

THE INTERPRETER

Church Office Hours: Mon-Wed 8-4:30 & Fri 8-3:30
Ministers: The Congregation Minister to the Ministers:
Rev. Michael Southcombe



NOVEMBER

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



Dinner @ 5 Volunteer Request

Dinner @ 5 has experienced an increase in attendance, especially among families, on Monday evenings. We were previously averaging around 80 participants, but now we are serving nearly 100 community members each week.

Our volunteer base for Dinner @ 5 has been steady for quite some time; however, some volunteers are starting to feel burnt out from having to come every week, mainly because we do not have enough volunteers. There have even been instances where we had to cancel a Monday dinner due to a lack of volunteers.

We are hoping that members of our congregation will be willing to volunteer for this meaningful community ministry. If we had 20 congregation members who could commit to helping at least one Monday a month, that would provide us with enough volunteers to sustain this program. Each commitment requires only about 2 to 2.5 hours, from approximately 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM, and you will also have the opportunity to enjoy the meal.

Families are encouraged to volunteer together to help teach our younger members the importance of supporting our community!

If you are interested in volunteering, please sign up at the kiosk or call Terra in the church office. By signing up for just one Monday a month, you can greatly support this program and our current volunteers! Thank you!

Saint Stephens UCC
903 E. 2nd St.
Merrill, WI. 54452
715-536-7322

Emergency
Pastoral Care Needs
618-558-5014

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The Serenity Room is available during office hours and after church on Sunday. If you need some time for meditation and prayer, please visit the Serenity Room that the Wise Team has organized on the second floor.

PRAY MORE
worry less



Join us for our third fundraising dinner on **November 13 from 5 – 7 PM** to support the Mission Trip. The dinner will feature a delicious menu including chili, chicken and noodles, ham and beans, cornbread and rolls, and a variety of desserts.

The cost is \$12 for adults, \$6 for children ages 5-10, and children 4 and under eat for free. We will also offer to-go containers for any of the selections at \$6 each.

In addition to the dinner, we will have raffle baskets and a quilt raffle! Come and support the members traveling for mission work right here in the U.S. We hope to see you there!



In “*It’s a Wonderful Life*,” George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) gets to see what the world would be like if he had never been born. Not just his little corner of the world, Bedford Falls, but truly the world. He had saved his brother from drowning and so his brother was not there to pilot a plane during WWII and save the lives of his crew.

As the year winds down, we can look forward to watching the movie again, along with all the other holiday movies we love. (*Christmas Story*, anyone?)

This month is also the time of year when we traditionally reach out with a pledge drive. More important than the actual pledge, however, is the process that gets us to the decision to make the church a priority.

This year, I invite you to think about the question, “What would Merrill be like if there wasn’t a St. Stephens UCC?”

Well, first, there would be one less church that cared for people and families who don’t usually attend a church but want a pastor to officiate at a loved one’s funeral.

The community food pantry would be different—it started in St. Stephens UCC’s basement.

There would not be a HAVEN for women and children who have suffered domestic violence. We helped start it and one of our members was the first director.

The radio station might have signed up others at some point, but St. Stephens UCC was the first to broadcast our Sunday morning services on the radio.

The Merrill economy would be short about \$45,000 a year because there was no one to loan out medical equipment for free or a donation.

About 260 children would go hungry every weekend and show up Monday sleepy, anxious and hungry, taking about 2 days to recover from their hunger over the weekend. Food 4 Kids would have ended when the church that started it couldn’t find anyone to take over that ministry.

About 90 people a week would not have a free dinner and a place to gather and fellowship for a while on Monday nights.

This year alone, 27 families would not have had the care and welcoming love when they needed a pastor or a church to help them through their grief with non-judgmental, life affirming care.

There would not be a church in Merrill making the public statement that those with mental health issues and their families are welcomed with understanding, caring and no judgment into the full life of the church.

There would not be a voice in Merrill saying, “Jesus didn’t turn people away, neither do we;” or “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

Please think about all these things along with our Sunday School, Confirmation program, church camp scholarships, special services like Blue Christmas and Nature Church, our Polka Sunday and our monthly Messy Church and others as you consider your support of the church this year.

Yes, please make a pledge. It helps turn your thoughts and prayers into visible action.

And, full disclosure, this year we will be asking for special gifts as some major projects become impossible to ignore. The sanctuary repairs and updates, upgrading lighting for better efficiency, tuck pointing the exterior of the sanctuary and possibly Memorial Hall and other projects needed in a 100+ year old building.

Without the steady support of the members for all our vital ministries with each other and this community, St. Stephens would simply not exist. And keeping the building in working order is simply wise stewardship. The building should serve our ministry, not the ministry serve the building.

The greatest support you can give the church, however, is your presence. Attend worship. Fellowship and serve with your fellow church members. Let us sing together! It is here you will find opportunities to deepen your faith, make lifelong friends and serve our loving and mighty God.

St. Stephens UCC is here, alive and well! Don’t make us imagine what it would be without you!

Pastor Mike

For CHURCH RECORDS Envelope # _____ (for office use) Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ I plan to give beginning _____ (date and year) each ☐ week ☐ month Annual Total For our congregation's ministries and _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ For our congregation's wider mission _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ I understand that this commitment can be changed at any time by giving notice to the appropriate church officer. ☐ I would like to talk with someone about including the church or church-related institution in my will. Signed: _____ Date: _____  Dreaming God's Dream NO GIFT TOO SMALL. NO DREAM TOO BIG.	For CHURCH RECORDS Date: _____ With others in my congregation, I commit myself to give in proportion to what I have for the ministries of the church and the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. I plan to give beginning _____ (date and year) Each ☐ week ☐ month Annual Total For our congregation's ministries and _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ For our congregation's wider mission _____ \$ _____ \$ _____
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You may submit both sides of this pledge card by placing it in the offering plate on November 16. If you wish to keep your name private but want the church to know you have made a personal commitment, please submit the right side of the card so we know of your commitment. If we know of your pledge, you may check on your pledge progress through your Realm account. If you have not set up your personal Realm account with the church, please contact Terra who can help you do so.

Thank you!

CHURCH COUNCIL OPENINGS AND ELECTIONS ANNUAL MEETING



We have three positions available on the church council for the upcoming year! Jennifer Porath, Sally Woller, and Leanne Schnable have each completed two consecutive two-year terms. Let's take a moment to thank them for their dedicated service to the church and its governance.

We are seeking volunteers to be placed on the ballot, which will be voted on by the congregation on **December 14 at the Annual Election Meeting**. Council terms last for two years, and members are eligible to be elected for a second consecutive terms, allowing for a total of four consecutive years of service.

We also have four church members up for reelection for their second term: Cathy Dornbrack, Emma Golisch, Stan Seeger, and Todd Frederick.

If you are interested in serving on the church council, please reach out to the church office, Pastor Mike, or any current church council member. Thank you!

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



November 7 – The Vibe @ 6 PM Kuck Lounge

November 9 – Messy Church

November 13 – Mission Fundraising Dinner

November 23 – Totenfest

November 24 – Soup and Chat 12 Noon

November 26 – Church Office Closed

November 28 – Church Office Closed

November 29 – Hanging of the Greens 8 AM

November 30 – First Sunday of Advent

Bible Study - Every Wednesday at 5 PM

Chime Choir – Every Thursday at 6 PM

Confirmation - Every Wed. 5 – 7:30 PM



NOVEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS

Nov 2, Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

Hab 1:1-4 Ps 119:137-144

2 Thess 1:1-4, 11-12 Luke 19:1-10

Nov 9, Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

Hag 1:15b-2:9 Ps 145:1-5, 17-21

2 Thess 2:1-5, 13-17 Luke 20:27-38

Nov 16, Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Isa 65:17-25 Isa 12

2 Thess 3:6-13 Luke 21:5-19

Nov 23, Reign of Christ

Jer 23:1-6 Luke 1:68-79

Col 1:11-20 Luke 23:33-43

Nov 30, First Sunday of Advent

Is 2:1-5 Ps 122

Rom 13:11-4 Matt 24:36-44



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

NOVEMBER RADIO BROADCASTS

November 9 – In memory of George, Gerald, and Lynn Henrich from the Prairie River Gang

November 23 – In memory of Bruce Schaefer and Lynn Henrich from the Prairie River Gang

November 30 – In gratitude for Saint Stephens and its ministries from Jon & Gerri Robinson



Open Radio Ministry Dates:

November 2, 16

December 7, 14, 21, and 28



November's Livestreams
are in memory of our
father Gary Sholund Sr.
from Gary Jr, Al, and
Gina Sholund.



Christmas is just two months away! Join us for the Hanging of the Greens as we transform the sanctuary into an evergreen wonderland on November 29 at 8 AM. With enough volunteers, we can have the church ready for Advent in no time!

Stan and Deb Seeger would appreciate help on Friday, November 28, to prepare the wreaths. If you can assist, please reach out to them!



**Please join us on Sunday, November 23,
for our special time of remembrance for
those born to heaven this past year.**

Gary Sholund Sr.	Gary Mosser
Lynn Henrich	Lois Wold
Betty Krause	Luette Sundberg
Randy Schwartz	Dick Bettin
Celina Schmidt	Millie Burrows
Dorothy Krause	Joyce Peterson
Anna Krueger	Warren Little
Shirley "Jean" Mootz	Sandra Dittmar
Faye Braatz	Steven Gehrt
Phyllis Reinhardt	John Hotzfeld
Judy Woller	Patrick Grob
Mary Ellis	Kirby Peterson
Michael Wahoske	Lyle Woller
Ruth Buck	

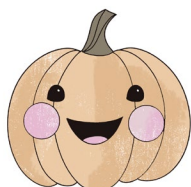


GREEN TEAM

Don't Toss Those Pumpkins in the Trash!

After Halloween, you can dispose of pumpkins in several ways: by composting them, donating them to wildlife or farms, or placing them in your yard waste bin. If you choose composting or yard waste disposal, make sure to remove all decorations, such as candles and paint, beforehand.

Additionally, please ensure that the pumpkins have not been treated with any chemicals before giving them to wildlife or composting them.



NOVEMBER MISSION:

Christmas Spirit

The Lincoln County United Giving Tree Program

Christmas is right around the corner, and we are preparing our hearts and our homes for the birth of Christ. Please also remember we are continuing our longstanding tradition of being a tree host for the Christmas Spirit Lincoln County United Giving Tree Program, which aims to provide a joyful Christmas for area children. Last Christmas, Christmas Spirit served 154 families, which consisted of 399 children from Merrill and Tomahawk!

Children's tags will be available for pick up on the giving tree located in our lobby. Once you have chosen a tag, please sign your name on the log by the tree. Remember, gifts are purchased, but please **do not** wrap them upon return to the church, which has been set for **November 25**.

If you are unable to shop for a child, monetary donations can be given through the monthly mission giving envelope, online via the church's website, or dropped off at the church office.



Stirring the Spirit: Soup and Pastoral Conversations



Join Pastor Mike for lunch and casual conversation on **November 24 at noon** in the Kuck Lounge.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Giving-A Spiritual Practice *by Rev Andrew Warner*

In just the last few years, I started running. Last month I ran my second half marathon. Each race teaches me something about myself. Early on in this race, a guy with my build and about my age tore past me, at a pace I couldn't imagine keeping. It felt so demoralizing to have him truck past me. I tried to pick up my pace a bit. Then, a couple of minutes later, the same guy came running past me again. "How slow am I going", I thought. This kept happening, for the first half of the race, the same guy passed me ten times.

Finally on the tenth time he passed me, I realized that I must have passed him too. But I didn't notice when I ran past him. I was so focused on other people beating me that I didn't notice when I passed someone. And it's easy to fall into this pattern- focusing on what other people have, on their instagramable life, #blessed, judging myself by the yardstick of someone else's moment. Sometimes people in my work call this a mindset of scarcity, a narrowness of vision that focuses on short comings, on what we lack, on a fear that we might fall behind and lose out. Do we have a mindset of scarcity in our lives? About our church?

Another runner showed me a different way to be. At mile 8, the course became a long, slow uphill grade to the finish line. It was also about as far as I'd run in my training. At this point of tiredness, another runner struck up a conversation. Chan and I talked the remaining 5 miles; well, mostly he talked. The half-marathon was a training run for Chan as he prepared for a full marathon. He could have easily passed me, but he hung back and encouraged me- mostly with distracting banter, but also, along the way with a few tips. Including, at the end, when he reminded me that there would be a photographer as I crossed the line- "no matter what" he said, "look up and smile".

Chan noticed the people running around him. He looked for someone who needed encouragement. Instead of seeing who beat him, he noticed who needed him. He brought a mindset of generosity to his running.

In my life, I want to move from a mindset of scarcity to a mindset of generosity. From a narrow, competitive field of vision to a broad, abundant view of life. This is what makes giving a spiritual practice. All the ways we can give- financially, but also time, encouragement, support- nurture in us a spirit of generosity.

Cheryl Buck-Stewardship Chair



THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS UPON US!

As Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and all the other fancy shopping days approach, think about purchasing Scrip cards at church on Sunday Mornings or stopping into the church office during office hours! This is a great way to fundraise for the church while fulfilling your holiday shopping list!

If we don't have the store cards you want in stock or if you have a large order, please fill out a scrip order form! You can also download the Raise Right App and purchase Scrip on the go! Check out the Scrip table on Sundays for more information or call the church office on how to sign up online for Raise Right.



WISE TEAM

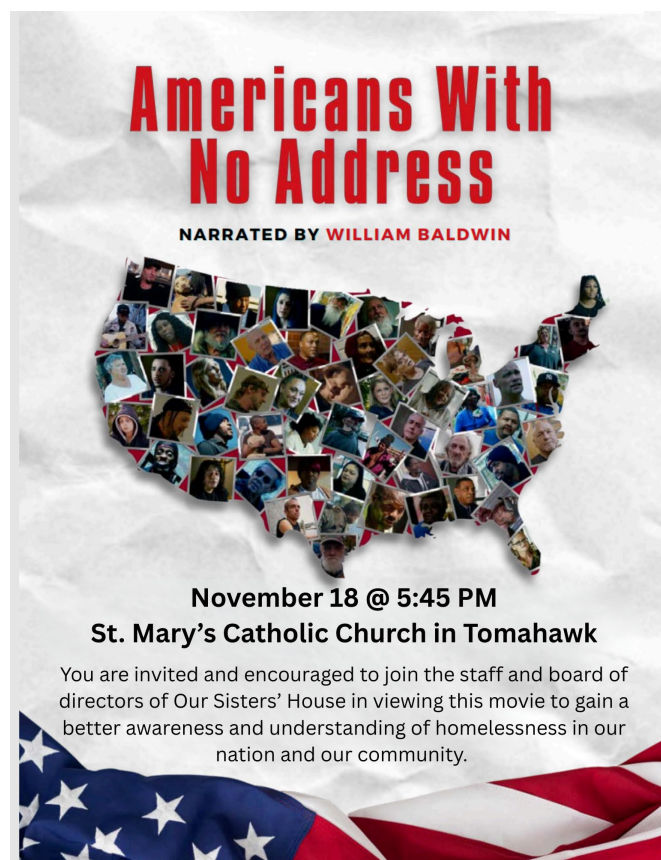
Language and Words Matter By Paula McIntyre

Do you remember the saying, “Stick and stones may break my bones, but words or names can never hurt me.”? I do. Unfortunately, words matter and can cause hurt and stigma. We have a history of using descriptors or adjectives to describe people which in turn stigmatizes them and the condition they have. It is important that we practice and commit to using person-first language to decrease stigmatization and stereotyping of certain conditions. For example, we tend to say someone is schizophrenic, bipolar, depressed, diabetic, obese, or “they committed suicide or killed themselves.” Instead, we can say:

“He is living with schizophrenia.” “She is living with bipolar disorder.” “They died by suicide.” “A person with diabetes.” “I am living with depression.”

Using person-first language means that we recognize a person’s experience with mental health or physical health is only part of who they are as a person and a child of God. Although Jesus did not use person-first language because it is a modern concept that did not exist during his lifetime, his interactions and behavior with people who lived with oppression or marginalization aligned with the spirit of it. Pastor spoke of this in a recent sermon. In Mark 1:40-42, Jesus touches a man with leprosy, acknowledging him as a whole person. Throughout the gospels, Jesus speaks directly to those he healed. He also includes those considered as outcasts in his ministry, like tax collectors and Samaritans.

Take time to listen to the language you use. If you notice it is not person-first, make a commitment to yourself and others to speak differently. If you’d like to learn more about how words matter for mental health, access this article here: [Words Matter: How to Use Inclusive Language When Talking About Mental Health](#) | NAMI StigmaFree



Scott and Kelly Wallace have sponsored a screening of *Americans With No Address* at Our Sisters' House in Tomahawk. They watched it at the Grand Theater and described it as an eye-opening experience. They want to share this movie with more people in our area. If you're interested in gaining a new perspective on homelessness, please join us in Tomahawk on November 18!



CHURCH FINANCIAL REPORT

September Revenue and Expenses

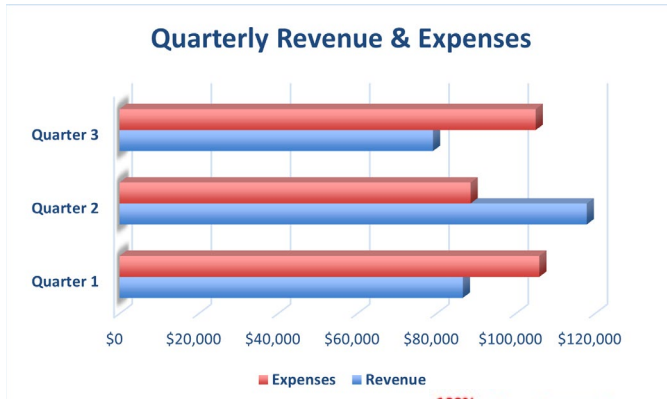
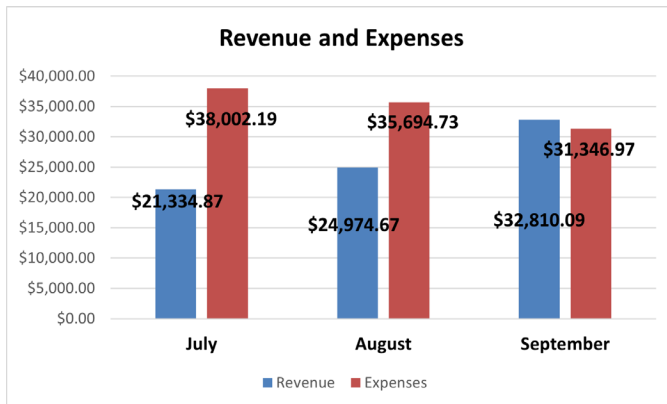
Revenue \$32,810.09

Expenses \$31,346.97

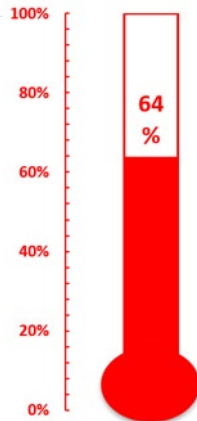
Net Gain: \$1,463.12

YTD: -\$15,896.76

The congregation raised \$1,030 for Neighbors in Need. Thank you for your continued support of our local missions!



OCWM Goal	
Quarter	Amount
QRT 1	\$1,655.00
QRT 2	\$1,465.00
QRT 3	\$1,355.00
QRT 4	
Total	\$4,475.00
Goal	\$7,000.00
Need	\$2,525.00
Achieved %	64%
Target %	100%



BUILDING UPDATES

The new roof project was completed in August! And the lightning rod required by Church Mutual has also been installed on the Cross! We still have an outstanding loan of \$60,312.39 for the new roofs and lightning rod installation. If you are able to contribute to the roof fund to help pay down this loan, the church would greatly appreciate your support.

Tim is currently working on the new flooring in the Medical Ministry Room and plans to address the ceiling outside of Office Door #1 in the spring, as both suffered water damage. Unfortunately, with an aging building, we will have many more projects ahead to ensure the building remains in good condition for years to come!



NOVEMBER 2



Fall back, not behind!
CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS and
join us on time for worship.



HAPPY
THANKSGIVING

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

NOVEMBER 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!

Nov 1	Laurie Burns	Nov 15	Naomi Berg	Nov 27	Tim Anderson
Nov 1	Dawson Heckendorf	Nov 15	Kathy Case	Nov 28	Tammy Duwe
Nov 3	Corey Dornbrack	Nov 17	Bradley Schnabl	Nov 28	Michael Golisch
Nov 6	Leah Lange	Nov 19	Nicholas Lewitzke	Nov 28	Jessica Frick
Nov 6	Josh Kohnhorst	Nov 20	Cheryl Ament	Nov 29	Allison Rodemeier
Nov 7	Holly Boehm	Nov 20	Gary Roggenbuck	Nov 29	Betsy Peterson
Nov 9	Leroy Frick	Nov 21	Whitley Golisch		
Nov 9	Garrett Lapsenberg	Nov 22	Brian Rowe		
Nov 10	Sue Heckendorf	Nov 22	Shari Schubert		
Nov 10	John Schenzel	Nov 23	Joan Johnson		
Nov 10	Jace Bloch	Nov 24	Katrina Depies		
Nov 10	Andi Christensen	Nov 25	Ione Koehler		
Nov 12	Linda Plautz	Nov 26	Philip Mussell		
Nov 12	Jeffrey Porath	Nov 26	Katie Rajek		
Nov 13	Andrew Podeweltz	Nov 27	Bert Hopp		
Nov 13	Scott Kasten	Nov 27	Diana Huston		
Nov 14	Luke Lazare	Nov 27	Gay Stencil		



Saint Stephens UCC

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

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Terra Holdridge
Kimberly McCaskill
Kari Weiland

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www.unsplash.com www.clipart-library.com www.churchart.com

GIFTS & memorials

Received through October 12

Dedicated to the glory of God and...

Radio Ministry

\$190.00	in honor of Todd & Renea's Anniversary on October 20
\$190.00	in memory of Bruce Schaefer on what would have been our 29 th wedding anniversary on October 18 from Janet Schaefer
\$190.00	in gratitude for Saint Stephens and its ministries from Jon & Gerri Robinson

Livestream

\$200.00	in honor of Tyler Fredricks' birthday on October 19 and in honor of Todd & Renea's anniversary on October 20 from Todd & Renea Frederick
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New Roof Fund

\$50.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from Kristine Smith
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Sanctuary Updates

\$50.00	in memory of Fern Langhoff from Bill & Joanne Wengeler
\$50.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from Bill & Joanne Wengeler
\$50.00	in memory of Dick Bettin from Ray Woller
\$30.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from Carl & Kathy Hass

Food For Kids

\$50.00	in memory of Fern Langhoff from Dennis & Luanne Grefe
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Memorial offering

\$100.00	in memory of Dick Bettin from Bill & Carol Weber
\$25.00	in memory of Mildred Burrows from The Mike Hommerding Family
\$20.00	in memory of Dick Bettin from Brenda Rowe
\$20.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from Carol Plautz
\$25.00	in memory of Dick Bettin from Merrill Forward Together
\$25.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from Randy & Diane Perry
\$25.00	in memory of Dick Bettin from Sally Oberg
\$25.00	in memory of Fern Langoff from Terry & Kevin Krueger
\$25.00	in memory of Rev. Gene Krueger from Terry & Kevin Krueger
\$20.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from Dave & Cheryl Buck
\$20.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from Eunice Schmidt
\$20.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from Janet Tesch
\$20.00	in memory of Millie Burrows from LuEllen Natzke

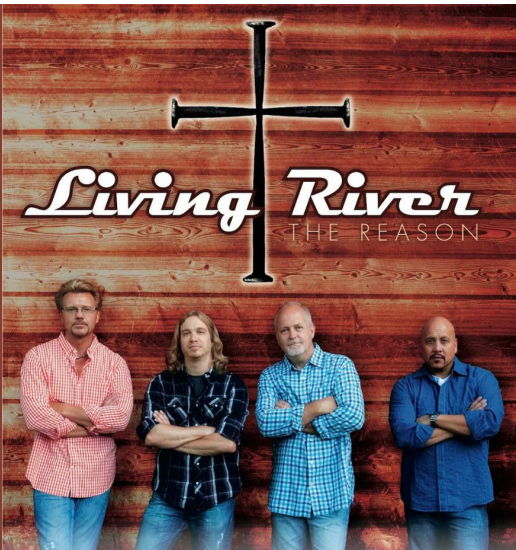


SAVE THE DATE:



Christmas Concert
Saturday, December 6
7:00 PM
Saint Stephens UCC
903 E 2nd Street







O'TANNENBAUM TOUR
December 6 & 7

Tour Hours: Adults - \$3
Saturday 10 AM - 7 PM Ages 6 - 11 - \$1
Sunday 10 AM - 2 PM Ages 5 & Under - Free



A Hunters Prayer

Source: *Elkbros.com*

Thank you majestic one for the honorable hunt.
My family and friends shall honor your sacrifice by feeding from your meat.
The memory of your last day will forever be a part of me.
May your spirit be embraced by the creator, knowing that you have served your purpose, fulfilled your destiny.

Thank you Lord for sharing your incredible nature and creatures.
Grant me always, wisdom and respect in the pursuit and keep me humble in the harvest.

Amen.

Good Luck Hunters and Be Safe!



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903 E 2ND ST
MERRILL WI 54452

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Pastoral Care Telephone Number 618-558-5014



&



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ststephensunitedchurchofchrist/

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>