



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

### ‘THANK YOU’

Dear beloved congregation,

I am encouraged to write in sincere appreciation for each contribution you give to the work of St. Stephen. Since the congregational meeting, we have witnessed families increase their pledges for 2025 and make extra gifts toward the mission of St. Stephen. Your donations are being used wisely. Your faithfulness allows us to continue to touch lives in the community, offer safe space for nonprofit groups, and grow disciples of Jesus. Thank you for continuing your support and for your partnership to spread the all-inclusive love of our Lord.



In peace,  
Pastor Tom

### MORE UPDATES FROM PASTOR TOM

**MORE MEMBERS:** We’re planning a new-member welcome March 16 – because three more people wish to join the church! 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 me.

**WORKDAY COMING UP:** Church Council member Rob Schiffer confirms that Parking-Space Striping, Round 2 is back on for Saturday, Feb. 22, at noon. “We’re looking for volunteers to help restripe the parking lot,” 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.” Here’s one example: Susan Warren says that her husband, Mark, is looking for a few strong folks who can help lift the

bench outside the nursery area so Mark can level the bench with some type of mulch. “It should take about four folks to get it done,” she says. Please mark your calendar.

**GIVING STATEMENTS:** If you made financial contributions to St. Stephen in 2024, and you haven’t yet received your official statement for tax purposes, you should receive it soon. Office Manager Lori put the financial statements in the mail this week.

**GENEROSITY:** Our Noisy Offering total for the Southern Poverty Law Center now stands at \$1,150!



### THE TALENT SHOW IS COMING UP FAST



As you know, the annual St. Stephen Talent Show is March 2. Between the end of the liturgy and the start of the show, there’ll be a light 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.

## REMEMBERING JANET

*From an announcement Jake Hartung made last Sunday*

“Probably the biggest question that I get every week is, ‘Hey, how’s your mom doing?’ I’d say a majority of the people here are asking about Ruth when they ask me that question. Ruth’s actually my stepmother, and very lovingly so. But my mother is named Janet Faris. A lot of you here never got a chance to know her. Last week, she passed away in Niceville, after a long illness. Peacefully, thankfully – it was definitely her time. I’m at peace with it. She spent so many years here when I was growing up, and she even worked in the office, taught classes, led Sunday School.... St. Stephen was always a very loving place for her.”

*Janet started attending St. Stephen in 1977 and officially joined in 1979. No date has been set for her memorial service, which will take place in Niceville. Arrangements are being handled there by McLaughlin Funeral Home.*

## 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.

## EXCERPTS FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

... My dad was a good fisherman. I recall him saying to me on a few occasions while fishing, “Try not to talk so much, Tommy. You’ll scare the fish!” ... I wonder how many people are scared away from following Jesus because so many preachers and teachers talk too much!

Their talking too much has led to lessons, instructions and judgments that actually counter Jesus’ teaching. We try to use so many words to convey a meaning instead of keeping it as simple as possible. We waste time and energy dividing who’s in and who’s out. How many lives are distracted with useless questions like who needs saving and who is beyond it?

... Preachers should simply tell of the God that people already know. That when we receive the nonjudgmental good news that Paul gave in the epistle reading today, we know it is the backbone of our faith.... That Christ died for us because God loved the world.... But then was raised on the third day.

With this message, we keep in mind that, like Paul, and all of humanity for that matter, we were unworthy of such love and mercy, but it came nonetheless. We proclaim that with confidence!

## BEFORE YOU GO...

- As Stephanie Leitch announced Sunday, Tallahassee Youth Orchestras soon will present a Guest Artist Concert, featuring the members of the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. Of course, St. Stephen's own Astrid van der Mark will be among the musicians. The concert is scheduled for 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 23, in Ruby Diamond Concert Hall. Here's a link for tickets: <https://www.tallahasseeeyouthorchestras.com/guestartist2025>



- Excerpt from this week's encouraging edition of *Fix the News*: "The two most populous regions in the world (Central-South Asia and Eastern/Southeastern Asia) have seen the proportion of children completing upper secondary school double since the beginning of this century. We are entering the first ever period in human history when more than half of humanity has at least a high school education."
- 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

Chris Reece - 02/15  
Patrick Kennell - 02/18  
Lisa Medley - 02/25  
Jackie Mustian - 02/25  
Judi Duffy - 02/27  
Rob Schiffer - 02/28  
Jan Harrison - 03/02  
Jim Christianson - 03/03



## COMING UP

### Today:

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

### This Friday:

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

### This Saturday:

10 a.m. - Sew for Hope meets in FH

### This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study  
9:30 a.m. - Choir practice  
10 a.m. - Worship, Sixth Sunday after Epiphany  
4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH



### Monday, February 17:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH  
7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH  
*The office will be closed in observance of President's Day.*

### Tuesday, February 18:

5 p.m. - NA meets in FH

### Wednesday, February 19:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH



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