., Sept. 18. Browse through the displays after 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. worship. Meet members of the Green Team and learn how to respond to God's call regarding being good caretakers of the earth and the environment.

Visit the following displays at St. Stephen's first Energy Fair:

- **Energy Monitoring** ~ Take a kit home and use it to check your energy use.
- **Ideas for your Home** ~ Earth-friendly, non-toxic and inexpensive cleaning solutions and more.
- **Pictorial Stories** ~ How the Monona Community Gardens help restore creation.
- **Renewable Energy** ~ Resources available for your home, by H&H Electric.
- **Lutherans Restoring Creation Energy Stewards Initiative** ~ An ELCA pilot project in which St. Stephen's is participating.
- **Recycle Batteries** ~ Why and how to keep batteries out of the landfills.
- **Hot Water in a Hurry** ~ Simple plumbing solutions to speed water flow.
- **How St. Stephen's Cares for Creation** ~ The various initiatives our congregation supports.
- **SHARE YOUR IDEAS BOARD** ~ Fill out one or more post-it-notes and share your own energy saving ideas for home or congregation.
- **Websites to visit** ~ Broaden your understanding of the Church's role in restoring creation.



Permaculture Bike Tour September 25

St. Stephen's will be one of the stops on the Permaculture Bike Tour on Sun., Sept. 25. Lunch will be served here from 12:30 to 2 p.m. for cyclists who come to view the swale and berm construction of the Monona Community Gardens. If you would like to help by furnishing some "grab and go" food items or by setting up, please sign up in the hallway after worship beginning on Sun., Sept. 4. Anyone who enjoys bicycling is invited and encouraged to attend and to join the tour. For more info, please go to www.madisonareapermacultureguild.org.

Cool Congregations



St. Stephen's will be hosting a WI Interfaith Power & Light training on October 1 for congregations to help members reduce energy use at home. If you'd like to know more, talk to the Green Team!

Our Life Together

LWR School Kits



We are currently collecting items for school kits to be sent to students of all ages around the world by Lutheran World Relief. Each kit should contain:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 4 Notebooks (70 sheets...not loose-leaf) | 5 Pencils (new, unsharpened #2 w/erasers) |
| 1 Blunt Scissors | 1 Eraser (2 1/2 in.) |
| 1 Ruler w/centimeters | 5 Ball Point Pens (no gel) |
| 1 Pencil Sharpener | 1 Box of Crayons (16 or 24) |

It costs \$1.40 to ship each bag. Donations for the shipping costs are also appreciated. If you can't or don't like to shop, monetary donations are always welcome. Thank you to Barb Kepler for organizing, and thank you in advance for your continued support.

National Youth Gathering in New Orleans

A huge gathering. Your chance! An info session on the ELCA National Youth Gathering for 8th-12th graders and parents will be September 7 at 7:00. Come find out more!

Confirmation, 6th-10th grade

Orientation for parents and 7th-9th grade students is September 14 at 7:00. Sixth grade pre-confirmation orientation will plan at 6:00 on September 14. Classes for 7th-9th graders begin September 21 at 6:45. Tenth graders begin meeting with parents September 25 at 9:10.



Get Ready for Sunday School!

Sunday School begins at 9:45 on September 18. We are looking forward to growing in faith together this year with the youngest members of St. Stephen's. Pre-School and Kindergarten students will meet in the classroom next to the Nursery, while grades 1-5 will head upstairs. Watch for info in the mail, and pre-register for Sunday School during our Homecoming celebration on Sept. 11th. If you are interested in leading an activity or participating in any way, please feel welcome to join in the fun!

Nursery

As we resume the program year, we will again have the nursery staffed at the 10:00 service for children to age 3. If you are able to help with an occasional shift, please call Jen Boll at 839-0095 or the church office.

Prayer Vigil for Peace

The next Prayer Vigil for Peace will be on Tuesday, September 20th at 5:30 p.m.



Recently Hospitalized

Lorraine Johnson, Lora Post, Gene Curtis,
William Kopplin, Ray Denson, Doris Bruns

Hospitalized – It is not automatic that we know when somebody has been hospitalized. If you or a loved one is planning on going into the hospital, please let the office know so a pastor can pray with or for you.

Prayers for Deployed Military

Please keep Jim Bahler in your prayers while he is deployed from Sugar Grove, WV to Iraq.



Baptism—Lily Faith Richardson,
daughter of Nicole Richardson

*Please continue to pray for this child
who has new life in Christ.*



Wedding Congrats – Daniel Marotz
& Tristin Klappauf on Aug. 13



Birth Congrats – Hunter Thomas Rohs,
son born to Philip & Sara Rohs on Aug. 2

Community – For upcoming **HospiceCare** events, call (608)276-4660; for upcoming **Alzheimer’s Assn.** events, call (608)232-3400.



Food Pantry Need – The Pantry is in need of the brown grocery bags.

E-Newsletter—*Another Way to Save*

To receive the monthly newsletter electronically, call the church office (222-1241) or see the news kiosk on the website.

New Mortgage Information

Original Balance (10/1/2010)	\$1,361,512
Interest Paid to Date	47,659
Principal Paid to Date	21,265
Remaining Balance	\$1,340,247

Preparing the Way

(thru 6th quarter – November 2009
thru April 2011)

Pledged to Date	\$ 214,039
Received to Date	\$ 204,652



New Staff Emails

Please Note the Changes

With some IT upgrades, the St. Stephen’s staff has new email addresses. You can find them on the back of this newsletter.



Leaving Telephone Messages

If you need to leave a message for the staff after the office closes at noon on Fridays, be sure to enter that staff member’s “specific” extension as any messages left on the “office” extension aren’t retrieved until Monday. Pastor Tim is ext 13, Pastor Nick is ext 12 and Rebecca is ext 16.

Lay School Try Out

Think you might be interested in greater devotion to your faith? Classes meet one weekend each month. The synod Lay School of Ministry will host a “discernment day” on Oct. 8 beginning at 9:00 at St. James, Verona.

Our Life Together

With a Thankful Heart:

- to David Kordela and Dave Dohler for work on the confirmation photo and display case
- to committee members who are attentive to details & procedures and nuts & bolts
- to you for making faith a part of your busy summer schedule

Lost & Found

Are any of these items yours?

The following items are currently in the bin outside the office: cell phone, eye glasses, tennis shoes in canvas bag, books for children, jackets, water bottle, button bracelet. All items not retrieved will be donated to the Food Pantry and given out to clients.

St. Stephen's 23rd Paint-a-thon—August 20



Jack Smith and his family at 129 Judd Street are truly thankful for all the work our crew accomplished. We solved some electrical problems, repaired some door and window frames and really did a super job with the painting. Preparing the surface is really important and we did a great job with the prep. As Pastor Nick said in a sermon recently, "It is not always easy to be the Church." Eighteen people contributed to the effort and we had another painting blitz. At the end of the day, we are always in awe of what 16, 17, or 18 people can accomplish in one day. The neighbors on each side of the house are happy. The neighborhood is better for our efforts and a lot of people who drove by or who live in the area are wondering who are those crazy guys that did that. Every time you drive by one of the 23 homes that St. Stephen's painted, you should have a big smile and good memories. God works in mysterious ways. Every year our personal schedules get busy and we ask ourselves...do we have time to paint another home for the Paint-a-thon? And every year, after we enjoy the camaraderie, and the smile on the home owner's face, we all know that we will be back for another day of painting.

The painters this year were: Jim Ridder, Kent Bahler, Larry Richardson, Bob Hepler, Gary Pluff, Curtis Mork, Allen Bodden, Stan Nielsen, Brent Ruffridge, Steve Gasser, Dave Thompson, Ernie Bollinger, Jim Wiskowski, Norm Muth, Ken Koscik, Jr. and Ken Koscik. Signe Thompson and Carol Koscik helped with food and drinks.

Once again, thanks for all your help!

Briefly in this month's letter, I'd like to recommend devotion to you.

Devotion can come in such a variety of textures and types that I don't need to try to foist a specific this or that in your direction. I simply wish you to take some care with devotion, especially since this may be a good time of year to rededicate yourself to it.

The word "devotion" is connected to making a vow. Most literally, it is about a giving away of yourself, giving yourself over to something else. (A devoted fan, for example, is deeply influenced by his or her favorite team.)

So already, if you've read this far, you are practicing a devotion. You've given yourself—your time, energy, attention—to me and are allowing me to influence you. But to refine that a bit, I don't want you to be devoted to me. I'm hoping that you're reading because this is a channel for a much larger devotion. I hope that you come to these monthly letters looking for God and for ways to connect your life to God.

Similarly, when we start staff meetings at church with devotions, or when you take some time for your own morning devotions, that is a way of dedicating what follows to God. It is saying that our meetings are for God's purposes. Morning devotions evoke and cultivate an attitude that the day is not wholly your own; what you will do is given to God.

Sunday worship is still seen as a Sabbath day. Originally, that was an entire day dedicated to God, one seventh of the week lived as a reminder of a life shaped by and for God. By coming to worship, you are molding your life into that devotion, giving an hour in church, but also expecting that your whole week will be reshaped into the pattern of God's will.

Just like a dedicated day, the Bible speaks also of "first fruits" giving. The first of a crop harvested, the first-born child, a portion of income—these were given to God. Setting aside some serves as a reminder that the whole belongs to God. We still give ourselves away like this, giving offerings as part of our devotion.

Pausing for prayer – at meals, when someone is sick, before bed, and many other times – is a reminder of all that comes from God and all that God is working for.

My "Pastor Sharing" notes each month are a bit of studious devotion, that reading good books gives time for my mind to learn and grow for God's work. Classes, like Bible studies at church, are another form of such devotion.

As a form of serving God by loving your neighbor, listening is good devotion. By receiving from them, you are giving yourself to them and their concerns.

Devotion

We could also see such listening and receiving by hearing birds and watching stars, a moment to be incorporated into the larger designs and rhythms of this world.

Any devotion, then, is a brief moment to have your life modeled and shaped, to realize that all is not for your own benefit, to give yourself in return for the good of others, and in that to be joined into Christ's work.

You're already on your way to devotion!

+ Nick

+ nick

PS - Pastor Sharing

I've been re-reading some of Gustaf Wingren's *Luther on Vocation* (not *Luther on Vacation*). It seems timely around Labor Day to think of the ways God's work in the world is accomplished through our daily roles in family, community, work, and world.

9/11 10th Anniversary Event

Pastor Nick has helped the WI Council of Churches plan an interfaith 9/11 anniversary event, asking how far we've come in the last ten years. Held at the Islamic Society of Milwaukee on Sat., 9/10, the theme will be "From Tolerance to Empathy." For \$10, the day includes a Middle Eastern lunch. Talk to Nick to carpool.

A New Seminarian

As you keep in prayers all those returning to school this autumn, we invite you to remember Christa Fisher, as well. After some classes at the Lay School of Ministry, Christa decided to attend Wartburg Seminary. She is the 2nd recent seminarian from St. Stephen's; Barb Kepler graduated this past spring. Christa will be commuting while husband Andre and children Jacob and Imani remain in Monona.

Remember, your gifts to the St. Stephen's Foundation can help with college/seminary scholarships.

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