



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



A SPIRITUAL TREAT

By Susan Hehn

Have you ever had an overwhelming experience with the Holy Spirit moving in your life? That is exactly what the St. Stephen spring retreat was for me. It began a few years ago when we divided into small groups to discuss our church's mission and vision for the future. One of the discussions included having a "spiritual retreat." A couple of years ago, a church member who dearly loves St. Stephen's church family approached me about having just that. Last fall we began working together to plan an event. It took a while to come together, but it was worth the wait. Opportunity for spiritual renewal and fellowship could not have come at a better time for our church.

I felt the Holy Spirit moving when Jacqueline Bussie was available during one of her busiest seasons. Everything aligned: Dr. Bussie's gem of a booking agent, a popular venue vacant on the perfect weekend, an in-demand caterer willing to take on a smaller event, three very enthusiastic team members (including a new church member) planning and implementing the retreat in two months' time, numerous other church members and staff offering their help, phone calls and emails arriving just in time, and probably numerous other things I am forgetting. I must mention that God blessed me with Rudy and our son Jezza, whose support and work carried me from beginning to end.

The joy I felt each time the Holy Spirit moved among us, especially during our spring retreat, is hard to describe: From seeing our dear friend Ruth Hartung there, to everyone pitching in when they noticed a need; from the beautiful messages by Dr. Bussie, to seeing folks stroll through the Garden Walk; and



most importantly seeing and hearing our church family enjoying a beautiful encounter with each other. But the most moving time for me was when we all sang our final hymn on Sunday morning: “Christ Be Our Light.” My tears of joy could not be contained.

Thank you to everyone who played a part, from the largest to the smallest, in bringing our spring spiritual retreat to fruition. That is what being a church family is all about. Peace and joy to you all. *(Poster photo by Rudy Hehn. Group photo on first page by Colin Hackley. And, yes, for those who didn't attend: That is keynote speaker Jacqueline Bussie stretched out on the floor.)*

HOPE RECIPES

The theme of the spiritual retreat was, in part, “Holding onto Hope in Hard Times.” The keynote speaker suggested that each of us could cook up our own recipes for hope ... and revise the recipe as often as necessary to keep up with life's twists and turns. Saturday morning, she invited participants to write their own recipes. Here's one that Rudy Hehn created:

- ½ cup laughter
- ½ cup companionship
- ¼ cup somebody else's point of view
- 1 T reality check
- 1 T wonder or amazement
- 1 T bird watching
- Bake at 375 degrees for 1 hour
- Forget till smoke alarm, 3 hours later
- Try again/Start over



This recipe is from Donna Schiffer:

- 1 cup laughter of a child
- 2 million text threads from friends
- ½ dozen false starts
- 4 T forgiveness
- Dash of faith
- 2 tons grief, frustration and anger
- Sprinkle of the love of a good man

NOW ... WHOM DO WE THANK?

It's a tough question for such an ambitious undertaking. Susan Hehn put it in



perspective: “Out of 54 total attendees, I personally saw 33 people who helped out in some way. Small and large ways. And I'm sure I missed

seeing a few contributors.” So maybe we'll just leave it like this: Thanks, everyone! Mostly to the planners (photographed here), the musicians, the Holdcrafts, Office Manager Rita Ford and our generous sponsor.

Well, wait: An email just arrived pleading for us to add the names of those who came early and helped out: “Patrick, Kirsten, Linda, Caroline, Anita, Janet and Greta.” Did we leave anyone out? Probably. **We'll follow up next week, with more of your thoughts about this memorable retreat.** We already have some in hand – too much for one newsletter! *(Photo of retreat planners Karen Elizabeth Olson, Susan Hehn, Caroline Collins, Barbara Sullivan and Jennifer Slusarz by Rudy Hehn)*

YOU, TOO, CAN BE A LEAF BLOWER

At St. Stephen, we have a strong bench of people ready to act as ushers, counters, lectors and more. But when it comes to leaf-blowers ... well, that's an activity that Pastor Tom often performs himself. And he's mighty good at it. But that's probably not something they prepared him for at seminary. It's definitely something the rest of us can handle.

So Rob Schiffer, our grounds guy, is inviting all eager would-be leaf-blowers out there to let him know they're interested, so he can set up a rotation. That will probably involve showing up at church late on a Saturday afternoon, very early on a Sunday morning or (if the weather forecast permits) late on a Friday. Please follow up with Rob ASAP.



HOW'D YOU LIKE TO HAVE A RETREAT HERE?

The photo above shows us where globetrotters Sue and Mark Canning were just recently. Sue says it's the spectacular interior of the Orthodox Church of Saint Sava in Belgrade, Serbia. Holy smokes. Maybe our Building Committee can get a few ideas from this picture.

Sue also sent the photo on the left. It was taken inside a Roman Catholic church in Golubac, Hungary, which she described as a very small town on the Danube.

As of her most recent email, she and Mark were in an inn built in the 15th century in Wells, U.K. Sounds pretty heavenly.

KEEPING UP WITH THE MUCHURUZAS

Graduation time is approaching for the Muchuruza family – former members and dear friends of St. Stephen. The once-tiny kids are all grown up and preparing to head off to college. Their mom, Eunice, recently provided an update.



Vince plans to attend the University of Central Florida, where he wants to study computer engineering. Vivien has become quite the accomplished soccer player. Recruited by 21 colleges around the country, she eventually picked the University of Miami. In fact, she's graduating a year early so she can begin her UM experience right away. That means both she and Vince are graduating as members of the West Orange High School (Winter Garden) Class of 2026.

Meanwhile, as she often has done, Eunice extends

her deepest gratitude to St. Stephen. She singles out these people in particular:

- Andrea Notley – “Thank you for loving my children so genuinely. For 18 years, you have remembered their birthdays, and each year they have looked forward to your thoughtful gifts with so much joy.”
- Beth Alexander – “Thank you for being such a dear friend and for always keeping up with my children’s sports. We look forward to celebrating with you at their graduation.”
- Ruth Hartung – “A true and faithful friend, you stood by us during their baptism and have remained a constant presence in our lives. Your kindness, especially through holiday wishes and heartfelt conversations, has brought us so much joy.”
- Pastor Marda, who baptized Vince and Vivien, and Pastor Tom – “Thank you for guiding them through baptism and confirmation. Through your leadership and prayers, God has been by their side, protecting them and nurturing their gifts.”
- All the Sunday School and confirmation class teachers – “Thank you for the strong spiritual foundation you have given them. Because of you, they pray, read their devotionals and hold onto hope. We continue to pray they carry these values with them into college and beyond.”

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

- Cassandra White - 4/16
- Sandy Lamb-Daniels - 4/17
- Terri Schmitt - 4/17
- Tyler Notley - 4/18
- Russell Reardon - 4/26
- Colleen Holdcraft - 4/29
- Sarah Bacani - 4/29
- Julia Bonfanti - 5/3
- Emily Jennings - 5/7
- Eva Mustian - 5/8
- Claire Claussen 5/9



BEFORE YOU GO...

- What a nice bonus in Sunday's service: We were joined by four representatives of agencies that are receiving checks from our Peace & Justice Endowment Fund. **In next week's newsletter, you'll get to see the names of all four, plus details about one that's close to home.**
- There's news this week from the St. Stephen choir. On the plus side, as you may have noticed, Sylvia Smith has joined as the newest soprano. On the minus side, longtime soprano Sandy Ness has stepped down. We thank both of them for adding their voices to our weekly worship. Certainly music is one of the hallmarks of the joyful St. Stephen experience.
- 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!
- And pictured here is the newsletter editor's latest suggestion, in case the Church Council ever decides to provide him with a company car. It's a 1935 Auburn Speedster. The ad says it's super-charged – just the way some church folks are feeling after last weekend. God bless the hope-filled speedsters!



SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Preaching and Presiding; **Audrey Post**, Assisting Minister; **Rob Schiffer**, Cup Minister; **Astrid van der Mark**, Lector; **Audrey Post and Loraine Sundberg**, Tech Team; **Linda Eshleman and Barbara Sullivan**, Altar Guild; **Susan Warren and Margaret Bowers**, Counters; **Karl Barton**, Cantor; **Bob Eshleman and Jacob Nallapu**, Ushers; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements

COMING UP

Today:

Noon - AI-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, Third Sunday of Easter

Monday, April 20:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, April 21:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, April 22:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH
7 p.m. - Choir rehearsal

Thursday, April 23:

10 a.m. - Bible study

He is
Risen



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