



# ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

## St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter



## THE PRE-LENTEN ENTERTAINERS

The people of St. Stephen laughed, danced and sang their way through another Mardi Gras Talent Show on Sunday – the first one since COVID erupted. The show featured 14 delightful acts. You and your church friends can argue late into the night over which ones were the best. FYI: Nearly all of our

brand-new members stuck around to enjoy the show, and two of them were even in it.



After the opening psalm, the congregation sang an ode to our comfy new chairs while Susan Warren wordlessly demonstrated those chairs' ability to lull us to sleep.

Next, Susan and Rudy Hehn – with Rudy sporting lederhosen for the first time in talent-show history – harmonized on “Edelweiss” and serenaded



each other on “Sixteen Going on Seventeen.” The second song had a bonus: After a slight wardrobe change, they returned with “Sixty Going on Seventy,” wrapping it up with a romantic kiss that brought sighs from the audience.

Jonas Holdcraft demonstrated his violin prowess on “City of Stars.” Afterward his grandmother, Judi Duffy, lip-synched Chuck Berry’s “Reelin’ & A-Rockin’” as she rock-and-rolled her way around the sanctuary.



The week before the show, when Mark Canning was rehearsing Sharon Simmons’ new lyrics for “My Way,” talent-show pianist Kirsten Ebbesen noticed that the extremely high notes in the refrain were a distinct challenge. Later, she took it upon herself to make Mark’s life easier: She transposed the music, so that the whole song was more comfortably in his range. That’s the kind of extra effort and ingenuity this annual show always inspires.



Alas, the extra effort went for nought: Mark had to bow out because of a family illness. What to do? When asked, Sharon agreed to step on-stage – not as a singer (she said in no uncertain terms), but as a dramatic reader accompanied by Kirsten. It was lovely.



Then came the first dance of the day: Rita Ford and Hector Quinones glided through a waltz to Beethoven's "Für Elise." After the dancing, Martin and Vicki



Guttenplan blended their voices nicely on a soothing song titled "All Good Things Come to You."

Martin certainly demonstrated his range – because next he, Karl Barton, Tom Buchanan (aka Rockin' Pastor Tom) and

Patrick Kennell starred in Karl's hilarious skit about ... well, let's just say it involved good and evil, lots of air guitar, some high-voltage "Stairway to Heaven," rampaging through the sanctuary and literally breathless dialogue.



Cassandra White followed the heavy-metal boys and displayed horror-movie acting skills while telling the haunting tale of "The Coming of the Frogs." And Pastor Tom showed once again what a good sport he is when the congregation teased him a bit for his slightly-longer-than-it-used-to-be hair.

spotlight in their dances and, yikes, fiercely went after the no-good Pastor Tom character with eyes blazing. They all remained in character so convincingly that it took a while for the rest of us to realize, "Oh, right, I guess one of us should untie Pastor Tom!" Coming to the rescue, of course, was his mom.

Fittingly, Pastor Tom had the last word in the show. He sang the final verse of "My Stephen Friends," which ends: "When the world seems dark and frightful, when we're feeling sad, we simply remember our St. Stephen friends, and then we don't feel so bad."

*Photos by Susan Warren – except for the cast photo taken by Amrit Bhagwandin*



## THE ZING TALENT SHOW, THIS SUNDAY



Dave Suhrweir's alter ego, The Amazing Zing, was under doctor's orders to sit out the talent show because of his COVID diagnosis. But Dave has the all-clear now. So this Sunday, immediately after the liturgy, we're all invited to stick around and watch his magical powers on display.





## NOW THEY'RE MEMBERS

Here they are, the newest members of St. Stephen, as of last Sunday. From left, lined up in front of Pastor Tom: Lynn Gunderson, James Gunderson, Colton Allen, Tami Allen, Fred Allen, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn and Greta Scavone. *(Photo by Colin Hackley. Not pictured here: Lila Allen.)*

## 'ONE MEAL AT A TIME'

The theme of Jim Christianson's Ministry Minute last Sunday was "Changing lives, one meal at a time." He and Janet Barber are off-and-on volunteers for Meals on Wheels, and he'd been invited to enlighten all of us on how that ministry changes lives in ways that go far beyond a simple meal.

"So what happens on a day when we volunteer?" Jim said. "The food comes out around 10 a.m. – both hot and cold food. We sign in, and get our route assignment with names and addresses and directions. We pack the meals in insulated bags and coolers, making sure the number of meals and the number of names agree. And we take off for deliveries by 10:30. We are usually done by 11:45 a.m. – basically a two-hour commitment."

Elder Care Services' Meals on Wheels program has been serving seniors since 1972, he said, and delivers over 100,000 meals a year in Tallahassee – at no cost to the recipient. But again, he said, it's not just about the meal.

"The Meals on Wheels volunteer who shows up with a meal and a smile may be the only person that senior sees or speaks with all day," Jim said. "Most live alone. So a friendly visit is a reason to get up, something to look forward to.

"Besides the meal and friendly visit, it is a safety check on the person. I see this as a life-giving, dignity-giving, independence-giving essential care to some of the most vulnerable people in our society."

Meals on Wheels always needs volunteers, Jim said. Just visit <https://eldercarebigbend.org>. Or call 850-921-5554.



## NOISY OFFERING THIS SUNDAY!



The organization receiving the proceeds from this month's Noisy Offering is, of course, the one you just read about: Meals on Wheels. Grab a handful of change before church. Write a big check. Whichever way you choose, get ready for the Noisy Offering before you drive to church Sunday. Or go online and donate at the website above.

## ONWARD THROUGH THE FOG: EXCERPT FROM PASTOR TOM'S SERMON

... How many think that living in the world today is like living in a fog or cloud? I feel like that sometimes. I feel uncertain about what is around the corner. There's insecurity ... our military is shooting all sorts of things out of the airspace. There are cataclysmic earthquakes and extreme weather events. Our society is trying to find its way through social problems, current and past discriminations, political problems as both parties venture further into extremes.

It is enough to feel like our world is barreling down a highway at breakneck speed and can't see past the hood of the car because of the fog.

There's an interesting truth about human nature and driving in conditions where you can't see very far. Studies show that people tend to speed up when visual conditions decline.... If we merely act on that instinct, we will go faster in fog and storm because our brains are telling us we need to ... get out of it quickly, so our vision can improve again. It is one of the times when we must NOT act on our instinct and instead slow down to stay in the fog longer, the storm longer, because it means a better chance of avoiding an accident....

## COMING UP

- March 4: Healthy Congregations session at Grace.
- March 11: Spring forward. (Daylight time begins.)
- April 9: Easter!
- April 21: Camping trip!



## MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES



- Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you'd like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service. Sign up on the flower chart in the narthex. The cost is \$35, which you can place in the offering plate.
- Have any questions for our Church Council members? They're listed on our website, <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/about-us>.
- 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

Lisa Medley - 02/25

Jackie Mustian - 02/25

Judi Duffy - 02/27

Jerry Rumph - 02/28

Rob Schiffer - 02/28

Jan Harrison - 03/02

Jim Christianson - 03/03

Robin Oliveri - 03/05

Lila Allen - 03/08

Linda Fevrier - 03/09

Victor Muchuruza - 03/13

Chris Gossman - 03/19

Stephanie Leitch - 03/27



## IN THE WEEK AHEAD

**Sunday, Feb. 26:**

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

**10 a.m.** - Worship with communion, First Sunday in Lent



**Wednesday, March 01:**

**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

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