



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



*Winter has become more serious here in mid-January. Jake Hartung took this and other Tallahassee-wintery photos recently at Piney Z Lake. You'll find them on his Facebook page.*

## COME GET A ST. STEPHEN UPDATE

We have business to take care of after the liturgy Sunday, at our semiannual congregational meeting.

First, we'll be adopting a budget for the coming year. The year-end financial statement for 2023 will be available in hard-copy form, along with the proposed budget for 2024. Many thanks to Treasurer Jennifer Dritt, President Denise Bookwalter, Office Manager Lori Zengel, Pastor Tom, and the other congregational leaders who've worked hard to create this spending plan for us. Many thanks, too, to everyone whose financial offerings bring our ministry plans to life.



Also at Sunday's meeting, we'll be electing two new people to the Church Council. The openings are for Care and Hospitality (Margaret Bowers' term is up) and Building and Grounds (Jake Hartung is stepping down). We thank Margaret and Jake for their service. So far, we have one new candidate for each vacant position: Lawana Lamb-Daniels for Care and Hospitality and Sandy Lamb-Daniels for Building and Grounds. Other nominees are welcome to step forward before Sunday's official vote. All worshippers are invited to the meeting, but a reminder: Only actual St. Stephen members may vote or hold office. See you there.



# St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday, January 28, 2024

A celebration of God's inclusive love.

*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. — 1 John 4: 7 - 8*

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Guest Speaker following the service (approximately 11:15 a.m.)

Luncheon in the fellowship hall to follow (near noontime)

All are welcome. All activities are free.



Speaker: Representative Anna Eskamani,  
Florida State House of Representatives

*“Leading with Love:  
Building a Foundation for Equality in Florida”*



➔ To participate virtually, visit <https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee/>. Videos of the service and presentation will be available on that Facebook page for later viewing.

Representative Eskamani asks that donations be made to **Zebra Youth**, a network of organizations in Central Florida that provides services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and all youth (LGBTQ+) ages 13-24. Zebra Youth assists young people facing homelessness, bullying, isolation from their families, and physical, sexual and drug abuse with individualized programs to guide them to recovery and stability.

For more information, go to <https://zebrayouth.org/>

Zebra Youth is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Freewill donations may be made to the Zebra Youth organization.

- Donation jar in the sanctuary and fellowship hall on January 28<sup>th</sup>
- Check delivered or mailed, payable to “St. Stephen Lutheran Church.” Please designate for “Zebra Youth.”
- Venmo app: @stephen-saint payable to “St. Stephen Lutheran Church.” Please designate for “Zebra Youth.”

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, 2198 N. Meridian Road,  
Tallahassee, FL 32303 (one block south of John Knox Road)  
850-385-2728



<http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com>

<http://www.reconcilingworks.org>

St. Stephen Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a Reconciling in Christ congregation that explicitly welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. St. Stephen is equally committed to anti-racism. We welcome people without regard to race, ethnicity, age, family status, economic status, or differing abilities.

## ONE WEEK FROM SUNDAY

Once again, Dave Suhrweir has snagged a compelling keynote speaker for our annual Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday. State Rep. Anna Eskamani will be here Jan. 28 with a talk titled “Leading With Love: Building a Foundation for Equality in Florida.” (See details in the flyer above.) It’s a potluck, so organizers hope you can bring a dish for our members and guests to share. Yes, our keynote speaker is vegan, so we welcome vegan dishes (prominently labeled) – but we also welcome non-vegan offerings.



Because Dave works to get the word out, we often have visitors for Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday. More visitors means more cars – and a possible shortage of parking spaces. Those who are able-bodied are encouraged to park at the office plaza uphill from St. Stephen. After you park, walk to church either along the side street or on the path that leads through the wooded area to our fellowship hall. Thanks in advance.

## DONATIONS R US

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

We’ve started off the new year with a new outreach initiative. Through Jan. 26, we’re 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.

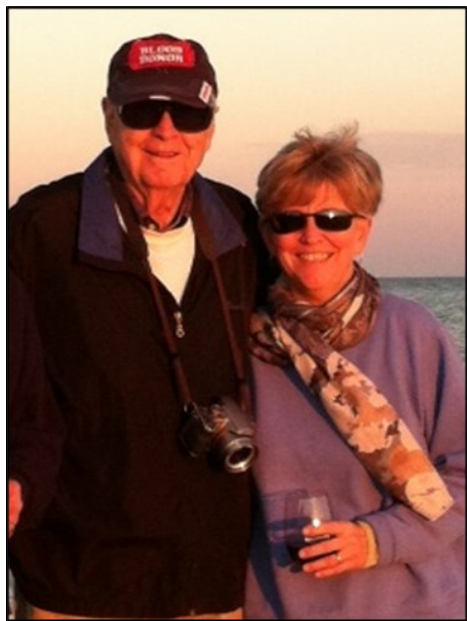




## WHAT A DAD

*Pastor Tom announced Sunday morning that Jennifer Dritt's father had died. Later, when we asked whether she wanted to share any stories about her dad in the newsletter, Jen enthusiastically said "Yes." In these excerpts, she tells the story of his adventurous life with humor and love.*

James Oliver Dritt, 93, a retired engineer and Air Force fixed-wing and helicopter pilot, passed away at home in Tallahassee on Jan. 10.... Hoping for an appointment to a military academy, his parents spent his college funds to send him to The Bullis School in Silver Spring, Maryland, where, according to his mother, he learned to smoke and swear. Considered too lacking in discipline to receive an appointment himself, Dad took the academy entrance exam to help prepare more suitable candidates for the mathematics questions. To his parents' relief, he received an appointment to ... West Point, graduated in 1953, and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.



In 1959, while stationed at Charleston AFB, he met and married Ann Cormier Hunt and together, they raised four children. Jennifer was born in Japan. James was born while Dad completed his M.S. in industrial engineering and management at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. Dan was born in Fairborn, Ohio, where Dad worked on the Dyna-Soar hypersonic glider at Wright-Patterson AFB, research that later contributed to the development of the space shuttle orbiter. Rachel was born in Wiesbaden, West Germany, where Dad's primary duty was flying German officials around Europe. Only as an adult did I realize the purple velvet bags he brought home after every trip, and in which we kept our marbles, were from the Crown Royal Canadian Whisky served to dignitaries

aboard his plane, not from bottles he consumed.

Ordered to Vietnam in 1970, ... he served as commander of [a rescue and recovery squadron].... Mom was devastated by his assignment to unarmed rescue helicopters, but Dad told her it was an answer to his prayers – as he wouldn't have to kill anyone.

An audiophile, trained engineer and gifted musician, Dad built his own stereo equipment, including speakers large enough to serve as buffet tables for parties. His love of music, wide-ranging taste and excellent rhythm meant guests were as likely to hear Ray Charles as The Mamas and the Papas, or Creedence Clearwater Revival as Gladys Night and the Pips. If you were lucky, and he thought he was alone, you might hear him playing boogie woogie from memory on the piano.... Music mattered, and whether foreground or background, he attended to it.

Our dad hoarded his leave time for family vacations and, with Mom serving as recreation director, summers were spent visiting national parks in the western U.S. and Canada in a gold Plymouth Fury III pulling a 21-foot Aljo trailer.... The Fury III was replaced by a Volvo station wagon – perhaps the only lemon Volvo ever made, and, eventually, by a Chevy Suburban, but it was really the trailer that needed to be bigger....

A longtime member of Wildwood Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee, Dad's faith in Christ was of the utmost importance to him. He loved nothing more than talking about the glory of God made visible in Creation.

*A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday in the chapel at Culley's, 700 Timberlane Road. A reception will follow.*

## **'COME AND SEE': PASTOR TOM'S WELCOME NOTES**

I love the move we encounter in the lessons today. God searches for us and finds us. The disciples search and find disciples. It is always this way. God comes to us first. Of course, that epiphany is thankfully not our last, and we move from the first encounter with God to what's next. And what's next often does not come immediately.

We once thought it solely meant access to heaven, but it's really about transformation here. Jesus and the disciples never sought escapism; they sought healing – first for themselves and then for others and for all creation.

Today on MLK weekend we are reminded that activism is more than marches and chants. Activism can mean cooking meals, babysitting, peace training, and organizing people in community. Being here [at church] is activism. Someone saw you come here. Someone you know sees you being transformed. When they ask, "What's that all about?" – why not say, "Come and see"?

Transform us, O God, and bless those we encounter.

## **BEFORE YOU GO...**

- Oh ye of many talents! Do you have one you'd like to share with the congregation during our Feb. 11 talent show? If so, become a performer! Write to [rrhartung1@gmail.com](mailto:rrhartung1@gmail.com).
- From Sunday's prayers: "God of compassion, hold in your care any who suffer and struggle. You who know our inner hearts and dreams. We pray for any who are oppressed, all victims of racism or cultural bias. We pray for the hurting and for the lonely to have respite and restoration."
- The end-of-year giving statements are ready for pickup in the narthex. Office Manager Lori will mail any remaining statements Jan. 29.



- 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!

## **UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS**

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  
Warren Schave - 01/31  
Jayden Schiffer - 01/31  
Joey Bonfanti - 02/02  
Gabbi Oates - 02/02  
Barb ODonnell - 02/05  
Chris Reece - 02/15



# ADVENTURES ON THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED BY AN ARTISTIC JOURNEY IN PROGRESS

Performance of Solo Show  
Happily Ever After One Woman's Journey To Find A True A True  
& Conversation With Diana Elizabeth Jordan

Actor, Solo Artist, Director, Producer, Disability Equity & IDEA Consultant, Artist Educator



Wednesday, January 24 from 6-8 PM ET/ 3-5 PM PT

[Sign Up Here](#)



[Find out more about Diana  
Elizabeth Jordan!](#)



## 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

### This Saturday:

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

### This Sunday:

**9:00 a.m.** - Book study

**9:30 a.m.** - Choir practice

**10 a.m.** - Worship, Third Sunday after Epiphany

**11:30 a.m.** - Congregational meeting

**4 p.m.** - Congolese Christian worship in FH

### Wednesday, Jan. 24:

**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](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com).

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

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA  
2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor