



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

DON DOWD, 1945-2024

Donald Alvin Dowd, an active member who for decades was almost like an assistant pastor for St. Stephen, died Feb. 18 after a long struggle with Alzheimer’s disease and vascular dementia. Don joined St. Stephen in 1974, and his heyday of church involvement lasted through roughly the early 2000s. He was Church Council president twice and was our in-house worship expert. Whenever a question arose about the liturgy, church music, the colors and traditions associated with the church calendar, even light bulbs and ladders, Don was our go-to guy.

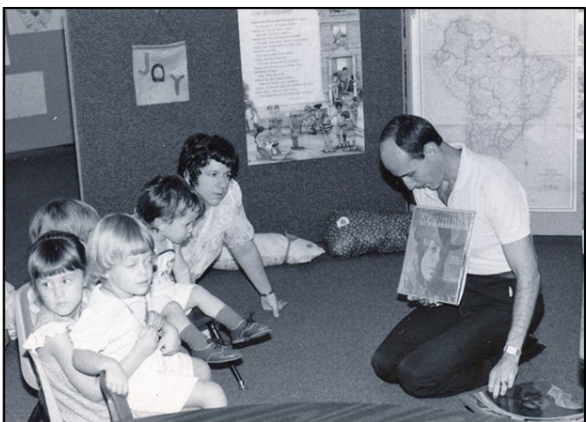


He was also known as the taller, calmer half of “Don and Nathan” – a reference to Nathan Basford, Don’s partner of 44 years and, in recent years, his faithful caregiver.

Here is what the July 2001 newsletter wrote about Don after he was declared a St. Stephen Servant of God: “Don Dowd has always symbolized a quiet, dedicated service that has little use for the kind of recognition he got at the June congregational meeting. Particularly in recent years [after Pastor Emory Hingst’s retirement], Don has been so instrumental.... His leadership of the organ campaign, his service on the Call Committee AND the Council of Stewards, his role in Sunday worship during our transition – those are just a few examples.”

Highlights from Don’s obituary

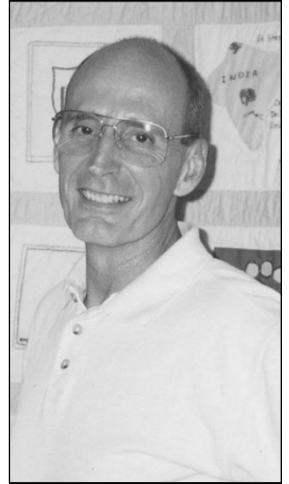
- His early years were spent mostly in Miami Springs. In 1957, Don’s family relocated to Midland, Texas, where Don remained until his graduation from Robert E. Lee High School in 1963. He loved casually mentioning that one of his classmates was the future Laura Bush, first lady of the United States.
- Don initially enrolled at Texas Lutheran College, but soon transferred to the University of Miami. He graduated with a B.S. in psychology in 1967.
- As part of the Peace Corps, Don was posted for two years in Brazil, where he lived in a monastery. He enjoyed teaching children English and working with the monastery to maximize cost efficiency in ordering their food supplies. (In this photo, he appears to be visiting a Sunday School class in the fellowship hall, telling of his Peace Corps days.)
- From 1969 till retirement in 2002, Don served in the Florida Department of Labor – first in Jacksonville and later in Tallahassee.
- An avid traveler, Don once journeyed from the Panama Canal to Austin, Texas, via Mexico. Among his other trips were a motor-home adventure to Alaska, and a visit to New Zealand and Hawaii.
- Don’s mother once said to Nathan, “You know, Don has always marched to a different drummer.” Nathan replied, “Yes, he has, and it’s been great watching him march.”



A memorial service is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, March 9, at St. Stephen. Please log in to see who's bringing which items for the reception afterward: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C45A4A62EA7FBC16-30049093-items>. (Questions? Contact Care & Hospitality Coordinator Lawana Lamb-Daniels: lawana.washington1961@gmail.com.) Flowers are welcomed. However, if you prefer, you may send a contribution in Don's memory to the Alzheimer's Project of Tallahassee at alzheimersproject.org or to Covenant Care Hospice (<https://www.choosecovenant.org/> or Covenant Care, 4540 Lafayette St., Ste G, Marianna, FL 32446). Both organizations were near and dear to Don's heart.

The Altar Guild remembers Don

- "He was always willing to help with banners, paraments and making sure we had the correct service for the seasons of the year. Don was very helpful when we had interim pastors, which was quite often after Pastor Emory retired. He told me he had considered becoming a minister at one time." (*Martha Marky*)
- "We both attended TLC (Texas Lutheran College, now University). It was such a treat to find each other so far from 'home' and sooo fun to reminisce. Don provided a number of things for the Altar Guild, like a large tabletop wine-bottle opener (easier to use than the 'hand-helds' we all have); the two large trays we use for candles, etc. at Christmas; and a fan for the sacristy. He was always looking to see how he could help. He was a ready right-hand for me with my projects. I miss him!" (*Billie Reardon*)

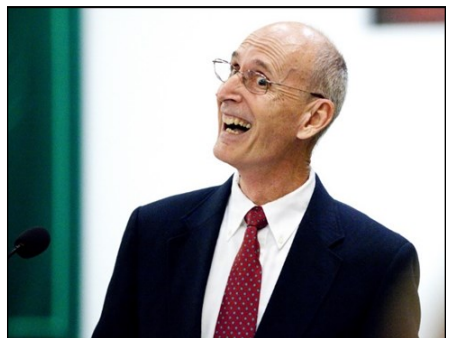


Sampling of Facebook notes to Nathan from St. Stephen people

- "Don will be a FANTASTIC angel! He always was when he was with us!" (*Bob Eshleman*)
- "We mourn with you, Nathan. I am grateful to have known Don and seen his devotion to God and the St. Stephen family. Thank you for the kind and steadfast care you gave to him in his final years." (*Colin Hackley*)
- "Nathan, may you feel wrapped up in and comforted by those 43 years of love and all the love and prayers that are being sent your way now. Peace, my friend." (*Barb O'Donnell*)
- "His life, and love for the church, and all things good are amplified in his life. As his disease progressed, you stepped right in without a question and took over his care. I am praying for you tonight, Nathan. For I know you have done a beautiful job, taking care of this man for years. Rest some now, sweet man." (*Susan Warren*)
- "Nathan, so sorry to hear the news, but glad that Don is now free of any discomfort and difficulty. You have been such a presence of goodness and strength in his life for so many years. You have truly been a blessing." (*Jim Sampson*)
- "Nathan, I was blessed to know him and I am blessed to know you. Cherish your memories and smile when you think of him." (*Audrey Post*)

The silly side

Don performed in several St. Stephen talent shows. Here he's pictured in a skit in which he portrayed then-Gov. Rick Scott. Also, he was so well-known for spending hours and hours behind the scenes at church that, for the 2003 talent show, we sang a song encouraging Don to more or less retire from his church duties. Some of the lyrics (to the tune of "Dawn, Go Away"):



*Don, go away –
we're no good for you.
Oh, oh, Don, we ask more
than we should from you.
Leave us. Don, believe us.
Think how much fun life could be
if you weren't here until 3.
Just think what your future could be without this ministry! Y-y!
Don, go away! Please go away!
We'll fall apart, but it's better that way-ay-ay. Oo-oo-oo....*

Rest in peace, Brother Don.

TIME FOR SOME FUN

The irrepressible Rita Ford is the chief organizer of this Friday's Fun Night at St. Stephen. She says there'll be pizza, games, crafts and general good times for people of every age, between 6 and 8 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Sound good? See you there.



SCENES FROM A TEA PARTY

Caroline Collins brought her camera to the recent tea party organized by the Outreach Committee. She captured a couple of whimsical teapots, as well as two creative women who help set up so many congregational events.

Upper left you see Margaret Bowers, showing off her spanakopita. Next to her is a photo of Carol Santos with her cat-and-cow-jumping-over-the-moon teapot. Below that is a picture of a butterfly teapot that Carol's late husband bought for her collection. For Carol, it's a favorite memento of his romantic thoughtfulness.

Overall, Caroline said she appreciated the tea party's "lacy and whimsical English décor."



PASTOR TOM'S WELCOME NOTES FROM FEB. 18

During Lent we are beckoned a bit closer to "oneness." In the purple colors and liturgical changes we sense a companion with us. A partner who's not afraid of the human experience. As the 13th-century poet Jaluddin Rumi writes: "There's a longing for mystical union with the Beloved, the divine lover from whom one has been separated." This Lenten journey, therefore, isn't a question of "What should I do?" or "What is expected of me?" It is rather "What do I love?" "What arises most naturally in my heart?" Today might we begin or renew that journey? Embracing the mystery of losing ourselves, and finally become what we love ... the divine mystery of Christ.

IRC Volunteer Opportunities

By Sharon Simmons



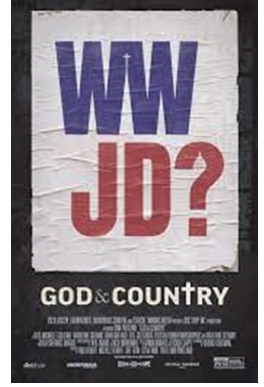
- The International Rescue Committee is looking for volunteers to help with cultural orientations once or twice a month, on Wednesday mornings, to help set up the room and keep clients' children busy. Contact Haley at 407-543-4407.
- Additionally, volunteers are needed to support the financial coach with taking IRC clients to the bank, helping them set up bank accounts so they can work on financial literacy and self-sufficiency. Contact Nick at 407-543-4407. So many opportunities to serve our community neighbors.

WANT TO WATCH THIS MOVIE WITH US?

“God & Country,” a documentary produced by Rob Reiner, spotlights the dangers of Christian nationalism. The Tallahassee Film Society is screening it soon, and a group from St. Stephen plans to attend the showing at 5 p.m. Saturday, March 16, at All Saints Cinema, 918½ Railroad Ave. If you’d rather not drive by yourself, carpooling will be available. We’ll meet at the church at 4:30 p.m., Pastor Tom said. Please use the links below to view the trailer and buy tickets ahead of time:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30kUQ7Sav30>

<https://www.tallahasseefilms.com/film/>



BEFORE YOU GO...

- Easter is mighty early this year: March 31!
- Meanwhile, daylight saving time kicks in at 2 a.m. March 10. That’s one week from this Sunday.
- Calling all campers: Mark Greeley reminded everyone Sunday that the annual St. Stephen camping trip is coming up. The dates are Friday, April 19, through Sunday, April 21, at the St. George Island campground. See Mark for details.



- Along with spring flowers come spring weeds, and our weeds demand attention. So Building & Grounds Coordinator Sandy Lamb-Daniels is inviting us to a weed-removal session at church. Write it on your calendar: 9 a.m. Saturday, March 16. She’ll provide Gatorade, water, *maybe* even doughnuts. She invites us to show up at 9 with hats, gloves, bug spray (just in case) and any weed-removal tools we might have. Pray for good weeding weather.



- You saw a note above from Martha Marky. These days, Martha worships mostly from home. How’s she doing? “I am doing as well as I can for an ‘old lady,’” she said by email. “I am only able to do some things for Altar Guild like taking care of the communion linens – washing and ironing them. Beth [Alexander] has been doing a great job, but having more people would be helpful.” Hint, hint. God bless you, Martha.
- 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

Jan Harrison - 03/02

Jim Christianson - 03/03

Will Allen - 03/08

Victor Muchuruza - 03/13

Chris Gossman - 03/19

Stephanie Leitch - 03/27



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. - Friday Fun Night in the FH

This Saturday:

10 a.m. - Sew for Hope meets in FH

This Sunday:

9:00 a.m. - Book study

9:30 a.m. - Choir practice

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

4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH



Monday, March 4:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Wednesday, March 6:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

7 p.m. - Choir practice



If you have news or photos to share,
please send them to Lori at
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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