



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



## TALENT SHOW IS THIS SUNDAY!

Some of the best photos from our years and years of talent shows capture not what's happening onstage but what's happening in the audience. Look at these faces from 2011, 2012 and 2016! Some you know, some you don't ... but all of them are lit up like Christmas. This is your invitation to stick around for the show after Sunday's liturgy and become an audience member. Here's how the program is shaping up:

1. Prelude, perhaps?
2. Opening Psalm, led by Lex Lutheran
3. "All Things Bright and Beautiful," created by Susan & Rudy Hehn, who will perform with Karl Barton, Kirsten Ebbesen and Katharine Gossman, with the assistance of Paul van der Mark
4. Acrobatics by Ceilia & Violet Greeley
5. "Father and Son," performed by Judi Duffy and friend Jim Weems
6. Karate Time with Bastian "Orange Belt" Stover
7. Karate Time with Terri "Black Belt" Schmitt, assisted by Patrick Kennell
8. "Praise and Thanksgiving," performed by Karl Barton
9. "Sweet Little Sixteen," performed by Judi Duffy and the Greeley girls
10. "If I Were a Preacher," performed by the audience
11. "Lutherans," performed by Ruth Streisand-Hartung
12. A special performance by the Reeces
13. "Banana Boat," with Rita Ford, Colleen Holdcraft and Pastor Fred Astaire
14. "Return of the Amazing Zing," written and performed by Dave Suhrweir
15. "Here at Dear St. Steve," led by the St. Stephen Tabernacle Choir



Between the end of the liturgy and the start of the show, there'll be snacks in the fellowship hall to calm your hungry tummies. Hospitality boss Lawana Lamb-Daniels says lots of you have signed up to bring treats – and "if there is anyone who wants to bring something in particular, that would be fine as well." Mmmmm.

## ASH WEDNESDAY DETAILS

The Ash Wednesday service is next Wednesday, Feb. 14, at 6 p.m. There will be communion, a choir anthem and the imposition of ashes. In case you can't drive after dark, Pastor Tom also will be available in the parking lot from noon until 1 p.m. for prayer and imposition of ashes.



## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT FOR JANUARY

By Pastor Tom



For the month of January, our total income was \$18,768, and our total expenses were \$20,185. So, at month's end, we were under our budget projection by \$1,417. As of Wednesday (Feb. 7), our checking account balance was \$4,662.

The congregation gave \$175 to Manna on Meridian and \$1,115 to Pastor's Justice and Mercy Account. Those figures are not included in the above financial summary.

## KEEPING UP-TO-DATE WITH ST. STEPHEN OUTREACH

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

Outreach encompasses our daily prayers and gifts for those in need locally, nationally and internationally. And we on the Outreach Committee have a NEW initiative to announce. Beginning this Sunday, we'll have a collection tub in the fellowship hall to support the closet at Common Ground Book Store, 128 N. Bronough St. The LGBTQ+-friendly store doesn't need clothing currently, but it does need accessories, shoes (men's/women's), hygiene products, hair products and new makeup. Cassandra White will make deliveries once a month. Common Ground is open noon-8 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and noon-6 p.m. Sunday.

Now, here are reminders of our other outreach opportunities:

- The Pastor's Justice and Mercy Account allows Pastor Tom to provide vital assistance to those with housing or food insecurity. You can participate by including a monetary gift with your regular offering or via Venmo, or with Publix, Target, Walmart or gas gift cards.
- We continue to support the local International Rescue Committee as it welcomes and resettles refugees from around the world. In a tub in the fellowship hall, we collect items such as laundry detergent, cleaning spray, toilet cleaner, toilet-bowl brushes, cleaning rags/towels, dishes, pots and pans, cutlery, sheets (twin/full/queen), blankets and personal-hygiene items. Contact me if you have baby/toddler clothes and equipment or children's books/games to donate, and I'll deliver them. (Please note: IRC is not collecting adult clothing or large furniture now.)



- St. Stephen continues to support Lutheran Social Services' KidSafe program via a yearly designated budget gift. In addition, you may designate specific gifts to KidSafe through Venmo or your offering envelope.
- Additional support continues for the Manna on Meridian food pantry through your generous monetary and food donations. Help us fill the tub in the fellowship hall with T-shirts, which will be refurbished into reusable Manna shopping bags.
- Ministry Minute is our once-a-month opportunity for members to learn about community outreach initiatives that may inspire the gift of your money or time. One example is the Seminole Manor Neighborhood Food Pantry. Not only were we able to provide clothing, blankets and sleeping bags, but also a group of intrepid St. Stephen gardeners and builders helped provide repairs to windows, doors and grounds there.



- Do you have professional clothes for college students going to job interviews? The “ProfessioNoles” Closet will take your donations. It’s having a clothing drive from this Monday through March 15. To donate, contact Heather Lazar at heather.lazar@fsu.edu or 850-644-6493. Donations are accepted at 100 S. Woodward Ave. by appointment only. It’s accepting professional attire that’s gently used or like new. Most needed:



- Women’s suits, blazers, dress slacks, dresses, blouses (smaller sizes).
- Men’s suits, blazers, dress pants and shirts (smaller sizes).
- Like-new dress shoes (any size, men’s or women’s).
- Accessories, including ties and belts.

Other ongoing initiatives we continue to support are:

- Collaborations with New Mt. Zion AME Church (water in July, socks in October, toiletries in January, and Unity in the Community in May).
- ECHO backpack drive (August).
- Giving Tree (December).

In Chapter 22 of Matthew, Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment. Jesus replies, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” And the second is to “love thy neighbor as thyself.” Thank you for your outreach support as we love our neighbors.

## EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM’S SERMON

Think of a time in your life when you said these words: “And so it begins.” That would be a time when you saw something or did something or decided something, and then came those words: “And so it begins.” Was it the decision to go or not go to college? Was it the time you decided to take a career path or change one that you’d been on? Maybe it was a decision to go into the military or maybe leave it when the time came. A decision to have children or to not have children. In all of these real-life decisions there was a new start; a turning of the page in life; and a new path was becoming your adventure....

Since we come off a week where we just had two funeral services right here at St. Stephen, and another the Saturday before at Culley’s Cemetery for a dear member whose father died, we are mindful of other ways our pages in life are turned. When a loved one dies we are forced to evaluate what comes next, to struggle through new responsibilities, new roles, and doing it all while deeply grieving. We become part of a club that each and every one of us will belong to if we live long enough. A grief club, a survivors’ club, an “And so it begins” club.

Whatever we call it, Jesus is there in the private and the public spaces. Whatever we call it, Jesus is wanting to proclaim a message to you and to me. A message of unity and partnership and healing ... and a message of serving, because that was what he came to do.

## BEFORE YOU GO...



- As Pastor Tom announced Sunday, your donations to Zebra Youth – one of the groups that recent keynote speaker Rep. Anna Eskamani supports – totaled \$750.
- These two formerly homeless cats, Gertrude and Myrtle, were featured on flyers posted all over church a while back. Karen Olson wanted you to see that they’re thriving with the couple who adopted them from the Humane Society.



- From last Sunday's prayers: "God who gives power to the faint, challenge us to share the faith stories of what God has done in our lives. Open us to receive the unique ways God is at work in your people, especially those whose perspectives challenge our own."



- Here's an offer from embroidery wizard Margaret Bowers: "Bring your own shirt, jacket, bag or apron and get the St. Stephen logo embroidered for only \$5. Our fabulous Council President Denise came up with the idea of rainbow colors. Bring in your item and \$5, then drop off in fellowship hall – so you can promote our wonderful church. Questions? Call Margaret at 407-921-8671."

- Margaret also says: "Come join us on Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 11:30 for OWLS at Casa Grande Margaritas & Cocina, 1800 Thomasville Road, next to Jo-Ann fabric store. RSVP 407-921-8671."
- 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

- Joey Bonfanti - 02/02
- Gabbi Oates - 02/02
- Barb ODonnell - 02/05
- Chris Reece - 02/15
- Patrick Kennell - 02/18
- Tami Allen - 02/21
- Lisa Medley - 02/25
- Jackie Mustian - 02/25
- Judi Duffy - 02/27

## 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
- 6 p.m. - Game Night (outside group) meets in FH

### This Saturday:

- 1: p.m. - Al-Anon meets in FH

### This Sunday:

- 9:00 a.m. - Book study
- 9:30 a.m. - Choir practice
- 10 a.m. - Worship, Transfiguration of Our Lord Sunday
- 11:30 a.m. - Mardi Gras Talent Show
- 4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH



### Monday, Feb. 12:

- 5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

### This Tuesday, Feb. 13:

- 11:30 a.m. - OWLS gathering at Casa Grande Margaritas & Cocina

### Wednesday, Feb. 7:

- 5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH
- 6 p.m. - Ash Wednesday service
- 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