



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

SUNDAY MORNING, WE'LL WATCH A VIDEO ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT

By Pastor Tom

How does one find meaning in life? It's an age-old question and often a focus when a new year begins. Over the next few Sundays, the adult class – and anyone else who's interested – will gather in discussion around what matters most in our lives. Join us in the fellowship hall at 9 a.m. Sunday to watch "Minimalism: A Documentary About the Important Things." It's available on Netflix. The video will take two Sundays to watch, and then we'll connect what we learned to Christianity and living a Jesus life.

STICK AROUND NEXT SUNDAY

It's time for our semiannual congregational meeting. This one is all about budgets and bylaws ... which might not sound *thrilling*, but it's important stuff. It's part of the way we do God's work. So please plan to attend, immediately after the Jan. 19 liturgy.



THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY, TOO, IS BIG

On Jan. 26, we'll have our annual Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday – a day when faith communities that have made a public stand in welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities highlight their shared ministry of hospitality and reconciliation. We'll have a special worship service and a luncheon with a guest speaker. Organizer Dave Suhrweir has snagged another impressive speaker: state Rep. Shevrin Jones. Look for further details in next week's newsletter.

OUR WANDERING ENVELOPES HAVE ARRIVED

No doubt you've been anxious all week, wondering whether our missing-in-action offering envelopes would show up. Turns out that they'd been delivered to the OTHER church at Meridian and Pinewood. Yes, our envelopes were relaxing at Faith Presbyterian. But they'll be awaiting us in the narthex Sunday morning. They can't wait to embrace your checks.



TIME FOR A DIRECTORY UPDATE



Speaking of the narthex ... Lori, our office manager, has placed a current church directory there. She's asking each of us to look over our own information and update anything that's outdated. Our deadline is Jan. 26. Then, on Feb. 2, Lori will send out new directories. If you ever try to communicate with fellow members between Sundays, you know how valuable the directory is. Thank you, Lori. *(Not worshipping with us in person this month? If your directory info needs an update, call 385-2728.)*

Thank you

THANKS FOR THE GIFTS, ST. STEPHEN

We all chipped in during December to give our fabulous pastor and staff a monetary token of our gratitude for the work they do. Here are their thank-you notes.

“Speaking for nursery attendants Sarah Pruitt and Kristyn McClure as well as myself, I wish to thank you for the very generous Christmas gift and cards. We were truly amazed at the generosity and love shown to us.” *(Pastor Tom)*

“Thank you for your generous Christmas gift. I appreciate you so very much. Thank you also for your expressions of appreciation to me, the choir, and all the musicians who contribute to services at SSLC. Best wishes to all for a wonderful New Year!” *(Katharine Gossman)*

“Thank you so much for your continued generosity. I hope everyone knows that I don’t take for granted the thoughtfulness and kindness of this special congregation. Happy New Year, all!” *(Lori Zengel)*

THE POWER OF MANNA

It’s good to be reminded of the good that St. Stephen does through Manna on Meridian, the food pantry we operate with fellow congregations on (and off) Meridian Road. Cassandra White, who routinely rounds up volunteers, passed along this eloquent thank-you note from Chad Van Iddekinge, Manna coordinator at Faith Presbyterian.

As 2019 comes to a close, we wanted to express our sincere thanks for all you have done to help feed the needy in our community. When people think of Manna, they probably picture the distribution of food and clothing on Saturday mornings. We thank those of you who faithfully show up every third Saturday of the month.



However, there are many tasks that need to be accomplished to help 150-200 individuals and families every month. For example, some of you order, pick up or donate food and other items. Some of you help prepare bags of groceries and fresh produce. Others of you contribute in additional ways, such as by helping plant, maintain and harvest vegetables from the Faith garden or by faithfully directing some of your giving to Manna. For these and other ways you help make Manna possible, thank you!

I also wanted to give a special thanks to the rest of the Manna leadership team. A big thank-you to my fellow coordinators – Burt Von Hoff and Kris Albers (Grace Lutheran), Mike Martinez (St. Stephen) and Charles Hubbard (Saint Paul’s United Methodist) – for your leadership and faithful service to this ministry. Thanks to Sue Wiley (Faith) for facilitating the purchase and delivery of fresh produce, as well as for helping maintain the Faith garden. Thanks to Shannon Guse (Faith) for coordinating the clothing closet. Finally, thanks to Carolyn Pardue and Kathryn Schroeder (Unitarian Universalist) and Drin and Bob Apgar (Faith) for coordinating the hospitality table.

God has truly blessed the Manna ministry this year. We look forward to continuing our work together in 2020!

OUR NEW OWL-IN-CHIEF

Jan Harrison, longtime coordinator of the OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans), has asked Nathan Basford to take over that role. So he's in charge for the group's upcoming lunch: 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at Panda Buffet, 3507 Thomasville Road.



Nathan said he's honored to be Head OWL, and he thanks Jan for her dedication and commitment. "Jan has done a remarkable job leading this ministry, and I look forward to an exciting year," he said. "During our gathering on the 21st, we'll be sharing ideas on what we'd like to do as a group to reach out to our community in sharing God's love in 2020."

Here's a Wes Adamson quote he found about making a difference: "Find something that you are passionate about in making a difference and you will find a waiting kinship of people willing to unite for the cause."

Planning to join the OWLs for lunch? Let Nathan know by Jan. 16: 850-545-2460 or nbasford@admin.fsu or nbasford@icloud.com. All are welcome.

TAKE ON TALLAHASSEE

A RALLY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



Terri Albrecht-Schmitt wanted you to know that thousands of concerned Floridians will rally outside the Old Capitol on Monday in support of public education. Why now? Because the legislative session is about to begin. These supporters plan to demand improved funding for students and schools, fair pay for all education employees, and an end to policies that have led to the over-testing of students and the loss of local control in school districts.

Here's the schedule for Jan. 13:

- **9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** – Buses arriving from across the state at the Civic Center.
- **12:30 p.m.** – Feeder marches begin from FAMU and FSU.
- **1:30 p.m.** – March from Civic Center to Florida's Old Capitol
- **2 to 4 p.m.** – Take On Tallahassee Rally at Old Capitol.
- **10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** – Trolleys will shuttle between Civic Center and Capitol for those needing assistance.

THE ABCs OF CBD

By Caroline Collins

Join the Healing Arts Alliance from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday in the fellowship hall to learn about CBD from Natural Life's Alex Petrick. A Tallahassee local, Alex became invested in the CBD industry early on after discovering testimonials and published science on CBD & hemp. An advocate and small-business owner with his own testimonial, Alex focuses his time on breaking stigmas through education.



CBD oil, or cannabidiol, is the active ingredient found in hemp. It has been known to have benefits such as fighting cancer cells, curing ulcerative colitis, improving mood and reducing opioid addiction. It can be consumed via tincture, vapor and edibles, applied topically via body creams, and more. Come learn from and talk with an expert about the benefits of this remarkable plant.

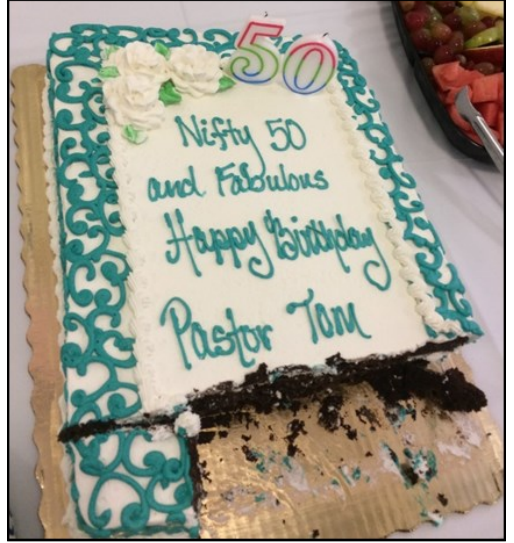
Link to Natural Life's HAA page: <https://healingartsalliance.org/united-states/tallahassee/holistic-health-experts-and-specialists/natural-life>

SUCH A YOUNG-LOOKING FIFTY

We threw a tiny party for our pastor two Sundays ago. After all, it was not just any birthday. Believe it or not, our preacher has turned 50.

We even serenaded the Rev. Slim Holdcraft with a little song, sung to the tune of the doxology:

*Our boyish Pastor Tom today
is turning 50. "Him? No way!"
He'll eat his cake - and after that,
still not 1 ounce of body fat.
Amen.*



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS:

Mary Andersen - 01/11
Mason Bonfanti - 01/11
Sharon Gordon-Girvin - 01/11
Mark Canning - 01/13
Natalie Schiffer - 01/15
Nathan Basford - 01/19
Myrna Dowdell - 01/21
Stephen Barton - 01/22
Denise Bookwalter - 01/22

UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday:

8:45 a.m. - Sunday Church School
9 a.m. - Adult Study
10 a.m. - Worship, Baptism of Our Lord Sunday
11:30 a.m. - Council meeting

Wednesday, Jan. 15:

7 p.m. - Choir practice

SERVING THIS SUNDAY:

Pastor Tom, Presiding, Preaching; **Colleen Holdcraft**, Assisting Minister; **Sandy Larson**, Cup Minister; **Jan Harrison**, Welcoming; **Phil Williams**, Walkways; **Caroline Collins & Marilyn Larson**, Greeters; **Stephanie Leitch**, Lector; **Eunice Muchuruza & Andrea Notley**, Altar Guild; **Margaret Bowers & Pepper Stewart**, Counters; **Val Sullivan**, Announcements



If you have news or photos to share,
please send them to Lori at
ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.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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