

# Progress

Volume 24, Issue 4

April 2026

## Pilgrim Lutheran Church

709 Weston Avenue  
Wausau WI 54403

715.842.4544

pilgrimofwausau@gmail.com  
www.pilgrimofwausau.org

### WORSHIP SCHEDULE

#### SUNDAYS

In-Person and  
Zoomed Online

9:00 am

#### THURSDAYS

IN-PERSON  
6:30 PM

#### Office Hours

Monday - Wednesday  
8-12 and 1-3

Thursday and Friday  
Closed

### Pastor's Notes...

*from Pastor Karoline Schwantes*

### Easter is coming!

We may still be digging out from 30 inches of snow. It may seem like our to-do lists are too long. It may feel like there's only bad news and sad news.

Good News! Easter is coming!

Hope!

Palm Sunday comes with waving palm branches, baptismal waters, and first communion celebrations.

Holy Week tells the story of God come near.

Maundy Thursday remembers an intimate meal with Jesus and his disciples, which shares an invitation for today.

Good Friday doesn't gloss over the pain and grief of the crucifixion, but points to God's willingness to sacrifice all for grace.

And Easter proclaims the Good News! Jesus is risen for the sake of the world, for our sake, and for you!

This has been a busy season in the Church year, especially for Saint Stephen and Pilgrim as we make plans to unite in the future. A lot of hard work has been going into the work groups and a lot of new friendships are being made and strengthened as we worship together. Listening to the ways in which the Holy Spirit is calling us has been a sometimes difficult and sometimes rewarding journey together. This stirs up a lot of feelings, too. Excitement, grief, joy, and even fear! But we walk together, celebrating Christ's love, knowing God is with us and guiding us.

Easter is coming!

## **MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP**

April 2  
6:30 p.m.

HELD AT GOOD SHEPHERD

## **GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP**

April 3  
Noon and 6:30 p.m.

HELD AT ST. STEPHEN

PARKING FOR GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES will be allowed on McClellan Street across from the church in city lots 10 and 11 for both the 12 pm and 6:30 pm services.

## **EASTER SUNDAY**

**8:30 a.m. Service at Pilgrim**  
Choir Sings

**10:30 a.m. Service at St. Stephen**  
Choir Sings

**6:00 am & 9:00 a.m. Services**  
at Good Shepherd

## **RUMMAGE SALE**

This year's rummage sale will be different. We are doing a combined rummage/bake sale with St. Stephen in Pilgrim's Fellowship Hall. It will be held on two weekends, Thursday, May 14 through Saturday May 16, and Thursday, June 4 through Saturday, June 6, with the Southeast Side neighborhood rummage sales. The date for dropping off donations will be announced soon. No electronic equipment or large items like sofas and mattresses will be accepted. Watch the Sunday bulletin for more information.

Volunteers are needed for various jobs. Questions? Please talk with Shirley Ecker 715-301-3372.

## **COMBINED SERVICES**

Worshipping together during Lent has been great and meaningful! It has been an experiment in shared worship. As details of the merger come together and we are starting to put together a timeline for planning, we will be making long term decisions worship together. **After Easter, we will be holding services at both congregations again (April 12-May 17)** and will be coming to you with a plan for the summer soon

## **GRADUATES**

Are you or a member of your family graduating from high school, a tech college, or a 4 year college? Please let us know so St. Stephen can help you celebrate this milestone during our worship service on Sunday, June 7th!

Please submit a photo to Nancy Henke at [nhenke@sslclwausau.com](mailto:nhenke@sslclwausau.com) and let her know if you will be present for the service on June 7th. Photos of graduates will be in the announcements before the service.

## **SATURDAY CRAFTERDAYS**

Saturday Crafterdays will be April 25 and May 17 at St. Stephen from 9:00 - 4:00. Bring a craft project (scrapbooking, card making, fiber arts, whatever you're working on!) and a snack to share. We meet in the choir/arts room upstairs.

## **EASTER BREAKFAST AT GOOD SHEPHERD**

Please gather family and friends and come support the Youth Mission Trip by joining us for a full Easter breakfast at Good Shepherd church!. We will be serving Easter morning, April 5, from 6:30 (just after the sunrise service) until 8:30, as you prepare for the 9:00 worship service. The Free Will Offering will help cover costs for the June mission trip to Milwaukee for several of our Good Shepherd youth and others from around town. Any questions can be directed to Tim Holcomb, 715-212-3633.

## Make a joyful noise!

God has rescued us from a place that we could never have rescued ourselves.

Our future was death,  
but Jesus came in and brought life ~ a living hope ~  
into our souls and into our lives...  
I hope anybody who gets to hear “Living Hope”  
not only sings along, but their hearts cling to it as well.

—Phil Wickham, composer

Phil Wickham and Brian Johnson, contemporary hymn composers, wrote the song “Living Hope” which is the choir’s anthem for Easter Sunday. The composers made sure “Living Hope” to express God’s saving power through the life and death of Jesus and the journey people make from despair to hope.

When you listen to the song, you will hear how it auditorily leads you, the listener, from despair to hope. It begins softly and in a low register with a small number of singers. All the words in this section describe hopelessness and despair. But in the midst of despair, the singer reaches out to God and the transformation begins.

The transformation begins quietly with God responding to the singer’s plea. A tiny fire of hope is kindled. The singer begins to realize “the work [of salvation] is finished, the end is written; Jesus Christ, my Living Hope”. From there the fire of hope grows and so does the volume of the song. Hope comes from the singer recognizing God’s mercy and boundless grace. The singer expresses gratitude for being forgiven and being called one of God’s own children.

By now the fire of hope is growing brighter to the point the singer can’t keep it under wraps. The singer’s only choice is to begin to praise God with a loud voice and with notes that vault to the ceiling. The Hallelujahs that have been hidden during the season of lent are set free; they burst forth into full throated praise. There is salvation in God’s name and Jesus is the living hope!

With thanksgiving for those who can lead us down a spiritual journey from despair to hope through a song,

Delores Kessel

There are several recordings of “Living Hope” that you can listen to on YouTube, including one done by Phil Wickham, one of the composers of this amazing piece of music.

## PERSONAL CARE KITS

We are still collecting and the items needed from most to least are:

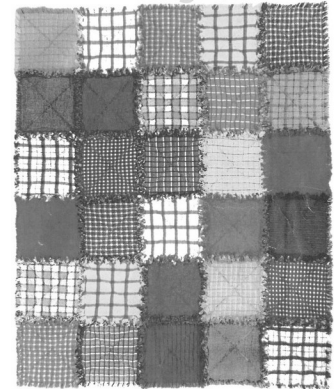
1. Combs
2. Toothbrushes
3. Clippers
4. Soap
5. Towels

## FLAT SHEETS NEEDED

Double size or larger.  
No fitted sheets, please.

The Busy Bee Quilters use these for the backs of the quilts.

Thank you.



## SEASON OF HOPE

### LENT

**Share God's love with your neighbors this Lent.**

Lent may be a time of waiting, but it need not be one of inaction. By making **Personal Care Kits**, we can deliver tangible hope to our neighbors in need around the world. Kits are specifically designed to help people coping with poverty, disaster, conflict, and more. We focus on providing kits to those in need and, as the need increases, we accept the challenge. We will be collecting personal care kit items throughout Lent and Holy Week. Here are the items...



2 or 3 bath-size bars of soap equaling 8-9 ounces, any brand, in original wrapping; no mini or hotel size bars.



1 metal nail clipper

1 sturdy comb.  
*(no picks or fine-toothed combs)*



1 light-weight bath-size towel  
(20" X 40" to 52" X 27")



1 adult-sized toothbrush in its original packaging  
*(multipacks may also be used.)*

## Weekly Prayer Circle Tuesdays 11:45 a.m.

If you would like to join the group, drop in. If you would like to receive the weekly prayer list, or place a prayer request, contact the office.

## Men's Monthly Bible Study Brunch at Eagle's Nest

2nd Thursday of the Month  
11:00 a.m.

The next gathering for food, faith, and fellowship is April 9. If you are interested in joining, contact Eugene Viegut at (715-359-9895).

\*\* collection containers are located in the Pilgrim narthex \*\*

## Walking Together to Celebrate Christ’s Love: An Update from Transition Workgroups

March 18, 2026

A vote to affirm the intent of St. Stephen and Pilgrim congregations to merge is expected in April. While a legal review must take place before voting, the transition team and workgroups have not identified any major roadblocks. More details regarding the vote and next steps will be shared soon.

The first joint meeting of the congregation councils was held at St. Stephen on March 10, with additional meetings planned for April. These joint meetings aim to bring Pilgrim and St. Stephen leadership together and begin integrating council functions.

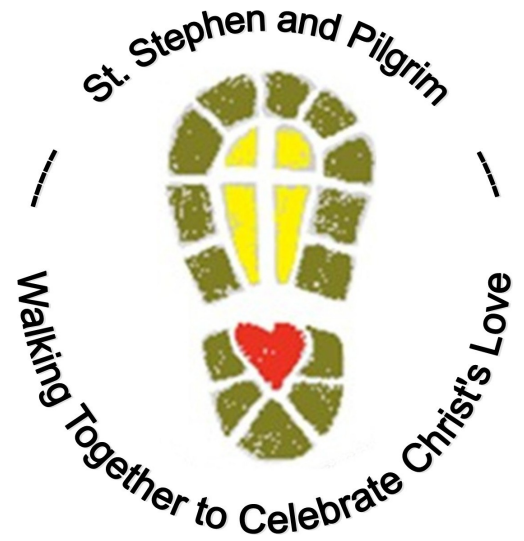
The Prayer Transition Workgroup is also planning a one-day workshop titled “*Adapting to Change,*” led by Pr. Karoline and Pr. Cath Mode. The date is still to be determined. “Because life is busy for all of us, it will be a one-day event—one and done!” said Pam Hackbart. “We hope to give voice to everyone’s concerns, grief, excitement, or whatever we’re feeling as we merge together, while also offering support and insight for the road ahead.”

A group led by Verlyn Oelke has reviewed and proposed updates to St. Stephen’s governing documents, incorporating guidance from the ELCA along with recommendations from the transition team.

One proposed change involves the structure of the congregation council, including updated terms of office and committee organization. “The council will have five standing committees,” Oelke explained, “along with a provision that allows the congregation to elect a member-at-large if committee members are unavailable to serve on the council.”

Another area under review is the governance of the St. Stephen Trust Fund. Established in 1986 as a separate entity, it is now recommended, based on ELCA guidance, that the trust fund be incorporated into the church’s bylaws and included within the St. Stephen constitution. The trust fund committee is also looking to add a member of the Pilgrim congregation.

“We hope to complete the updates to the constitution and bylaws and submit them to the synod constitution committee for preliminary approval,” Oelke said.



### Parish Updates

**BAPTISM—March 26, 2026**

Tracy Dorell Williams, Jr.  
Son of Sara Konkel & Tracy Williams, Sr.

**FIRST COMMUNION—March 26, 2026**

Makayla Ecker—Daughter of Catherine Ecker  
McKenna Ecker—Daughter of Chris & Terra Ecker  
Klaire Staffeil—Daughter of Daniel & Erika Staffeil

## MINUTES

### REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

March 10, 2026  
Not Yet Approved

This meeting was a combined meeting with the St. Stephen Council. It was determined to have one meeting rather than have a joint meeting and then break off into individual groups. These meeting minutes provide information on the business that Pilgrim council acted on along with information on the actions of the joint council.

**PRESENT IN PERSON:** Frank Koerten (Vice President), Charlie Freiberg (Treasurer), Linda Konkel (Secretary), Jim Lenselink (Building & Grounds Chair), Charlene Buttner (Church & Society Chair), and Sue Koerten (Worship Chair).

**ABSENT:** Janet Williams (Life & Growth Chair), Jean Trempe (President).

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** St. Stephen Council President Dick Holster called the meeting of the joint councils to order at 5:33 p.m. Dick led the councils in a devotion.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** (Linda Konkel) Motion by Sue Koerten and seconded by Jim Lenselink to accept the February 10, 2026, meeting minutes. Motion passed.

**PASTOR'S REPORT:** (Below is a summary of her report that applied to Pilgrim activities) Pastor Karoline reported that she will be teaching First Communion instruction for three students at Pilgrim. They will be receiving their first communion on March 29th. There will also be a baptism that day. A reception to honor all the children will follow the service.

On April 18th, the Synod will be holding church council training in Marion.

The Synod will also present a free Church Property Resource Hub webinar on March 17th, 19th and 24th.

Thank you to Fred Patten for stepping in to create St Stephen's bulletins for February 15 and February 22 while their office administrator was unexpectedly out of the office.

Thank you to Shirley Ecker who filled in for pulpit supply on February 22 while Pastor Karoline was at the Jour-

ney for Jesus Youth Conference.

Motion by St Stephen Council to accept Pastor Karoline's report.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** (Charlie Freiberg) Cash in the banks total \$85,130. The Restricted funds balance is \$12,056. Again, the largest portion of the restricted funds are Blessings that Give Hope. Our long-term debt stands at \$51,002. A reminder that the church real estate is not included on the balance sheet. The year-to-date giving is down about \$2,400 from last year.

Motion by Jim Lenselink and seconded by Sue Koerten to accept the treasurer's report. Motion carried.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** (Jean Trempe) No report.

**BUILDING & GROUNDS REPORT:** (Jim Lenselink) A leak in the roof in the gathering area occurred a couple of weeks ago. Home Insulation has repaired the areas that were

leaking. It is their recommendation that the roof be replaced. A quote of \$31,500 was submitted for this work. Jim will contact a couple other contractors to quote the project.

**WORSHIP REPORT:** (Sue Koerten) Delores Kessel has been in contact with the Synod about possible dates for the leave-taking service at Pilgrim. Pastor Dara is checking dates with Bishop Anne and will get back to her. Delores indicated that the time frame for the service would be this spring or early summer.

Attendance has been sparse at both the noon Lenten lunch services and the Thursday evening services. The services themselves have been meaningful and those who have attended have been happy to have attended. The offer for individual healing prayers that was added to the lunch service was well received.

Pilgrims should continue to use their envelopes while worshipping at St. Stephen. All loose plate offerings will be going to Pilgrim during this transition period.

Sarah Lonsdorf (SS) indicated that cantors are currently used at Pilgrim. It is the committee's recommendation to continue this practice. The committee feels that these individuals should be compensated for their time and talents. Discussion on the subject followed.

The group agreed they would like to see the cantors continue bringing their talents to the worship services. Sarah will take this up with the SS Compensation Committee.

The committee asked for the joint council's guidance on the worship schedule for the months of April and May. Supply pastors will need to be obtained as soon as possible if services continue at Pilgrim during this time frame. Discussion followed.

(SS) Council made and passed a motion for the two congregations to have separate Sunday services through May 17th.

Motion by Sue Koerten and seconded by Charlie Freiberg to have separate Sunday service through May 17th. Motion carried.

Ideas for summer services were discussed with more information to follow.

**CHURCH & SOCIETY REPORT:** (Charlene Buttner) She is still in need of donations for the personal care kits for LWR. Items can be dropped off anytime the office is open.

**LIFE & GROWTH:** (Janet Williams) No Report

**VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** (Frank Koerten) No report

**NEW BUSINESS:** Linda Konkel reported that the Inreach Group has found its final committee member and the group will begin its work soon.

Charlene reported that there will be a joint rummage sale. The sale will be held May 14-16 and June 4-5. It will be held at Pilgrim. St Stephen will price and transport donations they receive to Pilgrim.

The tentative dates for the Merger Resolution Vote are April 19 or April 26.

The Synod Assembly is June 4-6 in Oshkosh.

The next joint council meeting will be on April 16 at 5:30 p.m. at St Stephen.

Motion by Charlene Buttner and seconded by Charlie Freiberg to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Konkel

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION UPDATE

### March 25, 2026

A budget is a statement of faith. It is our way of saying this is what we believe God wants us to do. And we trust that God will provide.

<b>Mortgage</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
\$ 51,003 Balance: 02/25/2026	<b>Year-to-Date</b>
\$ 741 Principal Payment	\$15,751
\$ 133 Interest Payment	<b>Outstanding Bills</b>
\$ 50,262 Balance: 03/25/2026	\$890 Total Bills

### PARTICIPATE IN THE SCRIP PROGRAM AND SUPPORT PILGRIM

Put your regular household shopping dollars to work by purchasing gift cards at Pilgrim. Scrip-participating retailers sell gift cards to Pilgrim at a discount and you get the full face value of the gift card. Orders are taken periodically. For information, email or call the office at 715-842-4544

### THRIVENT CHOICE PROGRAM

We are pleased to announce that Pilgrim Church receives funds through Thrivent Financial's Thrivent Choice program. By directing Choice Dollars, eligible Thrivent members can recommend which nonprofit organizations they feel should receive charitable grant funding from Thrivent. If you are an eligible member, please consider us when directing Choice Dollars. Call 800-847-4836 or visit [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice).

### THOSE PILGRIMS UNABLE TO ATTEND SERVICES

Please remember the following Pilgrims who are not able to attend worship due to personal limitation. If you need their addresses, please contact the church office.

#### In Care Facilities

Kathleen Huebner.....Mount View  
John Schneider .....North Haven

#### In Their Homes

Steven Boehm      Donald Mattke

### PRAYER SHAWLS

Do you know someone who needs prayer and a special word of encouragement? Consider extending the love of Jesus through a Circle of Women prayer shawl.

A cabinet in the lounge holds a variety of prayer shawls. Choose one to deliver to a person who needs a special, tangible reminder of God's love and presence. Sign the book to show that you have taken one, and use a prayer request form to add this person to the Prayer Circle list, if that is appropriate.

A wicker basket sits next to the cabinet. If you have extra yarn to donate, you may place it there to be used for other handcrafted shawls. Thank You!

**Shawls given to date... 310**

### CAN'T GET TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY?

**COME WORSHIP  
THURSDAYS AT 6:30 PM!**

We gather for worship each week in a simple service of hymns, prayers, Scripture, sermon, and the Lord's Supper. We don't "dress up," and it only lasts 30 – 40 minutes. If your spirit needs food for the journey, please consider joining us. We promise you will be fed!

# BIRTHDAYS!

**Happy Birthday from your Pilgrim family!**  
Please contact the church office with any updates.

David Larsen	04/01	Christine Freiberg	04/19
Greg Larson	04/02	Dale Clark	04/22
David Theis	04/02	Lila Viegut	04/25
Timmy Bannister	04/06	Steven Soenksen	04/26
John .A. Schneider	04/07	Mark Jones	04/28
Linda Soenksen	04/07	Charles Freiberg	04/30
Karla Auner	04/09		

*On birthdays, we honor our beginnings and remember that in God's eyes, we have a place in this world that no one else has.*



## REMEMBER IN PRAYER...

the following members of our Pilgrim family on their

### April

1 Walter Petersen	16 John A. Schneider
2 Doug Pittsley	17 John R. Schneider
3 Kim Pittsley	18 Nancy Schneider
4 Caroline Randow	19 Wesley Schneider
5 Timothy Remley	20 Carol Shaw
6 Debi Rhyner	21 Linda Soenksen
7 Jean Rhyner	22 Steven Soenksen
8 Joel Rhyner	23 Bonnie Spangberg
9 Brandon Roberts	24 Alissa Strick
10 Patricia Roberts	25 Lucas Strick
11 Kenneth Rueth	26 Manda Strick
12 Lynn Rueth	27 Brianna Stromme
13 Jay Schlitz	28 Tammy Stromme
14 Ruth Schlitz	29 Nathan Stromme
15 Ramona Schmitz	30 Mary Swanson

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:00 Choir Practice at Good Shepherd	2 <b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> 6:30 Three-church Shared Worship at Good Shepherd	3 <b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> 12:00 Noon Service at St. Stephen 6:30 Three-church Shared Worship at St. Stephen	4
5 <b>EASTER SUNDAY</b> 8:30 Festival Worship at Pilgrim 10:30 Worship at St. Stephen	6	7 11:45 Prayer Circle	8 9:00 Busy Bee Quilters 6:30 Choir Practice	9 11:00 Men's Bible Study Brunch at Eagle's Nest 6:30 Worship	10	11
12 9:00 Worship 10:15 Town Hall Meeting	13	14 11:45 Prayer Circle 6:30 Council Mtg.	15 6:30 Choir Practice	16 6:30 Worship	17 Lay School	18 Lay School
19 9:00 Worship 10:15 SS	20	21 11:45 Prayer Circle 6:00 GWCS Meeting at Pilgrim 3:00 Transition Team Meeting	22 6:30 Choir Practice	23 6:30 Worship	24	25
26 9:00 Worship	27	28 11:45 Prayer Circle	29 6:30 Choir Practice	30 6:30 Worship		



See Page 2 for Schedule

**Easter Day Worship at Pilgrim**  
**Sunday, April 5th, 8:30 a.m. (special time!)**

**Staff**

Ministers  
Music Coordinator  
Choir Director  
Pianists  
Custodian  
Office Manager

All Pilgrims  
Delores Kessel  
Jim Linselink  
Delores Kessel, Norah Brown  
Shelby Brod  
Fred Patten

If you wish to give a gift to Pilgrim electronically, please go to [www.pilgrimofwausau.org](http://www.pilgrimofwausau.org) and click on the DONATE button on the home page.

Thank you.



**Services**

Sundays at 9:00 am / Thursdays at 6:30 pm

**PILGRIM LUTHERAN CHURCH...**

*Sharing God's Never-Ending Love with All People through Faith and Service!*  
[www.pilgrimofwausau.org](http://www.pilgrimofwausau.org)

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Electronic Service Requested

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