



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



SHADE-TREE UPDATE

Five years ago, when he was the church's building-and-grounds guy, Jake Hartung planted this tulip poplar tree in front of the playground. Check it out: The tree was basically a leafy stick. Well, look at the photo on the right, taken last Sunday. Whoa. Five years from now, we'll need a wide-angle lens.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHURCH FINANCES?

By Rudy Hehn, Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will give an update during our congregational meeting on Sunday, Aug. 3. If you have



"Great plan. Could I get some more details?"

questions or want to discuss giving and expenses, please come! You can also contact any member of the committee, or place written questions in the offering plate – Rita will get them to us. 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." I'm

the chairperson (rhehn@rose.net; 229.221.6139). Other members are Margaret Bowers, Jennifer Dritt, Audrey Post and Sylvia Smith.

MANNA MINUTE

Forwarded by Caroline Collins



The Manna on Meridian food pantry can use a few volunteers Friday, 9-11 a.m. (or sooner if we're quick). Jobs include:

- Shelving dry goods that are arriving Thursday.
- Putting frozen meat in bags for Distribution Day so we can know how much more needs to be ordered.
- Making a small dent in sorting and storing the huge largesse of plastic and cloth bags.
- And making sure the already doubled brown bags are counted, dotted and stored.

LIVE FROM LONDON, IT'S BLAKE SIMMONS

Did you see Blake in church Sunday? She was seated beside grandmother Sharon Simmons, as she always used to be – before departing last year for West Virginia University. I asked Sharon for an update on St. Stephen’s favorite puppet artist. This is what she wrote:

Blake spent the first three weeks of June in Europe with her other grandparents.



The main reason for the trip was to see Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical “Starlight Express” in London. She was fortunate to meet the star of the show, Tom Pigram, and have him autograph the puppet she constructed based on his character. That’s right – she travels with her puppets.

From London they went to Galway, Ireland. Blake said she liked it best because the weather was cool and the people extremely friendly and welcoming. After Ireland they went to Paris, where she put her high-school French to good use. The highlights for her were the Louvre and Notre Dame.

They made their way to Zurich with the intention of heading to

Italy, but an EU transit strike disrupted their plans – so they headed back to the U.S.

CHAIR YOGA COMES TO ST. STEPHEN

By Audrey Post

We have a plan for our weekly chair yoga class at 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays, beginning July 15. Yep, next week. Rita showed our instructor, Fatimah, the sanctuary after the demo class, and we all agreed those chairs are much better for chair yoga than the ones in Hingst Hall. Pastor Tom has agreed to let us meet in the sanctuary, as long as we put the chairs (and anything else we move) back the way we found them when we’re done. We also have a sound system in there and can set up a microphone and stand for Fatimah.

It’s a 30- to 45-minute class. Fatimah is giving us a discount and charging us \$40 per class, which means we’d need a minimum of eight people at \$5 per person each week. Based on the number of people who came to the demo class and liked it, as well as those who couldn’t attend but have expressed interest, I think we should be able to make the payment easily. If we have more than eight, we can hold the excess in “escrow” to make up the gap should we find ourselves with fewer than eight one night. Once we establish a decent cushion, we hope to offer “scholarships” to members for whom even \$5 is a stretch. As our new office manager and a yoga enthusiast, Rita has agreed to handle the money.



This is not limited to our congregation, so if you have a friend who wants to join us, we should have plenty of room. But members of our worship community will have priority if attendance explodes. I’m looking forward to getting started next Tuesday at 5:30. Thanks for supporting this experiment!

LIKE SPIRITUAL POETRY

Here's a passage from a book I just finished, "Long Time Gone," by Tallahassee author Anne Meisenzahl. In this scene, a young woman has just been to her first Catholic Mass in years and is speaking with the priest. She begins:



"I have a lot of mixed feelings about the Mass.... I loved the sense of community. But it's hard for me to take it all literally, or to imagine that everybody there takes it – you know, the Creed, the miracles – as literal truth."

"You don't need to," [Father Luke] said. "Take it *essentially*. The idea, I believe, is to absorb the truth behind the words. The Bible is the holy book that resonates for me because that's the text I was raised with, but there are others. Thomas Merton studied the Bhagavad-Gita. He was compelled to explore Buddhism, to find the universality in faith. He recognized that there are many paths to God....

"The right approach, I think, is to let the essence – the truth – flow through you like water, soothe you like a cool breeze. It's not to dissect these ancient texts like a historian seeking facts or like a scientist collecting data but to enter into them as a seeker longing for wisdom. To swim into them, like a diver transfixed by the ocean's beauty. Perhaps, as a writer, you might think of the words in the Bible as spiritual poetry rather than as literal truth."

'DO NOT GIVE UP ON US'

As someone who grew up Catholic long ago, when parts of the Mass were spoken in Latin, I love the simplicity of most of our liturgy. Especially this prayer we're using now for the confession and forgiveness: "Merciful God, you free us to love others, but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way. You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace, but we turn away from the abundant life you offer. You surround us with patience, kindness and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right. In your mercy, forgive us. Do not give up on us. Heal us, break our bonds, and show us the path of life."



BEFORE YOU GO...



- Pastor Tom should be back in the pulpit this Sunday. Hooray!
- It's quite likely there won't be a newsletter the next two weeks.
- 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

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
Astrid van der Mark - 08/02
Sharon Simmons - 08/09
Caroline Collins - 08/14

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

SERVING THIS WEEK

Pastor Tom, Preaching and Presiding; **Jennifer Dritt**, Assisting Minister; **Rita Ford**, Cup Minister; **Karen Olson**, Lector; **Colleen Holdcraft and Jonas Holdcraft**, Tech Team; **Lawana Lamb-Daniels and Sandy Lamb-Daniels**, Altar Guild; **Billie Reardon and Loraine Sundberg**, Counters; **Pastor Tom**, Cantor; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements

SERVING JULY 20

Pastor Tom, Preaching and Presiding; **Colleen Holdcraft**, Assisting Minister; **Audrey Post**, Cup Minister; **Violet Greeley**, Lector; **Mark Greeley and Audrey Post**, Tech Team; **Rita Ford and Susan Warren**, Altar Guild; **Rob Schiffer and Susan Warren**, Counters; **Rita Ford**, Cantor; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements

SERVING JULY 27

Pastor Tom, Preaching and Presiding; **Rob Schiffer**, Assisting Minister; **Colleen Holdcraft**, Cup Minister; **Stephanie Leitch**, Lector; **Sylvia Smith and Cindy Suhrweir**, Tech Team; **Beth Alexander**, Altar Guild; **Margaret Bowers, Marilyn Larson and Billie Reardon**, Counters; **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

This Saturday:

1:30 p.m. - Al-Anon District meets in HH

This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study

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



Monday, July 14:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

7 p.m. - Compassionate Friends meets in Matthew Room

Tuesday, July 15:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

Wednesday, July 16:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH



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