

The Flame

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

January 2013

Our Mission Graced by the love of God through Word and Sacrament to be a caring community of believers, the fellowship of St. Stephen's is called to support one another in growth in faith, to share in the mission of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to reach out in witness and in service to the communities to which we belong, as one in the body of Christ.

Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends in Christ,
The New Year fill us with hope, the hope of better times ahead. But of course we do not know what lies ahead, however we can face the future with the confidence of God's presence and Christ's redemption always. The future is not totally left to "chance". By our attitudes, behaviors, the way we treat and respond to one another is a determinate in our futures. Do we hold grudges? Treat others with respect? Are we ready to forgive? Along with these questions we can ask, do we share our faith about what God has done for us? About what it means to have trust in God?

As we begin a New Year, we continue to pray and work for peace, for an end to world hunger, the

eradication of malaria, for wholeness and the Shalom that is God's intention. And as we yearn for an end to violence in our country, we participate in the conversation with other persons of reason to do all **we** can to make certain there are no more murders of children as we are aware of in Connecticut and in Camden.

My sincere wishes that God Blesses us with a joyful New Year!

Peace,
Pastor Chris

WORSHIP WITH US JANUARY 2013

Sunday, January 6, 2012

Epiphany

9am Holy Communion
10:45am Holy Communion, Baptism
10:45am Sunday School

Sunday, January 13, 2013

The Baptism of our Lord

9am Holy Communion
10:45am Holy Communion
10:45am Sunday School

Sunday, January 20, 2013

The 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

9am Holy Communion
10:45am Holy Communion
10:45am Sunday School

Sunday, January 27, 2013

The 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

9am Holy Communion
10:45am Holy Communion
10:45am Sunday School

SCHOOL SUNDAY, BIBLE STUDIES, GROUPS AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

BIBLE STUDY

Monday's at 11 am.

1st Holy Communion

classes will be beginning for 3rd graders this month in January. If you would like your child to be included please contact Judy Hunter, 468-9798.

PRAISE & PRAYER: You are welcome to join us the second Wednesday of every month at 7 pm as we share prayer and praise to Our Lord Jesus. If you would like the Prayer group to lift up your prayer or praise request please feel free to submit prayer card which may be found in the pews. Cards may be submitted with the offering.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

**Sunday, January 13th, 2013
2 pm "Rejoicing Spirits Service"**, at St. John's Lutheran Church, Ocean City, NJ. We will meet in the parking lot at St. Stephen's at 12:30 pm, car pool and travel together. Please let Pastor Chris know if you will be going!

CONFIRMATION

January 6th, 5:30 -7 pm
January 13th Bowling after church
January 27th, 5:30 - 7 pm

SHARE THE WORD,

Members of the council are collecting Bibles to be given to prison inmates requesting them. When Rev. Carl Browne was with us he mentioned the need for such in the prison where he serves as chaplain. You may bring in used bibles or new ones and place them in the designated box in the narthex.

Annual Meeting, will be on January, 27th, following the 10:45 am service. Please join us and find out what is happening in the life of our congregation.

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

SWEET JUSTICE ~ the Lutheran World Relief Chocolate Project ensures that more of the money you spend on chocolate makes its way back to the cocoa

farmers. Fair Trade Chocolate means more money for farmers to spend on education, clean water, food and shelter. Consider buying a gift of chocolate that is available on the Social Ministries table in the narthex.

**STEWARDSHIP
MOMENT**

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1: 5-8

Submitted by the Stewardship Committee

EVANGELISM

The Evangelism committee will be updating our birthday list. We will be placing cards in the pews in January for

folks to fill out. No birthday cards will be sent out in December of January, so on behalf of St. Stephen's and the Evangelism Committee "Happy Birthday & God bless you!"

WELCA NEWS

Activities this month are:

- Jan. 3 - 9am - Sewing
- Jan. 8 - 9:30am - Circle
- Jan. 15 - 9:30am - Executive Meeting
- Jan. 17 - 9am - Sewing

The Auxilliary of the Lutheran Home

January is the Annual Auxiliary drive for the 250 residents at the Lutheran Home in Moorestown. The annual drive along with the two Fund Raisers, June Day and the Octoberfest are two ways the auxiliary pays the entertainment for three holidays, monthly outings at local restaurants, birthday parties every month, Christmas gifts, along with any personal needs a resident may have which families are unable to provide or there is not family. Any monetary gift will be appreciated to help

the auxiliary provide these extras for the residents. Please see Nancy MacMaster. Thank you!

LETTERS

Dear Friends at St. Stephen's,

Once again, we thank you for your recent donation of \$671.40 to the GWCM Food Pantry. The money, as you requested, will be used for the summer lunch box program. This year, we were able to serve lunches to 215 children. Every child received a book each week as well as school supplies for the ensuring year. Also, EVERY child received a back pack for school. Your generosity is much appreciated.

GWCM

Dear Pastor Christine Regan & St. Stephen's,

On behalf of Lutheran Social Ministries of NJ, I would like to express my gratitude for your gift of \$353.00 designated to the Lutheran Disaster Response.

Your gift allows LSM/NJ to aid victims of Hurricane Sandy who live in NJ. We are reaching out to those in

need with immediate supplies as we partner with Churches and other organizations in affected areas. Lutheran Disaster Response is a second response organization; we will assist with the long term recovery.

We are blessed to have partners who understand our mission to serve those who hurt, who are in need, or who have limited choices.

May you be richly blessed for your gift of compassion today and always.

Sincerely, Beth Gebhart
Exec. Director of Fund Development and LSM of NJ Foundation

Christmas 2012 - Dear Friends in Christ,

This is the time of year when people dream of home. Every family, every congregation knows the joy of greeting far-flung friends and family members who come back home for Christmas. The church's hospitality is our natural response and a vital part of that treasured experience.

Thanks to your generosity, our church is able to extend that warm hospitality and a "welcome home" not only to old neighbors, but also to new neighbors who dream of a place to call home - those who have no homes, and those who have been driven from their homes.

Many of these neighbors are mothers with children, mothers who work hard to feed, clothes and educate their families even as they struggle with poverty. Other neighbors long for peace, but the harsh realities of war or natural disaster - or both - have sent them searching for new places to call home. Thanks to your dedicated support the ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response our church is there to reach out a helping hand.

Here in the USA, ELCA congregation have become spiritual havens for many, welcoming those who are struggling financially or spiritually through tough economic times, as well as those whose lives have been disrupted by drought, floods, storms or other natural disasters. Thanks you for embracing theses neighbors.

People dream of home this time of year. Thanks to you, ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response are able to accompany many families around the world in their search for a place to call home. Thanks to you, our church's ministries of help and hope will walk alongside them for a long as it takes. Thank you!

Dan - The Rev. Daniel Rift, Director ELCA World Hunger & Disaster Appeal

FYI: Every penny raised provides support for this church's anti-hunger ministry. Over 90 cents of each dollar directly supports programmatic work; less than a dime is used for hunter program administration and fundraising.

(71% international relief & development; 8% domestic relief & development; 5% hunger education; 7.5% advocacy; 8.5% administration & fundraising)

May the peace and joy of this Holy Season fill your life with light today and always.

With Sincere gratitude for your support.

Kathleen Kusterbech -
Church World Service

Dear Pastor Regan & St. Stephen's,

We give thanks to all from Christus Academy Students. Thanks for your support and partnership for both the church and school. The school is doing well with our new principal and looking. God Bless your ministry around the birth of our Lord.

Pastor Carol

Dear Pastor Chris and Members of St. Stephen's,

My family and I wish to express our thanks to all of you for your support and out pouring of love at this difficult time.

We felt that love all thorough your many, many cards, phone calls and visits. He especially appreciated those visits and it lifted his spirits in very low moments. As Joel said "God is Good" and he was thankful to each and every one of you.

Love - Doris Mayes & Family

WITH THANKS

Thank you to those who decorated for Advent; Betty & Larry De Pasquale; and to those who decorated for Christams; Gary Hasenbalg, the Cummings Family, the Newcomb family, Lenore Cronlund, John & Mas Belko, the Angelo family, Margaret & Donald Boker, Rich Dann, Sharon Shepherd. You did a beautiful job, and you work well together! We even acquired a duet team for Christmas Eve!

Thanks to all of you for your gifts for Ally Keenan, who is still serving in the Peace Corps. We have enough for a few more packages, so we will not collect any more for now. Ally sends her love and wishes the Congregation a Merry Christmas!

Thank you to all who planned, cooked, shopped, wrapped and decorated gift bags for our Christmas luncheon to New Visions in Camden. It is a busy time for everyone, and that you shared Jesus' love in such a tangible way is a blessing to the folks in Camden and to St. Stephen's!

Thanks to all of you for your gifts for Ally Keenan, who is still serving in the

Peace Corps. We have enough for a few more packages, so we will not collect any more for now. Ally sends her love and wishes the Congregation a Merry Christmas!

Thanks to all who helped make this year's Cookie Walk a great success. We raised \$360.00 & received matching funds from Thrivent of \$300.00. The committee is excited about how we can make it even bigger next year!

HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS

In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, the outpouring of concern and the desire to offer help to the people of New Jersey has been amazing and awe inspiring. This will be a long, challenging recovery for your state and many different types of assistance will be needed in the days, weeks and months ahead.

Many have asked what items can be donated to help with disaster response. While financial donations are one of the best ways you can help, here is a list of items that are needed now for relief

and will continue to be needed as restoration moves forward: *non-perishable food items, bottles water, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner, soap (bar or body wash), comb & brushes, mouthwash, washclothes, hand sanitizer, work gloves, disinfectant wipes, sponges, scrub brushes, scouring pads, dish soap, household cleaner, disposable cleaning towels, laundry detergent, heavy-duty trash bags.* For more information regarding donations please contact Lisa Barnes, Director of Community Partnering and advocacy, at lbarnes@lsmnj.org or 609-699-4143.

BULLETIN BOARD

The German American group is offering free German lessons on 2nd, 3rd & 4th Tuesdays from 7-8:30 pm. Meets at the church in the choir room.

Synod Companion Trip to Namibia, July 2013 . . . details to follow. Approximate travel cost is \$4000. Speak to Pastor for more info. **HELP US go green** . . . by signing up for receiving your Flame via email. Sign up in the

narthex! Even if you are not interested please give us your email so we can alert you about special times, funerals, etc. . . THANKS

COLUMBARIUM NICHE - Permit for Single Inurnment \$2,250; Permit for Double Inurnment \$2500. A \$500 discount for church members till Dec. 2012. Please contact Lou Decina or Herb Budd with any questions.

VOLUNTEER/JOB OPPORTUNITIES

If you are interested in a disaster response mission trip in the future (not immediate) please speak to Pastor Chris. This will now be a cluster project.

Handy Helpers is a program to help senior citizens and disabled persons with small jobs around the home. Volunteers meet on the second Saturday of each month, September through June, working from 8:30 am till Noon. For further info call 856-845-1244.

