



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

### HOW TO AVOID A \$4,770 PLUMBING BILL

“On Saturday,” the minutes from Sunday’s Church Council meeting say, “Beth Alexander discovered a small leak in the water line while performing Altar Guild [duties] for Sunday services. The water was shut off until we needed it back on for Sunday services, and it will be shut off after the Council meeting. Pastor Tom said he would be calling [a plumber] Monday to find and repair the break.” Thus began St. Stephen’s latest plumbing adventure.

“Thankfully, the leak did not affect the interior of our building, but it presented a challenge to locate,” Pastor Tom wrote Wednesday when we asked for details. “The plumber from Cooper’s eventually found it on Monday evening. A pipe under the Matthew Room had broken, and the excess water came out around the stairs outside the church. They provided us with an estimate on Tuesday for” – brace yourselves – “\$4,770.” Yikes. “The work would require a jackhammer to break the foundation in the Matthew Room, locate and replace the broken pipe, fill the area with new dirt, and then pour new concrete.”

Where in the world would we dig up nearly 5,000 bucks? Before you start recommending bake sales, keep reading. “During the search,” Pastor said, “the plumber found a shut-off valve near the south side of the Matthew Room. The plan was to turn on the main valve by the street and keep the valve near the Matthew Room closed. It still meant the water was off to the property, but it was easier to turn on from time to time to refill toilets.



“Tuesday, I was writing an email to let the Council know about the estimate when Office Manager Rita came into my office and said, ‘The water is working in the kitchen.’ Sure enough! We checked all sinks and bathrooms, and the water was flowing and had good pressure. That report was added to the email I sent to the Council, and we were now blessed with precious time to obtain a second and third bid for the repair.

“During one of the calls, the person on the phone with Rita asked, ‘Where does the broken pipe bring water?’ Rita relayed the question to me, and then the revelation was made: The broken pipe, located under the Matthew Room foundation, supplied water to a spigot on the exterior, but nothing else. We realized we had water because the main (roadside) valve was turned on, and we could cut off water to the leak due to the extra valve that the plumber discovered. So, thanks to the Council’s request for additional estimates, Rita’s inquiry into where the water pipe delivered water, and the discovery of the extra valve, we were able to cancel the repair for \$4,770. The bill to have Cooper’s locate the leak was only \$550. Thanks be to God!”

### ARE YOU AN ENVELOPE PERSON?

It’s time to order new tithing envelopes for 2026. As part of our quest to ensure we’re good stewards, please let Rita know if you’d like her to order envelopes for you. Each year, we discard about a dozen envelope packets that were never collected. If you primarily give your offerings via electronic check or Venmo, you probably don’t need envelopes, and we can save money by not ordering them.



## CHICKEN DINNERS AND YOUNG ACTORS

By Jen and Chris Reece

Graham Reece is selling vouchers for a chicken-dinner fundraiser to support the Leon Marching Redcoats. The dinner is Saturday, Nov. 8, at Leon High School, and your \$15 voucher will allow you to drive through and take your meal to go that day between 3 and 6 p.m. This is one of the band's largest fundraisers each year and helps to offset the costs of band fees that include performances, transportation to and from games, and general upkeep of instruments. Graham will have vouchers with him this coming Sunday, but if you're interested in getting vouchers before then, feel free to email [reececw@gmail.com](mailto:reececw@gmail.com). We can accept cash or checks made out to "Leon Band."



Also, the Young Actors Theatre's 51st season is in full swing. The shows this season include "Little Mermaid," "Honk" and "Les Miserables." Both Elliot and Graham are involved in "Little Mermaid" and are looking forward to auditioning for "Honk" and "Les Mis." As part of their company responsibilities, they promote a season subscription to the shows. If you're interested in purchasing a season subscription (and receive priority for seating for shows as well as other perks), please reach out to any of the Reece family. Elliot and Graham are so appreciative of all the St. Stephen support they've received through the years!

## REMEMBERING DON

Nathan Basford invites us to Greenwood next Tuesday for the interment of the ashes of his beloved Don Dowd. "Don left behind more than memories," Nathan writes. "He left a legacy of love, laughter, and life lessons. Let's come together to celebrate the indelible mark Don left on each of us." Here are the details:

- Tuesday, Sept. 30
- 10 a.m. Central time (not Tallahassee time)
- Dellwood Baptist Church (Graveside), 6512 Blue Springs Road
- Greenwood, Florida (Dellwood Community)

Nathan is also dedicating this Sunday's altar flowers in Don's memory.





Connections & Conversation  
St. Stephen Lutheran Church

**FINDING FUNNY IN  
A SOMETIMES  
UN-FUNNY WORLD**

**Rhett DeVane**

Sunday, September 28th  
1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

## THIS SUNDAY! WOMEN INVITED! ✨

By Caroline Collins

**Join the Connections & Conversation in-person gathering for women — it's FREE!**

Pursuing humor and joy is not ignoring hardship and pain, but declaring that, despite it, we are not defeated. Laughter is an act of hope and a rebellion against despair. As long as we're willing to notice, create and share, there will always be something to laugh about, even in the darkest of times. In doing so, we don't merely survive; we truly live.

Join author Rhett DeVane for her laughter-nudging presentation "Finding Funny in a Sometimes Un-funny World." She offers suggestions on how to seek out and find sparkles in life, recounts some funny finds from her own experience, and shares a small piece from her new anthology, "Finding Angels: A Heartfelt Collection of Love, Laughter, and Hope." More details here: <https://conta.cc/4nez1zd>. Come to connect, share and be inspired.

## SOUPER SOUP SUPPER FOR SAFETY SEATS

*By Dottie Hinkle, executive director, Lutheran Social Services of North Florida (aka KidSafe)*

The magic word at KidSafe this month is SOUP! We are having our Super Soup Supper for Safety Seats event on Oct. 9 from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Grace Lutheran Church. Everyone, especially everyone from St. Stephen, is invited to join us for an evening of delicious soup, bread and dessert. Suggested donation is \$20, and all proceeds will benefit our mission of providing new child safety seats to infants and children living in vulnerable families in Leon and Gadsden counties. Everyone can help make this fundraiser a success:



- Sign up to donate a favorite soup or dessert to serve on Oct. 9.
- Buy one of our Friendship Soup Jars (\$15) in advance of the event (see Lawana).
- BUT, MOST OF ALL, JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP AND SUPPORT OF THE KIDSAFE PROGRAM.

## ‘DISHONEST WEALTH’: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

The parable [of the rich man and his shrewd money manager] ends as perplexing as everything else. Jesus concluded the teaching story with this statement: *And I tell you, make friends for yourself by means of dishonest wealth so that when it's gone, they may welcome you into eternal homes.*

Like all parables, we find the wisdom gained from them expands as it returns. It is about being sure we keep money as a tool and love it less than God. It is also about being the kind of “snake” Jesus calls us to be with money. Be savvy and shrewd ... not in the ways the world teaches through greed and ripping people off, but the kind that utilizes money wisely, as a necessary tool to help others. Particularly the least among us.

On that day, money will be useless to buy one’s way into God’s realm, but if it is used to help the least among us, the least among us will welcome you and me into the eternal home.

## ‘COAL IS PEAKING’

*This week, again, our president rhapsodized about “beautiful coal.” He denigrated renewable fuels. He said that even China had turned its back on wind power. Not true. Here’s an extended excerpt from a recent edition of Fix the News, the weekly roundup of stories of progress. Interested? Find out more here: <https://fixthenews.com/about>.*

China has been building a system to replace fossil fuels, and that system is now starting to work. Since the beginning of 2021, wind and solar capacity has soared from 635 [gigawatts] to almost 1,700 [gigawatts], close to a threefold increase. In the first half of this year China added more solar than the United States has in its entire history, forcing fossil generation down by 2%. Lauri Myllyvirta, one of the world’s leading energy analysts, calls it *the* tipping point. A country that was adding “two Great Britains worth of electricity demand every year” is now more than meeting that demand with panels, turbines and batteries instead of coal plants.... This is the structural change we’ve all been waiting for. Emissions are plateauing. Coal is peaking. The export of clean technology by China is doing more to [decarbonize] emerging economies than any Western climate summit or speech. Source: [https://ember-energy.org/latest-insights/china-energy-transition-review-2025/?utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email#executive-summary](https://ember-energy.org/latest-insights/china-energy-transition-review-2025/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email#executive-summary)

## BEFORE YOU GO...

- St. Stephen violinist Astrid van der Mark will be playing Oct. 5 in the Tallahassee Youth Orchestra's first concert of the year. The concert begins at 3 p.m. in Florida State's Opperman Music Hall.
- Mary Ann Lindley, a well-known journalist, public servant and friend of St. Stephen, is having a book launch at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 4, at Midtown Reader. Her book is titled "Fragments: Then & Now, a Cultural Memoir." Those of us who loved reading Mary Ann's columns over the years recommend it highly.
- Note from Diane Hines to our Tech Team on Sunday morning: "Thanks for making church possible from home." Amen.
- There's another Interfaith Vigil for Immigration Justice scheduled for this Sunday at 5 p.m. at the Old Capitol. It's being conducted in solidarity with the vigils at the Everglades Detention Center.
- Need the contact information for a St. Stephen member? Use your handy digital directory. Don't have it on your phone? Office Manager Rita can fix you up.
- Please remember that you can look up past sermons or newsletters that you missed. Visit our website: <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/>.
- 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 Rita to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!



## SERVING THIS WEEK

**Pastor Tom**, Preaching and Presiding; **Rob Schiffer**, Assisting Minister; **Rita Ford**, Cup Minister; **Jan (Elliot?) Reece**, Lector; **Loraine Sundberg and Audrey Post**, Tech Team; **Billie Reardon and Erik Robinson**, Altar Guild; **Kirsten Ebbesen and Marilyn Larson**, Counters; **Nathan Basford**, Cantor; **Denise Bookwalter**, Announcements



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

**Laura Kimel - 09/28**  
**Sue Williams - 09/28**  
**Jeanette Sickel - 09/30**  
**Vivian Halvorson - 10/2**  
**Emery Oates - 10/8**

## 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 a.m. - Bible study

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

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

### Monday, September 29:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

### Tuesday, September 30:

5 p.m. - NA meets in HH

### Wednesday, October 01:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in HH

7 p.m. - Choir



If you have news or photos to share, please send them to Rita at [sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com).

Don't forget our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA