



2026



“For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.” – 1 Corinthians 13:12

Some things aren't always what they appear to be, are they? It's part of why I enjoy optical illusions. Now, my theology teachers would probably hang me for saying this, but I think in some ways our faith is based on an optical illusion. What I mean by that, is that what the world sees and what God sees are not always the same... but let's come back to that in a minute.

On Sunday mornings our lectionary has had us making our way through the Gospel of John. The season of Lent marks a change in the plot of the story. We move from the acts of Jesus to the final 24 – 36 hours of Jesus' life. Over the next several weeks we will zoom in on the final acts of Jesus life, culminating in the death of Jesus on the cross.

During these final hours of Jesus' life the world looked on and what they saw was weakness. Jesus was supposed to be this almighty king. A king, you may recall, is somebody who is strong, bold, and powerful. Jesus captured, beaten, and dying does not project worldly strength. How can he be “the one”?

Yet, here's the thing, we know that it is in that very moment as Jesus hung, dying on the cross. When the world saw him at his weakest, we know that is exactly when Jesus was at his most powerful. For it was on that cross that Jesus defeated sin, death, and the devil once and for all. It is both a marvelous and confounding moment in history.

What the world sees and what we know, do not always line up. So, it's kind of like an optical illusion... I guess. Please come and join us on Sunday mornings as we focus in on the final hours of the life of Jesus.

Blessings,

Pr. Brad <><



PRAYER LIST

Laura Chambers, Norm Peterson, CarolAnn Peterson, Marcy Bell, Family and Friends of Jim Loehr, ALL THOSE MOURNING THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES, MILITARY – and all loved ones serving overseas.

ST. PETER'S VOLUNTEERS FOR MARCH

ALTAR CARE: Michelle Neely, Taylor Miller, Laura Chambers
 CHURCH CLEANING: Michelle Neely, Taylor Miller, Laura Chambers

ST. STEPHEN'S VOLUNTEERS FOR MARCH

USHERS: Mike Macrafi
 READER: Brian & Hazel Ritchart
 COMMUNION ASSISTANT: Brian Ritchart
 PREPARE COMMUNION: Ruth Kemp. Tracy Kemp

JANUARY FINANCES

<u>St. Stephen's</u>		<u>St. Peter's</u>	
General Fund Income	\$ 4,048.76	Income	9,060.00
Expenses	7,136.57	Expenses	7,534.94
Balance of Funds		Balance of Funds	
General	603.08	General	2,875.94
Building	2,848.22	Memorial	9,047.95
Memorial	12,117.91	Congregational Care	1,047.21
Parsonage	8,884.35	Parsonage – Savings	11,778.23
		Checking	4,292.41
		Sabbatical Reserve Fund	2,263.61
		Need \$ 7,112 Monthly	
		Need \$ 1,641 Weekly to Meet Budget	

REMINDER – If you would like to set up an automatic donation to your congregation, please contact Ruth Kemp or Jeannine Russell to get the information.

ST. PETER'S WELCA NEWS

Women of the ELCA will meet Thursday, March 12th at 7 p.m. Devotions: Liz P. What activities or what shall we accomplish this year? All women are welcome for this New Year. Is there an interest of holding our meetings after church service? A reminder note: if you are on Altar Care, it is your responsibility to clean up after communion.

Items for Birthday bags are being collected during Lent. These include a cake mix, frosting, candles, balloons, a card and maybe some small trinket. The Sunday School will assemble the bags. The annual summer raffle license will be arriving soon. This is a fund raiser for prepaid LP fuel. Ideas are needed before the tickets are printed. Please bring your ideas to the attention of one officers.

The Super Bowl/Sweet Auction was successful and fun. We especially thank Rich N. for being our "move it along" auctioneer. Also, to those who donated great items, attended, and won the bid. \$635.00 was raised for the General Fund. Everyone enjoyed the variety of delicious food and socializing.

PALM SUNDAY--there will be a pancake fund raiser provided by the young people for their summer trip.

St. Stephen's WELCA News

W-ELCA Bible study - 3/18 @ 1:00

No Quilting on March 7, or 14

Any changes to the Women's directory, let JoAnn know before we update in early March.

There are changes to the Baby Care Kits where sleepers (without feet), onesies or shirts, sweater or sweat shirts - need to be new (or nearly new condition). Since we send 6 mo-18 mo size, and often these items are like new at thrift stores. If possible, purchase a new item each month so that we can continue sending a box or two on to LRW in October. (These changes are not generated by LWR but rather customs in the various countries that receive them.)

The synod Women of the ELCA convention will be at Coon Valley Lutheran church on April 18th. Pastor Ben Morris will be leading the opening worship, former Bishop April Larson will be the keynote speaker, other speakers with information regarding programs that we support. The W-ELCA board is looking forward to worthwhile knowledge in our time together. Let's carpool a couple of cars to this event.

The triennial Gathering will be in Des Moines, Iowa in July. Registration needs to be in by the first week in June. There are 2 one-day choices (Friday or Saturday) or the entire 3 day gathering. If some of you would like to experience this gathering of women from across the nation but the cost is an issue, please let our officers; JoAnn, Nancy, Ruth or Helen know and we'll set up some fund raising! We

St. Stephen's Council

Thank you to everyone that supported St. Stephen's Church at the Camp Douglas village bon fire event on February 13.

On March 2 St. Stephen's and St. Peter's will host the Tomah Community Table.

On March 14 there will be council training at Journey Lutheran church in Holmen

St Peters Sunday School

It is the last part of our lesson program for this school year.

We're having SS on March 1st with a short lesson on Lent and practice for a skit on Palm Sunday during our church service.

SS will be doing the Wednesday Soup Supper on March 18th. Starting to prepare at 4:15 pm. Soup Supper starts at 5:15 with Worship following at 6:30. Help is appreciated.

Our next SS meeting is on March 28th from 10 am until noon for practice of our Holy Week skit, cookie decorating and a pizza lunch.

Sunday, March 29th Palm Sunday. SS is presenting information about Holy Week. We will be doing a 'NOISY Offering' for Hunger relief during offering.

There will not be a SS session during April.

Our last SS session is on May 3rd. This will be a 'FUN' day. Our Bible Bucks Store will be open for our students. Some treats will be eaten. A Good Works project will be done. Our project will be assembling Birthday Bags for local Food Pantries.

For each Birthday bag we will need one birthday gift bag, one child's birthday card, a box of birthday candles,

HIP HOP EASTER VIGIL

AGAPE*

Live at Trinity Lutheran Church

Sat. April 4 5:30 PM Sparta, WI

Join us for hors d'oeuvres afterwards

Scan QR Code to RSVP

FIVE
THURSDAY FREE

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00(P)Worship/ HC 10:30(S) Worship/HC 	2 (P) 6:00 Wrestling with the Word 4:00—5:30 Tomah Community Table Dinner	3 (P) 5:30 Quilting (P) Ellie Krause	4 (P) 5:15 Soup Supper 6:30 Worship (P) Diane Ness (P) Tammy Waltemath	5 (P) Kyle Handy (P) Julian Wilson (P)Damian Wilson	6 (S) Sheryl Epding (P)Terry Hayward (P) Matthew Iwanowicz	7 TURN CLOCKS AHEAD 1 HOUR (P) Clara Krause
8 9:00(P)Worship/ HC 10:30(S) Worship/HC (S) Thelma Miller (S) Benjamin Gunther (P) Marlene Batten	9 (P) 6:00 Wrestling with the Word (S) Johanna Dvorak	10 (P) 5:30 Quilting 4-7:00 Culvers Tip Night	11 9:30 Women's Birthday Breakfast 9:30 Men's Breakfast (S) 5:15 Soup Supper 6:30 Worship	12 (P) 7:00 WELCA	13	14 (S) 9:00 Quilting
15 9:00(P)Worship/ HC 10:30(S) Worship/HC (S) Council Mtg following worship (P) 6:00 Council Mtg (S) Olivya Talbert	16	17 (P) 5:30 Quilting	18 (S) 1:00 pm WELCA Bible Study (P) 5:15 Soup Supper 6:30 Worship	19 (P) Sarek Cochems Wendt (P) Katlyn Hericks	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21 (S) 9:00 Quilting
22 9:00(P)Worship/ HC 10:30(S) Worship/HC (S) Devyn Talbert (S) Garrett Talbert	23 (P) 6:00 Wrestling with the Word	24 (P) 5:30 Quilting	25 (P) 5:15 Soup Supper 6:30 Worship	26	27	28 (S) 9:00 Quilting (P) Joan Sutherland
29 Palm Sunday 9:00(P)Worship/ HC 10:30(S) Worship/HC (S) Rebecka Schleif	30 (P) 6:00 Wrestling with the Word	31 (P) 5:30 Quilting				