

THE INTERPRETER

Church Office Hours: Mon-Wed 8-3:30 & Fri 8-1

Ministers: The Congregation

Minister to the Ministers: Rev. Michael Southcombe



No matter who you are . . .
. . . or where you are on life's
journey, YOU are welcome here.

August



MISSION TRIP MEETING

August 3 at 10:30 AM

Planning some fundraising

Planning some routing.

Other questions the group may have.



Please submit your questions for the pastor in the "Ask the Pastor" bucket by August 3 or email them to mike@ststephensucc.net. The pastor will answer the questions during the usual sermon time on August 10, and on other dates if there are a large number of questions.

Saint Stephens UCC

903 E. 2nd St.

Merrill, WI. 54452

715-536-7322

Emergency

Pastoral Care Needs

618-558-5014

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Join Pastor Mike and members of Saint Stephens at **Sideways in Tomahawk on August 13 at 6 PM** for an evening out! This will be a casual gathering to converse about life and enjoy a meal together. The meal is at your own expense, but the company is free! If interested, please sign up at the kiosk or call the church office.



Available for Purchase:

French Roast	\$10
Breakfast Blend	\$10
Assorted Tea	\$5

Equal Exchange Fairly Traded Coffee is available for purchase in the Kuck Lounge (also in the office). Proceeds to benefit Holy Joe's Café.



The Israelites groaned under their slavery and cried out. God heard their groaning, but God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them. (Exodus 2:23b-25, NRSV, alt.)

At General Synod 25, and certainly at the lunch sponsored by Eden Seminary, Walter Brueggemann was on many of our minds. He had died just a month ago. For the groups gathered, all of us had Walter as a teacher, or guest lecturer, and author to guide us through our wrestling with the Old Testament and our ministries, wherever and whatever they may be.

Walter was vehemently supportive and demanding of “the truth.” That might be truth about history, truth of the relevance of scripture for today, truth of God’s love and grace and personal truth, especially for those of us who dare to preach a prophetic or a pastoral word today.

First, a quote from him from *A Way Other than Our Own*:

“The truth is that frightened people will never turn the world, because they use too much energy on protection of self. It is the vocation of the baptized, the known and named and unafraid, to make the world whole:

- *The unafraid are open to the neighbor, while the frightened are defending themselves from the neighbor.*
- *The unafraid are generous in the community, while the frightened, in their anxiety, must keep and store and accumulate, to make themselves safe.*
- *The unafraid commit acts of compassion and mercy, while the frightened do not notice those in need.*
- *The unafraid are committed to justice for the weak and the poor, while the frightened see them only as threats.*
- *The unafraid pray in the morning, care through the day, and rejoice at night in thanks and praise, while the frightened are endlessly restless and dissatisfied.*

So, dear people, each of you: Do not fear! I have called you by name; your mine!”

And Brueggemann’s other enduring message to us comes from so many of his lectures, poetry, prayers and writing, the ever so simple words, “...but God.”

People are suffering in Palestine, but God...

The climate is changing, storms are raging, floods and fire scouring cities and countryside, but God...

Greed has consumed our political life, politicians seek power for the sake of power and not for how it may serve the people, but God...

Families are fractured, children estranged, young children living with grandparents, but God...

I am growing older, aches and pains becoming actual disability, I don’t want to be a burden to my children, but God...

“But God...” condemns those who seek their own ends, their own power and who build wealth at the expense of others slaving in poverty and systems that push people down rather than lifting them up.

“But God...” comforts those who see no help and no hope in their present situation.

So, dear siblings in Christ, whatever worries you, whatever seems overwhelming to you, let us wrestle with where we might find hope and grace. And remember, always remember, that whatever we might say, the scriptures remind us, “but God...”

Pastor Mike

upcoming events

August 3 – Mission Trip Meeting 10:30 AM

August 10 – Messy Church

August 13 – Adult Night Out 6 PM



AUGUST LECTIONARY READINGS

August 3, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Hosea 11:1-11 Ps 107:1-9,43

Ecc. 1;2,12-14,2:18-23 Ps 49:1-12

Col 3:1-11 Luke 12:13-21

August 10, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Isa 1:1,10-20 Ps 50:1-8,22-23

Gen 15:1-6 Ps 33:12-22

Heb 11:1-3, 8-16 Luke 12:32-40

August 17, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Isa 5:1-7 Ps 80:1-2, 8-19

Jer 23:23-29 Ps 82

Heb 11:29-12:2 Luke 12:49-56

August 24, Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Jer 1:4-10 Ps 71:1-6

Isa 58:9b-14 Ps 103:1-8

Heb 12:18-29 Luke 13:10-17

August 31, Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Jer 2:4-13 Ps 81:1, 10-16

Sirach 10:12-18 Ps 112

Heb 13:1-8, 15-16 Luke 14:1, 7-14

+ These are the lectionary readings for Sundays. Not all readings will be used every Sunday. These are provided for your study and devotion.



We are seeking 2 nursery volunteers when Sunday School resumes in September. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to Kari at Kari@ststephensucc.net.

AUGUST RADIO BROADCASTS

August 31 – In memory of Bruce Schaefer on the 1st anniversary of his death, August 30, from Janet Schaefer.



Open Radio Ministry Dates:
August 3, 10, 17, and 24



August Livestreams are in loving memory of Phyllis Fausch whose birthday is on August 16 from her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Open Livestream Months:
October and December

****Contact the Church Office to sign up for an available Radio Ministry date or Livestream month!*****

Your 2025 Church Council Members

Jennifer Porath	President
Jody Meyer	Vice President
Leanne Schnabl	Secretary
Sally Woller	Treasurer
James Bjorklund	Darryl Frick
Jerry Burnett	Stan Seeger
Marcus Reinhardt	Emma Golisch
Todd Frederick	Cathy Dornbrack

AUGUST MISSION:

Bluejay NEST, Bluejay AID, and Bluejay Pantry



The Nest is a Merrill High School free resource to help students. The Nest has food, clothing, hygiene items, and school supplies. They also have funds to help support MHS students with specific financial needs. The high school also has a Food Pantry available to students to access food.

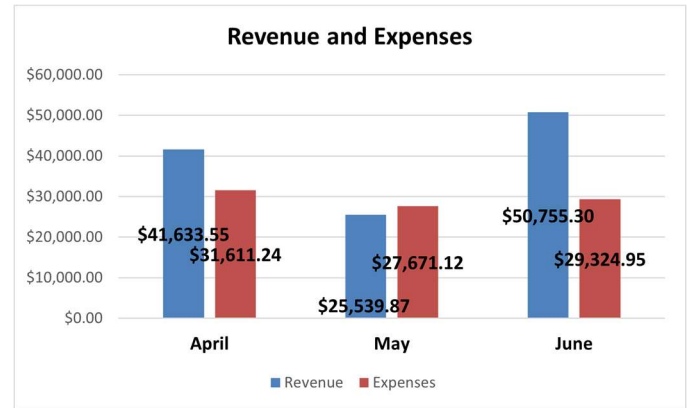
Bluejay AID is available to students at Kate Goodrich Elementary and Washington Elementary. They provide items like clothing and school supplies.

Please use your "Special Offering Envelope" and enter the amount you would like to donate to the Bluejay Nest, Bluejay Aid, and Bluejay Pantry on the monthly mission line. This offering will also be available on the online giving platform from our website <https://ststephensucc.net/give>, or you can text "SAINTSTEPHENS" to 73256 to give using your mobile device.



Kari is putting together the Labor Day parade, and we would love for you to join us! If you're interested in walking in the parade and sharing the joy of Saint Stephens and our ministries, just drop Kari an email at kari@ststephensucc.net. We can't wait to celebrate together!

CHURCH FINANCIAL REPORT



June Revenue and Expenses

Revenue \$50,755.30

Expenses \$29,324.95

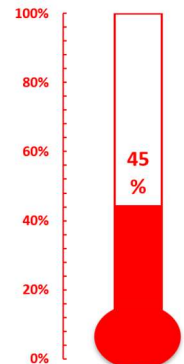
Net Gain: 21,430.35

Last year, Terra applied for the Employee Retention Credits available to the church, as we continued to employ our staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. In June, we were finally approved for these credits, and the church received the funds. Along with the second-quarter distribution from the unrealized gains in the endowment fund, this led to a surplus in revenue for June. As a result, the church now has a net gain of \$10,027.50 for the year.

However, we have significant expenses coming up, including major repairs for the elevator in the next month and a substantial cost for the installation of a lightning rod required by Church Mutual. Please refer to page 6 for more details on the church repairs.

Additionally, in June, the congregation raised \$935.00 for Strengthen the Church.

OCWM Goal	
Quarter	Amount
QRT 1	\$1,655.00
QRT 2	\$1,465.00
Total	\$3,120.00
Goal	\$7,000.00
Need	\$3,880.00
Achieved %	45%
Target %	100%



STEWARDSHIP CORNER

An Introduction to Stewardship:

Stewardship is defined as "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." When applied to our collective work to advance healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities, it describes leaders—both individuals and organizations—who take responsibility for forming working relationships to drive transformative change in regions and communities. Importantly, stewards must have a vested interest in promoting an equity-oriented approach to purpose, power, and wealth.

Everyone can be a steward! Certainly, individuals can serve as stewards to advance community well-being, and stewardship is best accomplished when people work together across differences and sectors to expand the vital conditions that all people and places need to thrive, starting with those struggling and suffering. We typically see stewardship having the greatest impact as a mechanism for shared responsibility and collective action; when the work has expanded, aligned breadth and depth, and in turn, expanded reach and impact.

Stewardship is a core component of any work to advance equitable well-being -without stewards, there would be no one to actually do the work. Most of us want equitable well-being for all, but making it happen is challenging. Stewardship, especially shared stewardship that engages people, organizations, local communities, etc. Collaborative work is a promising mechanism by which we can shift investments and systems to support thriving communities.

Stewardship Committee- Chair-Cheryl Buck

Source: communitycommons.org

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.

Matthew 25:35

WISE TEAM

Mental Health, Wellness, and Time Outdoors By Paula McIntyre

Whether weeding my flower beds or garden, taking a bike ride or a walk, or relaxing in my lawn chair reading a good book, I love spending time outdoors. Turns out, there are many benefits to spending time in nature, including those that benefit our mental health. Being in nature or outdoors can reduce stress and anxiety, improve mood, and enhance our emotional well-being. Research shows that those who spend 120 minutes per week in nature report greater health and well-being. The research also showed that this can be accrued in multiple bouts throughout the week, or in one 2-hour bout. You can read more about the benefits of spending time in nature in this article from the American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>



SCRIP REDUCTION

In the upcoming months, we will be reducing our inventory for the Scrip program. Unfortunately, many Scrip cards are not being purchased frequently. As a result, we will not be reordering Scrip cards from several Wausau restaurants, such as Red Robin, Texas Roadhouse, etc., and we will have fewer cards available for other retailers.

However, we will continue to offer local Scrip, as well as Kwik Trip, Walmart cards, and a small quantity of other retailers. **Scrip cards can still be purchased using the Scrip order form, which would be available the following week for pickup.** For a more convenient option, you can download the app to purchase Scrip directly from your phone! Please talk to Terra for more information on how to sign up for the app.



GREEN TEAM

Summer is all about the wonderful vegetables grown in our gardens or sourced from local farmers' markets. There's nothing better than using fresh ingredients to prepare delicious meals. Corn, in particular, is a staple vegetable at the end of summer. Here's a recipe to try:

Summer Corn and Spicy Sausage Pizza

- 1 pound pizza dough
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pizza sauce
- 4 oz fresh mozzarella, torn
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb spicy Italian sausage, cooked & crumbled
- 1 ear sweet yellow corn, sliced off the cob
- 1 cup arugula
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh basil, torn
- Olive oil and red pepper flakes for finishing

Preheat the oven to 500 degrees.

Dust a rimmed baking sheet lightly with flour. Place the pizza dough on the flour and gently stretch and form the dough into a 12 by 13-inch oval using your fingertips. Spread the sauce over the dough and top with the torn mozzarella. Sprinkle the sausage and corn evenly over the crust.

Place the baking sheet in the oven and cook for 10-12 minutes, until the crust appears fully cooked. Set the oven to broil and cook for an additional 1-3 minutes, until the crust turns a deep golden brown. Be careful not to burn the crust.

Remove the pizza from the oven to a cutting board and top with fresh arugula and basil. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with pepper flakes, if using. Slice and serve.

Recipe from www.qiadzy.com



CHURCH REPAIR UPDATES



The church is currently facing a number of unexpected repairs, in addition to planned projects that we hope to complete soon.

Here's an update on our current status and what's coming up:

Elevator: As many of you are aware, the elevator experienced a significant breakdown in July. We hope to have it repaired by the end of the month. The repair costs are substantial, totaling just under \$7,000. However, this repair may not be the final solution, as further repairs could be necessary. While the elevator has aged well, it is still dated, and we can expect additional maintenance needs in the future.

Lightning Rod: This past spring, we received a letter from Church Mutual requiring us to install a lightning rod on the sanctuary in order to maintain our policy. Installation is scheduled for early August, with a total cost of \$18,654.

New Roof: Kimmons tentatively has us scheduled for roof repairs in August for both the Sunday School building and the area above the offices. Once the roof work is completed, Tim will install new flooring in the Medical Ministry room.

Landscaping: Half of the front landscaping was redone at the beginning of summer. Tim, the Pastor, and a few volunteers spent a Saturday morning removing old rock, laying down a new weed barrier, and planting new perennials. McIntyres replaced some plants along the side by the office drive.

Parking Lots: Both parking lots have had the cracks filled.

Upcoming Projects: We have updates planned for the sanctuary (the committee needs to meet) and renovations for the Kuck Lounge bathrooms.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

We want to acknowledge and celebrate your special birthdays!
Send your church friends birthday wishes, whether in person, via
email, or by sending one of those wonderful cards you can hold
in your hands by mail!

Aug 1	Beth Frick	Aug 12	Kamryn Klade	Aug 22	Lori Anderson-Malm
Aug 1	Kathryn Vandre	Aug 13	Justice Lange	Aug 23	Molly Lyon
Aug 1	Robert Frisch	Aug 13	TyLynn Osness	Aug 23	Bryce Bloch
Aug 1	Cheryl Kanitz	Aug 15	Kinzie Stevenson	Aug 24	Dale Krause
Aug 2	Kenneth Mootz	Aug 15	Scott Brandenburg	Aug 24	Mary Schwartz
Aug 2	Jen Oestreich	Aug 16	Emma Pajtach	Aug 24	Timothy Seidler
Aug 2	Lily Kunkel	Aug 16	Chris Stevenson	Aug 24	Nick Oslage
Aug 4	Donna Frisch	Aug 17	Jodi Golisch	Aug 25	Thomas Smith
Aug 4	Lydia Hanson	Aug 17	Ralph Wangen	Aug 26	John Joyner
Aug 4	Eric Maluegge	Aug 18	Jeffrey Hanig	Aug 27	Trenton Lapsenberg
Aug 5	Sally Oberg	Aug 18	Lori Simonis	Aug 27	Janie Rowe
Aug 6	Jeffrey Anderson	Aug 18	Piper Lewitzke	Aug 28	Gregory Kloss
Aug 6	Piper Plautz	Aug 19	Nancy Seidel	Aug 28	Ruby Golisch
Aug 6	Collin Gennrich	Aug 20	Jerry Geiss	Aug 29	Emerson Iwen
Aug 7	Ervin Herdt	Aug 20	Tyler Drake	Aug 29	Beaver Plautz
Aug 7	Matthew Duwe	Aug 21	Sharon Detert	Aug 30	Sheila Anderson
Aug 8	Gerri Robinson	Aug 21	Tiffany Bucheger	Aug 30	Janessa Weisman
Aug 9	Cherie Kultgen	Aug 22	Sandi Krueger	Aug 31	Stephannie Pajtach
Aug 10	Dawson Drake	Aug 22	Glynis Schroeder	Aug 31	Finlee Lange-Peronto
Aug 11	Cheryl Buck	Aug 22	Aimee Gennrich	Aug 31	Sawyer Drake
Aug 12	Peter Bergh	Aug 22	Sally Tesch		



Saint Stephens UCC

715-536-7322 903 E. 2nd St., Merrill, Wisconsin 54452 ststephensucc.net

Rev. Mike Southcombe
Terra Holdridge
Kimberly McCaskill
Kari Weiland

Senior Minister
Administrative Director
Administrative Assistant
Christian Ed Director

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kimberly@ststephensucc.net
kari@ststephensucc.net

GIFTS & memorials

Received through July 20

Dedicated to the glory of God and...

Radio Ministry

\$190.00	in memory of Bruce Schaefer on the 1 st anniversary of his death, August 30 from Janet Schaefer
\$190.00	in memory of George, Gerald, and Lynn Henrich from the Prairie River Gang
\$10.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Dennis & Ione Koehler

Livestream

\$200.00	July's livestreams were sponsored by Mike & Sue Kunkel; in honor of our daughter Tricia Lazare's July 1 birthday; in honor of our grandson Leo Lazare's 14 th birthday; in honor of our granddaughter Amara Lazare for her many blessings throughout the year; in honor of our granddaughter Lilly Sue Kunkels's upcoming 14 th birthday.
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New Roof Fund

\$50.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Kristine Smith
\$10.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Carol Plautz
\$20.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Jeff & Sue Kraft
\$10.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Kathy Case

Sanctuary Updates

\$60.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Bill & Joanne Wengeler
\$25.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Tom & Mary Maluegge

Food For Kids

\$25.00	in memory of Mike Wahoske from Dennis & Luanne Grefe
\$300.00	in memory of David B Smith from Bill & Carol Weber
\$20.00	in memory of Gary Mosser from Bryan & Linda Plautz

Memorial offering

\$50.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Randy & Diane Perry
\$100.00	in loving memory for Ray & Betty Herdt's birthday, June 30 and July 1. Miss you dearly, Mom & Dad, from Brian, Terri & Ashley Haufe
\$20.00	in memory of Jean Mootz from Ron Vachavake
\$20.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Sharon Detert
\$20.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Dan & Patsy Pick
\$20.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Dennis & Sharon Woller
\$20.00	in memory of Gary Mosser from Dennis & Sharon Woller
\$20.00	in memory of Gary Mosser from Dave & Sue Pyan, Pyan Family, Wendy Plautz, and Zak

Dinner @ 5

\$25.00	in memory of Ruth Buck from Dennis & Luann Grefe
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JESUS TRAVELED TO MANY PLACES

Jesus traveled to many regions, cities, towns and villages to preach the Good News. In the puzzle below, find and circle the names of some of the places. Can you find the names on the list?

Words can go left to right, up, down or diagonal—so look carefully in all directions!

BETHANY

BETHLEHEM

BETHSAIDA

CAESAREA PHILIPPI

CANA

CAPERNAUM

DECAPOLIS

EGYPT

EPHRAIM

GALILEE

JERICHO

JERUSALEM

JORDAN RIVER

JUDEA

MAGDALA

MOUNT OF OLIVES

NAZARETH

PEREA

SAMARIA

SIDON

TYRE

WILDERNESS

B	M	L	E	T	C	U	S	G	O	T	O	B	T	H	E
E	J	O	R	D	A	N	R	I	V	E	R	E	M	N	S
T	U	E	U	E	N	A	R	B	Y	V	I	T	A	L	S
H	D	L	R	N	A	Z	A	R	E	T	H	H	G	A	E
S	E	G	E	I	T	S	S	S	G	Y	O	L	D	I	N
A	A	C	J	A	C	O	N	I	Y	R	P	E	A	R	R
I	D	E	E	A	C	H	F	D	P	E	H	H	L	T	E
D	E	H	R	E	R	E	O	O	T	A	L	E	A	S	D
A	C	O	U	T	H	P	A	N	L	T	I	M	S	W	L
C	A	E	S	A	R	E	A	P	H	I	L	I	P	P	I
H	P	P	A	A	Y	R	I	H	A	V	V	E	C	O	W
M	O	H	L	E	M	E	S	O	H	E	T	E	R	A	V
E	L	R	E	L	E	A	D	T	H	R	O	U	S	G	H
O	I	A	M	U	T	G	R	A	B	E	T	H	A	N	Y
L	S	I	I	L	G	A	L	I	L	E	E	E	E	F	R
O	M	M	C	A	P	E	R	N	A	U	M	M	A	R	K

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&



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Worship with us Sunday mornings
at 9:00 AM ...
Listen on the Radio or Join us for our
Livestream on Facebook!
"WE ARE THE CHURCH"

SAINT STEPHENS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

OUR VISION

We are a Christian community called by God's Love to be a force for good in our neighborhood and our world.

OUR PURPOSE

We seek to tell stories of God that challenge our assumptions, to open our doors wide with radical hospitality, and to use our own hands and feet to change the world.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE INTERPRETER

If you don't already receive The Interpreter, please let us know if you are interested in receiving it. We will be happy to send it to you by email or mail, whichever you prefer!

"But wait! There's more!"

Email recipients also receive our weekly updates between the monthly editions. Call Terra in the office (715-536-7322) or sign up and subscribe yourself here:

<https://ststephensucc.net/resources/newsletters>