



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

THEY LOVE OUR NEW ROOF

(PLUS UPDATES ABOUT SHARON, ZOE'S FAMILY AND THE NOISY OFFERING)

By Pastor Tom

- We received a quote from our current property and liability insurer. When they learned we had installed the new metal roof, they offered to renew our policy ... with an annual \$700 discount!
- Many people are asking: "How is Sharon Simmons doing?" *[Sharon gave her permission for us to publish this update.]* I have visited Sharon at home, and others of the congregation have been to see her, too. Lawana, Andrea, Beth and the Suhrweirs have been a great help. She's got a port to drain fluid from an infected gall bladder. They want to remove it, but they're waiting for other results to come in to make sure she's strong enough for the procedure. It all started when her gall bladder infection got serious, and she had a minor heart attack that sent her to the hospital in June. Sharon's at home now, following the doctor's orders not to drive. She's got rehab and home health visiting her. When she has the port removed, she hopes to get back to church. In the meantime, Sharon wants to thank the prayer team and everyone who has sent cards, made phone calls and sent texts. They cheer her up!
- A little more than a month ago, we welcomed Zoe Zerbe into baptism at St. Stephen. Her parents, Bennett and Courtney, also wish to become members at St. Stephen. I haven't received word from anyone else wishing to join at this time, but the door is open! We haven't yet determined a New Member Sunday date, so please let me know if you're interested.
- We've collected \$395 for the Noisy Offering to bolster the Pastor's Discretionary Fund (Justice and Mercy Account). We'll continue to collect for another week. These funds go directly to assist people who need help with shelter, utilities and other emergency needs.



'ST. STEPHEN STOOD WITH ME'

Edwin Weber was St. Stephen's vicar (intern) in 2011-2012. Many of us had lost touch with "Vicar Edwin" in recent years. What a nice surprise, then, when a package from him arrived here at newsletter headquarters. He was returning some materials he had received when he was brand-new here. We followed up with him and asked for an update. Read on! Even if you never met Pastor Edwin, you'll get to see St. Stephen through his eyes.

Greetings from Spokane! It's hard to imagine how much time has passed since my days as vicar at St. Stephen. Some of the materials enclosed were given to me back then as part of a packet introducing me to the congregation. I've included a copy of a talent show program and a skit from my year there. I had such delight rereading them, and remembering Pastor Marda singing a duet with her dog, Lady. Those were good days.

Since leaving St. Stephen and finishing seminary, I've found my way to the Pacific Northwest. I've now been serving nearly eight years at St. Mark's in Spokane (after a first call in Anchorage, Alaska, at Amazing Grace). It's a vibrant and life-giving place, deeply committed to children and youth, to the arts, and to meaningful worship, all grounded in a spirit of hospitality where all are truly welcome.

That same ministry of welcome at St. Stephen was profoundly formative for me. Being able to be fully and authentically myself in public ministry shaped the pastor I've become. It also helped create space for others who are now leading in the church. Just a few weeks ago at Synod Assembly, I attended a gathering of LGBTQ+ leaders, pastors, deacons and laypeople of all ages, who are actively shaping the church's future. I couldn't help but think back to a time when I was one of only a few. And yet, I was never alone, because St. Stephen and others stood with me. That is something I will never forget, and for which I give thanks to God.



Life and ministry, of course, have brought both joys and challenges. While in Anchorage I met my husband, Freddie, a tall, slender Black man (and yes, truly tall at 6'10"!). He's a baker, now working at a local bakery here on Spokane's South Hill, just a few blocks from St. Mark's. My parents continue to age, which brings its own complexities even as I remain grateful for their long, healthy lives. And like so many, I carry a growing awareness of the troubles in our world, the conflicts, divisions, and uncertainties of these days.



Please know that the people of St. Stephen remain in my prayers. I trust that your ministry continues to be a blessing in Tallahassee, even as you yourselves are sustained by God's grace.

IT'S BACKPACK DEADLINE TIME

If you promised Andrea Notley that you'd be taking part in ECHO's Backpack Drive, then please remember that this Sunday is the deadline for bringing in your designated student's backpack loaded with back-to-school clothes. Have any questions? Better get in touch with Andrea pronto.



CHAIR MOBILITY CLASS

By Beth Alexander

Calling all OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans) who are interested in improving mobility to join me! There is no fee or commitment to participate. Times of class will be finalized to promote maximum participation. Please feel free to email me your preferences for class time in addition to any questions. The first class is set below to provide a launching point.



- Who: OWLs
- What: Chair Mobility Class
- When: Tuesday, July 14, at 11 a.m.
- Where: Hingst Fellowship Hall
- What else: Please wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

SPEAKING OF OWLS...

They'll be gathering for lunch Tuesday (July 14) at Fresh Roots, 1605 E. Plaza Drive, by Eastwood Pharmacy. You're invited.



AFTER THE LEAVES FALL

By Pastor Tom

Leaf blowers, unite! Our four-person team is looking for others to assist in blowing off the walkways around the church. As an extra incentive, St. Stephen has been blessed with a brand-new battery-operated leaf blower from a generous donor! You're still welcome to use your own if you prefer, but if you'd like to use the church's blower, please let the office know so we can place it in an accessible area. We also have eye protection available. Thank you for serving the church in this important way!



WATERY UPDATE

We've just about reached the deadline for our annual summer donation of bottled water for clients of the Kearney Center. If you haven't done so already, please add yours to the ever-increasing collection of plastic-wrapped "cases" of water on the designated pew in Hingst Hall. We'll keep collecting until next Wednesday. At last count, we had 19 cases. The recuperating but ever-watchful Sharon Simmons is shooting for at least 20....



EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

The yoke of obedience may strike us as an unpleasant metaphor. It tends to evoke negative associations in most people. I hope none of us bristle with the call to be obedient to Jesus, for he invites us to learn from him, and to wear his yoke.

The image evokes a sense of partnership as opposed to following orders from a stern commanding officer. Carrying this yoke of partnership with Christ is a way of imitating Jesus and putting him over your shoulders. He won't ask us to do anything he hasn't done already.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- **Reminder:** Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. With your help, it will support people affected by the earthquakes in Venezuela and any other disasters that may strike this season. If you're able to give, visit www.elca.org. Or call 800-638-3522.
- 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 Office Manager 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 votes to provide him with a company car. It's a 1953 Nash Rambler, as sporty as they come. God, watch over us as we drive through life.



SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Preaching and Presiding; **Audrey Post**, Assisting Minister; **Beth Alexander**, Cup Minister; **Colleen Holdcraft**, Lector; **Simone Schuster**, Cantor; **Caroline Collins and Sandy Lamb-Daniels**, Tech Team; **Linda Eshleman and Barbara Sullivan**, Altar Guild; **Margaret Bowers and Kirsten Ebbesen**, Counters; **Bob Eshleman 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

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

Monday, July 13:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, July 14:

6 p.m. - NA meets in HH

6 p.m. - Confirmation for adults

Wednesday, July 15:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Thursday, July 16:

10 a.m. - Bible study

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Tom Buchanan - 7/14
Jonas Holdcraft - 7/15
Margaret Bowers - 7/19
Corine Brathwaite - 7/19
Emily Ruddell - 7/20
Bert Sundberg - 7/25
Kevin Robinson - 7/25
Kirsten Ebbesen - 7/26
Ian Medley/Miller - 7/27
Ben Claussen - 7/29



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