

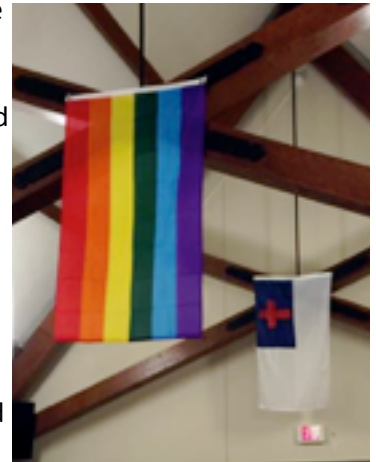


The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA issued a letter in response to the Sunday, June 12 shooting at the Pulse night club in Orlando. She begins by stating, *"We are killing ourselves. We believe that all people are created in God's image,"* and concludes with a call to *"stand with people who have been othered," "to speak peace and reconciliation into the cacophony of hatred and division,"* and to *"live the truth that all people are created in the image of God."*

What does living the truth that all people are created in God's image look like here at St. Stephen's? We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation. In obedience to Christ's command to love one another as he loves us, we welcome all persons without exception, without regard for age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, financial or family status, physical or mental abilities, or any other human distinction used to discriminate and exclude. The rainbow heart which appears with our logo on our website and on printed materials is a symbol of that commitment.



Recently we hung a rainbow flag in the narthex. It was a gift given to the congregation when we officially became Reconciling in Christ. I must confess that this flag sat forgotten on a shelf in my office for two years. After finding it again and consulting with our council leaders, we decided it would be appropriate to hang it in the narthex alongside other flags such as the Christian flag and the Luther Rose flag, that symbolize our common identity as Christians in the Lutheran tradition.



Rainbow flags have been around for a really long time. The first European rainbow flag was hoisted during the reformation by Thomas Muntzer, a peer and critic of Martin Luther. In the 1960s the rainbow flag became a symbol of the peace movement. The first LGBT pride flag was designed by San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker in 1978. He expanded the five-striped rainbow flag of the human races to symbolize the pride, hope, and diversity of the LGBTQ community which comes from all races and cultural backgrounds, all religions, all languages, all abilities, and all disabilities.

As one council member said, *"The rainbow flag really represents all of us."* Even if you do not feel it represents you personally, the rainbow flag does symbolize our commitment to live the truth that all people are created in God's image. It signals to everyone who comes through our doors that in this place all people, without exception, are regarded as human beings created in God's image, worthy of love and respect, even if we don't fully understand what it is like to walk in their shoes.

In light of the events in Orlando, I wonder, however, if it is enough to just hang up a flag?

Blessings,

Pastor Rita

Marty Johnson's Southeast Iowa Synod Assembly Observations

On May 6 and 7 I had the privilege of joining with Terri Petersen, Pastor Ritva, and Vicar Luci as we attended the annual Southeastern Iowa ELCA Assembly in Coralville. The theme "*Drawn to the Light of God*" served to inspire us all as we saw to the business of the Church and took time as well for worship through prayer and singing. Under the leadership of Bishop Burk, assembly speakers addressed the needs of our congregations for growth in membership, service, and giving as we move forward in the 21st century.

Friday evening saw the celebration of Holy Communion in a very inspirational service led by the bishop, and on Saturday we heard the stories of dedicated workers of the church as they described their service in ministry. Throughout it all, a talented biblical "story-teller" walked among us telling tales from scripture in an enthusiastic and thought-provoking manner.

Much of the last day was devoted to crafting and approving resolutions expressing the position of



the Church on many social issues. We ended by looking forward to the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's work next year, and the role that each of our congregations can play in that celebration.

This was my first experience in attendance at a synodical gathering and I was struck by the dedication and enthusiasm of our church leaders. I would wholeheartedly recommend participation by everyone who wishes in our congregation as we look toward future assemblies.

Finance Team Changes

I have stepped away from the Financial Secretary position, resulting in the reorganization of the finance team. Jenny Weber is our new Financial Secretary and Jim Daubenmier is our lead counter. Both Jenny and Jim have a lot of experience and the gifts to manage these positions successfully.

Jenny will record all contributions to the church (Sunday, EFT, and online contributions) and will also prepare gift-in-kind letters. Quarterly, she will generate contribution statements to donors. Jenny would be happy to answer questions at jenny.a.weber@gmail.com or 712-249-6645.

We're looking for volunteers to help assemble quarterly stewardship letters, including contribution statements. This takes place the month after each quarter end. We have two volunteers signed up to help in July. We need two people in October 2016, and January, April, July, and October 2017. If interested, please let Jenny or me know.

Jim will oversee the counter activities and create the counter schedule each quarter. Are you interested in counting? If so, contact Jim at jimdaubenmier@gmail.com or 378-9494.

I will continue as church accountant. This includes monthly financial statements, payroll, W-2s, 1099s, and any reporting needed by our Finance Committee.

It has been honor serving as the church's Financial Secretary the past several years. I leave these responsibilities in very qualified hands. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Jackie Lee



Five hundred twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes. This is the first line in act two of the musical RENT. 525,600 minutes, the number of minutes in one year. The song continues to describe different ways to measure time: in daylight, in

sunsets, in midnights, in cups of coffee, in inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife.

Now, I am fairly certain that time seems to pass in direct opposition from what you desire. It seems that just a blink ago, I was turning the calendar to May, and now it's the end of June. I am looking at days rather than weeks before my family and I move, yet again, back to Dubuque.

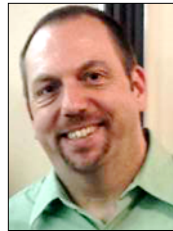
And although I spent just shy of a year with you, I sit here reflecting on the memorable minutes of this past year. The minutes that I will hold as learning moments, the minutes of joy that I will cherish, and the minutes of grief; all these minutes that will stay with me long after I leave.

Saying good-bye is never easy. But in order to participate in a healthy "leave-taking," I invite you, I ask you, to take a minute to share in this transition that we are all facing. Take a minute to say good-bye to me. And please, in a few weeks, when your new Vicar Kristi arrives, take a minute to show her and her husband the St. Stephen's hospitality.

Beginning July 21, the day after we move out, I will be taking a three-month "Sabbath" from social media communication with people at St. Stephen's. While I will still be online for personal use, I will not reply, "like," or respond to friend requests during this time. As much as I have enjoyed being your Vicar, this is a role that I cannot continue beyond my year with you. Following these three months, if you would like to remain in contact, I would love to hear updates on how you are doing. I pray that you understand this need for distance in order that we can all have a healthy transition.

I give thanks for this community and look forward to the minutes that we have left together and the memories that will last far into my journey.

Vicar Luci Sessold



As I promised last month, I am taking the next few months to talk about my position's responsibilities and my philosophy regarding them. The goal is to give you insight into the work I am doing with and for you. This month's responsibility can be

summarized as **being present with middle and high school youth.**

First it is important to define what it means to "be present." My understanding of this phrase is to be actively engaged in the lives of others. This may be done in formal and informal settings. With the youth, some of this engagement will be programmed and some more relaxed. At times it will happen in one-on-one or small group settings. Other times it will occur in large gatherings. Social media will definitely be a part of my being present with the middle and high school youth.

How this responsibility will be fulfilled is by being where the youth are in their lives. This will include being at the church on Sunday mornings, many Wednesday nights, and any other times we are having events where youth are actively involved. The responsibility will also be fulfilled by attending school and community events youth participate in. I will also be creating opportunities for youth to gather with me for times of conversation and fun.

The goal in all of these situations is to develop relationships between each youth and myself, as well as between the youth. This goal supports my ministry philosophies because one of my chief philosophies of ministry is that ministry is only possible through relationships. So being present is vital to the building of relationships. Relationships cannot be formed or maintained unless time is spent together.

Please feel free to discuss any of this with me. I enjoy any opportunity to share this awesome ministry and the wonderful aspects each of our youth bring to it. Also, suggestions and desires to volunteer are always sought.

Mark Howland
Youth & Young Adult
Minister



Practice Discipleship in Daily Life

Join us as we explore the seven faith practices that are the foundation for following Jesus in daily life: Worship, Prayer, Encourage, Study, Give, Invite, Serve.

WORSHIP

A new summer worship schedule for Sunday mornings began on May 29. We continue to offer two services, **8:00 and 10:00am**. The hour in between services provides opportunities for extended fellowship and guided conversation.

Wednesday worship during the summer will be at 6:30pm according to the following schedule:

- 1st Wednesday ... Taize-style Worship
- 2nd Wednesday ... Worship Around the Table
- 3rd Wednesday ... Healing Service
- 4th Wednesday ... Worship Around the Table

STUDY

Discovering God's Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts — a new 8 week class beginning Sunday, July 10 at 6pm. Sign-up sheet is available in the narthex or contact Marilyn Loan, marilyn.loan@me.com or 551-7632.

PRAY



The Prayer Team meets every Monday at 12:30pm to pray for concerns identified by members, and for

the life of this congregation.

GIVE



Sanctuary Lamp Oil Sponsor

Opportunity! If you wish to sponsor a week of oil for our Eternal Lamp, please put \$10 in the offering. Be sure to designate in the memo line or on your envelope that this is your intent. Or you can sign up online through Sign Up Genius

(<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080c45abaa2da57-fellowship1>) and pay through our online giving option.

Altar Flowers Sign Up Opportunity! Select a date and indicate if it is a special commemoration. Place your gift of \$25 (marked "FLOWERS") in the offering plate or pay through our website's online giving link.



Fourth Annual Pool Party
Saturday, July 16,
6pm-8pm at Bever.

The pool has been reserved for us, so bring your family and friends! All are welcome. Sign-up sheet coming soon.



How Our Quilting Ministry Group

Works: We have various projects from which to choose, for sewers and non-sewers. You work at home at your own pace. We now have neckties for a quilt –

something new! Our goal is to have 15 quilts ready for the next delivery to LSI. Thank you for all the donations.

Barbara Kusler – 319-826-3794 (home)
or 214-202-8646 (cell)



Summer Grill Outs Wednesday, July 13 & 27 at 5:45pm.

Invite your friends and neighbors for food, fellowship, worship around the table, and end the evening

with s'mores around the campfire. We hope to see you there!

Vicar and Family are Moving Out!



Wednesday, July 20, Vicar Luci and family will be leaving the Vicarage and trekking it back to Dubuque. In order to beat the July heat they'll start loading in the morning and are hoping for many hands to speed up

the process. Tentative start time is 9am; this will get firmed up closer to the date. Any amount of help will be greatly appreciated! Please let Vicar Luci know if you are planning on helping so she can plan accordingly.

Hospitality Opportunities!

Please consider signing up for the **Sunday coffee hour**. No sign ups/no treats. This is one of the easiest ways to be involved at St. Stephen's. Sign up at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080c45abaa2da57-fellowship1> or on the narthex bulletin board.

Grillers needed for the Wednesday summer grill-outs.

All you have to do is grill the meat; the grill is ready to go by 5:15 as we eat at 5:45. Sign up at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080c45abaa2da57-wednesdays> or on the narthex bulletin board.

Please remember to clean the kitchen and run the dishwasher.

Thank You!

Dear friends and members of St. Stephen's,

I thank you all so very much for your kind birthday wishes, both sung and in a handshake or a hug. My improved health could not have been possible if I had not had all the prayers you prayed for me! Thank you! Praise God! What a great church!!

Suzanne Schmidt

• • •

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the lovely cake and coffee brunch at church. Special thanks to Pastor Ritva, Terri, and Ev for their parts in it. I appreciate it all more than you'll ever know.

*Love,
Jane Severide*

Through the Week at St. Stephen's

What's usually happening on a given day

Sundays

- 8:00am 1st Worship Service
- 9:00am Fellowship
- 10:00am 2nd Worship Service
- 6:00pm Small Group: Discovering God's Vision for Your Life (7/10, 17, 24, 31)
- July 31 Signup deadline for 2017 Reformation Tour

Mondays **Office closed July 4**

- 9 to 2:00 Church office open
- 8:00am Men's Group at Mr. Beans in Marion
- 12:00pm eNews deadline
- 12:30pm Prayer Team

Tuesdays

- 9 to 2:00 Church office open
- 5:30pm Worship & Music Team Mtg (7/12)
- 6:30pm Ministry Teams Meetings (7/12)
- 7:00pm Strategic Working Groups (7/12)

Wednesdays

- 9 to 2:00 Church office open
- 10:30am Staff Meeting
- 5:45pm Summer Grill Out (7/13, 27)
- 6:30pm Worship (Taize Worship 7/6)
- 7:15pm Campfire, S'Mores, & Fun (7/13, 27)
- 7:15pm Vocalists Rehearsal
- 8:30pm Instrumentalists Rehearsal

Thursdays

- 9 to 2:00 Church office open
- 6:00pm WomenWineWisdom @ Mandarin Spice Asian Grill, 1412 Twixt Town Rd, Marion (7/7)
- 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting (7/14)
- 6:30pm Council Meeting (7/21)

Fridays Pastor's Sabbath

- 7:00pm Men's Bonfire at Aaron Tank's home, 5040 Broadview Dr. SE (7/15)

Saturdays

- 6:00pm 4th Annual Pool Party at Bever (7/16)

We welcome:

Luke David Lemke, son of Jenny and Adam, baptized Sunday, June 12.

New members Chris and Sally Terukina together with Mason Cook and Amber Suhr, who affirmed their faith Sunday, June 26.

Farewell and Godspeed to:

Joe and Sherrie Avila, who are retiring to Grimes, Iowa.

We pray for the families and friends of:

Judy Hahn (Mary Flecksing's mother), who passed on June 3.

On the Prayer List

Members

Steve Thomas
Mick Butz
Lee Tramutolo
Pete Hansen
Ken Kaiser
Joan Petersen
Elaine Peters
Toni Lee
Judy Nye
Suzanne Schmidt
Ann Kleman
Sally Beltz
Harriet Hemphill
Ev Petersen

Relatives

Terry Swalve
Trent Rosberg
Shirley Coates
Rev. Richard Hermstad
LaRue Hagen
Dave Goepfert
Cathy Goepfert
Ann Sanderson
Erik Hamalainen

Friends

Con Berger

Serving in the military and/or overseas

Kate Munro (Malawi)
Nick Wheeler, Army National Guard (grandson of Gail & Dan Husmann)
Alex Grafft, Army National Guard

*Please contact the office or use a Prayer Request card (in your pew rack) to place your loved one's name on this list for two weeks and/or request prayer of the Monday Prayer Team. **If your loved one desires a pastoral visit, please contact Pastor Ritva.***

God's work. Our hands.

As a social ministry organization of the ELCA, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) is so thankful for your partnership in ministry! We give special thanks for the many congregations making LSI the focus of their "God's work. Our hands." projects.

Past "God's work. Our hands." projects have included donations of tools for dads enrolled in our early childhood programs, plus children's books, towel bundles, school supplies and backpacks. LSI has also been blessed to receive "noisy" offerings, special offerings and proceeds from yard work or luncheons. Some Sunday School classes and youth groups have also encouraged youth at LSI's Beloit and Bremwood Residential Treatment Centers through quilts and letters.

We thank you for your witness of God's love and your service! If you are interested in ministering to those served by LSI and would like to know more about current needs, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at deborah.whitford@LSIowa.org.

LSI is proud to be an affiliated social ministry organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Finding Help and Hope

Bernie's daughter-in-law walked into her house and set her new baby on the living room sofa. She told Bernie the baby was "a mistake" and that she couldn't parent him. She never returned. At age 50, Bernie became a mom to her 2-month-old grandson, Bryce. Bernie's son – the baby's biological father – had medical and mental health issues that left him unable to care for the child.

When Bryce was young, he was diagnosed with ADHD, ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder), fetal drug and alcohol syndrome, mental retardation, and partial bipolar disorder. As he grew older, Bryce began to develop anger issues. Bernie knew he was struggling, so she reached out to LSI.

Bryce began receiving regular home visits from a Behavioral Health Intervention Services worker, who coached Bryce on anger management. Bryce also began seeing an LSI therapist.

Today, Bryce is 15 years old. He attends special education classes, and is doing wonderfully. When he is upset, he reaches out to his LSI therapist for help. Bryce still struggles with anger, but Bernie and his LSI support team work together to meet Bryce where he is.

"I want to thank each and every one of our workers from LSI," Bernie says. "They are doing marvelous work with him."

And thanks to LSI donors, Bryce receives the help, hope, and support he needs.



WomenWineWisdom met June 2 at the Farmer's Daughter's Market.



Wednesday, June 8, was a fine evening for activities after the grill out at 5:45 and worship at 6:30pm.



Sunday, June 12, during the second service, we welcomed Luke David Lemke, son of Jenny and Adam, to the body of Christ through the Rite of Holy Baptism.



Pastor Ritva Williams and Youth and Young Adult Minister Mark Howland joined in the Cedar Rapids Prayer Vigil for the Orlando victims Sunday evening, June 12.



Sunday, June 19, we held a farewell reception for Joe and Sherrie Avila who are retiring to Grimes, Iowa.



Tuesday, June 21, former Vicar Aleese Baldwin was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament in Rothschild, MN, with Pastor Ritva (John) and Ardell and Roland Begalske in attendance. Pastor Aleese will serve Shepherd of the Cross Lutheran Church, Muscatine, IA.



Tuesday, June 21, Youth Service Project – Youth and adult volunteers cleaned up landscaping around the church.



St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, ELCA
610 31st St. S.E.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403-3021

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Staff Directory

Pastor
Youth & Young Adult Minister
Pastoral Intern
Office Manager
Music Director
Piano Accompanist
Premises Keeper
Council President
eNews Editor

Rev. Dr. Ritva Williams
Mark Howland
Luci Sesvold
Susan Hallock
David Haas
Leslie Hyland
Debbie Polk
Jeanne Towell
Marilyn Loan

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iverson.luci@gmail.com
office@ssluth.com
music@ssluth.com
lesliehyland@gmail.com
(319) 329-7655
thetowells@msn.com
marilyn.loan@me.com

Sunday Morning Schedule (Summer Hours)

8:00am Worship
9:05am Coffee & Fellowship
10:00am Worship

Please join us Wednesdays:
6:30pm Worship



St. Stephen's
Lutheran Church, ELCA
To Know, Live, and Share Christ.
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St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
(ELCA) is a **Reconciling in Christ**
congregation that welcomes
diversity, which enriches, nurtures,
and challenges our life and ministry.

***Come and join us as
we know, live, and
share Christ
together in love.***

