

April 24, 2025



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



**TEN LITTLE CHRISTIANS:** *Pastor Tom had a lot of help during his Easter Sunday children's message. This was just one tiny part of a glorious service, which included a liturgical dance by Rita Ford, along with singing by Simone Schuster and others; a duet by Ceilia and Violet Greeley; powerful music from Katharine Gossman, Tom Buchanan and the choir; and more bubbles than you could count. (Photo by Susan Hehn)*

## THANK YOU, LORI

Dear St. Stephen,

It is with mixed emotions that I share with you the announcement that Lori Zengel will be resigning from her position as St. Stephen office manager on July 31. On the one hand, I'm happy for her and Scott to be moving to North Carolina to be near family and to have a home near the mountains. On the other hand, I will miss her as a valuable member of the staff at St. Stephen who brought exceptional skill and compassion to a sometimes-challenging job. She has become, and remains, a good friend to us all.

Though we are sad to see her go, we are excited about her new journey. Lori, like all good stewards, leaves us in better shape than when she found us. She has also been preparing lists of her duties to help assist the next office manager. It has also helped me to know that she's willing to help walk us through any snags we might encounter after she leaves.

I trust you will join me in expressing your appreciation for her years of service to St. Stephen, for her willingness to take on added responsibilities, and for her cheerful work even amid stress. Thank you, Lori, for being a voice and welcome presence of Jesus in our midst.

There will be more news to come about collections of cards, gifts and a sending party.

In peace,  
Pastor Tom



## CATCHING UP WITH OUR COUNCIL

*Here are a few highlights from the minutes of the April Church Council meeting, taken by Audrey Post.*

- [Treasurer Jen Dritt] reported that she and office manager Lori Zengel are getting comfortable with the new software, which gives us a better picture of where we are financially and makes it easier to pull reports.
- March contributions remained strong, as February's were. The congregation has increased its giving since our shortfall was discussed at the congregational meeting Feb. 2.
- Contributions via Venmo and PayPal are transferred to St. Stephen once a month. Lori and Jen will work together to determine the best date for the transfer for accounting purposes. It was noted that Venmo does not charge a handling fee, but PayPal does. Jen will find what percentage PayPal charges and report back at the next meeting. Some members of our worship community might not realize the church is not getting the full amount of their donations through PayPal.
- We welcomed Sylvia Smith, the newest member of the Church Council. Sylvia is the liaison to the Mutual Ministry Committee, formerly known as the Pastoral Care Committee. She replaced Jennifer Buchanan, whose term ended at the end of last year.
- Pastor Tom introduced Juan Andrada of Merrill Lynch, one of his financial advisors, who gave us his view of the global financial situation as we ponder where to move funds for better returns and easier electronic transfer. He advised not to put any money into the stock market right now, because things are volatile. He also added that he believes once the tariff situation is settled, one way or the other, the market will stabilize.
- [Youth Church Council member Graham Reece] gave an update on the proposed pre-confirmation class [that he would lead]. Emily [Stover, education coordinator] volunteered to sit in on the classes as an adult monitor, so Graham can focus on the lesson and not on supervising the children. Emily will reach out to other families with youth to see what they want for their children in terms of formative Christian education, as well as to determine which day of the week and time would be good to schedule the class.
- Graham made a motion to explore further the possibility of a pre-confirmation class to discuss major biblical stories and themes that would help kids prepare for the confirmation class with Dave Suhrweir. Motion passed unanimously. Council hopes to have the start of the class coincide with the start of the next school year.



## MANNA ON MERIDIAN

*This information from Shelli Camp at Manna on Meridian contains valuable information about our coordinated efforts with multiple churches in our area to help food-insecure individuals and families in our community.*

If you can help, consider volunteering for the next monthly food distribution on May 17. Go to the website below for more opportunities. St. Stephen is looking for a volunteer to act as a liaison to Manna. If you're interested, let Caroline Collins or Sharon Simmons know.



You can contact Shelli Camp, the Manna coordinator, directly at [Mannaonmeridian@gmail.com](mailto:Mannaonmeridian@gmail.com) for even more information.

You can find more upcoming Sunday and Monday volunteer opportunities here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508084AA8A82EA75-44786866-manna#/>

## WALK WITH US

*By Jennifer Dritt*

On Wednesday, April 30, the last day of National Child Abuse Prevention Month and National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, please join state Sen. Lauren Book, the Lauren's Kids team, staff members and friends of the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, Refuge House, the Oasis Center for Women and Girls, PACE Center for Girls-Tallahassee, and hundreds of survivors, advocates and community members from around the area for the 10th anniversary of *Walk in My Shoes!*



This is the last leg of Sen. Book's 1,500-mile walk across Florida – which began in Key West and is ending at the Capitol, bringing awareness, education, hope and healing. Whether you're able to walk with us for a block, a mile or more, every step counts in the fight to prevent child sexual abuse and help survivors heal.

If you're interested in walking and would like to register (T-shirt and bag are included), please use this link: <https://laurenskidswalk.org/> and use code LK2025 to register at no cost! Let them know you're with St. Stephen Lutheran Church.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

*By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator*

Three years ago, Pastor Emory and Ann Hingst made a financial donation and commitment to St. Stephen with the establishment of a Peace and Justice Endowment Fund. A committee was formed to investigate the intricacies of setting up such a fund. A year later, the fund was officially established with the express purpose of funding peace and justice initiatives. The Church Council asked the Outreach Committee to design endowment applications, send them out when appropriate, monitor fund growth and report regularly to the Council.

This year the Outreach Committee sent out applications, and we are excited



To announce that the inaugural recipients of the St. Stephen Peace and Justice Endowment Grants are:

- The Grace Mission
- Just Love Ministry
- The Seminole Manor Little Pantry

This month's Noisy Offering will be designated for the endowment fund. You can donate at any time to the Peace and Justice Fund by sending a check or using Venmo and noting "Endowment" on the memo line.

## PERSPECTIVE CHANGES EVERYTHING

*By Caroline Collins*

On Purpose Woman meets this Sunday, April 27, 1:30-3:30 p.m., in St Stephen's Hingst Hall, for Connections and Conversation. Our featured speaker, Michelle Ledbetter, is a hospice nurse and spiritual guide whose life radically changed after a near-fatal car accident six years ago. During what she calls an "altered reality experience," Michelle confronted her deepest fears and emerged with a profound sense of God's peace within. Now, Michelle shares practical tools to help others live with open hearts, higher awareness and deeper connection.

She wants us to know:

- Love is always within us.
- Perspective transforms everything.
- Death is not an end, but an expansion.



The gathering will be facilitated by Donna M. Anderson. All women are welcome to attend at no cost. Connect, share and be inspired.



## HERE I STAND ... NO, HERE I POD

*From Seeds Monthly, published by the ELCA, passed along by Cheryl Stuart*

Check out “Here I Pod,” the new podcast from ELCA Advocacy. Hosted by Regina Q. Banks, the podcast connects faith-based advocacy with current events that impact our neighborhoods, worship communities, social-service organizations and lives. Each episode brings insights from faith-based advocates caring for all people and creation, and teaches listeners how to get involved. Tune in to learn, act and be inspired! “Here I Pod” is available across all popular podcast platforms.



## ‘SOMETHING MORE’: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

... In Luke’s account of the resurrection, we find affirmation about how important it is that we see past what our eyes tell us. There’s doubt and terror as the women go to the tomb to finish preparing Jesus’ body for burial. Our eyes tell us they find an open tomb and no body of Jesus, but there are two “lightning-clad” angels. The angel asks, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?”

This question is unique to Luke. No other Gospel has it. “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” They went looking for a body to anoint for burial and are now beginning to “see” something else. They don’t “see” Jesus; there’s no resurrection appearance here – that will come next week.

What’s the good news? What’s the Gospel? The answer is they remembered what Jesus had said. That’s the Gospel! “They remembered his words.”

Notice it doesn’t say, “Everything from then on made sense!” Nor does it say, “They came to know everything about God, and lived the rest of their lives happily ever after.”

If the Bible had such expressions as these, then it would be a dead word. Simply an idle tale, like the apostles thought. Meaning, it would be simply a history of what happened and no longer able to change lives in the present, for the better.

But this, siblings, is a living word. Which means we open it, read and chew on the text and remember what Jesus said. Discuss it with one another in Accordance with our experiences and then find new things and clearer understandings spring forth about this God that’s willing to do what Jesus did: Die for Love.

When we read the Bible, Love is broadened, not restrained. Forgiveness is abundant, not scarce. We find that we are approached by a Higher Power that reassures us, even in our imperfections, that this Lord will dwell among us to be sure we know how much we are loved.

“To encounter a living God, embodied and active in the world, requires that we face something more than a happy ending.” Easter is that “something more.”

## BEFORE YOU GO...

- Reminder from Caroline Collins: The “Just Love: Grace in Action” Zoom is tonight, Thursday, April 24, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Click here to join via Zoom. Passcode: 643842. Meeting ID: 827 5503 3514.
- You read about Mark Mustian’s new book, “Boy With Wings,” in a recent newsletter. This might interest you: Mary Ann Lindley posted on Facebook, “It’s a pleasure for me to host a book-signing and discussion by our Local Literary Hero Mark Mustian Sunday April 27, at Hearth & Soul on Market Street. He will be there with a stack of [copies of] his terrific novel, ‘Boy With Wings,’ from 1 to 2:30.”
- 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



Colleen Holdcraft - 04/29  
Julia Bonfanti - 05/03  
Emily Jennings - 05/07  
Eva Mustian - 05/09  
Claire Claussen - 05/09  
Jennifer Dritt - 05/21  
Paxton Oates - 05/23  
Sandy Larson - 05/24  
Jake Hartung - 05/25  
Blake Simmons - 05/25  
Lawana Lamb-Daniels - 05/30

*\*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 Saturday:

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

### This Sunday:

**9:00 a.m.** - Book study

**9:30 a.m.** - Choir practice

**10 a.m.** - Worship: Second Sunday of Easter

**1:30 p.m.** - On Purpose Women meets in HH



### Monday, April 28:

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

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

### Tuesday, April 29:

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

### Wednesday, April 30:

**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>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA  
2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

*Edited by Ron Hartung (alias Lex Lutheran). Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, [sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com).  
Website: <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com/>  
To unsubscribe please reply with "UNSUBSCRIBE" as the subject line.*