



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

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Summer 2026 Rev. Brenda L. Greenwald

July at St, 10a. August at G, 10a. (Fellowship Before)

Newsletters questions or corrections? Contact Heather.



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IMPORTANT DATES For Your Calendar

July 5, 12, 18 ... One Worship at St. Stephen's at 10a. Fellowship before the service.

July 26. Annual Church Picnic + Potluck at **Erickson Park** in Stephenson at 10a. We will also be **blessing** Pastor Brenda as she departs on her 3-month sabbatical. Bring a **dish** to share for our **Potluck** lunch!

Aug 2, 9, 16, 23 . One Worship at Gethsemane at 10a. Fellowship before the service.

August 30 Join us for a Special Fellowship Time **before** worship at Gethsemane as we celebrate **Rev. David Christenson's** 50th Anniversary of Ordination!

September 6 ... We return to **worship** at **BOTH** locations.

Remember our Annual Worship Time Swap:

9a at **St. Stephen's** Fellowship **after**
10:30a at **Gethsemane** Fellowship **after**





July

- 5 Jane Christenson
- 6 Barbara Anderson
- 16 Bruce Bergquist
- 18 Madison Bergquist
- 19 Tom Dutkavich, Jr.
- 21 Alvin Etelamaki
- 21 Judy Stone
- 22 John Starzynski
- 23 Wendy Majkrzak
- 26 Gary Hess
- 29 Wayne Salo



August

- 1 Jim Francour
- 1 Dalten Wagner
- 2 Janet Salo
- 3 Lynda Keller
- 12 Bob Stone
- 13 Sharon Etelamaki
- 16 Berkley Norton
- 21 Aarika Smith
- 30 Carla Dutkavich



July

- 2 Wayne + Janet Salo
- 8 Keith + Crystal Salo
- 18 John + Pattie Starzynski
- 22 Bob + Judy Stone



August

- 1 Karen + Bill Grundstrom
- 5 Kelly + Paul Francour
- 27 Roy + Tammy Parrett



***We invite you to pray for
those serving in the military:***

***Jordan Baril
Jay Chapple
Brent Jurmu***



We continue to hold the following in prayer:

Amber, Dave, Jim G, Jim K, Jim R, Richie

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

A Note from Pastor Brenda: *The time has come, dear Church, to take my Sabbatical leave. The Councils and I have compiled a few FAQs to provide info and to quell any anxiety:*

What IS a Sabbatical? The term Sabbatical comes from the Hebrew concept of Sabbath, or **rest**. Genesis notes that God rested from the work of creation and the Ten Commandments instruct us to honor the Sabbath and keep it holy, by worship, and reflecting on the blessings of God. Deuteronomy and Leviticus describe Sabbatical periods **where the balance of life is restored**. Sabbatical leave is a carefully planned period of time in which a Pastor is granted leave away from their normal, ministerial responsibilities in order to spend an extended period of time in study, renewal, and reflection.

S A B B A T I C A L

What a Sabbatical is NOT: It is **NOT** a vacation: a Sabbatical is more than a simple holiday; it's a period of spiritual renewal and rest from the demands of ministry. It is **NOT** a job search: it is not a time for a Pastor to look for a different job or explore other career opportunities, nor is a Sabbatical a punishment or an imposed leave of absence for negative actions. Finally, it is **NOT** a substitute for normal rest: it is distinct from the regular, weekly rest or shorter vacations, and is meant to provide a deeper level of renewal.

WHEN is this Sabbatical? Pastor Brenda will be gone during **August, September, and October**. Her send-off/blessing/final Sunday will be July 26 at the Annual Church Picnic (10a at Erickson Park in Stephenson). She will return to the Office on Wednesday, October 28, and return to Worship on All Saints' Sunday, November 1, 2026.

AUG SEP OCT

WHO's going to PREACH + PRESIDE + CARE for our congregations? Pastoral Coverage has been arranged for **EVERY** Sunday! Meaning, a Pastor will be present to lead each worship service, including being able to offer Confession + Forgiveness, and to lead you through the sacrament of **Holy Communion** **EVERY** Sunday. Local Pastors **Keith Kolstad** (retired), **Scott Ehle** (Bethel), **Christine Olson** (Emmanuel), and **Amanda Kossov** (Zion) will be **on call** for Pastoral emergencies, hospital visits, and funerals. Your Council Members are dedicated to helping lead during this time, too.



How is this Sabbatical being PAID for? First, the regular expenses of the Church will continue to be paid by the **faithful members** who place their **Offerings** in the Offering Plate (or by electronic means). Your continued support (and attendance) as the **Church** will contribute to the success of this Sabbatical. Per Synod Guidelines, Pastor Brenda will receive her normal compensation and benefits while on Sabbatical. Gethsemane and St. Stephen's have also established a **Joint Sabbatical Reserve Fund**. Annual deposits into this Fund will ensure financial security, well-ahead of the next Pastoral Sabbatical.

Second, specific Sabbatical expenses are being entirely covered by the generous heart and spirit of the late **+Nancy Diehm+** and the **Living Trust** she left to our churches. This Trust will cover the payment of the Visiting Pastors who lead worship, their travel, Pastor Brenda's Sabbatical education and travel, and any emergency coverage Visiting Pastors might incur when assisting our members. While +Nancy+ was a member of St. Stephen's, the Living Trust established in her name was given in the spirit of supporting the **Pastor**, whether that Pastor is solely serving St. Stephen's, or that Pastor is serving both St. Stephen's and their yoked partner in Christ, Gethsemane. **Thanks be to God!**



May I CALL or VISIT or TEXT Pastor Brenda during her Sabbatical? **Nope...**but you can **PRAY** for her each and every day. The name + phone number of the **Pastor on Call** will be printed in the bulletin each Sunday. Calling the St. Stephen's Office at 906.753.4932 will also let you leave a message for Heather, who works 9a – 1p on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.



What do I do if I run into Pastor Brenda at Gary's or Menards? Well, **say hello!** You'll probably even get a hug – but don't be surprised if she doesn't launch into the business of the Church. While she will be away at times, she's not travelling during her *ENTIRE* Sabbatical, so you'll see her about town, in her backyard, at stores, etc. Being in her home will provide a place of sabbath rest, too.

Is Pastor Brenda discerning a new call to a different Church? **Not. At. All.** She dearly loves these congregations and wants to continue serving in this place. She has several friends in our Synod and around the country who were able to remain in their calls *even longer* because of the new energy gained during their Sabbaticals.



I thank you in advance for your faithful prayers and your commitment to worship and to one another. My rest will come easy knowing that you are capable and caring congregations who will tend to one another's needs, and I already look forward to returning to you with renewed energy and joy. May God bless you all. Love,

Pr. Brenda

Additional Info from our Northern Great Lakes Synod's Compensation Guide:

Sabbatical leave is a planned period of time in which a Pastor is granted leave away from their normal, ministerial responsibilities. They receive the opportunity to spend an extended period of time in study, renewal, and reflection. This time away from the congregation is to renew a Pastor's energies and vision. It is an excellent investment in the congregation's future. In a Sabbatical, the congregation gets many of the benefits of a fresh start without the additional expenses of a new call process and lost momentum frequently experienced in calling a new Pastor. It also provides the benefits of a longer-term Pastorate in the parish, since studies show that a Sabbatical often extends a Pastor's stay within a parish. Usually, this time away is after a Pastor has been in the parish for four years or longer.

During a Sabbatical leave, the congregation pays full salary and benefits to the Pastor on Sabbatical, plus the expense of Pastoral supply during the period. You may not realize it, but the Sabbatical is a powerful symbol of love and respect for a Pastor. It is also a powerful symbol of health and vitality for a congregation. Both congregation and Pastor benefit by the use of renewal and recreation time.

A Sabbatical leave of up to 3 months is recommended every 5-7 years to support renewal and professional growth. The Pastor would be expected to return to the present call for at least one year following the Sabbatical. Support for rest and renewal is part of the rhythm of healthy ministry. Covering professional expenses helps Pastors stay connected, equipped, and involved in the wider church. These aren't extras. They're essential acts of care—for the ones we've entrusted to lead, and for the church we're building together.

Burnout, discouragement, and depletion of spiritual and emotional resources threaten the effectiveness of Pastoral ministry and threaten to shorten Pastorates. Periodic, Sabbatical leaves may foster a ministry that is longer, more energized, and more fruitful. People are drawn to interesting, vitalized Pastors who reflect what they preach, and what we preach is a way of life. A vitalized Pastor at the center of their congregation's life is essential. The Pastor is called to model ways of emotional and physical wholeness, along with enthusiasm for proclaiming the gospel and caring about people. A Sabbatical provides the opportunity to drink deeply from Biblical and classical sources of wisdom so that the Pastor may return to the congregation with renewed vitality in all areas of ministry.

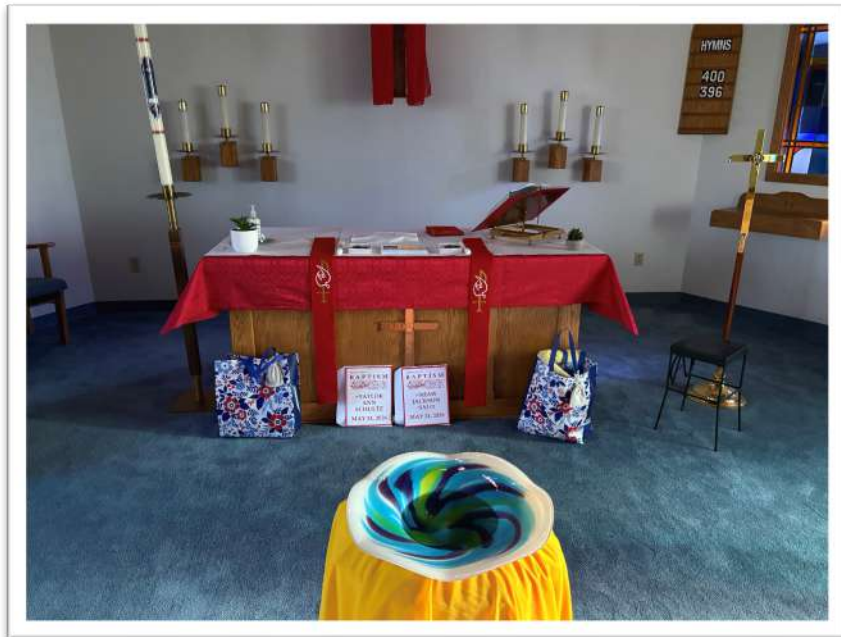


CONFIRMATION + GRADUATION 2026



class of
2026

PENTECOST 2026



5th Sunday Joint Worship - May 2026



Daily Bible Readings: July 2026

Wed, Jul 01	Haman Plans Mordecai's Death	Esther 5:9-14
Thu, Jul 02	Mordecai Discovers a Plot	Esther 2:19-23
Fri, Jul 03	One Whom the King Honors	Esther 6:1-9
Sat, Jul 04	Mordecai Is Honored	Esther 6:10-14
Sun, Jul 05	Esther Saves the Jews	Esther 7:1-10, 9:1-2, 20-22, 29-32
Mon, Jul 06	Mordecai Given Haman's Position	Esther 8:1-8
Tues, Jul 07	Letters to the Jews	Esther 8:9-14
Wed, Jul 08	The Jews Rejoice	Esther 8:15-17
Thurs, Jul 09	The Jews Fight Back	Esther 9:1-17
Fri, Jul 10	The Festival of Purim	Esther 9:18-23
Sat, Jul 11	Why It Is Called Purim	Esther 9:24-32
Sun, Jul 12	Grateful to Jesus	1 Timothy 1:12-17
Mon, Jul 13	Greetings to Timothy	1 Timothy 1:1-7
Tues, Jul 14	Instructions about Prayer	1 Timothy 2:1-7
Wed, Jul 15	Mystery of Our Religion	1 Timothy 3:14-16
Thu, Jul 16	God Created Everything Good	1 Timothy 4:1-5
Fri, Jul 17	Good Servant of Jesus	1 Timothy 4:6-16
Sat, Jul 18	Parable of the Lost Sheep	Luke 15:1-7
Sun, Jul 19	True Riches	1 Timothy 6:6-19
Mon, Jul 20	The Rich Man and Lazarus	Luke 16:19-26
Tue, Jul 21	They Should Listen to Moses	Luke 16:27-30
Wed, Jul 22	Saul Persecutes the Church	Acts 8:1-3
Thu, Jul 23	Saul Encounters Jesus	Acts 9:1-19a
Fri, Jul 24	Saul Begins to Preach	Acts 9:19b-24
Sat, Jul 25	Saul Comes to Jerusalem	Acts 9:26-31
Sun, Jul 26	Rekindle the Gift	2 Timothy 1:1-14
Mon, Jul 27	Proclaiming Jesus in Antioch	Acts 11:19-26
Tue, Jul 28	Barnabas and Saul Are Commissioned	Acts 13:1-12
Wed, Jul 29	The Council of Jerusalem	Acts 15:1-21
Thu, Jul 30	Timothy Joins Paul	Acts 15:36-16:4
Fri, Jul 31	Paul's Mission Heads West	Acts 16:1-10

Daily Bible Readings: August 2026

Sat, Aug 01	Conversion of Lydia	Acts 16:11-15
Sun, Aug 02	God's Word Is Not Chained	2 Timothy 2:8-15
Mon, Aug 03	Paul and Silas in Prison	Acts 16:16-34
Tue, Aug 04	Paul Released from Jail	Acts 16:35-40
Wed, Aug 05	Paul Goes to Thessalonica	Acts 17:1-9
Thu, Aug 06	Paul Goes to Beroea	Acts 17:10-15
Fri, Aug 07	Paul in Athens	Acts 17:16-31
Sat, Aug 08	The Conversion of Dionysius	Acts 17:32-34
Sun, Aug 09	Scripture Is Inspired	2 Timothy 3:14—4:8, 16-18
Mon, Aug 10	The Church at Corinth	Acts 18:1-17
Tue, Aug 11	Paul Leaves Corinth	Acts 18:18-23
Wed, Aug 12	The Church at Ephesus	Acts 19:1-10
Thu, Aug 13	Paul Leaves Ephesus	Acts 19:21-22; 20:17-28
Fri, Aug 14	Paul Tells His Story	Acts 22:1-11
Sat, Aug 15	Paul Continues His Story	Acts 22:12-21
Sun, Aug 16	The First Commandments	Exodus 19:1-6; 20:1-2
Mon, Aug 17	Moses Summons the People	Exodus 19:7-15
Tue, Aug 18	The People Are Consecrated	Exodus 19:16-25
Wed, Aug 19	Hear, O Israel	Deuteronomy 6:1-9
Thu, Aug 20	Trust in the Lord	Deuteronomy 6:10-19
Fri, Aug 21	The Purpose of the Commandments	Deuteronomy 6:20-25
Sat, Aug 22	God's Promises	Deuteronomy 7:1-6
Sun, Aug 23	The Ten Commandments, Continued	Exodus 20:3-11
Mon, Aug 24	God's Promises, Continued	Deuteronomy 7:7-11
Tues, Aug 25	Pay Attention to the Laws and Commandments	Deuteronomy 7:12-16
Wed, Aug 26	God Will Defend Israel	Deuteronomy 7:17-22
Thu, Aug 27	God Will Deliver Israel	Deuteronomy 7:23-26
Fri, Aug 28	Do Not Forget the Lord	Deuteronomy 8:1-5
Sat, Aug 29	Observe God's Commandments	Deuteronomy 8:6-10
Sun, Aug 30	The Ten Commandments, Continued	Exodus 20:12-16
Mon, Aug 31	Remember the Lord at Mealtimes	Deuteronomy 8:11-18



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church: Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 7, 2026 - 12p - Gethsemane Library *(before Joint Meeting)*

		COUNCIL MEMBER	TERM	PHONE	E-MAIL
P=Present E=Excused A=Absent	A	Cheri Leiphart	2026	906.295.0139	CheriL05@yahoo.com
	P	Kami Salo	2027	906.290.2460	SamiKalo56@live.com
	P	John Starzynski	2026	906.314.1981	JohnRetired1956@outlook.com
	P	Donna Tennessen	2028	920.579.3242	DTennessen@ameritech.net
	P	Donna Thonne	2028	715.923.4208	DThonne10@hotmail.com
	P	Pr. Brenda Greenwald	NA	720.989.8218	Pastor@GSSLutheran.org

Opening Devotions: Donna Thonne **CALLED TO ORDER:** 11:55a

FAITHFUL IN PRAYER: *Praying for the good of others Is the love of God working in us.*

AGENDA APPROVAL John Starzynski

1. Corrections? None

2. Additions? New Business Item: None

Motion to Accept Agenda: Donna Tennessen Second: Kami Salo FAVOR

SECRETARY'S REPORT Donna Tennessen

1. Minutes from March 22, 2026

Motion to Accept Minutes: Pastor Brenda Second : Kami Salo FAVOR

TREASURERS' REPORTS Sandy Chaney (T), Danielle Bergquist (FS)

1. Written Reports for April 2026

Motion to Accept Report: Pastor Brenda Second: Donna Thonne FAVOR

BRIEF MINISTRY TEAM UPDATES

<i>Bethesda (Pr B)</i>	<i>Faith Formation (Kami)</i>	<i>Fellowship (Cheri)</i>
A meeting was held on May 6, 2026. A old discontinued well was found on the property. A new hand pump will be installed to water plants.	Taylor Schultz and Shaw Salo will be confirmed on May 24, 2026. Three graduates, Kenzie, Dalten and Sara will be honored.	None
<i>Living Trust (Pr B)</i>	<i>Memorial (John)</i>	<i>Property (John)</i>
The Nancy Diehm Living Trust will help fund Pastor Brenda's Sabbatical.	None	The pipe/stack on the roof is leaning at a 45% deg. angle and will be made to stand upright.
<i>Social Ministry (Donna Th)</i>	<i>WELCA (Donna T)</i>	<i>Worship/Music (Cheri)</i>
A thank you card was received from U.P. Foster Closet for flower donations.	To honor Taylor and Shaw's confirmation, Kenzie Bright and Dalten Wagner's high school graduation and Sara Havelka's college graduation WELCA will host a breakfast brunch on May 24 during fellowship time. The brunch will include a cake, card and a gift for each of the young people.	The 2027-year worship and music program has been purchased.

Motion to Accept ALL Updates: Pastor Brenda Seconded: Donna Tennesen FAVOR

NEW BUSINESS

1. TOILET In the Women's restroom --- A new high-rise toilet will be Installed in the women's rest room to replace the one that doesn't always shut off.
2. Lawn mowing 2026 ---John will confirm that Sam Salo will mow the church lawn.
3. Regular Council Meetings will be suspended until: September 16, 2026 at 1:30 PM

NEXT STEPS

1. Next Council Meeting: Sept. 16, 2026 at 1:30 PM
2. Devotions for Sept. 16 St. Stephen's council meeting: Kami Salo
Motion to Adjourn: Pastor Brenda Time Adjourned: 12:44 PM THE LORD'S PRAYER

Fortune Lake Congregational Visit 2026





Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



Northern Great
Lakes Synod
www.nglsynod.org



Bi-Monthly Newsletter - 2026

Important Dates and Information inside!

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