



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



Now it has become a tradition: When St. Stephen scholars graduate from high school, they receive a custom-designed quilt created by the Sew for Hope members who use our fellowship hall. Last year, the quilt recipient was Blake Simmons. Last Sunday, it was Jonas Holdcraft. He looks pleased. His dad looks ... well, keep reading.

(Photos by Colleen Holdcraft)

PICKLEBALL VS. PASTOR

(AND PICKLEBALL WON)

It started out last Saturday as a fun family outing at Tom Brown Park. One physically fit generation of Holdcrafts vs. another: Pastor Tom and Colleen were on one side of the pickleball net, and son Wesley and his girlfriend, Me-Gan, were on the other.

“Everyone was playing well,” Pastor Tom recalls. “Lots of good rallies!” Then came the moment of truth. “Me-Gan hit a great cross-court shot, and there was no way for me to reach it. However” – uh-oh – “my competitive brain said, ‘TRY!’ I sprinted to it and tried to swipe a backhand shot. I missed the ball and went headfirst into the ground.”

It wasn’t just headfirst. It was face-first. The verb he used Sunday morning, when he told this story to a congregation transfixed by his wounded forehead, was “face-planted.” Ow.

“I knew it wasn’t good,” Pastor Tom recalls. “I rolled onto my back and asked, ‘Is it bad?’ Colleen quickly said, ‘Yes, it’s bad.’ They got me home, and Colleen did a lot of wound cleaning. The bleeding stopped. But the wound needed stitches, so she took me to the ER, where I received eight stitches.”

That took about three hours – not bad by ER standards, but still ... what a way to wrap up what began as a special Saturday. Well, it could’ve been much worse, right? There he was Sunday morning, leading worship and poking fun at himself. “I am healing well,” Pastor says, “and have appreciated the concern and care others have offered me.”



WHO WILL PATCH THE HOLE IN JOANN'S FABRIC?

In case you missed it, here is Stephanie Leitch's latest thought-provoking column, which appeared in the May 22 edition of the Tallahassee Democrat.

I have been deterred, at least twice, by a JOANN Fabric and Crafts employee from buying something that I did not need. I'm pretty sure that the \$17 I saved was not cutting into company profits.

On the contrary, this kind of business model made me return many times to the store confident that the army of knowledgeable women working the fabric counter had my back.



But now, because of bankruptcy filings, Tallahassee's branch at 1802 Thomasville Road is in its last two weeks before it shutsters for good on May 29. *[That's today.]*

On May 17, I encountered 11-year-old Elani Warren and her father, Kevin Warren, taking their last selfie in front of the store.

Dad tried to look hopeful, as the young smiling crocheter struggled with bags twice her size filled with enough yarn to supply a few years' worth of projects. Dad bemoaned the end of their weekly trips to source yarn for Elani's handiwork: She was busy planning a series of plush carrots, aliens, eggs and sharks.

I'm not a sewer, but I am a recycler. I patch holes instead of throwing things out. Each time I go into the store, I think about how to reshape and repair things I already own. I dream about one day using the old sewing machine that found its way into my home. I ask questions of the employees at the fabric desk, and each time, they empower me to try something new. Better than that, they also give me precise instructions on how to do it. I left on May 17 with a bolt of cotton fabric and a slip of paper folded into the shape of a pillow.

Behind the counter, Karen Platz showed me how, if I just followed the folds she demonstrated, her recommendations for topstitching, and then turned the whole thing inside out, I should be able to make a basic envelope pillow. In 10 minutes, Karen gave me the tools and the courage to make something. If I make it myself, I will understand how pillows are made, and maybe even reflect on why we need them at all.

I doubt that this support of Maker culture is unique to my store, but we had this type of artisanal knowledge in ample supply in Tallahassee. If there's anything resembling the bustle of the Greek Agora in our town, the store on Thomasville Road was just such a marketplace.

It was a depot for raw materials for Halloween costumes, holiday decorations and supplies for school projects. Generations of quilters, sewers, crafters came here to source, to sew, to stuff, to mend, but also to share ideas and expertise. Patient wise ones with knowledge of how to do things with their hands passed those skills along here to the next generation.

But where will the next generation of do-it-yourself fiber artists meet now? Will there be a new village square where Elani can pass along her craft to peers? Where will I find someone who will patiently fold a piece of paper and lock it with a promise that I can turn that into a pillow?

Stephanie is a professor of art history at Florida State University and the author of "Early Modern Print Media and the Art of Observation" (Cambridge University Press, 2024).



CAN WE COUNT ON YOU ... TO BE A COUNTER?



Office Manager Lori announces: “We really need some more counters. Our current roster is really getting spread thin, especially during summer. They are good sports” – but they could use our help. Here are the people you’d be working with: Janet Barber, Margaret Bowers, Kirsten Ebbesen, Patricia Handschy, Billie Reardon, Rob Schiffer, Loraine Sundberg and Susan Warren. Let Pastor or Lori know if you’re interested.

LITTLE FREE PANTRY

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

At 9 a.m. Saturday, 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 our Peace and Justice Endowment Fund check for the continued work of limiting food insecurity in their neighborhood.



JUST LOVE ... TONIGHT!



Reminder from Caroline Collins: You’re invited to experience the Just Love ministry from the comfort of your home today (Thursday, May 29), 6-7:30 p.m. Join the 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

HOLY LAND CHRISTIANS WILL BE OUR GUESTS

Another reminder: 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.



RAZORS, 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.

EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... Joy and grief; happy and sad. We need these events [such as graduations] in our lives because they mark for us an end to something, but something new is beginning. We recognize the messiness of it all.

The section from the Book of Acts read today reflects what I am saying. Paul received a vision and was convinced God called him, and others with him, to go to Macedonia to proclaim the Gospel there. What we didn't read was that, before the vision, they'd traveled through a handful of cities and met one dead end after another, but they kept being available and open to where the Spirit called them. They kept showing up, and then Paul received the vision.

This fall St. Stephen will begin a prayerful process of renewal around this very text in Acts. I don't need to tell most of you that our society has been dramatically changing over the past few decades. We used to be able to count on Lutherans coming to church, and that's just not the case anymore. This is not only affecting our denomination. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Catholics, Baptists and even nondenominational Christian bodies are finding this new reality. People are not, by and large, joining the church like they used to. Sometimes there are good reasons to leave (or not come back to) church, but the truth is that society has changed and membership is not as important as it used to be. The move in our culture today is toward authenticity.

Which, in the end, is a good thing, something to be happy about, but it's going to get a little messy. We'll need to encounter change and say goodbye to things, even people, that we assumed would be with us forever, as unrealistic as that belief is. But in the change and messiness, we'll ... meet the strangers who already believe in God, and we'll be our authentic selves knowing we are gifted and privileged with much to offer and share. We carry a knowledge of God's love and can extend a welcome to the outsider to share a place at the table.

And when one must say goodbye, we'll fight back the tears and give thanks for the time we shared space and walked alongside one another, and we'll know something.... We will know that there is something greater coming, and that we are all changing....

BEFORE YOU GO...

- The OWLs will meet at 11 a.m. Tuesday, June 10, at Kool Beanz Café (921 Thomasville Road). RSVP by June 8 to Barbara Sullivan, babsullivan7076@gmail.com.
- This month's Noisy Offering is going to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. There's still time to make your donation, even if you missed the noisy passing of the buckets last Sunday.



- The office is running low on gift cards for Publix, Walmart and gas. We provide these to people in need.
- Cassandra White reminds us that Common Ground Books is having its monthly community clothing swap from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Its new address is 1102 S. Adams St. The swap will happen no matter what the weather is like. Bring clothes; take clothes. You do not have to bring to take! Leftover clothing will be donated to the free CGB Gender Affirming Closet, other local mutual groups, or City Walk Mission.
- 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 after the service.



**Tallahassee Pride
Interfaith Service**

- **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>.
- **Check out the poster here for other upcoming Mickee Faust adventures.**
- **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

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: Seventh Sunday of Easter



Monday, June 2:

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

Tuesday, June 3:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, June 4:

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>.

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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor