

The Flame

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

March 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,
I include my report from the 2012 Annual Report to the congregation, for those who may not have read it.

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 2 Corinthians 5:17

This is not only a good reminder to each of us for the New Year; live your identity as a Christian; but it is the Good News that we can always change our ways to be more Christ like in our attitude and behaviors.

"Always being made New" is the theme of our Church — the ELCA as it / we celebrate our 25th anniversary.

This past year has been a good year and we give thanks to God for the mission and ministry that we shared in Jesus Christ. First of all I want to thank everyone for their commitment to St. Stephen's and to the wider expressions of the church – cluster, synod, and churchwide. In addition we are part of an ecumenical community here in Woodbury and share the ministry of the Food Pantry and Jeannette's Closet. Each week as we leave worship and head out into the "Mission field", we hear the last words of worship as expressed by the assisting minister; "go in peace, remember the poor." This is what God is calling us to do. As redeemed children of God, in grateful response for the love shared with us, we witness that love to others. Our church (building) does not exist for us, but rather for those outside the church who need to experience God's love. Thank you for your continued generous support of the ELCA Hunger Appeal; Global Barnyard, Malaria Fund and Disaster Response;

for while we can not be everywhere to serve; we can trust that those in the name of the ELCA, in the name of Jesus Christ are administering our contributed funds in good stewardship.

I still find that our congregation is a welcoming one, and I am grateful that we now have new (yet experienced) folks involved in leadership positions.

The confirmation class brings joy to my heart! While I was grateful that Vicar Karen Bernhardt took the reins last year, I am glad to be back in working with the young people again and glad to have Amanda Gebhart assisting me. In that same vein I enjoy the faith sharing that takes place in Bible Study each week. Just wish more folks would join us!

Thank you to the congregation for the support and fellowship shared with Pastor Magdalena Ya-Shalongo, as she worked towards her doctorate at LTSP. I know that she will be an even greater asset to the Lutheran church in Namibia; and am so pleased

to have her as
colleague/friend.

25 years! It seems like only
yesterday! The theme is
great and a challenge for us
to be about change (ew -
that scary 6 letter word) -
but we do need to change
to meet the needs of those
whom we wish to evangelize
and welcome as a part of
our church/congregation
family of faith. So to be
about always making things
new, I propose and commit
to:

1. Reinvigorating our
Rejoicing Spirits efforts.
2. Reviving our youth
ministry. Our confirmation
efforts are a good beginning
- But we need commitment
and leadership from the
congregation.
3. Renewing our
worship practices - we are
grateful for our upgraded
sound system; and now are
looking towards seasonal
worship experiences. This
was something that I
brought up at a recent
council meeting, and more
information will follow.

Thank you also for your
continued support as I
serve as Secretary of the NJ
Synod; and as president of
the GWCM, and chair of our
community CROP Walk. I
look forward to the
Churchwide Assembly in
August, that I will attend as
a voting member.

Please continue to keep in
your prayers our Mission

Partners, Christus
Lutheran Church in
Camden, and Emmanuel
Lutheran Church in
Namibia. Please
remember our synod in
your prayers as we
discern and select a new
bishop, as our faithful and
faith filled bishop, Bishop
Roy Riley retires after 22
years.

Peace to you all as we
continue in mission.
In the name of Jesus Christ!
Pastor Christine Regan

**WORSHIP WITH US
FEBRUARY 2013**

Sunday, March 3 2012
The 3rd Sunday in Lent
9am Holy Communion
10:45am Holy
Communion, Baptism
10:45am Sunday School

Wednesday, March 6th
7pm Lenten Study ~ **The
Lord's Prayer**

Sunday, March 10, 2013
The 4th Sunday in Lent
9am Holy Communion
10:45am Holy
Communion
10:45am Sunday School

Wednesday, March 13th
7pm Lenten Study ~ **The
Lord's Prayer**

Sunday, March 17, 2013
The 5th Sunday in Lent
9am Holy Communion
10:45am Holy
Communion
10:45am Sunday School

Wednesday, March 20th
7pm Lenten Study ~ **The
Lord's Prayer**

Sunday, March 24, 2013
Passion/Palm Sunday

*As we ponder what it would've been like to throw coats
and branches in your path as you entered Jerusalem,
Lord, help us lay our lives at your feet*

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

Thursday, March 28th, 2013
Maundy Thursday

*God, after the first Passover, you delivered Israel from
slavery. Today we share that meal, transformed by your
Son, and trust in your delivery from slavery to sin.
Amen.*

11am Spoken Holy
Communion
7:30pm Holy Communion

Friday, March 29th, 2013
Good Friday

*Holy God, mighty and immortal, have mercy on us. We
praise you, for by your holy cross you have redeemed the
world.*

12 noon Community Good
Friday Service, Kemble
United Methodist Church,
7:30pm Holy Communion

Sunday, March 31, 2013
Resurrection of our Lord
Easter Sunday

*Like the women who first heard the Resurrection news,
we come not knowing what to expect. Surprise us, Christ
Jesus, with your living presence, in life's uncertainties.*

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

SCHOOL SUNDAY, BIBLE STUDIES, GROUPS AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Still need a Sunday School teacher for the 5th & 6th grade, can be weekly or bi-weekly. Also if anyone is interested in helping out as a teacher, aide or substitute for the rest of 2013 please contact Judy Hunter at 856-468-9798.

During Lent the Sunday School will be collect & contribute money for the "Malaria Campaign". Bug collection containers have been given out.

New Members will be received into the fellowship of St. Stephen's this Spring. If you are interested in joining with us in ministry and commitment, as well as fellowship, please speak to Pastor Chris. Orientation sessions are scheduled for, **Sunday, March 10th & Sunday, April 14th** from 6—7:30 pm.

Mid Week Lenten Study
Each Wednesday, February 20th, 27th, March 6th, 13th, 20th. We will study "The Lord's Prayer" with some of our ecumenical partners. We will again host at St. Stephen's from 7 - 8:15 pm. Please plan on joining us in fellowship & study.

BIBLE STUDY
Monday's at 10:30 am. We are currently studying the book of Exodus. We are

especially relating it to our Christian faith today. Please join our group for coffee and conversation.

CONFIRMATION
March 3, 5 - 7 pm
March 17, 5 - 7 pm
March 24, 5 - 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.

SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Thanks to all who helped cook pancakes and sausage and wait on tables for the Pancake Supper.

The Super Bowl is over . . . , but we are still collecting canned soup for the Food Pantry. Please bring soup for this ministry that we share.

HELP needed at Jeannette's Closet, Tuesdays, 9-10:30 am, please see Lenore Cronlund for more info.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

Romans 11:29

For in God you have been enriched in every way- in all your speaking and in all your knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1:5

Submitted by the Stewardship Committee

WELCA NEWS

Welca is planning another bustrip to Sight & Sound in Lancaster, Pa to see the story of "Noah". Mark your calender for Wednesday April 24th. We'll stop first at Kitchen Kettle Village for shopping and a light lunch (on your own) then proceed to the theater for a 1PM show followed by dinner at Hershey Farm Restaurant. \$110. includes motorcoach, show ticket, visit to Kitchen Kettle Village, Dinner at Hershey Farm Restaurant, taxes and tip for bus driver.

See the poster on the bulletin board or Diana Bensel for information and reservations. Make checks payable to Jonathans Travel.

WELCA ANNUAL BLANKET BLITZ

Once again WELCA is holding a Blanket Blitz in order to receive funds from Thrivent. The date is Thursday, April 4th, 9—12. Everyone is invited to take part in helping us assemble quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We especially need Thrivent Members to take part if only for a short time. Once again you do not have to be handy with a sewing machine. We have many other small jobs that need to be done before the actual assembling of the quilts. Refreshments will be served. Please come and help out!

ANNUAL GATHERING FOR WOMEN AT THE SEMINARY

“Women at the Wheel” is the theme of the 2013 gathering at the Philadelphia Seminary, Saturday April 13th, from 9—4. This day will use the “Wholeness Wheel” as its basis, inviting women to renew, reconnect and refresh physically, emotionally and spiritually in a day of fellowship and gathering. The cost is \$40.00, which includes lunch. You can register by calling Kathie Afflerback at

215-248-6324 or let Nancy MacMaster know. We will be car pooling to the seminary.

EVANGELISM

The Evangelism committee is updating our Congregational Birthday list. Please fill out the card at the end of the pew.

We are also collecting any unwanted religious Christmas cards. We will be using them for a future project. If you have any cards you would like to donate, please leave them in the basket designated in the narthex. Thanks!

LETTERS

Dear St. Stephen's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your recent gift of \$3054.50 to Hurricane Sandy - US. Your gift means that our church can continue its effective and efficient response to disasters that have already occurred and can stand ready for those that may come in the future.

Both here in the United States and around the

world, the generosity of Lutherans like you makes it possible for communities and families whose lives and livelihoods have been disrupted by disaster to get back on their feet again. Thanks to your support and the expertise of our dedicated local affiliates, companions and partners, people are empowered to access the resources they need to recover after a disaster. And your generosity also supports disaster preparedness work, helping people know what to do in case there is a next time.

To neighbors who can feel alone and in despair, your gift brings both help now and hope for the future. Your generosity makes it possible for the church to be there alongside our neighbors for the long haul. Thank you.

In Christ's Service, The Daniel Rift

Director, ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal

Dear St. Stephen's Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministries, we would like to thank you for your generous gift of \$872.00. Your

commitment of helping the food pantry in our community is sincerely appreciated. Generous gifts from donors like you provide the financial and moral support needed to continue our mission.

Each year, the GWCM continues to advance its mission to feed those in need. Your donation and those of your friends and neighbors are what make this possible. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and continued support of the food pantry as we strive to make the lives of those less fortunate a little bit easier.

We thank you again for your generosity and for remembering the Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministries in your prayers.

Peace and blessings to you
GWCM

Thank you for your gifts to the ELCA Global barnyard. We purchased 1 llama, 1 goat & 3 pigs for a community some where in the world.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your most generous gift. As I contemplate this last year of ministry I cannot help but recognize the joy this ministry brings - to northern children and

adults, as well as supporters. Yet, On Eagle's Wings sees improbable. As written in our Advent Reflections: We are a family of diverse expression of Christian faith, from diverse cultures, uniting two of the largest nations on earth, walking humbly with each in Jesus' name. In days that value division over unity, such things seem improbable to us. Yet with God, all things are possible.

You are part of this unique and varied group. You are important to this ministry. Thank you for joining in the fun and celebration of northerners and southerners discovering God's grace. Thank you for believing that God will make a way. Thank you for praying for this ministry. Thank you for so generously giving of your own financial resources.

I am so grateful for your support. Your gift makes a difference . . . to this ministry, to me and especially those we have the honor and privilege of 'walking together with' as God's children. Friends of St. Stephen's, thank you for believing what is possible.

May God richly bless the parish of St. Stephen's!

AnnE Zimmerman

You may have noticed Pastor's art gallery in the hallway, if not please take a stroll. Thanks to Mike & Jackie Wyatt for hanging them! You will notice paintings by Sally Bouchaud, Alfred Hetrick and Lou Decina, paintings related to Pastor's trips to the Arctic to teach Bible School, a batik from her trip to East Africa to visit hunger relief and development projects, a photo of a young boy on a donkey in Israel that she took, as well as a photo that she captured in India of a little boy (currently being re-framed). There is also a batik from Samuel from Uganda hung outside the office. It is a great way to share them.

BULLETIN BOARD

Dr. Faroag Padder has invited members of St. Stephen's to a seminar on the "Life & Character of the Prophet Muhammad", on Thursday, March 7th, at the Mansion, 3000 High Street, Voorhees, from 7—9 pm. Please let Pastor Chris know if you are interested and she will register us all. Also we can car pool. Dr. Padder serves as president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of South Jersey.

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.

SAFETY For security reasons, if you have church business, PLEASE use the office door located in the front of the church (facing Evergreen Ave.), and you will be buzzed in (even if you have a key). Please stop in the office, sign in, so we know who is in the building with us. Also please exit through the same door. Thanks for your cooperation!

THE GREATEST NEWS

Death carries with it a certain dread. It has always been the enemy, the great, mysterious monster that makes people quake with fear. Death stalks the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated. Death is no respecter of race, color or creed. Its shadow haunts us day and night. We never know when the moment of

death will come for us. Is there any hope?

The greatest news that mortal ear has ever heard is the news that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, as he had promised. ... Because Christ lives, we also shall live. The greatest truth that you can ever hear is that Jesus Christ died but rose again, and that you, too, will die but can rise again into newness of life.

—Billy Graham



Now let the heavens be joyful!
Let earth her song begin!
Let the round world keep triumph,
And all that is therein;
Invisible and visible,
Their notes let all things blend,
For Christ the Lord has risen,
Our joy that hath no end.

—St. John of Damascus