



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



A COLORFUL BUNCH

Decades from now, people will look at this photo and think, “So THIS is what St. Stephen looked like on its 70th anniversary!” Yep, this is us. Not everyone was able to be in the picture, of course, but what photogenic Lutherans you are! Our thanks go out to God’s favorite photographer, Colin Hackley; to Cassandra White, who shifted into pleasant drill-sergeant mode to get everyone lined up just so; and to the many folks who rearranged the chairs in the front row. Zoom in. Can you find yourself? Are your eyes open?

BUDGET UPDATE

From the Finance Committee, who’s thrilled whenever the amount we spend is less than the amount we take in.

- General budget year-to-date contributions: \$198,100
- General budget year-to-date expenses: \$187,600
- Debt repayment from fiscal year 2025: \$8,000



LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE ZERBE FAMILY

To some of us, Bennett, Courtney and Zoe Zerbe are best known as the young family with the adorable daughter who occasionally would laugh or sigh at just the right moments during the service. Zoe was baptized in May, and her parents became official members in August. Here are some highlights from their bios.



Courtney is a sales executive at a cybersecurity/finance firm. Bennett is in sales and account management at a photography/software firm. Some of their favorite activities are going to the beach, hiking, cooking, and taking care of their four pets (cats named Yuumi & Yoshi, and dogs named Pickles & Pepper). Well, in reality, their favorite thing to do is watch Zoe learn more every day! Her favorite activities, by the way, include learning her ABC’s, “Bluey,” coloring, animals and (like the Finance Committee) counting to 10.

Bennett grew up regularly attending Lutheran services with his family in Colorado. Although Courtney’s immediate family didn’t regularly attend church,

she was exposed to a number of religious and spiritual ideas through extended family and friends. “We’ve talked about finding the right church for a few years, but finding somewhere to baptize Zoe was the factor that led us to find somewhere sooner rather than later.”

And now? “We’re excited to have found St. Stephen and look forward to growing within this community! We feel blessed to have found a congregation that openly believes and expresses values that align so closely with our personal beliefs and values.”

PASTOR TOM’S WELCOME FROM SEPT. 20

We are gathered today around the message of grace. Grace is the unmerited favor or forgiveness extended to those who don’t deserve it. Like getting dessert without eating your grow foods! Like getting a good night’s sleep without hard work! Like winning the lottery without buying a ticket!

These are dubious examples of grace, but they do help us to open our eyes to see the way God sees. If you wonder if you belong here, grace assures that you do. Whether you’re early to the work of the Lord or late, what matters is that you’re called. We rejoice today because not one of us deserves God’s favor or forgiveness ... yet here it is anyway. Amazing grace.

‘OUR NATION’S POOR BEHAVIOR’: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

The U.S. is not Nineveh, simply, and the Jonah story should not lead us to condemn a whole nation of people, but there’s no denying our proclivity to gun violence, domestic abuse, harsher force and penalty upon non-white people, and civil policies that treat some communities as disposable. The systems of economy in the U.S. have left its workers poor, hungry and unsheltered – often whole families.

Over and over we hear of the elite wealthy, people and corporations, negatively influencing entities that used to provide assistance to those struggling to find work, maintain it, and make enough to feed and care for themselves, if misfortune occurred. The basket our society used to have to assist people in hard times has had the bottom cut out of it. The same extreme wealthy bring about environmental danger and protected land capture.

The inequality and neglect is immense, and the institutional response to those who rebel against such injustice is more arrests, expanded prison construction, and more executions – with the harsher punishments and penalties on the Black and Latino siblings.

Our nation’s poor behavior spills over the borders as we come to know that the United States is among the world’s largest greenhouse-gas emitters, with no sign of repentance. No sign of good environmental stewardship. If we continue down this path there’s sure to be more drought, more flooding, more bad air, more displacement and more food insecurity.

BEFORE YOU GO...

- This Saturday at 9:30 a.m., join Simone Schuster and others for a cleanup session at San Luis Mission Park. There’ll be coffee and pastries, and everything you’ll need for cleaning up will be provided.
- Margaret Bowers and Rita Ford stopped by to visit our brother Gordon Fleischer recently at Cherry Laurel.
- If you need any offering envelopes, please let Office Manager Rita know. You may notice that the



printed dates on them have been blocked out. We're doing that intentionally so we can make full use of our current supply and avoid wasting them.

- In case you haven't been counting: Our choir reached a milestone Sunday. The list of singers in your bulletin reached 20! And, gosh, didn't they do a great job with Sunday's anthem? Thank you, singers. (We see you, Donna Schiffer, newest voice.) And thank you, Music Director Katharine.

- Starting Sunday, says the Outreach Committee, we'll be collecting men's and women's socks for residents at Kearney Center. And where should you put your donated socks? That's right: Whenever Outreach is collecting stuff for a good cause, there's a designated tub in Hingst Hall for that stuff.



This annual sock initiative is held in conjunction with our New Mt. Zion outreach partners.

- Reminder: Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the U.S. and around the world. If you're able to give, visit www.elca.org. Or call 800-638-3522.
- 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 1939 Opel Admiral. What would Jesus drive? Maybe this one. God, watch over us as we drive through life.



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

9:30 a.m. - Choir rehearsal

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

Monday, October 5:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

Tuesday, October 6:

6 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, October 7:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

6 p.m. - Confirmation for adults

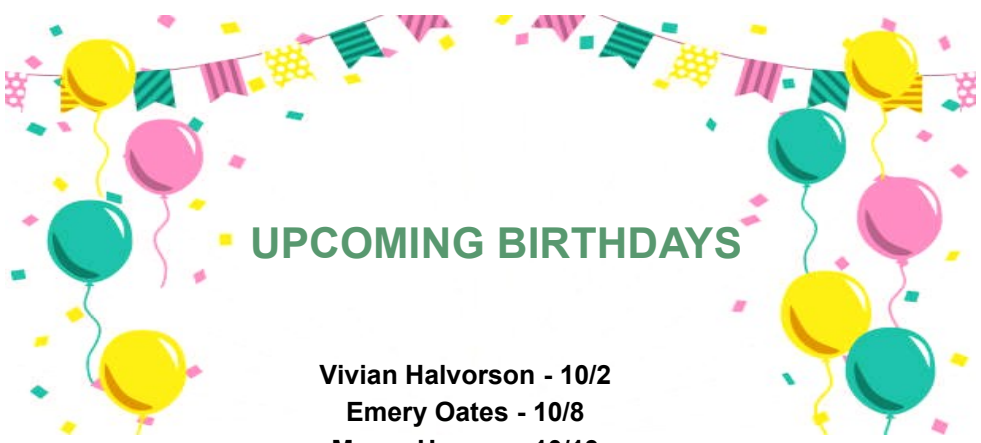
7 p.m. - Choir rehearsal

Thursday, October 8:

10 a.m. - Bible study

SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Pastor Brant Copeland, Preaching and Presiding; **Beth Alexander**, Assisting Minister; **Susan Warren**, Cup Minister; **Ron Hartung**, Lector; **Karl Barton**, Cantor; **Cindy Suhrweir and Colin Hackley**, Tech Team; **Rita Ford and Anita Sawh**, Altar Guild; **Diane Hines and Margaret Bowers**, Counters; **Jan Harrison and Patrick Kennell**, Ushers; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Vivian Halvorson - 10/2
Emery Oates - 10/8
Myrna Hoover - 10/13
Isabel Barton - 10/19
Val Kibler - 10/20
Dave Suhrweir - 10/21
Jim Sampson - 10/22
Audrey Post - 10/24
Barbara Ehlmann - 10/25
Graham Reece - 10/26
Bern Mustian - 10/30
Emily Stover - 11/02
Jen Reece - 11/02



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