

March 16, 2023



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

OUR ELEGANT NEW PIANO

There's a new look and a new sound in our sanctuary: St. Stephen has its first grand piano. Not a baby grand, either. It made its worship debut Sunday, March 5, as Music Director Katharine Gossman put it through its paces.

"Even though it already sounds terrific to most ears, it still needs to be tuned and 'voiced,'" Pastor Tom said. "At that point, Katharine says, we will hear its full potential." And don't be surprised if it travels around our worship space. Pastor says we'll be trying it in a couple of locations in the next few weeks to determine the ideal spot.

As reported at our January congregational meeting, we had been on the lookout for a refurbished baby grand from local expert Ann Garee – and the congregation approved spending as much as \$25,000. Then Karl Barton, our in-house music professor, became aware of a Yamaha grand piano in Thomasville. It wasn't one that Ann Garee had refurbished, but she was caring for it and recommended it. Her expert opinion was to value it between \$12,000 and \$15,000.



"The catch," Pastor Tom explained, "was that the space where the piano resided was being sold immediately, and the city of Thomasville had an offer on the table for the piano. While waiting for the city, Katharine and Karl went to inspect the piano. After about an hour of crawling under and looking inside, our musical experts determined the Yamaha to be the right instrument for our worship space and unique musicality. I reached out to Treasurer Jen Dritt to prepare a check in case the city of Thomasville's deal fell through. When the city couldn't meet the deadline, Karl made an offer of \$11,000, and it was accepted immediately."

Including the moving, tuning and "voicing," and the price of a piano dolly (to permanently support the instrument and allow it to be safely moved for special events), our total costs should be around \$13,000 – far less than the previous estimates.

So far, we've raised \$5,920. Nearly halfway there. If you've already contributed, many thanks. If not, to the extent that you're able, please help us cover the cost of this tremendous boost to our music ministry. *(Photo by Lori Zengel)*

GRAB YOUR HYMNAL



Here's another news flash from your worship world: We've gone back to using our hymnals, rather than printing all the hymns in the bulletin. "We made the decision to put down the hymnals during COVID, when we thought that surface spreading might be dangerous," said Pastor Tom, who recently proposed rediscovering our hymnals.

WEEKLY COMMUNION

One more worship note: Weekly Holy Communion also was a casualty of the pandemic, but now it's back. Thank you to our Altar Guild members, for whom this change means extra work. It's also extra work for our assisting ministers. Speaking of them...



WHY I VOLUNTEER AS WORSHIP ASSISTANT AND MORE

By Rob Schiffer

We can always use more people to pitch in at church. Rob has a long history of doing just that. We asked him to write about why he serves.

You often see me serving as worship assistant, once every month or so. You might wonder, "How does he get to do this?" Some might think, "Is he a wanna-be minister?" Or "Is he incredibly pious?" The answer to the last two questions is "Not at all!" As to the first question, I get to do this because I volunteered to serve many years ago.

Over my 40 years at St. Stephen, I've served as usher, youth group co-leader, Church Council member, lector, nursery attendant, cup minister, crucifer, acolyte, counter and, if I'm not mistaken, sub or assistant in Sunday School and confirmation classes. Perhaps my lack of piety has played a role in my volunteer service. Some of my non-church friends are likely surprised to learn that I do these things. I see it as a way of giving back to God and our congregation for all they've done for me. Maybe I can make up for some of the not-so-good things that I've done over the years....



I was particularly drawn to worship assistant and lector because I have experience presenting to audiences in my job as an urban planning consultant and my service as adjunct faculty at FSU. Soon after college, I volunteered as a jazz DJ at the FAMU radio station, which was great training in projecting my voice and combating monotone delivery. I felt that my background could be helpful to the congregation – but it's certainly not a prerequisite to serving in these roles.

If you're a bit more bashful about public speaking, you could volunteer as cup minister, where all you have to say is "The blood of Christ shed for you," sans microphone. And don't be worried about making mistakes. We all make them, whether it's bobbling a name, running late, doing things out of order or forgetting to do something.

Emails go out in advance of each season to check on availability to serve. It's understood that all of us travel from time to time, and this gives us a chance to scratch out dates for service. If schedules change, it's easy to switch Sundays with someone else. Occasionally we might get our schedules mixed up, but someone is always ready to pitch in.

Finally, "Do I have to wear a robe?" The answer now is "no." We kind of strayed from the use of robes during the pandemic. I'll defer to worship coordinator Beth Alexander on attire for special services.

So, please, think about how you might serve at St. Stephen, and feel free to ask me any questions I've failed to address. Thanks!



On the Sunday after the talent show, COVID-free Dave Suhrweir performed his one-of-a-kind magic routine for a grateful audience. Assisting him were Ceilia and Violet Greeley and their dad. (Photo by Colin Hackley)

‘IF THAT’S RELIGION...’

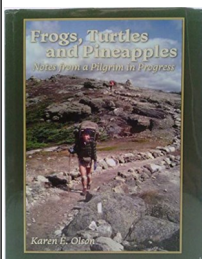
By Karen E. Olson (Excerpt from the March 25, 1990, edition of the Tallahassee Democrat)

Even now, as he prays for a miracle of healing, [Jim] Hardison prefers to talk about the mission that he knows will outlive him. It is in serving the needy, he said, that he has had the privilege of meeting Christ.

He dreams of the day the government shifts its spending from military security to economic security for the individual. He dreams of the day when everybody can earn decent wages, pay for housing and feed the children who are filling their bellies with dirt.

His favorite authors are those who link inner growth with external action – such as Mother Teresa, Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton. It’s clear to his friends that Hardison has taken the message to heart.

“When it comes to matters of the spirit, I’ve always been what you’d call maybe a hard sell,” confessed [Chris Gosen, who works with Hardison’s wife]. “But the spirit of Jim and Mary and their whole family has been something that has touched me and changed me. And if that’s religion, amen.”



You’ll find this and more of Karen’s stories in the book “Frogs, Turtles and Pineapples: Notes From a Pilgrim in Progress,” available at church or from Karen.



Here’s further photographic proof that Lutheran Social Services of North Florida recently received a check for \$27,700 from 100+ Women Who Care. If you look closely, you’ll see Barbara and Bryon Ehlmann on the left, and Caroline Collins just to the right of the jumbo check. (The two people on the right, in the back, are Ruth’s sister Priscilla Heidorn and her husband, Mark, members of Grace.)

OPEN YOUR HOME TO THE WORLD

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator



International exchange students are coming to our area this summer to participate in the EF/Educational Homestay Program. The program is a nonprofit division of EF that brings students from around the world to America to improve and enhance their English-language skills and to experience and learn about our American way of life.

This summer, a group of students from France will be in the Tallahassee area July 12-31. Their ages are 14-17. EF is looking for host families to open their homes and hearts to these students during their visit. Volunteer host families provide a bed for their student (in their own room or a shared room with someone of the same gender who's within three years of the student's age), meals and transportation to and from a nearby designated meeting place. The students will be in scheduled classes and activities from 8-5 weekdays. They'll spend the rest of their time with the host families.

Host-family teens can earn up to 45 hours of community service by hosting in this short-term summer program. Exchange students are fully insured and bring their own spending money. If you'd like more information, contact Doug Nordby, site director of the program, at 850-528-5685 or Nordbyd@Comcast.net.

COMING UP

- April 2: Palm Sunday
- April 6: Maundy Thursday, 7 p.m.
- April 7: Good Friday, 7 p.m.
- April 9: Easter! Easter egg hunt!
- April 21: Camping trip!



MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- Cassandra White sent out a request for Manna on Meridian volunteers – to pack produce at 1 p.m. Friday, and to help Saturday with setup at 7 a.m. and distribution at 8 a.m. Check with her for details. Also, she passed along praise from the Manna organizer at the Unitarian Church for volunteers from last weekend, including our own Caroline Collins and Billie Reardon.
- Susan Warren wrote: “Colin had requested stand-in ushers for [last Sunday]. Guess he couldn't be present. I nearly laughed myself crazy when I walked in the narthex and saw these two dressed alike.” Gentlemen, you've never looked better. Susan, thanks for this photo of the Kennell-Eshleman twins.
- Thank you for the cards and kind words you've sent to Jake, Ruth and me upon the death of my eldest sister, Suzy Hartung. She would've fit right in at St. Stephen. One of Suzy's friends called her “simply one of the nicest, kindest and most supportive people I have ever known.” Rest in peace, sweet sister.
- 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 or call 850-385-2728.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Chris Gossman - 03/19
Stephanie Leitch - 03/27
Davis Holdcraft - 04/01
Gordon Fleischer - 04/02
Colin Hackley - 04/02
Vicki Gутtenplan - 04/07
Beth Alexander - 04/11
Erik Robinson - 04/14
Elizabeth Halvorson - 04/15

IN THE WEEK AHEAD

Sunday, March 19:

9 a.m. - Book study
9:30 a.m. - Choir practice
10 a.m. - Worship, Fourth Sunday in Lent
11:30 a.m. - Council meeting

Wednesday, March 22:

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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