



ST. STEPHEN THIS WEEK

St. Stephen Lutheran Church Newsletter

LEMON BLOSSOM SPECIAL

Looks sort of like a big, bold lily, doesn't it? Actually it's just a little blossom on a church member's Meyer lemon tree, less than an inch across. Big or small, the flowers in God's great garden are exploding all around town. Warning: If you stop to smell this one, beware of the fierce thorns. Alas, God made them, too.



MORE CHANCES TO FILL A NEED

By Sharon Simmons, outreach coordinator

The generous hearts and hands of St. Stephen continue to support the initiatives of the Outreach Committee. The Capital City Youth Services-Going Places container for supplies is in the fellowship hall. CCYS-Going Places continues to need backpack-size snacks, juice boxes, individual bottles of water, socks,



new underwear (male/female), shorts, T-shirts, laundry detergent, and toiletries (shampoo, deodorant, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes) in all sizes. The organization also needs a bicycle for a homeless youth (6-foot-1, 380 pounds) to get back and forth to work. If you can contribute, write a check to the church with "Bicycle" on the memo line. CCYS-Going Places also keeps used

bicycles at its facility to help other clients needing help getting to work. Here's a new CCYS initiative: helping homeless youth move into stable apartments. If you're a property owner with an empty apartment, Justin Barfield would like to talk to you about this new program. Reach him at 850-251-0174 or justin.barfield@ccys.org.

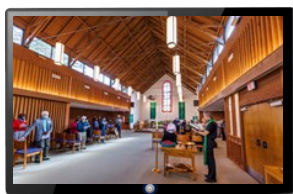
The International Rescue Committee continues to welcome new residents to Tallahassee from around the world. They need housewares, linens, blankets, furniture (beds, tables, chairs, couches), children's clothing, baby clothing and supplies (diapers, changing tables), children's board games and children's books (any age). You can bring small items to the fellowship hall with my name on them and I'll deliver them. If you'd like to deliver smaller items yourself, contact IRC representative Karen Duncan at Kduncan.irc@gmail.com and she'll set up an appointment. Contact her at the same email to set up pickup/delivery of furniture.

Meanwhile, at the Manna on Meridian food pantry, April is St. Stephen's month. Distribution will be Saturday, April 16. Bagging food will take place from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Sunday, April 10, at Faith Presbyterian. We need volunteers. If you can represent St. Stephen on either day, contact Mike Martinez at hondafitmartinez@gmail.com. Be sure to wear your mask.



WORSHIPPING ONLINE

For two years now, starting when COVID kept us confined to our homes, St. Stephen has been providing virtual worship. In recent months, as the CDC has lifted many of its restrictions, more of our members and friends are gradually returning to in-person worship. So you might be wondering how many people these days are viewing our liturgy via Facebook Live.



You won't be surprised to learn that Pastor Tom has been tracking the numbers.

"About 15 people watch the service live," he said this week. "Most log off after the sermon. By noon, the numbers are up to about 35" – meaning that some people watch the recorded liturgy later on – "and by Monday the count is around 50. We have no way of knowing how long these viewers stay watching."

Don't worry, online fans: Pastor Tom and the Worship Committee agree that we're getting enough watchers to continue this important ministry.

LUTHERANS WHO LUNCH

The OWLs' next luncheon is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 12, at Café De Martin, at the far end of the Esposito's plaza (2743 Capital Circle NE, Suite 100). FYI: The owner/chef is a former student of Patrick Kennell's, so he's gotta be good. Several of us have eaten there, and we loved it. Parking right in front of the restaurant is nearly impossible, so plan on parking down by Esposito's.



Remember: "OWLs" may stand for "Older, Wiser Lutherans," but these lunches are open even to people who are neither old nor wise. It's just an opportunity to get together outside of church and have fun on the second Tuesday of every month. Let Margaret Bowers know if you're coming, so the restaurant can have our tables ready. Her contact info is ambowersfl@gmail.com and 407-921-8671.

SPEAKING OF FOOD...

Lutheran Social Services of North Florida is having a share-night fundraiser at Sonny's BBQ, 1460 Timberlane Road, on Wednesday, April 27. You know, it's one of those deals where you show up, order food, tell them you support a particular group – and, bingo, that group gets 20 percent of the sales from its supporters.



You might be thinking that, since this is nearly a month away, you can snooze. Not so! For LSSNF to qualify for this bonus, the first step is for AT LEAST 20 people to promise they'll get food from *this* Sonny's on *this* day. Visit [Commit to Eat at Lutheran Social Services of North Florida, Inc.'s GroupRaise Meal @ Sonny's BBQ](#) and click on "Commit to Eat." Whew. Next, the LSSNF people want you to tell everyone you know. Then, of course, you need to swing by the Timberlane Sonny's between 11 a.m. and 9 p.m. on April 27. You can eat there or take it out, doesn't matter. But what DOES matter is that you have to mention your support of LSSNF. Questions? Call or text Dottie Hinkle, executive director, at 850-241-6434.

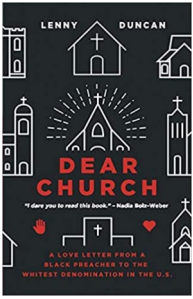
REST IN PEACE, BOBBI

Bobbi Schiffer passed away March 28 at HCA Florida Capital Hospital due to complications from cardiac arrest suffered one week earlier. She was 66 years old. Bobbi joined St. Stephen in 1983, along with her then-husband, Rob Schiffer. Their children, Collin and Natalie, and grandson Jayden were all baptized at St. Stephen. Bobbi was in charge of the St. Stephen nursery and fellowship coordination for many years. Bobbi also served as a Youth Group leader for several years, along with Rob and other St. Stephen couples during the 1980s. She led an expansion and renovation of the St. Stephen nursery in the 1990s. Plans will be made at a future date for a memorial service at the church.

RIGHT AFTER EASTER, A BOOK-STUDY OPPORTUNITY

By Pastor Tom

We're beginning a Sunday-morning book study April 24. Our first book will be



“Dear Church,” by Lenny Duncan, an ELCA pastor of Jehu’s Table in Brooklyn. As the book publicity states: “Lenny is an unlikely pastor. Formerly incarcerated, formerly homeless, and formerly unchurched, he is now a black preacher in the whitest denomination in the United States: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” And we need to listen to his wisdom. We’ll meet from 9 to 9:30 a.m. Sunday, April 24, to discuss a chapter from the book. Let me know if you’re interested in joining us and I’ll order a book for you.

DAVIS’ DEBUT

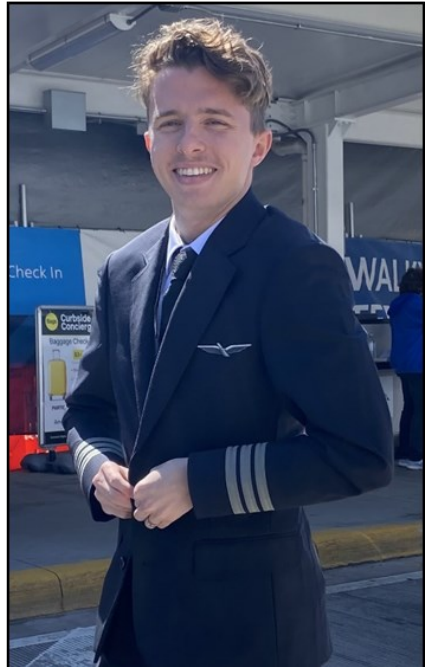
By Pastor Tom

After four years at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, hundreds of flight hours and seven months of training with PSA Airlines, our son Davis [pictured here in uniform] had his first commercial flight Tuesday.

He reported his first landing was “a little rough.” His second one, he said Wednesday, was smoother.

This afternoon, he flies into Tallahassee for a layover!

We all join the Holdcrafts in saluting their favorite pilot.



HAIKU CORNER

By Lex Lutheran

WET PAVEMENT

He swerved just in time
to miss the goose in the road.
Not everyone did.



A POETIC LINE FROM PASTOR’S SERMON

Each parable is
about God’s reckless love for
all humanity.



CANCER CLARITY

A friend diagnosed
with Stage 4 nonetheless writes
of “how sweet life is.”



ALL ABOUT 'PRODIGAL': EXCERPT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON

"It is not found in the text. 'Prodigal' is part of the title of the [Prodigal Son] parable, added years later, and not in the parable itself. Who knows what 'prodigal' means? You're hesitant. So was I! So I looked it up and found I missed knowing what it means. I thought it had something to do with lost or wandering or sinful, but it means 'a person who spends money recklessly or in extravagant ways; wastefully extravagant.' It's an adjective that can be used to describe the actions of the son [in this parable], but it can also be an adjective used to describe the actions of the father. Stay with me a second, if you think I am just reaching here. Just think, when we take all three parables [from Chapter 15 of Luke] into account, we find some very reckless and extravagantly wasteful heroes and heroines.



"The shepherd was reckless to leave the 99 to go and find the one lost sheep, yet he is the hero. The woman was extravagantly wasteful to throw a party just because she found one of her lost silver coins, yet she is the heroine. And then there's the father in the third parable ... who recklessly gave an inheritance to the young son and then was extravagantly wasteful to throw a massive celebration at his return. The father is the hero for the forgiveness and grace poured out. And that is exactly what God does.

"Shepherd, woman and father all exhibit attributes of who God is and what God does. I don't think this is the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This is the Parable of the Prodigal God. The Parable of God's Extravagant Waste. Poured out and lavished on people who are lost and hurting. Each parable today and the red thread that runs through all the lessons teaches us about God's reckless love for all humanity."

MORE MIDWEEK UPDATES

- **Reminder:** The annual camping trip is coming up fast – April 22-24 at St. George Island State Park. If you have any questions, get in touch with Mark Greeley (markhoffmangreeley@gmail.com) or Colin Hackley (colin@typestyle.net).
- Watch soon for an update on how much we raised toward the sanctuary project, how much we spent, and how we might use the surplus donations in the sanctuary.



- Sunday's Noisy Offering total was \$168. Thank you to everyone who put in the noisy change – and some paper money, too. It will all be sent to Lutheran World Relief in support of the Ukraine refugees.
- Margaret Bowers' daughter is looking for someone to clean their home. If you know anyone to recommend, please call Annika at 407-463-2541.
- Do you have any classified ads you'd like to place in the newsletter, free of charge? You know – items you'd like to give away or sell, items you'd like to acquire, that sort of thing. If so, send them in to Lori. Her contact info is below.
- 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 2022 Flower Chart in the narthex. The cost is \$35, which you can place in the offering plate.
- Have anything to add to a future newsletter? Email Lori at sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com or call 850-385-2728.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Davis Holdcraft - 04/01
Gordon Fleischer - 04/06
Colin Hackley - 04/06
Vicki Guttenplan - 04/07
Beth Alexander - 04/11
Elizabeth Halvorson - 04/15
Cassandra White - 04/16
Terri Schmitt - 04/17
Tyler Notley -- 04/18
Russell Reardon - 04/26
Sarah Bacani - 04/29
Colleen Holdcraft - 04/29

UPCOMING DATES

This Sunday:

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

11:30 a.m. - Council meeting

Wednesday, April 6:

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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2198 N. Meridian Road | Tallahassee, FL 32303
The Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

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