

January 21, 2021



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



SACRED BUILDINGS

Usually we take for granted that we live in a capital city. That our capitols are readily available whenever we have visiting relatives. That we'll be safe in them. The violent mob at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 forced us to take nothing for granted anymore. God, watch over our capitols, watch over our country, bless our new leaders and send us your peace. (Photo by Jake Hartung)

HEY, ST. STEPHEN VOTERS, SEE YOU AT 11:30 SUNDAY MORNING

This Sunday beginning at 11:30 a.m., we'll have our January congregational meeting – and we have lots to talk about. Church Council President Val Sullivan had Lori send out the agenda today, along with a motion put forth by the Council on moving forward with a capital campaign for the sanctuary.



In other business:

- We'll vote on a church budget. Val says the church is in good health financially, with an increase in pledges over previous years.
- We'll elect Council member(s). Val says that David Butler has offered to fill the Buildings and Grounds seat (thanks for your service, Phil Williams and Steve Kunst). The other open seat is Outreach. So far, no one has stepped forward for that one. "We would love to get some names for an Outreach Committee," our president says.
- We'll seek two representatives to attend the upcoming Synod Assembly.

Reminder: All are welcome to listen and follow the meeting, but only members of St. Stephen may vote. If you can't get access to the internet and can't be at church in person to participate and vote, please call (301) 715-8592. You'll need to type in the meeting ID (880 3952 8241) and passcode (955 279) on your phone.

"Please be patient," Pastor Tom says. "Voting will be slow as we count members' votes on Zoom, in person and by phone."

Ah, but it's worth it. These are important matters, so we need everyone's participation. Bless you.



LIFE ON SPOTTSWOOD DRIVE

Surely one of St. Stephen's friendliest faces belongs to Colin Hackley, our photographer-in-chief and the original never-met-a-stranger guy. Keep reading to see how he and his family are faring.

Hi, St. Stephen. We sure do miss seeing you in person! I've really enjoyed the updates from each of you. And since our favorite newsletter editor has asked me to write this week, I can now appreciate the anguish each of you might have felt trying to sum up your "new normal" in 2021. Given all that's going on, we truly have so much for which to be thankful. By the grace of God we're healthy, safe and about as happy as circumstances can allow.

Our son, Graham, turns 18 this month and yesterday returned to in-classroom studies at Leon High. He attended class from home since the start of the academic year, but with tennis season underway he wants to get the most he can from the end of his senior year – so being a brick-and-mortar student seems like a good way to go, even though I think he may miss the five-second commute to virtual school and being able to play X-box between classes. He's refining what major he wants to pursue at college (something in the urban planning/traffic engineering area) and has been accepted by four schools thus far.

Laura has added working for Legal Services of North Florida to her resume in addition to continuing to run her company, TypeStyle Graphics Studio, for her association clients still operating during COVID-19. She works with the fund-raising team at LSNF and among other things now manages a database – something she's never done before but finds rewarding in ways she didn't expect. Each day as she toils in the data vineyard, she encounters the names of St. Stephen family members who have financially supported the organization that provides legal help to those who need but can't afford it. She puts her journalism skills to work sleuthing who the people are and how they should be listed as she brings order to things there. They're fortunate to have her onboard.

I continue to work as a photographer for my education, news and corporate clients who are active while we all wait for that day when it'll be safe for large gatherings again. I'm using the time between gigs to learn how to become a drone pilot and have passed the FAA exam that licenses me to fly an unmanned aerial vehicle for commercial purposes. I'm in the second week of classes at TCC, where my instructor is attempting to teach me how to fly a drone and theoretically get paid to do so. My classmates each take two steps back when it's my turn to fly in front of them. My hope is to add aerial photo (and video) services into the mix for my existing clients and branch out into inspection and mapping work as well.

About the nutty photo: My mom sent us sweaters from our favorite place to eat (Runza!) in my hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska. So we (that includes Floyd the cat) did a photo, and Laura put her design and writing skills to use to make a fun placemat for Mom to have Christmas-season meals on while we FaceTimed our way through the holidays from afar.

PAINFUL ADVICE FROM OUR PASTOR

“While many of us wait for a coronavirus vaccine,” Pastor Tom says, “let me be the poster child to remind you of another vaccine. If you’re over age 50, please see your doctor or pharmacist about getting the shingles vaccine. Like the one for COVID, it’s a two-dose vaccine – but it’ll save you from the risk of intense pain and debilitation. Last Saturday, the doctor diagnosed me with the shingles virus. As I write this Wednesday, I’m getting better, but it’s been almost two weeks of struggle. Thank you for your prayers – and get your vaccine! I’ll be getting mine as soon as I’m showing no symptoms of infection.”



CALLING ALL SPEECH THERAPISTS

Margaret Bowers’ daughter, Annika Suarez, is a speech therapist and has her own company called Sunny Speech. She’s looking to hire other speech therapists in Tallahassee and surrounding areas who are interested in working with young children through the Early Steps program (under the age of 3). If you know of any speech therapists who may be interested, please have them contact her at 407-463-2541 or sunnyspeechinc@gmail.com.

MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION SUNDAY

On Jan. 31 we’ll celebrate Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday, but not as thoroughly as usual. Because of COVID safety concerns, we won’t gather around a special keynote speaker or have lunch together. But, on a brighter note, worship will still be centered on the inclusivity of the LGBTQ+ community. Please join us for live-stream worship and invite friends and family in support of God’s reconciling love in Christ’s Church. The link to the service is <https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee/live/>.

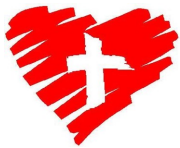


‘JESUS WILL FIND US’: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

“...This dark hour is necessary for us to come to terms with our history in America’s partnership with slavery, the pushing of inequality and the election of government officials through voter suppression. Today is about calling and duty. To ‘come and see.’ Get close, go to others who might not be expecting us and there we will find Jesus ... or, more clearly, Jesus will find us....”

MISC.

- Here’s an update from Barbara Ehlmann, chair of Lutheran Social Services of North Florida: “We asked for help with repainting an apartment and you came through for us. A big thank you to the Holdcraft’s (Pastor Tom, Collen, Davis, Wesley and Jonas), and Ron Hartung for their time and excellent work. The apartment looks fresh and ready to welcome a new resident.”
- Many thanks, as always, to the people who faithfully bring the Sunday liturgy into our homes: Pastor Tom, Katharine Gossman, Isabel Barton, Karl Barton, Paul van der Mark/Jonas Holdcraft and the Altar Guild.
- Lori reminds us that, even though we’re worshipping virtually, we’re still using altar flowers. For a donation of \$35, you’ll get an invitation to be among the 15 or fewer people who worship in person with Pastor Tom and Co. in the sanctuary. If you attend, you can take the flowers home with you. If not, you can pick up the flowers from the fellowship hall – or make other arrangements with Lori.
- Have anything to add to a future newsletter? Email Lori at sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com or call 850-385-2728.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

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
Graham Hackley - 01/30
Colin Schiffer - 01/30
Warren Schave - 01/31
Jayden Schiffer - 01/31
Gabbi Oates - 02/02
Barb ODonnell - 02/05



UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday:

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

11:30 a.m. - Congregational meeting via Zoom

Wednesday, Jan. 27:

Noon - Bible study

Sunday, Jan. 31

10 a.m. - Worship, Reconciling In Christ Sunday



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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