

ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

TRIUMPH OF THE TRIMMERS

These were the most important words spoken during Saturday morning's azalea operation in St. Stephen's front yard:

- "Whack the hell out of 'em!" That was Emily Jennings' blunt advice on how best to approach the wildly overgrown and vine-infested bushes.
- "Haven't you heard of power tools?" That was Mark Warren's exclamation when he arrived to find volunteers using only handheld loppers. The handheld tools are effective – but a project like this also needed firepower. Mark had brought a couple of electric hedge trimmers, which he and Jake Hartung wielded skillfully for a couple of hours.



The result? Well, as you can tell from this selfie, now you can actually see Meridian Road from our parking lot. There's space between the trees hanging down and the bushes reaching up. Order has replaced chaos!

Well, mostly. There's still a bit more work to do on the south end of the azalea row. But not just yet. Watch for future guidance from Rob Schiffer.

For the record, the sweaty volunteers in this photo (clockwise, starting at the bottom) are Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Jake Hartung, Sylvia Smith, Monty Mortensen, Mark Warren, Ron Hartung, Colleen Holdcraft and, of course, Emily Jennings. Not pictured is Marilyn Larson, who left just before the photo was taken.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

Water Works is underway. Place cases of bottled water on the designated pew in Hingst Hall. Last year we collected 19 cases for the Kearney Center clients. You know what that means ... we need to beat that number by at least one case of water for the congregation to earn their prize. 😊



Whole Foods has cases of water for \$5.79 each. Publix has a special "Buy two, get one free." Perhaps a couple of families can go in together and split that cost.

We will collect water until July 15.



FOR PATRICK'S TEAM, A TIME OF TRANSITION

Facebook often is a good source of information about the people of St. Stephen. On June 11, this item was posted about the FSU program headed by our brother Patrick Kennell:

After more than 45 years of serving students from around the world, the Intensive English Program and the TEFL Program at the Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES) will be closing permanently. CIES has been more than just an English language program — it has been a home, a community, and a place where lifelong friendships and cultural connections were formed. Thousands of students have passed through its classrooms, carrying their experiences and memories to every corner of the globe.



We are deeply grateful to the faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters who made CIES such a special place for generations of learners throughout the years.

Though this chapter is coming to an end, our EAP program will continue, as will the impact of CIES through the lives it changed and the community it built. Thank you for being part of the CIES family.

This was Patrick's measured response to Facebook friends who read that disappointing news:

"Many people are asking 'why?' Unfortunately, as with so many things, it comes down to money. Enrollment in intensive English programs around the country has been steadily declining since 2016, then the pandemic hit in 2020, and the decline worsened. Over 100 IEP programs have closed around the country over the last few years. FSU has been very supportive of us since 2021, but we could not turn it around. Now, FSU has given us time to 'teach out' over the next few months and transition our current students over the next semester or two."

Please keep Patrick and his people in your prayers. In the photo, Patrick is third from the right, and beside him is St. Stephen's Olivia James.

GOOD FOR YOU, STEPHANIE

More recently, this brighter FSU news release popped up on Facebook:

FSU art historian Stephanie Leitch has been named a 2026-2027 Berlin Prize Fellow by the American Academy in Berlin for research that examines how copied images shaped early modern knowledge of the world. Leitch, professor and chair of the FSU Department of Art History, will use the fellowship to complete a book exploring how recycled images influenced perceptions of distant peoples, places and animals during the 16th and 17th centuries.



The project examines how printers reused woodblock images in books about newly encountered places, carrying assumptions and inaccuracies into new contexts. “Printers worked in a very sustainable fashion,” Leitch said. “They reused blocks whenever they could instead of carving new ones. Our book looks at the repercussions of using images again and again and the stereotypes that emerged from that repetition.”

CALLING ALL BACKPACK DONORS

“It feels like we just got out of school, but it’s that time of year again! Anyone who’s interested in participating in the Backpack Drive can let me know.”



That message is from Andrea Notley, our perennial representative for ECHO’s Backpack Drive. For you newer folks: This program benefits students who need a little boost in preparing for the new school year. If you tell Andrea you want to take part, she’ll send you information and sizes related to a particular student. Then you’ll buy a kid-size backpack for that child and fill it with two school outfits, socks and underwear. Everything is due at church by July 12.

Alternative: If you’re interested in participating but don’t like to shop, you can include a designated ECHO donation in your church offering. Please make sure to put “Backpack drive” on the memo line. Same with Venmo.

Have any questions? You’ll find Andrea at church on Sundays, and in the directory always.

EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

Today we are reminded of our need to find shade and rest. That’s a good reason for Sabbath. It’s also a good reason for Sunday worship, for we become weary in a world like ours. Rest from a world where UFC fights occur on the lawn of the White House. Shade from the glaring world where value is set at the highest shock level (even if it’s blatantly racist behavior), and in a society where hateful speech and divisive behavior among people are disguised as freedom of speech and the pursuit of happiness. Rest from a world where lies are spread and said enough times that people begin to believe the most absurd things....

It is amidst these parallel worlds that Jesus urges his followers to not be afraid.

PASTORAL MINISTRY COMES IN MANY FORMS

Sure, we have the usual photos of Pastor Tom praying behind the altar, chatting during the children’s message, blessing a baby who’s braving a baptism, and (see above) sweating through an azalea workday. But thanks to Office Manager (and amateur photographer) Rita Ford, we now have a photo of our pastor plunging into an entirely different aspect of church life. What can we say, other than “Thank you, sir. Did they teach this at seminary?”



IT'S SUMMER. HOW ARE WE DOING?

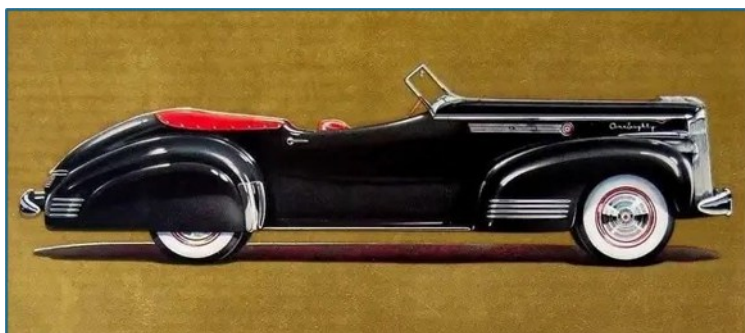
Pretty soon, in an upcoming newsletter, we'll get an update on the church's financial health. In the meantime, all of us can check on our own pledges and see how well we've kept up. God bless us and the dollars that keep our ministries going!

FRIENDS OF FRANK

Susan Warren reports that church friend Frank Meyers is at a long-term-care facility and would appreciate cards and visits. He's at:
AVIATA AT TALLAHASSEE
3101 Ginger Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308
Room 154

BEFORE YOU GO...

- Please mark your calendar: 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12. One of our members will have a book launch, right here at St. Stephen, and the community will be invited. Stay tuned for 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 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 1941 Packard, described in this ad as "so smart, so

sophisticated." What's more, the ad made this boast: "available..., at extra cost, is a sensational new Packard 'first' – *real, refrigerated Air Conditioning!*" The Packard company is extinct now, alas, but St. Stephen is still around – and it, too, has *real, refrigerated Air Conditioning*. At no extra cost! God, watch over us as we drive through life.

SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Preaching and Presiding; **Kirsten Ebbesen**, Assisting Minister; **Rob Schiffer**, Cup Minister; **Erik Robinson**, Lector; **Mark Canning**, Cantor; **Cindy Suhrweir and Ben Bush**, Tech Team; **Beth Alexander**, Altar Guild; **Margaret Bowers and Carol Santos**, Counters; **Bob Eshleman and Ann DelRossi**, 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, Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Monday, June 29:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, June 30:

6 p.m. - NA meets in HH

6 p.m. - Confirmation for adults

Wednesday, July 1:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Thursday, July 2:

10 a.m. - Bible study

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Sandy Davis - 6/28
Loraine Sundberg - 7/3
Sarah Barton - 7/3
Karl Barton - 7/4
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