



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



OUR CAROLERS AND CAROLEES

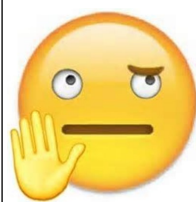
At the tail end of last month, Pastor Tom and others rounded up some of St. Stephen's best singers to serenade a couple of special house-holds. In the photo above, singing in the living room of Ann and Pastor Emeritus Emory Hingst are, from left:

Cindy Suhrweir (partly hidden by that lamp shade); Rita Ford; Sandy Ness; Dave Suhrweir; Colleen, Wesley and Pastor Tom Holdcraft; and Chris, Jen, Graham and Elliot Reece. In the other photo, three of the same singers – plus three new ones – are



brightening the day for Nathan Basford and Don Dowd. From left: Janet Barber, Martin Guttenplan, Dave Suhrweir, Rita Ford, Nathan, Don, Pastor Tom and Vicki Guttenplan. Nicely done, everyone.

WAIT! DELAY THAT MAC-AND-CHEESE!



Potluck is NOT this Sunday after all. Potluck will be a WEEK from this Sunday. Our esteemed Church Council will be meeting this Sunday, to put the finishing touches on the budget that it'll present to us at the congregational meeting. So, to review: Council meeting is this Sunday; potluck is two Sundays from now (Jan. 14); congregational meeting is three Sundays from now (Jan. 21); and Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday is four Sundays from now (Jan. 28). What a month!

THANK YOU!

"Thank you, St. Stephen, for your generous Christmas bonus! I am humbled by your generosity and love offering. Each year, I give thanks to God for being called as your pastor!" (Pastor Tom)

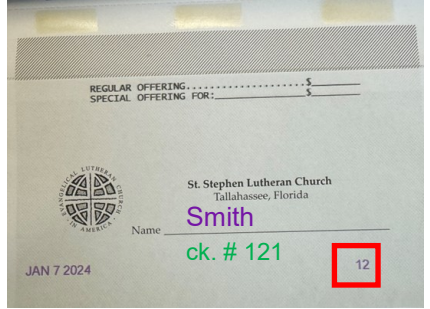
"Thank you so very much for the gift I received from you at Christmas. I am truly grateful for your continued generosity to me. It was also so lovely to play my first Christmas Eve prelude on the new piano! Wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year!" (Katharine Gossman, music director)

"I feel blessed and grateful to be working with such a wonderful organization. I thank you for the generous and much-appreciated Christmas bonus! It always comes in handy this time of year!" (Lori Zengel, office manager)

GOD BLESS OUR COUNTERS

By Pastor Tom

Our weekly counters need our help. If you're using envelopes for giving, please **write your name** on the line provided on the envelope and your **check number** below your name. In addition, it's also very helpful to write your **envelope number** on the memo line of your check. If all of us do these three things, we'll save a lot of busy work for our counters – and if they find a discrepancy during their count, it'll be easier for them to reconcile. Please call the office if you have any questions.



NEW YEAR, NEW PEOPLE IN NEED

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

Let's start off the new year with a new outreach initiative. From this Sunday through Jan. 26, we'll be collecting toiletries and toilet paper as part of our ongoing, joint mission with New Mt. Zion AME Church. For you new members: This is one of three joint drives where St. Stephen collects along with New Mt. Zion to benefit the Kearney Center. In July we work together to collect bottled water; in October we collect socks. All our donations go directly to the Kearney Center to benefit its clients. When you make your weekly run, pick up some extra toilet paper or toiletries – such as bar soap, shampoo, body wash, deodorant, toothpaste or toothbrushes. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.



A FORMAL FAREWELL TO DEBEE AND STEVE

After Debee Meyer died Oct. 19, we published a tribute to her. This is a follow-up from the obituary that appeared in Wednesday's Tallahassee Democrat.

A memorial service will be held at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Tallahassee at 10 a.m. on January 23, 2024. Debee had previously scheduled this date to memorialize her husband, Steve, who passed during the pandemic and was not able to have a formal service. We will celebrate them both directly after the service at St. Stephen with a potluck meet-and-greet (Family and friends of Debee will be providing the potluck). We are comforted knowing that they are reunited. In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to Lutheran Social Services of North Florida; donations will support KidSafe car seats, a cause that Debee was passionate about in her final years.



PRAYING FOR THE BARTONS

Marilyn S. Barton, who was Karl's mother and was grandmother to the Barton kids, died Dec. 28 at age 88. A Mass of Christian burial is scheduled for Friday in Pittsburgh. Karl posted this sweet message on Facebook: "Rest in peace, Mom. Thankful for all your support and love and grateful for your visits to Florida and the time we were able to spend with each other. What we have lost, heaven has gained!"

EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERMON

... My prayer is that the lights and ornaments on your trees are delightful and enchanting, and that there are wonderful things under your tree that mirror God's love for each of you.... Those lights and ornaments reveal the cracks and soreness of our lives and hearts. No amount of Christmas paper can hide that truth. The hurt in us, and the pain in the world, is significant and real, and Christ's coming doesn't "fix" that in the ways we always want it to. The wonderful things of secular Christmas are but shadows of God's love for you....



COMING UP

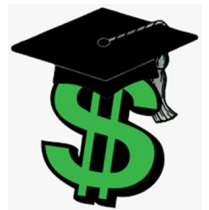


- **This Saturday at 9 a.m.**, join Pastor Tom to help clean-up the sanctuary from our Christmas décor. Also, if you sponsored a poinsettia, you may pick it up this Sunday.
- Sunday: Church Council meeting.
- Tuesday, Jan. 9: OWLs lunch, 11:30 a.m. at Panda Buffet on Thomasville Road.
- Sunday, Jan. 14: Potluck, after the liturgy.
- Sunday, Jan. 21: Congregational meeting. On the agenda: Vote on our 2024 proposed budget, and elect people to our two open Church Council positions.
- Tuesday, Jan. 23: Debee Meyer service, 10 a.m. in the sanctuary.
- Sunday, Jan. 28: Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday.
- Sunday, Feb. 11: Mardi Gras Talent Show, after the liturgy.



BEFORE YOU GO...

- For those of you who plan way, way ahead and want to help support our outreach partners at New Mt. Zion AME Church: Sharon Simmons says that the annual Unity in the Community event is set for 3 p.m. Sunday, May 26, at Allen Temple CME Church. The program helps raise scholarship dollars for graduating seniors from Rickards or Godby high schools who want to attend FAMU, FSU or TCC. The scholarship was set up to honor the late mother of Brenda Christie, whom we know as the outreach coordinator from New Mt. Zion. There's a sit-down meal immediately after the service. Sharon describes it as a joyful gathering.



- 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 in the narthex. Include the \$40 with your regular offering. And then take the flowers home!

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Linda Eshleman - 01/04
Lynn Gunderson - 01/04
Karen Olson - 01/05
Vince Muchuruza - 01/07
Marsy Miller - 01/10
Mary Andersen - 01/11
Mason Bonfanti - 01/11
Sharon Gordon - 01/11
Erin Kenney - 01/11
Mark Canning - 01/13
Nathan Basford - 01/19



IN THE WEEK AHEAD

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

5:30 p.m. - Villas HOA meets in FH

This Saturday:

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

This Sunday:

9:00 a.m. - Book study

10 a.m. - Worship, Baptism of Our Lord Sunday

11:30 a.m. - Council meeting

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH

Tuesday, Jan. 9:

11:30 a.m. - OWLs lunch at Panda Buffet

Wednesday, Jan. 10:

10 a.m. - Friendship Star Quilters meets in FH

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

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

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