



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS: ENDOWMENT FUND IN ACTION

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

Next week Pastor Tom will visit the Grace Mission on West Brevard Street to present a check from our Peace and Justice Endowment Fund to the Rev. Rachel Hill. It will be used to help housing-insecure residents of Tallahassee.



At 9 a.m. Saturday, May 31, the congregation is invited to join Pastor Tom at the Seminole Manor Neighborhood Association Garden, 4002 Roberts Ave. (between Roberts and Rankin), where Pastor and others willing to help will install the Little Free Pantry. A brief blessing will take place, and we encourage all members to bring a canned good for the pantry and a chair to sit in. Pastor will also present the Endowment Fund check for the continued work of limiting food insecurity in their neighborhood.

During the upcoming Florida-Bahamas Synod meeting in June, Pastor Tom will have the opportunity to present the third and final Endowment Fund check to Just Love Ministries and the Rev. Kari Niedermaier. The Just Love program will be in the Tallahassee area early next year to train pastors and laity in advocacy.

We're thankful to Ann and the late Pastor Emeritus Emory Hingst for their generosity and foresight in establishing this endowment fund to continue the mission of God and St. Stephen. If you're interested in making a donation, you may include it with your regular offering and designate a portion to the fund.

SPEAKING OF 'JUST LOVE' ...

By Caroline Collins



As Sharon reported above, the Just Love Ministry soon will be one of the recipients of a check from the Peace and Justice Endowment Fund. But before that happens, you're invited to experience this ministry from the comfort of your home, 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 29. Join the Just Love team for a Zoom gathering and training to lament, encourage one another, and dream together of a future where God's kingdom comes and God's will is done, where we can experience and participate in God's grace in action.

[Click here to join via Zoom](#)

Passcode: 643842

Meeting ID: 827 5503 3514

OUR ONETIME CANTOR IS MOVING ON UP

Proud dad Karl Barton sent us this announcement: “Isabel Barton walked in her graduation ceremony at Duquesne University on May 9 and will be returning to Tallahassee to complete her six-month internship in music therapy at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital – along with saxophone-playing boyfriend Tate Hanlon, who graduated with his B.A. in music last December and is planning to apprentice in the musical-instrument repair department at Music Masters. Once her internship is completed, Isabel will officially graduate her academic achievement summa cum laude. The entire Florida Barton clan celebrated the event in Pittsburgh and can be seen here at the Grand Concourse restaurant, which was once the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie railroad station, constructed in 1901.” Pictured from left to right: Karl, Melissa, Sarah, Isabel, Crystal (Stephen’s wife), Tate and Stephen.



Each year we try to list all the St. Stephen people who are graduating from high school, college or any other program. We want to celebrate with you, so please send us your name, where you’re graduating from and what your next steps are.

HOLY LAND CHRISTIANS WILL BE OUR GUESTS

A week from this Sunday, a guest speaker will tell us about the Christians of the Holy Land – and we’ll be able to see and purchase some of their handmade olive-wood religious articles from Bethlehem. These carvings include Nativity sets, crosses, Christmas ornaments, candle holders, angels and many other religious crafts. The Christian families who create them rely on the proceeds to get by.



George Ghanem, of the Holy Land Christian Solidarity Cooperative, sent us this overview: “More than 70% of the Christian Community in the Holy Land depend upon tourism as their only source of income. For decades those Christians have been enduring many hardships as tourism in Bethlehem has plummeted and access to other sources of income has been sharply restricted due to the ongoing conflict, the wars, the 12-yard wall built around Bethlehem, the COVID-19 pandemic, and nowadays the catastrophic ongoing war for the past nineteen months.... [Those conditions have] made it very difficult for the Christian families to find their daily bread and forced them to immigrate and flee their homeland.... The Christian population of the Holy Land was 30% in the last century; today it is less than 1%. If it continues like this, in a few years we will find no Christians in the land of Christ.”

BUG SPRAY, PLEASE

Here’s what we’re collecting for Pastor Tom to take with him to the upcoming Synod Assembly:

- Body wipes
- Travel-size lotions
- Deodorant (men’s & women’s)
- Bug spray
- Sunscreen
- Razors (men’s & women’s)
- Men’s boxer briefs (M/LG/XL)
- Women’s underwear (L/XL,2X)
- Unisex T-shirts (L/XL)

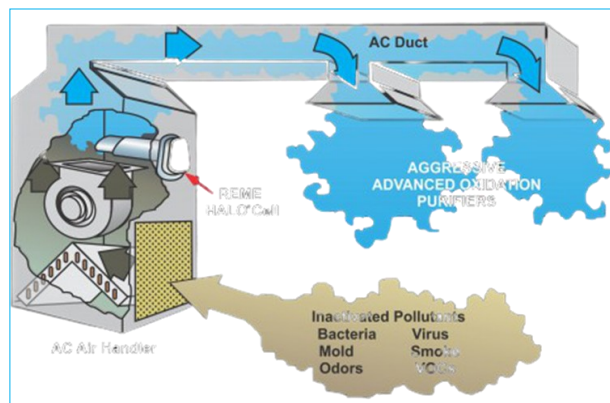


A tub is available in the Hingst Fellowship Hall for your donations. Deadline is June 8.

REMINDER:

WE BREATHE EASIER THANKS TO THIS GIFT

Every Sunday, when the assisting minister invites us to “safely share the peace” with each other, for some of us it’s a reminder of those fearful early days of



the COVID pandemic. Coming to worship in person suddenly seemed like a death-defying act. Even now, you might hesitate to join the worshippers at 2198 N. Meridian Road. Here’s a reminder to put your mind at ease.

Back in September 2020, St. Stephen was blessed to receive a generous donation to guard

against virus spread in the sanctuary, fellowship hall and office spaces. In case you want to know the details, here’s the link for the REME HALO Air Purification System that was installed in the five heating and air-conditioning systems at the church:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wa3nomhaDqY&t=8s>

ON MAKING DISTINCTIONS: PASTOR TOM’S WELCOME MESSAGE

Today we hear God’s voice telling Peter to not make distinctions between insiders and outsiders. How familiar these words are and how utterly terrifying they are, for our basic survival requires us to make distinctions. “Who is safe?” “Who is familiar?” “Who is like me?” Being in these groups keeps me healthy and familiar, right?

God’s message today is that if our distinctions remain unbalanced, then the opportunity to witness “all things being made new” is hindered. We rely on comfort and legalism, fear and unworthiness to control our behavior. But when we turn away from making distinctions, especially when they’re unwarranted, we glimpse the wonderful things God is doing in the other’s life. We hear their story – and we tell our own.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- Sunday at 3 p.m. is the annual Unity in the Community program at Allen Temple CME Church on Kissimmee Street. This event raises money to support scholarships for graduating high-school students who need financial assistance to attend FAMU, FSU or TSC. A Noisy Offering last month was collected to support this program. After the service will be a sit-down dinner. Please RSVP to Brenda Christie at 850-599-1948 or email at bchristie15@gmail.com.
- St. Stephen will host the Interfaith Pride Service at 7 p.m. June 18. Please come for the celebration and support of the LGBTQIA+ community and local interfaith clergy partners. There will be light refreshments available following the service in Hingst Hall.



- What if the word “homosexual” was never meant to be in the Bible? The Mickee Faust Club, in partnership with the Tallahassee Film Society, is showing “1946: The Mistranslation That Shaped Culture” at the Challenger Learning Center IMAX Theatre. Time is 3 p.m. June 28. More information is available at <https://www.1946themovie.com>.
- Looking for gently used shoes, women’s size 9 or 9.5? One smartly dressed Lutheran finds herself unable to wear some of her favorite shoes these days, and she’d like to find them a good home. For more information, call 850-222-5656.
- 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 Lori to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Paxton Oates - 05/23
Sandy Larson - 05/24
Jake Hartung - 05/25
Blake Simmons - 05/25
Lawana Lamb-Daniels - 05/30
Bevin Reardon - 06/03
Billie Reardon - 06/03
Susan Hehn - 06/11
Billy Oates - 06/14
Tim Larson - 06/16
Ruth Hartung - 06/23
Steve Kunst - 06/23
Sandy Davis - 06/28

**If you have an upcoming birthday not listed above, let the church office know.*

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:

10 a.m. - TOPS meets in HH

This Sunday:

9:00 a.m. - Book study this week

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

10 a.m. - Worship: Sixth Sunday of Easter with Noisy offering

Monday, May 26:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

7 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Church office closed for Memorial Day.

Tuesday, May 27:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, May 28:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

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
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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

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