



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



### SUCH FINE ST. STEPHEN FACES

People of St. Stephen, here’s what you looked like at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024. Familiar faces, new faces, lovely faces. A few missing faces – of people who probably were preparing lunch in the fellowship hall, not to mention people who’ve moved away or passed away since last year. Sigh. But we celebrate everyone who’s in this portrait. It goes without saying that you look ... marvelous.

As always, alas, it doesn’t include ace photographer Colin Hackley, who takes our congregational pictures year in and year out. But at least this year we did indeed get a picture of him in action. A friend of Susan Warren’s named Annette snapped this photo while she was waiting for us to stop posing. Thank goodness she was there! And thank Colin for being such a faithful chronicler of life at dear old St. Stephen. More of his photos await you below.





## THEY LOVE TO TELL THE STORY

It's nearly everyone's favorite tradition: Watching a new generation of kids (and creative adults) tell the story of Jesus' birth. The photo on page 1 shows the cast of last Sunday's Christmas program. From left: Colleen Holdcraft, Bastien Stover, Violet Greeley, Graham Reece, Rita Ford, Ceilia Greeley and Armand "Star of Bethlehem" Stover. Many thanks to organizers and coaches such as Rita, who portrayed the unhinged King Herod; Colleen, as Herod's overzealous underling; and Cassandra White, who supplied the voice of the angel. That angel, you'll recall, was created last year by Blake Simmons. Blake is away at college now, so the unseen person operating the angel was Jonas Holdcraft.



The program was much more than little kids reciting their lines. It had humor, beautiful Christmas music from Katharine Gossman and the choir, Rita's lovely dance, a duet from the Greeley girls, a special appearance by the Stover family – and smiling livestock on wheels. Wonderful.

## SO MANY ELVES IN THE HOUSE



The sanctuary looks beautiful and Christmassy now because of these people who showed up Saturday to help decorate: Billie Reardon, Rita Ford, Linda Eshleman, Carol Santos, Beth Alexander and Pastor Tom. Plus more than a dozen households donated poinsettias. Next time you're in church, make sure you take a look at the beautiful angel atop the tree. "It was purchased by Carol," Pastor Tom said, "and she asked if we could use it. I recalled the difficulty we had last year getting the poor tree-top star to balance, so we tried the angel – and it fit perfectly."

Sharon Simmons noted: "While one dedicated group of elves gathered in the sanctuary to decorate, an equally dedicated and lively group of creative elves gathered in the fellowship hall

to wrap presents for the Giving Tree recipients. Led by Giving Tree coordinator Andrea Notley and trusty sidekick Cindy Suhrweir, the group included Margaret Bowers, Lawana Lamb-Daniels, Sandy Lamb-Daniels, Janet Barber, Caroline Collins" – and Sharon herself. (See more about the Giving Tree below.)

And then, of course, there was the potluck – which wouldn't have happened without countless donations of food and loads of preparation and cleanup by Lawana and her team. What a Sunday!  
*(Wrapping photo by Sharon Simmons. Potluck photo by Pastor Tom.)*



# SUCH GENEROSITY

By Andrea Notley

This is the year of giving for St. Stephen! We adopted 33 children or 13 families – the most we've helped in the 15-plus years I've been doing the Giving Tree. I'm happy beyond words to be part of this generous and loving church family.



Thank you, thank you, St. Stephen! (Photo by Colin Hackley)

## BEFORE YOU GO...

- The Christmas Eve service is at 6 p.m. this year – a little earlier than in years past, in hopes of gaining more children/families.



- Update: According to the final tally, the recent Noisy Offering collected \$690 for Haitian Christian Ministries, thanks to the testimonials of volunteers Susan and Rudy Hehn. That's more than twice as much as the earlier count. Excellent!

- 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 nametags, or ask Lori to sign you up. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!



- This is the last newsletter of 2024. The editor thanks Pastor Tom and ALL of you who've contributed news items and photos during the year – and especially thanks to Office Manager Lori Zengel, without whom there'd be no newsletter at all. Merry Christmas!
- Oh, OK, one more photo – the goofy version of the congregational picture. Thanks again, Colin.





## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Carol Santos - 12/26  
Pr. Tom - 12/29  
Kate Stuart - 12/29  
Mike Martinez - 12/30  
Linda Eshleman - 01/04  
Lynn Gunderson - 01/04  
Karen Olson - 01/05  
Vince Muchuruza - 01/07  
Mary Andersen - 01/11  
Mason Bonfanti - 01/11  
Sharon Gordon-Girvin - 01/11  
Erin Kenney - 01/11  
Mark Canning - 01/13  
Nathan Basford - 01/19  
Myrna Dowdell - 01/21  
Stephen Barton - 01/22  
Denise Bookwalter - 01/22  
Ann Hingst - 01/22  
James Gunderson - 01/24  
Sandy Ness - 01/24  
Gladys Kane - 01/28  
Jennifer Buchanan - 01/29  
Graham Hackley - 01/30  
Jayden Schiffer - 01/31

## COMING UP

### Today:

Noon - Al-Anon meets in fellowship hall (FH)

7 p.m. - AA meets in FH

### This Friday:

9:30 a.m. - TOPS meets in FH

### This Saturday:

10 a.m. - Sew for Hope meets in FH

### This Sunday:

9 a.m. - Book study

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

10 a.m. - Worship, Fourth Sunday of Advent

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH

### Monday, December 16:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

### Tuesday, December 17:

5 p.m. - NA meets in FH

6 p.m. - Christmas Eve worship

### Wednesday, December 25:

**Merry Christmas**

*(office will be closed)*



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>.

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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor