



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

# NEW YEAR, NEW DECISIONS

**Welcome to 2023, St. Stephen. As all of us make the transition from holiday mode back to the real world, our pastor and Church Council in particular are rolling up their sleeves. Coming up fast is a congregational meeting, set for Jan. 22.**

**“This Sunday’s Council meeting will finalize what we present at the congregational meeting,” Pastor Tom said Wednesday.**

There's only one must-do item on the agenda: approval of a budget for 2023. Among the other items up for discussion is the wording of our creeds and the use of 'catholic' in them. Of course, depending on what the Church Council decides in its meeting this Sunday, we'll have more proposals to discuss as a congregation.


**As always, it's good to be part of St. Stephen. Let's get to work.**



## OUR PASTOR MOURNS FOR HIS FATHER

The week before Christmas, when Pastor Tom rushed to Winter Park to be with his dad, he thought he'd be there just to help him recover from surgery. As it turned out, shortly after the surgery, his dad – Charles Thomas “Tommy” Holdcraft – died. He was 87. Here are a few excerpts from his obituary.



- **Tommy Holdcraft learned to fly at age 16, served four years in the Air Force and was an airline pilot for 36 years. His own father was a commercial pilot, as is his grandson Davis.**
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- A photograph of two men, Tommy and Davis Holdcraft, sitting side-by-side on a wooden bench. Tommy, on the left, is wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt and dark trousers. Davis, on the right, is wearing a grey t-shirt with a circular logo and khaki pants. Both men have visible tattoos on their forearms.
- **He ran all the major U.S. marathons, including the Boston Marathon.**
  - **In addition to his relatives, Tommy left behind a group of loving friends and neighbors who looked out for each other – and gathered regularly for a walk to the lake to watch the sunset.**

**"I've done plenty of funerals, memorials and celebrations of life," Pastor Tom wrote in his eulogy. "But nothing really prepares you for the death of your own parent, does it? ... So what can I say that you don't already know about a man that has done so many things that touched so many lives?"**

**"I could say, he loved a few women. Judi (Mom) and Patricia. One mourns his death and the other welcomed him last week on the other side.... Patricia was a dear gift from God who came back into his life at the right time for Dad. She brought him to discover the benefits of being connected to church and to know that it's important to socialize with genuine friends and be with new people....**

**“He was intensely serious and rather difficult to approach in his early years, but he was a loving father, grandfather, husband and friend.... You showed up [today] because you knew that if you needed anything, Tommy would show up for you. Lend a hand, give an ear, and part with a ‘God bless you.’**

“... He’s probably angry at me and [my sister] Liz right now. ‘Just have a small family gathering,’ he said. So if you’re angry, Dad, because you didn’t want all of this, I think you know now that we needed all of this.... To have this time to come together; to look at one another; to shed a few tears but, I hope, share a whole lot more laughter and stories. To give thanks for the life of a man that, for his kids, was a huge safety net and a rock. And to hear him say one last time, ‘God bless you.’”



*To St. Stephen, from Pastor Tom:*

“Thank you for the generous Christmas gift and outpouring of cards offering condolences to the family and me upon the death of my father. I feel your prayers and I am boosted by God's love revealed in this community.”

*And from Katharine Gossman, our music director and organist/pianist:*

"Thank you, St. Stephen family, for your generous Christmas gift. I am extremely grateful for the kindness and wish each one of you a very happy new year!"

*And from Lori Zengel, our office manager:*

“Thank you so much for your most generous Christmas gift. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and kindness not only during the season but throughout the year. Best wishes for a blessed 2023 to all.”

## MEMORABLE YEAR-END OBSERVATION

*Excerpt from a Dec. 31 column by Nicholas Kristof in The New York Times*

Max Roser of the indispensable website Our World in Data puts the situation exactly right: “The world is awful. The world is much better. The world can be much better. All three statements are true at the same time.”



So all the bad news is real, and I cover it the other 364 days of the year. But it’s also important to acknowledge the gains that our brains (and we journalists) are often oblivious to — if only to remind ourselves that progress is possible when we put our shoulder to it. Onward!

## GET SET TO APPLAUD

The Mardi Gras Talent Show used to be annual – until the pandemic struck. We haven’t put on a show since 2020. Well, plans are afoot to put on a new show this year: Feb. 19, after the liturgy. Whether your talent is prodigious or just sort of silly – if you want to participate, please let Lex Lutheran (aka Ron Hartung) know at [rrhartung1@gmail.com](mailto:rrhartung1@gmail.com).



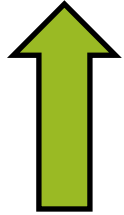
## LET’S DO LUNCH, OWLs

The first OWLs lunch of the new year is scheduled for 11 a.m. next Tuesday at Kool Beanz, 921 Thomasville Road. Please let Margaret Bowers know if you plan to attend: 407-921-8671.



## COMING UP

- Jan. 22: Congregational meeting, after the liturgy.
- Jan. 29: Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday.
- Feb. 19: Mardi Gras Talent Show.
- Feb. 22: Ash Wednesday.



## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- The Noisy Offering total for Seminole Manor Food Pantry was \$375. To quote our pastor: “WOW!”
- Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you’d like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service. Sign up on the flower chart in the narthex. The cost is \$35, which you can place in the offering plate.
- Have any questions for our Church Council members? They’re listed on our website, <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/about-us>.
- Have anything to add to a future newsletter? Email Lori at [sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com) or call 850-385-2728.



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Karen Olson - 01/05  
Vince Muchuruza - 01/07  
Marsy Miller—01/10  
Erin Kenney - 01/11  
Mary Andersen - 01/11  
Mason Bonfanti - 01/11  
Sharon Gordon-Girvin - 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  
Sandy Ness - 01/24  
Gladys Kane - 01/28  
Jennifer Buchanan - 01/29  
Warren Schave - 01/31  
Jayden Schiffer - 01/31

## UPCOMING DATES

**Sunday, Jan. 08:**

- 9 a.m. - Book study  
9:30 a.m. - Choir practice  
10 a.m. - Worship with communion, Baptism of Our Lord Sunday  
11:30 a.m. - Council meeting



**Wednesday, Jan. 11:**

- 7 p.m. - Choir practice



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