



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



**About 30 people spent Valentine's Day evening right here in our fellowship hall – baking cookies, making friends and generally having a fine time. God bless Terri Albrecht-Schmitt, Cassandra White and the other organizers for creating one more memorable event.**

## PLEASE COME AND BE OUR AUDIENCE

What a lineup we have for you Sunday, in this year's Mardi Gras Talent Show. We're still waiting to hear back from some talent representatives and Hollywood lawyers, but so far it looks as if our performers will include (but not necessarily be limited to):

- Pastor Tom (twice!)
- Jonas Holdcraft and his violin
- Jan Harrison
- Hector Quinones
- Terri "Black Belt" Albrecht-Schmitt
- Nathan Basford
- Eric McClanahan and his trombone
- Dave "Amazing Zing" Suhrweir
- The St. Stephen Tabernacle Choir

But the most important part of each show is the audience – and St. Stephen audiences have a reputation for being savvy, discriminating, intelligent, stylish, welcoming and, most important, forgiving. The audience also gets to hear some original St. Stephen songs – including one about chili!

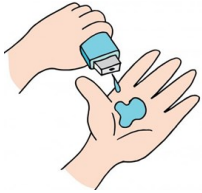
Yes, chili is the main dish for our potluck – which takes place immediately after Sunday’s liturgy, and immediately before the show. Margaret Bowers says she thinks we’re in pretty good shape as far as food goes ... but, as always, she’d be delighted to have a few people volunteer to help with cleanup.



Questions? Call impresario Lex Lutheran (who’s listed as Ron Hartung in the church directory). See you Sunday, talent fans.

## NOTES FROM PASTOR TOM

- **THE VAL REPORT** (as of Wednesday afternoon): Our dear president, Val Sullivan, has had some struggling days and nights, but her last procedure is showing good progress. They removed her from the ECMO bypass machine. Doctors and nurses plan to monitor her lung strength and remove the breathing tube next. They will give her a temporary trachea tube in case her lungs tire and she requires oxygen. This way, Val will not need to be re-intubated and she can be brought out of heavy sedation. Keep those prayers for healing coming!
- **COOTIE’S REHAB**: Our beloved “Cootie” Rhodes encountered a hip fracture. She is currently in rehab following surgery to repair the fracture. Please keep her in your prayers and send a note of “Get well soon!” to daughter Betty Wilder for delivery to Cootie. (You’ll find contact information in your new directory.)
- **TWINS ON THE WAY**: Thank you for your prayers for Erin and Eric McClanahan! Erin’s water broke for one of her babies (she’s expecting twins!), and for precaution’s sake she was admitted to the Women’s Pavilion at TMH. “I am fine,” she told me. “Just very bored.” Erin would love to have a visit from St. Stephen folks. Please give her a call or text first.



- **HAND-SANITIZER SEASON**: Sharing the Peace and holding hands during the Lord’s Prayer are special times in the life of our worship community. Please remember that if you’re feeling ill or particularly protective of your own health, you may touch elbows, fist-bump or simply bow as you extend the “Peace of Christ” to one another. Your neighbor will appreciate your willingness to keep our community healthy. It’s also a good idea to use hand sanitizer after shaking hands. I do!
- **TWO QUESTIONS**: Thank you for answering those two questions about our church and community last Sunday. (“What does St. Stephen do that you love?” and “If you could change one thing here in Tallahassee, what you work on?”) We’re working to organize them into categories to help direct our purpose. If you were absent last Sunday and didn’t get to take part, please see an usher this Sunday and write down your answers, so your views and ideas are heard.

- **‘HELLO! MY NAME IS...’**: Name badges are all the rage! Well, perhaps that’s an overstatement, but many are encouraged that folks seem excited to learn names and use them in greeting. The welcome team is assisting first-time worshippers with name badges to make introductions easier and name recognition quicker. If you need a new name badge, please sign the sheet next to the ushers in the narthex.



- **OUR COME-AND-GO CLASS**: Have you noticed the adult class is meeting in the fellowship hall on Sundays? I want to encourage interest from people who may only wish to sit in for a few minutes and be comfortable coming and going as needed. The fellowship hall offers more room to use the projector for videos and documentaries. Come grab a cup of coffee and sit in to see what’s happening!

## A SLICE OF LAST SUNDAY’S SERMON

“... When we were little and learning to swim, we couldn’t wait to be good enough to swim in the deep end.... Take the hand of Jesus today, and he will pull us from the kiddie pool and take us to the depths of love where only God and God’s character may dwell. Today, Jesus is right beside us and growing us a little every day....”

## SPECIAL WHEELS FOR A DEAR ST. STEPHEN FRIEND

By Sue Williams

It's been about a month since our annual Ministry of Reconciliation Sunday. I'm thankful that I worship in a church that welcomes absolutely all, and in particular our LGBTQ siblings in Christ, to be part of our community. I'm thankful that the ELCA voted 10 years ago to "allow" ordination of LGBTQ candidates who were in committed relationships.



It wasn't always so. In 1992, St. Stephen welcomed Robin Whitley as our vicar for a year. Shortly after she arrived, our daughter Rebecca was born and Vicar Robin was the first visitor we had at the hospital. She rejoiced with us as she held our hours-old baby. A couple months later, our 5-year-old, Thomas, struggled with the death of his beloved Grampy. Vicar Robin sat with him on the steps to the fellowship hall one evening and talked with him at length about life and death. Thomas healed some that night and we were grateful. In 1995, Robin was ordained (after a long wait for a congregation to take a chance on a recent graduate – and a woman!) at a church in North Carolina as many of us proudly looked on, knowing she would enrich the life of the church she served, much as she had enriched St. Stephen with her music, sermons, poetry and love. Two years later, needing to live an authentic life, Robin came out to her bishop as gay. She was removed from her call and the ELCA roster.

Robin now is a writer and artist living in North Carolina. She lives on disability income and budgets carefully for her condo payment, medical bills and other living expenses. When the choice came down to medicine or the upkeep of a vehicle, she reluctantly gave up her vehicle. Now, in an effort to restore mobility, she has worked with a cycle shop in Charlotte and found a motorized tricycle that will work for her (and her beloved companion dog, Birdie). I started a Go Fund Me campaign months ago to raise the \$3,000 needed, and we still need \$1,255. The trike has now been ordered on faith and will be delivered in about two weeks. I ask you, in the spirit of reconciliation, to consider a donation to our beloved Vicar Robin. [Here's the link.](#) (If reading the newsletter from your email, the active link is at the top of the email).

## THERE'S A YOUNG SPIRIT IN OUR CHURCH

Cheryl Stuart took this photo and sends along this inspiring text: "A couple who worshipped with us today (they were visiting family in town) marveled at the children in the children's sermon, and were blown away by having a young person read the lessons. Their home church in Indiana still uses the green book and doesn't have kids in it. You never know how people will be affected just by being around us as we worship and give glory to God..." Amen. Thanks, Cheryl. You too, Mr. Lector, Graham Reece, and Mr. Acolyte, Jonas Holdcraft.



## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Don't forget to bring your change this Sunday for the noisy offering.
- Help support Lutheran Social Services of North Florida by attending the Young Actors Theatre's production of "Matilda," at 7 p.m. March 29. See Marilyn Larson, Hilary Dennis or Barbara Ehlmann for tickets and more information. Or call the office at (850) 575-4309.



## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS:



Jennifer Ault - 02/22  
Kadeem Thomas - 02/24  
Lisa Medley - 02/25  
Jackie Mustian - 02/25  
Katharine Gossman - 02/26  
Judi Duffy - 02/27  
Rob Schiffer - 02/28  
Jan Harrison - 03/02  
Jennifer LaVia - 03/02  
Jim Christianson - 03/03  
Robin Oliveri - 03/05

## UPCOMING DATES

### This Sunday:

8:45 a.m. - Sunday Church School and Adult Study  
10 a.m. - Worship, Transfiguration of Our Lord Sunday  
11:30 a.m. - Potluck and Annual Talent Show

### Wednesday, Feb. 26:

6 p.m. - Church Vitality Prayer Group  
7 p.m. - Ash Wednesday Service

## SERVING THIS SUNDAY:

**Pastor Tom**, Presiding, Preaching; **Kirsten Ebbesen**, Assisting Minister; **Jennifer Dritt**, Cup Minister; **Terri Albrecht-Schmitt**, Welcoming; **Mark Warren**, Walkways; **Jan Harrison**, Greeter; **Aaron Halvorson**, Lector; **Beth Alexander & Andrea Notley**, Altar Guild; **Kirsten Ebbesen & Rob Schiffer**, Counters; **Pastor Tom**, Announcements



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, [ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com](mailto:ststephentallahassee@embarqmail.com).  
Website: <http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com/>*

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please [unsubscribe](#). To unsubscribe please reply with "UNSUBSCRIBE" as the subject line.