



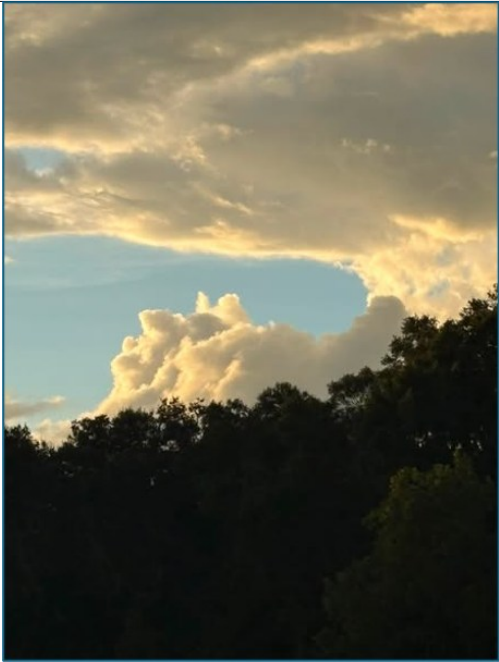
ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



LOOKING UP

Is it any wonder that people in the 21st century behold magnificent skies like these and still can't help thinking that somehow, some way, God must actually live up there? Thanks to Tom Buchanan for capturing these recent sky scenes.



JOINING THE 'JUST LOVE' TEAM

Adapted from press release

In our Scriptures, God consistently invites humanity into and co-creates *shalom*, the Hebrew word for collective healing, liberation and wholeness for all that God has created. Yet too often our shared life falls into division, distrust, scapegoating and exclusion. What are faithful Christians to do?

Our church “encourages individuals and worshipping communities to work together toward a civic life that better reflects God’s vision for a more just and reconciled world. The various forms of advocacy offer ways to press civic leaders and public policy makers to respect the needs and dignity of all persons and our common home, with special concern for the vulnerable,” to quote the ELCA draft social statement *Faith in Civic Life*. Though our church encourages such advocacy and action, few Christ-followers are trained *how* to do so.



On Saturday, Sept. 19, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., you’re invited to join the Just Love team of the Florida-Bahamas Synod and people of faith from around the Tallahassee area for training in a variety of skills to co-create and advocate for shalom in our congregations, communities and government. This training will take place at Grace Lutheran Church, 2919 Miccosukee Road, and lunch will be provided. Here’s the link to RSVP and submit lunch requests for the workshop: <https://bit.ly/3UoGPF7>

THE ST. STEPHEN CHOIR RIDES AGAIN!

Music Director Katharine Gossman would like for everyone to know that choir rehearsals resume Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 7 p.m. “As usual, we will rehearse in Hingst Hall,” says Worship and Music Coordinator Susan Hehn. “Choir is a great place to belong.”



How great, you ask? Well, this Sunday, Susan and husband Rudy will enlist a few more choristers to answer that question musically. You’ll love it.

ROOTING FOR MATT

During the part of the service where people call out the names of people they're praying for, you have to be on your toes. Sometimes you can't hear the prayer request at all, or you hear just a name. Like "Matt." And you mean to follow up but, well, you forget.



Thank goodness, then, that Sue Canning stopped by after church Sunday to provide more information on her son, Matt, whom some of us remember from when he was just a kid. Now, wow, he's 49 and living in the Atlanta area. Sad to say, Matt has been diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Sue is quick to add that the doctors say it's "highly treatable." That's a relief!

"Matt is in better spirits to be home after three separate inpatient admissions this summer," Sue reports. "His chemo treatments are spaced three weeks apart. He has had two treatments,

with four to go. Also, he had to get a pacemaker for many instances of heart arrhythmias. These separate issues came up concurrently. The doctors speculated the cancer may have kicked off the heart problems."

Want to reach out to Matt? Send mail to Matthew Canning, 5140 Chestatee Heights Rd., Gainesville, GA 30506. Or call or text [678-467-8864](tel:678-467-8864). Or write to canningonbass@gmail.com. "Thank you so much to all of you," Sue said, "for keeping him in your prayers."

FLU SHOTS? AT CHURCH? YOU BET

Many thanks to Care & Hospitality Coordinator Lawana Lamb-Daniels for once again

arranging for a pharmacist to show up on a Sunday morning to give us Lutherans our flu shots, COVID shots or other shots. "The pharmacist from Publix will be at church on Sunday, Sept. 13, 9:30-10 a.m., to provide vaccines for members of the congregation who would like to participate," Lawana said. "I

have a list of vaccines they offer, for anyone who wants to know what is available. There are forms that need to be filled out and turned in to me by this Sunday, Sept. 6. That way they will have the vaccines needed with them when they come on the 13th. We need a minimum of about 20 people, which has not been a problem the past two years. But so far I only have 6 completed forms." Let Lawana know if you're interested. (Kids must be at least 4 years old to be vaccinated.)



A CANDIDATE TO WATCH

Following up on the last newsletter's political-primary news related to our church: Caroline Collins points out that Amanda Marie Green – the winning Democratic candidate in Florida's 2nd District congressional primary – is the daughter of newly minted St. Stephen members Brian Green and Myrna Hoover. Amanda has even visited St. Stephen with her family on occasion. She'll face the Republican candidate in November. "She's worked so hard, followed her beliefs and is fighting hard to represent this district," Myrna said. "We could not be more proud!"

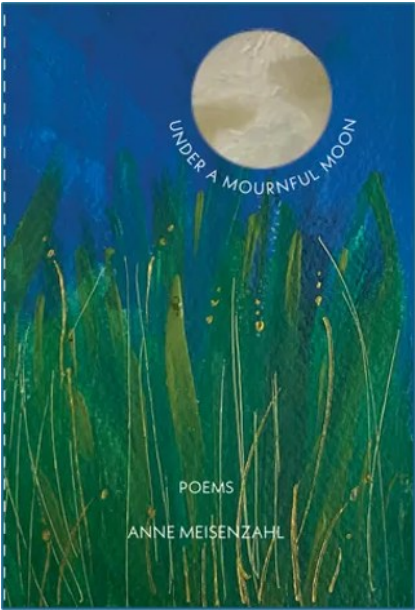
POETRY INSPIRED BY CHURCH HISTORY

By Caroline Collins

Tallahassee Nurseries presents its next Word Garden event this Sunday at 3:30 p.m. Celebrating poetry and spoken word, several local writers will share from their work. Among the invited speakers is Anne Meisenzahl, who just published a book of poetry titled “Under a Mournful Moon.”

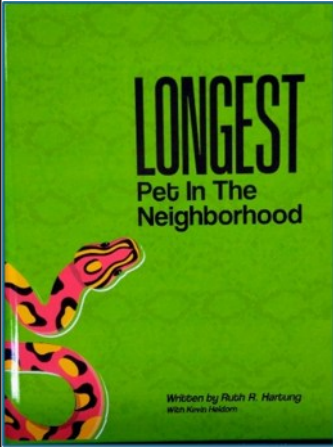
The collection explores the real-life tragedy involving the Catholic Church and government-run homes for unwed mothers in County Galway, Ireland, between 1925 and 1961. Imagining the individual viewpoints through poetry, Anne shines a light on a painful subject, examining how such cruelty – in the guise of holy righteousness – was allowed to happen.

The event will take place at Tallahassee Nurseries, 2911 Thomasville Road.



SPEAKING OF BOOKS...

Anne Meisenzahl is among the authors who’ll be selling their wares at St. Stephen on Saturday, Sept. 12. Anne will be here with her excellent books “Enter Here” and (as Caroline mentioned above) “Under a Mournful Moon.”



Other delightful authors scheduled to be at St. Stephen that afternoon are Mary Ann Lindley (author of “Fragments: Then & Now”); Lynne Knight (author of “If I Go Missing” and other works); Mary Jane Ryals (author of “Cookie & Me” and many more); and St. Stephen’s own Ruth Hartung. Ruth wrote a children’s book, “Longest Pet in the Neighborhood,” back in 2024. But before we could spread the word,

she was sidelined by serious health issues. Now we’re giving “Longest Pet,” the story of a domesticated boa constrictor, its long-delayed debut.

That day is also when Ron Hartung is launching his new collection of essays and columns, “The Man in the Red Flannel Shirt (and Other Stories),” with readings in the sanctuary starting at 4:30 p.m. Book sales, book signings, wine and general merriment will follow in the fellowship hall. The community is invited! Thanks in advance to Lawana Lamb-Daniels, Jennifer Slusarz and others who are preparing for our guests.



TRANSFORMATION: AN EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

In your adolescent years you might have been conformed to what Paul wrote about [in Romans, Chapter 12]. Conformed to the world and the luxuries of what it might provide one through success.

Honestly, that sort of conforming to the world occurred for me even through my twenties. Those were the years when I’d departed from the church and sought spirituality, sought God, on my own. There was the occasional prayer, and a lot of using the Lord’s name in vain. There was selfishness and greed; the pursuit of wealth and hopping from one unacceptable thing to the next.

Almost 60 now, and the urge to conform to the world even still presents itself, but now I know that a transformation occurred. A transformation that had nothing to do with my will or my ability. A transformation that began with connecting to a loving church community. It didn't happen overnight, and had nothing to do with being a pastor. What mattered most was connecting with other people in loving community.

Have you noticed that the more accepting and loving the church community is, the better one is able to follow Jesus, have sober judgment, and not think of themselves more highly than we ought?

BEFORE YOU GO...

- The OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans) will meet for lunch at 11 a.m. Tuesday (Sept. 8) at Little Paris, in the same shopping plaza as Tasty Pastry. Says organizer Barbara Sullivan: "Parking can be a bear." You've been warned.
- Andrea Notley's son Tyler (pictured here with his parents) just graduated from paramedic school in Shelby County, Indiana. Congratulations, Tyler!
- Sharon Simmons has been a fan of Dave's Pizza Garage for ages, since longer before Jonas Holdcraft started working there. So Sharon always gets Dave's "commercials" on Facebook. This past week was the first time she saw Jonas featured in one of them. If you ask extremely nicely, she might forward it to you.
- The St. Stephen office has run out of Publix/Walmart/gas cards to distribute to people who come to our door for financial assistance. If you can help us stock some of these cards, they will be put to good use. Cards worth \$20-\$25 are best. Thank you for supporting this ministry!
- Reminder: Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the U.S. and around the world. If you're able to give, visit www.elca.org. Or call **800-638-3522**.



- And pictured here is the newsletter editor's latest suggestion, in case the Church Council votes to provide him with a company car. It's a 1955 Chevy station wagon, and it's going to church! As the ad boasts: "Works hard all week ... and really shines on Sunday." Sounds just like you, St. Stephen people. God, watch over us as we drive through life.

SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Preaching and Presiding; **Beth Alexander**, Assisting Minister; **Susan Warren**, Cup Minister; **Erik Robinson**, Lector; **Kirsten Ebbesen**, Cantor; **Colin Hackley and Ben Bush**, Tech Team; **Susan Warren and Colleen Holdcraft**, Altar Guild; **Kirsten Ebbesen and Margaret Bowers**, Counters; **Ann Del Rossi and Jacob Nallapu**, Ushers; **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:

9:00 a.m. - Bible study

9:30 a.m. - Choir rehearsal

10 a.m. - Worship, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Monday, September 7: (Our office will be closed)

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, September 8:

6 p.m. - NA meets in HH

6 p.m. - Confirmation for adults

Wednesday, September 9:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

7 p.m. - Choir rehearsal

Thursday, September 10:

10 a.m. - Bible study

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Amanda Clause- 9/6
Martha Marky - 9/8
Greta Langley - 9/9
Bryon Ehlmann - 9/11
Aaron Halvorson - 9/14
Ron Hartung - 9/14
Mary Nesmith - 9/22
Ceilia Greeley - 9/23
Violet Greeley - 9/23
Kirsten Matthis - 9/23
Sue Williams - 9/28
Jeanette Sickel - 9/30
Melody Duke - 9/30



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