



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



**CHILD OF GOD:** Certainly the cutest worshipper last Sunday was Zyphren Aurelius Hnatiuk-Larson, seen here bravely enduring baptism. Surrounding him, from left: assisting minister Jennifer Dritt, Pastor Tom and the delighted parents, former member Gabe Larson and Veronica Hnatiuk-Larson. Also in attendance were proud grandparents Sandy and Tim Larson.

*(Photo by Colin Hackley)*

## NOISY OFFERING: SEW FOR HOPE

Some of you might have wondered what's behind the door at the far end of The Rev. Emory Hingst Fellowship Hall. Way back in the day, it was Emory's office. Later it became a choir office and rehearsal space. For the past few years, though, it has been filled with ingredients for quilts. The group called Sew for Hope meets at St. Stephen the first and third Saturdays of the month to carry out its mission: making quilts for children. Last Sunday, as part of the Outreach Committee's Ministry Minute series, Sew for Hope coordinator Sandra Tate spoke words of appreciation and invitation during the liturgy. When the group was born in 2008, she said, its goal was to provide a blanket for every child at the Hope Community – now known as Family Promise of the Big Bend.

"We continue to serve children at Family Promise," Sandra said. "Each child gets to choose a quilt that is theirs to keep. In 2010 we expanded our mission to the Migrant Farm Worker Summer Daycare Program in Quincy. For a period we made weighted therapy blankets for children with autism or trauma. We've donated blankets to various agencies around Tallahassee. We even sent blankets to a quilter in North Carolina after Hurricane Helene devastated the area."

One of her messages Sunday was "Thank you" to St. Stephen: "For sharing space with us, for your kindness, for your support and for your interest in what we do." She also invited us to take part: "Know how to sew? Come. Want to learn? Come on. Want to iron, fold or cut fabric? We have a job for you. We happily welcome you, just as you have welcomed us."



The proceeds from this Sunday's Noisy Offering will be presented as a gift to Sew for Hope, so please be prepared to give whatever you can. To find out more about Sew for Hope, visit <https://sewforhopenow.com/>. *(Photo by Caroline Collins, who coordinated Sandra's visit)*

## SATURDAY IS A WORKDAY

Church Council member Rob Schiffer reminds us that Parking-Space Striping, Round 2 is scheduled for Saturday at noon. “We’re looking for volunteers,” Rob says. “If we can count on you, please contact me at [robschiffer@gmail.com](mailto:robschiffer@gmail.com). Depending on how many volunteers we get, there are a few other things around the church property that could be accomplished.” Please mark your calendar.



## WANNA BECOME A MEMBER?

Pastor Tom says we’re planning a new-member welcome March 16 – because three more people wish to join the church! He says we’d be happy to welcome even more, in case you’ve been thinking of joining. If you have any questions about that process, please see Pastor.



## THE TALENT SHOW IS COMING UP FAST



As you know, the annual St. Stephen Mardi Gras Talent Show is March 2. Between the end of the liturgy and the start of the show, there’ll be lunch in the fellowship hall. Some of your favorite entertainers will be back ... but there are openings for new performers, too! In fact, there’s a rumor that at least one talented newcomer will be onstage. If you’d like to share your talents, talk to Master of Ceremonies Pastor Tom or show-biz veteran Rita Ford.

## OUR PASTOR, THE ADVOCATE

Wednesday, Pastor Tom sent this note describing what he’s been up to this week: “Tuesday I was at the Florida People’s Advocacy Center for advocacy training, and then we had the Multi-Faith Prayer Vigil at City Hall. Channel 27 was there and it may have made the news, along with the Rev. Russell Meyer’s interview at the center. We also spoke at length with a reporter from the *Democrat*. I’m not sure when that might be available. [Meyer is executive director of the Florida Council of Churches.]

“Today [Wednesday], we are heading over to attend committee meetings to speak in favor of refugees and immigrants, in opposition to children being held in adult prisons, and in opposition to solitary confinement in the prison complex system. There may be other things since the majority is throwing everything out there that they can think of.”

Opportunities for this kind of advocacy arise naturally when you have a congregation in a capital city – and a pastor whose heart is in the right place. God’s work, our hands. God bless you, Pastor Tom.



## MORE ABOUT THE PEOPLE’S ADVOCACY CENTER

Maybe you don’t know much about the People’s Advocacy Center that Pastor Tom mentioned above. (I had to Google it.) This is its mission statement: “We make it easy to make a difference. Florida PAC combines sound, timely research and analysis with the voices of those affected by specific policy proposals and budget decisions. Why? Because informed discussion around problems and solutions is the essence of civic engagement and the democratic process.” Amen.



# STEPHANIE’S OP-ED IN THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

Sunday’s *Orlando Sentinel* published a timely column by our own Stephanie Leitch – who, you may recall, is a professor of art history at FSU and specializes in the history of printmaking. Headline: “Will Google Maps Have Regrets About ‘America’?” Stephanie’s inspiration was the president’s recent bold proclamation renaming the Gulf of Mexico. Her op-ed begins: “Can we expunge history by changing names on a map? Borders on our current world map have shifted in the past in response to new geopolitical realities, some reaching back into old vocabulary to name the new realities. Such changes make our world globes feel hopelessly outdated.” To read it in its entirety, follow one of these links:



<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2025/02/16/commentary-will-google-maps-have-regrets-about-america/?share=oseyeoerpielmtebaom>

<https://archive.is/2025.02.16-135810/https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2025/02/16/commentary-will-google-maps-have-regrets-about-america/>

## ONWARD, CHRISTIAN CAMPERS

By Mark Greeley, First Gentleman

It’s once again time for the St. Stephen Annual Camping Trip! We have six sites reserved at St. Joseph Peninsula State Park for the weekend of April 25-27. Some of these sites are for tents, some are for RVs, and some extend beyond the weekend if you’re interested in a longer stay.



Loose schedule: Arrive Friday night, beach/hike during the day Saturday, worship on Saturday night, pack up and head out Sunday. We have communal meals and plenty of experienced campers to help set up gear. It’s really a big family when we’re down there. And at all times there will be bacon. The sites are not all spoken for, so please get in touch with me

([markhoffmangreeley@gmail.com](mailto:markhoffmangreeley@gmail.com)) or Colin Hackley ([colin@colinhackley.com](mailto:colin@colinhackley.com)) if you want to come.

## THE RETURN OF THE OWLS

Good news for fans of St. Stephen’s monthly lunch-bunch tradition: It’s back! Audrey Post has volunteered to be the coordinator for the OWLS (Older Wiser Lutherans). Please let Audrey know whether you plan to participate – and whether you have any ideas for lunch places, etc. Stay tuned for details about the next gathering.



## EXCERPTS FROM PASTOR TOM’S WELCOME NOTES

“Today we sense being at home as we commune with God. In the celebration of baptism and a gathering around the table for the Lord’s Supper we make visible what is meant to be: inclusion and welcome within the baptismal rite, unity and feeding within the Holy Communion table. These are the essences of our faith. For when our quests are diverted from love and meaning, there’s always suffering. But not today, for the true longing of all our souls is illuminated. And we are raised – as Christ has been raised.”

## BEFORE YOU GO...

- God bless Caroline Collins as she mourns the recent death of her father, Fred Deckert.



- **Sunday afternoon, Tallahassee Youth Orchestras will present a Guest Artist Concert, featuring the members of the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. St. Stephen's own Astrid van der Mark will be among the musicians. The concert is scheduled for 3 p.m. Sunday in Ruby Diamond Concert Hall. Here's a link for tickets: <https://www.tallahasseeyouthorchestras.com/guestartist2025>**



- **Inspiring excerpt from last Sunday's prayers: "Blessed are the nations. We pray for presidents, prime ministers, and leaders of nations. Give them wisdom and courage that will not run dry in times of challenge. Lead our lawmakers to compromise on policy but not on compassion. Give our judicial system your insight to keep kings out of power. God of grace, hear our prayer."**
- **Another inspiring excerpt, this one from a note that Sandra Tate sent to Caroline this week: "By the way, your congregation is so joyful in their worship, it is uplifting!"**



- **If you have an anniversary, birthday, special memory or special St. Stephen person or program you'd like to honor, celebrate by sponsoring the altar flowers for our service. Sign up on the flower chart, out by the nametags, or ask Lori to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!**



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Lisa Medley - 02/25  
Jackie Mustian - 02/25  
Judi Duffy - 02/27  
Rob Schiffer - 02/28  
Jan Harrison - 03/02  
Jim Christianson - 03/03  
Chris Gossman - 03/19  
Stephanie Leitch - 03/27

## COMING UP

### Today:

**Noon** - Al-Anon meets in fellowship hall (FH)  
**7 p.m.** - AA meets in FH

### This Friday:

**10 a.m.** - TOPS meets in FH

### This Saturday:

**Noon** - Painting the parking stripes  
**2 p.m.** - Private event in FH  
**5 p.m.** - Mickee Faust meets in FH

### This Sunday:

**9 a.m.** - Book study  
**9:30 a.m.** - Choir practice  
**10 a.m.** - Worship, Seventh Sunday after Epiphany  
**11:30 a.m.** - Outreach Committee meeting in FH  
**4 p.m.** - Congolese Christian worship in FH



### Monday, February 24:

**5 p.m.** - TIMA meets in FH  
**7 p.m.** - TIMA meets in FH

### Tuesday, February 25:

**5 p.m.** - NA meets in FH

### Wednesday, February 19:

**5 p.m.** - TIMA meets in FH  
**7 p.m.** - Choir practice



If you have news or photos to share,  
please send them to Lori at  
[sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com).

Don't forget our Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee>.

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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor