



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday, January 26, 2025

A celebration of God's inclusive love.



"What is good: what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God." – Micah 6:8

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Guest Speaker following the service (approximately 11:15 a.m.)

Luncheon in the fellowship hall to follow (near noontime)

(including vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options)

All are welcome. All activities are free.



Speaker: Jonathan Webber
Southern Poverty Law Center
Florida Policy Director



"The Politics of Possibility: Inspiring Hope in Times of Challenge"

➡ To participate virtually, visit <https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee/>
Videos of the service and presentation will be available on that Facebook page for later viewing.

Free-will-donations may be made to Southern Poverty Law Center, a charitable 501(3)(c) organization

- Donation jar in the sanctuary and fellowship hall on January 26th
- Check delivered or mailed, payable to "St. Stephen Lutheran Church."
Please designate for "SPLC."
- Venmo app: @stephen-saint payable to "St. Stephen Lutheran Church."
Please designate for "SPLC."

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, 2198 N. Meridian Road, Tallahassee, FL 32303
(one block south of John Knox Road) 850-385-2728

<http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com>

<http://www.reconcilingworks.org>

St. Stephen Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a Reconciling in Christ congregation that explicitly welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. St. Stephen is equally committed to anti-racism. We welcome people without regard to race, ethnicity, age, family status, economic status, or differing abilities.

'THE POLITICS OF POSSIBILITY'

Our annual Ministry of Reconciliation celebration is this Sunday! The flyer above gives you all of the details. The topic for keynote speaker Jonathan Webber, who's with the Southern Poverty Law Center, is "The Politics of Possibility: Inspiring Hope in Times of Challenge." Here in inauguration week, we're well aware that we live in times of challenge. But we soldier on! As you prepare for Sunday's activities, here are some last-minute thoughts from organizer Dave Suhrweir:

- The potluck luncheon should include some vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free items for those with restricted diets. If you're inclined to provide such food, please provide labels identifying them as such.



- We anticipate that a substantial number of visitors may attend. Because parking space is limited, church members who are not mobility-challenged are encouraged to park in the office-complex lot behind the church building. There's a walking path from that parking lot to the back door of our fellow ship hall (maybe the snowman pictured here will still be around). Otherwise, you may walk along Pinewood Drive to the church.
- We should make a special effort to greet visitors to make them feel welcome. We should also help visitors seated nearby with use of the church bulletin and finding hymns in the red hymnal.

COME HELP US PAINT STRIPES

A parking lot without stripes is just chaos, and our stripes need help. So at noon Saturday, Church Council member Rob Schiffer is gathering volunteers to brighten them up. He's hoping YOU can join them.



DUST OFF YOUR TALENTS!

The annual St. Stephen Talent Show is coming up March 2. So there's slightly more than five weeks for you to keep burnishing those talents you want to display onstage. Pastor Tom will act as master of ceremonies this year. He's hoping for an enthusiastic audience (no problem there), and the entertainment world is hoping for a nifty mix of veteran and newly discovered talents. Be thinking about it, OK?



EXCERPTS FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... [Jan. 19 was] Martin Luther King Jr. Day and also Inauguration Day.... Maybe it's a sign to have these two things occur on the same day? In [the Gospel of] John, signs always point to God or God's abundant grace upon grace. And, for us who remain attentive and follow Jesus' directions, there must be an attentive witness and a readiness to step up to God's justice.

For while we are Americans, we are first Jesus Followers who freely proclaim that no matter who is being inaugurated, the church's calling remains the same. The values we hold as Christ's Followers, love, equality, justice, bravery, will continue to be lived out boldly and distinctively.

For it may seem that, sometimes, our wine has run out, but then something amazing happens ... a sign ... a miracle ... and suddenly God's Word is right there accompanying us in our call. It's no wonder, then, that this account begins with the words "On the third day there was a wedding." On the third day Jesus rose from the dead. With Jesus around, every day is the third day. With Jesus around, we find miracles occurring every day. Even minor ones bring significant transformations, if we have eyes to see them.



When such moments happen, we find that the event is significant, but what happens in the midst of the event is even more important – because that's when the sign from heaven turns us around to see an outrageous and overflowing God of grace upon grace.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- Please mark your calendar for Feb. 2. We'll have a congregational meeting in the fellowship hall shortly after worship ends. At the meeting we'll elect new members to Church Council, go through the financial report from 2024 and vote on the budget for 2025. Pastor Tom isn't tying in a detailed open forum with breakout groups this time, but he will ask the congregation to pray about God's plan to utilize our building space for new ministries.



- Don't forget that this Sunday is the last day to contribute to the annual collection of Toiletries 'N' Toilet paper (TNT) with New Mt. Zion AME Church. Please toss your items into the tub in the fellowship hall.

- We'll be sending the second order for T-shirts and sweatshirts in February. If anyone would like to get in on that order, it's \$22 for T-shirts and \$35 for sweatshirts. Please send an email to Lori or Pastor Tom with your details.
- 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!
- Here's what Ruth and Ron's backyard looked like Wednesday morning. How about yours?



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



James Gunderson - 01/24
Sandy Ness - 01/24
Gladys Kane - 01/28
Jennifer Buchanan - 01/29
Graham Hackley - 01/30
Warren Schave - 01/31
Jayden Schiffer - 01/31
Joey Bonfanti - 02/02
Gabbi Oates - 02/02
Barb ODonnell - 02/05
Chris Reece - 02/15

COMING UP

Today:

Noon - Al-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. - Carpet cleaning in the FH

Noon - Parking lot striping

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

10 a.m. - Worship, Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday

11:15 a.m. - Ministry of Reconciliation guest speaker

Noonish - Potluck

1:30 p.m. - On Purpose Women meets in FH

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH



Monday, January 27:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Tuesday, January 28:

5 p.m. - NA meets in FH

Wednesday, January 29:

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.

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

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA
2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

*Edited by Ron Hartung (alias Lex Lutheran). Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com.
Website: <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com/>*

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