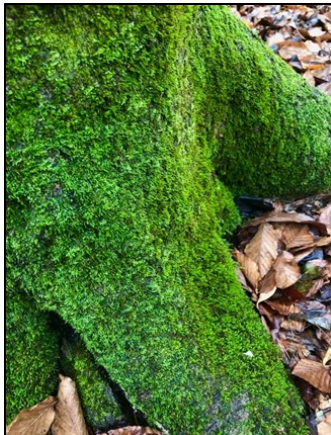




# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



## WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU RAIN ...

*... You and your camera can capture raindrops skewered on pine needles, or turkey tail mushrooms sprouting on forest floors, or bright green moss carpeting a tree trunk. The Lord God made them all. (Photos by Jake Hartung at Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park)*



## WELCOMING LENT IN A NEW WAY



Who knew that a parking lot could be a sacred space? That's what it became yesterday, when people arrived between noon and 1 p.m. for the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday. It was much more than a quick drive-through experience.

“Since it was such a nice day, people chose to get out of their cars,” Audrey Post, one of the participants, said in an email. “Pastor read the prayer of the day each time and imposed the ashes and addressed each worshipper by name, saying, ‘Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’”

Pastor Tom was delighted with the rare opportunity to spend face-to-face time with St. Stephen people during this Zoom era.



“What a foretaste for when we can gather again!” he said afterward. “With joy, 14 folks (including two new faces) came to the parking lot to receive their ashes on Wednesday. The smiles could be heard behind our masks! It was a joy to see people again – and to hear that many are receiving vaccines.” (Photos by Audrey Post)

## ‘WE ALL STAND IN NEED’: EXCERPTS FROM PASTOR TOM’S ASH WEDNESDAY SERMON

“... Whether you have these ashes or not, you are encouraged to make the sign of the cross on your forehead and say the words ‘Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’

“... Christ does not destroy what is lost. Christ reclaims those who are lost.... Tonight, Jesus gives us permission to forget ourselves.... To forget about our desire for approval. Forget about storing up treasures on earth. Forget about the spotlight long enough to see the ones who are hurting around us in the shadows. We all stand in need of this grace that Jesus offers....”

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

By Pastor Tom



**GOAL!** We have approximately \$111,700 collected toward our goal of \$175,000. My records indicate \$24,000 is still pledged. Thank you for your continued financial support. If you can make a gift of any amount, please be sure to designate it to the Capital Campaign for Sanctuary Project. God is up to good things among us.

*“For a person to be able to make a gift, they must have two things: The capacity and the will.”*

## ‘I AM NOT INDESTRUCTIBLE’: EXCERPTS FROM PASTOR TOM’S FEB. 7 SERMON

“... When I was a teenager, many years ago, I thought I was indestructible. Like most at that age, I thought tragedies happen to other people, but then I almost killed myself while snow skiing. At a picturesque resort in Lake Tahoe called Heavenly Valley, I ... hit a vicious patch of ice and collided with a tree. The tree won. Three to four days later I woke up in the hospital with the knowledge quite literally pounded into my head ... I am not indestructible.



“Looking back now, I see that I was made to understand that truth the hard way. A page turned in my life that allowed me to realize how fragile life is and how my behavior affects the life of other people. A page is turned in life when we understand that everything can change in a flash.



“Another example was when we left Kennesaw, Georgia, to move down to Largo, Florida. As we pulled away from the home where Davis and Wesley were born, we left stable careers knowing that there was a void in our lives. At such times, we are often brought to prayer, and I made one to God. A deal from a desperate man: ‘God if you can get us moved safely and settled into a new area, I will make it a priority to finally find a church community to belong to.’ We drove away, and again the page was turned....” [And St. Stephen Lutheran Church history was changed, too, Pastor Tom.]

## MY ST. STEPHEN FRIENDS

*This is the 2021 edition of a song we typically sing at our Mardi Gras Talent Show. Since the show could not go on this year, Sunday we sang this immediately after the liturgy. Some of you asked for the lyrics. Sing it to the tune of “My Favorite Things.” Or, if you want to hear how it sounds as sung by Isabel Barton and accompanied by Katharine Gossman, watch the video, starting at around the 45 minute mark:*

<https://www.facebook.com/ststephentallahassee/videos/1092747787861121/>

This past year’s been such a strange aberration.

No crowded pews – not until vaccinations.

No more events in the fellowship hall.

Oh, how we miss the sheer joy of it all.



No more big smiles – our masks totally hide them.

No more big hugs – there’s a virus inside them.

No children’s time, no more choir, no Arise.

Our former laughter has turned into sighs!

But I have a quick solution  
when the world seems sad.

I simply remember my St. Stephen friends,  
and then I don’t feel so bad.



Here’s the good news, in a world that’s so nervous:

Sundays at 10, Facebook brings us our service.

Kath-a-rine still sounds majestic online.

All of the Bartons still sound so divine.

We still have hymns and communion and prayers,  
Pastor, Church Council and faithful workday-ers.

Sure, we miss potlucks, but soon they’ll return.

In a pandemic, there’s one thing you learn:



When the world seems dark and frightful,  
when you’re feeling sad,  
you simply remember your St. Stephen friends,  
and then you don’t feel so bad!



## MISC.

- Chris Bischoff was one of the out-of-towners who joined in our virtual Ash Wednesday service. “Thank you,” she wrote. “I could not go to my Monroe, MI church for their Ash Wednesday service.”
- Lori has sent out the 2020 statements. Watch for yours in your mailbox.
- Want to provide altar flowers? For a donation of \$35, you'll also get an invitation to be among the handful of people who worship in person with Pastor Tom in the sanctuary. Afterward, the flowers are yours to keep. See Lori's contact information below.
- 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

Patrick Kennell - 02/18  
Jennifer Ault - 02/22  
Jackie Mustian - 02/25  
Lisa Medley - 02/25  
Judi Duffy - 02/27  
Rob Schiffer - 02/28  
Jerry Rumph - 02/28  
Jan Harrison - 03/02  
Jennifer LaVia - 03/02  
Jim Christianson - 03/03  
Robin Oliveri - 03/05

## UPCOMING DATES

### This Sunday:

10 a.m. - Worship, First Sunday in Lent

### Wednesday, Feb. 24:

Noon - Bible study



If you have news or photos to share, please send them to Lori at [ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com](mailto:ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.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

Edited by Lex Lutheran. Designed by Lori Zengel, office manager, [sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com](mailto:sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com).  
Website: <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com/>

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