



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



Ice Cream Social

*Back-to-School Reception
for Students and Teachers!
Join Us Sunday, in Hingst Hall,
After the Liturgy!*

GET YOUR SHOTS RIGHT HERE

As Pastor Tom acknowledged at the start of Sunday’s service, cases of flu and even COVID have touched people in our congregation recently. He advised worshippers to be vigilant and refrain from shaking hands as much as possible. “Be mindful of your close contact and conversations with everyone,” he said. “And if you do feel under the weather, it’s OK to stay home and take care of yourself and rest up. We just want to avoid any sort of unnecessary spread.”

Along those lines, please note that employees from Publix Pharmacy will be at St. Stephen from 9:30 to 10 a.m. Sept. 14 to administer immunization shots. There will not be any COVID vaccine available due to restrictions, but flu and other vaccines will be available. Please fill out the appropriate form the Sunday before, on Sept. 7. Then, on the 14th, a table will be set up in the office lobby for vaccinations. Questions? Check with Lawana Lamb-Daniels.



Also, please remember that — thanks to our trusty Tech Team — worshipping from home is an option.

ALMOST LUNCHTIME

Barbara Sullivan says that OWLS will be meeting at 4 Rivers Smokehouse on Thomasville Road (by the Miracle Plaza, anchored by Whole Foods) at 11 a.m. Tuesday (Sept. 9). All are welcome. Just let Barbara know, so she can give the restaurant people a heads-up. You’ll find her contact info in the church directory. You have a directory, right? If not, call the church office at 850-385-2728.



INTERFAITH VIGIL FOR IMMIGRATION JUSTICE

In solidarity with the vigils at the Everglades Detention Center

**Sunday, September 7, 2025 5-6 pm
Tallahassee - Old Florida State Capitol**

Leaders of faith and consciousness from around Florida are holding weekly faith vigils from 5-6 pm to stand together in prayer and witness against inhumane and unconstitutional treatment of our neighbors.

Everyone is welcome at this peaceful gathering.

Call (407) 415-7850 for more information.

‘HEARTLESS’: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

Kingdom of God citizens know there’s “heart disease” in our nation.... There’s heart disease in people when our hearts are not centered on God. When we selfishly center on ourselves, we become arrogant and diagnose everyone else’s problems without looking at ourselves.

A great example of this is found in our political system. It’s not only a matter of one person, but our president has forgotten the sacred trust bestowed upon him to be the moral leader and dutiful servant to the nation that elected him. We diagnose current and future suffering under this leadership.

When the decision of officials in power has been made to exploit and self-promote, we diagnose a part of the population will follow such leaders blindly. A forgetting about personal responsibility. Everything becomes the other person’s fault. Without a sense of humility, honesty and willingness to seek an account of how others are affected, we find ourselves potentially becoming heartless, too.

Yet the kingdom of God remains in opposition to all that. And it remains because people have the ability to reject becoming abusers even when they are abused. There is a gift, a strength and a will to counter hate with love. Each of us holds an antidote for arrogance. A vaccine against false leaders to keep us from becoming blind and callous. God has made that antidote known to us through Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

ONE TINY BIT OF ENCOURAGING NEWS

Sometimes, those of us who focus much attention on Washington, D.C., can lose hope. But I’ve felt more hopeful about our world ever since I subscribed to Fix the News, a weekly roundup of stories of progress. Interested? Find out more here: <https://fixthenews.com/about> . Here’s an excerpt from last week’s edition.

Billions of people have gained clean water, sanitation and hygiene in the last nine years. That’s not a typo — that’s billions, with a B. An astonishing new data dump from the [WHO and UNICEF](#) show[s] that between 2015 and 2024 humanity recorded one of the fastest expansions of basic welfare of all time: 961 million people gained safe drinking water, 1.2 billion gained safe sanitation, and 1.5 billion gained access to basic hygiene services, while the number of unserved fell by nearly 900 million. Coverage has risen to 74%, 58% and 80% respectively, while open defecation has dropped by 429 million people. Together, these figures represent an historic advance in human health and dignity.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- Way to go, Lutherans. So far, the total Noisy Offering collection benefiting Food for the Poor is ... \$320! (There’s still time to donate, if you didn’t do so yet.)
- “I don’t know how to act,” Pastor Tom said in his welcome Sunday. “We won a big game, and I forgot what that feels like.... So all of you that are here today with the understanding that you made with the prayer ‘I’ll go to church, Lord, if FSU wins’ – thank you, thank you! It’s because of you that we won.”
- Audrey Post reports that six to 10 people have been showing up in the sanctuary at 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays for chair yoga. We’re all invited ... for the low, low yoga price of 5 bucks. Give it a try.
- Please remember that you can look up past sermons or newsletters that you missed. Visit our website: <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/>.
- 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 name tags, or ask Rita to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!





UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Annette Claussen - 09/06
Martha Marky - 09/08
Greta Langley - 09/09
Bryon Ehlmann - 09/11
Aaron Halvorson - 09/14
Ron Hartung - 09/14
Ceilia Greeley - 09/23
Violet Greeley - 09/23
Kirsten Matthis - 09/23

SERVING THIS WEEK

Pastor Tom, Preaching and Presiding; **Rob Schiffer**, Assisting Minister; **Jen Dritt**, Cup Minister; **Erik Robinson**, Lector; **Cindy Suhrweir and Audrey Post**, Tech Team; **Linda Eshleman and Barbara Sullivan**, Altar Guild; **Kirsten Ebbesen and Susan Warren**; Counters; **Rudy Hehn**, Cantor; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements

COMING UP

Today:

Noon - Al-Anon meets in Pastor Emory Hingst Memorial Fellowship Hall, aka Hingst Hall (HH)

7 p.m. - AA meets in HH

This Friday:

9:30 a.m. - TOPS meets in HH

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study

10 a.m. - Worship: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Monday, September 8:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, September 9:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, September 10

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

7 p.m. - Choir



If you have news or photos to share,
please send them to Rita at
sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com.

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

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA
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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor