



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

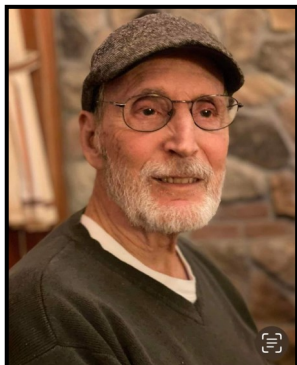
DAYLIGHT TIME: HERE WE GO AGAIN

Your No. 1 job Saturday night is to keep an eye on the clock. Magically, some-time after you climb into your jammies but before the sun rises, time will leap forward by one hour. But if you forget to set your clock accordingly, you'll think it's 9 a.m. Sunday when the rest of us God-fearing Lutherans know it's really 10. It's possible that God takes attendance. And if so, you don't want to have such a lame excuse for missing church, do you? Heavens no. Be a clock-watcher.



CELEBRATING DON'S LIFE

The service celebrating the life of our brother Don Dowd – and supporting our brother Nathan Basford – is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday at St. Stephen, followed by a reception in the fellowship hall. A ton of people have signed up to bring food and drink. In fact, as of early this morning, only one slot remained unfilled: vegan dishes. If you want to sign up, visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C45A4A62EA7FBC16-30049093-items>.



Questions? Contact Care & Hospitality Coordinator Lawana Lamb-Daniels: lawana.washington1961@gmail.com.

GREETINGS, ST. STEPHEN CAMPERS

By Mark Greeley

The annual church camping trip is scheduled for the weekend of April 19-21 at St. George Island State Park. This is a great event every year. It never ever rains, and the mosquitoes only come by to gently fan you with their wings for a pleasant breeze. If you're interested in this event, here are the details.

- We have enough sites for everyone. We got the reservations 11 months ago.
- The leaders handle the food. We don't eat fancy, but it's warm and filling and we cook it for you.
- Whether you want to stay 2 nights, 1 night or 0 nights, you're welcome to come on out and spend time with the group. There are friendly faces around all the time from Friday morning to Sunday afternoon.
- If you need camping equipment, talk to Colin Hackley or me.



In all seriousness, it's a fun weekend at a beautiful spot with time to walk, talk, beach, and have campfires, sunsets and Saturday-evening worship. Questions? Ask Colin (colin@colinhackley.com) or me (markhoffmangreeley@gmail.com). (Photo by Colin)

KEEPING YOU POSTED ON DOLLARS AND CENTS

By Pastor Tom



During announcements Sunday, I informed the congregation that our latest financials are in: During February, St. Stephen received \$16,182 in regular giving but incurred \$21,694 worth of expenses. So we finished the month with a deficit of \$5,513, and our year-to-date deficit is \$8,737.

We're still meeting our financial responsibilities, but it's becoming difficult to pay some of our bills on time – because we rely on income from weekly offerings. Even small differences in giving make significant impacts. Since conversations about this shortfall have taken place on the Church Council, two separate households have let me know they plan to increase their weekly/monthly tithe. Colleen and I are increasing our weekly pledge. I know this is not something everyone can do, but if you're able, I encourage you to pray for an increase in your gift. Or maybe you've been preoccupied – and forgotten all about that pledge you made. Whatever the case, thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration!

PASTOR TOM'S WELCOME NOTES FROM SUNDAY

We encounter a different side of Jesus today. Following the rules of the Jewish tradition, he goes up to the temple and – instead of a house of prayer, a house to distribute aid to people suffering – he found a marketplace. This was not the youth selling T-shirts or a bake-sale fundraiser for missionaries, but a thriving market forcing people to buy sacrifices – there were animals for all income levels. And then, on top of that, people had to buy temple money.



I shake my head when a well-meaning person tells me that a church is a business. It is not. A church may be “like” a business, meaning enough financial gifts are needed to keep the lights on, water running, pastor and staff paid. But businesses aren't in business to give everything away. We must remember that – so we do not become a marketplace.



MEET BALTHAZAR

St. Stephen puppeteer Blake Simmons' latest puppet, Balthazar, is on display at the 37th annual Mahaska Whitley Student Exhibition at LeMoyne Arts through March 30. The exhibition is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at LeMoyne, 125 N. Gadsden St.

Blake, who's in her senior year at Lincoln High, designed and created Balthazar during Christmas break. In addition, just to keep busy, she's been designing and constructing a 17th-century reproduction of a French dress for the upcoming statewide French competition in Orlando.

You may recall that Blake – Sharon Simmons' granddaughter – also created the show-stopping angel for St. Stephen's latest Christmas program.

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.



'THAT LOVE WOULD LOOK LIKE YOU'

Greta Scavone passed along the poem below, with this explanation: "In reaching my one-year mark as a member of St. Stephen Lutheran Church, this poem is a tribute of thanks and gratitude for a most gracious welcome, acceptance and loving-kindness from an awesome congregation that sure looks like the shape of 'God's love' and sure feels like 'home.'"



IF THOUGHTS HAD SHAPES

By James Dillet Freeman

If thoughts had shapes like things,
I wonder what they'd be -
Would wonder not be wings
And reverie a sea?

If hope looked like a seed,
Would lilies grow for grace,
Would worry be a weed,
Despair a barren space?

Would thoughts of truth not find
A rainbow's radiant form,
And would not peace of mind
Be sunlight after storm?

And love, what shape would show
Love, patient, warm, and true?
All you I love I know
That love would look like you!

THE MONKS ARE HERE

By Caroline Collins

Tibetan Buddhist monks are visiting Tallahassee on their Sacred Arts Tour this week. They've been constructing a sand mandala and offering several workshops at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2810 N. Meridian Road.



The only workshop still available is the one on Friday: "Noble Truths of Peace and Harmony," 1:30-3 p.m., in the Unitarian Universalist sanctuary, \$25/per person. To reserve a spot, call (850) 445-5275. A Tibetan market of handcrafted and fair-trade goods for sale will be on site daily 10:45 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

I plan to stop by the closing ceremony, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Saturday, before the memorial service for Don (which begins at 11 a.m.). I thought other St. Stephenites might want to do likewise, since Unitarian Universalist is just up the road a bit and this is a rare opportunity.

PLEASE TAKE PART BY MARCH 15

By Cheryl Stuart



At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the body directed the Church-wide Council to form the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). The CRLC was charged with reconsidering the statements of purpose for each of the three expressions of the ELCA (churchwide, synod and congregation) and the principles of its organizational structure, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism. The CRLC is to bring recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. I was appointed as one of 35 people on the commission. As part of this work, the CRLC is seeking input via an online survey. It is important that the commission hear from a wide range of people, especially laypersons. Please go to www.elca.org/CRLC to find the survey. The deadline is March 15. Your voice matters; please don't hesitate to share your thoughts. Thank you in advance for your participation.

E-SPIRIT WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

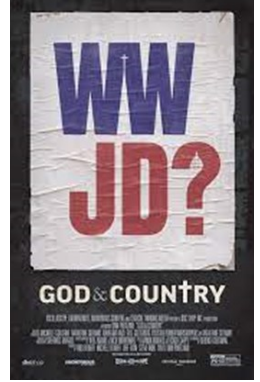
Cheryl also reminds us that the Florida-Bahamas Synod weekly newsletter, E-Spirit, has a ton of stuff in it. To subscribe, follow this link:
E-Spirit Weekly Newsletter | Florida-Bahamas Synod (fbsynod.com)

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/god-country-516/>



AH, THE COMPLEXITIES OF SHARING THE PEACE

By Ron Hartung



In the beginning was the handshake. When scary COVID arrived, in an abundance of caution, we jettisoned handshakes and adopted fist bumps. These days, St. Stephen appears to have both a

handshake faction and a fist-bump faction.

So here’s what happens regularly: I extend my fist as my counterpart extends an open hand. If things move quickly, her open hand swallows my fist. If things move more slowly, I shift gears and



convert my fist into an open hand. At the same time, she does the opposite. Awkwardness ensues. We pause, we laugh, and we move on. I’m thinking of just flashing a peace sign. Or maybe waving.



BEFORE YOU GO...

- One week from Saturday morning is our outdoor workday at church. Building & Grounds Coordinator Sandy Lamb-Daniels hopes a bunch of us can pull weeds starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, March 16. She’ll provide Gatorade, water, *maybe* even doughnuts. She invites us to show up with hats, gloves, bug spray (just in case) and any weed-removal tools we might have.



- Violet Greeley and Bastian and Armand Stover (left) were among those who enjoyed St. Stephen’s Fun Night last Friday. Many thanks to Rita Ford and her fun-loving fellow organizers.
- If you missed the Mardi Gras Talent Show – or if you were there, couldn’t believe your eyes and want to see it again – please send Lori an email request. She’ll send you a link to Pastor Tom’s YouTube page. Please note: It’s not for public access.
- 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

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

This Saturday:

11 a.m. - Celebration of Life service for Don Dowd

This Sunday:

9:00 a.m. - Book study
9:30 a.m. - Choir practice
10 a.m. - Worship, Fourth Sunday in Lent
4 p.m. - Congolese Christian worship in FH

Monday, March 11:

5 p.m. - TIMA meets in FH

Tuesday, March 12:

11:30 a.m. - OWLs Gathering at Little Italy

Wednesday, March 13:

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>.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, ELCA
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The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor