



SABBATICAL ANNOUNCEMENT

COME AWAY WITH ME BY YOURSELVES TO A QUIET PLACE
AND GET SOME REST. MARK 8:31

I will be taking a sabbatical beginning Monday, May 21 and ending Sunday, August 12.

If you're wondering what a sabbatical is, well it's a Sabbath, like when God rested from all God's labors on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2). Like when God commanded God's people to keep the seventh day as a Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11), and to give the land a rest every seventh year (Leviticus 25:1-7).

When universities were invented in the 10th century they were part of the church. It was decided that professors (who were also priests and pastors) needed one year in every seven to become students again to refresh and renew their calling. College and university professors still get sabbaticals. I used my first sabbatical at Augustana College (2006) to finish my studies at Wartburg Theological Seminary in preparation for my ordination in 2007. A research grant in 2011 enabled me to take an early second sabbatical in 2011, when I was called to serve St. Stephen's. Yes, this is my seventh year as your pastor.

In the church a sabbatical is a three month period of time during which a pastor is required to become once again a student and a worshipper. The idea is to give the pastor uninterrupted time for professional development, something that is very difficult to do in the midst of the ever-shifting schedule of church life. The cumulative effect of pastoral ministry can lead to spiritual and compassion fatigue, so rest, reflection and renewal are a big part of the sabbatical agenda.

For most of May and June, I will be at home working on a writing project with my daughter, Anne, gardening, playing with my cats, and concentrating on self-care. I have applied to participate in a leadership school sponsored by the Southeastern Iowa Synod, but have yet to learn if I have been accepted. On weekends John and I intend to visit other churches, especially RIC and "vitalized" congregations here in Iowa. In July we will be visiting family in Canada, and traveling to Europe.

In my absence, Vicar Mikayla Kopp will be your lead preacher and pastoral care-giver (including for funerals). Please note, that she will continue to do 16 hours/week of chaplaincy at St Luke's. Youth and Young Adult Minister, Mark Howland will preside at the altar, and when he is away Kathy Franzenburg or Lyle Kleman will sub for him. In addition to his role as Communications Coordinator Mark will also oversee the LOAF ministry together with the LOAF Committee (Melanie Ostmo, Debbie Ackerman, Carol White, and Eric Hart). Jeanne Towell will take over my personnel management and administrative duties. You will all be in good hands.

As you spend time with family and friends over the summer months, please keep St. Stephen's in your prayers!

Pastor Ritva



It is time for me to say thank you to many of you. Over the last few months, the youth have been working very hard to raise monies to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering and other special events. Many of you have been very generous in assisting us to

reach our goals. So let me say thank you to all who have contributed toward the various fundraisers which we have already completed and those we have yet to finalize. Thank you also to the parents of our youth who have organized, worked, and supplied resources for many of our fundraising activities. I would be overlooking some very hard-working individuals if I did not thank the middle school and high school youth who have committed their time and energy to make these activities happen.

I also thought that I would give you some financial information so that you are aware of what has been accomplished so far:

- Apple Pie Sales 2017 - \$2802
- Christmas Offering - \$1410
- Babysitting - \$213*
- Lenten Soup Suppers - \$622
- HyVee Coupon Book Sales - \$850*
- Dessert Auction/Bake Sale - \$870
- Apron Sales - \$100
- Easter Breakfast/Egg Basket Sale - \$817
- Can/Bottle Deposit - \$76*
- Pizza Ranch Night - \$263
- Stock Sales - \$670*

(*Still in progress)

We are about \$4000 away from our ELCA Gathering goal but we desire to go beyond that since we use the monies for other special events throughout the year.

So again, thank you! Please continue to support our upcoming events. Remember if you need some work around the house/yard done or babysitting, the youth are always on call.

Mark Howland

Youth & Young Adult Minister



Now that spring seems to finally be here (hopefully I didn't just jinx us by writing this), I've been thinking about renewal. Spring tends to bring this topic up in my mind each year as flowers start to break through the

once frozen ground and the seemingly dead branches of trees start to bud again. But I also tend to think of the renewal of my spiritual life as well.

We've just celebrated Easter Sunday not long ago and the season of Easter lasts a few more weeks, and with this in mind, I can't help but to continue to think about the Resurrection, new life and the things that bring those. So, with this time of year, I like to consider new spiritual practices to try through the spring and summer and that's what these last few weeks have brought up in my mind.

These last few weeks, I've been considering what I can do as a spiritual practice that will help me to slow down, especially during the busyness of summer. For instance, I recently remembered something that my grandma used to do, cross stitch. This simple little activity helps me to slow down, because its almost impossible to speed through cross stitch, and to really pay attention to what I'm doing. It gives me an opportunity to meditate on the day and to really look at how God was present, how God is present, how God has renewed me and brought new life.

What can you do in this time of year to help you to consider such things? Is there a new spiritual practice that you'd like to try that will help you slow down during the busyness of a new season and to see where God is really renewing you? Perhaps this is the perfect time to consider it and try something.

God's peace,

Vicar Mikayla Kopp

Stewardship & Finance Updates

To meet our monthly obligations at St. Stephen's we need \$18,960 in general fund offerings. This chart (prepared by Lee Paulsen, our Stewardship Committee Chair) shows how we are doing so far this year. See Treasurer, Paul Below's comments below.



St. Stephen's continues to reach out to the community and provide great ministry to our congregation as well as to our neighbors locally and globally. The Lenten offerings for Safe Place is an excellent example of the way we make a difference in this world. I want everyone to know how grateful I am that we commit our time and money to making a difference.

Part of that difference is making sure we have the support of personnel and infrastructure in place to continue this work. As your treasurer I need to let you know that as of the end of March we have a year-to-date loss of \$11,575. The bulk of this loss is that our projected donations to the general fund are \$10,212 lower than expected. I do want to thank the 89 households that have provided support to St. Stephen's. With your financial support we can continue to do God's work.

Paul Below, Treasurer

WORDS FROM OUR ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE:

We, at St Stephen's, stand on the shoulders of the congregation's founders and others that have gone before us. We can leave broad shoulders for future St Stephen's members and attendees to stand on with a robust endowment!

The committee wishes to say thank you. Since the 2018 Annual Meeting, your endowment committee has been made aware of two more legacy promises to the endowment funds.

Lyle Kleman, Chair
Cathy Gullickson
Ashley Hart
Pastor Ritva Williams, ex-officio





Communication Notes:

We are beginning the process of updating our directory to include pictures of our members and friends. We have chosen not to hire a company but instead to provide an easy, affordable, and creative way of helping people connect names and faces.

Communications Coordinator, Mark, will be collecting your pictures and assembling a new directory over the coming months. Here is what you need to provide:

- A digital copy of a picture of you, you and your family, you and your pets, whatever you choose. The picture must clearly show the faces of everyone in the picture. It should be in jpeg format and at least 1 mb in size. If you do not have a digital copy or know what any of this means, ask Mark for assistance.
- Your address, phone number(s), and email address. (This is to be sure that we have it correct.)
- Your birthdate and where applicable, your anniversary (Again, to verify accuracy)

These items should be sent to sslcoomcoord@gmail.com by **Wednesday, May 16.**

Communication contact information:
Email - sslcommcoord@gmail.com
Facebook - CommCoord Mark
Text and phone - 515-988-5183

Thank You Received...

From Abbe Health:

Rev Williams, Council &
Ken Nathan -



I just wanted to take a moment to send this note of thanks to you and your congregation for allowing the Witwer Healthy Aging Bridge Group access to your facility in the past and in the future. I am so grateful for your support.

My heartfelt thanks.

JoEllen Haddad
Witwer Healthy Aging Program Coordinator

From Safe Place Foundation:

Pastor Ritva and St
Stephen's Congregation,



Thank you so much for your incredibly thoughtful and generous gift of new bedding for each and every bed at the Safe Place Foundation! Gifts such as yours are essential as we attempt to carry out our mission: "Returning Recovered Men to Family and Community." Your kindness and generosity is much appreciated by myself, our Board of Directors, and the men in the house.

Thank you and God bless!

Ross Hauser, Executive Director
Safe Place Foundation

Remember that starting May 27 our worship times will be 8:00am and 10:00am each Sunday through the summer.



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

Sunday Worship Schedule, 8:00 and 10:30am.

Wednesday Worship is at 6:30pm. Now that the Lenten Season has ended, we return our regular schedule on Wednesdays.

- 1st Wednesday... Taize-Style Worship
- 2nd Wednesday... Interactive Worship
- 3rd Wednesday... Healing Service
- 4th Wednesday... Interactive Worship
- 5th Wednesday... Youth-led Worship

Would you like to sing with us? Join us Wednesday nights following worship or Operation Back Pack at 7:15/7:30-8:15/8:30pm. Childcare is provided during rehearsals.

STUDY

Sunday Morning Children's Time at 9:15am in the Children's Place (Pre-K/K) and in Classroom 8 (1st-5th grades) in the lower level). We use *Spark Lectionary Curriculum*.

Music with David Haas: The second Sunday of each month, after opening devotions in the Children's Place (lower level), the children come up to the sanctuary to learn a song they will offer as part of the worship during the second service.

Sunday morning High School Youth Discussion: (Youth Room) - see website for topics.

Life Long Learning 9:15am (Fellowship Hall)

May 6 - "A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment"

May 13 - A Strawberry Social

May 20 - Faith Stories by Confirmation Students

Bring Your Bible to Brunch. Join us as we look at the upcoming lectionary passages, we meet this month on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at the Chrome Horse, 1201 3rd Street SE.

Men's Coffee & Study Group (Mondays at 8am) at Mr. Beans in Marion. Current topic: *Being People of Privilege*

Women's Bible Study meets every Tuesday at 10:00am. We are studying Paul's epistle to the Romans.

Wednesday Evening Confirmation Program for Middle School Youth (6th-8th grades). Contact Pastor Ritva or YYAM Mark Howland for more information.

INVITE

WomenWineWisdom on Thursday, May 10 @ 6pm, Bandana's BBQ, 3707 1st Avenue SE. RSVP Amy at amykuhn2@aol.com or 270-6365. Child-care and rides can be arranged.

Women 50+ Luncheon — Tuesday, May 8 @ 11:30am, Fellowship Hall. For information, RSVP Ardell Begalske at reb4724@imonmail.com or 319-393-7073.

SERVE

Quilting Ministry: Contact Barbara Kusler — 319-826-3794 (home).

Operation Backpack - Usually every other Wednesday at 7:15pm in the Narthex. (May 2, 16 & 30)

Hospitality Hosts - Sundays at 9:00am in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall. Each Sunday you have the opportunity to provide refreshments for guests and members. For more information or to sign up, contact Amy Kuhn at amykuhn2@aol.com or 270-6365 or Nicole Brooks at nab21871@aol.com or 270-0900, Hospitality Team.

Opportunities to Sign Up for...

Altar Flowers – Sponsoring flowers for the altar is a nice way to honor a loved one's birthday, anniversary, or other special date. Sign up is easy! Go through Signup Genius or check the sign up on the What Would Jesus Sign Up For bulletin board.

The cost is \$25. You can place a check in the offering with "flowers" on the memo line, pay at the kiosk in the narthex, or pay online through the website. Take your flowers home after the second service or leave them to be shared with a member who cannot attend services.

Coffee Sponsor - Help provide coffee for fellowship between services and other church events. The cost is \$10. You can place a check in the offering with "coffee" on the memo line, pay at the kiosk in the narthex, or pay online through the website.

Sanctuary Lamp Oil - Keep the sanctuary lamp lit. The cost is \$10. You can place a check in the offering with "lamp oil" on the memo line, pay at the kiosk in the narthex, or pay online through the website.

Family Promise Food Providers and Hosts - Watch for our next scheduled dates for hosting.

Current Special Giving Opportunities...

Youth "Stock" - The youth are inviting you to purchase "stock" in their summer trip to the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston. Contact one of the youth for more information.

Amazon Smile - Do you shop on Amazon? Donate to our church with each of your purchases. Instead of using the regular Amazon site to make your purchases, go to <https://www.smile.amazon.com>. Choose St Stephen's as your charity.

Quarters for ELCA World Hunger - All quarters in the offering plate go to fight hunger throughout the world.

HACAP, Operation Backpack - Help the children fill the the quarter tube by the pulpit, so kids at Grant Woods & Erskine Elementary Schools can eat!

LORD Hear Our Prayers



Members

Steve Thomas
Mick Butz
Joan Petersen
Toni Lee
Judy Nye
Harriet Hemphill
Elfriede Hansen
Ann Kleman
Cris Nodruft
Leah, Sean and
Lydia Howard
Tekeste Gebrekidan

Relatives

Trent Rosberg
Gertrude Lee
LaRue Hagen
Gene Johnson
Georgia Henderson
Andrea

For those departed and those who mourn

Family and friends of:

Donna Brubaker, died March 24, member of St Stephen's and wife of Vern Brubaker
Sandra Kann, died April 11, grandmother of Nichole Plague

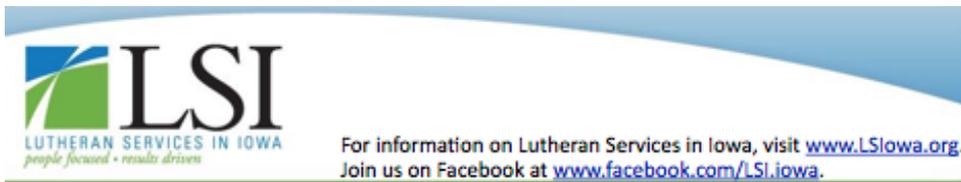
Serving in the military and/or overseas

Alex Grafft, Army National Guard
Jayson Clinton, Army, Turkey

Our Companions in Ministry

The Rev. Elineema Mndeme and people of Kisiwani, Pare Diocese, Tanzania (our Companion Congregation) and Bp. Charles Rabson Mjema and staff, Pare Diocese, Tanzania.

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 pastoral staff. If your loved one desires a pastoral visit, please contact Pastor Ritva by voice or text at 319-693-2087 or by email at pastorritva@gmail.com.



Happy Mother's Day!

Mother's Day is a time to celebrate the strong, loving women in your life. At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we see thousands of Iowa moms through their journey to build the brightest future for their children.

We see moms turning to LSI's Mental Health or Behavioral Health Intervention Services to ensure their child is receiving the coping skills and behavioral supports they need to thrive. In our Early Childhood Services, we see young first-time moms who are eager to join our parenting education classes and support groups. In 2016, LSI's Early Childhood programs provided support to 552 first-time parents. We are so inspired to hear their stories and see their hard work pay off as they raise our next generation.

As you celebrate Mother's Day this year, remember how many Iowa moms are being empowered because of your support. If you are looking for a way to honor your mother this year, please consider giving a gift in her name at LSIowa.org.

Thank you for standing alongside our Iowa families.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

"LSI has been a Lifesaver"

No parent should feel alone or hopeless when it comes to caring for their children's health. But those emotions were common for Judy four years ago.

It started when her son began seeing a litany of different doctors and specialists. Judy needed to coordinate his many appointments and medications, but it was difficult to keep track while still caring for her three other children as a single parent.

Judy found LSI's Pediatric Integrated Health services, which were a shoulder for her to lean on. Judy's LSI worker, Wyndolyn, coordinated medical appointments and counseling sessions.

When Judy's daughter required an Individualized Education Program (IEP) at school, Wyndolyn was there to keep in contact with the school and attend IEP meetings with Judy. When Judy's child began attending school at LSI's Bremwood Residential Treatment Center, Wyndolyn checked on him and provided updates to Judy. Wyndolyn also helped Judy to set up respite care through LSI's Services for People with Disabilities. Now, Judy can get a much-needed break while her children receive quality care from an LSI respite provider.

"We're one team now, we're on the same page," Judy says. "LSI has been a backbone for me when I wanted to give up. Wyndolyn talks to me when I'm stressed and ready to call it quits. She's really an advocate for my family. LSI has been a lifesaver."

Easter 2018



Sending in Service...



Haiti Mission Team 2018



Stephen Ministry Leaders



Stephen Ministers

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

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



Staff Directory

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

Rev. Dr. Ritva Williams
Mark Howland
Mikayla Kopp
Sherry Mercil
David Haas
Leslie Hyland
Debbie Polk
Jeanne Towell
Mark Howland

pastorritva@gmail.com
mhowland1983@gmail.com
kopp.mikayla@gmail.com
office@ssluth.com
music@ssluth.com
lesliehyland@gmail.com
(319) 329-7655
thetowells@msn.com
sslcommcoord@gmail.com

Sunday Morning Schedule

8:00am First Worship Service
9:00am Coffee & Fellowship
9:15am Learning Hour
10:30am Second Worship Service

Wednesday Evening Schedule

6:30pm Worship



**St. Stephen's
Lutheran Church, ELCA**
To Know, Live, and Share Christ.
ssluth.com • 319-364-2637

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.*

