



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

### 'IT'S BEEN THE PERFECT MATCH'

Twenty-two years after moving to Tallahassee, and 13 years after St. Stephen wisely hired her as office manager, Lori Zengel is moving away. After next week, she'll be using up some days off, and her last official day on the job will be July 31. But we didn't want to wait until the last minute to start our celebration of Lori's time with us. Everyone who has dealt with her at church agrees that she's top-notch.



It was 2003 when the Zengels moved here from Columbia, South Carolina. Husband Scott took a job as an environmental scientist. Lori was pregnant and confined to bed rest.

Before this job, Lori always had run after-school programs for at-risk kids. Hartsfield Elementary's after-school program is where she met Sue Williams, who in 2012 told her about St. Stephen's office vacancy. "I didn't know I'd even want a job like this," Lori recalled. "I was used to helping kids."

But after some challenges during their baby's early years, Lori changed her mind and happily snagged the

church job. "I could do the job effectively and not take it home," she said. She started in August 2012, succeeding Karen Dennis.

Now, as she prepares to leave the job, Lori says: "I feel like it's been the perfect match." She's had three good bosses: Pastor Marda Messick, interim Pastor Mary Nesmith and, since 2018, Pastor Tom Holdcraft. She has enjoyed the job's flexibility, the church members' thoughtfulness and genuineness, the scarcity of workplace drama and the quickness of people to offer their help – though Lori concedes she rarely asks for help. Her reputation among Church Council members and others is that Lori can handle just about anything – and that if she doesn't know how, she'll look it up.

Early on, before COVID, she had this dream team of weekly volunteers: Harriet Temanson, Edita Joshua and Martha Marky. "Having Martha here was so helpful with all things related to the Altar Guild," she said. Part of the Friday-morning routine was preparing the Sunday bulletins and changing the banners in preparation for the liturgy. Who better than Martha to be her mentor? And Martha still comes by at least once a week.

Actually, when it comes to help from the congregation, large and small, there are too many examples to fit here. Like Caroline Collins always picking up the altar flowers on Fridays when Lori was out of town. And when Lori took over the bookkeeping duties, there was Jennifer Dritt providing support and oversight during the transition – and Karen Olson helpfully pointing out how the financial information could be organized in a way that was easier for members to digest.

Now, for the Zengels, it's time for a change. Daughter Zoey, who's interested in a career as a crime-scene investigator, is sticking around here to wrap up her education. But Lori and Scott are moving to North Carolina. They'll live in Brevard (*here's a photo of their view*), where they'll be perfectly situated to help her aging parents and visit her sister in Charlotte. Besides North Carolina's multiple other charms, its politics also suit the Zengels just fine, for a variety of reasons.



Let's just say the Free State of Florida was not a great match.

Asked whether she could recommend any changes for her successor in the church office, or if there were any negatives to the job that she wanted to report, she said she couldn't think of any. "I feel very blessed to be here," she said. "St. Stephen came to me at a time when I didn't know I needed it. If I could pick it up and take it to Brevard with me, I would."

## FAREWELL AND GODSPEED

*By Pastor Tom*

When we created the updated position description for office manager, I realized how much our beloved Lori did for St. Stephen. When extra responsibilities were offered, she was gracious. If new things needed to be learned, she welcomed the education. But what makes Lori more than a manager is her welcoming presence, confidence, friendship and caring heart. I could always count on her in the season of challenge and celebrate with her in the season of joy.

Lori and Scott are moving to the next chapter of their lives, so I'd like her to know how appreciative I am that she has set St. Stephen up for future success. Let's pray for divine guidance and for love to accompany her on every step ahead. With heartfelt thanks, we bid farewell and Godspeed to Lori.

## LORI HELPED KEEP ST. STEPHEN AFLOAT – LITERALLY

*(Reprinted from St. Stephen This Week, Jan. 8, 2015)*

It was December 2012, and St. Stephen was having an Old Testament moment.



Roofers had removed the shingles and spread a tarp above the fellowship hall and office area ... but it didn't quite cover the roof. So when a blustery thunderstorm arrived, the inside of the building got quite a baptism. And so did Lori Zengel, who'd been our office manager for only four months.

"She literally bailed us out the day of the great flood," Pastor Marda said of Lori. "I came over, and she was running around putting garbage cans under leaks and throwing her body over the electronics. It was pure chaos! The carpet was soaked. We had to replace

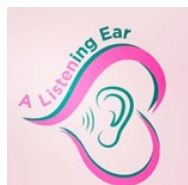
furniture because it was ruined. Stuff on the walls got ruined. It was just crazy! And she handled it with great aplomb."

Lori was even in the office the following Saturday, following up with the Bone Dry crew, making sure everything was ready (albeit slightly soggy) for Sunday's activities. So when Pastor Marda and St. Stephen members who regularly deal with Lori call her utterly dependable and unflappable, they have loads of evidence to back them up....

## MORE PRAISE FOR LORI

Lori is the best. Always kind, patient, diligent. I don't think she ever said no!  
*(Beth Alexander)*

From the beginning of her time at St. Stephen, I could see that Lori would exceed our expectations and that she would consistently go "above and beyond" her position description. When I served as interim Church Council president for a time, I saw even more evidence of what she does to support the success of the congregation, its members, its pastor and its lay leaders. I am grateful to have known Lori and to have worked closely with her. *(Jennifer Buchanan)*



I especially appreciate Lori lending a kind listening ear. At times I would stop at the office to drop off something and she never hesitated to stop during her busy workday while I carried on.  
*(Sue Canning)*

Lori has always been so helpful and supportive whenever we have needed anything done for KidSafe – collecting donations, distributing coffee and just getting the word out. We will miss her smile and wonderful nature. *(Barbara Ehlmann)*

Lori has always been super helpful and accommodating, responding to our requests and needs! *(Linda and Bob Eshleman)*

Lori, my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for the invaluable commitment and service that you gave to our church. Your kindness, guidance and support mean the world to me. May God bless you and your family in all you do. *(Rita Ford, Lori's successor)*

Lori is a jewel. She seems to never waver, always smiling. She has been great about responding to me cheerfully when I reach out to her for information. I wish her all the best in her new adventure. *(Jan Harrison)*

Without Lori, the church newsletter would be mighty unattractive. When I turn it in, it's often just a mass of type. Lori inserts colors and illustrations that bring it to life. As I'm working on it, she quickly answers my questions about church history or membership details. And, no small matter, she makes sure the newsletter arrives in your hands! She's a great publishing partner. *(Ron Hartung)*



We spoke with Lori shortly after we began visiting St. Stephen. She was caring, kind and quickly followed through on what we needed. What a great match for this church! Lori, we will miss you. *(Rudy & Susan Hehn)*

Thank you, Lori, for all that you've done keeping us on course at St. Stephen. You will be missed, but know that you're doing a great job teaching Rita your skills. Good luck to you and your family in years to come. *(Val Kibler)*

Lori, Sandy and I would like to thank you for all the help you have given us. As new board members, whenever we needed assistance, you were there. From helping to put us on the calendar when we needed to use and/or clean Hingst Hall, to helping to create sign-up sheets. When we email you, no matter the time, your response is always immediate, sometimes even before Lawana has had her first cup of coffee! You have always been pleasant and efficient whenever we have reached out. To say "Thank you" just seems too simple, as words cannot truly describe how grateful we are to have had you assisting our congregation. *(Lawana & Sandy Lamb-Daniels)*

Lori has been a good friend and an excellent office manager for St. Stephen. I know we will miss her. When we have had changes in our ministers and interims, she has been the one who helps us transition. She was a huge help to me when I was Altar Guild chairman. I wish her well in N.C. *(Martha Marky)*

She knows whom to call, and when, and gets estimates on things pretty often.... [Also] I absolutely trust her confidentiality. She knows a lot of things about St. Stephen people and events, and about me. And she's able to negotiate the various personalities that come her way! She does that very well, which is a skill that not all of us have. *(Former Pastor Marda Messick, quoted in the newsletter in 2015)*

I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have done for me. You have met the social workers for the Giving Tree and made sure that all of the gifts were given to the right families, and helped with the backpacks and keeping track of the money designated for the program. I am truly thankful and will miss you so much! *(Andrea Notley)*

How do we praise Lori? Let us count the ways.....

We praise thee for thy cordial countenance and willing smile.

Thy reliable nature so free and light, that so delights by day and night.

We praise thee freely for willingness of heart and hand. Your willingness to help without demand.

We praise your creativity so ably shared with newsletters so skillfully blared.

So, to North Carolina, its cool climes await, we wish you Godspeed in retirement with thy mate! *(Sharon Simmons, “with apologies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Sonnet 43”)*



Mark and I have seen many a church “secretary”/“office manager” come and go. All have possessed unique characteristics. But every encounter with Lori has been met with willingness to help, no matter the request. Such an upbeat presence for all of us who have relied on her for so many things. Thank you, Lori, for loving and taking care of all of us in so many ways. (Will you share your address so we can come for a cool Carolina visit!?) *(Susan Warren)*

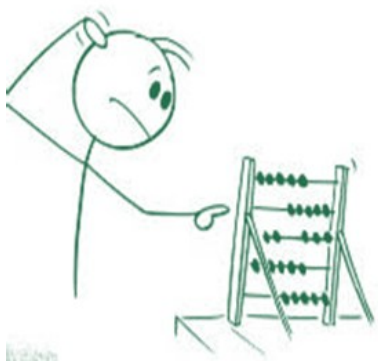
These two Lori-isms have helped me out numerous times: “Would you like me to take care of that?” and “I don't know, but I can find out for you!” *(Former congregational president Sue Williams, quoted in the newsletter in 2015)*

## THE LAST GOODBYE

Please note: We're planning to have a reception for Lori after church Aug. 10.

## JOIN US FOR A FINANCIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

*By Rudy Hehn, chairperson, Finance Committee*



What? You didn't know church finances can be entertaining? Well, not really, but we can agree it's important. The finance committee will give an update during our meeting Sunday, Aug. 3. We'll give a brief review of giving and expenses for the last five years. And we'll discuss our financial needs to be an “active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone.” Whether you're a financial whiz or just want information, your presence is needed. We promise not to bore you with accountant jokes.

## A CAMP THANK-YOU

*Forwarded by Caroline Collins*

*Carolyn Pardue, Manna on Meridian volunteer coordinator, sent us this message of gratitude on behalf of the Sowing Seeds Sewing Comfort Ministry (SSSC), upon the successful completion of summer camp.*



Thanks to your financial participation, Manna on Meridian was able to provide over 100 breakfast kits and almost 70 lunch kits for SSSC Campers to take home with them on the weekends and/or use during the camp as needed. In addition, your contributions also helped provide the “fixings” for at least one pancake breakfast. Campers are great kids from homes where getting a breakfast or lunch consistently during the summer might be a hardship. Thank you so very much.

## ‘ME!’

First, let’s salute Andrew Stover for agreeing to host children’s time last Sunday during Pastor Tom’s vacation. Not an easy assignment. But it gave us this priceless moment ... best observed from the seats off to the sides, where you could see both Andrew and his younger son, Armand, the only kid in church that day. Andrew’s message, courtesy of the Epistle to the Galatians, was that in our faith life we’re better off looking to the future, not just the past.

That’s when father asked son: “And who, in this church today, best represents the future of St. Stephen?” To the wide-eyed boy fidgeting on the carpeted floor, the answer was the usual one for any question asked in church: “God,” followed by “Jesus.” Not quite, said his dad. The rest of us knew instantly that he pictured Armand proclaiming, “Me!” As the youngest boy in church that day, he was the poster child for St. Stephen’s future. Armand didn’t say it, and he probably doesn’t believe it, but the rest of us got to see a father plant this seed in his son’s heart. No wonder Pastor Tom always thanks the children for coming forward so bravely. St. Stephen’s future is in their tiny hands.



## BEFORE YOU GO...

- **Andrea Notley** has this reminder: “All back-to-school backpacks are due at church by July 20. Also, in case anyone would like to donate any school supplies, we’ll have a container in the Hingst Fellowship Hall; they’ll be distributed among the students whose families are affiliated with ECHO. Thanks to everyone who’s donating to this program.”
- 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

Sarah Barton - 07/03  
Loraine Sundberg - 07/03  
Karl Barton - 07/04  
Tom Buchanan - 07/13  
Jonas Holdcraft - 07/15  
Margaret Bowers - 07/19  
Corine Brathwaite - 07/19  
Emily Ruddell - 07/20  
Michael Robinson - 07/25  
Bert Sundberg - 07/25  
Ian Medley-Miller - 07/27  
Ben Claussen—07/29

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

## SERVING THIS WEEK

**Pastor Bill Trexler**, Preaching and Presiding; **Audrey Post**, Assisting Minister; **Susan Warren**, Cup Minister; **Jennifer Buchanan**, Lector; **Colin Hackley and Sandy Lamb-Daniels**, Tech Team; **Bob Eshleman**, Usher; **Linda Eshleman and Barbara Sullivan**, Altar Guild; **Margaret Bowers, Diane Hines and Patricia Handschy**, Counters; **Simone Schuster**, Cantor; **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:

**10 a.m.** - TOPS meets in HH

*Church office is closed for Independence Day.*

### This Saturday:

**10 a.m.** - Sew for Hope meets in HH

### This Sunday:

**10 a.m.** - Worship: Third Sunday after Pentecost

**6 p.m.** - Cassandra White in the HH

### Monday, July 07:

**5 p.m.** - TIMA meets in HH

### Tuesday, July 08:

**11 a.m.** - OWLs gather at the Lively Cafe

**5 p.m.** - NA meets in HH

### Wednesday, July 09:

**5 p.m.** - TIMA meets in HH



If you have news or photos to share,  
please send them to Lori at

[sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com).

Don't forget our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee>.

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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

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