

THE GOOD NEWS

NOVEMBER 2014

At St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Fall River, Wisconsin & St. John's Lutheran Church, Doylestown, Wisconsin
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Thanksgiving Services:

In our rush-here rush-there world, it is so very good to ... prioritize our Thanksgiving "day of thanks" with worshiping God at one of our two congregations in our dual parish.

St. Stephen's will have Thanksgiving Eve service at 7pm (Nov 26th).

St. John's will have Thanksgiving Day service at 9:30am (Nov 27th).

Make time to worship our Savior from sin and thank Him for all He has done for us. And then, make it a faithful habit. We couldn't do anything better with our time.



The "NONES. A growing number of Christians, especially among the younger generations, are in jeopardy of being swallowed up by today's cultural norms and secular thinking, only to become unaffiliated to any church or denomination known as the "NONES." The "nones" are described as the fastest-growing "religious group" of our day – one in five Americans identify themselves as having no religious affiliation. One particular survey showed 3 in 10 college age students are "nones." If one adds the influence of culture and media together, the combination is "a recipe for a fast rise of the 'nones,' [and] a fast rise away from Christian values," he said. "We will be seeing this on various social issues, things that would have been unthinkable 20 years ago are now mainstream. The reason I think that's happening more frequently is because the cultural context is suited to it." **Christians have a responsibility to reach out to the "nones" by sincerely caring for their salvation instead of focusing more on themselves.**

INVITE, INVITE, INVITE! We NEED our congregation members to be actively seeking to invite friends, neighbors and relatives to church. Our world is filled with people everywhere who no longer feel the need to worship. You may know some of them. The devil has them brainwashed so that the Holy Spirit does not have opportunity through the Word of God to touch their hearts and enliven or wake them up spiritually. Our Lord loved us so much He gave His one and only Son to save us from sin and hell. It seems MANY have forgotten this great act of love and the SAVIOR'S DESIRE FOR US TO WORSHIP HIM. That is, many have forgotten that the Lord expects us to worship Him with grateful hearts and words. Pray for those around you who need a rich taste of Jesus' love and godly learning. Invite them to church. Offer to meet them at the door, or offer to pick them up and bring them with you. When at church, ask them where they would like to sit. Sit by them. Guide them through the liturgy if they need it. And during the week, call them or go over by them to visit about things. You just might be the "one" person they will listen to and allow God the Holy Spirit to have the opportunity to touch their hearts with the message of sin and grace; law and gospel. Don't be passive! Be aggressive. And kind. While there still is time.

End Times -- During November the Christian Church year focuses on the End Times, with readings and sermons reminding us this world will not "go on" forever. The SIGNS of the End Times are taking place all around our world. Of course, maybe the Return of our Savior will be many years away, or maybe it won't. We aren't supposed to know the exact day. Which means we must be prepared for the "instant" return of our Savior to "judge the living and the dead" whenever the Lord chooses to end the creation of the world which he created thousands of years ago.

ADVENT COMES FAST! The FIRST Sunday in Advent in our church year is November 30th. Advent is the time we give attention the Coming of our Lord, four Sundays before Christmas.

THANK YOU very very much to St. Stephen's Sunday School children and staff who served a delicious breakfast for their parents and the congregation last month. The offerings given will be used for a children's "outing." Thanks again!

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM PRACTICES will be held on **November 30, December 7, December 14, and December 21st**. The children will be practicing their Christmas Worship Program during the normal Sunday School times.

THOUGHT: if the SS Program is a way to bring a guest child or children to learn about Jesus and the meaning of His birth, that is, by inviting them to our SS program practices, we can try it. But their parents will definitely need to stay at church during program practices to help the teachers!!! And we would have to determine in each instance if it is workable for the teachers.

ST. STEPHEN'S SOUP SUPPER THANK YOU ~ Thank you so very much to everyone who donated food and/or offerings for our Soup Supper. Special thanks to those who served the Lord by working. And many thanks to those who attended the supper. Thank you, Fayan Merck for making the delicious potato soup. We appreciate all service and gifts to the Lord. The Soup Supper offering is \$1870 which includes \$21 from the Ruth Circle for dishcloth sales. Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Madison "Treasured Time With Tots" Outreach Program will receive \$670. St. Stephen's will use \$1200 for our monthly Guest Pastors for 2015. May God continue to bless Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Outreach Program and also St. Stephen's Guest Pastors who preach the Word for us. Again, many thanks to all.

November 6:30pm Thursday Bible Classes for Confirmed and Adult members & friends:

1. Abortion according to God's Word November 6th;
2. Homosexuality according to God's Word November 13th
3. Living Together / Not Marrying according to God's Word November 20th

Prayers for the hospitalized or recuperating in our midst:

Irene Baker who has been in & out of the hospital & struggling with her health.

Gertrude Stilson as she is recuperating from surgery.

Judy Dauman as she is recuperating from her surgery.

Oma Benzine as she will soon have double knee surgery.

Lew White, friend of our congregations, who is working hard in therapy to return home.

BE SURE TO LET PASTOR KNOW IF YOU ARE HOSPITALIZED, HAVING SURGERY, OR IN NEED OF SPECIAL PRAYERS, SO WE CAN THEREBY ENCOURAGE THE PRAYERS OF YOUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS IN OUR CONGREGATIONS. Never forget, prayer is powerful!

Communicant member totals in our congregations November 1, 2014:

101 at St. John's; 176 at St. Stephen's. Released from membership: Lance Benzine at St. John's; Christine Karow and Emily Jones at St. Stephen's.

Zion Lutheran Church in Columbus invites us to an open house of their new church building on Saturday November 15th 9am – 12noon.

TOUR: You are invited to join a 10-day tour to Greece, "In the Footsteps of Paul" scheduled for Oct. 19-28, 2015. Biblical sites will include Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth and more. Included in the tour is a 3-day cruise on the Mediterranean Sea to see Patmos and Ephesus as well as other Greek islands. There is also a 3-day optional tour to Rome. For details and a brochure, kindly contact retired pastor Eugene Kock [608 318 1079](tel:6083181079) or pastorkock@yahoo.com. Discounts for early enrollments.

Jesus is...Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:6

~~*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called...Prince of Peace.*~~

Are you ready for the frenzy? By now, we all know that it's coming. Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and that means turkeys to carve, tables to set, guestrooms to prepare—the list seems endless. And when it's all said and done, what is waiting for us but...Christmas! And that means presents to buy, trees to trim, cookies to decorate—that list is even longer than Thanksgiving's! It kind of makes us long for when it's all over, doesn't it? For a time when we can finally sit back, relax, and say, "Peace, at last!"

Peace. That is a concept the Bible talks about too. Only when the Bible talks about peace, it is referring to something far greater than a little bit of rest and relaxation after a frantic holiday season. It is referring to peace with God.

So do you have it? Do you have peace with God? Or perhaps a better question is this: Is it even possible for unholy, imperfect, sinful people like we are to have peace with a holy, perfect, and sinless God? After all, God himself demands in his word that, if we are to have peace with him, we must be holy and perfect just like he is. So is peace with God even possible?

It sure is. And not because we are somehow going to become holy and perfect on our own. It is because we have one who has been holy and perfect in our place. His name is Jesus, the one the prophet Isaiah so aptly calls the "Prince of Peace." Through his perfect life and innocent death, Jesus removed all of our sins and gave us his perfection. In doing so, the Prince of Peace has given us exactly what our holy and perfect God demands of us. Through faith, we now have peace with God as our personal possession forever.

Perhaps you are looking forward to the peace you will experience after the hustle and bustle of the holiday season is all over. As you do, never forget about the peace that the Prince of Peace brought you. Jesus brought you peace with God. And that peace will last forever.

Dear family of God,

Greetings from Brazil, where we arrived a week ago. It is nominally spring here, but feels like summer, with hot temps, lots of rain and high humidity. All the birds are singing as they go about finding their partners and making their nests.

We thank God for all of you who were so good to us while stateside. And once again, we are sorry that we didn't get to visit everyone that we wanted to. Somehow time goes so fast!

We had one amusing happening on our trip back: I was pulled aside to test for explosives on my hands! That is the first time we've had this happen. It was no doubt a random thing, or could they have wondered about all those sandwiches in my carry-on? We laughed about it quite a while.

Sitting in church my first Sunday back, after being gone for six months, I marveled at all the new faces. Some were people I had met sometime in the past, and others were entirely new. There was an entire family, now in regular attendance, who had had their children baptized years ago at the instigation of relatives who are members. There was a husband who was attending regularly only now, after his wife had become a member as a teen-ager, 8 years ago. There was a young adult who had come back after sampling another church with an exciting youth program. (She was horrified when the leader said that Jesus had paid for sins up till the moment He died, and from then on we pay for our own sins! Our instruction course is very explicit on this point.) There was another man who had appeared from time to time to witness a baptism, but is now, finally, taking instructions. That reminded me of how we cannot program the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we think that we send out a missionary to a new place, and expect him to have a congregation up and strong after x number of years. But it is a gradual thing, this building of the Kingdom of God. I'm sure you know of similar situations in which the Word that was sown finally came to fruition many years later. Isn't it wonderful how the Holy Spirit works and never gives up! Just think back to how long it took us to grow in faith, and we are not done growing! So we with HIS help keep on sowing while it is day and HIS grace is still present in our lives. THE LORD IS GOOD.

Other joys in that first service were the baptism of a baby that had been taken at 7 months because of the pre-eclampsia of the mother, and a recently confirmed man proudly saying, "I am now a member, and so is my grandson who was baptized on my confirmation day!" And it was good to see all the members again and sing with them during and after the service. (We always have a hymn sing after the service - we all love to sing!)

Now on to the preparations for Christmas. Charlie will take up the classes he was teaching next week. Part of the garden is in, and coming up with the rains, and the house is organized again.

May the Lord give you all a blessed Thanksgiving, as one more day to give thanks to Him that our names are written in heaven.

Charlie and Beth Flunker

**~ St. John's(J) and St. Stephen's(S) Lutheran Churches
~ November 2014 ~**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 8:15 am Worship(J) 9:15 am Kids for Christ(J) 9:45 am Worship(S) 10:45 am Kids for Christ(S)	3	4	5 3:30 pm Combined Churches 5 th & 6 th gr Bible History Class(S) 6:30 - 7:30 pm Combined Churches 7 th & 8 th gr Catechism Class(S)	6 6:30pm Joint Churches Bible Class (S) 7:30 pm Joint Churches Worship (S)	7	8
9 8:15 am Worship w/com(J) 9:15 am Kids for Christ(J) 9:45 am Worship w/com(S) 10:45 am Kids for Christ(S)	10	11	12 6:30 - 7:30 pm Combined Churches 7 th & 8 th gr Catechism Class(S)	13 6:30pm Joint Churches Bible Class (S) 7:30 pm Joint Churches Worship (S)	14	15
16 8:15 am Worship(J) 9:15 am Kids for Christ(J) 9:45 am Worship(S) 10:45 am Kids for Christ(S)	17	18 6:30pm SS Teachers Meeting (S & J) for Christmas Program Plans	19 3:30 pm Combined Churches 5 th & 6 th gr Bible History Class(S) 6:30 - 7:30 pm Combined Churches 7 th & 8 th gr Catechism Class(J)	20 6:30pm Joint Churches Bible Class (S) 7:30 pm Joint Churches Worship (S)	21	22
23 8:15 am Worship(J) 9:15 am Kids for Christ(J) 9:45 am Worship(S) 10:45 am Kids for Christ(S)	24	25	26 7:00 pm Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service at St. Stephen's	27 9:30 am Thanksgiving Worship Service at St. John's	28	29

Notes:

St. Stephen's Ushers: Nov 9th & 16th: Gene Adam, John Kehi, Billy Kehi, Jim Yohn & Mike Dykstra; Nov 23rd & 26th: J.D. Leisemann, Butch Leisemann, Jace Bolda & Dan Koch; Nov 30th & Dec 7th: Randy Randall, Chris Randall, George Randall, Todd Huggett & Nathan Rockweiler; Dec 14th & Dec 21st: Troy Sauer, Jamie McGee, Ken Dickerson, Jayson Selje & Mark Schultz; Dec 28th & Dec 31st: Russ Krakow, Del Foulkes, Nick Posthuma, Trent Trieloff & Hunter Trieloff