



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

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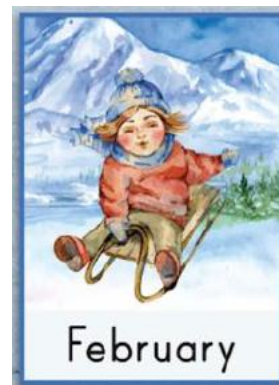
Happy 2025!

Sunday Worship: 9a
(Fellowship AFTER)

Reverend Brenda L. Greenwald

Phone/Text: 720.989.8218

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IMPORTANT DATES For Your Calendar

January 5, 12, 19 **Sunday Worship: 9a at St, 10:30a at G**

January 26 **Sunday Worship: 9a at St, 10:30a at G**

February 2 **SPECIAL Joint Worship: 9a at St. Stephen's**
Annual Meeting for ST after 9a Worship

**WRITE
THIS
DOWN**

March 5 **Ash Wednesday:** **Mini-service at 12p** at Gethsemane
(Some hymns, brief homily, ashes, communion)
Full Service 6p at St. Stephen's

Birthday Blessings January

4 Bruce Campbell
13 Sean Bright
13 Pam Sederquist
15 Penny Nehls
26 Callie Crawford
27 Sandy Chaney
29 Sally Oliver

February

4 Donna Tennessen
6 Kim Belec
8 Nick Diehm
9 Duelly Keyzers
16 Rev. Brenda Greenwald
16 Roy Parrett
21 Keith Salo
23 Pattie Starzynski
24 Shaw Salo Feb 3
Feb 17

We invite you to pray for those serving in the military: Jordan Baril, Jay Chapple, Ken Dams, Trish Dams, Brent Jurmu, Jared Jurmu

Happy Anniversary

Alvin & Sharon Etelamaki
Fred & Kim Belec

May the comfort and hope of the Resurrection be with the friends and families of:



+James Voss+

December 30, 1938
December 25, 2024

+Jim's+ funeral will be at 1p on Saturday, April 5 at St. Stephen's. Luncheon to follow.



+LaVerne Noasconi+

June 9, 1934
December 27, 2024

+LaVerne's+ funeral will be at 12p on Saturday, January 18 at Anderson Diehm Funeral Home.

Thank you for holding the friends and families of our Congregants in your prayers. Contact the Office with any corrections.

LOOKING AHEAD...

(More details sent mid-February 2025)

- **Ash Wednesday** - March 5, 2025
 - o Mini-Service at 12 - at Gethsemane
 - o Full Service at 6p - at St. Stephen's
- **Mid-Week Lenten Services**
 - o 5:15p Supper (Soup & Sandwich Suppers)
 - o 6:00p Service



Hospitalized? Welcome a visit? Contact the Office at **906.788.4234**, or reach out to **Pr Brenda** directly at **720.989.8218** (call/text), and we'll make it happen!

Turn Around!

Rev. Brenda L. Greenwald

(The Christmas Sermon for those of you who were unable to join us Christmas Eve.)

Merry Christmas, dear Church!

As we gather in the **quiet** of this hallowed eve,
with the **tree** aglow,
delightful **decorations**, **poinsettias** a-plenty,
family squished next to you in the pew
the **manger** scene outside in **place**....



You know...yeah.....let's **PAUSE** for a moment, and **talk** about that **Manger**.
Might I **remind** you that it has **NOT** been an **easy** path
to set-up that **manger**!?!



Year after **year**, we **stumble** into **ONE** adventure after another!

- 1) I mean, **WHO** could forget the **Winter** of **2019**,
where this very **HOLE-Y Mary** was part of the scene.
- 2) **Holy Mary** was followed by **THIS!**
Holy Hurricane-like winds of **2020**,
which **blew** right through our **lives**...
and apparently? Right through the **manger**, too!
- 3) The story of "Mary's Many Miseries and Mishaps"
was not even **CLOSE** to being over,
because she went **MISSING** the next year...as seen **HERE!**
- 4) Only to be **discovered** - perfectly **safe**
in the back of a **pick-up truck** seen **HERE!**
- 5) **LAST** year, we discovered a 3.5 year old **stowaway**,
nestled between the **Holy Family** and the **Shepherd Boy**.



So, THIS year, we were **DETERMINED** to have our **ducks** in a row.

On the morning we gathered to **decorate**,
I cheerfully went **outside** to check on the **progress** of our manger set-up
expecting to see a lovely, little **crèche**.

Well, it was lovely **below**, but **WHAT** on **EARTH** is happening **ABOVE**!?

Seems that Mary Had A Little Lamb...go **rogue**!
O Little Lamb, I **SO** get it. I just wanted to **tell him** a few things:



MUSIC (2 measure intro) Verse 1

"Total Eclipse of the Heart" - Song by Bonnie Tyler

- 1: Turn around. Every now and then, the Christmas **season** can get crazy and you wanna **run**-away
 - 2: Turn around Every now and then we **lose** our **minds** in the **hustle** and we really **lose** our way...
 - 3: Turn around. Every now and then, we get a little bit **nervous** that we've missed the **point** of Christmas
 - 4: Turn around. Every now and then, we need **reminding** that the Savior, come to us every day
- TURN AROUND....have hope. TURN AROUND...keep the faith. (We'll finish the song in a moment)**

Can ya really **blame** the little **lamb** for **turning** away from all the **chaos**? We have a **birth scene** unlike any you've seen on **TV**, and we sometimes forget **that**, surrounding the **PEOPLE** are the **ANIMALS**! Camels, donkeys, cows, chickens, pigs, and yes, **sheep**. Little **lambs** who, perhaps just an hour before, were busy minding their **own** business, grazing happily, settling in for the night. When, **WHOOSH**! In swoops an **Angel** of the Lord. **NOT** your typical evening occurrence.



"Don't panic!" the angel says. "Got some news for you. So, that **SAVIOR** we're always talking about? Good news. He was born - one village over. My friends and I thought you should know." Then, **WHOOSH**! The whole bunch is gone. I can't **imagine** the **flock** would have just **sat** there **quietly** and listened as the **glowing, beaming, SINGING** hosts of heaven **blaring** out their little message!?! We can only **IMAGINE** the **BLEATING**, and the BAAING and **WHAT WAS THAT** sounds that **scared** little lambs make! I'm guessing our little lamb **turned away LONG** before getting to the **manger**! And **WHY** the shepherds didn't just **SIT** there, **STUNNED** for the rest of night - is **beyond** me. But they jumped into **action**! They needed to **see** for themselves what the **Angels** had told them to be true. ¹⁶**So, they went with haste...**" They ran. They galloped. They made their way as **quickly** as possible to Bethlehem to try and **find** this baby.



MUSIC: BRIDGE

Every now and then we get a GLIMPSE of the glory of the Heavens of the joy and peace forever.
 And if we'd only tell each other, we'll be sharing the love forever
 And we'd only be sharing the joy, 'Cause the joy's all around.
 Together, we can tell of the Savior's mighty birth, God's love has come down, down to earth!
 I DON'T know why we'd WAIT, no longer in the dark,
 We're LIVING in a miracle, with Jesus, the Spark...
 Tonight! Forever's gonna start tonight...Forever is a holy night!

Oh, Church, what makes **US** move **WITH HASTE**!? toward the **manger**, this night? What makes **US** move with **ANY** sort of **SPEED** toward **ANY** sort of Divine connection **ANY** night!?? I **won't** ask you to **RAISE** your hands, or anything like that, but I **KNOW** that **NOT** all of you have gathered tonight **WITH HASTE**! **YOU** didn't get a heavenly messenger, glowing in the dark, who told you to **come** to worship. You **MAY** have received a **less** than heavenly "invitation" to get **"PUT YOUR SHOES ON. We're LEAVING in 10 MINUTES!"**



Either way, **little lambs**, you went from facing **AWAY** from the manger, to **facing** it, right here, right now. **Kudos! Pay attention** to what **captures** your **hearts**, this night. **Singing** may **not** be your thing (*I can hear my own brother raising a Hallelujah to that*) but maybe the **peace** of a Sanctuary is. Maybe **praying** with a whole bunch of people around might **NOT** make you comfortable, but **communing** with the Body of Christ is what reveals **God** to you tonight. With **SO** many commercialized items **competing** for our attention, it's important - it's **LIFE-GIVING** to recognize what keeps you turned toward Christ.



Truly - recognizing what keeps us turned toward Christ will far outlive the lights of the season. ALL of us can get swept away in the hullabaloo of the holidays, Pastors included! But when the **seasonal** hoopla has **calmed** down, and the **physical** mangers have been put back in the **attic** for another year, what's going to keep **YOU** turning **TOWARD** Christ?

FINAL MUSIC

*Once upon a time, there was a child in the straw,
Baby Jesus, born so small
Here's what we can do:*

1. Give praise for the grace of it all!
2. We stand in AWE at it all.
3. Give thankfulness for it all
4. We sing for joy in it all
5. Share loving peace for us all.
6. **Keep turning around for it all. AMEN!**

Pr. Brenda



Transitions: Gethsemane + St. Stephen's



On December 31, 2024, we bid adieu to **Tony Corey**, our Gethsemane Office Manager and dual-location custodian of over two and a half years. Tony always greeted folks with a friendly smile and was willing to lend a helpful hand to anyone in need. We sincerely wish him well in his future endeavors and thank him for the work he put in while at Gethsemane!

We'd like to thank **Heather Esmahan**, the Office Manager at St. Stephen's, who has taken on the responsibilities of Custodian at both Gethsemane and St. Stephen's. We will be placing an ad in the Journal soon regarding finding a new Office Manager for Gethsemane.



Lifelong Faith Formation 2025 Winter Classes Now Open for Registration

In its fifth year, Lifelong Faith Formation is one way for people of the Northern Great Lakes Synod, and beyond, to be church together. Join the conversation. Enjoy fellowship. Grow in faith as you study the Bible, church traditions, and contemporary concerns. Visit **[NGLSynod.org](https://nclsynod.org)** for more information!



Please register at least one week prior to the date your class begins. All classes are held online via Zoom, with one exception. ***"Take and Eat"*** is meeting in person, at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Escanaba. Courses are FREE but may require the purchase of textbooks or other materials. Contact Deacon Lori Ward if you have any questions about Lifelong Faith Formation at (615) 519-1969 or **lori.ward@nclsynod.org**.

FROM PASTOR SHARON

Dear Ones in the Northern Great Lakes Synod,



Grace and peace with you, through Christ, our Lord. Greetings! I am Pastor Sharolyn Swenson, and it is with joy and hope I look forward to being your new **Director of Evangelical Mission** and **Assistant to the Bishop** for the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the ELCA.



I have lived in Austin, Texas, most of my life and my whole time in ministry, serving God with congregations growing through seasons of transitions. Through this work, I have come to recognize we all are experiencing God's radical love, by being made new. I have walked with many congregations through seasons of unknown, exciting, and life-giving change. It is in this spirit of adventure and trust, I take this leap of faith, to come, serve with and live among you, for the sake of Christ, in a hopeful and changing world.

I have a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Texas at Arlington. (Thus really excited about the abundance of Frank Lloyd Wright buildings in the Great Lakes area.) My call to ministry grew through my work as a Godly Play storyteller and Trainer (a model of faith nurture and spiritual guidance with children) that led to a graduate Certificate in the Spiritual Guidance of Children from General Seminary (Episcopal) in New York City, and ultimately a call to ordained ministry. My Master of Divinity degree is from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and while I'm a lifelong Lutheran, and spent a year in residency at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for further Lutheran formation. I have served my synod on the Candidacy and Congregational Vitality committees, as well as at Austin Seminary Pastoral Leadership in Public Life fellow.

My heart is full for family and nature. I have three daughters in my life and heart: Navy, lived near Kilimanjaro, Tanzania as a director of a school, and now lives and goes to school in Austin. Summer, also lives in Austin, attends college, and is a dance teacher. Hope lived and died with leukemia, at the age of three, in 2000. Spending time in nature is a passion of mine, and I can't wait to see what the U.P. has in store. It seems absolutely beautiful. I enjoy gardening, hiking, kayaking, and camping. I'm eager to learn about new trees, growing seasons, and ecosystems.

I have found myself reflecting quite a lot on the imagery of bees, as I discern the activity of Director of Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop. The work of one bee is to go out and see God's gifts of the soil, the flowering fruit, and help pollinate other plants and return to the hive, in a centripetal loop of life in an ecosystem. The work is both solitary and interconnected, in hope and trust of God's abundant flourishing life for all. It works in seasons of birth, growth, and death...in the field, in the hive. It is the work of connecting many diverse expressions of life, for the common good. It is how I imagine our work together will be, through our love for God, one another, and creation.



Practically speaking, I will move to the Marquette area in late December, so that I can begin our work together in early January. I like to be called "Pastor Sharolyn" (it rhymes with Carolyn) and I use she/her pronouns. I hear it gets pretty cold up there...so I got a coat. I trust we will figure out the rest together.

Grace and peace, Pastor Sharolyn

Daily Bible Readings: January 2025

Wed. Jan. 1, 2025	Psalm 8	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:15-21
Thu – Jan 2	Proverbs 147:12-20	James 3:13-18	Psalm 147:12-20
Fri – Jan 3	Job 42:10-17	Luke 8:16-21	Psalm 72
Sat – Jan 4	Isaiah 6:1-5	Acts 7:44-53	Psalm 72

Sun. Jan. 5 Epiphany of Our Lord

Jer 31:7:14, Ps 147:12-20, Eph 1:3-14, John 1:1-18

Prayer of the Day: O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Mon. Jan. 6	Isaiah 60:1-6	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matt 2:1-12
Tue – Jan 7	Daniel 2:1-19	Ecclesiastes 4:17—5:1	Ps 72
Wed – Jan 8	Daniel 2:24-49	Ecclesiastes 5:15-20	Ps 72
Thu – Jan 9	Ecclesiastes 1:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Ps 29
Fri – Jan 10	Ecclesiastes 2:1-11	1 Corinthians 2:1-10	Ps 29
Sat – Jan 11	Ecclesiastes 3:1-15	1 Corinthians 2:11-16	Ps 29



Sun. Jan. 12 Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen

Mon – Jan 13	Judges 4:1-16	Ephesians 6:10-17	Psalm 106:1-12
Tue – Jan 14	Judges 5:12-21	1 John 5:13-21	Psalm 106:1-12
Wed – Jan 15	Numbers 27:1-11	Luke 11:33-36	Psalm 106:1-12
Thu – Jan 16	Jeremiah 3:1-5	Acts 8:18-24	Psalm 36:5-10
Fri – Jan 17	Jeremiah 3:19-25	1 Corinthians 7:1-7	Psalm 36:5-10
Sat – Jan 18	Jeremiah 4:1-4	Luke 11:14-23	Psalm 36:5-10

Sun. Jan. 19 Second Sunday after Epiphany

Is 62:1-5, Ps 36:5-10, 1 Cor 12:1-11, John 2:1-11

Prayer of the Day: Lord God, source of every blessing, you showed forth your glory and led many to faith by the works of your Son, who brought gladness and salvation to his people. Transform us by the Spirit of his love, that we may find our life together in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, Amen

Mon – Jan 20	Isaiah 54:1-8	Romans 12:9-21	Ps 145
Tue – Jan 21	Song of Solomon 4:1-8	1 Corinthians 1:3-17	Ps 145
Wed – Jan 22	Song of Solomon 4:9—5:1	Luke 5:33-39	Ps 145
Thu – Jan 23	Isaiah 61:1-7	Romans 7:1-6	Ps 19
Fri – Jan 24	Nehemiah 2:1-10	Romans 12:1-8	Ps 19
Sat – Jan 25	Nehemiah 5:1-13	Luke 2:39-52	Ps 19



Sun. Jan. 26 Third Sunday after Epiphany Neh 8:1-10, Ps 19, 1 Cor 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21

Prayer of the Day: Blessed Lord God, you have caused the holy scriptures to be written for the nourishment of your people. Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, comforted by your promises, we may embrace and forever hold fast to the hope of eternal life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Mon – Jan 27	Jer 36:1-10	1 Cor 14:1-12	Ps 119:89-96
Tue – Jan 28	Jer 36:11-26	2 Cor 7:2-12	Ps 119:89-96
Wed – Jan 29	Jer 36:27-32	Luke 4:38-44	Ps 119:89-96
Thu – Jan 30	2 Chr 34:1-7	Acts 10:44-48	Ps 71:1-6
Fri – Jan 31	2 Chr 35:20-27	Acts 19:1-10	Ps 71:1-6



Daily Bible Readings: February 2025

Sat – Feb 1	2 Chronicles 36:11-21	John 1:43-51	Psalms 71:1-6
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Sun. Feb. 2 Presentation of Our Lord Malachi 3:1-4, PS 84, Heb 2:14-18, Luke 2:22-40

Prayer of the Day: Almighty and ever-living God, your only-begotten Son was presented this day in the temple. May we be presented to you with clean and pure hearts by the same Jesus Christ, our great high priest, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen

Mon – Feb 3	1 Kings 17:8-16	1 Corinthians 2:6-16	Psalms 56
Tue – Feb 4	2 Kings 5:1-14	1 Corinthians 14:13-25	Psalms 56
Wed – Feb 5	Jeremiah 1:11-19	Luke 19:41-44	Psalms 56
Thu – Feb 6	Numbers 20:22-29	Acts 9:19b-25	Psalms 138
Fri – Feb 7	Numbers 27:12-23	Acts 9:26-31	Psalms 138
Sat – Feb 8	Judges 3:7-11	Luke 4:42-44	Psalms 138

Sun. Feb. 9 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany. Isaiah 6:1-13, Ps 138, 1 Cor 15:1-11, Luke 5:1-11

Prayer of the Day: Most holy God, the earth is filled with your glory, and before you angels and saints stand in awe. Enlarge our vision to see your power at work in the world, and by your grace make us heralds of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, Amen

Mon – Feb 10	Judges 5:1-11	1 Corinthians 14:26-40	Psalms 115
Tue – Feb 11	1 Samuel 9:15–10:1b	1 Timothy 3:1-9	Psalms 115
Wed – Feb 12	Isaiah 8:1-15	Luke 5:27-32	Psalms 115
Thu – Feb 13	Jeremiah 13:12-19	Acts 13:26-34	Psalms 1
Fri – Feb 14	Jeremiah 13:20-27	1 Peter 1:17–2:1	Psalms 1
Sat – Feb 15	Jeremiah 17: 1-4	Luke 11:24-28	Psalms 1



Sun. Feb. 16 Sixth Sunday after Epiphany Jer 17:5-10, Ps 1, 1 Cor 15:12-20, Luke 6:17-26

Prayer of the Day: *Living God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, Amen*

Mon – Feb 17	2 Kings 24:18–25:21	1 Corinthians 15:20-34	Psalms 120
Tue – Feb 18	Ezra 1:1-11 2	Corinthians 1:12-19	Psalms 120
Wed – Feb 19	Jeremiah 22:11-17	Luke 11:37-52	Psalms 120
Thu – Feb 20	Genesis 43:16-34	Romans 8:1-11	Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40
Fri – Feb 21	Genesis 44:1-17	1 John 2:12-17	Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40
Sat – Feb 22	Genesis 44:18-34	Luke 12:57-59	Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40

Sun. Feb. 23 Seventh Sunday after Epiphany Gen 43:3-11, 15, Ps 37:1-11, 39-40, 1 Cor 15:35-38, 42-50, Lu 6:27-38

Prayer of the Day: *O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen*

Mon – Feb 24	Genesis 33:1-17	1 Corinthians 11:2-16	Psalms 38
Tue – Feb 25	1 Samuel 24:1-22	1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 27-33	Psalms 38
Wed – Feb 26	Leviticus 5:1-13	Luke 17:1-4	Psalms 38
Thu – Feb 27	Deuteronomy 9:1-5	Acts 3:11-16	Psalms 99
Fri – Feb 28	Deuteronomy 9:6-14	Acts 10:1-8	Psalms 99



*Thank you, dear St. Stephen's,
for the generous gift card
given to me by the Council!*

*I already (fabric) have a few ideas
(fabric) about how the money (fabric)
will be put to good use (fabric)!*

Looking forward to tackling 2025 together!

Sincerely, Pastor Brenda